

The THOUSANDTH WOMAN

BY ERNEST W. HORNING

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY O. IRWIN MYERS

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Cazale, on the steamer Kaiser Fritz homeward bound from Australia, cries out in his sleep that Henry Craven, who ten years before had ruined his father and second wife, had found that Hilton Toye, who shares the steamship with him, knows Craven and also Blanche Macnair, a former neighbor and playmate.

CHAPTER II.—When the daily papers come aboard at Southampton Toye reads that Craven has been murdered and calls Cazale's dream second sight. He thinks of doing a little amateur detective work on the case himself.

CHAPTER III.

In the Train.

Discussion was inevitable on the way up to town next morning. The two grange friends, planted opposite each other in the first-class smoker, traveled inland simultaneously engrossed in a copious report of the previous day's proceedings at the coroner's court.

The medical evidence was valuable only as tracing the fatal blow to some such weapon as the missing truncheon; the butler's evidence explained that the dinner-hour was seven thirty; that, not five minutes before, he had seen his master come down-stairs and enter the library, where, at seven fifty-five, on going to ask if he had heard the gong, he had obtained no answer but found the door locked on the inside; that he had then hastened round by the garden, and in through the French window, to discover the deceased gentleman lying in his blood.

The head gardener, who lived in the lodge, had sworn to having seen a bare-headed man rush past his windows and out of the gates about the same hour, as he knew by the sounding of the gong up at the house; they often heard it at the lodge, in warm weather when the windows were open, and the gardener swore that he himself had heard it on this occasion.

The footman appeared to have been less positive as to the time of a telephone call he had answered, thought it was between four and five, but remembered the conversation very well. The gentleman had asked whether Mr. Craven was at home, had been told that he was out motoring, asked when he would be back, told he couldn't say, but before dinner some time, and what name should be given, whereupon the gentleman had rung off without answering. The footman thought he was a gentleman, from the way he spoke. But apparently the police had not yet succeeded in tracing the call.

"Is it a difficult thing to do?" asked Cazale, touching on this last point early in the discussion, which even he showed no wish to avoid this morning. He had dropped his paper, to find that Toye had already dropped his, and was gazing at the flying English fields with thoughtful puckers about his somber eyes.

"If you ask me," he replied, "I should like to know what wasn't difficult connected with the telephone system in this country! Why, you don't have a system, and that's all there is to it. But it's not at that end they'll put the salt on their man."

"Which end will it be, then?"

"The river end. That hat, or cap. Do you see what the gardener says about the man who ran out bare-headed? If he went and left his hat or his cap behind him, that should be good enough in the long run. It's the very worst thing you can leave. Ever hear of Franz Muller?"

Cazale had not heard of that important notoriety, nor did his ignorance appear to trouble him at all, but it was becoming more and more clear that Toye took an almost unhealthy interest in the theory and practise of violent crime.

"Franz Muller," he continued, "left his hat behind him, only that and nothing more, but it brought him to the gallows even though he got over to the other side first. He made the mistake of taking a slow steamer, and that's just about the one mistake they never did make at Scotland Yard. Give them a nice, long, plain-sailing strachase and they get there by bedtime—wireless or no wireless!"

But Cazale was in no mind to discuss other crimes, old or new; and he closed the digression by asserting somewhat roundly that neither hat nor cap had been left behind in the only case that interested him.

"Don't be too sure," said Toye. "Even Scotland Yard doesn't show all its hand at once, in the first inquiry that comes along. They don't give out any description of the man that ran away, but you bet it's being circulated around every police office in the United Kingdom."

Cazale said they would give it out fast enough if they had it to give. By the way, he was surprised to see that the head gardener was the same who had been at Uplands in his father's time; he must be getting an old man, and no doubt shakier on points of detail than he would be likely to admit. Cazale instanced the alleged hearing of the gong as in itself an unconvincing statement. It was well over a hundred yards from the gates to the house, and there were no windows to open in the hall where the gong would be rung.

"I've dreamed of the old spot so often," he said at length. "I'm not thinking of the night before last—I meant in the bush—and now to think of a thing like this happening, there, in the old governor's den, of all places!"

"Seems like a kind of poetic justice," said Hilton Toye.

"It does. It is!" cried Cazale, fetching most yet fiery eyes in from the fields. "I said to you the other night that Henry Craven never was a white man, and I won't unsay it now."

Nobody may ever know what he's done to bring this upon him. But those who really knew the man, and suffered for it, can guess the kind of thing!"

"Exactly," murmured Toye, as though he had just said as much himself. His dark eyes twinkled with deliberation and debate. "How long is it, by the way, that they gave that clerk and friend of yours?"

A keen look pressed the startling question; at least, it started Cazale.

"You mean Scruton? What on earth made you think of him?"

"Talking of those who suffered for being the dead man's friends, I guess," said Toye. "Was it fourteen years?"

"That was it."

"But I guess fourteen doesn't mean fourteen, ordinarily, if a prisoner be leaves himself?"

"A little more than ten."

"Then Scruton may be out now?"

"Just."

Toye nodded with detestable aplomb. "That gives you something to chew on," said he. "Of course, I don't say he's our man—"

"I should think you didn't!" cried Cazale, white to the lips with sudden fury.

Toye looked disconcerted and distressed, but at the same time frankly puzzled. He apologized none the less readily, with almost ingenuous courtesy and fullness, but headed by exclaiming himself in a single sentence, and that told more than the rest of his straightforward eloquence put together.

"If a man had done you down like that, wouldn't you want to kill him the very moment you came out, Cazale?"

The creature of impulse was off at a tangent. "I'd forgive him if he did it, too!" he exclaimed. "I'd move heaven and earth to save him, guilty or not guilty. Wouldn't you in my place?"

"I don't know," said Hilton Toye. "It depends on the place you're in, I guess!" And the keen dark eyes came drilling into Cazale's skull like augers.

"I thought I told you," he explained impatiently. "We were in the office together; he was good to me, winked at the business hours I was inclined to keep, let me down lighter in every way than I deserved. You may say it was part of his game. But I take people as I find them. And then, as I told you, Scruton was ten thousand times more sinned against than sinning."

"Are you sure? If you knew it at the time—"

"I didn't. I told you so the last night."

Well, I mustn't ask questions," said Hilton Toye, and began folding up his newspaper with even more than his usual deliberation.

"Oh, I'll tell you!" cried Cazale ungraciously. "It's my own fault for telling you so much. It was in a letter from Scruton himself that I heard the whole thing. I'd written to him—toward the end—suggesting things. He managed to get an answer through that would never have passed the prison authorities. And—and that's why I came home just when I did," concluded Cazale; "that's why I didn't wait till after shearing. He's been through about enough, and I've had more luck than I deserved. I meant to take him back with me, to keep the books on our station, if you want to know!" The brusque voice trembled.

Toye let his newspaper slide to the floor. "But that was fine!" he exclaimed simply. "That's as fine an action as I've heard of in a long time."

"If it comes off," said Cazale in a gloomy voice.

"Don't you worry. It'll come off. Is he out yet, for sure? I mean, do you know that he is?"

"Scruton? Yes—since you press it he wrote to tell me that he was coming out even sooner than he expected."

"Then he can stop out for me," said Hilton Toye. "I guess I'm not running for that reward!"

CHAPTER IV.

Down the River.

At Waterloo the two men parted, with a fair exchange of fitting speeches, none of which rang really false. And yet Cazale found himself emphatically unable to make any plans at all for the next few days; also, he seemed in two minds now about a Jernyn Street hotel previously mentioned as his immediate destination; and his step was indubitably lighter as he went off first of all to the loop-line, to make sure of some train or other that he might have to take before the day was out.

In the event he did not take that train or any other; for the new miracle of the new traffic, the new smell of the horseless streets, and the newer joys of the newest of new taxicabs, all worked together and so swiftly upon Cazale's organism that he had a little colloquy with his smart young driver instead of paying him in Jernyn Street. He nearly did pay him off, and with something more than his usual impetuosity, as either a liar or a fool with no sense of time or space.

"But that's as quick as the train, my good fellow!" blustered Cazale.

"Quicker," said the smart young fellow without dipping his cigarette, "if you were going by the old Southwest-ern!"

The very man, and especially the manners that made or marred him, was entirely new to Cazale as a product of the old country. But he had come from the bush, and he felt as though he might have been back there but for the smell of petrol and the cry of the motor-horn from end to end of those teeming gullies of bricks and mortar.

He had accompanied his baggage

just as far as the bureau of the Jernyn Street hotel. Any room they liked, and he would be back some time before midnight; that was his card, they could enter his name for themselves. He departed, pipe in mouth, open knife in one hand, plug tobacco in the other; and remarks were passed in Jernyn Street as the taxi boomed out west in ballast.

But indeed it was too fine a morning to waste another minute indoors, even to change one's clothes, if Cazale had possessed any better than the ones he wore and did not rather glory in his rude attire. He was simply and comfortably drunk with the delight of being back. He had never dreamed of its getting into his head like this; at the time he did not realize that it had. That was the beauty of his hour. He knew well enough what he was doing and seeing, but inwardly he was literally blind. Yesterday was left behind and forgotten like the Albert Memorial, and to-morrow was still as distant as the sea, if there were such things as to-morrow and the sea.

Meanwhile what subtle miles of dazzling life, what a vivid autumn flavor in the air; how cool in the shadows, how warm in the sun; what a sparkling old river it was, to be sure; and yet, if those weren't the first of the autumn tints on the trees in Castle-nau.

There went a funeral, on its way to Mortlake! The taxi overhauled it at a callous speed. Cazale just had time to tear off his great soft hat. It was actually the first funeral he had seen since his own father's; no wonder his radiance suffered a brief eclipse. But in another moment he was out on Barnes Common.

It had been the bicycle age when he went away; now it was the motor age, and the novelty and contrast were endless to a simple mind under the influence of forgotten yet increasingly familiar scenes. But nothing was lost on Cazale that great morning; even a milk-float entranced him, itself enchanted, with its tall can turned to gold and silver in the sun. But now he was on all but holy ground. It was not so holy with these infernal electric trams; still he knew every inch

of it; and now, thank goodness, he was off the lines at last.

"Slower!" he shouted to his smart young man. He could not say that no notice was taken of the command. But a wrought-iron gate on the left, with a covered way leading up to the house, was past and gone in a veritable twinkling.

Five or six minutes later the smart young man was driving really slowly along a narrow road between patent wheels and blatant semi-gentility; on the left good grounds, shaded by cedar and chestnut, and on the right a row of hideous little houses, as pretentious as any that ever let for forty pounds within forty minutes of Waterloo.

"This can't be it!" shouted Cazale. "Can't be here—stop! Stop! I tell you!"

A young woman had appeared in one of the overpowering wooden porticoes; two or three swinging strides were bringing her down the silly little path to the wicket-gate with the idiotic name; there was no time to open it before Cazale blundered up, and shot his hand across to get a grasp as firm and friendly as he gave.

"Blanche!"

"Sweep!"

They were their two nursery names. hers no improvement on the proper monosyllable, and his a rather dubious token of pristine proclivities. But out both came as if they were children still, and children who had been just long enough apart to start with a good honest mutual stare.

"You aren't a bit altered," declared the man of thirty-three, with a note not entirely tactful in his admiring voice. But his old chum only laughed.

"Fiddle!" she cried. "But you're not altered enough. Sweep, I'm disappointed in you. Where's your beard?"

"I had it off the other day. I always meant to," he explained, "before the end of the voyage. I wasn't going to land like a wild man of the woods, you know!"

"Weren't you! I call it mean."

Her scrutiny became severe, but softened again at the sight of his clutched wide-awake and curiously characteristic shapeliness suit.

"You may well look!" she cried, delighted that she should. "They're awful old duds, I know, but you would think them a wonder if you saw where they came from—"

"I'm sorry to interrupt," said Blanche, laughing. "But there's your taxi ticking up twopence every quarter of an hour, and I can't let it go on without warning you. Where have you come from?"

He told her with a grin, was roundly reprimanded for his extravagance, but brazened it out by giving the smart young man a sovereign before her eyes. After that, she said he had better come in before the neighbors came out and mobbed him for a millionaire. And he followed her indoors and up-stairs, into a little new den crowded with some of the big old things he could remember in a very different setting. But if the room was small it had a balcony that was hard-

ly any smaller, on top of that unduly imposing porch; and out there, overlooking the fine grounds opposite, were basket chairs and a table, hot with the Indian summer sun.

"I hope you are not shocked at my abode," said Blanche. "I'm afraid I can't help it if you are. It's just big enough for Martha and me; you remember old Martha, don't you? You'll have to come and see her, but she'll be horribly disappointed about your beard!"

Coming through the room, stopping to greet a picture and a bookcase (filling a wall each) as old friends, Cazale had described a photograph of himself with that appendage. He had threatened to take the beastly thing away, and Blanche had told him he had better not. But it did not occur to Cazale that it was the photograph to which Hilton Toye had referred, or that Toye must have been in this very room to see it. In these few hours he had forgotten the man's existence, at least in so far as it associated itself with Blanche Macnair.

"The others all wanted me to live near them," she continued, "but as now two of them are in the same county it would have meant a caravan. Besides; I wasn't going to be transplanted at my age. Here one has everybody one ever knew, except those who escape by emigrating, simply at one's mercy on a bicycle. There's more golf and tennis than I can find time to play; and I still keep the old boat in the old boat-house at Littleford, because it hasn't let or sold yet, I'm sorry to say."

"So I saw as I passed," said Cazale. "That hit me hard!"

"The place being empty hits me harder," rejoined the last of the Macnairs. "It's going down in value every day like all the other property about here, except this sort. Mind where you throw that match, Sweep! I don't want you to set fire to my pampas-grass; it's the only tree I've got!"

Cazale laughed; she was making him laugh quite often. But the pampas-grass, like the rest of the ridiculous little garden in front, was obscured if not overhung by the balcony on which they sat. And the subject seemed one to change.

"I was simply glorious coming down," he said. "I wouldn't swap that three-quarters of an hour for a bale of wool. You can't think how every mortal thing on the way appealed to me. The old blot was a funeral at Barnes; it seemed such a sin to be buried on a day like this, and a fellow like me coming home to enjoy himself!"

He had turned grave, but not graver than at the actual moment coming down. Indeed, he was simply coming down again, for her benefit and his own, without an ulterior trouble until Blanche took him up with a long face of her own.

"We've had a funeral here. I suppose you know?"

"Yes, I know."

Her chair creaked as she leaned forward with an enthusiastic solemnity that would have made her shriek if she had seen herself; but it had no such effect on Cazale.

"I wonder who can have done it!"

"So do the police, and they don't look much like finding out!"

"It must have been for his watch and money, don't you think? And yet they say he had so many enemies!" Cazale kept silence; but she thought he was the man who ran out of the drive," she concluded hastily. "Where were you when it happened, Sweep?"

Somewhat hoarsely he was recalling the Mediterranean movements of the Kaiser Fritz, when at the first mention of the vessel's name he was firmly hekkled.

"Sweep, you don't mean to say you came by a German steamer?"

"I do. It was the first going, and why should I waste a week? Besides, you can generally get a cabin to yourself on the German line."

"So that's why you're here before the end of the month," said Blanche. "Well, I call it most unpatriotic; but the cabin to yourself was certainly some excuse."

"That reminds me!" he exclaimed.

"I hadn't it to myself all the way; there was another fellow in with me from Genoa; and the last night on board it came out that he knew you!"

"Who can it have been?"

"Toye, his name was. Hilton Toye."

"An American man! Oh, but I know him very well," said Blanche in a tone both strained and cordial. "He's great fun, Mr. Toye, with his delightful Americanisms, and the perfectly delightful way he says them!"

Cazale puckered like the primitive man he was, when taken at all by surprise; and that anybody, much less Blanche, should think Toye, of all people, either "delightful" or "great fun" was certainly a surprise to him, if it was nothing else. Of course it was nothing else, to his immediate knowledge; still, he was rather ready to think that Blanche was blushing, but forgot, if indeed he had been in a fit state to see it at the time, that she had paid himself the same high compliment across the gate. On the whole, it may be said that Cazale was ruffled without feeling seriously disturbed

as to the essential issue which alone leaped to his mind.

"Where did you meet the fellow?" he inquired, with the suitable admixture of confidence and amusement.

"In the first instance, at Engelberg," "Engelberg? Where's that?"

"Only one of those places in Switzerland where everybody goes nowadays for what they call winter sports."

"She was not even smiling at his arrogant ignorance; she was merely explaining one geographical point and another of general information. A close observer might have thought her almost anxious not to identify herself too closely with a popular craze.

"I dare say you mentioned it," said Cazale, but rather as though he was wondering why she had not.

"I dare say I didn't! Everything won't go into an annual letter. It was the winter before last—I went out with Betty and her husband."

"And after that he took a place down here?"

"Yes. Then I met him on the river the following summer, and found he'd got rooms in one of the Nell Gwynne Cottages, if you call that a place."

"I see."

But there was no more to see; there never had been much, but now Blanche was standing up and gazing out of the balcony into the belt of singing sunshine between the opposite side of the road and the invisible river across away.

"Why shouldn't we go down to Littleford and get out the boat if you're really going to make an afternoon of it?" she said. "But you simply must see Martha first; and while she's making herself fit to be seen, you must take something for the good of the house. I'll bring it to you on a lordly tray."

She brought him siphon, stoppered bottle, a silver biscuit-box of ancient memories, and left him alone with them some little time; for the young mistress, like her old retainer in another matter, was simply dying to make herself more presentable. Yet when she had done so, and came back like snow, in a shirt and skirt just home from the laundry, she saw that he did not see the difference. His devouring eyes shone neither more nor less; but he had also devoured every biscuit in the box, though he had been by vowing that he had lunched in town, and stuck to the table still.

Old Martha had known him all his life, but best at the period when he used to come to nursery tea at Littleford. She declared she would have known him anywhere as he was, but she simply hadn't recognized him in that photograph with his beard.

"I can see where it's been," said Martha, looking him in the lower temperate zone. "But I'm so glad you've had it off, Mr. Cazale."

"There you are, Blanche!" crowed Cazale. "You said she'd be disappointed, but Martha's got better taste."

"It isn't that, sir," said Martha earnestly. "It's because the dreadful man who was seen running out of the drive, at your old home, he had a beard! It's in all the notices about him, and that's what's put me against them, and makes me glad you've had yours off."

Blanche turned to him with too ready a smile; but then she was really not such a great age as she pretended, and she had never been in better spirits in her life.

"You hear, Sweep! I call it rather lucky for you that you were—"

But just then she saw his face, and remembered the things that had been said about Henry Craven by the Cazales' friends, even ten years ago, when she really had been a girl.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

LEGAL NOTICES

ORIGINAL NOTICE.
In the District Court of Iowa in and for Delaware County, December term, 1915.
E. B. Stiles, Plaintiff.

The unknown claimants of the trust fund under decree entered by the Circuit Court of Iowa in and for Delaware County, in the cause entitled C. H. Morrell, plaintiff vs. John A. Carter et al, defendants, being case No. 511 in Equity, which decree appears in Book E on page 398 of the records of the said Circuit Court, and the order entered by said court upon the petition of Theodore A. Carter filed on January 28th, 1914, which order appears in the records of said court in Book E on page 607; the unknown heirs of Eleazer Carter, deceased; John A. Carter, Eliza Carter, Cornelia Carter Powers, Mary Gardner Carter, Saphronia Carter, Belinda Carter, Eleazer Carter, Jr., Charles Henry Morrell, Lorenzo Carter, Holmes Buell Carter, George B. Husted, Fred Clay Atwater, Jr., Charlotte Belle Davis, Nelson James Atwater, Julia Kelsey Atwater, George Atwater, Little B. Atwater, Fred Clay Atwater, Samuel Nelson Atwater, De Nyse Williamson Atwater, Kenneth Nelson Atwater, Donald Williamson Atwater, Charlotte S. Atwater, Elizabeth M. Carter Avery, Daniel Avery, Frederick Elliott, Aspinwall, Mary Goldmark, Eliza Dunham Cay, Carter Husted, Mary Carter Tomkins, Eliza Carter Husted; the unknown surviving spouses, heirs at law, personal representatives, grantees, devisees, and claimants against the estates of each and everyone of the persons in this caption named or referred to, Defendants.

You and each of you are hereby notified that on or before the 25th day of November, 1915, there will be on file in the office of the Clerk of the District Court of Iowa in and for Delaware County a petition of E. B. Stiles, as trustee of the fund to which by decree of Court Theodore A. Carter was entitled to the use and benefit during the term of his life and at his death to which the heirs of Eleazer Carter were entitled, alleging that the said

Theodore A. Carter is now deceased, and praying order of Court authorizing and directing plaintiff as such trustee to distribute said fund to the heirs of Eleazer Carter.

Said petition alleges that the persons entitled to share in such distribution and their respective shares of said fund are as follows:

Fred Clay Atwater Jr., one-four hundred fifth (1-405) thereof; Charlotte Belle Davis one-four hundred fifth (1-405) thereof; Nelson James Atwater one-four hundred fifth (1-405) thereof; Joseph Young Atwater now a minor one-four hundred fifth (1-405) thereof; Little B. Atwater one-eighty first (1-81) thereof; De Nyse Williamson Atwater one-two hundred forty third (1-243) thereof; Kenneth Nelson Atwater one-two hundred forty third (1-243) thereof; Donald Williamson Atwater one-two hundred forty third (1-243) thereof; Frederick H. Carter one-twenty seventh (1-27) thereof; Della Frank Hulaple one-eighty first (1-81) thereof; Anna Charlotte Richardson one-eighty first (1-81) thereof; Sarah Matilda Carter one-eighty first (1-81) thereof; Charles Gardner Morrell one-eighteenth (1-18) thereof; Frederick S. Morrell one-eighteenth (1-18) thereof; Louise Jennings one-eighteenth (1-18) thereof; Mary Keeler one-eighteenth (1-18) thereof; Carlton Branch White one-twenty seventh (1-27) thereof; Alice C. Boyd one-eighty first (1-81) thereof; Charlotte B. Hendrickson; one-eighty first (1-81) thereof; J. Roy Beardslee one-eighty first (1-81) thereof; Arthur Y. Bennett one-twenty seventh (1-27) thereof; Mary Adelaide Carter one-thirty sixth (1-36) thereof; George Theodore Carter one-thirty sixth (1-36) thereof; Eleazer Carter one-thirty sixth (1-36) thereof; Almada Leola Carter one-thirty sixth (1-36) thereof; Susan

Ellott Aspinwall one-twenty seventh (1-27) thereof; Mary Goldmark one-twenty seventh (1-27) thereof; Eliza Dunham Cay one-twenty seventh (1-27) thereof; Carter Husted one-twenty seventh (1-27) thereof; George B. Husted one-twenty seventh (1-27) thereof; Harriet B. Wixom one-twenty seventh (1-27) thereof; Henry Morrell Jewett one-eighteenth (1-18) thereof; Corolla Carter Powers one-ninth (1-9) thereof.

Said petition asks the Court to find and determine the persons who are entitled to said trust fund and the proportions in which the same should be shared by them.

Said petition further asks the Court to fix and determine a reasonable compensation for said trustee; and further asks order, after paying said reasonable compensation and the costs connected with said trusteeship, to distribute the balance to the persons who shall be found to be entitled to the same.

You are further notified that said petition will be heard and determined by said Court on Tuesday, the 7th day of December, 1915, the same being the 2nd day of the December, 1915, term of said court, and unless you appear and make objection thereto at the Court House in Manchester, Delaware County Iowa, on or before said date, order will be entered upon said petition as prayed.

E. B. STILES, Plaintiff.

It is hereby ordered that the above and foregoing notice be published for four consecutive weeks and the Manchester Democrat is hereby designated as the newspaper in which said notice shall be published.

A. O. STANGER, Clerk of the District Court of Iowa in and for Delaware County.

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A Young Woman Had Appeared in One of the Wooden Porticoes.



"Where Did You Meet the Fellow?" He Inquired.