

The Disappearance Syndicate

AND

Senator Stanley's Story

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New York

CHARLES B. REED, Publisher

164, 166 & 168 Fulton St.

1894

PR 6005
R38D47

AUGUSTA W. FLETCHER, M. D.



THE COUNCIL OF TEN. PAGE 101.

PREFACE.

The two stories, *THE DISAPPEARANCE SYNDICATE* and *SENATOR STANLEY'S STORY*, contained in this book, originally appeared in the *COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE*. The first story has been slightly elaborated and extended, for the purpose of developing an idea which the limits of magazine publication did not permit.

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The Disappearance *Syndicate*

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The Disappearance Syndicate.

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CHAPTER I.

A CHAIN OF MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCES THROUGH-
OUT THE WORLD.

LIFE is full of strange possibilities to those who keep their eyes wide open. Even to those who are blind there comes, at some turn in their existence, a flash of light. I have had a queer experience in my life, as it has thus far been lived, unlike anything I have ever heard of in any book or story. For a brief period I dwelt in a world more wonderful than any described in a tale of the Arabian Nights. How I came to lose this rare opportunity of living a life of light and knowledge, and how I have acquired the patience to follow again the humdrum of ordinary existence, may prove interesting. At any rate, I have firmly made up my mind to tell the story exactly as it occurred, with the hope that its recital will do some good to those who may care to read it through from its beginning to the end.

My name is Arthur Livingstone. I have been a writer upon social topics for many years. I read all the papers carefully, and am ever on the alert for out-of-the-way topics. At the time of the beginning of this story I had been much impressed by the number of peculiar disappearances throughout the world. These disappearances were nearly always those of

men of wealth and prominence. There never appeared to be any special predisposing cause, so far as any surface clue might indicate.

In Paris, during the preceding summer, I had been attracted by an article in the *Petit Journal* upon the subject of mysterious disappearances throughout France. The French are the most curious people in the world, and when a man disappears in that country, there are generally any number of witnesses, who, by shrewd observation, are able to give the clue which leads to a rational explanation. But this article called attention to the curious fact that, out of the ten cases noted in France that year, all had been identical in character. There was no crime, nor scandal, as a predisposing cause. In each case the absent individual had been in prosperous circumstances, and in each case the disappearance had been absolute, no trace being found afterwards.

When I returned to New York, in the autumn, I took up the files of newspapers kept in the Mercantile Library. I went carefully through the leading papers of the world for the year, looking for cases of mysterious disappearance. I found more than I could have anticipated, and found them, too, in every country where I made search. The record of London had reached, during the year, as high as twenty, and these really notable people. In Spain, there were five; in Italy, ten; in Austro-Hungary, five; in Germany, ten; in Russia, fifteen; in the north of Europe, fifteen, while the United States had contributed, in the same period, some twenty cases.

These cases were all alike, the world over. The people were always prominent, well-to-do, with no apparent reason for their "stepping out." The disappearances were always unforeseen. They were, also, as complete as they were unexplainable. Here are two cases from my note-book of observations in the



HUNTING UP CASES.

American papers. Case number one: A naval officer, in good standing at Washington, young, handsome, unmarried, leaves Fortress Monroe on an Old Dominion steamer for New York. His friends see him off, and observe that he is in unusually good spirits. The next morning he walks up the dock in New York, and steps out into the unknown. He has now been lost for one

year. The utmost resources of the department and of his friends have not been able to produce a trace of his existence. Case number two: A high official in one of the government departments, who has a pleasant home and an agreeable family, leaves his office at mid-day, and says he will return in a half-hour. He is seen upon Pennsylvania avenue, a short time afterwards, and then disappears. No apparent reason for his going away, however, has been found, while the world has been ransacked by detectives, to find out where he could have gone.

The latest case to attract my attention was the disappearance of a banker from the town of Winsted, Connecticut. He was rich, apparently happy, with a well-brought-up family. He had no bad habits known to any one around him. He had come to New York upon a business visit, and had never been heard of afterwards. His accounts were found to be correct to a penny. There was no evidence of any love affair. He had simply stepped out into the unknown and had left no trace behind him.

One night, at the Critics' Club, I talked over the disappearances noted by me with an old college-mate, Dr. Briggs, now headmaster of a large private school near Boston. He suggested, cynically: "You have evolved such a chain of disappearances throughout the world, that you have proved the necessity of some system behind it all. And a system argues a syndicate."

"A syndicate?"

"Certainly, a syndicate. Why not? The fact that only men well-to-do are taken shows the ear-marks of

a great business enterprise. The further fact that the dishonest and the criminal are eliminated from their customers shows how carefully the thing is managed and how it runs no risk of exposure or of coming to ruin through conflict with the law. I tell you, sir," and here the professor slapped the table, "there is, undoubtedly, somewhere in this world some great and overshadowing genius, who is the directing mind of a formidable syndicate created for the purpose of promoting disappearances. Oh, what would I not give to be able to see that man and talk with him!"

I must confess that I was a bit overwhelmed by the professor's explanation, and I could only feebly ejaculate, in response to his daring originality: "What you say is ridiculous!"

"Why ridiculous?" said the professor, sharply. "Would not such a syndicate make an appeal to the universal nomadic instinct? There are men with whom you touch elbows every day, who are outwardly cheerful, but who are bored to death—wearied with the routine of existence—who would jump at an easy, ready-made path into another existence, to which they could escape without fear of bother, scandal, or of possible failure in arriving there. Why, I once knew a man who committed suicide because he got tired of getting up every morning and lacing his shoes! Then, the cost of the disappearance would cut no figure if the system were perfect. Clearly, this syndicate is under the direction of a master-mind! Why, he can point to his past record of last year and even charge a fee of one hundred thousand dollars to the weary,

worn candidate, and be sure of getting it! I think he is wise in keeping the number limited and the price high. I would give a good deal to meet the president of The Disappearance Syndicate!"

"But, professor, why do you go so fast? Why do you treat your ingenious surmise as such an indisputable fact?"

"Simply because a syndicate is the only explanation. Without large capital and a perfect system, the disappearances noted by you, which are so uniform in character, could not have been possible. Large capital and a system are, naturally, the product of a well-organized syndicate, and the successful syndicate has always back of it the man—the dictator—who makes things go."

CHAPTER II.

LOOKING FOR FACTS TO SUPPORT THE SYNDICATE
THEORY OF DR. BRIGGS.

The professor's idea interested me. I was certain that it would, at least, make a good article for one of the Sunday papers. As I followed the thread of my friend's whimsical idea, I naturally turned in the direction of a possible candidate for the mythical syndicate. I found him in my old friend, James Musgrove, banker and broker, whose New York house had London and Paris branches. It was in Paris that I first knew him. It was through his house that I had cashed the small drafts that came to me, at fitful intervals, as compensation for stray newspaper letters. Musgrove was rich, and tired of everything. He had been a bold speculator all his life, and I knew that anything really new would divert him more than any other man of my acquaintance.

I made up my mind to call upon him and discuss the disappearance syndicate theory, merely to listen to the flow of his cynical talk. The Winsted banker had been one of his customers, and, as the papers were still full of the case, it gave me a good excuse for calling upon him.

I found the banker seated in the private room reserved for customers. At that time, he was in the

neighborhood of sixty years of age. He sat in a stuffed leather chair, with huge gold-mounted eyeglasses fitted up against his eager dark eyes. For upwards of forty years he had been tossing about upon the raging sea of speculation. Originally a farmer's boy in central New York, he acquired in youth a stock of health and vitality that had stood him splendid service during his life. He was slightly above the medium height, with a round and heavy figure. He always dressed in black. His coat was a loose, unbuttoned frock; his waistcoat was cut low enough to show a good expanse of white shirt, upon which gleamed a large diamond. His neck was encircled by a high standing-collar; his black cravat was tied in the form of a double bow at his throat. His trousers were cut as wide as a sailor's; his boots were broad, low-heeled and highly polished. His hat, worn in and out of doors, summer and winter, was, nine months of the year, a high silk; for three months, in the summer, it was a coarse, high-crowned straw. His face was round, olive-tinted, heavy-featured and thick-skinned. His nose was a wide-flaring pug. His mouth was large and thick-lipped; in the days when he was an active broker, engaged on the floor of the Stock Exchange, when opened, it gave forth the roar of a bull or the growl of a bear, according to the side he was engaged upon, in tones only too realistic. His teeth were firm and even, indicating a sound digestion, while his dark, close-cropped and curling hair—slightly thinning now towards the crown—showed only traces of silver-gray. When I came in, he sat in his favorite attitude, with his fat

hands clasped over his round stomach, as he gazed, with the intensity of an artist, upon the figures which a lean and hungry boy was continually marking up on the walls of a blackboard, which covered the two sides of the room, the register of the stock quotations of the world.

There was a great table in the center of the room, littered with financial reports, and newspapers; a clock-work machine—the “ticker”—monotonously turning, printing stock quotations on rapidly unwinding lengths of white tape, stood in one corner. The hieroglyphics printed by the machine are read from moment to moment, from ten A. M. to three P. M., all over the world, by grave groups, who scan the register of the day's proceedings with the same seriousness that people used to accord to the utterances of the Delphic oracle. About the room were the customers, who watched the figures on the wall with the manner of professional gamblers studying the movements of the hands of the croupiers at Monte Carlo. The whole floor of the building was given up to the offices of J. Musgrove & Company. It was divided off into little, compact pens, each lighted by incandescent electric lights. The great window looking into Wall street was filled with sheets of money, bonds, ingots, and with the gold of all nations; next to this array of money stood a small army of bookkeepers, who toiled, like convicts in the galleys, at long columns of figures, not daring to look up during the rush of business hours. In other pens were typewriters, telegraph operators, private secretaries, associate and special partners.

There were also a number of special pens for private conversation, where nervous customers could be taken in quietly and soothed when the market was going against them, and where they could be bravely patted on the back, and praised for their courage, and told to go in and win when the market was going their way. In some of these little pens strong men had broken down and shed tears at the thought of the fortune that had been taken from them through the mutations of the remorseless ticker.

Here they came, old and young, to try their fortune, to bet boldly or timidly, according to their natures, upon the direction in which the erratic market would jump. Musgrove always told everybody to keep away, and when a new customer came to him, he invariably said: "Don't you try stocks!" It was observed that the customers were never so anxious to try as when Musgrove advised them to keep away. The man who wishes to burn his fingers was never yet deterred by anything in the form of advice; and so, when the hollow-eyed customer came up to settle at the cashier's office, and sometimes totter away to penury and despair, it was an edifying spectacle to watch James Musgrove, as he stood rattling his customer's commissions in the deep pockets of his wide trousers, while he called out after him, in good-natured accents: "Remember, I told you to keep away!" And his "Better luck next time!" was a miracle of art, because it was this hope of the next time that brought each one back as soon as he could scrape together the wherewithal to cover the margins necessary to play again, the beauti-

ful game of betting what the uncertain movement of the stock quotation machine would grind out next.

Musgrove looked at me carelessly, as I came in, and then, having nothing very much to do for the moment, he began to give me his views concerning the condition of affairs in the country, which was his way of being agreeable. After he had described the different conditions of the various railroads of the country, and the effect upon the market of this and that influence, he walked into another private room, where I followed him. In the midst of his talk I finally interjected this question: "Did you know this Winsted banker, who disappeared the other day?"

Musgrove darted a sharp look at me, and said: "Why do you ask that? I have told over and over again, in the newspapers, for the last ten days, all that I know about him—and more, too."

"What I want to know is: Did you have intimate relations with him?"

Musgrove was no longer responsive.

"I knew him as I knew hundreds of others, and he used to come in here very often. He was a good customer."

I ventured to add that I was very much interested in the case, and I was curious to observe that Musgrove did not like to be questioned concerning the Connecticut man. I finally said: "I'm interested in all cases of this kind. My interest is only general."

I fancied, when I said this, that Musgrove looked slightly relieved. He was looking at me, all through this conversation, with that old, hard and curious look

that I used to see when he thought I was on the verge of bringing up some question of money. This look of hardness was soon followed by such a look of indifference that I was repelled. I did not reach a point in the conversation where it would have been natural for me to



“WHY DO YOU ASK THAT ?”

have introduced the syndicate theory. It takes a born fool, or a diplomat of the first water, to take up an utterly foreign subject, and drag it, neck and heels, into such a conversation, without some kind of prelude.

I never observed Musgrove so closely as I did upon this particular occasion. Some inner instinct of the detective

cautioned me to scrutinize his every feature, as I had never observed him before. Every detail of his characteristic face was rephotographed with remarkable distinctness upon my mind. I observed that under his left eye there were three little, blue powder-marks, the result of an accident in childhood. Behind his right ear was a small mole, in the shape of an egg. His hands were made the subject of my most minute attention. The left hand had a slight scar, running from the upper knuckle to the middle of the hand. This was the only characteristic mark, outside of their intensely individual form. They were very short and covered with the hair of a vigorous type of man; the nails were flat, cut very short, and even with the ends of the fingers, giving the hands a very blunt appearance.

My sharp scrutiny appeared to make him nervous. He said, brusquely: "What in the devil are you looking at me that way for?"

I made some explanation about being absent-minded, and got up to take my leave, as he was evidently anxious either to be alone, or to take up some other subject of more interest to him than the conversation of the casual caller.

When I rose to go, his old heartiness of manner came back. He got up with a rush, shook me by the hand warmly, and invited me to drop in and see him at the Colossus Club that evening, after dinner. "This shop, down here," said he, "is really no place for a talk. I've got some literary ideas I want to suggest to you. I think you are really getting careless in your

style, and the subjects you have been writing about lately are not new. You're losing your originality, my boy." This kind of remark was not new to me. It was a part of the engaging manner often employed by business men, to endear themselves to their literary friends.

I left Mr. Musgrove's office at three o'clock. The next morning all the papers published, with great detail, a story of the disappearance of James Musgrove. This brought the subject of mysterious disappearances very close home. I will not give the details of the many stories circulated about Musgrove's disappearance. No two of the theories published agreed, and no clue was then found showing what had become of him after leaving his banking-house on the day of my call.

CHAPTER III.

THE SENSATION CREATED BY THE DISAPPEARANCE
OF BANKER MUSGROVE.

The sensation created by the disappearance of James Musgrove was very great. He was one of the pillars of the Stock Exchange. His absence made a run on his bank. Rumors of a large defalcation were put in active circulation. All the stock or the enterprises in which the house had been interested were freely sold by the bears, who made so much noise and excitement by their sale of these securities, that they nearly created a panic on the Exchange. They soon found the missing banker had left his house in an absolutely sound condition. Every obligation presented was promptly met. Musgrove had withdrawn nothing from the firm which did not personally belong to him. His accounts were found to be in perfect condition. The reserve was ample for every need, showing that the banker's absence, if continued, would not, of necessity, force the winding up of the affairs of the concern.

The public interest in his disappearance was greatly increased when it was found that there was no apparent reason for his going away. The attention of the public had been lightly stirred by the story of the disappearance of the Winsted banker. The disappearance of so

prominent a New York banker, in an equally mysterious and unexplainable way, fanned the curiosity of the easily inflamed New York public to a high pitch of excitement. The newspapers increased this by inventing various kinds of impossible stories, ranging from



HERE YOU ARE, SIR! MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE!

scandal to crime. One particular newspaper, noted for leading all others in its audacity of inventions, pretended to have discovered the plan of a society formed for the secret assassination of bankers and people of wealth. I was made the subject of a good deal of attention, because an article of mine, on mysterious disappearances throughout the world, had appeared

during the week, in the *Illustrated Journal of Civilization*. Of course, I took advantage of the situation in the market to sell my wares. However, I made no reference in the article to my personal knowledge of Musgrove. If the article had been published during an ordinary period, it would not have attracted more than casual notice. Now, it gave me, temporarily, great notoriety. This notoriety brought me within the visual horizon of the editor of *The Daily Wasp*.

A reporter of this newspaper called upon me, one evening, at my club, and said the editor wished to see me. As I had never seen him, I was only too glad to accept the invitation, and to say that I would call at his private office at twelve o'clock on the following day. I correctly supposed that he had been attracted by my notoriety, the only qualification necessary, in his eyes, to make a successful writer for a newspaper. The latest criminal, and the freshest subject of some hideous scandal are considered to-day more valuable contributors, when writing over their own signatures, than the ablest professional writers. In this the modern editor shows his financial genius. An article on parental affection, by a young man who had murdered his mother because she would not lend him money for drink, had recently sent the circulation of *The Wasp* up several thousand. Its editor said, over and over again, that no member of the editorial staff had ever written an article that had ever given the paper such an upward bound in circulation as this filial article, which bore the address of Sing Sing.

I was prompt in my appointment, and found the editor in a room, fitted up with some attempt at luxury and taste, although I observed, on my way to it, that the small rooms set aside for the use of the writers were rather bare of furnishings or adornment. It is not my present intention, however, to try to describe the interior of this newspaper office.

When I entered the editor's office, he was giving final instructions to a reporter, for the presiding genius of this paper interfered with every department, and called it supervision. He was sending this reporter out to interview a widowed mother, whose only son had just been arrested for some crime.

"Be sure and see the mother," roared he, "and describe, in detail, her agony. Count her tears, and give a general idea of their size. Such descriptions are greatly relished by the public. If she does not break down in your presence—and people have a strange way of controlling themselves when in the presence of my reporters—then you can denounce her for her indifference and coldness. Be sure and make it spicy, and if you can put a touch of humor here and there to lighten the thing, don't fail. Now, go!"

I shall never forget the hungry look that came upon his face when he turned and motioned me to a seat near his desk. His eyes appeared to be pointed like gimlets, and as if seeking to bore themselves into my brain and draw out something to make palpitating copy. He said, abruptly:

"I have read your article on the mysterious disappearances throughout the world. It shows great orig-



"MY GOD ! AN ORIGINAL IDEA ?" PAGE 28.

inality and study. I have an idea that you did not put all you knew, or surmised, into that article."

"No, I did not."

At this, the editor bounded from his chair with excitement. No foxhound could bay louder than he, when upon the faintest trail of sensational copy. He now looked at me most admiringly. His commercial instincts approved the idea of writing part, and holding back the most valuable portion, to be sold upon a rising market. My reasons, however, had not been commercial. The editor's questions were now as abrupt as so many pistol shots.

"Have you any real news about Musgrove?"

"No."

"What are you holding back?"

"A good story."

"A news story?"

"No, not exactly, but a possible explanation; at least, an original idea concerning it."

"My God! An original idea?"

"Yes, I am sure of its originality."

At this, he abruptly rang a bell, and sent out word that he was not to be disturbed under any circumstances. He then turned to me, with great nervous anxiety, and said:

"If you have an original idea, I want to buy it. An original idea is worth money. I boil the brains of the men in this office daily, as I would so much soap-fat, searching for an original idea. Men break down, sometimes die, and sometimes are discharged, under my brain-squeezing process of searching for new ideas.

I offer premiums for their discovery, and discharge for their failure. Sometimes we are successful, and have a nice crop of really good ideas. But an original one—a wholly original one—we never had.” Here the editor towered above me, brandishing a check-book, as he fairly howled: “Don’t deceive me! Out with it! If it is original, I will pay any reasonable sum for it.”

“To speak the honest truth,” said I, “the idea is not original with me.”

“That does not matter. Have you got it with you?”

This treatment of an idea as an article of merchandise made a profound impression upon me. It was, after all, my friend’s idea. I believed he was entitled to some consideration, if this idea was to be treated as a property. I said something like this; but the editor waved aside the suggestion as trivial—as if I were trying to evade his desire. My reticence stimulated him. He said:

“Tell me really what the whole idea is, and, if it is original, I’ll give you five thousand dollars for it. Then there may be some business to follow.”

Upon this assurance, which quite took my breath away with its magnificence, I outlined the idea of a disappearance syndicate. The editor was in raptures.

“I call that an original idea, at last,” said he. “If I’d had that, I’d have gotten ten thousand dollars for it. I don’t grudge you the price.”

Here he tore open his check-book and wrote out a check for five thousand dollars, with an air of one to whom money was nothing. Then, when I told him

how intimate I had been with Musgrove, and how I had, by chance, studied him upon the very day of his departure, and could identify him under any disguise, he went into further raptures.

"I believe you can run down Musgrove. You know him. Try it. The story of a disappearance syndicate should be worked up with great detail, and should come from the other side of the water, to give it pith and point. Of course, it is absurdly impossible, and will, for that reason, be all the more readily believed. You should go to London at once. It would be well to visit Berlin and Paris, also. Musgrove is bound to be in some of his old haunts in Europe. Employ the French and London police. Spend money freely. If you find Musgrove, use the cable; if you don't, elaborate the disappearance syndicate idea. Make a twenty-column story. Articles in my paper are judged entirely by their length, the only test of true merit. Send it over by mail, and we'll mark it 'Special cable.' How soon can you go?"

"Right away."

"You have no special preparations to make?"

"None."

"I like that." Here the editor picked up a speaking-tube, marked "Cashier," and called out: "Send me up one hundred pounds, English money. When is the next European steamer?"

"The 'New York' sails at three this afternoon," came back through the tube.

In a few moments, up came a package of crisp English bank-notes. I soon had the value of my check

in my inside pocket. It had been changed to a draft on London. It was now two o'clock. The cab was called. I had still a few moments, as it was not over a twenty minutes' drive to the "New York's" pier. So, as I turned to go, the editor said :

"Try hard to think of a new idea on your way over, and cable it from Queenstown. Think of all the time you'll have going over." This last was said with an air of intense regret; his mind was poisoned by the thought that, for at least five days, I would be out of his reach, where he could not ply me with questions.

As I rose to go, he still devoured me with his hungry, unhappy gaze, as if he were in doubt whether he had gotten all he could out of me. He had no doubt concerning the correctness of his investment. In such bargains his genius never wavered when he had once marked out a course. He said, after a moment's thought :

"I'll send two reporters down with you to the steamer. You might have an idea on your way down. And I'll direct the city editor to put a basket of carrier-pigeons on the cab. You may have an idea on the way out through the Narrows, and if you have, you can send it back by them. Now, good-by, and do your best!"

Up to this time he had acted with the force and rapidity of a great man of affairs. There had been no feebleness nor hesitation. Now he looked almost pathetic. His investment was about to move out of range of communication.

"Cable me the moment you arrive," said he. "Send

a cable address as soon as you get to London. Report something every night."

At last I got away. It was now half-past two. I dashed into the waiting cab, with two reporters at my heels. The fire and fury of the editorial director yet stimulated the pulsations of my heart, which throbbed with comfortable rapidity against the book containing the five-thousand-dollar draft. In the fire and force of his intense, dominating individuality, I had overlooked all else; and now, I, caught in the clutches of *The Wasp*, was suddenly being fired, as from a catapult, towards Europe, without any previous thought or preparation. But the dominating thought was that, at last, I was authorized and financially backed for the purpose of investigating my favorite subject—a mystery. To hunt for James Musgrove was a fascinating task, and I shouted words of encouragement to the cab-driver, as he lashed his horse down the side streets, over the rough pavement and boxes and garbage of lower New York, deftly dodging street blockades, until we reached the dock, just as they were beginning to haul in the gangways to the steamer.

I mounted the last gangway, breathless and perspiring, just as it was beginning to move in. I waved my hat to the reporters, who cheered me as they cried: "We will tell the old man you made it."

Five minutes later the "City of New York" cast loose her moorings and was towed out into the stream. Fifteen minutes later she was turned about, and was running free down the Narrows, under the blazing sun of an early June afternoon.

CHAPTER IV.

SEARCHING THROUGH EUROPE FOR JAMES MUSGROVE.

Eight days after I was in London. From now on I moved in the atmosphere of turmoil and unrest of those who serve, even for the shortest time, a daily newspaper. Cablegrams came to me at all hours of the night, at my lodgings in Half-Moon street. Whenever I thought I had, by some long and toilsome day, earned the right to have a good rest, "bang!" would go the knocker, and in would come a buttoned boy with a blue-lined cablegram, covered with frenzied words, asking for the latest news. The night I arrived in London, before I had fairly entered my room, a cablegram came to me, asking how my search was coming on. This feverish intensity of pursuit made me, at times, wild. My peace of life was now gone; but I could not go back. I had taken a fee, and had made the engagement to try and perform a certain task. Then my own curiosity was a powerful stimulant. I made no attempt to call in the aid of the police. I knew that the best police of Europe had been already engaged by the private inquiries of the Musgrove family.

I knew that Musgrove was very fond of London, and that, when he lived in Paris, he had a frequent habit of coming over to the English capital, upon some finan-

cial pretext. In my occasional visits to London I had repeatedly met him. His habit, when there, was to occupy himself with financial affairs down in the city during the day, while, when evening came, he was nearly always to be found in some music-hall, with a group of lively friends, usually winding up with a supper at the Hotel Continental. He could not go about in any of his old haunts of London without being observed by some of his former friends. But, from sporting companion to the liveliest and shrewdest of the barmaids, I could find no word of him. He had not been seen. He was remembered, because he had spent his money so freely, and was such a consumer of champagne.

I searched carefully through the leading cities of Europe for six months, coming back, from time to time, to London. I was an humble, but observant, member of the various sporting circles, where membership is not difficult, and where Musgrove had been so prominent ; but I found nothing remotely bearing upon my search. It was clear that I was to find nothing in London ; but, if he was not there, where could he have gone ? His inability to speak the French language, in a manner even approaching ease or correctness, would have made his concealment in Paris as difficult as in a small village, so limited is the English-speaking colony there, and so closely is it observed by the curious French. Musgrove could hardly appear in Paris without being noted by the French police, so well was he known to them through his previous life in that city. I knew that he hated small towns, and would as soon

think of committing suicide as to bury himself in any rural obscurity. As I knew him, he would be wretched off the pavement of a great capital, and could only find perfect rest in a whirl of excitement. If he was not to be unearthed in London, then it was evident that he had not gone away of his own free will, or had found some new center of interest, outside of the calculations which I could make, based upon my previous knowledge of him.

I will pass over the violent letters and cablegrams which I constantly received from *The Wasp*, and keep, as near as I can, to the thread of my narrative relating to my search.

Six months after my arrival in London I made a valuable acquaintance. I met him at Warwick during a lazy trip of two days that I had deliberately taken to free myself from worry over the cablegrams from *The Wasp*.

My new acquaintance was Lord Robert Melrose, the youngest son of the Duke of Wex. Melrose's title was a courtesy one, and several lives stood between him and the succession. He was seated near me, the evening after my arrival, in the coffee-room of the Warwick Arms, and we fell into conversation together. He was in the neighborhood of thirty years of age. He was a fresh-colored blonde, with a smooth shaven face and close-cropped hair. He had traveled enough, as I found later, to wear away some of the prejudices of the average Briton. He had a pleasant voice, a quiet manner, and an insatiable curiosity concerning out-of-the-way things, which soon proved a bond between us.

We returned to London together, and on our way back I told him about my search for Musgrove, and asked him what he thought of the theory of a disappearance syndicate.

"I have traveled too much, and have seen too many surprising things, to regard anything as impossible, or really improbable," he replied. "I would not have you think me foolishly credulous. I simply avoid belief or disbelief, when an incident occurs or a theory comes up, until I can have sufficient facts to warrant a judgment. I am sure I can find out if your friend Musgrove is in London. Have you anything that formerly belonged to him, any picture?"

"No, I have no picture. I left New York too suddenly to go through my personal effects. I may have had there some scrap of his handwriting."

"Well, if he is in London, I can find him for you."

At the time, I asked for no explanation of this positive assurance, as we were just arriving at the Paddington Station. Lord Robert drove with me to my lodgings, where he took a bedroom, opening into my sitting-room, which we agreed to share in common. We returned upon a Sunday afternoon. That evening, after dining very well, and very late, at the Café Royal, we walked up Regent street, and then followed the cross-street which leads across Bond street to the Victoria Gallery. I had been for some time a member of the Gallery Club, where the leading men of society, politics, art, literature, and, in fact, of every walk of intellectual life, met on Sunday evenings during the social season. The hall where the

club meetings were held was a large one, used for the display of the pictures of a great society of modern painters. This hall was brilliantly lighted, and adorned with some of the best and noblest examples of modern art. During the meetings of the club, refreshments were served in this room, and opportunities given for intimate conversation. A small stage was always brought in for the Sunday evening gatherings. Upon this stage there came, by invitation, the leading personages of the higher amusement world of London. About the hall were numerous small tables, and easy-chairs, and cigars and drinks of all kinds were served by grave and decorous waiters. The guests wore evening dress, this requirement being imperative. Upwards of two hundred members were always to be found at these gatherings, and at times the attendance would be nearly doubled, if some unusual lion was to appear. No one was obliged to listen to the slight and irregular programme offered on the stage. Those who were not interested generally withdrew to the side rooms, but, as the entertainment always embraced the striking features of what was interesting London that week, the audience chamber was generally well filled.

CHAPTER V.

A REMARKABLE EVENING AT THE VICTORIA GALLERY CLUB.

We arrived at the hour of midnight. It was the beginning of the evening, so far as the entertainment was concerned. As we took a small table near the stage, and ordered the usual brandy and soda, with dry cigars and Egyptian cigarettes, Madame Flora, the prima donna of the Drury Lane Theatre, was just finishing an aria in a style as brilliant as she was beautiful. As she swept off the stage, escorted by an attentive member of the committee on entertainment, there was the usual wait and idle conversation.

"I think the next number will interest you," said Lord Robert, with significant meaning. He then added, "You have been so busy in hunting your hobby that you may not have heard of the latest London lion, Mortimer Mortimer."

"Who is Mortimer Mortimer?"

"That's what everybody asks."

"What is he, a circus manager, poet, escaped assassin, reformer, or a philanthropist?"

"You'll see him on the stage in a few moments. and when he's gone I'll ask you what you, yourself, think. He has made polite London fairly mad, although he is seen in only the greatest and most ex-



"MADAME FLORA WAS JUST FINISHING AN ARIA." PAGE 38.

clusive houses. My friend here, at my left, saw him at the Duke of Devonshire's the other night, and he can talk of nothing else. Ah, there he is, if I can judge correctly by the attention of my friend. Yes, he nods to my silent question. It is he."

I now turned to the stage, which was only raised about two feet above the floor of the hall. It was bare of all theatrical paraphernalia. The only articles of furniture were a few chairs and a small table, upon which stood a vase of roses.

The room was filled with the representative gentlemen of England.

The clear light of the hall revealed the intellectual faces of the leaders of men in one of the most refined societies in the great capital of the civilized world. It was an audience not to be trifled with, as its disapproval would have been sufficient to ruin the most ambitious social lion.

There was never a printed programme of the exercises on this stage. You were supposed to know all about the people who appeared. Explanations or introductions were never made.

As I looked at the stage there stepped upon it a man of medium height, who came to the front of the platform, with an ease and composure that commended him, at once, to the favorable attention of his audience. He appeared to be in middle life, but to have no particular age. His figure was slight; his face was brown in color, very clear, and regular in its features, and smooth shaven. His hair was straight and dark, cut to a medium length, and parted exactly in the

center, from his very broad, full forehead. His eyes were intensely black, penetrating, and gleaming with a steely light. His hands were lean, long and indicative of great nervous force. There was a look of calmness and power upon his face.

He came swiftly to the front of the stage and, with his hands locked before him, gazed calmly at the audience for several moments without speaking. His evening dress bore no sign of ornament. No jewel of the tiniest character showed in his snowy linen. The white cravat at his throat accentuated the dark color of his stern-lined face. As he looked intently at his audience, made up of cynical men of the world, the most difficult of all to impress by any ordinary means, while they are, at the same time, extremely responsive to the evidences of actual power, he soon demonstrated his right to be considered a leader. Before he had said one word, the audience fairly thrilled with expectation, and the hall was strangely silent. Here and there blue clouds of smoke, puffed by nervous smokers, curled and eddied upwards in the shining glare of the electric lights.

The occupant of the stage, who came in alone and unannounced, understood his audience. He made no gesture, and no change, even of attitude, as he began to talk. His voice was low-keyed, serious in its accents, and so carefully modulated that every syllable was heard throughout the room, although he never departed from the conversational tone, and carefully avoided all oratorical phrasing.

As nearly as I can remember, he said : " I am here

this evening through the kind invitation of your entertainment committee. I wish to talk to you about the natural, although some accuse me of dealing with the supernatural. I will make one experiment to illustrate an idea, and then I will have the honor of bidding you good night. I assume that I will have, during the few moments that I am here, your undivided attention, and I trust, that when I reach the point where the experiment is to be made, that no word or sound will be uttered. I make this request solely in the interest of the success of the experiment."

If possible, the attention of the audience deepened. There was a tension in the regard concentrated upon the speaker that was dangerous. If anything ordinary were now to follow, he would simply become an object of polite ridicule.

The speaker now continued: "You are, of course, aware of all that modern science has done in defining some of the primary possibilities of animal magnetism. I will allude to one only of the recent experiments, in Paris, of the great Dr. Charcot. You, doubtless, have heard of his celebrated sensitive, Leonie. The learned doctor, in his notes upon this case, calls attention to the fact that in Leonie there have been developed three separate sub-consciousnesses, each distinct, individual and critical of the other. Now, it is among the possibilities of this science that the sub-consciousness, that is the best in one, may, by cultivation, be made more prominent and be given permanent control. Who is there who really knows himself? Who is satisfied with what he is doing? What is it that

directs our thoughts so often to other fields of occupation? Is it not the shadow of some subdued subconsciousness seeking supremacy? But I have no idea of making an address upon the subtleties of this question. I will simply content myself with making an experiment which will show you the advancement that the science of animal magnetism has made. I do this for the purpose of impressing upon you the importance of the power that can be awakened by one who has given the subject some attention, and has been fortunate enough to have reached results which appear, only to the ignorant, as supernatural." Here the speaker paused a moment, and then, in the same quiet key, but with an increasing gravity of manner, continued :

"I believe no one, however perfect an adept in hypnotism, has ever assumed to put into the magnetic sleep or under the magnetic influence, more than one subject at a time. Now, I shall, within the next five minutes, establish such relations with this assembly as to make all here present see something I wish them to see, and to hear something that I wish them to hear. In a word, while you will not pass into the magnetic sleep—which is one of the lowest forms of the evidences of the power of hypnotism—you will, however, surrender your will for the moment utterly to mine. I shall ask you not to speak or move for thirty seconds to follow."

There was no sound of dissent. Every one present desired perfectly fair play, and the simple condition demanded was conceded as a matter of course.

The speaker now waved his right hand and disclosed a shining ball, about the size of an Italian orange.

It was too large to be a jewel, while it was translucent, and reflected light with the brilliancy of a diamond. Mortimer stepped back one step and held the ball above his head. His voice now became more measured, and took on the chanting tone of a priest reading the ritual. "Look on this ball and study its shining beauties," said he. The ball glowed with a mystic fire, as every other light in the room was dimmed. In a second a great cloud of darkness swept through the room, with a faint odor of incense following in its wake. "Listen to the music," now chanted the voice, which had an impersonal sound. It seemed, at this moment, to come direct from the center of the moving cloud of darkness. As the voice became silent, the distant notes of a great organ were heard, then a far-away chorus of pure voices chanting a lofty hymn of praise. This continued for a moment, and then there was silence. The clouds cleared, the lights came back, and the normal conditions of the hall were restored. As the darkness lifted, the brilliancy of the ball held in Mortimer's hands faded until the clear translucence was gone, and it became a dark, dull, unreflecting globe.

Mortimer now thanked the audience for its attention and its civility in complying with his conditions.

"You have," said he, "just had a proof of the hypnotic power in its highest form. This entire audience was for a moment under the influence of will power. You were all made to see light in a ball of dense, non-luminous carbon. The lights in the hall went out, to your eyes, although they were bright and shining all the time. You heard music, because it was

willed that you should. It was all a deception of your senses through the control of your imagination."

Mortimer Mortimer was about to bow and retire, when the Duke of Wex rose in the audience and begged permission to ask one question of the occupant of the stage, before his departure. The Duke was a tall, gallant-looking gentleman with resolute, aquiline features, and a smoothly shaven face, surmounted by a thick mass of closely-cropped white hair. His voice was pleasant and even, while his manner in addressing Mortimer was the perfection of civility. He said: "I, for one, have been profoundly interested in what you have said and done, but, in the interests of the experiment itself, will you permit a committee to examine the ball you have in your hand?"

There was a decided stir in the audience at this pointed request, but Mortimer was not at all disturbed by it. He replied: "There is no necessity for a formal committee. If you will come forward to the stage I will place the ball in your hands, and, with your assistance, make one more experiment, which may prove as interesting to you as the one just made. It is needless to repeat that I shall require the same conditions—attention and silence."

There was again the same profound attention when the Duke of Wex stepped upon the stage. As he faced Mortimer, the latter said, before handing over the ball for inspection:

"There is a curious property about this ball. When it is in your hand I shall become invisible to you, though visible to the audience, so please make your

personal inspection of it as it lies in my hand and before I hand it to you."

The strangest thing about this new situation was that no one of us now questioned Mortimer's ability to do what he proposed. Neither was there any surprise manifested. The Duke adjusted his eyeglasses and advanced toward Mortimer, and bent over the ball. As he looked intently at it, Mortimer said to him:

"Will you kindly report to the audience its appearance?"

At this request the Duke appeared to be puzzled. He said:

"As I look at the ball I observe that it has again become translucent, filled with light, and if it were a diamond it could not be purer and more beautiful. As I look at it I am conscious of a feeling of keen pleasure; its perfection is so complete, if one can use an adjective in connection with such a word. More than this, there appears to be an interior life underneath the forms of light. The ball seems to be the orb of something living. Ah, I now see a vista of distant mountains; a change has come; it is as if I were gazing through the reverse end of a telescope; what! gentlemen, I give you my word of honor, I am now looking upon a reduced picture of my place in Scotland."

To all else in the room the ball had not changed, while it was clear that the Duke simply saw what Mortimer willed him to see. The latter now handed the ball to the Duke. Instantly, there was a look of almost agonized surprise on the nobleman's face, as he stood staring at Mortimer, as if at vacancy.

“It is true,” said he, “that with the ball in my hand Mr. Mortimer has gone.” Then he exclaimed: “The ball is no longer clear. It is black, dense and dull, and has the appearance of being a globe of pure carbon.”

The scene lasted but half a moment, when Mortimer stepped up quietly and took back the ball, thrusting it in one of his pockets. The Duke appeared to be under the influence of some great excitement. He advanced to Mortimer and had a low, hurried word with him, and then he returned to his seat in the hall, where he sat down buried in a profound study. There was no demonstration or applause of any sort; but when Mortimer bowed and retired there was a low buzz of conversation, showing that the last number of the programme had had the unusual success of becoming the prevailing topic of conversation in one of the least curious circles in London.



"STUDY ITS SHINING BEAUTIES!" PAGE 44.

CHAPTER VI.

LORD ROBERT'S THEORY FOR THE EXPLANATION OF
THE CHARACTER OF MORTIMER MORTIMER.

As we walked home, about half-past one in the morning, Lord Robert said to me :

“I think I have found out something that draws nearer to your disappearance syndicate. I will give you one surmise, and that is that Mortimer Mortimer could possibly tell you where you could find James Musgrove.”

When I arrived at our lodgings, in Half-Moon street, I asked my friend if he did not think it was about time for him to explain himself. His half-hint had suggested that he had some knowledge, or, at least, some suspicion, concerning the subject which was of so much interest to me.

When we were once in our sitting-room, with the nearly-dead fire restored to a blaze by judicious nursing, and our pipes lighted, I took up the subject of the evening's entertainment, for the purpose of drawing him out, if possible. But Lord Robert began to speak at once of Mortimer Mortimer. It appeared that he had heard of him for some time. In the higher circles, where Mortimer was occasionally seen, it was faintly surmised that he was some great social reformer, the chief of some strong association, or, at least, a daring

investigator of problems of unusual interest to mankind.

"Whence the idea came," said Lord Robert, "that he was at the head of some great organization, I do not know. I have heard it several times, though no one has professed to know anything positive. In Russia, several years ago, I joined a secret society. Its objects were, in the ordinary sense of the word, non-political. The chief aim of the society was to cultivate fraternal relations in the world; to eliminate, as far as possible, purely selfish interests from the relations of men—in other words, to teach and propagate the doctrine of Christ: to love one's neighbor as one loves himself. All that there was to religion that had any value, the society held, was to be found in that principle. I am still a member of that society, and know its methods, which are most commendable.

'Soon after I joined I was called home by my father, and was given a civil appointment in India. I was, however, an active member of the organization long enough to learn its signs and its language. I knew, also, that the society that received me was only an elementary one, and that, somewhere in the world, there was a great central society, presided over by a master, who wielded a vast power, and whose great abilities were concentrated upon the work of raising the standard of human achievements. It is a poor commentary upon our civilization that, with all our wealth and intelligence, we have not been more successful in eliminating poverty, destitution, and their consequent suffering from the world. It will not do to

talk learnedly about the laws of nature, and the laws of supply and demand, in explanation of our defaults in this direction. If the well-to-do, the strong and the powerful were really banded together in a true, fraternal bond, then, when a weak brother fell in the race of life, he would find some encouraging hand to help him, and we should not have the continual retrograding tendency of the poorer sections of humanity.

“Have you ever studied the faces of the crowds that come out of the poor quarters in the great cities of the world? Have you not noticed the sullen savagery, the seeming brutishness of the greater number? It is in such quarters that the race becomes debased—through hideous surroundings, foul atmosphere, criminal contiguity, and poor nourishment—until we have crimes of the most terrifying nature, and criminals so hideous in character as to create a shudder at the mere sight of them. These criminals can be charged entirely to the selfishness of men. It is too long a story to go over now, the plan and aims of the society; but it is enough to summarize all by saying that it aimed to save the world to a newer and higher future by simply engaging the strong and healthy people in the world to unite in one association for the purpose of giving wise and judicious aid to the weak. One feature of its proposed work will give you a key to the practical nature of the reforms sought to be accomplished by it.”

“What was that?”

“The society first pledged every member, upon his sacred word of honor, to undertake the responsibility

of giving a good education and support to some one destitute child, until it could reach the age of self-sustenance. By this plan the society hoped, in the end, to do away with the necessity of charitable institutions for children, where they can have no personal attention, and where they graduate later with the pauper taint upon them. The society offered to substitute personal attention and a sense of responsibility for the individual child. It was not proposed that any member should adopt any child, nor that he should be given any particular child to look after. Each member was to make his own selection. The personal attention and interest were sought to be attained and held during the period of the up-bringing.

“The giving of mere money, when it costs no self-denial, nor thought, was considered as nothing. Here members were not pledged beyond the care of one weak child. Each member solemnly covenanted to give to this particular child the best physical training, the most wholesome nourishment and the education best suited to his needs, up to the time of his becoming of age, when he was affiliated as a member of the society itself. It was found that the cost of such education was trivial, in comparison with the sums every day spent by well-to-do men upon mere ordinary pleasures, and that the money-tax involved was the least. It was hoped that, in time, the members would take pride in the selection and training of the waifs and strays of the world, as they do now in their training of horses and dogs.

“It was held, further,” continued Lord Robert,

“that when the well-to-do in the world were united together to carry out such a plan, crime and poverty would be driven from the face of the earth; for nearly all misery and suffering in the world come from an untrained, underfed, misused childhood. To reform adults was no part of the work of the elementary society. Neither was a member confined in his duty to the education of one child. If he could show that he could take care of more than one, without injury to those immediately dependent upon him, he had, of course, that privilege. The more successful a member was in this high work, the more rapid his advancement. The successful up-bringing of one child entitled the member to advancement to membership in one of the inner societies. I am still a member of the elementary society, and, from what I know of its work, I am convinced that Mortimer Mortimer belongs to the Central organization, which is very limited in its membership, and is made up only of men who have given up every other object in life, of a strictly selfish character, in order to have their whole time to work for the raising of the standard of human character and achievement.”

“Why do you connect such a man and such an organization with the character of such a man as James Musgrove?”

“It’s a mere surmise upon my part. The society I have mentioned is a very practical one. There is not a line concerning any formal religion in any of its writings. There is no impossible straining after an assumed standard of an impossible perfection. It is especially sought to interest those who have money

and who have the command, therefore, of leisure. The experiment of this evening suggested to me a possibility, although I would not venture to mention it outside of a confidential conversation with a trusted friend. Mind you, this is only a possibility. It may be that the Central society is massing a great sum of money, to be employed as the basis of this movement, and your idea of a syndicate somehow fits into my mind. You note that all who step out are well-to-do; they are never accused of crime or ill-doing. They leave enough behind, so that no one suffers by their absence. They are nearly always men apparently absorbed in a mere selfish pursuit of gain. Now——”

“Well?”

“It may be that the Central society, from time to time, marks a man of that class, leads him to the fascinating border of some entrancing unknown, shields him when he steps out, then develops his second or third sub-consciousness, according to its nature, employs him, and thus gives the man that perfect contentment which is only found when engaged in work in accordance with one's better nature, while his money, or a portion of it, is used for the work of the society. Musgrove may have come in contact with some member of the society when he lived in Paris. The society has only lately begun its work in America, which is, you know, the land of material development and bad manners, and the land in which selfishness rules.”

“Come, that is hard on my country.”

“No. In what country were there, in the past, such great opportunities for the poor? You were free from

the environments of Europe ; but your history is like ours in the feudal days. It is one long story of seizure of wealth and property by the skillful and the bold, while your poor are now going to the wall with great rapidity. The slums of your great cities are even worse than the worst in Europe. Your material spirit, your greed for money, and your selfishness, show in everything—in the general indifference to art, in the general lack of manners, in the mad rush to see and be seen, and the subordination of your intellectual life to the most material one. You——”

“Oh, spare us ! It is too late an hour to take up my country’s defense. What you say, in one sense, is literally true, so far as it relates to a portion ; but you overlook all of the good, which, I hope, is not in such a small minority as you would think. However, the fire is going out. Let us say good-night.”

“Oh, by the way—I can’t breakfast with you in the morning, as I have an early engagement ; but I will meet you at the Carlton Club for our dinner. Before you go to bed, take one suggestion.”

“What is that ?”

“Make the acquaintance of Mortimer Mortimer.”

“Thank you. I will look him up to-morrow.”

And what a morrow I had before me ! No thought of it disturbed me as I calmly retired for the night.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EDITOR OF THE WASP IN LONDON—THE SENSATIONAL DISAPPEARANCE OF THE DUKE OF WEX.

The next morning I found upon my mantel-piece a note from *The Wasp* editor, who had arrived in London, and was at Brown's Hotel. I had written for him a number of letters, during the last six months, descriptive of London and Continental social life. These had commanded enough attention to satisfy him, and convince him that I was not wholly a failure, and that the money invested in me was not a loss. I called at his hotel about noon, just after my light breakfast.

I found him the center of the confusion which was so delightful to him. The floor of his sitting-room was literally covered with newspapers, bills, telegrams, and the rubbish of a counting-house. Servants were continually coming and going, in answer to his imperative orders. He kept up an incessant demand for everything he could think of, while, at the same time, expressing continued dissatisfaction with everything done for him. Such a guest knows the true way to endear himself to a host, but the hour of retribution comes when the account is to be made up. But this modern editor never winced at any bill incurred in administering to the wants of his glorious self, and so he was tolerated in hotels where otherwise his uproar and



A NOTE FROM THE WASP EDITOR. PAGE 56.

continual fault-finding might have ended in closing the doors against him.

I found him in a perfectly livid state of excitement. Without a word of greeting even, he cried out : " Have you seen the first edition of the *Evening Standard* ? "

" No ; I have not looked at a paper to-day."

" And here it is afternoon." My standing in his estimation went down many degrees. A man who could go by the mid-day breakfast hour without a look at those devices of the devil, the modern newspapers, was wholly outside of his range of comprehension. " Well, let me call your placid attention to a mysterious paragraph in *The Standard*." Here he caught up the newspaper, adjusted his eyeglasses, and read the following :

" " Last evening the Duke of Wex visited the Victoria Gallery Club with some friends. He left the club at half-past one in the morning in his own carriage. His coachman, a man who has been in his service for twenty years, observed that his Grace was strangely preoccupied as he came out of the club. He gave directions to drive home at once to the house occupied by him, in Park Lane. Ten minutes after, the carriage stopped in front of his house. The footman descended from the box to open the door, and he found the carriage empty. As the carriage had been driven at a rapid pace from the club, the surprise of the servants who attended him was great. They drove back over the route to the club, but could not find him. The footman entered the club and made inquiries, but no information was elicited. Naturally, the disappearance

of the Duke, under such circumstances of apparent mystery, has made a profound sensation. The police were asked to-day to assist in unraveling the mystery, as no trace or word has been heard of him during the night, or up to a late hour this morning.'

"Now," roared the editor, "you have a disappearance right under your nose. You must make a big story out of that, to be cabled at once. Do you know the Duke?"

"I have seen him. I know his son, Lord Robert Melrose. He lives in the same lodging with me and shares my sitting-room. I saw the Duke at the Victoria Gallery Club last night. Lord Robert was up and out this morning before me. I shall not see him before dinner. I wonder if he knows of this news."

"Living with Lord Robert Melrose, the son of the Duke of Wex. Why didn't you mention it before?"

"Why should I?"

"But it is most important."

The editor's manner changed towards me at once. I was to write out a good story of the disappearance of the Duke. Then I was at once to prepare an elaboration of the idea of The Disappearance Syndicate. It was now time for publication. Had I learned anything new?

I told my questioner something about Lord Robert Melrose and the Russian society.

He roared with derision at the idea of a society being organized for mere purposes of doing good in the quietest way possible. That was grotesquely improbable. He had no doubt concerning the good

faith of Lord Robert Melrose, but he had been taken in by the Central society. Those fellows were living high upon the plunder gathered in by them. He would expose them in the interest of reform and sensational journalism. "Run down this Mortimer Mortimer, and, if he is connected with the disappearance of the many rich men through the world, we will make him disgorge the hoodle."

I left, after preparing a cable story in accordance with his instructions, and took the first cab that came along. I directed the driver to take me to the Carlton Club, where I expected later to meet Lord Robert, and make some arrangement for finding Mortimer Mortimer. I remember distinctly the hour. I saw a large clock in the waiting-room of the hotel as I passed out. It was just four o'clock. The cabman who advanced from the head of the rank was a typical London cabby, red-faced, alert, tidy in dress, with a manner strangely blending impudence and respect. I told him where to go, gave him the shilling fare, and jumped into the cab. When I was about half-way down to the club, which was not more than five minutes away, I suddenly felt an imperious desire to jump out of the cab. I obeyed it on the instant, and, however irrational was the act which I made in response to some sudden command, I should have obeyed it had it led to my death. I vaulted out lightly just before we had reached Piccadilly. The short side street we were in was comparatively deserted. No one was near me when I jumped out, and I observed that the cabman was looking straight ahead of him, as if buried in thought.



"I FELT AN IMPERIOUS DESIRE TO JUMP OUT OF THE CAB." PAGE 60.

I turned in an opposite direction from the cab, and soon was around the corner. Here I took another cab, paid the fare, and in a moment was in another side street. Here I again jumped out. I changed cabs three times without being observed, and without any particular thought in my mind but that I was engaged in an ordinary occupation, although, in reality, no one seeking to elude detectives could have employed more successful means to evade pursuit.

Following my last directions, the third cab brought me within a few squares of Park Lane. As I jumped out, unobserved, as before, I found myself alone in Hargrave street, down which I walked quickly, until I had nearly reached the lane, where a small door in a garden wall which surrounded a great mansion silently opened, and I plunged through it as if I were expected, traversed a carefully laid out garden, and entered the house. It was apparently deserted. I walked through one vast hallway after another, mounting wide and dimly-lighted stairways, until I came to the top of the house. Here I kept on, up a circular stairway, which went up to a lofty dome, where I entered a circular room, at least twenty feet in diameter, which was aglow with a soft, clear light, producing a wonderfully soothing effect upon the eyes. I had noticed but little about the house as I entered, beyond the general fact that its dimensions and furnishing were palatial in character.

The room which I now entered contained no windows. It was ventilated from the top. The interior of the dome was pale blue, with a magnificent fresco, representing the Angel Gabriel summoning the earth



"I ENTERED THE HOUSE." PAGE 62.

to judgment. The walls were in panels of white and gold. Around the line of the circles of the room were broad divans, covered with soft white furs and numerous white silken pillows. The floor was in white marble, with small squares of blue set at the corners of the larger squares. Suspended from the dome, by a silver-covered cord, was a globe the size of an ordinary globe of the schools. Only this one was clear, translucent, shining, identical in character with the ball shown by Mortimer Mortimer, the night before, at the Victoria Gallery Club. Underneath the ball was a dark table, inlaid in some fantastic oriental design. Upon the table was a large sheet of white paper, fixed in the center. Near the table was a strong armchair, with the head of an angel of light carved upon the top. The figure was looking aloft, holding, in a gracefully posed hand, a star.

The room had an atmosphere distinct to itself. It fairly radiated rest, peace and harmony. I had not been in the room for more than a second when I became fairly intoxicated with its charm. What was it that made my heart pulsate with such rapture, my every breath an aspiration of delight? I did not stop then to analyze the charm. It is best to grasp unquestioningly perfect happiness when it comes, and so I quietly walked, still like one in a trance, to the side of the circular divan, where I sunk down in an attitude of luxurious repose, and gazed dreamily at the central globe, which glowed and paled with mysterious fires as incessant in their continued movement as the waves of mid-ocean.

"Where was I? Why had I come there? What mysterious power had brought me there?" were questions I did not ask for a long time. I was only too content to have stepped out from the grim realities of modern life into this enchanted atmosphere. As I lay upon the silken couch and studied the wave-lines of light in the ball, I gradually came back to myself. My usual powers of observation were restored to me. I saw, at this moment, some dark characters forming upon one of the sheets of the paper lying upon the table. I arose from the couch, glanced at the sheet of paper, and found written thereon, in a clear, scholarly hand, the following note:

"I learned to-day that you were desirous of meeting me, and that you had received instructions to write what is called, in the latest jargon of American journalism, 'An Exposure of My Career.' You wish to know also about a disappearance syndicate, the Central society, and many things which interest and puzzle you, and which you think I may be able to explain. On account of the friendship of Lord Robert Melrose for you, I am disposed to see you and to talk with you. You are at present in my house, upon my invitation. I will have the pleasure of dining with you at half-past seven this evening.

"MORTIMER MORTIMER."

Scarcely had I read the note, when the letters faded and the paper was left as blank as before. I may add here that the paper had remained attached to the table, directly under the ball, during my reading. Any sensa-



"I AROSE AND GLANCED AT THE SHEET OF PAPER." PAGE 65.

tion of surprise seemed impossible in this enchanted chamber. I fairly bathed in the atmosphere of peace and tranquility. Thoughts of a material character drifted away from me. What was it to me whether there was a disappearance syndicate or not? What was there more vulgar than curiosity for mere curiosity's sake? I had now even lost my desire to meet Mortimer Mortimer. I cannot describe my pleasure by using any ordinary words of comparison. The pleasure was wholly spiritual and intellectual. The body and its wants were forgotten.

Such a sense of perfect peace and contentment I had never known before. It was so novel, that my mind was completely lost in a flood of rapturous contemplation. I sank back upon the circular divan and coiled myself into a knot of luxurious ease. My eyes now came back to the ball, and I soon saw that its mysterious flashings had a meaning. I was familiar with the Morse code, and as soon as I had concentrated my attention upon the globe, after making this discovery, I saw that the news of the world was being flashed upon it by this telegraphic code. It was a curious use of electricity, and one wholly unknown to me. There now came a message personal to me :

“Will you kindly indicate what you would like for your dinner?”

This prosaic message, coming to me in my anything but prosaic surroundings, made me smile. I left the cloud-land where my dreamings had carried me, and became aware that I was intensely hungry. I involuntarily thought of what I would like, even to the

wines that best pleased me ; but before I could think of any way of communicating my answer, there came flashing upon the globe :

“All right ! I understand you. Dinner will be served at sharp half-past seven. No dress.”

CHAPTER VIII.

A DINNER AT THE CENTRAL STATION OF LIGHT
WITH MORTIMER MORTIMER.

I was now like the child in the Christmas pantomime. I was ready to accept everything as it came, and wanted no explanations. I looked at my watch and saw that it was six o'clock. I had been in the circular globe-room of light for nearly two hours, and it did not seem longer than so many moments.

At a quarter after seven, a tiny metallic sound came from the globe, and I heard the clear music of an orchestra of many pieces. Then I must have lost consciousness for a few moments, for, when I next opened my eyes, I saw that the table under the globe was covered with fine linen, and set out with the white china and the glittering silver of a dinner service. In the center of the table was a tall epergne filled with roses. The table was set for two.

By the side of the table stood my host, Mortimer Mortimer. He looked exactly as he did when he appeared upon the platform of the Victoria Gallery Club. Only now, instead of being in evening dress, he wore a dark morning costume. He bowed gravely to me as I arose, and indicated the nearest seat as mine. As I took the seat a Japanese servant entered the room and began to serve the soup.



EVERYTHING DURING THE DINNER WAS MATTER-OF-FACT. PAGE 11.

Everything during the dinner was matter-of-fact, and in accordance with the regular course of things. My host said, as dinner began :

“There is no enchantment in this house, save that of modern science. I say now, as I said at the Gallery Club, that I do not deal with the supernatural. I have no desire to mystify or to surprise any one. Where I make an experiment or an explanation, it is with a definite object. If you will wait until the dinner is passed, I will answer any questions you may wish to ask.”

“How did you know of me, and that I wanted to see you?”

“Lord Robert Melrose told me. He met me in Hyde Park this afternoon and said you were anxious to see me.”

“When did he tell you?”

“At half-past three.”

“And at four I was upon my way here, and yet you profess to be no master of magical arts.”

“All that is susceptible of explanation. Wait until the dinner is passed.”

The dinner was one that was worthy of the host. Everything was simple, but exquisitely good. The soup was like a fine wine. Each course was dainty, at once a whip to the palate and satisfying. The dishes I had indicated were cooked as I never had tasted them before. At the dessert, fruits were served in the greatest profusion. The delicacy of the wines, the elegance of the service, the excellence of the food, left behind a sense of well-being, the reverse of the heavy

sensation that follows the eating of the usual dinner. Our conversation during dinner related to the ordinary topics of the day.

At its conclusion the service was cleared away in a moment, and then Mortimer Mortimer, still sitting opposite to me, pointed to a bundle of Egyptian cigarettes upon a silver plate between us. When I had lighted one, he, excusing himself from smoking, began the conversation by saying :

“ Will you excuse me if I ask a few questions before answering those I know you are anxious to make? What has been your motive in seeking to probe the so-called mystery of Mortimer Mortimer? ”

“ I fear not a very exalted one. I love puzzles, but my motive in your case goes back to my first studies concerning the various disappearances of men through the world. In my study of this general subject, I was led to you as possibly one who could give me light and help.”

“ But underneath all that? ”

“ Well, I am now looking into the subject for *The Wasp*, an American newspaper.”

Mortimer frowned as he asked : “ Are you a regular member of the staff of that paper? ”

To this I replied “ No,” and then explained how I had been led to accept the special employment that had brought me to London to investigate the possibility of a disappearance syndicate.

“ How did you come to assume that I could throw any light upon the matter? ”

“ It was Lord Robert Melrose who suggested it.”

During this time Mortimer Mortimer was studying

me intently. Finally, he said: "If I did not believe you were better than you profess, I should be very reluctant to talk to you at all. Suppose, for a moment, I could give you some information concerning the subject of your inquiry. Will you kindly tell me why I should? Can you, as an honest man, say that the information will be used in such a way as to do any one any good?"

"It will be used as a basis for an article."

"For publication in a sensational newspaper?"

"Yes."

"Has this newspaper ever really served the public?"

"It prates of nothing else but of its duty to the public!"

"But in reality."

"Honestly, I cannot say that it ever has. It is published first and last to make money for its owner."

"So you ask me, a perfect stranger, to expose to your gaze my privacy and my innermost life for the sake of making copy to satisfy mere vulgar curiosity. No, a thousand times no! I will never consent to do that. If I did not know that you were capable of better things, I should not talk to you at all. I do know about the things you have so carelessly stumbled upon. There is something in this subject wholly beyond what you have imagined. But it is not what you have supposed. You have a thread of fact that could be used very cunningly to make a sensational story. It could not do harm to the cause I represent, but it would do harm to you. So, before I go farther into this subject, I will call your attention to a few possibilities

of modern science. First, this ball which hangs suspended here should interest you. It is one of the latest achievements of science. It is the product of the united work of some of the best minds of this world. A knowledge of it is not given to the public, and it may be generations before it will be. But I will show you some of its workings and its powers before proceeding to its explanation. You have here a central receiver of sound and of light. The person who understands its working, can, with its aid, see and hear what is taking place at a distance. It is also a medium of thought-transference, and a constant radiator of electrical force. I wrote you the note in my library, below, and it was flashed to the surface of the sensitized paper in the center of the table in my actual handwriting, which faded soon after the impression was passed. I sustained the impression until I learned by the reflex action in my library that you had read it. The atmosphere in this room is regulated by the globe. Through it your system was at once keyed up to its perfect electrical tone, which is the only perfect state of existence. When you have the proper electrical conditions in your body you are at the maximum of your powers, and disease or fatigue are impossible. Electricity is the life that animates everything. Electricity, as you know, can be transmitted, without wires, upon the air currents. Even electric lights have been produced without the actual contact of wires. How far this science has progressed under the direction of the Central society," here Mortimer Mortimer's eyes flashed, "I will, perhaps, indicate later."

“Now,” he continued, “will you kindly give your attention to the ball? Fix your mind upon some one you want to see. Concentrate your mind upon the ball, and look into its innermost depths.”

Mechanically, I obeyed. Upon the instant the vista of the globe enlarged and I gazed, as through a clear magnifying glass, directly into my sitting-room in Half-Moon street. I saw Lord Robert in the room. He



“WHAT TIME DID MR. LIVINGSTONE LEAVE THE HOUSE?”

was looking on the mantel for some note. Then he turned, and rang the bell sharply. I saw the servant enter and then I heard the following conversation, as distinctly as if I had been in the room :

"What time did Mr. Livingstone leave the house?"

"Just after his breakfast."

"Did he leave any word for me?"

"Yes, he said to tell you, when you returned, that he would meet you at the Carlton Club at seven o'clock, for dinner."

"Mr. Livingstone has not been back since?"

"No, sir."

"Very good. That will do."

The servant retired. Lord Robert now said to himself: "I should think Livingstone would have returned before this. I wonder if he found Mortimer Mortimer and was detained. I did not find him at the club at seven, and he has sent me no word. Well, I must go and dine, as it is late enough, heaven knows." With this he left the room.

"Do you wish to follow him?" said Mortimer.

"No, not at present."

I turned to Mortimer Mortimer as I said: "How am I to know that this is not a repetition of the experiment made by you at the Victoria Gallery? How can I know that you are not making me see and hear what you wish me to hear, and that you are making me respond to your will as you did this afternoon, when you arrested me in a cab and summoned me here?"

"Your question is pertinent, but future tests will show you that this surmise is not correct. The element of animal magnetism, as it is known to you, need not now be considered, as it is a subordinate branch of the general subject of electricity. It belongs to the de-

partment of personal electricity. This globe represents the highest achievement of mechanical electricity. It makes simple and certain what was formerly the occasional and uncertain gift of a few individuals. All of our sensations are recorded in the brain by electric waves along the lines of the nerves, which end in producing an impression upon the brain. Thought is the brain in action. The brain is the battery, and the thought is electricity generated. This, brought in contact with this high instrument of electrical skill, and you have the means of seeing and hearing what is going on at a distance, by projecting the thought-wave upon this globe. Between two people who understand the use of the instrument a conversation can be maintained at any distance."

"You mean between any points on this globe?"

"Let it stand there, as I do not want to go too far in this preliminary conversation."

At this, something within me moved through my body like a warm wave. A tide of emotion swept over my mind. All the littleness of my past came to me, in clear, sharp lines. Suddenly, I said :

"Mortimer Mortimer, I wish that you thought me worthy of becoming your associate, no matter how humble might be my place."

"The wish shows you to be worthy. I knew that, when you were waked up, you would become conscious that life, as it is now lived by the average mortal, is wholly unworthy and devoid of a proper object. With the most fortunate, it is but a brief struggle of selfishness, for successes achieved at the expense of others.

Perhaps you understand, even now, why this great and simple invention of the electrical globe could not be given to the world."

"Surely. It would only be used by the strong for the more successful preying upon the weak. Such inventions would naturally come first into the hands of the rich and the powerful, and its superior knowledge would be used in the further selfish aggregation of power."

"More than that," said Mortimer Mortimer, "it would become, in the present diseased condition of society, a weapon in the hands of the criminal. In time, I hope that it may become the means of regenerating the world, and of giving to it its proper place in the universe. It is, after all, only a union of the principle of the phonograph, the telephone and the kineotograph of Edison ; so one instrument serves for all. It is no more wonderful, as it now stands, than would have been either the telephone or the phonograph, twenty-five years ago. But, come, I have confidence in you. You may ask me what question you will, and I will answer. Leave the general subject to the last."

"First, how did you summon me here?"

"That was by an exercise, simply, of my will."

"How did you know where I was?"

"I returned directly to the house after seeing Lord Robert Melrose in the park near here, and looked for you in the globe."

"Did you direct my movements here?"

"Yes."

"Then, to all practical purposes, I am the hero of another case of mysterious disappearance?"

"You are. But you can return to your former life, if you wish, by simply giving me your word to be silent concerning what you have learned, or may learn, in this house. We hold no one against his will."

"We? Then there is a Central society, as you said?"

"Yes."

"Are you its head?"

"No."

"Do you belong to the Inner section?"

"Yes."

"Do you know James Musgrove?"

"I do."

"Where is he now?"

"He is at present in one of the monasteries in the Himalayas."

"Did he go there of his own free will?"

"Most assuredly. Do you suppose, for a moment, that we seek to have with us any one who is not willing to co-operate with us? I dare say, some time in the future, you will be able to see and talk with Musgrove. But now you can have but a passing glimpse of him, and I shall especially request you not to disturb him with any questions."

With this remark, Mortimer turned to the globe, and within a second I saw before me a whitewashed cell in the distant monastery. In this cell knelt James Musgrove, ex-money-hunter, attired in the white robe of an Eastern monk. He was looking steadfastly at



IN THIS CELL KNELT JAMES MUSGROVE. PAGE 79.

the pictures which were being flashed before his eyes in a globe which hung from the center of his cell. He was studying, with earnest care, the various pictures of his speculative life. He was made to see the unhappiness and the wrongs following the speculations which had been encouraged by him and his class. Tears were actually chasing down the cynical face of this broad-faced man, who, in the past, had seen regiments of men ruined without even drawing a long breath of regret.

“Musgrove, at heart, is a good fellow,” said Mortimer. “We are developing now his better consciousness. He has been tired a long time of what he is doing. We are training him now to see things as they actually are, and very soon we will have him at work as a member of one of the Inner societies, although it will be a long time before he can come to the Central station. You may rest assured of one thing, however, and that is, that he is contented and that no earthly inducement would ever tempt him to go back to the life he formerly lived.”

My questions now ceased. My mind was in a tumult. I tried to grasp the situation clearly. I was face to face with one of the best preserved secrets in the world, and the door to its innermost mystery stood wide open.

Finally, Mortimer Mortimer said to me: “You have experienced a desire to join us. Before doing so you should know generally what we are doing and what we hope to accomplish. This room is one of the places where candidates come. Those who stand the

tests, and are accepted, are given their work. We have been so careful in summoning candidates, by a study of their surroundings, that thus far we have had to reject only one. That one was the Washington official noted by you in your talk with your friend, the professor. At the last moment the politician became too strong for his better nature. A wave of forgetfulness was passed over his brain, and he was sent away. He came to his former consciousness in Sydney, Australia. From this place he made his way home to Washington, after an absence of over a year. He could give no acceptable explanation of his absence. He is now back at his profession of law, and while he is conscious, sometimes, of having missed a great opportunity, this year of absence is a blank in his mind. But you have had enough for one day. You can remain here, and, if you want anything, may address yourself to the globe."

Here my host turned to one of the panels, and, pushing it open, showed a passageway to a small, adjacent room. "In this room," said he, "you will find linens, toilet articles, changes of apparel, anything you may need for your short stay; and now, good-night." With this my host departed down the circular stairway, dropping a silken hanging over the passageway, leaving me to the exquisite luxury of being alone with my thoughts in the life-giving atmosphere of this beautiful chamber.

CHAPTER IX.

THE REVELATIONS OF THE HOUSE OF LIGHT.

If I had been merely occupied with amusing myself, without other thought, I might well have been contented to have remained in this room for the rest of my days. The whole world was at my command. Its news was constantly flashing before my eyes. Its secrets were to be had for the asking. The motives of men, the thousand and one puzzles of every-day life, made an entrancing study. I remained alone in this room for a week, seeing only the Japanese servant, before I thought of summoning Mortimer Mortimer. During this time, owing to the peculiar electric atmosphere in the room, my nature appeared to have changed. I seemed to realize more and more clearly the perfect hopelessness of life as it was lived. The indifference and cruelty of it all were relieved by so little of the leaven of unselfishness that when once my curiosity was satisfied, there succeeded a feeling of impatience that it should be so. This was followed by a firm resolution upon my part that I would devote my life and thought to something better than self. This determination was no sooner made than the globe gave forth a metallic note, and a moment later Mortimer Mortimer was with me.

“Your resolution is a wise one. You will now best

serve your true interests by apparently forgetting them. Are you prepared to renounce all personal ambition, to give up all hope of riches?"

"Yes."

"Are you willing to be obscure, unknown and poor?"

"Yes."

"There are no great formalities of membership. There is but little to learn that can be taught you by word of mouth. Neither will I now demand a pledge of secrecy from you. Perhaps, in time, it would be well to make the story of your coming here known. Now I will give a brief account of the work we are doing, and that which we propose to do in the future, and how I became attached to it. Twenty years ago I was in Paris, with a large sum of money at my command. I was then the heir to a large fortune. I am a Russian born, although I defy any one who does not know to name my nationality. My father was English, but my mother was Russian. I lived the life of pleasure that is so alluring when one is young. I exhausted everything in the way of sensual pleasure, my fortune drifting through my hands, until at the last I was left penniless. Then I was tempted to commit a crime. Years of debilitating pleasure and loose companionship had eaten almost the last shred of my moral nature, but there was one fiber that resisted at the thought of crime. I fell ill through distress and suffering; in fact, became hysterical through the disease of my overwrought nerves. I was taken to one of the public hospitals, and there I came under the care of Dr.

Charcot. In my shattered condition I was easily made one of his subjects, and in the magnetic sleep a sub-consciousness was developed in me that was so strong that it took complete possession of me, and after six months of patient care, my selfish character was sunk-en, I now know, forever.

“When I left the hospital Dr. Charcot was good enough to secure for me the position of secretary to a distinguished Orientalist, a learned man, who had spent a long life studying the characteristics of the various religions of the world, in the periods of their early development. I was with him several years and became, in the peaceful and serene atmosphere of the old man’s library, imbued with an almost savage desire to redeem the years of my life that I had, apparently, wasted. One night I received a summons such as you received when you came here. I left my master and walked forth in the night, following the movement of another’s will, until I found myself in a great hotel, surrounded by a park, in the outskirts of Paris.

“It was here my new life began. I shall not now go into details. The influence of Charcot, acquired in the hospital, was exerted magnetically, and I was brought, through it, to the chateau, where lived the president of the Russian society, described to you by Lord Melrose. I became a member, and continued my work with my master, the Orientalist, until about five years ago. It was during my work in Paris that I became acquainted with James Musgrove. I became deeply impressed, after a time, with the struggle continually going on between two very vigorous and very

diverse elements in his nature. The one that was uppermost was coarse, selfish and devoted to material pursuits. The other was poetical, with aspirations as lofty and great as ever visited the brain of Shakespeare."

He paused at my look of surprise, and then added :

"In time, I was fortunate enough to become advanced to membership in the Central society, and now I am one of the Inner Council of Ten that governs the world."

"Governs the world?"

"Yes. Not as might ordinarily be understood. But it is a government that grows day by day, and will, in the end, be the one government for the entire world, doing away with all others. You need not look surprised. It is simple enough. The elementary societies throughout the world are strong. Through them we have invited to our Inner societies, during the last few years, hundreds of very rich men. Their disappearance from the active circles of the world has not attracted any particular attention beyond the local ripple following their departure. We have selected only those who could be spared, who were doing no good to themselves, and whose departure will not impose suffering upon any one. When they are once with us, they would prefer death to going back to their old life. They willingly give their money to us. We have a reserve fund now of over one billion of dollars. We use this money to control great institutions throughout the world. The monasteries of Thibet are with us. In the Himalayas we have built numerous monasteries of

our own. We own great houses in the various capitals of the world. The Council of Ten live, for a portion of its time, in the world, and, as presiding officers of trust companies, manage, without attracting notice, the treasury of the Central society."

"But how can you own such vast possessions as hotels, monasteries, and the like, throughout the world without becoming subjects for curious gossip?"

"Because we move only as individuals. The whole world is bare to the gaze of inspectors, who watch the globes that are in our sub-telegraph stations. Here the members are watched, and warned constantly of every possible antagonistic influence. We have cultivated the wills of the Council of Ten until, united, they can, through the influence of a large central globe, highly charged, send out thought-waves, sufficiently powerful to affect a nation. This work is now going on at the central station of London. It is owing to the influence of this station that war has been so long held back in Europe. We do not say that there will never be a war again; that will depend only upon a power higher than our own. But peace is now in the air, and arbitration is taking the place of war, as a means of settling disputes."

"What is the primary basis of this new social order?"

"Simply to carry out Christ's new commandment, 'that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' There are no other laws governing it. There is no other creed contained therein."

“But how can you guard against the invasion of ambition and a perversion of the lofty aims of the society by the necessarily imperfect men who compose its directors?”

“In the atmosphere of the electric globes, man's nature is placed in accord with the laws of the universe, which are governed by justice and love. When the Council meets, an improper thought would break the harmony and strike a discordant note upon the central globe, like a clap of thunder. Every member knows that his every act and thought is laid bare, and recorded at every central station. Even if this were not a protection, I should defy any one to have his eyes really opened to the meanness of the motives of ordinary life and ambition, and ever consent to leave this life of serenity and of high purpose (with the mirror of the real world constantly before his eyes), for the dull incidents of the life of an ordinary ambition.”



MORTIMER MORTIMER: "I EXHAUSTED EVERYTHING IN THE WAY OF SENSUAL PLEASURE." Page 84.

CHAPTER X.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE ANTI-MATERIALISTIC WAVE
NOW MOVING OVER THE CIVILIZED WORLD.

“But can every one be brought in accord with the laws of electrical harmony?”

“Not always. There is no one who has not an inner nature better than its exterior; but, with some, this is so deeply hidden as to make necessary several generations of development. We take the most favorable natures first and impress them. You have observed that great popular movements come often without much preliminary agitation. The electrical current that runs through an excited crowd moving as a mob will often produce deeds of cruelty the individual would contemplate only with horror. It is important to control and direct the thought waves for the good; that is one of the subjects sought to be accomplished by the directors at the central stations. You have, doubtless, observed the recent interest in spiritual things, now so prevalent in Europe. Works upon Theosophy, Occultism, Spiritualism and ghost stories are sold by the thousands. This is owing to a spiritual, anti-material wave now constantly being sent out from the Central station in this house.”

“Do you encourage Spiritualism?”

“As it is generally understood, no. But even that,

with its wildest absurdities, is better than gross materialism. But Spiritualism, as construed by mediums in the form of table-tipping, the summoning of spirits from the vasty deep to tell Susan whether James is in love with her, or the stock-broker how stocks will move, is even now out of date. If there is nothing better in the next world than a return to this to act as the messenger of a medium, working, for money, to serve the vulgar or selfish curiosity of credulous visitors, then the next world is vastly inferior to this. But Spiritualism in the highest sense, the reaching up to a higher power for support, the belief in inspiration for those who are worthy to receive it, we fully believe, for we know some of the finest modern compositions are mere copies of tones flashed to our Central station in the Himalayas from higher and more distant spheres. It is at this station that we are studying the questions of the highest interest. It is there that we have established connection with the other worlds, through the power to transfer thought upon the great electric wave-conductors of the universe. Full histories of these worlds will be published in an age when the public will be educated sufficiently to comprehend. Now the ordinary scientists of the earth would regard such publications as emanations from a mad-house."

"Have you sought to absolutely prove that there is another world for us after this?"

"No. That is no more necessary for one who has studied the law of the electric forces of the universe through our globes, than it would be to prove the sun shines. We are constantly working, when in full elec-

tric harmony, in the flood of the light of love of the central universe, and we see and have every moment the evidences of another life, as convincing as the light that shines indicates the sun as its dispensing power. We seek to avoid the so-called supernatural, and keep to the development in the highest degree of the possibilities of the life on this earth. It is here that we are to be made worthy of a higher life. Our Inner society now holds within its hands the seeds of the millenium."

"Have you the power to reach the perfect existence here?"

"For the few only. We have abolished from among us disease or pain. Electricity, as the remedial agent, has done this. We cannot perform the miracle of restoring the actual loss of physical organs, nor can we more than postpone the day of death, but we prevent the inroads of disease by electric guards. As our system is at present organized, we select as members of our society only those possessing good physical organizations. With the perfection of existence will come the perfection of government. When once Christ's commandment of love is fully lived up to, the necessity for all governments, such as those now organized, will no longer exist. No one will seek to injure or wrong his neighbor, and as government is organized for the protection of the individual, when he no longer needs protection the usefulness of government is at an end. Our work is now to prepare the public—to impress it in new directions."

"Have you no fear of being disturbed in your work

by political organizations jealous of the power of the Central Council?"

"No. Our control of affairs is by indirection and by the impression of thought-transference. We break no laws. We seek no fruits of power. An electric current surrounds each one of our stations, through which no one not invited by us, or affiliated with us, can pass. Our interference is only for the purpose of doing good. Our progress is slow, as the world is crusted throughout every social channel with stupid, gross materialism, and a selfishness perfectly inhuman. Murders the most atrocious, crimes the most terrible, and suffering the most piteous in character, make no impression upon the hardened sympathies of modern civilization, while the mere suggestion of religious thought is coupled by the world with weak mentality.

"In no place do we find so much need of reform as in the churches themselves, and in no place do we meet with such resistance to the waves of love constantly sent towards them from our central stations. What member of any church follows to-day strictly in the path of his Master? Who of them would dare to follow His poverty, His obscurity, and His suffering? There we have found so much resistance from those intrenched in authority, backed by the accumulations of wealth, that we have turned our batteries upon the people themselves. The organization of the Salvation Army is the direct result of the central London station. Its rapid growth is owing to the stimulus of our stations throughout the world."

"But the Salvation Army is ridiculed even by the

churches, and every one feels qualified to look upon its members with pitying contempt."

"Yes; but it is almost the only religious organization in the world to-day whose members are honestly seeking to follow in the footsteps of Christ. They are poor. Their lives are consecrated to poverty, to the renunciation of self, while they do not shut themselves up in dreary prisons, seeking the purity of asceticism, but walk into the thickest rush of life to carry the light of love and truth to the poorest, the lowest, and the most debased."

"But——"

"Stop, before another word. Come with me to the globe and let us look, for a moment, upon the hourly work of one of the members of this band." I turned to the globe, and I saw, instantly, a dark, noisome alley in the east end of London. A young girl, with a white, resolute face, dressed in a robe of dark-blue, wearing the bonnet of the Army, now appeared alone. She walked through the alley and ascended the stairway of a tenement, crowded in all its quarters with the homes of the poor. Upon one floor I saw three families, crowded like animals, fifteen in all, in one room. Oaths, imprecations and quarreling were heard on all sides. Here dwelt the criminal and the outcast. Stalwart drunkards, dissolute women, sleeping in a dull, sodden stupor, little children poisoned in the foul atmosphere, desolate mothers, and discouraged workmen, made up a population of misery that can be found everywhere, every day in the year, in any of the slums of the great cities. I shuddered at the thought

of this young girl coming in contact with this vile throng. But her uniform made her sacred. I saw even the vilest of criminals give way before her with respect. I did not hear her say one word about religion. She came to help, and in any way she could, the poor and suffering. She shamed the most dissolute by asking permission to help clean up their dreary rooms. Soon she was joined by a companion, and for nearly an hour I watched these brave girls carrying water into rooms that never had been cleaned, dressing the children of drunken parents, steadfastly working in the grim and noisome atmosphere, with the patience and loving energy of so many angels of light.

"Now," said Mortimer Mortimer, "study well the work of these women."

"Do they do this every day?"

"Every day of their lives."

"But surely they do not spend all of their lives here?"

"That is what they do. They would have no influence if they did not come and live among these people. In the darkest quarters these missionaries take rooms, clean one spot in this foul quarter, and then work, as no domestic servant ever has worked, to fight the devil of dirt with soap and pure water. You cannot touch these people until they are made clean and fed. Every day some devoted heroine in this Army loses her life from disease or exposure. They nurse the newly-born, train the growing, and close the eyes of the dying. They accept poverty as their share. They know that they must be obscure, and that they may

fall in the first period of their engagement, but their courage never hesitates. Yet the poet who celebrates the deeds of the hero who, crazed by excitement, charges into the jaws of death upon a mission of murder, would never dream of looking into the life of a brave Salvation Army lass for a subject for his cantos. This movement is growing, and we intend that it shall, in the end, revolutionize the churches, until they wake to their duty and go forth to try to equal, if possible, the good now being accomplished by the only religious organization on the face of the globe that has a place or a thought for the outcast and the criminal poor."

CHAPTER XI.

THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF TEN, WHICH
GOVERNS THE WORLD.

I do not know how much longer this conversation might have continued, nor how many more scenes might have been shown me, had there not, suddenly, appeared upon the globe a signal which I did not comprehend.

Mortimer Mortimer said: "It is a signal for a meeting of the Council of Ten. Wait; I want to ask a question."

He now turned towards the globe, and, in a moment, there came back the answer, "yes," in the Morse characters.

"I have asked permission to connect you with the council-chamber, that you may both see and hear the proceedings of that body. You have been examined and accepted as a member, on probation, of one of the Inner societies, and we shall rely upon your pen as your contribution towards the work. You shall be a thought-wave in action, impelled by the power that is above us. But you are to be taught many things before you return to the world again."

"But when was I accepted as a member?"

"Yesterday."

"But how?"

“The electrical register in the Council reported yesterday, about noon, that your system indicated one hundred in the scale of harmony. That entitled you to be recorded as an acceptable candidate.”

“But I made no pledges. I have taken no oaths.”

“None are necessary. With our system, personal examination might, in the end, lead to deception. The electrical register of a man’s inner character never lies.”

“How long am I to remain?”

“Until you, yourself, wish to go so as to be at work. It will not be long. Remember, too, that when you are gone from this station, and appear in the world, you will still be in constant touch with us. All of our central stations will be open to you. Before you go, you will be given an electrical ball, similar to the one you saw with me in the Victoria Gallery. By its aid you can communicate always with the central stations for advice or information. Be careful not to lose it, though in strange hands it would have no more use than an ordinary telegraph instrument in the hands of a savage. Besides this, your will is to be strengthened to the grade of one thousand. Each member of the Council of Ten has a will worked up by electrical processes, so that, by union with the globe, it represents a degree of one hundred thousand. That is, the will of one such member is equal to the united wills of that number of people. For the purpose of thought-transference, solely, to distant spheres, this strength of will can, by union with other mechanical devices, be worked up to a billion. But you will find out all about these things soon, so that they will not excite your surprise.

They would have all been known to mankind long ago, if the minds of men were not so clouded by materialism and disbelief in everything not represented by money or some equivalent."

With this Mortimer Mortimer withdrew, saying that the Council was about to meet, and while he could take part in its proceedings by remaining with me, there were advantages secured by coming in actual personal contact with his associates, and so he left me awake with curiosity concerning the proceedings of the Council that secretly ruled the world.

I had been, for years, in attendance upon Congress in my own country, had studied the House of Parliament in London, the proceedings of the Corps Legislatif in France, the Cortes in Madrid, the Reichstag in Berlin, in fact, had been a witness of the methods of legislative proceedings in the various leading countries of the world, where selfish interests entirely predominated. At last I was to be a witness of the proceedings of a Supreme Council, whose single rule of procedure was unselfishness, and whose code was a pure love for mankind.

Need I say that I rubbed my eyes wide open and was all attention when the globe sounded and I read the message: "The Council is about to meet"?

Hardly had my friend, Mortimer Mortimer, left the room, when I addressed my most earnest attention to the globe. I had, previously, found that concentration of attention upon the subject under consideration was of vital importance, for the scenes shifted with the current of the thought, and, unless the thought was clear,

the scenes in the globe were dim. A dull person, with but little imagination or interest in things, would not see much in the globe, beyond a succession of blurred, disconnected visions.

I was much excited at the thought of having an opportunity to look behind the scenes and watch the powers which govern the world at work. At first I could not see clearly; but this dimness of vision continued only for a moment. Then I saw a large, wide room, with lofty ceilings. It was a council chamber, worthy of the powerful body to be assembled there. It was somber-hued in its furnishings. The ceiling was light, but divided off into heavily-framed circles. The light surface of each was covered by a map of some one of the various countries of the world. The center circle was larger than any of the others, and upon it was outlined the plane of the world.

This shifted, in alternating flashes of light, showing first the old world and then the new. The brilliant colors of the coats-of-arms of the various countries showed in brilliant relief in the center of the other circles. The woodwork of the room, which included the polished floor, the high and polished wainscot, and the broad, heavily-carved frieze, had the rich warmth of color of old Spanish mahogany.

Large, high-backed chairs with arms, broad and strong enough for giants, were placed about a heavy, round table which stood in the center of the room. Places were arranged for ten. In front of each seat was a sensitized paper similar to the one under the globe in the room where I was. Suspended above the

table was also a globe, about three feet in diameter. It looked very large in comparison with the globe in my room. When I first began to see this room distinctly, it was unoccupied. I should add, here, that this room, apparently, had no windows. The central globe furnished a clear light, so well diffused that there was not a dark spot or corner in the room, while under the table the shadow was a faint gray.

Soon I heard a low sound of music, and the portieres at the right parted, and the Council of Ten entered and quickly took their places around the table. I was astonished to find that this Council of Ten was divided equally in its membership between the two sexes. All wore evening dress. The men were of varying types. The eldest was a venerable sage, while the youngest was not older than Lord Robert Melrose. The ladies of this august circle were of the highest types. Their faces were beautiful and intelligent. All were richly dressed and had an air of great ease and refinement.

There was no chief in this Council to sit in any post of honor. There was no order of precedence. No one had a special seat, and no rule seemed to prevail for the seating of the Council, beyond the one of alternating the sexes. Naturally, my attention was arrested by the novel sight of women seated as peers of men in this high board of administration. The eldest of the five ladies was at the right of the picture as it appeared in the globe before me. She was, at least, sixty years of age. Her hair was snowy white and combed in a thick, high, rolling mass from a broad forehead. Her eyes were dark. Her complexion was of a childlike

fairness, and her regular features were overshadowed by a look of gentleness that would have subdued a savage. She wore a black lace dress that set off the lines of her robust, womanly figure. Diamonds flashed in her hair and at her throat. Her arms and hands would have done credit to a young woman.

Three of the other ladies were of ripe years, also, with forceful faces and calm manners. They secured, however, but casual notice from me. I passed them rapidly in review, and then, not pausing to examine the faces of the grave and serious men, who sat with their earnest gaze fixed upon the globe, my eyes swiftly turned to the one who was, for the moment, the overshadowing figure of the circle to me.

The fifth lady was the personification of all the beauty that is to be found in youth, encased in a body abounding in health of absolute perfection. What words can give one an idea of such youth, in such perfection? Her form showed the noble lines of a goddess, while her face was radiant with life, purity and high purpose. It needs the actual sight to obtain any impression of her charms. I knew but few of the great ladies of the world of London, and so I could not, for the moment, determine the nationality or social position of the one who seemed, to me, by natural right, to be above any rank. A feeling of the most passionate admiration filled my mind. It was so intense that it must have communicated itself as a message to its object. She gravely turned, for a moment, in my direction, smiled, and then turned her attention again to the work in the council chamber.

CHAPTER XII.

A STUDY OF THE WORKINGS OF THIS MYSTERIOUS COUNCIL.

I studied for a long time the workings of the Council before I fully understood its methods, the great power exercised by this circle, and its daring grasp of the questions of the day. Instead of seeking to act as a recorder of any portion of the proceedings, I will give a few general facts noted during my first hour of observation. I could not give more if I would, and I have no desire to say one word that could in any way injure the cause of those who have trusted me.

I first observed that, while no one was in absolute authority, Mortimer appeared for the time to be the directing mind. It was he who made suggestions and introduced subjects to be considered. I learned, later, that the direction of the Council passed in turns around the circle at each meeting. Each was engaged in working for unselfish purposes, and, as no personal ambition was possible within the circle, perfect courtesy and consideration prevailed. The speech or comment of the director's mind was taken up by the one who, by chance, sat at his right hand, and so the talk or the presentation of opinions passed around the circle.

Differences of opinion occurred, but when it came to final action, the best judgment or suggestion pre-

veiled, as if the Council, being ruled by higher purposes than mere self, had infallible guides to lead them to what was the best.

Each subject, such as the condition of a particular nation, was shown by a succession of pictures passing over the face of the globe. The tremendous struggles of an overweighted humanity, fighting for a place of security, the rapt and insolent selfishness of the few who, by chance or good fortune, were placed above the universal law of contest, were given in clear, sharp and distinct pictures.

The attention of the Council was first directed to European affairs. I learned, to my great surprise, that two of the most imposing potentates in Europe had direct affiliations with the Council of Ten, and co-operated with it.

I saw, for the first time, the wise, serene face of Leo XIII., which appeared in the globe soon after the meeting of the Council. I saw him sitting, alone, in the privacy of his palace, in his robes of white, turning his gentle eyes upon the Council, who were brought in direct accord with him through a globe suspended over his library desk. I learned that it was through his desire for peace and goodness to dominate selfishness that he had been brought to work in harmony with the powerful Council of Ten. He saw them only as in a vision, but their influence was ever at his right hand. I now understood, for the first time, some of the apparent contradictions of his political actions, and why the influence of his holy office was now constantly turning from the old forms of monarchical

rules to the best forms of self-government inspired by modern democracy. I saw that the lifting of the little finger of this great prelate would, at once, bring about the fall of the monarchy, and the rise of a republic in Italy. But the people were not yet ripe for this change. At present it could not be brought about without the shedding of blood, so the influences watched and waited. I now understood why the holy father of the Catholic Church immures himself in the Vatican and no longer goes in the world. What need had he of the world? It lay before him in the flashing scenes of the globe, and his every working moment is needed to devise some plan for the relief of suffering and cruelty, daily disclosed to him.

I saw, secluded in his closely-guarded castle at Gatschina, the Imperial Czar of all the Russias, and learned that it was not through fear of the Nihilists that he remained so constantly out of sight of the public. He, too, was closely affiliated with the Council of Ten, and upon him they showered all their influence, making him the one mighty war lord enlisted upon the side of peace, so that, while he lives, war is moved farther and farther away.

After this I saw pass in review the various royalties of Europe. All were subject, directly, to the influences of the Council, but only the Czar and the Pope were conscious of the influence, and in direct contact with it. The German Emperor I saw as he was changing from a wild and dissolute youth into a strong, forceful power, marching in high directions, but moving in erratic curves of action, owing to the pressure brought

to bear upon him. I saw numerous royalties, stupid, eaten up with petty vanities, imagining themselves as specially authorized by God Almighty to lead empty, vain, animal lives, without one thought of the responsibilities toward the people in their charge. I saw disgraceful downfalls preparing for them before the swift-rising tide of republicanism visible throughout the length and breadth of Europe to-day.

I saw one monarch near to the time when he would be deemed worthy to enter into the affiliation with the Council of Ten. This was the gracious King of Belgium, who has devoted his life and private fortune to stamping out the murderous slave trade of Africa. Instead of taking his ease and fattening upon the spoils of his position, his eyes, blinded by tears of sympathy, had turned towards the negroes of Africa, tortured by the rapacious slave-traders, whose murders in one year reached the astonishing number of one hundred thousand. If it had not been for his gentle yielding to the imperious impression sent him by the Council of Ten, the mob in Brussels would have been shot down by the orders of his ministers, mere selfish politicians, when the workingmen arose and justly demanded an increase in their suffrage rights.

I observed that the movement to increase the armed forces of Europe, the stimulus to increased skill in the manufacture of devices to kill, came directly from the Council of Ten. They sought thus to make war odious and terrible, and so add a bulwark to the edifice of peace.

As the scenes flashed in rapid succession upon the

globe, the discussion of this inspired Council ran on with the musical, murmuring evenness of a brook, running on over smoothly-worn surfaces, down the incline of thought to the broader sea of accomplishment. The smallest subject, the sorrows of an individual, were as often considered as affairs of national or world-wide importance. Those who were struggling upwards in any calling of life, who showed any indication of a noble character, were observed, or noted upon the records of the society, and later were commended to the care of some of the smaller stations. Small lapses from the path of high endeavor were not noticed. The spirit of forgiveness and charity hovered over every judgment. Even the worst of men were shown, in rapidly-flying reflections, to have qualities that occasionally made them subject to the influence of the Council of Ten.

Each one of the Inner council lives in the world. They are all independent, each one answerable only to himself; but to describe, more closely, their positions and their actual relations with the busy world where they are known, would require a knowledge not given me.

The Council elects its own members, and when a vacancy occurs, through death or absence, the gap is filled with one of the best members of the smaller societies. No one who has not utterly conquered selfishness can ever be considered as a candidate here. More than this, knowledge and administrative ability are needed to obtain a seat at the round table of this modern and model government. This information

came to me in a direct message from Mortimer Mortimer.

I was strongly interested in the equal participation of women in the Council, and to see how strongly their keenness of vision, their refinement and tenderness of heart, supplemented the strength and audacity of the men. Yet I saw this Council united, battling in vain to overcome the adamant wall of selfishness of women, in the treatment of the fallen of their own sex.

The session lasted for nearly two hours. Towards the last, my attention was concentrated upon one member, only, of the Council. I could only see her as she sat at the table. I was powerless to disengage her attention from the Council and its proceedings. My will was too weak to compel the slightest message regarding her individuality. I see her now, as I write, my heart throbbing with the bitter-sweet memory of the picture she presented as she sat in this council of administration, charged with the remedying of the evils of a suffering world. Her white satin dress, and the pearls which she wore, set off her fair and radiant beauty. Her face was a pure oval. Her color was fair and delicate. Her eyes were dark, showing soft and clear between the long lashes, under perfectly-lined brows. Her nose was a pure Grecian. Her mouth was full and small, disclosing even, white teeth, as she spoke or smiled. Her hair, a reddish brown, was combed high from her forehead and gathered in a regal crown upon the top of the gracefully-poised head. But her mere physical beauty was enhanced a thousand-fold by the inner light of a noble soul, that

shone through the transparent mask of her emotional countenance.

As I looked, the light in the globe faded, and I saw nothing. I looked for hours for something more, but nothing came; then, exhausted by the many emotions of the day, at midnight I fell into a sleep broken by dreams.



"I FOUND MYSELF BACK IN MY ROOMS IN HALF-MOON STREET." PAGE 111.

CHAPTER XIII.

A RETURN TO NORMAL CONDITIONS.

When next my eyes opened, I found myself back in my rooms in Half-Moon street. Lord Robert Melrose was at my side.

"Well," said he, "when did you come in?"

"I do not know."

"Do not know? You have been absent for ten days, and without leaving a word of explanation. Your editorial director has added you to the list of mysterious disappearances. Here you are, in your bedroom, just waked up from a mid-day sleep. Were you dropped through the ceiling?"

"I repeat, I do not know."

"Well, if you do not know, who does?"

"Let me ask you, has anything been heard of your father, the Duke of Wex?"

"There has been no sign from him, not one word to indicate where he has gone. But, nevertheless, I think I know the explanation of his absence."

"I can explain to you the reason for his disappearing, if you do not really know. But, honestly, for the present, I cannot tell you how I came to be back here in my own room. However, I may soon be enlightened." I suddenly thought of the globe. If I had been returned to the world to work as a humble assistant of

the great Central organization, then I must have the globe that was promised me by Mortimer Mortimer. Otherwise, I could have no means of communicating with my superiors, and would possess no evidence to disprove that my recent experience in the Central Station of Light was not a dream.

I now bounded out of bed, and began looking for the globe. I ran through the pockets of my clothing, like a madman, and, then, to my horror, I found nothing. I turned back my pillow—nothing. I tore open the bed—still nothing. I sank down in my chair in utter despair. Then a thought flashed into mind that this was, perhaps, a trial of my independence. I calmed myself. I begged Lord Robert to excuse me while I dressed, as I said: "I will see you in the sitting-room in a few moments and tell you the story of my absence."

When he left me, I dressed, and then sat down in a chair, before my little writing-desk. I wrote upon a sheet of paper the following message, addressed to Mortimer Mortimer: "I thank you for your kindness to me in the Station of Light. I realize now, in my return to the world, that you want me to recover my sense of independence. You do not wish me to lean upon any system of central aid as a crutch to my own halting steps, but merely to use it as a stimulant to help me advance my own individuality."

Hardly had the ink dried up on this message, when there appeared, directly under it, in shadowy-traced lines: "You understand. Have such faith always in us.

"M. M."

As I read this brief note, I was content. The Central station was, after all, a reality. I was one of its later disciples. I believed that I was to first find the work to be done, and, as I progressed, I would have my eyes opened more and more to the beauties of the life lived and directed by the Council of Ten.

There was now a pressure in my hand, and, looking down, I saw a globe. My badge of office, at last, had arrived, and, with it, a sense of tranquility and power I had never known before. I hastily placed it in my pocket, and joined Lord Robert.

He was profoundly interested in my story. "You are to be envied," said he. "I am prepared, by my experiences in the Russian society, to believe readily what you tell. I have suspected something of this kind for some time. I told you to seek Mortimer Mortimer, you know. I sought him this morning to ask him about my father."

"Did you see him, and where?"

"I saw him in the Bank of England, conferring with one of the governors. I had business in the bank, and so waited for him. He drove me back to my club in his brougham. He was upon the eve of leaving London for a long time, he told me."

"What did he say about your father?"

"Not much; but enough to convince me that I had no reason to worry about him. He also told me that you would be back in your room this afternoon; but in what way you were to come, he did not say. None of the servants saw you come in; and, when I entered your bedroom, I had no idea you were really returned,

although I was expecting you. By the way, have you taken a good look at yourself since your return?"

"No."

"Well, take the trouble. If I had not known you intimately, I would not have recognized you. If I had met you outside, I fear I should have passed you by."

I ran hastily to the mirror, over the mantel-piece, in our sitting-room, and there I saw a face, strange, wholly new in its expression, and only remotely familiar. While the features were unchanged, the expression underlying them was so different as to produce the impression of another individuality. It was more refined and gentle, and there was an accompanying shadow of force and resolution that created a wholly new type.

Said Lord Robert: "It is, undoubtedly, the result of the development of one of your sub-conscious selves. It is the better part of your individuality that has come to the surface, and has assumed control. I can understand how such influence could, in a very short time, make you wholly unrecognizable to those who knew you in your ordinary stage of existence."

"But, in spirit, I feel the same."

"Yet, but are you not conscious of a different influence inspiring your actions? Do you not, now, feel the same high desire to serve your fellow-mortals as when you were a guest of the Central Station of Light?"

"I certainly do."

"Then you, to all practical purposes, are dead to your former life. If you were to walk the streets of London to-day, you would escape the notice, abso-

lutely, of your ordinary acquaintances. In one month from now you would not be recognized, unless you so willed, by your most intimate friend. Although returned to me and to my friendship, on account of my past affiliations, you have disappeared forever from the life you have known. Let the authorities put a reward of £100,000 sterling on your head for your discovery, and you can, with perfect impunity, call at Scotland Yard and talk with every detective employed in the case without awakening suspicion."

"If you are correct in your theory, then this explains the perfect disappearance of the missing people noted in my original observations upon this subject."

"You, to-day, are conscious of no intellectual change?"

"Not at all. My powers seem as before. I am sure I am, intellectually, no different. My disposition seems, however, to be wholly changed. I feel in absolute harmony with the high directors of the Central station." I spoke with fervor.

As I said this, I heard a dull sound. It was like the note of a distant, tiny bell. It came from the globe in my pocket. But I did not speak of this to my friend.

CHAPTER XIV.

COMPLETELY CHANGED THROUGH PSYCHOLOGICAL
INFLUENCES, SO THAT EVEN THE "WASP"
EDITOR DOES NOT RECOGNIZE ME.

I took up life again, as I had known it. I looked eagerly for some path in life where I could be of service. My first duty was to my employer, who had sent me to Europe. I wrote for him the story as I have given it here; but, before I could send it, I saw a copy of *The Wasp*, in which it was publicly announced, under flaring headlines, that the mysterious disappearance of Arthur Livingstone, the special correspondent of *The Wasp*, had been rendered doubly mysterious by the return of the exact amount *The Wasp* editor had given the correspondent upon his departure for Europe to search for James Musgrove.

"The money," said the account, "came in the shape of a draft on New York, drawn by the Bank of England. No explanation came with it, except a briefly-printed line, 'On account of Arthur Livingstone.'"

The editor added: "Why any one should return money once paid over to him for value given is the mystery of all mysteries. *The Wasp*, now, is willing to pay the five thousand dollars thus returned, with an equal amount added to it, ten thousand dollars in all, to any one who explains this mystery and gives a detailed

and exact account of the present whereabouts of Arthur Livingstone."

So I withheld, for the time, my story, and it was weeks before I took it up again. Mortimer Mortimer's kindness thus freed me from any moral obligation relating to my former life.

It was now for me to elect how I should live. Lord Robert, who soon left me after my return from the Central station, went to Paris, where he received an appointment as secretary to the British Ambassador.

My globe, which I kept as the prize of my life, was, for the greater part of the time, dull and dark. But, every night, I studied its dark surface, and soon gleams of light taught me that the possibility of seeing in it would come rapidly if I were patient and persistent.

At the end of three months, I began to see again as I had seen in the great globe at the Central Station of Light, although the range of view was, as yet, limited, and confined to the neighborhood about me. I received occasional messages; and, when I resolved to take up, once more, my calling as a writer, to advance the cause of humanity, my globe rang out a triumphant note of approval; and, from then on, my development was rapid.

Not long after this, I dined at the house of a great statesman, who is fond of entertaining literary people and eccentric Americans. I was seated next to the famous editor of *The Wasp*, who was among the guests.

"So your name is Livingstone," said he, glancing at my guest card, next my plate, which bore the simple inscription, "Mr. Livingstone." "That recalls to my

mind a strange experience I had, recently, with a gentleman bearing your name. Perhaps you may have heard of Arthur Livingstone?"

"Yes; I have heard of him."

"At the first moment, I had just the shadow of an impression that you resembled him; but, as I look at you, I see that there is not the slightest resemblance. Did you ever hear of his mysterious disappearance?"

"Something about it comes to my mind, as you mention it."

"It was the most peculiar of all the disappearances noted by my great journal, for Livingstone went out of sight while engaged by me to unearth the disappearance of one of our leading bankers, James Musgrove. More than this: all the money I had given him was sent back to me, after he had been engaged for nearly a year in work upon this case. Now, Livingstone had a most original idea, as an explanation of these disappearances. He thought that there must be, behind them all, some great syndicate for the promotion of the successful disappearance of notable people that has taken place throughout the world. I never believed in the idea, but was willing enough to exploit the theory, on account of its originality. But, when the money came back, following Livingstone's disappearance, I have been forced to believe in a syndicate. But, my God, what kind of a syndicate is it that pays back money for no reason at all? My days will be shortened, unless I can probe this mystery."

"Are you still looking for the missing banker?"

"No; my whole attention is concentrated upon the

search for Livingstone, and the explanation of the system that carried him away and returned me that money. I will expend one hundred thousand dollars before I will give up beaten. If Livingstone is on top of this earth, I will find him. You have no idea of the enterprise of American journalism ; it explains everything, and pierces all mysteries."

"Did you know Livingstone well?"

"No ; I never saw him but twice. Once, upon the occasion when I sent for him to engage him to go to Europe. The second time was in London, at my hotel, upon the very day of his disappearance. Oh, that disappearance ! I hope the mystery will not drive me mad. But money can do anything, and, with its use, I shall succeed."

"You are not interested in Livingstone personally?"

"Not at all ; but why was that money returned?"

"Would you know Livingstone if you were to see him, by chance, in a passing crowd?"

"Know him ! Every feature of his face, bearing, walk and talk is indelibly photographed upon my brain. I see him in my dreams at night. You must know I was, originally, a reporter, and one of the best sensational reporters living. If I should see only the corner of Livingstone's ears, in a crowd, I should know him, and should follow him to the ends of the earth, before I should lose him. I carry about with me money sufficient for the longest of journeys, so as to be ready, upon an instant's notice, to take the track of an active scent. I am beginning to make it a matter of personal pride with myself to run him down."

"What would you do with him if you should find him?"

"Pump him dry."

"But, suppose he should not wish to talk. How could you compel him to explain?"

"With money. He could have what he liked."

"But suppose he should not care for your money?"

"Such an idea is inconceivable. Livingstone was, when he left for Europe, a poor, ambitious American; such men always want money."

"But suppose he should refuse?"

"Everything is conceivable to a poet, and the host informs me you are one of the coming poets of England. But, if all else should fail, I should fall on my knees, and plead for my life, which could not endure this forced further damming up of my curiosity. But you need not fear my failing, if once I secure the slightest trace of the missing man."

As the editor said this, he grasped my arm, with violence, adding: "The editor of *The Wasp* never fails. If I only could lay my hands upon the actual man my task would then be simple."

Was there ever anything more amusing than this boasting of alertness and acuteness in the presence of the person sought? Never did I have a more convincing proof of my complete outward change. To be shielded from the piercing keenness of the vision of this editor was to be guarded against the world.

CHAPTER XV.

DISCOVERY OF JAMES MUSGROVE, ON THE DRIVER'S
SEAT OF AN OXFORD STREET 'BUS.

Two days after this dinner, I mounted an omnibus, at Oxford Circus, to ride down to the Mansion House. I advanced over the roof of the 'bus, and took a seat by the side of the driver. I was his only companion upon the seat. I pulled out a cigar from my pocket and handed it to him, as I lighted one myself, prepared for a lazy observation of the great crowds and busy traffic of this, one of the busiest of London high-ways.

The driver was an elderly man, with a splendid, clear, strong face, neatly framed between his multitudinous neck-wraps and high, shiny, black hat. As he took the first puff at the cigar, a change came over his face. I fancied I heard a dull ring from one of his pockets, as of a bell.

Then the bell rang in my pocket, as if in response.

I then turned, and looked long at the driver. With a thrill, I first noted, under his left eye, as he turned to thank me for the cigar, three little, blue powder marks. Involuntarily, I looked behind his right ear, as I was upon his right. There I saw a mole, the size and shape of a small egg. I remembered, then, my last call upon James Musgrove, and my note of his per-

sonal peculiarities. The powder marks and the mole were his. I could not see his scarred left hand, as he wore heavy, leather gloves. In no other way was there any resemblance to Musgrove. This omnibus driver was a noble-looking man, with a grandly-benevolent face. Suddenly, I thought where Musgrove had been—of the possibilities of the change in his character. I believed it was Musgrove, transformed. As I murmured this to myself, the sound of a bell, in my pocket, confirmed my thought. This was followed by a similar one from the pocket of the thick overcoat of the driver.

There was no longer any room for doubt. Turning to the driver, I said: "Have you any objections to telling me your name?"

"None at all, Mr. Arthur Livingstone. Oh, don't look surprised. The initiated ones of the Circle of Light surely should know each other. I have been longer in than you, and so recognized you at once. I am, as you suspect, James Musgrove, ex-banker and broker, late of Wall street, New York."

"But how did you become a 'bus driver? When I saw you last, through the aid of Mortimer Mortimer, you were in the garb of a monk, in a Himalayan monastery, studying the scenes of your past life."

"And a tough study it was, too, my boy. Their memory remains with me now, but they appear as the acts of another individuality. How did I become a 'bus driver? Well, I wanted to begin in some walk of life where I could shake off the last crust of selfishness and hardness. I wanted to unload sixty years' ac-

cumulations of acquired habits of preying on others, and I thought I might learn something in the way of a new life by beginning to work with my hands. I always did know how to drive. I picked out something hard and tough, as a kind of penance, you know. I work, now, twelve and fourteen hours a day, and it is doing me good. I shall begin as a cab-driver next month. I am studying, in this post of observation, the profound misery and wretchedness of the great working masses of London. The tales of sorrow I have heard told on the top of this 'bus have wrung my heart. But I am learning, in this long exposure and toil, some of the values of life. Just why I piled up money wrung from people struggling around me, I cannot now understand."

At the Mansion House I bade Musgrove good-bye.

"When am I to see you again?" said I, as I began to climb down the steps from my elevated seat.

"It is not necessary for us to make appointments," said James Musgrove. "You and I are in the same circle, and, for a time, will work together. The next time you see me I shall be the driver of the cab engaged by you, upon the eve of your change of occupation and advancement in the service of light."

"When will that be?"

"You will know when the order comes. That will be time enough."

James Musgrove, London omnibus-driver, still puffing, with serene satisfaction, at the black Havana cigar, now gravely saluted, as he turned to the right, in response to the imperative foot-tapping of the conduc-

tor, who bawled, "Liverpool Stytion a penny." In a moment, his 'bus was lost in the traffic, while I sought the underground, and made my way back to the west end of the town, to my lodgings.

As I finish this paragraph, the globe lying upon the desk sounds. Its surface begins to glow with light. I see the faint shadow of the fair queen of the Council of Ten looking kindly upon me.

The globe now tinkles with a more imperious note.

Does that mean that I am to write no more upon this subject for the present?

CHAPTER XVI.

JAMES MUSGROVE, THE CABMAN, DELIVERS AN ORDER
FOR A SPECIAL SERVICE TO BE PERFORMED
BY ARTHUR LIVINGSTONE.

When my pen dropped at the imperious sound, noted in the last chapter, I thought I had, perhaps, reached the conclusion of the record that I would, for the present, be permitted to tell.

Three months have since elapsed, and the experiences of that period are necessary to a complete exposition of this preliminary record of The Disappearance Syndicate. The last chapter I finished late in the evening, in my writing-room, in my modest quarters in Knightsbridge Road. Up to the time I had completed the record of the story, as above written, I had made some progress in my readings of the globe. Yet I had by no means arrived at the power of clear seeing. It was only at intervals that I could see anything in it; and then the visions were faint and hazy.

Upon the evening in question, mentioned in the last chapter, the face of the fair lady of the Council of Ten came to me. A year had elapsed since my visit to the Central Station of Light, and this was the first time I had seen the faintest trace of the one who had made such an enduring impression upon me. It made my heart throb with delight. It was the shadow of a

promise that I might see her in reality. Her face in the globe was evidence to me of my progress, although the vision faded nearly as quickly as it appeared.

The globe glowed, after the vision faded, with a mystic fire; then there appeared to me the evidences of a struggle within its mysterious depths, as if two mighty forces were combining for a contest of life and death. I received merely the impression of a deadly struggle, but could not receive any information concerning it, neither could I see any of the figures engaged therein. Suddenly the globe became dark. I was moved to go out into the street for a walk, to relieve myself from the disappointment of the vain strivings to pierce its hidden meaning.

It was a soft, gray light of early spring. I was in evening dress, as I had come in from a call. I flung on, hurriedly, a light top coat and lighted a cigarette for a stroll in the park opposite my apartment. As I set foot on the street, I saw a hansom cab drawn up in front of the entrance.

The cabman saluted me, and then I recognized James Musgrove, by the signals of the globe. He bent down to me, with a cheerful smile, as he said: "Good evening, Livingstone. I have been waiting for you."

"Waiting for me?"

"Yes. You remember the last time you saw me I told you you would next see me as a hansom cab driver?"

"Do you like your present occupation?"

"Well enough; but let me come back to your business, which is more important. You will also remem-

ber that I said I would see you again when you would be upon the eve of an advancement in the service of light and of an entire change of occupation."

"Yes, I remember."

"Well, the time is arrived. Jump in the cab."

"To go where?"

"Never mind. You should obey orders without questions. If you doubt my authority as the bearer of the order, ask your globe."

The globe in my pocket sounded clearly the sharp ring of affirmation, and then, without a second of hesitation, I entered the cab, and was driven with great rapidity along the park to Piccadilly. When the cab passed the Rothschild house, it whirled to the right and plunged down in the direction of St. James' Palace. We soon passed that into the open of the Mall, and then pierced the gloom of the quarter to the southwest of Buckingham Palace. Ten minutes' drive brought us to a gloomy fortress of a mansion surrounded by high brick walls, behind which were groups of trees, shadowing deeply with their thick foliage the massive front of the house, where not a single light appeared to indicate living occupation.

As the cab stopped, Musgrove called through the top of the cab: "You are to enter here, and alone. I will wait for you until morning. If you need my help in any way, summon me through pressing the globe firmly in your hand as you call out my name. Your courage, I think, will be equal to the situation you will find inside that house."

"But how am I to enter? Why am I going?"

“Enter, that is the order. Have faith and go ahead. I am giving you the straight tip, and if you play it right you won’t get left.”

The Wall street flavor of Musgrove’s conversation caused me to look sharply at him, as I stepped out of the cab. There was a trace of the old Musgrove in his face, while, at the same time, he showed great excitement.

“Go ahead, my boy, and don’t waste your time staring at me.”

Mechanically, I advanced to the grim gateway, and, as I reached it, it opened silently. I entered, and, as I cleared the passage-way, the gate closed with a clang, and I heard the slide of a bolt in its socket.

I was now in the thick darkness of the garden. Turning for a last look at Musgrove, I saw him sitting, erect and grim, upon his box, puffing away at a cigar, without a trace of his former anxiety. In the darkness of the garden, I was impressed with a sense of evil, which I could not shake off. I advanced but a few steps, when the darkness closed in behind me, shutting off the light of the street, and the gate where I had entered. The darkness was of an unusual character, as it was absolutely impenetrable. I was exactly as if I had become deprived of my eyes.

There was an awful silence with the blackness, that deepened my impression of evil or misfortune. After the first few steps, I hesitated ; but the thought came to me, I was under orders, and was I to show weakness at the first trial ? With this thought, I lifted my head, although I could see nothing, and began to walk reso-

lutely forward. The darkness prevented me from knowing in which direction I set my feet, and the soft turf silenced my energetic footsteps. As I walked, the gloom deepened, until it hung about me with the effect of a weight. Occasional whispers came through the blackness, faint puffs of air, and now and then a tremulous action of the atmosphere, in the form of undulating waves, passed over me. I grasped firmly the globe in my right hand, and continued to advance. To my surprise I met no obstacles, and stumbled over nothing, although the view from the street had shown me a garden crowded with shrubbery and trees. I walked as freely as if I had been on a desert plain.

Suddenly I found myself at the main entrance to the house. Dimly I could see its outlines. Here the door opened silently, as had the gate, and I entered the house.

I was now in a region of light sufficient for me to see clearly. The interior was that of a palace, while the furnishings were of an amazing luxuriance and richness, carried to the point of extreme lavishness.

I walked through suite after suite of apartments, until I found my way into a great library chamber at the back of the house. Here there were luxurious couches and easy chairs ranged about a small center-table, upon which was an inlaid steel disk. Upon the surface of this disk there was a long, undulating needle, poised as the needle of a compass. It was whirling constantly, and with the rapidity of its movements the shifting light upon its surface gave it the appearance of a tiny serpent.

In this room there was an atmosphere of sensuousness that appealed to every instinct of my animal nature. The rich and extravagant coloring of the room and its furnishings, its perfumed atmosphere, the gentle music that sounded as if from a distant sphere as I entered, combined to capture and impress the senses.

In the Central Station of Light, I entered an atmosphere of harmony and rest. Here, the atmosphere was one of discord and unrest ; yet, one that fascinated and enthralled. I sank, enervated and listless, upon one of the easy couches near the center-table, and began to lazily watch the needle as it moved to and fro.

My first thought, upon entering the house, was that it might be one of the stations of the service of light. The richness and the mystery were in keeping with what I saw at the Central station, but the atmosphere of relaxation and sensuous attraction showed me that this was foreign to what I had seen and experienced under the direction of Mortimer Mortimer.

But, before I had had a moment to question the character of my surroundings, the tapestries at the far end of the room parted, and there entered a gracious, slim man, of an extremely youthful appearance. He was blue-eyed, with a clear complexion, and such regular features, such full, ripe lips, such white teeth, and such fine, silky blonde hair, as to suggest the fair features of a beautiful woman. He was in evening dress, and came forward to greet me, as I arose, with the easy courtesy of an accomplished man of the world.

"I thank you for the honor of this visit," said he.

"Your name I know very well, as one of England's most brilliant writers. My name is Ronald Hapgood."

"Are you the master of this house?"

"I am."

"Why am I here at this hour of the night? I offer no apology for my call, but seek the explanation of my coming from you, as I am not here of my own volition."

"I suppose not. This is not a mysterious place. It is a rival shop, if I may use that term, of the one controlled by your friend, Mortimer Mortimer, the prince of humbugs."

"Why do you call him the prince of humbugs?"

"Because he seeks, continually, the impossible, and, by his will and power to create illusions, deludes numerous people into following him with a credulity that does not hesitate even at the sacrifice of their personal fortunes."

"But in what way does this prove him a humbug? He aims only to do good."

"Yes; but the people who have such aims are always tiresome and impractical. Neither he nor any set of men are strong enough to bring about the millennium. Why should any one do good? Why should any one seek to be any better than nature has created him?"

"Because there is no true happiness to be found otherwise."

"Well, let us see about that. I belong to an association of individuals who live for the life we know. We are shrewd observers, and keep very close to this earth, although we have nearly the same amount of

scientific knowledge at our disposal that is at the command of Mortimer Mortimer and his followers. Now, you will concede that the universal quest in this world is happiness; is it not?"

"Yes."

"Well, the world is old enough to have learned a few lessons. If only happiness was to be found in doing good, do you not suppose that the natural shrewdness of mankind would, by this time, have taught them this lesson?"

"Well?"

"Why is it that man is given a nature that is instinctively opposed to so-called good, as outlined by Mortimer Mortimer? Let us admit, for a moment, his theory of another life, and an overruling power. If there is an overruling power of infinite goodness, why is it that men are endowed with natures that constantly impel them in the direction of the so-called opposite?"

"It is not for me to question the wisdom of creation. I only know that I have found no such happiness as I have experienced since I have begun to work upon the side of the good."

"You are of a dreamy, poetical nature, and I daresay that, for the time being, you are content. But have you ever really tested your own nature? Have you fought for the cause of the good, as you call it? Have you ever made one real sacrifice for it? Have you endured pain or ignominy for its sake? With you it is an abstract sensation. As Mortimer Mortimer has presented himself and his associates to you, he has made every appeal to the love of refinement and

beauty in your nature ; but are you sure you are really changed by your contact with him ? What do you see in the globe which you carry about with you, that any person with hypnotic tendencies and some imagination cannot see ? ”

“ You speak of things I cannot discuss with you. ”

“ Pardon me, I am not questioning you. I know what I am talking about. For a long time I was a follower of Mortimer Mortimer. I was advanced in what he was pleased to call the service of light. I am as great an electrical and hypnotical expert as he. But, in the end, the disciple differed from the prophet, and I was expelled from the society. ”

“ In what did you differ ? ”

“ As to the motives and objects of the society. Mortimer had, with his skill and administrative ability, built up a power and a reserve that would have justified his seizing the control of all the actual governments of the world. But he would not. He was content with indirect power. I was not. I also aimed to supplant him. But I did not succeed ; but, to-day, I have a more powerful society than he ; at least it is the equal of his, and I mean to contend with him for supremacy. ”

“ But what are your objects ? ”

“ To cultivate the theory, and sustain it against all comers, that men should follow out the law of the natures given them. Whatever nature wills them to do, let them do it, in so far as they can, without compromising their own comfort or safety. In other words, the doctrine of absolute selfishness. Who, do

you suppose, has, to-day, the greater number of followers?"

"You have, undoubtedly."

"And will have unto the end of all things. Look at the history of the countless ages, and you will find human nature unchangeable. Its tendencies are always the same. It is strangely made up of contradictory elements of unselfishness and selfishness, but the latter prevails and always will prevail. Any man of practical common sense should know that. What a stupid place this earth would be, if we were all arrived at what your friend, Mortimer Mortimer, would call the ideal state. Then there would no longer be any work left to be done by the Council of Ten. It is the very imperfections of the world that make it interesting."

"Why have you invited me here to tell me all this?"

"Well, I am going to be frank with you. You are Mortimer Mortimer's most promising proselyte. I am going to try and win you over to my side."

"Impossible!"

"Don't say that. Look over my case first. Let us take all the extreme phrases of modern speech in going over the situation. Let us suppose Mortimer Mortimer an angel of light and I the devil of darkness, you must concede I am a gentlemanly devil and entitled to a fair hearing."

"Go on."

"Well, give me the same attention you did Mortimer Mortimer. Look as intently at what I can show you as you did at the pictures in the Central Station of Light,

and then decide who has the better collection. If your convictions are not firm enough, or your courage great enough, to face temptation to pursue an opposite direction from the one you are now following, then you will only prove my theory concerning human nature and raise my estimate of your prudence. If you are so enchanted with your present system for cultivating happiness, surely nothing I can show, or ever offer, can have the slightest influence over you."

"I do not fear your influence."

"I like that. You have courage. Are you willing to look over my claims to superiority?"

"I am here through the orders of my superiors. I know it is through their will that I am in your society. So I am free to accept your challenge to move me from my present position."

At this Ronald Hapgood clapped his hands with delight, and looked so humanely pleased and boyish in his pleasure, that it was difficult to imagine him an evil person and an advocate of the doctrine of perfect selfishness as the best means to be employed to secure perfect happiness.

CHAPTER XVII.

RONALD HAPGOOD EXERTS THE FULL POWER OF THE
CENTRAL STATION OF DARKNESS TO MAKE ME
A DESERTER FROM THE SERVICE OF LIGHT.

My temporary host now said : " There is no use of our being too serious about this matter. I am not very hospitable in treating you to nothing but mere talk and argument."

With this, he clapped his hands, and there entered several Indian servants, who quickly moved up a table near the one where the needle was ever revolving. Three chairs were placed about the table, and then the dishes of a light repast, flanked by several bottles of dry champagne, were brought in. Hardly was the first bottle opened, than the tapestries again parted, and there entered a lady, young, beautifully dressed in a black evening dress, who advanced with only a slight salutation, and seated herself in the third chair.

Her beauty was startling ; for, in addition to the charms of a great physical beauty, there was the additional charm of a refined and cultivated mind, shown in the expression of the face and in the clear light of the dark, full-lidded eyes, arched by absolutely perfect eyebrows. Her clear, straight nose, her perfect mouth, and delicate, oval chin, would have enchanted any artist ; while the blue-black of her luxuriant hair, the

snowy whiteness of her teeth and the delicate, creamy tint of her complexion testified to the lavishness of Nature. Her evening dress showed the contours and form of a young woman enjoying the perfection of health; while there was an atmosphere about her of radiant vitality, which would have made a much uglier person attractive.

She looked at me with the frankness of a man looking at a brother, and slightly inclined her head, upon which shone a glittering diamond star, as my host introduced me to her.

"Lady Somers," said he, "another one of the rejected disciples of Mortimer Mortimer."

I looked at her intently and inquiringly as he said this.

"Yes," said she, with a mysterious smile. "I sat for one day in the Council of Ten, but I found it too stupid and—well, Hapgood can tell you the rest."

Then, with an easy air of languid indolence, she caught up a Venetian glass filled with champagne, and drank the foaming beverage at one draught. Her sigh of pleasure, and the lighting of her somber eyes, spoke volumes for her pleasure-loving nature.

Hapgood noted my earnest gaze at our fair companion, as he said: "I do not think you will find it so dull with us. You will find in our group the ablest and most interesting people in London. If you, with your refinement and love of beauty, find with us anything to shock or annoy you, then I shall give up all claim upon you."

As he said this, in a gentle, wheedling way, the hand of Lady Somers stole into mine under the cloth and

gave me a kindly pressure. Her hand gave me a feeling of sympathy and consideration that ran through my veins like fire. Her eyes seemed to say to me: "Do not yield, but stand firm"; and I must confess that this attitude of hers tempted me more than would have the persuasive pleadings.

To avoid the trouble occasioned by this touch of apparent sympathy, I turned to Hapgood and said: "Why do you bother at all about me? I am not of sufficient importance. I am as nothing in the councils of Mortimer Mortimer."

"It is not a matter I care to explain, beyond the fact that I oppose Mortimer Mortimer at every point, and I hope, before many years have passed, to be able to break the power of his syndicate."

"But how can you contend against him? He must know all your plans."

"To a certain extent, that is true; but, while he can witness, at a distance, the acts of his opponents, he cannot pierce behind the wall of our separate individualities, and read the secrets of our minds against our will. We have the same weapons that he has. We, too, can see what he is doing. When you are of us, I will show you how it is all done. I will give you a globe that will give you something besides gray, hazy suggestions of a possible something."

"When I am of you? That can never be."

"Well, we will see. It would not be polite to contradict you. I think you will find us more friendly and companionable than your present friends, whom you never see and may never see again. Is not Lady

Somers as beautiful as your Lady Flora of the Council of Ten ? ”

“ Lady Flora ? ”

“ Yes ; she is one of the ladies in waiting upon the Queen. She is fond of fads, and has a great influence with the Sovereign. She was a great capture for Mortimer Mortimer. But you need never expect she will look at you. She is absorbed in the ideal. She really believes that the reform of the world is possible.”

I looked inquiringly at Lady Somers. She said, with easy frankness : “ Lady Flora is easily the most beautiful woman ever seen in London. You may praise her as much as you will, and I will concede the truth of all you say ; but she is cold and passionless, a natural-born nun. She has never been in love with any one, not even herself, and if she were not in the service of Her Majesty, would never be seen in society at all. Mr. Livingstone, you are following a poetical idea in worshipping her.”

I shrunk back at this personal application, but Lady Somers continued, unmoved : “ We discuss everything in this house as it is, without apology or phrase. We know you are hopelessly in love with her, and, through this infatuation, Mortimer Mortimer will be able to lead you to a perfect slavery of service. Now, for your own comfort and pleasure, you had much better fall in love with me.” Here she gave me openly her hand, and looked straight into my eyes. “ I know how to amuse and interest men of your dreamy, poetical type. I will promise to love you, if you will engage to never talk to me about reforming the world. Make love to

me, and earn the right to my favorable consideration by your devotion, and then we will face the world as it is, and hunt for the little pleasure there is to be found in it, among the practical things of life, such as is this"; here she lifted a glass of champagne, and after touching it to her lips, pressed it to mine, as she continued: "instead of among the impractical idealities of life, that one never finds among sensible people, who actually rule and control the world about them."

I looked at the author of this cynical little speech, and found upon her beautiful face such an engaging air of frankness and seeming friendliness, that I could not conceal my artistic appreciation of so much surface beauty.

The supper was now ended. Lady Somers took my arm, and we followed our host into a spacious gallery, behind the tapestries, at the right of the room into which I had first entered. What had taken place was interesting; but a mere agreeable companionship could hardly be considered as having risen to the dignity of a temptation.

Lady Somers was too much of a woman of the world to overdo any part. On her way across the room, she said: "I have advised you to fall in love with me, but the advice is not good. I might return your love for a short time. I do not know, but I am certain it would not be for long, and, as you are a good fellow, who does not make too heroic a parade of his virtues, I give you this last piece of advice as the only really friendly suggestion I shall make to you while you are in this house."

I looked down at my companion with friendly gratitude and admiration. She was divinely beautiful, and it was impossible to believe that, if she had ever been affiliated with the Council of Ten, she could have been retired through any unpardonable fault of her own. Surely, some day she would be taken back. The virtues that had led to her advancement still existed. The charm of a daring intellectuality shone in her face.

As I looked at her, she said: "I am sure, if it were not for Lady Flora, you would already be on the high road of falling in love with me."

It was an odd thought in my mind that I should be inspired in my devotion to the highest good by one beautiful woman, and now have my thoughts turned, for the moment, in an opposite direction by another beautiful woman, of an equal, if not superior, intellectual qualification. But, while I was agreeably impressed for the moment, I found in Lady Somers only the charm that is ever found in the society of an accomplished and beautiful woman of the world. As I walked with her, I could not help comparing the lofty purity of Lady Flora's face with the easy, gracious worldliness of my companion.

It occurred to me, as I entered the large, studio-looking chamber, which was most brilliantly lighted, that the service I was asked to perform in this house was of a most peculiar character. It was odd to ask me to visit two worldly people, who did not appear to be any too much in earnest in their arguments to persuade me to leave the service of light and join them.

If I were to be confronted with no more dangerous temptations than the easy-going arguments of Hapgood and the indifferent talk of Lady Somers, I would be entitled to very little credit for strength of character in resisting them.

In this next room, Hapgood motioned me to a seat in the center of the room, flanked by two comfortable chairs. "Come," said he, "you sit down here by me ; I will show our world in action. I can, perhaps, show you as interesting pictures as did Mortimer Mortimer."

As he spoke, an attendant wheeled forward from a corner a large glass screen, bordered by an ornate and heavy scroll-work frame. Back of the screen was hung a black curtain, which shut off all reflected light from the surface of the glass. This screen was wheeled in front of the three chairs. I seated myself in the center. Hapgood was at my right and Lady Somers was at my left. His voice now took on the caressing notes of an affectionate friend ; Lady Somers leaned upon my chair, until her warm breath fanned my cheek, while the gentle perfume of her raven-black hair whipped my now half-awakened senses, stimulated from the first by the force of the radiant vitality of this exquisitely indifferent lady, who stood, apparently, upon the line between the two lines of life.

A dashing air, full of life, played by an unseen orchestra of artists, brought my pulse up to fever-beats, as a series of pictures began to unfold upon the screens.

It is possible that my former self, for a long time relegated to a position of sub-consciousness, now

struggled for supremacy. In no other way can I account for the feeling of delight at the pictures which represented pleasure, luxury, power, in all the varying forms of the most artistic and munificent selfishness. Throughout this splendid imagery there was not the faintest touch of self-denial or of a desire to benefit others. As these representations of power and pomp and pleasure passed before me, I felt a sensation of ambition and a thirst for power which I thought foreign to me.

I first noticed this change in myself in gazing upon the scene of a battle where thousands of men were portrayed rushing at each other, in a mad desire to commit murder.

"Actually, I have hopes of you," said Hapgood. "You can take pleasure in seeing a pack of fools try to make away with each other. You'll be on the same basis with us the moment you reach the conclusion that mankind is made up of a mass of fools, not worth saving, and that the only real pleasure in life is the exercise of power. This knowledge is, to-day, in the hands of the few wise people, who show their wisdom by guarding their interests against all comers. This life is the only thing we know anything about. Grasp a certainty in preference to a shadowy illusion. The so-called good is a weak force, at best. It works intermittently, and never with the resistless, unwearying force of human selfishness. Perfect selfishness is the true secret of power."

Hapgood was now silent. A slight turn of my head showed that he was gone. Now a scene of beauty and

of love was disclosed upon the scene. As I looked upon the gracious forms which waved and beckoned before me, the soft arms of my companion stole around my neck, and her beautiful face, now pillowed upon my breast, murmured words of endearment.

As I slowly turned towards Lady Somers, her influence ceased. Between my face and hers, there extended a fair, white hand. As I lifted my head, to trace the source of this intervention, I saw, for a fleeting moment, the vision of Lady Flora; and, at the sight of her face, the warm blood changed to ice in my veins. Had I no more strength than this to resist temptation? I felt for the globe in my pocket. It was gone.

At the thought of its loss, I sprung to my feet.

Lady Somers regarded me cynically.

"You are right," said she, "I should have despised you if you had yielded; but you have lost, after all. You are outside, now, of the circle of light. For to half yield is as deadly an offense, in their eyes, as if you had crossed the line completely. More than this, you are not entitled to the credit, for not passing clear across the line. It was my successor in the Council of Ten who interposed; so, if you are saved, and afterwards taken back to the service of that tiresome circle, why, you need not take any credit to yourself."

I bowed, in all humility, as I said: "There is no man vain enough, nor brave enough, to combat against the intellect and the beauty of such a woman as you. If I escape without any of the honors of the struggle, I am only too well pleased. Now that I have recov-

ered, to a certain extent, my ordinary vision, I can see that you are simply making sport of me."

"Even a poet has an occasional gleam of seeing clearly," said Lady Somers. "Pardon me for my impertinent attempt to interfere with the plan of your life."

With this, she walked out of the room, with as cheerful and as brisk an air as if she had been actuated by the loftiest of motives.

It was now light in the room again, but the light was a luminous green, shimmering with a sense of animosity. Yet I felt no fear. I said to myself: if I have shown weakness in the face of one temptation, I shall at least hope to redeem myself by courage in the face of danger.

With the stimulus of this thought, I turned, and sought the room where I had first met Hapgood. I entered this room without obstacle, although, as I crossed its threshold, I felt a shock from the magnetic needle, ever playing upon the polished dial of the center-table.

Here I found a new group, all men, seated in a row. They faced me as judges, and, before I was fully conscious, I was seized and bound, and placed upon the huge table, alongside the central dial.

My judges wore masks, and the long robes of inquisitors. As soon as I was placed upon the table, I became the subject of a discussion of a purely scientific character. I was treated as a subject of a scientific experiment about to be made.

The leader in the group, beneath whose mask hung a long, white beard, opened the discussion: "I have

long held," said he, "that mere good or evil in one depends largely upon the mechanical construction of the brain. Certain brain formations turn instinctively in the direction of crime, or what society has been taught to regard as wrong. Now, I propose to operate upon this subject before me, who has been treated by a benevolent association of scientists, until he has become weak, nerveless, and incapable of any expression except that of sympathy and kindness. To this degrading position in the human scale has he been forced by one Mortimer Mortimer. Of him he has made a poet. Now, instead of destroying him, as Hapgood advises, I propose to make him over into an assassin, an emissary of this society, armed with a will to fulfill all its mandates, in our building up of power. Those who oppose us shall not live. This man can be taught even to strike down Mortimer Mortimer. For, what is human nature but what is created through association and brain impressions. I pass beyond the years required to produce these impressions, and, by electrical power, in a short time, shall stimulate the particular cells of the brain necessary to develop my idea, and I shall thereby produce a man who will obey my will, as my right hand. Of what use is it to seek to rival the creative force, when we can utilize its results thus laid at our hand."

As he finished his prelude, he picked up an electrical appliance attached to a battery, and advanced towards me as he summoned several attendants.

"Shave his head," said he, "so as to leave bare the points of attack. I will begin at the base of the skull

and destroy, at first, all sensation of humanity, the love of mankind."

I shrieked with horror at the advance of the attendant.

No torture of a physical character could have rung from me such a cry. There was an instant response at the door. James Musgrove entered. He walked quickly up to the table, and, with a quick, deft touch, unbound me and placed me on my feet. He turned to the assembled inquisitors, who now stood in a circle about us, advancing threateningly.

"It is no go," said he; "I am not afraid of you. You have no power to injure me, and my friend here is under my protection." With this, he drew from his pocket the globe—the same in character as the one which I had lost. As he raised it, it flashed an angry fire, and the dark circle of enemies fell prostrate, as if paralyzed by a powerful shock.

Holding the globe in his upright hand, Musgrove, catching me by the arm, said: "Come, it is time to get out of this. You have had a new and interesting experience, and, for the present, you have been tried enough."

"But," said I, "I have forfeited my rights of protection. I have wavered under the influences of this house, and the proof of my weakness is found in the fact that I no longer have the globe, which was given me as the emblem of my membership of the service of light."

"Feel in your pocket," said Musgrove, "before you say any more." My right hand flashed into my pocket in an instant, and there, oh, joy! I found my

emblem of membership. At my look of surprise, Musgrove said: "This trial has been but a simple one, and is only in the direction of developing your character. It has taught you the lesson that the circle of light has opposed to it the circle of darkness, and that the principal work of the circle of light is in seeking to defeat the plans and evil works of the circle which uses the weaknesses of human nature for the extension of its power."

A moment later, we were outside of the house. It was early morning. Musgrove's cab was still in waiting. He drove me back hastily to my lodgings in Knights bridge. As I entered my room, I found Musgrove's prediction fulfilled. Upon the writing-desk of my sitting-room there was a note addressed to me. It was from Mortimer Mortimer.

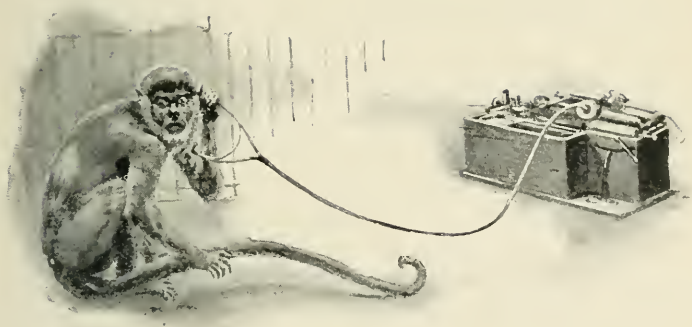
This note, in brief and formal phrases, conferred upon me the important office of chief of one of the sections of light, whose special duty was to watch and guard against the evil influences of Ronald Hapgood and Lady Somers, both deserters from the original service of light. In this letter, I was told to devote my entire attention to them, and to try and see if I could not win them back to the cause which they had deserted. To them and their influences could be traced nearly all the great crimes of Europe. The influence sent out from the station of evil is, at times, strong enough to overcome, temporarily, the influence of the station of light.

This episode closes the history of my preliminary experiences in pursuit of The Disappearance Syndicate.

At some day in the future, I hope to be able to relate some of the experiences of the position assigned to me as chief of the section of light. I have had to employ tireless energy and attention to counteract the evil influences of the circle dominated by Mr. Ronald Hapgood, who occupies, to-day, before the world, the position of editor of one of the most fashionable society papers in London.

THE END.

Senator Stanley's Story



CHAPTER I.

SENATOR STANLEY OUTLINES THE THREAD OF A
PECULIAR STORY.

I am a senator of the United States. A man who has reached a position in this body, by fair means or otherwise, has had much experience ; he certainly has been through enough to kill all romance and sentimentalism of disposition. As a brother senator of mine once said : "A man who reaches the Senate of the United States has been chased and torn on the way by bloodhounds, tramped over and tossed by wild elephants to such an extent that nothing afterwards can hurt him." This remark was brought out by a question concerning an editorial in a leading New York newspaper, which tore the character of my friend to shreds, and held him up as an object of contumely before its readers.

Possibly, my senatorial friend exaggerated the difficulties along the path to the Senate, so as to properly set off his own success in getting there, but there was a touch of truth in his highly-colored and dramatic picture of the road to the position of a senator. We senators know that we are a class set apart. We are the eighty-eight men who have captured the first prizes of American politics, and it cannot be denied that we always maintain the superiority of our positions.

But I must not forget that I have a story to tell. I have acquired a bad habit, in the Senate debates, of rambling at will when engaged in a discourse, and it is difficult for me to harness myself down to the straight way of a succinct narrative. From a friend, a successful writer, I have learned the following rule for telling a story; it is: Begin at the beginning and stop when you have finished.

This looks like a simple rule, but I find it will require some practice to follow it absolutely. I shall begin with myself, in this very peculiar story which I have to tell. To make it understood, I am obliged to say something about my character and position. First, I am fifty-five years of age. My wife is dead; I lived with her twenty years. She has now been dead five years. She was a quiet, self-contained woman, not given to much talk. Our marriage was a happy one as marriages go. She was a faithful wife, and I was a reasonably faithful husband. I never dreamed an old man's folly of trying to replace her. I have two sons, both grown up, and in business in Denver. Both are married. I have been alone for some time, but I find there are worse things than that. I have lived for many years in a house of my own at Washington. It is a good, well-built house, roomy and complete in all its appointments. It is in charge of a very wise, very quiet and good-mannered colored man of middle life. There is not a woman employed about the house. As a consequence, my house is always quiet and in a good state of discipline. My cook is an especially good one and understands my simple tastes. I have had good

health and an ample fortune. My position in the Senate was assured. Up to a year ago, I knew I could stay there as long as I wished, because there had been, for a long time, no opposition to me in my State. I was a welcome guest in every house of note in Washington. My ten odd years of social experience developed my powers of entertaining. I flatter myself that I was not a dull companion at the dinner-table, and I could endure a general reception with the stoicism of a veteran.

You might think that life should have had for me a look of cheerfulness, and that I should have been contented to float down the stream of life to its unknown and unknowable destination with something approaching contentment. Such contentment was possible, but now that sentiment is past. How mere physical comfort ceased to be a source of contentment will be found by any one who is patient enough to read what follows. Let me add one or two more points about myself. All my busy life I have been a materialist. In matters of religion, I have said simply I do not know; what appears to be evidence to others of a future life has never appealed to my reason. I have always treated religion, however, with great respect. I have always thought it most unfortunate that there was not some high court of appeal to settle disputed questions of religion; but as there is none, I have always regarded such discussions as idle and impracticable. In fact, I have refused to bother my mind with them. In politics, I have very positive convictions; but it is not necessary

to say to which one of the great parties I belong. I will merely add, that never in my great career have I occupied a position on the fence.

I have a friend, Martin Reynolds, who is an old school-mate. He is rich. He made his money in railroad building. He was always a member of the construction company. He is married, and has two grown daughters, Mary and Florence. His wife is a very dark, well-preserved brunette, who thinks her husband is one of the greatest men this country has yet produced. She is familiar with good society, to which she is devoted. She is not brilliant nor particularly well informed, but she makes no blunders. She does not have that unpardonable vice of some Washington women of affecting an interest in politics. The two daughters have a more pretentious education, but still remain good, genuine, clean-minded American girls. My friend Reynolds has retired from railroad building and has settled down in Washington. He has an amiable weakness for entertaining people of high official position. He is a member of the Metropolitan Club, and, thanks to his wife, is noted for his good dinners and his entertaining. I, myself, have never belonged to any club. I regard them as mere social trades unions for the advancement of those who are either socially or mentally feeble.

Reynolds' house is an old colonial one on Panorama Heights in Washington. It is built in the solid fashion of the early days, and is touched up with the light hand and color of modern taste and comfort. Reynolds has a good deal of time on his hands, and as he is very

active, he has always been on the lookout for new forms of entertainment.

One day, in April, I think it was near the middle, I received the following note from him: "My dear Senator: I have captured such an odd fish for a guest. He is a Hindoo fakir. No, perhaps I should not call him that; I believe he calls himself an expert. He is a great juggler. I have invited a few friends out to see him this evening. He is going to give some tests of his wonderful power. Be sure and come.

"REYNOLDS."

This note I received late in the afternoon, just before dinner. It came very opportunely. I was very nearly in a temper. I had, practically, been called a liar, in the brief space of one afternoon by, at least, two members of the opposition, because I had tried to tell the truth about a certain railroad scheme that was slowly, but surely, wriggling its way through the Senate. I had also found in my mail, upon my return to the house, a scathing editorial of a distinguished independent editor, calling the attention of the public to my suspicious attitude in opposing this railroad scheme. "Was the senator, or were his friends, bearing the stock?" asked the editor; "for we see no other motive for his peculiar actions." To be called a liar by two colleagues in one day, and then to be pointed out as an object of suspicion by a leading editor, because I was really trying to do my duty, were enough to disturb even my philosophy. But this note, and the prospect of a pleasant evening, made me forget my annoyances.

I knew, at Reynolds' house, I should see pleasant people, and if the visit included some curious diversion by the Hindoo, his special guest, why, so much the better. If I could have foreseen the result of that visit, I would have fled to the opposite end of the earth before I would have gone. In calm ignorance of anything, but the prospect of an agreeable evening of ordinary social converse, I prepared, soon after an early six o'clock dinner, to go out.

CHAPTER II.

SEANCE OF THE HINDOO ADEPT AT REYNOLDS' HOUSE.

I drove from my house, on Massachusetts avenue, out on the wide and spacious Sixteenth street, over the hill. In twenty minutes from the time I left my house, I was alighting at my friend's door. I paused for a moment under the old-fashioned porch, supported by four solid gray granite pillars, before ringing the bell. The air was very sweet and moist. The odor of the spring was heavy upon the languid atmosphere. In the west, great blue-black clouds were slowly moving forward with flashings of lightning playing in and out of their huge masses. The color of the bank of advancing clouds, under the play of the lightning, ran through a brilliant scale, from faint azure-gray tones, to royal purple and then densely blue-black. The stillness of the air was broken, occasionally, by short, sharp gusts, flying messengers in advance of the approaching storm. I stood for a moment lost in reverie, gazing upon the majestic spectacle, when the sound of voices within the house recalled me to myself, and I rang the bell, after dismissing my carriage.

I found the lower part of the house well lighted. It was now nearly half-past eight. The guests were gathered about a very distinguished-looking man, of the Oriental type. They were assembled in the library-

room, at the right of the main hall. In the group about him, I recognized Reynolds, his wife, their two daughters, the Secretary of State and his wife, the Secretary of the Navy, and his keen, intellectual, cynical-looking daughter, three or four senatorial friends, and several members of the diplomatic colony.

I give this group merely to indicate the stage-setting about the scene where Ram Chunder, the Hindoo expert, and I were soon to play the principal parts in what you may call comedy or tragedy, as you please.

The East Indian wore the conventional evening dress of polite society. He appeared, to me, to be about fifty years of age. He was tall, with a thin, spare figure. His head was long, and broad at the top. His hair was a short grizzled gray, nearly as white as his turban, the only bit of Oriental dress retained by him. His face was angular, and deeply lined with the strokes that character and experience alone can stamp upon the human countenance. His eyes were dark, and deep set, glowing with a subdued fire, an inner light rather than an outward sparkle. His nose was a fierce hook, with a broad base. His mouth was thin-lined, very firm in its outlines, and, partly, hidden by a drooping gray mustache, which shaded into a spiky beard of a lighter tint. In his shirt bosom there was a small emerald, which glowed in the light with, apparently, more expression than was visible in its owner's eyes. His long, slim, dark-brown hands were devoid of ornament, except for a great opal, set in a solid gold band, and worn upon the middle finger of the left hand. This left hand

rested lightly upon a round oaken center-table, which had been stripped bare of ornaments, books, and cover, for his use.

I found the company so absorbed in some mysterious source of excitement that my entrance was hardly noticed. Reynolds presented me in half a word to Ram Chunder, as I made a sweeping general bow to the company, all of whom were known to me. The Oriental made a profound impression upon me. He was seated as the host introduced me. The expert did not rise, and he scarcely bowed, yet his manner gave me the impression of a very subtle and penetrating courtesy. A slight sensation of fear, incomprehensible and unexplainable, stole over me as I met his look. His figure appeared to radiate a sense of great power. Burke says that all ideas of power are associated in the minds of men with ideas of fear. I am not an imaginative man. I am not even nervous. I had never seen a man who could produce upon me the sensation of fear until I saw this Hindoo expert. In his presence, for a moment, I felt as must a raw, young trooper feel when first a gleaming bayonet in the hands of a vigorous enemy darts towards his breast. There was the same faintness of the stomach and the shiver along the spine. These sensations were so wonderful to me that I was quite content to sit down and ask no questions concerning the strange scene which was being enacted in this great circular room.

A silent conversation was going on between Ram Chunder and those about him. As an evidence of the peculiar power of an expert, he had said that he would

engage in a mental conversation with those present. Questions were to be asked mentally by individuals, in turn, and his answers were to be made by flashing a reply upon the consciousness of the questioner. This test had just begun when I entered. The Secretary of State had been favored with the first mental conversation. The Secretary was an amiable, consequential, old gentleman, described by a friend as a man whose mind went to sleep at three o'clock every afternoon. He had listened to the explanation of what was required of him, with an easy, vacuous look. There was a silence as Ram Chunder dwelt upon the importance of the questioner keeping his mind absolutely upon the subject of the inquiry made. There was such a possibility of delusion in the whole thing. How could one know whether the mental question was really answered? was asked by several. Said Ram Chunder: "That you can only know by experiment. You will have no doubt when the answer comes that it is the real answer and from me." Then he added, quietly: "As a storm will soon burst over this house that will make ordinary talking impossible, you will find this method of exchanging thoughts quite advantageous."

There were some further preliminaries to arrange. It was agreed that the questioners should make a record of the conversation. Each questioner was given a pad of paper, with a pencil. The question was first to be written, and then the answer was to be promptly recorded. Where possible and agreeable, the records were to be shown; but I noticed that there was very little heartiness in the approval of this proposal.

I would not have trusted, for a moment, this first experiment to the lively imagination of the ladies present. Their highly-sensitive organizations were strung up to an unnatural tension—an atmosphere overcharged with the electricity of the coming storm—and, stimulated by an experiment of such an unusual character, their powers of imagination might lead them into the realm of delusion. But the Secretary of State had no imagination. He could be safely trusted to lead off. He began his questions with a most impassive face. I almost knew, from the grave lines of his countenance, that he was asking some serious diplomatic question. I was wondering how a reply could be flashed upon his feeble consciousness, when I heard the Secretary give a chuckle of delight; and then, after one or two more seconds of silence, he waved his hand gracefully, and said: "I am satisfied. I am more than satisfied."

I may as well add, right here, that I afterwards talked with every one of the persons present upon this eventful night, and they all agreed that their questions were answered correctly. The Secretary of State confessed with difficulty. From the meager scraps I pulled from him before my own experience began, I learned that his conversation with Ram Chunder must have run about as follows:

"Shall I ever see the beautiful, red-headed girl who applied to me, the other morning, for amanuensis work?"

"You certainly will. Red-headed girls in search of work from statesmen, if given a little encouragement, are very apt to call again."

"You think there is no harm in my taking a paternal interest in her? She is so young, and she says she is all alone in the world."

"Harm? I think there is no more touching sight in the world than the interest taken by weary, worn men of affairs in young and good-looking women, however unfortunate and lonely in life they may be. It shows that no experience of life is sufficient to quite stamp out youthful freshness from the human heart."

I shall not report the details of the other conversations as I obtained them. I give that with the Secretary of State, in order to gratify a very laudable public curiosity to know some of the phases of the workings of a great mind, and will pass directly to a most serious conversation had between Ram Chunder and myself. The others reported to me lighter subjects of talk. Perhaps, if I had started the conversation with Ram Chunder, I might have had a different experience. At the very instant it was my turn, there came to me, as distinctly and clearly as if it had been fairly shouted in my ear: "I have a message for you, of the greatest importance."

Now, I quite despair of making clear just how this sentence reached my mind. It came to me so positively that I drew myself up with all my senatorial dignity, and said, mentally: "At your service."

I cannot explain just how, for the time being, I surrendered my reason, and soon ceased even to wonder. I cannot say that I believed in the man. I may have thought that he had some peculiar power of producing illusions. Something of this was in my mind,

when he said, mentally : " I see you do not believe in me very much. You concede a certain peculiar ability, but you really question my power to do anything not explainable by known natural laws."

This came to me so clearly that, for the life of me, I could not help nodding my head affirmatively. Then it occurred to me that I was not fully exercising my will against possible illusion. I was permitting my now awakened imagination to gallop at a pace in keeping with the mad rush of the storm that was now dashing against the house with great fury. I pride myself upon my will. I set my teeth firmly, as I said to myself : " Well, my black-faced friend, try your best to humbug me. I give you permission."

" You defy my power," came to me, as direct as if from a telegraph instrument.

" Yes," was my mental reply.

Ram Chunder now turned and looked at Reynolds. The host at once arose, stepped to the door, where he called a servant to bring a glass of water and place it in front of the expert.

Then Reynolds spoke. He said : " Ram Chunder can converse, mentally, with but one at a time. To save time, I will explain to you what he is going to do. He is going to take this glass of pure water and give you two illustrations of his power before continuing his conversation with the senator. The first experiment will be visible to you all, directly under the light of the chandelier, where the glass stands. The second will be very interesting. He will, without approaching the water, or without touching, in any way, the table,

change the harmless contents of the glass into the most deadly poison."

Need I say that I was the most intensely interested member of this group? Why this parade of, what appeared to be, supernatural power before giving me my message?

But, as I thought this, the expert raised the glass to his lips and swallowed a draught of it to show its harmlessness.

Then he placed the glass at a distance from him, and, with his hands folded gracefully in his lap, he looked steadfastly at the water. It was in a plain, cut-glass goblet, devoid of ornament, heavy and clumsy in its lines. There was now a lull in the storm. Each one followed, earnestly, the gaze of the expert and concentrated his attention upon the same object. The silence was profound.

Faintly, now, there began to dawn, upon this clear water, a pink glow. Then this glow deepened, until it became the color of blood. A light shudder ran through the circle at this mysterious change, and then the solid color began to take form. Light places appeared in the water, and, in a moment more, a great red rose, full, velvety and fragrant, appeared upon its surface; perhaps the strangest part of this incident lies in the fact that there was no surprise expressed at this apparent miracle, although murmurs of admiration were heard on all sides. Now the rose faded, and, again, in another moment, the water became blood-red, paled, and once more was as before.

A light-green vapor was now seen hovering over the



"IT PASSED STRAIGHT THROUGH THE CEILING, VANISHING INTO THE NIGHT." PAGE 170.

glass. The water caught its reflection, and soon it took on a tone that suggested a poison of the most malignant character. I am not a superstitious man, by heredity or training, but I would not then have breathed the air hovering over this glass to have saved my seat in the United States Senate. In a second, almost, the vapor and color faded. The water was clear again. Was it really poison?

There was a secret signal from Ram Chunder; Reynolds went to the door, and again called to the servant. The man entered the room five minutes afterwards, bringing with him a purple dove, from a cote in the rear of the house. Dazzled by being brought, suddenly, into the light, it stared, stupidly, about, and did not flutter or struggle.

Obedying instructions, always given mentally, Reynolds stepped forward and held the dove, at arm's length, over the water, so that its head was not more than an inch above the fluid. The water flashed an angry green light, and in the instant the bird was dead. Reynolds placed it, gently, upon the table, as he stepped back, apparently stricken with fear. A blue vapor floated over the bird a moment; then, from the prostrate form there moved upward another bird, exactly like the dead one in form and color, and passed straight through the ceiling, vanishing into the hurry and roar of the storm.

CHAPTER III.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE SENATOR WITH THE
POWER OF THE ADEPT.

Ram Chunder now turned to me, and said : " Are you satisfied that you are in the presence of unknown forces ? " And, then, without waiting for my reply, he bade me, in the silent language of which he was master, to fix my gaze upon the glass of water.

From that moment my surroundings disappeared from, what I shall call, for lack of a better term, my normal vision. The room, the people, the table, everything first became dim in the mist that ascended from the glass, and then, in a moment, I was looking into what seemed, to me, to be another world. I could not, by any exercise of my will, change back to my preceding condition. My body was as if I were dead. Only the intelligence lived, and gazed out of the body as from a frame, from which it might, at any moment, be released, following, without question, the will of an all-controlling master.

I saw the past unfold before me, like the leaves of a book. Every incident of my life was repeated in a series of flashing pictures. Notwithstanding the rapidity of their lightning-like production, not a single detail was lost to me ; my super-sensitized vision recorded everything as sharply and as distinctly as if years had

been employed in presenting visions, instead of a brief fraction of a second.

I assure you it is not agreeable to sit as a spectator and see, so correctly, the incidents of one's past. No illusion was possible. There was no cloud of personal passion or prejudice to stand between me and them. For the first time in my life, I was enabled to see things exactly as they were. I had not supposed, up to that time, that I was either better or worse than the average man. But, as I sat in judgment upon myself, with the clear record before me, I could not help being deeply impressed by the intense selfishness and hopeless pettiness of it all. My loftiest ambitions looked very small and unworthy. Any evidence of self-denial, any sacrifice for the good of another, did not appear. Often some charitable act would come to the surface, but it was always the result of mere idle good-nature, and never represented any thought or sacrifice on my part.

Suddenly, the pictures ceased. A mist again swam before my eyes. A voice, as from a distance, came to me, saying: "Of what use has been your life? Who has been better for your living? In what way has the world been a gainer by your presence in it?"

I am willing to confess that such questions addressed to me, normally, under the ordinary natural conditions of life, would not have bothered me. I would have made most satisfactory replies to any such queries if they had been propounded to me in the open Senate; but here it was different.

The questions pierced to my inner consciousness, and appeared to compel, by some mighty power, the

exact truth in reply. My new vision made no reply possible. I was crushed with the sense of the utter and dire failure of my life.

Now, there came another change. The visions began again. I was invited to project my consciousness into the future. I had no will but to consent. I was borne along upon a tide I could not resist. You cannot know the hopeless horror of the thing. I felt myself a mere waif in the hands of unseen and irresistible forces. My mental pride was crushed. My physical courage was gone.

From then on I saw nothing of individual freedom. I was bound in strong fetters, and the end of my life appeared so dark and so dismal that I will not here dwell upon it, as I wish to make no appeal to any one's sympathies. I will simply speak of the after-effects of that evening. At the close of the conversation with the expert, I was told that I had forfeited my right to my own individuality through my selfish love of comfort, and that I must be prepared, at any moment, to surrender that individuality to influences which would make a better use of the opportunity afforded by my position.

I went home in rather a dazed frame of mind.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRANSFORMATION IN THE SENATE CHAMBER.

The next morning the scene of the preceding evening appeared like a dream. In fact, I could not conceive, in the bright light of open day, in the quiet serenity of my own house, how I could have been so affected by the incidents of the evening before. My mind was in a quiet state, and I turned to my morning paper, and documents requiring attention, with more than ordinary interest. I returned to my philosophical frame of mind by saying to myself that things that are not naturally explainable should be dismissed from all consideration.

I went to the Senate chamber at an early hour. There was to be a hearing before a committee, of which I was a member. I do not now recall the question that was pending; the proceedings were of a routine character, and no one there observed anything unusual about my manner. I then remember going to the Senate chamber, and there I listened, with more than ordinary interest, to the opening prayer of the chaplain. He appeared to direct his attention to me from the first. There were only two or three members in the Senate chamber, as few come in before the prayer is ended. Some moral reflections in this good man's discourse stirred, somewhere in my organization, a dull repetition

of the questions of the night before. What had I really accomplished beyond achieving personal comfort for myself?

During the morning hour, I wrote letters. I dwell upon the incidents of the morning because this was, really, the last day of my normal life. It is not often given to a man to witness the closing hours of his own existence, and to be able to write, correctly, and in his own person, the story of his departure from this life. I did not go away in any ordinary sense, and no one will be more surprised than my friends when they come to read this assertion.

At fifteen minutes past two, on the day following my visit to Reynolds' house, I rose to make a speech upon a measure which had been pending before the Senate for some time. It was a general proposition relating to the proper government of the business affairs of the various great railroad companies in their relations to the public. According to the traditions of my political career, I took, naturally, the strong side of the corporations, and in this I was thoroughly in harmony with the spirit which prevailed in the Senate of the United States. I had not, however, openly, said that the people had no rights in the matter, and that the rights of the public should not be protected as against the rights and claims of these corporations. My views concerning the subject were well known. My whole success in life had dated from early connections with corporations. I had represented them before the Legislature of my State, and in that body. Now, that I am speaking with such frankness, I may as well add that I

owed my election to the United States Senate to the powerful influences of the corporations which have, for years, controlled the political affairs of my State.

When I arose to speak, a little, blonde page darted from in front of the presiding officer's chair with a glass of water. I am a very deliberate speaker, and not at all inclined to be eloquent. I belonged to the class of modern statesmen who believe that facts cannot be stated too clearly and too simply. They discard adjectives, impassioned phrases, and studiously adopt the conversational tone in presenting arguments. I was never more deliberate than I was on this day. It was warm, and, before speaking, I raised the glass of water to my lips. As I did so, I involuntarily glanced to the private gallery, where visitors of prominence or fashionable ladies are to be found during debates. It is natural for a speaker to wish to know whether he has an audience or not. There were not over a half-dozen ladies in the gallery. There was a white spot in the farthest corner, shadowed by the heavy ceiling, which attracted my notice. In an instant I saw it was the white turban of the Hindoo expert. There were, perhaps, twenty-five or thirty senators in their seats. The debate on the bill had been led by two or three senators who had not presented very strong arguments. There was a trifle more than ordinary interest in what I was going to say, because, even now, I have left some remnant of pride concerning my former manner of discussing public questions.

I began, "Mr. President." These were the last words of any public address ever made by me. There was a

jar in my body, as if from some shock to its internal mechanism, and then I was conscious of passing directly out of my body, and had the extraordinarily odd sensation of seeing this self-same body standing there, full of life, occupied by some one else. The experience is not a common one. I need not add that it was anything but a pleasing one. Here I was, changed, in the twinkling of an eye, from a positive entity to an absolute nonentity. My first impression was one of outrage. I turned and shouted at the expert. I roared at him, shrieking with rage; but, apparently, no sound of my voice stirred the quiet tranquility of the Senate. No one had observed the transformation.

After the first moment of shock, succeeded an angry curiosity to know the result. I seated myself, deliberately, in a vacant chair, near my old place, and watched my material body go through the form of making a speech. I was strangely critical. At last, the power had been given me to see myself as others saw me. I observed, with regret, that I had been careless in my shaving that morning. My hair needed trimming, and my coat had not been properly brushed. These superficial facts made the same impression upon me that would be made by one looking into a mirror, and were the evidences that I must have been more than ordinarily disturbed during the morning. My interest was not, at first, very great. My substitute did not depart from my usual manner for a few moments, but there was an unusual undertone of earnestness in his thoughts, and every now and then I saw a flash of fire in his eyes. This was a grave infrac-



"HE WAS CONTENTING HIMSELF WITH A CLEAR AND ANALYTICAL EXAMINATION
OF THE LAW IN QUESTION." PAGE 179.

tion of senatorial etiquette, and so I watched, carefully, my successor to see whether these new features were attracting attention. He had not, as yet, expressed any view concerning the measure. He was contenting himself with a clear and analytical examination of the law in question. I must say he did this very well ; but, in a moment, he turned to the Senate, and began to express sentiments so foreign to my own beliefs that a positive sensation was created. He became strangely eloquent. His voice was musical and persuasive. This speech rapidly filled the galleries. News of anything unusual flies upon mysterious wings at Washington. Whenever the unusual happens it does not take many seconds to produce an audience. After the Senate galleries were filled, the Senate itself became crowded. Word was sent over to the House, and members came crowding in from every direction. I must confess that I was so filled up with pride at the sight of this vast audience gathering to listen to what, in all appearances, was the amiable gentleman who had so many years occupied my seat in the Senate, that I did not pay much attention to the thread of his discourse. But *the* senator—let me call him, because to me he was the senator of all—was now speaking with a fire and a fury which absolutely thrilled his audience, so that they swayed up and down the gamut of passion and feeling, like waves on a sea before a mighty wind.

At first, there was a look of surprise on the faces of the senators ; then there was a shock at this breaking away from traditions, and this daring to be eloquent, at this arrogant presumption of attempting to stir up

the emotions of men hardened to every trick and appeal of ordinary eloquence or phrase-making. Then this feeling was succeeded by one of indignation. I began, myself, to listen, and if it can be said that the hair of a nonentity can rise, then my hair rose with horror. The senator who had the floor was making a picturesque, powerful appeal for the consideration of the rights of the people. Think of that, and in the Senate chamber! It was clear that every one about was under the impression that I had either gone mad or that I had suddenly developed an abnormal ambition to become a popular candidate for President of the United States. He used such plain language, and he had such a way of driving home old-fashioned truths, that no one thought of interrupting him. He said that the senators of the United States were simply servants of the people, and that it was time that they were reminded of that fact. The corporations of the country were loaded with gifts from the people. Was the generosity and was the care always to be given to these great vested interests? Was there ever to be legislation in the interests of humanity, in the interests of the sin and suffering that filled the world? Was this measure, which was, at best, but a feeble step in the direction of restoring the rights of the people to their own, to be choked and throttled by arguments, stale and shop-worn, from the bureaus of the great corporations which furnished them?

I do not propose to make a report of this speech. It is enough to say that it overturned every tradition

of the Senate ; defied every belief before expressed by me ; contradicted every one of my previous utterances upon public questions ; and, in the end, closed with a peroration picturing the duties and aspirations of a man properly educated to honestly serve the public. These words were uttered with such deep conviction that a corresponding wave of emotion thrilled through and through the great audience.

CHAPTER V.

THE WORK OF A SUBSTITUTE IN THE BODY OF
SENATOR STANLEY.

From this day, my substitute was very active in all debates, and was easily the foremost figure in the discussions of the day. Naturally, he was the constant subject of attack. My old friends in the Senate looked at him first with wonder, then distrust, and then dislike. It was inconceivable to them that he was acting from disinterested motives; some held that he had gone out of his mind. I was in constant communication with him, although powerless to control him in any way. It was a long time before he would promise that I should occupy my old place again; and, then, only upon the condition that I would carry out the work he had begun. For months, I was in a dull state of rage at my powerlessness. He was using my brain, my place, my former opportunity, to advocate theories of an absolutely impossible kind.

One day, when the appropriation bill for the support of the agricultural department was pending before the Senate, he arose, and said that he saw no objection to appropriating hundreds of thousands of dollars for the study of agricultural subjects, for the payment of distinguished scientists to devote their time to a skillful warfare against the noxious enemies of valuable

vegetable growths, nor for the experimenting with new plants for the extension of the food-products of the farm. Wise were the provisions for the stamping out of the diseases of cattle and hogs. Cheerfully should be paid all sums necessary for the extension of our food supplies. When the Fish Commission comes to the Senate and asks for large sums of money for deep-sea studies, for the propagation of food-fishes in barren waters, what sensible man thinks of objecting? Government aid to such subjects is wise, because more secure than could be the support of private enterprise.

Thus far, in his discourse, my senator attracted no particular attention. The advocacy of large appropriations for almost any purpose of a routine character for which there are well-known precedents, is always received in the Senate with the sleepy approval of the lullaby song in the nursery. Suddenly, my representative changed his note of polite comment, and said, in sharp, trenchant tones, that waked every one: "If you are ready to spend the money of the people so freely in the directions already indicated, why would you not be willing to appropriate sums infinitely larger for the study of the means to prevent the ills and diseases of mankind? By ills, I mean everything relating to one's social condition. You have, now, bureaus, under the direction of wise and sagacious experts, dexterous in the arts of stamping out the misfortunes and diseases of the vegetable and lower animal world. Why not, now, ascend the plane and take up the subject of man?"

I shall not follow the speaker too closely. His plan

for the establishment of Government training-schools in every crowded district, for the care of children, for the enforced development of their physical condition, and for their being fed by the Government when necessary, he said, did not savor of charity, which might encourage pauperism. It was the duty of the Government to see that every child in the country should have an opportunity to acquire the full maximum of robust manhood that nature intended for him, with an education and a training which would make him self-supporting as an adult. "The hopelessly depraved, if there are any such," said he, "should be isolated and placed within the lines of a social quarantine to be crossed only when morally healed. You will never stamp out poverty and crime in the country without beginning with the children. There are thousands of children now growing up in the crowded cities who are steeped in a daily atmosphere of vice and sodden misery that would degrade, pollute and destroy any character, however nobly gifted, at the start, by nature. We have progressed to the point where we quarantine known contagious diseases. Years ago, when the 'black death' appeared, or when the Asiatic 'pest' swept over the earth, thousands upon thousands died without a struggle. Now, the public good, which is the sole excuse for all laws, justifies the seizure of property, the arrest of individuals, and even lives are ruthlessly taken in the maintenance of a quarantine. If all this can be done to keep out a fever, what might not be ventured in the interests of our moral and physical welfare, continually threatened from all directions?"

Must I go on? My senator could not be restrained. He continued: "We have, every year, questions involving the right of quarantine. The powers of the Government have been enormously increased, so that the Government of the great American Republic is as autocratic as that of Russia, in the exercise of its power to protect the national health. Now, I do not propose any sweeping change to be made at once, but I would like to have incorporated in this measure an amendment for the establishment of a commission of nine members, to be appointed by the President, to take up the question of how best to protect the weaker members of society. You have, among the people, a deep-seated discontent that grows year by year. The reason for this is that we permit the production under such unfavorable conditions of a continually increasing population, which is always a menace and a detriment to a country through its lack of early moral, intellectual, and, most important of all, physical training. The huge sums paid cheerfully for the pensions of the war, the burden of which is felt by but few, would give more than enough to take out of their present vile and unhappy surroundings the children of all the unfortunate in the country, and train them up into clean and self-supporting independence. It will not do to say that the children of even vicious and degraded parents have not, within them, the bud of promise. Look at the splendid work of the New York Reform School, and the high average result actually accomplished there in the building up of character, although its inmates are never admitted to the school until they have,

actually, broken some one of the criminal laws of the State."

Need I add how severely was my senator snubbed for his views? His amendment did not receive a single vote besides his own. Few condescended to answer any of his arguments. From this day on, he was more of a marked man than before. The letters received by him were now wholly different from those that used to come to me. There were no more communications from the heads of great corporations or leading bankers, but, instead, a perfect deluge of letters from the under-world of society. My senator rarely slept, so furious was his desire to help others. My comfortable fortune melted to the right and the left under his benevolent touch. The newspapers hinted that some of my relatives were talking of having a conservator appointed for the protection of my estate; but these reports were untrue. My boys were sturdy and self-supporting, very loyal to their father. If it pleased me, they said, to blow in my money on games of benevolence, it was my affair, not theirs.

Where was I all this time, the individual I, who records this story? I was chained, as a shadow, to my senatorial body. I could not escape from it. I followed it where it went, and learned, after a time, to know something of this new world of duty assumed by my representative, who, often, talked the subject over with me when we were at home, in my library. He said, one evening: "If I could convince you of the correctness of my views, I would give you back your body and let you take up my tasks while I go on else-

where. You need to learn a new definition of honesty. How could you, in the past, call yourself a public man when you were never actuated by anything but motives of private interest? Now, honestly, have you ever felt a single heart-throb of indignation over the unjust suffering there is in this world?"

"No."

"Have you ever shed a tear of pity over the wrongs of the unhappy?"


"No."

"Then by what right have you dared to assume the post of the guardian of the people, if you have not thought, constantly, of the poorest and the unhappiest? The wisdom of the legislative ages has been concentrated upon the building up of guards about the properties and rights of the well-to-do. It is time for an extension of the field of legislative action."

"But what can the Government do? It can't make poor people rich; it can't give them money, you know——"

"If you follow, so-called, natural laws in the struggle with small-pox or the cholera, where would you be? The trouble with even the friends of the people has been in the remedies sought to be employed by them. They have wanted to move too rapidly, and to right, by law and purse, immediate wrongs. This, of course, cannot be done in a moment. We can, by Government aid, help the cause of physical training, and so educate the up-growing that it will not be possible for an ill-formed or an ill-trained child, saving always accidents, to escape such a system of wise beneficence."

I cannot say that the senator convinced me that his views represented anything practical. I believed that if I were permitted to once more gain back my body before all my fortune was gone, that I should sink back into my comfort-living habits. You cannot teach old dogs new tricks.



CHAPTER VI.

SENATOR STANLEY RECOVERS HIS BODY, BUT UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS.

One day he gave me permission to gain back my body. He was summoned to a high conference in India. "Mind you," said he, "if you fail in your duty as an honest man in serving the public, I will come back at once and punish you."

"How?" I asked, for I was curious to know what to expect, as I had no hope of meeting his anticipations. I was conscious of being several centuries behind him in development. He looked at me carefully. I was then seated opposite him at the library-table in my home. "I think," said he, "I will give you an object lesson before I go." He called my carriage, and gave my coachman an order to drive to the National Zoological Gardens.

I may add here that I hate menageries. The smell of wild animals in confinement makes my gorge rise. So you can imagine the pleasure for me in being dragged at the heels of my tormentor, until we reached a cage, in which a large, disgusting monkey, of the mandrill type, was confined. Attached to the monkey's cage was a huge phonograph. Outside the cage, and near the phonograph, was a small, red-bearded man, dancing about, uttering the discordant notes of an

idiot, while frantically attempting to attract the attention of the mandrill.

Suddenly, the occupant of the cage came out of its dull, apathetic mood, advanced to the bars, and stretched out a huge, long-fingered paw, as he began to utter howls almost frantic in their misery and wailing. The little man outside with the phonograph now danced with delight. "Excellent," he said. He then began to try and repeat the peculiar howls of the mandrill.

"This man," said my companion, "is engaged in the fascinating task of collecting and registering, with the aid of the phonograph, the cries of the monkey species. He thinks he has classified these cries, and imagines that he has evolved from them a semblance of language. But I did not bring you here to observe him. I want you to take a good look at the mandrill standing at the bars. Do you notice anything peculiar about him?"

"Nothing, except the fact that he has a blue nose, red stripes around his beastly face, and that the hair is well worn off from his haunches."

"Do you notice anything peculiar about the expression of his eyes?"

The mandrill now ceased his shrieking, as if he understood the silent question. He appeared, also, to have the gift of seeing me, as well as hearing the conversation which passed. I answered: "Nothing, except an expression of low cunning and extreme selfishness."

My companion laughed, as the mandrill flew about in a perfect fury of anger, shaking the bars of his cage, and uttering cries of such deep and piercing rage that they nearly cracked the phonograph cylinder.

"Now," continued my friend, "that mandrill before you is, at present, occupied by the spirit of your old friend, Senator Babbington."

At this the mandrill bowed his head affirmatively, as I turned toward him.

"He is a disembodied spirit, in temporary confinement at the Zoo; and, of course, sees you, and can hear you. He was one of the richest senators. His fortune was colossal. He never used one penny of it, except for his own personal advancement. With millions in his grasp, he only thought of heaping together money, which neither he nor many generations of descendants could hope to use. He never had a kind or a charitable impulse. He ruthlessly ruined every friend who had ever trusted him. Towards the last of his wretched life, he paid a small insurance upon his future happiness by giving money to the church of which he was a nominal member. At present he is serving a preliminary term in the body of the mandrill to subdue his pride. He is soon to be the spirit which will enter into a child to be born of the poorest and most wretched and starving peasants in East Galicia. He will have to know centuries of poverty and suffering before he will be heard of again above the surface. But it was not to speak of him that I brought you here. It was to show you your future home for the remaining term of your natural life, after I leave you, if you ever swerve from your duty after I give you back your old body."

I shuddered at the horrible thought, and Babbington howled with malicious delight at my perplexity. It

was evident he did not believe he would be much longer confined in the mandrill's form. His sturdy, selfish spirit was eager for the contest with the forces of the world again, even if he should have to begin with a handicap of poverty and miserable conditions.

The next day, with the same jar and sense of electric shock with which I left my body, I resumed my old form. I was once more at home. But how changed was the situation. I was now the center of entirely new interests. My mail was one mass of begging appeals; my money was now going so rapidly that I doubted if my fortune would last out my days. Even my cook was ruined, as his abilities had been so long ignored that he had become indifferent. I did not dare to change one feature of my rearranged life. At a moment's hesitation, at any call of duty made upon me, I instantly saw a vision of the blue-nosed mandrill, and scented Babbington's eager impatience to have me slip, so that he could be moving on to new scenes.

Thank God, I did not slip, however, for a long time. Perhaps, if it had not been for the incident I am now about to relate, I might have escaped, for a much longer time, my ultimate fate. In the Senate I was severely let alone. In my State, all the corporations were arrayed against my re-election, as my term was now near an end. The people, outside of the politicians, were for me with a madness of enthusiasm hard for me to understand.

There was, during this closing winter of my life, a number of senatorial elections throughout the country.

In one State there had been an unusually bitter contest against a former friend, Senator Elihu Backus, a member of the opposition. He was re-elected, but the election was followed by a huge scandal. The use of money had been so open and flagrant in the election that the disappointed contestants were able to force an official investigation at Washington. The usual conflicting mass of testimony was taken; but such a clear case was finally established against Backus, that my party associates, who then had a majority of one in the Senate, decided, in secret caucus, for purely political advantage, to vote to expel the offending Senator. While the motives of my party associates were partisan, there was no question about the justness of the sentence, and the correctness of the action agreed upon in the secret caucus.

So it was clear what my vote must be. It was not often my new sense of duty placed me in accord with my party associates. My position was so clear that no one took the trouble to ask me about it.

The night before the day when the subject was to be finally passed upon, the agents of millionaire Backus fairly stormed the houses of senators whom they thought might be influenced. Pleas, piteous and sordid, struggled for a hearing. Backus was old; the disgrace would kill him. His only child, a beautiful, young and motherless woman, would be socially ostracized, in spite of her father's millions, if he should be expelled. Huge sums were brandished as temptations. But it was now a party matter, and our side was hopelessly committed. A change of vote was not possible,

without incurring greater disgrace than that which threatened the guilty senator.

No one called upon me until nine o'clock that evening. I sat alone in my library. I could no longer take my ease. I was at work upon reports, answering letters of appeal, writing checks for this and that, bitterly toiling at my hateful task of doing good to people I did not know, and for whom I cared nothing.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SENATOR CONSENTS TO SACRIFICE HIS FUTURE
TO DO AN UNSELFISH ACT.

At nine o'clock, a young, manly-looking man, about twenty-five years of age, stained with travel and careless of attire, entered the room, unannounced. I took a second look at him before I recognized my favorite son, if it can be said that I had a favorite. I loved both my boys, God bless them! but the younger always seemed nearer to my heart. He had a trick of the eyes and a slight tossing of the head, when in earnest, that always reminded me of his mother. He was now the assistant manager of a great western railroad, and so closely occupied with his duties that I knew his unheralded presence in Washington, and the hurry of his visit, meant something unusual.

I folded Dick in my arms and kissed him. He returned the kiss with the same loyal affection of his boyhood.

Standing on the rug, in front of the open fire, with one hand clasped in mine, with the other on my shoulder, as he looked up into my face, he said:

"Father, I have a request to make of you."

"What is it?"

"I want you to vote for Senator Backus, and save him."

I was astonished ; but I kept silence, as I thought of what such a vote would mean for me. First, I would lose all my popular support at home, without gaining any support from my former friends, the corporations. Thus I must lose, first, my election ; second, my reputation for honesty, because eleventh-hour changes of opinions, where millionaire interests are at stake, are damning ; and, lastly, there was the blue-nosed mandrill to be thought of.

Alarmed at my long silence, my son burst forth into eloquent pleadings.

"Do you know," said he, "that I am engaged to be married to Jane Backus? We have been long in love with each other, as you must have known, if you had ever given the subject attention. But Mr. Backus never encouraged me ; nothing under a foreign prince could match his millions, he said, and no engagement was permitted. All this you might have known ; but I found you, during the last year, so devoted to a new life, so different from your past, that I did not like to come to you."

"But," he added, loyally, "do not think, father, I am criticising you. Only, I did not understand, and you had so much to bear, in the way of unfriendliness, that I had not the heart to tell you that Senator Backus laid the chief burden of his opposition to me upon you and your devotion of a once great fortune to chimerical ideas. 'He will leave his sons beggars,' said he, 'and my daughter shall never marry a beggar.' But all this is changed now. Three days ago, I was telegraphed for by Jane Backus. I arrived here this evening, and

Senator Backus has agreed to our engagement—upon one condition.”

“I know what that is—I am to give him my vote. Do you know what that may mean to me?”

“Father, I think I know that you will have a bad quarter of an hour; but you have so often, lately, acted outside of your party, and have established such a high reputation for unselfishness and honesty, that you will be pardoned more easily than any other man. Then, father, you know very well that Mr. Backus has done no more than the average senator has done, or would do, in a close fight. You know, father, in our last election, you sent me down with a check for five thousand dollars, to be given to Mr. Somers, your agent, who telegraphed for help early in the morning. What was that check for, father?”

Decidedly, the young man was not fortunate in his arguments. It does not make us any more charitable for the sins of others to be reminded of our own. My heart hardened. Besides, I did not like old Backus very well. Let my boy, Dick, look out for some other girl. He was good-looking enough to get as good a girl as Jane Backus, and he would never need her money. Besides, my determination was hastened slightly by a seeming shadow in the mirror. I fancied I saw the blue nose of my friend, Babbington, and caught the eager glint of his eyes, gleaming with the hope of an escape.

My son saw my refusal in my face, but he did not give up. He left the room, without waiting for my final word, but returned quickly with Jane Backus, who

had been waiting in the room below. They stood before me. They attempted no theatrical pleading. They stood there with hands locked, looking at me in their pride and youthful passions, asking, like children, to have their own way, not dreaming or caring for the cost of the answer, so long as it was "yes."

Heavens, what a picture! He, tall, manly, dark, olive-tinted, his black, crisp mustache shading his mouth, his lips parting in eager anticipation; she, a foil to his darkness—a clear, wholesome blonde, showing, in every line of her figure, manner and dress, the result of careful training, of money lavishly spent by cunning and skillful hands to produce that rare product of modern society, a lady. Both stood as if a sentence of life or death was about to be passed. The love that radiated from the splendid, speaking eyes of Jane Backus for my gallant boy touched me more than her few low-voiced words for her father.

How do unworthy fathers come to have such children? Can I refuse my boy even temporary happiness? Can I shatter his loyal affection by refusing to grant his wish? Surely, a parent's love for a child is something more than an extension of individual egoism. As the boy looked at my hardened and silent face, his head gave that toss of confidence and trust which his mother used to give when she wished to express unusual faith in me. It was clear that I was, of my own free will, to do something unselfish at last. As I resolved to sacrifice my life in response to the frank confidence of my boy, Dick, there came straight to me a message from my absent friend in India:



"IF YOUR HAPPINESS DEPENDS ON ME, COUNT ON IT, WITHOUT FAIL." Page 200.

“Remember! If you fail in your public duty, you may know what to expect!”

Expect! I could even now hear the shriek of the mandrill.

“Dick, my boy,” I exclaimed, with all the impetuosity of my early days, “if your happiness depends on me, count on it, without fail. I consent to what you have asked me.”

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE FINAL FATE OF THE SENATOR.

I have been told by philosophers that every one has, at some period in his life, one whole moment of perfect happiness, to compensate him for the general misery of existence. Well, when I saw those two young people fairly mad with happiness, I had my moment. Never mind the price. I would not go back upon my decision, if I could. My only fear, at first, was that I would not be allowed to play my part to the end, and that my high-minded substitute might come back, and make me false to my promise. But, when I had made the decision, another message came :

“No; you shall not be disturbed. I showed you the way of duty in your relations to the public. After that, with your eyes open, if you choose to let private interest again influence you—and love of a son may become as improper an influence as any other private interest—then upon you must rest the consequence.”

All right. I accept. I've closed the doors of the library, and shall spend the night in writing. I know I shall be permitted to finish my programme. I know that, after the vote of to-morrow, to the world I shall be dead.

I hasten to complete this narrative, so that there will be left some reasonable explanation of the closing

year of my life : that, while I played the part of the philanthropist, I despised those whom I was forced to benefit, and, to the last, I maintained, in spite of my attitude in the Senate, my sturdy contempt for the public or its wishes.

Those who may have an interest in my unfortunate career will avoid my grave, but will rather come to shed the pious tear of regret at cage No. 5, in the section assigned the monkeys at the Zoo. You will recognize me by my blue nose, my red-striped face, and the general worn-out appearance of my hairy garments.

* * * * *

The above narrative was found among the private papers of the late Senator Stanley. Two newspaper dispatches, sent out to the Associated Press upon the day of his death, are of interest in connection with this story.

First :

“WASHINGTON, January —. The famous Senator Stanley died suddenly this evening. He was quite alone at the time of his death. He had taken a part in the Senate debates, and had made a great sensation by voting with the opposition against the expulsion of Senator Backus. His vote, alone, saved the latter. Senator Stanley was made the subject of great recrimination, and was cut dead by every one of his associates. His sudden death, which took place in his library, at home, was attributed to heart failure. The scenes of the day, undoubtedly, hastened his end.”

Here followed nearly a page of the great man's career, which it is not necessary to give.

The second dispatch to the Associated Press, in another part of the paper, was as follows :

“WASHINGTON, January —. Murphy, the mandrill kept in cage No. 5 at the National Zoo, died suddenly this evening. It is feared that the mandrill has been driven to suicide, as the monkey was found with his skull crushed, evidently from a self-inflicted blow.”

So, perhaps, the Senator, in spite of his forebodings, was forgiven. In spite of his disobedience, he was spared the torture of Murphy, the mandrill. It is to be hoped that he was, in the end, forgiven for all his other failures.

THE END

Napoleon Wolff

AND

His Newspaper of the Future

By T. C. CRAWFORD

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CHAPTER I.

In 1876, Washington was the center of great political excitement. The winter of that year, 1876-77, was a very stormy one. The disputed electoral count, and its attendant scenes, made up a picture of passionate partisan disturbance, unsurpassed by any period following the war of the late rebellion. If the sturdy common sense of the American people had not predominated, the government would have been overthrown, and this country Mexicanized. Washington, at that time, was thronged with the individual captains of special crusades. No city in the world is so noted for its peculiar characters. Cranks of all classes seek the capitol as the best theatre for the production of their peculiar roles. I know of no odder character who was prominent in that period than Napoleon Wolff.

He came to Washington early in the days of the excitement, and used to appear in the offices of the Washington correspondents with great regularity and persistence. His peculiar appearance might have made him the object of ridicule, had not the grim ferocity and energy of character made those who came in contact with him hesitate before presuming to trifle with a man who took himself so seriously. It was the

claim of Napoleon Wolff that he was a reformer very much in advance of his time. The world was all wrong, from beginning to end ; every form of government was a rotten nuisance, which should be abolished. According to Mr. Wolff, there were very few honest people in the world. I think I gathered from him, at the period of his daily calls in my office of newspaper correspondence, that there was, at that time, but one honest man in Washington, and he allowed it to be more than suspected that the name of that man was Wolff. The ostensible object of his first visit was for the purpose of offering articles for publication. These articles were fearful denunciations of the dishonesty of officials, with suggestions that the Government should be pulled down and renovated under the direction and leadership of the writer. He had seized upon this troublesome time as the proper one for the presentation of his views to the American public. He cared little for the merits of the dispute then existing between the Democrats and the Republicans. He said there had been so much villainy perpetrated on both sides during that election, that it was beneath the consideration of an honest man to attempt to pass upon the question of which set of knaves was entitled to office. If Mr. Wolff had possessed the slightest trace of humor, his conversation would soon have made him a nuisance, but the solemnity and savage energy of the man, combined with a certain intellectual ferocity, conspired to make him an interesting character study. He had much more than ordinary ability. His articles were well written, in spite of their peppery character, and

very often what he said had much truth upon its side ; yet his deductions were so sweeping, and his judgments so relentless, that I knew of no publication of that time that would have ventured to print the mildest of the concoctions of Napoleon Wolff.

His personal appearance was as peculiar as his mental make-up. He was spare, and of medium height. He had the tireless energy people of unbalanced judgment nearly always possess. His face was smooth-shaven, and very sharp in its lines. His nose was very long and straight ; his mouth was a huge slit, set in the firmest of straight lines. His eyes were very dark, gleaming under pronounced eyebrows, and encircled by black rings. The top of his head was as smooth and as polished as an ivory ball, with not the semblance or trace of hair upon its milk-white, gleaming surface, until the extreme base at the back of the neck was reached. Here, attached to the bump, which the phrenologists love to call the bump of amativeness, hung two tiny reddish-brown curls, almost infantile in their silkiness and dainty form. Who curled those two tiny remnants of hair under the base of this gleaming dome of thought, often puzzled the people who came in contact with Mr. Wolff ; for it cannot be said that he had any friends, and he despised mere acquaintances. He never spoke to any man unless he had something to say to him, and never wasted his time in bows or idle salutations. These curls were the only sign of grace or softness about this angular man. He had a voice sonorous, deep and harsh. There was not a soft note in it. I do not think

he could have whispered had he tried. He was in such a constant state of fury over some new wrong that he had discovered, that he was the terror of every one with whom he came in contact. He was passionately fond of attending public meetings where social questions were up for discussion. It was his proud pleasure to arise, and tear to tatters any argument advanced by any individual upon any subject which happened to be before the meeting. He was never so contented and cheerful as after being knocked over, dragged out, and kicked down several flights of stairs from some public meeting which he had nearly broken up by his violent interruptions. It was then that his nostrils were inflated with pride, as he said: "They fear me. If such a man as I were allowed continued free speech, the pillars of modern society would crumble."

He had reduced life to very simple lines. He said that the majority of men wasted their entire time and substance in the mad chase for something to eat. "If eating could be abolished in the world," said he, "then men would have time for intellectual improvement and there would be some chance for the world to rise." Yet he pretended to have no knowledge of science and never sought to immortalize himself by any suggestion beyond the fact that we all ate too much, and that the only hope for the future civilization of man lay along the lines of simple living.

It must be acknowledged that Mr. Wolff had very much simplified the conditions of his own existence. He rented a quiet room in a stable of a dairy in the suburbs of the town. Every morning and every night

he helped milk the cows. For this he received his compensation—the rent of the room and a certain share of the milk. In his room he had a little cook stove, and there he used to brew and prepare various articles with milk and oatmeal. The dairy had a hennery attached, and for occasional work in this direction Mr. Wolff received an egg to vary the items of his daily bill of fare. At the time he at first visited me, he claimed that he had reduced his expenses to the modest sum of one dollar a month. After he had made this remarkable statement, he added with perfectly savage ferocity: “Yet, in spite of all my care, my energy and my intellectual ability in this vile society as constituted to-day, I have as much difficulty in raising that one dollar a month as the Secretary of the Treasury had during the war in finding funds for the enormous outlays of that time. Don’t smile,” he added; “I am sure I use up more gray matter on that subject than ever did Secretary Chase.”

It was upon this occasion that I won his heart by buying of him two articles moulded with the rigidity of cast-iron, and sweeping and fierce in their phraseology. I paid this philosopher three dollars for them. It was the first large money he had seen for a long time. “Now,” said he, “I am a capitalist and for three months I am no man’s man.” Why I bought those articles, I do not know to this day, as Mr. Wolff never made any appeal to one’s sympathies, and he would have denounced me as a vile hypocrite had I made this purchase through any motives of kindness towards a fellow man. Yet, that financial transaction

established a certain relation between us. While, apparently, one of the most perfect materialists living, chopping logic with a closeness and vigor of a man correctly educated, with no mercy for any church, or any form of religion, he was yet one of the most superstitious persons I ever saw. His credulity was confined entirely to subjects which generally provoked incredulity, while his incredulity followed the same reverse process.

When not engaged in building up some plan for reforming society, and in changing over the governments of the earth, he occupied himself with the dark mysteries of astrology. He believed that there was no science in the world that could compare with that of astrology. Spiritualism, with all its possibilities, had once captured him, and held him enthralled; but now that his mind had matured, astrology contained all that was necessary to satisfy the mystic element in his nature. He was always casting horoscopes of his career, and predicting for himself a future of greatness and power. He once said to me, in a very patronizing way: "If I ever do arrive at that position, I intend to make society rock and tremble before me."

I was curious at that time to learn Mr. Wolff's plan for making society rock and tremble. I asked him: "Do you intend to employ dynamite or the poisoned dagger in your attempt to weed out the corrupt leaders of modern civilization?"

"The only objection I have to you," he said, with a hoarse roar, as he turned to me and smote my desk with his mighty hand, "is your tendency to sneer at

the possibilities of a brilliant future for a man who has arrived at middle life, and who has not yet reached the sure income of twelve dollars a year. I must confess that, from your point of view, you are, perhaps, justified; but, at the same time, if you had any real sense, you would see, in me, the coming man. I am simply passing through a stage of development."

"But you have not answered my question."

"Its very form was an insult and that's the reason I did not answer it. I am too intellectual a man to ever dream of using dynamite or anything so coarsely brutal as that. I know something more powerful than dynamite."

"And what is that?"

"Oh, just a daily newspaper, that's all."

"But I should think that, after twenty years attempting to secure admission to the columns of the various newspapers of the country without any very marked success, you would select some other engine of reprisal and reform."

"No, I adhere to the daily newspaper. I suppose you will laugh when I tell you that I mean to own one."

"Well."

But before I could say anything more, he drew out a sheet of paper and showed me a horoscope in which he calculated that, being born under Mars, he—Napoleon Wolff—was naturally of a combative disposition and that he was born for conquest. The unfortunate conjunction of Mars with the sign of Capricornus, at an early period in his life, had marked him for much

suffering, but a lateral sidereal connection along the lines of Jupiter, which was to occur late in life, meant for him great wealth and great power.

I am not exactly certain that I am giving the true and correct scientific summary of this horoscope ; but the interesting point was that Mr. Wolff, in spite of his many combats and many defeats, was as confident of his having a great fortune through the magical intervention of some happy circumstance, wholly outside of his control, before his death, as if he had the money actually on deposit in the bank, subject to his check.

"The moment that fortune is in my possession," said he, "I shall found, in the cities of New York, London and Paris, a great daily newspaper which shall be the newspaper of the future. It will contain more original ideas than any ever published ; it will be more honestly managed and will have a larger staff of brilliant writers than any daily newspaper ever known before in this world."

"But, my dear Mr. Wolff, you said you were going to make your paper original."

"Yes, sir ; I did."

"But did you not know that there was not a single newspaper published to-day but claims to produce all the merits which you are so confidently setting up as the basis for the reputation of what you are pleased to call the newspaper of the future ? Is not each one more honest, more original, more brilliant than the others ?"

At this, my friend, Mr. Wolff, burst out into violent denunciation of the lying newspapers and of their dis-

honesty in always siding with the most corrupt elements in politics. "Let me once arrive at my position of power," said he, "and I'll force them to mount to the high standard of excellence which I will set for them."

Here he turned towards me with great excitement as he pointed to a small black bag which he always carried with him. "Do you know," said he, "what is in that bag?"

"No, I am sure I haven't the slightest idea."

Mr. Wolff's face now fairly blazed with excitement. "If I were to open that bag," said he, "and let forth its secrets, I do not believe this Government would last twenty-four hours. What do you say to that?"

"Well, if the consequences surely will be as disastrous as that, I advise you to keep them as 'scoops' for the newspaper of the future."

To this flippancy he made no reply. He buttoned up his coat very tight; slouched his black hat fiercely over his eyes; walked out of the room without salutation, and I never saw him again until a little over a quarter of a century after, and then his newspaper project was brought before me once more under most extraordinary and peculiar circumstances.

CHAPTER II.

Three years ago, I was in Berlin. I was there as the representative of a New York banking house. The occasion of my visit was the placing of certain railroad bonds. While there, I made the acquaintance of a German officer of high standing, who had been, for a long time, on the staff of Prince Bismarck. This German officer was a nephew of the banker with whom I transacted the greater part of my business during my visit to Berlin. Count Ernst was a most agreeable companion. He had been in America, and was very much interested in our affairs. He was a scientist of profound rank, and, although still in the army and attached to the imperial household, devoted the greater part of his leisure to study.

When I came to return to London he was, by chance, my traveling companion. He was the bearer of dispatches from the foreign office in Berlin to the German Ambassador in London. We occupied the same compartment in the railway train, and, as I had always found him very congenial, we remained together during the journey.

Count Ernst was a close observer, and, if I may use the word, a most excellent reporter. He had the real love for news which constitutes a high-class gossip.

He knew everything that was going on in the court circles. His experiences were told in very concise language, while his observations upon men and things were very shrewd and expressed in careful language, which had running through it a thread of satire, suggestive to a stranger of malice. No capital of the world has so much gossip as Berlin, and in no city is there so much criticism of people in high place. This criticism, however, is only permitted by those who occupy the inner circle. Let a stranger or an outsider attempt to criticise those in power in the presence of even the most malicious of the court gossipers, and he will only find an indignant objection where he might have expected approval.

Naturally, the conversation in time drifted to the severed relations of Prince Bismarck with William II. This officer, who had been very closely attached to Prince Bismarck, was, however, too much of a courtier not to know how to save himself at the time of the Prince's downfall. Of all the interesting stories told by him concerning his experiences with the Prince, I recall, now, nothing more curious than one which excited, to the highest degree, his scientific curiosity.

He premised his story by saying: "I do not expect you to believe this story, and I shall not be at all offended if you disbelieve it. I can only say this: that Prince Bismarck himself will vouch for the correctness of the incident as I shall relate it to you, and that three other officers of the Prince's staff were present and were eye-witnesses of the incident in question."

The story, as the officer told it, was this: "One year before Prince Bismarck's retirement he was in his ministerial bureau, surrounded by his staff officers, receiving visitors. It was not a public reception, but his hour for receiving those who were properly presented to him or who had business of sufficient importance to warrant their coming to him without too much formality. In other words, it was his hour of general audience.

"Towards the close of the hour the uniformed messenger stationed in the ante-room came in and saluted, and said that a stranger desired to be admitted.

"‘What is his name?’ brusquely demanded the Prince, ‘and what is his business?’

"The messenger replied that the stranger had declined to give his name, because it was wholly unknown to the Prince and could, therefore, furnish him no information. He had declined to state what was his business to any one except Prince Bismarck himself. He had added that the affair which he wished to call to the attention of the Prince was one of the greatest importance and of the greatest possible interest to the German Government. He came alone and unintroduced because he had no friends.

"One of the officers suggested that the man be seen by some one of their number before admitting him. Berlin is full of Socialists, and a mysterious stranger seeking audience of a high personage is naturally to be regarded with distrust.

"The Prince said, with a smile, that he thought that he could risk the admission of one stranger into a

room filled with officers, and so rejected lightly the suggestion of precaution.

"The visitor was now shown in. He seemed to be a man of the humble class, although his face bore evidence of education and refinement. His pale, sallow face was set off by long, dark hair, while a mustache and short beard concealed the lower part of a very pale, resolute-lined face. His dark eyes flashed with the somber light of an enthusiast. His manner, however, was very deliberate and free from all excitement. He bowed very profoundly when the Prince said :

" 'Well, sir, what is it you want ?' "

"The visitor brought his heels together with the regulation military click, and saluted stiffly as he said :

" 'Herr Prince, I have a secret which I wish to sell to the German Government.' "

" 'Oh, oh ! a secret ? And what, pray, may be its nature ?' "

" 'Sir,' said the man, ' I am an inventor.' "

"At the sound of this word the Prince frowned, as he said with great impatience :

" 'Oh, yes, yes. You have some gun or some new war machine, or some new kind of powder or explosive. I never bother myself with those things. You should go to the War Office, and if you have anything of value, they will tell you there all about it. Good morning.' "

"But the inventor stood his ground and did not accept his dismissal. He again saluted, as he said :

" 'Herr Prince, just one word. My discovery does

not belong to the class you have just mentioned. You, perhaps, are the only one in Germany who could truly and properly appreciate the importance of this discovery of mine, which will revolutionize the whole world, and instantly change the systems of power now recognized by science as practically final in the range of their accomplishments.'

"Something in the man's earnestness and simplicity caught the Prince's attention. He had a very keen flair for a new sensation, and nothing attracted him more than the possibility of something new."

"'Well, my good man,' said he, 'what is your wonderful secret?'

"'Sir Prince,' said he, 'it can be told in a very few words. I have discovered the law which will enable any one to overcome the attraction of the law of gravitation.'

"The Prince burst out into a roar of contemptuous laughter.

"'And so that is your discovery,' said he.

"Before he could add another word, the man, fired by the attitude of contempt, said with fiery earnestness :

"'I came to you as a patriotic German to offer this discovery to my own government. Through the knowledge of this secret, sir, you can instantly construct machines of war which will navigate the air and dominate the other nations of the earth as you will.'

"The Prince continued to laugh as if he regarded him as an amiable lunatic, and then turned away impatiently as if life were too short for very much amusement of this kind, but his indifference and impatience

were changed in a second by the action of his visitor.

“The latter ran to an enormous model of a steel Krupp gun, which rested upon strong iron supports at one side of the room. This model weighed nearly a ton. His visitor said, as he reached the gun :

“ ‘ I will demonstrate to you, Sir Prince, with or without your permission, the truth of the declaration I have made to you. This discovery is so simple in its character that, at once, when it becomes known, you will wonder that it had not become the common property of all, long and long ago. It was on account of this simplicity that I made my demand for compensation in advance of its disclosure. But I will here give you the proof. If I cannot lift this cannon with my little finger, then everything I have said is a lie, and all that I have claimed is worse than a delusion.’

“The extraordinary attitude of the man and the character of his claims chained, instantly, the attention of all. He turned his back to his audience, made some sort of an adjustment under the gun, and, to the consternation and surprise of everybody, he was seen to lift the great mass of steel as if it were a feather. He held it aloft, balanced for a moment on the middle finger of his right hand, as he exclaimed :

“ ‘ Behold the proof ! ’ and in another second he had restored the gun to its position.

“What happened after this occurred in a briefer period than the time it requires to describe it. The man now turned to the Prince and said :

“ ‘ You have rejected me with your eyes closed. You have insulted me by doubting my words, without per-

mitting me to first give you a proof. Now, I intend to leave this country and go to America, where I know I will be better received.'

"With this, he darted out of the room. The Prince was so overwhelmed by the demonstration that, before he could regain his self-command to give an order for the arrest of the man, to hold him for examination, the stranger visitor had left the building.

"The entire resources of the Berlin police were directed to find traces of him. His name was discovered, but little more than that. He had lived for a long time alone in the suburbs of Berlin, in a little park, isolated from neighbors. His name was Moritz Schlager.

"He was traced to Bremen, where he took passage upon the ill-fated ship 'Wien,' which went down in mid-ocean, leaving behind no trace and no survivors."

"But," I asked, "do you mean to tell me that you could find no better ending for your story, Herr Count, than to drown such an inventor as that? Such a discovery, made by a man intelligent enough to reach the result named by you would surely be guarded better than that. He would not leave all to be staked upon the chance of a sea voyage."

"There is a rumor in Berlin," said my friend, "that Herr Schlager did leave a sealed package in the hands of a distant relative, with instructions to have it forwarded, within five years after his death, should any accident befall him, to the head of the American Government."

CHAPTER III.

Last spring I was at Chubbs' Hotel in London. I had been in London for nearly a year. I had given myself a vacation, and had, during this vacation-time, occupied myself with the study of processes for reproducing illustrations for periodical work.

One day, in the office of the *Illustrated News*, its editor, who was a personal friend, handed me over a series of illustrations from Australia, with a character study of a most remarkable man who had made a great discovery of diamonds. As this story has since been reproduced in all the American newspapers, it is not necessary to more than recapitulate, briefly, its main points. The editor, in handing me the story, said :

"Perhaps some of your financial friends in the city will be interested in the extraordinary information contained in this article."

This publication was held back for some time in the office of the *Illustrated News*, and it is only quite recently that its main features have appeared in the American journals. The article related to the most extraordinary discovery of diamonds ever made in the history of diamond hunting. A certain prospector, of the name of McGregor, an old man over seventy years of age, had taken up a lot of vacated diamond claims,

and by persistence and energy, had dug out enough to purchase a vast tract covering nearly all of the best portions of this, then comparatively valueless, diamond field. This old man was of a rude and vigorous physical type, who had a thorough knowledge of diamond digging. He had a theory that there was a large diamond reef to be found by tunneling along certain lines of the fields. He worked alone nearly two years in making these tunnels. His strength and extraordinary skill were shown in his capacity in doing what several men would have regarded as difficult in working together. At the end of his two years' work, he uncovered a reef of diamonds of very pure, and valuable quality. It was estimated by the most conservative judges in the diamond fields that the reef contained at least a ton of high-class diamonds. The report of this find was sent on to London and a syndicate was at once formed to buy the claims. The large diamond interests of Europe were represented in this syndicate, as it was held to be of the utmost importance to keep such a deluge of diamonds off the market and to regulate their production and sale so as not to endanger existing values. In the account handed to me by the *Illustrated News* editor, it was declared that the syndicate had offered the lucky miner the sum of two million pounds sterling, or, in round numbers, \$10,000,000, for his mine, and that it had been refused.

I was so interested in the story, with this strange turn of fortune which lavished untold gold upon a humble toiler near the end of his career, that I turned

in time to look at the slight sketch of the miner himself. It appears that he had come to Australia from America, and that, while he had a Scotch name, he had neither the accent nor the manner of a Scotchman. As I read this sketch, the editor took out of his drawer several photographs and handed them to me.

Where had I seen this face before? I was at once struck by the fact that he was a former acquaintance. In the first photograph, the owner of the Monte Cristo mine had a hat slouched over his eyes. In the second photograph, he was hatless. The gleaming, bare skull of the miner restored at once the chain of memory. The quarter of a century which had passed had not changed the lines of this grim face. This was the portrait of my former reformer friend, Napoleon Wolff. It was not possible that there were two such faces in the world. Never had I seen any one so perfectly and completely bald as Wolff, and this grim, determined old man answered to every feature of the photograph in my memory of my former Washington acquaintance. To make sure, I said :

“Have you a picture of him in profile?”

“You may be sure we have,” said the editor. “With his money and power, he will be the professional beauty of London for the remaining years of his life.”

He handed out a profile view, and there, at the base of the skull, were still the two tiny curls, as luxuriant and as carefully tended as ever, and affording the same absurd contrast of delicacy and care to the gleaming, smooth surface of this most vigorous and dogmatic old man.

There was something, after all, in his theory. At least, there had been a happy coincidence that justified, apparently, all the horoscopes he had worked out concerning the closing chapter of his life.

As I thought of Wolff and his mine of diamonds, my memory ran back to the time when he had further predicted that he would, one day, found a daily newspaper, and cause society to tremble before him. I think the thought of what such a man could do with unlimited means amused me much more than the chapter of accidents which had led his persistent hands through weary tunneling to the locked-up bank of inexhaustible treasures.

CHAPTER IV.

The story now moves up to a very recent time. It was only a few months ago that McGregor, the diamond millionaire, arrived in London. I called upon him at the Savoy Hotel. I was curious to see if this new hero was really Napoleon Wolff. I found him in a long suite of rooms filled with clerks and secretaries at work. I was shown directly into his room, where he received me alone. It was Wolff. He said to me, the moment I entered the room :

"The fates are kind to me. You are the very man of all others whom I wanted to see. Sit down and answer a few of my questions before you ask me any. First, are you free from all engagements?"

My reply to this was that I was just finishing my vacation and was about to return to New York. For the moment, I was absolutely idle and free from every business engagement.

"Good," said he. "My time is short and I want to get to business at once. I am seventy-five years old to-day, and I do not believe I have over twenty more years to live. In fact, the horoscope which I have been casting, lately, warns me I shall be cut off before I am one hundred. I am feeling as if I could live a thousand years. I have never wasted my vitality in

dissipation ; I have never been a stuffer of foods and drink, and now I have my reward—a buoyant, vigorous, splendid old age. If it were not for the cursed sign of Capricornus, which comes into conjunction with my star after I am ninety-five, I should have hopes of reaching the hundred-mark. But one can't have everything in this world. But I have plenty of time and plenty of power to turn the entire world upside down, and revolutionize this rotten modern society and establish in its place a clean civilization.”

“You still adhere to your original idea, then?” I said.

“Napoleon Wolff never changes.”

“Why have you used the name McGregor? It seems to me that that is a change.”

“I mean in ideas, sir. When I left America, I was bowed down with shame and despair. I had fairly gnawed my fingers to the quick with my impatience to throttle the evils which overspread society. If it had not been for the comforts of astrology, I should have committed suicide. An inspiration directed me to Australia. In that distant country I shook off everything of my former life, including my name. What does a name signify? One label is as good as another for a man like me. I have founded no family and have no ties. You can call me Wolff or McGregor, just as you please, and I will respond to either.”

“And are all the stories about your tremendous discovery of diamonds true?”

“The truth has not been half told. I have received,

in bonds and securities, the sum of ten millions sterling—fifty millions of dollars, and still own a half interest in the mine.”

“And now what do you propose?”

“I propose to found, at once, a great daily newspaper, whose management shall be honest and upright, and which shall be an unswerving foe to all that is wrong, and a sworn ally to everything that is right. You will see that in my prospectus, which is now being prepared in the next room.”

“Can’t you think of anything more original to put into your prospectus than that? Every newspaper claims that now.”

“I have no time for light discussions. I want you to bear that in mind in dealing with me. I am seventy-five years old and must get on. I want you with me, for the reason that you are the only man I ever met in America who had the faintest traces of appreciation of me and my work. If you like, you can be the editor of this paper, and I will pay you any salary you like. I haven’t any time to stop to bargain. If you have any suggestions to make, I shall be glad to listen to them; but when I have once made up my mind about anything, you will save me trouble and loss of time by not seeking to change me. I haven’t time now, at my period of life, to deviate for one second from a marked course. I intend to have this paper appear in every one of the capitals of the world. I shall make my first appearance in the city of New York, and branch out just as soon as I get my newspaper well going there.”

“Have you selected the name yet?”

“Yes, I have. I propose to call it the *Daily Diamond*. I think that name will attract attention. It suggests, at first, brilliancy and light. These are the first requisites of my newspaper. I propose, in the first place, to employ every reasonably honest man in journalism. I intend to make a corner in good men. It is possible that I may meet with some slight opposition at the start, because I intend to publish the truth about every one. I intend to expose every hypocrite in sight, large or small. Libel suits I sha’n’t care anything about. I have got money enough to float me by anything of that kind. In other words, I propose to stir up things. Now, in reality, I have no confidence in any one, not even in you. I have made a careful study of the New York newspapers, and they have some good features. It’s possible that I shall go beyond them, however, in some of these particular features that I admire. Now, I don’t want any one to think he can, by any service, gain with me any hold or attachment. I am utterly without human sympathies. I was born into the world as an emissary of retribution for a wicked and misguided society. It is probable that, for a long time, until I get my hand in, I shall be obliged to discharge, every day, my entire staff, from the office boy up, in order to have my ideas perfectly carried out. I will make an exception in your behalf, and even give you the benefit of a written contract, for I shall never forget your purchase of my manuscript a quarter of a century ago. It was not the money that you gave me, but it was the appreciation of my essays that made me resolve to show you, some day, how you

pierced through the hide of Napoleon Wolff and touched his grim heart."

During this interview, I had only a brief sketch of this newspaper of the future, but I was impressed with some of its original features. He surely had money enough to produce any kind of newspaper. He seemed to have certain ground notions, however, that promised well; although, if he was to follow up his theory of publishing the truth about everybody as fast as he could gather it in, he would certainly need all the revenues from his diamond mines to protect him from personal vengeance and financial loss.

I faintly suggested something of this thought to him, when he said, with an air of satisfaction: "I've arranged for all that, and in a way that you possibly will conceive to be good. Now, I don't propose to start a New York newspaper and edit it from Europe by cable. That's worn out. I don't propose to imitate any one. I propose to edit my newspaper from a balloon. Who can interview or get at me in a balloon?"

"But a balloon has to come down some time. I believe the longest record of suspension of any balloon has never reached the limit of twenty-four hours. This very society which you propose to crumble, by the exposure of its hidden vices and hypocrisies, might take a turn at pulverizing you."

"We'll come to that in a minute, and you'll see that I have overcome that difficulty. I propose to carry modern journalism to its logical conclusion and abolish any such contemptible thing as privacy in life. When

people are kept constantly bared to the cold gaze of public censors, then, and then only, will they be honest. According to my notion, we will never have a pure administration until every transaction is made in the light of open day. No act of any public official would be free from instant inspection of anybody."

He paused for a moment in his eloquence, and then I said :

"My dear Mr. Wolff, I think you have adopted altogether too mild a name for your newspaper. I should call it, at least, the *Daily Earthquake*. If you insist upon your programme, I have no doubt that society will roll and tremble before you. But I am no longer young, and I do not yearn for the excitement of editing your distinguished journal of reform. I know of no bomb-proof that could be constructed strong enough to protect me ; and I think, if it is all the same to you, I shall prefer to be a reader of your newspaper rather than its editor."

He looked at me coldly, as he said : "I always suspected you had a weak streak in you. But, as you have the technical knowledge required to publish these newspapers, and as I have more confidence in you than in any one living, I propose to waste a little of my precious time in showing you the advantages of your acceptance of my offer. In the first place, I will settle upon you \$100,000 for each dollar you paid me years ago. That will make \$300,000. Then I will give you \$25,000 a year for life ; and here, take this as a memento of my esteem for the only man who ever touched the heart of Napoleon Wolff" ; and he tossed,

lightly, across the table a diamond, about the size of the Koh-i-noor, sparkling with light and brilliance. Before I could stammer out my acceptance of so much magnificence, he continued, with great rapidity : “ I think I have used arguments which are unanswerable ; but I will add one thing more which will leave you without a leg to stand on. Your precious life will at no time be in danger during your employment.”

The sensations of shock and surprise at the fantastic liberality of Napoleon Wolff and the possibilities of this reckless man’s future, with so much wealth at his command, made me dumb. My power to ask questions was, for the moment, at an end.

But he seemed to anticipate my question, for he said : “ I am the owner of a new flying machine which is perfect. I can go up and stay in it for years if I like and go where I like. It’s large enough to carry supplies for any time that I may wish. I’ll take you with me.”

Now I knew that Wolff was mad, and I didn’t wonder that even his sturdy brain, after a long life of toil and disappointment, should give away under the rapturous strain of such unparalleled fortune.

He saw the shadow of this thought in my face, as he said :

“ I hope you are without prejudices. It’s such an awful waste of time to have to explain things to a man who is loaded up with prejudices. Last week I concluded a bargain with an inventor, who has made one of the greatest discoveries of his or of any time. This inventor has discovered the law of force that sustains

the stars in their course, and which, in action, suspends the law of gravitation."

I started to my feet. "Do you mean Moritz Schlager?"

"Yes. That's good. You've heard of him; that saves time."

"But Schlager was lost on the 'Wien.'"

"No, he wasn't. Do you believe in God Almighty?"

"I suppose so."

"Well, do you suppose God Almighty would create such an inventor as that and permit him to make such discoveries and then take him out of the world before any use had been made of them?"

Then, without waiting for any answer to this, he continued: "Schlager, insulted and rejected by the German Government, as you possibly know, if you know anything about him at all, resolved to escape from the country and evade the police. He took passage on the 'Wien,' but he did not depart on that vessel. He made his way out of Germany unobserved and came to London. He had thought of going to the United States; then—not knowing that country very well—and fearing that, owing to its isolation, it might not be in haste to control a power which it could, under no circumstances, employ against other nations, he came to London and remained in hiding. He was bitterly resolved to make no more experimental offers to any one until he was sure of his man. When I came to London, with more revenues at my disposal than any government could have for a private purpose, he came to me. He found in me that appreciation

which he could have found nowhere else. I tested the principle of his discovery and found it to be correct. I have been very prompt. Yesterday I closed a contract with him, and this morning I rented a large estate in Surrey for a private experimental station. We will have our flying machine ready in a month. We will mount into space and come down when and where we please. Before we go, we'll establish a perfect system and a chain of agents all over the world. We can drop dispatches of instructions to our various agents wherever we happen to be. We will take with us at least \$5,000,000 in coin and bills, for the payment of orders, dispatches, and what not. We will provide for a line of stations to flash back to us answering messages by the heliograph system. If everything goes well, we will never come down until a regenerated society begs us to come and offers us the presidency of the world."

Napoleon Wolff now called in Moritz Schlager and introduced him to me. He answered perfectly to the description of him given me by my friend, Count Ernst. Schlager confirmed every detail of that story, as related by Count Ernst.

Before my departure, Napoleon Wolff gave me one more beautiful thought concerning his newspaper of the future. "I propose," he said, "to eliminate, absolutely, from my newspaper the word modesty. My paper shall be the best; my editors shall have the largest brains that money can buy. All the talents, and graces, and virtues of the world shall be purchased by my money, and paraded in the columns of my

newspaper. Every man connected with my staff shall be required to have printed upon his card the detailed statement of his special excellence and qualities. For instance, if you were to live on *terra firma* as my responsible agent, I should require you to have printed on your card: 'Henry Osborn, the largest-brained and broadest-minded editor in the universe.' The editor of my religious department should be required to have a similar decoration. So on, throughout the entire range of my service. The foolish people, who think a newspaper should be conducted upon the lines of conduct that govern the life of a private gentleman, are laboring under a delusion. I prefer, however, to widen the field of our claims, by extending it from the newspapers which I shall create, to the men employed upon them. I think, in this way, we will make a much deeper impression upon society."

I, here, very feebly suggested that, if he adhered rigidly to the line of policy he contemplated, he need not worry for fear he would not produce a profound enough impression. I added that I feared there would be a great loss of life connected with the publication of his journal, and that he might find some trouble in recruiting members for the various staffs.

He made light of this.

"I may, at first, lose a few of my faithful employees," said he, "but I am prepared for that kind of thing. Money will supply me with more. If society is too troublesome in its retaliation, I shall select a few conspicuous examples, and drop a bomb or two around

them as a gentle reminder that the editor of the *Diamond* is not a man to be trifled with."

A few moments afterwards, I was abruptly dismissed by my new chief. He said that he had wasted all the time he intended to upon me. For the next two or three weeks he expected to be busy with Herr Schlager. I was to come down to Elmhurst upon the 30th of that month—two weeks later. That was the day fixed for the trial of the first flying machine, and if everything worked well, Napoleon Wolff intended to make a short voyage with the inventor, to test fully the merits of the new discovery.

CHAPTER V.

It was on the 30th of November, 1893, that I took a train out of Waterloo station to run down to Elmhurst. During the intervening time I had been busy carrying out Wolff's orders. I made one financial arrangement after another, all relating to the publication of the new paper to come out, early in the year, in the city of New York. We had cabled over for presses, and found that we could have a dozen ready about the 1st of April. A good site for a building had also been arranged for, and I was to cross by the first steamer, after the experiment at Elmhurst, to take charge of the local organization and to complete the details of organizing the vast domestic machinery and system necessary for the successful production of a modern newspaper in the great metropolis of New York. I was very contented with my work. I steadfastly refused to follow along the line of logical conclusion outlined by Mr. Wolff for his newspaper, trusting confidently, in my happy-go-lucky nature, to the trend of circumstances to mould the order of things more in accordance with reasonable lines. There is no pleasure so keen in the world as that of spending other people's money; and, as I was given perfect freedom by my employer, I, to use a good American phrase, fairly

made things hum in my preparations for this great publication. I arrived at Elmhurst late in the afternoon. The long twilight of an English fall day makes it light until nearly nine in the evening.

I found that, through the magical influence of money and the skill of Herr Schlager, a most satisfactory flying machine, strong enough to house, comfortably, at least fifty people, had been constructed. It was not a large apparatus, and had something of the appearance of a yacht, with the exception that, instead of high masts and sweeping sails, it had, at the sides, lateral platforms in the shape of wings. I descended to the cabin, which was fitted up with substantial comforts, and there I met Mr. Wolff and the inventor. Mr. Wolff said :

“It is not necessary, for the moment, for you to examine this machine to gain any technical knowledge concerning it. The engine which generates the power that opposes and renders negative the law of gravitation, is so simple, that you will be surprised, upon its examination, that a stupid world has not found out its principle long ago. The moment you concede that principle to be established, then a flying machine is as practical as any vehicle now employed for transportation on *terra firma*. All really great discoveries are simple. We have stocked this machine for three months. It is possible that I may wish to make a tour of discovery and observation before actually beginning my work in New York. I will be much obliged to you if you will cross directly by steamer and await our arrival in New York.

"But," said I, in surprise, "you do not mean that you are going to set off on so long a voyage without first making some experiments as to the power of this new force?"

"We have already made these experiments. We have been up during the last few nights, and have been able to maintain a speed, going in any direction we please, of one hundred miles an hour. What more would you want than that? You must remember my time is short. Never forget that. I have only called you down here for my final instructions. I have placed \$1,000,000 to the credit of the new newspaper in New York, and you, as my official director, will have authority to draw upon its funds. Go ahead, and take the next steamer, and await our arrival there."

"But shall I not remain here and see you depart?"

"Oh, if you like. You have more time than I. You can afford to gratify your curiosity, I suppose. When is the next fast steamer for America?"

"The 'Paris' will leave Southampton to-morrow afternoon."

"Well, if you can make that steamer, stay. We leave in exactly an hour."

The impatience of the two men to be away was great. The few men who had been employed upon the flying machine had long ago been dismissed; and as experiments of this kind are not uncommon in England, no great attention had been concentrated upon the work of these men, upon the lonely farm near Elmhurst, leased by Napoleon Wolff.

All of the work relating to the new discovery had

been done by Herr Schlager himself. At midnight I left the house, accompanied by the two men. I was the only witness of the departure of the "Monte Cristo," Mr. Wolff having given the vessel the same name as the one given to his mine. I was not permitted to enter the vessel after their arrival. It was supported lightly upon the right and left by staves. Herr Schlager entered the vessel first, climbing a little ladder placed there for the purpose. Then Napoleon Wolff mounted and the ladder was pulled up after him. Leaning over the rail of this graceful yacht-shaped vehicle, he called out to me: "My friend, the work of regenerating society is about to begin. Be faithful to the trust I have reposed in you and go ahead. Await orders in New York."

These were his last words. The vehicle rose like a bird, and sailing upon a graceful curve, mounted with the greatest rapidity, and, in a few seconds, vanished like the shadow of a dream.

I arrived in New York just before Christmas. There is still no word of Napoleon Wolff and his flying machine. There has been no message dropped. I am still confident, however, that two such great men, carrying with them the principle of such a discovery, cannot be lost. But, until I have some positive news, I do not dare to go ahead with the full preparations of the publication of the *Daily Diamond*.

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