The Diamond Bracelet

By MRS. HENRY WOOD,
Author of East Lynne, Etc.

(CHAPTER IV.—Continued.)

"It cannot be lost," returned Lady Sarah. "You are sure you put it out, Alice?"

"I am quite sure of that. It was lying first in the case, and—"

"Yes, it was," interrupted Hughes. "That was its place."

"And consequently the first that I took out," continued Alice. "I put it on the table; and the others around it, near to me. Why, as a proof that it lay there——"

What was Alice going to add? Was she going to adduce as a proof that Gerard Hope had taken it up, and it had been a subject of conversation between them? If so, recollection came to her in time, and she faltered and abruptly broke off. But a faint, horrible dread, to which she would not give shape, came stealing over her, and her face turned white, and she sank on a chair trembling visibly.

"Now look at Alice!" uttered Frances Chenevix; "she is going into one of her agitation fits."

"Don't allow yourself to be agitated, Alice," cried Lady Sarah; "that will do no good. Besides, I feel sure the bracelet is all safe in the case; where else can it be? Fetch the case, Hughes, and I will look for it myself."

Hughes whisked out of the room, inwardly resenting the doubt cast upon her eyesight.

"It is so strange," mused Alice, "that you did not see the bracelet when you came up."

"It was certainly not there," resumed Lady Sarah.

"Perhaps you will look for yourself now, my lady," cried Hughes, returning with the jewel box in her hands.

The box was well searched. The bracelet was not there.

"This is very strange, Hughes," uttered Lady Sarah.

"It's very ugly, as well, my lady," answered Hughes, in a lofty tone, "and I'm thankful to the presiding geniuses which rule such things that I was not in charge when it never would have taken place. [illegible] a guess how it was."

"Then you had better [illegible]," said her ladyship, curtly.

"If I do," returned Hughes, "I shall offend Miss Seaton."

"No you will not, Hughes," cried Alice. "Say what you please. I have need to wish this cleared up."

"Then, miss, if I may speak my thoughts, I think you must have left the key about. And there are strange servants in the house, you know, my lady; there's that kitchen-maid only came in it when we did, and there's the new under butler."

"Hughes, you are wrong," interrupted Alice. "The servants could not have touched the box, for the key never was out of my possession, and you know the lock is a Bramah. I locked the box last night in Lady Sarah's presence, and the key was not out of my pocket afterwards until you took it from thence this morning."

"The key seems to have had nothing to do with it," interposed Frances Chenevix. "Alice says she put the diamond bracelet on the table with the rest; Lady Sarah says when she went to the table after dinner it was not there; so it must have been in the intervening period that the—the disappearance took place."

"And only a few minutes to do it in!" ejaculated Lady Sarah. "What a mystery!"

"It beats conjuring, my lady," said Hughes. "Could any visitor have come upstairs?"

"I did hear a visitor's knock while we were at dinner," said Lady Sarah. "Don't you remember, Fanny? You looked up as if you noticed it."

"Did I?" answered Lady Frances, in a careless tone.

And that moment Thomas happened to enter with a letter, and the question was put to him, "Who knocked?" His answer was ready.

"Sir George Danvers, my lady. When I said the Colonel was at dinner, Sir George began to apologize for calling, but I explained that you were dining earlier than usual because of the opera."

"Nobody else called?"

"Nobody knocked but Sir George, my lady."

"A covert answer," thought Alice, "but I am glad he is true to Gerard."

"What an untruth!" thought Lady Frances, as she remembered the visit of Alice's sister. "Thomas' memory must be short."

All the talk—and it was much prolonged—did not tend to throw any light upon the matter, and Alice, unhappy and ill, retired to her own room. The agitation had brought on a nervous and violent headache, and she sat down in a low chair and bent her forehead on to her hands. One belief alone possessed her: that the unfortunate Gerard Hope had stolen the bracelet. Do as she would she could not put it from her; she kept repeating that he was a gentleman, that he was honorable, that he would never place her in so painful a position. Common sense replied that the temptation was laid before him, and he had confessed his pecuniary difficulties to be great; nay, had he not wished for this very bracelet—that he might make money——

CHAPTER V.

A knock at the door. Alice lifted her sickly countenance and bade the intruder enter. It was Lady Frances Chenevix.

"I came to—Alice how wretched you look? You will torment yourself into a fever."

"Can you wonder at my looking wretched?" returned Alice. "Place yourself in my position, Frances; it must appear to Lady Sarah as if I—I had made away with the bracelet. I am sure Hughes thinks so."

"Don't say unorthodox things, Alice. They would rather think that I had done it, of the two, for I have more use for diamond bracelets than you."

"It is kind of you to try and cheer me," sighed Alice.

"Just the thing I came to do. And to have a bit of a chat with you as well, if you will let me."

"Of course, I will let you."

"I wish to tell you I will not mention that your sister was here last evening. I promise you I will not."

Alice did not immediately reply. The words and their hushed tone caused a new trouble to arise within her, one which she had not glanced at. Was it possible that Lady Frances could imagine her sister to be the——

"Lady Frances Chenevix!" burst forth Alice, "you cannot think it! She! my sister guilty of a despicable theft! Have you forgotten that she moves in your own position in the world? that our family is scarcely inferior to yours?"

"Alice, I forgive you so misjudging me, because you are not yourself just now. Of course, your sister cannot be suspected; I know that. But as you did not mention her when they were talking of who had been here, I supposed you did not wish her name dragged into so unpleasant an affair, and I hastened up to say there was no danger from me that it would be."

"Believe me, she is not the guilty party," returned Alice, "and I have more cause to say so than you think for."

"What do you mean by that?" briskly cried Lady Frances. "You surely have no clue?"

Alice shook her head, and her companion's eagerness was lulled again.

"It is well that Thomas was forgetful," remarked Lady Frances. "Was it really forgetfulness, Alice, or did you contrive to telegraph him to be silent?"

"Thomas only spoke the truth. At least as regards my sister," she hastily added, "for he did not let her in."

"Then it is all quite easy, and you and I can keep our own counsel."

Quite easy, possibly, to the mind of Frances Chenevix, but anything but easy to Alice, for the words of Lady Frances had introduced an idea more repulsive and terrifying even than the one which cast the guilt to the door of Gerard Hope. Her sister acknowledged that she was in need of money, "a hundred pounds or so," and Alice had seen her coming from the back room where the jewels lay. Still—she take a bracelet! It was preposterous.

Preposterous or not, Alice's torment was doubled. Which of the two had been the black sheep? One of them it must have been. Instinct, sisterly relationship, reason and common sense, all combined to turn the scale against Gerard. But that there should be a doubt at all was not pleasant, and Alice started up impulsively and put her bonnet on.

"Where now?" cried Lady Frances.

"[illegible] to my sister['s] and ask her [illegible]," stammered Alice, making the best excuse she could.

"But you know you were in the drawing rooms all the time, and no one came into them suspicious or unsuspicious, so how will that aid you?"

"True," murmured Alice, "but it will be a relief to go somewhere or do something."

Alice found her sister at home. The latter instantly detected that something was wrong, for her suspense, illness and agitation had taken every vestige of color from her cheeks and lips.

"Whatever is the matter, Alice?" was her greeting; "you look just like a walking ghost."

"I felt that I did," breathed poor Alice, "and I kept my veil down in the street, lest I might be taken for one and scare the people. A great misfortune has befallen upon me. You saw those bracelets last night spread out on the table?"

"Yes."

"They were in my charge, and one of them has been abstracted. It was of great value, gold links holding diamonds."

"Abstracted!" uttered the eldest sister in both concern and surprise, but certainly without the smallest indications of a guilty knowledge. "How?"

"It is a mystery. I only left the room when I met you on the staircase, and when I went upstairs to fetch the letter for you. Directly after you left Lady Sarah came up from dinner, and the bracelet was not there."

"It is incredible, Alice. And no one else entered the room at all, you say? No servants? no——"

"Not any one," interrupted Alice, determined not to speak of Gerard Hope.

"Then, child, it is simply impossible," was the calm rejoinder. "It must have fallen on the ground or been mislaid in some way."

"It is hopelessly gone. Do you remember seeing it?"

"I do remember seeing amidst the rest a bracelet set with diamonds; but only on the clasp, I think. It——"

"That was another, that is all safe. This was of fine gold links, interspersed with brilliants. Did you see it?"

"Not that I remember. I was there scarcely a minute, for I had only strolled into the back room just before you came down. To tell you the truth, Alice, my mind was too fully occupied with other things to take much notice even of jewels. Do not look so perplexed; it will be all right. Only you and I were in the room, you say, and we could not take it."

"Oh!" exclaimed Alice, clasping her hands and lifting her white, beseeching face to her sister's, "did you take it? In—sport, or in—oh, surely you were not tempted to take it for anything else? You said you had need of money."

"Alice, are we going to have one of your old scenes of excitement? Strive for calmness. I am sure you do not know what you are implying. My poor child, I would rather help you to jewels than take them from you."

"But look at the mystery."

"It does appear to be a mystery, but it will no doubt be cleared up. Alice, what could you have been dreaming of to suspect me? Have we not grown up together in our honorable home? You ought to know me if any one does."

"And you really know nothing of it?" moaned Alice, with a sobbing catching of the breath.

"Indeed I do not. In truth I do not. If I could help you out of your perplexity I would thankfully do it. Shall I return with you and assist you to search for the bracelet?"

"No thank you. Every search has been made."

Not only was the denial of her sister fervent and calm but her manner and countenance conveyed the impression of truth. Alice left her inexpressibly relieved, but the conviction that it must have been Gerard returned to her in full force.

"I wish I could see him!" was her mental exclamation.

And for once fortune favored her wish. As she was dragging her weary limbs along he came right upon her at the corner of a street. In her eagerness she clasped his arms with both her hands.

"I am so thankful," she uttered. "I wanted to see you."

"I think you most wanted to see a doctor, Alice. How ill you look!"

"I have cause," she returned. "That bracelet, the diamond that you were admiring last evening—it has been stolen; it was taken from the room."

"Taken when?" echoed Mr. Hope, looking her full in the face—as a guilty man would scarcely dare to look.

"Then, or within a few minutes. When Lady Sarah came up from dinner it was not there."

"Who took it?" he repeated, not yet recovering his surprise.

"I don't know," she faintly said. "It was under my charge. No one else was there."

"You do not wish me to understand that you are suspected?" he burst forth with genuine feeling. "Their unjust meanness cannot have gone to that length!"

(To be continued.)

A STRONG PEOPLE.

Innuits of Alaska Are Classed Among Very Rugged People.

It now seems probable that not all the innuits of Alaska are so small as has been supposed. Indeed, if one is to believe the tales of travelers who visited an island south of Bering Sea, these Indians must be classed among the tallest people in the world. The travelers' story is given in Popular Science News: On King's Island Indians were found who by their physical characteristics belong to the Innuit or Eskimo family, having small black eyes, high cheek bones and full brown beards which conceal their lips. The majority of the men are over six feet high and the women are usually as tall as and often taller than the men. These women are also wonderfully strong. One of them carried off in her birch bark canoe an eight-hundred pound stone, for use as an anchor to a whale boat. When it reached the deck of the vessel it required two strong men to lift it, but the Innuit woman had managed it alone. Another woman carried on her head a box containing two hundred and eighty pounds of lead. Both men and women are also endowed with remarkable agility. They will outrun and outjump competitors of any other race who may be pitted against them. Their strength is gained from very poor food, and they frequently travel thirty or forty miles without eating anything. They live on carrion fish and sea oil. The fish, generally salmon, are buried when caught, to be kept through the winter and dug up as consumption requires. When brought to the air they have the appearance of sound fish, but the stench from them is unbearable. In the matter of dwellings these Eskimos are peculiar. Their houses are excavated in the sides of a hill, the chambers being pierced some feet into the rise, and walled up with stones on three sides. Across the top of the stone walls poles of driftwood are laid and covered with hides and grass and lastly with a layer of earth. These odd dwellings rise one above another, the highest overlooking perhaps forty lower ones. Two hundred people live in the village.

The Tug Boat Captain.

A tug lay hard by, and the captain added his bit to my sociological nocturne, as I sat in the pilot house and peered out on the water, where red lights and green lights with many of yellow and white dripped zigzag fashion down from the wharves and ships. "Where do you sleep?" questioned I. "Why here," he replied, "in this very pilot house, on that nice fluffy bunk you're a settin on; an' sometimes I sleep at that wheel, a-steerin' this boat, sir. Can't be helped, sir. The hours we work would stave in a trained nurse an' send a sentinel to be shot. Why, man, I've seed the time when I've stuck by that wheel twenty grim hours at a stretch; once it war forty two hours. And when you read in the paper about towin' a big propeller clean through a dock, or jammin' her into her next door neighbor fer keeps, don't you say us tug folks are Johnnie Raws. Just say we're worked and worked till we sleep at the wheel. For that's God's truth, sir."—Atlantic.

Platinum in Egypt.

M. Berthelot, a French savant, has discovered platinum in Egypt. Examining a metal box, once the property of an Egyptian queen of the seventh century, B. C., he found a plate supposed to be silver. Close examination showed that the plate is made of an alloy of platinum and gold. The box itself is otherwise interesting, its sides being covered with inscriptions and designs in gold and silver. It hails from Thebes. The platinum probably came from the alluvial deposits of the upper Nile.

Sufficient Evidence.

Sambo: "Whar you get dat chicken?" Mary Antony: "Nebber you mind 'bout dat chicken. 'Taint yours." "How you know 'taint?" "'Cause I found hit in youah coop."—New York Weekly.

The Weekly Panorama.

AN INFECTED ANTITOXIN.

It is unfortunate that the spread of new methods of fighting disease should be attended by such incidents as are reported from St. Louis. Eleven children, it is said, have died of lockjaw after being inoculated with an antitoxin for diphtheria, and other children are in danger of death from the same cause. Investigation has shown, of course, that there is nothing inherent in the pure antitoxin that could be held responsible for the lamentable results which in this case followed its use. The fault lies not with the antitoxin itself, which has been proved to have great value, but probably with the persons who were so careless, or so unfortunate, as to use serum taken from a horse which shortly afterwards died of lockjaw and which was, therefore, infected with the disease when it furnished the serum.

Many parents will now conceive a prejudice against the use of the antitoxin for diphtheria. If the child is to be safeguarded from one disease only to die at once of another, the inoculation cannot be said to be of much value. The proceeding is too much like jumping out of a problematical frying pan into an indubitable fire. But occasional accidents do not disprove the worth of the remedy. The diphtheria antitoxin will save ten times more lives than it destroys. A reasonable view of the matter will lead to its continued use with greater precautions.

WOLCOTT AND THE CABINET.

A Republican from a western state who has long been a warm personal friend of President Roosevelt, after spending an hour with him the other day, said to the newspaper correspondents:

"Do you know, I believe that the President meant to be taken literally when he announced to the country immediately after McKinley's death

E. O. WALCOTT.

that he would, in addition to carrying out his policies on public questions, retain each member of the Cabinet?"

This is not by any means the view taken by other Republicans, who think they are pretty well posted on what is going on in the President's mind these days, writes the Washington correspondent of the Chicago Inter Ocean. The more general opinion is that, no matter how sincerely President Roosevelt's announcement was made, circumstances will so shape themselves after Congress has been made acquainted with the new President's plans and purposes through his first annual message, that Cabinet changes will be inevitable.

Among the new names most frequently suggested for the Cabinet is ex-Senator Edward O. Wolcott of Colorado.

Folding Bicycle.

Both the bicycle and automobile are meeting with favor from the army authorities in Europe. For scouting and the conveyance of dispatches the bicycle is without a rival, being noiseless, occupying a small space and affording an insignificant target to the rifle fire of the foe.

The wheel which we illustrate was invented by Capt. Gerard of the French army, and can be folded up and carried on the back. The frame is strengthened by a second tube running parallel with the first, thus giving the machine great rigidity.

To Light Rivers with Electricity.

The granting of a patent by the Canadian government to the inventor of a scheme for lighting the St. Lawrence at night with electricity from Montreal to Quebec naturally suggests the possibility of utilizing electricity in the entire lighthouse establishments of the United States.

Ernest Seton Thompson, the well known writer and author, has been granted permission by the supreme court of New York to change his name to that of Ernest Thompson Seton. Mr. Seton Thompson in his petition said that the surname of Thompson was a pseudonym adopted by his family, which hid from the English government after having taken part in the Jacobite rebellion in 1745.

Booker T. Washington, when he visited Windsor castle during a trip to Europe, was entertained at tea by Queen Victoria, and while in Paris attended a banquet which was presided over by United States Ambassador Porter, the late ex-President Harrison, Archbishop Ireland and others.

If a man be endowed with a generous mind, this is the best kind of nobility.—Plato.

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The man who spends his life in trying to make this world like heaven does god-like work.

I am sure Piso's Cure for Consumption saved my life three years ago.—Mrs. Thos. Robbins, Maple Street, Norwich, N. Y., Feb. 17, 1900.

Men and clotheslines become unsteady when they have too many sheets in the wind.

AN OPEN LETTER

Address to Women by the Treasurer of the W. C. T. U. of Kansas City, Mrs. E. C. Smith.

"MY DEAR SISTERS:—I believe in advocating and upholding everything that will lift up and help women, and but little use appears all knowledge and learning if you have not the health to enjoy it.

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