SERIAL STORY

ELUSIVE ISABEL

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SYNOPSIS.

Count di Rosini, the Italian ambassador, is at dinner with diplomats when a messenger summons him to the embassy, where a beautiful young woman asks for a ticket to the embassy ball. The ticket is made out in the name of Miss Isabel Thorne. Chief Campbell of the secret service, and Mr. Grimm, his head detective, are warned that a plot is brewing in Washington, and Grimm goes to the state ball for information. His attention is called to Miss Isabel Thorne, who with her companion, disappears. A shot is heard and Senor Alvarez of the Mexican legation, is found wounded. Grimm is assured Miss Thorne did it; he visits her, demanding knowledge of the affair, and arrests Pietro Petrozinni. Miss Thorne visits an old bomb-maker and they discuss a wonderful experiment. Fifty thousand dollars is stolen from the office of Senor Rodriguez, the minister from Venezuela, and while detectives are investigating the robbery Miss Thorne appears as a guest of the legation. Grimm accuses her of the theft and threatens her with deportation.

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

"But if I am innocent?" she protested.

"You must prove it," continued Mr. Grimm mercilessly. "Personally, I am convinced, and Count di Rosini has practically assured me that—"

"It's unjust!" she interrupted passionately. "It's — it's — you have proved nothing. It's unheard of! It's beyond—!!"

Suddenly she became silent. A minute, two minutes, three minutes passed; Mr. Grimm waited patiently.

"Will you give me time and opportunity to prove my innocence?" she demanded finally. "And if I do convince you—?"

"I should be delighted to believe that I have made a mistake," Mr. Grimm assured her. "How much time? One day? Two days?"

"I will let you know within an hour at your office," she told him.

Mr. Grimm rose.

"And meanwhile, in case of accident, I shall look to Count di Rosini for adjustment," he added pointedly. "Good-morning."

One hour and ten minutes later he received this note, unsigned:

"Closed carriage will stop for you at southeast corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Fourteenth Street to-night at one."

He was there; the carriage was on time; and my lady of mystery was inside. He stepped in and they swung

"But if I Am Innocent?"

out into Pennsylvania Avenue, noiselessly over the asphalt.

"Should the gold be placed in your hands now, within the hour," she queried solicitously, "would it be necessary for you to know who was the —the thief?"

"It would," Mr. Grimm responded without hesitation.

"Even if it destroyed a reputation?" she pleaded.

"The Secret Service rarely destroys a reputation, Miss Thorne, although it holds itself in readiness to do so. I dare say in this case there would be no arrest or prosecution, because of—of reasons which appear to be good."

"There wouldn't?" and there was a note of eagerness in her voice. "The identity of the guilty person would never appear?"

"It would become a matter of record in our office, but beyond that I think not— at least in this one instance."

Miss Thorne sat silent for a block or more.

"You'll admit, Mr. Grimm, that you have forced me into a most remarkable position. You seemed convinced of my guilt, and, if you'll pardon me, without reason; then you made it compulsory upon me to establish my innocence. The only way for me to do that was to find the guilty one. I have done it, and I'm sorry, because it's a little tragedy."

Mr. Grimm waited.

"It's a girl high in diplomatic society. Her father's position is an honorable rather than a lucrative one; he has no fortune. This girl moves in a certain set devoted to bridge, and stakes are high. She played and won, and played and won, and on and on, until her winnings were about eight thousand dollars. Then luck turned. She began to lose. Her money went, but she continued to play desperately. Finally some old family jewels were pawned without her father's knowledge, and ultimately they were lost. One day she awoke to the fact that she owed some nine or ten thousand dollars in bridge debts. They were pressing and there was no way to meet them. This meant exposure and utter ruin, and women do strange things, Mr. Grimm, to postpone such an ending to social aspirations. I know this much is true, for she related it all to me herself.

"At last, in some way—a misplaced letter, perhaps, or a word overheard—she learned that fifty thousand dollars would be in the legation bank overnight, and evidently she learned the precise night." She paused a moment. "Here is the address of a man in Baltimore, Thomas Q. Griswold," and she passed a card to Mr. Grimm, who sat motionless, listening. "About four years ago the combination on the legation safe was changed. This man was sent here to make the change, therefore some one besides Senor Rodriguez does know the combination. I have communicated with this man today, for I saw the possibility of just such a thing as this instead of your stethoscope. By a trick and a forged letter this girl obtained the combination from this man."

Mr. Grimm drew a long breath.

"She intended to take, perhaps, only what she desperately needed—but at sight of it all—do you see what must have been the temptation then? We get out here."

There were many unanswered questions in Mr. Grimm's mind. He repressed them for the time, stepped out and assisted Miss Thorne to alight. The carriage had turned out of Pennsylvania Avenue, and at the moment he didn't quite place himself. A narrow passageway opened before them—evidently the rear entrance to a house possibly in the next street. Miss Thorne led the way unhesitatingly, cautiously unlocked the door, and together they entered a hall. Then there was a short flight of stairs, and they stepped into a room, one of a suite. She closed the door and turned on the lights.

"The bags of gold are in the next room," she said with the utmost composure.

Mr. Grimm dragged them out of a dark closet, opened one—there were ten—and allowed the coins to dribble through his fingers. Finally he turned and stared at Miss Thorne, who, pallid and weary, stood looking on.

"Where are we?" he asked. "What house is this?"

"The Venezuelan legation," she answered. "We are standing less than forty feet from the safe that was robbed. You see how easy—!"

"And whose room?" inquired Mr. Grimm slowly.

"Must I answer?" she asked appealingly.

"You must!"

"Senorita Rodriguez—my hostess! Don't you see what you've made me do? She and Mr. Cadwallader made the trip to Baltimore in his automobile, and—and—!" She stopped. "He knows nothing of it," she added.

"Yes, I know," said Mr. Grimm.

He stood looking at her in silence for a moment, staring deeply into the pleading eyes; and a certain tense expression about his lips passed. For an instant her hand trembled on his arm, and he caught the fragrance of her hair.

"Where is she now?" he asked.

"Playing bridge," replied Miss Thorne, with a sad little smile. "It is always so—at least twice a week, and she rarely returns before two or half-past." She extended both hands impetuously. "Please be generous, Mr. Grimm. You have the gold; don't destroy her."

Senor Rodriguez, the minister from Venezuela, found the gold in his safe on the following morning, with a brief note from Mr. Grimm, in which there was no explanation of how or where it had been found. . . . And two hours later Monsieur Boissegur, ambassador from France to the United States, disappeared from the embassy, vanished!

CHAPTER XII.

The Vanishing Diplomatist.

It was three days after the ambassador's disappearance that Monsieur Rigolet, secretary of the French embassy and temporary charge-d'affaires, reported the matter to Chief Campbell in the Secret Service Bureau, adding thereto a detailed statement of several singular incidents following close upon it. He told it in order, concisely and to the point, while Grimm and his chief listened.

"Monsieur Boissegur, the ambassador, you understand, is a man whose habits are remarkably regular," he began. "He has made it a rule to be at his desk every morning at ten o'clock, and between that time and one o'clock he dictates his correspondence, and clears up whatever routine work there is before him. I have known him for many years, and have been secretary of the embassy under him in Germany and Japan and in this country. I have never known him to vary this general order of work unless because of illness, or necessary absence.

"Well, Monsieur, last Tuesday—this is Friday—the ambassador was at his desk as usual. He dictated a dozen or more letters, and had begun another—a private letter to his sister in Paris. He was well along in this letter when, without any apparent reason, he rose from his desk and left the room, closing the door behind him. His stenographer's impression was that some detail of business had occurred to him, and he had gone into the general office to attend to it. I may say, Monsieur, that this impression seemed strengthened by the fact that he left a fresh cigarette burning in his ash tray, and his pen was behind his ear. It was all as if he had merely stepped out, intending to return immediately—the sort of thing, Monsieur, that any man might have done.

"It so happened that when he went out he left a sentence of his letter incomplete. I tell you this to show that the impulse to go must have been a sudden one, yet there was nothing in his manner, so his stenographer says, to indicate excitement, or any other than his usual frame of mind. It was about five minutes of twelve o'clock—high noon—when he went out. When he didn't return immediately the stenographer began transcribing the letters. At one o'clock Monsieur Boissegur still had not returned and his stenographer went to luncheon."

As he talked, some inbred excitement seemed to be growing upon him, due, perhaps, to his recital of facts, and he paused at last to regain control of himself. Incidentally he wondered if Mr. Grimm was taking the slightest interest in what he was saying. Certainly there was nothing in his impassive face to indicate it.

"Understand, Monsieur," the secretary continued after a moment, "that I knew nothing whatever of all this until late that afternoon—that is, Tuesday afternoon about five o'clock.

"Now, Monsieur, There Are Only Two Entrances to the Embassy."

I was engaged all day upon some important work in my office, and had had no occasion to see Monsieur Boissegur since a word or so when he came in at ten o'clock. My attention was called to the affair finally by his stenographer, Monsieur Netterville, who came to me for instructions. He had finished the letters and the ambassador had not returned to sign them. At this point I began an investigation, Monsieur, and the further I went the more uneasy I grew.

"Now, Monsieur, there are only two entrances to the embassy—the front door, where a servant is in constant attendance from nine in the morning until ten at night, and the rear door, which can only be reached through the kitchen. Neither of the two men who had been stationed at the front door had seen the ambassador since breakfast, therefore he could not have gone out that way. Comprenez? It seemed ridiculous, Monsieur, but then I went to the kitchen. The chef had been there all day, and he had not seen the ambassador at all. I inquired further. No one in the embassy, not a clerk, nor a servant, nor a member of the ambassador's family had seen him since he left his office."

Again he paused and ran one hand across his troubled brow.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

How He Timed His Talk.

A successful salesman for a hardware line of goods had a novel way last season of exciting at least a momentary interest in his prospective customers in the new territory he had been given. On entering the office of his prospect his first remark was:

"Mr. Smith, we are both business men with whom time is money. I only ask for three minutes of yours, as I can only give you three minutes of mine. Let's be sure we keep to the limit."

Thereupon he pulled from his pocket quickly and placed on the desk of his hearer, well within his vision and reach, a neat little article of the same shape as and patterned after the well-known hour glass, but containing only sand enough to require three minutes for its passage from the upper to the lower compartment.

"You keep tab and don't let me overtalk the limit."—System.

Morgan, Sentimentalist.

The sentimentalist of the world of finance is J. Pierpont Morgan. He gives money widely and recklessly to help men who think they have some wonderful invention or other thing that will be a sensational benefit to the human race. A few years ago an electrical experimenter got some friends to obtain a hearing for him with Morgan. He had plans for the greatest of all inventions. He had no money himself; he had no backing. He went away with a fat check, but returned for more again and again. In the course of time he received $150,000 to perfect his wonder, but it was not perfected even then. He made a final appeal for $50,000 more. Morgan wanted to send it to him, but some of the other members of the firm induced the banker to shut down on the supplies until there should be more signs of making good.

PROGRESS of the WORLD

SOME THINGS THE BUSY WORKER IS DOING FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CIVILIZATION

PAYS BIG DIVIDENDS

Courtesy Always an Asset in the Conduct of the Modern Business Concern.

MAKES AND KEEPS FRIENDS

Little Acts That Show Consideration Are Valuable Items, Though They May Not Figure in the Ledger as Accounts to Be Collected.

It pays to be courteous. No matter whether you are an employer, or a worker, you cannot afford to be discourteous to those with whom you come in contact.

"Courtesy in business pays bigger dividends than any other single qualification," declared the head of one of the greatest corporations in Chicago. "Courteous treatment wins friends and patrons in every line of trade, and such customers become walking advertisements of the store or institution where that sort of policy prevails. No business can succeed unless it makes friends of its patrons. Friends make business, and courtesy makes friends.

"It is easy to be courteous to a friend, but the courtesy that counts for most is that which is accorded strangers. Little acts that show consideration for persons with whom one is daily thrown in contact are most important, because the one who makes it a habit to be courteous at all times is the most successful employe or employer, as the case may be. Perhaps more discourtesy is shown in answering telephone calls than in any other way.

"Courtesy should be practiced at home, in the office, in the store—in fact, it should be practiced all the time. You cannot be really courteous in one place and not in another. It is never considered servility to go out of your way to do a favor for some one else. Little acts of kindness are the ones that pay the biggest dividends. They may not be in the shape of immediate cash, but they will come in lasting credit to you and your employer.

"It is just as essential for an employer to be courteous to those who work for him as it is for his employes to treat customers with consideration. Courtesy on the part of the boss engenders loyalty among workers, and that qualification is absolutely necessary to business success. Courtesy is not so much what is said, but how it is said. A courteous person can deny a request in such a way as to leave a better taste than some other person who grants it.

"Courtesy is in reality an application to every day life of the golden rule, and Lord Chesterfield gave an excellent example of it when he said, 'Whatever pleases you most in others will infallibly please others in you.'"

Genius Requires Work.

Genius is a great ornament to a man. It is the exceptional endowment which may enhance all effort many fold, but it is only an innate force. It must be exercised, it requires activity to develop it. It requires to be worked in harness, as it were.

It has been said of Nathaniel Hawthorne that his genius was augmented by patient and painstaking effort. For 13 laborious years he lived a hermit's life, practicing the art in which he perfected himself, so that he could give a wonderful product to the world. Robert Louis Stevenson practiced just as assiduously his chosen art of writing. Men who do not write seldom leave us records which show how industrious they are, but any one who can read in their great sum of accomplishment the items which make it has no difficulty in realizing that there have been steady days of never ending labor.

A man who has worked thus and attained, has some reason to be impatient when a fellow man says, "Aren't you a lucky dog?" But waiting on luck never brought it. In one of Hawthorne's stories he says: "The contrast between him and his former partner may be briefly marked, for Brown never reckoned on luck, yet always had it, while Peter made luck the main condition of his projects and always missed it."

To Revive Mesopotamia.

When Alexander determined on sending his fleet up the Tigris he cut the earthen dams thrown across the river. He put the boats where he wanted them for military purposes, but he destroyed the productiveness of the land, and returned it to the desolation which has brooded there ever since.

Now Sir William Willcocks, the great English irrigation engineer, proposes to the Turkish government that a portion of Mesopotamia be redeemed from aridity to productiveness by restoring the ancient dams in the Tigris. This will put an end to navigation between Basrakish and Bagdad, but the water would suffice to irrigate land on which $37,500,000 worth of cotton could be produced annually.

"You will find it is invariably the case that the men at the head of big business enterprises are uniformly courteous. This is not, as many people suppose, simply a veneer covering, but is a true indication of their real dispositions. True courtesy must be genuine, and no other kind is worth considering. It is a habit that must be acquired by constant civilization, and it will be beneficial in any line of business."

Stranger Quick to See Chances.

How the stranger in the city finds success where the native will not dream of looking for it is constantly brought to light in Chicago. Some nine months ago two Arabians came here. They landed on the west side and began to look around for a location where they could start some sort of small business. A certain corner, which hundreds of Americans passed up in looking for a business location, "looked good" to these Arabians. They fixed up a fruit and soda water stand on this corner. That was nine months ago. Now the men, who cannot put a sentence together in the English language, are making a weekly profit which, if a bookkeeper got it downtown, he would call a pretty good salary.

Travel, the novelty which changing of place and surroundings brings with it, was the making of these two Arabians. A couple of years away from home, away from the watchful solicitude of a mother and an older sister, will put considerable backbone into many a young man who is in need of it.—Chicago Tribune.

Married Seventy Years.

Mr. and Mrs. James Danby of Rose Cottage, Bardney, Lincolnshire, have been married for 70 years. Although nearly a centenarian, Mr. Danby intends walking down to the railway station, half a mile from his home, to help carry the baggage of his numerous descendants who are going to see him. He worked until he was ninety, and claims to be the last of the cordwainders, or workers in Spanish leather.—London Express.

MAKE PRICE TOO HIGH

EXPENDED ENERGY FREQUENTLY NOT WORTH THE COST.

Let Common Sense Rule in Matters Where Much Labor Is Required for a Given End.

Naturally every one believes in order and cleanliness and tidiness, but it sometimes comes home to one that spic-and-span order is occasionally bought at a price which makes a human beings something not far removed from galley slaves or beasts of burden. One hears that prisoners condemned to the treadmill die of heartbreak. They plead to be given work which when done may exist in some form to represent their labor, may do some earthly good, and when denied they waste away. How credible it is!

Coming home from Italy on a slow steamer a lady noticed day after day a man whose sole work it seemed to be to clean the brass rims of the portholes on the promenade deck. These were the portholes of the dining saloon, the library, the smoking room, the lounge and a number of deck cabins, and there was an infinite number of them.

The man worked from morning until night, day in, day out, scouring and polishing those brass rims, down one side of the deck up the other, and long before he could get around the circle the first ones were of necessity dingy and splashed with verdigris spots from the salt spray that blew against them. The man never stopped cleaning them, and yet those portholes were never clean. What an existence!

Every one likes the sight of bright polished brass—yes—but when it is bought at the price of the unceasing labor of a human being it seems as if no one would not prefer that polished brass painted over, done away with, substituted by anything, no matter, how unornamental, which should not represent quite such waste of human energy. That special man may not have realized the painful futility of his labor, though judging by the doglike appeal of his eyes and the deprecating pathos of his smile he did.

METHOD IN ECONOMY

Business Man Knows Vast Difference Between Theory and Actual Fact.

FAKE IDEAS ARE GENERAL

Small Savings That Heads of Departments May Consider Worth While, If Looked Into Will Be Found to Figure on the Ledger as a Loss.

"There are a great many kinds of economy, and most of them are expensive," said a prosperous Chicago business man recently. "There is a lot of truth in the old adage: 'Penny wise, pound foolish.' I knew a man that ran a drug store. He couldn't bear to see anything wasted. Every morning when he opened his mail he stopped to split the envelopes and save them for scratch paper. He kept a clerk busy most of the time picking knots out of the strings that came around packages and smoothing out the paper they were wrapped in, so that they could use it again. They lost not only the time it took to save the second hand material, but they also lost enough time in finding the right piece of paper and the right string when they wanted to wrap up a package to pay for fresh material. Incidentally they lost customers by using old stuff. That was penny wise economy, and cost the man heavily. I mention him as an extreme case.

"I have been guilty of false economy more than once. When I first started out on the road, twenty years ago, I was ambitious to save money for the house and myself. On my first trip, I remember, I had a night run, leaving one town at about 11 and arriving at my next stop at 6 in the morning. I decided that I would save the price of a sleeper by sitting up. When I got to my town I was so sleepy that I had to get a room at a hotel and go to bed until noon. If I had slept on the train I would not have needed the room, because I could have got out of town in the afternoon. But worse than that, I lost a big sale that morning. One of our competitors called on our principal customer while I was recovering from my economy and sold him up to the guards.

"Another disastrous economy is in trying to save the cost of labor by doing things yourself. There is a principle that people are apt to lose sight of. That is, that you can never afford to do anything that a cheaper man can do just as well. If you can earn $10,000 a year for yourself your time is worth 7 cents a minute, figuring 300 working days in the year of eight hours each. There are lots of little things that come to your desk that you feel like doing yourself. Perhaps it won't take you five minutes to clear them off. If you do it, it won't take many of them before you are spending five or six dollars' worth of time every day doing something that a $15 a week man could do just as well. So you will be losing actual money, to say nothing of the loss to your mentality caused by directing your attention from the big things. My practice is to do nothing that any one else can do, because I am the highest priced man in my employ. It leaves me with time and energy for the bigger things that come along.

"That's the way successful men do. I don't mean to hold myself up as a pattern of success, because I am only moderately successful, compared with captains of finance and such men; but you'll find that they never do anything that any one else can do. Can you imagine Pierpont Morgan fussing with his trial balance? An extreme case again, but it shows what I mean."

Eyesight and Efficiency.

A large percentage of the workmen whose efficiency decreases with middle age owe their declining earning powers to their eyes. Most persons experience a change in vision after they pass their fortieth birthday, the common trouble being an increasing tendency toward far-sightedness. In not a few manufacturing plants there is an organized inspection of eyes. In the best-developed systems the eyes of all employes are examined by a skilled specialist. The more common practice, and an effective one, is to insist upon an examination when a superintendent or foreman finds reason to suspect that something is wrong with the eyes. It is not uncommon to see a workman holding a blueprint or a piece of work far from him in order to see it better. Such a condition naturally slows up the man. Clear vision is a large asset, especially where work requiring precision is involved.—Iron Age.

Maine Squaws' Plug Hats.

The Indian maidens of Maine, three-quarters of a century ago, used to wear tall hats much the same as did Pocahontas, according to a print made in her time. For generations the village of the Passamaquoddy Indians in eastern Maine has been at Pleasant Point, near Eastport. An aged resident of Eastport says:

"When I was a boy, the young Indian squaws wore tall black hats with broad silver bands, silver disks upon their bosoms, and, below their short skirts, leggins trimmed with beads and scarlet cloth. They always wore bright-beaded moccasins. To us children they were a gorgeous sight, and they certainly did wear their silver-banded, tall hats with dignity."