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HARRY DEE.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH I FEEL COMPELLED TO TALK MUCH ABOUT MY EARLY YEARS, AND TAKE A JOURNEY INTO THE COUNTRY TO SPEND CHRISTMAS NIGHT IN A VERY MYSTERIOUS HOUSE.

I HOPE the reader may not be bored; but I find it necessary to begin my story with a great deal about my insignificant self. I am not the hero; and yet, owing to a strange run of circumstances, am so wrapped up with the characters and events which are to figure in my narrative that I find it impossible to make any sort of a beginning without telling somewhat of my own early history.

And, to begin with, the reader must know that when still a very small boy I succeeded in throwing my father and mother into a state of terror by an extraordinary piece of conduct. One night my mother, who had a habit of stealing to my little bed to tuck me in securely and repeat her good-night kiss, found my bed empty. Not a little startled, she instituted a diligent search, and to her horror discovered me walking, fast asleep, up and down our garden walk.

Of course the family doctor was called in at once.

He asked me all sorts of questions and made me so nervous that I put an end to the examination by bursting into tears.

"Madam," he at length said in grave tones to my mother, "you needn't be at all alarmed at Harry's somnambulistic propensities; he'll probably grow out of them. It's a—in fact, it's an idiosyncrasy."

For which he charged the usual fee.

The doctor's learned opinion of my case was on the point of bringing my distress to a climax, when my father led me from the room, and informed me that "somnambulistic propensities" merely meant that I had a tendency to walk in my sleep, and that its being an idiosyncrasy of mine was another way of saying that it was very odd on my part to do so.

"But," added my father, "you needn't bother about it. Some people snore in their sleep; others talk in their sleep; that's the sort of idiosyncrasy they have. Yours is to walk."

My father's way of putting it not only dispelled my alarm, but even made me somewhat proud of myself. I at once looked upon sleep-walking as an accomplishment. Even at this moment I cannot without smiling recall my conversation with Willie Styles, a very small boy with very large eyes, who lived within a few doors of us.

"Willie," I began, hastening over to his house, "do you snore in your sleep?"

"No," said Willie.

"Do you talk in your sleep?"

"No."

"Do you walk in your sleep?"

"No."

I looked on him with something akin to contempt

as I added, "Willie, you haven't got any iddy-sink-racing."

"What!" gasped Willie.

"I can walk in my sleep, Willie, and that's an iddy-sink-racing."

Proud both of the fact and the declaration, I departed to communicate the news to our cook and house-maid, leaving Willie in a state of perplexity not to be described.

The doctor's opinion, however, did not reassure my mother. Thenceforth she rested but little at night. Seated in an arm-chair beside my bed, she would clasp my little hand in hers and sleep as best she might. Night after night she took her station beside me, and with sweet sadness do I remember how often that soft, caressing mother's hand would gently stroke my brow; how often the mild, sweet face of my mother would bend down to mine as I awoke with a start from some troubled dream, and how, as her loving eyes fixed themselves on me, her lips would touch my cheek, while her soothing voice would charm my dream-haunted fancies into peace.

One morning—it was in my ninth year—I awoke bright and early, and, as was my custom, kissed the hand that clasped mine. But the hand I had ever found so gentle, so quick to answer my slightest touch, was cold and irresponsive. I raised my eyes to my mother's face; the smile I knew and loved so well still lingered about her features. But there was something in her face which I had never seen before, a weird beauty not of this world, which caused me to leap from my bed and clasp her in my arms and call her name. My dear mother gave me no answer. God had called her away.

I pass over in silence this, the supreme sorrow of my life.

Even during the first sharp agony of loss, it became evident to my father that it would not be prudent to leave me unguarded. The death of my mother had a very disturbing effect on me, and my restlessness during sleeping hours grew more alarming. The question then arose as to the choice of a night-watch. My father was not easily satisfied. He sought for some fit person throughout the city, but apparently to no purpose. At length he resolved to advertise in our daily paper, the *Sessionsville Democrat*, and accordingly the following appeared in its columns:

WANTED—A night-nurse. Must be steady and thoroughly reliable. Apply for further information to John Dee, 13 Madison St., Sessionsville, Missouri.

Quite promptly that morning the applicants came pouring in. My father and the doctor made short work of some, found great difficulty in putting off others, and finally, through sheer desperation, chose the least of many evils, as they thought, in the person of a woman giving her name as Mrs. Ada Raynor. As I say, it was for lack of a more satisfactory applicant that they chose her; for her evidences of a "character," as the saying is, were dark. To their searching inquiries her answers were vague and unsatisfactory. Whence she came, what were her past circumstances, they strove vainly to ascertain. The words into which she put her answers, while giving evidence of a good education, and, indeed, of no little refinement, only served to thicken the mist that obscured her past.

For all that she was duly installed, though my

father frowned and the doctor shook his learned head. As for myself, notwithstanding the fact that I was at an age when inquisitiveness is keen, I was not so difficult to please in the matter as my elders. What does the small boy care for the past when the present is so full of novelties and delights, when the future is brimming with unknown wonders and magnificent possibilities? Here was Mrs. Raynor bright and smiling, with pleasant answers to all my questions and many a gorgeous Eastern tale to while away an idle hour. Her past was nothing to me. In brief, I came very shortly to love her much; and though my father and the doctor could not be brought to believe it, she certainly seemed to return my affection. She had a soft, gentle way of calling me "Harry" which brought back vividly the tones and accents of my dear mother. There were other gracious resemblances, moreover, which I discovered for myself; and it came about quite naturally in course of time that I began to call her mamma. There was no doubt about the radiant smile which greeted me when I first addressed her by that endearing name. Nor at the time did it seem as though I had in anywise misapplied the term. To me she was in fact a mother; in her I placed all the confidence of a child's innocent, unsuspecting love. That love, as after-events go to prove, was within a little of wrecking my life. Every term of affection was afterward to be paid for in days of sickness and sorrow.

Beyond doubt Mrs. Raynor was a faithful nurse. It was her wont to sleep from early morn till noontime. But afternoon and night she was my constant attendant. Whenever my "iddy-sink-racing"

threatened me, she was at once beside me to soothe me and restrain my wanderings. My love grew with the months, and served to take off much of the bitterness of that first sharp grief.

And now let me begin my story proper. It was about sundown of the 21st of December, the day after my eleventh birthday. I was lying on a rug close to the glowing hearth-fire in our sitting-room, reading for the tenth or eleventh time the absorbing tale of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," and had just reached that exciting passage where Morgiana pours boiling water into the jars wherein the thieves have hidden themselves, when a brisk, firm step without brought me to my feet. Well did I know my father's footfall, and I hastened from the sitting-room into the hallway to meet and greet him at the door. To me his return was ever one of the pleasantest moments of the day. As he opened the door he always found me waiting within; and raising me in his arms would give me a fatherly kiss. That was all. He rarely spoke. On this occasion, however, he did speak.

"Harry, I've great news for you," he began as he returned me to the floor. "Of course you remember your Uncle James, don't you?"

I shivered at the name. Uncle James had been the bugaboo of my life. He had been face to face with me only once, but that was enough. The interview was a short one, yet short as it was my uncle had spoken so harshly, frowned so forbiddingly, and made such ugly faces that I had retired that night with my fancy at the complete mercy of all manner of hideous pictures.

My fear and aversion were not astonishing inasmuch as my uncle seemed to inspire the like feelings into all who came in contact with him. The old man was universally detested. From all I had heard he was very rich and very ugly, very harsh and very miserly.

"Remember Uncle James, papa? Indeed I do!"

"Well, something strange has come over him—poor James!—he's a diamond in the rough; for he's really making a show of being genial. Look at this!"

And unbuttoning his overcoat, my father took out a large yellow envelope, from which he produced a letter.

"See!" he said, holding it before my eyes.

"Read for me, papa; you know I can't read writing."

"Listen, then; I won't skip a word."

TOWER HILL MANSION, December 20, 18—.

Mr. John Dee,

DEAR BROTHER:—

Here my father paused, while the muscles of his face twitched; from after-experiences I infer that he was unable to reconcile his knowledge of my uncle with the warmth of affection implied in the term "dear." He went on reading, however, without comment:

I want your son Harry, my nephew Harry, to come to my house Christmas eve and stay over night. Important business.

Your brother,

JAMES DEE.

If my father counted on my being gratified by the wish thus curtly expressed in this letter, he was cer-

tainly deceived. The thought of passing a night under my uncle's roof was unbearable.

"O papa! I don't want to go."

"Why not, Harry?"

I must confess that at this stage of the conversation I blubbered.

"B-b-b-because he's an ugly old man; and he lives away out in the country—and—and"—here my grief grew more intense—"I c-c-c-can't b-b-bear him."

"Well, Harry! I didn't imagine you were such a coward."

This put a check to my tears.

"And to think," continued my father, a trifle sternly, "that a son of mine should speak of my brother as an 'ugly old man.'"

I began to feel uncomfortable. I realized that I had put myself in the wrong. After all, he was my uncle.

"Can Mrs. Raynor come along?" I asked concessively.

"Of course. That's understood. I'll speak to her at once."

But, no less to my surprise than to my father's, upon his asking her to accompany me, she showed the greatest agitation.

"Is it necessary for me to go?" she asked, after a moment of reflection.

"Well, it's not absolutely necessary," answered my father.

"Then I'll not go."

My father changed countenance.

"Mamma," I cried, catching her hand, "will you let me go alone to that house in the country?"

Mrs. Raynor drew me close and her face softened.

"My dear Harry, I'll miss you very much while you're gone; but it will be better that some one else go with you."

"But, mamma, I want you. Won't you please come?"

In a voice strangely agitated, Mrs. Raynor answered:

"I'll go. Yes, for your sake, Harry, I'll go."

On the 24th of December, accordingly, we took the morning train for Tower Hill, and I must say the day passed very pleasantly indeed. Toward nightfall we reached Tower Hill station, where we found awaiting us a rusty carriage under charge of a rusty driver, who shut us in with a sullen jerk and drove us off at moderate speed to my uncle's mansion.

That night proved to be an eventful one in my life.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH MRS. RAYNOR AND MY UNCLE HAVE A PASSAGE AT ARMS, A WILL IS READ, AND I GO TO SLEEP IN AN UNHAPPY FRAME OF MIND.

TOWER HILL MANSION, though a stately pile, was cold and forbidding. "Keep out" seemed to be the dominant note of its front. Nor did the interior belie the exterior. The furniture from hall to library and from library to sleeping apartments was severe, massive, and gloomy.

I shivered as the surly driver rang the door-bell; I shivered as a surlier servant threw open the door

groaning on its hinges; and you may be sure that I clung to my nurse's hand from the moment of our entering through the gloomy portals to the moment that we were conducted into the gloomy, heavy-curtained library, where, surrounded by long, gloomy shelves, filled with dark, ugly, musty, forbidding books, sat my old uncle, gloomiest among the gloomy.

As I entered, my nurse gave unmistakable signs of agitation; her face worked convulsively; and I fancied that she was stifling a rising sob. How her hand trembled in mine as we came face to face with my uncle! He raised his cold, heavily-shaded eyes and glanced at me long and sternly. Yet more sternly did he stare at Mrs. Raynor.

He had not changed in appearance since I last met him. His face, from the pointed chin to the wrinkled forehead, was yellow and sombre, and his long, thin nose and thin, bloodless lips were as cold as of yore. His sunken eyes seemed to dwell in a region of perpetual frost, and his neglected hair, falling about his shoulders, appeared to be whitened not so much by the touches of old age as by the polar atmosphere he carried about him. As I gazed at him in fear and trembling I wondered whether it were possible for him to smile.

"Boy," he began, while I was still ruminating upon this remote possibility, "who is that woman with you?"

"Mrs. Raynor, Uncle James. She has my mother's place."

"Your mother's place!" he repeated, and his voice was as the movement of an ancient door upon historical hinges. "Pah! You're too old to be coddled, boy. Your nurse wasn't invited here. Woman," he added, and all the rusty rheumatic hinges of his voice now came into full play, "go about your business."

Previous to the first mention of my uncle's name to Mrs. Raynor, my father had thought her a woman whose passions were conquered and dead. Her agitation had undeceived him. And now that she stood face to face with this forbidding old man, she manifested that there were other smouldering fires in her bosom; for the flash of anger which shot from her eyes as my uncle addressed her filled me with awe.

"God knows," she cried, still holding my hand, "this is the last place upon the earth I would come to, Mr. James Dee. I know you. So does my husband—so did he, rather. For he died penniless, a victim to your treachery."

At Mrs. Raynor's first words my uncle gave a perceptible start. As she went on, her voice gathering passion and volume with each word, his yellow face grew paler. There was that in the words of this woman which seemed to pierce his very soul; and when my attendant had uttered these, the first words in which I had ever heard her make allusion to her former history, my uncle gave a gasp—was it fear or anger?—rose from his chair, raised his skinny hand, and pointed with his skinny finger toward the door.

"Go away, woman, go away! Leave this house at once!" he snarled.

"I'll go, too, uncle, if you please," I stammered forth.

"No, boy; you remain."

I was terrified beyond measure. Catching my nurse's arms, I cried out:

"Mamma, I'm going to stay with you. If you go, I go too."

"Come on, Harry," answered my nurse, resuming the gentle tones my ear knew so well. "We'll leave this wretched house together; there's a curse hanging over it, and some day it will fall." And turning, we were leaving the library.

"Hold on! Stay! One minute!" How the old rheumatic hinges of his voice rasped as he called out to us in these words.

Mrs. Raynor paused and faced him; her bosom heaving and her eyes still sparkling with anger, she stood like a deer at bay.

"Since you stick so close together," he went on, "I'll have to give in for this time. Woman, you may stay."

"But I won't stay," returned Mrs. Raynor, her voice trembling. "It is not enough, O my God, that he should have brought ruin to the husband, but now he must insult the wife!"

"I'll not stay either," I cried. "Mamma, take me away from this awful place."

The old man lifted his hand to secure our attention. His face had changed again. He endeavored to look benevolent; there was a contraction of the facial muscles which in itself had the appearance of an attack of paralysis, but which, under the circumstances, I took to be an attempt to smile. He might as well have tried to fly.

"Madam," he said, with a bow as stiff as a recently-rinsed towel in midwinter, "I ask your pardon. I was harsh. I see that you love that boy. For his sake, I ask you to stay."

Mrs. Raynor hesitated.

"I assure you that to-night I have something to settle which is of great importance to the boy's future career; and I have made up my mind that Harry is to spend the night here and take his Christmas dinner with me to-morrow."

I hope I am not mistaken, but I thought, even as my uncle spoke, that a little of the Christmas spirit of peace and good-will shone in his cold, hard eye. In the light of after-events, it is consoling for me to believe this much of that wretched, loveless man.

After a short pause Mrs. Raynor made answer:

"For Harry's sake I will stay."

"Very well," said my uncle calmly, though I thought that he was secretly pleased. "Sit down then."

We complied with this abrupt bit of consideration, whereupon my uncle pulled a bell-rope beside his desk.

In there came presently the hideous, scowling servant who had admitted us into the house. In the matter of downright ugliness he set my uncle in quite a favorable light.

"Caggett," rasped my uncle, returning that gentleman's scowl of inquiry with a scowl of impatience, "tell the cook to come here at once."

Caggett gave a grunt, took his leave, and presently returned accompanied by a portly woman who entered the room with her arms akimbo.

"Caggett," growled my uncle.

A deep, guttural grunt from Caggett gave evidence that that giddy servant was all attention.

"Caggett, leave the room."

There was no doubt about Caggett's versatility and power in the way of growling and scowling now. He departed with a snarl which brought into play his ugly yellow teeth; he backed his way out of the room, and after bestowing a look upon me which forced me to hold my breath for fear, shut the door upon himself with a bang.

"Now," continued my amiable relative, "women both, and you, boy—are you listening?" The last three words he brought out with a burst—a sound as of unmusical cymbals brought clanging together by a furious hand.

"Yes, sir," I answered timidly, almost frightened out of my senses. I was clasping my nurse's hand, and even in my excess of terror could not but notice that the strong tempest of passion was yet raging in her bosom. She was muttering to herself, inaudibly for the most part, although once or twice the words "wretch," "villain," "scoundrel," and the like came hissing from between her set teeth. I felt that I was growing in fear of her too.

"Are *you* listening, cook?" said my uncle.

"I'm a-listenin', sir."

"That's what I want. Now listen closely."

He took up a paper from his desk. It was apparently yellowed with age. He held it for some time in his hands, then, without further prelude, read aloud something to this effect:

"I, James Dee, being of sound mind, do hereby devise and bequeath all my money and all my possessions of what kind and value soever to my serving-man, James Caggett."

The old man here raised his eyes and threw his gaze upon me.

"Your father and I, boy, had a quarrel once," he explained, "and I made up my mind that he should not get one cent of my money. Caggett struck me as the man who'd see to that. But blood is blood. Caggett's not of my family and you are. Besides," continued the old gentleman, in the same strain of simplicity and candor, "I hate Caggett."

"Look!" continued my sensational uncle. He tore the paper into bits and threw the pieces upon the gloomy, smouldering hearth-fire.

"Listen again." He selected another paper from his desk and read in substance:

"I, James Dee, being of sound mind, do hereby devise and bequeath all my money and all my property and all my possessions of what kind and value soever to my nephew, Harry Dee. There! Have you all heard?"

"Is that all?" asked Mrs. Raynor.

"Yes," snapped my uncle. "The rest is for the lawyers."

"I do not speak on my own account," said Mrs. Raynor, "for there are others to consider, Mr. James Dee. If I tell you who I am, will you promise to make some restitution to me for the wrongs you once inflicted upon my husband?"

"We'll talk about that another time, woman."

"But look! You are in my husband's debt for fifty thousand dollars. I claim that money, and I will get it, too."

"Another time, woman."

"Now's the time," continued Mrs. Raynor, in a solemn voice. "Can you promise yourself a long life? You're an old man."

My uncle looked at her quite mildly.

"Yes," he said slowly, "I'm an old man—an old man. Boy," he continued, turning to me, "I want to see you alone for a moment in my room. But business first. Women both, please sign this will as witnesses."

The "women both" complied. Whereupon my uncle turned to me with, "You're a rich man now, boy."

Then he pulled the bell, in response to which Caggett entered.

"Caggett, show this woman the boy's room, and see that the fire is in good order. Breakfast at seven, woman, dinner at one."

Then, taking my hand, he conducted me up the broad stairway and into the room at the head of the stairs, leaving Mrs. Raynor in charge of Caggett.

He drew a chair beside the hearth-fire, and seating me in it, stood looking down on me not unkindly.

"Harry," he said at length, and I was awed by the softness of his voice, "you're the picture of my mother."

I looked up into his face. His eyes were dim and there was a faint quivering about his lips.

"I was a little boy like you when she died—poor mother! If she had lived I might have been different."

As I continued to gaze at my uncle I wondered how I could ever have called him an ugly old man. Now he looked quite like my father.

"Harry, I'm getting old, and if I die soon you must get your papa to see to my accounts and to make it right with any people who have claims upon my money."

"Yes, Uncle James."

"I've been mean, Harry. And—and—to-morrow's Christmas. You're an innocent child—won't you—won't you pray for me to-morrow?"

"O uncle!" I cried, jumping to my feet and catching his hand.

In an instant my uncle had stooped down and kissed me lightly on the forehead. He straightened up at once and veiled his face in his hands. For a moment he was silent. Then, with an effort, he spoke:

"Breakfast at seven, boy; dinner at one. Go to bed." And before I had recovered from my surprise at this abrupt change he was seated at his desk, and with the old face set into its habitual frown, was writing as though I were a thousand miles away.

I made my way into the long corridor, and perceiving light streaming from an open door at the further end, hastened toward it. Mrs. Raynor was awaiting me. Her agitation was extreme, and I could see that she had been weeping.

Mrs. Raynor was communicative that night. In a voice broken with emotion she related something of her past history. It was a tale of sorrow and wrong, a tale that involved a very dark chapter in my uncle's life. I do not feel at liberty, nor do I consider it pertinent to my narrative, to enter into that sad story. As I have since learned, there was no word of exaggeration in her account, and as I listened I was thrilled with horror and inflamed with

indignation. Alas! the affecting scene with my uncle was driven from my memory like a dim dream and—as I write I ask God to forgive me for it—I allowed my feelings of hatred toward my uncle full play. On that night, hallowed as it should have been by the sweet sentiments of peace and love, I yielded to such passions as I humbly trust I shall never yield to again.

It was late when I fell asleep, and I regret to say that I carried into a troubled dreamland my bitter thoughts against the brother of my father.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH I AWAKEN TO A SAD CHRISTMAS.

I WAS habitually an early riser. On this Christmas morning, however, it must have been full seven o'clock when I awoke.

I shall never forget that awakening; for it was not the slow transition from unconsciousness to semi-consciousness, where sleeping and waking join hands. No; I passed from sound sleep to perfect wakefulness with a start, jumped from my bed and uttered a short gasp of terror. I was alone. For the first time in years I awoke to find myself alone!

As I threw a hasty glance about the room, my heart gave a sudden jump, my very blood seemed to congeal, and the sweat of agony started upon my brow. For a moment I was dumb with horror; then I broke into a scream of agony.

An awful discovery! There was a stain upon my coverlet, a stain upon the floor, a few crimson stains upon my night-shirt, and beside the chair on which

Mrs. Raynor had been seated the night before lay her glove, crushed and crumpled.

"Help! help! Murder!" I screamed; and in an ecstasy of fear I made a dash for the door. In the helplessness born of terror, I tugged at the knob in vain. Convinced that I had been locked in for some dire purpose, my terror passed beyond all limits. For the moment I became a maniac. I threw myself upon the floor and shrieked and screamed. Happily for me, even in this passing frenzy, the sweet words of my poor nurse—whom I now believed to have been foully dealt with—came forth from the chambers of memory and fought hand to hand with the sombre terrors of the present. Was not God present? Could bolts and bars lock out my angel guardian? My cries died away. Gradually I became calmer, and arising from my grovelling position on the floor, I fell upon my knees and prayed to God for help. Then I breathed a short ejaculation for the welfare of my poor nurse, dead or alive. Had she really been murdered? By whom? This was an awful question. I feared to assent to that answer which my mind suggested again and again: "Your uncle is more than a swindler and a thief; to make his title to fifty thousand dollars good he has become a murderer."

While absorbed in these reflections, a hand was laid upon the door without. I sprang to my feet, and waited in breathless anxiety to learn what new terror was upon the turn of events.

The door opened sharply and revealed Caggett—gloomier, uglier than he had shown himself the preceding night. His conduct was singular. Catching me roughly by the arm, he hurried me from the

room into the corridor, along nearly its whole length, till he stopped before a door.

"Boy," he growled, "do you know whose room this is?"

"My uncle's."

"Were you here last night very late?"

"No, sir."

"You lie! you were. Now, boy"—here he drew me to the door and laid his hand upon the knob—"now, boy, look and see what you've done."

And he threw open the door.

I took one look, gave a scream of horror, and—what happened after that I know not. For the first rough glance had been enough. Vivid as the picture still is in my memory, I have not the heart to reproduce it in all its ghastly details. My poor uncle had been stabbed during the night and lay dead upon his bed.

No wonder I fainted. The sight had conjured up a terrible tale of wickedness.

Into that thrust I saw gathered the hatred of the wronged wife and the revenge for a husband dead of a broken heart.

O my nurse! you to whom I had, in all a child's unstinted love, given the sacred name of mother!

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH I HEAR BAD NEWS, HAVE BRAIN FEVER, AND AFTER THREE VERY GLOOMY YEARS ENTER UPON A NEW LIFE.

WHEN I came to my senses I found myself in my little bed at home. My father was bending over me anxiously.

"O papa!" I cried, "do they think I did it?"

"No, indeed, my dear boy. No one but that wretched Caggett even suspected you. The whole thing seems to be now quite clear. The police have examined into the case. You must know there was a robbery, too. A large sum of money was taken, and that circumstance has helped to clear the matter. It's almost beyond the shadow of a doubt that your nurse—I always distrusted her for her dark, mysterious ways—committed the murder, partly out of hatred to your uncle, partly with the desire to make away with some money which she claimed he had swindled from her husband. Your uncle's cook gave a very clear account of Mrs. Raynor's conversation with my dead brother after he had read the will. Your nurse, after dabbling your night-shirt with blood, so as to lead us to believe you had killed him in your sleep, fled the house. But she'll soon be found. The police all over the country are on the watch for her."

"Papa, how much money was stolen?"

"Well, it seems that the miserable old man had a habit of sleeping with a large sum of money by his side—under his pillow, rather. Caggett, who knew his ways, testifies to his certain knowledge the sum in my brother's keeping on that night was fifty thousand dollars."

Fifty thousand dollars! The very sum Mrs. Raynor had claimed.

. . . . . .

Nevertheless, Mrs. Raynor was not found. For what light could be brought to bear upon her whereabouts, the earth might have swallowed her.

Nor was Mrs. Raynor the only one to disappear.