

down and build a new place without a past or a ghost."

While Gebb soliloquised thus, he heard a hoarse voice in the distance, and saw Martin, spade on shoulder, passing across the lawn singing one of his gruesome songs. Evidently he had caught sight of the detective on the terrace, for not until he came towards him did he begin to sing. Then he danced grotesquely over the green turf, croaking his wild ditty, and looking a strange figure in the strong sunshine; yet not unsuited to the lonely place, with its grim associations:—

When moon shines clear my shadow and I
Dance in the silver light;
When moon lies hid in a cloudy sky
My shadow with her takes flight.
And I remain in the falling rain,
Calling up on my shadow in vain:
"Oh shadow dear, I wait you here,
Alone in the lonely night."

When he came close to Gebb he stopped his song and dance suddenly, and looked inquiringly at the detective with his head on one side. "What do you want?" he croaked. "There is nothing here but death and misery. I've come to look at the house, Martin. Can you show me over it?"

"No, no," said the gardener, shaking his head. "I don't walk through the valley of dry bones. If you sit in the Yellow Room you hear the dead tell secrets."

"What kind of secrets?" asked Gebb, humouring him.

"How the sister killed the brother, and how she who killed them both laughed and laughed."

But she died at last in deep despair
When Satan caught her in his snare.

Gebb looked fixedly at the man. He had been in the house at the time of the Kirkstone murder, so it might be that his poor wits retained a memory of the tragedy. Was it possible that light could be thrown on its darkness by this madman? The detective asked himself that question once or twice, as he listened to the poor creature rambling on, how Laura had killed her brother at the instigation of Miss Gilmar.

"And is Mr. Dean innocent?" he asked, suddenly.

"God and his saints know that he had no hand in it," cried Martin, with a remarkably sane look on his face. "A woman ripped one, a woman slew the other, and the poor soul lies in chains—in chains." And he fell to weeping, as though his heart would break with sorrow and pain.

"I wonder if this is the truth," thought Gebb. "Perhaps, after all, Laura did murder her brother, and Miss Gilmar to save her denounced Dean. But there is no sense to be got out of this lunatic; his evidence would not stand in a court of law. The only thing is to search for that confession, so the sooner I set to work the better. Martin," he said, aloud, "can you show me over the house?"

"Not I! Not I! Ask old Jane. Come and I'll take you to old Jane," and shoukling his spade again, Martin walked off round the corner of the terrace, singing—

God is far away, alas!

The Devil is beside us;
And as we wander thro' the world,
He is the one to guide us.

He gives with grin, the wage of sin;
And when the fiend hath paid me,
We stand outside the gate of Hell,
With Christ alone to aid us.

Old Jane proved to be a grim and elderly female in a rusty black dress and a still rustier bonnet. She came out of a side door, and wiping her hands on a coarse apron, curtseyed to Gebb, while Martin, introducing the pair with a regal wave of the hand, danced off round the corner.

"What may you be pleased to want?" asked old Jane, when the scarecrow gardener had disappeared.

"I have received permission from Mr. Alder to look over the house," replied the detective, "and I wish you to show it to me."

"There ain't much to see, sir," croaked the ancient dame, "it's all dust and darkness. I doubt if my old leg would carry me over it."

"Oh, well, I can go by myself, Jane," said Gebb, cheerfully.

"Mrs. Grix, if you please," snapped Jane, indignantly. "I only allows Miss Edith to call me by my first name. Poor, pretty dear, and she's gone away for ever."

"I wouldn't be too sure of that," rejoined Gebb, dryly. "Mr. Alder has met with an accident and may die; in

which case Miss Wedderburn will return here as mistress."

"Mr. Alder's ill, is he?" said Jane in no very regretful tone, "and may die. Ah, well," with a lachrymose whine, "all flesh is grass, that it is; and if Miss Edith does come back I hope she'll shut up the Yellow Room."

"For what reason, Mrs. Grix?" "Cause it's haunted by spirits," replied Mrs. Grix, with a mysterious look. "I've heard 'em two of 'em quarrelling there."

"Which two? What two?" asked Gebb, who began to think that the old lady had been at the bottle.

"Miss Gilmar and the master; they 'aunts the Yellow Room and fights I knows it; 'cause I sleeps here all alone, save for Martin, as lives in the back part; an' I hears voices, that I do."

"I wonder you are not more afraid of that madman than of ghosts."

Mrs. Grix smiled in a cunning and significant manner. "Oh, I ain't afraid of Martin, sir; no one as knows him fears him."

"And why?" asked Gebb, sharply. This question Mrs. Grix did not choose to hear; but mumbled and shaking her old head, hobbled along the passages in the direction of the Yellow Room. She ushered Gebb into this with a chuckle, and threw open the shutters to let the sunlight shine on the faded and time-worn decorations of the room.

"I s'pose you'll want to see this first," said Mrs. Grix; "most folks likes to see a room as a murder's been done in. There's a stain of blood over in that corner; master's blood—which Miss Gilmar would never let be wiped out. I desay master comes and look at it, and wishes he had his body again. He was an awful bad one—and mean!" Mrs. Grix lifted up a pair of dirty and trembling hands. "They was both of 'em skindints," said she with a nod.

"Whom are you speaking of, Mrs. Grix?"

"Of Miss Gilmar and Mr. Kirkstone, sir."

"Did you know them?" "Did I know them?" echoed the hag, with scorn. "Of course I knowed them; and a bad lot the pair of 'em was. They give Miss Laurer a fine time, I can tell you. I wonder she didn't go off with Mr. Dean, I do."

"Were you here when the murder took place?" asked Gebb.

"Lor' bless yer 'eart, I saw the 'ole of it," croaked Mrs. Grix. "Master was a-lying over there with a knife in his 'eart, and Miss Gilmar, she was 'oller'ing for the police."

"Did Dean kill Kirkstone?"

"Ah, that's telling!" said Mrs. Grix cunningly. "Don't you ask no questions, young man, and you won't be told no lies."

"You must tell me!" cried Gebb, seizing her by the wrist. "I am from Scotland Yard; a detective." And he shook the beldame furiously.

Mrs. Grix raised a feeble wail of horror.

"Lor', you're perlice, are you?" she whimpered. "Jist let me go; I know nothin'."

"Did Laura Kirkstone kill her brother?"

"I dunno; I swear I dunno."

"Was Miss Gilmar the criminal?" Mrs. Grix leered. "She never told me she was, sir, but she didn't carry the Yellow Room about with her for nothin'."

"What do you mean?" said Gebb, releasing her.

Mrs. Grix rubbed her wrist, which had been somewhat bruised by his clasp, and leered again. "Miss Gilmar wrote it all down," she said.

"A confession?" cried the detective. "I dunno what you call it, sir; but I know she wrote it down, 'cause she said to me, 'It'll be all right when I'm dead.' Well, she are dead," said Mrs. Grix, "and it ain't all right, unless she left the writin' behind her."

"Where is that confession?"

"I dunno. I wish I did. There's money in it. I've hunted all over the house, and I can't come across it nohow."

"Well, Mrs. Grix, what is your opinion?" "Was it Dean, or Miss Gilmar, or Miss Laura who killed the man?"

"You look about for the paper, lovey," said Mrs. Grix, coaxingly, "and it'll tell you all."

"You tell me."

"But I don't know for certain."

"Never mind. What is your opinion?" "Will ye give me money for it?"

"That depends upon your information."

"Then I sha'n't tell ye," cried Mrs. Grix, backing towards the door. "You can look for what she wrote. I sha'n't 'elp you. Keep me fro' the work'ouse, and maybe I'll tell ye summat to make you wink; but not now, not now. Old Jane Grix ain't no fool, lovey. No, no!"

Gebb made a step forward to detain her, but Mrs. Grix hobbled through the door and vanished in the darkness as mysteriously as any of the ghosts she had been talking about. At all events, when the detective slipped out of the Yellow Room and into the twilight of the passage his eyes were somewhat dazzled by the sunlight and glare of colour within, and he saw nothing for the moment. Mrs. Grix was quicker on her old feet than he supposed, and in some way hobbled out of sight into one of the numerous passages, so that when Gebb's eyes became accustomed to the gloom he did not know into which one she had gone. Also, he heard rapidly retreating footsteps—not the heavy hobble of the old woman, but rather the light, dancing step of Martin. And as to confirm this impression, he heard the hoarse voice of the gardener singing one of his wild songs:

Light shall come but not from above,
For shall come but not from love,
The glow of hell, the lust of hate,
Impatiently for these I wait.

"Ha!" said Gebb to himself, as he

hurried down the passage. "Martin has been listening. I wonder why? I don't believe he is mad after all, for neither that old woman nor Miss Wedderburn is afraid of him. He must be feigning madness for some reason. Ha!" cried the detective with a sudden start, "can Martin be the murderer of—"

Before he could finish the sentence he heard a series of piercing shrieks from Mrs. Grix, and a hoarse growling from Martin. These noises sounded far in the distance, and Gebb ran down the passage, through the sitting-room into which he had been shown by Miss Wedderburn on the occasion of his first visit, and on to the terrace. Here he saw Mrs. Grix running from Martin, who was rushing after her with a furious face. Gebb stared, not at the terrified old woman, who was hurrying towards him with wonderful activity for one of her years, but at Martin's face. It wore a savage scowl, and there between the eyes was the deep mark spoken of by Page.

"Dean!" cried Gebb, thunderstruck. "You are Dean!"

"Yes! yes!" screamed Mrs. Grix, getting behind Gebb; "he's Dean sure enough. He was going to kill me 'cause I wanted to tell ye."

Martin—or rather Dean—stopped when he heard his name, then turned, and leaping over the terrace, ran like a hare down the avenue.

(To be continued.)

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