

BY EMILY THORNTON Author of "ROY RUSSELL'S RULE,"

"GLENROY," "THE FASHIONABLE MOTHER," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

In his unusually pleasant office or Broadway sat Lemuel Gray, a middleaged man and successful lawyer, in deep thought. In his hand he held a letter, which, after a few moments, he again carefully read. As it refers to people and events to be mentioned often in the remarkable story about to be related, we give the contents entire:

Yonkers, April 15, 18-Mr. Lemuel Gray:

Dear Sir-It is with great difficulty that I pen the following, being very ill, but as the object I have in view by thus addressing you is of great importance, I will write in as few words as possible.

You are aware, being my confidential adviser, that I expected to sail for Eutope shortly, in order to attempt to unravel the mystery surrounding the death of Sir Arthur Glendenning, in whose fate I am so deeply interested.

I wished to visit, in some disguise, the town where Glendenning Hall is situated, to become acquainted with the present barenet and Lady Constance, his wife, with the nephew and niece residing with them, and to learn something. if possible, about the only sister who married without the consent of her family, and who, therefore, was disowned by ther relatives as well as a young girl whom it was said they had adopted.

I desired, also, to make inquiries in regard to the private character of Antoine Duval, the valet of the present Sir Reginald Glendenning, and to study everything that might bear upon the mys-

tery of the case. I regret to say that my physician declares it impossible for me to undertake, with safety, this journey. What do you thing of my sending thither a substitute? I have in mind a young physician, Dr. Earle Elfenstein, who resides in your city. I write to ask you to hunt him up for me. Please make a few inquiries as to his circumstances, disposition and above all, whether he is an energetic and conscientious man.

Inform me in regard to these matters at an early date. If favorable, set a time when you can meet him at my residence and explain to him the peculiar mission I wish him to undertake in my long explanations that must be given, in order to instruct him in the performance of the work.

Yours, etc. LEON RAPPELYE. To this, a few hours later, the follow-

ing reply was penned: N. Y., April 16, 18-Mr. Leon Rappelye:

Dear Sir-Upon the receipt of yours of the 15th, I examined the city directory without delay. I find Dr. Elfenstein's ad-

dress to be 47 Exton street. Going at once to the neighborhood. I learned from a reliable source that the young man has a very small practice, therefore, finds it difficult to support his widowed mother and himself in comfort.

This state of his finances is not due to lack of energy, for he is indefatigable in his efforts to benefit his patients, but those who apply to him for advice are, unfortunately, the very poor in the region

of his home. He is an exceedingly conscientious and good man, and from all I can learn, just the one to undertake the important business which you propose, and which I fully approve.

I will meet him at your residence, on the evening of the 18th. It would be well to send him a telegram to that effect as soon as you receive this. Yours sincerely.

LEMUEL GRAY. . . . .

It was a dull and dreary picture that the eyes of Dr. Earle Elfenstein rested upon as he drew back the lace curtains that draped the parlor window of his cozy home.

His practice was not large and far from lucrative. Times were unusually hard, and his bills for services rendered, poorly paid, so that he had, indeed, a

hard struggle to live. This afternoon he was peculiarly cast down, for his mother had reminded him that the month's rent for the flat in which they resided would be due in three days, and he knew he had not one quar-

ter of the amount required.

It was no wonder, then, that a sigh escaped him as he turned to greet the sweet looking lady about fifty years of age, who entered the room, holding an envelope in her hand.

"Here is a telegram for you, Earle. What can it be?"

"I cannot say, as I expected none," he replied, opening the missive. "This is singular. I am requested to leave the city by the 8 p. m. train for Yonkers, to see a gentleman, who is an invalid. on a matter of business. His name is Leon Rappelye, a strange name to me." "What shall you do about it?" asked

the mother, anxiously. "I shall go, of course. The message says, 'you will be met at the station.' 1 have just about time to answer a call, and meet the train."

"What time shall you return?"

"It will be late, I know, perhaps not until morning. Good by, little mother. Who knows but this will bring better things for us?"

Later, closely protected by a comfortable ulster from the heavy rain that was young friend. When, therefore, his

falling, with a train of serious thoughts in his mind, occasioned by his poverty, Dr. Elfenstein wended his way to the Grand Central Depot and entered the

cars that would bear him to his destina-

The rain was falling in torrents as the train came thundering to the station at Yonkers, and upon stopping, the usual crowd hurried out, and passing through the waiting room to the street beyond, were soon lost in the gloom. The doctor had scarcely a moment to wait, when a private coachman approached, whip in

hand, and accosted him. "I have been sent to meet a gentle-man from New York named Elfenstein. Are you the one?"

"I am."

"Then please follow me." The young man was soon seated in handsome close carriage. Street after street was traversed, until finally they turned into the extensive grounds of an elegant residence.

As the young man stepped across the piazza, the large doors were instantly opened by a colored waiter, who motioned him to enter and proceeded to assist in removing his overcoat and wet over-

Crossing the marble floor of the long hall, he was ushered into a room elegantly appointed. The bright grate fire cast a cheerful glow around, while the velvet carpet scarcely gave back a footafll. The table was laid for one, and very soon a sumptuous dinner was served, of which he alone partook.

Leaving the doctor to enjoy his solitary meal, we will precede him to the story above, and to the presence of the invalid, whose urgent telegraphic dispatch had brought him to the place.

The second story back room was large and commodious, opening into a room beyond, where every luxury abounded, for the comfort of the master. "Has he come?"

These words issued from the pale lips of the sufferer, who was half sitting, half reclining upon the bed.

"Has Dr. Elfenstein come? I thought I heard the carriage."

"You did, and he is here," returned the nurse and housekeeper. "I thought it necessary, as the disease with which I saw him. I presume you have much to am afflicted forbids my entering into the say and would prefer not to be interrupted. He will be with you in a few moments now.'

"Has my lawyer come?" "Not yet. But the door bell rings.

think that is he." "Set that stand with writing materials close by my bed, then go down and show both gentlemen to this room; after which, you can leave us to ourselves until you hear me ring."

Making herself known to the doctor, the nurse introduced him to Mr. Gray. then led the way to the sick man's pres-

"Here is Mr. Gray, Mr. Rappelye, and this is your expected friend, Dr. Elfen-

stein.' Reaching forth a thin, white hand, the old man smiled feebly, and between struggling breaths managed to say:

"I am very glad to see you." Taking the emaciated hand in both his, Earle Elfenstein pressed it tenderly, and in a low tone full of feeling responded:

"I am glad I could come to you, but

sorry, very sorry to see you so ill!" "You must wonder why I summoned you, an entire stranger, to my side in this unceremonious way, but I have important business to transact. Talking is such an exertion, my lawyer, Mr. Gray, must explain for me my wishes, and why I sent for you."

These words were uttered at intervals, for his short breathing prevented long sentences, and gently releasing his hand Elfenstein took the seat close beside the bed, while Mr. Gray seated himself in a business-like way beside the table.

CHAPTER II.

"Dr. Elfenstein," said Mr. Gray, "my client and friend, Mr. Leon Rappelye, is, as you see, extremely ill. Our friend is a lonely man, having no relatives living to whom he wishes to leave his large fortune. He has dictated his last will and testament, and as he desires to sign it before he may be unable to do so, it was necessary for him to see you personally, previous to placing his name to the document, in which, I may add, you are deeply interested."

Earle Elfenstein started as he heard these words, and looked from the lawyer to the invalid beside him.

"You are surprised, naturally," again resumed Mr. Gray, "and probably won-der what Mr. Rappelye knows of you. I will explain this at once. Your father was George Elfenstein, a well-known banker; in years gone by he did Mr. Rappelye a never-to-be-forgotten service. His arrival in this country was followed by a long and dangerous illness, when he lay alone among strangers, almost neglected, and he attended to his wants like a brother, until he was entirely convalescent. They met often afterward, and then lost sight of each other, Years of silence passed, when accidentally he learned about three months since that his benefactor was dead, and his only son was a struggling physician in New York. He has heard of your fearless, conscientious manner of meeting your engagements, and this was a characteristic he particularly wished to find in some

fairs in your hands."
"Anything that I can do within the range of honor and integrity, I shall be pleased to undertake," Earle answered. "We felt so. The case then is this; but, of course, you will recognize the fact that the history of our friend's life, which I shall be obliged to unfold to you, is told in strict confidence. Will you promise to regard that confidence as a sacred trust, never to be told to another, until all that is now mysterious has been

swept away?'
"I will."
"Then I will proceed. Our friend was the youngest son of Sir Geoffrey Glen-denning, residing in a large town near Liverpool. This gentleman had one daughter, who married against his wishes, and three sons. Arthur, who would in case of his death succeed to the title; Reginald, two years younger, and Fitzroy, the gentleman you see before you, whose severe domestic misfortunes have been so great that for the last twenty-five years he has been obliged to live in this country, under the assumed name of Rappelye.

"A short time after the death of his parents, for they expired within a few months of each other, and after his brother Arthur had come into possession of his title, little turmoils arose between the brothers, and seemed to embitter them exceedingly.

"Reginald, the second son, had an ugly, morose disposition, that was peculiarly exasperating, and whenever the opportunity occurred he delighted in getting Fitzroy into disgrace with the young baronet.

"These young men had a very pretty cousin, in whose society they each took extreme pleasure. Her name was Constance Leonore Glendenning. It was soon discovered that the affections of the young girl were centered upon Sir Arthur, and this knowledge was immedi-

ately followed by a betrothal.

"Reginald, being somewhat disappointed that he could not win the prize, undertook to report several little interviews of a purely innocent and accidental nature that Fitzroy had with this lady to his brother, casting a very sinister light upon them, and assuring Arthur that Fitzroy was endeavoring to supplant him in her favor.

"This artful story infuriated the young nobleman, and caused a very bitter interview. Fitzroy indignantly denied every thought of interference, declaring the truth, that his love for Constance was merely cousinly. This Sir Arthur refus-ed to believe, and they parted in anger, Fitzroy exclaiming in a moment of unguarded passion as he left him:

"'Very well, think so if it sults you: but, mark me, you shall yet repent your unjust accusations, and, as I live, shall never repeat this insult.

"Closing the door as he spoke, he stepped into the hall and stood face to face had either purposely listened or acci- tarrh by Peruna. Once in the family as Dr. Hartman for Peruna. dentally heard the unfortunate remark.
"The brothers did not meet again that

day, but early the next, Fitzroy was awakened by an unusual tumult. To his horror he was told that Sir Arthur had disappeared during the night. His bed had been occupied as usual, but he had probably been murdered, or very badly wounded, as while no traces of his body could be found, evidences of a contest were on every side.

"Blood was upon the bed and floor, the window seat was covered with it, as though he had been dragged through it, and then by means of a rope let down to the ground below. From the grass to an ornamental lake not far distant were irregular patches of the same human gore. Beyond that, nothing was ever discovered! That lake was thoroughly dragged for the body; the grave by the side of it was searched, not a spot being left in which a corpse could be buriedto no effect.

"But, while stupefied with grief over his brother's loss, our poor friend was made aware that the finger of suspicion pointed to him with singularly fatal evidences of guilt.

"A dagger with his name engraved upon the handle was found by the bedside, on the floor, its blade still wet with blood. Beneath the window seat, caught upon a nail, was a fragment of cloth which, upon search being made, fitted exactly into a rent in a dressing gown of his, that was found hanging in his own closet.

"All he could conclude was that some unknown enemy had struck the fatal blow, and after stealing these articles from his private rooms, had left the dagger purposely upon the floor, and returned the torn and bloody gown to the closet, in order to fasten suspicion upon

him, and thus shield themselves. "To make a long story short, in due time the trial took place, and Sir Reginald Glendenning, who had succeeded to the title, testified to the bitter feeling that had existed between the brothers. He also identified the dagger and dressing gown as belonging to the prisoner. Antoine Duval testified as fully to the threatening language used to the deceased on the day previous to the murder by his brother.

"The trial was quite lengthy, but resulted in his acquittal and discharge from custody. But although freed by law, the popular opinion remained un-changed, and, unable to endure the cold, averted looks of his former friends, he left his home and embarked for America under an assumed name.

"Arriving in New York, the strain of grief that he had undergone so told upon his nervous system that he was laid upon a bed of severe illness. Then it was that your father sought him out and nursed him so tenderly. After his recovery, he resolved to devote himself to business, and thus forget his troubles and misfortunes.

(To be continued.)

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Perhaps it will be wet feet, or a draught, or damp clothes, or it may be one of a thousand other little mishaps, but no one is shrewd enough to always avoid the inevitable catching cold.

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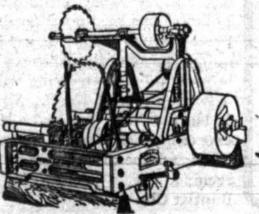
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