

HIS STRANGE EXPERIENCE

An Original Story in Two Parts

Part the First



YEAR afterwards, when he looked back to the events of that night, he felt as if the whole affair had been a dream, with all a dream's curious unreality and yet startling distinctness. He had been sent to Lille on business connected with his firm, of which he was the junior partner. The business was concluded and all preparations were made for his return the next day. The last two days he had found time to explore the neighborhood, and he had intended to spend the last afternoon in a long ride round by the Avenue de la Gare to see an extremely picturesque old house, which, with its gardens, constituted one of the places of interest of the town. Lately, he was told, it had been let, and the public were no longer admitted. But he had looked forward to seeing what he could of it and he determined to gain an entrance if possible. Unfortunately the day had been wet and stormy, and he had put off his ride till the evening, hoping it would clear.

After his early dinner he went to the hall door and looked out. The sky was most uncompromisingly black, but the rain had ceased. He ordered his horse and set off. Out in the open country it was even blacker and more dreary. He had ridden some distance when he came to the foot of the long hill which terminates the avenue. Then he knew that he was not far from the house. He dismounted, that the horse might climb more easily. It is a long, steep hill, and the wind came tearing down the narrow incline with a terrific force. At the top the hurricane was still fiercer, and a sudden whirl of wind caught his cap and swept it away into the darkness. He put out his hand instinctively to save it, at the same time loosening his hold on the horse's bridle. In an instant the horse, already frightened, had jerked himself free and turned back to the town. The sound of his hoofs as he clattered down the hill was soon lost in the roar of the wind.

It was an awkward predicament, but he had to make the best of it. To the left was a low stone wall that he thought must be part of the boundary wall of the garden he so longed to see. He stood leaning over, trying to peer down into the depths below. He could see dimly the ground beneath, and a sudden reckless notion took possession of him. He determined to jump down and explore without permission. The real entrance to the house he knew was in a lane off the main road, a lane which he would certainly never be able to find that night. The drop was a deeper one than he had calculated it would be. He alighted with a splash in a shallow stream of water. At that moment the moon broke through the clouds and showed him the stream, rippling along just under the wall. A footpath ran close to the water, and this he followed for some distance, until it struck abruptly at right angles across the grass. Soon he was under the shade of heavy trees, and so sheltered that scarcely a breath of wind reached him, though he could hear it swaying the branches above his head.

Presently the path lost itself in a sort of clearing. Here the grass was cleanly cut and rolled, and felt like a carpet under his feet. He was surprised to find, immediately in front of him, a small, peaked summer house. A light from a little window at one side threw a misty glow out into the darkness. He went up to it, but the curtains were closely drawn from within. As he stood considering it, the door was opened. The door was built into the framework of the wooden wall, and he had not noticed it. Before he had time to step back into the shadow of the trees a girl appeared. The moon's ray fell directly on her face, and he never forgot the impression of utter weariness that her face gave him. Her brows were drawn into an impatient frown, and she sighed as she folded her arms and leaned back against the door. He expected she would be one of the new tenants. As she had not seen him he ventured to move slightly away. But she instantly caught the sound, slight as it was, and turned her head.

"Je vous demande pardon," he began, "pardon—" and then the ghostly play of the moonlight on the girl's face bewildered him and he stopped.

"Je me crois bien," she said, with a slight smile, staring at him a surprise that equaled his own.

"Je me suis egare—" he began again, and again faltered. His command of the French tongue seemed to have vanished beyond recall.

"Why don't you speak English?" she said. "I can speak your language a little." She spoke with the faintest touch of accent.

"You speak it perfectly," he replied. "I hope you will forgive me for trespassing in your grounds?"

"How did you come in?" she interrupted.

"Well—over the wall. I must beg you to excuse me. I am entirely in the wrong, of course, and if you will kindly show me the road out again I shall be immensely obliged to you."

"But why did you come?" She glanced at him, taking in his hatless condition and his wet boots. "Dou you know, you look ridiculous!"

"I daresay. I have lost my horse,

one glimpse of it. I heard also that no one is admitted now; that is the reason I determined to see just a little in this way."

"But why choose the night?"

"Chance. I wish it had been day; then I should most assuredly not have jumped that wall. If I had come this afternoon, would there have been a chance of admission for me?"

She shook her head.

"I have no visitors at all," she said, stiffly. "We live quietly here. I shall have to take you through the house; am afraid you would not be able to find your way to the gate by the garden. Come this way."

He followed her into the summer house, which he found was scarcely a summer house, so luxuriously was it furnished. The walls were lined with bookshelves, the carpet was soft and thick, and the chairs were deep and comfortable. A shaded lamp burned on

knowing that you have been in the house, after all," she said, smiling at him pleasantly. "And really, if it had been in the daytime I would have shown you this hall; it is worth seeing. The carving over this fireplace is splendid." She held the candlestick up so that he could see. "But it is too dark now. You will have to trust to your imagination and to the histories of the place. I have read several accounts that have been quite correct."

"I have read a good deal about it, too. Is it true about the subterranean rooms?"

"That I do not know. I believe I have seen the entrance, or what was once the entrance, but it is all blocked up now. Perhaps some day some one will be enterprising enough to have it cleared out. It would be interesting to know if they really exist."

She was still standing with the candle in her hand, and he happened to glance up into a large mirror that hung over the fireplace. At the instant he looked up a flood of light streamed into the hall from a room behind him, and a man stood in the doorway. The girl had turned round quickly at the sound of the opening door. She went up to

took his arm, and the two walked back into the room.

"I suppose you see what is the matter?" she said. "That is my husband. You have seen more now than you expected to see. That, of course, is the reason why no one comes to the house." She spoke abruptly, and in an uneven tone of voice. "Perhaps you had better go, before you come across any more troubles. They abound in this house."

They stood together on the steps; the moonlight was flooding the footpath at the bottom, which led directly across a patch of grass to a large gate.

"I think you will find no difficulty now. Turn to the right from the gate, and you will be on the high road in less than a minute."

"Thanks. I must say good-by to my adventure now, I suppose?" he said a little hesitatingly.

Perhaps he was hoping for an invitation to inspect the carvings on the fireplace by daylight, but it did not come. "I suppose so," she said quietly.

"My name is Phillip Percy. If ever you are in London, and I could be of any use to you, will you let me know?"

"You are very good, but—well, I think I have come here to stay. It is extremely unlikely that I shall ever be in London again."

Her face was both weary and sad as he looked at her in the dim light. She held out her hand.

"Good-by."

(To be continued.)

THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES.

The persons who walk the streets and sidewalks of New York City are in danger of having the accident insurance companies put up rates on them. Last year 538 persons were killed by vehicles in that metropolis. This takes no account of the many other accidents due to the congestion, the carelessness of pedestrians, and the recklessness of drivers. This year the deathroll will be much longer because there are more persons to get in the way and more automobiles to dash through the crowds.

In giving warning to the public, the New York Evening Post which never appeals to the sensational, says: "The great number of automobiles on the streets, together with the increased use of electric cabs and delivery wagons, and the extra service of the car lines, has created a state of risk in the streets which has never been equalled."

Arrests for violation of the speed law are made almost hourly, and sometimes round fines are assessed, but in spite of this the maddening whirl goes on. The millions must get out of the way of the thousands, or have their necks, heads, arms, or legs broken. The districts which were once known for the quiet of the lives led in them, if they have well-paved streets, are now plagued by the whirling auto's. Certain streets are hardly better than notorious race courses. Fifth avenue and Broadway, with the driveways in Central park are the worst of them. New York being the largest city may be an exception but the let-her-go and get-her-at-any-cost spirit is in the air. There is not much difference in persons. We Americans are pushing things in all directions. As a consequence the number of killed and wounded goes on increasing at a correspondingly larger rate than the population.

Congressmen and Mileage.

Congressmen are not supposed to draw mileage expenses out of the federal treasury except for attendance upon the regular sessions, one each year. But at the extra session of 1893, which assembled in midsummer, they provided extra mileage remuneration for themselves, and there is the possibility that they will do so for the coming extra session, although it would be wholly inexcusable in this case, since the regular session will follow hard upon the adjournment of the extra. It is a matter that merits the attention of the taxpayers.—Springfield, Mass., Republican.

A Gifted Wife.

He was in the best of spirits—he always drank the best.

"Brushlet, dear," he said, and slipped her her hand.

A little box. But when his wife came down for dinner dressed

His heart stood still. A scarlet silken band.

Clasped with a blaze of diamonds, flashed on her snowy skin.

"Thanks, dear!" she said. "How pretty! And how light!"

I hate those heavy gold things—but, unless she's very thin,

I'm afraid she'll find her garter rather tight.—Town Topics.



and the wind blew away my cap on the hill, and unluckily I plunged into the stream of water under your wall. I don't wonder that you take me for a burglar or a highwayman or any one else equally disreputable."

"I did not say I took you for a burglar, or even a highwayman. I take you for just what you are—an adventurer."

"A harmless one, then. I beg you to believe I had no intention of coming out in that character when I started for my ride this evening."

"You mean you had no intention of exploring my garden in that character?"

He laughed a little awkwardly.

"I have been told so much of the beauties of your garden, madam, that I felt I could not leave Lille without

the table. She went across to another door at the far end and opened it. They entered a long, narrow passage, lighted by two or three small swinging lamps. As she walked in front of him, he had ample opportunity to notice her, but afterwards he found it was only a general impression that he carried away. He remembered that she was tall—her eyes had been almost on a level with his as they had stood for a moment in the room; that her dress was of some soft, light gray material that made her dark eyes appear still darker; but he could never recall any details. At the end of the passage she opened another door, and they passed into a large, dim hall, lighted only by one huge candlestick that stood on a table against the wall.

"You will have the satisfaction of

the man and took his hand gently.

"Who is that?" he asked.

"Come away, dear; you don't know him."

"My dear Juliette, of course I know him! I didn't recognize him at first."

In spite of the girl's detaining hand, he went into the hall and up to the astonished stranger.

"How do you do, my dear fellow?" he said.

There was a terrible vacancy in his blue eyes that revealed untold tragedies. The secret sorrow of the girl's life was here.

She had touched a bell as soon as she had seen him, and now the butler appeared.

"James," she said, quietly, "Mr. Malins will go with you."

The man went up to his master and

Science and Industry

The bureau of labor statistics at Washington, has put out a report which shows that the average advance in prices of food has within the last five years been 17 per cent., and that the average increase in wages has been at about the same rate. The increase in both is less than it has been supposed to be.

Contagious eye diseases increased among the children in the schools of New York City until the number affected was estimated at 50,000. Then children suffering from it were kept at home or sent to the hospitals, and a strict quarantine placed on all the schools. The disease now has been almost stamped out.

Verbatim et Literatim.

A Western teacher, instructing a class in composition, said: "Do not attempt any flights of fancy; be yourselves and write what is in you." The following day a bright pupil handed in the following: "We do not attempt any flights of fancy, rite what is in us. In me there is my stomach, lungs, heart, liver, two apples, one piece of mince pie, three sticks of candy, a hull lot of peanuts and my dinner."

Iowa Arrow Shots

If a lie is told three times the same it goes for truth.

Only weak persons talk about themselves a great deal.

A woman does not care as much for useful furniture as for pretty furniture.

Shining lives seldom come out of soft circumstances.

If a lie is told twice the same you ought to believe it.

We must be getting old, since nearly everything that young folks do nowadays makes us tired.

HAPPY DAYS

Sing a song of happy days
Comin' up the slope—
All the world a-tingin'
With silver bells of Hope!

"Dey ain't no use in lookin' fer spots on de sun," says Brother Williams. "It's de dark spots in dis world dat order take up all yo' attention."

Dey ain't no use in growlin'
W'en de stormy weather blow;
It takes a little rain, sometimes,
Ter make de roses grow.
—F. L. S. in Atlanta Constitution.

EXPEDITION TO THIBET.

The Whole World Will Take an Interest in the British Undertaking.

The whole world will take an interest in the British expedition which has started toward Thibet, without much regard for the reasons prompting the Indian government in dispatching this force.

It will be strong enough to force its way to Lhasa, the capitol of Thibet, for the inhabitants of that country are not in a situation to offer very formidable resistance.

Interest attaches to it because of the policy of exclusion which has kept practically all travelers and explorers out of the country. The Thibetan government has been not only exclusive, but cruel in its treatment of men who have attempted to reach Lhasa. However much such a spirit it may have tolerated in earlier periods of the world's history, it is contrary to the spirit of modern civilization, and hence Thibet has placed itself outside the pale of sympathy.

It was reported several months ago that a Russian subject in the disguise of a Thibetan entered Lhasa, but he is almost the only foreigner who has been able to reach that city and return with a report on the character and condition of the country. His evidence contradicted reports formerly more or less generally accepted that Thibet contained an enormous population. It seems from what he said that the population is something like 3,000,000, and that the country does not possess very valuable resources that are developed. If his estimate is correct, the British expedition will probably not have much difficulty in forcing its way to the heart of the country.

By means of this enterprise the public will obtain much coveted information concerning the least known part of the civilized world. It is because of the results of this nature that may be achieved that men everywhere will be interested in the undertaking.—Denver Republican.

Satisfactory Obituary.

One of the New York papers printed a half-column obituary of J. L. Mott, a well known citizen. Mr. Mott saw the obituary on the morning it was printed and was perplexed. He took the paper and went down to the editorial rooms. After much travail he got in to see the city editor.

"I came to see if you can tell me anything about this," said Mr. Mott humbly.

"About what?" asked the city editor raspingly. He took the paper and read the article hurriedly. "It seems to be an obituary notice of one J. L. Mott," he said. "What's the matter with it?"

"Nothing that I know of," answered Mr. Mott, "but I want to know how it came about."

"Come about? Why, the man died, I suppose. We don't usually print obituaries of live men."

Mr. Mott was impressed. "Probably not," he said, "but you did this time. I am J. L. Mott."

The city editor made many apologies. "We will print a correction if you like," he announced.

"No," said Mr. Mott, after hesitating. "Let it go as it is. I'll show it to people when they try to borrow money of me."—Philadelphia Post.

No Joy in Leading.

"Why don't you try to get ahead in the world?"

"Mister," said Meandering Mike, "it's a terrible t'ing to lead a procession. I've seen de drum major step-pin' along grand an' gorgeous an' lookin' like de whole outfit was his willin' subjects. But de truth is dat he's got to keep movin', for if he ever gets tired dat whole procession is goin' to march right over his prostrate form, wit' de band playin' 'Hall Columbia' jes' like notin' had happened. Dat's why I ain't ambitious. Me for de tail end, wit' de push carts and de grocery wagons, everytime."—Washington Star.

Kick Against Spelling Reform.

Filibusters are bad. Highwaymen are censurable. But spelling reformers, like pirates, can well be called the enemies of mankind. Devices to make entrance to knowledge of the English language easy are to be resented. The knowledge is desirable. But all history is proof that knowledge easy to obtain is soon forgotten, while that hard to acquire is permanently appreciated.—Brooklyn Eagle.