

A Voice in the Night.

By MORRIS COLEBORN.

CHAPTER I.

It happened to be five years to the very day—May 7th—since I had begun my career as a medical man. Perhaps the date, rotating, as it did, so many youthful ambitions, was responsible for the fact that instead of snoring the most of the unusual luxury of a good night's rest I began to dream instead.

It was a distinctly pleasant dream, and I had reached the point where I was moodily responding to a vote of thanks proffered by an eminent member of the Royal Society in acknowledgment of my recent important discovery in medical science, when the vociferous applause of the audience merged into the jingling of the telephone bell. My distressful honors melted into thin air as I sat up in bed and unhooked the receiver.

"Hello!" I said, dazedly. "Yes, I'm here all right—I'm Dr. Armstrong."

"A doctor! O, thank God!" sighed a woman's voice. "Have you a number?"

"Yes."

"Then, for Heaven's sake, come at once—The Pines, Oakbridge, Surrey, just on leaving Mary Stamford—tall, fair, brown eyes. Don't let any one put you off—accept no excuses—it is a matter of life and death!"

The last word ended in a sharp scream; then came silence. Some one had abruptly replaced the receiver, and so put a stop to the woman's message.

"When I rang up the exchange clerk I demanded sleepily what number I wanted."

"The call came from Oakbridge; I don't know the number. Kindly look up The Pines, Oakbridge, will you, and put me on to them again—the message was interrupted just now."

flower beds I pointed to the sheets of broken glass. "That settles the question as to their not all being in bed and asleep, and the first thing I've got to do is to find out whether Miss Stamford—"

"Stamford!" echoed Stebbing; why, that was the name of the young lady they were making such a fuss about in the evening papers; but perhaps you didn't happen to see them, sir?"

"No, why?"

"Well, sir, they were full of the disappearance of Miss Mary Stamford, daughter of a wealthy American. It appears she landed from New York at Southampton yesterday, and while her father had gone to arrange some business with the customs officials the girl and her maid disappeared and haven't been seen since. The police seem to think she may have been kidnaped in order to extort money from her father, and—"

"Did the papers give any description of the missing girl?" I broke in eagerly.

"I see, they said she was tall, with golden hair and brown eyes, and—"

"That's the exact description given of the patient at The Pines," said I. "We'd have done better, Stebbing, to bring a couple of policemen and some handcuffs instead of a surgical bag."

"Chloroform might come in handy, perfumery if we happened to be outnumbered, sir," suggested Stebbing, quietly.

"A capital idea," said I, "but in the meantime we must keep our eyes and cars open and if possible try to find out the position of the room with the broken window."

"Very good, sir," whispered Stebbing, and in another moment we were tramped noisily up the gravel sweep and rang a loud peal on the ponderous bell.

It was quite ten minutes before the door was opened by a small, wiry-looking man, whose disheveled hair and collarless shirt indicated that he had just sprung out of bed, though his neatly laced boots rather gave the lie to that impression.

"Bog pardon, sir," he said curtly, "there must be some mistake; there's no one ill at The Pines, sir. You see," he added, between a yawn and a smile, "the family is not expected home from the Riviera till next week, so there's no one to be ill, except me or the wife or 'er niece. She don't all much really, but she's not what you might call quite—quite all there, you know, sir, and she's always wanting to see the doctor. She rang one up on the telephone this evening, leastways the wife thinks she was going to—"

"She did, I was the doctor in question," said I quietly, "and though she only gave a very fragmentary message, I gathered that she was suffering, and therefore—"

"She didn't describe her symptoms, or give 'er family history, I suppose, sir?" questioned the man quickly.

"No, she had only time for a very few words before she was run off."

"Yes, my wife did that," said the man, evidently relieved. "She said it was a shame to trouble any doctor to come from a distance, when there's a medical man in Oakbridge."

"But since I am here," said I, depositing my bag on the floor of the dismantled hall, "don't you think I had better see the patient?"

"Well, sir, it's very good of you, of course, but you see, sir, she's in bed."

"My patients generally are," said I, good humoredly.

The man hesitated, then: "Very good, sir, if you don't mind waiting a moment, I'll just fetch the wife, if you'll excuse 'er being in dishabillie."

He disappeared without waiting for my reply, and Stebbing and I were left alone in the big hall, which was lighted only by a small hand lamp placed on the window sill.

It was with the assistance of this lamp that I silently pointed out to Stebbing the imprint on the dusty floor of a second and larger pair of masculine boots than those worn by the man we had interviewed. I had just replaced the lamp when the caretaker came from a door at the back of the hall, which apparently led to a back staircase.

"The patient is awake, is she?" Then I think we may as well go up at once. No, thanks; my assistant? (I emphasized the word as I shot a meaning glance at Stebbing) "Will bring the bag. It's just as well to have a second medical man when the patient suffers from delusion. They're often a little violent, and—"

"Oh, Eliza Morton ain't wot you might call violent, sir, though she 'as 'er little delusions. For instance, she fancies to-day as 'er name is Mary Stamford—you've seen the evening paper, of course, sir?"

"No, I happened to be too busy to-night; but what's that got to do with your niece?"

"Only that a young woman named Stamford seems to 'ave eloped, or something, and our Eliza was reading about it at tea, and so, of course, she began to think she was the young lady 'erself, didn't she, missis?"

"Yes, Eliza's always imagining some rubbish of that sort!" said a tall, muscular looking woman who had joined us at the head of the stairs and busied herself buttoning her soiled dressing gown as she ushered me into the patient's room.

The man had disappeared in obedience to his wife's irritable: "It's all right, Bill; you can go down. You're not wanted 'ere; the doctor and me can manage 'Liza all right!"

But as I bent over the lethargic figure on the bed the older woman's suggestion of possible violence seemed absurd. The patient had all the appearance of a somewhat heavily-built young woman, who had been roused out of a sound sleep, and her half-serenotient, half-irritable replies to my questions certainly bore out this impression. Then I took her pulse, and to my astonishment found it beating

in a fashion that betrayed at once the fact that for all her apparent lethargy, the patient was laboring under some strong excitement.

"Will you be kind enough to hand me that candle, please? Thank you—yes, that will do," said I, addressing the older woman, and I flatter myself that my voice was as perfectly calm and collected as though I had not made the important discovery that not only was the girl deliriously suffering sleepiness, but that in no particular of her personal appearance was she in the least like the woman I had been summoned to The Pines to see.

"She's all right, ain't she, doctor?" said the tall woman, with a portentous yawn.

"Well, there's nothing serious the matter, certainly," said I, hypocritically; "but I'll just write a prescription which you can get made up in the morning. Stebbing," I added, stepping on to the landing, where my chauffeur had discreetly taken up his position, "just hand me that bag a moment, will you?"

Stebbing obeyed, but instead of rummaging among the contents of the bag, I scribbled a few words on a piece of paper, and thrust it into his hand.

"I'm convinced there's some sort of foul play! Lese your way going downstairs; do anything as long as you find out whether there's another woman in this house."

"No, I shan't require your assistance," I said, aloud. "You can wait for me in the hall."

"Very good, sir," said Stebbing, and when I returned to the patient's room, I made a great show of being engrossed in the writing of my prescription, although in reality I was busy watching the two women as closely as I dared.

Once, when I looked up suddenly, I caught a quick glance of understanding pass from the alert eyes of the woman on the bed to her companion, but when I turned once more to the patient, she was apparently more sleepily inclined than ever, and before I was half way down the stairs, accompanied by the older woman, a loud snore betrayed the fact that she had only waited to be relieved of my presence to fall into a heavy sleep.

"Not much wrong with 'er, is there, sir?" said the woman, then added in a conciliatory tone, "but she'll be all the better for that physic, I'm sure. Left your 'at upstairs, 'ave you, sir; then I'll run on and fetch it. Keep straight on down the stairs, please, and you'll come out into the front 'all."

As the woman hurried up the stairs I turned to Stebbing, who was literally panting with excitement, a few steps lower down.

"This way, sir!" he gasped, as he raced down the long corridor, then up a second flight of stairs and along another corridor, only pausing when he reached a door at the further end.

"It's the room with the broken window, sir," he whispered, "and I'll swear I heard a woman's voice calling for help. Yes, the door's locked right enough, but if we both shove our shoulders so—got it, sir, this time!" he added triumphantly, as the door gave way with a wrench of splintered woodwork, and Stebbing and I found ourselves precipitated into a big, bare room, lighted only by the rays of the moon which shone through the bars of the unglazed window and fell on the meshes of a woman's golden hair.

Then Stebbing struck a match, and as I caught sight of the rascally caretaker with his hand pressed against a woman's mouth, I made a sudden rush that sent the scoundrel spinning against the opposite wall. But the fellow was stronger than he looked, and I got my eye on a spur of my nose in fair training I could hardly have kept my grip on his throat while I panted out:

"Quick, Stebbing—the small stoppered bottle! Yes, that's it! Empty it on to a towel—anything—right! Now—look out, man!" I broke off; "the other one, man!"

Stebbing turned as the rush of feet he heard the door, and in another moment he was hurled to the ground by a big, burly rascal, while the two women flung themselves savagely upon me.

Luckily the chloroform had already rendered the first ruffian practically harmless, and I soon decided that the contents of the stoppered bottle would prove the safest and most efficacious way of meeting the wildest attacks of the two women.

Then I rushed to Stebbing's assistance, and between us we succeeded, who gave vent to a series of blood-curdling expletives as he found himself being firmly secured to the stout iron bars that protected the window.

"Silence!" said I angrily; "if you say another word in this lady's presence, I'll give you such a dose of chloroform—"

"Don't do that, gov'nor," whined the man; "as likely as not you'll be 'ad up for three murders as it is," he added, glancing at the inert forms of his three accomplices.

"In that case a fourth wouldn't make much difference," said I grimly, as I forced a stiff dose of salvolatile between Miss Stamford's trembling lips. "Don't speak! Just drink it!" I urged, and as the girl obeyed, I turned and whispered to Stebbing, "Bring up the motor as fast as you can. Those wretches will revive directly, and I haven't another drop of chloroform."

Stebbing was off like a shot, and a moment later, when the girl had somewhat recovered, I seized a cloak from the back of a chair, wrapped it round her, and without more ado, picked her up in my arms and hurried out of the house.

Luckily, Miss Stamford was a light weight, for though I'm six feet two and fairly fit, it's no joke carrying any woman bundled up in a cloak like a baby. However, I was soon able to transfer her to the motor, and as we raced down the avenue at top speed, Stebbing remarked coolly:

"I think we'd better raise Cain with the motor horn, sir; that'll rouse Oakbridge, if anything will."

It did, in fact, I doubt whether that peaceful hamlet had ever experienced anything like it before, indeed there was such a hubbub that after the preliminary explanations

been gone through I decided to leave Stebbing and several amateur policemen in charge of the matter, while I drove Miss Stamford back to town, in order to place her under my mother's wing as quickly as possible.

"My mother will be delighted if you will remain with her," I explained, "until you can communicate with your father—unless you would rather put up here, or—"

"No, please, please take me away with you!" said the girl, laying an imploring hand on my sleeve.

"Right!" I will, I said, and very little else, till I handed the girl over to my mother's care, but some how, when the latter insisted on my going to bed for a few hours before beginning the work of the day, I did not dream this time of the shadowy honors that might possibly fall to my lot in the dim future, but of the very tangible reality of a girl's beautiful face, framed in masses of golden hair, which in dreamland I ventured to caress as I gazed into the clear depths of the lovely light eyes in the world.

Curiously enough, some months later the dream came true. The rascally 'gang had been tried and sentenced that day, and in the evening my fiancée and I strolled out on the balcony of my London house, leaving our elders engrossed in an animated discussion on "criminal instincts," or something equally fascinating.

Public Roads of Maine.

In 1904 there were 25,528 miles of public road in the State of Maine, of which 2236 miles were surfaced with gravel and eighty-seven miles with stone, making a total of 2323 miles of improved road. It will be seen from these figures that nine per cent. of the roads have been improved. By comparing the total road mileage with the area of the State, it appears that there was 0.85 of a mile of public road per square mile of area. A comparison of mileage with population shows that there was one mile of road to every twenty-seven inhabitants, but only one mile of improved road to every 298 inhabitants.

The necessary funds for making and repairing highways, "townways" and bridges are raised by the voters at the annual town meetings in March. These funds are assessed and collected in the same manner as other town taxes, and are expended by the town, commissioner or commissioners, or by the selectmen, as each town may determine.

Towns establishing State roads may receive State aid to the extent of one-half the amount devoted by the town to the permanent improvement of such roads. Under the law in force in 1904, no town could receive from the State a greater sum than \$200 in one year, but in 1905 this limit was raised to \$300. In order to secure this State aid the town must, before October 1, have raised and expended in the improvement of such State road, in a manner satisfactory to the county commissioners, at least \$100 over and above the amount regularly raised in the town for highways and bridges.

The State has also, by legislative enactment in specific cases, assisted the poorer towns and plantations to build roads and bridges. In the last twenty-five years such State appropriations have amounted to a total of \$176,830.29. For the year 1904 the amount was \$11,100.

The average annual expenditure for town roads for 1901-'04 was \$1,277,196.14. The amount expended on State roads by the towns in order to receive State aid was \$50,312.07 in 1904. The amount expended in the various towns by the State was \$33,485.49. The total amount expended therefore by the towns and by the State, including the State's special appropriation referred to above, amounted to \$1,472,393.70 for 1904. By comparing the total expenditures with the total mileage of public road and with the population of the State, it is found that the funds collected and expended for road purposes, including roads, bridges, sidewalks and snow expenses, amounted to \$57.67 per mile of public road, or \$2.12 per inhabitant.—Maurice O. Eldridge, Chief of Records, Approved: James Wilson, Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 1906.

Dustless Roads. How to bring about dustless highways is a problem, the quick solution of which interests all automobilists. True we have such remedies as oiling, tarring, westruming, and the latest is the use of calcium, but the true abatement of dust must trace back to the construction and repair of the road itself. On the other side the question is just now receiving unusual attention in England, where a Dustless Roads Association has been organized, its membership comprising substantially from the ranks of the automobilists.

Secretary Vaughan, in calling attention to the association, says: "The trouble is mainly attributable to the fact that the roads in many instances are made or repaired with materials which are easily converted into dust. Our efforts are, therefore, chiefly directed toward the elimination of this fault by bringing to the notice of the various road authorities concerned the means by which improvements may be economically effected. Because automobiles raise a large proportion of the dust that happens to be on the road than any other vehicle, they are frequently blamed for the very existence of the dust, and, consequently, have to endure much unfair criticism."—The Automobile.

A Road Plane. Upon the highways adjoining our farm we are using a road plane that keeps the road in excellent condition for the traveling public, and is but very little labor for us, says George W. Brown, of Mount Corey, Ohio, in writing to Farm Journal. This implement is made of two solid oak planks two by eight inches and nine feet in length, set up edgewise and framed together by two by four scantling, braced in the back with short iron braces. The lower edges of the plank are beveled upon the iron, and are shod by bolting on tire iron from discarded grain drill wheels. An evener and doubletrees taken from the harrow complete the outfit. We hitch our team to this plane and drag it down one side of the roadway and back the other side, grading all the dirt to the centre of the track. When rains come, the water quickly runs from the roadway and leaves it in good condition for travel.

"Sailing" Superseding "Shopping." "Sailing" or sailing is rapidly superseding shopping as a word to express visits to mark-down sales. It is London's latest "verbal tabloid," and many women who have little interest in the sales which are agitating most of the feminine community at present will go and buy what they could never want just for the pleasure of using a new phrase that is English. "Are you going sailing to-day?" asks the bargain hunter, and then sallies forth to the shop where there are alarming sacrifices and incredible bargains.—New York Press.

Various Sorts of Mules.

All mules are not alike. There is a greater difference between mules than horses, although they vary less in size. Most people regard the mule as an animal with abnormal ears, a raucous voice and abnormally developed muscles in his hind legs.

The principal class of mules are known on the market as cotton mules, lumber mules, railroad mules, sugar mules, farm mules, levee mules, city mules and mine mules. Miners are classed as pit and surface animals.

The commonest kind is the cotton mule, and there are more of this class than any other. They range from thirteen to sixteen hands, and are at their best between four to seven years. It makes little difference how they are built, so long as they are smooth. They bring in the Southern markets from \$50 to \$165 each.

The best mules are lumber mules, ranging from fifteen to seventeen hands, large, heavy boned and rugged. Their value depends upon their ability to draw heavy loads. Beauty cuts no figure in prices, which range from \$100 to \$250. Occasionally an extra good pair will bring \$600.

Railroad mules are lumber mules that have been somewhat broken down, or a little smaller mule than those used in the lumber camps. Sugar mules belong to the fancy class. If they are smooth, rangy, with small head and neck, and run from fifteen to sixteen hands high, they will bring from \$150 to \$200.

White and sorrel mules are never used in the mines. They say when the mine shafts are long a white mule resembles a ghost, and frightens the other mules beyond control. All pit mules must be dark bay or black in color, heavy boned, good weight, and from twelve to fifteen hands high. They bring from \$135 to \$200, but if used for any other purpose they would not bring within \$50 as much.

The Government is the best mule buyer. It pays big prices, but demands the very choicest animals on the market. The demand for mules is increasing every year, and farmers of the Middle West are learning that a good sized, smooth mare bred to a heavy weight, large boned, symmetrical jack will produce a mule, year in and year out, that will sell readily from \$150 to \$200 when three years old.—Kentucky Farmer and Breeder.

Mixed Feed For Hogs. Some recent tests at this station (Virginia Agricultural College) show clearly that mixed feed is superior to corn alone for hogs. These grains were, of course, fed without skim milk. The hogs fed corn and water gained .24 of a pound a head a day; those fed on cornmeal two parts and middlings one part gained .67 of a pound a head a day; those fed cornmeal one part and middlings one part gained .69 of a pound a head a day; those fed cornmeal one part and middlings two parts gained .86 of a pound a head a day. Another lot fed cornmeal one part and middlings one part gained 1.35 pounds a day, showing that individually plays a part in the gains made by animals. Still another lot fed shelled corn one part and middlings one part gained 1.26 pounds a head a day. While these gains are not large, they probably represent the average gains under farm conditions, and, moreover, they show very strikingly that hogs will make better gains if fed some protein food on the order of middlings, linseed meal, gluten meal, etc., rather than corn alone. Corn is a carbohydrate food and very fattening, and while it will finish off mature hogs, farmers desiring to grow animals rapidly and have them gain and develop as uniformly as they should will find it highly profitable to add some protein food, as suggested above, to the ration.

Sometimes we think it will not pay us to buy an additional food because we happen to have corn on hand, but these results are so striking and the work was done so carefully that it convinces us fully of the wisdom of making a balanced ration for growing hogs.—Professor Andrew M. Soule, in Southern Farm Magazine.

Make Heavy Bales of Cotton. One of the first questions we were asked in regard to cotton was, "How much does it take to make a bale?" The answer was 500 pounds. Even to this day, according to commercial ideas of the matter, it takes 500 pounds to make a bale. It would be better if every farmer would try to put that number of pounds in each bale. We can remember when now and then a farmer would try to overdo things and make bales of 600 and 700 pounds, which caused some of the old weakly presses to break. Farmers are now taking the other

extreme and are making their bales too light. Some do this because they think of a small profit they make on the bagging and ties of each bale. This is a wrong idea. Our aim should be to sell lint cotton and not bagging and ties. But most farmers who make small bales do it with the idea of increasing the number of bales to the farm. They want to be able to say they made so many bales or so many bales to a certain number of acres. Men who do not make much cotton are in this way trying to keep up with others who make a great deal of it.

A look at the gin books will show that many bales weighing less than 400 pounds are packed. Some weigh only 325 to 350. It takes about as long to haul off cotton for a light bale as for a heavy one. It takes about as long to haul the seed back to the place where they are to be kept. It takes fully as long to carry to market a light bale as it does to market a heavy one. Besides, light bales are objected to by compress-men and all cotton mill men. Why not make it a rule to put no bales of 500 pounds each as near as possible?—J. M. Beary, in Smithfield Herald.

The Fall Army Worm. These caterpillars are striped in appearance, a black stripe extending along each side of the body. When full grown they are from an inch to an inch and a half long. They are not usually serious pests, but in seasons when weather and the other conditions are just right, they suddenly appear in great numbers, devouring various grains, grasses, cow-peas, clover, alfalfa, sweet potatoes and garden crops. Almost every complaint this season mentions them as attacking crab-grass. Mr. Benbow, of Guilford County, says they are swarming on his alfalfa, and they have been likewise destructive to alfalfa on the Edgecombe Test Farm and the Experiment Station Farm here at Raleigh. Alfalfa is too valuable a plant to lose in this way.

After the worms have become noticeable, it takes them only a week or so to get full grown when they burrow in the earth, change to brown chrysalids or pupae, and from these come out plain, innocuous-looking grayish moths in another week or ten days. The last brood is thought to pass the winter in the pupae state underground. When they thus suddenly disappear, the farmer often thinks that they have died out, when in reality they are only transforming to the adult moth which will lay eggs for another brood.

If you have a sprayer, it is a simple matter to protect most of the garden vegetables by the use of Paris green in water, but this remedy is not to be thought of for fields of alfalfa or crab-grass. But, did you ever think how it would be to run a heavy roller right over the field? Seems to me that it would literally crush the life out of them, and it won't hurt the crop either, provided it is not to rank and tall. It is not likely that we will have another destructive brood of this pest this fall, but if we do, use the roller.—Franklin Sherman, Jr., Entomologist, Department of Agriculture, Raleigh, N. C.

German Kale and Spinach. The majority of our farmers and gardeners are well acquainted with the turnip and collar for winter greens. They are both good, but even in "greens" it is well to have a variety and to try all the varieties until we find out the ones we like the best. Now, we think German kale one of the hardest and easiest raised of all the salads. There is no trouble to secure a stand. The seeds are larger and germinate as quickly as the turnip. Kale requires about the same culture as turnips, and while it does not make any root crop it makes more salad and a finer variety. It will also last longer in the spring as it does not run up to seed so early as the turnip. If you have never tried it, be sure and sow some to see how you like it.

Spinach is considered the best of all salads. Personally we do not like it so well, but it is certainly worthy a trial by all gardeners. It is more difficult to germinate and requires the richest of soil to yield a paying crop. Both kale and spinach should have been sown by the first of September, but we suggest you try them on a small scale as soon as you can get them in. We raised good kale last year sown in October, though this is too late in severe winter. It wants to get a good growth before severe weather and then it is very hardy.—Southern Cultivator.

A Biblical Sabbath day's journey was found to be about a 65th of a mile.

Proverbs and Phrases. He who does what he likes, does not what he ought.—From the Sapphist.

A pig on credit makes a good winter and a bad spring.—From the Portuguese.

CHAPTER II. "Do you happen to know the whereabouts of The Pines, sir?" demanded my chauffeur an hour later, as we slid down a gentle slope into the village of Oakbridge.

"I haven't any idea," said I, "but there's sure to be a police station or something where we can inquire."

"It don't exactly look like it so far, does it, sir?" Stebbing retorted, as he drove slowly through the village street, where every house was close shrouded and even the dogs seemed sound asleep.

"It certainly is rather an out of the way little place," said I, glancing to where the Surrey hills rose to right and left, shutting in the hamlet as though it were in the hollow of a giant's hand.

"The place is evidently too small for a police station, sir," said Stebbing; "had I better knock them up at an inn, or—"

"No, we'll explore a bit first; I fancied I saw a light just beyond the dump of trees along that road to the right; you'll have to steer carefully, as it's rather narrow, but there's a house at the end all right, and—by George! This is The Pines," I added, pausing to examine the lettering on the big white gate. "There's no need to take the motor any further. I'll just walk up to the house and—"

"Better let me come with you, sir," said Stebbing.