

THE HOUSAN MAN BY RALPH STOCK

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AFTER meeting an M.A. on a boat "round up," the son of an R.A. on a bridge crew, an Hon. (strictly incognito) sporting a crimson nose and elongated boots on the boards of the Coeur d'Alene, Spokane, not to mention numerous university men in salmon canneries, coal mines and places even less salubrious, I was not at all surprised at meeting a man like Drummond in a British Columbia lumber camp.

In the whirlpool of life a man in case of from the outer, slower moving currents, where he had been accustomed to float serenely round and round on the surface, and finds himself irresistibly dragged toward the vortex. It is surprising the amount of selfish satisfaction he can derive from watching the struggles of others who had at one time enjoyed an equally exalted position, but who are now even nearer to being sucked beneath the surface than he is himself.

I am ashamed to say that I precisely what occurred to me when I first set eyes on Drummond.

To him could be applied without hesitation the much abused title of "gentleman." He spoke like one, acted like one and looked like one, even when with sweat and dirt begrimed brow he yanked refractory logs from his grooving bus wagon to the mill skidways with a cant-hook and an occasional curse.

I wanted to ask, "How did you come to be here?" And probably the same question presented itself to Drummond with respect to myself, but neither of us asked it.

We each recognized in the other a kindred denizen of another world, the same world, but both feared to offend by probing for the reason of the other's banishment.

For two months we went about our daily task, took our ice cold evening dip (for which we were regarded as quite mad by the rest of the camp) and sat dangling our legs from a trestle bridge blessedly immune from mosquitoes, owing to the electric torrent that flowed beneath it, and sucked the pipe of contentment and companionship.

"Billy," I began impressively, "I have just done my last day's work."

"Where did you get it?" he demanded at last accusingly.

Yet he was interesting. One instinctively felt that here was a man with a purpose, a man who had taken life in his two hands and wrestled with it; that there was something behind him that kept him wrestling still. What that something was proved an increasingly interesting subject of speculation to me for two months.

In appearance, Drummond was anything but impressive. Long, gaunt, with thin legs and gigantic feet, when walking his entire body seemed to move on sagging hinges. His head was semi-bald, but his chin and upper lip stoned for deficiencies in that direction by raising a very creditable straw colored beard and mustache. Yet, as I said before, with all his peculiarities there was no mistaking him for anything other than a gentleman, and I still wondered vaguely and held my peace.

On a certain Saturday evening I received a letter addressed three times and generally crumpled and soiled with handling. I read the typewritten contents, gasped and took the nearest seat, which happened to be the grass at my feet. I haven't the faintest idea what I sat there, who spoke to me or what I answered. I only know that when the full realization of what I had read came home to me, it brought me to my feet whooping like a red Indian.

I have a dim recollection of a ring of grizzled faces staring with stolid wonderment in my direction, a few gruff remarks, the drift of which centered around the main fact that "the dude was as crazy as a bedbug," and then I made a beeline for the trestle bridge.

There sat Drummond, a comprehensive briar dragging down one side of his mouth, his long thin legs culminating in their cumbersome feet dangling loosely to and fro like overweighted pendulums from the bridge coping, his face set in its usual expression of grave meditation as he gazed down the course of the torrent.

I laughed. I waved the letter above my head and advanced on him, executing a hornpipe like any maniac. I laughed still louder when he glanced up at me in a mild bewilderment of inquiry without the faintest semblance of a smile. I sat in a mild bewilderment of inquiry without the faintest semblance of a smile. I sat in a mild bewilderment of inquiry without the faintest semblance of a smile.

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"What the letter?" From the mail carrier, of course.

"No, the whiskey."

"Then I laughed again. Oh, the world was a very funny place that evening.

"I'm glad," very glad, old man," he congratulated me with unusual warmth. Then his pale blue eyes wandered off down the river's course. "I wish that was enough to let me out of it," he added meditatively.

"You wouldn't go on with it if you had that amount?" I demanded incredulously.

"My income is double that now," he said quietly, "but I dare not stop work."

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certain crude work-work that I could do day in, day out, and perhaps lose myself in the rhythm of doing it.

"I came here, and do exactly what you see me doing every day. I have my wagon loaded in the bush with logs, drive them to the mill skidways, roll them off and return to the bush. I find myself counting the trees that line the trail. Between the skidways at the mill and the skidways in the bush there are exactly 1,119 full grown trees lining the trail on the right side, and 73 less on the left. I make six trips in the day. My high home takes 2,040 steps to the trip, as a rule, and the off horse, 2,400. So I manage to occupy my mind all day and lose it in three sleepless nights. I have been doing this now for three years, and by comparing my state of mind now with what I remember it to have been three years ago I feel I am making headway."

"This thing you are trying to forget!" I began, carried away by the interest this extraordinary recitation had aroused in me, and he wouldn't understand, "but perhaps you'd rather not," I added hurriedly.

"I shall tell you all," he continued doggedly. "I was just coming to that—that is where the other man laughed. He opened his shirt at the throat, detached a small locket from a thin silver chain that encircled his neck and pressed some spring that opened it.

"That is what I'm trying to forget," he said as he placed it in my hand.

I studied the face of a very ordinary looking girl of perhaps twenty. The hair was dark and parted in the middle, with severe simplicity; the features undeniably handsome, a coarse, heavy-lidded eye style that suggested the Jewess. The eyes were, of course, expressionless, the picture being a photograph. I studied it carefully for a few moments, and then returned it.

"You see," he said, attaching the locket to a delicate monotone, "you're engaged to be married. I came out here to buy fruit land and build the home, and changed her mind, that's all."

After a brief pause he looked up at me, almost appealingly. "You're not laughing, suggested, without a trace of cynicism."

I was not. It annoyed me to such an extent that I resolved to speak.

"You have never seen her since—not for five years altogether?"

"And because she threw you over you came here and buried yourself. You thought this the best way to forget?"



"Look here, Drummond," I said fiercely, "you're going to try an experiment; you're coming home with me now! We're going to buy a fruit farm down in Wales, by the sea, where we can work when we feel like it and play when we feel like it. We'll have a bachelor establishment—liberty hall, a few decent fellows, whiskey and pipes, polo, tennis. We'll start the wear's daughter (he'd bound to have several) by way of variation, and well just chalk up how many days it takes for you to drown this idiotic dream of yours."

Drummond shook his head slowly but deliberately.

"I've tried all that," he said. "I scribbled to my feet. 'Then go to the devil!' I roared disgustedly. 'I've tried that, too,' he admitted with a flicker of a smile. 'It doesn't agree with me a bit.'"

It was Drummond's own suggestion that he should see me off, and I welcomed it as the first sign of awakening interest in things practical, as well as a proof that he bore me no ill will for my clumsy arguments.

The town was a new world to him. He stood on the curb running a long brown finger round the inside of his unaccustomed starch collar, alternately buttoning and unbuttoning the jacket of his when he emerged from the waters of English Bay and lay on the hot sand blinking like a couple of owls strayed from their cranny in the light of day. I saw he disliked it, but persevered unflinchingly.

"And now," said I, when a little later we left a down town restaurant, "we'll go to the Prince of Wales street, and persuade ourselves it's the Empire, Leicester square." Drummond followed like a lamb.

As we entered the theatre a fat blonde man in a rancorous voice and in a low tone inquired of an unappreciative audience "how they'd like to spoon with her." We took a little black look reeking of tobacco and beer and filled the air with the remainder of the turn received the undivided attention of the inquiring performer.

I watched Drummond closely, and nothing but unguessed boredom was discernible in his expression. His pale blue eyes wandered round the galleries, where passed the endless procession of painted faces. Fully a dozen or more private residences had been entered. In one case the lady of the house was beaten insensate in the act of telephoning the police.



continuous din of laughter, chatter, popping corks and more smoke.

"It's all rather beastly, isn't it?" he murmured reflectively.

Our door was flung open by a very grave of a young girl in a gray kimono jacket, short skirts and a pair of very small, very shiny shoes that were evidently hurting her horribly, who playfully suggested that we either buy beer or make room for some one who would.

I bought beer, while the visitor explained that as she received forty per cent commission on every dollar bottle of beer she could persuade people to buy we needn't hesitate in furthering a good cause.

When the sacrilegious intruder had hobbled from the box I turned and was surprised to see Drummond on his feet leaning over the additium. I pulled at his jacket, but he never moved. "Billy," I called, "wake up; we've got to drink this. He never answered. I studied his profile; it was hard and set; curious drawn lines hovered about the mouth, which hung partially open.

I glanced over his shoulder and on the stage saw a short, dark girl, dressed in orthodox Spanish dancing costume, whirling gracefully round to the accompaniment of her own castanets and a dreamy, haunting air played by the orchestra.

The second I looked on her face I knew I had seen it before, yet for a full minute my mind refused to supply the connection. Then in a flash it came to me, full, strong, incontrovertible. The hair was longer parted in the middle, but filled high in glistening coils and tied with vivid red ribbons. That was the difference, color, between the face on that stage and the face in the locket Drummond had shown me on the trestle bridge.

I returned quietly to my seat and tried to think clearly, then pressed the bell push. "Ask the lady now on to come to this box when she's through." The pale youth with the expressionless mask instead of a face vanished with an understanding nod.



box opened quietly and shut with a gentle click. The faint rustle of skirts and an overpowering odor of eau de Cologne pervaded the air. She drew a third chair toward the front of the box.

"Well, you're a dry looking crowd," she observed in a strident falsetto, with an indicative glance toward the beer and the empty glasses. Then she caught sight of Drummond. "What the matter, dearie?" she demanded playfully. "Homesick?"

Drummond turned, and I shall never quite forget the expression that passed over that woman's face. The blood ebbed from it entirely, leaving the paint in crude, ghastly blotches on lips and cheeks. The pencilled eyebrows and lids, even the powder, stared out in bold relief against the colorless marble of her face.

They gazed at each other in silence for what seemed an age, then the man moistened his lips. "Where is he?" he demanded in a voice low, even and unusually distinct.

The question seemed to break the spell. The woman's head bent slowly forward, her hands went to her face. For a second she rallied and I saw a hard mechanical travesty of a smile flash across her features—then she collapsed utterly.

Outside, underneath the stairs, I lit a fresh cigar and laughed.

"Fate sometimes plays a rough game," I mused turning toward my hotel, "but lord, how thorough!"

I waited up for him on the deserted piazza with a pipe and my thoughts. I saw the glow of his cigar approaching up the driveway long before his tall, gaunt form was discernible, and I remember wondering vaguely what I ought to say.



NEGRO EXHORTER GIVES AGE AS 138

The Rev. Mason Brooks, in Jersey Sermon, Asserts He Once Held General Washington's Horse.

New York, Aug. 24.—In a sermon delivered yesterday at Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church, in Somerville (N. J.), the Rev. Mason Brooks, a negro clergyman, said that he is 138 years of age, and that he remembers having held General George Washington's horse on the road between Somerville and Berlin.

The clergyman said he was born in Cuba in 1770, and was brought to Somerset county, N. J., when a child. He said that he was ten years old when he held General Washington's horse. He illustrated this part of his narrative by walking out along the road toward Raritan and locating the exact spot at which he said he had held the horse. The spot is near an old tree in front of the Cornell place.

IN MEMORY OF SAILORS

The annual decoration of the seamen's graves in the marine lot in Fernhill was carried out yesterday by members of the Seamen's Institute. An abundance of beautiful flowers donated by friends were taken to the cemetery in a barouche. A memorial service was conducted by Rev. L. A. McLean, who spoke of the love of their fellow men which prompted those who had gathered flowers, that the last earthly resting place of the sailors might be made beautiful.

MOORE'S MILLS MAN BADLY INJURED

St. Stephen, N. B., Aug. 24 (Special).—A likely fatal accident occurred at Moore's Mills today. Arthur White, who was working on a building at that place fell from a staging to the ground, a distance of about twenty feet into a ditch. One of the loose staging planks fell, striking him on the forehead, rendering him unconscious for some hours. His recovery is still in doubt.

GREAT BRITAIN'S NAVAL PROGRESS

Two Dreadnoughts Soon to Be Launched--Two Others Planned.

London, Aug. 23.—Before the close of the present year two more battleships of the Dreadnought class, but including improvements adopted after exhaustive experiments with the first of these vessels, are to be launched for the British navy, and work on still another one is to be commenced. The St. Vincent, which was laid down at Portsmouth in December last, is to take the water on Sept. 10, and the Collingwood's slip at Devonport, on Nov. 7. Both the Collingwood and St. Vincent are to be ready for commission early in 1910.

MOOSE INVADERS HAMPTON

Hampton, N. B., Aug. 24.—Two moose made a visit to Hampton this morning, one, a fine bull, was of immense proportions, but both appeared to be in rather poor condition. They had swum across the river from the Norton side and leisurely walked about, apparently looking for suitable feeding grounds which they eventually found in Mrs. Hayward's pasture. Their presence caused a good deal of interest, but owners of ripening grain and growing garden truck expressed the hope that they would extend their journey before night without further search for food provisions, but they were still enjoying themselves in the pasture late this afternoon.

TWO CHILDREN BATHERS DROWNED

Clinton, Mass., Aug. 25.—Two young children were drowned here today under somewhat unusual circumstances. George Parker, aged 12 years, son of Jeremiah Parker, was seized by cramps while bathing in Fuller's Pond and drowned in but two feet of water. Although some of his boy companions were close by, they were too young to help, and a physician worked over the body for some time, his efforts at resuscitation were unsuccessful.

HARVESTERS STRANDED AT MOOSEJAW

Winnipeg, Man., Aug. 24 (Special).—Following close in the wake of the harvesters, a series of the most daring burglaries have been pulled off in this city, and some of these are attributed to undesirable visitors. Saturday evening a man walked into a store on Portage avenue and at the point of a revolver compelled the woman cashier to hand over the receipts. He made a clean getaway afterwards. Fully a dozen or more private residences have been entered. In one case the lady of the house was beaten insensate in the act of telephoning the police.

THE UNEMPLOYED

Another Country Where Both Capital and Labor Are Out of Work.

(Correspondence of The New York Post.) London, August 12.—Occasionally, one gets the impression here that America believes England to be still in the full flood of prosperity, and ready to call to lend a helping hand to impoverished America.

CORN'S CURED

OTTAWA CONSERVATIVES

SELECT CANDIDATES

Ottawa, Aug. 25.—The Conservatives of the Capital held their convention tonight and nominated Thos. Birkett, ex-M.P., and Dr. Chabot, as the party candidates for the forthcoming election.

MINISTER SUICIDES

COUNTY COURT

Georgiana Sneed Not Guilty of Setting Fire to House—No Bill in Davis Case.

Winnipeg, Man., Aug. 25 (Special).—While paying a gang at Eagle, 65 miles east of Kenora, Alex. Milton, chief clerk in the paymaster's office, was killed with a shot in the head. He was on a side track. The men supplied with train No. 97 would take the main line, but instead, the train came down the siding and before the men could get clear, all three were killed.

PAYMASTER AND TWO MEN KILLED BY TRAIN AT KENORA