

THE STORY OF A GREAT SECRET.

Millions of Mischiefs.

By HEADON HILL.

Author of "By a Hair's Breadth," "The Duke Decides," "A Race with Ruin," Etc., Etc.
"And some that smile have in their hearts, I fear, millions of mischief."—
Julius Caesar, Act IV., Scene I.

(Continued.)
CHAPTER XI.

On the following day from my first meeting with him, I noticed a slight change in Herzog's demeanour. It was not that he relaxed his outward courtesy towards me, or showed any slackening of confidence, but that he was silent and preoccupied. He evinced no disposition to leave the house till after he had received a telegram which he put carefully away in his pocket-book after perusing it twice. From the time he took over it I guessed that it was in cipher.

It was then eleven o'clock, and I had seen nothing of Janet, though once or twice when the door was opened I had heard her voice in the opposite sitting room as she talked with her father. The mid-day boat, by which she presumably meant to start for Lymington, on route for London would be at the pier at a quarter to one, and it was therefore with a thrill of anticipation that I heard Herzog unfold his programme for the day.

"My friend," he said, "in comparison with yesterday today should be a day of small things. We will laze about the green walk, haunt the pier and watch the steamboats, and—this with a clenching of the thin lips that were in such strange contrast to his fleshy countenance—"prepare the outline of our campaign. Your quarry arrives to-day. Any moment I may unlash you."

"By what boat is Lord Alphonington expected?" I asked.

"By the one reaching here at noon—the same that brought us," was the reply.

It would be the boat which on its return journey would take Janet on the first stage of her quest for Danvers Crane. A sensational longing to see her off seized me, and to that end I hazarded the dissimulating suggestion—

"I have never seen the Prime Minister. I might recognize him from his pictures or I might not, and it would be well to make sure of him in the flesh as soon as possible. I want to get my job over and be off for this suspense is killing me. Let us go down and meet the boat."

"A good notion. I can understand your eagerness," said Herzog drily.

So it was that when the steamer rounded the point at Cliff End we were on the pier to watch her approach. While she was still a long way off Herzog nudged my elbow and drew my attention to a tall figure in a light grey suit standing by the wheel, talking to the captain.

"That is Lord Alphonington," he said, far too clever to drop his voice and a crowd where a whisper would have been more noticeable than his

perfectly natural indication of such a celebrity.

"Yes, that is Lord Alphonington, and you can prepare to face what the news papers call his eagle gaze, for in five minutes I shall introduce my rescuer to him," said a merry voice behind us. And, turning, we had to make our bows to Lady Muriel, who, with Roger Marske in attendance, had come to meet her father.

It was Herzog who constituted himself spokesman, and as he was a man who weighed every word, he puzzled me by his answer.

"If you will allow me the privilege of a responsible medical man, Lady Muriel," he said, "I should prefer to have that introduction postponed a little. My patient, Mr. Martin, is not feeling quite the thing this morning, and the excitement of such an honour might be too much for him."

As the so-called Doctor Barrabes enunciated this fiction I caught Marske's eyes bent on me in a malignant gaze, in which, however, I thought I detected a trace of fear. But Lady Muriel's sympathetic concern for my health caused me to turn to her and murmur a few words of thanks while Herzog gently plucked at my sleeve and led me away.

"We must steer clear of them while that fellow is about," he whispered. "I thought I had drawn his sting yesterday, but mischief is writ large all over him. I confess myself puzzled."

If my neck had not been in jeopardy I really think that at this point I should have begun to enjoy the game. That my cunning bear-leader should be puzzled by anything that to my duller wits seemed fairly patent was amusing, and under happier circumstances I could have laughed aloud at his mystification. For Herzog, I thought, attributed Marske's uneasiness to a desire to thwart the Alphonington plot, whereas I had good reason to believe that Marske's hostility was due to a very present sense of danger to himself.

With much churning of her paddle-wheels the steamer sidled up to the pier, and as soon as she was made fast Lord Alphonington stepped across the gangway. His advent had been noised abroad, and quite a little crowd of butterfly idlers had come down to witness his arrival, forming a semi-circle, into which Lady Muriel impulsively pushed her way to greet her father. When the Premier bent his imposing figure to kiss his daughter, someone raised a cheer, which was taken up with well-bred moderation as the distinguished party moved off.

I was watching them as they walked up the pier, Lady Muriel

hanging on to her father's arm, and Roger Marske, whom Lord Alphonington had warmly shaken by the hand, following a few paces behind when I saw Janet pass the toll-gate and come quickly toward them. She was carrying a small handbag, and was evidently in haste to catch the steamer, for she merely waved her hand to Lady Muriel and bowed to Lord Alphonington as she passed. Her way to the gangway brought her quite close to where Herzog and I were lounging, but she affected not to see us, and vanished on to the boat.

"It seems that we are to lose our charming fellow-lodger," said Herzog, removing his cigar to stare after her. That inscrutable stare of his. How I wished that I could read that stony mask and learn whether there was more in his mildly interested tone than met the ear.

"I suppose they have changed their minds again, and Mrs. Krance will be tearing her hair," said I, growing, I flattered myself, an adept in subtlety. "Colonel Chismark is probably looking after the luggage and will be along directly."

"No," replied Herzog shortly, and I fancied that there was a curious undertone in his voice. "The Colonel stays behind."

I was wondering what this meant—what sources of information he had tapped—when my attention was distracted by the sight of Roger Marske returning alone along the pier. The arrival of Janet had caused me to transfer my gaze to her from the Alphonington party, and the Earl and his daughter had now disappeared through the barrier—presumably to walk up to "Ardmore." Why was Marske coming back, with scowling face and determined tread?

The question troubled Herzog, too. I was sure. It was denied to a man of his plethoric build to repress one outward and audible sign of agitation, and the deep breath he drew told me that he was interested, if not annoyed. We neither of us had long to wait for an answer, and the ugly significance of it pierced me like a poisoned arrow.

Keeping his eyes averted, Marske crossed the gangway and went on board the steamer. He was going to London, too, by the same train as Janet, and his decision to do so could only have been come to on learning her intention. On the spur of the moment he must have excused himself to Lord Alphonington and Lady Muriel, and returned to catch the boat.

Though his action was another confirmation of my suspicions, it filled me with the gravest apprehensions on Janet's behalf. It had seemed like an outrage before to allow a

young and inexperienced girl to go to London alone to do the work of a skilled detective. Only my desperate position and my inability to trust anyone else had eased my conscience as to her mission. But that the man to whom, if our theory was correct, her quest would be a menace, should be in London while she was engaged upon it was intolerable. What could his object be but to thwart her by any means in his power? If indeed he was the slayer of my mother and sister, he was a human fiend who would not hesitate to cover crime with crime.

Heaven knows what an agony of doubt and fear I suffered as I realized the situation. I felt that I could not, must not, let Janet go alone. I would at least start with her, and on the boat trust to luck either to dissuade her from the journey, or devise some scheme for continuing it with her. I turned fiercely to Herzog, noting as I did so that his face wore its most saturnine aspect.

"I am going to be ill," I blurted out. "My nerves will stand the strain no longer. A trip on the sea might revive me. I will chuck the whole thing and give myself up if I may not go to Lymington and back on the steamer. It is your only chance of getting me to do what you want."

His eyes burned and scorched into mine, but suddenly their expression changed to a sardonic smile. An ominous sound fell upon our ears—the plashing of the steamer's paddles. "With all the will in the world I could not grant your request. It comes too late," he said.

It was too true; the boat was in motion, and by the time I could have jumped for her would have been her own length away. Some idea of my half-formed intention may have entered my companion's mind, for his gently restraining hand fell on my arm.

"Come, my friend," he said. "A walk to the Needles and back will give you all the sea air you want, and you will be a good deal safer with me than with Mr. Roger Marske."

And he led me away along the pier, steering me through the chattering throng of summer visitors, and so up the chine to the green walk, whence we had a parting view of the steamer that bore all my hopes and fears. As she rounded Cliff End Poiré and disappeared I could have wept with rage.

"See here," said Herzog, as he pushed me roughly down on to a seat; "you wish to save your neck, don't you? Well, your behaviour led me to think that you had forgotten that part of your anatomy."

"Why?" I asked sullenly.

"You wanted to go on the boat with Marske to pick a quarrel with him because he suspects your identity—perhaps, in your inborn ferocity, to strangle him or throw him overboard, eh?"

That motive would serve as well as another, I thought, seeing that I could not tell him the real one.

"You must draw your own inferences," I replied in the same sullen tone.

"Have no fear but that I shall do that," Herzog retorted drily, leaving me in doubt once more whether all my wriggings and subterfuges

were not thrown away upon this keen peruser of human documents. That he had not yet directly alluded to Janet was no proof that he had not divined my secret. On the contrary, it would be part and parcel of his duplicity to allow me to think that I had preserved that secret till he could pounce on it, tear it from me, and turn it to his own ends.

But during the walk which we took out and back across the heath-or-clad hills his mood was again that of the genial companion, and no word of his dread scheme passed his lips till we were back in our sitting room at "Springthorpe." A coroneted envelope, addressed to me as "Martin, Esq.," lay on the table. Herzog took it up, opened it as coolly as though it had borne his own name, and, after reading the contents, said quietly—

"An invitation for both of us to dine at 'Ardmore' to-morrow night, on behalf of her father, Lady Muriel is very pressing, you see. As you are getting restive you shall have your way, my friend. Before the entertainment is over you shall have your opportunity to lay his worship's proud head in the dust."

(To be continued.)

A CIVIL WAR CAPTAIN

Talks to the Point.

"Until about two years ago I had had piles for about thirty years, at times bleeding and very painful. I got a fifty cent box of Pyramid Pile Cure at the drug store, and used it and was entirely cured; got another box in case I needed it, and as the piles did not return in six months I gave the remedy to a friend of mine who wanted the doctor to operate to cure him. My friend said he would use the 'pyramid' but he knew they would do him no good, but they cured him of piles of twenty-five years standing. I am free from piles today, and have been since using Pyramid Pile Cure. Was Captain in the Civil War." James Adams, Soldiers' Home, Cal.

The majority of people labor under the impression that an operation is necessary in severe cases of piles, or hemorrhoids, and are very skeptical regarding the remedial virtues of any medicinal compound. Testimony like the above should certainly have a tendency to dispel this impression, although it is odd that such a fallacy should prevail, and still more odd that so many people should think an operation effects a permanent cure, whereas the contrary is more often the case.

We advise all sufferers from this painful complaint to buy a fifty cent package of Pyramid Pile Cure at any drug store and try it tonight.

Those interested can not be too strongly urged to write Pyramid Drug Co., Marshall, Mich., for their little book describing the causes and cure of Piles, as it contains valuable information, and is sent free for the asking.

TO ARBITRATE WITH AMERICA.

Japanese Government Agrees to Sign Treaty to this effect.

Tokio, Dec. 28.—The Japanese government has agreed to negotiate an arbitration treaty with the United States. This is the result of Minister Griscome representations to Baron Komura, minister of foreign affairs, who has notified him that his government is pleased to accept America's invitation. Baron Komura further states that Japanese minister Takahira is fully empowered to act with Secretary of State Hay and frame and sign a treaty of the kind at Washington. Although as yet undrafted, it is expected that this instrument will be worded on similar lines to a series of treaties recently signed by President Roosevelt and Secretary Hay.

"ALONG NEW TRAILS."

Mounted Police to Open a Winter Road in the Far North.

Ottawa, Dec. 29.—(Special)—The Mounted Police department received a telegram stating that a police patrol left Dawson, yesterday, to open up a winter road, to get connection with Fort-MacPherson, on the MacKenzie River. Much of the country through which the patrol intends going is unknown and it is very doubtful if they can get through.

TO TOUR BRITAIN.

New York, Dec. 28.—Sousa's band, under the personal direction of John Philip Sousa sailed for Liverpool today for the fourth European tour. The party consists of sixty musicians with Maud Powell, violinist, Herbert L. Clarke, cornetist, and Estelle Lieblich, soprano, as soloists. The band will return to America about the middle of May.

CANADA'S NATIONAL MUSEUM

Ottawa, Dec. 28.—(Special)—Geo. Goodwin signed the contract for the construction of the Royal Victoria museum today. It amounts to about \$990,000. The work will have to be completed in three years and six months.

Dry Goods and Millinery CLEARANCE SALE.

Owing to change of business, which will continue until the whole new and complete stock (\$15,000) has been disposed of. Such Bargains in Ladies' Garments, Ready-to-Wear Suits, Skirts and Coats, we venture to say have never before been offered in this city. Absolutely no reserve and no two prices.

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