The Mysteries of Myra An Inspiring Novel and Motion Picture Drama

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(Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.)

Myra Maynard, a beautiful heiress, persecuted by a mysterious band of devil-worshippers known as the Black Order, and ruled by a cunning genius called the High Master, is on the verge of suicide while in a somnambulistic trance, when she is saved by Dr. Payson Alden, a brilliant young physician, who has devoted his life to investigations of the psychic. Alden has learned through his studies of the plot to kill the girl in order that her fortune may revert, by a secret will of her father, to the Black Order, of which he was a covert member. His efforts to protect her are continually endangered by the work of Arthur Varney, the suitor favored by Myra's mother, who is in league with the High Master. By clever finessing against the knaveries of the evil order, Alden has managed to apply the modern discoveries in hypnotism, mind reading, electricity, chemistry and spiritualism in such a way as to thwart their plans.

The first attempt on the girl's life having failed, the High Master and his aides endeavor to slay the girl by cutting the "astral chord," during a seance in which the girl's soul, under hypnotic influence of Alden, is being projected to search in the ether world for the evildoers. The power of prayer saves her life when science fails. A poisonous Oriental flower is sent to her bedchamber, but Alden saves her at the bare escape from death himself. Balloons filled with deadly vapors are shrewdly smuggled into her room, but after escaping from the clutches of the Black Order, who have imprisoned him, the doctor rescues Myra once more. With the aid of a fellow investigator, Hajl the Hindoo, Payson Alden discovers the lair of the devil-worshipers and escapes from them at the cost of his friend's life. After trying vainly to set the police on the trail of the scoundrels, Alden finds the entire network of underground meeting rooms dynamited by the criminals.

He returns to Myra's home to learn that at the suggestion of Arthur Varney she has gone to the physician's laboratory. There she has used Alden's automatic hypnotizing machine to project her astral to search for the physician whom Varney has reported slain. After a tremendous effort Alden and Mrs. Maynard succeed in bringing life to the body of the unconscious girl. Upon her return to the Maynard mansion Alden sees, in the reflection of a mirror, the face of the High Master, instead of that of the girl whom he has learned to love. He prevents her from shooting him with his own revolver, and declares to the incredulous mother that the soul of the great criminal has taken possession of Myra's body.

CHAPTER XXIX.
The Surprising Myra.

IT was a changed girl who greeted Mrs. Maynard the next morning at breakfast. Instead of the usual good morning kiss from the rosebud mouth the tender caress of the gentle arms about her mother's shoulders, a cynical smile appeared which disturbed Mrs. Maynard more than she was willing to admit.

"How do you feel, dear?" was her question. "Yesterday was a terrible day, Myra, and I do hope that you are feeling stronger now."

"I never felt finer in my life. Where's the food?"

The girl looked at her mother to see a look of bewilderment on her face. This was not her usual manner of talking. As Willis, the butler, entered the dining room he seemed to sense something unusual.

"Hurry up there, you fool," was Myra's next remark. "I'm hungry as a wolf."

"Yes—yes, Miss!" and Willis stepped forward with forced alacrity. He awkwardly dropped a roll from his tray. The sharp blue eyes missed nothing.

"Stupid idiot! What sort of a hash house did you learn your trade in?" cried the girl.

"Why Myra, dear, I never heard you talk like that before," objected the astounded Mrs. Maynard. "You must have passed a dreadful night, but that should not alter your politeness."

The big eyes narrowed as with sudden realization.

"I'm so sorry, dear mother. I did not mean to be irritable. I have, indeed, been unhappy all night. This stupid Dr. Alden is getting on my nerves, I presume. I certainly want him to stay away from the house from now on. If he telephones or tries to call just tell him that I am not at home to him."

Myra began to eat with a startling eagerness. Her mother was surprised, then pleased; for the girl was usually a very light eater.

"Well, you are a naughty girl," she said, when the servant had gone to the kitchen for the next course, "but you must control your nerves. I am going shopping today, and I wish that you would take a complete rest."

Myra looked up thoughtfully.

"Yes, dear. A good idea. I may go downtown later myself. And by the way, where did I leave my bankbooks? I am so forgetful nowadays."

"Why, in the library table drawer, of course. Really, my dear, I do not understand you this morning."

The meal was completed in silence. Myra seemed busy with her own thoughts, until the telephone bell tinkled from the adjacent library.

The butler hurried out of the room and returned with a queer expression on his usually placed face. Myra did not overlook it.

"A gentleman wants to speak to you, Mrs. Maynard. He says it is very important and that he insists on your answering the telephone at once, ma'am."

"Who was talking?" insisted the girl.

"I don't know, Miss!" faltered the servant.

Mrs. Maynard walked into the other room, as Myra directed a malevolent glance at the unfortunate Willis.

"You are a liar!" were her surprising words, and Willis beat a decorous retreat.

Mrs. Maynard took up the instrument, apprehensively. Then she showed greater surprise.

"Why, it is Dr. Alden! Willis said that he didn't recognize your voice; that's strange—he certainly should by time."

She looked askance at Myra, whose face was wreathed in smiles for the instant, only to change to a scowl as her mother turned toward the telephone again.

The words of the physician, over the wire, caused further bewilderment to the good lady.

"Mrs. Maynard, don't talk for a minute. Don't say a thing at that end of the phone until you get my warning. That is not your daughter! Listen, now—there has been a great psychic crime committed! It is the spirit of a strange and wicked man which looks at you out of Myra's eyes. Beware!"

Mrs. Maynard sniffed.

"Dr. Alden, I believe you are losing your senses. You speak ridiculously. I believe you are crazy and I do not wish to talk with you any more. Good-by!"

And she hung up the receiver with a jerk.

"More of Alden's foolishness?" asked Myra, eagerly.

"Yes, but I don't believe it," replied her mother, with vague uncertainty in her voice. She rose to leave the room.

"What did he say, dear? There's no reason why you shouldn't tell me," persuaded the girl.

"Nothing important, Myra. Nothing worth bothering you about; you have had your ears filled with enough of this nonsense already." Her mother walked out, leaving the girl standing with clenched hands and a demoniac expression of rage on her smooth oval features.

"Well, it is time to get busy at once, or that fool will spoil everything," muttered the girl as she turned toward the library table.

It took but an instant to bring forth the bankbooks which were within. She lifted up the first—it was her mother's. She tossed this aside with a look of regret. The next one was in the name of Myra Maynard—it showed a big balance of credit.

She hurried around the table to the telephone and in another moment was talking to the bookkeeper at the bank.

"How does my account stand, please? This is Myra Maynard speaking."

"Oh, yes, I recognize your voice, Miss Maynard. A pleasant day, isn't it? Well, just a minute and I'll look it up to see how your checks are coming in."

There was a silence, after which the agreeable voice of the bank attendant came back over the wire.

"Miss Maynard, your bank balance to date is just $2,500. Is there anything more I can do for you?"

"Not now, thank you. Good-by," and the girl hung up the receiver.

She turned to the drawer again, rummaging about until she found the check book. She drew out one of the blanks, and another search brought forth some canceled checks. She filled out the blank for the sum of $2,500, payable to "Cash," and then, after a moment's hesitation, began to copy her own signature from the bottom of an older check!

Just as this was laboriously completed and blotted, Myra's pet dog came racing into the room with wagging tail. As the animal came near her he suddenly stopped. The hair rose stiffly on his neck, and he began to growl, as he retreated toward the door.

"Come here," called the girl, nervously.

But the dog began to bark furiously, showing his white teeth menacingly. Myra's hand went to a book, as a weapon, just as Willis rushehd into the room.

"I don't think he likes you any more, Miss Myra," observed the servant, catching the animal by his collar.

"Well, there's no love lost, then, for I don't like dogs," was the surprising response. "Take him out of the room, and keep him out!"

CHAPTER XXX.
The Betrothal.

As she entered her boudoir her cat arose from the seat of the armchair by the window, where it had been sunning itself. Its black back was arched and it began to spit. The girl approached it, with a hand outstretched to caress it, but the animal sprang wildly out of the chair, scuttling through the door to the corridor!

Myra Maynard laughed, as she turned toward her dresser and began to rummage through the drawers for a jewel box. There was a strange look of greedy joy on her face as she slipped the dinner rings on her fingers, placed a bracelet, set with diamonds, on her slim wrist, and pinned on two brooches. A sparkling lavalliere was slipped about her neck, and two pendants were put in the pocket of her heavy street coat.

The girl lifted her handbag, opened it with clumsy fingers, and placed a jeweled watch inside, as well as the folded check. Then she awkwardly donned the coat, man-fashion, buttoning it the wrong way!

Her hat was the next difficulty. This she put on at several angles, after apparently giving up hope about the identity of front or back!

While she was thus engaged, the doorbell rang. Dr. Payson Alden, alighting from a taxicab, had rushed into the vestibule breathlessly.

"Mrs. Maynard, I must speak to you at once," he cried.

"Doctor, you offend me with your remarks," began Myra's mother, but the physician stopped her impetuously:

"But, I must tell you. In Heaven's name, believe me! Myra's spirit is gone and in its place—"

"That is ridiculous. We have had enough of this buffoonery," declared Mrs. Maynard in disgust. "I must ask you to leave, Mr. Alden."

Unseen by Alden, Myra had slipped down to the broad stairway to eavesdrop outside the door. Her face was twisted in an ugly, unfamiliar snarl, while her hands clenched in rage.

Before the doctor could continue, another visitor rang the doorbell. It was Arthur Varney!

Debonair, suave, and self-confident as usual, he stepped into the vestibule with a look of well-bred surprise at the evident perturbation of the physician.

"Why, good morning, everyone! Nothing wrong, I trust," he began.

"Step into the music room, Arthur. I am bidding good-by to Dr. Alden," said Mrs. Maynard. The physician waited until his rival had passed out of earshot. He did not se the surprise on Varney's face as he found the girl listening on the other side of the closed door. She shut it hastily and bade him join her eavesdropping!

"I beg of you to believe me, Mrs. Maynard," the doctor continued. "I have tried so hard to save her, as you know."

"Good morning, Doctor Alden!" was the cold response.

"Oh, you are her mother. Won't you help me? Mrs. Maynard, I—I—love her!"

The door of the music room opened, and Myra Maynard emerged, leading Varney by the arm.

Alden looked at her as though he were seeing a ghost. As he drew back in alarm, Myra spoke:

"Mother, Arthur and I are engaged to be married!"

Even Varney showed his surprise, as he looked into the girl's eyes, and then at the other two. Mrs. Maynard clasped her hands nervously, and then tried to laugh.

"You are joking, my dear. You have not spoken of this to me before," she faltered.

"I won't permit this crime!" cried Alden, tense with fury. "This is not Myra herself, and you know it!"

Varney stepped in between the raging physician and the girl with outstretched arm.

"How dare you intrude?" he demanded. "I am engaged to Miss Myra Maynard, and I order you to leave this house before the servants put you out! If you don't I'll throw you out bodily!"

Alden's head drooped as he turned away. With one miserable look at the triumphant faces of Myra and Varney, he left the house, walking down the steps like an old man.

Myra smiled at Varney, who impulsively threw his arms about her. At last he had won his goal! Despite the cleverness of the astounding physician the work of months was success.

He leaned forward to claim the first kiss of their betrothal. But as he did so a surprising slap on the cheek greeted him.

"Oh Myra!" he cried, in an aggrieved tone. "You never treated me this way before. What has come over you, my dear—in this, the happiest minute of my life?"

"You fool!" an dthe girl's voice was oddly suggestive of another's that he remembered, despite the feminine quality. "You idiot, don't you know me? I'm the High Master!"

The girl, or as it really was the incarnation of the criminal genius of the Black Order, raised clenched hands to her cheeks with thumbs upturned on either side of the clustering blonde curls.

At this symbol of the devil-worshippers and the unmistakable manner of his superior, the startled Varney stepped back with fallen jaw. He dropped instinctively to his knees and gave the answering sign, his face awe-lit.

"Get up now before that woman comes back!" comanded the Master's spirit.

"Yes, Myra. I mean, Master!"

Varney was struggling to divine it all, but he groped clumsily, as he stared at the transformed face of the girl he loved.

How surprisingly hawk-like had become the usually gentle glance of those blue eyes. The rosebud lips were drawn to a firm, cruel line of tyrannical dominion, as the evil one continued.

"I have substituted the spirits of our astrals. My own body is in the meeting chamber. Myra Maynard's soul is imprisoned within it. This confounded Payson Alden guessed the truth too quickly. You must hurry to the place at once. Take my body to the house in the gorge—you know where. Not a sign of suspicion that all is not well here, understand—or you will pay as Hajl did!"

Varney dropped his glance and nodded obediently, as "Myra" caught Varney's hand tenderly.

"I must be going, my dear, for there's a little errand I must perform at a certain jeweler's! Good morning, Mrs. Maynard. You haven't given me your blessing yet."

"This has taken me by surprise,' said Mrs. Maynard tearfully. "I hardly know what to say, Arthur. But I trust Mra's judgment, and I know that you will be good to her."

"At last, Dr. Alden knows the truth, and has something to think about," observed "Myra," with a wink at Varney, who could not resist a smile at the double truth.

"Good-by, then. I'll be back later."

And not knowing whether to be happy or miserable, Varney went down the steps with a backward wave of his hand at the two women.

Mrs. Maynard was studying her daughter's face and suddenly looked up, in alarm, at her hat.

"My dear! What has come over you? You have your hat on backward, and your coat is buttoned wrong! I never saw you so untidy before."

"Just help me fix it, dear. I am so happy this morning," "Myra" laughed, "that I didn't stop to worry about little things. I'm going down to the shops to buy some little things for my trousseau."

"I'll go with you, as every mother should," but "Myra" intercepted with a pretty shake of the head.

"Not this time, dear. I want to surprise you with my good taste. I wish you would have the butler order a taxicab, so that I can go right away. We're wasting the whole morning with this sentimental foolishness," said the "girl."

Her mother shook her head in turn.

"I cannot understand you. Why should you want a taxicab when our own car is all ready? Where are your wits, my dear?"

"Oh, yes. I forgot about having a car," was the surprising reply.

Once at the bank, where the chauffeur had gone according to a curt direction, "Myra" left the car. "She" walked hesitatingly to the paying teller's wicket.

"Good morning, Miss Maynard."

"Good morning. Please cash this check, as I am in a hurry to do some shopping."

The paying teller took the slip of paper, then looked up startled. He had already reached for a large pile of bills, when he turned to the girl again.

"Miss Maynard, this does not look like your signature at all," he said, slowly.

"It is my signature. I want none of your opinions. Don't you know who I am? Hurry up."

"But Miss Maynard, I am only exerting the caution which I am paid for. This certainly isn't your signature."

"I am going to patronize another bank hereafter!" was the angry response of the "girl." A well dressed man, hatless, and evidently an official of the bank, was passing. He stopped at these surprising words, and then stepped forward.

"Why, Miss Maynard, what is the trouble?" he began, apologetically.

"The teller refuses to honor my signature," she began, sweetly, but the manager soon ended the difficulty by promptly O. K.ing the check. "Myra" murmured her thanks as the dumfounded clerk handed the money through the window. "She" bowed and walked to the safe deposit vaults, leaving the two men in a heated discussion by the wicket.

"Good morning," was "her" greeting there. "I have forgotten the number of my box. But I have the key. Will you please show it to me?"

"Certainly, Miss Maynard," and the attendant, after consulting his record book, walked ahead of her into the armor-plate safe room and opened the lock of her private box, with his own master key and one from the bunch which she handed him.

"Myra" drew out the metal box, retiring to one of the individual coupon rooms at the side. Alone here, "she" greedily lifted the cover and smiled at the jewelry which sparkled from within.

This safely changed to the handbag, the "girl" returned the box to its place, and with a more than usually amiable smile returned to the waiting car outside.

"I think I'll walk for a while. Tell mother that I will stay downtown for luncheon and not to worry about me," were the parting orders. "You can go home now."

VARNEY WAS WARNED BY JEAN

CHAPTER XXXI.
A Soul In Jeopardy.

WITHIN the somber surroundings of the Black Order's secret headquarters there was a strange unrest. In the main council room a group of the members were talking excitedly, but in subdued voices, with the leader of ceremonies.

"What has happened to the Master?" they demanded. "He has not told us what to do today, although yesterday he commanded that we come early for the day's labors."

"I dare not go inside without his command," replied the leader. "He strictly forbade doing that."

Just then the face of the High Master appeared through the black velvet curtains. He gazed fearsomely about him, and then with a strange, inarticulate cry, disappeared!

"Did you see that?" exclaimed one of the brethren, as they all fell to their knees.

"The Master has never before shown himself in this outer chamber! What can it mean, my brothers?" the leader demanded. "It bodes ill for us."

Before they could discuss it further, the Master's face reappeared. The men fell to their knees once more in the posture of adoration according to their ritual. Now, stranger still, he walked out among them as they tremblingly prostrated themselves.

Had any of them been looking upward a surprising expression might have been noticeable upon the face of the ruler. A gentler, softer look was upon the drawn features; his stride was uncertain, even effeminate, and he looked about him with a half frightened air.

The "Master" strode toward the incense tripod and knocked it over. The members cried in fear at this strange sacrilege.

Without a word the "Master" rushed toward the stone bull which stood upon the altar and knocked it crashing to the stone floor. The brothers crawled back toward the black hung walls in horror.

The "Master" sprang toward a great sword suspended near the altar, and with it began to scrape away at the weird symbols of the devil-worshiper's pentagram, which was painted on the floor.

"Oh, Master, spare that!" cried the leader of ceremonies.

"Oh, master, you know not what you do!" pleaded another kneeling member, with outstretched hands.

The "master" turned angrily, and with a threatening wave of the sword, cried:

"Begone! Every one of you! Get out of here!"

At the words they turned and fled through the secret entrance, leaving the "master" alone—and now more puzzled than ever. "He" looked down at the strange hands, and at the unfamiliar body.

"What can it all mean? What can it all mean?" and the unfortunate in panic tried to open the secret door. But it could not be done!

Outside, the members were buzzing in perplexed fashion as they picked their way along a creek bed toward an old mill which stood some distance up the stream. They were completely at a loss to understand the proceedings until Arthur Varney came running up to them and in a few breathless words explained the situation. At his suggestion they returned to the secret meeting place.

The outer room was empty. Suddenly a voice came from behind the curtains; they noiselessly approached the arras to peer within.

The body of the master was seated in the black carved chair talking excitedly over the telephone. The voice was tremulous with fear. "Oh, Dr. Alden, save me! It is Myra! It is Myra! But now I seem to be a man—a horrible man!"

Varney and his associates ran forward, to snatch away the instrument and quickly subdue the weak body.

"Quick, bind him—I mean her—and follow me," directed Varney, exultantly. And his command was obeyed with a cruelty which brought forth piteous moans.

CHAPTER XXXII.
The Warning of the Spirit.

"WHAT on earth can that mean? Why was it cut off? Why can't I find out the location of that telephone? Oh, it is terrible!" and Dr. Payson Alden strode excitedly up and down the floor of his laboratory.

His companion, sitting in a reclining chair in the darkened room, interrupted mildly:

"You broke into our seance, doctor, just as I was getting into the sensitive state. Be patient, for the sake of the girl. Here—I feel the call even now."

Alden impatiently paused, and then studied the face of this medium sent by one of his friends. The man, with eyes closed and hands tensely clutching the arm of the chair, was evidently undergoing some grilling mental strain. He groaned, and breathed hard, as his body writhed in apparent physical agony.

"The spirit of a Hindoo wishes to speak to you—it is a matter of life and death," said the medium. Alden leaned forward alertly, but it was many minutes before another syllable crossed the medium's lips.

At last the sensitive spoke again.

"The Hindoo says that he is your friend. He warns you to go to the house in the gorge quick! quick! quick!"

"What else? Tell me, what more did he say?" Alden demanded anxiously.

"Nothing that I can remember. He is gone."

"Then I must be going too. 'The house in the gorge'—where can that be, I wonder. Oh, yes, I do remember a place, outside the city, where I used to collect specimens years ago. It was not far from where they used the dynamite. I will get a machine and go. Come and see me again soon. I must hurry."

With the words the doctor snatched up his revolver from his desk and slipped it into his pocket. A hasty handshake and he dashed from the room to hail a passing taxicab.

It was a tedious and nerve-racking ride to the distant gorge. Alden was tortured by a thousand grewsome fears which he realized were only too well grounded. Finally the doctor signalled the chauffeur to stop.

"Will you go with me? I need help," he asked.

"Not me, governor," responded the driver, "I stay with me car."

"Very well then. Here is your fare," and Alden paid the man. "But wait here, after you turn your machine about, for I will have another passenger with me for the trip back to town—I hope."

The man touched his cap, and the physician strode into the underbrush and down a steep declivity, his revolver in hand. After several minutes' cautious advance he approached a dilapidated old frame house, standing on a ledge of rock.

The stream which flowed beside it, in a precipitous, rock-ribbed gorge resembling in a miniature way the Grand Canyon of Colorado, came from a waterfall about seventy-five feet high. Above this fall, as Alden now remembered, was a small natural dam which formed a considerable lake.

The only substantial portion of the weather-beaten structure seemed to be a strange stone chimney which was built at one end of the house, and which rose close to a higher ledge of the steep walls of the gorge.

Alden rushed for the door of the house, which swung open at his touch. Within the barren room, containing as furniture only two chairs and a wooden table, he beheld a startling scene.

In one of the chairs lay the body of Myra Maynard, bound with heavy ropes from the waist to the ankles. In another lay the unconscious figure of the high master of the Black Order! He was free from bonds entirely. The physician was mystified and ran forward to cut the ropes about the supposed Myra.

Before the girl's face hung a curious arrangement—a small hand mirror, suspended from a beam in the ceiling by a long piece of twine, and spinning as it swung. The leer on the girl's face warned him that the transportation of souls still held sway.

He pointed his weapon at the incarnation of the criminal, to be greeted by a sarcastic laugh.

"If you kill my body over there, Myra Maynard's spirit will be lost forever, Dr. Alden. If you kill her body you are guilty of murdering a young girl, and it will be impossible for her to ever come to this life again in it. You are a clever man, Dr. Payson Alden, but today the game is checkmate" jeered his enemy.

"But, if you give your word not to shoot I will permit her spirit to return to her. For I have won the game, and I prefer my own body in which to enjoy it in!" added the real high master with a cupning smile.

This was better than the present situation, although Alden knew it contained a hidden ruse.

"Go ahead! I see you are working a hypnotizing machine with the mirror. But I will shoot you if you try to escape!" answered the physician.

The enemy twirled the mirror again, gazing steadfastly into it. At the same time Alden noticed the ornate display of jewels. He saw the handbag on the table, and guessed its contents, and the purpose of the evil genius. As the hypnotism took its cataleptic hold, he quietly reached forward and tucked the handbag into his own inside coat pocket. The doctor was a physical as well as a psychical detective, in this, as in many other instances.

Suddenly the figure of the master stirred, the eyes opened and the cruel face smiled shrewdly. The girl's body was still unconscious. Alden ran toward the doorway and blocked it with the table. He covered the master now with his weapon.

"Try to escape and I'll blow your brains out!" he commanded. "You are my prisoner now!"

The master chuckled and edged toward the window, which was palpably too small for his body to pass through. Alden, sure of this, stooped over Myra, to cut the ropes, not noticing the wave of a handkerchief as a signal to some one outside.

There was a sudden, tremendous, shattering report, as a rain of rocks showered down upon the roof of the old house from the ledge of the waterfall above.

"What was that?" demanded the physician, trying vainly to awaken the girl from a mysterious stupor.

The high master chuckled, but shook his head with a pretense of ignorance.

"I suppose they are blasting somewhere. That's all I know, except that you are apt to be disappointed. * * * Listen, what is that sound?"

As he spoke, he pointed toward the window, and Alden glanced in that direction, his revolver still held ready for defense.

He saw an appalling sight. A mountain of water was rushing upon them from the waterfall! Already it was beginning to seep through the door, across the floor.

The physician realized that here, indeed, was a death trap; that the dam had been destroyed by some of the Black Order confederates, and that drowning had been the planned doom for the unfortunate girl as soon as the master could retranspose his soul!

The cunning horror of it all was plain to the physician, whose thoughts were flashing with the kaleidoscopic speed that is engendered in the last few seconds before death.

He looked about. The only door was barricaded, and was facing the direction of the impending flood. There was no escape!

"Myra, Myra! Wake up!" he cried, shaking her roughly.

The High Master stood regarding him with arms folded and a look of calm satisfaction.

"Ah, it is a pleasure to enjoy the fruits of victory—a double finish of triumph, I should call it!" he said.

Alden had caught the girl's limp body over his left arm, and now he pointed the revolver at the scoundrel who exulted so cold-bloodedly.

"Well, I am going to make a triple finish of it," he snapped out.

But before he could pull the trigger of the revolver nature's great power seemed to come to the assistance of the demoniac plotter. There was a crashing over head! The mass of water burst in through the sagging wooden walls.

Alden caught the body of the women he loved closer to his breast. At least it was sweet to be able to die with her, he thought.

There was a pandemonium of ripping, banging boards and falling planks, with showers of wet plaster. One beam struck his head, and he was dazed for an instant.

When he looked up again the Master had disappeared, as though by a continuance of his evil magic.

Alden strove to hold his footing. He sprang toward the table and forced his way past it, holding Myra closer than ever before.

The swirl of the waters caught him up and half submerged him, but he valiantly managed to hold the girl's head above the current.

He caught one glimpse of the great stone chimney, and it flashed on him how the villainous Master had disappeared. Even at that instant he was emerging from the top of it and being dragged to safety by two confederates.

On, on, the mighty current dragged them, but Alden managed to swim to the solid ground and pull the bedraggled girl to safety. The cold shock of the water had accomplished more than his own earlier efforts, for now she opened the blue eyes.

"Thank God! Oh, Myra, Myra!"

This was all he could say, as he showered the wet hands with impetuous kisses.

Myra did not restrain him. Her glance reflected the kindling glow of his own, as she strove to stand upright.

"Look," she cried. "Look, it is that man again!"

There are on the jutting ledge above them were three men. In the center was the Master. His thumbs went up, with clenched fist on either side of his cheeks, in the devil worshippers' symbol. It was the threat of continued malevolence and future dangers!

A thrill or horror shot through Alden and Myra as they stood there ankle deep in water. Alden, with a muttered imprecation, whipped out his revolver and fired. The three men promptly disappeared.

They did not come to view again, although he watched for several minutes. Then Alden and the girl began to pick their way over the rugged bank, to make a slow and laborious ascent further down the stream. It was near where Payson Alden had entered the thicket, and he breathed a sigh of gratitude to see the patient chauffeur still waiting for him.

"Great Scott, governor, wot you been doing? Out on a surf bathing party?" asked the surprised chauffeur as Alden helped Myra into the car.

"No, nothing but a little accident," he replied. "Hustle us home now. We're cold and might get warmed up if you burned up the road."

As they rode along Alden learned from Myra as much as she could remember, which was precious little. He told her of his own strange discovery of the lost trail. When he brought forth her handbag, she opened it to find her jewels and the $2,500 in cash within.

"How on earth could that have got there?" she exclaimed. "Why, these were in my safe deposit box. And this money?"

"I believe that the leader of the Black Magicians endeavored to do some high financing before he changed back to his own body. A telephone message to your bank will explain what happened. Did you know that you accepted Arthur Varney's proposal of marriage this morning?"

The girl looked at him with horror. Then she began to cry.

"Oh, Doctor Alden, I wish this terrible man had succeeded, for I would rather be dead than"—

Then she buried her face in her hands and sobbed wretchedly until the sight of her anxious mother at the front door forced her to a semblance of calm.

"We must keep most of this from poor, dear mother, for she has already had her cup of sorrow. I don't know how I can ever straighten out this angle. There was never a more miserable girl in the world than I!"

And then she and the physician spent an unpleasant half hour relating to Mrs. Maynard a logical—and untruthful—series of episodes to account for their condition.

Alden's heart was sad as he finally left them. He knew now that the grip of the Black Order was tightening. He cursed his own stupidity for not having shot the scoundrel in cold blood when he had the chance. But regrets were vain, and he engrossed himself at once on some new investigations in the laboratory.

Payson Alden was not a quitter, in danger—or love!

To Be Continued Next Sunday.

See it today at the Hippodrome, 9th and N. Y. Ave.—Advt.

IT'S EITHER DANDRUFF OR HAIR

You Can't Have Both for Long.

Look at your coat collar. If it shows evidence of dandruff you can take it as a sure sign of coming baldness unless you take steps to prevent it.

When the hair threatens to leave you can't afford to take any chances. Go to O'Donnell's Drug Store, 904 F Street, and ask for a 50c bottle of Speiser's Scalp Tonic. Use it according to directions, and in a reasonable time dandruff, falling hair and irritations of the scalp and skin will disappear and the growth of the hair will be promoted. Mr. O'Donnell is so certain of the merits of Speiser's Scalp Tonic that he'll gladly refund your money if it fails.

Avoid preparations containing alkalis (the presence of alkali is made known by the foaming of the liquid) or cocoanut oil. Be on the safe side—use Speiser's Scalp Tonic only.—Advt.