

The Adventures of Mr. Peter Ruff

BY E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

The Little Lady from Serbia

COPYRIGHT, 1909, BY THE PEARSON PUBLISHING CO.

Westward sped the little electric brougham, driven without regard to police regulations or any rule of the road; silent and swift, wholly regardless of other vehicles...

"Let me tell you," she begged. "Kindly wait till I have tied this and put my studs in." Peter Ruff interrupted. "It is impossible for me to arrive at a ball in this condition, and I cannot give my whole attention to more than one thing at a time."

"We shall be there in five minutes," she exclaimed. "What is the good, unless you understand, of your coming at all?"

Peter Ruff surveyed his tie critically. Fortunately, it pleased him. He began to press the studs into their places with firm fingers. Around them surged the traffic of Piccadilly; in front, the gleaming arc of lights around Hyde Park Corner. They had several narrow escapes. Once the brougham swayed dangerously as they cut in on the wrong side of an island lamp-post. A policeman shouted at them, another held up his hand—the driver of the brougham took no notice.

"I am ready," Peter Ruff said, quietly.

"My younger brother—Maurice," she began, breathlessly—"you've never met him. I know, but you've heard me speak of him. He is private secretary to Sir James Wastley—the Minister for Foreign Affairs." Ruff answered swiftly.

"Yes! Maurice wants to go in for the Diplomatic Service. He is a dear."

"Is it Maurice who is in trouble?" Peter Ruff asked. "Why didn't he come himself?"

"I am trying to explain," Lady Mary protested. "This afternoon he had an important paper to turn into cipher and hand over to the Prime Minister at the Duchess of Montford's dance to-night. The Prime Minister will arrive in a motor-car from the country at about two o'clock, and the first thing he will ask for will be that paper. It has been stolen!"

"At what time did your brother finish copying it, and when did he discover its loss?" Ruff asked, with a slight air of weariness. These preliminary inquiries always bored him.

"He finished it in his own rooms at half-past seven," Lady Mary answered. "He discovered its loss at eleven o'clock—directly he had arrived at the ball."

"Why didn't he come to me himself?" Peter Ruff asked. "I like to have these particulars at first hand."

"He is in attendance upon Sir James at the ball," Lady Mary answered. "There is trouble in the East, as you know, and Sir James is expecting dispatches to-night. Maurice is not allowed to leave."

"Has he told Sir James yet?" "He had not when I left," Lady Mary answered. "If he is forced to do so, it will be ruin! Mr. Ruff, you must help us. Maurice is such a dear, but a mistake like this, at the very beginning of his career, would be fatal. Here we are. That is my brother waiting just inside the hall."

A young man came up to them in the vestibule. He was somewhat pale, but otherwise perfectly self-possessed. From the shine of his glasses, black hair to the tips of his patent boots he was, in appearance, everything that a young Englishman of birth and athletic tastes could hope to be. Peter Ruff liked the look of him. He waited for no introduction, but laid his hand at once upon the young man's shoulder.

"Between seven-thirty and arriving here," he said, drawing him on one side—"quick! Tell me, whom did you see? What opportunities were there of stealing the paper, and by whom?"

"I finished it at five and twenty past seven," the young man said, "sealed it up in an official envelope, and stood it up on my desk by the side of my coat and hat, and without a moment's delay, my servant laid it there ready for me to put on. My bedroom opens out from my sitting-room. Whilst I was dressing, two men called for me—Paul Jermyn and Count Von Hern. They walked through my bedroom first, and then sat together in the sitting-room until I came out. The door was wide open, and we talked all the time."

"They called accidentally?" Peter Ruff asked.

"No—by appointment," the young man answered. "We were all coming on here to the dance, and we had agreed to dine together first at the Savoy."

"You say that you left the paper on your desk with your coat and hat?" Peter Ruff asked. "Was it there when you came out?"

"Apparently so," the young man answered. "It seemed to be standing in my dress, as usual, as where I had left it. I put it into my breast pocket, and it was only when I arrived here that I fancied the envelope seemed lighter. I went off by myself and tore it open. There was nothing inside but half a newspaper!"

"What about the envelope?" Peter Ruff asked. "That must have been the same sort of one as you had used or you would have noticed it?"

"It was," the Honorable Maurice answered. "It was a sort which you kept in your room."

"Yes!" the young man admitted.

"The packet was changed, then, by some one in your room, or some one who had access to it," Peter Ruff said. "How about your servant?"

"It was his evening off," the Honorable Maurice answered. "I let him put out my things and go at seven o'clock."

"You must tell me the nature of the contents of the packet," Peter Ruff declared. "Don't hesitate. You must do it. Remember the alternative!"

The young man did hesitate for several moments, but a glance into his sister's appealing face decided him.

"It was our official reply to a secret communication from Russia respecting—a certain matter in the Balkans."

Peter Ruff nodded. "Where is Count Von Hern?" he asked, abruptly.

"Inside, dancing," the Honorable Maurice answered.

"I must use a telephone at once," Peter Ruff said. "Ask one of the servants here where I can find one."

Peter Ruff was conducted to a gloomy waiting-room, on the table of which stood a small telephone instrument. He closed the door, but he was only absent for a very few minutes. When he rejoined Lady Mary and her brother they were talking together in agitated whispers. The latter turned towards him at once.

"Do you mean that you suspect Count Von Hern?" he asked, doubtfully. "He is a friend of the Danish Minister's, and every one says that he's such a good chap. He doesn't seem to take the slightest interest in politics—spends nearly all his time hunting or playing polo."

"I don't suspect any one," Peter Ruff answered. "I only know that Count Von Hern is an Austrian spy, and that he took your paper! Has he been out of your sight at all since you rejoined him in the sitting-room?"

"I mean to say—had he any opportunity of leaving you during the time you were dining together, or did he make any calls en route, either on the way to the Savoy or from the Savoy here?"

The young man shook his head. "He has not been out of my sight for a second," he declared.

"Who is the other man—Jermyn?" Peter Ruff asked. "I never heard of him."

"An American—cousin of the Duchess," the Honorable Maurice answered. "He could not have had the slightest interest in the affair."

"Please take me into the ball-room," Peter Ruff said to Lady Mary. "Your brother had better not come with us. I want to be as near the Count Von Hern as possible."

They passed into the crowded rooms, unnoticed, purposely avoiding the little space where the Duchess was still receiving the late comers amongst her guests. They found progress difficult, and Lady Mary felt her heart sink as she glanced at the little jeweled watch which hung from her wrist. Suddenly Peter Ruff came to a standstill.

"Don't look for a moment," he said, "but tell me as soon as you can—who is that tall young man, like a Goliath, talking to the little dark woman? You see whom I mean?"

Lady Mary nodded, and they passed on. In a moment or two she answered him.

"How strange that you should ask," she whispered in his ear. "That is Mr. Jermyn."

They were on the outskirts now of the ball-room itself. One of Lady Mary's partners came up with an open program and a face full of reproach.

"Do please forgive me, Captain Henderson," Lady Mary begged. "I have hurt my foot, and I am not dancing any more."

"But surely I was to take you in to supper?" the young officer protested, good-humoredly. "Don't tell me that you are going to cut that?"

"I am going to cut everything to-night with exception," Lady Mary said. "Please forgive me. Come to tea to-morrow and I'll explain."

The young man bowed, and with a curious glance at Ruff, accepted his dismissal. Another partner was simply waved away.

"Please turn round and come back," Peter Ruff said. "I want to see those two again."

"But we haven't found Count Von Hern yet," she protested. "Surely that is more important, is it not?"

"Believe that I saw him dancing just now—there, with the tall girl in yellow."

"Never mind about him, for the moment," Ruff answered. "Walk down this corridor with me. Do you mind talking all the time, please? It will sound more natural, and I want to listen."

The young American and his partner had found a more retired seat now, about three-quarters of the way down the pillared vestibule which bordered the ball-room. He was bending over his companion with an air of unmistakable devotion, but it was she who talked. She seemed, indeed, to have a good deal to say to him. The slim white fingers of one hand played all the time with a string of magnificent pearls. Her dark, soft eyes—black as sloes and absolutely English—flashed into his. A delightful smile hovered at the corners of her lips. All the time she was talking and he was listening. Lady Mary and her partner passed by unnoticed. At the end of the vestibule they turned and retraced their steps. Peter Ruff was very quiet—he had caught a few of those rapid words. But the woman's foreign accent had troubled him.

"If only she would speak in her own language!" he muttered.

Lady Mary's hand suddenly tightened upon his arm.

"Look!" she exclaimed. "That is Count Von Hern!"

A tall, fair young man, very exact in his dress, very stiff in his carriage, with a not unpleasant face, was standing talking to Jermyn and his companion. Jermyn, who apparently found the intrusion an annoyance, was listening to the conversation between the two, with a frown upon his face and a general attitude of irritation. As Lady Mary and her escort drew near, the reason for the young American's annoyance became clearer—his two companions were talking softly, but with great animation, in a foreign language, which it was obvious that

he did not understand. Peter Ruff's slow pressed against his partner's arm, and their pace slackened. He ventured, even to pause for a moment, looking into the ball-room as though in search of some one, and he had by no means the appearance of a man likely to understand Hungarian. Then, to Lady Mary's surprise, he touched the Count Von Hern on the shoulder and addressed him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, "but I fancy that we accidentally exchanged programs, a few minutes ago, at the buffet. I have lost mine and picked up one which does not belong to me. As we were standing side by side, it is possibly yours."

"I believe not, sir," he answered, with that pleasant smile which had gone such a long way toward winning him the reputation of being "a good fellow" amongst a fairly large circle of friends. "I believe, at any rate," he added, glancing at his program, "that this is my own. You mistake me, probably, for some one else."

Peter Ruff, without saying a word, was actor enough to suggest that he was unconvinced. The Count good-humoredly held out his program.

"You shall see for yourself," he remarked. "That is not yours, is it? Besides, I have not been to the buffet at all this evening."

Peter Ruff cast a swift glance down the program which the Count had handed him. Then he apologized profusely.

"I was mistaken," he admitted. "I am very sorry."

The Count bowed. "It is of no consequence, sir," he said, and resumed his conversation.

Peter Ruff passed on with Lady Mary. At a safe distance, she glanced at him inquiringly.

"It was his program I wanted to see," Peter Ruff explained. "It is as I thought. He has had four darts with the Countess."

"Who is she?" Lady Mary asked, quickly.

"The little dark lady with whom he is talking now," Peter Ruff continued. "He seems, too, to be going sally. He has no dances reserved after the twelfth. We will go downstairs at once, if you please, I must speak to your brother."

"Have you been able to think of anything?" she asked, anxiously. "Is there any chance at all do you think?"

"I believe so," Peter Ruff answered. "It is most interesting. Don't be too sanguine, though. The odds are against us, and the time is very short. Is the driver of your electric brougham to be trusted?"

"Absolutely," she assured him. "He is an old servant."

"Will you lend him to me," Peter Ruff asked, "and tell him that he is to obey my instructions absolutely?"

"Of course," she answered. "You are going away, then?"

Peter Ruff nodded. He was a little sparing of words just then. The thoughts were chasing one another through his brain. He was listening, too, for the sweep of a dress behind.

"Is there nothing I can do?" Lady Mary begged, eagerly.

Peter Ruff shook his head. In the distance he saw the Honorable Maurice come quickly toward them. With a firm imperceptible gesture he waved him away.

"Don't let your brother speak to me," he said. "We can't tell who he is behind. What time did you say the Prime Minister was expected?"

"At two o'clock," Lady Mary said, anxiously.

Peter Ruff glanced at his watch. It was already half an hour past midnight.

"Very well," he said. "I will do what I can. If my theory is wrong, it will be nothing. If I am right, well, there is a chance, anyhow. In the meantime—"

"In the meantime?" she repeated, breathlessly.

"Take your brother back to the ball-room," Peter Ruff directed. "Make him dance—dance yourself. Don't give yourselves away by looking anxious. When the time is short—say at a quarter to two—he can come down here and wait for me."

"If you don't come!" she exclaimed.

"Then we shall have lost," Peter Ruff said, calmly. "If you don't see me again to-night, you had better read the newspapers carefully for the next few days."

"You are going to do something dangerous!" she protested.

"There is danger in interfering at all in such a matter as this," he answered, "but you must remember that it is not only my profession—it is my hobby. Remember, too, I do not often lose."

For twenty minutes Peter Ruff sat in the remote corner of Lady Mary's electric brougham, drawn up at the other side of the Square, and waited. At last he pressed a button. They glided off. Before them was a large closed motor-car. They started in discreet chase.

(To be continued)

New York Weddings

Bridal Gowns and Wedding Finery—Color Schemes for Bridesmaids' Dresses—Matron's Toilets and Traveling Frocks—Rat Bag.

NEW YORK, Feb. 4.—Time was when fashionable weddings were booked for after Easter or for the autumn months, but in recent years notable nuptials have been held even in Lent and with the Decies-Gould and several other almost equally smart weddings coming off in February this month is unusually honored.

The Wedding Gown. Creamy white satin, or pearl white of that tint is more becoming, is as of old the preferred material for this gown of gowns, and this year the slender close-fitting lines and elaborate veiling with net or costly lace accords with the prevailing mode. The English liking for quaintness and picturesque effects has gained favor here. Combinations of color are the rule in bridal processions. Long scarf veils of point lace like frostwork or their delicacy of texture and pattern are first favorites where expense has not to be considered, but even in this case some brides prefer the voluminous veil of tulle that is more generally becoming to the wearer.

At a Benefit Musicals. At a benefit musicals, for which Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt lent her house, Miss Maud Morgan was in charge, and a notable gathering of well known people enjoyed the varied program. The tickets for this gathering were disposed of privately. Mrs. K. a well known matron, wore a dress of black satin with a train, the top of the bodice of white lace and with shaped garnitures of violet velvet embroidered in white and jet beads. The hat was of violet velvet with many plumes. A dress of taupe velvet the upper

part of the bodice enriched with straps of pink satin and inserts of gold embroidered lace was topped by a hat of black lace, a huge umbrella like affair with a scant frill of white Duchesse lace at the edge of the brim.

The Rat Bag. The latest thing to hang by one's dressing table is the "rat bag," of openwork embroidered linen, that holds the extra puffs, etc., which are so universally pinned on as occasion requires, and are so unattractive when not adjusted. The idea was inaugurated by a clever woman at Christmas time and has caught on wonderfully because it offers a needed hiding place for the "rats."

FANNIE FIELD. The matron of honor at a recent wedding in St. Bartholomew's church, wore rosy mauve satin, veiled in a very pale shade of the same tint, and the bodice was banded by a drapery of the mauve satin, over which the tunic of chiffon was placed. The tunic sleeves were, of course kimono cut, and finished at the elbow with a simple hem. The round neck was edged with tiny pleating of the material. The hat, a mushroom Corday, like the ones worn by the bridesmaids, had a crown of pale lavender covered with white net and the downward slanting brim had a flat pleating of pale lavender, with a small spray of mauve roses and green foliage at the left side. Her bouquet of mauve primroses hung from the arm, caught with a wide soft band and bow of mauve satin ribbon. The bridesmaid's costumes were similar, only developed in white, but the same colored primrose bouquets were carried.

At the Metropolitan Opera. Mrs. Clarence Mackay in her box at the opera wore recently a striking gown of cerise panne velvet, the sleeves of white lace. A drapery of black tulle over the left shoulder

ed with tiny satin roses, has affected the draping of the wedding veil. This is arranged to simulate the puffy crown of the "Charlotte Corday" cap and to form frills that prettily frame the soft pompadour which notwithstanding all edicts to the contrary, remains the most popular coiffure of girl brides.

One Sided Effects. One sided effects are especially smart to judge from gowns seen on the elect of the fashionable set, at the opera and other places where the newest and most exclusive frocks are exploited, and Geisha girdles ending in huge flat bows at the back are a notably popular feature.

QUEEN DETERMINED TO LEAVE KING. Victoria Cannot Remain Any Longer in the Palace Where Alfonso Reigns. MADRID, via France, Feb. 6.—Attempts to effect a reconciliation between King Alfonso and Queen Victoria, have been unavailing. The queen is fully determined to carry out her determination to quit her royal spouse and go to her relatives in England. This was learned today from a source close to court officials, and the latest information confirms the first reports as related exclusively in United Press dispatches last week, which called for the denials from the

WHO IS TO BLAME. Women as well as men are made miserable by kidney and bladder trouble. Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root, the great kidney remedy promptly relieves. At druggists in fifty cent and dollar sizes. You may have a sample bottle by mail free, also pamphlet, telling all about it. Address, Dr. Kilmer & Co., Birmingham, N. Y.

Indoor Work Bad For the Complexion. From the New York Fashion Gazette: "Women whose household duties confine them to their homes and young ladies who work in offices or stores without sufficient sunlight often find their complexion growing dark, sallow and patchy looking. Of course there is nothing so good for the complexion as sunshine and fresh air, but there are thousands of persons to whom this is denied. The use of paints, powders and cosmetics often do more harm than good in an endeavor to preserve the youthful appearance as long as Nature intended it should last. In lieu of outdoor life the best help to the complexion is a simple solution made by dissolving an original package of mayotone in 8 ounces of witch hazel. Massage the face, neck and arms daily with this lotion and the skin will become fine, white and smooth. It prevents wrinkles, dark spots and stray hairs. Many a woman of more than forty has a skin as smooth, fresh and velvety as a girl in her twenties—due to mayotone and witch hazel."

Rock Island. *Train 473—Leaves Keokuk 7:40 am *Train 741—Leaves Keokuk 2:55 pm *Train 472—Arrives Keokuk 8:15 pm *Train 470—Arrives Keokuk 1:05 pm

Local Freight Trains. *Train 86—Arrives Keokuk 5:30 pm *Train 85—Leaves Keokuk 2:00 am *Daily except Sunday.

Spanish minister at Washington. These despatches revealed the fact that Alfonso's attentions to women of the half world had become unbearable to Victoria, and that their relations had been strained to the point of open rupture. It may be a few weeks before the queen leaves, inasmuch as she is willing that her departure take on the pretext of a mere visit in order to lessen the scandal. The "visit" will stretch interminably. The only circumstance that is now regarded as possible to interfere with a complete separation of the royal couple is their children. The queen cannot take them out of Spain, and she is loath to leave them.

Des Moines. Keeley Cure. CURE FOR DRUGS AND TOBACCO HABITS. 708 WEST FOURTH ST. Des Moines, Iowa. Our Free Booklet.

GOLD MEDAL FLOUR. For either acute or chronic kidney disorders, for annoying and painful urinary irregularities take Foley Kidney Pills. An honest and effective medicine for kidney and bladder disorders. Wilkinson & Co.

WABASH

No. 2, daily, leaves at 4:15 pm No. 4, daily except Sunday, leaves at 4:40 pm No. 76, daily except Sunday, freight, leaves at 8:10 am. Arrive. No. 77, daily except Sunday, freight, arrives 5:00 pm No. 15, daily except Sunday, arrives 3:35 pm No. 3, daily, arrives 11:05 am Nos. 76 and 77 carry passengers.

Toledo, Peoria and Western Railway. *Train 4—Leaves 7:00 am *Train 2—Leaves 2:00 pm *Train 3—Arrives 12:05 pm *Train 5—Arrives 8:10 pm *Daily, except Sunday.

C. B. & Q. RAILWAY CO. Trains leave from Union Depot. Berths and tickets, Fifth and Johnson streets.

South Bound. —No. 8, St. Louis and south, leaves 12:45 am —No. 12, St. Louis and Kansas City and west, south, leaves 8:50 am —No. 4, Quincy, Hannibal & St. Louis, arrive 1:15 pm. leaves 1:20 pm —No. 10, Quincy and Hannibal, arrives 8:25 pm —No. 10 leaves 8:35 pm

North Bound. —No. 7, Chicago, St. Paul and points west, leaves 2:35 am —No. 13, Chicago, St. Paul and points west, arrives 7:35 pm —No. 13, leaves 7:55 pm —No. 3, Burlington, Chicago and east, leaves 1:55 pm —No. 1, Burlington, leaves 7:35 am —No. 61, Donnellson, C. B. & K. C., and North Road, leaves 3:30 pm —No. 50, from Donnellson, C. B. & K. C., and North Road, arrives 11:30 am —No. 1, K. & W. west, leaves 9:05 am —No. 5, Centerville, leaves 7:35 pm —No. 4, from Centerville and points intermediate, arrives 1:15 pm —No. 2, from Centerville and west, arrives 9:10 pm —No. 3, Centerville, leaves 9:10 pm —No. 6, from Centerville, arrives 11:55 am

—Daily. —Daily except Sunday. —Sundays only.

K. & W. ELECTRIC CO. Leaves East Arrives Keokuk Hamilton Jr. Warsaw 7:10 am 7:25 am 7:45 am 8:45 am 9:00 am 9:15 am 10:15 am 10:20 am 10:30 am 12:05 am 12:25 am 12:45 am 2:30 pm 2:45 pm 3:00 pm 4:00 pm 4:15 pm 4:30 pm 6:10 am 6:25 pm 6:45 pm 7:45 pm 8:00 pm 8:20 pm 9:30 pm 9:45 pm 10:00 pm 10:45 pm 11:00 pm 11:15 pm

West. Leaves Warsaw Hamilton Jr. Keokuk 6:40 am 6:50 am 7:45 am 8:05 am 8:20 am 9:20 am 9:40 am 9:55 am 11:00 am 11:25 am 11:40 am 12:45 am 1:05 pm 1:20 pm 3:10 pm 3:20 pm 3:45 pm 4:20 pm 4:50 pm 5:05 pm 6:45 pm 7:05 pm 7:20 pm 8:45 pm 9:05 pm 9:20 pm 10:05 pm 10:25 pm 10:40 pm 11:20 pm 11:40 pm 11:55 pm

Note—Daily except Sunday. All other trains daily.

O'HARRA, O'HARRA, WOOD AND WALKER. ATTORNEYS AT LAW. Corner of 5th and Main Streets, Keokuk, Iowa.

PERSONNEL. Apolous W. O'Harr. Keokuk Clifton J. O'Harr. Keokuk Earl W. Wood. Hamilton Henry S. Walker. Carthage

CONTRACTORS AND BUILDERS. John W. Young, Builder, Superintendent and Contractor for all kinds of construction. Also general repair work. Prompt and careful attention given to plans and estimates. Your patronage solicited. Office 504 Blondeau Iowa phone, office, 2143; residence, 3342.

INSURANCE. Only reliable companies of large assets represented. H. B. BLOOD. 12 South Sixth Street.

CHICHESTER'S PILLS. Ladies! Ask your Druggist for Chichester's Pills. They are the best remedy for DIARRHOEA, Sufferers in every part of the world. Be sure and ask for "Chichester's Pills" and take no other kind. Twenty-five cents a bottle. Guaranteed under the Food and Drug Act, June 30, 1906. Serial Number 102. AN OLD AND WELL TRIED REMEDY. SOLD BY DRUGGISTS EVERYWHERE.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup. Has been used for over SIXTY-FIVE YEARS by MILLIONS of MOTHERS for their CHILDREN WHILE TEETHING, WITH PERFECT SUCCESS. IT SOOTHES THE CHILD, SUPPRESSES THE GUMS, ALLAYS ALL PAIN, CURES WIND COLIC, and is the best remedy for DIARRHOEA, Sufferers in every part of the world. Be sure and ask for "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup" and take no other kind. Twenty-five cents a bottle. Guaranteed under the Food and Drug Act, June 30, 1906. Serial Number 102. AN OLD AND WELL TRIED REMEDY.

E. E. HAWKES. UNDERTAKER AND LICENSED EMBALMER. 723 Main. Both Phones. Re: Cross Ambulance.

I. S. ACKLEY. UNDERTAKING AND EMBALMING. 1007 Blondeau Street. Iowa phone, 456-M. Home, 3439

For either acute or chronic kidney disorders, for annoying and painful urinary irregularities take Foley Kidney Pills. An honest and effective medicine for kidney and bladder disorders. Wilkinson & Co.

GOLD MEDAL FLOUR