

SOLACE.

You say you are not strong enough, dear heart.
To bear misfortune's sting and scarring smart.
You say the future seemeth gray and dark—
A troubled sea on which you must embark.
I know how futile is my power to cheer.
I know how vain my words must be, my dear!
Yet will I utter thoughts that throng the mind.
In hopes therein some solace you may find.
The Past hath vanished like a fleeting dream,
Bearing our joys and sorrows on its stream.
The Future's doors are barred and will not open,
Even to the sesame of sacred hope!
The Present only is what we possess,
In which to do the deeds that blight or bless.
The Present—ah, what joys we daily store
For future good when we observe her lore.
The duty done, the anguish borne, the weight
Of cares upheld—that is to smile at Fate!
Dear heart, live in the now, nor vainly dread,
That which to fancies threatens far ahead.
—Arthur E. Locke, in Boston Budget.

My Strangest Case

BY GUY BOOTHBY.

Author of "Dr. Kikola," "The Beautiful White Devil," "Pharos, The Egyptian," Etc.

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CHAPTER I.—CONTINUED.

Next day I made my way to the great metropolis, and installed myself at a small private hotel, while I looked about me preparatory to commencing business. To talk of gaining a footing in London is all very well in its way, but it is by no means so easy a task to accomplish as it might appear. Doubtless it can be done fairly quickly if one is prepared to spend large sums of money in advertising, and is not afraid to blow one's own trumpet on every possible occasion, but that is not my line, and besides, even had I so wished, I had not the money to do it. For a multitude of reasons I did not feel inclined to embark my hard-earned savings on such a risky enterprise. I preferred to make my way by my own diligence, and with that end in view I rented an office in a convenient quarter, furnished it, put a small advertisement in a few of the papers, and then awaited the coming of my clients.

As I have a long and curious story to tell, and this book is only intended to be the narration of a certain episode in my life, a detailed description of my first three years in London would not only be superfluous, but in every way a waste of time. Let it suffice that my first case was that of the now notorious Pilchard street diamond robbery, my success in which brought me business from a well-known firm in Hatton Gardens. As the public will doubtless remember, they had been robbed of some valuable gems between London and Amsterdam in a singularly audacious manner. My second was the case of the celebrated Russian swindler, who called herself Countess Demikoff. This case alone took me nearly six months to unravel, but I did not grudge the time, seeing that I was well paid for my labors, and that I managed to succeed where the police had failed. From that time forward I think I may say without boasting that I have been as successful as any man of my age has a right to expect to be. What is better still, I am now in the happy position of being able to accept or decline business as I choose. It is in many respects a hard life, and at all times is attended with a fair amount of risk, but you cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs, and if anyone chooses to spend his life running to earth men who are waging war against society, well, he must not grumble if he receives some hard knocks in return.

After these preliminaries I will proceed to show how I came to be mixed up in the most curious case it has ever been my good, or evil, fortune to encounter. It showed me a side of human nature I had not met before, and it brought me the greatest happiness a man can ever hope to find.

CHAPTER II.

All business London, and a good many other people besides, must remember the famous United States Empire bank fraud. Bonds had been stolen and negotiated, vast sums of money were discovered to be missing, and the manager and one of the directors were absent also. So cleverly had the affair been worked, and so flaring were the defalcations, that had it not been for the public-spirited behavior and generosity of two of the directors, the position of the bank would have been most seriously compromised, if not shattered altogether. How the vultures had managed to slip through the fingers of the law in the first place no one could say, but the fact remains that they were able to get out of England, without, apparently, leaving a trace of their intentions or their whereabouts behind them. Scotland Yard took the matter up with its usual promptness, and at first were confident of success. They set their cleverest detectives to work upon it, and it was not until more than a month had elapsed that the men engaged were compelled most reluctantly to admit their defeat. They had done their best; it was the system under which they worked that was to blame. In the detection of crime, or in the tracing of a criminal, it is best, as in every other walk of life, to be original. One morning on arriving at my office I found a letter awaiting me from the

remaining directors of the bank, in which they inquired if I could make it convenient to call upon them at the head-office that day. To tell the truth, I had been expecting this summons for nearly a week, and was far from being displeased when it came. The work I had expected them to offer me was after my own heart, and if they would only trust the business to me and give me a free hand, I was prepared on my part to bring the missing gentlemen to justice.

Needless to say, I called upon them at the hour specified, and after a brief wait was conducted to the board room, where the directors sat in solemn conclave. The chairman, Sir Walter Bracebridge, received me on behalf of his colleagues.

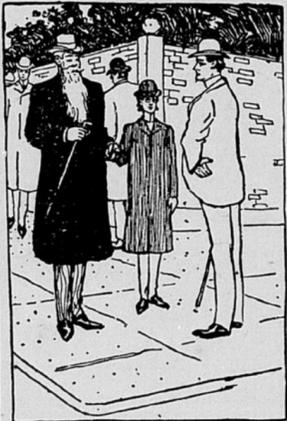
"We wrote to you, Mr. Fairfax," he said, "in order to find out whether you could help us concerning the difficulty in which we find ourselves placed. You of course are aware of the serious trouble the bank has experienced, and of the terrible consequences which have resulted therefrom?"

I admitted that I was quite conversant with it, and waited to hear what he would have to say next.

"As a matter of fact," he continued, "we have sent for you to know whether you can offer us any assistance in our hour of difficulty? Pray take a chair, and let us talk the matter over and see what conclusion we can arrive at."

I seated myself, and we discussed the affair to such good purpose that, when I left the board room, it was on the understanding that I was to take up the case at once, and that my expenses and a very large sum of money should be paid me, provided I could manage to bring the affair to a successful termination. I spent the remainder of that day at the bank, carefully studying the various memoranda. A great deal of what I had read and heard had been mere hearsay, and this it was necessary to discard in order that the real facts of the case might be taken up, and the proper conclusions drawn therefrom. For three days I weighed the case carefully in my mind, and at the end of that time was in a position to give the board a definite answer to their inquiries. Thereupon I left England, with the result that exactly 12 weeks later the two men, so much wanted, were at Bow street, and I had the proud knowledge of knowing that I had succeeded where the men who had tried before me had so distinctly failed.

As will be remembered, it was a case that interested every class of society, and press and public were alike united in the interest they showed in it. It is not, however, the trial itself as much as another curious circumstance connected with it that has induced me to refer to it here. The case had passed from the magistrate's court to the Old Bailey, and was hourly increasing in interest. Day after day the court was crowded to overflowing, and when the time came for me to take my place in the witness-box and describe the manner in which I had led up to and effected the capture of



"YOU ARE MR. FAIRFAX, ARE YOU NOT?" INQUIRED THE TALLER OF THE MEN.

the offenders, the excitement rose to fever heat. I can see the whole scene now as if it had occurred but yesterday; the learned judge upon the bench, the jury in their box, the rows of counsels, and the benches full of interested spectators. I gave my evidence and was examined by the counsels for the prosecution and for the defense. I described how I had traced the men from England to their hiding-place abroad, and the various attempts that had been made to prevent their extradition, and had just referred to a certain statement one of the prisoners had made to me soon after his arrest when an interruption caused me to look behind at the rows of spectators. At the further end of the bench, nearest me, were two men; one was evidently tall, the other very short. The taller was the possessor of silvery white hair and a long and venerable beard. He was a handsome-looking man of about 40, and my first glance at him told me that he was blind. As I have said, his companion was a much smaller man, with a smooth, almost boyish face, a pair of twinkling eyes, but a mouth rather hard set. Both were evidently following the case closely, and when on the next day I saw that they were in the same place I took an even greater interest in them than before. It was not, however, until the trial had finished and the pair of miserable men had been sent to penal servitude for a lengthy term of years, that I made the acquaintance of the men I have just described. I remember the circumstance quite distinctly. I had left the court and was proceeding down the Old Bailey in the direction of Ludgate Hill, when I heard my name pronounced. Turning round I discovered to my astonishment the two men I had seen in the court, and who had seemed to

take such an interest in the case. The smaller was guiding his friend along the crowded pavement with a dexterity that was plainly the outcome of a long practice. When I stopped, they stopped also, and the blind man addressed me. His voice was deep, and had a note of pathos in it impossible to describe. It may have been that I was a little sad that afternoon, for both the men who had been condemned to penal servitude had wives and children, to whose pitiful condition the learned judge had referred when passing sentence.

"You are Mr. Fairfax, are you not?" inquired the taller of the men.

"That is my name," I admitted.

"What can I do for you?"

"If we could persuade you to vouchsafe us an hour of your valuable time we should be more grateful than we could say," the man replied. "We have an important piece of business which it might possibly be to your advantage to take up. At any rate, it would be worthy of your consideration."

"But why have you not come to me before?" I inquired. "You have seen me in court every day. Why do you wait until the case is at an end?"

"Because we wanted to be quite sure of you," he answered. "Our case is so large and of such vital importance to us, that we did not desire to run any risk of losing you. We thought we would wait and familiarize ourselves with all that you have done in this affair before coming to you. Now we are satisfied that we could not place our case in better hands, and what we are anxious to do is to induce you to interest yourself in it and take it up."

"You pay me a very high compliment," I said, "but I cannot give you a decision at once. I must hear what it is that you want me to do and have time to think it over, before I can answer you. That is my invariable rule, and I never depart from it. Do you know my office?"

"We know it perfectly," returned the blind man. "It would be strange if we did not, seeing that we have stood outside it repeatedly, trying to summon up courage to enter. Would it be possible for you to grant us an interview to-night?"

"I fear not," I said. "I am tired, and stand in need of rest. If you care to come to-morrow morning, I shall be very pleased to see you. But you must bear in mind the fact that my time is valuable, and that it is only a certain class of cases that I care to take up personally."

"We are not afraid of our case," the man replied. "I doubt if there has ever been another like it. If fancy you yourself will say so when you hear the evidence I have to offer. It is not as if we were destitute. We are prepared to pay you well for your services, but we must have the very best that England can supply."

My readers must remember that this conversation was being carried on at the corner of Ludgate Hill and the Old Bailey. Curious glances were being thrown at my companions by passers-by, and so vehement were the tall man's utterances becoming that a small crowd was gradually collecting in our neighborhood.

"Very well," I said, "if you are really desirous of consulting me, I shall be very glad to see you at my office at ten o'clock to-morrow morning. I must ask you, however, not to be late, as I have several other appointments."

"We shall not be late," the man answered, "you may rely upon that. We have too much at stake to run any risks of losing your assistance. We will be with you to-morrow at ten o'clock punctually."

He thereupon bade me good-by, and, raising his hat politely, was led along the street by his companion in an opposite direction to that I was taking. They seemed delighted that I had given them an appointment, but for my part I am afraid I was too absorbed by the memories of the day, and the punishment that had been allotted to the two principal members in the swindle, to think very much of them and their business. Indeed, although I made a note of the appointment, it was not until I had arrived at the office on the following morning that I recollected their promised visit. I had just finished my correspondence, and had directed a few letters to my managing clerk, when a junior entered with two cards, which he placed before me. The first I took up bore the name of Septimus Codd, that of the second, Mr. George Kitwater. When I had finished the letter I was in the act of dictating, I bade the clerk admit them, and a moment later the blind man and his companion whom I had seen on Ludgate Hill the previous evening were ushered into my presence. I cannot remember a more venerable appearance than that presented by the taller man. His was a personality that would have appealed forcibly to any student of humanity. It was decidedly an open countenance, to which the long white beard that descended almost to his waist gave an added reverence. His head was well shaped and well set upon his shoulders, his height was six feet two if an inch, and he carried himself with the erectness of a man accustomed to an outdoor life. He was well dressed, and for that reason I surmised that he was the possessor of good manners. His companion was as much below the middle height as he was above it. His was a peculiar countenance resembling that of a boy when seen at a distance, and that of an old man when one was close to him. His eyes, as I have already said, were small, and they were set deep in his head. This, in itself, was calculated to add to his peculiar appearance. He steered his blind companion into the room and placed him in a seat. Then he perched himself on a chair beside him and waited for me to open the debate.

"Good morning, gentlemen," I said. "Allow me to congratulate you on your punctuality."

"We were afraid of missing you," observed Kitwater. "Our business is

so particular that we did not want to run any risk of losing our appointment."

"Perhaps you will now be good enough to tell me what that business is?" I replied, taking my notebook out of a drawer, preparatory to writing down what they had to say.

"In the first place, sir," the man began, "we of course understand that everything we have to tell you will be regarded by you as strictly private and confidential?"

"That goes without saying," I replied. "If I were to divulge what my clients tell me, my business would not be worth a day's purchase. You can rest assured that everything you may impart to me will be treated in strictest confidence."

"We thank you," said Kitwater. "The story I have to tell you is perhaps the strangest that has ever been told to mortal man. To begin with, you must understand that my companion and myself have but lately arrived in England. We have been for many years missionaries in China, sowing the good seed in the western provinces. I do not know whether you have ever visited that country, but, even if you have not, you must be aware to some extent of the dangers to which our calling is subjected. We carry our lives in our hands from the moment we leave civilization until we enter it again. There are times, however, that compensate one for all the trials that have to be undergone."

"You must excuse me," I said, "if I remind you that my time is valuable, and that, however interested I may be in the missionary work of China, I cannot allow it to interfere with my business. The sooner you tell me in what way you want me to help you, the sooner I shall be able to give you the answer you are seeking."

"I must implore your pardon," the man continued, humbly enough. "I am afraid our calling, however, is apt to make us a trifle verbose. If you will allow me I will put what I have to say in a few words as possible."

I bowed and signed to him to proceed.

[To Be Continued.]

THE WHIRLIGIG TABLE.

An Ingenious Three-Story Affair Made by a Connecticut Yankee Years Ago.

A lounge in a second-hand furniture shop asked the man behind the counter whether he had ever seen one of the queer merry-go-round tavern tables described recently in a New York newspaper, relates the Detroit Free Press.

"Yes," the second-hand man answered, "and I can go ahead of that New York man's story. I've seen a whirligig table three stories high. The New York man's table had only one story, with pigeon-holes for the dishes of food in the revolving center. Also, he describes it as a southern device, but I happen to know that all these revolving tables are Yankee inventions. Those I have seen were invented by Connecticut Yankees, good men who had such big families that they couldn't get all their children served with food under half an hour's valuable time."

"Down in a Kentucky town, now, I could show you a three-story revolving dinner table. It was carefully constructed years ago by a man who came west from Connecticut; he made it of beautiful inlaid woods, and the family used it with dolleys under the plates instead of a tablecloth. The center of the table proper was a revolving disk on which the meats and vegetables were placed, and above this a smaller disk revolved, holding salads and fruits, and on a little disk at the top was always a glorious big cake. Yes, it looked queer, of course; but that Yankee mother and housewife was an extra good cook, and I've seen some remarkably toothsome repasts go round on that old whirligig table. The family is all grown and scattered now. When the children were young they thought their father's invention was the finest thing in the world. It served a good purpose, too—that funny old whirligig table did."

Church Going in the Olden Days.

Those who are concerned about the present condition of church attendance, now being discussed in our columns, might like to return to the state of things prevalent in George II's reign. The mediaeval laws for fining people who did not go to church, and even those who harbored absentees, were still in force, which looks as though the church still entered a good deal into the daily life of the people. There was, indeed, daily service in 44 of the city churches, and evening service in all of them on Wednesday and Friday evenings, besides special sermons on other days in churches endowed with lectureships. Fast days were still rigorously observed, too, although, in most cases, the shops were not closed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, as they had been in monastic times. But the work of the clergy practically ended with the performance of their ecclesiastical duties and the visiting of the sick. Other parish work was not then done by the clergy at all.—London Chronicle.

Prominent in Literature.

"I tell you," said "Shiny Patches," as he addressed five of his companions while all were basking in the sunshine and resting between rests, "we are the prominent figures in modern literature. I don't pick up a paper without reading something about some member of our ancient order. The very thought of our fame makes me eloquent."

"We are indeed famous. Every intelligent man recognizes the names of 'Weary Willie,' 'Dusty Rhodes,' 'Meandering Mike,' 'Tired Thomas,' 'Hungry Hawkins,' 'Resting Robert,' and a score more of names that we are proud of. Literature has made us."—Stray Stories.



WILL MARRY A PRINCE.

Beautiful Baltimore Girl to Become the Bride of the Fourth Son of the King of Sweden.

News has been received from Paris of the engagement of Helen Gorman Wild, of Baltimore, and Prince Eugene of Sweden, fourth son of the king of Sweden and Norway, and hitherto regarded as a possible heir to the throne.

Miss Wild, a beautiful woman, is related to the famous Carroll family of Baltimore. She is a devout Catholic, while the royal family of Sweden is Protestant. She is an heiress in her own right and is well known in society in Baltimore, New York and Philadelphia.

At first King Oscar objected strenuously to the match, principally on the ground of the young woman's religion.

In the annals of Sweden there is not a single instance of an alliance of a scion of royal blood with a Catholic. Perhaps in no country in Europe is Protestantism so strongly entrenched as in Sweden, and when the romantic marriage of Prince Eugene was broached its possibility was laughed at by the court entourage. By his marriage Prince Eugene will resign all right to the throne, Catholic influence near the Swedish crown being regarded as out of the question, and the sacrifice of a possible throne for love invests the match with a more than usual interest. The present wearer of the Swedish crown had for one of his predecessors Gustavus Adolphus, the "Lion of the North," and the defender of the Protestant faith.

At first, it is said, King Oscar flouted the possibility of an alliance between his son and an American Catholic. The ardent lover was given to understand that the marriage was out of the question, and was warned that if he persisted he would have to renounce all royal rights.

It seems, however, that Prince Eugene had a potent ally in the queen, his mother, and through her influence she was able to give him the answer you are seeking."

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HELEN GORMAN WILD.

ence the king was won over. She persuaded the monarch to consent to the match, urging that her son had set his heart upon it and that to prevent it might be followed by serious consequences. It is said that the queen has determined to divide her immense fortune of \$25,000,000 between her two sons, Bernadotte and Eugene. Miss Wild's fortune is large.

She will be the second beautiful Baltimorean to win a royal husband, the other being, of course, Miss Paterson, who married Jerome Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon I. In this connection, however, it is interesting to recall the fact that Prince Eugene of Sweden is a descendant of one of Napoleon's marshals, the famous Bernadotte, founder of the present royal house of Sweden.

Eugene of Sweden is one of the most interesting princes in Europe. Those who have followed his career are not surprised to hear of the romantic match. He is a handsome young fellow, highly educated and of artistic temperament. He has no fads or vices, and from his youth has been attracted toward serious and artistic pursuits.

The wedding, which will take place soon, will be a private affair. It will be celebrated in a little Catholic church in Paris, in the Latin quarter, where the pair have been accustomed to attend service together. The ceremony will be attended by intimate friends of the pair, the king having expressed the desire that the marriage be celebrated as quietly as possible.—Philadelphia Press.

The Edges of the Carpet.

It is the part of wisdom to examine the edges of the carpet often in the spring. If the carpet is not to be taken from the floor remove the tacks, turn back a half yard all around the room, wipe the floor and spray with benzine in the cracks or use a little carbolic acid in the water. Then replace the carpet, cover with a damp sheet and iron with a hot flatiron. This will produce sufficient heat to destroy both the moths and all their larvae.

Husbandly Apprehension.

Mrs. Jones—They say capital is timid.
Mrs. Brown—Yes; when my husband has any he grows pale every time I kiss him.—Puck.

DUCHESS OF BUCCLEUCH.

Mistress of the Robes and Ex-Officio Prime Minister to the Queen of England.

Few people have been busier in London of late than the stately dame who is duchess of Buccleuch. As mistress of the robes she has had her hands about full for some time with the care of Queen Alexandra's wardrobe, not only for the coronation ceremonies next June, but also for the series of evening "drawing rooms" to be given by the king and queen during the year. She is a sort of prime minister for the queen.

The duchess of Buccleuch is one of the greatest ladies in the kingdom. She



DUCHESS OF BUCCLEUCH.

was three times mistress of the robes under Queen Victoria, and was "continued in office" by the present queen when she came to the throne. As the holder of this exalted position the duchess has authority over the ladies of the bedchamber and maids of honor.

Her duties as head of this illustrious staff promise, however, to be less onerous under Queen Alexandra than under the late queen, for whereas Queen Victoria always insisted on being accompanied in all her movements by a perfect swarm of titled lady attendants, her successor dispenses with the services of the maids of honor, contenting herself with the society of her friend, Miss Knollys.

BEGINNING HER CAREER.

How a Girl Should Pass the Interesting Period Between the School-room and Altar.

When a girl begins her social career, after completing her education, she finds the world far different from what she expected. The schoolroom is one thing, the world another. She may have been popular with her teachers, because she was a diligent scholar, and carried off the honors of the school. But she finds that book knowledge does not make her popular or successful socially. Some of the most intellectual people we have known have been among the most disagreeable. A woman whose nature is aggressive, who parades her knowledge before those of inferior education, is an object to be dreaded. Mere learning in a woman is never attractive. It is, on the contrary, offensive, unless coupled with feminine graces. School learning should sink into the character and deportment, and only exhibit itself as the perfume of a flower is exhibited—in a subtle, nameless, and unobtrusive manner. A woman's intellectual acquisitions should not make her talk like an orator in daily life—they should simply make her conversation gracious and agreeable. Mathematics should render her mind clear and her judgments true; her geographical studies should teach her that the world is too small for falseness to find a hiding-place; and history should impress her that life is too short for unworthy ambitions. The time between the schoolroom and the altar should not be a mere harvest-time of pleasure, but a sowing time for all the seeds of kindness and self-sacrifice for others, and of unselfishness and benevolence, which alone can make her a happy wife and mother.—N. Y. Weekly.

THE WELL-DRESSED GIRL.

Good Taste, Skillful Fingers and Industry Often Accomplish What Money Fails to Do.

You may have an idea that the best-dressed girl is the one who spends the most on her clothing, and that no girl need consider herself well-dressed who has to plan and scrimp and make over continually. This is a mistake. Good taste and skillful fingers can often accomplish what money fails to do.

The girl who does not dress to fit her years is not well-dressed. For a miss in her teens to wear gowns fashioned as elaborately as her mother, and of as expensive material, proves someone in error, either the mother or the girl. Form simple tastes, girls. Then you will never be in doubt as to how you shall dress; your own good sense will tell you.

Some girls may have prettier dresses than others, but there is no reason why any girl should excel another in neatness. A girl has herself to blame if her shoes are a rusty color instead of attractive black. It is not lack of money, but lack of energy, that is shown when a girl's shoe is minus some of its buttons.

After all, it makes less difference how a girl is dressed than she sometimes believes. To have a mind well-clothed and thoughts lovely and attractive, will do more to add to the appearance of any girl than can the most costly fabric. Clothe yourselves with content, cheerfulness, and loving thought for others, and, so your dress be neat and fresh, you need have little anxiety as to your appearance.—Girls' Companion.