## The House on the Marsh

THE MYSTERY OF THE ALDERS

BY FLORENCE WARDEN CHAPTER IL.

I was down in the dining-room the next morning, with the unfailing punctuality of a new-comer, at the sound of the breakfast-bell, before any one else was there. Mr. Rayner came in in a few minutes, handsome, cheerful, but rather preoccupied; and I was listening to his bright small talk with listening to his bright small talk with the polite stranger's smile, when I discovered, without having heard any sound, that Mrs. Rayner was in the room. She had glided in like a ghost, and was standing at the table, waiting. I was thankful to see that there was no trace of the steadfast, eager gaze which had disconcerted me on the night before, nothing but the limpest indifference to me in the way in which she held out her hand when her husband introduced me. introduced me.

"She must have been pretty ten years ago," I thought, as I looked at her thin face, with the fair faded complexion and dull gray eyes. There was a gentleness about her which would have been grace still, if she had taken any pains to set off by a littue womanly coquetry her slim girl-like figure, small thin hands, and the masses of long brown hair which were carelessly and unbecomingly dragged away from her forehead and twisted upon her head.

Then the door opened, and the servants came in to prayers, with the elfish baby and a pretty delicate-looking child, blue-eyed and fair-haired, who was presented to me as Haidee, my pupil. She must have been pretty ten

was presented to me as Haidee, my pupil.

Nobody talked during the meal but Mr. Rayner, and the only other noticeable thing was the improper behavior of the baby, who aimed a blow with a spoon at her father when he passed her chair to cut himself some cold meat. He saw it and laughed at her.

"It is a most extraordinary thing, Miss Christie," said he; "but that child hates me."

I thought he spoke in fun; but, be-

child hates me."

I thought he spoke in fun; but, before I had been long at the Alders, I found that it was true that this most unpleasant baby's strongest feeling was dislike of her father. She would not even take sweets from his hand.

"Were you not surprised, Miss Christie," said Mr. Rayner, during breakfast, "at the wording of my advertisement?"

"Yes, Mr. Rayner." My wife was afraid that it would frighten off many desirable young ladies by its ogreish abruptness. The fact is, the lady who has just left us, quite a typical instructress of forty, with prominent teeth and glasses, nearly frightened our lives out. She nearly frightened our lives out. She wouldn't talk, and my wife wants a cheerful companion. Moreover, she threatened to prosecute me for decoy-

threatened to prosecute me for decoying her to so damp a place. So we registered a solemn vow that we would have nothing to do with hoar antiquity again."

"How could she say anything against such a lovely place?" said I.

"Well, now, Miss Christie, I have sometimes thought the place damp myself; but my wife has got attached to it; haven't you, Lola?"

"Yos." said she without a sign of

"Yes," said she, without a sign of

"Yes," said she, without a sign of feeling or interest.

"And so we remain," he went on,
"You must know, Miss Christie, that I am a penniless wretch, dependent on my wife; am I not, Lola?" He turned playfully to her.

"Not quite that," said she, gently, but with no more warmth than before.

"Practically I am," he persisted.
"She was an heiress, I a ruined spendthrift, when she married me. Yet she trusted me; and the only con-

I could not help feeling rather sorry for Mr. Rayner. He was always kind and attentive to his wife; but she was always the same, limp, nerveless, apathetic, speaking when necessary in a low, soft voice, slowly, with many panses. She had a habit of letting the last words of a sentence die away upon her lips, and then, after a few moments, as if by an effort, she would say them aloud. I soon grew quite afraid of her, and, being anxious to shake off this strange diffidence, I offered to read to her when my short hours of study with my pupil were over. She acceptith my pupil were over. She acceptstopped at the end of each chapter waiting for some comment, but she only said: "Thank you," very gently, and, when I asked if I should go on: 'Yes, if it will not tire you."

"Yes. if it will not tire you."

Presently I found out that she was not listening, but that she was sitting with her hands in her lap, while her eyes were fixed on the garden outside, with a deep sadness in them which contrasted strangely with her usual apathetic indifference to all things. Still I read on, until such a heavy despairing sigh broke from her pale lips that I involuntarily stopped short in my reading, and raised my eyes, with tears in them, to hers. She started and turned toward me. A little color came to her cheeks; n another moment I believe she would have called me to her side, when a roice from behind her chair started us

common courtesy at my hands. I was hurt as well as puzzled by this; and, being too young and timid to make any further advances, the distances en me and the silent sad lady grew

ater than ever.
In attempt that Mr. Rayner made a days after the above seene to draw together only sent us further apart. came into the school-room just as dee and I were finishing the day's ions, and dismissed her into the gar-

her mother's a rought of intellect.
ife does not give herself the airs
clever woman. But you would

not have doubted it it you had known

He was in one of those moods of almost embarrassing frankness, during which the only thing possible was to sit and listen quietly, with such sparing comment as would content him.

"I dare say," he continued, "it will seem almost incredible to you, but she was one of the most brilliant talkers I have ever met, and four years ago she wrote a book which took London by storm. If I ware to will have to be a such a such a such as the same to be a such as the same a same a such as the same

storm. If I were to tell you the no de plume under which she wrot you would be afraid of her, for it h you would be afraid of her, for it be-came at once a sort of proverb for dar-ing of thought and expression. We had a little boy then"—his voice seemed to tremble a little—"two years older than Haidee. The two children had been left in the country—in the best of care, mind—while my wife and I spent the season in town; it was s duty she owed to society then as one of its brightest ornaments. We heard that the boy was not well; but we had no idea that his illness was serious. Well— I can scarcely speak of it even now—the child died, after only two now—the child died, after only two days' illness, away from us. It was on her return from a ball that my wife heard of it. She sunk down into a chair, dumb and shivering, without a word or a tear. When at last we succeeded in rousing her from this state, she took off her beautiful jewels—you have heard she was an hairseas and have heard she was an heiress—and flung them from her with a shudder of

He paused for a few minutes, and ] sat waiting for him to continue, too much interested to say much.

disgust. She has never looked at them

"I hoped that the depression into instead, it only grew deeper. After her boy's death, my wife would never ever visit town again. When Mona was born, I hoped she would reawaken to interest in life. Instead of that, her apathy deepened, until now, she raises a barrier between herself and the life around her which to strangers is ofter insurmountable. I have been looking for an opportunity to tell you this, Miss Christie, as I was afraid you were offended by her strange manner the offended by her strange manner the other day when you were reading to her. When I came in, I thought you looked rather frightened, and I supposed that something you had read had recalled her grief, and perhaps led to one of those outbreaks which sometimes cause me the gravest anxiety."

I understood what he meant; but I would not allow myself to accept

would not allow myself to appear alarmed by the suggestion. Mr. Rayner

went on: "I fancied I caught sight of a wild "I fancied I caught sight of a wild look in her eyes, which is sometimes called up in them by a reference to the past, or even by a sudden vivid flash of memory. At such times only I, with the power of my long-tried affection, can calm her instantly. Do not imagine that she would ever be violent, but she might be incoherent enough to frighten you. Tell me, had she said anything that day before I came in which alarmed or puzzled you?"

"No, Mr. Rayner; she scarcely spoke while I read to her."

"Was there anything in what you were reading likely to call up memories of the dreadful time to which I have alluded?"

have alluded?"

"I think not. No—none."
"I need not warn you, Miss Christie, to avoid all reference to that subject in talking to her. I still hope she may recover her former health and spirits, and consent to move away from this place for a little change. I have often begged her to do so, but so far without success. I can not bear to be harsh with her, and there is an iron strength of istance in that woman of strong innot overcome. But believe me that underneath all she has a warm heart spendinfilt, when she married me. Yet she trusted me; and the only condition she would allow her friends to make was that I should settle in the country—out of reach of temptation, you see, Miss Christie."

He spoke with some feeling, and looked affectionately at his wife; but she remained as impassive as ever.

I could not help feeling rather sorry for M. Regenerate He was always kind.

still be conscious."

There was something so winning in his voice and manner as he said these last words that I felt for the moment last words that I felt for the moment even more sorry for him than for her, and I took the hand he held out as he rose to go, and looked up with all the frank sympathy I felt. He seemed touched by it, for, as if by a sudden impulse, he stooped and let his lips lightly touch my hand; then, pressing it once more in his, with a look of almost grateful kindliness, he left the room.

I was a little suprised by this demonstration, which I thought rather out of place to a dependent. But he was an impulsive man, the very opposite in all things to his cold, statuesque wife, and the union between them seemed sometimes like a bond between the dead and the living.

things to his cold, statuesque wife, and the union between them seemed sometimes like a bond between the dead and the union between them seemed sometimes like a bond between the dead and the union between the dead and the union between the dead and the union between the dead and the living.

When I thought over all that he had told me, after he had left the room, it was impossible not to come to the conclusion that the fault in this most uncomfortable household was chiefly on the side of Mrs. Rayner. I had never seen a more attentive, long-suffering husband, nor a more coldly irritating wife. I judged Mr. Rayner to be a society with her usual apathetic invence to all things. Still I read on, such a heavy despairing sigh to first the property of the society the neighborhood afforded, and made me laugh by his humorous descriptions. But I fand hood afforded, and made me laugh by his humorous descriptions. But I faucied that, dull as it might be, he would have been glad of such society as there was in the vicinity, and from the bitterness with which he laughed at the paltry pride of small country gentlemen, I imagined he must have been snubbed by some of them.

The first Sunday and my arrival

have called me to her side, when a voice from behind her chair started us both.

Mr. Rayner had entered the room so softly that we had not heard him.

"You look tired, my dearest Lola," said he, gently; "you had better go and lie down for a little while."

At the sound of her husband's voice Mrs. Rayner had shrunk back into her usual statuesque self, like a sensitive plant touched by rough fingers. I timidly offered to read her to sleep, but she declined, and took the arm her husband held out, and left the room with him.

After that, her reserve toward me was greater than ever; she seemed reluctant to accept the smallest service of common courtesy at my hands. I was hurt as well as puzzled by this; and, being too young and timid to make before we parted, my pupil and I go-ing on by the road while the girl re-mained in the field. We were only a few steps away when I heard the voice of another girl addressing her rather

sharply:
"Who was that you were talking to,

The answer was given in a lower

The shock given me by those few

"Well," the other went on, "you should not have spoken to her. Don't you know she comes from the house on the marsh?" CHAPTER IIL

her five years ago."

He was in one of those moods

overheard words—"Ion should not have spoken to her. Don't you know she comes from the house on the marsh?"—was so great that I lay awake half the night, asking myself whether it would be wise to stay in a house to which it was clain that a mystery of some sort was clinging. At last, when my cryes were calmed somewhat and I be an to feel sleepy, I made up my mind to set down those unlucky words as the prejudiced utterance of some narrow-minded country girl, to whom the least touch of unconventionality seemed a dreadful thing.

ventionality seemed a dreadful thing.
Although Geldham church was only a short distance from the Alders, Mrs.
Rayner was not strong enough to walk: so she and her husband drove there in

a short distance from the Alders, Mrs. Rayner was not strong enough to walk; so she and her husband drove there in the brougham, while Haidee and I went on foot. We started before them, and Mr. Rayner was carefully helping his wife out of the carriage as we got to the gate. When she had alighted we all went into the little church.

There was a square family pew just in front of ours, which was empty when we took our seats; but, when I rose from my knees, I found fixed upon me, with a not very friendly stare, the eyes of a girl two or three years older than myself, whom I recognized as the owner of the voice which had said of me. "Don't you know she comes from the house on the marsh?" By her side, therefore also facing me, was the younger sister, with whom I had talked. As for me, I felt that I hated them both, and was glad when the gentleman who was evidently their father changed his position so that he almost hid them from my sieth. man who was evidently their father changed his position so that he almost hid them from my sight. Next to him sat a stout lady, who wore a black silk mantle covered with lace and beads and a white bonnet trimmed with yellow bows and unlikely clusters of roses. My heart sunk curiously when I caught sight of the third person in the row, at the further end of the pew. It was Mr. Laurence Reade, my friend of the dog cart; and I felt as if a trusted ally had suddenly proved to be an officer in the enemy's camp. Having found myseli in an uncongenial household, I had unconsciously looked forward to seeing again, at some time or other, the only again, at some time or other, the only person I had met since I came to Norfolk to whom no associations of mystery or melancholy were attached. And now to meet him with those hor And now to meet him with those hor-rid girls! He was their brother evi-dently, for the elder harpooned him sharply with her sunshade several times for dozing during the service: but, when the sermon began and he had settled himself sideways in the cor-ner with the plain intention of sleeping through the entire discourse, and the devout girl made a desperate lunge at him to rouse him once for all, he quiethim to rouse him once for all, he quietly took the weapon from her and kicked it under the seat. I rejoiced at this, and so missed the text, which was given out during the struggle.

When the sermon was over, and we filed out of church, I noticed that old Mr. Reade exchanged a few words with Mr. Rayner rather stiffly, while the two girls deliberately turned their the two girls deliberately turned their heads away from us. But Mr. Laurence Reade hung back behind the rest of his family, and stopped to speak to Haidee, who was holding my hand. He asked her to give him a kiss, and she refused—and I was very glad. Of course, i was and duty to rebuke her for rud hass, by instead, I looked carefully the other way and pretended not to be a were of the little comedy.

comedy.
"Oh, Haidee, you shouldn't turn away from your friends!" said he, in his musical voice, with rather more of grave reproach than the occasion re-quired—to a child.

At dinner Mr. Rayner was very severe indeed in his comments upon rustic wits and rustic governors, calling them sheep and donkeys and other things. Then he grew merry and things. Then he grew merry and made jokes about them, and I laughed; and, finding in me an appreciative listener, his spirits rose still higher, and I thought before dinner was over that I had never heard any one talk more amusingly. I think Mrs. Rayner made only one remark, and that was when I was furtively wiping some tears of laughter from my eyes, she asked me:

"Do you care to go to church this afternoon, Miss Christie?"

I suppose I looked rather snubbed, for Mr. Rayner broke in:

"Poor girl, how frightened you look

"Poor girl, how frightened you look at the thought! Know then, Miss Christie, that it is not one of the conditions of residence under this moist but hospitable roof that you should trudge backward and forward to church all Sunday, with intervals of pious meditation. We never go ourselves more than once.

tion. We never go ourselves more than once.

But I had quickly made up my mind that I had better go. Indeed, I liked going to church; and, even if I had not acquired the tasto already, the dullness of the Sunday before—which I had spent in the drawing-room with Mrs. Rayner and Haidee would have made me love it. So I said I should like to go, and, as there was no afternoon service at Geldham, Mr. Rayner told me the way to church at Gullingborough, the next parish, which was not far off. It was a sultry summer afternoon, but to be alone and out of the somber atmosphere of the Alders was a relief. I passed a park, among the trees of which I saw a big square white house; an American chair stood on the grass in the shade, and a young man in a light suit, with cravat hanging loose, was lying at full length in it. He had a cigar in his mouth, a book in his hand and on a rustic table was a half empty glass containing some liquid with ice in it. I only glanced that way but recognized the gentlemants Mr. Laurence Reade. He saw me, I think, for he started up and coughed; but I was looking the other way, and I thought best not to hear him. As I turned the angle of the park, I glanced again at the white house, and I saw, with a little surprise, Mr. Reade running toward it.

I got to church in very good time,

toward it.
got to church in very good time,
being given a seat in the chancel,
uld watch the country people at
filed in; and just before service
an, Mr. Laurence Reade, having
hanged his light suit for churching attire, strode up the middle aisle
banged the corr of a pew upon
self. And, retember ag how cool
iced drink looken, are how cozy the
chair appeared, a trought it did
credit to come to church the sectime.

aim credit to come to church the second time.

The sky had grown very dark by the time service was over, and the occasional rolling of distant thunder threatened a storm. It was nearly half an hour's walk to the Alders; my way say where there was little or no shelter, and my umbrells was a small one. However, there was nothing to be done but to ctart. I had seft all chance of shelter behind me, when the rain campouring down. I stopped, gathered us my skirt round me, gave a gland round to see that no one was in sight and then ran for my life. Before I have gone many yards, I heard some of the saming after me, and then Mr. Beads

"Miss Christier" 1 ran on without heeding him, ashamed of my plight; but he would not take the rebuff, and in a few more steps he had caught me up, and taking away my small umbrella, was holding his large one over me. He opened a gate to the right that led into a field.

"But this is the wrong way. I have to turn to the left, I know," said I "There is a shed for carts here where

we shall get shelter," said he.
And in a few minutes we reached it and I found myself under a low roof. watching the downpour outside. few days before I might have found something to enjoy in this curious en counter with my friend of the dog-cart but the rudeness and suspicion of his sisters had made me shy with him Sc I merely sat there and looked straight in front of me, while he, infected by my reserve, leaned against the side of the shed and looked at me. "I wish it would leave off," I re

marked, stupidly, at length
"Are you in such a hurry to get back
to the Alders? It is no dryer than i

"But at least one can change one

"Have you got your feet wet? You will be laid up with rheumatic fever, or something of the kind," said he, anx

"Oh, no, no," said I. "It isn't that
But Mr. Rayner will be anxious."
"Mr. Rayner; and Mrs. Rayner
won't she be anxious, too?"
"Oh, Mrs. Rayner is never anything
At least—I mean," said I, "she is st
reserved that—"
"That you like Mr. Rayner best?"
"Oh, ves!"

"That you like Mr. Rayner best."
"Oh, yes!"
He drew himself up rather coldly.
"So do mest ladies, I believe."
"One ean't help liking a person who talks and laughs, and is bright and kind, better than one who never speaks and glides about like a ghost, and looks coldly at you if you speak to looks coldly at you if you speak to Perhaps she means to be kind,

said he, gently.

"Then she ought to make her meaning plainer. She can't think it is kind ing plainer. She can't think it is kind to fix her eyes upon me as if I were something not human, if I laugh; to give me her hand so coldly and unre sponsively that it seems like a deachand in mine, and at other times to have more rotice of me than if take no more notice of me than if I were not there. Besides, she knows that it is the first time I have ever left home, and she must see sometimes that I am not happy."

Then I remembered that I had n right to make this confession to a com-parative stranger, and added, quickly: "I ought not to talk as if I were illtreated. I am not at all. If she would only not be quite so cold!"
"Perhaps her own troubles are very

heavy and hard to bear." heavy and hard to bear."

"Oh, no, they are not?" I replied, confidently. "At least, she has a kind husband and a pretty home, and everything she can wish for. And I think it is very selfish of her to give herself up to brooding over the memory of her dead child, instead of trying to please her living husband."

her living husband."
"Her dead child!"
"Yes. She had a boy who died some years ago, and she has never got over it. That is why she is so reserved."
"Oh! How long ago did this boy
die?" asked he, in a curiously incred

ulous tone. "About five years ago, I think Mr.

Oh, then it was Mr. Rayner who "And Mrs. Rayner has never got over

"No. It seems difficult to believe. doesn't it, that a brilliant woman who wrote books and was much admired should fade like that into a kind of

"Oh, she wrote books! Did she tell you so herself?"
"No-Mr. Rayner."

"Oh! Did Mr. Rayner tell you any more?"

The irony in his tone was now so unmistakable that I hesitated and looked

mistakable that I hesitated and looked up at him inquiringly.

"I am sure he must have told you that he is a very ill-used man and a very long-suffering husband, and asked you to pity him. Didn't he, Miss Christie? Ah, I see he did!" he cried. I could feel the blood rushing to my checks; but I was indignant at having sulpmit to this catechism.

"Mr. Rayner never asks impertinen questions," I said, severely.

The young man drew back and muttered: "I beg your pardon." I was sorry directly; but my dignity forbade my calling him back to retract the snub. Yet I was dying to know the reason of his violent prejudice against Mr. Rayner. To my relief, in a few minutes he came back to me of his own accord.

"Miss Christie," he began, nervously, "I am afraid I have offended you. Won't you forgive me for being carried a little too far by my interest in a lady who herself confessed that she is away from her friends for the first time and not—very happy?" " Mr. Rayner never asks impertinen

not—very happy?"
I could not resist such an appeal; I looked up smiling:
"Oh, I am not at all offended! But I should like to know what reason you have for thinking so ill of Mr. Rayner." "Perhaps I am wrong," he said. "It is not his fault that, with all his cleverness, his ease of manner is no quite the ease of a gentleman."

quite the ease of a gentleman."

I considered for a moment and then said, timidly: "Won't you tell manything more? I am alone in the world and need all the knowledge I can get of the people I live among to guide me in my conduct."

He seemed to debate within himself for a moment, and then drawing near said, very earnestly:

for a moment, and then drawing near said, very earnestly:
"Seriously, then, Miss Christie, I would advise you to leave the Alders as soon as you possibly can, even be-fore you have got another engagement. You are in the midst of more danger-

fore you have got another engagement. You are in the midst of more dangerthan you can possibly know of, more
probably than I know of myself, more
certainly than I can warn you against."

His voice was very low as he finished,
and while we both remained silent, a
dark figure suddenly appeared before
us, blocking out the light. It was Mr.
Rayner. Mr. Reade and I started
guiltily. The new-comer had approached so quietiy that we had not
heard him; had he heard us?

Mr. Rayner was in the brightest o'
humors; and his first words dispelle
my fear that he might have overheare
the warning that Mr. Reade had just
given me. He caught sight of me first.

"At last, Miss Christie! It was a
happy thought of mine to look for you
here. But how in the world did you
discover this place of refuge?" Then,
turong, he saw my companion. "Hallo,
Laurence! Ah, this explains the mysterrant, I see, and I am too late in the
field; but I shall carry off the lady, after
all. My wife noticed that you started
without your ulster, Miss Urristie, and
sent me off with it to meet you."

The rain soon began to fall less heavily, and we seized the opportunity to make our escape. We all went to-gether as far as the park gates, where Mr. Reade left us.

"Nice young fellow that," said Mr Rayner, as soon as the other was out of ear-shot. "Handsome, frank and good-natured. He is worth all the rest good-natured. He is worth all the rest of his family put together. Father—self-important, narrow-minded old simpleton; mother—ill-dressed vegetable, kept alive by a sense of her own dignity as the penniless daughter of an Earl; sisters—plain stuck-up nonentities; younger brother—dunce at Eton. But they haven't been able to spoil Laurence. You don't understand the restice mind yet. Miss Christia. I assure you rence. I ou don't understand the rustic mind yet, Miss Christie. I assure you there are plenty of people in this parish who have condemned me to eternal punishment because I play the violin." "Do you play the violin? Oh, I am so fond of it!"

"Are you? Poor child, you had better not acknowledge the taste as long as you remain in this benighted spot; they class it with the black art. However, you shall hear my violin some evening, and give me your opinion of

As we entered the garden gates saw a woman's figure on our right. I could not recognize her on account of the darkness, and only guessed it was Mrs Rayner. The idea of those great weird eyes watching me made me un-comfortable. Mr. Rayner did noi look that way and left me in the hall, going to his study, while I went into our little school-room to put my church service away.

The French window had not been closed, and I walked up to it to see whether the rain had come in. The sky was still heavy with rain-clouds, so that it was quite dark indoors, and while I could plainly see the woman I had noticed stepping over the flower-beds on the lawn, and making her way to the front of the house, she could not see me. When she came near enough for me to distinguish her figure, I saw that it was not Mrs. Rayner, but Sarah, the housemald. I stood rather in awe of this woman; she was so tall and so thin, and had such big eager eyes and such a curiously constrained manner. She was only a few steps from the winsky was still heavy with rain-clouds, so She was only a few steps from the window where I stood completely hidden by the curtain, when Mr. Rayner passed quickly and caught her arm from be-hind. She stopped short with a sort of

"What were you doing in the shrubbery just now, Sarah?" he asked, quiet-y. "If you want to take fresh air in ly. "If you want to take fresh air in the garden, you must keep to the lawn and the paths. By walking over the beds you do damage to the flowers—and to yourself. If you can not remember these simple rules, you will have to look out for another situation." She turned round sharply, "Another situation Me!"

"Yes, you. Ti ould be sor-y to part with such an old servant, et one may keep a servant too long.'
"Old! I wasn't always old!" sh

broke out, passionately.

'Therefore you were not always in receipt of such good wages as you get now. Now go in and get tea ready. And take care the toast is not burned

I could see that she glared at him with her great black eyes like a tigress at bay, but she did not dare to answer again, but slunk away cowed into the house. I was not surprised, for the cone of cold command with which he spoke those last insignificant words inspired me with a sudden sense of fear of him, with a feeling that I was face to face with an irresistible will, such as I should have thought it impossible for light-hearted Mr. Rayner to inspire.

The whole scene had puzzled me a bery for? How had Mr. Rayner seen and recognized her without seeming to look in that direction? Was there any deeper meaning under the words that had passed between them? There was suppressed passion in the woman's manner which could hardly have been to the garden paths and not to burn the toast; and there was a hard de-cision in Mr. Rayner's which I had never noticed before, even when he was seriously displeased. If he were to speak to me in the tone that he had used to Sarah, I felt that I should run away or burst into tears, or do something equally foolish. At tea-time Mr. Ray-ner was as bright as usual, and laughingly declared that they should never trust me to go to church by myself

That night I pondered Mr. Reade's warning to me to leave the Alders, but I soon decided that the question was quite unpractical. For, in fact, there was no tangible reason I could offer for wishing to go. The dangers Mr. Reade had hinted at so vaguely could not be mentioned so long as they existed only as his suspicions. My father was dead and my mother had been left with but little to live upon. She had been glad to accept an offer to superintend the household of a brother who had recently lost his wife. My uncle, I knew, would give me a home while I sought a situation, but experience had taught me how few people wanted the services of "A young lady aged eighteen who preferred children under twelve." Besides, what a bad recommendation it would be to have left my first situation within a month. So I decided to remain where I certainly was, on the whole, well off.

The next morning I could not help noticing how much better I was looking than when I lived in London. Instead of being pale I had now a pink color in my cheeks, and my eyes seemed to look larger and brighter than they used to do. After a minute'a pleased contemplation of my altered appearance if from the glass in shame.

"Come into the garden for a few "Come into the g warning to me to leave the Alders, but I soon decided that the question was

He put down his newspaper and smiled at me.

"Come into the garden for a few minutes until the rest of the family assembles," said he; and I followed him to the lawn.

The morning sun left this side of the nouse in shade. The birds were twittering in the ivy, the dew was spark ling on the grass and the scent of the flowers was deliciously sweet.

"Looks pretty, doesn't it?" said Mr. Rayner.

Rayner.
"Pretty! It looks and smells like
Paradise! I mean—" I stopped and
blushed, afraid he would think the blushed, afraid he would think the speech profanc.

But he only laughed very pleasantly. I was smelling a rose while I tried to recover the staid demeanor I cultivated as most suitable to my profession. When I raised my eyes, he was looking at me still laughing.

"You are fond of roses?"

"Yes, very, Mr. Rayner."

"But don't you think it was very silly of Beauty to choose only a rose

when her father asked her what he should bring her? Now if you were Beauty waat would you ask papa to bring you? A Prince?"

I blushed and shook my head. "No, not yet," I said, smiling rather mis-

"A ring, a bracelet, a brooch?"
"No. Mr. Rayner. I should say a rose like Beauty—a beautiful Marshal Niel rose. I couldn't think of anything lovelier than that."

thing lovelier than that."

"That is a large pale yellow rose, isn't it? I can't get it to grow here."

We had sauntered back to the dining-room window, and there, staring out upon us in a strange fixed way, was Mrs. Rayner. She continued to look at us, and especially at me, as if fascinated, until we were close to the window, when she turned with a start; and when we entered the room the inwindow, when she turned with a start; and when we entered the room the in-tent expression had faded from her lusterless eyes, and she was her usual lifeless self again.

At dinner time Mr. Rayner did not appear; I was too shy to ask Mrs. Rayner did not appear; I was too shy to ask Mrs. Rayner the reason, and I could only guess, when tea time came and again there was no place laid for him, that he had gone away somewhere. I was sure of it when he had not reappeared the next morning, and then I became conscious of a slow but sure change in Mrs. Rayners's manner. She did not become ners's manner. She did not become talkative or animated like any other woman; but it was as if a statue of woman; but it was as if a statue of stone had become a statue of flesh, feeling the life in its own veins and grown conscious of the life around it. This change brought one strange symptom; she had grown nervous. Instead of wearing always an unruffled stolidity, she started at any unexpected sound. This change must certainly, I thought, be due to her husband's do thought, be due to her husband's de-parture; but it was hard to tell whether his absence made her glad or sorry, or whether any such vivid feeling as glad-ness or grief caused the alteration in

her manner. On the second day of Mr. Rayner's absence Sarah came to the school-room, saying that a gentleman wished to speak to me. In the drawing-room I found Mr. Laurence Reade.

"I have come on business with Mr. Rayner, but as he is out I ventured to trouble you with a commission for him,

"I don't know anything about business," I began. "Perhaps Mrs. Ray-

"O I couldn't trouble her with so small a matter." And he disclosed the nature of his errand, which was of trifling importance. Considering this fact he occupied a great deal of time in explaining it. He talked about Sunday, and hoped I had not caught cold; and then he went away. And I found, by the amount of hemming Haidee had got through when I went back to the school-room, that he had stayed quite a long time.

Nothing happened after that until Saturday, which was the day on which I generally wrote to my mother. After tea I took my desk up-stairs to my own room. I had not written many lines before I heard the faint tone of a violin. At first I could distinguish only a
v notes of the melody, then there
was puts and a sound as of an opening vinde after that Schubert's beautif Amenthalt' rang out clearly

ing in the after that Schubert's beautiff and that 'r rang out clearly and held me is if enchanted. It must be no thought of the played the violin, that he could play like that. I must hear better. I shut up my half-finished letter hastily in my desk and slipped down-stairs with it. I stole softy through the hall, and as I passed the drawing-room door Mr. Rayner, without pausing in his playing, cried: "Come in!" I was startled by this, for I made no noise; but I put my desk down on the hall table and went in. Mrs. Rayner and Haidee were there, the former with a handsome shawl, brought by her husband, on a chair be-side her, and my pupil holding a big wax doll which she was not looking at; the child never cared for her dolls. Mr. Rayner, looking handsomer than ever, sunburnt, with his chestnut hair in disorder, smiled at me, and said,

in disorder, smiled at me, and said, without stopping the music:

"I have not forgotten you. There is a souvenir of your dear London for you," and nodded toward a rough wooden box, nailed down.

I opened it with much difficulty; it was from Convent Garden, and it,

was from Convent Garden, and in it, lying among ferns and cotton-wood, were a dozen heavy beautiful Marshal Niel roses. I sat playing with them in an eestacy of pleasure, intoxicated with music and flowers, until Mr. Rayner put away his violin, and I rose to say

good-night.
"Lucky Beauty?" he said, laughing, as he opened the door for me. "There is no beast for you to sacrifice yoursell to in return for the roses.'

I laughed back and left the room I laughed back and left the room, and, putting my desk under my flowers, went toward the staircase. Saralwas standing near the foot of it, wearing a very forbidding expression.

"So you're bewitched too!" she said, with a short laugh, and turned sharply toward the servant's hall.

And I wondered what she meant and why Mr. and Mrs. Rayner kept in their service such a very rude and dis-agreeable person. [TO BE CONTINUED.

### Tobacco Barn and Gin-House insurance.

REPRESENTING THE SOUTH & North Ameican Lloyds, and the New York and Chicago Lloyds of New York City, I am prepared to write all clases of Firs Insurance AT EXTREMELY LOW RATES.

J. BART WHITE, Agent for Darlington County, S.C.

### Creditor's Notice.

ALL persons having claims against ALL persons having claims against the estate of T. A. Gandy, deceased, will present them properly proved, and all persons indebted to said estate will make payment forthwith to H. M. SMITH, Nov 21—3t Administrator.

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ROAD. LEAVES FOR: C. & D., \*7.30 a. m. Hartsville, Wadesboro, Florence, Hartsville,

\*Sunday only. †Daily except Sunday. †Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, \*Tuesdays, Thursdays and

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA. County of Darlington.

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS. G. J. McCown and John M. McCown, copartners under the name and style of G. J McCown & Bro., Plain-

tiffs, against aucy Jordan, William Jordan, James Jordan, Clark Jordan, Charles Jordan, Paul Jordan, John Jordan, Man-

dan, Paul Jordan, John Jordan, Mandy Jordan, Nona Jordan and Fanny Jordan, Defendants.
Summons for Relief. (tomplaint not Served.)

To the Defendants Lucy Jordan, William Jordan, James Jordan, Clark Jordan, Charles Jordan, Paul Jordar, John Jordan, Mandy Jordan, Nona Jordan and Fanny Jordan: You are hereby summoned and required to answer the complaint in this action, which is filed in the office of the Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas for said county, and to serve a opy of your answer to the said com-

leas for said county, and to serve a aint on the subscribers at their ofce at Darlington, S. C., within twenty days after the service hereof, exclusive of the day of such service; and if you fail to answer the complaint within the time aforesaid, the plaintiffs in this action will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in the complaint woods & MacFarlan,

Oct. 4 A. D. 1895.

To the Defendants Paul Jordan, John Jordan, Manly Jordan, Nona Jordan and Fanny Jordan: You will take notice that the com-laint herein was filed in the office of

he Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas for Darlington County, South Carolina, on Oet. 4, 1895.
WOODS & MACFARLAN.

Plaintiffs' Attorneys.

#### Health Ordinance.

Darlington, S. C., June 24, 1895. BE in ORDERED AND ORDAINED:
That the following Rules and
Regulations, passed and adopted by
the Board of Health of the town of
Darlington, S. C., having been approved by the Town Council of the
town of Darlington, S. C., are hereby declared to be Ordinances of the said

W. F. DARGAN. J. W. EVANS, Mayor.

J. W. EVANS, Mayor. Clerk.

RJLES AND REGULATIONS OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH OF THE TOWN OF BARLINGTON, S. C., MADE OF FORCE JUNE 24TH, 1895.

Rule I. That any person, who, in any manner, hinders or obstructs the Health Officer of this Board, or any member of this Board, or any authorized Officer of the Lown setting under

member of this Board, or any authorized Officer of the I own acting under authority of the Board, in the inspection of premises within the Town limits; or in the abatement of any nuisance, which, in the opinion of the Board, is deemed prejudicial to the public health; or in the discharge of any duties prescribed by the said Board of Health, for the correction and preservation of the sanitary con-Board of Health, for the correction and preservation of the sanitary condition of the Town, shall be punished by a fine of not more than Fifty Pollars, or by imprisonment not exceeding thirty days for every such offense. Rule 11. That anyperson who refuses or neglects to abate or remove any naivance or any effect. fuses or neglects to abate or remove any nuisance, or anymatter, or any thing, which, in the opinion of the Board of Health, is likely to endan-ger the public health, after having, been directed to do so by the Health Officer, or any member of said Board of Health, shall be punshed by a fine of not less than Fifteen Dollars or by imprisonment not exceeding thirty days for every such offense; and in

by reason of such removal or abate-ment shall be recovered, as is legally provided for, from the tenant or own-er of the property on which said nuisance is found.

Rule III. That any person who allows a dead animal to remain on any premises within the corporate limits of the Town to him or her beinging,

days for every such offense; and in such event of said refusal and neglect it sha!! be the duty of the Health Officer to have removed or abated such nuisance; and all expenses incurred

of the Town to him or her beinging, or by him or her controlled, to a long er period than twenty four hours, shall be punished by a fine o not less than Five Dollars, or by mprisonment not exceeding thirty days.

Rule IV. That on and after Dec. 31, prox., it shall be unlaw for any person or persons to keepany hog or hogs on any premises within the corporate limits of the Towng; and any person or persons so do in hall b nownished by a fine of not less than

porate limits of the Towng;and any person or persons so doin hall bin punished by a fine of not less than Ten Doilars, or by imprisonne at not exceeding thirty days, or both, at the discretion of said Board of Health, or Rule V. Section 1. That it shall be the duty of all physicians practicing within the town to report to the Secretary of the said Board of Health the names and residences of all persons coming under their professional care who are afflicted with any contactious or infectious disease; said report to be made to the Secretary, eith er verbally or in writing, within two days after such disease is contracted. Section 2. That it shall be the duty of all physicians and mid-wives to

er verbally or in writing, within two days after such disease is contracted.

Section 2. That it shall be the duty of all physicians and mid-wives to report to the Secretary of this Board all births, together with sex and race, happening within the corporate limits of the Town; said report to be delivered to the Secretary of the Board, either verbally or in writing, within two days after occurrence of such birth or births.

Section 3. That it shall be the duty of all physicians and undrtakers to report to the Secretary of this Board all deaths occurring within the corporate limits of the Town, together with cause of death, name, residence, age and mee of deceased; said report to be delivered, either verbally or in writing, within two days after such death or deaths.

Section 4. Any physician, mid-wife or undertaker failing to comply with the requirements of this Rule will be fined not less than Five Dollars or more than Fifty Dollars at the discretion of said Board.

Rule VI. That t shall be the duty of the Health Officer of this Board to visit and personally inspect all premises within the corporate limits of the Town; and any premises found to be in an unhealthy or unsanitary condition, the owner or tenant thereof will be punished by a fine of from One Dollar to Fifty Dollars, or imprisonment not exceeding thirty days, or both, at the discretion of said Board.

Rule VI. That my person who obstructs in any way the drains, watercourses or ditches of the Town, or who throws paper, rags, trash, gabage or any other refuse matter in the streets, or on the Public Square, or on or about either of the banks of Swift Creek, or who orders it thrown in any of such places, shall be punished by a fine of not less than One Dollar or more than Ten Dollars, or by imprisonment for not less than thirty days, or both, in the discretion of said Board.

By order of the Board:

W. J. GARNER, M. Drand Dollars, or by imprisonment for not less than thirty days, or both, in the discretion of said Board.

Board.
By order of the Board:
W. J. GARNER, M. D.
D. P. LIDE,
Secretary,
Jun27—