



SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I.—Wealthy and highly placed in the Chicago business world, Benjamin Corvet is something of a genius and a mystery to his associates. After a stormy interview with his partner, Henry Spearman, Corvet sends Constance Sherrill, daughter of his other partner, Lawrence Sherrill, and sends her to a friend named Alan, a young man who is a friend of his partner's. She then disappears. Sherrill learns Corvet has written to a certain Alan Conrad, in Blue Rapids, Kansas, and exhibited strange agitation over the matter.

CHAPTER II.—Corvet's letter summons Alan, a youth of unknown parentage, to Chicago.

CHAPTER III.—From a statement of Sherrill it seems probable Conrad is Corvet's illegitimate son. Corvet has died his house and its contents to Alan.

CHAPTER IV.—Alan takes possession of his new home.

CHAPTER V.—That night Alan discovers a man ransacking the desks and papers drawers in Corvet's apartments. The appearance of Alan tremendously agitates the intruder, who appears to him a ghost and raves of "the Miwaka." After a struggle the man escapes.

CHAPTER VI.—Next day Alan leaves for Blue Rapids. He is introduced to Henry Spearman, Alan is astounded at the discovery that he is the man whom he had seen in his boyhood.

CHAPTER VII.—Alan tells no one of his strange encounter, but in a private interview tells Spearman with the fact. Spearman laughs at and sends him.

CHAPTER VIII.—Corvet's Indian servant, Wassaquan, tells Alan he believes the legend of the Indian Drum, which according to old tradition tells one for every life lost on the Great Lakes. Twenty years before, the great freighter Miwaka had gone down with twenty-five aboard, but the Drum had sounded for only twenty-four, leaving the inference that one person had been saved. It is a general belief that the drum never errs. Pursuing a stranger, Alan made a discovery at his house. Alan is slugged and rendered unconscious.

CHAPTER IX.—Conrad recovers, and the affair remains a mystery.

CHAPTER X.—Alan learns from Wassaquan that it was Corvet's habit to keep the sum of \$1000 in the apartment to meet the demands of a certain "Lake," who appeared periodically in the absence of Wassaquan. "Lake" comes to the house demanding to see Corvet. He is evidently in a dying condition. He is alcohol and exposure. Conrad tries without avail to get him to explain his connection with Corvet. The man dies. Wassaquan gives Conrad a paper on which is a list of names.

CHAPTER XI.—From the document Alan thinks he may have a clue to the mystery surrounding Corvet's life and disappearance. He leaves Chicago to visit Lake Michigan ports in search of the persons whose names were on the list.

CHAPTER XIII.—Inquiries show that the watch in the package is the property of a Captain Stafford, commander of the Miwaka, who had gone down with his ship.

He had seen—he reckoned them over again—fourteen of the twenty-one named originally on Benjamin Corvet's lists; that is, he had seen either the individual originally named, or the surviving relative written in below the name crossed off. He had found that the crossing out of the name meant that the person was dead, except in the case of two who had left the country and whose whereabouts were as unknown to their present relatives as they had been to Benjamin Corvet, and the case of one other, who was in an insane asylum.

He had found that no one of the persons whom he saw had known Benjamin Corvet personally; many of them did not know him at all, the others knew him only as a name. But when Alan proceeded, always there was one connotation with each of the original names; always one circumstance bound all together. When he had established that circumstance as influencing the fortunes of the first two on his lists, he had said to himself, as the blood pricked queerly under the skin, that the fact might be a mere coincidence. When he established it also as affecting the fate of the third and of the fourth and of the fifth, such explanation no longer sufficed; and he found it in common to all fourteen, sometimes as the deciding factor of their fate, sometimes as only slightly affecting them, but always it was there.

In how many different ways, in what strange, diverse manifestations that single circumstance had spread to these people whom Alan had interviewed! No two of them had been affected alike, he reckoned, as he went over his notes of them. Now he was going to trace those consequences to another. To what sort of place would it bring him today and what would he find there? He knew only that it would be quite distinct from the rest.

The driver turned aside from the road across a cleared field where ruts showed the passing of many previous vehicles; crossing this, they entered the woods. Little fires for cooling burned all about them, and nearer were parked an immense number of farm wagons and buggies, with horses unharnessed and munching grain. Alan's guide found a place among these and went forward on foot. All about them, seated upon the moss or walk-

ing about, were Indians, family groups among which children played. Alan saw among these looking on, the bright dresses and sport coats of summer visitors who had come to watch. The figure of a girl among these caught his attention, and he started; then swiftly he told himself that it was only his thinking of Constance Sherrill that made him believe this was she. But now she had seen him; she paled, then as quickly flushed, and leaving the group she had been with, came toward him.

He had no choice now whether he would avoid her or not; and his happiness at seeing her held him stupid, watching her. Her eyes were very bright and with something more than friendly greeting; there was happiness in them too! His throat shut together as he recognized this, and his hand closed warmly over the small, trembling hand which she put out to him. All his conscious thought was lost for the moment in the mere realization of her presence; he stood, holding her hand, oblivious that there were people looking; she too seemed careless of that. Then she whitened again and withdrew her hand; she seemed slightly confused. He was confused as well; it was not like this that he had meant to greet her; he caught himself together.

Cap in hand, he stood beside her, trying to look and to feel as any ordinary acquaintance of hers would have looked.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Owner of the Watch.

"So they got word to you!" Constance exclaimed; she seemed still confused. "Oh, no—of course they couldn't have done that! They've hardly got my letter yet."

"Your letter?" Alan asked.

"I wrote to Blue Rapids," she explained. "Some things came—they were sent to me. Some things of Uncle Benny's which were meant for you instead of me."

"You mean you've heard from him?"

"No—not that."

"What things, Miss Sherrill?"

"A watch of his and some coins and—a ring." She did not explain the significance of those things, and he could not tell from her mere enumeration of them and without seeing them that they furnished proof that his father was dead. She could not inform him of that, she felt, just here and now.

"I'll tell you about that later. You—you were coming to Harbor Point to see us?"

He colored. "I'm afraid not. I got as near as this to you because there is a man—an Indian—I have to see."

"An Indian? What is his name?" You see, I know quite a lot of them."

"Jo Papo."

She shook her head. "No; I don't know him."

She found a spot where the moss was covered with dry pine needles and sat down upon the ground.

"Sit down," she invited. "I want you to tell me what you have been doing."

"I've been on the boats." He dropped down upon the moss beside her. "Until yesterday I was a not very highly honored member of the crew of the package freighter Osceola; I left her at Frankfort and came up here."

"Is Wassaquan with you?"

"He wasn't on the Osceola; but he was with me at first. Now, I believe, he has gone back to his own people—to Middle Village."

"You mean you've been looking for Mr. Corvet in that way?"

"Not exactly that." He hesitated; but he could see no reason for not telling what he had been doing. He had not so much hidden from her and her father what he had found in Benjamin Corvet's house; rather, he had refrained from mentioning it in his notes to them when he left Chicago because he had thought that the lists would lead to an immediate explanation; they had not led to that, but only to a suggestion, indefinite yet. He had known that, if his search finally developed nothing more than it had, he must at last consult Sherrill and get Sherrill's aid.

"We found some writing, Miss Sherrill," he said, "in the house on Astor street that night after Luke came."

"What writing?"

He took the lists from his pocket and showed them to her. She separated and looked through the sheets and read the names written in the same hand that had written the directions upon the slip of paper that came to her four days before, with the things from Uncle Benny's pockets.

"My father had kept these very secretly," he explained. "He had them hidden. Wassaquan knew where they were, and that night after Luke was dead and you had gone home, he gave them to me."

"After I had gone home? Henry went back to see you that night; he

had said he was going back, and afterward I asked him, and he told me he had seen you again. Did you show him these?"

"He saw them—yes."

"He was there when Wassaquan showed you where they were?"

"Yes."

A little line deepened between her brows, and she sat thoughtful.

"So you have been going about seeing these people," she said. "What have you found out?"

"Nothing definite at all. None of them knew my father; they were only

amazed to find that anyone in Chicago had known their names."

In her feeling for him, she had laid her hand upon his arm; now her fingers tightened to sudden tenseness.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Oh, it is not definite yet—not clear!" She felt the bitterness in his tone. "They have not any of them been able to make it wholly clear to me. It is like a record that has been—buried. These original names must have been written down by my father many years ago—many, most of those people, I think—are dead; some are nearly forgotten. The only thing that is fully plain is that in every case my inquiries have led me to those who have lost one, and sometimes more than one relative upon the lakes."

Constance thrilled to a vague horror; it was not anything to which she could give definite reason. His tone quite as much as what he said was its cause. His experience plainly had been forcing him to bitterness against his father; and he did not know with certainty yet that his father was dead.

"You'll lunch with us, of course," she said to Alan, "and then go back with us to Harbor Point. It's a day's journey around the two bays; but we've a boat here."

He assented, and they went down to the water where the white and brown power yacht, with long, graceful lines, lay somnolently in the sunlight. A little boat took them out over the shimmering, smooth surface to the ship; swells from a faraway freighter swept under the beautiful, burnished craft, causing it to roll lazily as they boarded it. A party of nearly a dozen men and girls with an older woman chaperoning them, lounged under the shade of an awning over the after deck. They greeted her gaily and looked curiously at Alan as she introduced him.

"Have you worked on any of our boats?" she asked him, after luncheon had been finished, and the anchor of the ship had been raised.

A queer expression came upon his face. "I've thought it best not to do that, Miss Sherrill," he replied.

She did not know why the next moment she should think of Henry.

The yacht was pushing swiftly, smoothly, with hardly a hum from its motors, north along the shore. He watched intently the rolling, wooded hills and the ragged little bays and inlets. His work and his investigations had not brought him to the neighborhood before, but she found that she did not have to name the places to him; he knew them from the charts.

"Grand Traverse light," he said to her as a white tower showed upon their left. Then, leaving the shore, they pushed out across the wide mouth of the larger bay toward Little Traverse. He grew more silent as they approached it.

"It is up there, isn't it," he asked, pointing, "that they hear the Drum?"

"Yes; how did you know the place?"

"I don't know it exactly; I want you to show me."

She pointed out to him the cove, dark, primeval, blue in its contrast with the lighter green of the trees about it and the glistening white of the shingle and of the more distant sand bluffs. He leaned forward, staring at it, until the changed course of the yacht, as it swung about toward the entrance to the bay, obscured it.

"Seeing the ships made me feel that I belonged here on the lakes," he reminded her. "I have felt something—not recognition exactly, but something that was like the beginning of recognition—many times this summer when I saw certain places. It's like one of those dreams, you know, in which you are conscious of having had the same dream before. I feel that I ought to know this place."

They landed only a few hundred yards from the cottage. After bidding good-bye to her friends, they went up to it together through the trees. There was a small sun room, rather shut off from the rest of the house, to which she led him, leaving him there, she ran upstairs to get the things. She halted an instant behind the

door, with the box in her hands, before she went back to him, thinking how to prepare him against the significance of these relics of his father. She need not prepare him against the mere fact of his father's death; he had been beginning to believe that already; but these things must have far more meaning for him than merely that. She went in and put the box down upon the card table.

"The muffler in the box was your father's," she told him. "He had it on the day he disappeared. The other things," her voice choked a little, "are the things he must have had in his pockets. They've been lying in water and sand."

He gazed at her. "I understand," he said after an instant. "You mean that they prove his death."

She assented gently, without speaking. As he approached the box, she drew back from it and slipped away into the next room. She walked up and down there, pressing her hands together. He must be looking at the things now, unrolling the muffler.

What would he be feeling as he saw them? Would he be glad, with that same gladness which had mingled with her own sorrow over Uncle Benny, that his father was gone—gone from his guilt and his fear and his disgrace? Or would he resent that death which thus left everything unexplained to him? He would be looking at the ring. That, at least, must bring more joy than grief to him. He would recognize that it must be his mother's wedding ring; if it told him that his mother must be dead, it would tell him that she had been married, or had believed that she was married!

Suddenly she heard him calling her. "Miss Sherrill!" his voice had a sharp thrill of excitement.

She hurried toward the sun room. She could see him through the doorway, bending over the card table with the things spread out upon its top in front of him.

"Yes."

He straightened; he was very pale. "World coins that my father had in his pocket all have been more than twenty years old?"

She ran and bent beside him over the coins. "Twenty years!" she repeated. She was making out the dates of the coins now herself; the markings were eroded, nearly gone in some instances, but in every case enough remained to make plain the date. "Eighteen-ninety—1894—1899," she made them out. Her voice hushed queerly. "What does it mean?" she whispered.

He turned over and re-examined the articles with hands suddenly steady.

"There are two sets of things here," he concluded. "The muffler and paper of directions—they belonged to my father. The other things—it isn't six months or less than six months that they've lain in sand and water to become worn like this; it's twenty years. My father can't have had these things; they were someone else, or some one else had them. He wrote his directions to that person—after June twelfth, he said, so it was before June twelfth he wrote it; but we can't tell how long before. It might have been in February, when he disappeared; it might have been any time after that. But if the directions were written so long ago, why weren't the things sent to you before this? Didn't the person have the things then? Did he have to wait to get them? Or—was it the instructions to send them that he didn't have? Or, if he had the instructions, was he waiting to receive word when they were to be sent? You thought these things proved my father was dead. I think they prove he is alive! Oh, we must think this out!"

He paced up and down the room; she sank into a chair, watching him. "The first thing that we must do," he said suddenly, "is to find out about the watch. What is the 'phone number of the telegraph office?"

She told him, and he went out to the telephone; she sprang up to follow him, but checked herself and merely waited until he came back.

"I've wired to Buffalo," he announced. "The Merchants' exchange, if it is still in existence, must have a record of the presentation of the watch."

"Then you'll stay here with us until an answer comes?"

"If we get a reply by tomorrow morning; I'll wait till then. If not, I'll ask you to forward it to me. I must see about the trains and get back to Frankfort. I can cross by boat from there to Manitowoc—that will be quickest. We must begin there, by trying to find out who sent the package."

She helped him put the muffler and the other articles into the box; she noticed that the wedding ring was no longer with them. He had taken that, then; it had meant to him all that she had known it must mean.

In the morning she was up very early; but Alan, the servants told her had risen before she had and had gone out. The morning, after the cool northern night, was chill. She slipped a sweater on and went out on the ver-

anda, looking about for him. An iris-cent haze shrouded the hills and the bay; in it she heard a ship's bell strike twice; then another struck twice—then another—and another—and another. The haze thinned as the sun grew warmer, showing the placid water of the bay on which the ships stood double. She saw Alan returning, and knowing from the direction from which he came that he must have been to the telegraph office, she ran to meet him.

"Was there an answer?" she inquired eagerly.

He took a yellow telegraph sheet from his pocket and held it for her to read.

"Watch presented Captain Caleb Stafford, master of propeller freighter Marvin Halch for rescue of crew and passengers of sinking steamer Winnebago off Long point, Lake Erie."

She was breathing quickly in her excitement. "Caleb Stafford!" she exclaimed. "Why, that was Captain Stafford of Stafford and Ramsdell! They owned the Miwaka!"

"Yes," Alan said.

A great change had come over him since last night; he was under emotion so strong that he seemed scarcely to dare speak lest it master him—a leaping, exultant impulse it was, which he fought to keep down.

"What is it, Alan?" she asked.

"What is it about the Miwaka? You said you'd found some reference to it in Uncle Benny's house. What was it? What did you find there?"

"The man—" Alan swallowed and steeled himself and repeated—"the man I met in the house that night mentioned it. He seemed to think I was a ghost that had haunted Mr. Corvet—the ghost from the Miwaka; at least he shouted out to me that I couldn't save the Miwaka!"

"Save the Miwaka! What do you mean, Alan? The Miwaka was lost with

him—officers and crew—no one knows how or where!"

"All except the one for whom the Drum didn't beat!"

"What's that? Blood pricked in her cheeks. "What do you mean, Alan?"

"I don't know yet; but I think I'll soon find out."

"No; you can tell me more now, Alan. Surely you can. I must know. I have the right to know. Yesterday, even before you found out about this, you knew things you weren't telling me—things about the people you'd been seeing. They'd all lost people on the lakes, you said; but you found out more than that."

"They'd all lost people on the Miwaka," she said. "All who could tell me where their people were lost; a few were like Jo Papo we saw yesterday, who knew only the year his father was lost; but the time always was the time that the Miwaka disappeared!"

"Disappeared!" she repeated. Her veins were prickling cold. What did he know, what could any one know of the Miwaka, the ship of which nothing ever was heard except the beating of the Indian Drum? She tried to make

him say more; but he looked away now down to the lake.

"The Chippewa must have come in early this morning," he said. "She's lying in the harbor; I saw her on my way to the telegraph office. If Mr. Spearman has come back with her, tell him I'm sorry I can't wait to see him."

"When are you going?"

"Now."

She offered to drive him to Petoskey, but he already had arranged for a man to take him to the train.

She went to her room after he was gone and spread out again on her bed the watch—now the watch of Captain Stafford of the Miwaka—with the knife and coins of more than twenty years ago which came with it. The meaning of them now was all changed; she felt that; but what the new meaning might be he could not yet come to her. Something of it had come to Alan; that, undoubtedly, was what had so greatly stirred him; but she could not yet reassemble her ideas. Yet a few facts had become plain.

A maid came to say that Mr. Spearman had come up from his boat for breakfast with her and was downstairs. She went down to find Henry lounging in one of the great wicker chairs in the living room. He arose and came toward her quickly; but she halted before he could seize her.

"What's wrong, dear?"

"Alan Conrad has been here, Henry."

"He has? How was that?"

She told him while he watched her intently. "He wired to Buffalo about the watch. He got a reply which he brought to me half an hour ago."

"Yes?"

"The watch belonged to Captain Stafford who was lost with the Miwaka, Henry."

He made no reply; but waited.

"You may not have known that it was his; I mean, you may not have known that it was he who rescued the people of the Winnebago, but you must have known that Uncle Benny didn't."

"Yes; I knew that, Connie," he answered evenly.

"Then why did you let me think the watch was his and that he must be dead?"

"That's all's the matter? You had thought he was dead. I believed it was better for you—for every one—to believe that."

She drew a little away from him, with hands clasped behind her back, gazing intently at him. "There was some writing found in Uncle Benny's house in Astor street—a list of names of relatives of people who had lost their lives upon the lake. Wassaquan knew where those things were, Alan says they were given to him in your presence. Why didn't you tell me about that?"

He straightened as if with anger. "Why should I? Because he thought that I should? What did he tell you about those lists?"

"Nothing—except that his father had kept them very secretly; but he's found out they were names of people who had relatives on the Miwaka!"

"What?"

Save the Miwaka! What Do You Mean, Alan?"

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"All except the one for whom the Drum didn't beat!"

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"Save the Miwaka! What Do You Mean, Alan?"

Recalling how her blood had run when Alan had told her that Henry's whiteness and the following suffusion of his face did not surprise her.

"I told that fellow long ago not to start stirring these matters up about Ben Corvet, and particularly I told him that he was not to bring any of it to you. It's not—a thing that a man like Ben covered up for twenty years till it drove him crazy is sure not to be a thing for a girl to know. Let it alone, I tell you."

She stood flushed and perplexed, gazing at him. She never had seen him under stronger emotion.

"You misunderstood me once, Connie!" he appealed. "You'll understand me now!"

She had been thinking about that injustice she had done him in her thought—about his chivalry to his partner and former benefactor, when Uncle Benny was still keeping his place among men. Was Henry now moved, in a way which she could not understand, by some other obligation to the man who long ago had aided him? Had Henry hazarded more than he had told her of the nature of the thing hidden which, if she could guess it, would justify what he said?

She had made Alan promise to write her, if he was not to return, regarding what he learned; and a letter came to her on the fourth day from him in Manitowoc. The post office employees had no recollection, he said, of the person who had mailed the package; it simply had been dropped by some one into the receptacle for mailing packages of that sort. Alan, however, was continuing his inquiries.

She wrote to him in reply; in lack of anything more important to tell him, she related some of her activities and inquired about his. After she had written him thus twice, he replied, describing his life on the boats pleasantly and humorously; then, though she immediately replied, she did not hear from him again.

A new idea had seized Constance. Captain Caleb Stafford was named among the lost, of course; with him had perished his son, a boy of three. That was all that was said, and all that that was to be learned of him, the boy.

(Continued Next Week.)

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