

Smith would have been amazed if he had seen an inkling of what Waterbury, Connecticut, was thinking of Passaic, New Jersey.

CHAPTER V.

MR. SMITH had just turned into the Place de l'Opera when, for the second time, he was halted by the abrupt appearance before him of a man who blocked his way. Mr. Smith stopped, thrust his hands into his pockets, and looked him over. He was the same type of man, precisely, as the one who had stopped him on the Pont du Carrousel,—who, in a general sort of way, was a twin of M. Remi,—and something told Mr. Smith he was going to ask the same questions.

"What eez your name?" demanded the stranger curtly. Yes, the same question—a worse English.

"What is it to you?" Mr. Smith queried deliberately.

Aha! He was not M. John Smith any more; he was M. Watts Ittooyu! It must be a Japanese name! Ze huge Americaine must take ze police of la belle France for ze grand stupid! Ohoh!

"Where do you leave?" came the question.

"At the corner of the United States and two o'clock," Mr. Smith declared hotly. "Now, look here, son, I don't know why you people in Paris stop a fellow and ask his name; but it's none of your business, and the next one who does it will get a good swift poke in the jaw."

Mr. Smith stalked into the lobby of the Grand Hotel with a grim expression on his face, which softened instantly into mild interest as he came face to face with a tall, slender young woman gowned in black and heavily veiled, coming out. She started a little at sight of him, hesitated a scant instant,—he thought she was going to speak,—then passed on hurriedly. There was something vaguely familiar in the trim figure, the walk, the tilt of the head, and he paused to look after her a moment. Whatever he thought of her was lost in the throes of his mental wrestlings with a clerk who boasted that he spoke English and understood United States.

THE first day's search ended fruitlessly for Mr. Smith, but rich beyond the most optimistic dreams to the sleuths of Paris who were seeking W. Mandeville Clarke. M. Remi listened to the reports of the men who were assisting him, and his mental convolutions were weird in the extreme. He sent them away and sat down to try to adjust all the odd facts in his possession.

John Smith, alias Watts Ittooyu, was W. Mandeville Clarke. He was big enough, the rugged lines on his face made him look old enough, he kept clean shaven with the most scrupulous care, and his dingy black hair bore every indication of having been newly dyed—badly dyed. But why should W. Mandeville Clarke set himself to search the hotels of Paris for W. Mandeville Clarke? Why, when confronted the second time by one of M. Remi's assistants, did he give that strange name, Watts Ittooyu? And that strange address—the corner of the United States and two o'clock? Who was the mysterious veiled woman in black who was also searching for M. Clarke? Was she a confederate? There was some deep laid plan somewhere, and seeking it the French sleuth acquired a headache, which he treated with many overstrengthened Martinis. Result, more headache!

ON the second day Mr. Smith planned to make the Arc de Triomphe as a center and revolve around it. At his first point of departure, the Hotel Carleton in the Champs Elysees, he encountered for the second time

the veiled woman in black. She was standing at the desk with her back toward him as he entered, talking in French with the clerk in charge. She finished and started away.

"Do you speak English?" Mr. Smith began monotonously.

"Yes, Monsieur, I speak him quite well," replied the clerk.

"Do you happen to have with you a man known as W. Mandeville Clarke?"

The clerk glanced involuntarily at the veiled woman, who turned quickly, inquiringly. At sight of Mr. Smith she became rigid where she stood, listening, listening!

"No, Monsieur. He is not here."

"Has he been here? Do you expect him?"

"He is not here. We do not expect him."

"There's no American or Englishman with a full beard and white hair here? No man about my size?"

Again the clerk glanced at the young woman, who, with fingers writhing within themselves, stood motionless half a dozen feet away.

"No, Monsieur," replied the clerk at last. "We have them wider and shorter, and longer and thinner; but none of your size."

Following the clerk's glance, Mr. Smith turned and recognized the veiled woman with a sort of start. Her eyes met his squarely for a fraction of a second; then she turned and went out. A minute later he went out in the same direction. She was standing beside a taxicab at the curb waiting. He knew she would be. She faced him flatly, almost defiantly.

"I AM not mistaken?" she asked in a tone so low he could just hear her. "This is Mr. Smith?"

"Yes, ma'am." Mr. Smith thought at first he knew the voice, knew it as one he had heard before; but there was some note in it that made it seem strange. He wondered if she was going to ask where he lived.

"You don't—don't happen to know who I am?" she went on, apparently with an effort.

"No, ma'am."

She sighed a little; it might have been relief. "You are looking for Mr. Clarke, I believe?" There was a tense, eager note in the girl's question, a suggestion of fear. Her face was perfectly pallid behind the kindly veil, and her small fingers gripped her palms mercilessly.

"Yes, ma'am," M. Smith replied frankly. "You don't happen to know where he is, do you?"

"May I ask—pardon me if my question seems impertinent—may I ask why you are looking for Mr. Clarke?"

Mr. Smith thoughtfully stroked his chin. "It's a little personal matter, ma'am," and his voice hardened, "a little matter between us. If it's just the same to you, I'd rather not tell you."

The girl caught her breath sharply, and when she spoke again there was abject terror in her manner. "I should not have asked, of course," she apologized quickly, falteringly. "You—you come from the United States to find Mr. Clarke?"

"Passaic, New Jersey; yes, ma'am."

"And when you find him?"

Mr. Smith's straight staring eyes grew steely, and there was a glint of danger in them; his powerful hands worked spasmodically, his white teeth were locked together. "When I find him!" he repeated grimly. Then quickly, "I'd rather not tell you, ma'am."

For an instant she stood staring at him, and twice she made as if to speak; then suddenly, silently, she turned and entered the taxicab. The car jerked and went speeding away up the Champs Elysees. For a long time Mr. Smith stood gazing after it blankly, wonderingly.

To be continued next Sunday

The Garden of Fate

Continued from page 14

ly toward her; but she did not look at her attempt to reply.

"Can you not say that also?" he insisted.

"My happiness nothing to you?"

"Yes," she admitted, "it is." Her voice was so low that it was barely audible.

He leaned still farther toward her, gently, as if fearing to alarm her by vehemence of action. "Have you not known for months—or at least since that night we were here together—on this same seat—that I wanted to be a part of your happiness?"

She tried to stop him, but faltered, and was insistent that she should know and give him an answer, hurriedly on.

"You have known it! You have read it in my eyes! You did know it that night when I bade you goodbye expecting never to

be alone with you again! You indorsed my struggle when we parted, and then—then at least—you loved me!"

Nervously she lifted herself lightly to her feet, endeavoring to gain her habitual repression, which was being swept away by his earnestness.

"Margaret," he pleaded, "Margaret, is it not true?"

She stepped away from him and out to one of the white columns, and he, eager to hear her speak, rose and followed. He saw that the fingers of one hand had tightly gripped the fluting of the stone, and would have placed his own over them had she not pulled them away.

"No! No!" she forbade, retreating from him and holding both hands extended.



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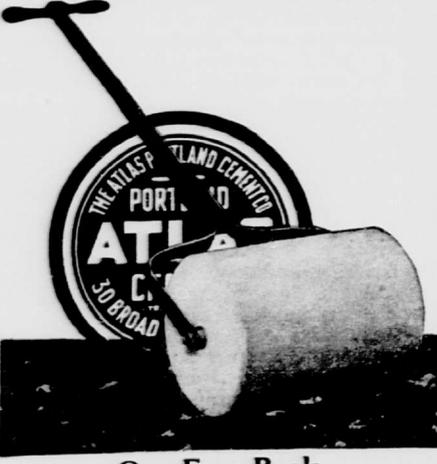
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