

NO OTHER WAY

Drawings by
HOWARD GILES

BY GORDON HOLMES

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

CLAUDE G. WAVERTON, a rich young New Yorker, became so dissolute that his wife Doris was forced to get a divorce, which was just at the time he was seriously injured in an automobile accident at Palm Beach, Florida. He recovered at the Asphodel House, where he was attended by a woman of unsavory reputation, known as Mrs. Josephine Delamar. On his return to the North, Waverton's friends were astounded at the change in him: for he had dropped all his riotous habits and become a sober, respectable man. He saved his own child from drowning at Narragansett Pier; then spurned his wife's efforts to bring about a reconciliation and departed.

Herbert W. Kyrle of Absecon, New Jersey, Mrs. Delamar's husband, was found dead (supposedly from heart failure) in a cutter off Cape May. James Leander Steingall, inspector in charge of the New York Detective Bureau, and C. F. Clancy, his chief assistant, instantly took up the case. It was found that Kyrle had been poisoned, and Clancy busied himself in running down clues at Absecon, which seemed to implicate Mrs. Delamar.

Waverton had sent Doris a warning against John Stratton Tearle, which she interpreted as betokening a wish for a reconciliation, which she ardently desired, and so she rushed over to the old country home and met her former husband suddenly in the park.

CHAPTER IX. (Continued)

Husband and Wife

A WOMAN'S first thought is given to her appearance, and Doris had scarcely realized her whereabouts before her hand traveled mechanically to hat and hair. "Oh, how utterly foolish of me to break down like that!" she almost sobbed. "But I was so frightened, and I imagined that you would be hurt in a scuffle with that dreadful man. Where is he?"

Then she looked round, and discovered that she was standing nearly halfway between house and lake.

"How did I get here?" she cried, utterly bewildered. "Did you carry me? But how was that possible, when you are so weak?"

She broke off with a fresh cry of alarm, because Rice came panting up, and Waverton grasped desperately at the opportunity that presented itself.

"Not a word before the servants, Doris," he muttered. "Leave matters as they are till the morning. I promise you they will be gone into thoroughly then. Let Rice take you to the dining room, where he will bring you a glass of wine, and by the time a carriage is ready you will be feeling all right again. You won't mind if I go straight to my room, will you? There is not so much of you that I could not have carried you a mile if I were in good form; but I was badly broken up at Palm Beach, you know—"

He ended lamely, for the explanation was curiously labored; but Doris, tearful, bubbling over with joy, yet distressed by the outcome of her momentary weakness, fell in with his suggestions willingly. Rice, keeping discreetly in the background, was delighted by the manner and speech of husband and wife as they walked together to the house. He was somewhat taken aback when he found that Mrs. Waverton was left to his care when they reached the interior; but her smiling face reassured him, and she thanked him very sweetly for all that he had done as he ushered her past an astounded footman in the hall, and saw her safely into the waiting carriage.

Next morning, about ten o'clock, he was intrusted with the mission of searching for and placating Joe Brett, and Waverton also handed him a letter.

"You will be passing the parsonage," he said. "Leave that for Mrs. Waverton. There is no answer, and I should prefer, if possible, that you should not hold any communication with her."

THE words struck chill on the valet's warm heart; but he soon hugged the belief that his master was only feeling ill and wretched as the outcome of experiences overnight. Nevertheless, his first impression was the right one; for the letter that Waverton had written to his wife conveyed the most flagrant insult that he could inflict on the woman who had surrendered all that she held best and holiest for his sake. It read:

DEAR DORIS.—I was unwilling last night to blurt out a fact that must have altered the whole tone of your words. You were so excited and unnerved that I am sure you will credit me with displaying at least some regard for your feelings when I withheld the plain statement I here make, namely, that I intend to marry Mrs. Delamar at an early date. You now know why I have persistently refused to meet you since you gave me my freedom and obtained your own. In warning you against Tearle, I was only trying to do you a good turn. Need I say more? Sincerely,
CLAUDE G. WAVERTON.

P. S.—I cannot do other than type

this note. Would you mind burning it? Let its ashes mingle with those of any projects you may have formed as the outcome of last night's useless and painful scene.

At first Doris refused to accept the evidence of her physical senses. She held in her hands and read with her eyes a document so curt and unbelievable that her benumbed brain declined to assimilate a word of it. Three times did she peruse it in vain effort to realize its full significance. Her face, deathly pale for some minutes, suddenly became suffused with color when she recalled certain passages of the conversation by the side of the lake. She grew dimly aware too of the restraint, the half hints, the desperate anxiety to be rid of her company, on her husband's part, which were now fully revealed by what he called a "plain statement" of his intentions. What a fool she had been, and how he had punished her for her folly!

There were no tears now: she was a prey to no feelings save shame and hot indignation. Burn Claude Waverton's letter? Never! Rather would she keep it as a reminder, if ever such were needed again, that she must exercise some degree of commonsense in her dealings with a man who had the nature of a boor in the guise of a gentleman.

She bade goodby to her puzzled and sympathetic friends at the parsonage, crossed the lake to Burlington, where she had lunch with a friend, and caught the next train for New York, telling herself that she had shaken the dust of Saginaw off her feet forever. Women, especially young women, are apt to use these words "never" and "forever" somewhat carelessly; but certainly in Doris Elstead's case (no more of "Mrs. Waverton" for her!) they seemed to be warranted by the circumstances.

HER unappreciative husband did not seem to be enjoying the rebuff he had given his wife. As a villain he was a failure. He neither smoked the callous cigarette nor chuckled over a woman's distress. Indeed, he sat very still in the library, looking out over the park, ignoring the mild question in Bob's upraised eyes; for the sun shone gloriously, and there would seldom be a better day for roaming the woods.

When Rice returned, he reported the placating of Joe Brett.

"And now," said his master, giving the valet a look

under which Rice squirmed, "I assume that someone in this house, probably you, knew that Mrs. Waverton would be in the park last night?"

"Yes, Sir," came the honest answer.

"I thought so. Well, I forgive that sort of thing once, because it may have been inspired by good intent; but the next time I am trapped in such fashion those responsible for it, or helping it in any way, will leave my service. Is that clear?"

"Yes, Sir."

Waverton said no more. He went to the typewriter, and rattled off a brief note to Steingall, in which he recounted the incidents of the meeting and pointed out that he could not think of interfering further in Mrs. Waverton's affairs.

This attempt has been a sad bungle [he wrote]. I thought it better to appeal temperately to her than raise a row with Tearle; but I was wrong. I have never understood women, and, as the outcome of my disinterested endeavor to save Mrs. Waverton from another scoundrel, I found myself compelled to lie to her this morning. She believes now that I mean to marry Mrs. Delamar. Still, as a man is free to exercise a feminine privilege, and change his mind, I shall be glad to hear from you if there is any real chance of Tearle's winning Mrs. Waverton's affections—on the rebound, as it were. It may be my wish, as it would certainly be my duty, to stop a crime of that magnitude.

Steingall was bending his brows over this enigmatical note, and nibbling his mustache in a vain effort to reconcile its rather contradictory sentiments, when a telegram was brought to him.

It was from Clancy, at Palm Beach, and it read:

Remarkable developments here. Keep clear of Clo-Clo. Connection established with purchase of crystals.

Then the chief inspector whistled, and he read Waverton's letter again; for he saw it in a new light.

CHAPTER X. A Turn of the Screw— and Two Turns of the Wheel.

CLANCY meant to stop the growth of confidential relations between Claude Waverton and the bureau, because he had good ground for believing that the man might yet figure in court side by side with Josephine Delamar. If that thrilling dénouement came about, Mrs. Delamar would be charged with the murder of her husband, and Waverton would be called on to disprove that he was "an accessory before the fact."

Even if his innocence of that particular crime were established, he might be indicted for another grave offense; and, in either event, he was officially undesirable as a friend. But, to understand Clancy's attitude on this point, it is necessary to follow the little man's adventures in Florida.

He called first on the Chief of the Police at Palm Beach, and persuaded that functionary to set on foot an inquiry as to whether any person had purchased a considerable quantity of crystals of nicotine from a local drugstore during the last year.

With regard to any ordinary drug of a poisonous nature, such a wide cast of the net might have defeated its own purpose; but crystals of nicotine was a rare poison. It was more than likely that the great majority of the Palm Beach druggists had never so much as heard of it, while those who did recognize it, and had dispensed it, would surely have some record or memory of the customer.

Then he set forth to interview Drs. Bentley and Mercier. Dr. Bentley was a fussy little man, a Bostonian, a wonderfully adroit surgeon; but so full of the present that he could deal only in generalities as to the past.

He remembered the Waverton accident, of course;



"Here We Have the Spot
Where the Car Was Wrecked."