

IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT

(Vol. 1-3) (Annotated)

T. W. SPEIGHT



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Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Maren Fairbourne

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CHAPTER I. OVER THE CLIFF.

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A hot, windless August day had settled down into a dull, brooding evening, presageful of a coming storm. It was nearly dark by the time Lionel Dering was ready to turn his face homeward. The tide was coming in with an ominous muffled roar; the wind, unfelt all day, was now blowing in fitful puffs from various points of the compass, so that the weathercock on the green, in front of the Silver Lion, was more undecided than usual, and did not know its own mind for two minutes at a time. The boatmen were busy with their tiny craft, making everything fast for the night; and the bathing men were dragging their machines high and dry beyond reach of the incoming tide. Many of the excursionists--those with families chiefly--were already making their way towards the railway station; but others there were who seemed bent on keeping up their merriment to the last moment. These latter could be seen through the wide-open windows of the Silver Lion, footing it merrily on the club-room floor, to the music of two wheezy fiddles. A few minutes later there comes a warning whistle from the engine. The music stops suddenly; the country-dance is left unfinished; pipes are laid aside; glasses are quickly emptied; and the lads and lasses, with many a shout and burst of laughter, rush helter-skelter across the green, to find their places in the train.

"We shall have a rough night, Ben," said Mr. Dering to a man who was coming up from the beach.

"Yes, sir, there's a storm brewin' fast," answered Ben, carrying a finger to his forehead. "If I was you, Mr. Dering," he added, "I wouldn't go over the cliffs to-night. It ain't safe after dark, and the storm'll break afore you get home." But Mr. Dering merely shook his head, laughed, bade Ben good-night, and kept on his way.

The old boatman's words proved true. The first flash of lightning came just as the last houses of Melcham were lost to view behind a curve of the road, and when Lionel had two miles of solitary walking still before him. The thunder and the rain, however, were still far out at sea.

By this time it was almost dark, but Mr. Dering pressed forward without hesitation or delay. The cliff road, dangerous as it would have been under such circumstances to any ordinary wayfarer, had for him no terrors. He knew every yard of it as well as he knew the walk under the apple-trees in his own garden. It was not the first time by any means that he had traversed it after nightfall. As for the lightning, it was rather an assistance than otherwise, serving every two or three minutes, as it did, to show him exactly where he was. It was a bad road enough, certainly. Unfenced in several places, with here and there a broad, yawning chasm in the direct path, where some huge bulk of the soft earthy cliff, undermined by fierce winter tides, had broken bodily away and had gone to feed the ever-hungry waves. But to Lionel every dangerous point was familiar, and he followed the little circuitous bends in the path, necessitated by the breaks in the frontage of the cliff, instinctively and without thought.

He had been thinking of Edith West--his ladye-love, whom he might not hope ever to see again. In his long solitary walks both by day and night she was almost always in his thoughts. Not but what Lionel, this evening, had an

eye for the lightning, so beautifully terrible in its apparently purposeless vagaries. Fast following one another, came the blue, quivering flashes, lighting up, for one brief moment at a time, the barren skyward-climbing cliff, and the still more barren waste of sea.

"Like my life--like my life," murmured Lionel to himself, his eyes still bent on the wide tract of moorland, which had just been lighted up by a more vivid flash than common. "Barren and unprofitable. Without byre or homestead. Left unploughed, unfenced, uncared for. Of no apparent use, were it not that a few wild-flowers choose to grow there, and a few birds, equally wild, to build their nests there. But over it, as over more favoured spots, the free breeze of heaven blows day and night, and keeps it sweet; and the sea makes everlasting music at its feet."

These thoughts were still in Mr. Dering's mind when a sudden turn in the pathway brought him in view of the lighthouse, whose gleaming lantern, although full half a mile away, shone out through the coming storm like the cheery welcome of a friend.

The thunder was coming nearer, bringing the rain with it. The flashes were becoming more vividly painful. The sea's hoarse chorus was growing more loud, and triumphant. Lionel had paused for a moment to gather breath. A flash--and there, not fifty yards away, and coming towards him, was a man--a stranger! It was the work of an instant for the lightning to photograph the picture on his brain, but that one instant was enough for him to see and recognize the deadly peril in which the man was placed. He was marching unknowingly to his death. Not six yards in front of him yawned the most dangerous chasm in the whole face of the cliff.

In another moment Lionel had recovered his presence of mind. "Stop! stop for your life!" he shouted at the top of his voice. "Don't stir another step." It was too dark for him to see whether the man had heard and understood his warning cry. He must wait for the next flash to tell him that. The words had hardly left his lips when the thunder burst almost immediately overhead, as it seemed, and the first heavy drops of rain began to fall. Lionel, meantime, was making his way as quickly as he could round the back of the chasm. Two minutes more would bring him to the very spot where he had seen the stranger. But while he had still some dozen yards or more of the dangerous path to traverse, there came another blinding flash. It had come and gone in the twinkling of an eye, but that brief second of time was sufficient to show Lionel that the man was no longer there. An inarticulate cry of horror burst from his lips. With beating heart and straining nerves, he pressed forward till he stood on the very spot where he had seen the man; but he was standing there alone.

The storm was at its height. The forked flashes came thick and fast. One crack of thunder was followed by another, before the echoed mutterings of the last had time to die away. A wild hurricane of wind and rain was beating furiously over land and sea. Utterly regardless of the storm, Lionel lay down at full length on the short, wet turf, and shading his eyes with his hands, peered down into the black gulf below. It was a dangerous thing to do, but in the excitement of the moment all sense of personal fear was forgotten. He waited for the flashes; but when they came they showed him nothing save the wild turmoil of the rising tide as it dashed itself in fury against the huge boulders with which the beach was thickly strewn. It would be high water in half-an-hour. Already the base of the cliff was washed by

the intrushing waves. Lionel shouted with all his might, but the wind blew the sound back again, and the thunder drowned it. He stood up despairingly. What should he do to succour the poor wretch who lay there, dying or, perhaps, already dead, at the foot of the cliff? What *could* he do? Alone and unaided he could do nothing. He must seek the help of others. But where? The nearest point where he could hope to get assistance was the lighthouse, and that was nearly half-a-mile away. But long before the lighthouse could have been reached, and help brought back, the rising tide would have completely barred the passage along the foot of the cliffs, and would, in all probability, have washed the body out to sea. At the point where he was standing, the cliff had a sheer descent of a hundred feet to the beach. But suddenly Mr. Dering remembered, and it seemed to him like a flash of inspiration, that no great distance away there was a slight natural break in the cliff, known as "The Smugglers' Staircase[1]." It was merely a narrow gully or seam in the face of the rock, not much wider than an ordinary chimney. If it had ever really been used by smugglers in years gone by as a natural staircase, by means of which access could be had to the beach, they must have been very active and reckless fellows indeed. But what had been made use of by one man might be made use of by another, Lionel thought, and, with some faint renewal of hope in his breast, he made his way along the cliff in the direction of the staircase. If he could only get down to the beach before the tide had risen much higher, and could succeed in finding the body, he might, perhaps, be able to obtain some foothold among the crannies of the cliff, where he would be beyond reach of the waves, and where he might wait till daybreak, and the ebbing of the tide, should give him a chance of seeking help elsewhere.

But here he was at the staircase--a place, of a truth, to try a man's nerve, even by broad daylight. Although Lionel had never ventured either up or down it, he was no stranger to its peculiar features. More than once, in his rambles along the cliffs, he had paused to examine it, and to wonder whether the jagged, misshapen ledges of protruding rock from which it was supposed to derive its likeness to a gigantic staircase, were the result of nature's handiwork or that of man.

Lionel had lost no time. From his first sight of the stranger till now was not more than five or six minutes. Pausing for a moment on the edge of the staircase, he flung his hat aside, buttoned his coat, and then, instinctively, turned up his cuffs. Then he went down on his hands and knees, and was just lowering one leg over the edge of the cliff; when his collar was roughly seized, and a hoarse voice growled in his ear: "In heaven's name, Mr. Dering, what are you about?"

For the moment, Lionel was startled. Next instant he recognized Bunce, the coastguardsman[2]--a very worthy fellow, to whom he was well known. A few rapid words from Lionel explained everything. "All the same, Mr. Dering, you can't bring the dead back to life, do how you will," said Bunce, "and that man's as dead as last year's mackerel, you may depend on't. Let alone which, the tide's right up to the bottom of the cliff. No, no, Mr. Dering--axing your pardon--but one live man is worth twenty dead uns."

"Bunce, you are a fool!" said Lionel, wrathfully. "If I were not in a hurry, I would prove it to you. Take your hand off my collar, sir. I tell you I am going down here. If you choose to help me, go to the lighthouse and get Jasper to come back with you, and bring some ropes and a lantern or two, and whatever else you think might be useful. If you don't choose

to help me, go about your business, and leave me to do mine."

"But you are going to certain death; you are indeed, Mr. Dering," pleaded the coastguardsman.

"Bunce," said Lionel, "you are an old woman. Goodbye." There was a flash, and Bunce caught a momentary glimpse of a stern white face, and two resolute eyes. When the next flash came, Lionel was not to be seen. He was on his perilous journey down the Smugglers' Staircase.

"A madman--a crazy madman," muttered Bunce. "If he gets safe to the bottom of the staircase, he'll go no farther. Not as I'm going to desert him. Not likely. Though he did call me a old woman."

Going down on one knee on the wet grass, he put both his hands to his mouth, and shouted with all his might: "I'm going to the lighthouse for help, Mr. Dering." He listened, but there came no answer. Presently, with a little quaking of the heart, he rose to his feet. "He needn't have called me a old woman," he muttered. With that he pulled his hat fiercely over his brow, and set off for the lighthouse at a rapid walk, which soon quickened into a run.

How Lionel got down to the bottom of the staircase he could never afterwards have told. He only knew that when about half way down his foot slipped. The next thing he remembered was finding himself among the rocks at the bottom, bruised, bleeding, and partially stunned. A larger wave than usual, which dashed completely over him, gave him a shock which helped to revive him. Not the least perilous part of his enterprise was still before him. Already the tide was two feet deep at the foot of the cliff. Fortunately, the wind had gone down, and the rain had in some measure abated; but had it not been for the lightning's friendly flashes, Lionel's task would have been a

hopeless one. The road he had to take was thickly strewn with huge boulders, and gigantic masses of rock which had fallen--some of them centuries ago--from the cliffs overhead. Between and over these Lionel had to make his way to the point where the stranger had fallen. It was a work of time and peril, more especially now that the tide was coming in so dangerously fast, beating and eddying round the rocks and dashing over them in showers of stinging spray. Lionel saw clearly that, in any case, it would be quite impossible for him to return by the way he was going till ebb of tide. He must find some "coign of vantage" among the fallen rocks, or high up in the face of the cliff, beyond reach of the waves, and there wait patiently for further help. But first to find the stranger.

Manfully, gallantly, Lionel Dering set himself to the task before him. Foot by foot, yard by yard, he fought his way forward. The lightning showed him at once the dangers he had to contend against, and how best to avoid them. Over some of the rocks he had to clamber on all fours; round others he had to pick his way, waist-deep in water. Now and then, a larger wave than common would seize him, dash him like a log against the rocks, and then leave him, bruised and breathless, to gather up its forces for another attack. But Lionel never faltered or looked back. Onward he went, slowly but surely nearing the object of which he was in search. Nearly exhausted, all but worn out, at length he reached the heap of débris formed by the falling of the cliff--or rather that portion of it which the sea had spared. He was terribly anxious by this time. If the body of the stranger when it fell had been caught by any of the ledges or rough projecting angles of the débris, and had lodged there, there was just a faint possibility that the man might be still alive.

But if, on the contrary, it had rolled down to the foot of the cliff, the waves would long ago have claimed it as their own.

The storm was passing away inland. The lightning was no longer either so frequent or so vivid. Lionel's difficulty was to find the exact point of the cliff from which the stranger had fallen. At the most he could only guess at it. Still, here was the mass of fallen cliff, and the body, unless washed away by the tide, could not be far off.

Having accomplished so much, he had neither long nor far to search. Putting out his hand in the dark to grasp a projecting ledge of rock, which the last flash of lightning had shown to him, his fingers touched a clammy ice-cold face. He drew back his arm with an involuntary shudder. Next moment his heart gave a great throb of relief, and he felt that, whether the man were alive or dead, his labour had not been entirely in vain.

The body was lying among a heap of jagged rocks, half in and half out of the water. Lionel's first idea was that the man was stone dead. But a more careful examination, which he made as soon as he had dragged the body beyond reach of the still-rising tide, convinced him that there were still some flickering signs of life--just the faintest possible pulsation of the heart. The forehead was marked by a thin streak of blood, which Lionel tried to stanch with his handkerchief. For the rest, he made out, by the momentary glimpses which the lightning afforded him, that the man was young, fair, slightly built, and, to all appearance, a gentleman. Feeling some hard substance, Lionel put his hand into the stranger's pocket, and drew from it a small travelling flask. It contained a little brandy, with which Lionel moistened the unconscious lips, but the stranger's teeth were so firmly set that he found it impossible to open them. What more could he do? he asked himself, and he

was obliged to answer, Nothing. If Bunce had not deserted him, help would be forthcoming before long. Otherwise, he must wait there for daybreak and the ebbing of the tide.

But faithful, good-hearted Bunce had not deserted him. He had roused up Jasper, the lighthouse-keeper, out of his first snooze--Jasper's two mates being on duty--and had brought that individual, still half dazed, but responding manfully to the call, together with a quantity of stout rope, and a couple of ship's lanterns, not forgetting a blanket and a nip of cognac, and was back again on the cliffs only a few minutes after Lionel's search was at an end.

Never had human voice sounded so welcome to Lionel as did the coastguardsman's hoarse shouts that August night. They soon made each other out, and then the rest was comparatively easy. A rope was slung round the body of the still unconscious stranger, which was then hauled up by the two men with all possible care to the top of the cliff; a process which was repeated in the case of Lionel.

"I never thought to see you alive again, Mr. Dering," said Bunce, with tears in his eyes, as Lionel grasped him warmly by the hand. "Where do you wish to have the gentleman taken to?"

"To Gatehouse Farm, of course," said Lionel. "Jasper, you run into the village, and borrow a horse and cart, and some straw, and another blanket or two, and get back again as if your life depended on it."

And so about midnight the stranger, who had never recovered consciousness, was laid in Mr. Dering's own bed at Gatehouse Farm. They had found a card-case in his pocket, the cards in which were inscribed with the name of "Mr. Tom Bristow," but that was the only clue to his identity. Dr. Bell, the local practitioner, was quickly on the spot.

"A serious case, Mr. Dering--a very serious case," said the little man, two hours later, while pulling on his gloves and waiting for his cob to be brought round, "But we have an excellent constitution to fall back upon, and, with great care, we shall pull through. We have dislocated our left shoulder; we have broken three of our ribs; and we have got one of the ugliest cuts on the back of our head that it was ever our good fortune to have to deal with. But with care, sir, we shall pull through."

Somewhat comforted in mind by the doctor's assurance, Lionel went back upstairs, and having taken a parting glance at his guest, and satisfied himself that nothing more could be done for the present, he lay down on the sofa in the next room to catch an hour's hurried sleep.

He had no prevision of the future, that August morning: there was no voice to whisper in his ear that the man whose life he had just saved at the risk of his own would, before many months were over, repay the obligation by rescuing him, Lionel Dering, from a still more bitter strait, and be the means of restoring him both to liberty and life.

CHAPTER II.

THE HERMIT OF GATEHOUSE FARM.

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Lionel Dering at this time was twenty-eight years old. A tall, well-built, fair-complexioned man, but bronzed by much exposure to the sun and wind. His eyes were dark gray, very steady and penetrating. He had a habit of looking full into the faces of those with whom he talked, as though he were trying to penetrate the mask before him. It was a habit which some people did not like. He had never shaved in his life, and the strong, firm lines of his mouth, betokening immense power of will, and great tenacity of purpose, were all but hidden by the soft, flowing outlines of a thick beard and moustache, pale golden as to colour. His free, outdoor life, and the hard work to which he had accustomed himself of late years, had widened his chest and hardened his muscles, and had ripened him into a very tolerable specimen of those stalwart, fair-bearded islanders whose forms and figures are familiar wherever the English language is spoken. For three years past he had been living the life of a modern hermit at Gatehouse Farm. His reasons for choosing thus to isolate himself entirely from the world of his old friends and associations, to bury himself alive, as it were, while all the pleasures of life were still sweet to his lips, will not take long to explain.

Lionel Dering came of a good family on both his father's side and his mother's. Unfortunately, on his father's side there was little or no money, and his mother's side never forgave the marriage, which was one of those romantic run-away affairs of which people used to hear every week at a

time when the blacksmith of Gretna Green[3] was a legal forger of matrimonial fetters.

After nine years of married happiness, Godfrey Dering died, leaving his widow with two children, Lionel, aged eight, and Richard, aged six. Mrs. Dering found herself with an annuity of six hundred pounds a year, which her husband's care and prevision had secured to her. For the future, this would be the sole means of subsistence of herself and children. Her own family had repudiated her from the day of her marriage, and she was too proud to court them now. She sent her two boys away to a good school, and while still undecided where she would permanently fix her home, she went to live for a while with some of her husband's friends at Cheltenham[4]--and at Cheltenham she stayed till the day of her death. The Langshaws, under whose roof she found a home during the first year of her bereavement, were worthy well-to-do farmers, distant relations of Godfrey; who seemed as if they could never do enough for pretty Mrs. Dering and her two fatherless boys. After a time she took lodgings in the town itself, where her money and her good looks, combined with her amiability and easy, cheerful disposition, soon attracted around her a wide circle of friends and acquaintances. She had several offers of marriage during the ten years of her widowhood, but she remained steadily faithful to the memory of her first love, and when she died her husband's name was the last word on her lips.

His mother died when Lionel Dering was eighteen years old, six months after his younger brother, Richard, had gone to India to carve out for himself that mythical fortune which every youthful enthusiast believes must one day infallibly be his.

Lionel had been brought up to no business or profession. While still a youth at school, a great part of his holidays had been spent at the Langshaw's farm, three miles out of Cheltenham, where he was always a welcome guest. Here he learned to ride, to drive, to shoot, and to take an interest in all those outdoor avocations which mark the due recurrence of the seasons on a large and well-managed farm. But when his school-days were really at an end, both Lionel and his mother were utterly at a loss to decide in which particular groove the young man's talents--genius Mrs. Dering called it--would be likely to meet with their amplest and most speedy recognition.

Truth to tell, the widowed mother trembled at the idea of parting from her favourite boy, of letting him go out unprotected into the great world, so full of wickedness and temptation, of which she herself knew so little, but about which she had heard such terrible tales. So week passed after week, and month after month, and Lionel Dering still stayed at home with his mother. An inquiry was made here and there, a letter written now and then, but all in a half-hearted sort of way, and Mrs. Dering never heard the postman's knock without trembling lest it should be the herald of a summons which would tear Lionel from her side for ever. When, at last, the dreadful summons did come, in the shape of the offer of an excellent situation in India, Mrs. Dering declared that it would break her heart if Lionel left her. She was a very delicate little woman, be it borne in mind, and Lionel, who loved her tenderly, fully believed every word she said--believed that her heart would really break if they were separated--as in all probability it would have done. "I won't leave you, mother--I won't go away to India," said Lionel, as he kissed away her tears.

"You might let *me* go, mother, instead of Li," said Richard, as he too kissed her. "If you love me, mother, let me go."

So Richard went to India in place of his brother, and Lionel still stayed at home. Six months later, Mrs. Dering, who had been a partial invalid for years, died quite suddenly, and Lionel found himself, after the payment of all expenses, with about fifty pounds in ready money, and no ascertainable means of earning his own living.

In this emergency, a certain Mr. Eitzenschlager, a German merchant, who had met Mrs. Dering in society some five or six years previously, and had fallen in love with her to no purpose, came to the rescue by offering Lionel a stool in his counting-house, at Liverpool. But to Lionel, with his outdoor tastes, the thought of any mode of life which involved confinement within doors was utterly distasteful. He preferred taking up his quarters for a time with his old friends the Langshaws, and there waiting till another opening should give him an opportunity of joining his brother in India.

When Dorothy St. George ran away from home to marry Godfrey Dering, she never afterwards saw her father, nor any member of her family, except her youngest brother, Lionel--the brother after whom her eldest boy was named. He was a soldier, and shortly after Dorothy's marriage he was ordered abroad, but he wrote occasionally to the sister whom as a boy he had loved so well, therein disobeying his father's express command, that no communication of any kind should henceforth be held with the disgraced daughter of the house. But many years passed before Lionel St. George had an opportunity of seeing his sister--not, in fact, till some time after their father's death: not till he had won his way up, step by step, to the rank of general, and had

come back from India, a grizzled veteran, with a year's leave of absence in which to recruit his health, and pay brief visits to such of his relatives and friends as death had spared. His sister Dorothy was one of the first whom he made a point of seeing. For Lionel he contracted a great liking, chiefly, perhaps, because his nephew was named after him, and because in the tall, bronzed young man he saw, or fancied that he saw, many points of resemblance to what he himself had been in happy days long gone by. It was a pity, the general said to himself, that such a fine young fellow should be kept tied to his mother's apron string. So, after he got back to India, he brought his influence to bear, and an eligible opening for Lionel was quickly found. But, as we have already seen, Lionel did not avail himself of his uncle's offer. Richard went to India in his stead, and Lionel was by his mother's side when she died.

Left thus alone, it seemed to Lionel that he could not do better than join his brother, and he wrote his uncle to that effect.

But before he could possibly get an answer from India, something happened which changed the whole current of his life. Mr. Eitzenschlager, the German merchant, died, and left Lionel a legacy of twenty thousand pounds.

What a fund of quiet, unsuspected romance there must have been in the heart of the old Teuton! At fifty years of age he had fallen in love with pretty Mrs. Dering; but Mrs. Dering had nothing but esteem to give him in return. Once rejected, he never spoke of his feelings again, but went on loving in secret and in silence. Had Mrs. Dering outlived him, the twenty thousand pounds would have been left to her. As it was, the money was left to the son whom she had loved so well.

An unexpected legacy of twenty thousand pounds is enough to upset the calculations of most men. It upset Lionel's. The idea of going out to India was abandoned indefinitely. Now had come the time when he could carry out the cherished wish of his life. Time and money were both at his command, and he would travel--travel far and wide, studying "men and manners, climates, councils, governments." When he was tired of travel, he would buy a little estate somewhere, and settle down quietly for the remainder of his days as a gentleman farmer. Such were some of the daydreams of simple-minded Lionel--daydreams which the future would laugh to scorn.

Hitherto Lionel had escaped scathless and heart-whole from all the soft seductive wiles prepared by Love to ensnare the unwary. But his time had come at last, as it comes to all of us. He saw Edith West, and acknowledged himself a lost man. Nor could any one who knew Edith wonder at his infatuation. She was an orphan and an heiress. She lived with her uncle, Mr. Garside, who was also her guardian. Lionel saw her for the first time in a railway carriage, when she and Mrs. Garside were travelling from London to Cheltenham. There was a slight accident to the train, and Lionel was enabled to show the ladies some little attention. Three weeks after that chance meeting, Lionel proposed in form for the hand of Mr. Garside's niece.

Lionel's proposal was very favourably received, for Mr. Garside was prudence itself, and young men worth twenty thousand pounds are not to be met with every day. Very wisely, however, he stipulated that the lovers should wait a year before fastening themselves irrevocably together.

So Lionel, after spending two months in London, where he had an opportunity of seeing Edith every day, set out on his travels. In ten months from the date of his departure he

was to come back and claim her for his wife. He left the Continent and the ordinary lines of tourist travel to be done by Edith and himself after marriage, and started direct for America. Cities and city life on the other side of the Atlantic did not detain him long. He panted for the wild, free life and noble sports of the prairies and mountain slopes of the Far West. He spent six happy months with his rifle and an Indian guide on the extreme borders of civilized life. Then he crossed the Rocky Mountains, and found himself, after a time, at San Francisco. There letters from home awaited. One of the first that he opened told him of the failure of the bank in which the whole of his legacy, except a few hundred pounds, had been deposited. Lionel Dering was a ruined man.

One morning, about three months later, Lionel was ushered into the private office of Mr. Garside, in Old Broad Street, City. The rich merchant shook hands with him, and was polite but freezing. Lionel went at once to the object of his visit. "You have heard of my loss, Mr. Garside?" he said.

"I have, and am very sorry for it," said the merchant.

"I have saved nothing from the wreck but a few hundred pounds. Under these circumstances, I come to you, as Miss West's guardian, to tell you that I give up at once, and unreservedly, all pretensions to that lady's hand. I absolve her freely and entirely from the promise she made me. Miss West is an heiress: I am a poor man: we have no longer anything in common."

"Very gentlemanly, Mr. Dering--very gentlemanly, indeed. But only what I should have expected from *you*."

Lionel cut him short somewhat impatiently. "You will greatly oblige me--for the last time--by giving this note to Miss West. I wish her to understand, direct from myself, the motives by which I have been actuated. This is hardly a

place," looking round the office, "in which to talk of love, or even of affection; but, in simple justice to myself, I may say--and I think you will believe me--that the feelings with which I regarded Miss West when I first spoke to you twelve months ago, are utterly unchanged, and, so far as a fallible human being may speak with certainty, they will remain unchanged. I think I have nothing more to say."

But Lionel's note never reached Edith West. When Mr. Garside had finished recounting to his wife the details of his interview with "that strange young man," he gave her the note to give to Edith; but the giving of it was accompanied by a look which his wife was not slow to comprehend. The note was never alluded to again between husband and wife, but somehow it failed to reach the hands for which it was intended. Edith was simply told by her guardian that Mr. Dering, with a high-minded feeling which did him great credit, had broken off the engagement. "He is a poor man--a very poor man, my dear," said Mr. Garside, "and he has the good sense to know that you are not calculated for a poor man's wife."

"How does he know that--or you--or anybody?" flashed out Edith. "But Lionel Dering never made use of those words, uncle. They are an addition of your own."

Nevertheless, the one great bitter fact still remained, that her lover had given her up. "If he had only called to see me--or even written!" she said to herself. But days, weeks, months, passed away, and there came no further sign from Lionel. So Edith locked up her love, as some sacred thing, in the innermost casket of her heart, and the name that was sweeter to her than all other earthly names, never passed her lips after that day except in her prayers.

Lionel was not long in making up his mind as to his future course. He had still two or three hundred pounds in ready

57 An informal written acknowledgment of debt, from the phrase “I owe you.” It is not the same as a formal negotiable security such as a bond or mortgage.

58 Dobbs is described as the “body-servant to Kester St. George,” meaning a personal valet or attendant who served a gentleman in daily matters such as dressing and errands.

59 Duxley appears to be a place, probably a town or estate, but the excerpt gives no further identifying details. The text only indicates that Kester St. George has gone there and has not yet returned.

60 “Bedlam” was a popular name for Bethlem Royal Hospital in London, historically associated with the treatment of mental illness. In older usage it could also be used loosely to mean an asylum or a scene of chaos.

61 This means interest calculated at 5 percent each year. In the passage, Mrs. McDermott is comparing it with higher investment returns she thinks she could get elsewhere.

62 A formal men's coat worn for evening or ceremonial dining. Here it signals the stricter dress expectations Mrs. McDermott imposes on the household.

63 A character in the novel, the Squire's sister. She is portrayed as talkative and meddlesome, and the name reflects an older style of surname that may feel less familiar to modern readers.

64 The name of a piece of land belonging to the Squire. In this context, “holt” is an old word for a small wood or wooded hill, so the phrase suggests a wooded tract rather than a building.

65 A travel label or luggage tag showing the passenger’s name and destination, a common railway-era way of identifying baggage. Here it indicates that the luggage arrived by train and was meant for Bath.

66 The mineral spring waters for which Bath, England, was famous, long promoted as having health benefits. In the 19th century, visitors often went there on medical advice to “drink the waters.”

67 A public room at a spa where visitors gathered to drink mineral water pumped from the springs. Bath’s Pump Room was one of the city’s best-known social and лечебные venues.

68 A toll-gate was a barrier on a road where travelers paid a fee to pass, often maintained by a road trust or turnpike authority. It reflects the toll roads common in Britain before modern highways.

69 In railway usage, a siding is a side track used for passing, storing, or loading trains. “Siding accommodation” here means extra track space or facilities needed at a station for operational flexibility.

70 A portmanteau was a large traveling bag or trunk, commonly used in the 19th century for carrying clothes and

personal belongings.

71 This means a nap taken after a meal. The phrase is formal and somewhat humorous here, describing the Squire dozing off after dinner.

72 Bath is a historic city in Somerset, England, long known for its Roman baths and as a fashionable spa town. In older novels, a trip to Bath often implies travel to a social or commercial center rather than a simple holiday.

73 “Dirty Jack” is a nickname for John Skeggs, and the text says he is also called “Drunken Jack.” Such nicknames were common in fiction for rough, lower-status characters, especially those known for drinking or shady dealings.

74 A “wooden leg” is a prosthetic limb made from wood, used by people who had lost a leg. In the 19th century it was a common practical replacement before modern artificial limbs.

75 A “half-crown” was a British coin worth two shillings and sixpence, used before decimalization. The request for “a couple of half-crowns” means a modest sum of money in the currency of the time.

76 A Latin phrase meaning “may he rest in peace.” It is commonly used in funerary or commemorative writing to refer respectfully to someone who has died.

77 A legal term used in older British usage for murder committed intentionally. In the novel, it refers to the charge

that would follow if the truth about Percy Osmond's death were revealed.

78 A light, open carriage with a basket-like body, used for short trips on country roads. Such vehicles were common in the 19th century but are less familiar today.

79 A named private or local bank in the fictional town of Duxley. The reference suggests there was more than one bank in the area, distinguishing it from the 'Town and County' bank.

80 A British parliamentary expression meaning the opposing party in the House of Commons. It is a familiar political insult or shorthand in 19th-century debate.

81 A nickname for an elderly woman in the story; here she is dead and buried, and her death sets off much of the action. The text treats her burial and family connections as important to the plot.

82 A railway worker who supervised labour on railway construction or maintenance, especially on the track. The term is now uncommon, but it was a recognizable occupation in the late 19th century.

83 A British colony and, by this period, a distant destination for emigration or travel from England. In the novel, going there represents a major and likely permanent departure.

84 In England, the assizes were periodic criminal court sessions held by traveling judges. Here, "summer assizes"