

The Mystery of Redcliffe Manor.

By the Author of "Married, But Not Mated," "A Woman of the World," etc.

CONTINUED.

CHAPTER IV.

A SPIRIT OF THE SEA.

The days passed rapidly at the Manor in so calm and uneventful a manner that Adela sometimes wondered whether she had dreamed the strange events of Gardner's Hotel.

Her post was almost a sinecure. The housekeeping gave her little trouble. Dr. Barrington getting in all stores from London, Adela's duty being confined to giving out what was required, and ordering the meals.

The patients were docile, and well looked after by their attendants and Dr. Ives, Dr. Barrington's assistant.

He was a shy, retiring young fellow, about twenty-seven, with vague features, weak eyes, and a high forehead, from which he wore his lanky sandy hair carefully combed back.

A pair of blue spectacles completed the tout-ensemble, which he flattered himself was that of a man of culture and science. Dr. Barrington he considered the best and wisest of mankind.

Vapid and narrow minded, easily influenced, a nonentity whom the doctor found plastic material in his clever hands—such was the character of the assistant, purposely chosen.

When she came to know him better, Adela speedily relinquished the faint hope she had formed, that he might stand her friend in emergency, and resolved not to trust him, though he soon became her devoted slave, and would follow her about with primly-arranged bouquets culled in the grounds, or expensive boxes of chocolates, for which he had bicycled to Netherwood.

His silent adoration—which he never went the length of putting into words—bored Adela intensely, though she thought it better policy not to offend him by showing this, and was always civil to him.

She little suspected that this had gained her a dangerous enemy in Mrs. Arabin, the widow, who cherished a delusion that Dr. Ives—whose Christian name happened to be Charles Edward—was a Stuart prince in disguise, and had fallen violently in love with him.

Mrs. Arabin was a small, dark woman, with sharp, bird-like face, large, restless, light-blue eyes, and a fresh complexion.

She was middle-aged, but had been a spoilt beauty in her day.

Her chief qualities were overweening pride and self-importance, and when, at a stroke, she lost both husband and fortune, her brain—never very strong—had given away.

Enough was saved from the wreck of her property for her friends to place her with Dr. Barrington, who had succeeded to his father's high class private asylum at Redcliffe.

Here, as it was to his interest, she was well treated and cared for.

Poor Cordelia Joy was a patient of a different type—good humored, harmless, and docile. A terrifying adventure with brigands in her younger days, while travelling with friends in a wild part of Turkey, had unbent her mind, and, though the party were ransomed and safely brought back to England, she remained hopelessly insane.

Her relations were rich, and paid a handsome sum for her to be kept out of their way, seldom troubling their heads about her otherwise.

She loved Nurse Deane with a dog-like affection, for Adela pitied her profoundly, and was always kind to her.

A word as to Mr. Millicham and the professor, who completed the list of Paul Barrington's guests.

The former was a fat, pale man below medium height, whose puffy eyes and livid complexion denoted the non-vivacious.

Self-indulgence and brooding over imaginary ailments had eventually brought him to semi-idiotcy, and Adela disliked him intensely.

He and Mrs. Arabin were the two malcontents of the party, and gave far more trouble than the others.

The professor, like Cordelia Joy, was harmless enough.

A little, dried up old man, who cared for nothing but to be left alone with his books and a blackboard, which was always cov-

ered with close rows of meaningless figures and diagrams.

Adela thought it strange that Paul Barrington left so much in her hands; in fact, she seldom saw him, except at meal times.

He expressed himself as quite satisfied with the way she filled her somewhat difficult post, adding that he was glad to have more time to himself, as he was perfecting some medical inventions.

He was generally shut up in his study, though sometimes she thought she heard his voice in muffled tones in the rooms she now knew were Miss Barrington's.

Old Solomon Drax, a crabbed, morose old man, acted as valet to Lord Erceeldonne, and waited upon him generally.

Adela mistrusted him as much as his wife.

He had the same evil, furtive expression, and always eyed her in a truculent manner, she fancied, though he was cringing civility itself to Lord Erceeldonne.

And what of Lord Erceeldonne, her principal patient and charge?

Adela hardly dared ask her own heart. They had been thrown together much, and already it was as though they had known each other a lifetime.

What of this man man? His richly-stored mind was every day a revelation to her, his delicate kindness and warm friendliness balm to her solitude.

The hot blood rose to her face as she felt how much he already was to her.

What a blank life would seem but for the hours spent with Lord Erceeldonne.

It seems as though I had never really lived till now. Is this love, to feel as though one person were the whole world to you—that you thrill at his touch, hang on his lightest word? Ah, Heaven! I would die to save him a single pang, and I am powerless. The net is tightening slowly, and yet I cannot see from what side the danger menaces him.

These were her thoughts as she sat one day in Erceeldonne's room, trying over a cantata of Sullivan's in which he had asked her to accompany him.

It was three o'clock, the hour he had appointed, but he had not made his appearance.

Perhaps he was not well. The day before, when playing with his violin, he had suddenly been seized with faintness and vertigo.

Looking round the room, she saw a small porcelain box on the writing-table, with the label, 'To be taken after meals.' It contained the capsules of which Dr. Barrington had spoken, small oval tabloids, covered with white sugar.

A strange dread seized her, which she dared not formulate, even in her thoughts, but, quickly possessing herself of one of the small oval pellets, she slipped it into her purse.

She had scarcely done so, when Lord Erceeldonne entered the room with halting steps.

His face was livid, and he breathed with difficulty.

His eyes stared wildly.

He did not see Adela, who was partially concealed by a Japanese screen near the writing-table, but went straight to the draped easel, from which he tore the curtain.

A picture was disclosed, which Adela had not, till that moment seen uncovered.

It was the portrait of a young and lovely woman, dressed in pale green drapery, with a trailing wreath of feathery seaweed garlanding her red-gold hair, which streamed against a background of blue waves.

The picture was marvellously painted, and bore under it the inscription—'A Spirit of the Sea.'

Lord Erceeldonne threw himself on his knees before it.

'Bella, my own, my best beloved,' he cried, the scalding tears coursing down his cheeks, 'why do you revisit this earth only to torment me with vain hopes?—no wrath, but your living, breathing self. I saw you to day, when I wandered on the shore thinking, as ever, of the dead. Like a spirit, you flutter by, the folds of your white dress touching me as you passed. I tried to grasp them, but in vain. Oh, Bella, I conjure you, speak but a few words across the gulf which separates us! Tell me why you will not stay with me.'

Adela Deane, torn by the sight of his anguish, stepped forward from her post behind the screen.

It was the first sign Lord Erceeldonne had shown in her presence of the delusion mentioned by Paul Barrington.

She loved him deeply—hopelessly. Yet, with true woman's selfishness, she would fain have cast on his troubled heart the balm for which he yearned.

'Dear friend, be comforted,' she said, laying her firm, cool hand on his brow. 'The one you love is not lost, and, though on this earth you may see her no more, she is still with you—a guardian angel to guide you to a blessed meeting in a happier world. Try to think of this, will you not?'

in America and elsewhere. Paul Barrington says so.' Then, lowering his voice to a hurried whisper: 'I will tell you a secret.'

'He believes about Bella—I am a medium, he says, and, one day, if I can exert the necessary great force of will, she will, perhaps, speak to me, and let me touch her. Ah, Heaven! what would I give to fold her once again in my arms—to kiss her living, breathing lips? What a triumph that I, Ralph Erceeldonne, should have opened the barred gates of death for thousands, millions of sorrowing, suffering human beings!'

The light of madness glittered in his eyes, his voice trembled.

He continued—

'Ay! my name will be handed down to posterity as the greatest benefactor the world has known. Death will have no terrors—for what one person has done, others may do. I shall preach a new creed to my fellow men—ah, you will see—no one will disbelieve me then!'

Adela was appalled at the feverish intensity of his manner.

She tried to soothe him, in vain. He paced the chamber, talking and laughing wildly.

As she watched him, a conjecture, revealing, if true, an unheard-of depth of iniquity, began to take shape in her brain. 'Do not argue the point, but humour him.'

These words of Paul Barrington's returned to her with vivid force.

That some wicked scheme was on foot between the doctor and Cosmo Villiers to deprive Erceeldonne of his inheritance, she knew, but till now she had failed to discover what it was.

A light seemed to dawn on her. The bookshelves were full of works on spiritualism—the very worst of reading for a man subject to Lord Erceeldonne's fancies; and Adela gleaned from Ralph's disconnected phrases that Paul Barrington professedly believed in these ghostly appearances.

What could it all mean?

At this instant a step was heard outside, and the doctor himself entered the room.

He betrayed no surprise at Lord Erceeldonne's excited manner, and carried a wineglass carefully.

'I thought this would be the result of walking too long in the sun,' he said, calmly. 'My dear fellow, I watched you from the cliff, perambulating the sand, your hat in your hand. I have brought you a cooling draught, which you must take, and then lie down quietly.'

His rather stern manner appeared to calm Lord Erceeldonne somewhat.

'Leave it there, then. The things you give me always make me feel worse'—fretfully.

Perhaps, for the moment. This is often the effect of medicines which benefit greatly afterwards.

'Give it to me; I will see that Lord Erceeldonne takes it,' said Adela, in a low voice. 'Perhaps, if you leave the room, he will be more inclined to do so.'

Her heart beat strangely, though her voice was even and expressionless.

'Very well; I know I can trust to you. Wash the glass after, as I have put a little laudanum in it, to make him sleep,' said Paul Barrington, as he left the apartment.

Nurse Deane had played her role so well hitherto that he had not the faintest distrust of her motives.

Moreover, she had proved an excellent coadjutor so far, popular with the patients, clever in her work, and reticent in her conversation.

He valued her accordingly.

Lord Erceeldonne sat motionless on a lounge by the window, one hand over his eyes.

Adela's quick glance at him showed he had not taken in what had passed between her and the doctor.

Hastily turning her back towards him, she poured the medicine into a glass on a cabinet.

Then she filled the glass again with water from the carafe on the sideboard, putting a tiny bit of sugar into it from a silver basket which also stood there.

'Drink this—I promise it will do you no harm—and try to rest. You will believe me?'

'I do—yes, I do,' he muttered, looking at her with a strained, pathetic gaze. 'But bend lower let me whisper something. Paul's medicines always—always makes me ill. Don't tell him—but do you know what Nurse Cecily said once? It was not true, of course; but I sometimes think of it. She hated Paul, you know,' incoherently.

'Nurse Cecily! Who was she? Tell me—you need fear nothing.'

Could Only Whisper.

Often Colds settle on the Throat and Bronchial Tubes, and make the voice hoarse and husky, and an effort to speak, distressing. It may be reduced to a whisper or lost entirely for a while.

In cases of this kind nothing will so soon give relief and restore the voice as

Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup.



This is what Thos. J. Smith, Caledonia, Ont., writes:—'A year ago I had a very severe cold which settled on my lungs and throat. I got so bad I could scarcely speak louder than a whisper. I tried several Cough medicines but got very little relief until I used two one-half bottles of Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup, which completely cured me.' Price 25c.

Laxa-Liver Pills cure constipation without any griping, weakening or sickening. Price 25c., all druggists.

'The—one who was here before you came. She was very good and kind to me; only, she would never believe about poor Bella. No one will—except Paul,' wearily. 'What was I saying? Oh, about medicines! She thought they made me worse, and used to throw them away. Paul, somehow found out, he was very angry. I did not notice her again after that, but I believe she left here just before Paul went to London and brought you back.'

'Do not think about it any more,' said Adela, gently. 'Lie down for a while and I will play over some of the new music.'

He stretched himself on the couch with a gesture of utter lassitude, closing his eyes.

Nurse Deane watched him intently. He certainly looked very ill, much more so than on the day she had first seen him.

His face was sharp and thin, and his clothing hung loosely on his wasted limbs. What devilry was sapping his life, and with it his mind?

She wrung her hands in despair at her helplessness.

When Lord Erceeldonne was asleep she took the blue-and-white Japanese fish to her room, and poured its contents into a small phial.

Before doing so she drank a few drops of the liquid, which she felt an acrid taste on her tongue, and gave her an unpleasant feeling of nausea and drowsiness.

It was the same with the small white tabloid, half of which she swallowed, feeling strangely giddy and faint after doing so.

That a slow poison was one of the ingredients in both medicines, Adela now felt convinced.

She must devise some way of preventing Lord Erceeldonne from taking them—but how?

Fortune favored her in an unexpected manner, of which more hereafter.

CHAPTER V.

THE GHOST IN THE CORRIDOR.

The next morning, Paul Barrington sent for Adela to his study.

'I have had a telegram summoning me to town for a few days,' he said. 'During my absence I will leave you and Doctor Ives in charge. Should anything be wrong, you can wire to me at once at the hotel, and I will return immediately. Look after Erceeldonne, and give the medicines regularly. Let him stroll about as usual; but, if he goes down to the beach see that old Drax, or someone reliable, keeps in sight.'

'I should not have thought there was any danger of escape that way,' said Adela, carelessly. 'However, as you wish, of course.'

'It would be difficult, but not impossible on a calm night, to get away to sea, if a good boat could lie in close to the shore. Not that I think poor Ralph would have energy of mind or body to plan such a thing; still, it is best to be careful. Keep an eye on all the patients. That Arabin woman has seemed very sulky and queer lately—watch her especially. I don't think there is any more to say, so I won't detain you longer.'

Adela's heart beat high with hope at this brief respite.

A few days gained meant everything. She might yet save the man she loved.

When she had seen Paul Barrington drive off, she went in search of Dr. Ives, whom she found playing a game of bowls with Cordelia, Mrs. Arabin, and the professor.

'Don't you think a picnic would be pleasant this fine day?' she said, in low tones, calling the young man from the group.

'There seems no reason why the brake should not be used. Drax could drive. Lord Erceeldonne is unwell, and will not require him. It would be an outing for the old man, too. I will see that a good basket is packed. Take as many of the attendants as you can, they will wait on you all, and they do not get much variety. One thing, though—let the suggestion come from you; it will sound better, as you are the head of affairs when Doctor Barrington is away.'

'Certainly—an excellent idea,' stammered Dr. Ives. 'But you will come with us?' eagerly.

'I should like it above all things,' with simulated chagrin; 'but I must stay with Lord Erceeldonne; and, to tell you the truth, I shall be glad to go over some accounts, for which I have had little time lately. It will be a great help if you take the others out, as I shall have less to see to.'

'Oh, well, if that is the case!—but I shall expect you to reward me, you know,' with a clumsy attempt at gallantry. 'Give me that rose you are wearing, it shall be a badge of obedience to my lady's will.'

'Certainly, if you like,' said Adela, presenting it to him with a smile. 'It is rather battered I'm afraid,' as some of the leaves fell from it.

'Like my heart. Oh! if you only knew—'

'Nonsense! I am too busy to listen to compliments. Let me see, chicken and ham pie, strawberries, tickling off the list on her fingers. 'I think that will do,' she said, when she had finished enumerating the delicacies.

'Pate de fois gras sandwiches, if you've got any,' interpolated Mr. Millicham, a greedy expression in his pale, prominent eyes. 'But the cotton-wool, you know,' wagging his head, meaningly. 'Let there be plenty of it, and lots of soft cushions; the jolting of the brake might crack me if we are not very careful.'

'The only thing I complain of,' said Mrs. Arabin, peevishly, 'is that the people will have had no time to prepare the triumphal arches and decorations. An address, too. There ought to be one at Netherwood. Couldn't we wire and let the mayor know?'

'No, no,' cried Cordelia Joy, imploringly.

'That would not do at all. It would attract too much attention, and we should be followed by the spies from Constantinople. They are everywhere,' in a mysterious whisper. 'I saw one last night—she glided before me up the passage, dressed

in a floating white gown, with a garland of something red and leathery on her hair. I had forgotten my knitting, and went down for it, very late, to the drawing-room, because the moon shone—and then I can never sleep. Nurse Jane said I might—you do not mind?' with a childishly appealing glance at Adela, whom she feared she had displeased, for her idol was silent, and looking keenly at her.

'Not in the least my dear. I was only sorry you had not rested well. Nurse Jane was quite right to let you get your work,' patting her hand gently, as one might have done a child's.

'But do not wander about the corridors at night, or you may get cold.'

During Adela's jesting conversation with Dr. Ives, Mrs. Arabin had stood apart, her bird-like head on one side, straining to catch each word, and dire malignancy in her glance.

But Nurse Deane noticed nothing, so startled was she by Cordelia's last words.

It was a curious coincidence that the figure described by Cordelia Joy should so resemble the ghostly appearance to Lord Erceeldonne, and also the picture, painted by himself, in his room.

Revolving this strange incident in her mind, she went slowly back to the house.

That two patients who had barely seen each other—for Lord Erceeldonne never mixed with the rest—should be possessed of exactly the same delusion, was incredible.

She went to Ralph's room and peeped cautiously in. He was sleeping on the couch, and looked perhaps a shade less ghastly than on the previous day.

The tabloids she had replaced by some small white sweets she fortunately chanced to have by her.

They were so like in shape and size, that no one would notice the difference.

The brake drove off with its motley party. Cordelia Joy was gorgeous in a green muslin of antiquarian cut, and a girlish Lehigh hat, trimmed with pink rosettes.

Mrs. Arabin had arranged her bonnet, with a widow's long black veil and dragged white feathers, to look her regal character as far as possible.

Mr. Millicham and the Professor were comic objects, in mushroom-like solar hats with muslin round them, while Dr. Ives, in his loose black lustrous coat and blue spectacles, sat on the box with Drax.

The attendants, in their severe grey dresses and close bonnets, completed the strange company.

Their grim faces had relaxed somewhat, in anticipation of the day out, and Adela impressed upon Dr. Ives that he need not return too soon.

Nurse Jane one of the attendants had asked to stay at home, not feeling—as she said—very well.

She was a sleepy, good-tempered woman rather slack about her duty, and therefore was told off to take charge of Cordelia Joy, who was perfectly harmless and docile.

Paul Barrington had rebuked her more than once, for careless oversights.

It was very difficult to get nurses to stay in so wild and out-of-the-way spot, or her tenure at Redcliffe Manor would have been short.

Mrs. Drax and this attendant were the only two left at home, with the exception of Adela Deane.

The domestic servants employed at the Manor kept to their own offices in a remote part of the building, and never entered the patient's quarters unless specially summoned by speaking-tube or electric-bell.

Mrs. Drax met Adela in the panelled hall. A little brandy, she thought, would do Nurse Jane good. This she spelt out on her fingers.

The old woman's face was glum as she preferred the request.

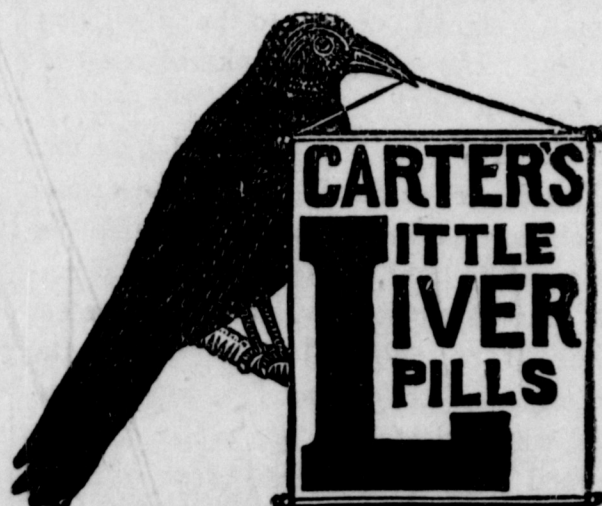
She had a secret weakness for a dram, and Paul, knowing this, did not trust her with the keys of the cellarette.

A sudden inspiration seized Adela. 'Certainly I will give out some. You look poorly yourself, Mrs. Drax, and I think a stiff glass would do you good, too. Will you bring me some tumblers?'

Mrs. Drax's sour visage relaxed somewhat as she obeyed.

When she had gone, Adela quickly un-

Continued on Fifteenth Page.



CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS

SICK HEADACHE

Positively cured by these Little Pills.

They also relieve Distress from Dyspepsia, Indigestion and Too Hearty Eating. A perfect remedy for Dizziness, Nausea, Drowsiness, Bad Taste in the Mouth, Coated Tongue, Pain in the Side, TORPID LIVER. They Regulate the Bowels. Purely Vegetable.

Small Pill. Small Dose. Small Price.

Substitution the fraud of the day. See you get Carter's, Ask for Carter's, Insist and demand Carter's Little Liver Pills.

Enameline
THE MODERN
STOVE POLISH
PASTE, CAKE
OR LIQUID

After using Enameline
No Housekeeper will ever
use any other Brand.
J.L. Prescott & Co. New York