

The Wand of Sleep OR The Devil-Stick

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

CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

"Perhaps I may settle affairs sooner than you think," said Aymer. "Uncle Jen, I won't be back to dinner to-night, as I have to go into Deanminster."

"What about?"

"Business connected with the devil-stick and Isabella."

"H'm! You are pleased to be mysterious. Why not tell me your business?"

"Because I may fail," said Maurice. "Here, Uncle Jen, don't be cross; I'll tell you about it to-morrow, and then you will see and approve of my silence to-night."

"Well," said Jen, with a shrug, "you are old enough to guide your own actions. But I must say that I don't like to be shut out of the confidence of my two boys in this way."

"You'll know everything to-morrow."

"About David also?"

"Perhaps I can even promise you that!" said Maurice, with a smile.

"What!" cried Jen, "do you know why David has gone to town?"

"Not for certain; but I can guess. Now, Uncle Jen, I shan't answer another question just now, as I must go into Deanminster."

It was useless to ask further questions, as Jen saw that the young man was getting irritated; so, in no very pleasant temper himself, the Major went up to his dressing-room. He was of a peace-loving and easygoing nature, fond of quietness, so it annoyed him not a little that all this disturbance should take place on account of a woman.

David and Maurice both being absent, Major Jen was compelled to dine alone. This he disliked doing, so hurrying over his dinner with all speed, he betook himself to the smoking room with a book. Here he chose a comfortable chair near the open window, and attempted to read; but the somnolent influence of the evening was upon him, and before long the good Major was sound asleep.

Outside a warm wind was blowing, and the air was filled with the perfume of flowers. In the darkly blue sky hardly a cloud could be seen, and the moon, just showing her orb above the tree tops, flooded the still loveliness of the night with wave after wave of cold light. All was full of charm, spellbound as it were by the magic of moonlight, when suddenly a long, wild cry struck shudderingly through the silence.

Accustomed as an old campaigner to sleep lightly, Major Jen was on his feet in an instant, and again heard that terrible shriek. It seemed to come from the direction of the high-road, and thinking that some evil was being done, Jen, without loss of time, raced across the lawn and into the avenue. In a few minutes he arrived at the gate, and stepped out into the white and dusty road; a black mass was lying some distance down, and towards this ran Jen with an undefinable sense of evil clutching at his heartstrings. The black mass proved to be the body of a man, cold and still. Jen turned the corpse over and recoiled. The dead man was Maurice Aymer.

CHAPTER IX.

While the Major, hardly able to credit his own eyes, was staring at the dead body of his dear lad, Jaggard, attracted also by the strange cry, came running up.

"What is it, sir?" he asked, saluting Jen even in that moment of anxiety. "I heard an awful cry, sir, and came after you."

Jen pointed to the corpse, but said nothing. Jaggard, ignorant of the truth, bent down to place a hand on the dead man's heart. Then he saw and recognized the face.

"Mr. Maurice! What does it mean?" he cried, aghast with sudden horror. "It means murder, Jaggard!" replied Jen, in a hollow voice which he hardly recognized as his own. "Mr. Maurice went to Deanminster before dinner, and now—" the Major pointed again to the remains.

"Murder!" echoed Jaggard, his ruddy face going pale. "And who, sir—"

"I don't know—I can't say!" interrupted his master, impatiently. "Go and get the men to bring down a stretcher for the body, and send the groom for Dr. Etwald."

"Ain't it too late, sir?"

"Do as I tell you," said Jen, so fiercely that Jaggard did not dare to disobey, but ran off, leaving the Major alone with his dead.

The road which ran past "Ashantee" towards the Wigwam was lonely even in the daytime, and at this hour of the night it was quite deserted. Not a person was in sight, although the Major could see up and down the road for a considerable distance, owing to the bright moonlight. He raised Maurice in his arms, and placed the body on the soft grass by the wayside.

In the bright moonlight he carefully

examined the body, but could find no trace of any wound until he came to the right hand. Here, in the palm, he saw a ragged rent clothed with blood, but it was a mere scratch not likely to have caused death, unless poison were— Here Major Jen rose to his feet with a new and terrible idea in his brain.

"The devil-stick!" he said, aloud.

Again he bent down and examined the face and hands. Both were swollen and discolored; he tore open the shirt at the neck, and saw that the young man's breast was all distended and bloated. Undoubtedly the cause of death was blood-poisoning, and the devil-stick had been the instrument used to effect the deed. But here the problem proposed itself: Who had killed Maurice? The person who had stolen the devil-stick! Who had stolen the devil-stick? The person who—Major Jen came to an abrupt pause. He could think, for a moment, of no answer to that question; but it is only fair to say that, dazed by the terrible occurrence of his dear lad's death, Jen had not his wits about him.

While he was still considering the affair in a confused manner Jaggard reappeared with the men from "Ashantee" carrying a stretcher. While they placed the body of Maurice thereon, the groom bound for Deanminster passed them driving the dog-cart, and Major Jen stopped the man to tell him that at all risks he was to bring back Dr. Etwald with him. Jaggard wondered at this, for Maurice—poor lad—was beyond all earthly aid—but Jen was thinking of a certain person who might have committed the crime, and he wished for the aid of Dr. Etwald to capture that person. In the meantime the necessities of the case called for the immediate removal of the body to "Ashantee." It was a melancholy procession which bore the body up to the house, and behind came Major Jen bowed to the ground with sorrow.

In due time Etwald arrived, for the groom had been fortunate enough to find him at home. On hearing of the affair he expressed the deepest concern, and, putting all other business on one side, he came back to "Ashantee" in the dog-cart. Before seeing Jen, he went up to Aymer's room and examined the body of the unfortunate young man. Having satisfied himself so far as he was able he came down to the library, where Jen awaited him.

"Well, Etwald," cried the Major, when he saw the tall form of the doctor at the door, "have you seen him?"

"I have seen it," corrected Etwald, with professional calmness, "the poor fellow is dead. Major—dead from blood-poisoning."

"I knew it; I guessed it—the devil-stick!"

"That may be," rejoined Etwald, taking a seat, "but I cannot be sure. You see neither you nor I know anything of the poison which was in the handle of that African instrument. It—"

"But what are you talking of?" broke in Jen, impetuously. "You say that my poor boy died from blood-poisoning. How else could he have come by that, save through being touched or struck with the devil-stick? No one in the neighborhood was likely to possess any weapon likely to corrupt the blood. If Maurice had been stabbed, or shot, I could understand the crime; but as it is, the person who stole the devil-stick must have killed him."

"And who stole the devil-stick?" asked Etwald, coolly. "If I forget not, Major, you asked me the other day if I did. I was no friend of the dead man; I did not like him, nor he me. We both loved the same woman—we were rivals. What then so easy as for you to say—for a jury to believe—that I had stolen the devil-stick and killed Mr. Aymer, so as to get him out of the way?"

"I never thought of such a thing," protested Jen. "I do not suspect you."

"Then whom do you suspect?" asked Etwald, fixing his dark eyes on the Major.

"Dido—the negress of Mrs. Dallas!"

"That is ridiculous. The commission of a crime presupposes a motive. Now what motive had Dido to kill your friend?"

"She hated Maurice, and she did not want him to marry Miss Dallas."

"Neither did I, if I remember rightly," said Etwald, dryly. By the way, I suppose you will have a detective to sift the affair to the bottom? Mr. Sarby is in the city. Why not wire him?"

"If I thought that— But," added Jen, breaking off, "how do you know where David is?"

"Oh!" rejoined Etwald, quietly, "Mr. Aymer told me so tonight."

"No-night!" echoed Jen, starting up. "You saw Maurice to-night?"

"Certainly. About at hour and a half before he was murdered. At my house," replied the doctor, with great deliberation.

"So it was you whom he went to see on business to-night?"

"I don't know if you call it business," I asked Mr. Aymer to call and see me, and sent the message by that tramp named Battersea."

"I remember his coming. Go on, please."

"Mr. Aymer called, as I said," continued Etwald. "And then I told him that Miss Dallas was ill from being prevented by her mother from seeing him. That I was sorry for the poor young lady, and that I gave up my position as a rival. In fact," added the doctor, "I advised Mr. Aymer to see Miss Dallas and marry her as soon as he could."

"But why did you wish to act in this generous manner?"

"For the very simple reason that Miss Dallas is of a delicate and nervous constitution," said Etwald. "If she does not marry Mr. Aymer, with whom she is in love, she may die. I quite forget that I should speak in the past tense now, Major. Mr. Aymer is dead, and Miss Dallas may pine away of grief. It was to prevent such a catastrophe from occurring that I surrendered my claim to her hand."

"Very generous of you indeed," said Jen, ironically; "but I do not see why you should behave in such a noble manner when you were so much in love with the girl."

"It is for that reason that I changed my mind. As you know, I have been attending upon Mrs. Dallas this week and I saw plainly enough that my case was hopeless; that the girl was dying to marry Aymer. Besides," added Etwald, carelessly, "the mother was not on my side."

"She wants Isabella to marry David."

"So I hear; and he is in town, as Mr. Aymer told me to-night. But what are you going to do about the matter, Major?"

"Give notice to the police."

"There will be a post-mortem, of course," said Etwald, carelessly.

"No, no! I hope not," cried Jen, horrified at the idea.

"But there must be," insisted Etwald, cruelly. "Aymer died of poison, and it must be proved that such was the case. Then we may learn if he perished from the poison of the devil-stick. Afterwards you must get a detective to search for the person who stole it from your smoking-room. Once he or she is found, and the assassin of your poor friend will be in custody."

"He or she," repeated Jen, slowly. "Dido I mentioned; but 'he' who is 'he'?"

"Ah, that is what we wish to find out," said the doctor, gravely. "But how do I know? Battersea may be the thief."

"The thief and the murderer!"

"Well, no, Major. On second thoughts I do not think it is wise to couple those two words as yet. The thief may not be the murderer—but what can I say?" broke off Etwald, suddenly. "As yet we know nothing. It is late now, Major, and I must get back. Shall I give information to the police?"

"If you will be so kind," said the Major, listlessly, and he let the doctor go away without another word.

All through that long night he knelt beside the bed upon which lay the corpse of the man whom he had loved as a son. The Major was broken-hearted by the sorrow which had come upon him, and when he issued from the chamber of death he looked years older than when he entered it.

Fortunately he was not forced to sorrow alone; towards midday David arrived from town, filled with grief and surprise at the untimely end of Maurice. He found the Major in the library, and grasped him by the hand with genuine sorrow.

"My poor uncle," he said, in a low voice. "I cannot tell you what I feel. Etwald telegraphed to me the first thing in the morning, and I came down by the earliest train there was. Poor Maurice!—and we parted in anger."

"More the pity," sighed Jen, leaning upon the shoulder of Sarby; "but you cherish no anger in your heart now?"

"Heaven forbid, sir!"

David spoke so fervently that Jen saw plainly he meant what he said. The massive face of the young man looked worn and haggard in the searching light of the morning, and whatever enmity the love of the same woman had sown between him and the dead, it was not to be denied that he was suffering cruelly from remorse at their unhappy difference. Jen was sorry, but even in his own grief he could not forget a stab.

"You can marry Isabella now," he said, bitterly.

"No!" said David, faintly, turning his face away. "At least, not yet."

The Major looked at him for a moment or two, then, with a new idea in his head, he took David by the hand and led him into the chamber of death.

"Swear," said he, "that you will not marry Isabella Dallas until you have discovered and punished the murderer of Maurice."

(To be continued.)

A MAN'S TERROR.

"Where are you going, my pretty maid?"

"I'm going a-shopping, sir," she said—

"Won't you come with me?" He shook his head.

And then, base coward, he turned and fled!

—Washington Star.

The Educated Eye.

Student (home at vacation)—Bridget, I've just found another fly in the milk.

Bridget (appreciatively)—Begorra, it's wonderful what college trainin' will do for ye.—Yale Record.

THE FOOTBALL CRAZE.

Epidemic Hysteria to Which Women Are Especially Susceptible.

It is fast growing to be the opinion of thoughtful people outside of academic circles that the mania for sports and contests of physical prowess in our colleges and schools has gone so far that it constitutes an evil of great magnitude, writes Albert Shaw in the Review of Reviews. One of the reasons for the intensity of the devotion to football, for example, as a type of the intercollegiate competition, is to be found in the great size of the undergraduate body and the great prominence of the leading institutions in the social sense. College loyalty has to express itself in some form or other, and ardent devotion to the success of the college team in its contests with other colleges comes to be the easiest form of common expression among a great mass of students who can find no other rallying point.

A natural consequence of the intensity of this feeling is the undue responsibility placed upon the members of the representative teams. The football players are made to feel that upon them chiefly depends the glory or the disgrace of their college. So overwhelming is this feeling that it becomes a veritable obsession. Members of the faculty and of the Board of Trustees and all the old graduates become infected with the craze.

Women are especially susceptible to epidemic hysteria of this sort. Their influence is even worse than that of men in driving the players to that attitude of false heroism which would make any of them willing and glad, not merely to break his nose or his collar bone, but to lay down his life on the football field. They are doing it all for the glory of the college and the admiring applause of the score of thousands of well-dressed girls on the bleachers who, all unaware to themselves, have become tainted with that wretched passion for dangerous gladiatorial combat that takes the fair women of Spain to the bull-fight every Sunday afternoon.

FASHION HINTS



A "smoke-blue" broadcloth suit, has a natty little coat that is a clever modification of the Russian tendency.

The skirt and waist are in one piece. Soutache braid and self-covered buttons form the trimming, while the yoke is of "smoke-blue" dotted net.

SPLINTERS.

All to the good—Sermons.

Fortune hunters are always looking for big game.

A man may be self-possessed and yet owned by his creditors.

It is better to give than to receive until the other party starts to grab.

Bowers—Jones seems to have a hard time making both ends meet. Powers—Yes, his financial end is short.

You have got to have the coin if you want to catch the crowd.

Boyce—You never see Smith cutting a very wide swath. Joyce—You can't do it very well when you are in the straight and narrow path.

Some people are like the parrot which can say only a few words and talks all the time.

First Diner—Are you looking for pearls in that oyster stew? Second Diner—No, I am hunting for oysters.

Victory Bad Enough.

In a corridor of one of the University of Texas buildings there is a large replica of "The Winged Victory."

A waggishly inclined student observed the headless, armless, footless statue, and wrote underneath: "God pity Defeat!" — Lippincott's Magazine.

Hood's Sarsaparilla

Is the most effective medicine for the complete purification of the blood and the complete renovation of the whole system. Take it this spring.

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

To Be Called Early.

"On the morrow call me early, Call me early, mother dear! Said the maid unto her parent As she brushed away a tear.

"Are you going shopping, daughter? Are you going out to dine? Or why should I call you early, Call you early, daughter mine!"

"Let me whisper to you, mother, Let me whisper in your ear; 'Tis to-night I marry Early— Mr. Early, mother dear," —Yonkers Statesman.



Munyon's Paw Paw Pills cost the user into activity by gentle methods. They do not scour, gripe or weaken. They are a tonic to the stomach, liver and nerves; invigorate instead of weaken. They enrich the blood and enable the stomach to get all the nourishment from food that is put into it. These pills contain no calomel; they are soothing, healing and stimulating. For sale by all druggists in 10c and 25c sizes. If you need medical advice, write Munyon's Doctors. They will advise to the best of their ability absolutely free of charge. MUNYON'S, 244 and Jefferson Sts., Philadelphia, Pa. Send 10c for trial package.

Uncle Allen.

"One of these days," predicted Uncle Allen Sparks, "some ambitious Eskimo will make his way, with great hardships, down to the equator, and when he goes back home and tells of his sufferings and the wonderful sights he saw he'll be hooted at as the biggest liar in the arctic circle."—Chicago Tribune.

In the Rough.

A man mixed some strychnine with wheat, And fed it to the English sparrows. Said the cat: "What makes The birds taste so queer?" And there wasn't a dry eye in the igloo.



The first aid to a weak stomach, sluggish liver or constipated bowels should be the Bitters, because it has proven its right to be called "the best." It is for Indigestion, Costiveness and Malaria. Try it.



Will Find Speedy Relief and Absolute Cure by Using the Wejust Treatment (Doses locally, tablets internally.) It is an honest reliable treatment used by physicians everywhere every day in all cases of inflammations, ulcers, discharges, irregularities, nervous symptoms, etc. ONE MONTH TREATMENT \$1.00 At Druggists or Sent Direct Prepaid. WEJUST REMEDY CO. Forest Grove, Or.