

# "The Man Who Disappeared."

CHAPTER XIV.

## A STRANGE DESIGN.

(Continued.)

By brushing it well back, and having it cut in a new fashion, he could materially change the appearance of his forehead; and by keeping it closely trimmed behind, he could do as much for the apparent shape of his head at the rear. If the forehead needed still more change, the line of implantation could be altered by removing hairs with tweezers; and the same painful but possible means must be used to affect the curvature of the eyebrows. By removing hairs from the tops of the ends, and from the bottom of the middle, he would be able to raise the arch of each eyebrow noticeably. This removal, along with the clearing of hair from the forehead, and thinning the eye-brows by plucking out, would contribute to another desirable effect. Davenport's eyes were what are commonly called gray. In the course of his study at Bertillon, he came upon the reminder that—to use the Frenchman's own words—the gray eye of the average person is generally only a blue one with a more or less yellowish tinge, which appears gray solely on account of the shadow cast by the eyebrows, etc. Now, the thinning of the eyebrows and lashes, and the clearing of the forehead of its hanging locks, must considerably decrease that shadow, and consequently change in the apparent hue of the eyes would be helped by something else, which I shall come to later. The use of the tweezers on the eyebrows was doubly important, for, as Bertillon says, "no part of the face contributes to a more important share to the general expression of the physiognomy, seen from in front, than the eyebrow." The complexion would be easy to deal with. His way of life—midnight hours, abstemiousness, languid habits—had produced bloodless cheeks. A summary dosing with iron, and a reformation of diet, would soon bestow a healthy tinge, which, exercise, air, proper food, and rational living would not only preserve but intensify.

"But merely changing the face, and the apparent shape of the head, would do as long as his bodily form remained the same, so would his general appearance at a distance or when seen from behind. In that case he would not be secure against the disabusing shock of self-recognition on seeing his study of the bodily resemblance to Murray Davenport in a man facially dissimilar. The change in bodily appearance, gain, and so forth, would be as simple to effect as it was necessary. Hitherto he had leaned forward a little, and walked rather loosely. Larcher—the strongest shoulder braces would draw back his shoulders, give him tightness and straightness, increase the apparent width of his frame, alter the swing of his arms, and entail—without effort on his part—a change in his attitude when standing, his gait in walking, his way of placing his feet, and holding his head at all times. The consequent throwing back of the head would be a factor in the facial

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alteration, too; it would further decrease the shadow on the eyes, and consequently further affect their color. And not only that, for you must have noticed the great difference in appearance in a face as it is inclined forward or thrown back—as one looks down along it, or up along it. This accounts for the failure of so many photographs to look like the people they're taken of. The stupid photographer makes a simple hold in their faces, to get a stronger light who are accustomed ordinarily to carry their faces slightly averted.

"You understand, of course, that only his entire appearance would have to be changed; not any of his measurements. His friends must be unable to recognize him, even vaguely as resembling some one they couldn't place. But there was, of course, no anthropometric record of him in existence, such as is taken by criminals to ensure their identification by the Bertillon system; so his measurements could be unaffected without the least harm to his plan. Neither would he have to do anything to his hands; it is remarkable how small an impression the members of the body make on the memory. This is shown over and over again in attempts to identify bodies injured so that recognition by the face is impossible. Apart from the face, it's only the effect of the whole body, and that rather in attitude and gait than in shape, which suggests the identity to the observer's eye; and of course the suggestion comes there if he does not come from the face. But if Davenport's hand might go something else, he decided his handwriting should not. It was slovenly, scratchy degeneration of the once popular Italian script, and on of keeping with the new character he was to possess. The English cursive English calligraphy taught in most primary schools is easily picked up at any age, with a little care and practice; so he chose that, and found that by writing small he could soon acquire an even, elegant hand. He would need only to go carefully to habituate to the new style, with which he might defy even the hand-writing experts, for it's a maxim of theirs that a man who would disguise his handwriting always tries to make it look like that of an uneducated person.

"There would still remain the voice to be made over—quite as important a matter as the face. In fact the voice will often contradict an identification which the eyes would swear to, in cases of remarkable resemblance; or it will reveal an identity which some eyes would fail to notice, where there has changed appearances. Thanks to some out-of-the-way knowledge Davenport had picked up in the theoretic study of music and elocution, he felt confident to deal with the voice difficulty. It came to that later, when I arrive at the materials employed by actors, until he should succeed in producing a countenance to his liking; and then, by surgical means, to make real and permanent the sham and transient effects of paint-stick and pencil. He would violently compel nature to register the disguise and maintain it.

"He was favored in one essential matter—that of a place in which to perform his operations with secrecy, and to let the wounds heal at leisure. To be observed during the progress of the transformation would spoil his purpose and be highly inconvenient besides. He couldn't lock himself up in his room, or in any rooming to which he might move, and remain unseen for weeks, without attracting an attention that would probably discover his secret. In a remote country place he would be more under curiosity and suspicion than in New York. He must live in comfort, in quarters which he could provision; must have the use of mirrors, heat,

water, and such things; in short, he could not resort to unhabited solitudes, yet must have a place where his presence might be unknown to a living soul—a place he could enter and leave with absolute secrecy. He couldn't rent a place without precluding any investigations as to his whereabouts made on his disappearance, and his plans possibly ruined by the intrusion of the police. It was a lucky circumstance which he owed to Larcher—one of the few lucky circumstances that ever came to the old Murray Davenport, and so to be regarded as a happy confidant. As for the rest of the world, nothing whatever existed, or should exist, to connect him with that room. He conceived always to be informed of Mr. Bud's intentions for the immediate future, and to be ready to receive the shipment of turkeys for Thanksgiving and Christmas would keep the old man busy in the country for six or seven weeks without a break. He was now all ready to put his design into execution.

CHAPTER XV.

## Turl's Narrative Continued.

"On the very afternoon," Turl went on, "before the day when Davenport could have Mr. Bud's room to himself, Bagley sent for him in order to confide some business to his charge. This was a customary occurrence, and rather than seem to act unusually just at that time, Davenport went and received Bagley's instructions. With them he received a lot of money, in bills of large denominations, mostly five-hundred-dollar bills, which he was to use for Bagley's use. In accepting this charge, or rather in passively letting it fall upon him, Davenport had no distinct idea as to whether he would carry it out. He had indeed little thought that evening of any thing but his purpose, which he was to be executing on the morrow. As not an hour was to be lost, on account of the time necessary for the healing of the operations, he would either have to despatch Bagley's business very quickly or neglect it altogether. In the latter case, what about the money in his hands? The sum was nearly equal to that which Bagley had morally defrauded him of.

"This coincidence, coming at that moment, seemed like the work of fate. Bagley was to be absent from town a week, and Murray Davenport was about to undergo a metamorphosis that would make detection impossible.

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