

THE ST. JOHN EVENING TIMES, TUESDAY, JANUARY 10 1905.

THE STORY OF A GREAT SECRET. Millions of Mischief.

By HEADON HILL.

Author of "By a Hair's Breadth," "The Duke's Deeds," "A Race with Rain," Etc., Etc.

"And some that smile have in their hearts, I fear, millions of mischief."

(Continued.) CHAPTER XXI.

Any confirmation that I needed of my interest in Janet was furnished by his despondent whine I received the staggering blow contained in Mrs. Krance's news. I could feel that my consternation was an open book to him, which he was reading without the slightest attempt at concealment. "Strangely enough, something as was his scrutiny of me, it had in it, rather pity than merriment."

As he read he drew a long breath, and as he reread the telegram he expelled the draught of air from his lungs as though he were riding himself of a nausea. From the brief glimpse he took over the perusal of the cipher, he had been receiving, was not in cipher. In his treatment of it, too, I noticed a difference. The cipher telegrams he had instantly destroyed by tearing them into infinitesimal fragments or burning them in the grate. This one he carefully folded and put it away in his pocket-book.

Then, without any reference to it, he looked up at me, his broad features breaking into a slow, almost paternal smile. "Heaven, how I hated him!" "I have been comforting the Colonel," he said, in his most cynical tone. "Let me also comfort you, my friend. I have been telling him that young ladies who wish to prolong their—shall we call them—holidays, are sometimes driven to strange shifts and expedients. In short, I pointed out to him that, far from having met with some disaster, his daughter might very well have sent that first telegram herself, having good reason for not returning to sleep last night at the house of the old servant with whom she was to stay. She might, for instance, be the Colonel, engaged in trying to pull chestnuts out of a very hot fire for a sweetheart unable to perform the operation for himself."

"You devil!" I snarled, guessing that his impromptu kindness had had for its object the pumping of the Colonel. Herzog continued to smile. "For are you," he said, "for a man who ought to have been hanged the day before yesterday. Yes, I comforted you also take comfort, my gallant captain, for I know that your trouble is the same. The Colonel cleared up a point that has been puzzling me by admitting that Miss Janet knew the notorious Rivington slightly—is it not right to emphasize that word my friend?"

"You must make what use you choose of your cunningly-gained discovery, but expect no information from me," I replied. "I am about to make an angry remark, but checked whatever he had been about to say, and remained silent for the rest of the evening, smoking, and evidently thinking deeply. Even in my sore distress about Janet, I derived some amusement from his knitted brows and impatient ejaculations, which I attributed, quite erroneously as I was to learn later, to his sudden discovery that I was an innocent man, and therefore useless to him as an assassin. The problem perplexing him touched me more nearly, and if I had only known it I should have done better by helping him to a solution. It was only as we lit our candles to go upstairs that he flung at me the remark: 'You will have cause to regret your reticence before many hours are over, Rivington!'"

"You mean that because you have found out there is an honest girl who believes in me your plot against the Premier stands revealed as hopeless, and that you will therefore have me recaptured?" I retorted. "He shook his head almost sadly. 'I cannot tell you whether your danger will spring—for the good reason that as yet I do not know,' he answered. 'Not from me, for in that case I should fall with you. This case has been a surprise packet all along, but I have not given up hope yet.'" "I was not a single ray for me."

It had begun to rain heavily during the evening, and now the wind rose, raising a swell on the beach that broke with a rhythmic cadence which would have lulled me to sleep at any other time. As it was, the wild voice of nature, the drip from the eaves, the sound of the waves, and the sob of the westerly gale, braced my senses to unusual alertness. I had left my window open, and so gained the full effect of the storm. Living wide awake on the bed, I was watching the ragged clouds chase each other across the angry sky, when suddenly the lower half of the open window was jerked by the shape of a human head. I remained perfectly still, staring at the motionless head and wondering grimly if after all this was the kind of danger Herzog had prophesied for me. If so, it was a welcome change from the anticipated knock at the front door by a posse of policemen. For upwards of two minutes the head remained as still as I did, and then it began to shift a little to the right and left. I knew quite well what was going on. The owner of the head, having satisfied himself that I was asleep, was endeavouring to locate my person on the bed, because they were towards the darkness of the room, and such a faint light as came upon the storm-wracked sky was behind him. He kept his full face towards me, and I saw the old-fashioned daguerotype, which his profile would have yielded. This was not the arm of the law,

but someone who wanted to murder me, and whom I should be justified in throttling. I told myself with a suppressed joy that glowed through my veins. I knew then how fiercely I had wanted to strangle someone—Herzog for choice—all the evening, and it was with savage anticipation that I watched the head desert from its focussing movements and rise higher with the clear intention of creeping through the window. The splash of the rain and the howling of the wind drowned any sound the intruder might have made, giving the impression of something stinging and staccato creeping in on me as one long log was lifted over the sill. I waited breathless, ready to spring and then the door of my room opened with a jerk, and a shaft of light from a bull-eye lantern, held by Herzog, fell on the face of my spectral visitor. It was the face of Roger Marske.

(To be continued.) HE HAD FAITH and it was justified.

GIN CAUSES A CHILD TO DIE. Father Taught His Five Year Old Boy to Drink and it Killed Him.

Hartford, Conn., Jan. 9.—Because of the death of his five year old son, Francis, from the effects of gin drinking, John Garrity, a constable, has been placed under arrest. The boy's death occurred in the Hartford Hospital to which he was taken from his home on Sunday morning after the police had learned of the case through the child's mother. The father is said to have admitted to the medical examiner that he had given the child a quantity of gin, although the boy had not asked for it.

NOTED OLD TIME ACTRESS DEAD. San Francisco, Jan. 9.—Miss Nellie Cummings an old time actress of note died here today, in poor circumstances, of asthma. Miss Cummings was leading lady for John McCulloch and Lawrence Barrett at the old California theatres in this city during the rainy days of the drama. After that time she drifted east, playing with many companies, notably those of Richard Mansfield, Frederick Warde and Edna Wallace Hooper. She had been playing brief engagements of late until her health broke down.

A QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY. New York, Jan. 9.—A Rome despatch to the Herald dated January 8 says: "The city is decorated today in honor of the birthday of Queen Helena. She has received congratulatory despatches from all important cities in Italy and abroad. Especially cordial was a message from Mde. Loubet. Special fetes were organized in Rome and other Italian cities. The Circo Militaire of Rome gave a banquet in honor of the occasion."

Mexico City, Jan. 9.—Apostolic delegate Seratini has resigned his post on account of his health and will leave for Rome next week. Mgr. Corveti, secretary of the apostolic delegation here, will perform the duties of delegate until the new representative of the Vatican arrives.

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