

THE CRIMSON BLIND

BY FRED M. WHITE

"You need not be afraid," she said. "You can speak quite freely. How is Van Sneek?"

"Very queer," David responded. "Bell hoped to have operated upon him before this, but such a course has not been deemed quite prudent. The day after tomorrow it will be, I expect. Henson has found out where Van Sneek is."

"Indeed. Has he been to see you?"

"He has been more than once on all kinds of ingenious pretences. But I didn't call you up to tell you this. We have been making inquiries at Wale's, Marley and myself. The time has come now to let Marley behind the scenes a bit."

"Did Wale's people know anything about the tall American?"

"Oh, yes. A tall American with a thin beard and a faint suggestion of a smile called about a week before the great adventure, and asked to see some gun-metal diamond-mounted cigar-cases—like the one in Lockhart's window."

"Did he really volunteer that remark?"

"He did, saying also that Lockhart's were too dear. Wale's hadn't got what he wanted, but they promised to get some cases out of stock, which meant that they would go to the same wholesale house as Lockhart's and get some similar cases. As a matter of fact, one of Wale's assistants was sent round to study the case in Lockhart's window. The cases were procured on the chance of a sale, but the American never turned up again. No notice was taken of this, because such things often happen to shopkeepers."

"And this was about a week before the night of the great adventure?"

"Yes. Wait a bit. I have not quite finished yet. Now, once I had ascertained this, an important fact becomes obvious. The American didn't want a cigar-case at all."

"But he subsequently purchased the one returned to Lockhart's shop?"

"That remark does not suggest your usual acumen. The American was preparing the ground for Van Sneek to purchase with a view to a subsequent exchange. You have not fully grasped the villainess of this plot yet. I went to Lockhart's and succeeded in discovering that the purchaser of the returned case was a tall American, quite of the pattern I expected. Then I managed to get on to the trail at the Metropolitan. They recollected when I could describe the man; they also recollected the largeness of his tips. Then I traced my man to the Lion at Moreton Wells, where he had obviously gone to see Reginald Henson. From the Lion, friend went to the Royal at Scarsdale Sands, where he is staying at present."

"Under the name of John Smith?"

"I suppose so, seeing that all the inquiries under that name were successful. If you would like me to come up and interview the man for you—"

"I should like you to do nothing of the kind," Chris said. "You are more useful in Brighton and I am going to interview Mr. John Smith Rawlins for myself. Good-bye. Just one moment. Chris countermanded the dog-cart. She had ordered and repaired to the library, where Littimer was tying some trout-fishes behind a cloud of cigarette smoke."

"Thought you had gone to Moreton Wells," he said. "Been at the telephone again? A pretty nice bill I shall have to pay for all those long messages of yours."

"Mr. Steel pays this time," Chris said, gaily. "He has just given me information that 'ablates' the necessity of going into the town. My dear uncle, you want a change. You look tired and languid."

"Depression of spirits and a disinclination to exercise after food. Also a morbid craving for seven to eight hours' sleep every night. That's the little game."

"Bracing air," Chris laughed. "Lord Littimer and his secretary, Miss Lee, are going to spend a few days at Scarsdale Sands, Roy's Hotel, to recuperate after their literary labors."

"The air here being so poor and enervating," Littimer said, cynically. "In other words, I suppose you have traced Rawlins to Scarsdale Sands?"

"How clever you are," said Chris, admiringly. "Wale's American and Lockhart's American, with the modest pseudonym of John Smith, are what Mrs. Malaprop would call three single gentlemen rolled into one. We are going to make the acquaintance of John Smith Rawlins."

"Oh, indeed, and when do we start, may I ask?"

Chris responded coolly that she hoped to get away in the course of the day. With a great show of virtuous resignation Lord Littimer consented.

"I have always been the jest of fortune," he said, plaintively; "but I never expected to be dragged all over the place at my time of life by a girl who is anxious to make me acquainted with the choicest blackguardism in the kingdom. I leave my happy home, my cook, and my cellar, for at least a week of hotel living. Well, one can only die once."

Chris hustled away to make the necessary arrangements. Some few hours later Lord Littimer was looking out from his luxurious private sitting-room with the assumption of being a martyr. He and Chris were dressed for dinner; they were waiting for the bell to summon them to the dining-room. When they got down at length they found quite a large number of guests already seated at the many small tables.

"Your man here?" Littimer asked, languidly.

Chris indicated two people seated in a window opposite. "There," she whispered. "There he is. And what a pretty girl with him!"

CHAPTER XLIX.
A Chevalier of Fortune.

Littimer put up his glass and gazed with apparent vacancy in the direction of the window. He saw a tall man with a gray beard and hair; a man most immaculately dressed and of distinctly distinguished appearance. Littimer was fain to admit that he would have taken him for a gentleman under any circumstances. In manner, style, and speech he left nothing to be desired.

"That chap has a fortune in his face and accent," Littimer said. "Pon my word, he is a chance acquaintance that one would ask to dinner without the slightest hesitation. And the girl—"

"Is his daughter," Chris said. "The likeness is very strong."

"It is," Littimer admitted. "A singularly pretty, refined girl, with quite the grand air. It is an air that mere education seldom gives; but it seems to have come to her of one of another! Depend upon it, Chris, whatever that man may be his daughter knows nothing of it. And yet you tell me that the police—"

NEURALGIA IN THE FACE

LONG-STANDING CASE COMPLETELY CURED BY DR. A. W. CHASE'S NERVE FOOD.

Headache and neuralgia. What hosts of people seek for cure of these ailments. And in vain. Because they are misled by going after medicines which only relieve. Dr. A. W. Chase's Nerve Food is not a mere relief for headaches and neuralgia but is the thorough cure in the only way these troubles can ever be really cured—by restoring the nervous system.

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else beyond the couple in the window. She rose presently, with a little gasp, and hastily lifted a tankard of iced water from the table. The girl opposite her had turned pale and her dark head had drooped forward.

"I hope it is not serious," said Chris. "Drink a little of this; it is iced."

"And they told me they had no ice in the house," the man Rawlins muttered. "A little of this, Grace. It is one of her old fainting fits. Ah, that is better."

The man Rawlins spoke with the tenderest solicitude. The look of positive relief on his face as his daughter smiled at him told of a deep devotion and affection for the girl. Chris, looking on, was wondering vaguely whether or not she had made a mistake.

"Lord Littimer obtained our ice," she said. "Pray keep this. Oh, yes, that is Lord Littimer over there. I am his secretary."

Littimer strolled across himself and murmured his condolences. A little time later and the two were outside in the verandah taking tea together. Rawlins might have been, and no doubt was, a finished scoundrel, but there was no question as to his fascinating manner and his brilliant qualities as a conversationalist. A man of nerve, too, and full of resources. All the same, Littimer was asking himself and wondering who the man really was. By birth he must have been born a gentleman, Littimer did not doubt for a moment.

But there was one soft spot in the man, and that was his love for his daughter. For her sake he had been traveling all over the world for years; for years he had despaired of seeing her live to womanhood. But she was gradually growing better; indeed, if she had not walked so far today nothing would have happened. All the time that Rawlins was talking his eyes were resting tenderly on his daughter. The hard, steely look seemed to have gone out of them altogether.

Altogether a charming and many-sided rascal, Littimer thought. He was fond, as he called it, of collecting types of humanity, and here was a new and fascinating specimen. The two men talked together till long after dark, and Rawlins never betrayed himself. He might have been an ambassador or cabinet minister unbending after a long period of heavy labor.

Meanwhile Chris had drawn Grace Rawlins apart from the others. The girl was quiet and self-contained, but evidently a lady. She seemed to have but few enthusiasms, but one of them was for her father. He was the most wonderful man in the world, the most kind and considerate. He was very rich; indeed, it was a good thing, she would never have been able to see so much of a wonderful man. He had given up nearly the whole of his life to her, and now she was nearly as strong as other girls. Chris listened in a dazed, confused kind of way. She had not expected anything like this; and when Lord Rawlins found time for those brilliant predatory schemes that she had heard of?

"Well, what do you think of them?" Littimer asked, when at length he and Chris were alone. "I suppose it isn't possible that you and I have made a mistake?"

"I'm afraid not," Chris said, half-sadly. "But what a strange case altogether."

"Passing strange. I'll go bail that that man is born and bred a gentleman; and what is more, he is more of an American than I am. I kept on forgetting from time to time what he was and taking him for one of our own class. And now, really, I capped my folly by asking him to bring his daughter for a drive tomorrow and a lunch on the Gapstone. What do you think of that?"

"Splendid," Chris said, coolly. "Nothing could be better. You will be good enough to exercise all your powers of fascination on Miss Rawlins tomorrow, and leave her father to me. I thought of a little plan tonight which I believe will succeed admirably. At first I expected her to carry matters with a high hand, but now I am going to get Mr. Rawlins through his daughter. I shall know all I want to by tomorrow night."

Littimer smiled at this sanguine expectation.

"I sincerely hope you will," he said, drily. "But I doubt it very much indeed. You have one of the cleverest men in Europe to deal with. Good-night."

But Chris was in no way cast down. She had carefully planned out a course of action, and the more she thought over it the more sure of success she felt. A few hours more and—but she didn't care to dwell too closely on that.

It was after luncheon that Chris's opportunity came. Lord Littimer and Grace Rawlins had gone off to inspect something especially beautiful in the way of a waterfall, leaving Chris and Rawlins alone. The latter was talking brilliantly over his cigarette.

"Is Lord Littimer any relation of yours?" he asked.

"Well, yes," Chris admitted. "I hope he will be a nearer relation before long."

"Oh, you mean to say—may I venture to congratulate—"

"It isn't quite that," Chris laughed, with a little rising in color. "I am not thinking of Lord Littimer, but of his son."

Yes, I see you raise your eyebrows—probably you are aware of the story, as most people are. And you are wondering why I am on such friendly terms with Lord Littimer under the circumstances. And I am wondering why you should call yourself John Smith."

The listener coolly flicked the ash from his cigarette. His face was like a mask.

"John Smith is a good name," he said. "Can you suggest a better?"

"If you ask me to do so I can. I should call myself John Rawlins."

There was just the ghost of a smile on Rawlins' lips.

"There is a man of that name," he said, slowly, "who attained considerable notoriety in the States. Considerable he was the demented criminal, a rascal. He was supposed to be without feeling of any kind; his villainies were the theme of admiration amongst financial magnates. There were brokers who plausibly thanked Providence because Rawlins had never thought of going on the Stock Exchange, where he could have robbed and plundered with impunity. And this Rawlins always baffles the police. If he baffles them a little longer they won't be able to touch him at all. At

present, despite his outward show, he has hardly a dollar to call his own. But he is on to a great coup now, and, strange to say, an honest one. Do you know the man, Miss Lee?"

Chris met the speaker's eyes firmly. "I met him last night for the first time," she said.

"In that case you can hardly be said to know him," Rawlins murmured. "If you drive him into a corner he will do desperate things. If you tried that game on him you would regret it for the rest of your life. Good heavens, you are like a child playing about amidst a lot of unguarded machinery. Why do you do it?"

(To Be Continued.)

TWO 80-YEAR-OLD LOVERS ELOPED

Wisconsin Widower Runs Away to Wed Sweetheart Who Had Waited Life-Time.

Madison, Wis., June 14.—Blending the vigilance of his six adult sons and a score of grandsons, who were opposed to his second venture in matrimony, Rudolph Ploetz, aged 79, a retired widower of the village of Prairie du Sac, Wis., eloped to Madison with his childhood sweetheart and neighbor, Miss Ursula Hunger, aged 80. The marriage took place in the office of Justice of the Peace J. C. Fehlandt.

Ploetz wanted to be married at his home town, but his six stalwart sons vigorously opposed the union. They not only opposed it, but they persuaded the ministers and magistrates in the village and vicinity to refuse to perform the ceremony. Then, with the aid of their numerous sons, they established a thorough system of espionage over the venerable lovers.

But the ardent bridegroom was not to be deterred. Quietly slipping away from home he came to Madison and confided his troubles to Justice Fehlandt, who finally agreed to perform the ceremony. Mr. Ploetz returned home, and his plans for elopement to Miss Hunger, and won her consent.

The elopers escaped the watchfulness of the sons and grandsons by going to Sauk City, a short distance from Prairie du Sac, early in the morning and boarding the train for Madison. While six of the sons were busy milking the cows and doing other chores on their six large farms, the couple were being whisked away to Madison.

Arriving at Madison Mr. Ploetz and Miss Hunger took a carriage to Justice Fehlandt's office, where that official was awaiting them. Summoning his stenographer, Miss Alta E. Chatterton, and several other persons for witnesses, Justice Fehlandt quickly married them, kissed the blushing bride, and shook hands with the happy bridegroom.

Ploetz and his wife were sweethearts in childhood, but were separated by a petty quarrel. He later married, but she vowed she would never marry anyone if he could not give him. Finally his wife died, and after a period of mourning he successfully renewed his siege to the heart of Miss Hunger.

THE WORKINGMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT

Claimed That Its Effects Are Proving Disastrous to Labor in England.

London, June 16.—Fresh evidence is accumulating day by day as to the disastrous effect the extension of the workmen's compensation act is having upon employment throughout the country. G. A. Greig, secretary of the London Building Industries Federation, says:

"The act was looked forward to by millions of workmen as a blessing, but it is likely under present conditions to prove nothing but a curse. It is an undeniable fact that agents of some insurance companies are going into factories and threatening when they see men who have passed the prime of life to raise the premium unless these men are discharged."

The chairman of the General Accident, Fire and Life Assurance Corporation stated at their last annual meeting in Perth that employers would have to pay a much higher premium in the future for insurance under the workmen's compensation act unless they made up their minds to discontinue the employment of aged men and those who were not thoroughly sound and healthy. He also said that medical examination would be necessary in every case.

"It is this attitude on the part of the insurance companies which my federation, in common with a vast number of other trade unions, complains of. Experience shows that the man above middle age is less liable to accident than younger men."

Sir Hiram Maxim, another large employer of labor, also points out that many employers are discharging and refusing employment to men who, while still mentally and physically efficient, have age, or, in many instances, infirmity.

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merely the appearance of age, against them. Sir Hiram declares that the compensation act should be repealed, and fully confirms Sir John Brunner's views, heretofore printed in The Sun, as to the smaller liability of the older man to accidents."

"The law," he says, "unquestionably imposes a great hardship upon middle aged and elderly workmen. It erroneously supposes them more liable to accidents."

"As a matter of fact middle aged and old men are not nearly so liable to accidents as very young men. I should say, indeed, that an average man of fifty is not half as liable as a man of twenty-five."

"The best gunmaker I ever employed—and I am told he was the best in England—was more than sixty. The majority of the men we intrust with work requiring great care are either middle aged, or old."

"If a man has taken care of himself he is less liable to accidents between the ages of forty and forty-five than at any other time of his employment. There is no doubt that the act is doing a great deal to discourage industries in England. It should be ranked among the numerous other laws classified by Herbert Spencer as having an exactly contrary effect to that for which they were supposed to have been framed."

BALLOON PASSED OVER THE AZORES

To All Appearance the Airship Was Under Human Control.

Horta, Fayal, Azores, June 16.—A letter has just been received here from the Island of Flores, which declares that a balloon, evidently under human control, passed over that island on June 6, at eight o'clock of the morning, traveling from east to west. The balloon rose to pass over the island, and then came down to its previous level as soon as it was clear of the western shore. The passage of the airship created much excitement among the people of Santa Cruz and Lagens, but it was impossible to note other details than those given above.

The Island of Flores is one of the northwest group of the Azores. It is about 800 miles due west of Lisbon, Portugal. The only communication between Flores and Horta is by steamer or sailing ship. The distance from Flores to the American coast is about 2,000 miles.

There is no record of any balloon missing in Europe. The last balloon race previous to June 6 was held in England on May 30, but every airship in this contest was accounted for.

Mr. C. V. Mutart is a Customs Broker and Insurance Agent at St. Catharines, Ont. He writes the Zam-Buk Co. as follows: "I have been a sufferer for years with itching piles. I have spent many dollars on advertised remedies for Piles but got no relief. A friend of mine advised me to try Zam-Buk. I had but little faith in any remedy to cure me, but tried one box and I got relief at once. I have used four boxes and am completely cured. I cannot say you enough for such a wonderful curative. I have recommended Zam-Buk to my friends and they too were cured."

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- 3.—Four heavy "three-lives," easily-placed grates with no bolts. Any section can readily be removed through ash-pit door.
- 4.—Large and heavy rolled steel plate door and radiator.
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- 8.—Large dust-pipe connecting ash-pit to dome, preventing circulation of dust in cellar or rooms.
- 9.—Correctly placed, easy-to-fill water-pan.
- 10.—Quick-clearing flues and durable brush.
- 11.—Automatic Gas Damper, saves heat-energy, rejects gaseous fumes.
- 12.—Nickel-plated chain shield with easy-working, non-rusting chain pulleys.
- 13.—Bottom casing rigid solid to ash-pit, making furnace easy to set.
- 14.—Height regulation adapted to all cellars. Pipes given due elevation.
- 15.—All parts interchangeable.
- 16.—Economical and safe.
- 17.—Easy to operate.
- 18.—Twenty to twenty-five per cent. more weight than any other furnace made in Canada.
- 19.—Made from Canadian patterns as well as made in Canada.
- 20.—Manufactured by the largest and most experienced Furnace Builders in the British Empire.

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