

The CASTLE LIES

BY ARTHUR HENRY VASEY

CHAPTER XIX.—Continued.

And when she had summoned assistance? When the castle was storming as it were, by grandeur? Her own peril would be extreme.

It was hopeless to prevent the inevitable. The rescue of Captain Forbes would be accomplished; my complicity in the intrigues of Dr. Starva and Madame de Varner would be taken for granted. Expostulations would be useless. My very presence in the chateau would be the evidence of my guilt.

And so I had played my desperate game to no purpose.

To save myself—that was my one thought. Two courses lay before me. Could I make my escape? Could I flee? Could I effect his release before Helena returned with help? If that were possible, and if I could hastily make my position clear; if the king's messenger might not yet be well. At least so far as the establishment of my innocence was concerned.

Or I might overtake Helena Brett. To her I might make my confession. And if she were persuaded, not only that I was acting in her interests, but that my plan to clear up Sir Mortimer's disappearance promised success, I might even hope for pardon.

It was my fear that she would scornfully refuse both to believe my story and to accept my aid that made me hesitate as to this course.

It was Dr. Starva who decided for me.

He had appeared on the terrace below, and he was following Helena Brett.

I had read Captain Forbes's message as well as Helena's. Why, then, could there not have been a third person interested in the strange antics of the mirror? And if this surmise were true? If Dr. Starva or Madame de Varner had read the message? They had not hesitated to use desperate expedients to gain their purpose. Would Dr. Starva hesitate to use means as desperate to prevent Helena from summoning help?

I asked myself this startling question as I took the stairs two at a time to the great hall. The main entrance was locked. For a moment I thought I was a prisoner in the chateau as well as Captain Forbes. Even now I am not certain that such was not the intention of Madame de Varner. But Dr. Starva had gained the terrace by a small door close by the spiral staircase. In his haste he had forgotten to lock this door.

Desperate as was my own haste I took the precaution of locking the side door after me and placing the key in my pocket. My reasons for this were vague enough. It was an instinct that prompted me to take the precaution rather than deliberate reflection. Else perhaps I might be able to regain the chateau in due time by this side entrance, and none be the wiser. For as far as I knew I had effected my exit unobserved.

In the meanwhile I ran swiftly after Helena and Dr. Starva. I had lost sight of both. I soon came to an end of the promenade. It led directly into the main street of the village. Now that I had gained the village street I looked eagerly about for them. Neither was in sight. I guessed that Helena Brett would make her way as soon as possible to the hotel where she was known. What hotel? That was the question.

I halted an urchin and asked him the name of the best hotel in the village. "Oh, the Grand hotel," he answered without hesitation; "that is where all the English lords and American millionaires stay."

Then let him take me hither; I tempted him with a franc.

"Evidently the gentleman is in a hurry."

I assured him that I was, and promised him two francs if I could reach the hotel before a lady whom I was following.

"Then, the gentleman must go by the short cut."

I sped after the urchin down the village street.

This street is one of the most quiet in the whole world. There are two stories of shops on either side. The pavement is of flag stone, the cut the youngest had promised, before Helena or Dr. Starva.

At the foot of these steps the youngest bolted, assuring me that I should reach the hotel where I had reached the top of the flight.

These steps pierced a wall of one of the houses of the village street. The flight was steep for the first 40 or so, then it turned curiously on a little landing at right angles. Here I was in semi-darkness. I groped my way for the continuation of the flight. The first series of steps began to descend, had ended at a sort of porter's lodge. I learned afterwards that this was a private entrance to the hotel above and that in the glass-covered little room a porter was accustomed to sit.

I was still feeling my way cautiously by about (for I had not yet seen that the flight of steps was continued at right angles, and the steps were broken and uneven), when the circle of light at the foot of the steps leading into the street was blotted out.

At first I hoped it might be Helena. It was a man, and he was leaping up the steps in desperate haste.

I guessed it to be Dr. Starva. But I had no intention of letting him know that I was following him. I pressed close against the wall to let him pass.

To my astonishment he darted into the empty porter's lodge and crouched down in the gloom. I held my breath, watching, hardly an arm's length from where he stood motionless.

Again the circle of light was blotted out. A woman was rapidly ascending the steps. I could hear her catching her breath. It was Helena on her way to the hotel for aid.

And now I am forced to a confession that will deepen the sympathy or contempt felt for me when I related the tragedy at the beginning of my narrative. But I have determined to make myself no hero.

For now again came that curious paralysis of will. Again, as in the tragedy of the Alps, horror robbed me for the moment of power to act instantly. I had caught the glint of



It Was an Unequal Struggle.

steel. I knew that Helena was doomed unless I hurried myself instantly on the treacherous assassin.

I did indeed fling myself headlong on him, but only after he had fired. There was a crash of shattered glass; the shot of his revolver was still echoing in the stairway as I grappled with him.

It was an unequal struggle. I felt Dr. Starva's hairy hands close about my throat and I was hurled backward.

CHAPTER XX.

I Am Rudely Enlightened.

The force of the blow had stunned me for the moment. Presently I heard Helena calling for help. I struggled to my feet and leaped gasping against the wall.

"Are you much hurt, sir?" she asked in French, in a cool, matter of fact voice. She had not recognized me in the semi-gloom.

"I am not hurt at all," I replied in English. "But I am sorry, Miss Brett, that that villain has made his escape."

"I fancy I heard some one rush after him," she continued, coming to me closer and trying to distinguish my features.

"I am Mr. Haddon," I said, quietly. She repeated the name vaguely.

"The coward," I added.

There was an awkward pause. We began to ascend the second flight of steps.

"I am afraid you are assuming a name to which you have little right, Mr. Haddon," she said gently. "I believe that you saved my life just now. I am much obliged to you."

She extended a white hand in the gloom. There was absolutely nothing of sentimentality in the action. And

errand. Now that we were near the hotel its urgency came to her with redoubled force. She was debating whether she should take me into her confidence. She was saying to herself, I was sure, that it would be a generous repayment for her silent censure of me on the terrace of the hotel at Lucerne if she entrusted to me the deliverance of Captain Forbes.

"Why," she asked slowly, "should that man have kin in wait for me there? Was he a common thief, do you think?"

"No," I answered after some hesitation. "He is a Bulgarian, a political adventurer. I am afraid, Miss Brett, that he has had much to do with the disappearance of your brother."

She paused, startled.

"How should you know that?" her voice vibrated with suspicion.

"Because I have learned something of him at the chateau. I am a guest there. I pointed to the castle towers across the valley.

"You are a guest of that woman, Madame de Varner?"

"Yes."

"Then, sir, she was hastening her steps to meet you with cold hostility. It is certainly not to you that I should be appealing for help."

"Miss Brett," I said with some bitterness, "you draw your conclusions very hastily. It is impossible for you to believe that I wish to help you—that I wish to make statement to you for the suffering I have caused you unconsciously!"

She looked at me intently, her eyes still wide with distrust.

"But you are at the chateau," she repeated. "You are a friend of that infamous woman who has ruined my

brother. If you are her friend, how can you be mine?"

"I have not said that I am her friend," I protested quietly.

"Then you are the villain!" She spoke the words obstinately. That fact was, in her eyes, an unanswerable argument.

"Yes; and I know that Captain Forbes is detained there; that he has just signaled to you that fact and has asked you to get help. And now I want you to leave the matter to my hands. I demand that as my right. It is I who have rescued you. Once you said to me that I should save a life for the life that was lost through me."

"You are already made that reputation," Mr. Haddon, she said almost humbly. "Fate has punished me that I should have judged you so hastily and so wrongly."

"No, not I! I speak in fervent remembrance. Will you never be just to me? That was an accident, I tell you."

"I do not like you less that you say so."

It was hopeless to make her understand now. I should have confessed my cowardice sooner if I wished to be believed. She had judged as at Lucerne—and this judgment caused me much the greater pain.

"Listen," I drew her to a garden seat. "A life for a life—that is what you said. But if, instead of a life, it was only a honor that I could save—if it were the honor of your brother?"

Her lips trembled. She leaned toward me in her appeal.

"You would give me with the weight of my gratitude. Save my brother's honor, and—and—"

"I should then stand equal with other men in your respect?"

"Yes," she said faintly, her eyes bright with unshed tears. "We need a friend so much now. We are in such deep distress because of my poor brother. Evidently you know of his disappearance. Has he had any news?"

"I know something of it," I said with sympathy. "Tell me, Miss Brett, do I not bear a marked resemblance to your brother?"

"At first that is startling," she cried eagerly. "When my mother and I saw you at Lucerne we thought you were he. When we learned that you were with Mr. Willoughby at the time of his death, we were naturally disappointed. Forgive me if I am again suspicious, but that I should find you so good as to be in league with her against you!"

She hesitated. "She is a dangerous woman. If my poor brother has fallen a victim to her horrible beauty—"

"I shall be glad to reply lightly, smiling at her fierce resentment.

"If I am to help you, you must trust me."

"I will. I do."

"Implicitly?"

"Yes."

Even though circumstances seem utterly against me? Even though I may seem a friend of Madame de Varner's? She is to be in league with her against you?"

"You are testing my belief in you to the utmost, Mr. Haddon. I suppose you are among the suspicious of your hostess as readily as you do mine."

She spoke bitterly. And if she found it difficult to trust me now, how much more difficult when she learned, not the whole truth, but a damning half-truth.

"Ah, you are waverer already in the trust you have promised to give me. Great God, you think that it is a pleasant task to have my myself! To smile on this woman, to play the hypocrite, to spy on her when I am her guest, that I may do her, coax her into telling the truth, that I may enter the release of my brother at the right moment! Miss Brett, I would wash my hands of this ugly business if I had not sworn to endure every ignominy and risk of being misunderstood not only by a man like Captain Forbes but by yourself. I tell you that I have not a clear field to carry out my plans—if I fail, or am baffled by some well-meaning intruder, I am a disgraced man. No one will believe my defence—not even you. I may even be dragged to prison as a common felon."

"She placed both her hands in mine."

"You are one of the bravest I have met. I do trust you. Return to Madame de Varner, Mr. Haddon. I shall try to be patient. But Captain Forbes, am I to do nothing to help you?"

"Until this evening, no. You see, I am testing your faith."

I looked at her keenly. She returned my glance with brave assurance.

"If you receive no word, either from Captain Forbes or myself, midnight to-night, if you are not summoned to the chateau by your brother (and that may not be for some time), I will inquire at the Grand Hotel for Mr. John Locke. He is an American consul at Lucerne; he will help you."

"He has already helped me. It was Mr. Locke who detected Captain Forbes and myself here at Alterbach fen."

"And will you not include among my services," I drew a white hand up to my forehead, "the fact that I was so fortunate as to save your life just now, Miss Brett?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Illinois State News

Recent Happenings of Interest in the Various Cities and Towns.

BRIDE ATTEMPTS SUICIDE.

Fear of Opposition of Husband's Parents is Supposed Cause.

Peoria.—Miss Pauline Major of this city attempted to take her life at Eureka by shooting herself in the breast. The young woman had been employed as a domestic in the family of Joseph Major and his son Ray fell in love with her and married her despite the opposition of his parents. After eloping the young couple moved to this city, where the husband was employed as a traveling salesman. Of late, through the influence of his parents, he has been making his home in Eureka for much of the time and his wife has occasionally visited him there. Feeling his parents would want her husband away from her is believed to have caused the woman's despondency.

TRIED HARD TO ESCAPE.

"Fainting Bertha" Freedom Was But Short Lived.

Bartonville.—Bertha Lubbeck, alias "Fainting Bertha," the most notorious woman pickpocket and sneak thief in America and since last December an inmate of the Bartonville asylum, made a sensational escape from the ward in which she was confined, only to be recaptured while hiding in the basement of another building about an hour after she had slid down from a second-story window by means of an improvised rope of bed sheets. Only last week Bertha attempted to obtain her release by pleading with Gov. Deneen.

Liquor Men in Unusual Appear.

Bloomington.—A unique appeal to the mayor of Petersburg by the Mayor and County Liquor Dealers' association is attracting much attention throughout central Illinois. The organization goes on record in a startling manner as follows: "The Menara County Liquor Dealers' association declares itself opposed to all violations of the law pertaining to the dramshop act, and pledges its members to the faithful observance of the same. Its members are particularly opposed to the open Sunday, and against the sale of liquor on that day. The association therefore requests the mayor and city council to take such steps as will actually bring about the desired end." So far as known, this is the first petition of the kind on record.

\$2,500,000 Tax Confirmed.

Joliet.—The board of review of Will county confirmed the \$2,500,000 assessment against the sanitary district property in this county. The assessment has been accepted by the trustees of the district and the action of the board of review was followed by the declaration that the matter would be appealed to the supreme court. The Commercial club in another county actually bring about the desired end. So far as known, this is the first petition of the kind on record.

Fortune Found in Old Safe.

Monmouth.—When an old safe in the poorest looking place in a 70 year old, backless, formerly a blacksmith, who was found dead in his yard in Little York recently, was opened, securities and money aggregating \$100,000 were found. The house was a miniature arsenal. The estate was bequeathed to his niece Margaret Shepherd Pool, of Dunfermline, Scotland.

Killed by Fall from Train.

Aurora.—The crew of a Burlington stock train found the dead body of James Pennell, an Elmira (N. Y.) real estate dealer, lying beside the tracks near Hickley. The body was not yet cold and it showed indications that Pennell had fallen from some passing train. Cards and letters in his pockets revealed his identity.

Killed the Wrong Man.

Anna.—Fred Holland, well known young resident of this city, was struck down and killed by a stranger here. The assailant when arrested said he had intended killing a foe, and stated that the Holland was not the man he sought. He mistook Holland for his enemy.

Two Boys Killed by Train.

Ottawa.—Thomas Dunn and Francis Burke, boys, aged 13 and 14 years, were killed by a Burlington passenger train here.

Says the Wed the Wrong Twin.

Paris.—Mrs. Addie Thomas brought suit for divorce from her husband, Calvin Thomas, alleging he had deceived her in the marriage by marrying his twin brother, Alvin, whom he closely resembles.

Will Vote on Local Option.

Jacksonville.—The matter of voting by local option in Jacksonville precinct and Morgan county at the election Nov. 5 next is now assured. The committee having this in charge make his announcement.

ARRESTED FOR PERJURY.

Couple Arrested for Swearing Falsely to Get Marriage License.

Clinton.—Because they swore upon oath that they were both of legal age in order to obtain a marriage license in the DeWitt county clerk's office on August 8, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hobson have been arrested, charged with perjury. The bride is said to be only 14 years of age. It develops that the marriage was an elopement. The young man is 23 years of age, and his own master. Mrs. Hobson's maiden name was Ruby A. V. Vert, of Elliswood, and she swore that her age was 18 years. The parents of Mrs. Hobson, according to common report, are relentless and propose to push the case. Mrs. Hobson was released on bond furnished by her grandfather, Pleasant Church Term Down.

Ridgecrest.—The Old Cumberland Presbyterian church, midway between this village and Georgetown, which has stood the tempests for almost 50 years, has at last fallen prey to the ravages of the elements and has been torn down and removed.

PROTEST SENT FROM PEORIA.

School Board Wants Dougherty and Donovan Separated.

Peoria.—The school board adopted resolutions demanding that Gov. Deneen take steps to separate Newton C. Dougherty, former superintendent of the Peoria public schools, who was convicted of the theft of \$1,000,000, and John H. Donovan, also a prisoner in the Joliet penitentiary. The resolution cites that the two prisoners were implicated in the robbery of the Peoria school board safe last January, which was performed through the aid of a Peoria constable, Dougherty and Donovan have been assigned to the books in the Joliet penitentiary and have entered into a conspiracy, it is claimed, to further interfere with the business of the board of school inspectors of Peoria.

Come For to Marry Stranger.

Bloomington.—Leon L. Kramer came all the way from Yuma, Ariz., to marry a girl he had never seen. The bride was Miss Flora Weiss, of Tazewell county. Kramer wrote to her in Peoria, Ill., and she told him that she was a good wife, as he was leading a lonely life on a ranch in Arizona. Mrs. Patterson recommended her neighbor's daughter, Miss Weiss, to the board of school inspectors of Peoria.

Couple Weds Second Time.

Mount Vernon.—A. G. Hausman, aged 70, and E. A. Dunch, aged 67, were married here Sept. 6. Because of the fact that when they entered a marriage license in Coles county 11 years ago they had the ceremony performed in another county they resupplied upon hearing of the case of Oma, Sims and Miss Oma Knight, who obtained a license in one county and married in another, necessitating a second marriage.

Cavalry Arrives at Fort Sheridan.

Fort Sheridan.—Two hundred and twenty men, comprising the first squadron of the 10th Cavalry, arrived at Fort Sheridan Sept. 7, one of the longest marches in the history of the United States army. The command, led by Fort Riley, Kan., July 27, and the "hike" of 703 miles, took just six weeks.

Caught in Quicksand; Two Die.

Peoria.—Standing upright in the Illinois river, their feet imbedded in quicksand, and with water reaching up to their necks, the bodies of Keeling Wilson and William Stinger, of Lacon, Ill., were found. Lying near by, covered by the water, was the body of Charles McCune, the companion of the two.

Woman Forger Caught.

Kankakee.—Mrs. H. Mason, of Kankakee, is under arrest in Canada on a charge of forgery alleged to have been committed in this county.

Will Add a Million.

Peoria.—Approximately \$1,000,000 will be added to the assessment of real estate in the original town of Peoria by the board of review.

Jordan Church to be Dedicated.

Riverton.—The new church at Jordan will be dedicated September 15. Rev. A. C. Byrly will be in charge.

Without Car Service.

Belvidere.—The Belvidere street railway is closed, following the action taken by Mayor W. L. Pierce, who charged that the provisions of the franchise with the company are not being complied with.

Lightning Kills Girl.

Peoria.—Lightning conveyed by a wire clothes line to the farmhouse from the orchard instantly killed little Freda M. Roberts, ten years of age, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Roberts.