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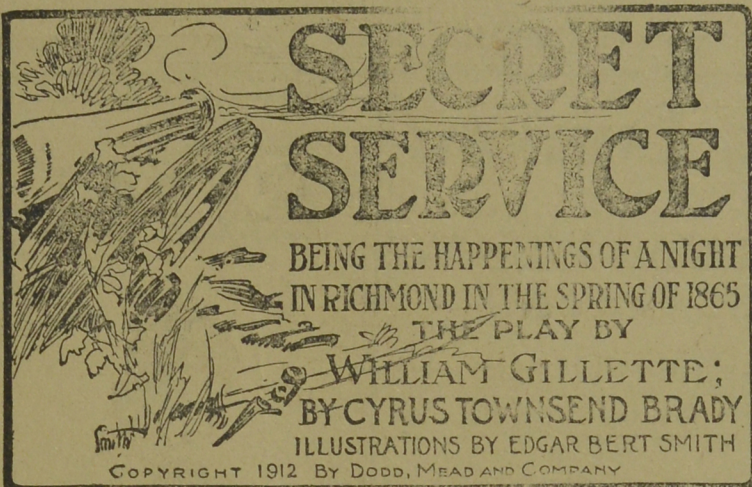
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Now that Wilfred had taken the
plunge, his impatience to go was at
fever heat. He could not wait, he felt,
for another moment. He had spent
some of his half hour in composing a
letter with great care. It was a short
letter and therefore was soon finished,
and he was now pacing up and down
his room with uneasy steps waiting
for old Martha's welcoming voice.

It was a long half hour for little
Caroline Mitford, busily sewing away
in the kitchen. It seemed to her that
she was taking forever to turn up the
bottoms of the trouser legs and make a
"hem" on each, as she expressed it.
She was not very skillful at such
rough needlework and her eyes were
not so very clear as she played at
tailoring. This is no reflection upon
their natural clarity and brightness,
but they were quite often dimmed
with tears, which once or twice
brimmed over and dropped upon the
coarse fabric of the garment upon



She Had Possessed Herself of His
Hand.

which she worked. She had known
the man who had worn them last, he
had been a friend of hers, and she
knew the boy who was going to wear
them next. If she could translate the
emotions of her girlish heart, the new
wearer was more than a friend. Was
the same fate awaiting the latter that
the former had met?

The half hour was very long to Jo-
nas, the old butler, trembling with
fright, suffering from his rough usage
and terror-stricken with anticipation
of the further punishment that await-
ed him.

The half hour was longest of all to
Mrs. Varney. After her visit to How-
ard, who had enjoyed one of his lucid
moments and who seemed to be a
little better, she had come down to
the drawing-room, at Mr. Arrexford's
suggestion, to see that no one from
the house who might have observed,
or divined, or learned, in any way
what was going on within should go
out into the garden and disturb the
young couple, or give an alarm to the
man who was the object of so much
interest and suspicion, so much love
and hatred.

About the only people who took no
note of the time were the busy semp-
stresses in the room across the hall,
and the first sign of life came from
that room. Miss Kittridge, who ap-
peared to have been constituted the
messenger of the workers, came out
of the room, went down the hall to
the back of the house, and presently
entered the drawing-room by the far
door.

"Well," she began, seeing Mrs. Var-
ney, "we have just sent off another
batch of bandages."

"Did the same man come for them?"
asked the mistress of the house.

"No, they sent another one."

"Did you have much?"

"Yes, quite a lot. We have all been
at the bandages, they say that that is
what they need most. So long as we
have any linen left we will work at
it." She turned to go away, but some-
thing in the elder woman's face and
manner awakened a slight suspicion
in her mind. She stopped, turned, and
came back. "You look troubled, Mrs.
Varney," she began. "Do you want
anything?"

"No, nothing, thank you."

"Is there anything I can do or any-
thing any of us can do?"

"Not a thing, my dear," answered
Mrs. Varney, trying to smile and fail-
ing dismally.

"Is it Howard?" persisted the other,
anxious to be of service.

"He seems to be a little better," re-
turned the woman.

"I am glad to hear it, and if there is
anything any of us could do for you,
you would certainly tell me."

The elder woman nodded and Miss
Kittridge turned decisively away and
stepped briskly toward the door. On
second thought, there was something

she could do, reflected Mrs. Varney,
and so she rose, stepped to the door
in turn, and called her back.

"Perhaps it would be just as well,"
she said, "if any of the ladies want
to go to let them out the other way.
You can open the door into the back
hall. We're expecting some one here
on important business, you know, and
we—"

"I understand," said Miss Kit-
tridge.

"And you will see to this?"

"Certainly; trust me."

"Thank you."

Mrs. Varney turned with a little
sigh of relief and went back to her
place by the table, where her work
basket sat near to hand. No woman
in Richmond was without a work bas-
ket with work in it for any length of
time during those days. The needle
was second only to the bayonet in the
support of the dying Confederacy.

She glanced at it, but, sure evidence
of the tremendous strain under which
she labored, she made no motion to
take it up. Instead, after a moment's
reflection, she crossed to the wall
and pulled the bell rope. In a short
time, considering her bulk and un-
wieldiness, old Martha appeared at
the far door.

"Did you ring, ma'am?" she asked.

"Yes," was the answer. "Has Miss
Caroline gone yet?"

"No, ma'am," answered Martha
smilingly displaying a glorious set of
white teeth. "She's been out in the
kitchen for a while."

"In the kitchen?"

"Yes'm. Ah took her out dere. She
didn't want to be seed by no one."

"And what is she doing there?"

"She's been mostly sewin' an' be-
havin' mighty strange about sumthin'
gret deal ob de time. She's sniffin' an'
a-weepin', but Ah believ she's gittin'
ready to gwine home now."

"Very well," said Mrs. Varney, "will
you please ask her to come in here a
moment before she goes."

"Yes'm, 'deed Ah will," said old
Martha, turning and going out of the
door through which, presently, Caro-
line herself appeared.

She looked very demure and the air
of innocence, partly natural but lar-
gely assumed, well became her although
it did not deceive Mrs. Varney for a
moment, or would not have deceived
her if she had had any special inter-
est in Caroline's actions or emotions.
The greater strain under which she
labored made the girl of small im-
portance; she would simply use her, that
was all.

"Caroline, dear," she began immedi-
ately, "are you in a great hurry to go
home?"

"No, ma'am, not particularly, espe-
cially if I can do anything for you
here," answered the girl readily, some-
what surprised.

"It happens that you can," said Mrs.
Varney; "if you can stay here a few
minutes while I go upstairs to Howard
it will be a great help to me."

"You want me just to wait here, is
that it?" asked the girl, somewhat
mystified.

Why on earth anybody should be re-
quired to wait in a vacant room was
something which Caroline could not
understand, but Mrs. Varney's next
words sought to explain it.

"I don't want you merely to wait
here but—well, in fact, I don't want
anybody to go out on the veranda, or
into the garden, from the front of the
house, under any circumstances."

Caroline's eyes opened in great
amazement. She did not in the least
understand what it was all about until
Mrs. Varney explained further.

"You see Edith's there with—"

"Oh, yes," laughed the girl, at last
as she thought, comprehending, "you
want them to be left alone. I know
how that is, whenever I am—where
come—that is of course I will see to
it," she ended rather lamely and in
great confusion.

"Just a few minutes, dear," said
Mrs. Varney, smiling faintly at the
girl's blushing cheeks and not think-
ing it worth while to correct the mis-
apprehension, "I won't be long." She
stepped across the room, but turned in
the doorway for her final injunction.
"Do be careful, won't you?"

"Careful!" said Caroline to herself.
"I should think I would be careful. As
if I didn't know enough for that. I
can guess what is going on out there
in the moonlight. I wouldn't have
them disturbed for the world. Why, if
I were out there with—with Wil-
with anybody, I wouldn't—"

She stopped in great dismay at her
own admissions and stood staring to-
ward the front windows, over which
Mrs. Varney had most carefully drawn
the heavy hangings.

(To Be Continued.)

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gregate; the housewife hails each dawning day with grim and
harrowing dismay. Says she: "My work will NEVER end;
o'er dusty stretches I must bend, until, with aching back and hands
I finish what the day demands."

The
"Floor-and-Door-a"
Girl

Then Mrs. Jones, one afternoon, drop-
ped in, at time most opportune. An
optimist, she knew the wiles of house-
hold work—its sighs and smiles. She
told of how she polished floors and wood-
work and the endless doors, until when Hubby saw them, too,
reflections said: "Why, howdy-do!"

"The Gold Dust Twins," said she, "I find, help leave the woes
of dust behind. Each mark of sticky hands on doors, each tread of
muddy feet on floors, all fade before
the slightest touch of Gold Dust, and
the work is such that, when the
woodwork has been done, I find
said work was only fun." This
line of reasoning must show that
those who've tried it OUGHT to
know. If you, in one day's duties,
find that there's a Grouch in ev'ry
Grind, invite the Gold Dust Twins
to share such tasks as tire and
fret and wear.

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