A Dark Night's Work

BY PAUL INGELOW.

Continued from 1st page.

"He will claim that the mortgages cripple him; that he has not sufficient means to pay interest and living expenses. He will sell the mining property at a ruinous sacrifice, the villa, every thing, anything, in fact, to handle ready cash."

"But that will take time." "Yes."

"And time is all I ask!" spoke Le Britta, with determined eyes. holds the upper hand now. Wait!" Le Britta did not enlighten the lawyer as to his intentions, nor concerning his discovery of the hiding-place of the

treasure. He wished to investigate that branch of the case alone. More than that, he resolved, in case he found the money, to withhold it from Durand's hands, if he had to retain personal secret possession of it until Gladys came of age.

He correctly and readily surmised that one motive Durand had in wishing Gladys' return was to learn of the missing money, and he wondered what Durand's next move would be, when he ascertained that the heiress was entirely ignorant concerning it. The lawyer had arrived at a common-

place decision that they could only wait until something had developed, but Le Britta left him with a far more serious and definite thought in his mind. He had but one hope of ultimately defeating all the plots of Ralph Durand, and that was based on the recovery of the tramp. In case Doctor Milton brought him through his illness, and in

case, furthermore, the tramp would give his evidence against Durand, the affair was ended. The Gladys Vernon estate would forever he free from the plotter's wiles, Sydney Vance might return and face his fellowmen once more, and the efforts of the photographer to right a great wrong would be crowned with success.

But the tramp might not recover. If he did it might be too late. Durand was no lax schemer. He had Galdys Vernon in his power. Suppose he should force the girl to wed him; suppose he should dispose of what little wealth the mortgage had left in sight; suppose he should do away with Sydney Vance, for the testimony of the latter on the witnessstand would alone convict Durand, were it not not that Vance was himself suspected of the crime of killing old Gideon Vernon?

"The tramp is safe with Doctor Milton," mused Le Britta, "the hidden money is in the ravine, and I hold the clue to its whereabouts. Sydney Vance is the element of mystery in the case. How can I get an inkling as to his place of incarceration?" Le Britta was wearied from his long

quest, and, going to the hotel, sought the rest he so needed. At nightfall he started again for Hawthorne villa. He approached it by a circuitous route, for his inspection of

the mansion was to be a covert one. He had decided to watch at a distance, in the hopes of seeing Durand, theorizing that if Sydney Vance was anywhere in the vicinity, the plotter might go to visit him, and, by following, he might locate the refugee and captive.

After remaining in the neighborhood for over an hour, Le Britta became impatient. There had not even the slightest trace of activity about the villa-no lights, no servants visible. He came nearer to the house. It was closely shuttered. He penetrated the grounds, he even peered in at unguarded windows. There was no sign of life about the gloomy place.

Just leaving the grounds, he came to a

halt as a carriage and two horses came toiling along the sandy road. He recognized the driver on the box—it was the steward whom Ralph Durand had employed a few days pre-vious, and as he dismounted to open the iron gates he spied Le Britta.

"Looking for anybody?" he queried, in a suspicious tone of voice.
"Yes," Le Britta was forced to say, "Mr. Durand." "Oh, him! He's gone."

"Away on business. I just drove him over country to catch an east bound train He's ordered me to closs the villa for the next month. He won't be back for some time."

"Where will a letter reach him?" ventured Le Britta. "Address in my care," was the keen response. "Say, I know you, and 1 know that you're after—a trace of Miss Vernon. Well, I've this to say to you. and that ends it—she's been sent to some friends by Mr. Durand, several hundred miles from here, and you won't be very likely to find her by seeking" As he spoke, the man coolly led his

horses into the grounds, and closed the gates on the dismayed Le Britta.

Ralph Durand had scored another victory. He had got the whole game in his hands, and had covered his tracks by There is the large stone described. Hold a timely disappearance. "Beaten-thrown off the trail!" mur- That's it! Hold the lantern higher.

mured Le Britta, slowly walking down the road. "I can do positively nothing. Gladys has been spirited away, Vance, too, probably, and, at a distance, Durand will mature his plans whatever they | the ravine. may be. A month! Why! in that time the scoundrel may force Gladys to marry location of the spot where Gideon the station-agent at the town where the him, dispose of Vance, realize on the Vernon had put away his ready cash doctor was, asking him to inform Doctor affairs as to leave nothing but wreck free neighbor and had died ere he could the train, but would deliver the medicine and ruin in his wake. I give it up at communicate the secret to his niece, in person as soon as a fast horse could last, I have tried to help the poor girl, Gladys.

Le Britta paused abruptly and started with a shock, for at just that moment a exact spot, but"wild form rushed down the road, fairly colliding with him. Then, with a quick, excited ejacula-

tion, the new-comer grabbed Le Britta's arm, and peered into his face, keenly and excitedly. "I've found you-good!"

Le Britta started and thrilled, for wonder of wonders! the speaker was-Dr. Richard Milton!

CHAPTER XXVIII. -GONE!

The last man in the world Jera Le Britta would have expected to see at Hawthorne villa, Dr. Richard Milton, gazed fixedly at his friend. The photographer was astonished to speak, but he

gasp forth:—
"Dick—Doctor,

"Brought me here?" "Yes. "After you." "After me!"

"Exactly, I have been looking everywhere for you.' "Why"-Doctor Milton took his companion's arm and walked on with him. "I followed you to the city," he

plans are.

it is!"

"Then you think?"-

secluded retreat, where she will be a

emissaries, that he has removed the lover

Vance likewise to a new prison-place. He holds Vance's life and liberty in his

keeping. By this means he silences the

girl. Meantime he will proceed to

negotiate a sale in the mortgaged

porperty unhampered by the girl's

interference, probably armed with her

written consent to do so, and without

"But the ready money, the fortune,

the hundred thousand dollars-he has

"No, he has probably considered that

"No I fear we do not," interrupted

"Eh? Why! what do you mean, Dick?"

Le Britta came to a sudden standstill,

and viewed his friend with a startled

latter had grown decidedly ominous.

Doctor Milton, seriously.

there was real cause for anxiety and plained. "I found you had left the conclave; I imagined you had come here, There lay a great flat stone overturned. "not having gone home. What news In the soft yielding earth beneath was the impress of a broad wallet. Le Britta felt positive that his friend The dirt was disturbed, and the spot had some important disclosure to make, but he repressed his curiosity and sus-

showed evidences of a recent visit. At first the two friends feared that pense and briefly narrated the developments in the Vernon case since last they some connection with the flight of Ralph The doctor was an interested listener, a startled one too, as he learned of the They momentarily chilled as they reflected that he might have discovered last move on the part of Ralph Durand. the hiding-place of the fortune, have

"The scoundrel has indeed checksecured the treasure and have disappeared mated your every move,," he comwith it. mented. "It's plain to me what his But, no! Lying on the ground near the stone was a piece of white cloth, and, picking it up, Doctor Milton "That he has terrorized Gladys Vernon completely, has removed her to some

"The tramp was here!" "You are sure?" breathed Le Britta. virtual prisoner in the hands of paid anxiously.

"Positive."

"You see this piece of cloth?" "Yes.

"It is one of the bandages I placed on nis arm. "Which he dropped here?"

"In his rough haste in securing the treasure, yes. That is the only solution fear of you or her other friends troubling to the affair. The tramp has anticipated us. The treasure is gone." "Oh! why did I not come here early this morning," groaned Le Britta.

"No matter about that now." "We must try to find the tramp." "It will be more difficult to trace a man unknown than a person like Ralph Durand. Le Britta, I fear we are at odds with fate. We have lost the game ' It looked so. Within an hour the two friends were at the village. Promised reward spurred the town

officials to send out their men in quest of look, for the voice and manner of the the tramp as described by the photog-"It was that money—that hidden treasure of old Gideon Vernon's that the doctor personally scoured the coun-

"The money—the hidden treasure?" "Why?" "It is in danger!"

"Exactly. You know the condition

you left him in-delirious. Well, that

be rational, the next raving. I encour-

aged the former mood, even to the

taxing of his vitality, and began to

administer a strong stimulant. Yester-

day evening he was sleeping quietly

when I left him. I went to call on a

Doctor Milton paused impressively

"When I returned," he repeated, in

Gone!" cried Le Britta, with a

iolent start and in blank wonderment,

"Rather, gone away. With him was

missing the bottle from which I had

administer d the stimulating medicine.

am now satisfied that the tramp had

possessed his senses all day. He watched

me. He realized his situation. His

wounded arm was no detriment to

getting around. It was the fever, the

frequent fits of delirium that bothered

him, and his weakness. I believe he

recalled how he had imparted his secret

so us. I think he regretted it. At all

events, he had arisen, dressed himself.

and taking the stimulant and a bottle

"I tried to. At first I thought he had

wandered away in delirium. I never imagined he could go far in his terribly

weak condition. Then in a flash,

thought of an impelling motive for his

flight-the hidden treasure. I knew not

of the success or failure of your efforts

to secure a copy of the missing balf of

his written secret. I had men search in

the vicinity of my office and throughout

the town. No trace. I started for the

conclave after you. I hoped to find you

here, and here I came. That is how I

The doctor's graphic story bewildered

His eyes scintillated with anxiety and

"Dick!" he ejaculated, "we must

"I think he started for here."
"In quest of the hidden treasure?"

"He may have fallen by the way."

end of the trail to guard. Possibly I

am here ahead of him. He would have

to travel slowly. There is no doubt in my

mind but that he has changed his mind,

and, his strength returned and his old

covetousness revived, he wishes to secure

"Rather anticipate him. You see, Le

Britta, he may not have arrived. If we

secure the treasure or find it intact, one

of us will remain at the spot where it is

hidden and await the tramp's coming.

The other, if he does not soon arrive,

will go back toward home, and try to

"Dick! you are a jewel to plan!"

spoke Le Britta, gratefully. "That will

be the move to make, for if the tramp

has his senses again, all the more reason

than ever that we keep him closely

"That we may as soon as possible

confront that villian Durand with him.

and clip his wings effectually by

proving him, on the tramp's clear

evidence, to be the murderer of old

The two friends hurried on, Le Britta

leading the way toward the nearest

"Wait here," he said, upon reaching a

He disappared down the graveled

walk, and the waiting doctor heard him

knock at the rear door. Then there was

a brief parley, and Le Britta reappeared.

"I've borrowed a lantern," he

"You think you can locate the spot?"

"Where the treasure is secreted?-we

"The tramp may arrive at any

moment. I have explicit directions from

the message he had written. I looked

over the ground to-day, but believed the

treasure to be safe enough for a later

visit and my thoughts and time were

occupied with poor Gladys Vernon's

affairs. If we can only recover the

"Yes. Here we are. Down the path

here-this is certainly the way Gideon

Vernon came the night of the murder.

according to the tramp's statement.

the lantern. Here is a clump of bushes.

Le Britta, with the contents of the

written key to the secret treasure well

memorized, had led his companion down

fortune to prevent it falling into un-

"Here is the rock described," spoke

Le Britta, eagerly. "Yes, this is the

An ejaculation of consternation escaped

the edge of the ravine, thrilling at its

"What is it?" he queried, in suspense,

"We are too late!" announced Le

Britta, in a hollow tone of voice; "the

CHAPTER XXIX.-IN GLOOM.

Yes the treasure was gone. The dis-

mayed Le Britta knew it at a glance,

It had been there, and recently too.

The correct hiding-place of the fortune had been located. All these facts were

soon verified, but—the situation could

The tramp, Dr. Milton's mysterious

As Doctor Milton sprang down the

rocky ledge to the side of his friend, and

viewed the spot in the flickering rays of the lantern, he saw at a glance that

the startled Doctor Milton realized the

fact in a very few moments of time.

be summed up in five little words-.

They had come too late!

patient, had preceded them.

You have located the right spot?"

"And the treasure"-

treasure is-gone!'

ominous echo.

"Yes."

his lips. Dr. Richard Milton leaned over

"And Raiph Durand's just begun."

tramp, her persecutious are over."

Now, then, hand it down to me."

"That is probable, but this is the

of brandy with him, had disappeared"

"You followed him"-

happen to be here."

excitement.

find that man."

"What else?"

"I should say so!"

"We must stop him!"

find him on the way hither.'

guarded and near us."

"You mean?"

small cottage.

must!"

"Then you intend"-

"And at night!"

"To go at once to the ravine."

and yet aroused Le Britta.

"You think he came here?"

and sighed-a troubled, anxious sigh.

melusion, "the tramp was-gone!"

"I do not understand you."

"You mean the tramp?"

patient. When I returned"-

"Then he had escaped?"

ron mean!"

'Disappeared."

"The patient."

"The treasure in danger!" "Decidedly so."

rewarded their kindness by carrying away a royal fortune. Two nights later, discouraged and baffled, the friends left the vicinity of Hawthorne villa. The doctor was nettled at being

beaten; Jera Le Britta felt discouraged,

disheartened. As a sudden storm sweeps a hill-top of verdure in a moment of time or a next day he got suddenly better. The swooping breeze changes the whole case perplexed me. One hour he would aspect of a placid pool, so had the past two days disintegrated and demolished the fabric of plot, counterplot and complication which had presented itself as a tangible labyrinth to Le Britta. Not a clue was in sight. Durand had disappeared, taking with him Gladys Vernon and Sydney Vance.

The tramp had secured the hidden fortune, and was not to be found. Justice slept; the right had been defeated; wrong and cunning were seemingly triumphant. All that Le Britta had done in the interest of justice had, it seemed, been of no avail.

Home and its endearments looked dark, with a return signalized by disaster and defeat, and duty half accomplished. "That is the end of the Vernon case!"

sighed Doctor Milton, as the train neared "No," replied Le Britta, "I cannot believe it. It only sleeps-we are shut out from further present investigation, villainy is triumphant, innocence persecuted, but-the mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly small!' I feel in my heart that we shall yet be called upon to champion anew the cause of poor Gladys Vernon. I feel that yet, face to face, skill for skill, plot for plot, blow for blow, I shall meet

that double hearted scoundrel, Ralph Durand, and vanquish him!" Prophetic words! The hour was to dawn, the great Vernon case was to be revivified, but at a time and in a manner little dreamed of by the true-hearted photographer!

For the present it slumbered, for the time being all its obscured Issues were hidden completely from the public view. And Jera Le Britta resumed his duties as citizen, friend and a man of family, with many a longing thought of the lives held under the cruel domination of Ralph Durand's wicked power, until one night, one dark, stormy night, when the wind howled dismally and the rain beat frantically at casement and threshold, and the great wings of the storm flapped out the light of moon and stars, the gifted artist opened the book of his life at a new and an eventful

TCHAPTER XXX.-A STRANGE

Fierce rose the tempest; darker and wilder grew the night. Such a night! Jera Le Britta drew his coat closer about his neck, drove his hat down over his brow, bent his head to the storm and plodded along the muddy road, splashing in and out great ruts and puddles and almost blindly forcing his way forward on his mission. A mission in keeping with the night

sion of life or death, a self-imposed duty that stern necessity had urged upon him.

For over a month he had been busy emotions the strain at his studio. Since the distressing experienced. climax in the affairs of the Vernons, Le Britta had devoted his energies to

The season was a brisk one and it had experiment. He had to catch up—to pay with double labor for the hours he had bestowed on the affairs of others. There were old orders to fill, and new ones to attend to. His industrious assistant, Maud had her hands full. Le Britta found barely time to write to the Vernon lawyer, only to receive the disheartening reply that no trace of Gladys or Durand had been discovered.

The afternoon preceding that stormy night, Doctor Milton had received a call from a patient some thirty miles distant, who, hearing of his rare skill. had sent for him. The doctor had taken the train for his destination, but just at the tears of pity and love to his eyes, and made his heart beat the faster with dusk Le Britta received a telegram sympathy. bearing his friend's signature.

It told Le Britta briefly that the doc-

tor had found his patient in an extremely critical condition; that he needed a certain medicine not to be obtained in the town near the home of his patient. and it asked him to go to his office and secure a certain phial. This he was to hand to the express messenger on the evening train, with instructions to deliver it to a messenger waiting at the depot of the town from which the telegram was dated.

Circumstances tended to interfere with this arrangement, however. In the first place, the message was delayed in its delivery; in the next place, Le Britta found some difficulty in securing the bottle the doctor needed. When he hurried to the depot to catch the express messenger, it was to see the

train just moving away. "No train until midnight now, ruminated Le Britta, concernedly. "] declare, it's too bad! Doctor Dick will be expecting the medicine. He wouldn't go to all this trouble about it if it wasn't important. He must have it. What had I better do. I'll take it to him." Step by step he had traced out the

Le Britta at once framed a dispatch to carry him thither. Then, arranging some little studio details that were necessary, Le Britta

proceeded to the nearest livery-stable. and obtained the fastest light turnout in the establishment. It was dusk when he started. One hour later the storm evertook him. The darkness was intense, the road unfamil-

Crash! off went a wheel in a deep rut. With a neigh of pain the horse sank down, its forefoot disabled by a slip. A light showed near by—the only one visible on the dreary landscape. Le Britta hurried toward it, leading the horse. He rapidly directed the humble occupant of the house to care for the steed until the morrow, inquired his way, and started on foot for his destination, which he learned, was five miles straight ahead.

He was sorry that he had undertaken the difficult task. less than a mile on his course. The storm had redoubled its fury, the wind now blew a perfect hurricane, and the rain came down in sheets. In doubt he groped his way " 'Straight ahead,' he said," mur-

mured Le Britta, grimly, at last, as, wearied and breathless, he shrank to a tree for shelter. "It strikes me that I am going decidedly crooked. Hello! I see my mistake now. This is no road, it is not even a path—I have strayed from the highway—I am lost!"

Ruefully Le Britta surveyed his surroundings. Not a light glowed in the

vicinity. He was entirely at sea as to the distance, location and even direction. The country was moderately thickly settled in portions, however, and he felt assured that forward progress would eventually bring him to some habitation. On he plodded. Knee-deep he stumbled into a bog. He struggled out of it to fall into a pit. He clambered out of that

to dash into a lot of briers. Wet, dismayed, harassed, the photog. rapher almost despaired of reaching his friend Doctor Milton before midnight. With a glow of hope, he suddenly hurried forward, however. "A light!" he ejaculated. "It seems quite near at hand, too. If I can find

some farmer to hitch up and drive me to the town where Dick is, I shall be all right." It took Le Britta fully an hour to gain the light that was less than half a mile distant. A more desolate tract of land he had never traversed. At one place quarry excavations showed, at another felled timber almost obstructed his progress; but finally, soaked and panting from his arduous exertions, Le Britta came out upon a barren open

space, with about as miserable an apol-

ogy for a human habitation as he had ever seen, a few rods beyond him. It was a hut that the poorest of the poor might consent to call home, and then only under protest. It had but one and that held only one whole pane of glass. Through it, from a candle set on a rude deal table within a sparingly furnished room, emanated the glow that had been to him, a beacon to

safety and shelter. The dripping eaves and the sides of the hut were, however, a shield from the driving wind, and Le Britta paused there and glanced cariously in at the window A little wood fire blazed in the fireplace. Near it, he head held in one hand

rry for some trace of the man who had I in a thoughtful, wearied pose, was little girl of about eleven years. Her attire was of the coarsest and commonest fabrics, threadbare and in places frayed and tattered, but wonderfully clean. Abject poverty surrounded her. It spoke in the bare walls, the broken fragment of food on the table. the pinched wan face of the child.

That face, however, had something so pathetic in it, something so strange and pleading, that Le Britta's heart stirred and thrilled as he gazed at its pure clearcut profile, as if he was surveying some artistic portrait. He went around to the door and knocked. The next minute it was opened.

"Who is it?" spoke the child, in a

sweet, gentle tone of voice. "A stranger," responded Le Britta. "I have lost my way in the storm. Are you all alone here, my child? Can I get no one to guide me to Bayville?" Something in the sweet, loving face turned toward him, puzzled him. The girl seemed to look at him, and yet beyond him with a blank, far-away expression in her strange eyes. "There is no one who could do that quarter of a mile to the road, and a mile | asked:-

down that to Bayville." "Ah" exclaimed Le Britta, "so near? Thank you. I can find my way." "I fear not, if you are a stranger," responded the girl in the same soft, wellmodulated tones. "There are deep pits to pass, and to a stranger on such a night it would be dangerous. Wait sir, till I get my cloak and hood, and I will lead you as far as the road." "Oh, thank you"

Le Britta stepped inside the hut. The child walked like one in a dream, so slow and yet gliding were her movements. She proceeded to a cupboard, and took out a well-worn hood and

"I am ready," she sad. Le Britta retres through the open doorway. The little gira followed him, softly closed the door, sighed anxiously, and then seemed to grope out toward him. "Let me take your hand," she said.

sweetly. "That is it," as he grasped the little hand within his own "Now, only keep by my side, and be careful not to stumble. Only, let me guide you." "If you had a lantern," suggested Le Britta, somehow deeply interested in the ushered them. gentle and careful movements of his strange guide. "A lantern?" repeated the child, softly. "We have one, but it would be of no | make him well, won't you?"

"No use-why?" "No, for-I am blind"

use to me."

CHAPTER XXXI-THE BLIND GIRL.

Jera Le Britta stopped suddenly. For the moment he was rendered speechless with the surprise the simple, pathetic announcement caused him. "Blind" he ejaculated, finally. "Oh. "You fear to trust me to guide you?"

smiled the little girl. "You need not. Why, I know every foot of the way, with no eyes at all, better than those who have two of them. Keep tight hold of my hand, only trust to me. I will not and its devastating influences. A mis- let you fall into any of the pits, or fall Jera Le Britta confessed to mingled emotions the strangest he had ever

The situation was thrilling. He shuddered, as even in the blackness of the his profession with renewed vigor and night he could see deep excavations yawning at the sides of the narrow path they pursued. His guide advanced been all work-little time for study or slowly, but unhesitatingly. Sure-footed. possessed of some rare instinctive gift of perception, she at last led her startled companion to a point where a broad highway ran, and down its far length gleamed the lights of the town he had sought so vainly. For the present, however, Jera Le

Britta's thoughts were not on Doctor Milton or his mission of the night. He forgot storm and discomfort amid the deepest, tenderest interest in the little child before him. His heart was touched at her misfortune. something in the sweet, pure face brought

"I do not know how to thank you," he said, pressing a bank note in her "This is money, is it not?" she asked. "Yes.

"And you can spare it-I have earned it honestly?" "Ten times over!" cried Le Britta, deeply touched at the earnest probity of his little guide. "I thank you very much, then," she said pathetically, "for I need it." "You do not live in that lonely place

alone, surely?" spoke Le Britta. "Almost," was the answer. "My aunt, who is old and poorly, comes over once a week from a farm on the ridge, where she works, to stay all night, and mend my clothes, and do things I cannot about the house. She brings me food, too, but I earn quite a little, carrying

"But your father—your mother!" "My mother died two years ago," was the answer, with a slight sob. "My father has not been here since her funeral. He took to drink, but I am keeping the house for him. They wanted head, and I stay at the old hut. He will out of the question. come some day-oh, yes!" And the little matronly creature sighed wisely, like a guardian over a wayward charge. "Some day he will get tired of the cruel drink, and will come home to nursing, and

comfort, and love!" "Poor, afflicted child!" Murmuring the words, Jera Le Britta stood gazing after her as she bade him good-by, and started back the way He trembled for her safety, but, as the

darkness swallowed her up, he realized how futile would be his blind gropings along that narrow path; he recalled her confident assurances that she knew every foot of the way, and had traversed it a thousand times. "I shall not lose sight of the poor child," he told himself, as he started

down the road. "How wisked for humanity blessed with sight and reason to complain at trifles, when that little waif is deprived of the gift of seeing, of friends, of even a decent shelter, and yet patiently, almost cheerfully, assumes her cross! She interests me, she appeals to my sympathy. I shall try and brighten her condition in some way." Le Britta pursued his way. He little

dreamed that he was indeed to see the little child again, and that, too, sooner than he expected; that her influence was to east a singular glow over his life. and to become strangely mingled with the plots that had affected his recent interest in the great Vernon case. "The town at last," sighed Le Britta,

as wearied and wet to the skin he reached Brief inquiries located the doctor and his patient. Dr. Richard Milton greeted Le Britta warmly, gratefully, when he heard his narrative of the night's adventures. He explained the importance of the medicine he had brought.

"I shall be with my patient most of the night," he said. "You had better go to the hotel, and get dry and keep warm after the terrible exposure of the night.' "Can I not help you in any way?" "No, thanks. I will call for you in the morning." "And we will return home together."

"Exactly." This was agreed on. Le Britta left the dactor with his patient in a gloomy old mansion and was soon tucked in a comfortable bed, and in the land of dreams Doctor Milton appeared at dawn t report his patient past the crisis and o the rose to recovery, thanks to the potent medicine that the photographe had brought, and they had breakfas

Le Britta had not forgotten the little blind girl. As they strolled toward the railroad depot he related the details of his meeting with the child. "We have time to spare. Shall we go and see her?" he asked. "I don't care," replied Doctor Milton. 'It is two hours to train time yet."

"I think I can find the hut," spoke Le

Britta. "Yes, it was in that direction, and-look, Dick, look! Le Britta excitedly seized his companon's arm and pointed down the road. "Eh? What is it Jera?" "The very child!" "The blind girl?" "Yes"

An advancing figure enchained their mutual attention. It was that of the blind child, and she was hurrying toward the town as fast as she could

Le Britta advanced to intercept her. "Wait, wait, my child!" he said, seizing her arm. The blind girl lifted her face to that of the speaker with a quick, pleased

"I know you-I remember your voice!" she cried. "Indeed?" murmured Le Britta. "Yes, you are the gentleman who gave ne the money last night Oh, sir! do not detain me just now. Oh, sir! I have such news!" Her face was aglow with emotion and

excitement as she spoke "Why are you going to the village -what is your hurry?" queried Le Britta. "I will tell you," she half-whispered, her features scintillaiting with joy-"oh sir! he has come back!" CHAPTER XXXII.-CLUE OR MISTAKE?

"He has come back!" The illuminated face of the little child, the accents of pride, delight and affection in her gentle voice, were indescribable as she uttered the fervent but myself," she said. "It is only a words. Deeply interested, Le Britta "You mean your father?" "Yes, poor father! I knew it. I told

you so. He's come back, but, oh!" and the face fell to sadness and anxiety, "he's come back so worn, so ill, may be dying!" she concluded, in a tone sunk to a whisper of terror. The two friends exchanged glances of interest and sympathy. "And where were you going?" asked Le Britta. "To the village. I must get a doctor. The money you gave me last night will

pay for one, will it not?" "My friend here with me is a physician," interrupted the photographer. "Oh! I am so glad." "And he will charge you nothing. Come, doctor, we may be of use to the child's father." "Oh! how kind you are," murmured

the girl, fervently.

She led the way from the town, the others following. Her accuracy of step engrossed the doctor. She seemed to feel her way with her feet, and never stumbled or made a misstep. Into the wretched but Edna-for she had told them that was her name-"Where is your father?" asked Le Britta. Edna pointed to the next room. "He is in there. You will ter and

"We will, indeed!" Doctor Milton removed his hat, and advanced to the door of the little apartment. He entered it. Le Britta, watching the girl, was startled by a sudden ejaculation a minute later. Immediately thereafter, Doctor Milton, with a startled face reappeared. "Le Britta!" he almost gasped, "come

"What is it. Dick?" Doctor Milton pointed to a low cot which lay the figure of a man. "Do you know him?" he queried. "How should I, a stranger?" "Look closer ' "Mercy! Dick, it is"-

"The tramp!" Staring in unfeigned amazement, the two friends stood regarding the figure on It was the tramp-the beneficiary of Dr. Richard Milton's kindness in the past-the homeless wanderer who had imparted to them the secret of the hidden treasure in the ravine at Haw-

thorne villa. Thinner, paler, weaker than ever, there he lay. The man they had sought for so arduously and unsucces-fuly, the man who had evidenty secured the Vernon fortune, was before them. Satisfaction at his discovery was obscured by the profound surprise experi enced by both Le Brista and the dostor, as they marveled at the strange workings of providence that had brought the man | he and you kither, that had led them to his side. [To be Continued.]

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