

# The Filigree Ball

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## CHAPTER VIII.

LET me repeat. The person who had left the marks of his presence in the upper chamber of the Moore house was not the man popularly known as Uncle David. Who, then, had it been? But one name suggested itself to me—Mr. Jeffrey.

It was not so easy for me to reach this man as it had been for me to reach his singular and unimaginative uncle. In the first place, his door had been closed to every one since his wife's death. Neither friends nor strangers could gain admittance there unless they came vested with authority from the coroner. And this, even if I could manage to obtain it, would not answer in my case. What I had to say and do would better follow a chance encounter. But no chance encounter with this gentleman seemed likely to fall to my lot, and finally I swallowed my pride and asked another favor of the lieutenant. Would he see that I was given an opportunity for carrying some message or of doing some errand which would lead to my having an interview with Mr. Jeffrey? If he would I stood ready to promise that my curiosity should stop at this point and that I would cease to make a nuisance of myself.

I think he suspected me by this time, but he made no remark, and in a day or so I was summoned to carry a note to the house in K street.

Mrs. Jeffrey's funeral had taken place the day before, and the house looked deserted. But my summons speedily brought to the door a neat looking but very nervous maid, whose eyes took on an unmistakable expression of resistance when I announced my errand and asked to see Mr. Jeffrey. The expression would not have struck me as peculiar if she had raised any objection to the interview I had solicited. But she did not. Her fear and antipathy consequently sprang from some other source than her interest in the man most threatened by my visit.

Loretta, the Jeffrey's maid



WAS I to be taken to the man most threatened by my visit. Was it, could it be, on her own account? Recalling what I had heard whispered about the station concerning a maid of the Jeffreys who always seemed on the point of saying something which never really left her lips, I stopped her as she was about to slip upstairs and quietly asked: "Are you Loretta?"

"The way she turned, the way she looked at me, as she gave me a short affirmative and then quickly proceeded on her way, convinced me that my colleagues were right as to her being a woman who had some cause for dreading police interference. I instantly made up my mind that there was a mine to be worked and that I knew just the demure little soul best equipped to act the part of miner.

In a moment she came back, and I had a chance to note again her pretty but expressionless features, among which the restless eyes alone bespoke character or decision.

"Mr. Jeffrey is in the back room upstairs," she announced. "He says for you to come up."

"Is it the room Mrs. Jeffrey used to occupy?" I asked, with open curiosity, as I passed her.

An involuntary shudder proved that she was not without feeling. So did the quick disclaimer:

"No, no! Those rooms are closed. He occupies the one Miss Tuttle had before she went away."

"Oh, then, Miss Tuttle is gone?" Loretta disclaimed to answer. She had already said enough to cause her to bite her lip as she disappeared down the basement stair. Decidedly the boys were right. An uneasy feeling followed any conversation with this girl. Yet, while there was slyness in her manner, there was a certain frank honesty visible in it, too, which caused me to think that if she could ever be made to speak her evidence could be relied on.

Mr. Jeffrey was sitting with his back to the door when I entered, but turned as I spoke his name and held out his hand for the note I carried. He appeared to shrink from observation and shifted uneasily as long as I stood in front of him, though he said nothing and did not lift his eyes from the letter he was perusing till he heard me step back to the door I had purposely left open and softly closed it. Then he glanced up with a keen if not an alarmed look, which seemed an exaggerated one for the occasion—that is, if he had no secret to keep.

"Do you suffer so from drafts?" he asked, rising in a way which in itself was a dismissal.

I smiled an amused denial, then, with the simple directness I thought most likely to win me his confidence, entered straight upon my business in these plain words:

"Pardon me, Mr. Jeffrey, I have something to say which is not exactly fitted for the ears of servants." Then as he pushed his chair suddenly back I added reassuringly: "It is not a police matter, sir, but an entirely personal one. It may strike you as important, and it may not. Mr. Jeffrey, I was the man who made the unhappy discovery in the Moore mansion which has plunged this house into mourning."

This announcement startled him and produced a visible change in his manner. His eyes flew first to one door and then to another, as if it were he who feared intrusion now.

"I beg your pardon for speaking on so painful a topic," I went on as soon as I saw he was ready to listen to me. "My excuse is that I came upon a little thing that some night which I have

Securing an imprint of Jeffrey's hand



not thought of sufficient importance to mention to any one else, but which it may interest you to hear about."

Here I took from a book I held a piece of blotting paper. It was white on one side and blue on the other. The white side I had thickly chalked, though this was not apparent. Laying down this piece of blotting paper, chalked side up, on the end of a large table near which we were standing, I took out an envelope from my pocket and, shaking it gently to and fro, remarked:

"In an upper room of the Moore house—you remember the southwest chamber, sir?"

Ah, didn't he! There was no mistaking the quick emotion—the shrinking and the alarm with which he heard this room mentioned.

"It was in that room that I found these."

Tipping up the envelope, I scattered over the face of the blotter a few of the glistening particles I had collected from the place mentioned.

He bent over them, astonished; then, as was natural, brushed them together in a heap with the tips of his fingers and leaned to look again just as I breathed a heavy sigh which scattered them far and wide.

Instinctively he withdrew his hand, whereupon I embraced the opportunity of turning the blotter over, uttering meanwhile the most profuse apologies. Then, as if anxious not to repeat my misadventure, I let the blotter lie where it was, and, pouring out the few remaining particles into my palm, I held them toward the light in such a way that he was compelled to lean across the table in order to see them. Naturally, for I had planned the dis-

talance well, his finger tips, white with the chalk he had unconsciously handled, touched the blue surface of the blotter now lying uppermost and left their marks there.

I could have shouted in my elation at the success of this risky maneuver, but managed to suppress my emotion and to stand quite still while he took a good look at the filings. They seemed to have great and unusual interest for him, and it was with no ordinary emotion that he finally asked:

"What do you make out of these, and why do you bring them here?"

My answer was written under his hand, but this was far from my policy to impart. So, putting on my friendliest air, I returned, with suitable respect:

"I don't know what to make of them. They look like gold, but that is for you to decide. Do you want them, sir?"

"No," he replied, starting erect and withdrawing his hand from the blotter. "It's but a trifle—not worth our attention. But I thank you just the same for bringing it to my notice."

And again his manner became a plain dismissal.

This time I accepted it as such without question. Carelessly restoring the piece of blotting paper to the book from which I had taken it, I made a bow and withdrew toward the door. He seemed to be thinking, and the deep furrows which I am sure had been lacking from his brow a week previous became startlingly visible. Finally he observed:

"Mrs. Jeffrey was not in her right mind when she so unhappily took her life. I see now that the change in her

dates back to her wedding day; consequently any little peculiarity she may have shown at that time is not to be wondered at."

"Certainly not," I boldly ventured. "If such peculiarities were shown after the fright given her by the catastrophe which took place in the library."

His eyes, which were fixed on mine, flashed, and his hands closed convulsively.

"We will not consider the subject," he muttered, reseating himself in the chair from which he had risen.

I bowed again and went out. I did not dwell on the interview in my own mind, nor did I allow myself to draw any conclusions from it till I had carried the blotter into the southwest chamber of the Moore house and carefully compared the impressions made on it with the marks I had scratched on the surface of the mantelshelf. This I did by laying the one over the other after having made holes where his finger tips had touched the blotter.

The holes in the blotter and the marks outlined upon the shelf coincided exactly.

## CHAPTER IX.

I HAVE already mentioned the man whom I secretly looked upon as standing between me and all preferment. He was a good looking fellow, but he wore a natural sneer which for some reason I felt to be always directed toward myself. This sneer grew pronounced about this time, and that was the reason, no doubt, why I continued to work as long as I did in secret. I dreaded the open laugh of this man, a laugh which always seemed hovering on his lips and which was only held in restraint by the awe we all felt of the major.

Notwithstanding, I made one slight move. Encountering the deputy coroner, I ventured to ask if he was quite satisfied with the evidence collected in the Jeffrey case.

His surprise did not prevent him from asking my reasons for this question.

I replied to this effect: "Because I have a little friend who seems enough and subtle enough to worm the truth out of the devil. I hear that the girl Loretta is suspected of knowing more about this unfortunate tragedy than she is willing to impart. If you wish this little friend of mine to talk to her I will see that she does so and does so with effect."

The deputy coroner looked interested. "Whom do you mean by 'little friend,' and what is her name?"

"I will send her to you."

And I did.

The next day I was standing on the corner of Vermont avenue when I saw Jinny advancing from the house in K street. She was chipper, and she was smiling in a way which made me say to myself:

"It is fortunate that Durbin is not here."

For Jinny's one weakness is her lack of power to hide the satisfaction she takes in any detective work that comes her way. I had told her of this and had more than once tried to impress upon her that her smile was a complete give away, but I noticed that if she kept it from her lips it forced its way

out of her eyes, and if she kept it out of her eyes it oozed like an inner radiance from her whole face. So I gave up the task of making her perfect and let her go on smiling, glad that she had such frequent cause for it.

This morning her smile had a touch of pride in it as well as of delight, and noting this, I remarked:

"You have made Loretta talk."

Her head went up, and a demure smile appeared in her cheek.

"What did she say?" I urged. "What has she been keeping back?"

"You will have to ask the coroner. My orders were strict to bring the results of my interview immediately to him."

"Does that include Durbin?"

"Does it include you?"

"I am afraid not."

"You are right. But why shouldn't it include you?"

"What do you mean, Jinny?"

"Why do you keep your own counsel so long? You have ideas about this crime, I know. Why not mention them?"

"Jinny?"

"A word to the wise is sufficient." She laughed and turned her pretty

face toward the coroner's office. But she was a woman and could not help glancing back, and, meeting my dubious look, she broke into an arch smile and naively added this remark:

"Loretta is a busybody ashamed of her own curiosity. So much there can be no harm in telling you. When one's knowledge has been gained by lingering behind doors and peeping through cracks, one is not so ready to say what one has seen and heard. Loretta is in that box and, being more than a little scared by the police, was glad to let her anxiety and her fears overflow into a sympathizing ear. Won't she be surprised when she is called up some fine day by the coroner? I wonder if she will blame me for it?"

"She will never think of doing so," I basely assured my little friend, with an appreciative glance at her sparkling eye and dimpled cheek.

Jinny cracks further evidence

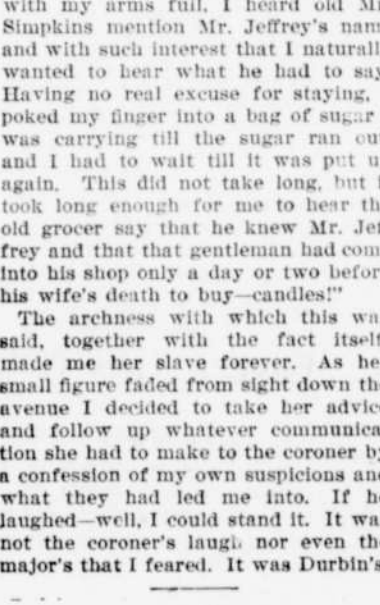


The arch little creature started to move off again. As she did so she cried, "Be good, and don't let Durbin cut in on you," but stopped for the second time when half across the street—and when, obedient to her look, I hastily rejoined her, she whispered demurely: "Oh, I forgot to tell you something that I heard this morning and that nobody but yourself has any right to know. I was following your commands and buying groceries at Simpkins' when, just as I was coming out with my arms full, I heard old Mr. Simpkins mention Mr. Jeffrey's name and with such interest that I naturally wanted to hear what he had to say. Having no real excuse for staying, I poked my finger into a bag of sugar I was carrying till the sugar ran out, and I had to wait till it was put up again. This did not take long, but it took long enough for me to hear the old grocer say that he knew Mr. Jeffrey and that that gentleman had come into his shop only a day or two before his wife's death to buy—candles!"

The archness with which this was said, together with the fact itself, made me her slave forever. As her small figure faded from sight down the avenue I decided to take her advice and follow up whatever communication she had made to the coroner by a confession of my own suspicions and what they had led me into. If he laughed—well, I could stand it. It was not the coroner's laugh, nor even the major's that I feared. It was Durbin's.

CONTINUED.]

The gallery is supposed to be the main source of bolsterousness in the



HENRY MILLER, STARRING IN "MAN PROPOSES."

theater, but collegians really deserve this questionable distinction. Many an actor's heart has been set aching by the pranks of the callous schoolboys.

Richard Mansfield once had an experience in England with a boxful of Oxford students. Once bitten, twice scared, so when he played later in Cambridge Mansfield anticipated exactly what happened. The opera was "The Mikado," and Mansfield was playing Ko-Ko. There were students in every part of the house. Ko-Ko's entrance was greeted by hurrahs from the boys and the thrusting of half a dozen rods on the stage. Instantly there was bedlam. Ko-Ko, however, stood his ground. In a couple of minutes the students had shouted themselves hoarse or tired, or both.

When quiet prevailed Mansfield, in his own robes as Ko-Ko, entered and began his song as the super he had sent on to take the reception grinned at the success of his ruse and ambled awkwardly off. ROBERT BUTLER.

Concerning Basket Ball. Basket ball as a recreative game is unique in its origin for two reasons—firstly, it is our one, positively sure, home American production; secondly, the name, date and place of its authorship are exactly known. Of no other game in all the category can this be said. The birth of the bulk of them is buried in an obscurity which reaches beyond the uniform covered, baked clay tablets of Babylon and the hieroglyphics of the remotest Egyptian records.

Mrs. Newbride—See here! When I gave you that pie, you promised to saw some wood.

Hungry Hank—Well, you oughtn't to've gave me the pie first, lady.

Mrs. Newbride—The idea! Of all the impudence!

Hungry Hank—Dat ain't impudence, lady. I mean I just ruined de saw tryin' to cut de pie.—Atlanta Constitution.

## An Animal Story For Little Folks HOW THE STORK DIS-SOLVED PARTNERSHIP

Professor Slangley was a great inventor, and it occurred to him that he could make a machine that would both travel on earth and fly in the air. For the earthly travel his bicycle would do very well, but to get in the air—that was the problem!

He solved it, however, by entering into partnership with an old stork, who was to furnish the wing power.

"What are the terms?" questioned the stork.

"These," replied the professor: "When on the earth, you are to sit on the handle bars of the machine and I do the work. When in the air, you are to



MR. STORK LET GO.

grasp the handle bars with both claws. I shall grasp your legs firmly, and you will do the flying.

"It will be grand, magnificent!" he pursued. "The world will wonder and then praise. There will be great glory."

"But who gets the glory?" asked the stork anxiously.

"Oh, we share that!" said Slangley. "But somehow the professor took all the glory upon himself, and the poor stork was not recognized."

"What a wonderful genius that Slangley has!" said every one, but they said nothing of poor Mr. Stork. He, however, winked first one eye and then the other, scratched his head with his claw, and said:

"I believe in being honest, and I'll soon show you, Mr. Professor, that you can't cheat us dumb creatures so."

Next day there was to be a grand exhibition of "Professor Slangley's new and approved terrestrial aerodrome."

The course was five miles by land and then over the lake by the air line. The five miles was made in record time, the stork sitting on the handle bars. Then came the fly. Professor Slangley grasped the legs of Mr. Stork, who rose gracefully. It was a great success. But in midlake the stork let go. The professor held hard, but Mr. Stork had grasped his long limbs carefully, and, though he tried, the professor and his machine tumbled into the lake, amid howls of derision and laughter, while Mr. Stork, flapping his wings, lazily floated off to other climes.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

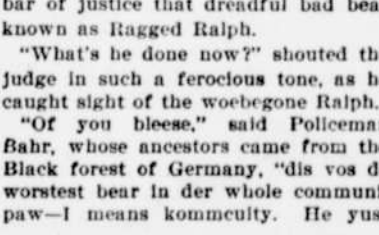
"B-r-r-ring in the pr-r-r-isoner," growled his honor, Judge Bruin, and Policeman Bahr dragged up before the bar of justice that dreadful bad bear known as Ragged Ralph.

"What's he done now?" shouted the judge in such a ferocious tone, as he caught sight of the woebegone Ralph.

"Of you please," said Policeman Bahr, whose ancestors came from the Black forest of Germany, "dis vos de worstest bear in der whole communit-paw—I means kommunity. He just

lay around and ketches little bears and steals dere pennies."

"Woof! woof!" snapped the judge, as he shook the judicial gavel at the trembling culprit, "you're a fine specimen to be allowed to run loose! I've heard a whole lot about you, and nothing that's good. I'll make an example of you that will fix you all right. You had a good home and should have grown up to be a respectable bear, but, instead, you would rather be a tramp and a nuisance to your family and everybody else. Your sentence is that you are confined for life in the zoo, in a cage by yourself, and that the cage shall have such a fine wire screen over the bars that good hearted little children cannot push even the smallest of shelled peanuts through. Take him away."—Pittsburg Dispatch.



RAGGED RALPH.

## THE BLACKMAILER

[Copyright, 1904, by Charles B. Lewis.] The career of Miss Hattie Saunders, as she called herself, was brief, but full of incident, and the way she happened to become an inmate of the prison I was connected with was a fair sample of the adventures she engaged in.

The "job" for which the woman was convicted and sentenced was carried out in London. She invented excuses to go to the office of a wealthy broker several times and to have him call on her at least twice. He was a widower, but was soon to be married again. One day she demanded \$5,000 of him, and he stood up and defied her to do her worst. She was angered over his defiant attitude and made the mistake of taking him into court. The woman he was to be married to at once broke the engagement, and he was the subject of public and private scandal.

This made him thirst for revenge. He won his case, but he set private detectives at work, and in the course of time the girl was traced clear back to the home from which she had run away. Then he caused her arrest and unmasked her in court, and pretty soon the doors of a prison closed on her on a three year sentence. At her trial a prominent divine testified:

"I was favorably impressed with her appearance. I never saw a more truthful, honest face. Her voice charmed me. She was very shy and diffident, and all my sympathies were aroused. I received her in my study, as I did all others. She was there for about twenty minutes and told me a story that was false from beginning to end, but which I implicitly believed at the time. When she rose to go, she demanded \$500 of me, threatening to go before a judge and swear out a warrant for me if I did not hand it over. She was cool and calm, and, while admitting my innocence, she argued that I could not afford to be dragged into court and scandalized. The result was that I gave her the money."

Prison officials are not easily beguiled, but I must admit that Miss Saunders pulled the wool over our eyes in great shape. She hadn't been with us two weeks before we began to look upon her as a martyr. She won the heart of the matron in a month, and within three she was being treated more as a guest than a prisoner. Our prison was open to the public several hours each day, and everybody who came wanted to see "the beautiful prisoner." In one month six different men offered to marry her in case she could get a pardon, and nine-tenths of the female visitors gave her their sympathies. The prison doctor, the chaplain, the warden and a guard were all "soft" on her at the same time, and yet all of them were old prison officials and married men.

The matron had a sister living about half a mile from the prison. After Miss Saunders had been with us for five or six months this sister was taken ill, and the matron would go over for breakfast and after supper. One evening I was coming up from the village in a buggy and encountered the woman on the highway. We nodded to each other, but after I had passed on it struck me that the female, whose weight was 190 pounds, had suddenly lost flesh. I turned to look and then became certain that some one had borrowed her clothes. Whirling the buggy around, I overtook her, and, behold, it was Miss Saunders!

I took her back to prison and made an investigation, and it did not surprise me overmuch to learn that the matron was in the plot. She believed the girl innocent and was willing to help her get away. The political situation was rather ticklish just then, and so the facts were kept from the public. A month later the commissioner from London dropped in and inquired for Miss Saunders. He had been appealed to by a score of outsiders who did not believe her guilty. The matron and myself were present at the interview. The commissioner had the record of her trial, and he started in without a doubt of her guilt, but two hours later he was very much befogged.

The prisoner not only explained away the points bearing hardest against her, but accused the broker so circumstantially that it seemed to be a case where he had evoked the law to carry out a private spite. She spoke without halting or hesitating. She seemed to anticipate every question and have an answer ready. It was not her words alone, but she knew just where to fetch a smile and where to shed a tear, and at times she looked so sad and heartbroken that you wanted to pat her on the head and tell her to put on her hat and walk out. It may be a mean thing to give the commissioner away, but I'll bet boots to buttons that he was a bit stuck on our prisoner when he left the institution.

I don't know how things would have turned out in the matter of securing a new trial or a pardon had not something occurred to render further proceedings useless. The doctor's wife was an almost daily caller at the prison, and of course she had the run of the place. She was greatly interested in Miss Saunders, but not foolish enough to help her to escape. It amounted to the same thing, however. She brought laudanum to cure a suppurative toothache, and in return Miss Saunders gave her a dose of it in something they were drinking together in the matron's private room. When the drug had taken effect, the fair prisoner dressed herself in the other's garment and passed the guards and got safely away.

The search for her was only half hearted, and she made good her escape, and later on we heard that she was living in France. Her escape could not be concealed from the public this time, although every effort was made to hush things up. M. QUAD.

## An Animal Story For Little Folks The Bad Bear

"B-r-r-ring in the pr-r-r-isoner," growled his honor, Judge Bruin, and Policeman Bahr dragged up before the bar of justice that dreadful bad bear known as Ragged Ralph.

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RAGGED RALPH.

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