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BY GEORGE BARR MCUTCHEON  
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"You mean the law? Is it different  
from ours?"  
"Not that. The—er—situation. You  
see, they might think it a trifle odd if  
they found you here—with me. Don't  
you understand?" He turned to her  
with a very serious expression. She  
started and sat bolt upright to stare at  
him comprehensively.

"You mean—it isn't quite—er—  
"Regular perhaps," he supplied.  
"Please keep your seat. I'm not the  
censor. I'm not even an opinion. Be-  
lieve me, Miss Drake, my only thought  
was and is for your good."

"I see. They would believe evil of  
me if they knew I had come to you,"  
she mused, turning quite cold.

"I know the kind of people your sis-  
ter-in-law has at her place, Miss Drake.  
Their sort can see but one motive in  
anything. You know them, too, I dare  
say."

"Yes, I know them," she said uneas-  
ily. "Good heavens, what a fool I've  
been!" she added, starting to her feet.  
"I might have known they'll say all  
sorts of terrible things. They must  
not find me here. Mr. Shaw, I'm—I  
am so ashamed—I wonder what you  
are thinking of me." Her lip trembled,  
and there was such a pleading look in  
her dark eyes that he controlled him-  
self with difficulty. It was only by  
imposing the severest restraint upon  
his susceptibilities that he was able to  
approach her calmly.

"I can't tell you now—not here—what  
I am thinking. It isn't the place. May-  
be—maybe you can read my thought,  
Penel—Miss Drake. Look up, please.  
Can't you read—oh, there now—I beg  
your pardon! You come to me for pro-  
tection and I—well, don't be too hard  
on me just yet. I'll find the time and  
place to tell you." He drew away al-  
most as his hand was ready to clasp  
hers—all because her sweet eyes met  
his trustingly—he could have sworn—  
lovingly.

"Just now I am a poor little repro-  
bate," she sighed ever so miserably.  
"You are very good. I'll not forget."  
"I'll not permit you to forget," he  
said eagerly.

"Isn't the housekeeper a long time in  
coming?" she asked quickly. He  
laughed contentedly.

"We've no reason to worry about her.  
It's the pursuers from Bazelhurst that  
should trouble us. Won't you tell me  
the whole story?" And she told him  
everything, sitting there beside him  
with a hot drink in her hand and a  
growing shame in her heart. It was  
dawning upon her with alarming force  
that she was exposing a hitherto un-  
known incentive. It was not a com-  
fortable awakening. "And you cham-  
pion me to that extent?" he cried joy-  
ously. She nodded bravely and went  
on.

"So here I am," she said in conclu-  
sion. "I really could not have walked  
to Ridgely tonight, could I?"  
"I should say not."

"And there was really nowhere else  
to come but here?" he asked dubiously.

"See that light over there up the  
mountain?" he asked, leading her to a  
window. "Old man Grimes and his  
wife live up there. They keep a light  
burning all night to scare Renwood's  
ghost away. By Jove, the storm will  
be upon us in a minute. I thought it  
had blown around us." The roll of  
thunder came up the valley. "Thank  
heaven you're safe indoors. Let them  
pursue if they like. I'll hide you if  
they come, and the servants are close  
mouthed."

"I don't like the way you put it, Mr.  
Shaw."

"Hello, hello—the house!" came a  
shout from the wind ridden night out-  
side. Two hearts inside stopped beat-  
ing for a second or two. She caught  
her breath sharply as she clasped his  
arm.

"They are after me!" she gasped.  
"They must not find you here. Real-  
ly, Miss Drake, I mean it. They would  
not understand. Come with me. Go  
down this hall quickly. It leads to the  
garden back of the house. There's a  
gun room at the end of the hall. Go in  
there, to your right. Here, take this!  
It's an electric saddle lantern. I'll  
hand these fellows off. They shan't  
find you. Don't be alarmed."

She sped down the narrow hall, and  
he, taking time to slip into a fog  
dressing coat, stepped out upon the  
porch in response to the now prolonged  
and impatient shouts.

"Who's there?" he shouted. The light  
from the windows revealed several  
horsemen in the roadway.

"Friends," came back through the  
wind. "Let us in out of the storm. It's  
a terror."

"I don't know you." There was a  
shout of laughter and some profanity.

"Oh, yes you do, Mr. Shaw. Open  
up and let us in. It's Dave Rank and  
Ed Hunter. We can't make the cabin  
before the rain." Shaw could see  
their faces now and then by the flash-  
es of lightning, and he recognized the  
two woodsmen, who doubtless had  
been visiting sweethearts up toward  
Ridgely.

"Take your horses to the stable, boys,  
and come in," he called, laughing  
heartily. Then he hurried off to the  
gun room. He passed Mrs. Ulrich com-  
ing downstairs yawning prodigiously.  
He called to her to wait for him in the  
library.

There was no one in the gun room.  
The door leading to the back porch  
was open. With an exclamation he  
leaped outside and looked about him.  
"Good heavens!" he cried, stagger-  
ing back.

Far off in the night, a hundred yards  
or more up the road, leading to Grimes'  
cabin he saw the wobbling, uncertain  
flicker of a light wending its way like  
a will-o'-the-wisp through the night.  
Without a moment's hesitation and  
with something strangely like an oath,  
he rushed into the house, almost up-  
setting the housekeeper in his haste.  
"Visitors outside. Make 'em com-  
fortable. Back soon," he jerked out  
as he changed his coat with small re-  
spect for his injured arm. Then he  
clutched a couple of raincoats from the  
rack and flew out of the back door like  
a man suddenly gone mad.

CHAPTER VIII.

In Which a Ghost Trespasses.  
THE impulse which drove Penel-  
ope out for the second time  
that night may be readily ap-  
preciated. Its foundation was  
fear. Its subordinate emotions were  
shame, self pity and consciousness of  
her real feeling toward the man of the  
house. The true spirit of womanhood  
revolted with its usual waywardness.

She was flying down the stony road,  
some distance from the cottage, in the  
very face of the coming tornado, her  
heart beating like a triphammer, her  
eyes bent on the little light up the  
mountain side, before it occurred to  
her that this last flight was not only  
senseless but perilous. She even laugh-  
ed at herself for a fool as she recalled  
the telltale hand bag on the porch and  
the damning presence of a Bazelhurst  
lantern in the hallway.

The storm which had been raging  
farther down the valley was at last  
whirling up to the hilltops, long delay-  
ed as if in gleeful anticipation of  
catching her alone and unprotected.  
The little electric saddle lamp that she  
carried gave out a feeble glow, scarce  
opening the way in the darkness more  
than ten feet ahead. Rough and irk-  
some was the road, most stubborn the  
wall of wind. The second threat of  
the storm was more terrifying than  
the first. At any instant it was likely  
to break forth in all its slashing fury,  
and she knew not whither she went.

Even as she lost heart and was  
ready to turn wildly back in an effort  
to reach Shaw's home before the  
deluge the lightning flashes revealed  
to her the presence of a dwelling just  
off the road not 200 feet ahead. She  
stumbled forward, crying like a fright-  
ened child. There were no lights. The  
house looked dark, bleak, unfriendly.  
Farther up the hillside still gleamed  
the little light that was meant to keep  
Renwood's ghost from disturbing the  
slumbers of old man Grimes and his  
wife. She could not reach that light,  
that much she knew. Her feet were  
like hundredweights, her limbs almost  
devoid of power. Grimes' hut appear-  
ed to be a couple of miles away.  
With a last, breathless effort she turned  
off the road and floundered through  
weeds and brush until she came to  
what proved to be the rear of the  
darkened house. Long, low, rangy, it  
reached off into the shadows, chilling  
in its loneliness. There was no time  
left for her to climb the flight of steps  
and pound on the back door. The rain  
was swishing in the trees with a hiss  
that forbade delay.

She threw herself, panting and ter-  
ror stricken, into the cavellike opening  
under the porch, her knees giving way  
after the supreme effort. The great  
storm broke as she crouched far back  
against the wall, her hands over her  
ears, her eyes tightly closed. She was  
safe from wind and rain, but not from  
the sounds of that awful conflict. The  
lantern lay at her feet, sending its ray  
out into the storm with the senseless  
fidelity of a beacon light.

"Penelope" came a voice through  
the storm, and a second later a man  
plunged into the recess, crashing  
against the wall beside her. Something  
told her who it was even before he  
dropped beside her and threw his  
strong arm about her shoulders.

He was crying something into her  
ear—wild, incoherent words that seem-  
ed to have the power to quiet the  
storm. And she was responding—she  
knew that eager words were falling  
from her lips, but she never knew  
what they were—responding with a  
fervor that was overwhelming her with  
joy. Lips met again and again, and  
there was no thought of the night, of  
the feud, the escapade, the Renwood  
ghost, or of aught save the two warm  
living human bodies that had found  
each other.

The storm, swerving with the capri-  
cious mountain winds, suddenly swept  
their refuge with sheets of water. Ran-  
dolph Shaw threw the raincoats over  
his companion and both laughed hyster-  
ically at their plight, suddenly re-  
membered.

"We can't stay here!" he shouted.  
"We can't go out into it," she cried.  
"Where are we?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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