

SONG.

There is no one like my lassie, Her brow a snowdrop is, And her lips they are red cherries, That give her a kiss.

SAVED BY A HAIR.

It was a dark and stormy night without, and I drew my chair closer to the fire as I sipped my tea and regaled myself with the news of the local paper.

"What's this?" I said, as my eye alighted on a startling paragraph. "Mysterious murder! Mr. John Randolph, one of our old and wealthy citizens, was this morning found dead in his room, having been murdered during the night by some unknown person.

Now, although I am usually among the first to hear of criminal news, from the nature of my business, this was the first intimation I had received that such a murder had been done.

"And so this is the way that Edgar Morton repays the benefactor of his youth and soon to be father? Yet, no," I cried, "I will stake my life on that young man's innocence."

As I spoke there came a gentle tap at the door, followed almost immediately by the entrance of a lady deeply veiled, who at once threw aside her veil, disclosing to me the features of my deceased friend's daughter, Cecil Randolph.

"Excuse me, Mr. Ferguson, for entering uninvited, but urgent business must be my only excuse."

"Be seated, Miss Randolph," I said, rising and handing her a chair. "Oh, Mr. Ferguson!" she sobbed forth, burying her face in her hands, "that I should ever be obliged to come to you on such an errand as this!"

I endeavored to quiet her, and partially succeeded, when I drew from her what few facts she knew regarding her father's death.

"He retired last night at the usual hour apparently in good spirits, and no sound was heard during the night to cause any alarm. In the morning, as he failed to appear at breakfast, a servant was dispatched to summon him. Knocking at the door and receiving no answer, he finally opened it and advanced into the room. What a sight did he then behold! My poor father lay upon his bed, with his throat cut from ear to ear! Death must have come to him suddenly—so suddenly as to prevent any outcry—and the unknown assassin had no trouble in making his escape."

"But," I said, "I can't see why any one should suspect Edgar of the murder."

"That is the most mysterious part of the sad affair. This morning, when Edgar was told of the murder, he turned very pale, reeled, and would have fallen to the ground had not support been given him. Some of the ignorant beholders of this scene thought his actions denoted guilt, and an officer was summoned, who at once insisted on searching his room. A razor, on which was several spots of blood, was found concealed under the carpet, together with an old suit of clothes belonging to Edgar, which was bespattered with blood. This was considered sufficient evidence to warrant his arrest, and he now lies in jail charged with the awful crime of murder. Oh, Mr. Ferguson, if you can do anything to save him, and at the same time bring the guilty perpetrator of the deed to justice, I will amply reward you."

"Do you know of any enemies of your father, or of Edgar, who would be likely to commit such a crime, either for robbery or revenge?" I asked.

night and his features assumed an appearance perfectly fearful, he continued, 'But you shall never become the wife of Edgar Morton while I have life to prevent it.' He then turned and abruptly left my presence. I was much alarmed and thought of speaking to my father about it, but during the afternoon he returned and begged my forgiveness for the words he had used, and made such professions of sorrow in regard to them that I freely forgave him, and have since thought no more of the matter."

"The fact is quite clear to me," I said. "I know this fellow well and the sort of company he keeps, and I shall not be surprised to find that he committed the murder. Now, then, I want to see the body of your father and the room in which the deed was done."

"Well, Mr. Ferguson," she said, rising and preparing to accompany me, "you will find everything as it was when first discovered. The officer decided not to disturb anything until after the inquest, which takes place tomorrow forenoon."

Wrapping myself up in my greatcoat we set out, and after a brisk walk of ten minutes reached the handsome residence of my companion. I was at once shown to the room of the murdered man, and then began making such an examination as only a detective knows how to make.

Circumstances of the most trivial character, which would be overlooked by an ignorant person, are often seized upon by a skillful detective, and sometimes constitute the most damaging evidence of guilt. In this case, however, everything had been done in the most skillful manner, and I could not succeed in making any discovery.

I was about to leave the room in despair when, glancing toward the bed, I noticed what appeared to be a slight scratch on the neck of the murdered man just above the gaping wound which had so cruelly let out his life's blood. On examination I found it to be nothing more than a hair, which had in some manner probably become loosened from the head of the assassin and had settled on the neck of the victim, where it now lay, a silent yet truthful witness, pointing out the guilty wretch to the eye of justice.

The hair was of a deep red color, which was totally unlike that of any of the household. It was, indeed, the same color and shade as that of Conrad Smithers. I placed it carefully in my pocketbook, and saying nothing to any one of my discovery, started for the residence of Smithers, intent on doing a little acting. I found him, as his attendant said, ill in bed and on no account must he be disturbed.

"This sickness is but a stratagem," I thought, "to divert suspicion." Telling the woman that I wanted to see him but for a moment on the most urgent business, she finally reluctantly consented to my entrance. I found him lying upon a bed, apparently in great pain. In my youth I had studied medicine and was consequently well informed in such matters, and saw at once with a quick glance that he was only feigning sickness. He started up somewhat angrily as I entered, but I silenced him with a motion of my head.

"Conrad Smithers, this is a desperate game you are playing, but it will avail you nothing."

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed, springing to his feet, his illness all gone. "I mean that the game is up and the murderer of John Randolph is discovered."

Thrown completely off his guard, as I had anticipated, he sank into a chair, and burying his face in his hands sobbed out, "Lost! lost!"

"Do you confess the murder, then?" "I do," he answered, "now that concealment is no longer of use."

I took him at once into custody and soon had the satisfaction of seeing him change places with Edgar Morton.

Conrad Smithers was tried for the murder and, knowing that any defense would be useless after his confession to me, he pleaded guilty and threw himself upon the mercy of the court, which sentenced him to imprisonment for life.

It needs scarcely to be explained that the villain Smithers had found an opportunity of visiting Edgar Morton's room in his absence and possessed himself of the razor and the articles of clothing. After the commission of the murder he had returned to the apartment and deposited the blood stained evidences of his crime, thus incriminating Edgar.

About a year after I received an invitation to the wedding of Cecil Randolph and Edgar Morton, who live most happily together and never ceased thanking me that Edgar was saved by a hair.—New York Evening World.

A Book for Farmers. The United States department of agriculture has just issued "A Special Report on the Diseases of the Horse," which consists of 536 pages, including thirty-four pages of plates, among which are some of the finest colored pictures of the horse ever produced in this country.

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