

A TERRIBLE SECRET

The Curse of the Morelands.

BY LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)
"You'll excuse me, I am sure, Mr. Moreland," resumed the host, as he filled the glass of his guest a second time, "for asking you to my table without having had the honor of a previous acquaintance."

"No excuses are necessary, my dear sir," returned Radd, beginning to feel a little more at his ease, although a tremor still shook him every time his gaze encountered the sleek Hindoo hovering behind the master's chair. "I am delighted to make your acquaintance, sir."

"Then permit me to ring at once for our supper," said the host, touching a silver-toned bell placed near him. "For my part, I am impatient to do it justice. Tipoo!"

The Hindoo hastened to open the kitchen door, at a nod from his master, when a tall and robust Bengalee woman came into the dining-room, bearing a large tray which contained all the essentials of a repast of several courses, including the fine loin of roast beef whose appetizing odors had previously fixed Radd's attention.

To describe the wild stare of the startled diner is no easy matter.

The huge, massive circlets of gold on the fingers and in the ears of the East Indian woman, her flaming bandana towering upon her head, her tawny complexion, the deep, liquid blackness of her eyes, and the weird blending of colors displayed by the folds of her ample robe—all gave Radd a sense of mingled wonder and terror.

He could only continue to stare as Tipoo gave his assistance to the newcomer, and the couple proceeded, with a celerity as wonderful as their silence, to arrange upon the table a repast that would have tempted the most indifferent Sybarite.

"Of course you will try the roast beef, Mr. Moreland?" remarked the host, as he seized a carving-knife and fork and proceeded to carve the loin. "What is your preference?"

"I am not at all particular, sir," replied Radd, pinching his hands as they met under the edge of the table, to be sure that he was not dreaming. "A little of the fat with an outside piece, if it's just as handy."

"Ah, well done, then?" returned the host as he helped his guest. "Our tastes agree perfectly. Rattle, the vegetables!" Host and guest were quickly helped to everything they desired, and the manner of the former continued so kind and attentive that Radd readily assented to the demands of his appetite, as sharpened by the glass of wine he had taken, and began giving adequate attention to the tempting repast which had been so strangely placed before him.

Little more was said, in fact, until the appetite of the host and guest had been in a great measure appeased, but not once did Radd find the Hindoo and the Bengalee woman near him, in the attentive service they gave him, without a profound nervous tremor, so deeply was he impressed by their appearance and manner.

As the meal progressed, however, the generous East India wine Radd continued to imbibe did not fail of its due effects, and gradually he grew calmer and less apprehensive, at length going so far as to laugh heartily at some of the pleasant observations of his host.

"I am glad to see you feeling more at home with me," remarked the latter, after one of these laughs. "You seemed at first quite startled at my presence at The Elms!"

"So I was, sir," returned Radd, "and I am likely to remain so if you do not do me the honor of telling me who you are!"

"What are you ignorant of my identity?"

"As much so, I confess, as if my eyes never had the pleasure of resting upon you."

"Why, I am the very man of whom you were speaking not long ago to Vance Weyville."

"What—what man?"

"Mr. Chapman."

Radd started, pushing his chair back from the table, and looking as if his supper had suddenly soured upon his stomach.

"The husband of your niece, you know," pursued the host, with a singular smile.

Radd withdrew still further, staring at his entertainer with wild, blood-shot eyes.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Chapman, the master of a three-masted schooner which trades between Chicago and Buffalo," continued the host, as his strange smile deepened. "I have had a terrible quarrel with Jesse, and am not likely to visit this neighborhood again for some time to come, but you and I will always be good friends, Mr. Moreland."

Radd uttered a suppressed shriek, carrying his hands to his head.

He comprehended it all, or at least thought he did.

He was hallucinated—the sport of a hideous illusion.

He was being punished for lying.

He was talking supper with a phantom.

"Help! murder!" he cried, running his fingers through his hair and springing to his feet; "I've got 'em again!"

The host made a gesture to Tipoo, who hastened to ignite something resembling an ordinary parlor match and pass it under Radd's nose.

The next instant the guest reeled, and would have fallen headlong if Tipoo had not received him in his stout arms and lowered him gently to the floor.

It must have been some ten minutes later when Radd recovered his consciousness and opened his eyes.

The dining-table was in its accustomed place, but its cloth had been removed, and there was not a dish upon it! Confused and even terrified, Radd took his way to the sitting-room, in which had so recently taken place the interview he had had with Vance Weyville.

A light was still burning, there precisely as he had left it at the moment of directing his steps toward the cellar.

As he recognized this fact, he carried his hand to his pocket, discovering with a keen satisfaction that his bottle of Yquem was quite safe.

He hastened to open the wine and swallow a liberal quantity of it, with the air of a man who is conscious of being in a terrible situation.

"What a narrow escape!" he muttered, with a prolonged sigh of relief. "I never had a worse touch of the tremens. 'Blue spirits and gray!' Did any man ever have a worse alcoholic imp than that Hindoo couple? And that 'Mr. Chapman'! What a singular hallucination that such a phantom should claim to be a reality, repeating all those lies I had invented on the spur of the moment for Weyville's benefit! 'Fearfully and wonderfully made!' Well, I should think so! How real it all seemed! I really feel as if I had been eating. I can even taste that wonderful jelly that was served with the beef." And he smacked his lips critically.

Grasping the bottle he had produced from his pocket, he extinguished the light in the sitting-room and took his way up-stairs to the elegant guest-chamber in which he had passed the previous night.

"The best cure for a touch of the tremens, or even for such an awful attack as that," he muttered, "is to drink moderately, and I'll accordingly finish this bottle and turn in!"

The thought was duly acted upon, and within a few minutes thereafter the breathing of the intruder announced that he had already lost himself in the soundest of slumbers.

CHAPTER VII.
DR. ROBINETT.

WHEN Vance reached home after his interview with Radd Moreland, he found Mr. Weyville in his office awaiting him with the greatest excitement and impatience.

"Come in, my dear boy," was the uncle's greeting, in his usual cheerful voice. "I was never in such a hurry to see you!"

"Indeed?" returned Vance, as he dropped wearily into a chair. "What's up?"

Instead of replying, Mr. Weyville bestowed a very earnest scrutiny upon the countenance before him, as if he had suddenly remarked that there was something wrong about it.

"It looks to me as if a word from you might be just in order," he said. "Where have you been, who have you seen, and what has left you such a state? Are you ill?"

"No, uncle—simply disgusted," answered the young doctor. "I have been having an interview with Radd Moreland."

"Ah, he's turned up, then? Where?"

"You could never guess where, and so I shall have to tell you. He is quartered at The Elms!"

"What! In the absence of Mrs. Moreland and Jessie?"

"It is because of that absence that he is in possession," explained Vance. "In other terms he is an intruder. He effected an entrance by breaking a glass, so that he could be made to suffer for his lawlessness if his relatives cared to arrest him."

"But of course they don't!"

"Not for worlds would they touch him," declared Vance. "And the discovery of this man at The Elms throws a flood of light upon the sudden departure of Mrs. Moreland and Jessie in their sleep last evening. They have gone away to get rid of him, uncle, rather than because they had any apprehensions of our visit."

"And so you have talked with the rascal? Give me an idea of the interview."

The young physician proceeded to do so, while Mr. Weyville lighted a cigar with his usual air of getting ready for business.

"Yes, Radd is at The Elms without the knowledge of the ladies," was the conclusion to which the uncle instantly came. "There is danger, of course, that he will burn the place in one of his drunken bouts, but we are not authorized to expel him, and if we were we could not execute the task without creating an uproar that is more to be dreaded than death. You did quite right to leave him in possession, without a hint of the attractions we are in duty bound to give him. He didn't tell you after, where Mrs. Moreland and Jessie are?"

"No, uncle. After I got track of the game he was playing, I concluded to depend upon our own exertions in this respect. I have no hesitation in saying, however, that the ladies are at no great distance. I remember hearing them speak of their summer visits to an island down the lake, a rude, rustic spot enough, which was selected because it responded to their desire for solitude, and I think it more than likely that they are paying this retreat a visit."

"What a pity that we do not know where they are!" exclaimed Mr. Weyville. "I would not hesitate a moment to write them about the conduct of this man. It might even be well to telegraph. But in the absence of their actual address, what can be done?"

"Perhaps we can get their new address at the postoffice," suggested Vance. "Mr. Sheen will certainly be able to give it if they remain absent any length of time. Let's see; I've heard them speak of that place. It is very like Egg Harbor."

"Ah! I have it," cried the uncle, with a flush of jubilation. "It's Egg Island; and the nearest postoffice—the one at which we must address the ladies—is Port Norris."

Vance drew a sigh of relief.

"Then we're all right," he said. "You can do no less, uncle, than write to Mrs. Moreland, and ask her what are her wishes concerning this intruder. You had better write to-night, so that the letter will go in the morning."

"All right, Vance; I will do so. And now to come back to my discoveries. There's light on the horizon at last, my dear nephew."

"I'm glad to hear it, uncle. Let's have a few beams of it."

Mr. Weyville picked up a large octavo he had been poring over in his nephew's absence, and held it up triumphantly in such a way that the title on its back fell under the latter's gaze.

"Did you know you were the fortunate owner of this book?" he demanded.

Vance read the title, as follows: "Dr. Geo. Robinett, on Defective and Redundant Limbs and Other Malformations."

Mr. Weyville breathlessly awaited his answer.

"Yes, uncle, I was aware the work is in the library, but that is about all," was the nephew's response. "It is one of the many volumes bequeathed to me by Dr. Rathby, and also one of many that I have never found time to open."

"Then I have a great surprise for you," exclaimed Mr. Weyville, as he drew up a chair and sat down near his nephew, turning the leaves of the volume almost affectionately. "But first a word about the book and its author. It was published in London three years ago. Its author, as you are probably aware by the name, is one of the most distinguished doctors now living in the British Empire."

"It ought to be good," declared Vance, taking the volume and running his pages inquiringly under his thumb. "Dr. Robinett's name is familiar to me as that of a prominent specialist, but I was not aware until now that he is renowned in this particular field."

"Oh! he's the most renowned man in it," assured Mr. Weyville, as he resumed possession of the book, and opened it at a page in which he had previously placed a bookmark. "It seems that Dr. Robinett is of English birth, notwithstanding the French form of his name. I learn, too, from the publishers' account of him, that he has resided many years in India, although he occasionally returns to his 'native heath' for a few months or a year or two."

"You have been looking over the book in my absence, I suppose, uncle?" queried Vance.

"Exactly."

"Impossible! It would take me all night to give you any just idea of it," protested Mr. Weyville. "Such cases as it contains! Such a fund of historical information!"

"Then give me an account of the particular case which has fixed your attention?"

"All right, my dear boy, but you must prepare to be astonished. The truth is there is a 'case' here which I believe to be that of Mrs. Moreland and Jessie!"

The young doctor started and faced about abruptly in his chair under the impression that he had not heard aright.

"Did you say the case of Jessie and Mrs. Moreland?" he demanded.

The uncle assented.

"And you find the same in a medical work published in London?"

"Exactly."

"But there must be some mistake, uncle."

"Not a bit of it."

"But they are not mentioned by name," continued Vance who was now in such an excited state of mind that he could not help extending his hand for the volume.

"No, Vance," replied Mr. Weyville, withdrawing the book beyond the reach of his nephew's hand. "They are quoted in the usual fashion of such reports, under a number. They happen to be 'case 33,' and for me, at least, this is the most interesting in the volume."

"But how can the case of Jessie and her mother have been reported to Dr. Robinett?" pursued Vance.

"In the simplest manner imaginable," declared the uncle. "To begin with, the case came to the notice of Dr. Rathby, who was your predecessor, and who died in this very house. Well, with or without your knowledge, Dr. Rathby was a correspondent and honorary fellow of the Royal Medical Society of London, and had long been in correspondence with Dr. Robinett. It was Rathby, therefore, who reported this remarkable case, and published by Robinett solely upon the authority of his American correspondent."

"I see, uncle. But what is the case, and what are its features?"

"Why, it seems that the girl and her mother have deformed hands," explained Mr. Weyville. "The affliction has been transmitted during several generations, and is spoken of as the 'withered' or 'dew' hand. It consists in a general atrophy of the members, or in a stunted and arrested development of the same. Originally, no doubt, there was some cause for the infirmity, but it is now perpetuated by sheer morbidity and anxiety. As we have seen for ourselves, Vance, there is nothing in this affliction to prevent the ladies from using their hands, but they are evidently so anxious that they shrink from showing them to the public, and hence those black gloves which have been such a puzzle."

"But why need they be so sensitive on the subject?" queried Vance. "And especially why need they let so trifling a blemish stand in the way of their happiness?"

Ere Mr. Weyville could reply a carriage came whirling up to the young doctor's door, with that air of importance which the drivers of such vehicles know so well how to give themselves when they have a fare who is presumed to be worthy of their best efforts.

"Ah, for us evidently," ejaculated Mr. Weyville, after listening to the slamming of the door of the carriage and the opening of the gate. "Some stranger from a distance, in all probability, who has come by the 10:30 train."

A succession of heavy footsteps resounded upon the walk, and soon came to a halt at the door, where the newcomer rang for admittance.

Vance and his uncle both hastened to receive him, the farmer's boy having been dismissed for the night, and such was the commanding and pleasing manner that they did not hesitate a single instant about inviting him in.

"I hope I have made no mistake, gentlemen," said the distinguished-looking stranger, as he released the hand of Mr. Weyville after a hearty shake, and fixed an eagle-like glance upon Vance. "You are Doctor Weyville?"

The young physician inclined himself politely to place a chair at the newcomer's disposal.

"Then I shall have the pleasure of finishing here a journey of some twelve thousand miles," announced the stranger, as his rugged but kindly face lighted up eloquently with a vivid sense of satisfaction. "I have cards somewhere on my person, but I seldom enter upon a search for them, it is so much easier to tell you on so many words that I am Doctor George Robinett, of India."

"Robinett!" cried the uncle and nephew in chorus, with as much excitement as if they had found a long-lost brother.

"Yes, that's my name. But what's the matter? Why are you so excited about it?"

"Simply because we were discussing you and one of your works at the very moment of your arrival, Doctor," explained Vance, as he seized the hand of his famous colleague and shook it heartily.

"Indeed? Well, I am pleased to find

that I am not unknown in America, and that I am among friends," declared Dr. Robinett, as he seated himself. "The driver told me as I came from the station that this is the property which belonged to my correspondent of other days, Dr. Rathby!"

"Such is indeed the case, sir," acknowledged Vance, with a new glow of pleasure. "Need I say how pleased and honored I am to have you as my guest? Let me show you to a room at once and give orders for supper!"

"The room—yes, my young friend, after a few minutes, for I am as tired as a dog; but I shall not need anything in the way of food and drink until morning," was Dr. Robinett's response.

"Here is a letter of introduction, by the way, from a very dear friend of mine, who says that he does not have the honor of being personally acquainted with you, but who at the same time assures me that you know a great deal about him through his sister and niece, and that you will be pleased to honor all his demands upon you."

"Ah, you refer to Colonel Barton Ridley, the distinguished millionaire merchant of Calcutta!" interrupted Vance. "I do, sir! Here's the Colonel's letter!"

"I will read it at my leisure, Doctor Robinett," returned Vance, with the true delicacy characteristic of him, as he pocketed the letter, "and it is needless to say that any demands or suggestions of Colonel Ridley will be instantly and fully honored. Permit me to add, however, Doctor Robinett, that your place in my home and heart has been won by your own great merits."

"There! there!" returned Dr. Robinett, raising his hand deprecatingly. "You must not spoil me in this fashion, the more especially as you will hereafter have me as a neighbor, and possibly as a professional rival!"

This last suggestion was made with a genial smile, which presented the speaker under his best aspects and characteristics.

He had reached his sixtieth year, although he scarcely looked his age, and was powerfully built without ceasing to possess a lithe and athletic frame. His bearing was particularly refined, and his glances as kindly as searching.

"What you tell us is too good to be true," cried Vance. "You are really serious?"

"Entirely so. Being obliged to leave India definitely, on account of a liver complaint, I have purchased the Whitcomb property, at Colonel Ridley's suggestion, through Potter & Carpenter, and am to have immediate possession. A fine property, is it not?"

"One of the finest in America, Dr. Robinett," replied Vance; "that is, for the price at which it has been held. Of course, Colonel Ridley was able to speak of it from his personal knowledge and observation."

"Yes, and he also said he would be glad to take it off my hands at any time at the price I pay for it. The truth is, the Colonel was closing up his affairs in India at latest accounts, as you will learn by his letter, and he may now be expected here from one day to another."

"Indeed? To remain permanently?" queried Vance.

"His very idea. The Colonel has never married, you see," exclaimed Dr. Robinett, "and he is anxious to pass the remainder of his life with his sister and niece. It is owing to the Colonel's persuasions, in fact, that I have come to America instead of returning to my old home in England. The truth is, he and I have been the best of friends ever since his advent in India twenty years ago, and I saw no other way to retain his companionship than to take up my abode near his new home."

Vance and his uncle both expressed their joyous satisfaction at all this information, and occasion was now found for the presentation of the latter to Dr. Robinett in due form.

"You are not a doctor, then?" was almost the first direct question of the renowned visitor.

"No, Dr. Robinett, I am sorry to say; except in the sense that I occasionally give my nephew a little amateur zeal in his line," declared Mr. Weyville, smilingly. "The most I can claim is to have a great deal of respect for the science of medicine, and, also, at this time a strong personal interest in it."

"Why, how is that?" queried Dr. Robinett. "The fact that your nephew is practicing it, I suppose?"

"Yes, doctor, and also the fact that he is just now called upon to perform a miracle in his line, or be miserable. Allusion has been made already to Mrs. Moreland and her daughter. Well, my nephew has fallen in love with this girl, but she has refused him because of a morbid sensitiveness about some personal defect or blemish, and—"

"Bart!" interrupted Dr. Robinett, with a vivid flush of delight. "It seems I've dropped down here square-footed, like a cat tossed in a blanket! Just in time, in fact, to set all to rights!"

"What do you mean, Doctor?" cried Vance.

"Simply that I have been sent here by Colonel Ridley with special instructions to give my best professional attention to Mrs. Moreland and her daughter. It is owing to the Colonel's anxieties and hopes on this very point, gentlemen, that I am standing in your presence at this moment!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Carl Pretzel's Philosophy.

Der mishtook of a minoot may git you a barrel of unhappiness so long vat you lif.

Dot's foolishness to ask der Lord to keep you from ahartsin for a load of wood. He don't vas in der coal pishness.

You cood vhere a shmile und your heart vas pooty gvick broke open. Dot rain out bow vas looking pooty vell in der shky oop, but yooost pelow dot vas der awful sad cryin of der seashore.—National Weekly.

The New South.

The census returns show surprising gains for some of the Southern States, notably Arkansas and Texas, each of which will increase their Congressional representation under the new apportionment. Little Rock, the capital of Arkansas, has grown in population and wealth at a lively pace. It is one of the hustling, bustling cities of the South. Among the buildings of note in process of construction there are an Exposition Palace and a Masonic Temple, to cost, respectively, \$100,000 and \$75,000.

WINDMILLS were not known in England at the conquest, but were introduced in less than a century afterward.

The present moment is a powerful deity.

G. SATRANG,

—DEALER IN—

Groceries, Provisions, Crockery, Glassware, Boots and Shoes,



Call and see our prices

Main St., Canton, S. D.

J. ANDERSON. P. J. ANDERSON.

Anderson Bros., Wholesale and Retail Furniture, Sewing Machines and Organs.

FURNITURE OF ALL KINDS, which we are prepared to furnish at prices lower than the lowest.

CANTON, SOUTH DAKOTA.

THE PIONEER JEWELRY STORE.

Established 1869. M. L. SYVERUD, Prop.

Watches, Clocks, Jewelry and Silverware, Musical Instruments.

Fine watch repairing a specialty. All work warranted.

CANTON, SOUTH DAKOTA.

Thos. T. Brady, of Beresford, will make Special Prices To Farmers, On a bill of goods. Call and see him.

M. E. RUDOLPH, Attorney at Law.

Practices in all the Courts of the State.

Notarial and Collection Business given careful attention.

CANTON, SOUTH DAKOTA.

Farmers Trade Specially Invited. HOTEL AND RESTAURANT.

A. D. HYMER, Prop.

Board by day or Week. Meals 25c.

CANTON, SOUTH DAKOTA.

G. C. Bray

—Proprietor of—

THE GATE CITY LIVERY.

Keeps a first class outfit of livery rigs of every description. One of the best equipped barns in this state. Sale and boarding department in connection.

E. End 5th St., CANTON, S. D.

T. L. Torgeson, Beresford, South Dakota,

—DEALER IN—

Dry Goods and Notions, Groceries, Boots and Shoes.

Motto "Square dealing." Come in and look us over.

B. Schmidt & Co., Beresford, South Dakota.

Dealers in all kinds of Heavy and Shelf

HARDWARE,

Stoves, Tinware Barb wire, Paints, Agricultural Implements, etc.

Give us a call and we will guarantee you prices.

O. T. HELGERSON

Owens this space. He handles a large variety of farm machinery, mowers, reapers, binders, Aultman & Taylor threshers, hullers and engins, corn plows, stirrings plows, and all kinds of binding twine, oils and repairs.

If you call on him for what you want in the machinery line he will treat you well and supply your wants according to hoyle.

O. T. HELGERSON.