

The Wand of Sleep OR The Devil-Stick

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

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

Isabella stepped out into the night. And in a moment or two she was swallowed up in the darkness with her companion. Left alone, the Major closed the window, bolted and barred the shutters, and then hastened back to the death-chamber, where he rang the bell. In a few minutes the footman, half-dressed and half-asleep, made his appearance; then came the policeman, hastily, from the kitchen; finally, as the bell still continued ringing, all the other servants, male and female, poured into the room. A single glance showed them what had occurred—the insensible Jaggard, the empty bed, the open window. A babel of voices ensued. "Silence, all of you," cried Jen, authoritatively. "We must act, not talk. Two of you take Jaggard to his room. Tell the groom to ride at once for Dr. Etwald and Inspector Sampson!" he added, turning to the policeman, who was stolidly staring at the empty bed, "rouse yourself. Take lanterns, and search for footmarks. There must have been more than one person to carry off a dead body."

These directions were obeyed at once. The house, the grounds, the whole wild night with its driving tempest became radiant with light and alive with terrified men. That a human being should be murdered was sufficiently ghastly without this crowning horror of a missing body coming after. Every man looked on his fellow with suspicion; in the yellow light of the lanterns, dimly through the steady downpour of the rain, could be seen pallid faces and scared expressions. And while the men-folk scoured the house, the park, and the adjacent lanes, the female servants, unnerved and hysterical, crowded together in the kitchen, whispering over hastily prepared tea. It was a wild night, and full of the vague horrors of death and mystery.

Etwald came immediately in company with Arkel, whom this last extraordinary event took entirely by surprise. He questioned Sampson—he searched the chamber of death, stepped out of the window and across the lawn towards the belt of laurels which divided the lawn from a winding and tortuous lane. This, a tenebrous pathway even in the noonday, slipped eel-like through darkling trees to emerge into the high-road a quarter of a mile away. Arkel was so long absent that Jen could only surmise that he had gone into this outward darkness; and on the Inspector's return it appeared that the Major was right in his conjecture. Furthermore, Arkel brought back certain news.

"Without doubt the body was taken out through the window," he said to Jen. "The flower-bed beneath the lattice is trampled down. It was carried across the lawn—for I could see by the light of the lantern the footmarks of four feet—and through the bushes into the lane. The way can be traced easily enough to that point; but it is too dark to note any further sign."

"Nothing more can be done tonight," said Jen, gloomily. "The men have returned dead tired, but they have seen nothing and no one."

"We must question your servant," said Arkel. "He was stunned, I believe?"

"I can't say. I haven't examined him. Stunned or drugged, I suppose."

"And where is Mr. Sarby?" asked the Inspector, as they turned to leave the room.

"Mr. Sarby went out as soon as we discovered the loss, and he has not yet returned."

"Was he with you when you made the discovery?"

"No. He had retired to bed," rejoined Jen. "But as soon as I saw what had taken place I called him up, and he jumped through the window to see if he could spy any traces of the robbers. Then the servants came, and I sent for you."

Inspector Arkel left the room with the Major to seek out Jaggard, and, if possible, to learn from him what had occurred. But this they were unable to do. The man had been stunned by a blow on the head, and was quite insensible.

"And yet he was a strong man," said Etwald, when he conveyed this intelligence. "He must have been taken by surprise."

"Undoubtedly," asserted Jen, readily. "But he must also have been asleep, else he would have called out as the men burst through the window."

"How do you know there were more than one?" asked Etwald, in a jesting tone.

"Because Maurice was an unusually heavy man," replied the Major, "and he could not have been carried off unless by two men. There may have been three for all I know. But what is the meaning of it all?" cried Jen, in bewildered dismay. "Why was the poor lad's body stolen?"

"Resurrectionists!" suggested Arkel; whereupon Major Jen shuddered.

"Don't even hint at such a thing," he

cried, vehemently. "It would be too terrible; and, as it happens, quite unbelievable. It is incredible that such a thing could occur nowadays."

"It is incredible that such a thing as the theft of a body should occur," said Etwald, dryly. "Yet it has taken place. But where is Mr. Sarby? I should think that he would be present to aid you."

Jen was just about to repeat his feigned explanation regarding David's absence, when the door opened and the young man, wet and exhausted, entered the room. To give him his cue, the Major spoke to him at once.

"You are just in time, David, as I was telling these gentlemen about your hunt after these wretches. Did you see anyone?"

"I saw nothing," said David, wearily. "I am quite puzzled."

"And no wonder," said Etwald, counting off events on his fingers. "The devil-stick, the murder, the theft of the body. This is a catalogue of horrors. A man might do worse than write a story on these things."

"I agree with you!" remarked the Major, sharply. "A man might make a jest of these horrors—as you are doing."

"I assure you I never felt less like jesting in my life," replied Etwald, coldly. "But it is no use discussing such a thing at 5 in the morning. If you can do without me, Major, I shall return home. I am tired."

"But Jaggard?" asked David, rising stiffly from his chair.

"He is all right for the time being. I have detailed a housemaid as nurse, and she knows what to do. I'll come back in the morning and see if he has recovered his senses."

When Etwald took his departure, Major Jen sent David to bed, in spite of the young man's remonstrances, but remained up himself to talk to Arkel. For a long time Jen discussed the matter with the Inspector, but the conversation proved extremely unsatisfactory. Arkel was not a keen-witted man, and in a case like the present—difficult and involved—he was quite at a loss how to proceed. Finally, Major Jen dismissed him in despair, and while Arkel went to see his men, who were posted round the house, Jen remained alone to think of what he should do.

"I must be my own detective," he thought, pacing the library. "I must do the work myself, with the assistance of David. To find out who stole the devil-stick; that is the first step. To discover who killed Maurice; that is the second step. To learn who carried away his body; that is the third step. Three very difficult things to find out, and I don't see where to begin. I must learn all I can about Maurice's past life, for he may have enemies of whom I know nothing. I shall go and sleep, and when I awaken I shall set to work to solve these mysteries."

As he spoke, the Major unbarred the shutters of the window. The rain had ceased, the dawn was breaking, and the terrible night was at an end.

"It is an omen!" said the Major, "an omen of good!"

CHAPTER XII.

The sensation caused by the news that the dead body of Maurice Aymer had been stolen was even greater than that occasioned by the discovery of the murder. Even the big papers took up the matter, and sent down reporters to make investigations and build up theories as to the reason of this strange disappearance. Everywhere people were talking of the matter. Would-be detectives haunted the roads and lanes round "Ashantee"; they would have penetrated into the park itself but for the vigilance of Major Jen.

It must be conceded that for an amateur the Major set about his unaccustomed task in a very methodical manner. He offered a reward of five thousand dollars for the detection of the murderer, and a further sum of the like amount to any one who should discover the thief who had desecrated the chamber of death. These munificent rewards set everybody on the alert, and Jen, without putting down actual money, thus became possessed of some hundreds of spies who would bring him any information likely to assist him in his investigation. Also, the Major examined all the servants in the house. He questioned Sampson, the young policeman who had been in the kitchen on the night when the body had been stolen; and finally he paid a visit to the police office, where he saw Mr. Inspector Arkel.

"Well, Arkel," said Jen, after the first greetings were over, "have you any clue?"

"No, Major," replied Arkel, rather gruffly, for disappointment was beginning to tell on his temper. "Nor are we likely to find any until that servant of yours regains his senses. How is he now?"

"In a state of high fever, poor soul," said Jen, with a depressed look. "He

does nothing but rave. Yet in all his wild talk he never lets slip a single word likely to help us."

"That's a pity, Major. By the way, I questioned Dr. Etwald about the matter, and he is of the opinion that the man was stunned by a blow on the head."

"I know that. I can only suppose that Jaggard fell asleep at his post and woke up in time to see the men getting in by the window. A struggle would then ensue, and he would be struck on the head, as Etwald supposes."

"I don't agree with that theory. There are flaws in it."

"Yes?" queried Jen, eagerly. "I am open to correction. Please go on."

"Jaggard was drugged, sir."

"But the wound at the back of the head which stunned him?"

"There you have it," cried Arkel. "The wound at the back of the head was caused by his falling like a log when he was drugged."

"H'm! This is all building on sand," said Jen doubtfully. "Even to drug him, these men must have entered by the window."

"No, do you not remember, when we examined the window, that it was opened from the inside?"

"Egad, you are right. Then you think that some one must have been concealed in the room, and strung out from hiding to drug Jaggard?"

"No," said Arkel again, "no one was concealed in the room."

"Confound it, man, you don't mean to say that Jaggard opened the window," cried Jen, starting from his seat with a sense of temper.

"Ay, but I do, Major. Jaggard helped to steal the body of Mr. Aymer. He opened the window to admit his accomplices. When they fulfilled their task and got the body out of the room they turned on Jaggard and betrayed him. That is, they drugged him and knocked him down."

"I don't agree with you at all, Arkel. Jaggard is perfectly honest, and was as devoted to Maurice as he is to me. Besides, even granting the possibility of such a thing, which I do not in the least, why should Jaggard's accomplices betray him?"

"I can't say," returned Arkel, shrugging his shoulders. "They may have been bribed to steal the body, and on accomplishing their task did not want to share the bribe with Jaggard!"

"Rubbish!" said Jen, tartly. "They must have known that he would betray them when he recovered his senses!"

"No doubt. But in the meantime they would make themselves scarce. Jaggard has been insensible or raving for over a week, Major. The scoundrels counted on that!"

"I say again that I believe in Jaggard's honesty, and do not agree with you," said Jen, putting off his hat, "and after all, I do not see how you deduce this drugging theory?"

"Oh, as to that, I was once a bit of a chemist," explained Arkel; "and when you took me to see Jaggard I smelt a curious perfume which seemed to be hanging about him. As a servant is not likely to use perfumes, I thought it curious."

"Did Etwald notice it?" asked Jen, thoughtfully.

"Yes; but he professes his inability to explain it. He thinks the man was stunned, and not drugged. I think that he was first drugged and then stunned."

"H'm! It's queer! I'll have to think it over. But when the body was taken out of the window, Arkel?"

"The thieves carried it across the lawn!"

"Then down through the bushes to that winding lane, I suppose?" said Jen. "I know all that; but afterwards?"

"They put it into a cart and took it away."

"How do you know that?" asked the Major, all on the alert.

"Why," said Arkel, fidgeting his fat chin, "it was raining, as you may remember, on that night. We found the mark of wheels in the lane, which would not have been left had not a considerable amount of rain fallen."

"Did you follow the trail?" asked the Major.

"To the high-road only, and there the wheel marks became mixed up with those of other vehicles. I never met the like of it before, and I am fairly puzzled. Why should these wretches steal the mortal remains of a murdered man?"

"True," said Jen; "and why should these wretches have murdered that man?"

"As to that, we are by no means certain that they are the same."

"I don't follow you."

"No? And yet it is easy enough. If those who slew Mr. Aymer wanted his body, they could have stolen it on the high-road, where they struck him down. It was mere foolishness to venture liberty and life in a raid upon the house."

"It may have been an after-thought."

"People don't have afterthoughts in grim matters of this kind," said Arkel, rising. "Well, Major, good-by; good-by. Should I learn anything else, I shall let you know; but depend upon it; the truth of the matter is to come from Jaggard."

"He is honest. Honest!" cried Jen. "I'll stake my existence upon that."

(To be continued.)

He Owns Up.

"Own up, now. Who's the head of your family?"

"My wife used to be," admitted Mr. Enspeck, "but since my daughters are grown we have a commission form of government."—Exchange.

Tartar Alphabet.

The Tartars owe their alphabet to the Christian missionaries known as the Nestorians.

BUILT ON QUICKSAND.

Remarkable Piece of Engineering on Chinese Railroad.

The most remarkable piece of engineering on the Pekin-Hankow Railroad, China's iron backbone, is Yellow river bridge. Outside America it is the largest of its kind in the world. It measures almost two miles from end to end and is constructed entirely of steel. There is no stream which shifts its bed more than Yellow river. It is called China's sorrow, and is said to have changed its course no less than nine times within the past 20 centuries, each time choosing a different mouth by which it enters the sea. At the last great flood, when the waters forsook their bed, many millions were drowned.

The bed of Yellow river is of quick sand, so deep that it was impossible to use any masonry in constructing the bridge. Steel tubes were sunk in place of the ordinary concrete pillars and these were joined together by steel bands. There are eight of these steel tubes, each of which goes 50 feet down into the bed of the river. Other steel tubes extend down from 33 to 45 feet. The arches of the bridge have a span of 65 feet, where the current is strongest, and of 98 feet in other places. The steel piles, or tubes, have been filled with cement to give them strength, and rock and stones have been sunk around their bases to solidify their foundations.

The stones were first dropped down into the river without any support and were carried away by the quicksand. Later mats made of the branches of trees, bound together with wire, were let down around the piles and the stones dropped upon them. In this way tons of stone have been moored on such rafts about each pile and they have made the bridge as firm as though the piles were bedded in concrete. The bridge was put up in a year and a half, and on the opening day a train of 21 cars passed over it without causing a perceptible vibration.

FASHION HINTS



The fashion of very sheer over-dresses or tunics, combined with heavier materials, is exceedingly pretty, if used in good taste.

The sketch shows a rose foulard, polka-dotted in black, and having a tunic of black chiffon, the hem being embroidered in rose, as is also the vest.

Faithful to His Trust.

I was waiting near the elevator in the factory building for my friend to come down when I noticed a small boy sitting in one corner of the hall holding a large, thick sandwich. He eyed the sandwich lovingly for a long time, then he carefully lifted off the top slice of bread, took out a piece of dill pickle, ate it, and replaced all as before. In a few seconds he again removed the top piece, extracted a piece of pickle and a piece of meat and replaced the top. Again and again the performance was repeated until all the pickle and almost all the meat were gone, the sandwich, however, appearing intact as at the beginning.

"Why don't you eat up your sandwich and not pick at it in that way?" I asked the boy, with some curiosity.

"Why," he answered, looking up with great innocence, "it ain't my sandwich."—Woman's Home Companion.

A feature of the winter season in Quebec is a competition for the best snow statue to be made in Dufferin terrace, directly opposite the Chateau Frontenac. Snow lends itself admirably to modeling, as several successful statues made in past winter carnivals in Canada testify. It is probable that one of the three judges will be M. Paul Chevre, of Paris, who is the sculptor of the Champplain statue on Dufferin terrace. M. Chevre is spending several weeks in Quebec at the chateau. The Chateau Frontenac offers a purse of \$50 in gold to the sculptor of the best snow statue and two other prizes, each of \$25 in gold, are offered by business firms.

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Made by the J. C. Ayer Co., Lowell, Mass.

Stolen Joke.

The shade of the ice baron had introduced himself to Charon on the river trip.

"Quite a roomy bit of water, this Styx," he commented. "Never freezes over, does it?"

"Not so's to interfere with navigation," said Charon smilingly, "and, by the way, that very fact gave Mehlsto the idea for his favorite joke."

"You don't say! What's the gag?"

"Why, when a guest in haides complains of the scarcity of ice the old boy explains that it's due to the unprecedented perversity of the past winter."—Buffalo Times.

Ants and Colors.

It was proved long ago that ants have the power of seeing the—so-called—invisible rays of the ultra violet portion of the spectrum. They fear the light for their larvae and when allowed choice between different degrees of light always carry them to the darkest place accessible. When given the choice between a compartment lighted with yellow light and one dark to our eyes, but under the actinic ray, the ants unhesitatingly chose the yellow light, showing that to their eyes it was darker than the other, to man invisible.—Argonaut.

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething period.

Consul General James W. Ragsdale states that another example of the policy in Canada to produce the finished fish product is the recent venture of a cold storage company at Halifax in putting up fillets of fish. This is a product virtually unknown to this country, but very popular in England.

Omissions of History.

Pope Gregory had revised the calendar.

"The spelling needs reforming, too," he said, "but I'm afraid to tackle that." Which shows what he missed by not having Prof. Brander Matthews handy to brace him up and give him courage.

Siamese English.

Here is an amusing extract taken from a Siamese paper that has an English column for foreign readers:

"Shooting Outrage—O Fearful Agony.—Khoo Tong was a man of Langoon and on his return accidentally shot at by some miscreant scoundrels. Untimely death, oh fearful! All men expressed their mourn. The cowardice dogs is still at large."

SOFT EYES, weak, inflamed, red, watery and swollen eyes, use PETT-IT'S EYE SALVE. All druggists or Howard Bros., Buffalo, N. Y.

Recent experiments in the German army show that neurasthenia is three and a half times as prevalent among the soldiers as it was a decade ago, while hysteria cases are twice as numerous.

Making a Distinction.

"There is not a particle of evidence, your honor," said the attorney for the defense, "to show that my client was within a dozen miles of the scene when the crime was committed."

"I beg your pardon," interrupted the other lawyer, "but his brother-in-law testifies specifically that he saw him there."

"I know it," rejoined the defendant's attorney, "but his testimony isn't evidence."

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