

Dark Hollow

By Anna Katharine Green
Illustrations by C. D. Rhodes
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CHAPTER XVIII—Continued.

He was in no better mood than myself to encounter insult, and what had been a simple difference between us flamed into a quarrel which reached its culmination when he mentioned Oliver's name with a taunt, which the boy, for all his obstinate clinging to his journalistic idea, did not deserve.

Knowing my own temper, I drew back into the hollow.

He followed me.

I tried to speak.

He took the word out of my mouth. This may have been with the intent of quelling my anger, but the tone was rasping, and, noting this and not his words, my hand tightened insensibly about the stick which the devil (or John Scoville) had put in my hand. Did he see this, or was he prompted by some old memory of boyish quarrels that he should give utterance to that quick, sharp laugh of scorn? I shall never know, but ere the sound had ceased the stick was whirling over my head—there came a crash and he fell. My friend! My friend!

Next moment the earth seemed too narrow, the heavens too contracted for my misery. That he was dead—that my blow had killed him, I never doubted for an instant. I knew it, as we know the face of Doom when once it has risen upon us. Never, never again would this lump of clay, which a few minutes before had filled the hollow with shrillest whistling, breathe or think or speak. He was dead, dead, dead!—And I? What was I?

The name which no man hears unmoved, no amount of repetition makes easy to the tongue or welcome to the ear!—the name which I had heard launched in full forensic eloquence so many times in accusation against the wretches I had hardly regarded as being in the same human class as myself rang in my ears as though intoned from the very mouth of hell. I could not escape it. I should never be able to escape it again. Though I was standing in a familiar scene—a scene I had known and frequented from childhood, I felt myself as isolated from my past and as completely set apart from my fellows as the shipwrecked mariner tossed to precarious foothold on his wave-dashed rock. I forgot that other criminals existed.

In that one awful moment I was in my own eyes the only blot upon the universe—the sole inhabitant of the new world into which I had plunged—the world of crime—the world upon which I had sat in judgment before I knew—

What broke the spell? God knows; all I can say is that, drawn by some other will than my own, I found my glance traveling up the opposing bluff till at its top, framed between the ragged wall and towering chimney of Spencer's Folly, I saw the presence I had dreaded, the witness who was to undo me.

It was a woman—a woman with a little child in hand. I did not see her face, for she was just on the point of turning away from the dizzy verge, but nothing could have been plainer than the silhouette which these two made against the flush of that early evening sky.

As long as I could catch a glimpse of this woman's fluttering skirt as she retreated through the ruins, I stood there, self-convicted, above the man I had slain, staring up at that blotch of shining sky which was as the gate of hell to me. Not till their two figures had disappeared and it was quite clear again did the instinct of self-preservation return, and with it the thought of flight.

But where could I fly? No spot in the whole world was secret enough to conceal me now. I was a marked man. Better to stand my ground, and take the consequences than to act the coward's part and slink away like those other men of blood I had so often sat in judgment upon.

Had I but followed this impulse! Had I but gone among my fellows, shown them the mark of Cain upon my forehead and prayed, not for indulgence, but punishment, what days of gnawing misery I should have been spared!

The horror of what lay at my feet drove me from the hollow. As my steps fell mechanically into the trail down which I had come in innocence and kindly purpose—only a few minutes before, a startling thought shot through my benumbed mind. The woman had shown no haste in her turning! There had been a naturalness in her movement, a dignity and a grace which spoke of ease, not shock. What if she had not seen? What if my deed was as yet unknown? Might I not have time for—what? I did not stop to think; I just pressed on, saying to myself, "Let Providence decide. If I meet any one before I reach my own door my doom is settled. If I do not—"

And I did not. As I turned into the lane from the ravine I heard a sound far down the slope, but it was too distant to create apprehension, and I went calmly on, forcing myself into my usual leisurely gait, if only to

gain some control over my own emotions before coming under Oscar's eye.

That sound I have never understood. It could not have been Scoville, since in the short time which had passed he could not have fled from the point where I heard him last into the ravine below Ostrander lane. But, if not he, who was it? Or if it was he, and some other hand threw his stick across my path, whose was this hand and why have we never heard anything about it? It is a question which sometimes floats through my mind, but I did not give it a thought then. I was within sight of home and Oliver's possible presence; and all other dread was as nothing in comparison to what I felt at the prospect of meeting my boy's eye. My boy's eye! My greatest dread then, and my greatest dread still! In my terror of it I walked as to my doom.

The house, which I had left empty, I found empty; Oliver had not yet returned. The absolute stillness of the rooms seemed appalling. Instinctively I looked at the clock. It had stopped. Not at the minute—I do not say it was at the minute—but near, very near the time when from an innocent man I became a guilty one. Appalled at the discovery, I fled to the front. Opening the door, I looked out. Not a creature in sight, and not a sound to be heard. The road was as lonely and seemingly as forsaken as the house. Had time stopped here, too? Were the world and its interests at a pause in horror of my deed? For a moment I believed it; then morbid natural sensations inter-vened, and, rejoicing at this lack of disturbance where disturbance meant discovery, I stepped inside again, re-ound the clock, and sat down in my own room. My own room! Was it mine any longer? Its walls looked strange; the petty objects of my daily handling, unfamiliar. The change in myself infected everything I saw. I might have been in another man's house for all connection these things seemed to have with me or my life. Like one set apart on an unapproachable shore, I stretched hands in vain toward all that I had known and all that had been of value to me.

But as the minutes passed I began to lose this feeling. Hope, which I thought quite dead, slowly revived. Nothing had happened, and perhaps nothing would.

Men had been killed before, and the slayer passed unrecognized. Why might it not be so in my case? If the woman continued to remain silent; if for any reason she had not witnessed the blow or the striker, who else was there to connect me with an assault committed a quarter of a mile away? No one knew of the quarrel; and if they did, who could be so daring as to associate one of my name with an action so brutal? A judge slay his friend! It would take evidence of a very marked character to make even my political enemies believe that.

As the twilight deepened I rose from my seat and lit the gas. I must not be found skulking in the dark. Then I began to count the ticks measuring off the hour. If thirty minutes more passed without a rush from without I might hope. If twenty?—if ten?—then it was five! then it was—

Ah! The gate had clanged to. They were coming. I could hear steps—voices—a loud ring at the bell. I moved slowly toward the front. I feared the betrayal which my ashy face and trembling hands might make. Agitation after the news was to be expected, but not before! So I left the hall dark when I opened the door. And thus decided my future.

For in the faces of the small crowd which blocked the doorway I detected nothing but commiseration; and when a voice spoke and I heard Oliver's accents surcharged with nothing more grievous than pity, I realized that my secret was as yet unshared, and, seeing that no man suspected me, I forbore to declare my guilt to anyone.

This sudden restoration from sound less depths into the pure air of respect and sympathy confused me; and beyond the words "Killed! Struck down by the bridge!" I heard little, till slowly, dully, like the call of a bell issuing from a smothering mist, I caught the sound of a name. It struck my ear and gradually it dawned upon my consciousness that another man had been arrested for my crime and that the safety, the reverence and the commiseration that were so dear to me had been bought at a price no man of honor might pay.

But I was no longer a man of honor! I was a wretched criminal swaying above a gulf of infamy in which I had seen others swallowed but had never dreamed of being engulfed myself. I never thought of letting myself go—not at this crisis—not while my heart was warm with its resurgence into the old life.

And so I let pass this opportunity for confession. Afterwards it was too late—or seemed too late to my demoralized judgment.

My first real awakening to the extraordinary horrors of my position was when I realized that circumstances were likely to force me into

presiding over the trial of the man Scoville. I feigned sickness, only to realize that my place would be taken by Judge Grosvenor, a notoriously prejudiced man. If he sat, it would go hard with the prisoner, and I wanted the prisoner acquitted. I had no grudge against John Scoville. Of course I wanted to save him, and if the only help I could now give him was to sit as judge upon his case, then would I sit as judge whatever mental torture it involved.

Sending for Mr. Black, I asked him point blank whether in face of the circumstance that the victim of this murder was my best friend, he would not prefer to plead his case before Judge Grosvenor. He answered no; that he had more confidence in my equity even under these circumstances than in that of my able, but headstrong colleague, and prayed me to get well. He did not say that he expected me on this very account to show even more favor toward his client than I might otherwise have done, but I am sure that he meant it; and, taking his attitude as an omen, I obeyed his injunction and was soon well enough to take my seat upon the bench.

What men saw facing them from the bench was an automaton wound up to do so much work each day. The real Ostrander was not there, but stood, an unseen presence at the bar, undergoing trial side by side with John Scoville, for a crime to make angels weep and humanity hide its head: hypocrisy!

But the days went by and the inexorable hour drew nigh for the accused man's release or condemnation. Circumstances were against him—so was his bearing, which I alone understood. If, as all felt, it was that of a guilty man, it was so because he had been guilty in intent if not in fact. He had meant to attack Algernon Etheridge.

He had run down the ravine for that purpose, knowing my old friend's whistle and envying him his watch. Or why his foolish story of having left his stick behind him? But the sound of my approaching steps higher up on the path had stopped him in midcareer and sent him rushing up the slope ahead of me. When he came back after a short circuit of the fields beyond, it was to find his crime forestalled and by the very weapon he had thrown into the hollow as he went scurrying by. He had meant to attack Etheridge. It was the shock of the discovery of the body, heightened by the use he made of it to secure the booty thus thrown in his way without crime, which gave him



He Was Dead, Dead, Dead—and I? What Was I?

the hang-dog look we all noted. That there were other reasons—that the place recalled another scene of brutality in which intention had been followed by act, I did not then know. It was sufficient to me then that my safety was secured by his own guilty consciousness and the prevarications into which it led him. Instead of owing up to the encounter he had so barely escaped he confined himself to the simple declaration of having heard voices somewhere near the bridge which to all who know the ravine appeared impossible under the conditions named.

Yet, for all the incongruities and the failure of his counsel to produce any definite impression by the prisoner's persistent denial of having whittled the stick or even of having carried it into Dark Hollow, I expected a verdict in his favor. Indeed, I was so confident of it that I suffered less during the absence of the jury than at any other time, and when they returned, with an air of solemn decision which proclaims unanimity of mind and a ready verdict, I was so prepared for his acquittal that for the first time since the opening of the trial I felt myself a being of flesh and blood, with human sentiments and hopes. And it was "Guilty!"

When I awoke to a full realization of what this entailed (for I must have lost consciousness for a minute, though no one seemed to notice), the one fact staring me in the face was that it would devolve upon me to pronounce his sentence; upon me, Archibald Ostrander, an automaton no longer, but a man realizing to the full his part in this miscarriage of justice. Chaos confronted me and its contemplation of it, I fell ill!

Somehow strange as it may appear I had thought little of this possibility

previous to this moment. I found myself upon the brink of this new gulf before the dizziness of my escape from the other had fully passed. Do you wonder that I recoiled, sought to gain time, put off delivering the sentence from day to day? I had sinned—sinned irredeemably—but there are depths of infamy beyond which a man cannot go. I had reached that point.

What saved me? A new discovery, and the loving sympathy of my son Oliver. One night—a momentous one to me—he came to my room and, closing the door behind him, stood with his back to it, contemplating me in a way that startled me.

What had happened? What lay behind this new and penetrating look, this anxious and yet persistent manner? I dared not think. I dared not yield to the terror which must follow thought. Terror blanches the cheek and my cheek must never blanch under anybody's scrutiny. Never, never, so long as I lived.

"Father"—the tone quieted me, for I knew from its gentleness that he was hesitating to speak more on his own account than on mine—"you are not looking well; this thing worries you; I hate to see you like this. Is it just the loss of your old friend, or—"

He faltered, not knowing how to proceed.

"Sometimes I think," he recommended, "that you don't feel quite sure of this man Scoville's guilt. Is that so? Tell me, father?"

I did not know what to make of him. There was no shrinking from me; no conscious or unconscious accusation in voice or look, but there was a desire to know, and a certain latent resolve behind it all that marked the line between obedient boyhood and thinking, determining man. With all my dread—a dread so great I felt the first grasp of age upon my heartstrings at that moment—I recognized no other course than to meet this inquiry of his with the truth—that is, with just so much of the truth as was needed. No more, not one jot more. I therefore answered, and with a show of self-possession at which I now wonder:

"You are not far from right, Oliver. I have had moments of doubt. The evidence, as you must have noticed, is purely circumstantial."

"What evidence would satisfy you? What would you consider a conclusive proof of guilt?"

I told him in the set phrases of my profession.

"Then," he declared as I finished, "you may rest easy as to this man's right to receive a sentence of death."

I could not trust my ears. "I know from personal observation," he proceeded, approaching me with a firm step, "that he is not only capable of the crime for which he has been convicted, but that he has actually committed one under similar circumstances, and possibly for the same end."

And he told me the story of that night of storm and bloodshed—a story which will be found lying near this, in my alcove of shame and contrition. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

SCAR MARKS EVERY FACE

Mysterious Affliction That is Common to All the Inhabitants of Bagdad.

An uncanny, pernicious pest called the "date boil" scars the face of every human born in Bagdad, writes a correspondent of the National Geographic Magazine. Children invariably have this dreadful sore on their faces. Throughout the middle east this mysterious scourge is known by various names—"Bouton d'Alep," "Nile sore," "Delhi button," etc.

Its cause and its cure are unknown. First a faint red spot appears, growing larger and running a course often eighteen months long.

White men from foreign lands have lived years in Arabia, only to have this boil appear upon their return to civilization, where its presence is embarrassing and hard to explain.

Maybe it was "date boils" that Job had! Once a British consul at Aleppo lost almost his whole nose from one of these boils. Nearly every Bagdad native you meet has this "date mark" on his face.

The Likeliest One. The late Admiral Mahan, at the beginning of the war, was arguing with a lady at a luncheon about the British navy.

"But my dear madam," said the admiral, "it is hard to argue with you because you are so—er, pardon me—so ignorant."

"You remind me of the young wife who said to her brother about her volunteer husband:

"Isn't Jack just wonderful? Think—he's already been promoted to field marshal."

"From private to field marshal in two months? Impossible," said the brother.

"Did I say 'field marshal'?" murmured the young wife. "Well, perhaps it's court-martial. I know it's one or the other."—New York Tribune.

Daily Thought. I seek no thorns, and I catch the small joys. If the door is low I stoop down. If I can remove the stone out of my way I do so. If it be too heavy I go around it. And thus ever: day I find something which gladdens me.—Goethe.

Ages of Various Trees. The ivy lives 200 years, the elm 300, to 350 years, the linden 500 to 1,000 years, the locust tree and the oak 400 years, and the fir 700 to 1,200 years.



PASTEURIZED MILK IN FAVOR

Great Advantage in Process Is to Insure Freedom From Disease-Producing Organisms.

The great advantage in pasteurizing market milk is to insure its freedom from disease-producing organisms. This is a point which is constantly brought forward in favor of pasteurization of milk. Of course the pasteurized milk will have better keeping qualities than the same milk that has not been pasteurized and of course this is an advantage from the standpoint of the milk dealer, and is also an advantage to the milk consumer.

Outside the cost of the process, there are practically no disadvantages connected with the pasteurization of milk. This is especially true with the way pasteurization is conducted today. There is absolutely no doubt but that milk properly pasteurized and properly handled subsequent thereto is just as healthful a food for children as well as for adults as is raw milk.

Most of the commercial pasteurization of market milk at the present time is done by heating the milk to 145 degrees for approximately thirty minutes. This temperature and time of exposure does not change the milk physically or chemically to any appreciable extent. If milk is heated to higher temperatures or for longer periods of time, the creaming powers of the milk will be influenced—that is, the heated milk will cream less rapidly and somewhat less completely than the raw milk. The milk will also acquire, which is objectionable to many people, what is known as the cooked taste. It is not probable that the nutritive value of the milk is injured; in fact, at the present time many physicians advocate the heating of children's milk to the boiling point.

Those Queens Again. It—I dreamed last night I took the classiest queen on the campus to the prom.

She—Did I dance well?

To Fortify the System Against Winter Cold. Many users of GROVE'S TASTELESS CAL TONIC make it a practice to take a number of bottles in the fall to strengthen and fortify the system against the cold weather during the winter. Everyone knows the tonic effect of Quinine and iron which this preparation contains in a tasteless and acceptable form. It purifies and enriches the blood and builds up the whole system. 50c.—Adv.

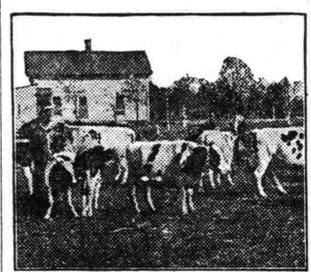
Heard Down the Line. Hobo—Gimme er loaded acrobat. Barkeep—Wot's dat? Hobo—Tumbler full o' whisky. See!

Not Gray Hairs but Tired Eyes make us look older than we are. Keep your eyes young and you will look young. Use the Moxie always Murine Your Eyes—Don't tell your age.

The fact that the fool killer neglects his business contributes much to the safety of most of us.

To keep clean and healthy take Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets. They regulate liver, bowels and stomach.—Adv.

More often than not the inside tip fails to win out.



Purebred Holsteins.

having large and profitable production of butterfat.

8. Raise well the heifer calves from cows, which for one or more generations have made large and profitable productions of milk and butterfat.

9. Breed heifers to drop their first calves at 24 to 30 months of age. Give cow six to eight weeks' rest between lactation periods.

10. Join a dairy cattle breeders' association. It will help you to keep posted and in touch with the best and most modern ways of managing your dairy herd.

IMPORTANCE OF DAIRY COW

Most Economical Producer of Human Food of All Domestic Animals—She Is Here to Stay.

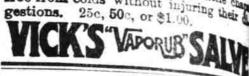
(By N. J. FRASER, Illinois.) Since the cow is the most economical producer of human food of all our domestic animals, and as she can live and produce milk on a ration composed entirely of roughage, she will be the animal that will be resorted to in order to convert half of the energy of our common crops, which is otherwise unavailable, into human food.

Another reason why the cow is here to stay, and will always be of vital importance in sustaining human life, is that babies and invalids cannot be nourished on cornmeal mush alone. For these reasons, even after the time comes that there is an actual struggle for human food, the dairy cow will still be a vital and abiding factor in a system of permanent agriculture, if we are to retain a high degree of civilization.

Carefully Treat Children's Colds

Neglect of children's colds often lays the foundation of serious lung troubles. On the other hand, it is harmful to administer any dose of delicate little stomachs with internal medicines or to keep the children always indoors.

Plenty of fresh air in the bedroom and a good application of Vicks' Vaporub Salve over the throat and chest at the first sign of trouble, will keep the little ones free from colds without injuring their delicate organs. 25c, 50c, or \$1.00.



HAD PELLAGRA; IS NOW CURED

Hillsboro, Ala.—J. W. Turner, of this place, says: "I ought to have written you two weeks ago, but failed to do so. I got well and then forgot to write. I can get about like a 10-year-old. You ought to see me run around and to my farm. I can go all day just like used to. I am so thankful to know there is such a good remedy to cure people of pellagra.

There is no longer any doubt that pellagra can be cured. Don't delay until it is too late. It is your duty to consult the resourceful Baughn.

The symptoms—hands red like sunburn, skin peeling off, sore mouth, the lips, throat and tongue a flaming red, with much mucus and choking; indigestion and nausea, either diarrhoea or constipation. There is hope; get Baughn's big Blue book on Pellagra and learn about the remedy for Pellagra that has at last been found. Address American Compounding Co., box 2090, Jasper, Ala., remembering money is refunded in any case where the remedy fails to cure.—Adv.

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More often than not the inside tip fails to win out.

Answer the Alarm.

A bad back makes a day's work twice as hard. Backache usually comes from weak kidneys, and if headaches, dizziness or urinary disorders are added, don't wait—get help before dropsy, gravel or Bright's disease set in. Doan's Kidney Pills have brought new life and new strength to thousands of working men and women. Used and recommended the world over.

A South Carolina Case. L. W. Garrison, 1510 S. Main St., Anderson, S. C., says: "I was in terrible shape with kidney complaint. Often the pain seized me in my back and down my side, and I was having to go to the hospital. The kidney secretions were scanty and filled with sediment. I had a awful discharge of urine. The boxes of Doan's Kidney Pills cured me and I haven't suffered since."

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rheumatism, neuralgia, sprains and chest pains disappear almost as if by magic when treated externally with Yager's Liniment.

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Is a safe and sure remedy. "The Relief Was Instant"

Mr. Joe E. Baum, Witty Hawk, N. C., writes: "I suffered with a severe case of Yager's Liniment and relief was instant. Also, I was cured of a bad case of rheumatism. After a long deal of pain and trouble, after rubbing the liniment on my joints with your liniment it entirely disappeared."

At all dealers. An eight ounce bottle for 25c. Prepared by Gilbert Bros. & Co., Inc., Baltimore, Md.