

# A TERRIBLE NIGHT

## The Curse of the Morelands.

BY LEON LEWIS.

### CHAPTER IV.—(Continued.)

This farewell review consumed but a few minutes, and the couple then made their final preparations for departure. The portmanteau they had packed was conveyed to the side porch, and all the lights within the dwelling were extinguished, save that of the lantern, with which they proposed to light their departure.

"Have you taken your revolver, Jesse?" asked Mrs. Moreland, as she halted at the door, to make a last thoughtful survey of her surroundings, and assure herself that she was leaving everything as it should be and had forgotten nothing she desired to take with her.

"Yes, mother; have you?"

"Certainly. I feel safer with it, in view of the many tough and lawless characters one is likely to meet on the lake and all along the shore."

"Then let's be off!"

They passed out, the mother closing and locking the door behind them, and picked up their portmanteau and descended the steps, moving quietly in the direction of the lake.

In another minute or two they had reached the boathouse at the water's edge, carrying their portmanteau between them.

The boathouse was a tall, gothic-roofed structure, standing on a high, stone foundation, the object of the builder having been to shelter his sleep in it without unstepping its mast or even lowering its sail. It was always kept locked, of course, as it contained many valuable articles pertaining to the aquatic tastes of the mother and daughter, not to speak of the neat craft they kept here habitually in readiness for instant use throughout the summer.

To take possession of their sleep, with their portmanteau and other effects, and to get it out of the boathouse and set sail, leaving everything snug behind them, was the work of a few additional minutes, and not long thereafter they had vanished on their voyage down the lake.

"Well! good-by, my dear relatives," muttered Radd Moreland, who had watched their embarkation from a snug covert near the landing. "I can find you when you are wanted, as I know where you are going. I am even acquainted with your destination, as I passed several months at the village of Egg Island a few years ago. Curiously enough, our old friend Hutchley is living there as a fisherman, and he and I may take a new hand together. Meanwhile I am going to make myself quite at home here—quite!"

He sauntered carelessly back to the house, giving himself admission by breaking a pane of glass and turning the fastener of a window.

Lamp in hand he made a rapid but comprehensive survey of the premises, and proceeded to serve himself an appetizing "bite to go to bed on," which included a bottle of choice wine from the cellar.

Emboldened by the said bottle he went on and took down the three signs left by the representative of the real estate agents, and concealed them under an arched trellis in the garden, after first reading them by the light of his lantern.

"The fact is," he muttered with characteristic impudence, "I don't propose to be turned out of doors by my sister-in-law, even if she don't know of my presence."

Returning to the house he locked himself in securely and took his way to a handsome guest chamber up-stairs which had aroused his admiration. He finished his bottle of wine while making a more particular survey of the apartment and then went to bed with many a self-congratulation at finding himself in possession of such quarters.

### CHAPTER V.—PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES.

OR almost the first time in his life, Radd Moreland was up with the sun on the morning subsequent to his invasion of The Elms.

The explanation of the fact is a simple one.

It was almost the first time in his life he had been "hived" in such elegance and luxury.

As was to have been expected, therefore, no sooner did the first gleams of the morning sun come peeping into the room than Radd had so resolutely made his headquarters, than he opened his eyes with a gasp of wilderment, and sprang up into a sitting posture, with a vague expression that he had been swapped off during the night for some stray millionaire.

A swift glance around the room, however, assured him that he was beginning the new day where he had left off the old one, and a serene sense of peace settled upon him.

He had reached port at last! He could now begin living!

"I shall need money, however—ready cash to buy tobacco and other necessities," he said to himself, with speculative mien, as he turned out of bed and proceeded to make his toilet. "And I must also have a revolver."

Vance crossed away abruptly with a gesture of polite dismissal.

"I was hard to serve, but I have had my revenge," he said, and he only after thoroughly examining the premises and discovering that the long absence of men from that household had left him no chance of a present change.

His toilet made—as well as his resources permitted—he went down to the kitchen, started a fire, and proceeded to get up a breakfast that would have sufficed, as far as quantity was concerned, for a boarding-house of no mean proportions. We must also do Radd the justice of

saying that the quality of his repast was not so bad as might have been expected, he having been forced at one period of his life, by the spur of dire necessity, to make several trips as a cook in a canal-boat.

His breakfast was too appetizing in fact for him not to linger over it a long time, but he dissolved company at last with its remainders and proceeded to pack the bundle to which his thoughts had turned so promptly and also so naturally.

He did not leave the house, however, until he had seen that the coast was clear, and had also tacked to the front and side doors slips of paper bearing the following legend:

"Absent till afternoon or evening."

It must be confessed that there was a considerable element of uncertainty in this announcement, but it may be stated in explanation that the said element was largely in the ascendant in Radd's mind at the moment he penned it.

The truth was he was going to town to raise money, and he knew his own weaknesses too well to particularize the hour when The Elms would again have the honor of his presence.

He reached the station just in time to catch one of the early morning trains, and in due course reached his destination.

We need not pause upon his transactions with the mythical uncle of his thoughts, nor upon the numerous "treats" he gave himself during the next few hours, but will pass to results.

As he had been on short allowance for several weeks previous to his advent at The Elms, he readily imbibed more than he could hold, and thereby became unexpectedly sobered.

A timely diversion of his attention by a well-dressed figure at the entrance of a ready-made clothing establishment served to withdraw him from the gutter for this occasion, recalling him to the principal object of his trip to the metropolis.

Having purchased an elegant suit of clothes, he became so impatient to see them reflected from his person that he took the next train for The Elms, where he arrived in due course.

It being his fixed purpose to get himself up like a gentleman, he devoted several hours to the business, beginning with a bath, and paying especial attention to his hair and beard.

Satisfied at last with the change wrought in his personal aspect, he prepared a supper which was a considerable improvement upon his breakfast, and then selected a book from the shelves of the library, and sauntered out to the rustic seat in the meadow which had elicited his admiration the day previous.

He had been seated here nearly an hour, or until twilight, enjoying a choice cigar and glancing occasionally at the pages of his book, when he saw Vance Weyville approaching from the direction of the lake, and proceeded, with the calm dignity of a well-fed dog in the manger, to intercept him near the side entrance.

"There is no one at the house to receive you, sir," he announced, returning Vance's polite gesture of salutation.

"I am aware of that fact," responded the young physician, coming to a halt, "or I had at least understood that such is the case. Seeing you here, however, I thought I would make a few inquiries, although I do not have the honor of your acquaintance."

"Exactly," returned Radd. "You've been here two or three times before today, I believe?"

"Only once before," Vance was good-natured enough to answer. "May I ask where the ladies are, and whether they will be at home this evening?"

"The ladies have set out upon a long tour in Europe, Asia, and Africa," replied Radd, "and a mere statement of this fact should be enough to tell you, sir, that they will not be visible for many a long year, if ever."

Vance was prepared by many a premonition to hear something of this sort, but the declaration nevertheless fell upon his hearing with startling force.

"May I ask what route they have taken?" he ventured, after a painful pause.

"That I cannot tell you, sir," responded Radd, assuming an air of great importance. "I have strict orders from Mrs. Moreland and her daughter, not to give their address to any human being."

"Not even to me?"

"Particularly not to you, sir."

The young doctor scanned the face and figure before him with singular intentness, asking himself how he could carry his point.

"Can I not prevail upon you to tell me at least, by what steamer the ladies proposed to sail?" he asked, in a voice husky with pain and consternation.

"No, sir," was the answer. "Not if you were to offer the millions. Mrs. Moreland intends the little incident of last evening to be final."

"What incident?"

"The rejection of your hand, sir!"

Vance's face flushed deeply, and he did not seek to conceal the fact that the declaration of Radd had given him a profound surprise.

"May I ask who you are?" he demanded.

"I am one of the family, sir; a Moreland."

"A Moreland?"

Vance's attention redoubled.

"May I ask you for a closer definition of your relationship to these ladies?" he asked, in a voice husky with pain and consternation.

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He walked away rapidly, and was soon lost to Radd's view in the darkness.

"Good!" exclaimed the latter, proceeding to take a drink from a flask he had drawn from his pocket. "Ha! ha!" and he laughed exultingly. "I've succeeded! 'Nothing venture, nothing have!' It was a risky thing to do—to draw it quite so strong—but the result is all I could have desired. That doctor is fooled completely. He'll never show up here again! The projected marriage is knocked higher'n a kite! As the girl's likely to take the situation to heart and die, at the same time worrying her ma to death, I shall soon be the sole heir of The Elms and all their other property, and also that millionaire East Indian uncle! In this way I shall not only be revenged upon these dear relatives for their insolence, as displayed in their recent chatter, but I shall also plant myself in clover for the rest of my days! Glorious! Capital!"

CHAPTER VI.—A STARTLING EXPERIENCE.

FOR nearly five minutes after watching Vance out of sight from the side door, Radd stood looking out into the night, and then his attention was attracted to certain sounds within the dwelling.

"The place is certainly getting over-run by rats," he muttered, nervously, as he closed the door and locked it. "Or is it haunted, as has been reported during the last thirty or forty years? Can a gang of thieves have come in by an underground passage, or has Colonel Ridley arrived here secretly from India, as Jesse so fancifully suggested? In any case, I must have up another bottle of that Yquem and make myself comfortable. I feel as shaky as a loon!"

Lighting a small lamp used for running about the house, he took his way down the cellar stairs, but suddenly paused in the middle of the descent, sniffing audibly.

"Now, there's that smell of cooking again!" he muttered, looking startled, as he peered into the darkness around him. "Somebody must be roasting beef at no great distance. How can that odor invade this house so strongly? Is there really an underground passage to the lake, as reported?"

He sniffed again with increased vigor, continuing to investigate his surroundings.

"In any case," he added "I must have that bottle! I never felt more in need of bracing up thoroughly! Ugh! I'm fairly wild!"

Resuming progress, he descended the stairs and visited the wine-vault, securing the bottle he wanted, but not without many a startled and suspicious glance around him.

"The place must certainly be haunted," he ejaculated, as he began ascending the stairs. "I hear something moving—footsteps—a rolling as of muffled thunder."

He sped upward rapidly, emerging from the staircase, the door of which closed behind him with the double violence of a sharp draft of air and his nervous haste, and the noisy jar thus produced was followed by an unmistakable fuster of voices.

But just where?

Hardly knowing what he did, Radd extinguished his lamp and thrust his bottle of Yquem into one of his capacious pockets, listening with all the intenceness of a sudden terror.

"This way, Mr. Moreland," suddenly called a deep but pleasant voice. "I am awaiting the pleasure of your company."

This greeting came from the dining-room, the door of which was opened at this moment, allowing a strong glare of light to fall upon the face and form of the startled plotter.

"Who—who are you?" he gasped, in undignified bewilderment, as he stared at a figure seated at the table.

"Come here and see, please."

Radd hesitated another moment, and then began moving slowly toward the dining-room, with staring eyes and fascinated air, precisely as a bird which has been charmed by a serpent advances toward the jaws awaiting to seize it.

"Show Mr. Moreland in, Tipoo," ordered the gentleman seated at the table, with a graceful wave of the hand, addressing some person still invisible to Radd.

"That sudden glare of light seems to have blinded him!"

The words had scarce been enunciated when the sleek, scarpie figure of a well-dressed Hindoo appeared, lamp in hand, at the entrance of the dining-room, and inclined itself with inimitable dignity and politeness to Radd, with the words:

"Walk in, please. My master desires the pleasure of your company to supper!"

Radd managed to incline his head with an air of comprehension, continuing to advance, and in another moment was within the dining-room, with such a wondering and dazed look on his features that any one seeing it would have readily divined that it was out of his power to utter a word.

"This is really a great pleasure, Mr. Moreland," said the self-constituted host, as he arose briskly from the table, and advanced to meet Radd, whom he took by the hand with graceful politeness. "I was just wishing I could have a companion in the repast with which I am about to close the day, and here comes a gentleman who does not all seem a stranger to a social glass or to an excellent dinner. But sit down, Mr. Moreland—sit down!"

He shook Radd's hand warmly, conducted him to the table, and installed him solitarily in the post of honor.

He was a man of some five-and-forty years of age, with a complexion that had originally been florid, although his features now displayed a deep, dark bronze which attested that they had been exposed to many years of tropical sunshine.

His form was of medium height, but of

the finest proportions, and a single glance would have sufficed to tell an observer that he enjoyed the best of health.

He was, indeed, an strikingly handsome specimen of rare strength and agility that few men after looking into his keen, blue eyes, would have ventured to attack him.

Yet his aspect was as pleasant as commanding, and no one could have long remained in his presence without learning that he was one of the most genial of men.

He was gifted with that quiet elegance and costly simplicity which ever indicate the possession of unlimited wealth, and there were certain singularities in his speech and manner which attested cosmopolitan experiences, and even suggested that he must have passed long years in some far country of the East.

"Many, many thanks," gasped Radd, with a wonderful glance at his host and a look at the glive Hindoo servant which had an imprint of positive terror. "You—you are very kind, sir! I had no idea—this is all so strange—pardon me!"

He passed his hand nervously over his forehead, and it was easy to divine that a little more pressure of the sort to which he was already subjected would cause him to fly shrieking from the house, or paralyze him entirely.

"You are quite excusable, sir," returned the host, with an increase, if possible, of his smiling suavity. "Permit me to offer you a glass of rare East Indian wine."

His action corresponding to the word, Radd raised the glass to his lips with a hand as shaky as his bow of acknowledgment was awkward.

A sip or two of the liquid, however, brought a strange sparkle into the eyes of the dazed plotter, his mien undergoing a change as marked as sudden.

"That is indeed fine!" he declared, smacking his lips audibly. "Something new, too! Never tasted it before. Is it all the way from India?"

The host smilingly assented, and Radd emptied his glass at a swallow, as if anxiously seeking the steadiness of nerves which only something of that sort could bring.

### WATARI KITASHIMA.

He is the first ordained Japanese Preacher in America.

The first Japanese ever regularly ordained to the Christian ministry in this country has lately been put in charge of a Unitarian parish at Vine-land, N. J. The young man is Rev. Watari Kitashima, and was born in western Japan in 1868. His father, who was at one time a Shinto priest, is a physician, and has charge at present of the only Christian hospital in Tokio.

Watari was brought up as a Buddhist and received a good education in his own country. While he was



so occupied his father was baptized and allied himself with the Presbyterian Church. Watari also was baptized and became a Presbyterian and resolved to devote himself to the ministry of that body. He determined to come to America and so, at the age of 16, with scarcely any knowledge of English and with no relatives or friends here, he set forth for America. He landed at San Francisco and soon made friends there. He also entered a school there and continued his studies, during the progress of which he became a Unitarian. Watari soon announced himself as a candidate for the Unitarian ministry and went to Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa., in preparation for this post. Later he attended the Harvard Divinity School, whence he was graduated last year. While there he preached ninety-six times and lectured sixty throughout New England. He then began preaching at Shirley, Mass., and a short time since was ordained and became pastor at Vine-land.

If your children are young, there is cause for joy in that fact, because you can console yourself with the reflection that they will be all right when they are older. But there will come a time when they are older, and not all right. There comes a time in a man's life when he can no longer put off disagreeable things; he must face them.

Men who make themselves felt in the world are conscious of a certain fate in their constitution which they know how to use. Few have overheard the gods or surprised their secrets. Life is a succession of lessons that must be lived to be understood.—George Eliot.

Citizens of Cleveland, Ohio, to Lynch a policeman. That is one of the ways of improving the force—unusual, but effective.