

The Wand of Sleep

OR

The Devil-Stick

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

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

When riding home after this interesting conversation, the Major could not but admit to himself that Arkel had brightened up wonderfully in his intellects since first taking charge of the case. The man was not brilliant, not even clever; yet in the present instance he displayed more readiness of resource than Jen would have given him credit for. The theory of the drug-giving was worthy of investigation, and the Major determined to see if anything could be discovered likely to support this view of the matter. He still held to his belief in Jaggard's honesty, for it was incredible that an old servant of thirty years' standing should turn traitor all at once; but he thought it probable that some one might have taken him by surprise and drugged him. But as the window was closed, the person in question must have been concealed in the room. Here Jen's train of thought became confused.

Jaggard was far from the condition of connected thought, or coherent words. He turned and tossed upon his poor bed with bright eyes, burning skin, and babbling tongue. His head was swathed in bandages, and the housemaid who watched beside him had frequently to replace the clothes he tossed off in his violent movements. This nurse was a sickly, dark-eyed creature, who was strongly attached to Jaggard; and it was her love for him that made her proffer her services to look after him, and that chained to his bedside. She reported to her master that Dr. Etwald had been that morning and was coming again in the afternoon, but that there was nothing to be done until the delirium had expended itself.

"Ay," thought Jen, as he stood by the bed, "or until the man dies. If he dies without regaining his senses, we will never know the truth."

He bent down to replace the bed-clothes which the sick man had thrown off, and, as he did so, a faint perfume, sickly and rich, struck his nostrils. It seemed to come from the bandages at the back of the head, and on bending down for a closer inspection, Jen saw that one of these was of finer linen than the rest. The fabric was cambric, and with a start which made the blood turn to ice in his veins, Jen realized that it was a woman's handkerchief.

"How came this here?" he asked the housemaid, pointing to the scrap of linen.

"Oh, that was on the first night, sir," she hastened to explain. "It was put on his head when in the room where he fell, sir. The doctor, sir, says as it ain't safe to take it away yet."

A curtain interposed between the head of the patient and the light of the window. This Jen drew aside, and lightly removed the outside wrappings of the wound. The housemaid looked on in horror, for she did not dare to prevent her master from meddling, yet she felt sure that he was doing wrong. But Jen was bent upon making the discovery as to whom the handkerchief belonged; and in a few minutes he had the outside bandages removed, and saw the handkerchief discolored with dry blood lying over the wound. With deft fingers he lightly touched the four corners. In one of them was the initials "M. D."

"M. D.!" said the Major to himself. "Margaret Dallas, the mother of Isabella. How did her handkerchief come into the room on that night? And the perfume?"

It struck his sense of smell with a belief that he had smelt it before. Nothing is so strong to waken memory as odor, and in less than half a minute the mind of the Major leaped back to where he had smelt it before. It was the perfume of the dried poison of the devil-stick.

CHAPTER XIII.

That the handkerchief of Mrs. Dallas should be bound round the head of Jaggard was strange, but that it should be perfumed with the deadly scent which impregnated the devil-stick was stranger still. Had Mrs. Dallas found the wand of sleep? Had Mrs. Dallas perfumed the handkerchief with its cruel poison? Had Mrs. Dallas drugged or stupefied Jaggard on that fatal night by means of that saturated handkerchief? These were the vital questions which presented themselves to the puzzled Major.

And here the personality of Dr. Etwald intruded itself into the affair. It was Etwald who had bound up the wound with the handkerchief in question, and had forbidden its removal. The question was, had he received it from Mrs. Dallas, or had he found it on that night by the side of the insensible man? If the first, Mrs. Dallas must have perfumed it designedly with the poison, and Etwald, knowing that it was so impregnated, must have used it advisedly as a bandage. If the sec-

ond, Mrs. Dallas must have been in the room on the night in question, and have used the handkerchief to render Jaggard insensible. And in either case, as the Major very sensibly concluded, Mrs. Dallas must be in possession of the devil-stick. Otherwise, how could she have obtained the deadly scent?

"And the plain conclusion of the whole affair," soliloquized Jen, "is that Mrs. Dallas must have stolen the devil-stick, must have murdered Maurice, and must have drugged Jaggard for the purpose of completing her work by stealing my poor boy's body. But her reason?"

That she did not desire Maurice for a son-in-law was an insufficient motive for the commission of a triple crime. She had declined to sanction the engagement; she had forbidden Maurice the house; she had ample power to prevent the match which was distasteful to her. Why, then, with this power, should she jeopardize liberty and life by thieving the devil-stick, and killing the man? In his perplexity, Jen sought out David and asked his opinion. The young lawyer gave a very decided verdict in favor of Mrs. Dallas.

"I don't believe that Mrs. Dallas had anything to do with the matter," he said, in a decisive voice. "She had no motive to commit these three crimes, each one of which is more terrible than the other. Nor, Major, do I think that she has nerve or brain enough to design or accomplish assassination or theft."

"But I assure you, David, the handkerchief is hers."

"Granted; but you forget that Isabella was in the room on that night. She might have dropped the handkerchief."

"Well," said Jen, after a pause. "That is not improbable. But the perfume?"

"Oh," said David, with a shrug, "we know that the scent is an Ashantee preparation. Dido's grandmother came from Ashantee, so it is just probable that Dido herself, knowing the secret, might have prepared a dose of the poison."

"Even so. Why should she have perfumed the handkerchief?"

"I can't say, Major. You had better ask her."

"I shall!" cried Jen, starting from his chair. "And also I'll find out why she needed to prepare the poison at all. In my opinion, David, that black Jezebel is at the bottom of the whole affair. She stole the devil-stick, she prepared the poison, murdered Maurice, and stole his body."

David retired to his room, and Jen went off to interview Isabella at "The Wigwam." He walked meditatively down to the gates, and here, on the high-road, his thoughts led him to a sudden conclusion respecting the coming conversation with Miss Dallas. Without much consideration he retraced his steps rapidly, and sought out David in his room. Then and there he asked him a question which was of vital importance.

"David," said he, abruptly, "owing to the coming of Etwald and Arkel on the night upon which the body was stolen, I forgot to ask you what reception Miss Dallas met with on her return home. Who received her?"

"Mrs. Dallas. She had missed her daughter, and had been seeking for her in a state of terror—surely natural under the circumstances. I found her pacing the veranda, wondering what had become of Isabella."

"Pacing the veranda," echoed Jen, thoughtfully. "Was she fully dressed?"

"Well, yes, so far as my memory serves me I think she was."

"And Dido?"

"I saw nothing, or heard nothing, of Dido. When I found Mrs. Dallas, I simply performed my mission, and delivered Isabella into her hands. The poor girl was quite distraught with the horror of the night, and was led unresistingly to bed by her mother."

"Mrs. Dallas dressed! Dido missing!" said the Major. "Thank you, David, you have told me all I want to know," and, with a nod, Major Jen set off for the second time to "The Wigwam."

Fortune favored him, for on arriving within the grounds of Mrs. Dallas the Major met with Isabella herself, in a light-colored dress, with sunshade and straw hat; she was strolling down the walk which led to the gate. On coming up with Jen, he was surprised to see that her manner was calm and collected; in all respects different from that displayed during the frenzy of the midnight visit. He could hardly believe that she was the same girl.

"I am glad to see you, Major," said she, holding out her hand. "You have saved me the trouble of a journey, as I was on my way to your house."

"To see me, Miss Dallas?"

"It is my intention to aid you in your search for the assassin of Maurice. Oh, yes, you may look doubtful as to my ability to help you, but I can and will. I am not the mad woman

who burst into your library at 4 in the morning. I am cool and calm, and bent upon revenge. Maurice is dead. I loved him. And I intend to devote myself to avenging his death. Come, Major, sit upon this seat beside me, and relate all you have heard, all you have discovered. With my woman's wit I may be able to help you in the way the mouse aided the lion. Begin!"

Jen was astonished, both at her peremptory tone and her quiet manner. Whatever influence had been at work, it was certainly wonderful how she had calmed down from the nervous, hysterical girl, into the reasonable and cool-headed woman. Isabella noted the amazement of the Major, and guessing its cause, she explained the reason of the change in her looks, manner, and nervous system.

"Dr. Etwald cured me, Major," she said, quietly. "He has preserved my sanity, and I owe him a debt of gratitude."

"You certainly do," said Jen, dryly. "Will you repay it by marrying him?"

"No. I shall marry no one; not even Mr. Sarby, much as my mother wishes me to do so. I live only to avenge the death of Maurice, to recover his body from those who have stolen it. Come, Major, tell me what you know!"

Thus adjured, and feeling that he could not do without her assistance, Jen related all that he had heard from Arkel, and also his own personal experience with regard to the finding of the handkerchief. Isabella heard him to the end in silence, her large and shining eyes fixed upon his face. When he paused, she pondered, and finally spoke out.

"It would seem that you suspect Dido or my mother of having something to do with the matter?" she remarked, coldly.

"No. I don't say that exactly, but you must admit that the finding of the handkerchief bound round Jaggard's head is strange."

"Not at all. Dr. Etwald used it as a bandage. He picked it up in the bedroom."

"Precisely," assented Jen, eagerly. "Therefore, your mother—"

"Had nothing to do with it," interrupted Jen, "but the similarity of the kerchief in the room. Is there anything so very extraordinary in that?" she added, impatiently. "The matter is very simple. I brought with me one of my mother's handkerchiefs instead of my own. In the agitation of finding the body gone I dropped it, and Dr. Etwald found it, to use as a bandage. That is quite plain, I think."

"Quite plain," agreed the Major, "saving the presence of the perfume similar to that of the devil-stick."

"I don't know anything about the devil-stick. I never saw it; but with regard to the perfume I can explain. I was ill on that night, as you know, and Dido applied some of her negro remedies; among them the perfume with which that handkerchief of my mother's was saturated. It was bound across my forehead to soothe the nerves. During my journey to your house I snatched it off, and—"

"I can understand all that," interrupted Jen, "but the similarity of the perfumes? I must have that point cleared up."

"I dare say it can be," said Isabella, quietly. "Come up to the house, Major, and speak to Dido. I feel sure she can explain."

"Very good," said Jen. "If her explanation is only as clear as your own, I shall have nothing to say. By the way, Miss Dallas, how did you escape from your room on that night?"

"So far as I can remember, I left by my bedroom window. I had only to step out through it like a door, as it is a French window and opens on to the lawn."

"H'm!" said Jen. "But, seeing that you were so ill, was no one watching beside you?"

"Yes, my mother was. So you see, Major, she could not have dropped the handkerchief in the bedroom of poor dear Maurice."

"No; I understand. You have explained clearly. All points have been elucidated save that dealing with the perfume."

"You will now be satisfied on that point," said Miss Dallas, rather dryly. "For here is Dido. She prepared the drug and perfumed the handkerchief, and for all I know," added the girl ironically, "she may have taken the hint from your wand of sleep."

(To be continued.)

Jays of the Country.

"How pleasant it must be to sit before a blazing fire while the wind vainly rages outside."

"Yes," answered Farmer Cornstossel, "I s'pose it would be right pleasant."

"Why, you ought to know. You live in the country."

"Yes, but I ain't the feller that sits by the fire. I'm the feller that fetches in the wood."—Washington Star.

A Feminine Advantage.

Two mature young women were overheard the other day conversing in a Cedar car.

"Yes," said the one with the sugar-scoop hat, "I'm almost determined to give up school teaching and become a trained nurse. They seem to get married quicker."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Nicaragua to Date.

"We have decided to shoot you," said the Nicaraguan official to an American.

"But my nationality—"

"Oh, that's easily arranged. If we find we have made a mistake we will apologize to your government later, when your government makes us."

FASHION HINTS



This amethyst-linen suit was charming with its simply shirred waist, and the embroidery of amethyst and white. The shirred sleeves were of very sheer batiste.

The jaunty black and white hat had an owl's head as the only trimming.

SINGULAR JEWELRY.

The esthetic and decorative uses to which barbarians will turn objects which to civilized races are things of the humblest utility are amusingly illustrated by this "fashion note" from West Africa, taken from an Italian newspaper:

For some time the officials of the German colony in Southwest Africa noticed that the telegraph wires and other accessories of the electrical plant disappeared as by magic immediately after they had been put up. The most diligent inquiries remained fruitless.

From other parts of the German possessions came reports of strange predilections for articles of German commerce, as, for example, rubber heels, garters, buckles and so forth, things which the natives of those countries do not generally use.

The governor of the colony gave an entertainment one year in honor of the emperor's birthday, and invited the chiefs of the different tribes to it. What was his surprise when he saw these native gentlemen appear with his stolen telegraph wires twisted round their illustrious necks. The higher the dignity the more rings of the wire were round the neck.

Inquiries were soon started in the outlying villages, and it came to light that the white china insulators of the telegraph poles had become ear rings. A young lady of the highest distinction in native society wore a rubber heel hanging from her nose, and a young man who was a well known dandy wore dangling from his ears a pair of beautiful pink silk garters.

A Substitute for Alcohol.

The tendency of people to contract some sort or another habit is shown by the common use in various countries of tobacco, tea, coffee, opium and the like. In Abyssinia and parts of Arabian Turkey the place of alcohol is taken by the kat plant, which the natives almost universally chew. In parts of Abyssinia certain tribes chew the leaves of the kat plant commonly when they are compelled to exert special or long-continued effort, the immediate effect of which is to produce an agreeable sleeplessness and stimulation. The freshly-cut leaves have a rather pleasant taste, and produce a kind of intoxication of long duration, with none of the disagreeable features of ordinary inebriety. Messengers and soldiers are enabled, by chewing the leaves, to go without food for a number of days.

In parts of Arabian Turkey there are cafes for the consumption of the kat plant which correspond to the cafes in Europe and America where coffee and alcohol are used.

TRIALS of the NEEDLEMS



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Send 10c for trial package.

The Same Way.

Mrs. Kicker—If you are going to another one of those banquets I don't suppose you will know the number of the house when you get back.

Mr. Kicker—Oh, yes, I will. I unscrewed it from the door and am taking it with me.—Kansas City Journal.

Ready with Her Answer.

"Queer habit Miss Passay has when you're talking to her."

"Why? Doesn't she listen?"

"Oh, yes, very attentively, but she keeps nodding her head and intercepting 'yes,' 'yes,' all the time."

"I think she has fallen into that habit waiting for some man to propose."—Catholic Standard and Times.

Not Adjuncts of Happiness.

An exchange wonders how people get along without the telegraph, telephone, etc., etc. Well they did get along, and so far as anybody knows they were just as happy as are the people who are surrounded with all these "adjuncts of civilization."

Suspected So.

Caller—Mrs. Leeder, have you had any photographs taken lately?

Society Dame—I'm not sure, but I think so. A reporter or two called here last week—and I miss a cabinet photo that was on the mantel.—Chicago Tribune.

Old School Prejudice.

"Doctor, I met a medical practitioner of a new kind the other day, and I can't classify him. He diagnoses all diseases by looking at the finger nails of his patients. What would you call him?"

"I should call him a humbug."

When a widow in Oklahoma needs the wages her son of school age might earn the state pays the mother the amount and the boy continues in school. The women of Oklahoma are now trying to have the same law passed for daughters.

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