

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 i.

(Continued.)

Left alone in my bedroom I reviewed the situation as I mechanically began to undress. It seemed hopeless to gain speech with Janet that night, though she was in the same house, and must be only a few yards away. Yet, that she meant to endeavour to grant my whispered appeal for an interview was evident from the news indirectly brought by Mrs. Krance. The revocation of the Chilmarks' notice to leave I looked on in the light of a message. It was a blessed promise that Janet would stick to me, and I could only trust that fortune would be kinder to me on the morrow and allow me to meet her.

At least there was a change in my circumstances for the better. Two nights ago I had slept in the condemned cell at Winchester; last night I had slept in a shady hotel at Southampton; tonight I was going to sleep, if I could, in a decent lodging in a rising watering-place. If I could keep up this rate of "arithmetical progression," where should I be at the end of Herzog's fortnight? Nothing short of being honourably free, with character and friends restored, would satisfy me, and that, as my sudden fit of elation passed, I perceived to be nearly as far from realization as ever.

For what mattered the slight increase in personal comfort, what would Janet's proximity and loving care avail me, so long as I was a hunted criminal, with the black shadow of a recorded sentence hanging over me? Even if I could fool Herzog a little longer in the pretence that I meant to carry out his murderous behest, the end would be as surely and inexorably the same as though I had never quitted the prison cell.

Unless—some unseen devil whispered in my ear—unless I ceased to deceive Herzog and stole myself to see my soul with the stupendous crime he had liberated me to commit.

With a shudder I drove the vile temptation away, and presently flung myself on the bed and slept. But sound slumber was not for a poor nerve-racked creature such as I had become, and after a while I was by the sound of movement, faint but unmistakable, beyond the lath and plaster partition separating Herzog's room from mine.

Late as was the hour my custodian was up and stirring. Yes, and he was doing more than that—he was stealthily leaving the house. For after I had lain breathless, but in vain, waiting for a repetition of the sounds in the next room, I heard another of a different kind a little

further off. Not loud enough to awaken a sleeper, but quite audibly to one listening with straining ears as I was, a stair creaked.

CHAPTER VII.

Janet Reads the Riddle.

Throwing on some clothes, I softly opened my bedroom door and stole out on to the landing in time to gain confirmation of my surmise. There was a window at the stair-head, overlooking the front garden and the road, and, sure enough, there was Herzog, plainly distinguishable in the moonlight, in the act of passing out through the gate. Turning to the left, he walked off briskly and disappeared.

My first sensation was one of intense curiosity as to why he should have gone out at such an hour. That important business had taken him afield was self-evident, since, for all his apparent confidence in me, he would not willingly have left me unguarded. His nocturnal expedition too, must have been premeditated, I guessed, when his questioning of Mrs. Krance as to her powers of sleep recurred to me.

But what was the use of speculating on the motives of such a man, when his exodus had left me unprotected, for a few minutes at any rate under the roof that covered Janet? I turned wildly from the window to scan the doors going on to the landing, wondering which was hers, when, lo! one of them opened, and there stood Janet herself, peering at me in the half-light.

Then she stole forward with a suppressed cry of recognition and pillowed her fair head on my breast, what followed—the few words we dared whisper—concern no one but ourselves, nor could I remember them if I would. Janet was the first to recover herself, and with her finger to her lips led me into the room whence she had emerged.

"This is no time for false prudery," she observed, when she had softly closed the door. "We might be heard if we talked on the landing, and my room has an equal advantage as to the window. The outlook is the same, and we shall be able to watch for that man's return while we talk."

"You heard him go out?" I said, taking up my station behind the curtain.

"Heard him and saw him," my brave lass replied. "Did you think that I should do anything but wait and watch till I had spoken with you?"

Recognising that every moment was of value if I was to make her understand how I was situated, I

began my narrative at once, and without any preamble told her of all that had happened in connection with my escape from jail, and of the fearful condition that had been laid on me by my mysterious liberator. Naturally she was greatly shocked that such a dastard design should be hatching against Lord Alphington, but her horror was evidently blunted by her concern for me.

"You must get away from this terrible man's clutches, Arthur," she insisted. "With my help surely it can be managed, for the chance he has given you tonight shows that he is not infallible."

But I had to dash her hopes with the expressed conviction that Herzog would never have left the house even trusting me as I believed he did, unless he had taken steps to prevent, my eluding him. And I went on to say that "life would be of no use to me, that I would just as soon go back and be hanged, if I could not turn my spuriously-won respite to good account."

"I have no mind to be a hunted fugitive for the rest of my days, which would be my lot if I could shake Herzog off," I said. And I proceeded to tell her how, when the venal warder had broached the news of my coming escape, my one idea had been to utilise it to clear my name by finding the real scoundrel who had done my mother and sister to death. I narrated the grounds of that forlorn hope—my dying sister's last words: "Man, mask, Roger."

Janet had stationed herself behind the other window curtain to help me in my vigil for Herzog's return. The slanting moonbeams fell on her motionless figure in the pretty blue dressing-gown and touched her beautiful, wistful face with a tender glow all through our scarcely audible conversation. But now, at the sound of those to me meaningless words, she started, and her dear eyes shone with swift excitement.

"Say those words again, Arthur," she scarcely breathed.

"Man, mask, Roger," I repeated. "Clara must have referred to a man called Roger who wore a mask, probably for the purpose of his crime."

The wash of the tide on the shore of the bay alone broke the silence as Janet gazed across at me. A dawn of hope, in which a great fear mingled, had come into her face.

"Arthur," she whispered, "what if the man's name sounded like that—not mask, but m-a-s-k-e-r? I know a Roger Marske. You saw him with Lady Muriel and me this afternoon?" My heart gave a great bound at the suggestion, which would have occurred to me before had I known the christian and surnames Roger and

Marske in combination. The ingenious idea had much to recommend it. There was my instinctive dislike of the man at first sight; there was his viciously-expressed confidence in my guilt; there was the evident desire to check and thwart Lady Muriel's interest in my escape by withholding the newspaper from her.

Yet, on the other hand, I had never heard of him before in my life—certainly not in connection with my mother and sister, nor had I the slightest reason for believing that they were acquainted with him. That being so, what earthly object could he have had in compassing their death—always provided that Clara's incoherent utterance was intended to indicate her murderer?

Clutching at straws, however, as I was, I could not afford to throw cold water on any clue—still less on one that had in it so many elements of probability.

"If we could find that this Roger Marske ever had any sort of association with my people I should know that you had read the riddle aright," I said. "And then all would depend on something being discovered in the nature of that association to connect him with the double murder. For it would not follow that he murdered Clara because she mentioned him with her dying breath."

Janet's fingers quivered so that she shook the curtain which she was holding back for a better view of the road. "Arthur, this Roger Marske is a bad man," she panted in her agitation. "He is down here to pursue Lady Muriel Crawshaw with attentions which she loathes, yet has to tolerate owing to her father's foolish infatuation for the son of a member of his Cabinet. And Mr. Marske thinks it consistent with his honor to annoy me with his grossly odious but less definite attentions at the same time."

"The brute!" I muttered, impressed by this confirmation of Herzog's insight. I asked Janet how she came to know such big-wigs as the daughter of the Prime Minister and the son of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; for the Chilmarks, though well born, had not been in the habit of mixing in such exalted circles.

But it was all very simple when it came to be told. The acquaintance was one which would never have been struck up in London, but which germinated and grew quite naturally in a small seaside resort free from the usual "attractions," and holding itself on its exclusiveness. Lady Muriel, having got "run down" half way through the London season, had been packed off to "Ardmore," and the influx of visitors not having then set in, the girls had met in their walks about the cliffs, had forgathered, and had finally become friends.

"She is the sweetest soul, and so sympathetic, that she soon saw that I was in trouble," added Janet rather diffidently. "One day, when we were sitting in the heather at the back of Alum Bay, Arthur, I broke down and told her of my dreadful grief. She is as staunch a believer in your innocence as I am myself."

And this was the daughter of the man whom I had been released to kill.

(To be continued.)

IN TELEGRAPHIC AND GENERAL NEWS THE TIMES LEADS.

WRONG IDEA.

Don't get the wrong idea into your head that starvation is good for Dyspepsia.

It's not. Those who have not studied the subject very deeply or with trained scientific minds, might think so.

But facts prove otherwise. All specialists in stomach and digestive disorders know, that it is best for dyspepsia to be well fed. Why, dyspepsia is really a starvation disease!

Your food doesn't feed you. By starvation, you may give your bowels and kidneys less to do, but that does not cure your digestive trouble—simply makes you weaker and sicker; less likely to be permanently cured than ever.

No, the only right way to permanently cure yourself of any form of dyspepsia or indigestive trouble, is to eat heartily of all the food that you find best agrees with you, and help your digestion to work with Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets.

This is a safe, certain, scientific, reliable method of treatment, which will never fail to cure the most obstinate cases if preserved in.

Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets have a gentle, tonic, refreshing effect on the secretory glands of the entire digestive tract.

They gently force the flow of fresh digestive juices.

They contain, themselves, many of the chemical constituents of these juices, thus when dissolved they help to dissolve the food around them in stomach or bowels.

They therefore quickly relieve all the symptoms of indigestion, and coax the glands to take a proper pleasure in doing their proper work.

They coax you back to health. No other medical treatment of any sort nor any fad system of "Culture," or "Cure" will give you the solid, permanent, curative results, that will Stuart's Dyspepsia Tablets.

Write for a free Book of Symptoms, F. A. Stuart Co., Marshall, Mich.

AT THE OPERA HOUSE.

The Dailey Company last evening presented "The New Dominion" at the Opera House. The audience was not large, but they thoroughly enjoyed the production. Homer Mulaney, Mr. O'Malley and Helen Ray had the principal roles and the balance of the cast was good.

Tonight the company will present "A Runaway Match," a farce comedy.

Saturday afternoon the New Dominion will be given for the matinee and Arizona, will be given Saturday evening.

Christmas Day and for the first half of next week a new play to theatre-goers will be given. The title of next week's holiday attractions are Our New Minister and Tess of D'Urberville.

NEW TURBINE LAUNCHED.

Glasgow, Dec 22.—The new Allan line turbine steamer Virginia was launched here today. She is a sister ship of the Victorian.

DISHONEST

BELL BOYS

Organized Gang in Chicago Hotels Whose Object is to Rob Guests.

Chicago, Dec. 22.—A gang of bell boys organized to steal the property of guests in the downtown hotels has been discovered by the police, and money and jewelry amounting to nearly \$1000 has been found in their possession.

The discovery was the result of the theft of \$180 and two gold watches from Edward Cambess. His room mate, Ernest Greenstein, was arrested and confessed to the theft. He then told the police that Frank Barsted, a bell boy in a downtown hotel, could lead them to the spot where the money had been hidden.

Barsted was then taken to Lincoln park by detectives and he pointed out a loose stone at the end of a culvert under a bridge. Here the money and three watches were found wrapped in a newspaper. Further disclosures made by Greenstein led to the arrest of John Kerr and Chester Price. All of these are employed in large hotels. One of the thefts the boys confessed is that of sixteen diamonds worth \$750 from an actress who is staying at a downtown hotel. According to Barsted, Kerr was called the "travelling monkey." Their plan, he said, was to rob guests as they slept.

SUDDEN DEATH

OF OLD WRITER.

New York, Dec. 22.—The Tribune says Seth Stoddard Wood, a writer, dropped dead yesterday at Passaic, N. J., as he was about to board a train for Deposit, N. Y. Heart failure was the cause of death. Both Mr. Wood and his wife were writers. They were writing a story of New Jersey. Mr. Wood was sixty-three years of age. Wood's Household Magazine, was edited by him for five years from 1869. Mr. Wood also served on the staffs of New York dailies. At the time of his death he was employed in putting the finishing touches on an elaboration of his many original views on social economics, entitled "God's Law of Love."

Mr. and Mrs. Wood were on the way to Deposit to take charge of the "Publisher and Advertiser," a monthly business publication.

"SWISS FOOD" TASTES GOOD.

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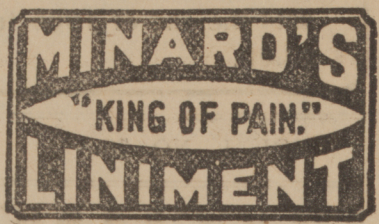
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CLEARANCE SALE.

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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