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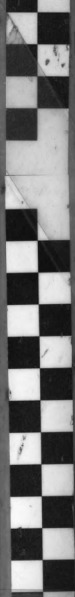
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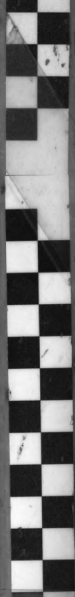
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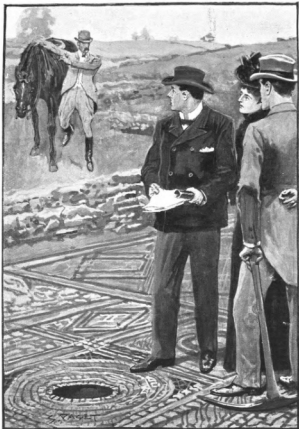


THE
SANCTUARY
CLUB





The Sanctuary Club



“What are you doing here, you scoundrels?” (Page 111.)

The Sanctuary Club

[Frontispiece

Club

of

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✓
SMITH, ELIZABETH THOMASINA
'7 (MEADE), 1854-

The Sanctuary Club,

^{expanded} BY
L. T. MEADE AND ROBERT EUSTACE.

AUTHORS OF 'THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE SEVEN KINGS,'
'THE GOLD STAR LINE,' ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY SIDNEY PAGET,

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THE SANCTUARY CLUB

INTRODUCTION

I AM a man of day-dreams, and a doctor by profession. It was my lot when about forty years of age to inherit a large fortune, and I immediately set to work putting into execution a design which had long occupied my mind. I resolved to leave the thorny and struggling path, where I had often felt myself in my brother practitioners' way, and, buying a large site of ground in the vicinity of Hampstead, proceeded to build upon it a goodly mansion.

When the house was completed and the grounds laid out to the best advantage I took possession, and now unfolded my scheme to a brother doctor whom I had long respected and

loved. He and I agreed to go into partnership, and, with the aid of some of our younger brothers of the medical profession, to open what we were pleased to call the Sanctuary Club. This was in the spring of 1890.

The rules of the club were as follows: It was to be opened to men and women of all ages and classes who chose to fulfil the necessary conditions. These were an entrance fee of £50, a yearly subscription of £10, and the still more important fact that the person, man or woman, who intended to become a member, was the victim of disease in one of its many forms. The primary object of the club was to cure maladies that were in any way curable without sending the patients from England.

This great institution, of which I had dreamed so long, was for the treatment of all sorts of disease on a hitherto unattempted scale. Here my friend Chetwynd and I could put into execution the boldest and most recent theories that other medical men, either from lack of means or courage, could not carry out. One of the chief features of the place was to be a special department where the latest and most up-to-

date scientific theories could be realized, one in especial being an attempt at the production of artificial climates.

I had often been struck by the pertinacity with which my brother doctors had ordered patients to seek health resorts, either at home or abroad, when they were far too weak to travel. Thus some patients were sent to the sea, others to the neighbourhood of pine forests, others to high altitudes in order to enjoy the benefits of mountain air; others again to warm, others to cold or dry, climates. At the Sanctuary Club we had, by virtue of our modern scientific knowledge, the means of producing such conditions artificially. Heat, cold, humidity, dryness, even barometric pressure, or any other required constituent of the air, were mere matters of mechanical or chemical detail. Mineral waters of the exact composition of those at the springs of home or Continental spas could be reproduced in our laboratory. Every appliance that science or art could suggest for the alleviation of suffering humanity would be worked by an efficient and well-qualified staff.

This had been my dream for years, and now with the aid of my friend Henry Chetwynd, it was about to be realized. From the first our scheme proved attractive to those unfortunate members of the community who, suffering as they were, were only too keen to try a new thing. Our club opened with a hundred members, and before a year had expired we had nearly three hundred resident patients in the house.

Those members of the Sanctuary Club who only suffered from slight maladies could come occasionally for consultation, and at any time enjoy the benefit of our large Reading and Refreshment Rooms, and our carefully-laid-out and luxurious grounds. But it was the indoor members, those who lived under our roof, who excited my keenest, strongest, and most life-long interest.

Strange cases came to my knowledge, stories of the most thrilling and absorbing interest fell to my lot to listen to and sympathize with. There were cases, and not a few, when it was my privilege and also my bounden duty to act not only as doctor but as personal friend. From

time to time my brother doctor and I had to face adventures the most thrilling and dangers of so hair-breadth a character, that even now my pulse quickens when I think of them.

The following stories relate some of our most vivid experiences.

CHAPTER I

THE DEATH CHAIR

LADY HELEN TREVOR was one of the earliest members of the club. She was a beautiful and distinguished-looking young woman of about thirty years of age. She herself belonged to the noble house of Hampton, but she had married a commoner of apparently colossal wealth. She was the Earl of Hampton's only daughter, but she had several brothers, and also two children of her own. The good things of life seemed to have fallen abundantly to her share—beauty, riches, and the devoted love of an excellent husband—but nevertheless she was a victim. She suffered from an extraordinary kind of nervousness, which, without ever approaching the borderland of the insane, caused

her sleepless nights and days of apprehension and misery.

When the first prospectus of the Sanctuary Club reached her, she eagerly availed herself of this chance of cure, and was speedily installed in the most comfortable suite of rooms in the house. Lady Helen was too courteous and kind-hearted to inflict her own sufferings on others; she was full of tact and sympathy, and soon became a vast favourite in the house. She could sing beautifully, could lead the games, make dull people bright and sad people merry, and in particular attracted the attention of another member of the club, a certain Señor José Santos, who had also come to the Sanctuary seeking health and cure.

José Santos lived in a large mansion called Roe House in the neighbourhood of Wimbledon Common, and was said to be not only very rich, but was also known to possess one of the finest private collections of art treasures in England. Señor Santos and Lady Helen soon became great friends—they had many tastes in common, and used to spend hours talking about those gems of art, those priceless

possessions, which, handed down from father to son, are the heirlooms of many families.

José Santos, however, had not the same power of dissimulating his misery as Lady Helen had—Chetwynd believed him to be suffering from incipient insanity, and there were times when his moody eye and fierce and yet abstracted manner seemed abundantly to carry out this suggestion.

“I do not like the man,” said Chetwynd; “he is either insane or he is a devil incarnate. I wish Lady Helen were not so friendly with him.”

“You have taken a prejudice, Chetwynd,” I said, looking at my friend.

Chetwynd gave me one of his quick glances. His was a curious personality, and it is impossible to continue these stories without saying a few words about him. He was a little man, with a slightly deformed body, a plain face, and large head. But he had that sparkle and depth of meaning in his clear, golden-brown eyes which often seem to be an accompaniment of physical deformity. It was in his power to express volumes by a single glance, and I often observed

that he had more power over his patients than I ever hoped to possess. He was a man of few words, but his devotion to duty was unflinching and his indifference to danger almost stoical. There was little doubt that he was deeply imbued with the principles of some fine philosophy or faith. Also beneath his sphinx-like gravity there lurked a vein of rich humour, which made him, when he chose to exert himself, the best of companions.

Now, as he spoke of Señor Santos he rose and paced up and down his room.

"I am sorry that the man has taken a liking to Lady Helen Trevor," he said, "but I am still more disturbed at his friendship for my own special *protégé*, John Ingram."

"Ah! you are devoted to Ingram; you almost spoil the lad," I could not help saying.

"No one could spoil one so simple-minded," answered my brother physician; "he is one of the best fellows I know, and his devotion to his mother is beyond all praise."

"What of his health?" I said.

"He is deriving benefit from our treatment," said Chetwynd, in a cheerful voice. "The

paroxysms of neuralgic agony are much less frequent than of old—he will quite recover if he stays here long enough.”

“By the way,” I said, after a moment’s pause, “you paid his entrance fee here, did you not?”

“What if I did?” was the somewhat vague answer.

Just then the step of a patient was heard in the corridor, and I could not pursue the subject further.

That evening Lady Helen Trevor and Señor José Santos had an eager conversation over an old casket, called the Catalini Casket, which had been for years in the Hampton family, and which Señor Santos honestly said he would give the world to possess. Ingram joined in the talk, and I also was interested by the lady’s description of the matchless casket, made of an enormous onyx stone, and richly incrusting with diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and emeralds.

A few days later these three members of the club took their departure, all sounding its praises and promising to visit it again. Lady Helen returned to her husband and children;

Señor José Santos to resume the control of his magnificent museum; and John Ingram, who was a commission agent in the City, to his usual employment.

The Sanctuary Club was opened in the early spring of 1890, and it was in the late autumn of that same year that I next saw Ingram. One afternoon, between five and six o'clock, he burst unceremoniously into my consulting-room.

"You must forgive me," he cried. "Chetwynd is out, or I would have seen him, but I cannot rest until I confide in some one, and you will tell Chetwynd, I know. The most splendid luck has fallen in my way. I can scarcely believe in my own good fortune."

"Sit down, Ingram," I said. "Why, how excited you look; what can have happened?"

"You know that we are poor, Dr. Cato, and that but for Chetwynd's generosity I could never have afforded to join the club. What don't I owe to the Sanctuary Club—not only my recovery to health, but also the acquaintanceship of"—he hesitated and dropped his voice—"of those who will make my fortune. But there, I am under a promise not to mention

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names. Chetwynd may have told you how my mother looks to me for support—it is one of my day-dreams to have her to live with me. Well, I am in a fair way to have that day-dream realized. I am just about to receive a commission—5 per cent. on £7000. That means £350, all earned in one day. Think of that for a novice!”

“But how have you done it?” I asked.

“Ah! that I cannot explain—I am bound to secrecy, but what I tell you is true. I will call again to-morrow, and, if you like, will show you the cheque. Yes, I am a made man, for other commissions will doubtless follow from the same source. But I cannot stay another instant. Tell Chetwynd, and wish me luck, Dr. Cato.”

I did so heartily—I liked the bright-eyed, happy-looking young fellow, and could not but rejoice in his unlooked-for prosperity. When Chetwynd returned I mentioned Ingram’s visit. To my astonishment the little doctor looked grave and disturbed.

“I wish I had been at home,” he said. “I don’t like this a bit. Of course, it means——”

"What?" I interrupted.

"The Spaniard has a finger in this pie—I don't like it, Cato."

"Now, what do you mean?" I asked.

"Señor José Santos was far too friendly with Ingram when they were both here. I distrust the man thoroughly. There is no doubt that on some points he is insane—he is also unscrupulous, and to attain his ends would stop at nothing."

"Oh! you are over-suspicious," was my answer. "There is no use in labelling any man scoundrel until he has proved himself one, and what the Spaniard has to do with Ingram beats my comprehension."

"Why, Paul, are you blind? Who else would give Ingram a commission of that magnitude? Doubtless, when he left here, he was going to Wimbledon. I don't like it at all; what is more, I have a good mind to follow him."

To this remark I made no reply. I knew that in certain moods my friend Chetwynd would brook no interference. If he chose to follow Ingram on a wild-goose chase, it was his

own affair. I thought little more of the circumstance during that evening, being much engaged with some anxious cases. Little did I guess the next news which was to reach me. About ten o'clock the following morning Chetwynd burst into my room. His face was white, and his big, queer-looking eyes were shining with a curious expression. He spoke very quietly, however.

"I was right in my conjectures," he said, and he dropped into a chair.

"What do you mean?" I cried.

"Ingram is dead."

"What?" I answered, springing to my feet.

"Yes—he was found dead this morning on Wimbledon Common. The following are the details." Chetwynd spoke in an almost monotonous voice, but I knew with what an effort he was keeping himself under control.

"You remember my words of last night? When I went to bed I could not sleep. Each moment I felt more fearful and uncomfortable. Finally I resolved to go to Wimbledon as soon as the day broke. I cycled over, and went

in the direction of the Spaniard's place, Roe House. When I got within three hundred yards of the house I saw a crowd collected. I went up to them. They were clustered round John Ingram's dead body. The poor fellow had been found by one of the rangers. He was lying about three hundred yards from one of the main roads, beside a clump of gorse bushes. The man gave the alarm, and the police, when they arrived, said that he must have wandered or been decoyed off the road and murdered. But the point which astonishes and horrifies every one is the merciless and brutal character of the murder. The assailant must have been possessed of superhuman strength, for Ingram had evidently been hurled to the ground with the utmost violence. Indeed, his injuries were so extensive and his fractures so numerous, that it seems almost impossible that the murder was the work of any one human being. Another strange thing is that there are no marks round the spot to give evidence of a struggle. It is all most horrible. I cannot understand it."

"Do you still hold to your queer opinions

with regard to Señor Santos?" I asked, when I could find my voice.

"I do and I don't. The whole thing is inexplicable: unless he threw the poor fellow from a balloon, I have not the slightest idea how he killed him. Well, Ingram is dead past recall. I pity his poor mother. I wish to God I had gone to Wimbledon last night."

I started up.

"I will go to Wimbledon myself," I said. "I cannot rest until I know more."

Chetwynd said nothing to dissuade me—he looked queer and unlike himself. I took the next train to town, and arrived at the scene of the murder in the course of the morning. Poor Ingram's body had been removed, in preparation for the coroner's inquest, to the nearest inn. I was admitted to see him, and heard the opinions of many experts who had been called in. One and all denied that the murder was the work of a human being, though they frankly admitted that they could offer no suggestion as an alternative argument. I personally could give no information except a report of Ingram's last words to me on the

previous day. Suddenly it flashed through my mind that I would call upon Señor José Santos and tell him the whole story. He had been interested in Ingram. If Chetwynd's surmise was right, he had something to do with the large commission which the poor fellow was to earn. Roe House was situated on the edge of the Common. The house itself was large and built in the modern style. It was surrounded by private grounds, and there were thick trees growing up almost to the front door.

I rang the bell. It was answered immediately by a demure-looking, elderly servant in livery. In reply to my query he told me that his master was within, and invited me to enter. I was shown into a lofty dining-room sumptuously furnished. I was in no mood, however, to notice the antique oak and rare vases of old Sèvres and Chelsea porcelain which decorated the walls. The Spaniard entered. He held out his hand with a pleasant greeting.

"It is kind of you to call, Dr. Cato," he said.
"I'm pleased to see you."

"I have come," I answered, "not only to see

you, señor, but to acquaint you with a painful affair."

"What is that?" he asked.

"You remember Ingram—that nice young fellow whom you were so kind to when staying at the Sanctuary in the spring?"

"I remember him perfectly."

"I have just seen his dead body."

José Santos started, and his swarthy face turned pale.

"Ingram dead?" he cried, after a pause; "that accounts. But I am interrupting you, Dr. Cato; when and how did he die?"

"He was found this morning three hundred yards from your gate, injured almost past recognition, dead, foully murdered."

Santos was quite silent for a moment; then he said, slowly—

"And you have called here because you thought this news would interest me?"

"I called for a double reason," I replied. "First, because your friendship for the poor fellow entitled you to know of his death, and partly because I hoped that you might be able to throw light on a ghastly occurrence."

"I did not murder him, if that is what you mean," answered Santos.

"If I thought that I should scarcely have asked to see you," was my reply.

He laughed.

"My dear fellow, forgive an unseemly joke. The fact is, your news has unnerved me. Unfortunately, I can throw what will be a very lurid light on this affair. But tell me first—have you seen Ingram lately?"

"I saw him last evening. He came to bring Chetwynd and myself an excellent piece of news. A friend, whose name he would not divulge, had given him a magnificent commission—he was nearly beside himself with joy."

"He would not give you the name of his friend?"

"No."

"I can supply it. I am the person. Two days ago I learned, through a mere accident, that the celebrated pearl necklace in the Forsyth collection was to be sold yesterday at Christie's. As I did not wish to appear in the matter, I commissioned Ingram to buy it for me, giving him power to bid as high as £7000. I had a

telegram from him yesterday, which I can show you, saying that he had secured the necklace for my figure, and would bring it to me in the course of the evening. I waited up for him until past midnight ; he did not appear, and I went to bed."

"Then you never received the necklace?"

"No."

"This is most important. Of course, the poor fellow was robbed and murdered, for there was nothing of value on his person. The coroner is probably now at the Sign of the Dragon ; will you come with me?"

"Willingly," answered Señor Santos. He put on his hat and accompanied me. His evidence was given quietly. It, of course, supplied a motive for the murder ; but how the deed was accomplished, how the murderers got away, and where the celebrated necklace now was, remained wrapped in mystery.

Time went on and nothing transpired to throw light upon the occurrence. Everything conceivable was done, the most unlikely clues followed up, but the police had at last to confess that they were nonplussed.

One afternoon, towards the end of the following May, I was walking in my grounds when I was attracted by the arrival of a cab just outside the principal entrance. A tall lady, in deep mourning, but rather shabbily dressed, got out and walked up the drive. She paused when she saw me, hesitated, and then raising her eyes, said—

“Am I addressing Dr. Paul Cato?”

“That is my name,” I answered; “is there anything I can do for you?”

“I am Mrs. Ingram,” was her reply. “You knew my son and were kind to him. May I speak to you in private for a few moments?”

“Certainly,” I said, much interest coming into my voice. I took the lady immediately into my private study. Closing the door, I asked her to seat herself.

“I knew your son well,” I remarked, “and took a deep interest in him. His death has caused me the greatest pain.”

She raised her hand to interrupt my words.

“I beg of you to allude as little as possible to personal feelings in this matter,” she said. “It is with an effort I can keep my grief under

control, and I do not mean—I am determined not—to give way.”

Her face changed from red to white as she spoke and her lips trembled. After a moment, however, she spoke very quietly.

“I want to talk business with you—do you understand?”

“Perfectly,” I said.

“It is my intention to trace this murder to its source. I have come here for the purpose. I would have seen you before, Dr. Cato, but after the shock of my son's death I was ill. A blank surrounds that dreadful time—I had fever and, luckily for myself, was unconscious. I have now recovered, and have one object left in life. I mean to bring the man who deprived my boy of his young existence to the gallows.”

“My hand on it, madam,” I could not help saying—“your wish is mine.”

“Thank you,” she answered. A sudden fire filled her dark eyes, the colour rushed into her cheeks.

“If that object can be effected I shall die happy,” she continued. “Now may I ask you one or two questions?”

"As many as you please."

"Will you give me, quietly and impartially, an exact account of the murder—the appearance of the body when it was found, where it was found, and everything else?"

I complied—I told the mother of the murdered man the whole sad history. She would not allow me to shirk anything, nor did I try to. When I had done she said—

"My son knew Señor José Santos. The señor lives on Wimbledon Common. His house is called Roe House. My son wrote to me constantly about him: the Spaniard had evidently attracted him to a remarkable degree. How far from the spot where the body was found is the residence of Señor Santos?"

"The body was found about three hundred yards from Roe House," was my reply.

"Ah," she said, "I thought as much. Has no one seen Señor Santos in connection with the murder?"

"I visited him immediately afterwards. He told me that he had commissioned your son to buy him a valuable necklace. He expected your son to visit him on the evening when the

murder was committed in order to hand him over the necklace, when your son was to receive his commission, a sum amounting to £350. Ingram never reached Roe House, and beyond doubt the murderer absconded with the necklace."

"So that is Señor Santos's story," replied Mrs. Ingram, very slowly. "Will you listen to me? I have every reason to believe—nay more, I am certain of the fact—that my son did visit Señor José Santos on the evening of the day on which he was murdered, and did hand him over the necklace. I have more than one reason for the very firm opinion which I have formed. In the first place, Santos is not a man of honour."

"Now, what can you mean?" I said.

"He commissioned my son to purchase a valuable necklace, telling him that he might bid as high as £7000 for it. My son was to bring him the necklace, and on receipt of it he was to be paid £7000 and his own commission of 5 per cent. My son, reckless with joy at the thought of securing so large a sum, had borrowed the £7000 from a dealer in order

to go to Christie's to pay for the necklace. On my son's murder, this dealer, Robertson by name, applied to Señor Santos to restore the money, declaring that the order was practically his, and that he ought to make good the loss. Señor Santos absolutely declined to pay one penny."

"And how has the debt been met?" I asked.

"By me, Dr. Cato. All I possess in the world of ready capital has been raised to clear my son's honour. I have paid Mr. Robertson to the last farthing. I have now nothing in the world to live on but a small annuity, which I inherited from my husband, of £50 a year."

I felt my heart beat high with indignation. There was nothing to say, however, and the widow proceeded—

"My other reason for believing that there has been foul play is on account of a dream, a curious and very vivid dream which I had."

"Indeed," I said, gravely. I naturally did not believe in dreams, but the face of the woman opposite to me, in its intense and tragic earnestness, forbade a smile.

"I can guess something of your thought,

Dr. Cato," she continued, "but there are dreams which have elements of truth in them. Let me tell you mine. On the night when my boy was murdered, I dreamt that he visited José Santos at Roe House, that he gave the Spaniard the pearl necklace, and sat with him for a time on the wide veranda of his house."

"I did not know the house had a veranda!" I exclaimed.

"In my dream I saw a veranda with great distinctness. It was on the second floor. This veranda was inclosed by a stone balustrade, and there were several deck chairs about and some small, round tables. My son and Señor Santos sat there together that night and smoked. My dream was so vivid that I could almost hear what they were saying, and I noticed the expression on the Spaniard's face. I tell you, Dr. Cato, it was diabolical. I would have seen you before on the subject of my dream but for my queer illness. That dream was not sent to me for nothing."

"Go on," I said, "what followed? You say you heard Santos speak and you saw his face. What came next?"

"Nothing," she replied; "a great blackness fell over me—I no longer saw the figures on the veranda. I awoke struggling for breath and screaming. I do not know any more."

"Then owing to your dream you are under the impression that Santos is connected with the murder?"

"He is at the bottom of the whole thing," she replied.

I sat silent for a few moments, Mrs. Ingram facing me. Her eyes, with that look of absolute confidence in them, were uncanny; the firm conviction of her words could not but impress me. Chetwynd would doubtless have shared her suspicions, but I could scarcely give credence to her story. Because a woman dreamt a ghastly dream, was a person, to all appearance innocent, to be accused of crime? Nevertheless, Don Santos must be a scoundrel not to have made some effort to replace the £7000 which Ingram had borrowed to purchase the necklace.

"What can I do for you?" I said, after a pause.

"This," she replied instantly—"I want you

to go and see the Spaniard. I cannot go myself, for the moment he saw me he would be on his guard. Pay him a friendly visit, and find out if there is such a veranda to the house as I have just described. Get him to talk about my son: watch him closely. If you will do this for me, it is all I ask. He does not suspect you; will you go, and at once?"

"I have not the slightest objection to visiting Señor Santos," I said, after a pause, "and if it will relieve your mind I will call upon him."

"Then go now, this afternoon—there is no time to lose."

Her wild words impelled me. I had nothing special to do, and started off for Wimbledon within the hour. I was admitted to Santos's presence. He received me quietly and with his usual courtesy.

"I am delighted to see you, Dr. Cato," he said. "I was just writing to you."

"What about?" I asked.

"I want to pay a visit to the Sanctuary next week. I am not well; some of my old painful symptoms have re-appeared. Chetwynd had a soothing influence over me—his treatment

served me marvellously. Can you take me in next week?"

"With pleasure," I answered, "but I am sorry you are feeling indisposed."

"It has been coming on gradually. Chetwynd will soon restore me to my normal health. By the way, you don't look too well yourself, Dr. Cato. You have quite a haggard look in your eyes. You take poor Ingram's murder to heart. That will never do. By the way, has any fresh light been thrown upon the mysterious affair since I saw you last?"

"None whatever," I answered.

"Ah," he said, looking thoughtful; "it is one of those mysteries which will not be revealed until the Day of Judgment. Now that you have come, doctor, I shall insist on your dining with me."

I thought for a moment, and then determined to accept the invitation. Señor Santos rang his bell and gave directions to a servant who appeared. Not long afterwards he and I found ourselves seated at a little oval table in the big dining-room. As we ate my host talked well and brilliantly. Certainly he was an interesting

man, and his knowledge of art treasures was extensive.

The meal lasted for over an hour, and during that time I had almost forgotten Mrs. Ingram, her curious dream, and her nameless suspicions. The dream, however, and the suspicions were revived when Santos said, in a hearty voice—

“The night is fine—let us go up and smoke on the veranda.”

“The veranda!” I could not help exclaiming.

“Yes, have I not shown it to you? It is one of the specialities of my house. I had it built according to my own ideas. On the hottest day in summer you get a breeze there, and I generally smoke my last Havana there before retiring to rest; but come.”

As he spoke he led the way up-stairs, and, opening a door on the second floor, just as the widow had described in her dream, we entered an extensive veranda. As I looked at it I could not help starting. It was inclosed by a stone balustrade, upon which were fixed by uprights iron rails which ran round it. There were several deck-chairs, just as the widow had mentioned, and there were also some small,

round tables. The night was starlit and warm. As I seated myself in a comfortable deck-chair and lit a cigar I noticed that my host was listless and silent.

A sudden impulse came over me.

"Do you know," I said, watching him narrowly as I spoke, "that I had an interview to-day of a somewhat painful nature."

"Indeed," he replied.

"With no less a person than Mrs. Ingram, the mother of the poor fellow who was murdered. She told me of a dream she had had. She dreamt that you and her son were seated on this balcony."

"Ah," he said, impatiently, "we never sat here. I often meant to have him to dine with me. On that one eventful night I waited long for him, but he never came. I could not account for his non-appearance." The Spaniard spoke softly and with much sadness in his tone.

"There is one thing, Señor Santos," I said, suddenly; "you will forgive me, but perhaps you do not realize that Mrs. Ingram is a poor woman. Her son borrowed £7000 to buy

that necklace for you. Is it fair that she should have to pay it back?"

In a moment he had turned upon me, his whole face distorted with the most livid passion.

"Why do you interfere?" he said; "you had much better not. My God! If you only knew! I will pay that woman the £7000 in full when I get the necklace, not before. Tell her to move heaven and earth to get it back for me, and she shall be paid then in full, every farthing, but not before—my God! I have spoken—*not* before."

His voice quivered, he suddenly left my side and began to stride rapidly up and down the veranda—there was almost the ring of a madman in his tones. I saw I had gone too far, and was about to soothe him when he suddenly came back and spoke in his accustomed voice.

"I told you that my nerves were giving way—there are moments when I can scarcely contain myself. I must come to the Sanctuary as quickly as possible and put myself under Chetwynd's treatment."

"And I will not keep you longer now," I said. "I have tired you."

"You have upset me," he said, brusquely. "Forgive me for being rough, but there are some things I cannot bear. Well, if you must go—you must."

A few moments later I had taken my leave of him.

As soon as I entered the Sanctuary on my return, I was greeted by Chetwynd.

"I want to speak to you," he said. There was some slight excitement in his manner. I noticed it.

"You will be interested to hear," I remarked, "that I have just been paying a visit to our old patient, José Santos. You ought to go and see him—Roe House is worth visiting."

"Ah," replied Chetwynd, "you know my opinion of that man, Cato. Come with me into my private consulting-room, won't you? I have something to say."

I went with him. He turned at once and spoke to me about Mrs. Ingram.

"I have seen her," he said; "she told me that she had asked you to visit Señor Santos."

She also mentioned her most extraordinary dream."

"I said I would try to verify it for her," was my remark.

"Have you done so?"

"Strange to say, Chetwynd, I have—at least the part in which she describes the veranda. It is there, and just as she spoke of it, but doubtless the thing can be explained. Ingram must have mentioned it to her in one of his many letters."

Chetwynd was silent.

"By the way," I continued, after a pause, "you will have to put up with Señor Santos, whether you like him or not. Next week he is coming here again."

"The old symptoms?" asked my brother doctor.

"He complains of them."

"That man will end in an asylum," said Chetwynd, briefly. "I am sorry he is coming back."

"I could not refuse him admission to his own club," I answered.

"Of course not. By the way, we seem to

be doomed to have old patients back again. I have just received a letter from Lady Helen Trevor ; she arrives to-morrow."

"Indeed," I said, "she was a very pleasant visitor ; we ought to be glad to welcome her."

"By the way," said Chetwynd, quietly, "Señor Santos may not find things so pleasant as he imagines at the Sanctuary Club. Did I tell you that Mrs. Ingram is coming here also to-morrow ?"

"Indeed, but how ? She is not a member."

"She comes as my guest. You remember that you and I always have the privilege of asking guests here from time to time."

"Certainly, but are you acting wisely in extending this invitation to a hysterical woman ?"

"You are hard on her, Cato, and also unjust. Mrs. Ingram possesses absolute self-control. Her mind is perfectly balanced ; and as to her dream—well, think what you like of me, old fellow, but I believe in it."

I could say nothing further. In certain moods it was impossible to control Chetwynd—he was determined to saddle a foul crime upon

Señor Santos, and what the end would be remained shrouded in mystery.

The next day Lady Helen arrived. She looked older than when I had last seen her, and there was evidently a very serious care weighing upon her mind. On the first evening of her visit she spoke to me.

"I have not forgotten the gentleman who was an inmate of this house when I was last here," she said.

"Do you refer to Señor José Santos?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied.

"You are likely to meet him again. He is coming back next week."

"Indeed," she answered. She looked pleased and relieved. Looking full at me she said, suddenly, "I want to take you into my confidence—may I?"

"If I can be of use to you, I shall be pleased to listen to anything you have got to say," was my answer.

"Well, it is this. At the present moment I am sorely in want of money—a good sum, too."

"But I thought your husband was a millionaire?"

"He is rich, no doubt, but not quite so rich as people give him credit for. In the present matter, however, it is impossible for me to apply to him. Now, I must get the money—£5000—as soon as possible, and it has occurred to me that Señor Santos can help me. I mean to ask him for his aid."

"I wish you would not," I could not help saying.

She opened her eyes wide in some surprise.

"I must," she said; "my need is very pressing; in fact, I may as well own to you that I have come to the Sanctuary Club more in the hope of meeting Señor Santos than anything else."

I stared at her in some surprise. I did not like to press more fully for her confidence, but what did she mean? She was young and handsome—what could she have in common with a man of the Spaniard's type?

The next week the señor arrived. He was gentle and courteous, his friendship with Lady Helen was quickly renewed, and, to my aston-

ishment, he also took special pains to be polite to Mrs. Ingram. That strange woman by no means repelled his attentions. On the contrary, she often sought him out, and they had long and interesting conversations together.

The days passed without anything special occurring. At last, on a certain morning, Lady Helen came to see me.

"Will you help me?" she said, impulsively; "if you will, I can get what I require."

"What do you want me to do?" I asked.

"Señor Santos has promised to advance me a loan of £5000 on a condition."

"And what is that?" I asked.

She made a slight pause; her large brown eyes were full of restlessness.

"I must give you my full confidence," she said then. "I want the money for my brother—my favourite youngest brother. He has got into terrible trouble—he is reckless, defiant of the ordinary rules of society. He has always been something of a spoilt darling. When my mother died she left him in my care. He has got into debt. My husband is jealous of my great love for him, and will not help him with

so much as a pound. Something must be done immediately, so I am determined to come to the rescue. If I can get £5000 from Señor Santos, my brother's most pressing debts will be paid, and he will be saved."

"What is the condition on which he will lend you the money?" I asked.

She came a little nearer and dropped her voice.

"You know the señor's passion for curios of all sorts?" she said. "Have you ever heard me speak of a casket which we hold in my father's family? It is called the Catalini Casket—it has belonged to us for four hundred years. When I married, my father gave it to me as my wedding present, but on a condition, a solemn one, that I was never to part with it. I did not intend to break that condition, but my present need is too great. I am going, not to sell the casket, but to borrow money on it. Señor Santos will lend me £5000 if I give him the casket as security. He returns home to-day."

"So soon?" I interrupted.

"Yes. He says the uncomfortable symptoms

which brought him here have quite disappeared, and he is anxious to be home again. I am also going back to Yorkshire this afternoon, but will return early to-morrow with the casket. I want you to take the Catalini Casket to Señor Santos to-morrow night, and to bring me back the money. He will pay me in gold, not by cheque—I have asked him to do this in order to insure my husband never knowing of the transaction."

"But why should I be your messenger?"

"It is by the señor's special request. He says that he has made a rule never to admit a woman into Roe House. Oh, you will not refuse me? If you will help me in this matter I will bless you to the longest day of my life."

She spoke with passion; there were tears in her eyes; her voice trembled. Perhaps Chetwynd might have refused her, but I found it impossible to do so.

"I don't like it," I said. "I will say so frankly, but, of course, I cannot decline to be your messenger."

"Thank you," she answered; "you cannot understand what a relief this is to me. I will

go and tell Señor Santos immediately—he will be pleased—he is most anxious to secure the casket, and says quite openly and frankly that he does not believe I shall ever be able to redeem it.”

“And under such circumstances are you willing to part with such a treasure?” I asked.

“I must,” she replied; “I have no choice.”

She left the room, and a couple of moments later José Santos himself knocked at the door of my room.

“Come in,” I said.

“So you are going to help Lady Helen?” he remarked, closing the door softly behind him.

“I am very much obliged to you, very much obliged indeed. Now listen. I have not been here for the last two or three days for nothing.

That poor woman, Mrs. Ingram, has impressed me favourably. I cannot part with £7000 for

a valuable necklace which I never received, but I will let her have half the money, and whenever

the necklace is traced and brought to me, she shall have the remainder. If you will bring

the Catalini Casket to my house to-morrow night, you shall have in gold and notes the

money which Lady Helen requires, and also a cheque drawn in Mrs. Ingram's favour."

I thanked him heartily. I did not remark then, although it occurred to me afterwards, that as he spoke he avoided looking at me.

"I am glad you are better," I said.

"Much better—in fact, I am quite well. I am restless away from my treasures, and am going back to them to-day." He walked to the window as he spoke, and I saw him rubbing his hands together as though some thought was pleasing him very much.

"You are in good spirits," I said.

"Who would not be at the thought of securing so matchless and celebrated a casket?"

"Indeed," I answered; "I know nothing about these things."

"If you had ever studied the subject of art treasures, Dr. Cato, you must have heard of this special casket. It is formed out of one enormous onyx, on which are two priceless cameos, and around the lid rubies, diamonds, emeralds, sapphires, all of enormous value, are richly embedded. The casket was fought for, struggled for, and lost again and again as far

back as in the time of the Crusades. How it got into the Hampton family remains a mystery. It will be mine now."

"But surely Lady Helen will redeem it?"

"Never," he said, softly. He came up to me almost on tiptoe, held out his hand, said good-bye, and left me.

That evening, before retiring to rest, I had a word or two with Chetwynd.

"I want to ask you a straight question," I said. "Señor Santos has been your patient once again: do you still suspect him of foul play in the matter of Ingram?"

He did not answer for a moment; then he said, slowly—

"I would rather not speak of my suspicions. I have just come from a long interview with Mrs. Ingram; she interests me profoundly."

"Well, I have something to say," I continued. "I am going to visit the Spaniard at Roe House to-morrow evening. I have been commissioned to execute some business for him."

"The deuce you have!" he cried, springing to his feet. "Are you mad?"

"I hope not; and, by the way, the man's

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visit here has not been without fruit. He has promised to refund Mrs. Ingram some of the money which her son paid for the necklace."

Chetwynd looked grave and anxious.

"I wish you would not go to Roe House," he said, earnestly.

I laughed.

"Really, Chetwynd," I answered, "I shall begin to think your own nerves are out of order."

He was silent for a moment, then he said, slowly—

"Notwithstanding my duties as doctor here, I have toiled over the strange case of the murder of John Ingram almost day and night, and I now hold a theory too fantastic to divulge. This theory is founded on a single point. It is this: As I looked at poor Ingram's dead body that morning last autumn, I saw adhering to his coat a good many pine-needles and twigs. Now, the only fir trees anywhere near stand in the inclosure surrounding Señor Santos's house. This looked to me as if Ingram must have climbed a fir tree, for he could not have got the

needles on him unless he had been among the small branches."

"Climbed a fir tree? What on earth for?" I asked.

"Ah! that remains to be answered. Now listen, Cato. Have you made up your mind to visit Roe House?"

"Certainly."

"In spite of my telling you frankly that I consider there is an element of danger in your visit?"

"In spite of your friendly warning."

"Then I will cease to urge you not to go. On the contrary, I consider that your visit may be of the utmost use to me. Go and do exactly what Santos asks you. If he requests you to dine to-morrow night, humour him. I shall also go to Wimbledon to-morrow; we will force his hand."

"Do you mean to come with me to his house?"

"Not I. He won't know until the last moment that I am on the premises. My dear fellow, of one thing I am certain—Ingram was never murdered on the common."

"Not murdered on the common? But he was found there. How did he get there?"

"That," replied Chetwynd, "is what you and I have got to discover, and to-morrow night, too. It is a risk—are you prepared to run it?"

"I certainly am. Chetwynd, I am sorry for you; you are bitten by a craze—a craze to discover what never can be discovered on earth."

"We will soon know," was his ambiguous answer.

Lady Helen returned with the casket and put it into my hands, and punctually at eight o'clock on the following evening I arrived at Roe House, carrying the treasure with me. The moment I rang the bell the door was opened by José Santos himself.

"Well," he cried eagerly, "have you got it?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Capital. Come into my study. You have done well."

We both entered. I took the precious casket out of its wrappings and gave it to him. He

went over to the nearest window and examined it carefully. I noticed a queer smile of avarice on his features.

"You will dine?" he said, looking at me.

"If you wish it," I answered.

"That is right. I have not yet received the necessary notes and gold from the bank. I sent a special messenger for them early to-day. They will come, doubtless, in the course of the evening. Lady Helen specially stipulated to be paid in gold and notes. Of course, in a case of this kind one must submit to the caprices of a woman, and the money will be here by the time we have done dinner."

"My time is yours," I answered; "I have nothing special to hurry me back."

"Good, very good. It is a delightful summer's evening—we shall enjoy ourselves on the veranda afterwards. May I take you to a room now to wash your hands?"

I was somewhat surprised at his acting as his own servant. The house, too, seemed silent and deserted. In a few moments we were seated before a sumptuous cold repast in the dining-room.

"I hate your hot English dinners," said Santos, apologetically; "besides, it means keeping a lot of servants around one. Now, my wants are few, and it is so much more convenient to wait on ourselves than having chattering servants overhearing every word one says."

The señor spoke in a quick, nervous way, and there was a gleam in his eyes which I had noticed with more or less apprehension when he was suffering from his worst attacks at the Sanctuary. Suddenly, as I sat before that dinner table, some of the fears which had infected Chetwynd began to visit me. I lost my appetite. I wished myself anywhere than where I was. Santos was a stronger man than I: of more muscular and more physical power. Should occasion demand it, the strength of a madman might be his. Beyond doubt he was the victim of incipient insanity. His conversation as dinner proceeded took a strange turn. He talked of himself in a most confidential way.

Suddenly he rose.

"How hot the night is," he said; "shall we finish our dessert on the veranda?"

"With pleasure," I answered. "But I hope your messenger will soon come with the notes, Santos, for I want to return to Hampstead before it is too late."

"He ought to arrive at any moment—we will wait for him on the veranda. Come, let me show you the way."

He led me up-stairs, and we entered the large veranda which Mrs. Ingram had so faithfully described in her dream. It was a beautiful starlit night and perfectly warm.

"Take that chair," said the señor. He pointed to one of the deck-chairs as he spoke. I seated myself and lit a cigar. My host also smoked silently. We were both quiet, drinking in the peace and beauty of the night. At last Santos stirred restlessly, and said, in an abrupt tone—

"It is strange how one's memory reverts to by-gone events. Now, I hate even to think of poor Ingram, and yet I never come to this veranda but thoughts of him return to me. By the way, how far away from here did you tell me his body was found?"

"Not three hundred yards," I answered.

"Strange, strange. Have you any special theory with regard to the murder?"

"No," I replied, "but my friend Chetwynd has."

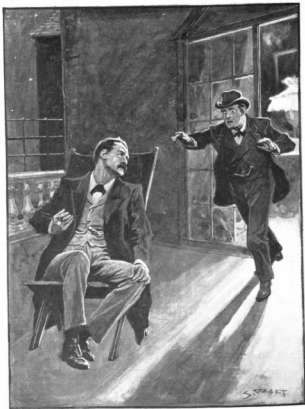
"Ha!" he answered; "and doubtless that most interesting lady, Mrs. Ingram, also holds a theory of her own. I must not forget that I am to send her a cheque by you to-night. I would never wish to be hard on women, although I hate them all. By the way, Cato, do you know that I believe that woman, in some queer, unfathomable, impossible way, suspects me—*me*—of the murder of Ingram?"

"Nonsense," I answered.

He started to his feet.

"I don't think it nonsense, nor does she. But I believe I heard a ring—that must be the messenger with the notes and gold. I will let him in."

It struck me, as Señor Santos said this, that he must have extraordinary ears, for I had certainly heard no bell ring. He left the veranda quickly. I sat on in my comfortable chair. I heard the sound of his retreating footsteps dying away, and then everything was quiet except for



“Get out of that chair!”

The Sanctuary Club

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the stirring of a slight breeze in the top of the dark fir trees. I was relieved that Santos was no longer by my side. If the man were not mad he was next door to it: his words during my visit had been more than strange, and there was a light in his eyes which I had seen before, but never in those of a sane person. Should I leave the veranda, go down-stairs, and make my escape? Was I really in danger? I could have easily gone away, but Lady Helen had trusted me with her commission, and the casket was in the Spaniard's possession. I must not leave the house without the £5000 which was to be Lady Helen's in exchange for the Catalini Casket. I must also try to get the cheque which the man had promised Mrs. Ingram. I was still lying back in my chair when a moving shadow cast by a lamp in the room behind me suddenly spread across the veranda. I started and turned. Great heavens! It was Chetwynd himself! He rushed towards me, his eyes alight with terror, his voice hoarse with fear.

"For God's sake, Paul, get out of that chair," he cried; "jump for your life."

There was no time to be even surprised. I made one bound from the chair, and at the same instant something whirled through the air close behind me. There was a dull clang. Chetwynd, gripping my arm, pointed up. Neither of us could speak.

Fixed at the extremity of a huge steel spring which had been concealed as one of the planks of the veranda, the chair had flown up in a great arc above us, the spring had dashed against the bars of the iron railing, and the chair checked thus suddenly in its flight was still quivering to and fro from the terrific shock of the impact.

Chetwynd was the first to gain his voice.

"Hush! Look!" he whispered. Through the doorway, leering out into the darkness, was the face of the Spaniard. The next instant it vanished. Chetwynd blew loud blasts on a whistle, and we both rushed into the room. The man was gone, but before we had reached the top of the stairs a loud shriek, followed by the sounds of a desperate struggle, fell on our ears, and hurrying down we saw Señor Santos struggling like a wild cat in the hands of two

powerful detectives. It was a horrible sight. Chetwynd turned to me.

"I congratulate you, Cato," he said. "Two minutes more and you would have been lying amongst the gorse bushes. It was a little too near to be pleasant." He looked back at the señor, who was still filling the great hall with furious imprecations.

"Take him to the station, Mitchell," I heard Chetwynd say; "I will be with you the first thing to-morrow morning."

I shuddered. The shock, the suddenness of the whole thing, had unnerved me. I felt sick and faint.

"Come, old chap, it's over now," said my friend; "let me get you some brandy."

We entered the dining-room. The table was still strewn with the remains of our dinner. Chetwynd lit a candle, and I poured out a stiff glass of brandy and gulped it down.

"But what does it mean?" I cried.

"I suspected it," he answered; "not exactly what has happened, but something very like it. The señor is partly mad, but more wicked. He had a craze for the collection of art treasures, and

wanted to secure them without paying his victims the necessary money. Thus he never intended to pay Lady Helen for the Catalini Casket. The old story which was repeated once in the case of Ingram would have again been the talk about you. Your lifeless body would have been found in the morning on Wimbledon Common, and the police would suppose that you had been robbed and murdered. I guessed that this was the señor's game, but it was impossible for me to tell how he performed his ghastly feats until I could get within the precincts of Roe House. When I found that you were really going there, I thought my opportunity had come. I resolved to watch you, and at the same time to let you go into danger. I followed you this evening, bringing two detectives in plain clothes with me. I perceived that there were no servants in the house, which strengthened my suspicions. We three managed to get into the garden, and watched you as you sat at supper. When you went up to the veranda we raised a window and got into the house, and then began our search. We first made our way to the room under the veranda. Come, I will show you." He

took up a candle as he spoke. I followed him.

"We could hear your voices above us," continued Chetwynd. "When we entered the room I struck a light and then saw what I will now show you—something that sent me flying up to you. Thank God, I was just in time. Santos must have gone down the other way, so I missed him."

We had now entered a small, bare room. In the centre stood an enormous cogged wheel and ratchet, which could be wound by a handle. Upon the floor lay a long steel chain.

"Do you see this?" said Chetwynd. "The chain was used to wind down the huge steel spring in the veranda; this cord drew back the catch in order to release it, and then—well, you saw the rest for yourself. One moment more, and it would have flung you over the fir-tops and out on to the Common, three hundred yards away. Your dead body would have been found there in the morning. Just as in Ingram's case, there would have been no clue. Señor Santos would have declared that you left the

house with the money in your possession, thus giving the motive for your murder. No possible suspicion could have attached to him. Paul, I don't wonder you feel shaken, but think for your comfort that you have avenged Ingram and brought to the gallows one of the most crafty, scientific, and satanic criminals of the day! What a stir it will make!"

The next day Roe House underwent a careful examination by some of the ablest detectives in London. In all sorts of unlikely places treasures of immense worth were hidden. Doubtless they were most of them stolen. Amongst others the pearl necklace for which poor Ingram was murdered was found. It was sold again for even a larger figure, and thus Mrs. Ingram got back her money. Lady Helen also received the Catalini Casket uninjured into her trembling hands. She had the courage and good sense, after so frightful a catastrophe, to inform her husband of the truth. He was more lenient than she had painted him, and her young brother was saved from absolute ruin.

As to Don José Santos, even the plea of

insanity availed nothing—two months later he was hanged for his crimes, and the world was rid of one of the most consummate scoundrels who has ever lived.