The Wand of Sleep
OR
The Devil-Stick

By the Author of "The Mystery of a Hansom Cab," Etc.

CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

On the day after the Major's dinner party, Isabella was sitting in the veranda with a book open on her lap and Dido standing gravely near her. Mrs. Dallas in the cool depths of the drawing-room, was indulging in an after-luncheon siesta. The sunlight poured itself over the velvet lawns, drew forth the perfumes from the flower beds, and made the earth languorous with heat.

In the veranda all was cool and restful and pleasingly silent. Isabella, in her white dress, looked beautiful and pensive; while Dido, in reddish-hued robe, with a crimson kerchief twisted round her stately head, gleamed in the semi-gloom like some gorgeous tropical bird astray in our northern climes. Both mistress and maid were silent.

It was Dido who spoke first. She noticed that the eyes of her mistress constantly strayed in the direction of "Ashantee," and with the jealousy begotten of deep affection, she guessed that the girl's thoughts were fixed upon Maurice. At once she spoke reproachfully, and in the grotesque negro dialect, which, however, coming from Dido's mouth, inspered no one with merriment.

"Aha, missy," said she, in deep guttural tones, "you tink ob dat yallerha'r man!"

"Maurice! Yes, I'm thinking about him; and you know why."

Dido's fierce black eyes flashed out a gleam of rage, and she cursed Maurice audibly in some barbaric tongue which Isabella seemed to understand. At all events she interrupted the woman's speech with an imperious gesture.

"No more of that, Dido. You know that I love Maurice; I wish to marry him. Why are you so bitter against him?"

"He take you from me."

"Well, if I marry anyone the same thing will happen," responded Isabella, lightly; "and surely, Dido, you do not want me to remain a spinster all my life."

"No, missy, no! You marry, an' ole Dido am berry pleased. But dat yaller-ha'r man, I no like him."

"We are engaged."

"Your mudder, she say no!"

"Nonsense! She likes Maurice herself," replied Isabella, uneasily. "Maurice wants our engagement kept quiet for the present, but when I do tell Major Jen and my mother, I am sure neither of them will object."

"H'm, we see, missy, we see," said Dido, darkly. "But why you marry dis man I no like?"

"Because I marry to please myself, not you," said Isabella, sharply. "Oh, I know your thoughts, Dido; you would like me to marry David Sarby. The idea! as if he can compare with Maurice!"

"Wrong, missy. I no wish dat man."

"Then Dr. Etwald—that horrid, gloomy creature!"

"Him great man!" said Dido, solemnly. "Him berry—berry great!"

"I don't think so," retorted Isabella, rising. "Of course, I know that he is clever, but as to being great, he isn't known beyond this place." She walked to the end of the veranda, and stood for a moment in the glare of the sunshine. Suddenly an idea seemed to strike her, and she turned towards the negress.

"Dido, you wouldn't like to see me the wife of Dr. Etwald!"

"Yes, missy. Him berry big great man! He lub you. He told old Dido so."

"He seems to have been very confidential," said Isabella, scornfully, "and from what I have seen, Dido, he has some influence over you."

"No," said the negress. But while her tongue uttered the denial, her eyes rolled uneasily round the lawn, as though dreading some invisible presence. "No, missy. Dido a great one, you know. She no 'fraid ob dat doctor; but him big man, missy; you marry him!"

"I love Maurice!"

"You nebber marry him, missy. Nebber, nebber! I make de spell. I know. De spell say dat doctor he marry you!"

"Well, Dido,, we will see. And now ——"

She never finished what she was about to say, for at that moment Dido stretched out one arm. Across the lawn there crept a wizen, grey-haired little man, with a cringing manner. He was white, but darkish in the skin, and there was something negroid about his face. This dwarfish little creature was a tramp, who had become a pensioner of Isabella's. He had attached himself to her like some faithful dog, and rarely failed to present himself at least once a day.

What his real name was nobody knew, but he said that he was called Battersa. He was cringing, dirty, and altogether an unpleasant object to look upon; but Isabella was sorry for the creature, and aided him with food and a trifle of money. It may be here mentioned that Battersea, although he knew nothing of Obi, was terribly afraid of Dido. Perhaps some instinct in the negro blood—for he undoubtedly had something African in his veins—made him fear this unknown priestess of fetish-worship.

"Well, Battersea," said Isabella, kindly, "how are you to-day?"

"Very well, lady, very well, indeed. I met Mr. Aylmer, and he gave me a dollar."

"That was generous of him! But, why?"

"Because I said that a certain lady was——"

"Now, now," laughed Isabella, "no more of that nonsense, Battersea." She turned and ran along the veranda into the house. The tramp and the negress were alone.

"What de doctor say?" said Dido, in a low-voiced whisper.

"Two words. The devil-stick."

The negress started, and threw up her hands in surprise.

CHAPTER IV.

Evidently there was an understanding between these two strange creatures, and thereby an occult connection with the ideas and doings of Dr. Etwald. What the trio were plotting against Isabella and her lover remains to be seen; but it can be guessed easily that the message of the devil-stick carried by Battersea to Dido was of some significance.

Battersea himself knew nothing of its esoteric meaning, but to the negress the mention of the emblem conveyed a distinct understanding. She let her arms fall listlessly by her side, and, with an unseeing gaze she stared at the green trees bathed in hot sunshine. After a moment or so, she muttered to herself in negro jargon, and clenched her hands.

"Baal! the wand of sleep! the bringer of death!"

"What are you saying, Dido?" asked Battersea, his feeble intellect scared by the fierce gestures and the unknown tongue.

"I say deep things which you no unde'stan'. Look at ole Dido, you white man."

Battersea whimpered, and, rubbing one dirty hand over the other, did as he was requested with manifest unwillingness. With an intensity of gaze, Dido glared at him steadily, and swept her hands twice or thrice across his face. In a moment or so the tramp was in a state of catalepsy, and she made use of his spellbound intelligence to gain knowledge. There was something terrible in her powers being thus exercised in the full sunlight.

"De debble-stick. Whar is it?"

"In the house of Major Jen. In a little room, on the wall, with swords and axes."

As he said this in a monotonous tone, Dido looked across the tree tops to where the red roofs of "Ashantee" showed themselves against a blue July sky. She shook her fist at the distant house, and again addressed herself imperiously to Battersea, commanding:

"Tell ole Dido ob de debble-stick."

"It is green, with a handle of gold, and blue stones set into the gold."

Dido bent forward, and touched the tramp on his temples.

"See widin dat stick," she muttered, eagerly. "I wish to see."

"There is a bag in the handle," repeated Battersea, with an effort. "Under the bag a long needle," then, after a pause, "the needle is hollow."

"Is der poison in de bag, in de hollow ob de needle?"

"No!" said Battersea, again. "The poison is dried up!"

At this moment a noise in the house disturbed Dido, and with a pass or two she released Battersea from the hypnotic spell. He started, rubbed his eyes, and looked drowsily at the tall negress, who had resumed her impassive attitude.

"What have you been doing, Dido?" he asked, stupidly.

"Obi?" was the brief reply. "You hab told old Dido what she wish about de debble-stick."

"The devil-stick," repeated the tramp, in wide-eyed surprise. "I don't know anything of it. Dr. Etwald met me, and ses he, 'You go to Miss Dallas,' and I ses, 'I does;' and he ses, 'You'll see Dido,' and I ses, 'I will;' and he ses, 'Say to her "Devil-stick," an' I ses, 'Right y'are, sir.' But as to knowing——"

"Dat nuffin!" said Dido, with a lordly wave of her hand. "I black; you hab de black blood in youse also. I mek you do Obi. Um!"

"What's Obi? What's you torkin' of?" asked Battersea, rather nervously. "An' 'ow does you know I hev black blood?"

"Obi say dat to me. Your mudder black?"

"Yah!" cried Battersea, derisively. "You're out of it. My mother white; but my father," here he hesitated, and then resumed—"Yes, you're right, Dido; my father was a negro! A Seedee boy who was fireman on a liner."

"I hab seen dat," replied Dido, nodding her head. "Black blood in youse, an' I can do Obi on you. I send your spirit to de house of Massa Jen! You tell me ob de debble-stick. But I take care ob you. Now git to de kitchen; dere am food for you."

The old man's eyes brightened in anticipation of a feast, and he shuffled off round the corner as quickly as his age would allow him. Dido looked after him for a moment, considering the message he had brought from Dr. Etwald, and then began to think of the devil-stick.

She knew very well what it was, for her grandmother had been carried off as a slave from the west coast of Africa, and knew all about Ashantee sorcery and fetish rites. These she had repeated to her granddaughter, Dido, with the result that Dido, cherishing these recollections, knew exactly how to use the wand of sleep. She had spoken about it to Dr. Etwald, quite ignorant that Jen kept one as a curiosity, and now Etwald had intimated through Battersea that he wished her to do something in connection with the stick. What that something might be, Dido, at the present moment, could not guess.

She had exerted her magnetic and hypnotic influence over Battersea, not that she wished for a detailed description of the wand, for already she knew its appearance, but because it might happen that it would be necessary to use the tramp for certain purposes connected with the discovery of secrets. Dido exercised a strong influence over this weak old creature.

Battersea was supposed to be a Christian; but the barbaric fluid in his veins inclined him to the terrible grotesqueness of African witchcraft, and Dido and her words stirred some dim instinct in his mind. The negress saw that accident had placed in her way a helpless creature, who might be of use in her necromantic business; therefore, by hypnotizing him once or twice, she contrived to keep him within her power. All of which fantasy would have been denied by the average newspaper reader, who cannot imagine such things taking place in what he calls euphoniously a Christian land. But this happened, notwithstanding.

Having dismissed Battersea, the negress turned to seek Isabella. She was so devoted to her nursling that she could hardly bear to be away from her; and since her infancy Isabella had scarcely been absent an hour from her strange attendant. The girl had gone into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Dallas was still sleeping; and there, relieved for the moment from the prying eyes of the negress, she took a letter out of her pocket. It was from Maurice, stating that he was coming to see her that afternoon at 3 o'clock, as he had something particular to say.

It was now close upon the hour, and Isabella was wondering how she could get rid of Dido, whom she did not wish to be present at the coming interview. The inborn jealousy of the woman, and her advocacy of Dr. Etwald's suit, made her an unpleasant third at such a meeting; moveover, Maurice instinctively disliked this sullen creature, and was never quite easy in her presence.

Finally, Isabella decided to slip round back of the house and meet Maurice at the gate. She put on a straw hat, and ran lightly away to see her lover. She passed out by a side door, danced like a fairy across the intervening space of lawn, and slipped laughingly into the narrow path which wound through the wood to the avenue near the gates.

Just as she emerged into the open, she heard a sharp click, and saw Maurice approaching. He was dressed in his flannels, and looked particularly handsome, she thought; the more so when she beheld his face lighting up at her unexpected appearance. The magnetism of love drew them irresistibly together.

"My own dear love," he murmured, softly. "How good of you to meet me!"

"I came down here to escape Dido," explained Isabella, slipping her hand within his. "You don't like her to be with us!"

"I don't like her in any case, my darling. She is like a black shadow of evil always at your heels. I must get your mother to forbid her trespassing upon our meetings."

"My dear Maurice, how can you possibly do that, when you refuse to tell my mother of our engagement?"

"Oh, I had a reason for keeping our engagement secret, but it is no longer necessary, and I am going straight to ask your mother to give me this dear hand in marriage. If she consents, we will soon get rid of Dido."

"But my mother may not consent," said Isabella, a trifle nervously.

"Why not? I have a profession and a small property. We love one another dearly, so I don't see what ground she has for refusal. I wish to tell your mother of our engagement; for I must rescue you from the influence of that dark Jezebel. She is dangerous."

"I know she is; but she hates you!"

"I don't care for her hate," replied Maurice, carelessly. "It is a poor thing, and cannot possibly harm me. Surely Mrs. Dallas will not let herself be guided in so important a business by the will and feelings of that black wench."

(To be continued.)

The Nature of It.

"A hotel keeper has an occupation which inclines him to amiability."

"How so?"

"Because to all inquiries about rooms, no matter how put, he likes to give a suite answer." — Baltimore American.

American capitalists are trying to form a merger of every acre of timber-producing land in Novia Scotia, investing $5,000,000.

THE AMERICAN WORKMAN.

His Condition as Compared to English and German Laborers.

J. B. Street, statistican for the British department of commerce and labor, who has been investigating comparative conditions of working people throughout Germany, the United States and England, says that the American workingman lives higher, works lesser hours and has a better time all around than either his German or English brethren.

"I find that the skilled man in the United States has a better and more varied diet than in any other country I have investigated," he said. "The English workman has as much meat, but he hasn't the variety of vegetables and sweets. His meals lack imagination."

The German mechanic Mr. Street finds to be in the worst condition of all. His trades unions are the most complete and best organized of the three countries considered, and yet he works more hours, gets less pay, eats less, and is worse housed than any of them. They get 25 per cent less pay than Englishmen," said Mr. Street. "They work 10 hours a day as against nine in England and eight in the United States, and their cost of living is 18 per cent higher."

The poor districts of American cities failed to horrify Mr. Street. He said they had worse at home.

"I've been through your poorest section," said he. "It is much the same as one finds in all the large cities of the world. The difference here is that there is an appearance of energy and hopefulness in most of your poor people. The reason is, I take it, that they had enough enterprise and thrift to start with to get themselves over here with the intention of bettering their condition."

FASHION HINTS

Foulards are coming in such lovely shades and patterns, that it's no wonder they are to be more than ever popular this season. One of wistaria, figured over with irregular dashes of white, is shown here. It is designed for general wear. A little hand embroidery on the vest adds to its attractiveness. The "kimona" or "peasant" type of shoulder-and-sleeve-in-one, is again fashionable.

Fish Versus Beef.

When the Beef Trust puts the price of steak up to $1 a pound we can go to eating more fish. Grazing land diminishes every year, so it is only a question of time until beef gets up somewhere near canvas back duck in price. Old ocean will always be in business at the old stand and with the same undiminished confines, unless we run afoul of a wildcat comet or planet and are wiped out; then it won't make any difference. So long as fish is a trifling incident of our diet its price will somewhat follow up the price of beef, for lack of general supply. When it becomes a chief article of food enormous fish industries will be established everywhere, and the supply will keep up with the steady demand. There can't be a monopoly of the ocean; there can't even be such a monopoly in the handling of fish as in the slaughtering, packing and cold storaging of beef.

A Bright Lawyer.

An eminent lawyer was once cross-examining a very clever woman, mother of the plaintiff in a breach of promise action, and was completely worsted in the encounter of wits. At the close, however, he turned to the jury and exclaimed: "You saw, gentlemen, that even I was but a child in her hands. What must my client have been?" By this adroit stroke of advocacy he turned his failure into a success.

Hood's Sarsaparilla

Leads all other medicines in the cure of all spring ailments, humors, loss of appetite, that tired feeling, paleness and nervousness. Take it.

Get it today in usual liquid form or tablets called Sarsatabs. 100 Doses $1.

Didn't Mean That.

"These," said the lecturer, indicating them with his pointer, "are the movable bath-houses. Thousands of people congregate here during the summer season. Over here on the left is the hotel at which I stopped, and an exceeding homelike place it is. I shall give you a nearer view of it presently. Although I was there a week or two, and would gladly have remained longer if I could have spared the time, I did not take any baths, for the reason——"

(Loud and prolonged laughter.)

"I meant, ladies and gentlemen," he resumed, after the merriment had subsided, "that I didn't take any baths down at the beach. This audience is altogether too smart."—Chicago Tribune.

His Little Scheme.

"Great Caesar, old man!" exclaimed the gunner as he opened the door and found his friend's house brilliantly illuminated at noonday. "What does this mean? Why are all these blankets over the windows, and why is the gas burning in the daytime?"

"Sh!" whispered Guyer, cautiously "It's a scheme of mine."

"What kind of a scheme?"

"Why, my wife is on a visit to her mother, and I tell her I remain home every night and read. I've got to get rid of some gas somehow so it will go on the bill at the end of the month.'—Atlanta Constitution.

With Some Exceptions.

"Grandma, do you think birds go to heaven?"

"I see no reason to doubt it, dear. I sometimes think, though, that parrots go to the other place."

Seeking Knowledge.

It had been raining all day and finally little Lola asked: "Mamma, when God gets all the juice squeezed out of a cloud what does he do with it?"—Chicago News.

The longest telegraph line in the world, above ground, and without a break, has been completed in Australia. Its total length is something over 6,000 miles.

TO GET
IT'S BENEFICIAL EFFECTS
ALWAYS BUY THE GENUINE

SYRUP OF FIGS AND ELIXIR OF SENNA

MANUFACTURED BY THE
CALIFORNIA FIG SYRUP CO

SOLD BY ALL LEADING DRUGGISTS
ONE SIZE ONLY. 50¢ A BOTTLE

REDUCE
YOUR COST OF
LIVING

Take Advantage of Our Cut Prices on Everything You Buy and SAVE 25% to 50%

Our Catalog No. 60 is crammed full of direct-to-consumer prices. Write for it. Note these

Specials for April

SEEDS THAT ARE PURE (Per lb.)
Timothy . . 5 1-2c — Choice Alsike . . 16c
Mam. Red Clover 18c — Turkestan alfalfa 11c
Choice " " 15c — Dry Land " 9c
Prime " " 11c — Choice " 12c
White Clover, choice 21c

BLACK FIGS
10 lbs. for 60c. 25 lbs. for $1.40. 50 lbs for $2.70

OYSTERS
Small cans, 4 oz. (dry meat) . $1.00 per doz.
Large cans, 8 oz. (dry meat) . 1.75 per doz.

EXTRA FINE OYSTERS
5 oz. cans, $1.50 doz. 10 oz. cans, $2 doz.

VERMICELLI OR SPAGHETTI
6 lb. box for 50c. 10 lb. box for 80c.

HONEY IN COMB—Pure Oregon Honey
24 lb. case, $3.60. 1 lb., 15c.

ITALIAN PRUNES
10 lbs. for 60c. 25 lbs. for $1.40. 50 lbs. for $2.70

CRESCENT BRAND SARDINES
Formerly called Mackerel
1 lb. can, 10c. 1 doz. cans, $1.00 per doz.

MAPLE SYRUP—Eastern Star Brand
Quart, 30c. Half gallon, 60c. Gallon, $1.10

PRESERVED FIGS—Fine and Healthy
20c per can $2.25 per doz.

Begin to save now—write today for Catalog No. 60—it's Free

THERE IS ONLY ONE
Jones Cash Store
Front and Oak Sts. PORTLAND, ORE.