

CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.

of Edmund Naylor, on the sixteen of last July, the sum of ten pounds.

The amount was exactly what Gwynneth had been convicted of stealing.

The date was the same—the Saturday on which it had been stated, at the trial, that the money had been taken from Edmund's desk in Mr. Barnes's office.

Had Clarence Sterne at last stumbled on the clue he had so long desired to find? Without an instant's hesitation he decided to appropriate that tell tale receipt.

It was, at least, as safe with him as with Edmund.

Replacing the other papers in the pocket book, he put that back in its usual resting place in the breast pocket of its owner's coat.

Then, with firmly compressed lips, and a look of almost savage hope in his deep set eyes, the vicar once more looked about him for assistance.

The sound of a merry whistle broke like music on his ear, for he was getting anxious about Edmund's prolonged unconsciousness; and he was still more pleased when the whistler came in sight, for he recognized him as one of his own parishioners, and about the most stalwart of them all—a young farmer, who was every bit as fit a fellow as he looked.

Mr. Sterne beckoned eagerly, and the whistle ceased as George Ryder ran up to him, raising his eyebrows when he caught sight of the figure on the ground.

"What's happened, Mr. Sterne? Why, it's Naylor! Drunk again, I suppose?"

"Partly so, Ryder. I wanted to see him home, and he tried to elude me; but his legs gave way, and he must have hit himself in falling. Will you help?"

"At this moment Edmund open his eyes. 'What's the matter?' he asked, quietly enough. 'I feel awfully dazed.'"

Mr. Sterne explained. "Well, I'm sober enough now," said Edmund, abruptly, struggling to his feet. "Though I feel confoundedly giddy, too."

It was fortunate that two pairs of muscular arms were stretched out to help him, for he reeled to the right and left, and would assuredly have fallen again had they not held him up.

They succeeded in getting him home safely.

Mrs. Naylor was greatly alarmed when she heard what had happened, and she became more so when Edmund lapsed again into unconsciousness almost as soon as he entered the house.

For days afterwards Clarence was in an agony of doubt as to whether Gwynneth's innocence would ever be proved.

Edmund's life was in danger, and if he should die, how would the truth become known?

But one day Edmund awoke in full possession of his senses, but with a terrible fear in his eyes.

His mother bent over him in a rapture of hope, which was, however, turned to despair by his first words.

"You mustn't think I am going to get well, mother, because I am not," he said.

And when the doctor next called, he asked him point blank, with the courage of utter despair, if he were going to die.

"I think, Edmund, it would be well if you made peace with heaven."

"Ah!"

"Look here, my boy, you have something on your mind—on your conscience; and you won't be able to die happily until you have confessed it. If you have wronged anyone, now is the time to make atonement. I'll send Sterne to you. Take my advice and talk to him freely."

In less than a quarter of an hour, Clarence stood by the young fellow's bedside. "Kiss me, mother; you may not care to presently," said Edmund wistfully. "And now, dear, listen, and forgive, if you can. Write every word, please, Mr. Sterne. Gwynneth went to prison in my stead. It was I who stole that money."

"I'll tell you how it was. You remember I went to London for a week of my holiday early last year? Well, I lost money over billiards."

"I met a fellow called Snellgrove—a shifty sort of man about town—who put me in the way of seeing a lot of things, and so I couldn't refuse when he asked me to play him a game or two. When I came home I owed him six pounds, which somehow increased to ten in a very few weeks' time, for, of course, he charged interest on the loan."

"Well, in July he wrote that he was coming to King'slea for a few hours, and that I must pay up. I hadn't so much as ten shillings, let alone ten pounds, and I didn't dare ask you for it, mother, and an ad-

vance from Barnes was out of the question. But, on the very morning of the day I expected Snellgrove, Barnes handed me a ten-pound note to pay some ground rents with."

"I couldn't resist the temptation to appropriate it for a time. Well, while I was thinking about it, Gwynneth came into the office with a message from you to Mr. Barnes. I told her I wanted the note changed; that it was part of my next quarter's salary, advanced to pay some bills with."

"Gwynneth said she would change it at Hunter's where she was going to get something for Maude's birthday. The note was lying on the desk, and she took it and went out of the office. A moment later, Barnes called to me to give him back the note and have a cheque instead. I pretended to look for the note, in order to gain time to think what I had better do; but I was in a terrific scare, and hardly knew what I was about."

"Barnes called to me to know why I was so long, and then I had to say I couldn't find the note. He asked who had been in the office since he gave it to me, and I said only Gwynneth, and perhaps she had hidden it for a joke."

"Barnes said something about such jokes not being legal, and suggested that I should follow Gwynneth and get the note back. I went gladly enough but was too late to prevent the wretched thing being charged. Gwynneth was in as great a fright as I was myself when she heard the rights of it; but when I said something about going to Hunter's and changing the money for the note again, she reminded me of Snellgrove."

"Well, to cut it short, Gwynneth suggested that she should be suspected of having taken the money. She thought it might make you love her a bit better, mother, when you knew that she had been willing to do so much for me; and we neither of us thought Barnes would prosecute."

"But he proved hard as adamant when I told him Gwynneth had taken the note, vowing if the money was not in his desk when he reached the office on Monday morning he would have poor Gwynneth arrested. I tried to get some grace of Snellgrove; but he said he was going abroad and must have the money, threatening to come to you if I did not pay up. I could not stand your knowing I had lost so much and so I had to let him have it."

As Edmund ceased speaking, there was silence, except for his mother's sobs.

Mr. Sterne finished his shorthand notes of Edmund's confession, and then looked at him expectantly.

A faint smile played round the weak mouth.

"Yes, I'm glad I've owned up at last. You'll go and fetch Gwynneth, won't you?"

"Shall I, Mrs. Naylor?"

The vicar hardly recognized the face Edmund's mother raised for an instant to nod assent.

What would this great sorrow make of her.

Hall joyful half sorrowful, he went out, and left mother and son together.

#### CHAPTER VII.

"Someone is putting off from that yacht, Davy; they have launched a boat."

Old Davy turned his head to look at the yacht Gwynneth had been watching so attentively.

"I can't tell who 'er be," he observed, alluding to the yacht. "Er bain't known to these 'ere eyes or to this 'ere coast, I'm thinkin'. An they're in a mortal 'urry to get along, whoever 'em be. See, missy, they on'y jus' waited for the boat to get clear of 'em, and off they are for 'Ead Point. My wig! That chap's a puttin' on sail, ain't he? He'll get a duckin' 'fore he lands, or my name bain't Davy Morgan."

At this prediction Gwynneth transferred her attention from the vanishing yacht to the little boat, which was running for Beachborough, under all the sail she could carry.

"Er be in a 'urry to get ashore, 'er be. By yer leave, missy!"

Old Davy shifted a rope, with the intention of going 'longside,' as he explained, to ascertain if the man in the 'stranger craft' knew the coast well enough to expect to land in safety.

Gwynneth never quite knew what happened next.

She carried with her through life a confused remembrance of a sudden puff of wind, which made her clutch her hat, and which set Davy working diligently with the sails, while she looked round with a vague desire to see how that other boat had fared.

Then she fancied she must have screamed—certainly, someone did.

But what occurred between that instant and the anguishing discovery that a white, beseeching face, rising to the surface of the water some few yards distant, belonged to Clarence Sterne, Gwynneth could not have said.

Davy Morgan's boat was a cumbersome thing, and before it could reach the man to whom Gwynneth instinctively held out her arms, the face had vanished.

How did she get in the water?

She could not have said if she had overbalanced and fallen, or if she had jumped in; but there she was swimming towards the spot where she had seen the man she now knew she loved far better than life.

Her clothes hung heavily about her, and retarded her progress; but she scarcely noticed how she was handicapped.

All she remembered of that short swim was the rush of joy which swept over her when the white face rose again to the surface, almost close to her this time.

One stroke—two—three! And those eager arms clutched and held him fast.

He was half unconscious now; but he clung to her wildly, dragging her down with him, when the waters once more closed over his head.

Gwynneth had her right arm free, and struck out desperately, though not unwilling to die—with him.

But old Davy was not inclined to permit

that; and the next thing Gwynneth remembered was being hauled into the boat after the helpless form which she had helped to place there.

"All right, missy? That's well, for I can only manage one at a time. A little more salt water would about 'a done for this poor chaps, I'm thinkin'. A parson, 't would seem, by the looks o' him."

"Let me help, Davy! I—I know him, you see!"

One glance at the quivering little face, and old Davy understood the meaning of that sudden plunge into the sea, which had so alarmed him.

He gave his instructions briefly, and then left the half-drowned man to Gwynneth, while he ran up his sails again, and made for land with all possible speed.

Kind hearts and willing hands were ready with assistance when they reached the beach.

The house where Miss Jessop lived was so near that Mr. Sterne was taken there at once; a doctor was fetched, further restoratives were applied, and by the time Gwynneth had changed her things she was told by Katharine Jessop that Clarence was conscious and asking for her.

"Has he said how it happened, Miss Jessop?"

"Yes, dear. When his train reached Beachborough, where he had to change, he found he would have nearly three hours to wait. Thinking he might sail across in less time, he went to the harbor, where he chanced upon an old college friend who was just leaving for Torrs in his yacht, and who at once offered to bring Clarence as far as the entrance to the bay, and to lend him a boat in which to land, not being to spare the time to bring the yacht right in. Clarence was only too glad to accept, and all went well until that sudden squall struck his boat and capsized it. Clarence seized him directly he got into the water, and he would certainly have drowned had you and Davy not gone to his assistance. Thank Heaven you were so near, and that all is well!"

"And what of the boat?" asked Gwynneth, with the inconsequence with which one frequently speaks first of the least important thing on one's programme of interesting events.

"Davy and another man have gone out to see to it, and to wait for the return of the yacht to restore it to its owner. Now, dear, will you come?"

As in a dream, Gwynneth followed Katharine into the room where Clarence lay wrapped in blankets, able to greet her only with eyes and speech.

But the expression of his eyes, and the manner of his speech, were such that the girl desired nothing more.

For, what was this wonderful thing he was saying, while he watched her with tender concern?

"You risked your life to save mine, Gwynneth!"

Had she done that?

Surely not!

Though, the thought was enough to make her happy.

But listen!

What was he saying now?

"I can reward you, dear child, by giving you back all you gave up so willingly in the hope of winning your mother's love. Edmund has confessed, and Mrs. Naylor knows you are innocent, and has sent me to take you to her."

The beautiful dream faded—of course it was only a dream—everything faded; thick darkness clouded her spirit, and settled on her senses.

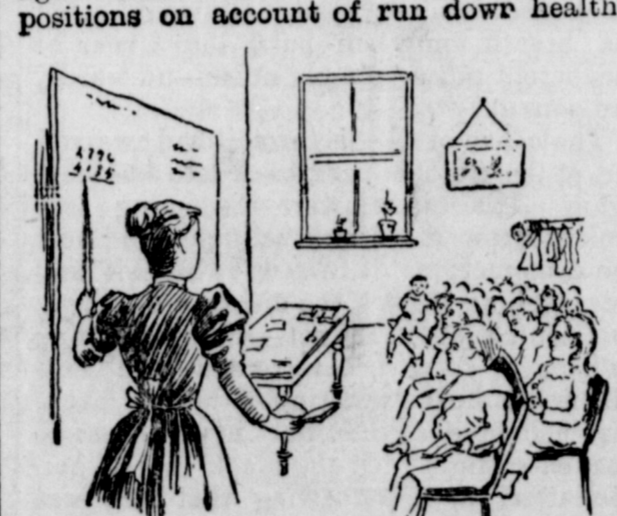
Excitement and anxiety, followed by relief and deepest joy caused Gwynneth Naylor to faint for the first time in her healthy young life.

When she came to herself and realized that the dream was real, after all—a blessed reality—no shadow was cast on the brightness until she was in the train on her way to the home which had been closed to her for so many weary months.

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Mr. Sterne was with her; he had rebelled against the doctor's command that he should remain in his blankets until the next day.

The cramp—which had so nearly brought about his death—had left him and he felt none the worse for his immersion.

Miss Jessop was not equal to the journey, and he could not let Gwynneth travel alone.

Gently, as they were borne onwards, he told her of Edmund's illness.

Pain drove all the joy from her face; she looked at him with great piteous eyes.

"Is happiness never perfect in this world? I thought it was too good to last!"

The plaintive lament went to his heart. Taking her hand he bent towards her, saying—

"Is it not better that he should die penitent than live impenitent? Had it not been for this illness he might never have confessed."

"But—mother! How will she bear it?"

She bears it better than I dared to expect. And I think she has learnt to be thankful that he did not recover. I shall tell her I possessed a clue by which I should, sooner or later, have been enabled to bring home the theft to him. His sudden illness sealed my lips and tied my hands. But is far better as it is—that he should confess his guilt of his own free will. Do you not think it better?"

"Yes, oh yes! I begin to think, too, that I was wrong, Mr. Sterne. Wrong to take the note for him, and wrong to shield him afterwards."

"You can't expect me to blame you, child. If you did wrong, you have suffered enough for it, in all conscience. But when are you going to stop calling me 'Mr. Sterne'?"

"You know, you promised to be my wife when your innocence was proved."

"I don't think I ever promised anything of the kind."

"I like to think you had."

His tone expressed disappointment, as did his eyes, when Gwynneth stole a startled glance at his face.

"Did you really—always—believe I was innocent?" she asked, eagerly.

"I always believed in your innocence of soul, dear. You assured me so positively you had taken the money that I was compelled to believe it had passed through your hands. But never for a moment did I think you actually guilty of theft. How could I, Gwynneth? Why, I loved you from the first!"

"No one else thought me innocent!" she murmured, leaving in his strong clasp the fingers he had taken.

He raised them to his lips, passing his spare arm round her shoulders.

"Therefore?" he asked, bending to look into her eyes.

For a moment, she kept them bidden; but, presently, she leant back against him, and looked up, whispering—

"Therefore—I love you—dearly, Clarence!"

#### Blue Grass Siftings.

According to one of the New York newspaper correspondents who were despatched to Kentucky after the recent assassination of Mr. Goebel, the following is a true sample of the extraordinary conversational powers of Colonel Jack Chinn, the race-horse man and friend of Goebel, who won his colonelcy while serving in the Confederate cavalry:

"It's a—qualified—outrage, sah, the way we've been treated by the—qualified—corporations in this election. And, then, these mountain 'citizens' and their mass meetings. What rot! To call those weevil brained ginseng diggers representatives of Kentucky manhood! Why, some of those God-forsaken cusses don't even know the difference between good Kentucky Bourbon and moonshine."

"Certainly, I always tote a gun. In my hip pocket? Oh, no. That's too much of a giveaway. Here's where it is. I can get at it there without the surrounding population saying, 'Look out, Chinn's pulling a gun!' Then I can do a little business with 'em. But no mountains for yours truly. Do you know, if I was to start up there, it wouldn't be ten minutes before there'd be one of those mountain-cers with a quirk rifle behind every juniper bush along the big road. And he'd be crazy to institute a Democratic funeral right off, too. Excuse me; but I have no desire to have somebody pull a sheet down off of my face and remark, 'Poor Jack, poor fellow—but don't he look natural!'"

#### Odd Effect of Electric Currents.

In a Brussels street traversed by an electric tram-car line, it has been noticed

that the trees on one side of the way begin to lose their foliage early in August, the leaves turning brown and dropping off. But in October the same trees begin to bud again, and sometimes even blossom.

Meanwhile the trees on the opposite side of the street are unaffected, losing their foliage late in the autumn and budding only in the spring. The cause of the anomaly is supposed to be leaking electric currents, which stimulate the growth of the trees affected.

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#### Lawton's Worst Scare.

It has been said of General Lawton as of Bayard, le chevalier, "sans peur et sans reproche," that he was never known to be afraid in all his life. Major Putman Bradley Strong, who served on the staff of General MacArthur in the Philippines denies this. He says that General Lawton himself confessed to him that he had been badly scared by bullets and that very recently.

It happened just beyond the Paco cemetery in Manila. General Lawton was riding past the cemetery one day with his little boy, when a number of our soldiers were burying some of their comrades. The firing squad found that had nothing but ball cartridges.

"Oh they'll do," said the sergeant of the volunteers.

"Ready, fire!" came the order a moment later.

The bullets went whizzing over the stone wall, on the other side of which rode General Lawton and his boy, their heads only a few inches below the wall. The bullets made a breeze as they went past.

"That blast of bullets whizzing over our heads scared me blue," said General Lawton as he related the incident, "but the kid only looked up innocently and asked: 'Say, papa, does it sound like that when you're under fire?'"

#### Smaller Than Atoms.

It has usually been assumed that the atoms of which all matter consists are invisible, but Prof. J. J. Thomson of the Royal Society of Great Britain, thinks that he has found evidence of the divisibility of atoms. Experiments with cathode rays indicate, he says, that the stream of electrified particles projected from the negative plate consists of corpuscles torn from the atoms composing the electrode, and not of the whole atoms themselves. These corpuscles are very small portions of the atoms from which they come.

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