The Wand of Sleep
OR
The Devil-Stick

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

CHAPTER XVIII.

This long conversation har somewhat exhausted Jaggard, who was yet weak, so, telling him to cease from talking, Jen recalled the housemaid, and left the room to think over all he had learned. The story of Jaggard convinced him more than ever that Dr. Etwald was the cause of all the terrible events which had occurred during the last few weeks. Without doubt it was he who had treacherously hidden Dido in the chamber of death. After drugging Jaggard, the negress no doubt had opened the window to admit Etwald, and between them this precious pair had carried off the dead body.

"Yes," said Jen to himself that night, as he retired to bed. "To-day I have learned sufficient to implicate Etwald; to-morrow I shall be able to convict him. Dido must confess or go to prison."

Angered by the selfish way in which David had acted, Jen did not communicate his discoveries to the young man. During the night he took counsel with himself, and the next morning he acted upon the plans which he had formed. These were to see Dido and force the truth from her; to send Battersea to Deanminster to fetch both Arkel and Dr. Etwald to "Ashantee;" and finally, to communicate his discoveries to the Inspector and get him to arrest Etwald.

After breakfast the Major wrote two notes—one for Arkel, asking him to be at "Ashantee" by noon, as the writer had important matters to discuss; the other for Etwald, requesting him to call and see Jaggard, who, added Jen significantly in the letter, had recovered his senses. Having thus prepared his trap for the doctor to walk into, Jen delivered the letters to Battersea, with instructions to set off at once for Deanminster. When the Major had seen him safely out of the gates, he took his way towards "The Wigwam," for the all-important interview with Dido.

On arriving at "The Wigwam," Jen presented his card, and was shown into the drawing-room, there to wait he arrival of Mrs. Dallas. On hearing that the Major had called to see her, she sent Dido to inform him that she would shortly accord him an interview. The negress, as gloomy and sullen as ever, delivered this message with folded arms and bent head. Then, without even a look at him, she turned to leave the room, when Jen placed himself between her and the door.

"Not yet, Dido," he said, in a cold voice. "It is true that I called to see your mistress; but I wish to speak to you also."

"What you wish, sah?"

"To ask you a few questions about the devil-stick."

"Massa, I say all I know of de debble-stick!"

"Indeed, you did not, Dido. You did not inform me that by Dr. Etwald's directions you filled the devil-stick with poison; or that you steeped the handkerchief found in the room of Mr. Aylmer in the same poison for the purpose of drugging my servant; or again, that you concealed yourself under the bed, and afterwards drugged him."

A kind of terror showed itself in the dilated eyes of the negress. She could not understand how Jen had become possessed of a knowledge of her crimes, and at first was struck with stupor by the recital. Speedily, however, she recovered herself, and with a dark smile of contempt and pity she was about to deny all, when Jen brought out his last accusation.

"Nor," said he, fixing his eyes on the woman, "did you confess that you opened the window of Mr. Aylmer's room, and aided Dr. Etwald to carry away the dead body?"

"De—de—dead—dead!" she stammered, shrinking back.

"Yes, the dead body of Mr. Aylmer, which you and Dr. Etwald took to his house at Deanminster. No denial, woman," said Jen, raising his voice, as she was about to speak. "I see by your face that you are guilty."

Dido trembled all over, whether from rage or fear Jen could not determine, and opened her mouth to give the lie to her accuser. Then she shut it again, as a heavy step was heard outside the door. A moment later and Mrs. Dallas, with a face expressive of astonishment, was standing on the threshold of the room; and Dido at her feet was making the room resound like a jungle with howlings like those of a wild beast. All the savage nature of the woman was now on the surface, and had broken through the sullen restraint of her impassive demeanor.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded Mrs. Dallas, with an uneasy glance at the frantic negress.

"I shall explain when Dido stops her howling," said Jen, quite undisturbed.

"Oh, missy! missy!" wept the negress, getting on to her feet. "It all am a lie what dat massa say. Poo' ole Dido know nuffin'—do nuffin'."

Major Jen took Dido by the shoulder, and giving her a good shake, commanded her to be silent. At once the negress—who was evidently acting a part—ceased her outcries, and after casting her eyes significantly at her mistress, stared sullenly at the floor. Mrs. Dallas turned pale at this rapid glance, and was obliged to take a seat to prevent herself from falling. Jen recapitulated for the benefit of Mrs. Dallas the points of his accusation against the negress. Dido heard him in silence, but this time she made neither outcry nor denial.

Mrs. Dallas appeared to be horrified by the recital. Every now and then she cast a look of terror at Dido, while passing her handkerchief over her white lips. When the Major concluded, she could only shake her head and stammer a few words.

"It cannot be true," she murmured. "It is impossible."

"It is a fact," insisted Jen. "I have the evidence of Jaggard to prove that Dido was in the room on that night."

"Dido," cried Mrs. Dallas, in a trembling voice, "is this true?"

The negress raised her wild eyes slowly to the face of her mistress. What she saw therein evidently determined her reply. Without a word she beat her head.

"Ah!" cried Jen, "you admit your guilt."

"No," said Dido, bluntly, "I say dat I in de room, but I no kill dat man."

"But you filled the devil-stick with fresh poison?"

"No," said Dido again. "I saw no debble-stick."

"Woman," cried Jen, with energy, "no one but you could manufacture the poison with which the devil-stick was filled."

"Dat I know; but I no fill the debble-stick."

"Do you mean to say that Dido killed Mr. Aylmer?" asked Mrs. Dallas, nervously.

"No; but she supplied the means to the man who did. Dr. Etwald."

"Dr. Etwald!" repeated Mrs. Dallas, in what seemed to Jen to be a tone of relief. "Why do you think he killed Mr. Aylmer?"

"Because Maurice was engaged to your daughter, whom he wished to marry. Etwald killed my poor lad so as to remove a dangerous rival from his path. And Dido manufactured the poison which was used to drug the watchers of the dead."

"The watchers of the dead!" echoed Mrs. Dallas, with a start.

"Well, let us say my servant, Jaggard. He was drugged by Dido, and she stole the body, or, rather, she aided Etwald to do so."

"Dido, is this true?"

"Yis," said the negress, coldly; "de great massa tole me to do dat."

"The great master," repeated Jen; "you mean Dr. Etwald? He took away the body of Mr. Aylmer, and you helped him? Why did you steal the body?"

"Ask de great massa."

"Where did you take it to?" demanded Jen, baffled in one direction and trying another.

"Ask de great massa," said Dido, once more.

"The law will do that. I intend to have Dr. Etwald arrested. On three charges. First, that he thieved the devil-stick; second, that he killed Maurice; third, that he stole the lad's body."

Mrs. Dallas fell back on the sofa, with a white face. Dido laughed in a guttural fashion, and shrugged her shoulders contemptuously.

"Voodoo!" she said, and laughed again.

The Major guessed that she meant that African witchcraft would avert disaster from Etwald, and at once flung the word back in her face.

"Voodoo will not help the doctor," said he, quietly. "This is a civilized country, and we who inhabit it are above being influenced by such degrading superstitious. You believe in Voodoo, in Obi; let us see if such things will protect you."

"Do you mean that Dido is in danger of arrest?" cried Mrs. Dallas, in a terrified tone.

"Certainly as the accomplice of Etwald. She filled the devil-stick with the poison which was used to kill," retorted the Major, coldly; "and she confesses to having aided him in stealing the body."

"Ah!" murmured Mrs. Dallas, casting a haggard look around. "All is lost."

"Are you alluding to Dido?" demanded Jen, rather surprised at her tone.

Mrs. Dallas was about to speak, when the negress silenced her with a look, and raised her head proudly.

"Yis. It ole Dido," she said. "But ole Dido not lost. Dat great massa, he look after old Dido."

"If you mean Dr. Etwald, he will have enough to do to look after himself. Well, Mrs. Dallas, as I have learned what I wished to know, I shall now take my leave."

"You go to ruin us," wept Mrs. Dallas.

"No," said Jen, in an inflexible voice, "I go to punish the man who killed my boy."

Without another word he left the room. His last glance showed that Dido had gathered her sobbing mistress in her arms, and was staring after him in a defiant manner. At the front door Jen heard his name called softly, and Isabella, with a rich color in her usually pale cheeks, came flying after him.

"Major, Major, I have heard all! I have been listening at the window."

"Then you know that I am aware of your deception about the handkerchief?"

"Yes. I did not speak truly," stammered Isabella; "but I could not act otherwise. It was to save a certain person."

"Ah! you know who committed the first of the crimes," cried Jen, seizing the young girl's arm. "Confess. It was Dr. Etwald who stole the wand of sleep."

"No! No! Not Dido! Oh!" cried Isabella, in a tone of anguish, "it was my mother."

CHAPTER XIX.

Major Jen recoiled from the young girl in amazement.

"Your mother," he muttered, hardly believing the evidence of his own senses. "Your mother stole the devil-stick?"

"Yes, but she did not know what she was doing. Wait! Listen!" said Isabella, much agitated. "I told you falsehoods before to shield my mother. Now that I know you have discovered so much, that you are bent on punishing Dr. Etwald, I must tell you the truth, so that she may not be dragged down to ruin. Come with me, Major. Quickly!"

Without glancing towards the house, Isabella ran down a secluded path which led through a kind of shrubbery to the flower garden, and then disappeared into a light cane summer-house, which was constructed in the Chinese fashion and overgrown with greenery. Major Jen followed her as rapidly as his more mature age would permit him.

"Major," she said, when, somewhat out of breath, he had taken his seat beside her in the summer-house, "although I relate what inculpates my mother, it is to save her that I do so. Both she and I are in a net woven by Dido."

"Ah! poor Maurice always mistrusted that negress."

"He was right to do so. Oh, you do not know what a terrible woman she is. For years both I and my mother have been under her influence and have submitted to her will. Now, I see her in her true colors, and I am determined to speak the truth. Save myself and my mother, Major, for we are innocent. Dr. Etwald and Dido are the guilty persons."

"They killed Maurice. They stole the body."

"I can swear they did," said Isabella, with emotion. "I have only been certain of these things since our last interview. I lied to you then because Dido said if I told the truth she would accuse my mother of the murder."

"I see," said Jen, thoughtfully, "and I can understand their motives. Dido wished you to marry Etwald."

"Yes; and it was to force my mother into compliance with that desire that the whole of these crimes were committed. Dido——"

"One moment, Miss Dallas. What influence has Etwald over the negress?"

"He is the possessor of the Voodoo stone. It is a small black pebble of a peculiar shape," explained the girl, "and it was brought from Africa to Barbadoes over a hundred years ago. The negroes believe that a spirit dwells in this stone, and that when it is worshipped the indwelling devil can work woe to those against whom the possessor of the stone bears malice. You can have no idea how the talisman is venerated by all the blacks; they would go miles to look on it to adore it; they would burn down a city to possess it; to gain it they would murder a hundred human beings. Well, Dr. Etwald was in Barbadoes some years ago, and he gained possession of this Vodoo stone. He has used it while here to intimidate Dido. While he holds it, she will not dare to disobey him, and all this plotting and assassination, designed to bring about my marriage with Dr. Etwald, has been designed by him, and carried out by Dido, solely on account of his ownership of the Voodoo stone. You know that she calls him the great master! Well, now you can guess the reason for her servile worship of this man."

"And how about the theft of this devil-stick?"

"Oh, on the night it was stolen I was seated on the verandah after dinner, and I saw my mother come out with Dido. They did not know I was there, as I sat in the shade. I saw Dido speak to my mother and point towards your house. Then she waved her hands before my mother's face, whereupon my mother turned and walked swiftly past where I was seated. I saw her face; it was quite white, and her eyes were open and glassy. When my mother disappeared Dido re-entered the house. At once—terrified by my mother's action—I ran down the little path which leads to the gate, and followed her out on to the road. She went into your grounds by the postern in the wall. I saw her cross the lawn, and enter the smoking-room, wherein a lamp was burning. When she came out, it was with the devil-stick in her hand. I recognized it by the golden handle. I reached home before she did, and again hid on the verandah. Dido re-appeared as my mother came up the walk, and took the devil-stick from her. Then she led her indoors."

(To be continued.)

Good Rule to Follow.

What is worth doing is worth doing well; and with little more trouble at first, much trouble afterwards may be avoided.—Max Muller, Letter to John Bellows.

Few things are impossible to diligence and skill.—Johnson.

FIRE BLIGHT IN APPLE TREES

A Brief Description o. the Disease and Its Cure.

By H. S. Jackson, Oregon Agricultural College, Corvallis.

Fire blight is the most serious of all the diseases which attack the pear and apple. It is a contagious disease of bacterial origin which, under proper conditions, may attack any part of the tree. Besides the pear and apple, the quince, wild crab apple, hawthorns, mountain ash, serviceberry and some other pomaceous trees are subject to attacks of this disease.

Myriads of germs are present in all freshly blighted portions of the tree and in the sticky ooze exuding from cankers. The germs live almost entirely in the sappy portion of the bark, though in some vigorous-growing varieties of pears the germs have been known to invade the sap wood to a limited extent. Fire blight occurs in more or less severity in nearly all parts of the United States where pears and apples are grown.

In Oregon fire blight has appeared in two general localities — one in the Southwestern part of the state, including the Rogue River valley, the other in the Northeastern part.

Beginning in the spring the first apparent damage produced by the disease in an infected orchard is the blighting of the blossoms. Infection is brought about by insects, principally bees, which have visited a case of hold-over blight and become covered with the organisms contained in the sticky exudation, inoculating the flowers in their search for nectar. The organisms divide and multiply in the nectar and are able to enter the living tissues through the unprotected nectaries. Having entered the tissues they quickly blight the blossoms, pass down the blossom-stem and into the fruit spur, killing the tissues and cutting off the leaves from water supply, causing them to shrivel and dry, thus producing "fruit spur blight." The latter occurs several weeks after blossom infection. In very serious cases nearly all the fruit spurs may be blighted in this way and the trees set no fruit. Usually the germs die out and do not grow into the twig or branch on which the spur occurs, but occasionally the germs may continue into the bark of the branch at the base of the fruit spur and form a typical canker. Fruit spurs on the larger branches are a fruitful source of body infection and many cases of blight canker originate in this way.

The name "fire blight" is given to this disease because of the characteristic appearance of pear foliage on twigs or branches which have been killed by the organisms. The leaves turn black as though scorched by fire and frequently remain on the tree during the following winter. It should be noted that this color of the foliage is characteristic of the pear when it has been killed during the growing season. If a grower not familiar with the pear blight desires to known how the "twig blight" looks let him girdle a twig in mid-summer and watch the results.

The cankers are also quite characteristic, but are very variable in appearance. The disease progresses most rapidly in the fleshy outer layer of the bark and at first produces a watery appearance in the affected area. Later the tissues of the bark are more or less broken down and the cankers become dark in color.

One of the most fruitful sources of infection has been by the pruning shears or saw. In pruning, if an active canker is cut into, the tools become infected and serve as inoculating instruments to spread the disease.

The only method known of controlling fire blight is to cut out all cases of cankers wherever they appear. Spraying with fungicides is of only supplementary value and the various blight cures are worse than useless.

Experience has shown that it is of little permanent value to attempt to cut out the fruit spur and twig blight as they appear. Unless these forms of the disease extend into the branches on which they occur and a canker is formed the disease usually becomes naturally limited and the germs gradually die.

The efforts of the grower should be directed to cutting out all cases of blight canker and body canker during the fall, winter and early spring, when the cankers have become more or less limited in their growth and are not actively spreading.

Summer cutting is intelligently applied is frequently of great value, particularly where there is only a little blight. In the autumn before the leaves fall is a good time to do the cutting, as all cases of twig blight are easily observed.

The trees should be particularly examined for cases of the collar rot. It is this form of the disease that causes many trees to be killed outright.

In cutting out cankers it is necessary that the tools be kept moist with some good disinfectant. If this is not done each cut will reinoculate the germs into the bark at the edges of the canker and the labor may thus be useless.

Corrosive sublimate in a solution of one part to one thousand of water has been found to be the most satisfactory disinfectant. The solution is a violent poison. It must be kept in glass.

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Expert Opinion.

What is the use of a child's going to school to learn mere grammar? Such evidently is the opinion of the mother of a girl whose teacher instructed her to purchase a book on that subject. According to a writer in the Burr Oak Herald, Lulu came back the next day with this explanatory letter:

I do not desire for Lulu shall ingage in grammar, as I prefer her ingage in yuseful studies, and can learn her how to spoke and write properly myself. I have went through two grammars, and I can't say as they did me any good, I prefer her ingage in german and drawing and vocal music on the piano.

Journalistic Modesty.

"Going to start a paper, are you? What do you intend to call it?"

"The Nebula."

"What's the explanation?"

"Why, some day, I hope, it will grow to be a World, a Globe, a Star, a Sun or something of that kind, you know."

Wasted Money.

Warden—You'll get six months for this job.

Prisoner—Just my blooming luck. Only had my hair cut last night. Threepence chucked away, as you might say.—Illustrated Bits.

Frightful Possibility.

"But what will you do," asked his confidential friend, "if they imprison you?"

"If they threaten to do that," answered the financial magnate, with a frown, "I'll send orders to my agents to start the biggest panic this country ever saw!"

Gladdening His Heart.

"Dear papa," wrote the little girl at the summer resort, "I have gained six ounces in weight since we came here. Mamma sends her love. Please write to us to-morrow. Send your love and all the money you can spare."—Chicago Tribune.

Objection Sustained.

Judge—The witness told all that happened on the second floor. Now, why do you object to his telling what happened on the third floor?

Counsel—Because, if it please your honor, that is another story.—Brooklyn Eagle.

Sorry, but Bearing Up Well.

"I'm truly sorry, ma'am," said Old Hunks to the widow, "to see you in such hard luck. You mustn't let it distress you, though. It may be all for the best."

Then he went and foreclosed the mortgage.

A Hair Dressing

If you wish a high-class hair dressing, we are sure Ayer's Hair Vigor, new improved formula, will greatly please you. It keeps the hair soft and smooth, makes it look rich and luxuriant, prevents splitting at the ends. And it keeps the scalp free from dandruff.

Does not change the color of the hair.

Ayer's — Formula with each bottle. Show it to your doctor. Ask him about it, then do as he says.

At the same time the new Ayer's Hair Vigor is a strong hair tonic, promoting the growth of the hair, keeping all the tissues of the hair and scalp in a healthy condition. The hair stops falling, dandruff disappears. A splendid dressing.

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