

The Wand of Sleep OR The Devil-Stick

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

CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

"I shall explain, and it is lucky for you that Mrs. Dallas gave you permission to ask me for an explanation, otherwise I should have been forced, from a sense of honor, to hold my tongue. Mrs. Dallas fears that if Isabella marries anyone but David, her death will take place."

"Whose death? Isabella's or Mrs. Dallas'?"

"The latter. You must know, Maurice," continued the Major, "that Mrs. Dallas, though well born and well married, is an extremely ignorant woman. She was brought up mostly by Dido's grandmother, who was the most accursed old witch in Barbadoes. This old hag instilled into the mind of Mrs. Dallas all kinds of superstitions, in which she really believes. When the grandmother died Dido became nurse to Isabella, and private witch of the Dallas household. She is clever—wonderfully clever—and she has continued her grandmother's system of terrorizing both Mrs. Dallas and Isabella."

"Yes; I can see that, Uncle Jen, and it is for that reason I want to marry Isabella, and take her away before her mind is degraded further by that old fury."

"Well, the old fury sees what you want, my dear lad, and so she is determined that Isabella shall marry David and not you. To accomplish her aims she went through some hocuspocus and discovered that if Isabella marries you, Mrs. Dallas will die."

"And does Mrs. Dallas believe that rubbish?" asked Maurice, incredulously.

"Implicitly! I tell you she is ignorant and superstitious. Come what may, she is convinced that your marriage with Isabella means her own death; so you may rest assured, Maurice, that she will never, never accept you as her son-in-law."

"I understand," said Maurice, with a shrug. "It seems hopeless to contest this decision of a diseased and feeble mind. I can understand Dido stopping my marriage, as she wants to retain her sinful influence over Isabella; I can understand Mrs. Dallas, weak and silly, being dominated by this negro Jeezabel; but I can't understand why David is chosen as the future son-in-law. If he marries Isabella, he will no more put up with Dido than I should have done."

"Of course not; I can't explain the reason," replied Jen, shaking his head. "But you know all that I know, Maurice; and you can see that it is hopeless for you to attempt to marry the girl."

"I'm not so sure of that," retorted Maurice. "I love Isabella, and come what may, I intend to make her my wife."

"But what about me?" said a voice outside the open window; "what about me?" And a moment later David, in dusty riding-dress, stepped into the room. He looked disturbed and angry, and his strongly marked face bore traces of agitation and haunting thoughts.

Disturbed by the unexpected appearance of David, and seeing from his expression that he was bent upon making himself disagreeable, Jen hastily interposed to prevent a quarrel between the two young men.

"What, David? back again!" he said, ignoring the question asked by Sarby. "So you did not stay to dinner?"

"No," replied David, shortly. "I didn't! He flung himself into a chair and resumed in a significant tone, "Mrs. Brance didn't ask me, and if she had, I couldn't have accepted in this dress. Besides, I am not the man whom she delights to honor. Now, if Maurice had been here, Meg—"

"Don't couple my name with Meg's," interrupted Maurice, sharply. "You know quite well—"

"It's no use your assuming that innocent air, Maurice. You have not treated Meg well!"

"I have! How dare you say such a thing? Meg knew that I was in love with Isabella."

"Oh!" said David, with a sneer. "I overheard you arrange to marry her. But you'll never do that while I am alive, or Mrs. Dallas either. I told Mrs. Dallas that I loved Isabella, and she said that nothing would give her greater pleasure than to see us married."

"You shan't marry her!" cried Maurice, angrily rising.

"I shall!" said David, and rose also.

"Boys! Boys!" said Jen, annoyed at this quarrel, "do not be so positive. If you are both in love with the same woman, let the woman decide."

"She has decided!" said Aylmer, sharply. "She loves me."

"I don't care two straws about that," said David, coldly. "I have not spoken to her yet; but all the same I intend her to become my wife. I give you fair warning, Maurice, that you are not to poach upon my preserves."

"Your preserves. Confound your insolence!"

"Upon my word, David," said Jen, seeing that Maurice could hardly speak for rage, "you go too far. The girl loves Maurice and not you; and it would be much more honorable for you not to press your suit."

"I don't care two pins for honor, Major! I love Isabella, and I intend to marry her. But become the wife of Maurice she never shall; I'd rather see her married to Etwald."

"The third Richmond who is in the field," scoffed Maurice. "Well, he has as good a chance as you. Dido supports his pretensions; Mrs. Dallas is your champion. As for me, I have the love of Isabella, so I'm afraid of nothing."

"Are you not?" said Sarby, with a peculiar smile. "Remember what Etwald said about your life in death!"

"I don't believe in that rubbish, David, and I should be very sorry to think you did."

"As to that, I don't care about discussing the point," was the reply. "Our own beliefs are our own business. But I may say that Etwald is a dangerous man, both to you and to me."

"I daresay," said Maurice, coolly. "The more so, as I believe he has stolen the devil-stick."

"What!" David made a step forward and stared at the wall. His face was quite pale, and his hands trembled in spite of his efforts to control himself. "The devil-stick gone!" he said, turning on his heel. "Both you and I must be careful, Maurice."

CHAPTER VIII.

So far the reader may wonder at the constituent elements of this story. African witchcraft, mysterious strangers, and barbaric women seem to be out of place when set in the sober framework of a provincial town. But romance is not dependent upon landscape or on surroundings for its occurrence; it is to be found everywhere, and very often in the most unlikely places. Here, for instance, by some trick of fate, certain people had come together, certain passions had been aroused, and now that the drama had been set in motion, it seemed likely that it would play itself out to a tragical conclusion.

For a whole week after the events already related, nothing new took place likely to alter the situation. Maurice and David remained coldly polite, and very watchful of one another; neither mentioned the name of Isabella, nor did the one or the other see the girl. Mrs. Dallas took care of that. Acting, no doubt, under the advice of Dido, she kept Isabella within doors and refused to allow her to communicate with Maurice. But, on the other hand, she did not force her to see David; and Isabella was thankful for the consideration.

But there was one visitor to the Wigwam whom Isabella would gladly have avoided—no less an individual than Dr. Etwald. After the violent scene with Maurice, the widow so overtaken her attention that she became ill, and the doctor was sent for. His mere presence appeared to soothe Mrs. Dallas, and he came frequently. When she could, Isabella absented herself; but this she was not able to do on all occasions, and so she had to endure his complimentary speeches and the mesmerizing quality of his gaze. This last, especially, was a trial to one of her sensitive organization, and one day she felt so uncomfortable that she remonstrated with Etwald.

"You make me afraid, doctor," she said, impetuously. "Your gaze is disagreeable to me."

"My dear young lady," replied the man, blankly. "I must look at you when I address you."

"Then don't address me!"

"Isabella, do not be rude!" cried Mrs. Dallas, who had overheard this passage of arms; whereupon the girl, with a defiant glance at her tormentor, left the room.

"I'm sure I don't know what I'll do with Isabella," sighed Mrs. Dallas; "she is getting so disobedient."

"Perhaps I can assist you."

Mrs. Dallas looked uneasily at her medical attendant.

"No," she said, quietly. "I may persuade her into doing what I want."

"Which is to marry Mr. David Sarby," said Etwald, coolly. "In that case I can only hope that the young lady will continue obstinate, as I wish to marry her myself."

"I know—I know! But I don't want her to marry you, doctor. Mr. Sarby is the man for my daughter. He is good-looking and clever and—"

"And poor!" finished Etwald.

"Well, yes," assented Mrs. Dallas. "There is that objection. But it is not much of an obstacle, as Isabella has money. The young couple can live on three thousand a year."

Dr. Etwald went home with this sum running in his head, and more than ever he resolved to marry Isabella. He was in love with her, and would have taken her without a penny; all the same, if she was an heiress in a small way, it was all the better. The doctor was clever but poor, and with an income like that he could move to the metropolis and do great things. There were many schemes in Etwald's head, and certain of these he determined to put into execution at once, in order to secure Isabella for his wife.

Some time previously Major Jen had asked Etwald about the devil-stick, but only to be informed that the doctor knew nothing of the missing article.

"I have not set eyes on it since that night you showed it to me," declared Etwald, coolly. "You refused to sell it to me, so of course I gave up all idea of possessing it. All the same," finished he, politely, "I am sorry that it is lost."

"Lost! Stolen, you mean," growled Jen, tartly. "That negress—"

"Dido! Well, I admit that such a barbaric treasure would tempt her, the more particularly as she knows about such wizard instruments. Ask her if she took it."

"I have done so, and I have asked Mrs. Dallas also," replied Jen; "but it seems that Dido wasn't out of the house that night. She was ill—and, oddly enough, I hear, Etwald, that it was you who made her ill."

"Really!" said Etwald, quite self-possessed. "I suppose Mr. Aylmer told you so. I thought as much," he continued, as Jen nodded. "He saw me calming Dido's agitation when I arrived to ask Mrs. Dallas for her daughter's hand. This negress is hysterical, and on that day she happened to be so. I quieted her, yet Mr. Aylmer accuses me of having caused her illness."

"I don't know anything about it, Etwald; but truth to tell, Maurice does not like you!"

"Because I prophesied ill concerning him!"

"Oh, that was rubbish," said Jen, contemptuously. "You didn't mean it. Didn't I wait and see?"

After which Etwald bowed his visitor politely to the door of the gloomy old house which he occupied in Deanminster, and Jen returned home, quite baffled as to what could have become of the devil-stick. Maurice still held to his idea that Dido had taken the wand, but Jen's inquiries proved that the negress had not been out of the house on the night in question.

"Then it must have been Battersea!" said Maurice, decidedly. "He is a friend of Dido's and a pensioner of Isabella's. I'll find out if he stole the stick for the negress or for Dr. Etwald."

This was easier said than done, as Mrs. Dallas would not allow Maurice to set foot in the house. Still Maurice hoped to learn the truth from the tramp himself, a hope that proved futile also. Battersea had gone on one of his begging excursions, and for quite a week was not seen in the neighborhood of "Ashantee." Then he suddenly made his appearance at the house, and asked to see Maurice. On being led into the hall, Aylmer came out to speak with him, and after a few words he took the old man into the library. Jen, who was rather curious to know what Maurice might learn from the disreputable old scamp, waited patiently for the termination of the interview. As Aylmer did not reappear, he sought the library, and found the young man alone.

"Where is Battersea?" asked Jen, glancing round. "What did he wish to see you about?"

"He heard that I accused him of taking the devil-stick," explained Maurice, "and came here to exculpate himself. He is quite innocent. He didn't take the devil-stick."

"Then who did?"

"I'll tell you that to-morrow."

"Why not to-night?" asked Jen, sharply.

"Because I have a suspicion, which I cannot prove at present. Battersea gave me a hint upon which I am determined to work. To-night I may learn the truth."

"From whom?"

"Don't ask me, Uncle Jen; I can't answer you yet."

"Well, just as you please, but you are as mysterious as David."

"Why, what about David?"

"Only this, that he has gone up to town without bidding me good-by, save in this short note. I can't understand such conduct."

"Nor I," said Maurice, stretching out his hand. "Please let me read the note, Uncle Jen. I wish to see precisely how it is worded."

The note which the Major handed over was curt to the verge of rudeness. It merely stated that the writer had gone away for a couple of days on business, and would be back as soon as possible. Maurice did not wonder that Jen was annoyed at receiving such a missive from one whom he regarded in the light of a son.

"The fact is David has not been quite himself since this trouble about Isabella," he said, gravely, "and he thinks it best to go away for a time. You know how he tortures himself over trifles."

"This love business of you two young men is getting to be anything but a trifle," said Jen, testily. "What between the lot of you and Etwald, there seems to be nothing but trouble. I wish you'd marry the girl, Maurice, and have done with it."

(To be continued.)

Rare Birds Indeed.

"Woman," observed the epigrammatic boarder, "is a puzzle without an answer."

"Huh!" snorted old Grumpley. "I never saw a woman without one yet."

—Boston Transcript.

Best Seal for Envelope.

When you seal an envelope with the white of an egg it is impossible to steam it open.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS OF OUR HOME STATE

CRATER LAKE ROAD ASSURED.

Uncle Sam Approves Plans, and May Give Substantial Aid.

The Crater Lake road will be built. Government approval of the project has been secured by Will G. Steel, a recognition appropriation of \$5,000 made, Engineer B. F. Heidle sent by the government to Medford, and the promise given that 50 per cent of the work will have been accomplished by July 1 of this year. The Medford Commercial club's subscription of \$25,000 for the construction of the road is well under way and there will be no further delays. Mr. Steel has just returned from Washington. He represented the Medford Commercial club and intervened on its behalf with Secretary of the Interior Ballinger and other government officials.

"The government's approval of the Crater Lake road in effect nullifies the decree handed down by the Supreme court last month," said Mr. Steel.

"I found about the halls of the capitol a feeling of resentment that even so august a body as the Supreme court should deem the Crater Lake national park a local affair, any more than that Yellowstone national park should be so considered."

"Secretary Ballinger asked me how much money we would be wanting from the government for the Crater Lake project. I told him we would need eventually about \$2,000,000, including making of trails and various other improvements. He assured me of his belief that we would get that much, at the same time stating frankly that had it not been for the indomitable energy and persistence of the Medford commercial interests nothing further would ever have been done, following the Supreme court's unfavorable decree."

"I received an official communication stating that the United States fish commission would place 50,000 rainbow fry in the Crater lake, to add to the stock of fish already there."

Crater lake road, completed, will be 87 miles long. Engineer Heidle will give his time not only to making a survey of all roads now planned, but in making a survey of all roads and trails to be constructed at any future time.

ELECTRIC LINES FOR LANE.

Will Connect Eugene, Springfield, Siuslaw and McKinzie Valley.

Eugene—Chief Engineer Fornert, of the Lane County Asset company, of this city, which announces that it will build a system of electric railways in this vicinity, including a line between Eugene and Springfield, one to the Siuslaw and perhaps to Coos bay, also up the McKenzie valley, has begun the work of surveying for the line between the two cities. The line will extend east on West Fifteenth street through the suburb of Fairmount to the city limits, then turn north to the river, which will be spanned with a first class double track steel bridge. The road will then make a circle to the north and east and enter Springfield by way of its northern limits, passing through a thickly settled farming community.

F. B. Kidder and John Baird, railroad men of experience, who resigned positions with the Minneapolis Rapid Transit company, of Minneapolis, Minn., to promote this system of roads, are directing operations and they claim to have the best of backing. Engineer Fornert also resigned as chief engineer of the same company to accept this position. They promise that work on the bridge will begin this summer and that the line will be in operation between the two cities early next year.

Masons Dedicate Temple April 20.

Roseburg—The Masonic temple will be dedicated with appropriate ceremonies April 20. The dedication ceremonies will be conducted by the officers of the grand lodge of Oregon. Owing to the large membership of the order in the state, it has made it necessary for the local lodge to limit invitations. Between 500 and 600 Masons and their wives and members of the various Eastern Star lodges are expected to be present. Invitations will be extended to every lodge of Masons and Eastern Star in the county, as well as to the lodges of Grants Pass and Eugene.

Gravel Famine Ends at Albany.

Albany—Councilman Miller has secured permission from United States Chief Engineer McAdoo to take gravel from the bed of the river at Albany. The government had previously forbidden the taking of gravel from the river bed, which made it extremely difficult for local contractors to obtain concrete building material.

Big Vessel Will Be Built.

Marshfield—The Simpson Lumber company, of North Bend, has announced that it will build a big new vessel for carrying lumber from the Simpson mills. She will be one of the best lumber carriers in the coastwise trade, and will have a capacity of 1,000,000 feet.

PRICE IS \$2,200 AN ACRE.

Hood River Apple Land Sets New High Record Sale.

Hood River—The prediction that Oregon orchard land would sell for better than \$2,000 an acre this year came sooner than was expected here, when Rede S. Delano, an Eastern man, paid \$14,400 for six and one-half acres of 8-year-old trees.

The price per acre is a little better than \$2,200, and reaches a mark \$300 higher than the best previous price, which was obtained a week or two ago, when ten acres here were sold for \$19,000. The orchard was purchased through B. E. Duncan & Co. from Dr. Stanton Allen, a retired physician, who came here several years ago and went into apple growing. The land is situated on the east side of the valley.

In addition to buying the acreage of bearing orchard, Mr. Delano bought seven acres of brush land adjoining, for which he paid \$528 an acre. This is also the record price for unimproved land at Hood River. His total investment for the 13 acres is \$18,000. Dr. Allen still has 15 acres of bearing orchard which he will retain.

BIG DITCH CHANGES HANDS.

Deal Means Irrigation of Thousands of Acres of Rich Land.

Baker City—One of the most important irrigation deals in Eastern Oregon was closed when the Eastern Oregon Land company, which is controlled by Balfour, Guthrie & Co., completed the deal for the purchase of a one-half interest in the Eldorado ditch. The property was bought through John Thomsen, formerly owner of the Red Boy mine, who held an option from the First National bank of Carroll, Iowa, owner of the property. The price paid was \$12,500.

State Senator Hart, who conducted the negotiations for the land company, announced that they would use the water in irrigating several thousand acres of land in Malheur county, of which they have recently secured control. It is also probable that some water may be sold to ranchers along the line, as they have been depending on the water for some time. The wheat yield of Eastern Oregon will be increased several thousand bushels by this deal.

R. R. Surveyors Toward Coast.

Eugene—People living near the summit of the Cascade mountains report that a party of Hill railroad surveyors have crossed the summit of the mountains by way of the McKenzie pass, working toward Eugene. It is believed that they are making the preliminary survey for a railroad to be built by Hill, connecting the Willamette valley and Coos bay with the Oregon Trunk via Eugene.

PORTLAND MARKETS.

Wheat—Track prices: Bluestem, \$1 @1.02; club, 95c; red Russian, 94c; valley, \$1; 40-fold, 97c @98c.

Barley—Feed and brewing, \$24.50 @27 ton.

Corn—Whole, \$34; cracked, \$35 ton. Hay—Track prices: Timothy, Willamette valley, \$20 @21 per ton; Eastern Oregon, \$23 @24; alfalfa, \$16.50 @17.50; grain hay, \$17 @18.

Oats—No. 1 white, \$27.50 @29 ton.

Fresh Fruits—Apples, \$1 @2.50 per box; cranberries, \$8 @9 per barrel.

Potatoes—Carload buying prices: Oregon, 50 @60c per hundred; sweet potatoes, 3 @3c per pound.

Vegetables—Asparagus, 3 @9c per pound; cabbage, 1 @2c; rhubarb, 4 @5c; spinach, \$1 per box; sprouts, 9c per pound; turnips, \$1 per sack; rutabagas, \$1 @1.25; carrots, 85c @1; beets, \$1 @1.25; parsnips, 50 @75c.

Onions—Oregon, \$1.75 per hundred. Butter—City creamery, extras, 33c; fancy outside creamery, 32 @33c per pound; store, 20c. Butter fat prices average 14c per pound under regular butter prices.

Eggs—Fresh Oregon ranch, 23 @24c per dozen.

Pork—Fancy, 13 @13c per pound. Veal—Fancy, 11 @12c per pound. Lamb—Fancy, 15 @18c per pound.

Poultry—Hens, 19 @20c per pound; broilers, 27 @28c; ducks, 22 @23c; geese, 12c; turkeys, live, 22 @25c; dressed, 25 @29c; squabs, \$5 per dozen.

Cattle—Best steers, \$6.25 @6.75; fair to good, \$5.55 @6; strictly good cows, \$5.50 @6; fair to good cows, \$5 @5.25; light calves, \$6 @7; heavy calves, \$4 @5; bulls, \$4 @5.25; stags, \$4.50 @5.50.

Sheep—Best wethers, \$8 @8.90; fair to good, \$7 @7.50; good lambs, \$8 @12. Hogs—Top, \$11.10 @11.15; fair to good, \$10 @11.

Hops—1909 crop, 17 @19c per pound; olds, nominal; 1910 contracts, 15c.

Wool—Eastern Oregon, 16 @20c per pound; valley, 20 @22c; mohair, choice, 25 @26c.

Hides—Dry hides, 16 @17c per pound; dry kip, 16 @17c; dry calfskin, 18 @20c; salted hides, 7 @8c; salted calfskin, 14c; green, 1c less.