

IN LUCK AT LAST.

BY WALTER BESANT.

(Continued From Sunday, October 19.)

and me, and I've got a wife and a young family and a rising practice at home in the State of Maine, and I am only come over here to see you into your rights at great personal expense. Paid a substitute. Yes, actually paid a substitute. We only found the papers the other day, which is the reason why we did not come over before, and I am going home again directly."

"You are not really going away, Joe, are you?"

"No, I am going to stay here; but I shall pretend to go away. Now remember, we've got no suspicion ourselves, and we don't expect to meet any. If there is any, we are surprised and sorry. We don't come to the lady with a lawyer or a bondholder; we come as friends, and we shall arrange this little business between ourselves. Oh, never you fear, we shall arrange it quite comfortably, without lawyers."

"How much do you think we shall get out of it, Joe?"

"Listen and open your eyes. There's nearly a hundred and twenty thousand pounds and a small estate in the country. Don't let us trouble about the estate more than we can help. Estates mean lawyers. Money doesn't."

"He spoke as if small sums like a hundred thousand pounds are carried about in the pocket."

"Good gracious! And you've got two hundred of it already, haven't you?"

"Yes, but what is two hundred out of a hundred and twenty thousand? A hundred and twenty thousand! There's spending in it, isn't there, Lotty? Gad, we'll make the money spin, I calculate! It may be a few weeks before the old lady transfers the money—I don't quite know where it is, but in stocks or something—so your name, as soon as it is in your name I've got a plan. We'll remember that you've got a sweetheart or something in America, and you'll break your heart for wanting to see him. And then nothing will do but you must run across for a trip. Oh, I'll manage, and we'll make the money fly."

"He was always adding new details to his story, finding something to embellish it and brighten the effect, and now having succeeded in getting the false Iris into the house, he began already to devise schemes to get her out again."

"A hundred thousand pounds! Why, Joe, it is a terrible great sum of money. Good gracious! What shall we do with it when we get it?"

"I'll show you what to do with it, my girl."

"And you said, Joe—you declared that it is your own by rights?"

"Certainly it is my own. It would have been bequeathed to me by my own cousin. But she didn't know it. And she died without knowing it, and I am her heir."

Lotty wondered vaguely and rather sadly how much of this statement was true. But she did not dare to ask. She had promised her assistance. Every night she waked with a dreadful dream of a policeman knocking at the door; whenever she saw a man in blue she trembled; and she knew perfectly well that, if the plot failed, it was she herself, in all probability, and not her husband at all, who would be put in the dock. She did not believe a word about the cousin; she knew she was going to do a vile and dreadful wickedness, but she was ready to go through with it, or with anything else, to pleasure a husband who already, the honeymoon hardly finished, showed the propensities of a rover.

"Very well, Lotty; we are going there a once. You need take nothing with you, but you won't come back here for a good spell. In fact, I think I shall have to give up these lodgings for fear of accidents. I shall leave you with your cousin."

"Yes; and I'm to be quiet, and behave quietly, I suppose?"

"You'll be just as quiet and demure as you used to be when you were serving in the music shop. No loud laughing, no capers, no comic songs, and no dancing."

"And am I to begin at once by asking for the money to be—want do you call it, transferred?"

"No; you are not on any account to say a word about the money; you are to go on living there without hinting at the money—without showing any desire to discuss the subject—perhaps for months, until there can be the shadow of a doubt that you are the old woman's cousin. You are to make much of her, flatter her, cooer her up, and out all the family secrets, and get the length of her foot; but you are not to say one single word about the money. As for your manners, I'm not afraid of them, because when you like you can look and talk like a countess."

"I know now." She got up and changed her face, so that it became an eager, subdued and quiet, like a quiet serving-girl behind a counter. "So, is that modest enough, Joe? And as for singing, I shall sing for her, but not music-hall trash. This kind of thing, listen."

There was a piano in the room, and she sat down and sang to her own accompaniment, with a sweet, low voice, one of the soft, sad German songs.

"That'll do," cried Joe. "Hang me! what a clever girl you are, Lotty. That's the kind of thing she swells like. As for me, give me ten minutes of Jolly Nash. But you know how to pull 'em in, Lotty."

It was approaching twelve, the hour when they were due. Lotty retired and arrayed herself in her quietest and most sober dress, a costume in some brown stuff, with a bonnet to match. She put on her best gloves and boots, having herself felt the inferiority of the shop-girl's lacy in these minor points; and she meditated and mitigated her fringes, which, she knew, was rather more exaggerated than young ladies in society generally wear.

"You're not afraid, Lotty?" said Joe, when at last she was ready to start.

"Afraid? Not I, Joe. Come along, I couldn't look queer, nor if I was to make up as I do in the evening as a Quakeress. Come along. Oh, Joe, it will be awful dull! Don't forget to send word to the Hall that I am ill. Afraid? Not I!" She laughed, but rather hysterically.

There would be, however, shrewdly considered, some excitement when it came to the finding out, in a very few hours, in fact, she had no faith at all in the story being accepted and believed by anybody; to be sure, she herself had been trained, as ladies in shops generally are, to mistrust all mankind, and she could not understand at all the kind of confidence which comes of having the very thing presented to you which you ardently desire. When they arrived in Chester Square she found waiting for her a lady, who was certainly not beautiful, but she had kind eyes, which looked eagerly at the strange faces, and with an expression of disappointment.

"It can't be the fringes," thought Lotty. "Cousin Clara," she said softly and sweetly, as her husband had taught her, "I am

Iris Deseret, the daughter of your old play-fellow, Claude.



"I am Iris Deseret, the daughter of your old play-fellow, Claude."

"Oh, my dear, my dear," cried Clara, with enthusiasm, "come to my arms! Welcome home again!"

She kissed and embraced her. Then she held her by both hands, and looked at her face again.

"My dear," she said, "you have been a long time coming. I had almost given up hoping that Claude had any children. But you are welcome, after all—very welcome. You are in your own house, remember, my dear. This house is yours, and the plate, and furniture, and everything, and I am only your tenant."

"Oh!" said Lotty, overwhelmed. Why, she had actually been taken on her word, or rather the word of Joe.

"Let me kiss you again. Your face does not remind me as yet, in any singular feature, of your father's. But I dare say I shall find resemblance presently. And, indeed, your voice does remind me of him already. He had a singularly sweet and delicate voice."

"Iris has a remarkably sweet and delicate voice," said Joe softly. "No doubt she got it from her father. You will hear her singing presently."

Lotty hardly knew her husband. His face was preternaturally solemn, and he looked as if he was engaged in the most serious business of his life.

"All her father's ways were gentle and delicate," said Clara.

"Just like hers," said Joe. "When all of us—American boys and girls, pretty rough at times—were larking about, Iris would be just sitting out like a cat on a carpet, quiet and demure. I suppose she got that way, too, from her father."

"No doubt; and as for your face, my dear, I dare say I shall find a likeness presently. But just now I see none. Will you take off your bonnet?"

When the girl's bonnet was off Clara looked at her again, curiously, but kindly.

"I suppose I can't help looking for a likeness, my dear. But you must take after your mother, whom I never saw. Your father's eyes were full and limpid; yours are large, and clear, and bright; very good eyes, my dear, but they are not limpid. His mouth was flexible and mobile, but yours is firm. Your hair, however, reminds me somewhat of his, which was much your light shade of brown when he was young."

"And now, sir," she addressed Joe—"how do you have brought this dear girl all the way across the Atlantic what are you going to do?"

"Well, I don't exactly know that there's anything to keep me," said Joe. "You see, I've got my practice to look after at home—I'm a physician, as I told you—and my wife and children; and the sooner I get back the better, now that I can leave Iris with her friends, safe and comfortable. Stay," he added, "there are all those papers which I promised you—the certificates and the rest of them. You had better take them all, miss, and keep them for Iris."

"Thank you," said Clara, touched by this confidence; "Iris will be safe with me. It is very natural that you should want to go home again. And you will be content to stay with me, my dear, won't you? You need not be afraid, sir; I assure you that her interest will not in any way suffer. Tell her to write and let you know exactly what is done. Let her, however, since she is an English girl, remain with English friends, and get to know her cousins and relatives. You can safely trust her with me, Dr. Washington."

"Thank you," said Joe. "You know that when one has known a girl all her life one is naturally anxious about her happiness. We are almost brother and sister."

"I know; and I am sure, Mr. Washington, we ought to be most grateful to you. As for the money you have expended upon her, let me once more beg of you—"

Joe waved his hand majestically.

"As for that," he said, "if the money is spent, Iris is welcome to it, if it were ten times as much. Now, madam, you trusted me, the very first day that you saw me, with two hundred pounds sterling. Only an English lady would have done that. You trusted me without asking me who or what I was, or doubting my word. I assure you, madam, I felt that kindness, and that trust, very much indeed; and in return, I have brought you Iris herself. After all expenses of coming over and getting back, buying a few things for Iris, if I find that there's anything over, I shall not you to take back the balance. Madam, I thank you for the money, but I am sure I have repaid you—"

"Iris," said Clara, "this is a very clever speech. If there had been a shadow of doubt before it in Clara's heart (which there was not), it would vanish now. She cordially and joyfully accepted her newly-found cousin."

"And now, Iris," he said with a manly tremor in his voice, "I do not know if I shall see you again before I go away. If not, I shall take your fond love to all of them at home—Tom, and Dick, and Harry, and Harriet, and Prissy, and all of them—Joe really was carrying the thing through splendidly—and perhaps, my dear, when you are a grand lady in England, you will give a thought—a thought now and again—to your old friends across the water."

"Oh, Joe!" cried Lotty, really carried away with admiration, and ashamed of her skeptical spirit. "Oh," she whispered, "ain't you splendid!"

"But you must not go, Dr. Washington," said Clara, "without coming again to say farewell. Will you not dine with us to-night? Will you stay and have lunch?"

"No, madam, I thank you. It will be best for me to leave Iris alone with you. The sooner she learns your English ways and forgets American ways the better."

"But you are not going to start away for Liverpool at once? You will stay a day or two in London?"

The American physician said that perhaps he might stay a week longer for scientific purposes.

"Cousin," said Lotty eagerly, "please give him a check for a hundred pounds. Make it a hundred. You said everything was mine. No, Joe, I won't bear a word about repayment, as if a little thing like fifty pounds, or a hundred pounds, should want to be repaid! As if you and I could ever talk about repayment!"

Clara did as she was asked readily and eagerly. Then Joe departed, promising to call and say farewell before he left England, and resolving that in his next visit—his last visit—there should be another check. But he had made one mistake; he had parted with the papers. No one in any situation of life should ever give up the power until he has secured the substance. But it is human to err.

"And now, my dear," said Clara warmly, "sit down and let us talk. Arnold is coming to lunch with us, and to make your acquaintance."

When Arnold came a few minutes later he was astonished to find his cousin already on the most affectionate terms with the newly arrived Iris Deseret. She was walking about the room showing her the pictures of her grandfather and other ancestors and they were hand-in-hand.

"Arnold," said Clara, "this is Iris, and I hope you will both be great friends; Iris, this is my cousin, but he is not yours."

"I don't pretend to know how that may be," said the young lady. "But then I am glad to know all your cousins, whether they are mine or not; only don't bother me with questions, because I don't remember anything, and I don't know anything. Why, until the other day I did not even know that I was an English lady, not until they found those papers."

A strange accent for an American! and she certainly said "lady" for "lady" and "paper" for "paper," like a cockney. Alas! This comes of London music halls even to country-bred damsels!

Arnold made a mental observation that the girl might be called anything in the world, but could not be called a lady. She was handsome, certainly, but how could Claude Deseret's daughter have grown into so common a type of beauty? Where was the delicacy of feature and manner which Clara had never ceased to commend in speaking of her lost cousin?

"Iris," said Clara, "is our little savage from the American forest. She is Queen Pocahontas, who has come over to conquer England and to win all our hearts. My dear, my cousin Arnold will help me to make you an English girl."

She spoke as if the State of Maine was still the hunting ground of Sioux and Iroquois.

Arnold thought that a less American-looking girl he had never seen; that she did not speak or look like a lady was to be expected perhaps, if she had, as was probable, been brought up by rough and unpollished people. But he had no doubt, any more than Clara herself, as to the identity of the girl. Nobody ever doubts a claimant. Every impostor, from Demetrius downwards, has gained his supporters and partisans by simply living among them and keeping up the imposture. It is so easy, in fact, to be a claimant, that it is wonderful there are not more of them.

Then luncheon was served and the young lady not only showed a noble appetite but, to Arnold's astonishment, confessed to an ardent love for bottled stout.

"Most American ladies," he said impudently, "only drink water, do they not?"

Lotty perceived that she had made a mistake.

"I only drink stout," she said, "when the doctor tells me. But I like it all the same."

She certainly had no American accent. But she would not talk much; she was perhaps shy. After luncheon, however, Clara asked her if she would sing, and she complied, showing considerable skill with her accompaniment, and singing a simple song in good taste and with a sweet voice. Arnold observed, however, that there was some weakness about the letter "h," less common among Americans than among the English. Presently he went away, and the girl, who had been aware that he was watching her, breathed more easily.

"Who is your cousin Arnold?" she asked.

"My dear, he is my cousin but not yours. You told me so, often, because he is going to be married, I am sorry to say, and to be married beneath him—oh, it is dreadful—to some tradesman's girl, my dear."

"Dreadful!" said Iris with a queer look in her eyes. "Well, cousin, I don't want to see much of him. He's a good looking chap, too, though rather too finicking for my taste. I like a man who looks as if he could knock another man down. Besides, he looks at me as if I was a riddle, and he wanted to find out the answer."

In the evening Arnold found that no change had come over the old man. He was, however, perfectly happy, so that, considering the ruin of his worldly prospects, it was, perhaps, as well that he had parted, for a time, at least, with his wife. Some worldly misfortunes there are which should always produce this effect.

"You told me," said Lala Roy, "that another Iris had just come from America to claim an inheritance of your cousin's."

"Yes; it is a very strange coincidence."

"Very strange. Two Englishmen die in America at the same time, each having a daughter named Iris, and each daughter entitled to some kind of inheritance."

Lala Roy spoke slowly, and with meaning.

"Oh," cried Arnold, "it is more than strange. Do you think—?"

He could not for the moment clothe his thought in words.

"Do you know if anyone has brought this girl to England?"

"Yes; she was brought over by a young American physician, one of the family who adopted and brought her up."

"What is he like—the young American physician?"

"I have not seen him."

"Go," said Lotty, "to-morrow morning, and ask your cousin if this photograph resembles the American physician."

It was the photograph of a handsome young fellow, with strongly-marked features, apparently tall and well-set-up.

"Papers, miss—papers! Out of the safe!"

"Yes. They are papers of no value whatever to the thief, whoever he may be. But they are of the very greatest importance to us. Your master seems to have lost his memory for a while, and cannot help us in finding out who has done this wicked thing. You have been a faithful servant for so long that I am sure you will do what you can for us. Think for us. Try to remember if anybody besides yourself has had access to this room when your master was out of it."

James sat down. He felt that he must sit down, though Lala Roy was looking at him with eyes full of doubt and suspicion. The whole enormity of his own guilt, though he had not stolen anything, fell upon him. He had got the key; he had given it to Mr. Joseph; and he had received it back again. In fact, at that very moment it was lying in his pocket. The worst that he had feared had happened. The safe was robbed.

He was struck with so horrible a dread and so fearful a looking forward to judgment and condemnation that his teeth chattered and his eye gave way.

"You will think it over, James," said Iris "think it over, and tell us presently if you can remember anything."

"Think it over, Mr. James," Lala Roy repeated in his deepest tone, and with an emphatic gesture of his right forehead. "Think it over carefully. Like a lamp that is never extinguished are the eyes of the faithful servant."

They left him, and James fell back into his chair with hollow cheek and beating heart.

"He told me," he murmured—"oh, the villain—he swore to me that he had taken nothing from the safe. He said he only looked in it, and read the contents. The scoundrel! He has stolen the papers! He must have known they were there. And then, to save himself, he put me on to the job. For who would be suspected if not—oh, Lord!—if not me?"

He grasped his paste-brush, and attacked his work with a feverish anxiety to find relief in exertion; but his heart was not in it, and presently a thought pierced his brain, as an arrow pierces the heart, and under the pang and agony of it his face turned ashy pale, and the big drops stood upon his brow.

"For," he thought, "suppose that the thing goes abroad; suppose they were to advertise a reward; suppose the man who made the key were to see the advertisement or to hear about it! And he knows my name, too, and my business; and he'll let out for a reward—I know he will—who it was that ordered that key of him?"

Already he saw himself examined before a magistrate; already he saw in imagination the locksmith's man who made the key, the Testament, and giving his testimony in clear and distinct words, which could not be shaken.

"Oh, Lord, oh, Lord!" he groaned. "No one will believe me, even if I do confess the truth; and as for him, I know him well; if I go to him, he'll only laugh at me. But I must go to him—I must!"

He was so goaded by his terror that he left the shop unprotected—a thing he had never thought of—ran as fast as he could to Joe's lodgings. But he had left them; he was no longer there; he had not been there for six weeks; the landlady did not know his address, or would not give it. Then James felt sick and dizzy, and would have sat down on the doorstep and cried for the look of the thing. Besides, he remembered the unprotected shop. So he turned away sadly and walked back, well understanding now that he had fallen like a fool into a trap, artfully set to fasten suspicion and guilt upon himself.

When he returned he found the place full of people. Mr. Emblem was sitting in his customary place, and he was smiling. He did not look in the least like a man who had been robbed. He was smiling pleasantly and cheerfully. Mr. Chalke was also present, a man with whom no one ever smiled, and Lala Roy, solemn and dignified, and a man—an unknown man—who sat in the outer shop, and seemed to take no interest at all in the proceedings. Were they come, he asked himself, to arrest him on the spot? Apparently they were not, for no one took the least notice of him, and they were occupied with something else. How could they think of anything else? Yet Mr. Chalke, standing at the table, was making a speech which had nothing to do with the robbery.

"Here I am, you see, Mr. Emblem," he said; "I have told you already that I don't want to do anything to worry you. Let us be friends all round. This gentleman, your friend from India, will advise you, I am sure, for your own good, not to be obstinate. Lord! what is the amount, after all, to a substantial man like yourself! A substantial man, I say." He spoke confidently, but he glanced about the shop with doubtful eyes.

"Granted that it was borrowed to get your grandson out of a scrape—supposing he promised to pay it back and hasn't done so; putting the case that it has grown and developed itself as bills will do, and can't be helped, and can't be stopped; it isn't the fault of the lawyers, but the very nature of a bill to go on growing—its like a baby for growing. Why, after all, you were your grandson's security—you can't escape that. And when I would no longer rely, you gave of your own accord—come now, you can't deny that—a bill of sale on goods and furniture. Now, Mr. Emblem, didn't you? Don't let us have any bitterness or quarrelling. Let's be friends, and tell me I may send a man."

Mr. Emblem smiled pleasantly, but did not reply.

"What bill of sale it was, dated January the 25th, 1883, just before that cursed act of Parliament granted the five days' notice. Here is the bill of sale in possession. You can pay the amount, which is, with costs and sheriff's poundage, three hundred and fifty-one pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence, at once, or you may pay five days hence. Otherwise the shop, and furniture, and all, will be sold off in seven days."

"Oh," James gasped, listening with bewilderment, "we can't be going to be sold up! Emblem's to be sold up!"

"Three hundred and fifty pounds!" said Mr. Emblem. "My friend, let us rather speak of thousands. This is truly a happy day for all of us. Sit down, Mr. Chalke—my dear friend, sit down. Rejoice with us. A happy morning."

"What the devil is the matter with him?" asked the money lender.

"There was something, Mr. Chalke," Mr. Emblem went on cheerfully, "something said about my grandson. Joe was always a bad lot; inky his father and mother are out of the way in Australia. You came to me about that business, perhaps. Oh, on such a joyful day as this I forgive everybody. Tell Joe I do not to see him, but I have forgiven him."

"Oh, he's mad!" growled James; "he's gone stark staring mad!"

"You don't seem quite yourself this morning, Mr. Emblem," said Mr. Chalke. "Perhaps this gentleman, your friend from India, will advise you when I am gone. You don't understand, Mister," he addressed Lala Roy, "the nature of a bill. Once you start a bill, and begin to grow, it's like planting a tree, for it grows, and grows of its own accord, and by act of Parliament, too, though they do try to hack and cut it down in the most cruel way. You see Mr. Emblem is obstinate. He's got to pay off that bill, which is a bill of sale, and he won't do it. Make him write the check and have done with it."

"This is the best day's work I ever did. Mr. Emblem went on. 'To remember the letter, word for word, and everything! Mr. Arbuthnot has, very likely, finished the whole business by now. Thousands—thousands—and all for Iris!'"

"Look here, Mr. Emblem," said the lawyer, angrily. "You'll not only be a bankrupt if you go on like this, but you'll be a fraudulent bankrupt as well. It is honest, I want to know, to refuse to pay your just debts when you've got by thousands, as you boast—you actually boast—for your grand-daughter?"

"Yes," said the old man, "Iris will have thousands."

"I think, sir," said Lala Roy, "that you are under an illusion. Mr. Emblem does not possess any such savings or investments as you imagine."

"Then why does he go on talking about thousands?"

"He has had a shock; he cannot quite understand what has happened. You had better leave him for the present."

"Leave him! And nothing but these mouldy old books! Here, you, sir—James—your shopman—come here! What is the stock worth?"

"It depends upon whether you are buying or selling," said James. "If you were to sell it under the hammer, in lots, it wouldn't fetch a hundred pounds."

"There, you hear—you hear, all of you! Not a hundred pounds, and my bill of sale is three-fifty."

"Fray, sir," said Lala Roy, "who told you that Mr. Emblem was so wealthy?"

"His grandson."

"Then, sir, perhaps it would be well to question the grandson further. He may know things of which we have heard nothing."

Mr. Chalke went away at length, leaving the man—the professional person—behind. Then Lala Roy persuaded Mr. Emblem to go up stairs again. He did so without any apparent consciousness that there was a man in possession.

"James," said Lala Roy, "you have heard that your master has been robbed. You are reflecting and meditating on this circumstance. Another thing is that a creditor has threatened to sell off everything for debt. Most likely, everything will be sold, and the shop closed. You will, therefore, lose the place you have had for five-and-twenty years. That is a very bad business for you. You are unfortunate this morning. To lose your place—and then this robbery. That seems also a bad business."

"It is," said James with a hollow groan. "It is, Mr. Lala Roy. It is a dreadful bad business."

"Fray, Mr. James," continued this man with grave, searching eyes which made sinners shake in their shoes, "pray, why did you run away, and where did you go after you opened the shop this morning? You went to see Mr. Emblem's grandson, did you not?"

"Yes, I did, said James.

"Why did you go to see him?"

"I went to see him, Lord! I went to tell him what had happened, because he master of the shop, and I thought he ought to know," said James.

"Did you tell him?"

"No; he has left his lodgings. I don't know where he is—oh, and he always told me the shop was his—settled on him," he said.

"He is the Father of Lies; his end will be confusion. Shame and confusion shall wait upon all who have hearkened unto him or worked with him, until they repent and make atonement."

"Don't, Mister Lala Roy—don't; you frighten me," said James. "Oh, what a dreadful liar he is!"

All that morning the Philosopher sat in the bookshop's chair, and James, in the outer shop, felt that those deep eyes were resting continually upon him, and knew that bit by bit his secret would be dragged out of him. If he could get up and run away, a customer would come—if he could think of something else! But none of these happened; and James, at his table with the paste-brush before him, passed a morning compared with which any seat anywhere in Purgatory would have been comfortable. Presently a strange feeling came over him as if some invisible force was pushing and dragging him and forcing him to leave his chair, and throw himself at the Philosopher's feet and confess everything. This was the mesmeric effect of those reproachful eyes fixed steadily upon him. And in the doorway, like some figure in a nightmare—a figure incongruous and out of place—the man in possession sitting, passive and unconcerned, with one eye on the street and the other on the shop. Up stairs Mr. Emblem was sitting fast asleep; joy had made him sleep; and Iris was at work among her shelly letters, compiling sums for the fruit-trader, making a paper on comic actions; to the Cambridge man, and working out trigonometrical equations for the young schoolmaster, and her mind full of solemn exultation and glory, for she was a woman who was loved. The other things troubled her but little. Her grandfather would get back his equilibrium of mind; the shop might be shut up, but that mattered little. Arnold, and Lala Roy, and her grandfather and herself, would all live together, and she and Arnold would work. The selfishness of youth is really astonishing. Nothing—except perhaps toothaches—can make a girl unhappy who is loved and newly betrothed. She may say what she pleases, and her face may be a yard long when she speaks of the misfortunes of others, but all the time her heart is dancing.

To Lala Roy the situation presented a problem with insufficient data, some of which would have to be guessed. A letter, now lost, said that a certain case contained papers necessary to obtain an unknown inheritance for Iris. How, then, to ascertain whether anybody was expecting or looking for a girl to claim an inheritance! Then there was half a coat-of-arms, and lastly there was a certain customer of unknown name, who had been acquainted with Iris's father before his marriage. So far for Iris. As for the thief, Lala Roy had no doubt at all. It was, he was quite certain, the grandson, whose career he had watched for some years with interest and curiosity. Who else was there who would steal the papers? And who would help him, and give him free access to the safe? He did not only suspect, he was certain that James was in some way cognizant of the deed. Why else did he turn so pale? Why did he rush off to Joe's lodgings? Why did he sit trembling!

"At half-past twelve Lala Roy rose."

"It is your dinner hour," he said to James, and it seemed to the unhappy man as if he was saying, "I know all. It is your dinner hour; go, eat, refresh the body. Whom should suspicion frighten except the guilty?"

James put on his hat and sneaked—he felt that he was sneaking—out of the shop. During his dinner hour Joseph himself called. It was an unusual thing to see him at any time; in fact, as he was never wont to call upon his grandfather, unless he was in a scrape and wanted money, no one ever made the poor young man welcome, or begged him to come more often.

But this morning he walked up stairs and appeared so cheerful, so entirely free from any self-reproach for past sins, and so easy in his mind, without the least touch of the old hangdog look, that Iris began to reproach herself for thinking badly of her cousin.

When he was told about the robbery he expressed the greatest surprise that any one in the world could be so wicked as to rob an old man like his grandfather. Besides his abhorrence of crime in the abstract, he affirmed that the robbery of a safe was a species of villainy for which hanging was too mild—much too mild a punishment. He then asked his grandfather what were the contents of the packet stolen, and when he received no answer except a pleasant and a cheery laugh, he asked Iris, and learned to his sorrow that the contents were unknown.

[To be Continued.]

Shooting in the County.

Yesterday morning about 10 o'clock Phil