THE GHOST OF DOWN HILL

BY

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CHAPTER I. — THE MAN WHO WANTED PASS BOOKS

IT was, of course, a coincidence that Margot Panton was the guest of Mrs. John Staines on the night of the visitation; it was equally a coincidence that she travelled down to Arthurton by the 4.57 in the same railway coupé as Jeremiah Jowlett. And yet it was as natural that she should break her journey in town to accept the hospitality which her old nurse could offer her, as it was that Jeremiah and she should be fellow passengers by the only fast train which Jerry always took, summer and winter, unless he was away from London or was working up evidence against some malefactor; for Jerry was a barrister, and had a desk in the office of the Public Prosecutor.

"My dear," said Martha Staines in genuine admiration, "I should never have known you!"

Margot, a slight, pretty figure curled up in an armchair before the fire, raised her tea cup in warning.

"Don't tell me I'm growing pretty Martha!" she said solemnly. "Ever since I can remember I have been growing pretty and have never quite grown."

"Well, you've got there now Margot," Martha Staines shook her head and sighed.

The girl's mother had died eight months before, leaving her orphan child in the guardianship of an absent brother-in-law. Martha recalled the sad, thin face of the woman she had served for so many years and those happy days at Royston when Margot had been the most angelic of babies.

"Your uncle is back, then, Margot?"

The girl nodded, a gleam of amusement in her eyes.

"It is rather fun having a guardian you cannot find!" she said. "I wonder what he will do with me when the travel fever comes on him again?"

Martha shook her head. She was a stout, good-looking woman of forty-five, and her prosperity had neither spoilt her humour nor her manners.

"Where has he been this time?" she asked.

Margot took a letter from her bag and consulted it.

"The Upper Amazon," she said. "I'll read you the letter:

"'Dear Margot,

"'I was grieved to learn on my return that my poor sister had passed away. By the letters which I found waiting from your lawyers I see that I am appointed your guardian. I hope you will not find Arthurton a bore. I am rather an old fogey and am interested in very little outside of geology and spiritualism, but you shall be your own mistress. I shall expect you on Tuesday evening.

"'Your loving uncle, "'James Stuart.'"

"Spiritualism," said Martha thoughtfully. "That sounds lively."

The girl laughed and put down her cup upon the table. She was at an age when even the supernatural phenomena of life were amusing.

Mr. Staines came in a few minutes later. He was a bluff man, red and jovial of face and stout of build. He brought with him a faint fragrance of pine, and the dust of the saw-mill lay like power on his boots.

"It's a lovely part of the country you're going to, Miss Panton," he said, as he stirred his tea. "I know it very well. What is the name of your uncle?"

"Stuart," said the girl, "Mr. James Stuart."

He nodded.

"I know his house, too; a big place at the foot of the hill with a lovely garden—in the proper season. It will be well under snow now."

He scratched his chin.

"Yes, I remember him, a very close gentleman. He had the name of being a little eccentric, if you don't mind my saying so, miss."

"He's a spiritualist, Staines," said Martha.

"A spiritualist, eh?" Mr. Staines chuckled.

"Well, he's got plenty of spirits to practise on at Arthurton. Maybe he'll have a go at the Ghost of Down Hill Farm."

"That sounds thrilling," said the girl, wide-eyed. "Do tell me about the Ghost of Down Hill Farm, Mr. Staines."

"Well, I've never seen it myself—mother, I'll have another cup of tea—but I've heard yarns about it," said Mr. Staines. "In the first place, there isn't a Down Hill Farm. There used to be about eighty years ago, but it's built on now, and before that there was a priory, or a monastery, or something. That is where the ghost comes from. I took the trouble to read up the history years and years ago," he explained almost apologetically. "That is why I know the dates. In 1348 the country, and the continent too, was visited by a terrible plague which took off half the inhabitants of England. It broke out in the Priory, being carried to Arthurton by a monk who came from Yorkshire, and when the villagers heard that they had the plague they put a guard round the place and would allow no one to go in or come out. All the monks died except one, and he used to come out every night and walk round the building. After a time he died too. He is the Ghost of Down Hill—they have dropped calling it a farm—and I've met old men who say they have seen him."

"How lovely!" said the girl ecstatically. "Do you think that he'll walk for me?"

"Well, miss," said Staines with a twinkle in his eye, "if he wouldn't walk for you, he'd walk for nobody," and his laugh shook the decanters on the side-board.

Suddenly he became serious and turned to his wife.

"Did I tell you about that case at Eastbourne, mother?" he asked.

"No, my dear, you didn't," said his wife, busy at the table clearing up the tea things.

"Did you ever hear me speak about a man named Wheeler?"

Mrs. Staines shook her head.

"Well, I have, lots of times," said Staines. "Anyway, it doesn't matter. He's in the surveyor's office at Eastbourne now, but I knew him years ago when he was clerk of the works for one of the biggest architects in the South of England. A very nice fellow."

"Well, what about him?" asked Mrs. Staines.

"Listen to this."

Mr. Staines fumbled in his pocket and produced a pair of pince-nez which he fixed to his nose, then unfolded the evening paper, and after a search:

"'An extraordinary happening is reported from Eastbourne. Mr. Joseph Wheeler, of the Borough Surveyor's office, was sitting in his room on Sunday night, the family being at church, when a masked man appeared and, holding up Mr. Wheeler at the point of a revolver, demanded that he should produce his bank-books or any other personal accounts he might have. Fortunately Mr. Wheeler had the books handy and produced them under protest. The intruder then ordered his victim to stand with his face to the wall whilst he examined the pass-books which had been produced. The examination lasted five minutes at the end of

which time the masked man disappeared as suddenly as he came."'

"Well, now, what do you think of that?" said Mrs. Staines, properly impressed.

"I thought it was going to be quite exciting," said the girl disappointed. "He should at least have left a message written in blood!"

She went to bed early that night. She had had a tiring journey and Mrs. Staines, leaving her husband to go to his office to work out the day's accounts, followed her example.

The Staines's house stood at the entrance of one of the timber yards which John Staines, in his affluence, had acquired. A one-story brick building built in the yard formed the headquarters of his thriving business and it was to his own office that he repaired to enter up the personal transactions.

He did not hear the door open but he felt a cold draught of air and looked around. A man was closing the door behind him as he looked and Mr. Staines jumped to his feet, for the head of the intruder was enveloped in a monkish cowl and two hard, bright eyes glared at him through the vertical slits which had been cut in the mask. More alarming still was the automatic pistol which he held in his hand.

"Don't shout, and don't attempt to get away. Pull down those blinds," ordered the man; and Staines obeyed drawing down the blue linen blinds and shutting out all view of the interior from the yard.

"I want your pass-books, bank-books and private ledgers for the past ten years," said the stranger.

"Look here," began Mr. Staines.

"Look nowhere," snarled the man, "Do as you are told, damn you!"

Mr. John Staines was a wise man and albeit resentfully, obeyed. He stacked the little brown covered books on the table, taking them from his safe.

"Now stand against the wall and do not look around," said the intruder and again Mr. Staines obeyed.

He heard the rustle of turning leaves but he did not turn his head. Five minutes passed and a chair was pushed back.

"Stand still," said the stranger.

The door opened and closed rapidly, a few seconds later he heard the crash of the wicket gate and sat down heavily in his chair.

"Well, I'm——!" said Mr. Staines, and his profanity was pardonable in the circumstances.

CHAPTER II. — JEREMIAH OBADIAH JOWLETT

IN a small, gloomy office overlooking Whitehall, Mr. Jeremiah Jowlett collected together the dossiers he had been examining, tucked them under his arm and sprinted for the room of his chief. Lord Ilfran looked up as his subordinate came in.

"Hullo, Jerry, haven't you gone?" he asked.

"No, sir," said Jerry unnecessarily and put the envelopes before the elder man. "I think we can prosecute in the cases of Myer and Burton," he said "but there does not seem to be a case against Townsend."

Lord Ilfran nodded.

"Is there any fresh news?" he asked.

"None sir, of any importance. I see in the newspapers that an attempt has been made to rob the strong rooms of the mail steamer Carmuria, but the thieves seem to have bungled it very badly, and the men are in custody at Southampton."

"There are no good strong room robbers left," said Lord Ilfran in a tone which suggested that he regretted the circumstances. "Ever since the Flack gang were laid by the heels that branch of crime has become uninteresting. What is this I see," he asked, "about the hold-up of a wood merchant in Camberwell?"

"Oh, yes," Jerry was leaving but turned back. "That is extraordinary. There was a man held up in similar circumstances at Eastbourne two or three days ago, and now this man Staines has been victimized."

"Nothing was stolen?" asked Lord Ilfran.

"Nothing at all, apparently," replied Jerry. "As in the previous case, the burglar merely asked to see the state of the pass-books and the private ledgers of Mr. Staines."

"Extraordinary!" murmured Lord Ilfran looking out of the window. "Most extraordinary! Nothing was stolen you say?"

"Nothing at all," said Jerry, who threw a glance at the clock above the head of the Public Prosecutor.

"Well, get off," said Lord Ilfran with a smile. "I suppose you are catching your 4.57. What on earth makes you live at Arthurton?"

"Come down and spend Christmas with me, sir," said Jerry with a smile, "and I think you'll understand."

The taxi-cab that took him to Victoria was a slow one and he had to race to the platform and even then only arrived as the train was on the move. The guard opened the door of a first-class carriage and he jumped in and would have fallen, but a little hand thrust out in alarm saved him.

"I am so awfully sorry," said Jerry, with that smile of his which had disarmed so many of his critics.

"I think the train jerked," said Margot Panton primly.

"I'm almost sure it jerked," said Jeremiah, and then he chuckled and the girl laughed too.

It was all very improper, of course, and very unusual. Margot had been warned since she could understand never to speak to strange men in railway carriages, and never under any circumstances to travel alone with one. And yet before the train had reached Clapham Junction, Jerry had told her that his favourite aunt's name was Maud and she had explained the inner workings of the perfect system at the school she had left.

"Arthurton!" he said in delight when she told him her destination. "Good lord, I'm going there, too. Where are you staying?"

"With my guardian, Mr. James Stuart."

"Is that so?" he said, raising his eye brows. "Why, we're neighbours! Mr. Stuart is the antiquarian or explorer, or something, isn't he? I know he lives abroad."

"I know very little about him," she replied, "and I don't remember having seen him. He is the only relative I have in the world," she said simply.

Jerry was more than ordinarily interested and plied her with questions as to her length of stay until, laughingly, she changed the subject.

"If you live at Arthurton——"

"As I swear I do," he said.

"Don't interrupt. If you live in Arthurton you can tell me something I am dying to hear about."

"I have a bronze medal for saving life," he said modestly. "I must tell you this in case nobody else does. I am willing to earn another one."

"Have you ever seen the Ghost of Down Hill?" she asked.

He fell back in his seat and shrieked with laughter.

"I am the Ghost of Down Hill," he said, and she stared at him. "At least I'm the only ghost that's ever haunted Down Hill. My house is built, if not upon the site, at least upon the land which the old monks owned and which the proprietor of Down Hill Farm, which was burnt a hundred years ago, included in his demesne."

"And you've never seen the ghost?" she asked.

"I've never seen the ghost, and Minter—he is my valet, cook and general manager—hasn't seen a ghost either."

He hesitated and then:

"No, we've seen nothing."

"You were going to say except," she began.

He smiled.

"Except that two or three nights ago we saw a strange figure in the garden, but it was probably a poacher setting a snare. There are thousands of rabbits on that part of the Downs."

"You'll love the place," he said as he helped her to alight at Treen Station, "and I hope your uncle is going to invite me to tea and tennis. You've got a wonderful court and I have no court at all. And there is your uncle. Shall I introduce you?" he asked whimsically.

The man who walked towards her was a little above middle height and strongly built. Apparently he was in the region of sixty but he was as straight as a ramrod. The short-clipped white beard, the shaggy eyebrows and the large nose gave her the impression of an old eagle; an impression which the bright deep-set eyes helped to strengthen. He gave her smile for smile as he met her and took her little hand in his big, hairy paw. Though it was bitterly cold and the snow lay thick on the roads, he wore no overcoat nor gloves and the soft white shirt was opened at neck to expose the corded throat.

"You're Margot," he said, and brushed her cheek with his lips. "How do you do, Mr. Jowlett. This is a neighbour of ours, Margot."

His manner was brusque, his voice gruff, but his attitude was genial. He had a little car waiting at the station yard. It was parked alongside Jerry's one extravagance, a long-bonneted racing car, the possession of which he excused on account of its hill-climbing qualities.

"It is my elevator," he said. "I live on the first floor of the world, Miss Panton, a position which gives me the happy feeling of being able to look down upon my fellow-citizens."

They gave him a minute's start and he disappeared silently across the snowy carpet.

James Stuart sat at the wheel and his little car followed at a respectable distance. He did not speak to the girl and she had time to take stock of this new relative who had come into her life. He had the glamour of relationship to her mother, but she felt that she could love this grim old man, upon whose face she thought she detected the lines of suffering.

Mr. Staines had not exaggerated the prettiness of her new home. It was an old house, creeper-grown, and stood in extensive grounds. Even under its white, fleecy covering, which lay in thick pads on the spreading cedars, she saw the beautiful possibilities of the sleeping garden.

"I wonder you can ever leave this place," she said as she stood looking through the French windows of the drawing-room.

"It's pretty," he said shortly.

"Is there anything in Brazil as pretty?"

He shook his head.

"Nothing," he answered shortly.

Her own apartment was a lovely large room overlooking the garden and had the appearance of having been recently furnished. She discovered later that this was the fact and that the furniture had only arrived that day from Eastbourne.

She found her uncle amiable enough at dinner. He had a fund of sardonic humour which kept her amused and he took, moreover, a surprisingly broad view of men and things.

"There isn't much young company for you in Arthurton," he said. "A girl like you should have plenty of dances and similar nonsense. I'll invite young Jowlett over to dinner to-morrow night if you like."

She did like very much.

"In the season there's plenty of social life in Eastbourne, and it is only fourteen miles away, and I'm thinking of getting another car," he said. "But now—" he hesitated and rubbed his beard with his knuckles, a little gesture of irritation which did not escape her—"I am very busy in the evenings with my specimens and I'm afraid you'll be left alone——"

"Please don't worry about me, Uncle James," she said earnestly. "I can amuse myself with a book. And if I think I'm on your mind all the time, it will take half the fun out of life."

He seemed relieved at this, and then awkwardly:

"Well, you can start right away," he said. "I am going to my study now,"

At ten o'clock she tapped at his door to say good-night and went up to her room. He had promised her a maid, though she was ready enough to dispense with this luxury. She undressed and sat in her kimono by the open window looking over the garden. It was the third quarter of the moon and it was rising as she looked out upon that most wonderful of landscapes.

The snowy expanse of the Downs lay in blue shadow and the moonlight flooded the broad white Weald with an uncanny radiance.

She sighed happily, switched off the light and snuggled into bed. The strangeness of the room and, perhaps, the queer smell which all new furniture has, prevented her sleeping as soundly as she expected. She turned from side to side, dozing fitfully, and then she heard a faint sound of a foot on the gravel path outside. From the position of the patch of moonlight on the floor she knew it must be very late and wondered if her uncle was in the habit of taking midnight strolls on such a freezing night. Slipping out of bed she pulled on her dressing-gown, walked to the window and looked out.

And then her blood froze, and her knees gave under her, for there in the middle of the garden path, standing out against the snowy background, was a figure in the sombre habit of a monk!

The cowl was drawn over his head and the face was invisible.

It stood there motionless, its hands concealed in its wide sleeves, its head bent as in thought.

Then slowly the head turned and the moonlight fell upon the bony face, the hollow sockets of its eyes, the white gleam of its fleshless teeth.

For a moment she stared, paralysed, incapable of sound or movement; and then she found her voice, and with a shrill scream collapsed on the floor in a dead faint.

CHAPTER III. — THE TRAMP

WHEN she came to herself she was lying on the bed under the eider-down quilt and her uncle's anxious face was looking down at hers. He was in his dressing- gown and his hair was rumpled untidily.

"I am such a fool," she said, with an apologetic smile.

"I heard you scream. What was the matter—nightmare?" asked Mr. Stuart.

And then she told him what she had seen. Stuart walked to the window and looked out.

"A manifestation," he said gravely. "You were very fortunate."

"A manifestation?" she repeated in an amazement. "Do you believe——"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I believe there is a great deal one doesn't understand; a great many things and a great many phenomena," he replied. "But honestly, I think in this case you have been suffering from nightmare."

"Do you—do you think," she replied, "that was the Ghost of Down Hill?" She heard him chuckle.

"So you've heard the yarn, have you?" he said. "Perhaps it was. Perhaps it was oyster patty followed by coffee—a combination which has produced more ghosts than any of us spiritualists have raised."

Margot Panton was neither superstitious nor a sceptic. She had the mens sana in corpora sana of the well-balanced public school girl, and she was heartily ashamed of the exhibition she had made of herself. It had been the surprise of it; the atmosphere of mystery; the moonlight; the strangeness of the place—all those

circumstances had combined to surprise her into that ridiculous fainting fit.

Alone in her room, she sat up in bed clasping her knees, a picture of frowning puzzlement. Her common-sense told her that there was no such thing as ghosts and they did not wear boots that crunched the gravel beneath them. She got out of bed again and looked out into the garden. It was empty. Then switching off the light with a contemptuous "pooh!" she curled herself in bed and fell into a dreamless sleep.

Her uncle was out when she came down to breakfast but he returned before she had finished the meal.

"Well, have you got over your scare?" he asked as he dropped his hand on her shoulder in passing her.

"I'm perfectly certain it wasn't a ghost," she said.

"Oh, you are, are you?" his eyes twinkled, "and how do you reach that conclusion?"

"Ghosts don't wear boots," she said decidedly.

"They may have shoes," said the dry old man. "I take tea without sugar or milk, Margot. If it was not a ghost, then I ought to be careful," he said. "I have brought some rather valuable things back from Brazil and Peru; some old statuettes of the Incas," he explained, but did not offer to show them to her.

She had had a glimpse of his study that morning, a plainly furnished room on the ground floor with a book-case and a desk, a few skins of animals stretched on the walls and little else.

That morning she was still occupied in unpacking her trunk and disposing of her photographs about the room.

She lunched alone, her uncle having gone to Hastings in his car. When he had told her he was making this trip she had expected he would invite her and he must have guessed her thoughts.

"When I get a better car I will take you round the country, Margot, but you make my old flivver look shabby."

She smiled at the implied compliment. She was beginning to like this old man with his mordant humour and his pretty turn of compliment.

His absence gave her an opportunity of exploring her own domain, and putting on a pair of heavy boots—for the snow lay thick upon the hillside, under a radiant sun—she went out on a tour of inspection. Beyond the garden was a wide paddock which ran up the hill and was divided from the next property by a wire fence. She followed this fence to the crest of the rise and saw that it passed close to a pretty little brick bungalow which stood on the top of the hill. This must be Down Hill she thought. It covered a larger area than she had imagined. She caught a glimpse of bachelor comfort through the wide open windows. A stout man, whom she rightly guessed was Jeremiah Jowlett's factotum, gave her a stiff little bow as she came abreast of him. He was shovelling away the snow that had fallen in the night from the garden path. Apparently Jerry had gone to town.

"Good morning, madam," he said respectfully.

"Is this Down Hill?" she asked.

"Yes, madam. This is Mr. J.O. Jowlett's estate."

The words sounded to her a little magnificent and she smiled internally. She remembered that her travelling companion of the evening before had said that this man disapproved of "Jeremiah." She passed the house and walked along the Downs and sat down to rest on a garden seat which had evidently been placed there by Jeremiah, and was dry and free from snow.

The view was wonderful. In the golden sunlight the Weald was a glittering snow-field, and far away on her right she saw the silver fret of the sea running across the gap at Seaford, like the line of a lace bodice across the V of a woman's corsage. She sat

entranced, dreaming idly, formless, pleasant fancies floating across her mental vision—lazy mists that alternately revealed and veiled the substances of life. Her reverie was rudely broken.

"Pretty view, ain't it, miss?"

She turned with a start. Not more than two yards away a man was standing in the road. He looked like a tramp. His clothes were old and soiled, his boots were gaping, and his chin had not known a razor for a week. He was puffing at an empty pipe and his big coarse hands were thrust into the pockets of his tattered overcoat.

She rose quickly.

"Yes, it's very beautiful," she said.

"Do you live around here, miss?"

"Yes, I live here," she said shortly and turned to walk back towards Down Hill, the red roof and chimney pots of which showed above the trees. She heard his feet crunching through the snow behind her and presently he drew abreast.

"Nice place to live, ain't it, miss?" he asked and she made no reply.

"I haven't had anything to live on since yesterday morning," he said suggestively.

She opened her bag and took out a shilling and handed it to him without a word.

"Thank you kindly. Mind you, I'm a rich man by rights, if every man had his due."

He volunteered the information and paused at the end as though he expected her to make some reply. She quickened her pace but recognized the futility, and even danger, of running from a danger which was probably non-existent, and when they came again in

sight of the house and the placid servant leaning on his shovel, she recovered something of her lost self-possession.

"There's a ghost around here, so they tell me," said the tramp, and she looked at him more carefully.

He was a hollow-faced man with small eyes set close together and a long aggressive nose. She thought his age was something between forty and fifty.

"I shall be round here for a day or two," he said. "My name is Sibby Carter. I'll just be hanging around."

In spite of herself she laughed.

"I don't know why you should tell me that," she said. "I am really not interested in your plans."

"Sibby Carter my name is," he repeated, and smacked his lips, "and I shall be hanging around here for two or three days."

She was walking away from him when he followed and caught her arms with a grip that made her wince.

"Here, I can tell you something," he began but the stout servant had seen, and with a surprising agility had leapt the hedge and was coming towards them.

"Clear out of here. What do you mean by accosting this lady!"

Sibby Carter released his hold and his thin lips curled up in a sneer that showed his yellow teeth.

"Hello, fat and ugly!" he said rudely. "What are you coming interfering with me for?"

The girl, breathless and a little white, had instinctively drawn to the stout man's side.

"You be off," said Mr. Jowlett's servant peremptorily.

"I've as much right here as you have," said Sibby Carter.

"You're on private property, you know that! Now be off, or I'll take you down to the village and give you in charge."

The tramp seemed impressed at this possibility and he looked from the girl to the stout man, and then:

"Fat and ugly!" he shouted. "Fat and ugly!" and went trudging back the way he had come, his shoulder hunched, his hands in his pockets.

CHAPTER IV — THE PASSING OF SIBBY

WHEN James Stuart returned the girl told him of her unpleasant experience and he listened with a grave face.

"As a rule we see few tramps in this neighbourhood," he said. "You must not go out alone, Margot. What did he call himself?"

"Sibby Carter!" she repeated with a half smile, but Mr. Stuart did not smile.

"I must remember the name. It may be useful for purposes of identifying him," he said. "We must thank Mr. Jowlett for the service that his servant has rendered us."

He himself met Jeremiah at the station that night, and Jeremiah, whose work had suffered that day by the memory of two laughing grey eyes, accepted the invitation to dine with indecent haste.

"I am glad Minter was on hand," he said. "Confound that fellow! But that was Minter all over. Ever the knight-errant and rescuer of distressed ladies—lucky devil! Do you dress at nights?"

"No, no" said Mr. Stuart, shaking his head. "I want you to come as you are. Perhaps you'll drive straight to the house."

"I'll take the elevator to the ninth," said Jeremiah, "and I'll be back at the house in time to welcome you."

But when he did get to Arthurton Lodge Mr. Stuart was waiting. The dinner was a great success from the point of view of two peopled who rallied one another as though they had been friends since childhood. The old man was a silent but appreciative audience.

"And so you actually saw the ghost! And he wore hob-nailed boots. Bully for the ghost," he said boisterously.

"It's fun for you but I was scared to death," said the girl.

"You were afraid I'd lose him I suppose," said Jerry, "and thank you for your thoughtfulness. He certainly had no right to stray on to your property, and any time you see him away from his ancestral home I hope you will send him back. I must get some slippers for him," he said gravely. "You have no idea how that ghost wears out boots——"

"You haven't seen him yet!" she challenged. "You won't speak so flippantly of him when you do."

"I never speak flippantly of ghosts," protested Jerry. "Certainly not of my own ghost. When I bought the property five years ago and built that bungalow I particularly asked for special provision to be made for William——"

"Who is William?" asked the unsuspecting girl.

"William is the name of the ghost," said the other solemnly.

"You're incorrigible. And besides you know uncle takes quite a different view."

"About ghosts?" asked the other incredulously.

"Don't you uncle?" the girl appealed.

Mr. Stuart rubbed his beard.

"Naturally I believe in manifestations," he said. "I have witnessed some extraordinary psychic phenomena and I would not exclude the possibility of even a ghost."

"I am sorry if I——" began Jerry.

"You can say anything you like about them," said the old man good-humouredly. "I'm merely expressing an opinion."

They adjourned to the drawing-room after dinner and to the girl's surprise Mr. Stuart accompanied them and sat whilst she sang. It was in an interval of silence, one of those momentary cessations of speech which the superstitious associate with the

twentieth minute, that an interruption came. The girl looked round suddenly at the shuttered window.

"What was that?" asked Mr. Stuart quickly.

"I thought I heard a sound," she said. "It was as though somebody had touched the window pane."

Jerry rose.

"I'll go and see," he said, but the hand of James Stuart detained him. "It may be our friend the ghost," he said, half jocularly and half seriously, "and in that case I think that somebody should see him who takes a less frivolous view."

"Shall I come with you?" asked Jerry.

"I'd rather go alone," replied Mr. Stuart, and was gone for some time.

They heard his footsteps walking along the gravel path which ran round the house and then they heard him return. It was some minutes before he came back to them and he met Jerry in the passage.

"Miss Panton was getting anxious," said the young man.

"Nobody was there," explained Stuart as he came back to the drawing-room and laid an electric torch upon a table. "I searched the shrubbery and the garden but there is no sign of ghost or burglar."

"It may have been the creeper knocking against the window," said Margot, but Stuart shook his head.

"There is no wind and I particularly noticed that the creeper is trimmed close near the window," he said. "Perhaps it was your imagination."

They sat talking for some time and the old man included himself in the conversation. Jerry was hoping that the scientist would tell

something of his adventures in Brazil but beyond a perfunctory and superficial reference to the heat and the mosquitoes he said little or nothing and the talk was mostly of Margot's school life and Mr. Stuart's reminiscences of her mother when she was a girl.

He was in the midst of one of these stories when he stopped suddenly and bent his head.

"Did you hear anything?" he asked.

"I heard nothing," said Jerry in surprise. "What did it sound like?"

"It sounded like a footstep on the gravel. Did you hear it Margot?"

But Margot had not heard it either.

"Strange!" muttered Mr. Stuart.

The conversation was resumed. Again he stopped.

"I'll swear I heard a cry," he said.

Jerry had heard what he thought was the faint screech of a distant owl.

"I thought it was an owl, too," said Margot.

Soon after Jerry rose to go and they walked with him to the hall, Mr. Stuart helping him on with his coat. He had left his car at the back of the house outside the little garage but refused the old man's company.

"I can find my way up the hill road blind-folded." He said as Stuart opened the door, "and——"

He stopped and started back with a little exclamation of surprise. And well he might be surprised, for crouched in the porch was the figure of a man. The light in the hall was strong enough to

show every detail of the huddled man and Margot recognized him.

"Why, it is the tramp!" she cried. "Sibby Carter."

Jerry leant over the figure and touched it, and at that touch it rolled over and fell in an inanimate heap.

"Dead!" gasped Jerry and looked closer.

As the figure lay its throat was exposed and there was a round and livid bruise at the nape of the neck.

"Dead!" said Jerry again. "And murdered I think. The Ghost of Down Hill has a pair of very powerful hands, Mr. Stuart, for this man's neck is broken!"

CHAPTER V. — MINTER THE SERVANT

THERE was no doubt about it. The man was dead. Jeremiah had only to look at him for a second to see that. Gently he shepherded the girl back to the drawing-room. She was white but very calm, and when she spoke her voice did not so much as tremble.

"Is he dead?" she asked quietly, and marvelling at her self-possession, Jeremiah nodded.

"How dreadful! What do you think happened?"

"My mind is in a whirl," said Jeremiah, shaking his head helplessly. "I know no more than you."

"I am sure he is the man whose name was Sibby Carter," she said, and he looked at her in astonishment, for he had not heard her half-whispered words when the body had been found.

"Do you know him?" he asked incredulously.

She shook her head.

"I only met him to-day," she said and she told him again of her meeting with the tramp.

"That man?" he said in surprise; "what an extraordinary coincidence!"

It was an hour before the police came, and nearly two hours before the ambulance arrived from Eastbourne to carry away the victim of the tragedy.

The fact that Jeremiah had been present in the house relieved Mr. Stuart from the cross-examination of the detective officer, who came in haste with the ambulance.

"It was very fortunate you were here," said James Stuart gravely. "I can't understand it. Why did the man come here, and who but the Ghost of Down Hill could have slain him?"

In other circumstances Jeremiah would have laughed.

"The Ghost of Down Hill?" he repeated; "but surely, Mr. Stuart, a ghost is not a material thing with material strength in its insubstantial fingers?"

James Stuart shook his head.

"There are more things in this world than are dreamt of in your philosophy," he said simply, and with these words in his ears Jeremiah made his way back to his bungalow, a greatly perturbed man.

Although the hour was late, the stout and placid Minter was waiting for him; a little fire burnt in the grate of his comfortable sitting room, and Minter, who never seemed to be tired, listened to the story of the "exciting night" which that air of polite interest which invariably annoyed Jeremiah.

He was a large, stout, calm man with a clean-shaven face and deep-set eyes, the very model of a perfect valet-butler, but there were times when he irritated Jeremiah beyond endurance. The man had been in his service for five months, and in every way had been satisfactory, and now Jeremiah had a particular reason for being grateful to him. He had that morning saved the girl from the unpleasant attentions of the dead Sibby Carter.

"One would imagine, Minter," he said irritably, "that I was telling you the story of a tea-fight. Don't you realize that there has been a murder committed under your very nose?"

"Oh yes, sir," said Minter respectfully. "What time would you like your breakfast in the morning?"

"Pah!" said Jeremiah.

He dismissed his servant, and went to bed. But his mind was too active to sleep. Again and again he turned over in his mind the extraordinary circumstances of that evening, and somehow the adventure of the surveyor of Eastbourne, and Mr. Staines's

curious experience, insisted upon obtruding into his mind and mixing themselves up until, with a groan, he shut his eyes tight and attempted to dismiss entirely from his thoughts both the Ghost of Down Hill and the mystery man who held up inoffensive people and examined their pass-books.

He was nearly asleep when he thought he heard a stealthy movement outside his door, and was instantly awake. He listened. Again it came, a faint creak of sound, and carefully pulling back the clothes, he got out of bed as noiselessly as possible, crept to the door and listened.

The clock of Arthurton church struck three.

"This is getting on my nerves," he muttered to himself and would have gone back to bed, but for the unexpected repetition of the sound. This time it was outside the house. He walked across the room to the window and gently drew aside the curtain. The cloud wrack had for a moment covered the moon, but he could see a figure walking quickly down the snow-covered path to the gate, and there was no mistaking its identity, for the bulk of the man could not be distinguished. It was Minter!

He pulled on his trousers over his pyjamas, slipped his feet into long mosquito boots, and bundling on an overcoat, he went out into the passage through the door which was open, along the covered passage way, and out of the side door, which also was ajar.

When he got outside the man had reached the gate.

"Minter," he called sharply, and at the sound of his voice Minter turned. He was carrying something in his hand; something that glittered and gleamed in a fitful ray of moonlight.

"Minter," called Jeremiah again.

"Yes, sir," was the answer, and the man came slowly back.

Before he could slip the thing he carried into his pocket, Jeremiah had seen the revolver, and gasped. He did not link the mild Minter with lethal weapons.

"What the devil are you doing crawling about in the middle of the night with a pistol in your hand," he demanded.

"I was following the Ghost of Down Hill, sir," was the cool reply.

"The Ghost of Down Hill," repeated Jeremiah, "what do you mean?"

Minter did not reply immediately, and Jeremiah, scrutinizing him keenly, saw that he was considerably perturbed by the unexpected interruption to his quest.

"I thought I saw a figure moving through the gardens here and I followed it."

Jeremiah looked at him.

"But you're fully dressed, Minter," he said quietly. "Did you happen to be fully dressed when you saw the ghost?"

"Yes sir," was the surprising reply.

Jeremiah led the way back to the sitting room and turned on the light, and this time his examination of his servant was more thorough.

"And did you happen to have changed your clothes before you went to bed," he asked pointedly, for the suit the man wore was not the butler's uniform that had encased his portly figure when Jeremiah had said good-night to him.

Minter did not make any reply.

"I will see you about this in the morning," said Jeremiah, and with a curt nod dismissed his servant.

The more he thought the matter over, the more puzzled he became. A faint glow was showing in the east before he eventually fell into a troubled sleep, to be awakened by the correct Minter, who came into the room with a preliminary knock, carrying the usual morning tea service.

The man filled Jeremiah's bath and put his clothes ready before he spoke.

"I, daresay, sir," he said, after a moment's hesitation, "that you think my conduct last night was rather strange."

"I think it was extremely strange," said Jeremiah, "and I tell you this frankly, Minter, that unless you explain what you were doing out in the middle of the night, and explain it to my satisfaction, I shall dispense with your services."

Minter's heavy head nodded.

"That I can quite understand, sir," he said politely, "but if I tell you, sir, that I have seen the Ghost of Down Hill three nights in succession, and that I was waiting last night to follow him, you will understand that there is nothing mysterious about my having changed my clothes for garments more suitable for an out-of-door chase."

This argument was unanswerable. Jeremiah did not for one moment doubt the big man's word. He also had seen the Ghost of Down Hill, and it was quite possible that the man was speaking the truth.

"Ghosts, sir," the man went on, "do not as a rule impress me because I come from a long line of Wesleyan Methodists who are not great believers in spiritual manifestations. But a ghost with a theodolite and a measurers-rod seems to me to be little outside of the usual run of ghosts."

"What do you mean Minter?" asked Jeremiah quickly, as he sat on the edge of the bed staring at the man.

"Two nights ago, sir, I saw the ghost, and he carried over his shoulder a small theodolite—I saw it in use later. He was making elaborate measurements, evidently starting from the big rock in the sunken garden below the house, for I saw the rod as distinctly as I see you. Before I could dress and get out he was gone."

Jeremiah whistled. All doubt as to his servant's story was now dissipated. He knew that the man was speaking the truth.

"You must have found his footprints?"

"I found them immediately after, sir, but was unable to make a very careful observation in the morning because another fall of snow fell during the night," said Minter, shaking his head, and Jeremiah had to laugh at the matter-of-fact tone of his servitor.

"Aren't you a bit scared, Minter?"

"No, sir, I am not very scared," said the man with a smile. "Not so scared as the ghost would be if he knew that I took the revolver prize at Bisley for three years in succession."

CHAPTER VI. — THE WARNING

"IT is an extraordinary case," said Lord Ilfran shaking his head. "One of the most extraordinary I have ever heard about."

He was seated at his desk in the big room overlooking Whitehall and Jeremiah Jowlett was sitting on the opposite side of the table facing him.

Lord Ilfran ran his long, nervous fingers through his white hair, and stared out of the window.

"You say that this man Carter was a member of the Flack gang."

Jeremiah nodded.

"I don't think there can be any doubt about that," he said, "His finger prints have been taken and identified; moreover, he didn't seem to disguise his name. He went to prison at the same time as John Flack, the head of the gang, and they were released from prison within a few days of one another."

"Has Flack been discovered?"

"No, sir," replied Jeremiah. "We have put a call out to all stations, but up to now we have not been able to pull him in."

"It's curious," said the Public Prosecutor again, "and what a terrible shock for that poor girl."

"She stood it splendidly," said the enthusiastic Jeremiah. "Most women would have fainted, but she was a brick."

"There were no footsteps in the snow?"

"No. The garden path had been swept clear of snow, and the only clue we have is the one supplied by Mr. Stuart. He said he thought he heard footsteps a few minutes before the tragedy was discovered."

Lord Ilfran leant back in his chair.

"The ghost suggestion is, of course, absurd," he said. "Somebody is masquerading for a purpose of his own. By the way, have you seen the ghost?"

"Twice," said Jeremiah to his chief's surprise. "The fact is sir—" he leant across the table and lowered his voice—"so far as a house can be said to be haunted, that description applies to my bungalow. I haven't told Miss Panton because I did not want to alarm her, but the Ghost of Down Hill is a very real quantity, and although my glimpses of this midnight wanderer have been more or less sketchy, yet the descriptions Miss Panton gave me of the man in the monk's robe with a grinning skeleton face are identical with what I saw."

Lord Ilfran was seldom surprised. A lifetime spent in the law had removed the novelty even from the bizarre, but now he was genuinely amazed, for Jeremiah was a hard-headed young man who had few illusions.

"How long has this been going on?" he asked curiously.

"About six months," was the reply, "or about three months before Mr. Stuart returned from the Brazils. The first time I saw the ghost was one late summer night when a storm was working up from the sea. I was sitting in my study reading a law book, when I heard a tap-tap at the window. I thought that a shutter had worked loose and took no notice. Presently it was repeated. I walked to the window and looked out; it was a pitch black night and I saw nothing until suddenly there came a blinding flash of lightning, and there, standing in the middle of the path, I saw the figure of a monk. By the time I had got outside it was raining heavily, and the fitful flashes of lightning failed to reveal the visitor.

"The second time was a month ago, and on this occasion the visitation was a little more serious," said Jeremiah quietly. "I had gone to bed and was asleep when Minter woke me to tell me he heard a noise in the cellar. We have a cellar beneath the house

where I keep a small stock of wine. When I went to investigate I discovered the cellar door wide open and on going down I found that somebody had dug a deep hole in the floor of the cellar."

"You saw nobody?" asked Lord Ilfran, intensely interested.

"Nobody," replied Jeremiah, "at that moment. Behind the house is a covered passage-way which communicates with the kitchen, and affords me storage for my bicycle and a side entrance to the garage. In my search of the house I reached the passage-way, carrying a petrol lantern and then I saw the visitor for the second time. He was at the far end of the passage near the side door, and I am willing to confess that the sight of that fleshless face startled me. Before I could reach him, he was gone."

"Has there been any other manifestation?"

Jeremiah smiled.

"It is curious you should used that word sir," he said, still smiling. "It is a favourite one of Mr. James Stuart, who implicitly believes in spirits, and has asked me to give him permission to spend a night alone in the house in order that he may lay the ghost. I might add," he went on, "that Minter, my servant, has also seen the figure—a fact which I learnt only last night."

Lord Ilfran rose from his table and paced the room slowly.

"That will not bring us any nearer to the discovery of the murderer of Sibby Carter," he said.

"Are you going to fall in with Mr. Stuart's suggestion?"

"I don't know why I shouldn't," said Jeremiah. He did not explain that he was particularly anxious to be on good terms with the uncle of Margot Panton, and that as Mr. Stuart had offered him the use of his own house during the period of his ghost laying, he was all the more willing and ready to humour the old man in his whim.

"Yes, sir," he said. "I am taking Minter down to Mr. Stuart's house the day after to-morrow."

"That is Christmas Eve," interrupted Lord Ilfran, "and a very excellent time for ghosts. I am sure I wish Mr. Stuart luck."

Jeremiah Jowlett went home that night a little earlier. He was anxious to see the girl who had made so profound an impression upon him, and more anxious to learn whether any new evidence had come to light. He found Margot amazingly cheerful. Perhaps it had been her first shock which had steeled her to the subsequent tragedy, but at any rate, she was less distressed than he had dared to expect.

"Uncle is out," she said. "Will you have some tea with me?"

Jeremiah did not want a second invitation. He lingered over the repast till it was nearly dinner time, but Mr. James Stuart had not returned, and at last he reluctantly took his leave.

It was a beautiful night, despite the cold and they stood for a moment talking at the garden gate. From where they were the outlines of Down Hill house stood clear against the dying light in the western sky.

"I have allowed Minter to go home to see his sister," explained Jeremiah, when the girl had remarked upon the darkness of the bungalow. "Please don't worry about me, Miss Panton; I am an accomplished bachelor, who can grill a chop and boil a potato, with the best cook in Arthurton,"

"It seems horribly lonely for you," said Margot. "Won't you stay to dinner?"

"I'd like to," said Jeremiah in all sincerity, "but I don't want to annoy your uncle by living on the premises."

Suddenly she clutched his arm.

"Look!" she gasped, and pointed to the house.

He could only stare in speechless amazement.

Of a sudden every window in the little building was glowing redly, as though simultaneously every room was on fire. Fiercely it gleamed across the snow-white hill, and then as suddenly the red glow died down.

"I must investigate this," said Jeremiah.

"Let me come with you," she said, and he felt her grip tighten on his arm, and hesitated.

"I think you had better stay here," he said, and a minute later she heard the thunder of his car as it took the steep hill road.

Jerry jumped from the machine at the entrance to his demesne, and raced along the garden path. Switching on a pocket lamp he tried the side door. It was locked. He thrust a key into the lock and a second later was in the covered passage-way. He did not meet any intruder, nor did he expect to. There was a strong smell of sulphur and the dining room, the first he entered, was hazy with smoke. A small fire, which Minter had lit before he went out, glowed on the hearth; but the room was empty, as was his bedroom where another small fire was burning.

He searched every inch of the bungalow without finding the slightest trace of a visitor. It was impossible that anybody could have made their escape, for all the doors, except the side door, were locked on the inside, and the side door had a lock which head recently put on, which he knew it was impossible to pick.

He came back to the dining room, and then, for the first time, saw a document which lay upon the table. It was not of paper, but of old-fashioned vellum, and the words were written in quaint old English characters:

"Thy presence on this hallowed spot is a profanation. Leave thy house, lest the lonely monk of Down Hill bring thee to a terrible death."

CHAPTER VII. — THE FOOTPRINTS ON THE ROOF

HOW had the paper got there? He looked round and the solution became apparent. The table was placed near to the window and above the window were two small ventilating panes, one of which was opened. The paper could have been thrust in from the outside and the chances were that it would fall upon the table. He opened the window to let the fumes disperse and then sat down to puzzle out the situation.

Suddenly a thought struck him, and he went to the fire and looked at it carefully. On the top of the red glowing coal were the ashes of paper. He went into the next room and made a similar discovery. Slowly a smile dawned on his face.

"So that's it, is it?" he muttered and went out of the house taking with him a step ladder which stood in the passage. His home was built into the hill rather than upon it, and the fields behind were almost on a level with the roof. He planted his step ladder and climbed carefully. In a second he was standing on a small stone parapet which surrounded the roof. There was no doubt now as to what the visitor had done; the snow-covered slates were marked in all directions with footprints, and they led up to the squat chimney stack. He made an inspection and returned to his room. Whoever the Ghost of Down Hill was, there was no doubt as to the method he had employed for producing the effect which had so startled Jeremiah and the girl. Two packages of red fire had been dropped down the two chimneys simultaneously, had fallen into the fire, and had ignited producing the red glow.

He went back to where he had left his car and drove down the hill again to reassure the girl whom he found waiting wrapped in her furs at the garden gate of Mr. Stuart's house.

"Nothing very startling," he said carelessly. "Some fireworks that I had intended using to celebrate the coming of the New Year had been left too close to the fire, and were touched off."

"It might have been serious," said the girl. "Your house might have been burnt down."

"I don't think it was as bad as that," said Jeremiah.

He stood talking to the girl for some time, and then went back to the house. Half way up the hill he thought he saw a figure crouching in the shelter of some bushes, and stopping the car with a jerk, jumped out. The man turned to run, but Jeremiah was on him before he had gone a few paces.

"Let me have a look at you, my friend," he said as he gripped the stranger's arm; and then he fell back in surprise, for the man was Minter.

"What the dickens do you mean by sneaking away into the bushes?" demanded the exasperated Jerry. "Now see here, Minter, I have had just as much of this mystery as I am willing to stand. You will come up to the house and explain what you are doing here when you are supposed to be in London attending the sick bed of your sister."

The man made no reply, but stepping on to the running board of the car as it moved, accompanied Jerry back to the house.

"Now, Minter," said Jeremiah grimly, as he closed the door. "I won't trouble you to spin a yarn about the Ghost of Down Hill; I will even excuse you the lie that you were returning home, and that you mistook me for the monkish bogey and hid from fear. Let us have the truth."

Minter was dressed in a rough knicker-bocker suit, over which he wore a heavy Irish ulster. He did not seem in the least embarrassed by his employer's direct questions, and his placid face remained impassive all the time Jerry was talking.

"I have no explanation to give, sir," he said in a smooth, even way, "if you will not accept the story that I was returning to the house when you overtook me,"

"Why did you run away?" asked Jeremiah sternly.

"That, I admit, was an error," replied Minter, gravely inclining his head. "I should have stood my ground and offered my explanation. The truth is, Mr. Jowlett, I did not think that the occupant of the car was you."

"Nonsense," snapped Jerry, "you know the sound of my car as well as you know the sound of Big Ben. Now, what have you to say for yourself?"

But Minter had evidently no explanation to offer, for he remained silent.

"Very good," said Jeremiah, "then you leave my service to-morrow, you understand, Minter? I will not have these infernal mysteries."

Suddenly a thought struck him.

"You haven't by chance been perambulating the roof of the bungalow to-night?" he asked sardonically, and Minter smiled.

"No, sir, I did not go on to the roof," he said, "but I have been wandering about the house; it is possible you may have observed my footmarks, though I was careful to keep to the paths as much as possible."

"Did you see the fire?"

"The red fire," corrected the other, "yes, I saw that."

"Did you see me come up to the house?"

Minter nodded.

"I even saw you come up to the——"

Crash!

They were standing near the window when the interruption came. The big glass pane splintered into a thousand pieces, and

something dropped heavily on to the floor. Jerry stared open-mouthed at Minter, as the man stooped and picked up an object from the ground.

"How very cheerful, sir," said Minter holding a large white something in his hand, and despite his self-possession Jeremiah shivered. It was a human skull that had come hurtling through the window!

Jeremiah Jowlett was early in London the following morning, and instead of going to his office, he proceeded straight to Scotland Yard, where he had an interview with the assistant commissioner.

That official listened without comment whilst Jeremiah told his story, and when he had finished:

"What do you want me to do?" he asked.

"I want the best detective you have, sir, preferably Leverett, who I am told is a particularly smart man; for I am sure that behind all these ghostly warnings there is something particularly sinister, and I associate the death of the man Carter——"

"With the Ghost?" smiled the commissioner quietly.

"With the ghost," said Jeremiah.

The commissioner shook his head.

"I am afraid you can't have Leverett; he has been working for some time on a very old case—the Flack case; you probably have heard of it?"

"I know about the Flack gang," smiled Jeremiah, "what is Leverett doing?"

"He has been trying to recover the money that was stolen from the liner. The Flacks got away with an enormous treasure, you remember, and not a penny of it has been recovered. I can let you have Jackson, who is a fairly smart fellow."

"There is another thing I want to say, Sir John," said Jeremiah, and he seemed reluctant to continue. "It is about my man Minter; a very excellent chap," he explained, "but I have reason to suspect that he knows more of this ghost business—in fact, I am under the impression that he is the ghost!"

He took a little case from his inside pocket and produced a photograph.

"I snapped Minter when he wasn't looking the other day; perhaps you people may be able to identify him. I hate thinking ill of the man, who has been a particularly good servant to me, but in the circumstances——"

The commissioner took the photograph from Jerry's hand and examined it.

"Do you know him, sir?"

"I seem to remember the face."

"Is he a member of the Flack gang," said Jeremiah with sudden inspiration.

"I will ask Leverett," said the commissioner quietly. "And in the meantime Mr. Jowlett, I will see that your house is kept under observation. It must be an extremely trying experience for you."

"It will be more trying for the ghost," said Jerry unpleasantly.

He had arranged with Minter to take his clothes and personal belongings to James Stuart's house, and when he returned that evening it was with a sense of going home.

He found the dutiful Minter very much at his ease in his new surroundings.

"Nothing disturbs that fellow," said Jerry, with reluctant admiration. "You would imagine that he was born and bred in your uncle's service."

Margot laughed.

She was looking unusually beautiful that night, Jerry thought, and he prayed that Mr. Stuart's investigations into spiritual phenomena would occupy at least a week, though he felt a little guilty that he had allowed the old man to go to the house at all. His conscience was pricking him that night at dinner.

"Do you know, Mr. Stuart," he blurted out, when they had reached the coffee and dessert stage of the meal, "I think I ought to tell you that these manifestations, as you call them, are due to human agency."

The old man turned his grave eyes upon Jeremiah.

"That is what the uninitiated say of all manifestations," he said quietly.

"But I have a feeling that I am fooling you by allowing you to go to the house," said Jerry.

"I am willing to be fooled," said Stuart with a quiet smile.

"I saw you to-day."

It was the girl who spoke, and she addressed her uncle.

He rose his bristling eyebrows.

"You saw me, my dear," he said gently. "Where did you see me?"

"At Seafort," said the girl with a smile.

"You were in a big motor-boat. It was almost too big to call a motor-boat; it was nearly a yacht. I had to go into Seafort to get some medicine for Mrs. Wilmot, who has rheumatism," she said.

"You should have gone to Eastbourne, the road isn't so bad," he said shortly and then after a long pause; "Yes, I was trying the boat. A man wishes to buy it, but I am not very keen on the sea."

"But it was a brand new boat, and they told me it had just arrived from London and that it was yours."

He smiled.

"The wish was probably father to the thought," he said good-humouredly, "and the gentleman who gave you this information was probably the proprietor, who is anxious to sell it to me at a profit."

He changed the conversation to another channel.

At nine o'clock that night, with a small bag in his hand and Jeremiah's keys in his pocket, he said good-night to the two.

"I shall probably have some very important information to give you in the morning," he said. "I am in a particularly good mood to-night, and there is very little doubt that I shall gain communication with those upon the other plane."

"Cheerio," said Jeremiah, who could think of nothing more appropriate to say.

"Poor uncle," said the girl when the older man had gone. "He really does believe in spirits you know."

"I'm inclined to believe in them myself," said Jeremiah flippantly. "In fact, I hope that Down Hill is stiff with ghosts, then they will keep Mr. Stuart busy for another year."

He reached out and took her hand, and saw her colour change.

"Margot," he said, "how long does a man have to know a girl before he falls hopelessly in love with her?"

She tried to withdraw her hand but he held it tightly.

"I know that this is not the most appropriate time for love-making, and that by certain rules of conduct I am acting despicably," he said earnestly, "but Margot, I can answer the

question I have just asked. It takes a man just as long as I have known you to fall in love."

"Do you play chess?" she asked hastily.

"I play everything except the flute," said Jeremiah.

He was a riotously happy man that evening, for he had read the answer to his unspoken questions in the moist eyes of the girl, and when he went to bed that night (which was in Mr. Stuart's own room) he seemed to tread on air.

The next morning brought James Stuart a little weary-looking, but full of confidence. He had an amazing story to tell of a visitation, and a long conversation he had had with one of the innumerable spirits which haunted Down Hill, but he only stayed for ten minutes and then returned to the house.

Jeremiah went up to town, taking Minter with him. He had a number of purchases to make, and he intended that this Christmas Day should be a memorable one, not only in his own life, but in the life of the woman he loved.

They got back to Arthurton after nightfall and the snow was falling gently but persistently.

"It looks as if we are going to have a pretty wild night, Minter," said Jerry as he jumped into the car.

"Yes, sir," said Minter agreeably.

The wind was blowing in fitful gusts, and long before they had reached the house, both men were white with the driven flakes.

Jerry could not see Down Hill house: the falling snow made an impenetrable veil which hid, not only the bungalow, but the whole of the hill.

The girl had been busy decorating the house with holly and greenery, and Jerry spent a happy evening assisting her. He allowed Minter, who said he had a chill, to go to bed early, but

this was no great hardship to Jerry, who wanted to be alone with the girl, free from interruption.

They had almost finished their work when Jeremiah remembered a particular present which he had given Minter to carry. It was intended for Mr. James Stuart and was not amongst the parcels that were piled on the hall table. Minter would not be asleep so early, he thought, and went up the stairs to the room where Minter was quartered. He knocked at the door but there was no answer, and he turned the handle and walked in. The room was empty; the bed had not been slept in, and Jeremiah went back to the girl as a very thoughtful young man.

Mrs. Wilmot, the housekeeper whose rheumatism had sent the girl into Seafort, had not seen Minter, nor had the other servants who had been employed since Margot's arrival.

"He said he had a chill, and I let him go to bed," said Jeremiah in a troubled voice. "I don't understand it and I don't like it. If he had a chill he would not go out on a night like this, and if he hadn't a chill, he had certainly some reason for lying."

"Perhaps he has gone up to your house for something he had forgotten," suggested Margot. "Now don't be silly, Jeremiah; come along and help me with this holly."

Midnight came and the girl had gone to bed, but still Minter had not returned. Jerry made three visits to his room, and at one o'clock he decided that he would lock up and go to bed. But how would Minter get in? Minter was beginning to worry him. That smooth, placid man, who was never disturbed and never distressed by the most extraordinary happening, was beginning to present a problem almost as insoluble as the Ghost of Down Hill.

At two o'clock Jerry went up to his room and lay down, pulling the silken coverlet over him, expecting any minute to be disturbed by Minter's knock, but no sound came. After lying for an hour he got up and looked out of the window. The snow was

still falling, and there was no sound but the low soughing of the wind and distant hoot of a fog-horn in the far-away Channel.

He wondered what the old man was doing at that lonely house on the hill, and smiled despite his annoyance. Then he heard the low purring of a motor-car. It came to him with the wind in the little gusts, sometimes loud, sometimes almost indistinguishable. He threw open the casement windows and leant out, peering into the darkness. Nearer and nearer came the sound of the car, and suddenly with a start he recognized that it was his own car which he had left in the garage on the top of the hill, on the previous night.

There was no mistaking the sound. Jeremiah could have distinguished it from a dozen. Suddenly the purring ceased; the engine had stopped. Faintly came the sound of a voice; a queer, eerie sound it made in that silent night; high-pitched and unintelligible. Another voice replied, and then there was an interval of silence. Suddenly a shot rang out, clear and distinct. It was followed by another, and a third, in rapid succession.

Jerry waited to hear no more. In three seconds he was outside the house and running through the deep snow in the direction of the road whence the sound had proceeded.

He heard the roar of his car, and jumped aside just in time to avoid being run down; it was going without lights and he only had time to glimpse a huddled figure at the wheel before it passed into the night.

He stood stock still, bewildered and baffled. Then there came to him a faint cry from the direction the car had gone; he plunged through a snow drift almost up to his waist in an effort to reach the man who had called. Putting his hand in his pocket he discovered his lamp, and flashed the light. He knew before he had picked up his bearings that he was in one of the deep ditches which ran on either side of the road and he struggled back to firmer going.

"Where are you?" he shouted.

"Here," cried a faint voice, and he turned into the narrow lane which led up to the Down Hill farm.

Suddenly he stopped and his blood ran cold. Staring up from the ground was that ghastly fleshless face he had seen on the monk. Only for a second was he stricken motionless, and stooping picked up the thing. It was a mask; evidently dropped by somebody, but was evidently part of the "ghost's" equipment.

"Where are you?" he called again.

"Here," said a voice close at hand, and he turned his lamp on a figure that lay half covered by the driving snowflakes.

"My God," he gasped, "Minter!"

Minter's white face was streaked with blood, but that calm man could afford to smile.

"My name isn't Minter," he smiled.

"I am Inspector Leverett of Scotland Yard and I am afraid I am badly hurt."

IT was some time before Jeremiah could procure assistance to carry the wounded man to the house, but at last Leverett was propped up on pillows in the drawing-room, and Mrs. Wilmot was lighting a fire to prepare restoratives.

Jerry had a rough knowledge of surgery and he saw at once that the two wounds in the man's head and shoulder were not as desperate as he had feared, a view which was confirmed when Arthurton's one doctor came upon the scene.

"Who did this?" asked Jeremiah.

"John Flack," was the reply. "I have been watching him for five months, and now the devil has got away, though he can't escape from England, that I swear. Which way did he go, sir?"

"Was he in the car?" asked Jeremiah.

The man nodded and winced with the pain of it.

"I think he went to Seaford."

"To Seaford," gasped Inspector Leverett. "Didn't I hear the young lady say that he was trying out a motor-boat? That is the means by which John Flack will escape."

"No, it was Mr. Stuart who was trying the motor-boat!" said Jeremiah.

The man looked around.

"Is the young lady about?" he asked in a low voice.

Jeremiah shook his head. "No, thank heavens, she's still sleeping, Mrs. Wilmot tells me."

"Good," said Leverett, and eyed Jeremiah curiously. "You say that Mr. Stuart owned that boat at Seaford," he said, "and I told you that John Flack would escape by means of that boat. I now tell you what will probably surprise you, Mr. Jowlett. Flack and John Stuart are one and the same person!"

CHAPTER VIII. — THE LAST

MARGOT PANTON never knew the story of her uncle's past. She simply heard that he had gone abroad, and did not even know that wreckage of his motor-boat had been picked up in the Channel four days later. To her John Stuart is still that pleasant memory of a pleasant and eccentric old man who left England hurriedly and unexpectedly on a wild winter night, and has not returned.

Jeremiah saved her from the knowledge, and when he sold his house at Arthurton, and without authority disposed of James Stuart's property, handing the proceeds to the girl, she never dreamt but that he was acting under Mr. Stuart's directions.

Even when they married, as they were three months later, Jeremiah never showed her the letter which Inspector Leverett sent to him a week after the girl had been whisked off to town.

"Dear Mr. Jowlett," the letter ran,

"I feel that I owe you an apology and an explanation beyond the few incoherent remarks I made on the night when you undoubtedly saved me from death, for I should have been frozen by the morning.

"You probably know as much about the Flack gang as I do. The gang was organized by one of the cleverest crooks in the world; his real name was James Stuart. Stuart had been in the hands of the police many times, but always under the name of John Flack. He was a clever bank smasher and for his crimes he served three terms of penal servitude. His long absences from home, when he was supposed to be engaged in tours of Brazil and South America generally, are explained by the fact that he was serving terms of penal servitude during these periods.

"Nobody knew that the white-bearded gentleman who lived at Arthurton was Flack, and I had no suspicion of the circumstances until some six months ago. Flack, or Stuart's last

job, was the burgling of the strong room of a liner. He and his two companions got away with nearly a million dollars in paper currency, with the police hot on their track. The third man of the gang was drowned in an attempt to swim a river, but Flack and the man named Sibby Carter went their several ways, agreeing to meet in London at a certain rendezvous. The police picked up Sibby Carter, and from him learnt the direction Flack had taken, and started off in pursuit of the leader of the gang. Flack or Stuart, must have known what was happening, for he made a bee-line to the country he knew best, namely the country about Arthurton where he lived, respected by his neighbours, who had not the slightest idea that they were harbouring one of the greatest crooks in the world.

"He dare not go home, however. His biggest asset was his identity as Stuart, and he had a shrewd suspicion that the police would not be shaken off. He arrived at Arthurton in the night, and his first step was to bury his plunder. He chose a spot on the top of a hill, the site of an old monastery which was supposed to be haunted. There, deep in the ground, he buried a steel box containing his loot.

"After carefully marking the place, he went on to London, hoping to baffle his pursuers, but was arrested at Charing Cross station, two days later. He swore that the money was lost, and was sent to a term of penal servitude for seven years, as also was his confederate, Carter. The two men were released within a few days of one another, but unfortunately Flack was released first. Carter, who wanted his share of the loot, and who knew that his chief had hidden it, began a search to discover the hiding place of his former leader.

"He must have known something about Stuart's identity, for the man appeared in Arthurton a short time after his release. It was his arrival at Arthurton which brought me, for I was trailing Sibby Carter in the hopes that it would bring me to the stolen property which had been hidden. Carter was anxious to get the money, but he was also in some fear of Stuart, for I have no

evidence that he had ever spoken to the man, except on that night when he lost his life. But here I anticipate.

"Stuart, released from gaol, came back home and discovered to his horror that a bungalow had been erected on the very spot where his money was hidden. His first suspicion was that the builder, or the Clerk of the Works must have found the money and said nothing about it. He paid a visit to the Clerk of the Works, who by this time had an appointment with the municipality of Eastbourne, and holding the man up at the point of a pistol, he examined his pass-books, his object being to discover whether any large sum had been paid into the account at the time the building was in course of erection. Failing to make this discovery he next called upon the builder, a man named Staines, and submitted him to the same search. When these had failed, he was certain that the money was still under the house, and began his carefully considered plan of frightening the occupant away so that he could pursue his search without hindrance.

"Unfortunately for him, I had already arrived at Arthurton and knowing that Sibby Carter was in the neighbourhood, and more than suspecting that James Stuart and Flack were one and the same person, I had contrived to be taken into your employment as a butler—in which capacity I trust I have given you no cause for complaint.

"I shaved off my beard and moustache, and it was fortunate for me that I did so, otherwise Stuart would have recognized me.

"On the night that Sibby Carter was killed I was watching the house with a pair of powerful night glasses, and I saw the two men in conversation. They must have walked to the porch, and there undoubtedly James Stuart, who was a tremendously powerful old man, had broken the neck of his erstwhile companion in crime, in order to silence him. Possibly Carter had threatened to expose Stuart. The motive for the murder is not at

all obscure; there were many reasons why it was necessary that Carter should be put out of the way.

"The rest of the story needs no telling. Stuart, posing as a spiritualist, got admission to your house. On the night he dug deep into your cellar and unearthed the tin box, I was watching him. I followed him down the hill road through the storm, hanging on to the back of the car, knowing that he was making his final getaway, and that the tin box on the seat by his side contained the money he had stolen from the liner.

"When we reached the road I thought it was time to reveal myself, and jumping on to the step, I put a revolver under his nose and demanded his surrender. At the same time I gripped the steel box and jerked it from the car. Before I knew what had happened he had shot me down—that is the story.

"The money is now recovered, and I should not think it is necessary that Miss Panton should know any more than she already knows.

"One thing I think you can tell her—it is that her uncle, definitely and finally, has laid the Ghost of Down Hill.

"Yours very sincerely,

"Frederick Leverett."

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S BELT

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"I SUPPOSE there is nothing more to be said."

The woman rose slowly from the deep chair and drew the lace wrap about her shoulders with a little shiver.

The terrace before Emmersley Hall was deserted. There floated out to the couple the soft strains of the latest Hungarian waltz, and there was a harmony between the soft mist of sound, and the solemn splendour of the moonlit path, which sloped down from their feet.

The man had risen with her. He was a tall, handsome man on the right side of thirty; his straight back and squared shoulders spoke eloquently of the army. Now his fine face was hardened by the pain which he had occasioned, and which he would willingly have spared this beautiful woman.

She looked unusually pale in the moonlight; a beautifully shaped creature with masses of dark hair, dressed low about her temples; imperious and haughty; you saw that in the almost insolent droop of the eyelash, in the strength of the chin.

She was humble enough now.

"No, I do not think there is much to be gained by talking it over," said the man with a nervous little laugh. "I wonder at myself, that I can discuss it so dispassionately, but it is only because I want to be fair to you, Anna—I beg your pardon!" He corrected himself hastily. "It is a trick one does not readily lose—Lady Wensley."

As if actuated by a common desire to get as far from the house as possible, they walked to the edge of the terrace.

"You think I have treated you badly?" she said, leaning over the balustrade by his side.

She spoke quickly, for she knew that their time together would be all too brief for her purpose.

"I don't think you acted quite straight with me," he said. "I want to be fair with you. I know now that you were keen on marrying money, but you might have given me some indication of your thoughts and wishes in that direction."

Yet, she noticed wonderingly, there was no reproach in his voice.

"The first news I had of your marriage came by the very post by which I expected to receive your final wishes about the marriage settlement. You had given me no indication, no hint of your changed views. Why, you were married by the time the letter reached India. It was a pretty hard and bitter blow for me," he said gravely.

"You have survived it very well, Ronald," she said with a little smile.

He turned his head; his face was stern; there was no reflection of the amusement she had shown.

"God gives men strength in the hour of their necessity," he said soberly. "Do you remember your 'Vanity Fair'? You remember that awfully good chap who would have been the hero of the story, if Thackeray could have tolerated a hero; and you remember what he said to the girl whose whims and fancies he had endured for so long? You probably don't. He said 'You are unworthy of me.' It was as I was finishing your letter for the second time, that that blessed phrase came to me. Trite, wasn't it?" he said with a short laugh. "Yet, like most trite things, it was very comforting."

She hung her head.

"You are very hard; you do not understand."

"I confess I do not; at least, I did not then," said the man.

"You do not know what it is to be poor," she said in a low voice.

He laughed again.

"I've hardly ever known what it is to be anything else," he said with a little chuckle of genuine amusement.

"And now it is all over, and you've forgotten?"

"Yes, it is all over," he agreed.

"And you have forgotten?"

"No!"

"You think women are horrid?"

There was a little inquiring tilt to her eyebrows, as she raised her face to his with the question.

"I do not think that women are horrid," he said, "though I am perfectly sure, by whatever standard one judges, that you were not as nice as you might have been. Let it go at that."

He turned as if to re-enter the house, but she laid her hand on his arm.

"One moment, Ronald," she said. "Suppose—suppose?"

She stopped. Her breath came quickly, there was a strange fire in her eyes.

"Suppose I have regretted all that I did, and that I see now, with a clear vision, my folly and its fruits? Suppose," she dropped her voice to an eager whisper, "that I count love above all things? Ah! Listen to me!"

She caught his arm, for he would have moved a little away from her in his embarrassment.

"Money isn't everything, Ronald. It was wicked of me, and cruel of me, I know, to do what I did; but I wanted something more than love, and now I want love more than everything."

The diamond star upon her white bosom rose and fell quickly; her shining eyes were uplifted to his.

He shook his head slowly. There was pity in the face turned to hers.

"It is too late," he said gently, "even were I blackguard enough, it is too late! For if you did not love me, I believe I could not love you as a man should love——"

She stepped back with a little cry.

She had never doubted his love for her. His words were like a blow; harder to endure.

"There is someone else?"

He dropped his eyes before hers; he found himself talking a little hoarsely and cleared his throat.

"There is someone else," he said. "I think that, at last, I have found the real thing."

Through the French window which opened from the ball-room to the terrace, there came a tall, big-moulded man. The light from the room touched his white hair, and gave the pair a momentary glimpse of a red, jovial face.

"Hullo! Is that you, Anna?" he called.

He saw her figure standing aloof from the other, and hastened towards her.

"Come along, my dear, the Rajah was asking for you. Hullo, Grey!" he said genially to the other; "come inside, my lad. You will find, when you reach my age, that a sentimental passion for

moonlight effects will be tempered by a natural fear of rheumatism. Brrrrrr!" he shivered.

"I will come in one minute, John," said the woman. "Captain Grey was just telling me about his adventures in India and you've interrupted at the most exciting part."

"I'm sorry," said her husband with a quick laugh.

He turned his kindly blue eyes upon the younger man.

"You fellows who have adventures to tell," he said ruefully, "have a tremendous advantage over us poor stay-at-home fogeys. Yet the Rajah has promised a glimpse of that treasure of his. There's adventure enough there—even for you, Grey," he said.

"I will come in."

"One moment, Captain Grey," said lady Wensley, desperately. "I wanted to ask you just one thing."

Her husband stood for a moment irresolutely, and then, as he realized that he was a little de trop, he made a graceful retreat.

"Don't stay too long, the air is chilly," he called over his shoulder.

She waited until his big form had disappeared into the brilliantly illuminated room, then turned to her companion.

"What is her name?" she asked quietly.

Ronald Grey hesitated.

"It would be hardly fair?" he said.

"Are you engaged to her or aren't you?" she asked, almost roughly.

"I am engaged," he said simply.

She laughed; it was not a laugh that was good to hear. It told of the disappointment, chagrin, humiliation and thwarted designs

of the woman. It told too of the reawakened love, perhaps of its very birth, since she had never felt so deeply as now.

"Who is she?" she asked again.

Before he could reply, the slim figure of a girl stepped out on to the terrace, and came towards them.

"Ronald," she cried, "we are waiting for you."

She stepped up to him and laid her hand on his arm.

There was no need for lady Wensley to ask any further. The man's silence was eloquent. He had wished to spare her the humiliation of knowing that Marjorie Douglas had supplanted her in his heart.

Marjorie was Anna Wensley's cousin—a beautiful child who had blossomed, as it seemed, in a day to womanhood. She was fairer than Lady Wensley; as tall, as graceful, and, of her colouring, more beautiful. Her eyes sparkled with laughter as she spoke; she was all excitement.

"Oh Anna," she cried, "aren't you longing to see this wonderful belt of the Rajah's?"

The woman pulled herself together with a great effort.

"I'm not particularly keen," she said.

She knew that the tête-à-tête was finished. What further need was there for any talk between them? She knew the worst; she had offered something and that something had been rejected.

She fell in naturally by Ronald's side, and walked back with him into the room.

The dancing had ceased; the guests were gathered in one corner of the room about the swarthy figure of the Rajah of Jhiopore. It was the Coronation year, and to Sir John Wensley had fallen the duty of entertaining one of the richest of India's potentates. They

had met when Sir John had been on a shooting expedition, and he had welcomed the suggestion of the India Office that he should take under his wing for protection and guidance this stout and kindly Easterner.

The Rajah had had the benefit of an Oxford education, and was at once a pleasing and an accommodating guest.

As the little party entered the room, his Highness was talking to a tall, clean-shaven man, of distinguished appearance. The hair about his temples was grey; there was a certain strength in the set of his jaw, but humour shone in the grey eyes that looked out upon the world from under shaggy black eyebrows.

The Rajah's deep laugh sounded high above the babel of talk.

"This will amuse you, Sir John," he called, as he caught sight of the figure of his host.

"What is that?" asked Sir John with a smile. "Anything Claude Trennion says is calculated to amuse me."

"I don't know that it is particularly amusing," drawled Trennion, "though I suppose even a policeman is entitled to his jape. I was telling the Rajah that he ought to be jolly careful of that belt in the house of an antiquarian, as you are, Sir John, of such enthusiastic tastes."

"Well, the Rajah hasn't corrupted me yet," smiled Sir John, "though possibly after I have seen this wonderful belt of his I shall be filled with greed and envy."

"You shall see it now."

The Rajah got up from his chair and beckoned a servant.

"Will you tell my secretary that I wish to see him," he said.

Then, turning to the little throng about him, he said seriously:

"It is rather a business seeing the Queen of Sheba's belt. You see, it is one of my family heirlooms. I brought it to London with me because the British Museum people were most keen on preparing a replica, and though my faithful subjects tell me, from time to time, that I am the most admirable of men—that I am the very light of the heavens, and the rich soil beneath their feet—I have not the same childlike faith in their integrity as I have in the staid gentlemen at your great national museum."

With a swift glance he looked around. His eye lighted on Marjorie, and he nodded.

"You, Miss Douglas, shall wear this belt. It looks its best upon somebody. You can have no idea of the fascination of the jewel until you see it worn by a beautiful woman."

The words of the Indian sent a quick flush to the girl's face, though the compliment had been kindly meant. Whatever embarrassment she may have felt was relieved at that moment by the arrival of the dark-skinned secretary of the Rajah.

They exchanged a few words in Hindustani, and then with a deep salaam the secretary left.

Trennion watched the scene curiously. He had come down from London that day at the invitation of Sir John. He had welcomed the change. Too much of Scotland Yard is not good for the health of an Assistant Commissioner, and work had been very heavy during the past few months, as a result of the Coronation festivities.

He took an idle interest in people; they were his chief and solitary "subject." Human nature he found more engrossing than any other kind of actor.

He fell in at the rear of the little party which trailed behind the Rajah and his henchmen. They made their way through the long corridor of Wensley Hall, and up the broad stairway to the Rajah's suite. There was nothing in the furnishing or decoration

of the apartment to suggest the abiding place of one of India's richest men; for Sir John knew the Rajah's tastes sufficiently well to avoid ostentation, and indeed, the stout little man who ruled the Province of Jhiopore neither desired Eastern luxury or missed it.

There were two rooms communicating. The inner was his Highness's sleeping apartment; the outer his sitting room, and, for the time being, his state office.

He bade them wait a little while and disappeared into the bedroom. A few minutes later he came out carrying a long, flat case of red morocco. He laid it upon the table in the centre of the room, under the branching lights of an electrolier, and opened it.

The little party which thronged about the table uttered cries of surprise and delight.

There, upon its blue velvet cushion lay the Queen of Sheba's belt. It was a great breast-plate of dull gold set about with uncut diamonds and emeralds; on either side, flush with the breast of the wearer, were two bosses thickly encrusted with pearls and emeralds.

He lifted it gingerly from its case and weighed it reflectively in his hands.

"This weighs seven pounds," he said, "which rather disproves the theory that the new woman is better developed physically than was her sister of olden days."

He nodded to Marjorie and she stepped forward, a little uncomfortably, but smiling.

"May I be your lady's maid?" he said, and with his deft hands he fastened the great belt about her waist.

It fitted her perfectly. The ancient fasteners behind, working as truly as they did in the days of Solomon's queen, snapped into their places: the jewelled shoulder-straps fitted true into their

little slots, which the dead and gone workmen of Babylon had fastened.

She made a gorgeous figure standing there in the full glare of the lights.

Ronald, watching her, felt a glow of pride in her loveliness, and their eyes met in one understanding and happy glance.

Lady Wensely had intercepted that glance, and something gripped at her heart and stirred the very foundations of her being. With a superhuman effort she retained control of herself.

"Very pretty, Marjorie," she drawled, "you look as if you had just stepped off the stage of the Gaiety, or," with an almost imperceptible shrug, "from the floor of a Covent Garden ball. What is the value of this wonderful thing, Rajah?"

The little man looked up, showing his white teeth in a smile.

"It would be difficult to value it from the point of view of an antiquarian." He glanced at Sir John and the baronet nodded. "But taking a purely material view, if one weighed the gold and valued the gems according to the standard of Hatton Garden, that belt is worth 200,000 pounds."

There was a little gasp of astonishment.

"Oh, take it off please," said Marjorie nervously, "I don't like to wear anything so valuable, even for a few moments. One of the emeralds may drop out."

The Rajah shook his head.

"Enjoy the sensation for a moment," he said. "Remember as you stand there, that Sheba's queen wore that belt probably before the great Solomon himself."

"Please take it off," she said.

She had gone suddenly white. Some premonition of evil had come to her, and Trennion on whom no sign was lost, caught a glimpse of the face of his hostess, and wondered what this girl had done to earn that brief and fleeting malevolence which gleamed from the older woman's eyes.

With deft fingers the Rajah released the belt, and the girl, looking a little white, smoothed out the creases in her crumpled dress with a hand that trembled.

"It gave me quite an uncanny feeling," she said, smiling nervously. "Wasn't it absurd of me!"

"Other people have had that feeling," said the Rajah drily. "People with stronger nerves than you, Miss Douglas."

He replaced the belt in its case and disappeared into the bedroom with it; by and by he returned.

"What did you think of it?" he asked Sir John.

"It is a magnificent piece of work," said the antiquarian, shaking his head in admiration. "I didn't have the opportunity I should have liked to have had of examining it."

"You shall have that tomorrow," said the Rajah. "To tell the truth, I am as chary of showing it as most people are of wearing it. It wasn't fair, really, that I should ask Miss Douglas to put it on. It was only because I, myself, have no faith in these ridiculous superstitions"—he shrugged his shoulders contemptuously—"but I should not have asked other people to share my scepticism."

"Is there a legend?" asked Trennion.

"There is an obscure and rambling legend to the effect that anyone wearing it is liable to bad luck, or something of the sort. It is not a particularly powerful talisman, either for good or evil."

They made their way back to the ball-room.

It was a small house-party that had gathered at Wensley Hall. This restriction as to the number of guests had been necessary, since Sir John had been in some doubt as to the retinue the Rajah would bring, and in what state he would live. It had come as a pleasant surprise to find this genial ruler so simple a man. The Rajah of Jhiopore, with his big round body and his big round face, was a pleasant surprise to most people with whom he was brought into contact. He was one of the best read men of his class; a keen sportsman, and a good fellow by all standards.

Trennion was thinking this as he strolled to the library. The "policeman" was no dancing man, and his idea of rest took the very common place and intelligent shape of a book, a pipe, and an easy chair. It was all he asked of the world—just then.

He found a comfortable chair in one of the window spaces. Sir John was something of a modernist so far as his domestic comfort was concerned, and those nooks which in ordinary country houses are breeding places of pneumonia and influenza, were at Wensley Hall the cosiest of corners.

The room was empty when he came in. One light was burning and he did not trouble to switch on the remainder. He had no wish to read: he lit his pipe, and stretched himself on the big settee, looking through the window at the soft vista of park land mysteriously illuminated by the yellow moon.

He was a tired man. He had come to Wensley Hall because he was tired. His head nodded; the pipe in his mouth fell with a little thud on to the carpeted floor and he dozed.

He could hardly have fallen asleep before he was awakened by the sound of voices.

He opened his eyes. Marjorie stood in the centre of the room, an agitated Marjorie, with her hands clasped. She faced a small bald-headed man with melancholy side whiskers.

"I can't pay you yet, Mr. Callit," she was saying; "I had no idea you would want paying so soon."

"Well, Miss," said the man, "I'm sorry to bother you, but I really must get money in. I've had some big demands, otherwise I shouldn't have bothered you. I've come down specially from London, to-night, to see you."

"But I can't pay you," said the girl in despair. "I can't! I should never have had those things if I had thought you were going to bother so soon. My dividends aren't due for another two months, and it is impossible for me to do what you ask."

The little man shook his head, helplessly.

As for Trennion lying there, an unwilling eavesdropper, he was in an unenviable position, and would have given no little sum to have been well out of the room beyond earshot.

He knew exactly what the girl would feel if she found him there, or if he were to make his presence known.

"Can't you get the money anywhere, Miss?" asked the man desperately; "you don't know what a hole I am in. Eighty pounds won't be anything to a lady like you."

"Oh, you ought never to have come," said the girl. "I wish to Heaven I had never bought clothes at your wretched place. It is abominable of you."

"Can't you borrow the money?"

"How dare you!" she flamed. "How dare you suggest that I should borrow money! Whom do you imagine I could borrow money from? You have to wait."

"I can't wait, Miss," whined the man, wringing his hands. "I tell you I am in a pretty bad position. What about Captain Grey?"

She drew herself up and looked down at the other coldly.

"I am going to ring for the servant," she said; "you had better go. You are behaving disgracefully. You have no right to mention anybody's name to me."

"I must have the money," said the man in a panic. "That's what I came for, and I am not going away till I get some."

Trennion thought he heard a slight noise near the door; his ears were unusually sensitive, and they caught that which the girl had evidently missed.

He looked up quickly and bit his lip to suppress an exclamation. In the shadow of the portiere he saw a woman, and that woman was Lady Wensley. She had been there all the time—he saw that. From where she stood she could have seen him and she turned her head, but her attention was too closely occupied by the scene she was witnessing.

Trennion guessed that she had been there all the time. He had no illusions as to the motive of human beings. His police work had destroyed much of his faith in the common honesty of humanity. She had followed the girl, he guessed, with intent to discover the meaning of, what must have been to her, a suspicious visit. And now she stood there, listening intently.

"I will send you something tomorrow," said Marjorie at last. "I can do no more than that."

The man hesitated.

"Are you sure, Miss——" he began.

"I tell you I will send you money tomorrow," said the girl with a little stamp of her foot; "and you must be content with that."

"Well——" he rubbed his hat irresolutely on his sleeve, "that will have to satisfy me, Miss, I suppose," he said dubiously. "I'll trust you. If you can let me have it before twelve o'clock tomorrow, it will make all the difference in the world to me."

She said no more. The interview was finished.

Trennion saw the figure by the portiere slip through the door. He saw, too, the puzzled look which came into the girl's face at the sight of the open door—a bewilderment which was succeeded by a look of apprehension. Without a word she threw the door wide open and passed through; and the man followed, closing the door behind him.

Trennion sat up, picked up his pipe from the carpet, and walked into the middle of the room.

An Assistant Commissioner of Police is not usually perturbed by the frailties or the unexpected impecuniosities of his fellows. That Marjorie Douglas should be damned neither shocked nor amused him. At first he thought he had come upon a surprising streak of extravagance in the girl, but the words of the agitated tradesman had dismissed that idea from his mind. He saw exactly her position—a position in which any woman might find herself.

He wondered whether he should offer her the money. Eighty pounds was not a great sum, but to make the offer would be to make the admission of knowledge. It was a delicate situation. He was pondering the matter over, his chin on his palm, when the door opened hurriedly, and Anna Wensley came in.

She stopped dead when she saw him.

"Mr. Trennion!" she said, and then, with a little nervous jerk of her shoulders, came farther into the room. "I wanted a book; these dancing people are boring me. How long have you been here?"

She spoke quickly and jerkily.

"I've just come in," replied Trennion untruthfully.

"Did you meet—anybody?" she asked.

"No! I saw your cousin, Marjorie. Who was the queer old gentleman with her?"

"Oh! He is a man who has come down from town." She shrugged her shoulders. "I'm afraid poor Marjorie is rather extravagant. You won't tell anybody, will you?" she asked pleadingly.

"You may be sure I shall tell nobody," he said.

He wondered exactly what her object was in telling him this and how much of the secret she was prepared to divulge.

"You see, Marjorie has been spending a tremendous amount of money on jewellery and things." Her gestures spoke her disapproval more admirably than words could have conveyed it. "I think the young girls of to-day are tremendously foolish. It is so easy to get credit, and then," another shrug, "to find a method of raising money on the jewels. I don't say," she said quickly, "that that is what Marjorie has done—but so many girls do it. It's rather shocking, isn't it?" she cooed.

He nodded.

"It's very shocking indeed," he said gravely. "In fact, it is an offence under the law in certain cases."

"I know. But you are not going to arrest dear Marjorie and take her away?" she smiled, "are you? No! The man you saw was from Stangs, the jeweller. However, one oughtn't to talk about it, but I know I can trust you, dear Mr. Trennion."

"Oh yes," he said with a smile, "you can trust me."

What object could she have, he wondered, in lying to him? He did not doubt that the man was from a firm of dressmakers. Why should she wish to represent her cousin so blackly? Why had she come in so hurriedly and shown such evidence of dismay at finding him there?

These were the problems which helped to keep him awake longer than he desired that night. They occupied him at spare moments on his journey to London the next day.

Once back in Scotland Yard his engrossing work was sufficient to take his mind from the little comedy which he had seen enacted at Wensley Hall. He was an enthusiast in the pursuit of criminal research. He found his work already defined for him that day, and spent a fascinating twelve hours taking the measurements and the weights of a number of known criminals, who had been transported in closed vans to Scotland Yard, to his office, for that purpose.

The work took him two days. It was two days of minute measurements, two days of patient recording.

On the second day he had finished his work and had gone back to his club for dinner. In the middle of the meal a club waiter brought him a telegram, and he opened it.

His eyebrows rose as he read the message it contained:

"QUEEN OF SHEBA'S BELT HAS BEEN STOLEN FROM WENSLEY HALL.

CAN YOU COME ALONG AND HELP US INVESTIGATE? JOHN WENSLEY."

He laid the telegram down by his plate and whistled softly to himself.

Marjorie Douglas stood facing her cousin in the dusk of the drawing-room. The girl's face was tense and white, but about the thin lips of Lady Wensley flickered a faint satirical smile.

"I really cannot understand what you are driving at, Anna," said the girl.

"I didn't suppose you would," said the older woman drily; "yet I thought you might have saved me the embarrassment of putting what I have to say into plain words."

"They cannot be too plain for me," said the girl coldly. "I am tired of innuendoes, and of hints and suggestions."

Lady Wensley had dropped her eyes, and was viewing with apparent interest the gathers she was making in her tulle scarf.

"I suppose you are," she said, without looking up. "As for me, I am more than tired of other things."

The girl looked at her with a puzzled expression.

"I can quite understand, Anna," she said gently, "that you are a little distraught by this dreadful robbery; but your hints hurt me; they worry me terribly. Can't you say exactly what you mean? Do you suspect anybody? And do you think——?"

She stopped dead.

"You don't think that I know who took it?" she asked with a catch of her breath.

Lady Wensley raised her insolent eyes to her, and stared unwinkingly.

"I wonder why you say that," she said softly. "Now, can't you offer me any hint that would help me when it comes to giving dear Mr. Trennion information?"

"Hint?" gasped the girl. "Why surely——"

"I simply hate to say it, Marjorie," said Anna.

She walked to the window and looked out upon the gathering gloom, her hand behind her; the figure of a woman with an unpleasant task before her. Yet the straight line of the shoulders and the poise of the head told the girl that her cousin would not

shrink from the performance of her duty, however painful it might be.

"Of course, dear," she said, in her cooing voice, "everybody knows you are hard up."

The girl flushed.

"I don't know what you mean," she said steadily.

Lady Wensley shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, after all, if you don't know you are the only person here that doesn't. Isn't it a fact that you are being dunned by a man who came all the way from London?"

"That is true," said the girl hotly, "and you are wicked and cruel to suggest that the fact that I have been in want of money can in any way be associated with the loss of the Rajah's jewel. It is infamous of you!" She stamped her foot. "How dare you?"

Lady Wensley turned swiftly.

"Did you pay the man the money?" she asked pointedly.

"I did," said the girl.

"Where did you get the money from?"

With an effort the girl mastered her growing anger.

"The money came to me? I found the money?"

She stopped; it seemed such an impossible explanation.

"I received money on Thursday."

"The day after the robbery," said Lady Wensley meaningly. "How did it come?"

"It came by post, in bank notes."

"But from whom did it come?"

The growing terror in the girl's eyes was pitiable.

"I don't know," she said.

She forgot to be indignant or angry. All she realized was that there was piling up against her a monstrous mountain of suspicion, and that she could give no explanation which would satisfy her inexorable cousin.

"It came by post," she said again, "on Thursday morning. There was just a hundred pounds in bank notes. I don't know who it came from," she shook her head helplessly, "but I had written to one or two people, and I thought that one of these had sent it."

"To whom did you write?"

"I thought it was from one of these," she went on quickly; "but there was no name on the envelope. I should have written to them to find out, but by the next post came a letter from both of them. One of them sent me the money, which I returned; the other was not able to help me. That is the truth," she said defiantly. "You have pried into my private affairs; you have put the worst constructions upon my actions. You don't, for one moment, imagine that I had anything whatever to do with the taking of this jewel?"

Again the shrug.

"I want to settle this matter without any bother," said lady Wensley. "After all, my dear girl, it isn't so much a question of what I think, as what the world will think?"

She hesitated a moment, eyeing the girl closely.

"What will Captain Grey think?" she said slowly.

The girl's face was white now. She stood a moment staring at the other, as though she could not fully grasp her meaning. Then she turned, and without another word, left the room.

She went straight to the library, expecting to find Ronald there. She knew he had some work to do, for he had been asked to prepare a report upon some north-western tribes with which he was acquainted.

He looked up as she came in. He was sitting at the writing table, surrounded by papers. His smile left his lips when he saw the distress of the girl.

"Why, what is the matter?" he said rising.

In a voice which was rendered almost incoherent by her mingled grief and anger, she told him the story, and he listened. And as he listened his eyes opened wide in astonishment.

"But," he said, "my dear girl, surely you are joking?"

"I'm not," she said.

"But Anna would never dare to say that to you," he cried, his brows clouding, "Not in all seriousness?"

For reply, the girl burst into a passion of weeping.

He caught her to his breast, and soothed her as best he could, but it was a long time before he could pacify her.

It was unthinkable; it was monstrous that such a suggestion as this should be made. He had shared in the general perturbation which had fallen upon the household when the discovery of the Rajah's loss was made. It had hurt him to see Sir John Wensley so grieved. The old antiquarian had taken the matter much to heart; and although the Rajah, with oriental philosophy, had made light of the matter, and had sought to ease the shock of the discovery, yet nothing that the Indian could say or do could relieve Sir John of the sense of his own responsibility.

The Rajah had gone. He had taken leave of his host and hostess with the urbanity and geniality which characterized all his movements. One might have thought, from his florid little speech,

and from the gay good humour in which he left, that, so far from having lost a jewel which was worth a king's ransom, he had acquired one.

Two of the best men from Scotland Yard had come down to investigate the matter, without arriving at any result that was satisfactory either to Sir John or to themselves.

Sir John Wensley had been a little disappointed that Trennion could not come himself.

Trennion had a reputation through two continents for the detection of such crimes as these.

Scotland Yard's opinion, as represented by the two detective officers who came, was that the burglary was the work of a gang of international criminals whose activities had, for the past year or so, tried the patience—and called into play all the vigilance—that Scotland Yard possessed.

As against this theory, their enquiries in the neighbourhood failed to elicit any news of strangers, nor did systematic investigation in the villages about Wensley produce any other evidence which might connect outsiders with the crime.

The accusation against Marjorie Douglas was, of course, absurd. Ronald himself did not take it seriously. He was disturbed by a belief, which amounted almost to a certainty, that the robber or robbers had operated from within the house, and that whoever had taken this wonderful jewel had not, so far, succeeded in removing it from the precincts of Wensley Hall.

This view he had communicated to Sir John, but a very stringent search of the servant's quarters had not revealed any clue.

Lady Wensley was not in her boudoir, nor was she in her little study.

Ronald hesitated.

Should he send to her room? Sir John was away; he had gone to town to see Trennion.

His hand was on the bell when Lady Wensley came in.

She had utilized the period which had elapsed between the departure of the girl and the coming of Ronald, to change. She looked her best in the blacky-blue close-fitting velvet dress which she wore. She had just the touch of colour which she sometimes lacked, and the glitter of diamonds at her fingers offered the only relief to the svelte and sombre figure. Her eyes were bright as with some unwonted excitement.

To his surprise she came forward with a smile.

"I suppose that girl of yours has been telling you that I suspect her?" she asked.

"I think——" he began.

"Don't think," she said lightly. "Just come along and sit over here." She indicated a big settee. "Now, Ronald," she said with almost matronly assurance laying her hand on his arm, "I want you to take a sensible view of things. I know it sounds horrid, but remember this, that Marjorie has been in great difficulties. She is being dunned, and when a young girl is being dunned, you never know exactly what she is going to do."

"But surely," he said, looking at her in pain and astonishment, "you don't really mean that you think Marjorie is a thief?"

"What am I to think?" asked lady Wensley in resigned despair. "Somebody has taken the belt—somebody inside the house."

"But it's preposterous, Anna," he said sternly. "You really don't mean it?"

"Mean it? Indeed I mean it," she said earnestly.

He rose quietly to his feet.

"If you mean that," he said, "then you and I are no longer friends."

"But—-"

He raised his hand.

"Hear me until I've finished. You know as well as I that your cousin would never stoop to so base a crime. Her whole life, her upbringing, her training—everything, is against such a monstrous supposition."

"When a girl buys jewellery—-" murmured Lady Wensley.

"It was not jewellery," cried Ronald indignantly. "She has told me everything. It was a paltry eighty pounds with a wretched little tailor who was on the verge of bankruptcy. He came up here in a panic. As a matter of fact, his petition is filed in this morning's papers."

Lady Wensley smiled.

"How clever of Marjorie!" she said admiringly. "Of course, she saw that in the paper and jumped at the idea."

He turned from her abruptly.

"I don't stay in this house another day," he said, standing at the door, "nor does Marjorie. I see something behind all this—some wicked malice."

"Oh, la la!" laughed lady Wensley; but her laugh was a little artificial, and more than a little shrill. "What melodrama we talk in these days! If you must go, of course you must. I'll have your bag packed, and as to Marjorie"—she shrugged her shoulders—"I suppose you have the right to say that she shall go too. I will place no obstacle in your way. Go to London, and let me know where you are staying. More important," she said carefully, and looked at him with a speculative eye which well nigh maddened

him, "you had better let me know where Marjorie is staying. There may, of course, be developments."

She lingered on the last word with significance.

"Developments," she repeated. "I think I can do no less than go to Scotland Yard and lay my view before dear Mr. Trennion. It is a shocking thing to do, of course, but what am I to do? I must protect our guests."

His calm grey eyes were fixed upon her face.

"I do not know what you can do," he said quietly, "I only know this, that I am either to believe that Marjorie is a thief who has committed a most terrible crime, or I am to believe that you are a jealous, disappointed and malignant woman."

Every word was a clean cut; every word flicked the woman like the cruel end of a lash.

Yet she showed no sign, save the tightening of her lips, and an almost imperceptible stiffening, that she felt his anger. She did not attempt to reply; there she was wise. She controlled all outward evidence of distress; to speak would have been to betray her weakness.

"I choose to believe," he went on, "in the purity and in the honesty of Marjorie. If I do you an injustice I am not doing you so cruel a one as you have done my future wife."

He made a little pause before the last word, and, seeing her wince, was momentarily sorry.

"You may offer Sir John any explanation you wish. You may tell him that I am Marjorie's accomplice if you wish," he said. "I am leaving by the six o'clock train, and Marjorie goes with me to London."

His voice was low, but perfectly under control.

With a little bow he left her. She stood motionless for a long, long time, though it was probably not more than a few minutes, and then she walked slowly from the room, and mounted the stairs to her own bedroom.

She stood before her glass, as though communing with herself; then she turned swiftly and rang the bell.

A French maid came in a few minutes.

"Celeste," she said, "tell me, where is Miss Douglas?"

"She is going, milady," said the girl.

They were speaking in French, for Celeste knew very little English.

"Where is her baggage?"

"In the hall, milady."

"All of it?"

"Oui, milady. Thomas brought down the last bag before your ladyship rang."

Anna considered a moment.

"Go quickly, and if there is nobody there, bring up Miss Douglas's bag—the green one."

The girl went out of the room, and Anna paced the floor feverishly. It was a desperate thing to do. She was in a panic before the girl had half descended the stairs; she would have run down and called her back, in fact, she went to the door with that object, but heard footsteps and stopped. It might be Ronald, he was on the same floor. What a fool she was; what a careless, blundering fool, first to precipitate this crisis and then to take advantage of it with such unpardonable gaucherie! But the green bag would be an easy matter for her—if Celeste could get it.

Then a thought struck her; she walked swiftly to her dressing table and pulled open a drawer.

She heard a tap at the door and her heart froze within her.

"Come in," she said faintly.

It was Celeste, and she was carrying a small green dressing-case.

"Did anybody see you? Answer me quickly—did anybody see you?"

"No, milady," said the girl.

Anna could trust Celeste. The girl was devoted to her—owed, in fact, her life to this strange woman who could be so cold and so fiery, so heartless and so tender even to her dependents. Anna had nursed this French maid of hers through a bad attack of diphtheria, when a trained nurse from a nursing home could have been found for her—when, too, she could still have claimed something of credit for the girl's recovery. But with that perverseness which was at once her charm and her undoing, she had chosen rather to attend the girl herself. Now she was to put her adoring servant's loyalty to the test.

"You will not say a word of this to anybody," she said, fumbling with the clasps of the bag. "Go out of the room and see if there is anybody in the corridor."

The girl went out, and came back to find her mistress, white of face, tugging unavailingly. The bag was locked. She was mad to expect anything else.

"Take it back to the hall," she said "quickly."

She had a key which would open it, for the green bag had been her own till she had given it to the girl. But her keys were not there. They were in her study downstairs. She had realized this the moment she had opened the drawer of her dressing table.

She followed the girl out as she carried the bag along the corridor, and stood at the head of the stairs until she had disappeared from view. There she waited until the French girl returned.

"Did anyone see you?"

"No, milady," said the girl, wonderingly.

"Bien!" said my lady with a heartfelt sigh of relief.

There must be some other way. She must find it. The fortune of chance might serve her in good stead.

She walked steadily down to the hall, just as Marjorie came up. A servant stood at the door, there was nothing to be said but conventionalities.

"I am sorry you have to go," she said politely.

Ronald took her extended hand and bowed over it.

"I hope I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again," he said stiffly.

Marjorie said nothing. She was too shocked by the amazing charge which had been brought against her to find either the will or the inclination to play a part.

To cover the awkwardness of the situation she turned to the waiting groom.

"I want you to register that bag." She pointed to the little travelling bag. "Book it to the cloak-room at King's Cross, until called for."

"Yes, madam," said the man.

To the cloak-room at King's Cross, repeated Anna mentally. She saw a way.

She watched the brougham which carried the two to the station until it was lost to sight in a turn of the long avenue, then she slowly retraced her steps to the house and to her room.

To the cloak-room at King's Cross.

Then Marjorie was not going home. She would go to Plymouth, to her aunt's, and would pick the bag up on her return.

Marjorie lived with her widowed mother in Chelsea, but Anna knew that she was, at that moment, wintering in Italy, and was not due back for a week.

Yes. It would be Marjorie's Plymouth relative who would entertain the girl for the next week.

A week. Sufficiently long! Here was her opportunity.

She went into her study to work out the plan. Her luck was in; how much so she realized when the evening brought a wire from Sir John to say that he was accompanying the Rajah to Paris, and would not be back for eight days.

CLAUDE TRENNION came swinging through the archway of Scotland Yard, his hat, a large white Terai, set a little askew on his head.

His face was thin, clean-shaven and burnt brown by the Indian summer—for he had come to Scotland Yard by way of the Punjab. There was a patch of grey hair at his temple, and a monocle in his eye. He was tall enough to indulge himself in the luxury of a stoop; one hand was everlastingly thrust into his pocket, the other whirled a Malacca cane.

He returned the salute of the policeman on duty at the door, went up the broad stairway two steps at a time, and came to his big handsome office as his uniformed clerk was laying his papers on his desk.

Trennion looked round as he entered the office.

A weighing-machine, such as may be seen in the offices of a medical man, stood under the window. This he had used in preparing his famous report on the Bertillon System.

"Get that away to-day, Cole," he said, nodding toward the machine. "Anybody waiting to see me?"

"A lady, sir."

"Oh yes, Lady Wensley." He nodded, this time to himself, and, unlocking the drawer of his desk, took out a large envelope. "Ask her to come in," he said.

Trennion was silently reviewing the events of the previous week, when the door opened and Anna Wensley came in.

"I am so sorry to bother you, dear Mr. Trennion," she said as they shook hands. "I've come about the belt, of course. I do so want to clear this matter up without any delay, and it was dear of you to give me this appointment."

He smiled.

"Very delightful of you. Won't you sit down and tell me exactly what your own views are?"

Trennion placed a chair for his visitor.

Lady Wensley deposited her muff and gold purse, with its bunch of jingling keys attached, upon the Assistant Commissioner's table, and settled herself comfortably in the chair Trennion offered. She was a little irritated by his "office manner," and how absurd of him to pretend that he did not know her views after her letters and telegrams.

"I am afraid I can tell you very little," she said easily. "The belt has disappeared and we must get it back. It is considered by the Rajah literally as priceless. He is beside himself with anxiety, and till it is found neither Sir John nor I can know any peace."

"The belt is particularly heavy, I remember, is it not?" Trennion put the question almost indifferently.

"It weighs six pounds four ounces," Anna replied promptly; "that is one of the facts which I thought you knew. By the way, you have a list of my guests, have you not, Mr. Trennion?" she added carelessly.

"Yes; I have the list you sent me—here it is."

Trennion took the slip of paper from his desk.

"It was hardly necessary to be so explicit," he smiled, "remembering that I shared your hospitality for two whole days. I see you have included Marjorie Douglas,"—he looked up sharply,—"and you say," he read from the letter, "she is very poor, very pretty, very clever and ambitious, and she was seen coming out of the Rajah's room on the day the belt was stolen. I always understood that Marjorie is a cousin and a great friend of yours?"

Anna's short upper lip curved ever so slightly, but she avoided the inquiring gaze of the other.

"Not exactly," she said carelessly. "She's certainly a cousin; but as for the other—she's a friend of a friend—Ronald Grey, whom you know." Trennion nodded. "She's pretty certainly, I should not call her beautiful—a very fascinating girl, and he's a susceptible man."

"They're engaged?" Trennion put the question as one who was merely making conversation.

Lady Wensley stiffened a little and answered as it seemed, reluctantly.

"Yes; there is some entanglement. She's—well, of course, dear Mr. Trennion, I don't care to say anything unkind, but—" she lifted one velvet-clad shoulder deprecatingly, "I think you remember a certain episode in the library at Wensely—the dunning jeweller?"

Trennion nodded. He maintained his attitude of polite attention.

"You've known Ronald for some time, have you not?"

"Oh, for quite a long time," said Anna easily, though under the inconsequent examination of the man she was experiencing a tinge of exasperation. "I shouldn't have asked Marjorie if he hadn't insisted."

"Insisted?" echoed the attentive Commissioner. "He must be rather a close friend—a very close friend—to insist upon our receiving a girl you do not care to meet."

"Perhaps 'insisted' was not quite the right word—I express myself badly, I am afraid."

Lady Wensley's tone was languidly impatient.

"He has some right perhaps——" Trennion paused.

Anna rose from her chair. Her movement was full of dignity and grace. Only the steely glitter in the narrowed beautiful eyes betrayed her anger.

"Pray what do you mean?" she demanded coldly.

"Don't be offended, Lady Wensley, I beg. Friendship is a big matter. Surely if it has obligations, it has rights."

Anna resumed her chair, and with something of her indolent serenity; the interview was going the wrong way. She felt herself losing grasp of the situation.

A knock on the door interrupted her, and, in response to Trennion's summons, a policeman appeared with a card. The Assistant Commissioner glanced at it thoughtfully and put it on his desk.

"In a moment, Cole," he said, "I will ring; ask them to wait."

"We policemen, Lady Wensley," he continued when the man had left, "are inclined to be brusque, you understand? Well, this affair of the belt is a very serious matter. The Government doesn't want the matter to go into court, but we must get the belt."

"Of course, we must get the belt," said Anna, in her most confidential manner, "but——" there was a slight change of tone, a drop in its temperature, "do you mean that there will be no prosecution?"

"Not if we can get the belt without," said the other decidedly.

The woman bit her lips and moved a trifle restlessly.

"You'll hush it up—I didn't think they did that sort of thing at Scotland Yard!"

Trennion made a little grimace.

"Oh, we do many things at Scotland Yard besides finding lost umbrellas," he said a trifle flippantly.

She was obviously disturbed.

"I must insist—dear Mr. Trennion, how can I allow this matter to be hushed up? Think of my position. It is extremely awkward. I am afraid—indeed, I am convinced—it is impossible in this case to let the guilty go free. I am very sorry for her, of course"—she gave a little shrug—"besides, she was my guest. It is all very embarrassing. I wish Ronald would be more careful in his choice of friends—you see, I know the branch of the family rather well, and they are—well—just a little—oh, how I hate——" she checked herself again, and resumed in calmer tones, "how I hate being concerned in a affair of this kind!"

Trennion had been regarding his fair vis-à-vis attentively. He remembered that night in the library; it was a vivid memory. And her present distress was not lost upon him; he adopted a properly sympathetic tone as he replied:

"I'm awfully sorry for you, but I must tell you that unless we discover the belt actually in Miss Douglas's possession we shall not prosecute."

The lady's lips tightened.

"How do you mean 'in her possession'?"

"Well, unless, for example, she has it on her person, or we find it in here," tapping a green leather bag which lay on his desk.

"But why should it be in there?"

The question was put in all artlessness and Trennion stifled a smile.

"Because this is her bag," he said patiently, "and because I acted on your information and secured it from the cloak-room at King's Cross. Curiously enough, somebody else had been trying to get it."

"Marjorie herself, no doubt?"

"I should say not. If she had tried she would have got it. Besides, she left immediately after the robbery for Devonshire. She wrote to you from London, you remember, telling you that she had gone on in a hurry, leaving her bag at the cloak-room. At least," he said carefully, "that is what you told me. Oh no, the lady who was trying to secure this bag was a veiled, mysterious person—so mysterious that the attendants refused to hand it to her without the ticket. I learnt as much only this morning. I got the bag to-day in order that it might be opened in the presence of interested persons."

Trennion fixed his eyeglass a trifle more firmly in his eye, and pressed the electrical bell upon his table.

"I think we had better try to unravel this matter. You are pretty confident that the belt is in this bag?"

A shadow crossed Anna Wensley's face, but it passed in a moment. She could hear the thump-thump of her own heart, could feel the process of age that drew the skin of her face tighter, and deepened the shadows beneath her eyes. Yet she was apparently her easy, nonchalant self again as she drawled:

"Dear Mr. Trennion, how can I be confident? I only tell you of my suspicions—all that I wish to do is to assist justice."

"I think you may be able to do much in that direction," Trennion assured her, as he turned to the man who answered his ring. "Ask that lady and gentleman who are waiting to see me to come in, please."

"Very good, sir."

Anna started up from her seat suddenly and crossed the room to where Trennion sat. She laid her hand on his arm. She had not expected this.

"Mr. Trennion," she said, "I don't want——"

But whatever she had in her mind to say was not spoken, for at that moment two people were shown into the room.

The first was Marjorie. She was very pale, and her deep blue eyes were wide with distress. Her pretty mouth had a downward droop, like that of a tired child, and her lips were not quite steady, though she pressed them bravely together. Trennion, with his quick smile, welcomed her and pushed forward a chair. She certainly did not look a thief, nor did she bear the stamp of infamy, which as Anna had hinted, was part of her family heritage.

Ronald Grey—tall, soldierly, and more angry than distressed, followed her. He paused abruptly as he caught sight of Lady Wensley.

"Anna!" he said. "You here!" His voice was charged with contempt.

The fleeting expression of sullen rage which had marred her beautiful face a moment earlier as the two had entered the room vanished like birds before a storm. She smiled sweetly at him and utterly ignored the girl.

"Yes, of course I'm here—where did you expect me to be?"

He looked at her impatiently.

"Why have you come?" he said sternly. "Surely not to repeat the lies you pretended to believe at Wensley?"

Marjorie laid a pleading hand upon her lover's arm.

"Ronny, please! Please say no more."

The girl's words and actions seemed to fan to flame some smouldering passion in the beautiful woman as she turned her eyes angrily on the girl.

"Please, please!" she mocked. "Oh, don't beg his forbearance, I pray you. Let him say what he wishes. There was a time, Ronald, when—but do I need to remind you of that time? I see you remember!"

The man's eyes Involuntarily sought those of the young girl, and as he answered the elder woman he pleaded to his fiancée.

"I remember much that I wish I could forget," he said very gravely.

But Lady Wensley had no intention of accepting the rebuff.

"How like a man!" she said almost gaily, "isn't it, Mr. Trennion? Men wish to forget their own follies, and women find their chief joy in remembering them!"

Marjorie's eyes were fixed on her cousin's face.

"Anna," she said, "I have come here to answer the charge you have brought against me——"

Anna stared at her.

"I—my dear, good girl, I bring no charge."

The girl's face went a trifle paler under the insult of the older woman's manner.

"Why! That is my bag," she exclaimed suddenly.

Trennion nodded, and his voice was gentle and reassuring as he replied:

"Yes, it is your bag. I have taken the liberty of exercising certain embarrassing powers which I possess to claim it."

Ronald, who had listened impatiently to the exchange between the two women, could no longer control himself.

"But this is monstrous—it is an outrage," he broke out. Then he looked across at Lady Wensley, who stood all the time with a little scornful smile upon her face. "This is a plot," he accused her.

"If it is a plot," said Trennion soothingly, "I shall find out all about it, you know. I've got quite a reputation for finding things out. The Commissioner says I'm more like a magazine detective than a policeman. Now let us get to facts. The belt was stolen—the Queen of Sheba's belt. I'm sure, Lady Wensley," Trennion favoured her with his most friendly smile, "that dear lady would turn in her grave if she knew that her golden corsets were the subject of an inquiry at Scotland Yard. It was stolen, no doubt about that, and on the morning it was stolen," he turned again to Marjorie, "a maid saw you, Miss Douglas, leaving the Rajah's rooms."

"I can explain," said Marjorie quietly.

"One moment." Trennion's voice was as gentle as ever. "The explanation given is that you had the room immediately above the Rajah's, and corresponding in every way, mistook the floor,

entered the Rajah's sitting-room by mistake, and came out immediately."

"That is the truth—a simple explanation," Marjorie answered him.

"Oh, very!" The words were from Lady Wensley, and her tone implied all that her words left unspoken.

"Lady Wensley, your tone is insulting," said Marjorie, rising indignantly, with tears of anger in her eyes.

Again Trennion interposed, but Ronald interrupted roughly.

"The whole thing is absurd. Suppose Marjorie had stolen it—where on earth could she dispose of it? How could she smuggle——?"

Trennion's smiling protest interrupted his anger.

"I think it best, don't you, if we have no interruptions?" he said smoothly. "Now, Miss Douglas, did you ever see this belt except on the occasion when I was present?"

"Never," said the girl decidedly.

"Or handle it—except on that occasion?"

"Never—even then I did not touch it."

"You did not by any chance carry it away inadvertently, caught it in your wrap or something?"

"Oh, no, that would be quite impossible."

"Why?"

Trennion spoke almost sharply.

"Because I was not wearing a wrap," the girl returned.

"How absurd, Mr. Trennion," Lady Wensley interrupted impatiently. "How would she carry it away in her wrap—why it weighs over six pounds!"

"Miss Douglas apparently does not retain a sufficiently vivid impression of the fact to realize this," said Trennion very quietly; then to the girl, "who packed your bag?"

"I packed this bag."

"What is in it?"

"Nothing of importance, that is why I left it at the cloak-room."

"It is pretty heavy." Trennion lifted the bag gingerly.

"There are some books in it."

The girl showed signs of weariness at the apparently useless questions, and Ronald came to her aid.

"Marjorie has been perfectly open and straightforward, Trennion," he said hotly. "It is a disgraceful thing that such a charge should be levelled at an innocent girl."

Lady Wensley looked at him scornfully.

"If you are going to be heroic, I shall be bored," she said. "May I look at your pictures, Mr. Trennion, do you mind?"

"Pray do, Lady Wensley," said Trennion politely; "but you'll find very little to amuse you, I'm afraid."

"I assure you it takes very little to amuse me—is not that so, Ronald?" She was fast losing all sense of caution. Only she knew that she had thrown something away with both hands; had been prodigal of love—of happiness, of life.

Ronald Grey looked at her smiling face almost sorrowfully, and made no reply. The smile died from her lips and she turned her back on him abruptly.

"You have no objection to my examining this bag?"

Trennion put the question almost deferentially.

"None whatever," said Marjorie; "but I am afraid I have no keys with me. I left them behind at Plymouth."

"Oh!" Trennion's tone was non-committal.

"Of course she wouldn't have the keys, Mr.Trennion," Lady Wensley turned from her inspection of the pictures to make the remark; "and of course they would be at Plymouth—two hundred miles away."

Ronald faced round towards her.

"Your malignity is pitiable," he said in a low tone.

"You grow more and more like the hero of melodrama every minute," she retorted calmly, and then as though dismissing him from her thoughts she pointed to the weighing-machine. "What is this thing, Mr. Trennion?"

He started.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Lady Wensley. That is a balance. I've been conducting some experiments."

"Really, how positively ducky—I wish you would weigh me."

Her enthusiasm was almost childish, and as Trennion hesitated, she stepped on to the weighing plate and repeated her request. It was the desperate expedient of one who desired time. The very freakishness of it took the Commissioner off his guard, and he crossed the room obediently.

"This is not business, you know," he said reproachfully, as he carefully adjusted the weights.

Captain Ronald took advantage of the interruption to gently lay his arm upon his fiancée's shoulders. He spoke reassuringly,

caressingly, but there was infinite pain in the man's clear grey eyes.

"Marjorie, you have nothing—nothing to fear."

She slipped her hand into one of his and moved a little nearer to him.

"You do not doubt me?"

"I'd as soon doubt my mother. If I doubted you, life would be a bitter, empty thing. You are the beginning and end of life to me."

There was no doubting his earnestness and the girl smiled up at him gratefully. The smile faded as the thought of Lady Wensley intruded itself.

"Yet I am so afraid of her, Ronald; there is something sinister in her assurance. She behaves as though she had me in a trap. There is a triumph in her voice, in her look. Oh, Ronny, I am afraid—afraid!"

"Nine-stone twelve-and-a-half-pounds," the Assistant Commissioner's voice broke in on them.

"Is that good or bad?"

"It can be nothing but good in your case, Lady Wensley," said the courteous Trennion.

"I don't know what that means, but I am sure it is meant to be nice."

She played with the weights of the machine as Ronald claimed the other's attention.

"Trennion, Miss Douglas is quite willing that you should cut open the bag."

"That is good of you, but it is not at all necessary," replied Trennion with a smile, taking off the telephone receiver. "We are

always prepared for—hullo—hullo—give me 16-X. Yes is that 16-X? A.C. speaking. Sergeant, send me up some keys, a lady's dressing-bag. Very ordinary type. Thank you. I shan't keep you a minute."

He hung up the receiver and turned to find lady Wensley at his elbow.

"Mr. Trennion"— she spoke very softly, "there is something I feel I ought to tell you."

"Yes," said Claude in a matter-of-fact tone.

She looked significantly at the others.

"Alone," she said briefly.

Marjorie rose immediately and turned to the door, and with the stiffest of bows Ronald Grey prepared to follow her.

Lady Wensley advanced a little towards him.

"You don't mind, Ronald, do you?" she said plaintively, "I shan't tell him a word about—us."

Ronald apparently did not hear her. He held the door open for the girl and they passed out of the room.

Trennion was consumed by a strangely sudden interest in the papers on his desk. It was well that he did so, for Lady Wensley's face at the moment was not good to see. The next moment a stifled little cry caused him to look up.

She had both hands to the lace at her throat. She swayed a little. He was beside her in an instant.

"Are you ill?" He reached for the bell.

"No—no, don't ring; I'll be better in a moment—a little water, just a little water!"

"Let me ring, Lady Wensley."

"Please don't, it will pass. I am ashamed of such weakness."

"Can I leave you—I'll go myself for the water—are you sure you will be all right?"

"Yes, yes."

"I won't be a moment." Trennion went hurriedly from the room. He was really concerned. A woman, unless she was absolutely normal, invariably troubled him.

The closing of the door had an extraordinary effect upon Anna Wensley. She stood suddenly erect.

"Queen of Sheba's belt," she murmured. "Did she feel like me?"

She walked swiftly to the door to be certain it was shut, and then came as swiftly to the table. She spoke breathlessly now, as though the low spoken words urged her on to complete the work she had to do.

"Did she hate a woman and pray for her death? I wonder, a woman who had stolen her love from her. Answer that, my Queen of Sheba's belt?"

Her fingers fluttered rapidly down the buttons of her loose tailor-made coat, and as it fell back something glittering showed against the dark of her gown beneath, something that shone and sparkled as it clasped her waist with its setting of gold. She found a key hanging on a long chain round her neck and hastily unlocked the bag on the table.

In an instant the glittering thing from her waist was in the bag, and she snapped the fastening down. Trennion, entering the next moment, found her still in the drooping attitude in which he had left her, and he hurried to her side with the water.

"Are you better? Do drink this."

She took the glass from his hand and murmured some words of thanks.

"I am so sorry, but you know I am not very strong. Thank you so much, I have been an awful nuisance to you."

"Not at all—do you feel well enough to tell me——"

She put up her hand to stop him.

"I think I won't if you don't mind; after all, it is hardly fair; I have only my suspicions, you know. The girl can't help being poor, can she——"

He looked at her sharply.

"Well, as you please," he said. Then a light knock sounded on the door.

"Come in! Ah, Cole, with the keys. Please ask Captain Grey and Miss Douglas if they would kindly come in again."

Trennion stood jangling the keys together till the man had gone, then looking at the bag, he asked Lady Wensley:

"You think she stole it?"

"Well, what am I to think? I hate to be uncharitable, but all sorts of things happen in society, as you must know, dear Mr. Trennion."

She paused as Marjorie, followed by Ronald, entered the room again, then went on in her drawling tone:

"I hope you won't keep me very much longer, I've three calls to make and I must leave town by the 12.45."

Trennion answered her. "I do not think you need wait at all, lady Wensley," he said.

She frowned. She was being taken too literally. Nor did she like Trennion's "office manner."

"I can spare another ten minutes or so. I will wait till then anyhow," she said.

He selected one from the bunch of keys the man had brought him.

"I think this is a likely one, Miss Douglas. Will you open it or shall I?"

"You open it, please."

Trennion tried the key he held in his hand.

"This fits. Hullo!" he looked up with a little frown.

"Doesn't it open?" asked Marjorie.

"I can't tell yet." Trennion put his hand to the bell. "Yes, it is open. One moment before we look into it. I want to ask my man a question." Then to the man, who had just come in, "you brought this bag from King's Cross yourself?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you had charge of it ever since?"

"Yes, sir," repeated the man.

"Did you notice if it was locked when you received it from the cloak-room?"

"It was, sir."

"Are you sure?"

"Perfectly certain, sir. I brought it straight to the Divisional Superintendent and he tried it."

"Thank you, Cole; that's all."

"I only wanted to find out," said Trennion to the astonished three, "to—well, just to make sure."

He looked at the bag again but made no move to open it.

"Well!" the impatient exclamation came from Anna Wensley.

Trennion looked at her as if he was thinking of something else.

"Well! I hope it is well," he said at last, and he opened the bag. Just inside was a filmy lace wrap, and in silence he lifted it. The Queen of Sheba's belt lay shimmering between the folds of lace.

"My God!" Ronald Grey turned an agonized face to the woman he loved.

"Ronny—I am innocent! I know nothing—nothing about it!"

Grey took the half-fainting girl in his arms and comforted her with little choking words. He was dazed and bewildered but he did not doubt her.

As for Trennion, this scene might have been enacted a thousand miles away for all the notice he took.

"I don't think I want this bag anymore," he said calmly.

Anna looked towards him eagerly "What are you going to do—your duty, I hope?"

"You never can tell," said Trennion vaguely.

"You will arrest her—you must, you will?"

There was no mistaking the passion in the woman's voice, and Ronald turned on her almost savagely.

"Anna! Have you no heart? Can you not show a little mercy? She is innocent. My God! You know she is innocent!"

She laughed; a little rippling sound which expressed real mirth.

"My dear good Ronald—voila!" she pointed to the belt.

Trennion interrupted her.

"I think if you would talk to Miss Douglas, Ronald, possibly there is an explanation—try and get her to remember the circumstances."

He turned to lady Wensley and appeared to be making conversation to gain time for the now weeping girl.

"Ten-stone twelve-and-a-half-pounds," he said lightly. "That's a respectable weight for so dainty a person, Lady Wensley."

"It wasn't ten-stone twelve, Mr. Trennion," said Anna, adopting his tone, "it was nine twelve, you know."

His friendship at this moment, when every remaining spark of goodness in her flamed to light to uncover her sin was especially comforting.

"Ten twelve, I think," said Jimmy.

"Don't be stupid, Mr. Trennion, I can prove it—come here."

She stepped on the weighing-machine and Trennion slid the weight upon the steel arm. Then he turned to the lovers.

"Have you found a possible explanation?" he asked.

"I can offer none—none."

"I didn't think you would somehow."

He put his hand on the bell.

Ronald Grey was as white as the girl by his side.

"What are you going to do?" he asked.

"I am going to send for an officer."

"Ronald!" Marjorie clutched his arm. Lady Wensley's drawling voice jarred in upon them.

"Dear Mr. Trennion, I think it is awfully splendid of you. I know just how you feel, but one owes a duty to society, and all that sort of thing, and duties are most painful things."

"They are," said Trennion unsympathetically, "very painful." Then to the attendant who had just entered, "take this bag to a cab for Miss Douglas."

He crossed the room to where the lovers stood and taking the girl's hand in his, said kindly:

"I am so sorry to have given you so much bother. Go and finish your holiday in Devonshire; it's a delightful place."

"Why—aren't you—aren't you arresting me?" said the startled girl.

Trennion smiled.

"No; why—do you want to be arrested?"

"But the belt—I must be cleared of that dreadful charge."

"Oh, you're cleared all right."

"Cleared!"

"Yes, you don't suppose I should send you off if I thought you were guilty; I—catch her!"

And the overwrought girl reeled and would have fallen but for Trennion's timely warning.

She pulled herself together and forced herself to speak.

"I'm all right—only it was a little, a little sudden." She smiled pitiably. "How can I thank you, Mr. Trennion?"

"Please don't—go off and thoroughly enjoy Devonshire."

But Lady Wensley had found her voice.

"Mr. Trennion—what does this mean? I will not be a party to this perversion of justice."

The Assistant Commissioner smiled crookedly.

"Don't bother, Lady Wensley, you're not. Marjorie, I am sure your cab is waiting; do not let us keep you."

He almost hustled them from the room and turned to meet the fierce stare of the woman.

"You shall hear of this, Mr. Trennion."

She was speaking quickly, painfully. She saw the undoing of a plan, which, hateful as it was, was dear to her.

She walked swiftly to the door and would have passed through, but he stood before her.

"Do not go for a minute, I beg, Lady Wensley." The cool young man's voice was smooth and persuasive.

"You will not persuade me," she raged. "I shall go straight to the nearest newspaper office and tell the story."

"Ah, then you would lose your train," said the imperturbable Commissioner. "Be advised by me, go straight to Wensley and forget this miserable affair."

"How dare you offer me advice!" She was almost incoherent in her anger. "Of course, I see your object. You have good reason for wishing the matter forgotten. But if there is a law in England, she shall suffer. You shall not hush up this affair."

"As a matter of fact, I am not really keen on hushing up ordinary crime, but this is no ordinary crime."

He picked up the belt from the table and weighed it thoughtfully in one hand.

"Here is the belt," he pursued, "a nice heavy belt—you must have found it very heavy."

"I—I? why, what do you mean?"

"You wore it this morning, you know, when you came here with it round your waist. You knew that Marjorie's bag was here, because you wired me to secure it, and because all other means having failed you, you hoped for an opportunity to put the belt in."

"How dare you!"

But the Assistant Commissioner went on as though she had not spoken.

"The opportunity came when I went to get you a glass of water—you made one mistake. You did not lock the bag after you."

"Oh, this is infamous," gasped the enraged woman. "Prove it; prove it! You cannot!"

"I can prove everything; but there are some things we don't want to prove."

"You shall pay for this insult."

"Lady Wensley, listen to me." His voice was firm; he had dropped the tone of badinage. "For your innocent amusement, and at your request, I weighed you when you came in—you weighed nine-stone-twelve-and-a-half. For my own information I induced you to be weighed again—after—the belt—was found."

"Ah!" a look of terror came into the beautiful, insolent eyes and he continued:

"You weighed nine-stone-six—you had lost six-and-a-half-pounds in less than a quarter of an hour. Lady Wensley, this belt weights six-and-a-half-pounds."

"What a fool—oh, what a fool!" The words were whispered rather than spoken, and the terror in her eyes deepened.

"It is very simple, isn't it," said Claude suavely; "but I repeat, there are some things one does not want to prove. You wish to catch the 12.45, I think, Lady Wensley. Well, you'll find your way

out—you needn't wait for Cole. The stairs are at the end of the corridor. Good-bye, so glad we have been able to arrange things. Hope you will have a pleasant journey—charming day, isn't it?"

He watched the unsteady figure till it had turned into the side corridor which led to the stairs, then he came back to his desk, and stood looking down at the belt.

"Rum things, women," he said. "Queen of Sheba—Anna Wensley—all rum."

THE END