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THE MYSTERY OF THE GREEN RAY

By William Le Queux

CHAPTER II.—(Cont'd.)

"Ah!" said I. "It has come, then." And I was surprised that I had forgotten all about the war, which was actually the cause of my presence there. I noticed with some curiosity that Hilderman looked out of the window with a strangely tense air, his lips firmly pressed together, his eyes wide open and staring. He was certainly awake now. But in a moment he turned to me with a charming smile.

"You know, I'm an American," he said. "But this hits me—hits me hard. There's a calm and peaceful, friendly hospitality about this island of yours that I like—like a lot. My own country reminds me too much of my own struggles for existence. For nearly forty years I fought for breath in America, and, but that I like now and again to run over and have a look round, you can keep the place as far as I'm concerned. I've been about here now for a good many years—not just this part, for this is nearly new to me, but about the country—and I feel that this is my quarrel, and I should like to have a hand in it." "Perhaps America may join in yet," I suggested.

"Not she," he cried, with a laugh. "America! Not on your life. Why, she's afraid of civil war. She don't know which of her own citizens are her friends and which ain't. She's tied hand and foot. She can't even turn round long enough to whip Mexico. Don't you ever expect America to join in anything except family prayer, my boy. That's safe. You know where you are, and it don't matter if you don't agree about the wording of a psalm. If an American was told off to shoot a German, he'd ten to one turn round and say: 'Here, hold on a minute; that's my uncle!'" "You think all the Germans in the States prefer their fatherland to their adopted country, or are they most of them spies?"

"Spies?" said Hilderman, "I don't believe in spies. It stands to reason there can't be much spying done in any country. Over here, for instance, for every German policeman in this country—for that's all a spy can be—there are about a thousand British policemen. What chance has the spy? You don't seriously believe in them, do you?" he added, smiling, as he offered me a Corona cigar.

"I don't know," I said doubtfully. I didn't want to argue with my good Samaritan. "There is no doubt a certain amount of spying is done, but, of course, our policemen are hardly trained to cope with it. I daresay the whole business is very greatly exaggerated."

"You bet it is, my boy," he replied emphatically. "Going far?" he asked, suddenly changing the subject.

"North of Loch Hourm," I answered. "Oh!" said Hilderman, with renewed interest. "Glenelg?"

"I take the boat to Glenelg and then drive back," I explained. "I was in a mood to tell him just where I was going, and why, and all about myself, but I reflected, with an effort, that I was talking to a total stranger."

"Drive back?" he repeated after me, with a sudden return to his dreamy manner. Then, just as suddenly, he woke up again. "Where are we now?" he asked.

"Passing over Morar bridge," I explained.

"Dear me—yes, of course!" he exclaimed with a glance out of the window. "Well, I must pack up my wraps. Good-bye, Mr. Ewart; I'm so glad to have met you. Your country's at war, and you look to me a very likely young man to do your best. Well, good-bye and good luck. I only wish I could join you."

"I wish you could," I replied heartily. "I shall certainly do my best. And many thanks for your kind assistance."

And so we parted, and returned to our respective compartments to put our things together; for our journey—the rail part of it, at any rate—was nearly over. And it was not until long afterwards that I realized that he had called me by my name, and I had never told him what it was.



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CHAPTER III.

Mainly About Myra. The train slowed down into Mallaig station. I thrilled with anticipation, for now I had only the journey on the boat, and Myra would be waiting for me at Glenelg. The train had hardly stopped when I seized my bag and jumped out on to the platform. The next instant I was nearly knocked back into the carriage again. A Great Dane had jumped at me with a deep bark of flattering welcome, and planted his paws on my shoulders.

"Sholto, my dear old man!" I cried in excitement, dropping my bag and looking round expectantly. It was Myra's dog, and there, sure enough, was a beautiful vision of brown eyes and brown-gold hair, in a heather-colored Burberry costume, running down the platform to meet me.

"Well—darling?" I said, as I met her halfway.

"Well?" she whispered, as she took my hand, and I looked into the depths of those wonderful eyes. Truly I was a lucky dog. The world was a most excellent place, full of delightful people; and even if I were an impecunious young barrister I was richer than Croesus in the possession of those beautiful brown eyes, which looked on all the world with the gentle affection of a tender and indulgent sister, but which looked on me with—Oh! hang it all—a fellow can't write about these sort of things when they affect him personally. Besides, they belong to me—thank God!

"I got your telegram, dear," said Myra, as we strolled out of the station behind the porter who had appropriated my bag. Sholto brought up the rear. He had too great an opinion of his own position to be jealous of me—or at any rate he was too dignified to show it—and he had admitted me into the inner circle of his friendship in a manner that was very charming, if not a little condescending.

"Did you, darling?" I said, in reply to Myra's remark.

"Yes; it was delivered first thing this morning, and father was very pleased about it."

"Really!" I exclaimed. "I am glad. I was afraid he might be rather annoyed."

"I was a little bit surprised myself," she confessed, "though I'm sure I don't know why I should be. Dad's a perfect dear—he always was and he always will be. But he has been very determined about our engagement. When I told him you'd wired you were coming he was tremendously pleased. He kept on saying, 'I'm glad; that's good news, little woman, very good news. 'Pon my soul, I'm doocid glad!' He said you were a splendid fellow—I can't think what made him imagine that—but he said it several times, so I suppose he had some reason for it. I was frightfully pleased. I like you to be a splendid fellow, Ron!"

I was very glad to hear that the old General was really pleased to hear of my visit. I had intended to stay at the Glenelg Hotel, as I could hardly invite myself to the Inverloch Lodge, even though I had known the old man all my life. Accordingly I took it as a definite sign that his opinion was wearing down when Myra told me I was expected at the house.

"And he said," she continued, "that he never heard such ridiculous nonsense as your saying you were coming to the hotel, and that if you preferred a common inn to the house that had been good enough for him and his fathers before him, you could stop away altogether. So there!"

"Good—that's great!" I said enthusiastically. "But did you come over by the boat from Glenelg, or what?"

"No, dear; I came in the motor-boat, so we don't need to hang about the pier here. We can either go straight home or wait a bit, whichever you like. I wanted to meet you, and I thought you'd rather come back with me in the motor-boat than jolt about in the stuffy old Sheila."

"Rather, dear; I should say I would," said I—and a lot more besides, which has nothing to do with the story. Suddenly Myra's motherly instinct awoke.

"Have you had breakfast?" she asked.

"Yes, dear—at Cranlarich. The only decent meal to be got on a railway in this country is a Cranlarich breakfast."

"Well, in that case you're ready for lunch. It's gone twelve. I could do with something myself, incidentally, and I want to talk to you before we start for home. Let's have lunch here."

I readily agreed, and after calling Sholto, who was being conducted on a tour of inspection by the parson's dog, we strolled up to hill to the hotel. As we entered the long dining-room we came upon Hilderman, seated at one of the tables with his back to us.

"Yes," he was saying to the waiter, "I have been spending the week-end on the Clyde in a yacht. I joined the train at Ardlui this morning, and I can tell you—"

I didn't wait to hear any more. Rather by instinct than as a result

screen to a small table by a window. After all, it was no business of mine if Hilderman wished to say he had joined the train at Ardlui. He probably had his own reasons. Possibly Dennis was right, and the man was a detective. But I had seen him at King's Cross and again at Edinburgh before we reached Ardlui, so I thought it might embarrass him if I walked in on the top of his assertion that he had just come from the Clyde. However, Myra was with me, which was much more important, and I dismissed Hilderman and his little fib from my mind.

"Ronnie," said Myra, in the middle of lunch, "you haven't said anything about the war."

"No, dear," I answered clumsily. "It was an astonishingly difficult thing to say when it came to saying it."

"And yet that was what you came to see me about?"

"Yes, darling. You see, I—"

"I know, dear. You've come to tell me that you're going to enlist. I'm glad, Ronnie, very glad—and very, very proud."

"I hate people who talk a lot about their duty," I said, "but it obviously is my duty, and I know that's what you want me to do."

"Of course, dear, I wouldn't have you do anything else." And she turned and smiled at me, though there were tears in her dear eyes. "And I shall try to be brave, very brave, Ronnie. I'm getting a big girl now," she added pluckily, attempting a little laugh.

"The truth, of course, we afterwards discussed the regiment I was to join, and how the uniform would suit me, and how you kept your buttons clean, and a thousand other things, that was the last that was said about it from that point of view. There are some people who never need to say certain things—or at any rate there are some things that never need be said between certain people."

After lunch we strolled round the "fish-table," a sort of subsidiary pier on which the fish are auctioned, and listened to the excited conversations of the fish-curers, gutters, and fishermen. It was a veritable babel—the mournful intonation of the East Coast, the broad guttural of the Broomielaw, mingled with the shrill Gaelic scream of the Highlands, and the occasional twang of the cockney tourist. Having retrieved Sholto, who was inspecting some fish which had been laid out to dry in the middle of the village street, and packed him safely in the bows, we set out to sea, Myra at the engine, while I took the tiller. As we glided out of the harbor I turned round, impelled by some unknown instinct. The parson's dog was standing at the head of the main pier, seeing us safely off the premises, and beside him was the tall figure of my friend J. G. Hilderman. As I looked up at him I wondered if he recognized me; but it was evident he did, for he raised his cap and waved to me. I returned the compliment as well as I could, for just then Myra turned and implored me not to run into the lighthouse.

(To be continued.)

Letters That Have Changed a Nation.

On one occasion Lord Wolsey prophesied that eventually the Chinese would rule the world. It looks as if this prediction may be nearer the truth.

In the past, ninety per cent of the Chinese people were quite illiterate. There has, however, come an awakening, and a desire for education has developed. One of the reasons for this sudden change is that the Chinese have adopted a new phonetic alphabet. By means of thirty-nine signs, or letters, it is possible for them to write and express anything which can be spoken in their own language.

For thousands of years there had been a way of writing Chinese, but it was such a difficult way that only scholars attempted it. The old Chinese alphabet had 43,000 signs, and it is scarcely surprising that most Chinese gave up all idea of learning to read and write.

Eventually China's ruling men set themselves the task of inventing a simple phonetic alphabet, such as most languages possess.

The Chinese Board of Education, with the help of various foreign authorities on languages, succeeded in inventing an alphabet of thirty-nine letters, which are not unlike shorthand. Missionaries and teachers have undertaken the teaching of reading and writing by means of this simplified method. The modern Chinaman is hungry for knowledge and education, and even old people are found to be anxious to learn to read and write.

The oldest known English picture is one of Chaucer, painted on panel in the year 1380.

Entries Close November 26th for the **TWELFTH ANNUAL TORONTO FAT STOCK SHOW** Classes for Singles, Lots of Three and Carloads of Cattle, Lots of Three, Six and Ten and Carloads of Lambs; Lots of Three, Five and Ten Hogs.

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Woman's Interests

Odds and Ends in Time Savers.

Almost every day one learns little helps in the daily routine of work. One Sunday not long ago, my family made an unexpected visit to my sister on the farm. My brother went out and dressed two chickens so quickly as to excite my wonder. At home we never have hot water ready for immediate use. I asked my sister about it and she said, "I keep the tea kettle full of water in a place where it will always be hot." Since that Sunday I have always had my tea kettle full of water, and hot, too.

How many of us in doing our Monday's washing finish the washing before we hang out any clothes? I always thought this was the only way to do. But I have learned differently. Lately, I have been scrubbing out the first two boilers and flannels and getting them all ready for the line; then with the last boiler on the stove, and the machine going, I hang the clothes that are ready on the line. By the time I am through washing those clothes, unless the weather is rainy, are dry and I bring them in and sprinkle them. In the afternoon while my two little girls are taking their naps, I iron the white clothes. On Tuesday I have only the colored clothes to iron and I can do some mending in the afternoon. I find I do not get as tired this way as I do when I wash one day and do all the ironing the next.

My mother told me a fine thing in doing housework. Have certain things to do every day and your work will be twice as easy. I tried letting my work go one week in order to get some dressmaking done and when Saturday came the house was in general disorder. I found playthings, dust and dirt in the most unheard of places. It took all day to go through and get the house in order once more. Since then I have followed mother's advice and have done the housework, dishes, bed-making, picking up, sweeping and dusting, and then taken time to do the other little things that are sure to come up. One feels much better and more satisfied if the house is in order, ready for any emergencies that might arise.

Another time-saver which I find to be a great help is always to keep some kind of cold canned meat on hand for the unexpected visitor or workmen. Salmon is good, but I find that a two-pound can of roast beef goes farther and also provides gravy which may be thickened or, just as one cares to do, I also have marshmallow cream and confectioners' sugar on my shelves ready to fix up a cake or disguise cookies and make them appear more appetizing. Sauce is ready in the cellar, and also vegetables. This

leaves no cause to worry in regard to the hurried meal and one has no reason to feel that the meal was a failure with these or similar things on hand. If there is an especially busy day ahead peel the potatoes the day before and cover with water. Cook the meal the day before and also get the dessert ready. By preparing things the day before one gets time for the little odd jobs that are sure to arise on a busy day when everything is hustle and bustle.

One more help. Baby is just beginning to creep and takes up all the dust and dirt. Take the tops of old stockings and cut them down a short way. Then sew these up and place a rubber cord at the top and at the bottom of the legs and let her wear them around. The stockings take up the dirt instead of baby's clothes and the cost is nothing.

(It is not a good thing to make a rule of allowing peeled potatoes to stand long in water, as they lose part of their nutritive value.—Ed.)

Looking Your Best. Cookstoves and complexions! You've never thought of them as friends? Well, most of us don't, but they really are. For, after all, what is cooking a big dinner but giving your face the preliminaries of the steaming treatment that the beauty parlors charge so much for? Only you mustn't stop at the preliminaries if you're after a pretty skin. You must follow the same course as the beauty shops do.

After the dinner is cooked—that means after the steaming is over—take a clean towel and wipe your face thoroughly. Be especially careful of the corners where the blackhead is most prone to congregate. You see, the steam has opened all your pores and brought every bit of oil and foreign matter to the surface. When you wipe this away, you leave your skin very clean.

But, besides being clean, the skin is now relaxed and every pore is gaping open. To correct this, take the other end of the towel and dip it in the coldest water you can find. Slap it vigorously against the whole face, not neglecting the neck. What is the charm of a pretty face if it surmounts an ugly, dingy neck? Press your hardest against the muscles that are most likely to sag, and try to smooth out the little fine lines that fatigue brings so quickly under the eyes.

This treatment closes the pores and makes the skin firm and smooth. It will only take a minute or two before you sit down to dinner. But you will find that it is a minute or two well spent. For if you persist in turning your cookstove into a beauty parlor you'll find that your skin is becoming more attractive.

Round the world in 408 hours, at a cost of \$680, will soon be possible by connecting up different aerial routes. The usual time for the trip by land and water is reckoned at sixty days.

Minard's Liniment for Colds, etc. A habit all should cultivate, is to read and ruminate.

CORNS Lift Off with Fingers

Electric Ice Machines. There are now in operation throughout the United States many central electric stations provided with ice-making apparatus. The unused power of the stations during the "light load" summer season is employed to run compression motors for liquefying ammonia in the process of freezing artificial ice.

The plan has been especially successful with small plants supplying electric power and light for towns of less than five thousand inhabitants. In some cases the earning of the auxiliary ice-making apparatus equal the annual return on the whole plant for other purposes.

Why such marked difference in the psychic rays people send out, one person affecting us like a breath of Spring, another repelling us as a discord or bad odor, and still another—just nothing.—Frank Crane.

Minard's Liniment Used by Veterinaries

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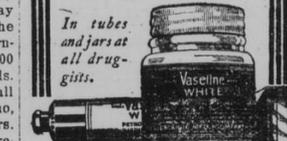
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