

No Other Way

BY GORDON HOLMES.

Author of "A Mysterious Disappearance,"
"The House of Silence," Etc.

"My word, sir," he said, when his deft hands were busy with sponge and towel, "your illness did take it out of you, an' no mistake."

"Why, don't you think I am as fit as I was?"

"You must have lost pounds and pounds, sir. Your muscles show up a bit better, for all that. I shouldn't be surprised, sir, if you ain't a better man when your arm gets right. Effect of proper diet an' nursing, sir."

"Now, Rice, be candid. It's the effect of less rum, isn't it?"

"Well, Mr. Claude, if you put it like that—"

"Steady, there! My ribs won't bear pressing. Thanks, I'll rub my breast myself. Look here, sir, you fellows generally hear all the news below stairs. Why didn't you tell me Mrs. Waverton had gone to Narragansett?"

"You don't mean to say, sir—"

"So you didn't know? Moreover, she is in this very hotel, with Mrs. Daunt—and the hotel."

"Miss Kathleen, sir?"

"Yes, I have just fished Miss Kathleen out of the Atlantic. She fell in from the end of the rocks."

The valet did then forget himself, and emitted a short, sharp whistle between his teeth.

"I guessed that would make you blow off steam," laughed Waverton. "Mr. Delamar was to show up now I should run out of the hotel, call the first cab and tell the man to drive in a bee-line for the next five days."

"I wish you'd never seen that lady, Mr. Claude," said Waverton, with unusual earnestness. "I'll tell you honestly, I don't like her. When you were brought in for dinner to spend the evening, would not let me to near your room—no, not for days. I don't want to speak uncharitably of anybody, but I couldn't help thinking of the money you had won at Mr. Schwartz's place, sir. It was in everybody's mouth next day. A maid showed it to me in the 'Evening Standard' newspaper. Never was I so glad of anything as when you sent for me and said we was off to the hotel."

"Do you find a great change in me, Rice?"

"Change, Mr. Claude? Why, it's a miracle, that's what it is!"

The man was conscious instantly that he had said a little too much, but Waverton passed the slip without comment—or, rather, he appeared to misunderstand its underlying cause.

"I came rather near eternity that night, Rice," he said quietly. "And those five days I was forced to remain in bed and live on slops gave me time for thought. Mrs. Delamar was not exactly my good angel, but she was kinder than while I was ill. Anyhow, we don't want her any more now. Narragansett. No, I'll not dress for dinner. A blue serge, please. I'm going out again, and I don't wish to be mobbed as a hero as I stroll along the front. I shall avoid the beach, of course. You need not sort out all those things now. We leave early on Monday."

Rice was taken by surprise to be dried, when he met Celestine, the nurse, whom he had not set eyes on during many months. She was smiling at him, and had sufficient English to recite the afternoon's occurrences. A little later she sent a page to bring him a note from the corridor, and then informed him that Mrs. Waverton wished to see him.

Now, Rice was his former mistress greatly, and had always regarded Waverton as the biggest fool in Christendom in respect to his treatment of a valet—a attractive wife. Indeed, Rice himself was on the lookout for another situation at the time of the accident in Florida, and he was puzzled to account with his employer since the latter's illness. Three days later, he was called to the door of his room, and he found Mrs. Waverton standing there, looking at him with a puzzled expression.

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Hair Dressers in Hot Race: Wild Scenes at Braid Contest

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