

# UNTIL THE DAY BREAK

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**SYNOPSIS:** *Joselyn Ware, a London journalist who is engaged in exposing the wrongs of the laboring classes, befriends Lily Childers and her baby son. Lily has been married to a worthless scamp passing as Hugh Childers. In reality his name is Noel Palliser. As the police are on the point of arresting him for swindling he pretends to commit suicide, and thus escapes. Joselyn and Lily go into the country, near London, that the woman and her baby may recover from the hardships they have undergone.*

*Near where they are staying lives the Palliser family, which is interested in a tea-house company which Joselyn has been investigating. The head of the family has died but recently, and a large fortune has devolved upon the elder son, Clive, with a substantial legacy for Noel.*

*Lily recognizes Noel Palliser as her supposedly dead husband as he is bringing home another bride. She seeks an interview with Noel, and is murdered by him.*

(CONTINUED FROM LAST SUNDAY.)

## CHAPTER VI

(Continued.)



LIVE smiled. If his brother's devotion to his wife savored somewhat of idolatry, nevertheless, he regarded her from it. He only trusted that it might be lasting. In the past Noel—but Clive rebuked himself for allowing thoughts of his brother's past to intrude themselves. He was not very well acquainted with Irene. He remembered her as a girl of seventeen, what time Noel, a boy himself, had been desperately in love with her; but she had gone abroad, and Noel had not been long in transferring his affections elsewhere and more disastrously. Noel's engagement and marriage had been exceedingly quick work, and something of a shock to Clive. After his reappearance Noel had almost immediately gone abroad again, and met Irene Stratford at Florence. Clive had posted out to Italy for the wedding, to find the Irene Stratford changed from an immature, fascinating girl into a superb woman. There was no doubt about her beauty and attractions. But Clive, endowed with an analytical brain, had wondered whether Noel's sudden access to a fortune had anything to do with Irene's promptness to change her estate. After the wedding, Clive had posted back to England and the many enterprises, including Kiosks Limited, that absorbed him. Closer acquaintance would enable him to form a clearer estimate of his brother's beautiful wife. In business he studied of men and women not so much from a moral point of view as whether they were fit tools for his purpose or not. Had he studied moral character, he would not have tolerated such a person as Mr. Schneiderkopf; have Schneiderkopf was admirable as a kind of traveling inspector, and had made some valuable suggestions for reducing the working expenses of Kiosks, Limited. But Clive Palliser in the boardroom or his offices was a different person from Clive Palliser as a private individual. There was a distinct duality about him.

Noel's wife and his future had momentarily distracted Clive's thoughts from the tragedy revealed to him at Eldon station, but it intruded itself, as Noel, before leading the way into the reception room where Irene awaited them, turned to him and again asked him, in a low voice, not to dwell on the ghastly business before his wife.

His brother's anxiety did not seem unnatural to him. He nodded his head, but his strong mouth tightened after his habit when he had arrived at some determined decision. Clive Palliser, the uncrowned king of Eldon, J. P. and prospective parliamentary candidate for the division, was going to do all in his power to bring the murderer to justice. Clive Palliser, the human man, vividly recalling the scene in Faulder's cottage, was equally determined to be responsible for the murdered woman's child, unless it should be shown to him conclusively that the child's future was assured, and that the child himself would be well taken care of.

Then he followed his brother into the reception room, where Irene awaited them, her evening gown a "dream"—as women put it—that displayed her superb figure to perfection. She was a dark-eyed, red-lipped woman, her eyes proclaiming a passionate nature. At twenty-six years of age she was at the zenith of her charms, but there were other strains to her nature besides the passionate one—ambition and vanity among them.

Clive shook hands and spoke a few quiet, sincere words of welcome, acknowledging to himself her physical attractions. Noel stood by, feasting his eyes on her. She evidently obsessed her husband, and sight of her seemed to have dismissed his anxiety of a few moments before.

"I'm quite in love with Eldon," she said to Clive. "It's such a peaceful, sweet, old-world place." She gave a little shiver, that caused a scintillation of the diamonds about her white, satin-skinned throat. "But his peacefulness makes the dreadful tragedy seem all the more hideous. It quite haunts me. Do you know, Clive, that when we motored past Faulder's cottage yesterday that poor young woman was standing in the porch as Noel called my attention to the picturesque little place. She looked a girl—from the glimpse I had of her—and somehow with her fair hair looked in harmony with the cottage, the creeper-clad porch."



was Hugh! she went on, just as if she'd seen some one of that name. And then, Miss Ware, I wondered—Mrs. Faulder dropped her voice to a hushed whisper—whether she might not have been thinking in her wandering thoughts of her late husband. Not that I knew his name. But I understood from you that the poor thing's married life had been unhappy, and you'd especially asked me in that letter of yours not to ask any questions, he having died under unhappy circumstances. Not that I should have

"He himself had found the man, huddled up in a drunken or exhausted sleep."

mouth was compressed. The cottage parlor and the figures in it, Mrs. Faulder sobbing, Faulder mute with dazed shocks, Joselyn Ware, white-faced, holding a little crying bundle in her arms—the scene had again visualized itself before him.

Noel Palliser had turned away, his back to the singer and his brother. One hand had gone to his face, the fingers biting into the skin, the palm covering the two parallel scratches that disappeared into his beard. There was a stare in his eyes. But it was another scene to his brother's that had visualized before him, and the cry in his ears was a woman's, not a child's. Irene Palliser's choice of song had, perhaps, been unconsciously influenced by the nature of her haunting thoughts.

She rose from the piano and announced her intention of retiring for the night. A few moments later the brothers were in the smoking room. Noel Palliser mixed himself whisky and soda. The whisky exceeded the soda water. Clive cut the end from a cigar, thrust it between his teeth, but forgot to light it.

"If this tramp theory is correct," he said, reverting abruptly to what was preying on his mind, "the man's capture should only be a matter of hours. An individual of that class is easily identified. He may know the country, be able to hide temporarily; but he has not got the facilities of an ordinary man to make good his escape. I'm due in town tomorrow, but I shall stay here, Noel; see it through, attend the inquest. Apart from that, there is the human side. Have they subpoenaed you, Noel?"

"No," answered the other. "Your evidence as to time might be important. You were at the stifle about a quarter past eight. That was what made me ask."

The man's logical brain was at work. He began to pace the room.

"If I'm not satisfied as to the future of the child, I shall hold myself personally responsible."

He was voicing his thoughts aloud now.

"Childers—Childers—Childers." He repeated the name three times questioningly, as if trying to recall something associated with it, but the effort was a failure.

"I think I shall turn in," said Noel after a pause, and tilted more whisky into his glass, as if the proportions were not yet correct. He emptied the glass at a draught.

Clive held out his hand. "Good night, Noel. I'm sorry this tragedy should have cast a shadow over your homecoming."

"Good night, Clive, old chap. You've been most awfully decent."

"Justify my hope in you, Noel." The blood-tie was strong, and ever had been with the Pallisers. Clive spoke with suppressed emotion. "You've a straight, clear road before you."

Noel's eyes were steady, but looking past his brother, the brother who was already beginning to play the part of detective tentatively.

## CHAPTER VII

ON THE following morning Miss Summers was marked "absent" on the time sheet of the Kiosk tea shop in the Strand.

Joselyn Ware had passed a sleepless night. She had made no attempt to go to bed. After Clive Palliser's departure Sergeant Robbins had returned to the cottage and asked her a number of questions. She had gathered that she would be wanted at the inquest, if only to give formal evidence on the subject of the murdered woman's identity. The sergeant had told her that the motive for the crime had been robbery. The police were on the track of a tramp. Some facts are best set down baldly; the pen is unequal to the description of such emotions as Joselyn endured. Yet she had listened and comprehended. The first blur and fog of dazed horror and grief had yielded to a painful, acute clearness of mind, and the clearer the mind the more intense the capacity for suffering or joy. During the night Joselyn's one distraction, and that in the nature of a sacred duty, was tending Lily Childers' child. A baby only a few weeks old requires constant attention. There is a latent mother in every true woman.

Dawn had no long broken when Mrs. Faulder came into the parlor with a cup of tea for Joselyn. The good soul was inclined to be garrulous in her grief and sympathy, to recall reminiscently every incident associated with Lily Childers since the cab bearing Joselyn, Lily and her child came into view on the previous afternoon.

"I and Faulder," she said, in this reminiscent way, "were standing at the gate, not for a moment giving thought of anything wrong with the poor thing. It was only after Mr. Noel and his wife had passed that Tom turned. 'Lor, missus,' he cried, and there she was, lying in a faint on the porch."

Joselyn had heard already of this fainting from Mrs. Faulder in the course of the sleepless night; but Lily Childers had been in delicate health since the birth of her child.

"If only I'd not let her go out afterward! But she said the fresh air would do her good."

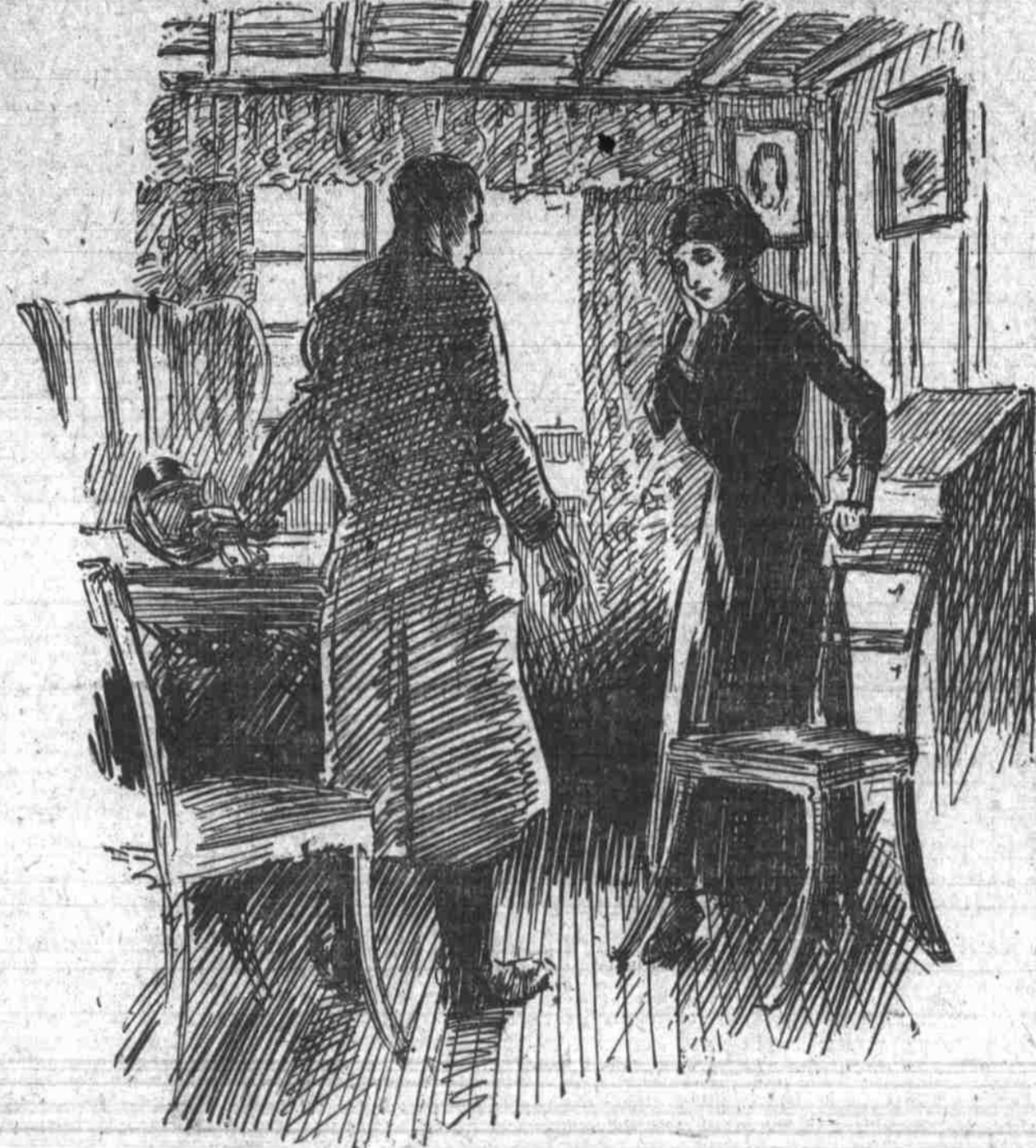
Mrs. Faulder wrung her hands remorsefully. Then she barked back in her incoherent way.

"She was some while coming round, and when she did, poor thing—more like a girl than a mother, she seemed to me—she wandered in her mind, as folk will wander when they're betwixt and between, so to speak. 'Did you see him?' she kept on murmuring."

Mrs. Faulder would have much rather been spared all this. She had been on the point of covering over her ears with her hands. This was the first time Mrs. Faulder had given a detailed account of the episode. But she checked the movement of her hands for her pained ears. Her senses were no longer blurred, but acute.

"Did you see him?" She repeated the words, half to herself.

But Mrs. Faulder heard, and it stimulated her to proceed with her recital, from which, dearest soul in the world though she was, she undoubtedly obtained something in the nature of morbid satisfaction.



"You have consolation at least in the thought that you were for her—her friend—not against her."

taken any such liberty, but I was more afraid of Tom, but I drove it home to him in a good talking to."

As a matter of fact, Mr. Faulder was a silent man. It was Mrs. Faulder who did the talking, whose tongue occasionally tripped, though never in unkindly fashion.

"It was Hugh?"

Joselyn again repeated the words, but this time silently. Then she pressed her hands tightly to her forehead, as if trying to concentrate her thoughts. Just for a moment a possibility had half shaped in her mind. The next instant she had dismissed it as beyond the bounds of even probability. Yet she had wondered—

She rose up quickly. Her ears had caught a cry from upstairs; a cry proclaiming a waking, hungry infant. Another bottle was due.

She was busy with the spirit lamp, milk, barley water and sugar-of-milk and other articles and accessories associated with infantile dietary, when she heard a motorcar rush up and stop outside the cottage. Her nerves and emotions were highly strung. She hurried to the lead lattice window in the thick wall. Mr. Clive Palliser had quitted the stationary car. Mrs. Faulder could have told her that Mr. Clive, like the late Sir John, was credited with rising every morning at 5 o'clock, and with the aid of secretaries and typewriters, dispatching hundreds of letters before breakfast.

On the previous evening Joselyn's senses had been blurred. She had been grateful to the man who had rendered her practical, quietly sympathetic assistance. He had not been the obnoxious personality, the dividend-grinding capitalist-ogre she had conceived him to be from Lily Childers' description and her own investigation into the methods of Kiosks, Limited.

But at this moment, as she watched him, she felt she hated him. She was frightfully overwrought. Lily Childers' whole past played itself before her vividly, and this man, now passing up the garden path, had been responsible for some of her dead friend's misery. Her feelings would have been difficult to describe. But Lily Childers had been made for sunshine, and the world and this man had helped to rob her of it while she lived. In a much lesser degree than the scoundrel of a husband, whose suicide had not atoned in the least for his cruelty in Joselyn's eyes, but she regarded the chairman and managing director of Kiosks, Limited, as having been party to the conspiracy against the dead woman during her lifetime.

She heard Mrs. Faulder coming up the stairs. "Mr. Clive," said the latter, in hushed tones of respect, "would like to see you. And—oh, Miss Ware—the tramp's been took!"

The words gave Joselyn something in the nature of a shock, but hardly afforded her satisfaction. The tragedy remained. Lily Childers was beyond recall to life. All the punishment that the law might mete out to her murderer would not atone for the irrevocable past. The law demands a life for a life. Justice is done, but nothing is undone.

Some such thoughts as these passed through Joselyn's mind. Possibly Mr. Clive Palliser wished to see her in order to give her particulars of the capture, thinking that it might give her some kind of satisfaction. But she would rather be spared the detail. It was right and essential that the inhuman monster should be taken and put to death, but—

Joselyn hid her face in her hands. There was

enough horror before her in the shape of the coming inquest. She drew her hands from her eyes. The baby was demanding food vociferously. Mrs. Faulder had interrupted Joselyn as the latter was in the process of preparing a bottle.

"Ask Mr. Palliser to excuse me, please," said Joselyn to Mrs. Faulder.

Joselyn was only human. Rightly or wrongly, she had been bitterly prejudiced against the man from the first. Rightly or wrongly, she associated him and his methods as responsible partly for the unhappiness of her dead friend's life. She had been grateful to him for his services on the previous night, but her frame of mind was altogether different now.

Mrs. Faulder looked at her with dazed surprise. Mr. Clive was the uncrowned king of Eldon, and it was no light matter in the good soul's sight to refuse to see him.

"I'll mind the little one," she ventured. Joselyn repeated her message. Mrs. Faulder entered the parlor into which Clive Palliser had been shown with much respectful curtsaying. There was a look on the lean, determined face that indicated a sleepless night. Dust was thick on his motoring coat and his boots clogged with soil.

Mrs. Faulder altered Joselyn's message somewhat. "Miss Ware, sir," she said, "asks you to excuse her; but"—her voice broke—"she's busy looking after the little one."

"I'll wait," replied Clive Palliser in his direct way, glancing at his watch. He had drawn-off his gloves, and the backs of his hands were scratched, as if by brambles. "Please tell Miss Ware that I will wait. It's important. It's about the child that I want to talk to her."

Mrs. Faulder curtsayed very deferentially before returning to Joselyn.

"I do believe," was her thought, "that Mr. Clive is going to interest himself in the poor little mite, and Mr. Clive never does anything except thoroughly. And there are folks as say he's hard as nails."

Clive Palliser crossed to the window, grim faced, folded his arms and looked out. He had not gone

know what Mrs. Childers' circumstances were. In the child's future assured? Are there relatives who will take care of him, properly, and look upon his bringing up as something more than a cold duty? You know what I mean."

His last words were a tribute to his better in her understanding. Her personality had impressed him on the previous evening when she journeyed in his private carriage. He prided himself on his ability to read character. The picture of her with the motherless child in her arms had bitten itself upon his memory the night before. Yet Joselyn, when she had preconceived the character of the managing director of Kiosks, had denied him anything approaching sentiment. Yet he had revealed it at the outset. The prospect of the child being brought up from a sense of cold, possibly reluctant, duty was not good enough for him.

His very blue eyes looked at her interrogatively. "She—she had no near relatives," answered Joselyn with difficulty. That had been another tragic side to Lily Childers' life.

"That settles it, then. I—"

Joselyn interrupted. There was nothing melodramatic in her manner of saying that the child was going to be her care. She did not raise a hand above her head, and call heaven to witness her vow.

There was a moment's pause. The keen, blue eyes were asking questions—practical questions. The upbringing of a child costs money. Clive Palliser knew nothing about Joselyn Ware, except her name, though he had formed and was still forming an opinion on the subject of her nature and personality.

"Then," he said, "there is no need to worry as to the child receiving the essential care and love."

His manner was abrupt still. But this was hopelessly inconsistent with the character given by Joselyn to the managing director of Kiosks. Her white face, stress and grief written on it, flashed faintly.

"You mustn't think the rude or gratuitously inquisitive," he went on, "but there is a financial side to most things. Suppose we divide the responsibility. You will furnish the love and care and the good influence. I shall take the personal interest as well. I shall not content myself solely with the financial side, but I shall be responsible for it."

Joselyn was still wearing the black stuff dress, not so as to clear the ground, that was insisted by the regulations of Kiosks, Limited. But she had discarded cap, cuffs and apron before leaving the tea-shop in the Strand on the previous evening. Clive Palliser had noted the cut and style of the workmanlike gown, but it was not distinctive enough to identify her with the company he managed. Such a style of dress was common to drapers' establishments as well as tea-shops and restaurants. Some business men insisted that their women clerks and typists should dress in this way. But those eyes of his were observant, and he had deduced from her dress that she was a woman who worked for her living.

A sudden feeling, a kind of jealousy and pride mixed, possessed Joselyn, bred of her independence and the latent motherhood within her. Yet she recognized the delicacy, the fine feeling, behind the man's words.

"You're most good," she answered, hesitating a little. "But I have made up my mind to take all the responsibility."

"There is such a thing as false pride," he said, in his quiet but plain-speaking way. He never hesitated to call a spade a spade. "Of course, I'm speaking in the dark largely. I don't know the circumstances of your life. But, all well, the child will grow up. The question of schooling, an education to fit him for the battle of life, the choice of a career, and so on, will all come along in their due course. A godfather's duties may be different, but I consider them as essential as a godmother's—at all events, in the case of a boy. I shall constitute myself the boy's godfather."

The domestic side of the man's nature had never been stimulated before. The ambition to go better than every one else, make a success of everything he handled, had absorbed him hitherto.

Joselyn was silent. She was up against a stronger character than her own. She asked herself quick questions. What right had her pride and her preconceived notions of this man to interfere with the child's future. To combat this offer would be almost criminal. She was a hard-working journalist, entirely dependent on her efforts. She was not thinking of herself and the self-denial that her resolve might entail; but she saw the falsity of the position, in relation to the well-being of Lily Childers' child, that pride and jealousy and a subconsciousness of the man's position and methods in business had tempted her to take up.

"That is settled," he went on. "Believe me, I shall not attempt to interfere with your province. But you will tell me your plans, and don't let your pride take offense. All expenses associated with the child from this moment are my business. Don't misunderstand me. I'm a business man, and I have a way of speaking in a businesslike manner; but I recognize the solemnity of the occasion, and my intention is a very solemn one."

He was playing havoc with Joselyn's preconceived notions. For a moment she looked at him. There was not much outward expression on his striking face. Was this the man who was privy to the overworking and underpaying of women, who had drawn up a code of tyrannous rules, who employed such a character as Schneiderkopf? He must be a kind of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. And then a feeling of intense discomfort, a sense that somehow she was playing an underhand game, gripped her. Here, in Eldon, she was entering into a kind of sacred alliance with the man whom she was about to attack in the pages of the Daily Dial. The dilemma had presented itself to her, but only in a fleeting way. This was not the time to work out its solution.

"When you have made your plans, you will let me know," he continued. He lowered his voice. "You have heard of the arrest?"

"Yes."

Horror found expression on her face.

"I wish you could have been spared the pain of the inquest." He paused. "The name 'Childers' is somehow familiar to me; but I cannot associate it with anything definite. Who—who was her husband?"

"A man called Hugh Childers," Joselyn spoke strainedly. Suicide had not atoned in her sight for his cruelty.

She had furnished the missing link.

"Hugh Childers," repeated Clive Palliser quickly. "The Childers who—"

He stopped. He had remembered the case of the long-firm swindler who had committed suicide in his offices in Chancery Lane. After that it was easy to draw a quick picture of the tragedy of the murdered woman's life.

"He was her husband," he added more to himself than to Joselyn. Then he crossed suddenly to the window and looked out, his back turned to Joselyn. Not rudeness, but the action of a man obsessed by thoughts. He turned after some seconds.

"You were her friend—throughout," he said rather jerkily.

His hands went quickly to her eyes. One sharp, convulsive sob came from her.

"I cannot tell you—the full, tragic story of her life now," she choked out.

But it all crowded before her. The man understood. Her words, that one dry, choking sob, had caused his strong mouth to twitch and twist.

He crossed to her, and spoke in rather labored fashion.

"You have consolation at least in the thought that you were for her—her friend—not against her."

He had a rather elliptical way of speaking. But he was right, though he spoke without actual knowledge of all that Joselyn Ware had been to the weak girl woman.

Then he turned abruptly. He reached the door as Sergeant Robbins entered.

(CONTINUED NEXT SUNDAY.)