

EQUAL PARTNERS

By HOWARD FIELDING

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CHAPTER XVIII.

BRENDA OFFERS A BRIDE AND A CAUTION.

ALDEN looked in at St. Winifred's about 6 o'clock, as was his custom before going to dinner. He had always left word where he should dine and had never gone far from the hospital.

On this occasion he met Mr. Elmendorf at the head of the stairs by which one ascends from the street level within the structure. The most unobservant and preoccupied person could not have failed to note that Elmendorf was possessed by an unusual excitement. Alden's greeting was simply, "What's the matter?" and the words were spoken in great anxiety.

"Nothing—nothing at all," replied Elmendorf. "Miss Miller is better than



"We'll begin with A."

ever. She ought to be dead after what she's been through, but she isn't. She's fine, I assure you."

"What has she been through?" demanded Alden, and the detective became singularly embarrassed. He would say nothing except that Elsie had had a hard day.

"But I've struck a little clew in the case," he continued, brightening. "It looks to me like a sure thing. But don't ask what it is just yet. All I want is the names of all the doctors you know in New York."

"All the doctors I know!" echoed Alden in surprise. "Isn't that rather a large order? How am I going to remember them all?"

"We shan't need absolutely all," said the detective. "You can skip the old ones and the fat ones and the short ones. In fact, I want a tall, thin, gaunt man, and if you could remember walking down Broadway with him awhile ago, perhaps two months—"

Alden laughed gently.

"I say, Brother Elmendorf," said he, "you're rattled, aren't you?"

"Perhaps I am," the detective admitted. "This new clew absolutely stands my case on its head. It seems to prove squarely and fairly that everything I had figured on was not only wrong; it was upside down. However, let us not be hasty. Let us think about the doctors. I'll take a list of them."

And he produced pencil and paper for that purpose.

"Now," said he, "we'll begin with A."

"Tall, thin, young doctor, whose name begins with 'A'?" said Alden. "I don't know any; but, passing to B, there's Blair."

Elmendorf leaned back against the wall and put the pencil and paper into his pockets.

"Do you mean to tell me that you knew Dr. A. G. Blair before this case came up?" he asked in a sort of hopeless tone almost laughable.

"Why, certainly," replied Alden. "I'd met him."

"You showed no sign of it over at Mrs. Simmons," said Elmendorf.

"Didn't I? Well, the Lord knows what I did there. Blair certainly bowed to me."

"I was watching you," said Elmendorf. "However, this simplifies matters. You didn't know Blair well?"

"Not intimately. I'd met him several times, and," he added, with a smile, "I may have walked down Broadway with him, but I don't remember."

"It's only a small matter," said the detective, with a resumption of his usual demeanor. "I want to ask Blair a question; that's all."

"I'll go over with you," said Alden. "Wait till I have seen Kendall."

He walked toward the doctor's room and at the first turn of the hall encountered Brenda.

through the corridor hastily, glanced in toward the window.

"Brenda! Come!" he said. "The nurse you left there has sent for me."

Brenda turned as white as paper.

"It is I who let her talk and excite herself!" she said huskily. "I may have killed her."

She turned and seized Elmendorf's arm.

"One thing more," she said almost in a whisper. "Remember my promise and also remember this—that Elsie has not said it was her husband who struck

the blow. Do not make an error now for your own sake and for— for all of us."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE EVIDENCE OF DR. BLAIR.

DR. BLAIR'S office was beginning to gather the night shadows in its corners when Elmendorf entered, although the long June day was still bright without. The doctor was sitting on his couch, staring at the pretty pillow that Kendall had noticed. He had not troubled himself to rise as he called, "Come in!" in response to the detective's knock.

"Mr. Elmendorf," said he, "good evening, sir. What can I do for you?"

"I want to ask you a few questions, doctor," replied Elmendorf. "Hello! Had a burglary?"

He pointed to a desk in the corner that seemed to have been broken open. "There was a blankbook that had contained a business memorandum," he said, "and it was locked up in that desk. A friend of mine was so anxious to see it that, calling in my absence, he did not wait for me to return. He broke the desk and got the book. But, unluckily for him, I had already removed the page on which the memorandum appeared."

"Blackmail?" queried Elmendorf.

"Something of the sort," was the reply.

"If I can be of any assistance, let me know," said the detective. "And now I want to talk about the case of Elsie Miller. There's a little medical point—"

"Why don't you ask Kendall?"

"Dr. Kendall is not talkative," said Elmendorf, "and—"

"Neither am I," responded Blair.

"However, let's hear your question."

"You remember," said Elmendorf, seating himself and looking across the table in the center of the room, his arms resting upon it, "that Miss Miller was stabbed in a peculiar way. There was a little mark, a scar you might call it, just below the collar bone on the left side—"

"The mark of what we call a 'green fracture,'" said Blair; "that is, the bone was broken in youth. I understand she fell against a sharp point of something while she was at play. The rib at that spot was permanently weakened and somewhat depressed afterward, but not enough to interfere with the lung."

"It was no disfigurement when she wore a low cut dress, was it?" asked Elmendorf.

"Quite the contrary," replied Blair.

"It looked like a large dimple."

"An ordinary man wouldn't have known what it was, eh?"

"Probably not."

"The knife couldn't have struck there by accident," said Elmendorf. "It looks to me like one of those freaks of a murderer who has brooded over the crime in advance."

"Curious point," said Blair.

"So it seemed to me," said Elmendorf, "and here's another. Of course the man who stabbed her meant to kill her."

"Certainly."

"A thief would have struck her on the head."

"So this was a murder case," said Elmendorf. "There was the intention to kill. Now, why didn't the murderer strike again?"

"He probably thought the wound was fatal," responded Blair.

"That's the queer part of it," said the detective. "I wouldn't have thought it was fatal. Most murderers go on stabbing; they strike half a dozen times in a sort of frenzy. This man was content with one blow, but it was a good one, and if the knife blade hadn't been bent—"

"Was it bent?" inquired Blair.

"Yes," was the reply. "And if the assassin was one who knew the location of the vital organs, but was at the time too much excited to notice the defect in the instrument, why, then, that bend in the blade may have saved her life."

"If it is saved," added Blair.

"It was certainly saved for a time," said the detective, "though every doctor who saw the wound immediately pronounced it fatal. That's a point in the case."

"From which you conclude—what?" said Blair, rising and taking a seat at the table opposite Elmendorf.

The detective did not immediately answer the question. He seemed to be deep in thought.

"By the way," he said suddenly, "there's another point while I remember it. I mean that letter."

"What letter?"

"The one Alden wrote and Elsie never got," replied Elmendorf. "The postman really delivered it, of course, though he won't testify positively. It was undoubtedly put by the servant under the door of the vestibule, that little hall leading to Miss Miller's room. It was put under that door, but not far enough."

"Not far enough?"

"No. Somebody came along and pulled it out. If it happened to be a man who was in love with Miss Miller, the reading of it couldn't have been pleasant. But how did the man get there?"

TRAGEDY AT GREENVILLE

Prominent Business Man Kills the Despoiler of His Home,

Greenville, Special.—A tragic shooting affair took place Saturday morning at the Air Line station, which has created a sensation on account of the circumstances preceding it. Mr. L. F. Rush, a merchant of this city, who was elected an alderman last year, mortally wounded John T. Stevens, a freight conductor on the Southern railway, at 8 o'clock, shooting him at close range through the head and also through the neck.

The antecedent facts are that Stevens was attentive to Rush's wife, and a couple of months ago Rush found him one night at his residence when it was thought Rush was out of town. He ordered Stevens out of the house, and also left his home the next day, placed his brother in charge of the store and went to California, where he remained several weeks, and returned here a week or two ago.

It is not known that Rush and Stevens had met before since Rush's return and the latter was at the station on business. He was about to take the trolley car when Stevens accosted him, and Rush told him that he did not wish to have any conversation with him, but Stevens persisted and Rush again declined to talk with Stevens, who made a movement as if to draw a pistol when Rush quickly fired upon him and wounded him twice as already stated. Rush immediately left the vicinity of the station and went to another building, where he was arrested soon afterward by Policeman Tucker. It is said that Rush left the scene of the shooting for fear that Stevens' railroad friends might do him injury, but there was no evidence of such intention.

Chief Kennedy was informed of the shooting and went in a carriage to the station, where he took charge of Rush and brought him to Sheriff Gilreath's office, from whence he was taken to jail. Rush was advised not to do any talking, and he has made no statement as yet concerning the affair.

Stevens is a native of western North Carolina, and has been connected with the Southern railway several years. He is unmarried and about 33 years of age.

Stevens has no relatives here and was boarding. His mother and sister live in North Carolina, and he was their main support. His conduct upon making an assault upon Rush, who tried to avoid any difficulty, is said to be in keeping with the denunciations made since Rush came back from California. While Rush had said to friends at different times that he did not propose to have any difficulty with Stevens, but would attend to his own affairs if let alone.

Stevens died at 7 o'clock Saturday evening at a sanitarium. He had not shown signs of consciousness since he was shot this morning.

The sympathy of the community is with Rush, who narrowly escaped with his life, as Stevens was armed with a 44-calibre weapon, and only the fact that the pistol caught in his pocket as he attempted to draw it kept Rush from being the victim of the encounter. Stevens' pistol was found lying by his side on the ground.

Negro Kills His Captor.

Greenville, Special.—Another killing took place Saturday afternoon in the suburbs of the city, and the victim was Samuel Willimon, a white man, who was fatally shot by a negro whose name is unknown. The negro was a stranger in the neighborhood, and he broke into a dwelling this morning. When he was pursued by a party of white men, including Willimon, who arrested him and was bringing him to the city. Accounts differ as to what took place on the road, and as there were no eye witnesses the facts may never be known with certainty. One story is that Willimon, in charge of the negro, allowed him to walk along the road with him and when near the city the negro drew his pistol and shot Willimon, who died almost instantly. The other statements are that the negro was not armed, that his hands were tied and that he knocked Willimon down and then took his pistol and killed him, which does not seem probable. Sheriff Gilreath received the information by phone from the vicinity of the killing and started at once with a posse to catch the negro. Willimon lived about three miles from the city and leaves a wife and several children. He was about 50 years of age.

President Waters Resigns.

Baltimore, Special.—At a directors' meeting of the Atlantic Coast Line Company, of Connecticut the parent company of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, the resignation of President Henry Waters was received and accepted, and Warren G. Elliott was elected president to succeed him. Michael Jenkins, of this city, was elected a director and R. D. Cronly, secretary.

The Rice Lands Surveyed

Austin, Tex., Special.—Information from Marble Falls, Burnett county, Texas, is to the effect that aside from the Patrick trial, probably no item in connection with the immense estate of the late millionaire, Wm. Marsh Rice, has created more interest than the recent report of the official survey of the Rice league of land lying to the south of Marble Falls, and bordering on the Colorado river. This survey widens the supposed bounds of the league to an enormous extent and takes in supposed holdings of others. It is the conflict of claims now imminent that portends the most interesting and important phase of the matter.

Accused of Embezzlement.

Alexandria, Special.—George W. Dix, a letter carrier, late treasurer of the Osceola Tribe of Red Men, was arrested charged with embezzling money from the tribe. He will have a hearing tomorrow. The tribe this morning sent to the Corporation Court for record a certificate of a change in trustees. The tribe has appointed Policeman R. F. Bettis and W. A. Ferguson trustees, vice George W. Dix and S. Cuveller, Jr.

THANKSGIVING SERMON

DR. CHAPMAN UTTERS A MESSAGE APPROPRIATE TO THE DAY.

A Timely Discourse Entitled "Three Meetings of the Saviour"—Render Thanks to God for the Greatest of Gifts, His Son, Jesus Christ.

New York City.—The Rev. Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, who has recently resigned the pastorate of the Fourth Presbyterian Church in this city in order to devote himself to evangelistic work, has prepared the following Thanksgiving sermon for the "Saviour," and is founded on the text, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray." Psalm 55: 17.

It is quite the custom on Thanksgiving Day to render thanks and praise unto God for material gifts and material prosperity. We are accustomed to measure the harvests and to try to count out earthly blessings, and then make an effort to put into language some adequate expression of our appreciation of God's goodness. I leave this task to other ministers, while I thank to God for the greatest of gifts, namely, His Son, Jesus Christ, and it is my hope that I may present Him in such a way in this message that all may see that it is their privilege to come in closest fellowship with Him. With this thought in mind I use the text, "Evening, and at noon, will I pray." The Psalmist determines to pray frequently, at least three times a day, on his knees; he determines to pray fervently, for he will cry aloud unto God. The text does not run as we would like it to, for we always reverse the order and say at morning, at noon, and at evening, but the Hebrews began the day with the evening and closed it with noon. We always begin it with the morning, and one day we shall reach a morning which shall never end. The Psalmist means that he will pray more than three times. He is simply saying that he will begin and continue and end the day with God, for the greatest of gifts, namely, His Son, Jesus Christ, and it is my hope that I may present Him in such a way in this message that all may see that it is their privilege to come in closest fellowship with Him. With this thought in mind I use the text, "Evening, and at noon, will I pray." The Psalmist determines to pray frequently, at least three times a day, on his knees; he determines to pray fervently, for he will cry aloud unto God. 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