

LOST MAN'S GLEANINGS

A SECOND EPISODE
IN THE LIFE OF AMELIA BUTTERWORTH

BY ANNA KATHARINE GREEN

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"BEHIND CLOSED DOORS," "THAT AFFAIR NEXT DOOR,"
ETC., ETC.

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CHAPTER XVIII
THE SECOND NIGHT.

I cannot say that I looked forward to the night with any very cheerful anticipations. The locksmith having failed to keep his appointment, I was likely to have no more protection against intrusion than I had had the night before, and while I cannot say that I especially feared any unwelcome entrance into my apartment I would have gone to my rest with a greater sense of satisfaction if a key had been in the lock and that key had been turned by my own hand on my own side of the door.

The atmosphere of gloom which settled down over the household after the evening meal seemed like the warning note of something strange and evil awaiting us. So marked was this that many in my situation would have further disturbed these girls by some allusion to the fact. But that was not the role I had set myself to play at this crisis. I remembered what Mr. C. had said about winning their confidence, and though the turmoil evident in Lucetta's mind and the distraction visible even in the careful Miss Knollys led me to expect a culmination of some kind before the night was over I not only hid my recognition of this fact, but succeeded in sufficiently impressing them with the contentment which my own petty employments afforded me (I am never idle even in other persons' houses) or them to spare me the harassment of their alternate and forced visits which in their present mood and mine promised little in the way of increased knowledge of their purposes and much in the way of distraction and the loss of that nerve upon which I calculated for a successful issue out of the possible difficulties of this night.

Had I been like most women I would have sounded three premonitory notes upon my whistle before blowing out my candle, but while I am not lacking, I hope, in many of the finer feminine qualities which link me to my sex I have but few of its weaknesses and none of its instinctive reliance upon others which leads it so often to neglect its own resources. Till I saw good reason to summon the police I should not summon them, a premature alarm being in their eyes, as I knew from my many talks with Mr. Gryce, the one thing suggestive of a timid and inexperienced mind.

Hannah had brought me a delicious cup of tea at 10, the influence of which was to make me very drowsy at 11, but I shook the weakness off and began my night's watch in a state of stern composure which I verily believe would have awakened Mr. Gryce's admiration had it been consonant with the proprieties for him to have seen it. Indeed the very seriousness of the occasion was such that I could not have trembled if I would, every nerve and faculty being strained to its utmost to make the most of every sound which might arise in the now silent and discreetly darkened house.

The precaution which I took the night before of pushing my bed against the door of my room I omitted, being anxious to find myself in a position to cross its threshold at the least alarm. That this would come I felt positive, for Hannah in leaving my room had taken pains to say, in unconscious imitation of what Miss Knollys had remarked the night before:

"Don't let any queer sounds you may hear disturb you, Miss Butterworth. There's nothing to hurt you in this house; nothing at all." An admonition which I am sure that her young mistresses, after all that had passed between us this day, would not have allowed her to utter if they had been made acquainted with her intention.

But though in a state of high expectation and listening, as I supposed, with every faculty alert, the sounds I apprehended delayed so long that I began after an hour or two unaccountably to nod in my chair, and before I knew it I was asleep, with the whistle in my hand and my feet pressed against the panels of the door I had set myself to guard. How deep that sleep was or how long I can only judge from the state of emotion in which I found myself when I suddenly woke. I was sitting there still, but my usually calm frame was in a violent tremble and I found it difficult to stir, much more to speak. Some one or something was at my door.

An instant and my powerful nature would have asserted itself, but before this could happen—Hannah having confessed to me afterward that she had put a few harmless grains of morphine into my tea—the stealthy step drew nearer and I heard the quiet, almost noiseless, insertion of a key into the lock and the quick turn which made me a prisoner.

This, with the indignation it caused, brought me quickly to myself. So the door had a key after all, and this was the use it was reserved for. Rising quickly to my feet, I shouted out the names of Loren, Lucetta and William, but received no other response than the rapid withdrawal of feet down the corridor. Then I felt for the whistle, which had somehow slipped from my hand, but failed to find it in the darkness, nor when I went to search for the matches to relight the candle I had left standing on a table near by could I by any means succeed in lighting one, so that I found myself shut up in my room, with no means of communicating with the world outside and with no light to render the

situation tolerable. This was having the tables turned upon me with a vengeance and in a way for which I could not account. I could understand why they had locked me in the room and why they had not heeded my cry of indignation and appeal, but I could not comprehend how my whistle came to be gone nor why the matches which were plentiful enough in the safe refused one and all to perform their duty.

On these points I must be satisfied before I proceeded to invent some way out of my difficulties. So, dropping on my knees by the chair in which I had been sitting, I began a quiet search for the petty object upon which, nevertheless, hung not my safety perhaps, but all chances of success in an undertaking which was every moment growing more serious. I did not find it, but I did find where it had gone. In the floor near the door my hand encountered after awhile a hole which had been covered up by a rug, which I distinctly remembered having pushed aside with my feet when I took my seat there. It was not large, but it was deep, so deep that my hand failed to reach to the bottom of it, and into this hole by some freak of chance—I have noticed in my short but eventful life that chance, or rather let me call it Providence, for there can be no such thing as chance, frequently seems to lend itself to the cause we are fighting against—had slipped the small whistle I had so indiscreetly taken into my hand. The mystery of the matches was less easy of solution; so I let it go after a moment of indecisive thought and bent my energies once again to listen, when suddenly and without the least warning there rose from somewhere in the house a cry so wild and unearthly that I started up appalled, and for a moment could not tell whether this was some fearful dream I was laboring under or a still more fearful reality.

A rushing of feet in the distance and an involuntary murmur of voices soon satisfied me, however, on this score, and drawing upon every energy I possessed again I listened for a renewal of the cry which was yet curdling my blood. But none came, and presently all was as still as if no sound had arisen to disturb the midnight, though every fiber in my body told me that the event I had feared—the event of which I hardly dare mention the character even to myself—had taken place, and that I, who was sent there to forestall it, was not only a prisoner in my room, but a prisoner through my own folly and my inordinate love of tea.

The anger with which I contemplated this and the remorse I felt at the consequences which had befallen the innocent made me very wide awake indeed, and after an ineffectual effort to make my voice heard from the window and various other small attempts of which I am not proud enough to relate I called my usual philosophy to my aid and said that since all this had happened and I was shut up there and had to await events like any other weak and defenseless woman I might as well do it with calmness and in a way to win my own approval at least. The dupe of William and his sisters, I would not be the dupe of my own fears or even of my own regrets.

The consequence was renewed equanimity and a gentle brooding over the one event of the day which brought no regret in its train. The ride with Mr. Trohm and the acquaintanceship which it had led to were topics upon which I could rest with great soothing effect through the weary hours stretching between me and daylight. Then of Mr. Trohm let me think as far as modesty would permit, since shame, trouble and horror lay in other directions into which my now vividly aroused thoughts might stray.

Whether the almost deathly quiet into which the house had now fallen or the comforting nature of my meditations held inexorably to the topic I had chosen acted as a soporific upon me I cannot tell, but greatly as I dislike to admit it, feeling sure that you will expect to hear I kept myself awake all that night, I gradually and insensibly sank from great alertness to an easy listening to my own heart beats and from that to vague dreams in which beds of lilies and trellises covered with roses mingled strangely with narrow, winding staircases whose tops ended in the swaying branches of great trees, and so into quiet and a nothingness that were only broken into by a rap at my door and a cheerful:

"Eight o'clock, ma'am. The young ladies are waiting."

I bounded, literally bounded, from my chair. Such a summons, after such a night! What did it mean? I was sitting half dressed in my chair before my door in a straightened and uncomfortable attitude, and therefore had not dreamed that I had been upon the watch all night, yet the sunshine in the room, the cheery tones such as I had not heard even from this woman before, seemed to argue that my imagination had played me false and that no horrors had come to disturb my rest or render my waking distressing.

Stretching out my hand toward the door, I was about to open it, when I thought me.

"Turn the key in the lock," said I. "Somebody was careful enough of my safety to fasten me in last night."

An exclamation of astonishment came from outside the door.

"There is no key here, ma'am. The

door is not locked. Shall I open it and come in?"

I was about to say yes in my anxiety to talk to the woman, but remembering that nothing was to be gained as yet by letting them know to what an extent I had carried my suspicions I hastily disrobed and crept into the bed I had not pressed before that night. Pulling the coverings about me, I assumed a comfortable attitude and then cried:

"Come in."

The door immediately opened.

"There, ma'am. What did I tell you? Locked—this door? Why, the key has been lost for months."

"I cannot help it," I said, but with little if any asperity, for it did not suit me that she should see I was moved by any extraordinary feeling. "A key was put in that lock about midnight, and I was locked in. It was about the time that scream was given by some one in your own part of the house."

"Scream?" Her brows took a fine pucker of perplexity. "Oh, that must have been Miss Lucetta."

"Lucetta?"

"Yes, ma'am; she had an attack, I believe. Poor Miss Lucetta! She often has attacks like that."

Confounded, for the woman spoke so naturally that none but a suspicious nature like mine would think of suspecting her, I raised myself on my elbow and gave her an indignant look.

"Yet," said I, "you said just now that the young ladies were expecting me to breakfast."

"Yes, and why not?" Her look was absolutely guileless. "Miss Lucetta sometimes keeps us up half the night, but she does not miss breakfast on that account. When the turn is over, she is as well as ever she was. A fine young lady, Miss Lucetta. I'd lose my two hands for her any day."

"She certainly is a remarkable girl," I said, not, however, as dryly as I felt. "I can hardly believe I dreamed about the key. Let me feel of your pocket," I laughed.

She, without the smallest hesitancy, pulled aside her apron.

"I am sorry you could think I would deceive you, ma'am, but Lor' me, ma'am, this is nothing to what some of our guests have been in—indeed, I have known them to scream themselves and vow they saw white figures creeping up and down the halls—all nonsense, ma'am, but believed in by some folks. You don't look as if you believed in ghosts."

"And I don't," I said, "not a whit. It would be a poor way to try to frighten me. How is Mr. William this morning?"

"Oh, he's well and feeding the dogs, ma'am. What made you think of him?"

"Politely, Hannah," I found myself forced to say. "He's the only man in the house. Why shouldn't I think of him?"

She fingered her apron a minute and laughed.

"I didn't know you liked him. He's so rough, it isn't everybody who understands him," she said.

"Must one understand a person to like him?" I queried good humoredly. I was beginning to think I might have dreamed about that key.

"I don't know," she said, "I don't always understand Miss Lucetta, but I like her, like her through and through, ma'am, as I like this little finger." And holding up this member to my inspection she crossed the room for my water pitcher, which she proposed to fill with hot water.

I followed her closely with my eyes. When she came back, I saw her eyes fall on the break in the flooring, which she had not noticed in entering.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "what a shame," her honest face coloring as she drew the rug back under the small black gap. "I am sure, ma'am," she cried, "you must think very poor of us. But I assure you, ma'am, it's honest poverty, nothing but honest poverty, as makes them so neglectful," and with an air as far removed from mystery as her frank, good natured manner seemed to be from falsehood, she slid from the room with a kind:

"Don't hurry, ma'am. It is Miss Knollys' turn in the kitchen, and she isn't as quick as Miss Lucetta."

"Humph," thought I, "supposing I had called in the police."

But by the time she had returned with the water my doubts had awakened again. She was not changed, though I have no doubt she had told what I had said below, but I was, for I remembered the matches and thought I saw a way of tripping her up in her self complacency.

Just as she was leaving me for the second time I called her back.

"What is the matter with your matches?" I asked. "I couldn't make them light last night."

With a wholly undisturbed countenance she turned toward the bureau and took up the china trinket that held the few remaining matches I had not scraped on the piece of sandpaper I myself had fastened up alongside the door. A sheepish cry of dismay at once escaped her.

"Why, these are old matches!" said she, showing me the box in which a half dozen or so burned matches stood with their burned tops all turned down. "I thought these were all right. I'm afraid we are a little short of matches."

I did not like to tell her what I thought, but it made me doubly anxious to join the young ladies at breakfast and see for myself from their conduct and expression if I had been deceived by my own fears into taking for realities the phantasies of a nightmare or whether I was correct in ascribing to fact that episode of the key with all the possibilities that lay behind it.

I did not let my anxiety, however, stand in the way of a very manifest duty. Mr. Gryce had bid me carry the whistle he had sent me constantly about my person, and I felt that he would have the right to reproach me if I left my room without making some endeavor to recover this lost article. How to do this without aid or appliances of any kind was a problem. I knew where it was,

but I could not see it, much less reach it. Besides, they were waiting for me, and the whistle I must have, it occurred to me that I might lower into the hole a lighted candle hung by a string.

Nothing enters one so much as the consciousness of being waited for, but the whistle I must have, and that, too, by the simplest device possible. Looking over my effects, I chose out a hair-pin, a candle, two corset laces (Iardon me, I am as modest as most of my sex, but I am not superstitious. Corset laces are strings, and as such I present them to your notice. That you will regard them in any other light is not to be feared after this explanation) and—a buttonhook, you will say, but alas—for a buttonhook would have been very useful in this emergency—I have not yet forsaken the neatly laced boot of my ancestors, and I could only produce a small article from my toilet service which shall remain unmentioned, as I present it discarded and turned my whole attention to the other objects I have named, a poor array, but out of them I hoped to find the means of fishing up my lost whistle.

My intention was to lower first a lighted candle into the hole by means of a string tied about its middle, then to drop a line on the whistle, thus discovered and draw it up with the point of a bent hairpin, which I fondly hoped I could make do the service of a hook. To think was to try. The candle was soon down in the hole, and by its light the whistle was easily seen. The string and bent hairpin went down next. I was successful in hooking the prize and proceeded to pull it up with great care. For an instant I realized what a ridiculous figure I was cutting, stooping over a hole in the floor on both knees, a string in each hand, leading apparently to nowhere and I at work cautiously steady one and as carefully pulling on the other. Having hooked the whistle hand string over the first finger of the hand holding the candle, I may have become too self conscious to notice the slight release of weight on the whistle hand. Whatever the reason, when the end of the string came in sight there was no whistle on it. The charred end showed me that the candle had burned the cord, letting the whistle fall again out of reach. Down went the candle again. It touched bottom, but no whistle was to be seen. After a long and fruitless search, such as it was, I concluded to abandon my whistle fishing excursion, and rising from my cramped and undignified position I proceeded to pull up the candle. To my surprise and delight, I found the whistle firmly stuck to the lower side of it. Some drops of candle grease had fallen upon the whistle where it lay. The candle coming in contact with it, they adhered to each other, and I became indebted to accident and not acumen for the restoration of the precious article.

(To be continued next Saturday.)

Prunes cost 50 cents a dish in Dawson City. Life must be one glad, sweet song for people who have to live in boarding houses up there.

TELEGRAMS TERSELY TOLD.

Fears are entertained for the safety of the British steamer Saltram, which left Philadelphia for Havana Oct. 28.

At the annual meeting of the Cleveland Terminal Railway company Thursday John K. Cowen was elected president.

At Verona, Italy, there was a short but very sharp earthquake Thursday night. It threw the inhabitants of the town into a panic.

Rear Admiral Schley was given a dinner Thursday night by the Clover club at Philadelphia prior to his departure for South American waters.

The cardboard manufacturers of the United States have decided on a 10 per cent increase in the price of all cardboard, taking effect immediately.

The discussion at Thursday's session of the postmasters' convention was confined mostly to technical sections touching the internal works of the postal service.

The dedication ceremonies for Rust hall and an addition to the memorial hospital, the two important buildings of the Order of Deaconesses, occurred Thursday at Washington.

President Blakeneder of the Wheeling and Lake Erie railway has named Nov. 22 as the time for a conference with the employes regarding the increase in wages required by them.

President and Mrs. McKinley entertained the visiting Methodist bishops and clergymen, now holding their conference at Washington, at a reception at the White house Thursday night.

The mining engineers employed in the Brazil, Ind., district went out Thursday to enforce a demand for an advance of wages from \$50 to \$75 per month. Three thousand men are out of employment.

The American Institute of Architects chose Washington for the next meeting place and the election of officers resulted: President, R. S. Peabody, Boston; secretary and treasurer, Glenn Brown, Philadelphia.

The resignation of Henry Wolfer, warden of the Minnesota state prison, was accepted Thursday. General C. McCreve, late colonel of the Thirtieth Minnesota volunteers, was elected to succeed him.

Secretary Wilson of the agricultural department is investigating the complaint of the New York cotton exchange that the special cotton report issued on Tuesday was in the hands of private firms before it reached the exchange.

John R. McLean, late unsuccessful Democratic candidate for governor of Ohio, has decided to remain in Cincinnati until after the presidential election and Thursday leased a house near the Queen City club, which he will occupy immediately.

The United States transport Thomas, with the Forty-seventh regiment aboard bound for Manila, was roundly cheered at Gibraltar Thursday by the British channel squadron, whose bands played British and American pieces as the transport passed.

At Fort Wayne Thursday J. E. Mellinger confessed to having fired a barn in which children were playing 18 years ago. One girl was burned to death. Mellinger charged Charles Suminsky with the crime and he was convicted, serving several years' imprisonment.

A GLIMPSE AT STYLES.

Many Changes in Skirts, Bodices, Sleeves and Trimmings.

One of the distinguishing features of the new fashions as delineated by the New York Sun is the diversity in the styles of skirts and overdress effects, which no doubt will be warmly welcomed by those who have objected so strenuously to the old-fashioned variety. However, this style of skirt is conspicuously in evidence among the imported models, in spite of the fact that there are later styles with the correct fullness at the back. This is arranged chiefly in box plaits about two inches wide, either one or two, as you fancy.

Another encouraging feature is that the skirts of street gowns have less train than those worn during the summer. They are not short in the sense of clearing the ground, but there is a tendency in the right direction. Some of the tailor made skirts barely touch the floor all around, while the more dressy cloth gowns have two, three or four added inches, as you like. Dressy gowns, and evening gowns in particular, are all provided with the graceful train which is their rightful prerogative, and all skirts are full and flaring at the bottom.

Other salient points of winter modes, according to the authority mentioned, are as follows: The overdress or double skirt effect in various forms and modes of treatment is a leading style made very effective by using two materials or very elaborate decoration.

The new sleeves are very close fitting, with very little fullness at the top, but they claim a goodly share of the trimming all the same. They are tucked, encircled with rims of lace insertion or embroidered according to the kind of material used. The entire sleeve is decorated in very many cases,



CLOTH GOWN IN WEDGWOOD BLUE.

but again the trimming is seen at the top and wrist or set in bands, with plain spaces between. The finish at the wrist is close, with points, scallops or frills of lace falling over the hand.

As for the bodice, it is a varied work of art, with all the fancies of last season supplemented by any number of fresh ones. The special novelty perhaps is the new bolero, made with two box plaits in the back and one on either side of the front. It is quite short, showing a wide, draped belt of satin below, which is straight on the lower edge. The neck is cut out round to display a yoke of lace and a fitted collar of velvet about three inches wide.

In detail of finish and decoration the new gowns have blossomed out beyond description. Tucks and machine stitching are well to the front again, and both are applied to almost every kind of material, except lace, and that is sometimes decorated with narrow stitches of colored silk when used for a yoke and hems. The craze for lace has progressed with all the other extravagances.

Wedgwood blue is the tint for a cloth gown trimmed with circular bands of white silk edged with roses of blue stitching.

Cloth in light colors and velvet, either plain or closely covered with white pin spots, and a sort of wool material resembling serge, with a little roughness on the surface, are the leading fabrics for winter gowns, with silks, lace and elegant brocaded shiffrs for evening wear.

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