DARK HOLLOW

By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN

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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 barriers surrounding the place. The woman has disappeared but the judge is found in a cataleptic state.

CHAPTER I—Continued.

It was an awful and a terrifying sight to little Miss Weeks and, screaming loudly, she left her window and ran into Judge Ostrander's presence, and, gazing wildly about, wormed her way toward a heavily carved screen guarding a distant corner and cowered down behind it.

The gasping, struggling men, the frantic negro, were in the next room now—she could catch the sound of the latter's panting breath rising above the clamor of strange entreaties and excited cries with which the air was full; then a quick, hoarse shout of 'Judge! Judge!' rose in the doorway, and she became conscious of the presence of a headlong, rushing force struck midway into silence as the frozen figure of his master flashed upon the negro's eyes—then—a growl of concentrated emotion, uttered almost in her ear, and the screen which had been her refuge was violently thrust away from before her and in its place she beheld a terrible being standing over her, in whose eyes, dilating under this fresh surprise, she beheld her doom, even while recognizing that if she must suffer it would be simply as an obstacle to some goal at her back which he must reach—now—before he fell in his blood and died.

What was this goal? As she felt herself lifted, nay, almost hurled aside, she turned to see and found it to be a door before which the devoted Bela had now thrown himself, guarding it with every inch of his powerful but rapidly sinking body, and chattering defiance with his bloodless, quivering lips—a figure terrible in anger, sublime in purpose, and piteous in its failing energies.

"Back! all of you!" he cried, and stopped, clutching at the door casing on either side to hold himself erect. "You cannot come in here. This is the judge's—"

Not even his iron resolve or once unequaled physique could stand the sapping of the terrible gash which disfigured his forehead. He had been run over by an automobile in a moment of blind abstraction, and his hurt was mortal. Already his head, held erect by the passion of his purpose was

Turning, They Beheld the Judge Upon His Feet.

sinking on his breast; already his glazing eye was losing its power of concentration, when with a final rally of his decaying strength he started erect again and cried out in terrible appeal:

"I have disobeyed the judge, and, as you see, it has killed him. Do not make me guilty of giving away his secret. Swear that you will leave this door unpassed; swear that no one but his son shall ever turn this lock; or I will haunt you, I, Bela, man by man, till you sink in terror to your graves. Swear! sw—"

His head fell forward again and in that intense moment of complete silence they could hear the splash of his lifeblood as it dropped from his forehead on to the polished boards beneath; then he threw up his arms and fell in a heap to the floor.

"Dead!" broke from little Miss Weeks as she flung herself down in reckless abandonment at his side. She had never known an agitation beyond some fluttering woman's hope she had stifled as soon as born, and now she knelt in blood.

A solemn hush, then a mighty sigh of accumulated emotion swept from lip to lip, and the crowd of later invaders, already abashed if not terrified by the unexpected spectacle of suspended animation which confronted them from the judge's chair, shrank tumultuously back as little Miss Weeks advanced upon them, holding out her meager arms in late defense of the secret to save which she had just seen a man die.

"Let us do as he wished," she prayed. "I feel myself much to blame. What right had we to come in here?"

No one in authority was present; no one representing the law, not even a doctor; only haphazard persons from the street and a few neighbors who had not been on social terms with the judge for years and never expected to be so again. His secret!—always a source of wonder to every inhabitant of Shelby, but lifted now into a matter of vital importance by the events of the day and the tragic death of the negro! Were they to miss its solution, when only a door lay between it and them—a door which they might not even have to unlock? Miss Weeks was about to utter an impassioned appeal to their honor, when the current of her and their thoughts was changed by a sudden sense of some strange new influence at work in the room, and turning, they beheld the judge upon his feet, his mind awakened, but his eyes still fixed—an awesome figure; some thought more awesome than before.

Death was present with them—he saw it not. Strangers were making havoc with his solitude—he was as oblivious of their presence as he had been unconscious of it before. His faculties and all his attention were absorbed by the thought which had filled his brain when the cogs of that subtle mechanism had slipped and his faculties paused inert.

"Where is the woman?" he cried.

It was a cry of fear; not of mastery

CHAPTER II.

The Veiled Woman.

The intensity of the question, the compelling, self-forgetful passion of the man, had a startling effect upon the crowd of people huddled before him. With one accord, and without stopping to pick their way, they made for the open doorway, knocking the smaller pieces of furniture about and creating havoc generally. Some fled the house; others stopped to peer in again from behind the folds of the curtain which had been only partially torn from its fastenings. Miss Weeks was the only one to stand her ground.

When the room was quite cleared and the noise abated (it was a frightful experience to see how little the judge had been affected by all this hubbub of combined movement and sound) she stepped within the line of his vision and lifted her feeble and ineffectual hand in an effort to attract his attention to herself.

But he did not notice her, any more than he had noticed the others. Still looking in the one direction, he cried aloud in troubled tones:

"She stood there! the woman stood there and I saw her! Where is she now?"

"She is no longer in the house," came in gentle reply from the only one in or out of the room courageous enough to speak. "She went out when she saw us coming. We knew that she had no right to be here. That is why we intruded ourselves, sir. We did not like the looks of her, and so followed her in to prevent mischief."

"How dared you! How dared she!" Then as his mind regained its full poise, "And how, even if you had the temerity to venture an entrance here, did you manage to pass my gates? They are never open. Bela sees to that."

As she watched she saw his eyes, fixed up to now upon her face, leave it and pass furtively and with many hesitations from object to object, toward that spot behind him where lay the source of her great terror, till finally, with fatal precision, they reached the point where the screen had stood, and not finding it, flew in open terror to the door it was set there to conceal—when that something else, huddled in oozing blood, on the floor beneath, drew them to itself with the irresistibleness of grim reality, and he forgot all else.

Dead! Bela! Dead! and lying in his blood! The rest may have been no dream, but this was surely one, or his eyes, used to inner visions, were playing him false.

Grasping the table at his side to steady his failing limbs, he pulled himself along by its curving edge till he came almost abreast of the helpless figure which for so many years had been the embodiment of faithful and unwearied service.

Then and then only did the truth of his great misfortune burst upon his bewildered soul; and with a cry which tore the ears of all hearers and was never forgotten by anyone there, he flung himself down beside the dead negro, and, turning him hastily over, gazed in his face.

"And where was I, when all this happened?" he demanded in a voice made low by awe and dread of its own sound.

"You? You were seated here," murmured the little woman, pointing at the great chair. "You were not—quite—quite yourself," she softly explained, wondering at her own composure. Then quickly, as she saw his thoughts revert to the dead friend at his feet, "Bela was not hurt here. He was downtown when it happened; but he managed to struggle home and gain this place, which he tried to hold against the men who followed him. He thought you were dead, you sat there so rigid and so white, and, before he quite gave up, he asked us all to promise not to let anyone enter this room till your son Oliver came."

Understanding partly, but not yet quite clear in his mind, the judge sighed, and, stooping again, straightened the faithful negro's limbs. Then, with a sidelong look in her direction, he felt in one of the pockets of the dead negro's coat and, drawing out a small key, held it in one hand while he fumbled in his own for another, which found, he became on the instant his own man again.

Miss Weeks, seeing the difference in him, and seeing, too, that the doorway was now clear of the wondering, awe-struck group which had previously blocked it, bowed her slight body and proceeded to withdraw; but the judge, staying her by a gesture, she waited patiently near one of the bookracks against which she had stumbled, to hear what he had to say.

"I must have had an attack of some kind," he calmly remarked. "Will you be good enough to explain exactly what occurred here that I may more fully comprehend my own misfortune and the death of this faithful friend."

Then she saw that his faculties were now fully restored, and came a step forward. But before she could begin her story he added this searching question:

"Was it he who let you in—you and the others—I think you said others? Was it he who unlocked my gates?"

Miss Weeks sighed and betrayed fluster. It was not easy to relate her story; besides it was woefully incomplete. She knew nothing of what had happened downtown, she could only tell what had passed before her eyes. But there was one thing she could make clear to him, and that was how the seemingly impassable gates had been made ready for the woman's entrance and afterwards taken such advantage of by herself and others. A pebble had done it all—a pebble placed in the gateway by Bela's hands.

As she described this and insisted upon the fact in face of the judge's almost frenzied disclaimer, she thought she saw the hair move on his forehead. Bela a traitor, and in the interests of the woman who had fronted him from the other end of the room at the moment consciousness had left him! Evidently this intrusive little body did not know Bela or his story, or—

Why should interruption come then? Why was he stopped, when in the passion of the moment he might have let fall some word of enlightenment which would have eased the agitated curiosity of the whole town! Miss Weeks often asked herself this question and bewailed the sudden access of sounds in the rooms without, which proclaimed the entrance of the police and put a new strain upon the judge's faculty of self-control and attention to the one matter in hand.

The commonplaces of an official inquiry were about to supersede the play of a startled spirit struggling with a problem of whose complexities he had received but a glimpse.

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The library again! but how changed! Evening light now instead of blazing sunshine; and evening light so shaded that the corners seemed far and the many articles of furniture, cumbering the spaces between, larger for the shadows in which they stood hidden. Perhaps the man who sat there in company with the judge would have preferred to see more perfectly that portion of the room where Bela had taken his stand and finally fallen; but from the place where he sat there was no getting any possible view of that part of the wall or of anything connected with it; and so, with every appearance of satisfaction at being allowed in the room at all, Sergeant Doolittle from headquarters drank the judge's wine and listened for the judge's commands.

"Sergeant, I have lost a faithful servant under circumstances which have called an unfortunate attention to my house. I should like to have this place guarded—carefully guarded, you understand—from any and all intrusions till I can look about me and secure protection of my own. May I rely upon the police to do this, beginning tonight at an early hour? There are loiterers already at the corner and in front of the two gates. I am not accustomed to these attentions, and ask to have my fence cleared."

"Two men are already detailed for the job, your honor. I heard the order given just as I left headquarters."

The judge showed small satisfaction.

"Two men! Couldn't I have three? One for each gate and one to patrol the fence separating these grounds from the adjoining lot?"

"If two men are not enough to insure you a quiet sleep you shall have three or four or even more, Judge Ostrander. Do you want one of them to stay inside? That might do the business better than a dozen out."

"No. While Bela lies above ground, we want no third here. When he is buried I may call upon you for a special to watch my room door. But it's of outside protection we're talking now. Only, who is to protect me against your men?"

"What do you mean by that, your honor?"

"They are human, are they not? They have instincts of curiosity like the rest of us. How can I be made sure that they won't yield to the temptation of their position and climb the fences they are detailed to guard?"

"And would this be so fatal to your peace, judge?" A smile tempered the suggestion.

"It would be a breach of trust which would greatly disturb me. I want nobody on my grounds, nobody at all. Has not my long life of solitude within these walls sufficiently proved this? I want to feel that these men of yours would no more climb my fence than they would burst into my house without a warrant."

"Judge, I will be one of the men. You can trust me."

"Thank you, sergeant; I appreciate the favor. I shall rest now as quietly as any man can who has met with a great loss. I shall always suffer from regret that I was not in a condition

"Who Is to Protect Me Against Your Men?"

to receive Bela's last sigh. He was a man in a thousand. One seldom sees his like among white or black."

"He was a very powerfully built man. It took a sixty-horsepower racing machine, going at a high rate of speed, to kill him."

A spasm of grief or unavailing regret crossed the judge's face as his head sank back again against the high back of his chair.

"I should like to ask a question," he finally observed. "You were not at the inquiry this afternoon, and may not know that just as Bela and the crowd about him turned this corner they ran into a woman leading a small child, who stopped the whole throng in order to address him. I saw that woman myself; earlier. She was in this house. She was in this room. If you will consent to look for her, and if she is found and no stir made, I will pay all that you think it right to demand."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

English Lads Shout "Marseillaise."

Never say that the English are not a musical people. You shall meet seven little muddy boys, keeping loyally to the gutter, clad in not many inches of old clothes, and none of them so much as ten years old. Yet they will all be shouting the whole of the "Marseillaise," which is not an eight-bar tune, but a very complex melody, without a mistake.

Whether the London urchin has been furnished with a translation of the French battle hymn it would be hard to say, for though the music is well rendered the words are indistinguishable.—London Chronicle.

Curing Cholera by New Method.

Doctor Renault, director of the sanitary service of French India, reports to the Indian Medical Gazette that he has had remarkable success in curing Asiatic cholera by hypodermic injections of chlorhydrate of emetine, in doses ranging from one centigram for babies to four centigrams for persons above the age of twenty-five. In a severe epidemic of cholera he cured 73 per cent of his cases, and says this would have been greater but for the excessive zeal of his assailants, who administered it to patients in the last stage of the disease, when it is absolutely useless

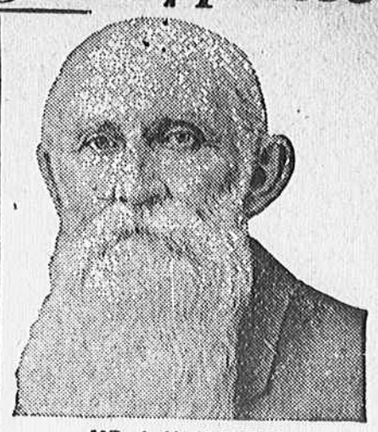
Healthy Old Age Brings Happiness

Simple Remedy Promotes Health By Overcoming Tendency to Constipation.

Advancing years impair the action of the vital organs. Old age should be the period of greatest happiness, but good health is necessary. Constipation should not be tolerated—it is often the direct cause of ill health.

Headache, belching, biliousness, bloat, drowsiness after eating and other symptoms of constipation can be readily relieved by the use of a simple laxative compound sold in drug stores under the name of Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin. Mr. J. H. Bristol, 1412 Geddes Ave., Ann Arbor, Mich., who is 83 years old, says "Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin is the best remedy I ever used for constipation and I always have a bottle of it in the house to use when I feel the need of it; it never disappoints."

Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin is a mild laxative preparation, positive in its effect, acting easily and naturally without griping or other pain or discomfort. For over a quarter of a century it has been the standard



MR. J. H. BRISTOL.

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Many a man's worth is not discovered until his will is read.

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Whenever You Need a General Tonic Take Grove's

The Old Standard Grove's Tasteless chill Tonic is equally valuable as a General Tonic because it contains the well known tonic properties of QUININE and IRON. It acts on the Liver, Drives out Malaria, Enriches the Blood and Builds up the Whole System. 50 cents.—Adv.

Craven Knight.

"Never speak to me again," exclaimed the fair maid, as with flashing eyes she handed back to the football hero the ring he had so proudly placed on her finger a few short days before. "I can never marry a coward."

"A coward?" he stammered.

"Yes, a coward. I saw you with my own eyes at the game this afternoon. You had the ball under your arm and ran with it the whole length of the field instead of facing the crowd and fighting like a man."

He Lived There.

James E. Ferguson, governor of Texas, smiled the other evening when the conversation turned to the subject of bad breaks. He said he was reminded of how Smith sadly fozzled.

Some time ago Smith was taken to an entertainment in an unfamiliar town by a friend, and being somewhat bored toward the end of the show he looked around the room for a sympathetic soul.

"You look just the way I feel about it," he remarked to a sad-looking citizen. "These receptions are the most tiresome things on the face of the earth."

"Yes," admitted the sad-faced one, with something akin to a sigh. "They are rather tiresome."

"Bore you to beat the band," returned Smith, and then suggested, "Why don't you go home?"

"I am home," was the startling rejoinder of the other. "I live in the bloomin' place."

MOTHER'S "NOTIONS"
Good for Young People to Follow.

"My little grandson often comes up to show me how large the muscles of his arms are.

"He was a delicate child, but has developed into a strong, healthy boy and Postum has been the principal factor.

"I was induced to give him the Postum because of my own experience with it.

"I am sixty years old, and have been a victim of nervous dyspepsia for many years. Have tried all sorts of medicines and had treatment from many physicians, but no permanent relief came.

"I used to read the Postum advertisements in our paper. At first I gave but little attention to them, but finally something in one of the advertisements made me conclude to try Postum.

"I was very particular to have it prepared strictly according to directions, and used good, rich cream. It was very nice indeed, and about bedtime I said to the members of the family that I believed I felt better. One of them laughed and said, 'That's another of mother's notions,' but the notion has not left me yet.

"I continued to improve right along after leaving off coffee and taking Postum, and now after three years' use I feel so well that I am almost young again. I know Postum was the cause of the change in my health and I cannot say too much in its favor. I wish I could persuade all nervous people to use it."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Postum comes in two forms:

Postum Cereal—the original form—must be well boiled. 15c and 25c packages.

Instant Postum—a soluble powder—dissolves quickly in a cup of hot water, and, with cream and sugar, makes a delicious beverage instantly. 30c and 50c tins.

Both kinds are equally delicious and cost about the same per cup.

"There's a Reason" for Postum.

—sold by Grocers.

The Man for the Job.

"He never complains at his luck. Just takes his misfortunes with a smile and keeps plugging along."

"Fine, he's just the man we're looking for. Let's make him chairman of the entertainment committee and give him the worst of it."—Detroit Free Press.

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Are you an eczema sufferer? Do those ugly patches of eruptions start up and itch as though they would drive you frantic? And have you tried treatment after treatment with, at best, only temporary relief? Then you are only going through the experience of thousands of others who at last found that resinol healed their sick skins for good!

With the first use of resinol ointment and resinol soap the itching and burning usually stop, and soon all trace of eczema or similar torturing skin-trouble disappears, even in severe and stubborn cases. Doctors have prescribed the resinol treatment for twenty years.—Adv.

How the fact that town dogs are bathed regularly must make the country dogs snicker.

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Don't dose delicate little stomachs with harmful internal medicines. Vick's "Vap-O-Rub" Salve, applied externally, relieves by inhalation as a vapor and by absorption through the skin. Vick's can be used freely with perfect safety on the youngest member of the family. 25c, 50c, or $1.00

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At all dealers—An eight ounce bottle for 25c.

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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. The Paxton Toilet Co., Boston, Mass.

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The N. C. State Board of Health states that 40% of the deaths of children could be prevented. Brame's Vapo-Mentha for Croup and Pneumonia if applied in time not only prevents, but cures Croup and Pneumonia, Colds and affections of the air passages. Keep it handy. Price, 25c., 50c. and $1.00 at all dealers or sent Post Paid on receipt of price. Sample and interesting booklet sent on request. BRAME MEDICINE COMPANY, N. Wilkesboro, N. C.

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