

THE UNDOING OF A DOUBT

BY HUGO ST. FINSTERRE, M.D.
AUTHOR OF "WHO'S WHO IN THE
COURT OF THE WORLD"

Continued from first page.

"Miss Esther will be wid' yo' in a few minutes."

I was in one of those broad, roomy apartments which will contain 100 people with comfort. The ceiling was low, and there was an alcove at one side partitioned with heavy curtains. The carpet, pictures, furniture, piano at one side and the electric bells told of the wealth of the owner and the taste of the one who presided over the household in place of the mother that had been dead for years.

I did not hear the fairlike step until the young lady, smiling but slightly flushed, appeared before me. She walked straight forward, with her dainty hand extended.

"I am glad to welcome you, Mr. Kenmore, to our home and regret more than I can tell you that it should be made under such distressing circumstances."

"You have done much to rob it of its unpleasant features," I replied as I rose to my feet, "and I am unable to say how much I thank you."

"It is shocking," she said, resuming her seat and without the least trace of embarrassment, though the color of her wonderfully attractive features was heightened. "Your resemblance to the guilty person is extraordinary, but does not justify any one in holding you responsible for his crimes. I wish you would tell me about it."

"Thus invited, I went over the history from the time of my arrival in Mississippi until the present hour, she listening with a close attention that was embarrassing at times, though flattering in a high degree. When I gave the particulars of my purchase of her own horse from the stranger, she compressed her thin lips and a peculiar light shone in her lustrous eyes, but she did not utter a word.

"We were both struck by our mutual resemblance," I added, "though neither made any reference to it. It was striking, even after he had removed his mus-



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tache, and I identified him among the crowd last evening that swarmed into the dining room of the inn."

"And yet you say no one else suspected it."

"So far as I was able to judge, no one did. When I accused him, he met the accusation jauntily and was cunning enough to speak in a disguised voice. He had also changed his dress and thus diverted suspicion from himself."

"It was most extraordinary, and yet perhaps it was not, when your wonderful resemblance to each other is noted. Your appeal to them for time ought to have been heeded."

"Nothing is so unreasoning as a mob."

"Nor so cruel. Even now you are in danger. They expect you to come here, and will follow you. I hope father will soon return."

For the first time she showed nervousness, and, rising from her chair, walked to the window and looked down the highway. Nothing was observed, and she returned to her seat.

"He heard of it last evening, and could scarcely believe it. There has never been a lynching in this part of the state, and it would have been horrible had an innocent man been the victim. Colonel Mansley's first belief was that it was Mr. Beyer who had taken his horse and been caught at it, and he was angry enough to express the wish to take part in his punishment. He, however, changed his mind."

I was hopeful that there would be some explanation of her visit to the inn. My curiosity was to know whether that remarkable call was made under the belief that the real Hank Beyer was in peril or whether from the first it had been her wish to save a guiltless man from punishment. I dared not ask the question, and she did not choose to enlighten me.

"I have been wondering," I said after a moment's silence, "whether Mr. Beyer was not conscience smitten when he saw my peril and whether he would not take some steps to save me."

"Not he!" she exclaimed, with another flash of her black eyes. "Did he not have the opportunity and yet fail to use it?"

"Because it would have involved him in danger. But he could place himself beyond reach of the mob, and then send word to them of the truth."

She shook her head decisively.

"A man who commits such a wrong as he did is not the one to correct it."

"And yet the truth would be certain to come to light in the long run. His and my identity would be established."

"Still he could have escaped by placing himself at his own leisure beyond reach of the law. Do you not see also that if your mutual identity was made clear it would not have removed the taint from your names—that is, on the part of the unreasoning ones who accuse you?"

"Why not?"

"The missing horse was in your possession. That is enough to condemn you with unthinking people. Mr. Beyer had only to deny the purchase as you explained it, and he would have been generally believed. It was a grave error on your part to humor the fancy that you were another person."

was the instant response of the young woman.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A Squirrel Story.

A Bar Harbor gentleman tells this story of how the squirrels on White Island often spend their time feeding a flock of sheep from a certain orchard there. He says that he and his companion, who were duck shooting there last fall, had stopped to rest in an old field in which there was an orchard. A flock of sheep was feeding near by. It was not long before their attention was called to the chirping of some squirrels in a thicket, and they were surprised to see the sheep suddenly stop feeding and manifest great excitement.

The squirrels went into the orchard, and, climbing into one of the trees, resumed their loud chatter, evidently calling the sheep, since the flock made at once for the apple tree. Then the squirrels began to bite off the apples, which fell among the hungry sheep, who would struggle for the fruit like so many schoolboys. The squirrels seemed to enjoy the fun, and after they had dropped a few apples from the first tree they skipped to a distant tree, for which the sheep would make in great confusion.

After the squirrels had thus enjoyed an hour's fun with their feisty neighbors and supplied them with a sufficient quantity of the fruit they scampered back to their haunts in the thicket, leaving the sheep to resume their grazing.—Kennebec Journal.

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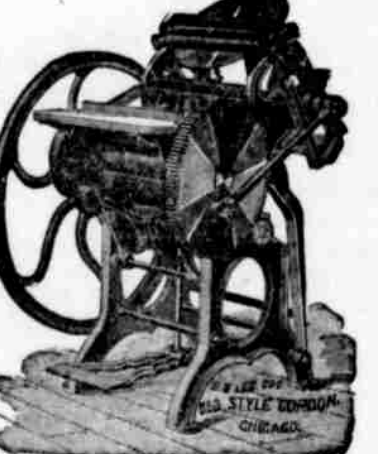
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