

Dark Hollow

By Anna Katharine Green
Illustrations by C. D. Rhodes
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SYNOPSIS.

A curious crowd of neighbors invade the mysterious home of Judge Ostrander, county judge and eccentric recluse, following a veiled woman who has gained entrance through the gates of the high double doors. She is surrounded by the judge's daughter, Miss Weeks, and the judge's wife, Mrs. Scoville. The woman has disappeared but the judge is found in a cataleptic state. The judge swears. Miss Weeks explains to him what has occurred during his absence. He secretly discovers the whereabouts of the woman. She proves to be the widow of a man tried before the judge and executed for murder years before. Her daughter is engaged to the judge's son, from whom he is estranged, but the murder is between the lovers. She plans to clear her husband's memory and asks the judge's aid. Alone in her room Deborah Scoville reads the newspaper clippings telling the story of the murder of Alexander Eberidge by John Scoville in Dark Hollow, twelve years before. The judge and Mrs. Scoville meet at Spencer's folly and she shows him how, on the day of the murder, she saw the shadow of a man, whittling a stick and wearing a long peaked cap. The judge engages her and her daughter Reuther to live with him in his mysterious home. Deborah and her lawyer, Black, go to the police station and see the stick used to murder Eberidge. She discovers a broken knife-blade point embedded in it. Deborah and Reuther go to live with the judge.

CHAPTER VIII—Continued.

Already had she stepped several times to her daughter's room and looked in, only to meet Reuther's unquiet eye turned toward hers in silent inquiry. Was her own uneasiness infectious? Was the child determined to share her vigil? She would wait a little longer this time and see.

Their rooms were over the parlor, and thus as far removed as possible from the judge's den. In her own, which was front, she felt at perfect ease, and it was without any fear of disturbing either him or Reuther that she finally raised her window and allowed the cool wind to soothe her heated cheeks. The moon emerged from scurrying clouds as she quietly watched the scene.

Perched, as she was, in a window overlooking the lane, she had but to lift her eyes from the double fence (that symbol of sad seclusion) to light on the trees rising above that unspoken ravine, black with memories she felt strangely like forgetting tonight. Beyond . . . how it stood out on the bluff! It had never seemed to stand out more threateningly! . . . the bifurcated mass of dismal ruin from which men had turned their eyes these many years now! But the moon loved it; caressed it; dallied with it, lighting up its toppling chimney and empty, staring gable.

Spencer's folly! Well, it had been that, and Spencer's den of dissipation, too! There were great tales—but it was not of these she was thinking, but of the night of storm—(of the greatest storm of which any record remained in Shelby) when the wind tore down branches and toppled down chimneys; when cattle were smitten in the field and men on the highway; and the light towering overhead, flared into flame, and the house which was its glory was smitten apart by the descending bolt as by a Titan sword, and blazed like a beacon to the sky.

This was long before she herself had come to Shelby; but she had been told the story so often that it was quite vivid to her. The family had been gone for months, and so no pity mingled with the excitement. Not till the following day did the awful nature of the event break in its full horror upon the town. Among the ruins, in a closet which the flames had spared, they found hunched up in one corner the body of a man, in whose seared throat a wound appeared which had not been made by lightning or fire. Spencer! Spencer himself, returned, they knew not how, to die of this self-inflicted wound, in the dark corner of his grand but neglected dwelling.

But as she continued to survey it the clouds came trooping up once more, and the vision was wiped out, and with it all memories save those of a nearer trouble—a more pressing necessity.

Withdrawing from the window, she crept again to Reuther's room and peeped carefully in. Innocence was asleep at last. Lighting a candle and shielding it with her hand, she gazed long and earnestly at Reuther's sweet face. Yes, she was right. Sorrow was slowly sapping the fountain of her darling's youth. If Reuther was to be saved hope must come soon. With a sob and a prayer the mother left the room, and locking herself into her own, sat down at last to face the new perplexity, the monstrous enigma which had come into her life.

It had followed in natural sequence from a proposal made by the judge that some attention should be given

his long-neglected rooms. He had said on rising from the breakfast table—(the words are more or less important):

"I am really sorry to trouble you, Mrs. Scoville; but if you have time this morning, will you clean up my study before I leave? The carriage is ordered for half-past nine."

The task was one she had long desired to perform. Giving Reuther the rest of the work to do, she presently appeared before him with pail and broom and a pile of fresh linen. Nothing more commonplace could be imagined, but to her, if not to him, there underlay this special act of ordinary housewifery a possible enlightenment on a subject which had held the whole community in a state of curiosity for years. She was going to enter the room which had been barred from public sight by poor Bela's dying body.

The great room before her presented a bare floor, whereas on her first visit it had been very decently, if not carefully, covered by a huge carpet rug. The judge's chair, which had once looked immovable, had been dragged forward into such a position that he could keep his own eye on the bedroom door. Manifestly she was not to be allowed to pursue her duties unwatched. Certainly she had to take more than one look at the every-day implements she carried to retain that balance of judgment which should prevent her from becoming the dupe of her own expectations.

"I do not expect you to clean up here as thoroughly as you have your own rooms upstairs," he remarked, as she passed him. "And, Mrs. Scoville," he called out as she slipped through the doorway, "leave the door open and keep away as much as possible from the side of the room where I have nailed up the curtain. I had rather not have that touched."

Not touch the curtain! Why, that was the one thing in the room she wanted to touch; for in it she not only saw the carpet which had been taken up from the floor, but a possible screen behind which anything might lurk—even his redoubtable secret.

"There is no window," she observed, looking back at the judge.

"No," was his short reply. Slowly she set down her pail. One thing was settled. It was Bela's cot she saw before her—a cot without any sheets. These had been left behind in the dead negro's room, and the judge had been sleeping just as she had feared, wrapped in a rug and with uncovered pillow. This pillow was his own; it had not been brought down with the bed. She hastily slipped a cover on it, and without calling any further attention to her act, began to make up the bed.

Conscious that the papers he made a faint reading were but a cover for his watchfulness, she moved about in a matter-of-fact way and did not spare him the clouds of dust which presently rose before her broom. But the judge was impervious to discomfort. He coughed and shook his head, but did not budge an inch. Before she had begun to put things in order the clock struck the half-hour.

"Oh!" she protested, with a pleading glance his way, "I'm not half done."

"There's another day to follow," he remarked, rising and taking a key from his pocket.

The act expressed his wishes; and he was proceeding to carry out her things when a quick, sliding noise from the wall she was passing drew her attention and caused her to spring forward in an involuntary effort to catch a picture which had slipped its cord and was falling to the floor.

A shout from the judge of "Stand aside, let me come!" reached her too late. She had grasped and lifted the picture and seen—

But first let me explain. This picture was not like the others hanging about. It was a veiled one. From some motive of precaution or characteristic desire for concealment on the part of the judge, it had been closely wrapped about in heavy brown paper before being hung, and in the encounter which ensued between the falling picture and the spear of an image standing on the table underneath, this paper had received a slit through which Deborah had been given a glimpse of the canvas beneath.

The shock of what she saw would have unnerved a less courageous woman.

It was a highly finished portrait of Oliver in his youth, with a broad band

of black painted directly across the eyes.

In recalling this startling moment Deborah wondered as much at her own aplomb as at that of Judge Ostrander. Not only had she succeeded in suppressing all recognition of what had thus been discovered to her, but had carried her powers of self-repression so far as to offer, and with good grace, too, to assist him in rehanging the picture. This perfection of acting had its full reward. With equal composure he excused her from the task, and, adding some expression of regret at his well-known carelessness in not looking better after his effects, bowed her from the room with only a slight increase of his usual courteous reserve.

But later, when thought came and with it certain recollections, what significance the incident acquired in her mind, and what a long line of terrors it brought in its train!

It was no casual act, this defacing of a son's well-loved features. It had a meaning—a dark and desperate meaning. It had played its heavy part in his long torment—a galling reminder of—what?

It was to answer this question—to face this new view of Oliver and the bearing it had on the relations she had hoped to establish between him and Reuther, that she had waited for the house to be silent and her child asleep.

Unhappy mother, just as she saw something like a prospect of releasing her long-dead husband from the odium of an unjust sentence, to be shaken by this new doubt as to the story and character of the man for whose union with her beloved child she was so anxiously struggling!

There was a room on this upper floor into which neither she nor Reuther had even stepped. She had once looked in, but that was all. Tonight—because she could not sleep; because she must not think—she was resolved to enter it. Oliver's room!



It Was a Highly Finished Portrait of Oliver in His Youth.

left as he had left it years before! What might it not tell of a past concerning which she longed to be reassured?

The father had laid no restrictions upon her, in giving her this floor for her use. Rights which he ignored she could afford to appropriate. Dressing sufficiently for warmth, she lit a candle, put out the light in her own room and started down the hall to this long-closed room.

A smother of dust—an odor of decay—a lack of all order in the room's arrangements and furnishings—even a general disarray, hallowed, if not affected, by time—for all this she was prepared. But not for the wild confusion—the inconceivable litter and all the other signs she saw about her of a boy's mad packing and reckless departure.

There was an inner door, and this some impulse drove her to open. A small closet stood revealed, empty but for one article. When she saw this article she gave a great gasp; then she uttered a low psalm; and with a shrug of the shoulders drew back and flung to the door. But she opened it again. She had to. One cannot live in hideous doubt, without an effort to allay it. She must look at that small, black article again; look at it with candle in hand; see for herself that her fears were without foundation; that a shadow had made the outline on the wall which—

She returned to the closet and slowly, reluctantly reopened the door. Before her on the wall hung a cap—and it was no shadow which gave it that look like her husband's; the broad peak was there. She had not been mistaken; it was the duplicate of the one she had picked up in the attic of

the Claymore inn when that inn was simply a tavern.

Then she found herself looking into a drawer half drawn out and filled with all sorts of heterogeneous articles—sealing wax, a roll of pins, a penholder, a knife—a knife! Why should she recall again at that? Nothing could be more ordinary than to find a knife in the desk drawer of a young man! The fact was not worth a thought; yet before she knew it her fingers were creeping towards this knife, had picked it up from among the other scattered articles, had closed upon it, let it drop again, only to seize hold of it yet more determinedly and carry it straight to the light.

The knife was lying open on her palm, and from one of the blades the end had been nipped, just enough of it to match—

Was she mad! She thought so for a moment; then she laid down the knife close against the cap and contemplated them both for more minutes than she ever reckoned.

The candle fluttering low in its socket roused her at last from her abstraction. Catching up the two articles which had so enthralled her, she restored the one to the closet, the other to the drawer, and, with swift but silent step, regained her own room, where she buried her head in her pillow, weeping and praying until the morning light, breaking in upon her grief, awoke her to the obligations of her position and the necessity of silence concerning all the experiences of this night.

CHAPTER IX.

Unwelcome Truths.

Silence. Yes, silence was the one and only refuge remaining to Deborah. Yet, after a few days, the constant self-restraint which it entailed ate like a canker into her peace and undermined a strength which she had always considered inexhaustible. Reuther began to notice her pallor, and the judge to look grave. She was forced to complain of a cold (and in this she was truthful enough) to account for her alternations of feverish impulse and deadly lassitude. The trouble she had suppressed was having its quiet revenge.

Was there no medium course? Could she not learn where Oliver had been on the night of that old-time murder? Miss Weeks was a near neighbor and saw everything. Miss Weeks never forgot; to Miss Weeks she would go.

She had passed the first gate and was on the point of opening the second one, when she saw on the walk before her a small slip of brown paper. Lifting it, she perceived upon it an almost illegible scrawl which she made out to read thus:

For Mrs. Scoville:
Do not go wandering all over the town for clues. Look closer to home.

And below:

You remember the old saying about jumping from the frying pan into the fire. Let your daughter be warned. It is better to be singed than consumed.

Because Deborah's mind was quick it all flashed upon her, bowing her in spirit to the ground. Reuther had been sinned by the knowledge of her father's ignominy, she would be consumed if inquiry were carried further and this ignominy transferred to the proper culprit. Oliver alone could be meant. The doubts she had tried to suppress from her own mind were shared by others—others!

In five minutes she was crossing the road, her face composed, her manner genial, her tongue ready for any encounter. The truth must be hers at all hazards. If it could be found here, then here would she seek it. Her long struggle with fate had brought to the fore every latent power she possessed.

Miss Weeks was ready with her greeting. A dog from the big house across the way would have been welcomed there. The eager little seamstress had never forgotten her hour in the library with the half-unconscious judge.

"Mrs. Scoville!" she exclaimed, fluttering and leading the way into the best room; "how very kind you are to give me this chance for making my apologies. You know we have met before."

"Have we?" Mrs. Scoville did not remember, but she smiled her best smile. "I am glad to have you acknowledge an old acquaintance. It makes me feel less lonely in my new life."

"Mrs. Scoville, I am only too happy." It was bravely said, for the little woman was in a state of marked embarrassment. Could it be that the visitor had not recognized her as the person who had accosted her on that memorable morning she first entered Judge Ostrander's forbidden gates?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Trust in Providence.

When we meet one of these big, blazing motor headlights while riding in the modest electric belonging to our wife's relations, we just go ahead, trusting that Providence that watches over children and husbands will take care of us, too.

MEXICANS URGED TO AGREE ON PEACE PLAN

THE PRESIDENT CALLS ON MEXICO TO FORM GOVERNMENT POWERS CAN RECOGNIZE.

DESIRE IS ONLY TO AID

As Friend and Neighbor United States Willing to Aid Stable Government, If Established, Which Must Be Done to Alleviate Suffering.

Washington.—All factions in Mexico were publicly called upon by President Wilson Wednesday in the name of the United States government "to accommodate their differences" and set up a government that can be accorded recognition.

Failure to unite in a movement to bring peace to Mexico "within a very short time," it was announced in a statement telegraphed to Generals Villa, Carranza, Zapata and others, would constrain the United States to decide what means should be employed "to save the people of the southern republic from further devastations of internal warfare."

Statement to American people: "For more than two years revolutionary conditions have existed in Mexico. The purpose of the revolution was to rid Mexico of men who ignored the constitution of the republic and used their power in contempt of the right of its people, and with these purposes the people of the United States instinctively and generously sympathized. But the leaders of the revolution, in the very hour of their success, have disagreed and turned their arms against one another.

"All professing the same objects, they are nevertheless unable or unwilling to co-operate. A central authority at the City of Mexico is no sooner set up than it is undermined and its authority denied by those who were expected to support it.

"Mexico is apparently no nearer a solution of her tragical troubles than she was when the revolution was first kindled. And she has been swept by civil war as if by fire. Her crops are destroyed, her fields lie unseeded, her work cattle are confiscated for the use of the armed factions, her people flee to the mountains to escape being drawn into unavailing bloodshed, and no man seems to see or lead the way to peace and settled order. There is no proper protection either for her own citizens or for the citizens of other nations resident and at work within her territory. Mexico is starving, and without a government.

"In these circumstances the people and government of the United States can not stand indifferently by and do nothing to serve their neighbor. They want nothing for themselves in Mexico. Least of all do they desire to settle her affairs for her, or claim any right to do so. But neither do they wish to see utter ruin come upon her, and they deem it their duty as friends and neighbors to lend any aid they properly can to any instrumentality which promises to be effective in bringing about a settlement which will embody the real objects of the revolution—constitutional government and the rights of the people. Patriotic Mexicans are sick at heart and cry out for peace and for every self-sacrifice that may be necessary to procure it. Their people cry out for food, and will presently hate as much as they fear every man in their country or out of it who stands between them and their daily bread.

"It is time, therefore, that the government of the United States should frankly state the policy which in these extraordinary circumstances it becomes its duty to adopt. It must presently do what it has not hitherto done, or felt at liberty to do—lend its active moral support to some man, or group of men, if such may be found, who can rally the suffering people of Mexico in an effort to ignore, if they can not unite, the warring factions of the country, return to the constitution of the republic, so long in abeyance, and set up a government at the City of Mexico which the great powers of the world can recognize and deal with, a government with whom the program of the revolution will be a business and not merely a platform.

"I, therefore, publicly and very solemnly call upon the leaders of factions in Mexico to act, to act together, and to act promptly, for the relief and redemption of their prostrate country. I feel it to be my duty to tell them that if they can not accommodate their differences and unite for this great purpose within a very short time, this government will be constrained to decide what means should be employed by the United States to help Mexico save herself and serve her people."

Commander in Chief Re-elected.

Richmond, Va.—General Bennett H. Young of Louisville, Ky., was Wednesday re-elected commander in chief of the United Confederate Veterans in annual reunion, Birmingham, Ala., was selected as the reunion city for 1918. W. N. Brandon of Little Rock was elected commander in chief of the United Sons of Confederate Veterans.

We and the British Have Sweet Tooth.

Britons have the sweetest tooth, and Americans come next, if the statistics for consumption of sugar mean anything. An Englishman eats annually 92.4 pounds, an American consumes 79.2 pounds. In Denmark the average consumption is 72.9 pounds per capita; in Switzerland it is 55 pounds; in Germany, Holland, Sweden and Norway it is from 39 to 44 pounds; in France, 35 pounds; in Belgium, 33; in Austria, 24.2; in Russia, 19.8; in Portugal, 15.4; in Spain, and Turkey, 11; in Italy, Bulgaria, Roumania and Serbia, from 6 to 7 pounds.

The principal reasons for these variations is found in the relative richness or lowness of the customs duties on sugar and on the things with which it is commonly associated—coffee, tea, etc.

RESINOL BEGINS TO HEAL SICK SKINS AT ONCE

You don't have to WONDER if resinol ointment is doing you good. You KNOW it is, because the first application stops the itching and your tortured skin feels cool and comfortable at last. Why don't YOU try this easy resinol way to heal eczema or similar skin eruption? Resinol clears away pimples, too, and is a valuable household remedy for sunburn, poison-ivy, cuts, sores, burns, chafings, etc. It has been prescribed by doctors for 20 years and contains nothing that could irritate or injure the tenderest skin. Sold by all druggists.—Adv.

Opposite Cause and Effect.

"I have such a poor appetite, doctor."

"That's too much rich food."

This is to the credit of human nature: It is not on record that anyone ever resolved to be meaner next year.

MRS. LYON'S ACHES AND PAINS

Have All Gone Since Taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

Terre Hill, Pa.—"Kindly permit me to give you my testimonial in favor of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. When I first began taking it I was suffering from female troubles for some time and had almost all kinds of aches—pains in lower part of back and in sides, and pressing down pains. I could not sleep and had no appetite. Since I have taken Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound the aches and pains are all gone and I feel like a new woman. I can't praise your medicine too highly."—Mrs. AUGUSTUS LYON, Terre Hill, Pa.



It is true that nature and a woman's work has produced the greatest remedy for women's ills that the world has ever known. From the roots and herbs of the field, Lydia E. Pinkham, forty years ago, gave to womankind a remedy for their peculiar ills which has proved more efficacious than any other combination of drugs ever compounded, and today Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is recognized from coast to coast as the standard remedy for woman's ills.

In the Pinkham Laboratory at Lynn, Mass., are files containing hundreds of thousands of letters from women seeking health—many of them openly state over their own signatures that they have regained their health by taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound; and in some cases that it has saved them from surgical operations.

Paxtine

A Soluble Antiseptic Powder to be dissolved in water as needed For Douches

In the local treatment of woman's ills, such as leucorrhoea and inflammation, hot douches of Paxtine are very efficacious. No woman who has ever used medicated douches will fail to appreciate the clean and healthy condition Paxtine produces and the prompt relief from soreness and discomfort which follows its use. This is because Paxtine possesses superior cleansing, disinfecting and healing properties.

For ten years the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co. has recommended Paxtine in their private correspondence with women, which proves its superiority. Women who have been relieved say it is "worth its weight in gold." At druggists. 50c. large box or by mail. Sample free. All orders must be accompanied by express paid for \$1.00. The Paxton Toilet Co., Boston, Mass.

DAISY FLY KILLER

placed anywhere, attracts and kills all flies. Neat, clean, ornamental, convenient, cheap. Kills all metal, and is not soiled or injured by anything. Guaranteed effective. All dealers or direct express paid for \$1.00. HAROLD SOMERS, 150 De Kalb Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

WINTERSMITH'S CHILL TONIC

not only the old reliable remedy FOR MALARIA but a general strengthening tonic and appetizer. For children as well as adults. Sold for 50 cents. 60c and \$1 bottles at drug stores.

DROPSY TREATED, usually gives quick relief, soon removes swelling and short breath, often gives entire relief in 15 to 25 days. Trial treatment sent FREE. DR. THOMAS E. GREEN, Successor to Dr. H. H. Cross's Sons, Box A, Chatsworth, Ga.

Chanak-Kalesi, the straggling town near the "narrows" of the Dardanelles, which figures frequently in the latest operations, means "earthenware castle" in Turkish, and is so-called from a celebrated pottery on the Asiatic side of the strait. An agent from this pottery used to be always on the lookout for a wandering European, and hooked on to every passing ship. His boatload of gaudy crockery was generally more remarkable for gilding and tawdry color

than for taste. But the forms of the vessels were often graceful, even classical; and specimens of the tall water jugs he sells, or once sold, can be seen throughout the Levant, though seldom in London.

Rapid Coaling at Havana. Coaling vessels at Havana is facilitated by automatic devices, according to a commerce report. A cargo of 8,200 tons can be discharged and stacked for storage at the wharf or loaded into barges in 16 hours. Me-

chanically equipped barges, which are used in pairs as a rule, are capable of giving a continuous delivery of 300 tons per hour. A record was made, however, when these barges put 1,800 tons of coal into a steamer in seven hours, this time including delays and stoppages for trimming.

Monaco. Monaco, which is arranging an exhibition to illustrate its history, is one of the most curiously constituted states in the world, since of its 19,000

inhabitants 17,000 are foreigners and the balance is largely composed of French and Italians only recently naturalized. Sixty years ago Monaco was poor and desolate and Monte Carlo did not exist. Then came M. Blanc, established the casino and called into existence the most beautiful hell upon earth. The casino company, with its capital of 375,000,000 francs, now practically runs the little principality, subsidizing the prince, undertaking most of the public works and relieving the population of all taxation.