

THE STORY OF A GREAT SECRET.

Millions of Mischief.

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 1.

(Continued.)
CHAPTER X.

What Janet Discovered.

We caught the excursion steamer at Bourne-mouth and made the return journey without further incident or seeing anything of Roger Marske. As a result of the afternoon's adventure, he had either decided to get back to Totland by the Lymington route rather than travel with us, or he had altered his plans entirely—possibly to the extent of taking train for London.

Colonel Chilmark was in his accustomed place in his window at "Springthorpe" as we entered the garden gate, and the scrutiny which he bent on us from under his shaggy brows was an unexpected ordeal. He had not entered into my calculations when I had consented to the removal of the false whiskers and now I stood before him in my old semblance, save for the lack of my moustache. His critical star gave me a bad twenty seconds as we walked up the path, but before we reached the door he had carelessly resumed his everlasting newspaper.

The two occasions on which I had met him had evidently not stamped me on his memory to the extent of recognition in my altered guise. Fortunately, like all valetudinarians, the Colonel was del-centred, and more-over, thanks to my engagement, to Janet having been kept secret, he had no particular interest in me—except, of course, as a notorious malefactor with whom he would not be likely to go out of his way to claim acquaintance.

We had hardly entered our sitting-room when Mrs. Krance appeared. She gave me a queer birdlike glance, which Herzog seemed to think demanded the explanation that it had been clean-shaven because of the heat. She sniffed, without comment.

"I have got a message for you gentlemen from the young lady," she said.

"From Miss Chilmark?" Herzog purred softly.

The landlady nodded, and continued: "Leastways she didn't send it as a message direct, but she told me she hoped you wouldn't make a noise shutting your doors, or anything. She's been over to the New Forest to-day, and went to bed with a bad headache directly she got back."

"Oh, we are very quiet folk and shall not disturb the lady," replied Herzog with a genuine carelessness that reassured me. He evidently did not suspect what I guessed—that the "message" was a real one with a hidden meaning in it intended for me alone. My dear girl, I felt sure, had taken means of conveying to me

that she had fulfilled her self-set task and had returned—a fact about which I should have been anxious if not informed. I could not be certain as to her motive in keeping to her room, but I did not believe in the "headache." I had never known her suffer that way, and it was more likely that it was part of some plan for communicating with me.

Some five hours later, when, after another strained evening, spent for the sake of appearance in the hotel billiard-room, Herzog and I retired to our respective bedrooms, I proved the truth of the surmise. I had not begun to undress, and was listening to Herzog moving about in the next room, when a folded sheet of foolscap was gently slid under my door. Needless to say how I pounced upon the missive, and yet how carefully I handled it lest the crackling of the paper should reach the ears of my sleepless neighbour.

"I had to deceive father with a fictitious ailment in order to be myself to write this," the document began abruptly in Janet's well-known hand. "I had better say at once, to prevent raising unfounded hopes, that I have discovered nothing to corroborate my suggested reading of your sister's last words. I have not heard the name of Marske all day. At the same time I did discover something which, I think, calls further investigation."

"On presenting myself at 'The Glen,' I failed for some time to make any impression on the discreet elderly female who answered my ring. Sarah Leven is a treasure not often found nowadays in domestic service. She struck me as being in a very highly-strung condition—probably, though I did not at first refer to it, on account of your escape, of which she had doubtless heard. I rather think that she took me for a police agent endeavouring to ascertain if you had sought refuge there."

"I began by describing myself as a stranger convinced of your innocence and desirous of seeing the house where such a miscarriage of justice had originated. But Sarah Leven, standing in the doorway, with her iron-grey locks framing her stern face, was not going to pander to idle curiosity. She commenced to shut the door upon me slowly.

"This house of death and sorrow is no place for sightseers," she said, continuing to close the door till it touched the foot which I had thrust over the threshold. Still she did not desist, but pushed the door till my poor foot was squeezed almost to a jelly. I would not give way, and at last she cried, angrily—

"If you do not go I will send the first passer-by for a policeman."
"And rob Captain Rivington of

his last chance of saving his honour and his life," I answered, swiftly deciding that the only way to gain this faithful creature's confidence was to give her some of my own. And in pursuance of this idea I told her that I was your promised wife, and that I was set upon using the repressive you had gained to find a clue to the wretch who should stand in your place. In fact, I told her everything—except that I had seen you and knew where you were. I even asked her if she knew the name of Marske in connection with your sister. She made no immediate reply, but I was gratified with the instant success of the course I had adopted. She opened the door and admitted me.

"Sarah Leven is evidently not a woman to do things by halves. Having made up her mind that I was to be trusted, she was ready to trust me altogether. Leading the way into the dismantled drawing-room, she turned to me with all the grimness gone from her hard-featured face, and made amends in the quaint, old-fashioned way for her previous rudeness. I told her that I liked her the better for being rude to me before she was sure, and that clinched the matter. Sarah and I are sworn allies."

"She now answered in the negative the question I had put to her about the name of Marske. No such person had ever been at 'The Glen,' and she had never heard the name. Indeed, from what she says, your mother and sister must have led a most retiring life, seeing no one but the clergyman and a few neighbours, and never having visitors staying in the house—unless you yourself could be so considered."

"But you will be eager to learn the point which, rightly or wrongly I regard as a discovery. It was this. Asked if your sister had a large postal correspondence, Sarah looked sharply at me, hesitated, and finally admitted such was the case."

"Ever since she went to stay in London for six months three years ago for the classes, Miss Clara has written a lot of letters—received a good many, too, though not so many as she wrote," Sarah Leven replied, and hesitated again, as if there was more behind.

"Come!" I persisted. "I can see that Miss Rivington not only had many letters and wrote many, but that you know the name of her correspondent. Remember that whatever duty of silence and secrecy you owed to her is cancelled by what you owe to her brother now. What you know may save him from a disgraceful death."

"It isn't much that I know, but I

will tell it to you," Sarah yielded after a pause. Miss Clara usually met the postman and got the letters from him, and she went to the post herself with those she wrote. But once about a year ago, she had influenza badly and could not leave the house. She asked me to post her letters for her and to say nothing about them to Mrs. Rivington. I didn't like it, having been with the mistress since a girl, but then, again, I loved Miss Clara as if she had been my own. I consented to post the letters, and I couldn't help seeing that they were to a gentleman."

"His name and address?" I asked, trying to conceal the importance I attached to the question.

"Danvers Crane, care of Mrs. Webley, 458, High Street, Notting Hill," Sarah replied, snapping her jaws as though she said it under compulsion, and, I hope, saving her dear honest conscience thereby. That woman is sterling gold, Arthur, and if ever these clouds break we must not forget her."

"Well, that is the sum total of my discovery, and now for my plans. I shall tell my father in the morning that I must go to London for two days—possibly three. Luckily I have an excuse in having to view a house which he thinks of taking near Harrow. But the house will not claim much of my time, which shall be devoted to the last minute if necessary, to learning all there is to learn about Mr. Danvers Crane. I hope to get away by mid-day to-morrow, and half-an-hour after I arrive in town."

"I hate having to leave you, my own dearest, especially as you will be in the society of that hateful Herzog, and he may begin to urge on the unspeakable deed before I return. But I have no other clue to follow, and I am impelled by some undefined force to drag aside the veil from the man who had a part in your sister's life without the knowledge of her friends. Hope on, Arthur darling, as I shall, while there is room for hoping, but if you are driven into a corner during my absence you might in the very last resort, tell your story to Lady Muriel—provided you can see her alone. But only if threatened with detection and recapture, for Muriel is devoted to her father, and might feel it her duty to warn him that there is a plot against his life."

So ended the missive, which by its clear brave words told me at least that I should be craven to despair while their staunch writer bade me hope. It was indeed news to me that my sister Clara, the demure and self-contained, had carried on a clandestine correspondence with a mysterious "Danvers Crane."

Why Do Women Suffer

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ESSAY ON HAPPINESS.

Uncle John Presents a Few Philosophical Observations.

Happiness is not confined to a few but is available to all, or nearly all. It is not a commercial commodity, else it would become a monopoly, as other commodities have become. The millionaire would possess it to the exclusion of the pauper.

But, luckily, happiness is as easily attainable by one as the other. It is purely and simply a matter for the consideration of the individual, and it rests entirely, or almost entirely, with him as to the amount of it he is willing to accept. The exact amount is dependent upon his desire to possess it. Of course, to be happy, one needs a fairly healthy body and mind, as much depends upon the joint condition of these, in order to enjoy happiness to its fullest degree.

Freedom from debt should rank as a very high notch in the score-card of happiness, as it does not appear possible to be happy and in debt at the same time. To those who are encumbered by debt, I might say that a great deal of happiness may be experienced just by an honest effort to free themselves from this terrible and obnoxious plant whose leaves are ever spreading.

Contentment cannot be over-estimated as a factor very favorable in the search for happiness. We could be far more easily contented, if we, by comparison, would allow ourselves to see the very many people who are not so well off mentally, physically, or financially as ourselves. It needs but the exercise of ab-servation, to make us more contented than we at present are, and the result cannot but very materially help us on the way to happiness.

Jealousy is one of the great drawbacks that the seekers after happiness have to contend with. It is a thorn in the side which is more easily plucked than may be at once imagined, since it is generally a feeling that has little, or no foundation; inasmuch, as it is often merely a sort of suspicion, or mild form of envy that ends in the idea that some one else is enjoying what one thinks he himself should enjoy. It is not jealousy when one has the proof of the fact that arouses the passion within him. When he has that proof, then other feelings should take the place of jealousy, and these may put him in a better position for the reception of happiness than he was before. However, jealousy without cause must be removed before he can be happy.

Ill health is one of the great drawbacks to happiness, except in the case of those who have lost all interest in this life, and are happy in the assurance of a greater happiness in the life to come. Therefore, get all the happiness you can prior to your days of sickness, or failing health, and do all in your power to retain that health which once lost is so hard to restore. An invalid is often far happier upon recovery than he was before, and it takes something in the undesirable line, of which we

have cleared ourselves, to make happiness the more appreciated.—
UNCLE JOHN.

BIG CARGOES AT PORTLAND NOW.

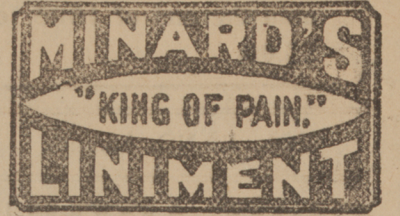
Winter Steamship Business There Has Opened Up at Lively Rate.

Portland, Dec. 26.—Great cargoes are going rather rapidly from this port. The steamship Turcoman sailed Saturday with a very large cargo, 130,080 bushels of barley, 64,000 bushels of wheat, 24,000 bushels of oats, 10,000 boxes of cheese, 24 car loads of provision, 30 tons of flour, 300 sheep and 606 cattle. All the rest sailing Saturday and Sunday will be fully loaded, but they will not take as much wheat and grain. The shipment of wheat has been resumed in full vigor, but some steamers take less than others. For example the Hurona, to sail late Saturday afternoon will take 48,000 bushels of wheat and 550 cattle as a part of her cargo, and the Hungarian will take out 400 cattle, 269 sheep, and about 60,000 bushels of grain of various kinds, of course, the whole making but a comparatively small part of her great cargo.

Portland is again having the old times success in a very important respect. Very frequently steamships leave other ports with a partial cargo, but those sailing from this city have full cargoes. The Grand Trunk management has, since Gen. Mgr. Hays took charge of the system, succeeded in getting a vast amount of freight, and there is always enough if not in sight, then on the way. Last season there was not a break in the supply, although the exports reached an enormous figure, and this season promises to be even better.

The shipping of wheat in large quantities is regarded as a favorable sign. There is again a strong and quick demand in Europe and, in fact, judging by the great mass of other freights, there is a demand for almost all kinds of provisions in Europe, and in England. That means as a matter of course, that the farmers of the west and of Canada, will profit by the demand for their products.

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