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## - The Face -Behind the Mask

A Romance.

The room was spacious and richly Just enough light stole through the oriel window at the fur-Ther end, draped with crimson satin, embroidered with gold, to show it. The floor was of veined wood of many colors, arranged in fanciful mosaics, and otrewn with Turkish rugs and Persian mats of gorgeous colors. The walls were carved, the ceiling comiced, and all fretted with gold network and gilded moldings. On a couch covered with erimson satin, like the window drap-ery, lay a cithren and some loose sheets of music. Near it was a small marble table, covered with books and drawongs, with a decanter of wine and an exquisite little goblet of Bohemian glass. The marble mantel was strewn with ornaments of porcelain and alabaster, and a beautifully carved vase of Parian marble stood in the center, filled with brilliant flowers. A great mir-ror reflected back the room, and beneath it stood a toilet-table, strewn with jewels, laces, perfume-bottles and an array of costly little feminine trifies such as ladies were as fond of two centuries ago as they are today. Evidently it was a lady's chamber, for in a recess near the window stood a great quaint carved bedstead, with curtains and snowy lace, looped back with golden arrows and scarlet ribbons. Some-one lay on it, too-at least Ormiston thought so; and he went cautiously forward, drew the curtain and looked

"Great heaven! what a beautiful ce!" was his cry, as he bent still further down. really a bride. The bridegroom could not have loved her much, I fancy, or

"What the plague is the matter?" asked Sir Norman, coming forward.
"You have said it," said Ormiston. recoiling. "The plague is the matter. There lies one dead of it!"

Curiosity proving stronger than fear, Sir Norman stepped forward to look at the corpse. I was a young girl with a face as lovely as a poet's vision.
That face was like snow now; and in
its calm, cold majesty, looked as exquisitely perfect as some ancient Grecian statue. The low, pearly brow, the sweet, beautiful lips, the delicate oval outline of countenance, were perfect. The eyes were closed and the long dark iashes rested on the ivory cheeks. A profusion of shining black hair fell in elaborate curls over her neck and bride: a robe of walte satin brocaded with silver, fairly dazzling in its shining radiance, and as brief in the article of sleeves and neck as that of any modern belle. A circlet of pearls was clasped round the snow-white throat, and bracelets of the same jewels encircled the snowy, taper arms. On her head she wore a bridal wreath and veil—the former of jewels, the latter falling around her like a cloud of mist. Everything was perfect, from the wreath and veil to the tiny sandaled feet; and lying there in her mute repose she looked more like some exquisite piece of sculpture than any-thing that had ever lived and moved in this groveling world of ours. But from one shoulder the dress had been pulled down, and there lay a great hvid purple plague-spot!

"Come away!" said Ormiston, catching his companion by the arm. "It is death to remain here!" Sir Norman had been standing like one in a trance, from which this address roused him, and he grasped Or-

miston's shoulder almost frantically. Look there, Ormiston! There lies very face that sorceress showed me fifteen minutes ago in her infernal caldron! I would know it at the other end of the world!" 'Are you sure?" said Ormiston.

glancing again with new curiosity at the marble face. "I never saw anything half so beautiful in my life; but you see she is dead of the plague." "Dead! Oh, she cannot be! Nothing so perfect could die!" 'Look there!" said Ormiston, point-

ing to the plague-spot. "There is the fatal token. For heaven's sake, let us get out of this, or we will share the same faite before morning.' But Sir Norman did not move-could not move; he stood there rooted to the

spot by the spell of that lovely, life-Usually the plague left its victims

hideous, ghastly discolored and cov-ered with blotches; but in this case there was nothing to mar the perfect beauty of the satin-smooth skin, but one dreadful mark. There Sir Norman stood in his trance

as motionless as if some genii out of

## All grecers sell Tea, but all that in spite of vigilance dust accumulates in cracks and corners, and is only Teas are not the same. Some are good and some are not

We have had a great many years' experience, and after carefully studying the productions of all the countries we recommend the use of

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moral sussion or to take him by the collar and drag him headlong down the stairs, when a providential but rather dismal circumstance came to his aid. A cart came rattling down the street, a bell was loudly rung, and a hoarse voice arose with it: "Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!"

Ormiston rushed downstairs to intercent the dead-cart already almost full London is a huge, half-regulated mechanism, the expression of a thous-and impulses to crowd together all those things which humanity cries out for. Close, side by side, are thrust, tailor shop, book mart, and fishmonger's stall, and human needs, but illcept the dead-eart, already almost full on its way to the plague-pit. The driver stopped at his call and instantly followed him upstairs and into the room. Glancing at the body with the clothed in human forms, push in and out, pass and repass-the forms change, the needs remain the same,

for they are never satisfied.

The real things are the buildings, the monuments, and the Thames; the utmost sangfroid, he touched the dress the monuments, and the Thames; the unreal are the people who rush by like baddy-colored phantoms on a vaudeville stage. The crooked ways of man, the narrow courts and lanes dodge siyly in among scarce wider streets and bump aduaciously against some great stone building. The little shops which line the lanes leer at you through half-closed window-fronts: and indifferently remarked:

"A bride, I should say, and an uncommonly handsome one, too. We'll just take her along as she is, and strip these nice things off the body when we get it to the plague-pit."
So saying he wrapped her in the sheet, and directing Ormiston to take through half-closed window-fronts; the bigger shops along the strand offer in profusion all their contents, or snuggle down among the serious ex-changes, with merry disregard of the hold of the two lower ends, took the upper corners himself, with the air of a man quite used to that sort of thing. Ormiston recoiled from touching it, and Sir Norman, seeing what they were about to do, and knowing there was no help for it, made up his mind, like a sensible young man as he was, to con-

queer effects they make.

In London the small shops are pushing and crowding along the thoroughfare of competition untroubled by the ceal his feelings, and caught hold of the sheet himself. In this fashion the approach of organized department In their still unconscious simplicity, they have not learned the wily art of window decoration. A candy shop has in the window a basket of red and yellow gum-drops and a heap of chocolate done up in silver paper. A hatter displays his whole stock in trade with green labels pinned struck eight. St. Michael's, St. Alban's and the others took up the sound; and the two young men paused to listen. For many weeks the sky had been clear, brilliant and blue; but on this night dark clouds were scudding in wild upper across it and the air was on the brims of straw and Derby. The shoe shop next is not so confused, for there is an inevitable symmetry about a pair of shoes. Then, open to the air, and recognized a rod away is the stall appressingly close and sultry.
"Where are you going now?" asked where fish, damp and glistening, are piled one atop the other. And so it

flead bride was carried downstairs and

laid upon a shutter on the top of a pile

It was now almost dark, and as the

cant started the great clock of St. Paui's

wild unrest across it, and the air was

Ormiston. "Are you for Whitehall tonight?"
"No," said Sir Norman, rather deject-

edly, turning to follow the pest-cart. "I am for the plague-pit in Finsbury

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Ormiston, energetically; "what will take you there? You surely are not made enough to follow the body of that dead girl?"
"I shall follow it! You can come or

"Oh, if you are determined, I will go with you, of course; but it is the craziest freak I ever heard of. After this you need never laugh at me."

"I never will," said Sir Norman, moodily; "for if you love a face you have never seen, I love one I have only have never seen.

looked on when dead. Does it not seem

sacrilege to throw anyone so like an angel into that horrible plague-pit?"

"I never saw an angel," said Ormiston, as he and his friend started to go after the dead-cart. "And I daresay

there have been scores as beautiful as

that poor girl thrown into the plague-

pit before now. I wonder why the

house has been deserted, and if she was

not even the pestilence could have scar-

"But, Ormiston, what an extraordinary thing it is that it should be pre-

cisely the same face that the fortune-

think I could be mistaken in such a

for I don't believe there ever was such

"So be it, then! Your object,

"Precisely so. Don't talk; I feel in no

the two friends followed the gloomy

dead-cart. A faint young moon, pale

and sickly, was struggling through

drifts of dark clouds, and lighted the lonesome streets with a wan, watery

glimmer. For weeks the weather had

been brilliantly fine-the days all sun-

his eyes on the pest-cart, and the long

white figure therein, took no heed of anything in the heaven above or in the

earth beneath, and strode along in dis-

mal silence till they reached, at last, their journey's end.

[To be Continued.]

MINNIE PALMER'S ESCAPE.

was bowing her acknowledgments at

the end of her act at Shea's last night,

a plaster ornament fell from the ceil-

ing and only missed her head by about

Once or twice a year the good house-wife has a thorough house cleaning. The house has been swept and dusted every

day in the year, but the housewife knows

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lations of waste and poisonous matter which invite disease. Doctor Pierce's

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larly once or twice a year, would save many a sickness. It purifies the blood,

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the body of poisonous accumulations.

The incident caused a sensation

Toronto, Dec. 26 .- As Minnie Palmer

shine, the nights all moonlight;

faith in La Masque for ever.'

Ormiston looked doubtful.

not, just as you please!"

ed him away.'

another created."

of bodies in the dead-cart.

LIKE AN OLD-TIME FAIR. The buying and selling of London are like some old-time fair--the shops so often seem no more than booths and of but short life. And turning just one corner you are out of it all and back 100 years. Take such a turn off Charing Cross—where cabs and 'buses keep up a din till long after 12 at night, where flower girls stand bareheaded on the curb, and crowds are worrying along in different directionsand you can be almost alone in a mel-ancholy street lined by lodging-houses having the dignity of old women who wear false fronts and leave their shoe laces untied.

One house looks more alert. It has a plate set in between the parlor windows, announcing the residence of Benjamin Franklin some 100 years ago. But a thin, gray cat sits carefully on the edge of the grating over the cellar way. Up the street there is another, not so gray but thinner—London is full gray cats and wizened old women.

And yet at the other end of this cobble-stone street one comes out on the Thames, and in the mist that rises from the river after sunset are seen the solemn perpendiculars of the houses of parliament. They rise above the petty transitory buildings about them just as the chimes of Big Ben teller showed me. There she was alive and here she is dead; so I've lost all ring out every quarter above the jar-ring noises of cabs and venders'

A "PAVEMENT ARTIST." "Are you quite sure it is the same, There is a wide stone wall along the "Quite sure?" said Sir Norman, in-ignantly. "Of course I am! Do you ink I could be mistaken in such a knees at his base drawing with colored chalks, which she smears with the case? I tell you I would know that face at Kamschatka or the North Pole. palms of her hands. There is a gray tower against a pink sky, a stretch of water and some green trees. She has made four pictures, and they are all country scenes. She looks up as course, in following that cart is to take a last look at her?" you pass with a defiant movement of her pretty head; her eyes are large and dark, and her wrists are thin and red mood for it just at present."

Ormiston smiled to himself and did as she rests her hands on the dusty not talk, accordingly; and in silence

On the other side of the embankment the Hotel Cecil stands back in its sixstory greatness behind a shabby parkway of trees and bushes. Quite a way down, past Queen's College, there is a archway, and underneath a flight of stone steps. These lead into the outer Temple court, and passing in there is a labyrinth of squares, passageways and smaller courts.

now Ormiston, looking up at the troubled face of the sky, concluded mentally that the lord mayor had se-The buildings are tall and stolidlooking. They will never tell the legal secrets of the barristers who have had lected an unpropitious night for the grand illumination. Sir Norman, with chambers within their walls; they will not confess to us what they confessed to Dickens—the windows are not frank and clear, but have small panes which in the gathering dust scarcely throw back the light that comes in over the tops of the other buildings.

THE TEMPLE WIG SHOP. In one corner of the Temple cloisters there is a little pigeon-hole shop where wigs and gowns are in display. They

might be the same that were there 50 years ago; there is dust about the And then there is a dingy little park, put right down into the stone paving. A young man comes from a darkening doorway, drops a roll of documents, picks them up, and takes a hurried cut

across the grass plot and hurries down Plum court. A woman sits all alone on the one bench, swinging her foot in its ragged shoe and bending her head over a basket. Her hair is matted, and sticks

out of the holes in her hat. She is the only person in there except the man who lies under a stone near the Templars' Church; he has lain there 300 y ears, if one makes out the figures rightly, so many feet have helped to ru them indistinct. The old church is three or four feet below the rest of the place. It is on

the former level of Fleet street. Under a lilac bush that shades another old gravestone there is a blinking, purring at, a cheerful guardian of a memory. It is all still and quiet. Some way it is oppressive, and you are glad to come out suddenly into the bustle and confusion of Fleet street. "THE CHESHIRE CHEESE." Dodging in front of a Piccadilly 'bus

and avoiding a "sandwich" man, you came to the other side of Fleet street, and nearby there is the sign, "Wine Court." It's a narrow court, and almost dark—just light enough to see another weather-beaten sign hanging out from a door only a few feet away. "The Cheshire Cheese" is inscribed thereon. From the door comes the heavy laugh of a man and the heavy 'chug" of ale glasses on a wooden

Inside there is, first of all, a smell of toasting cheese and the large portrait of Dr. Johnson and a ghost of Boswell's presence. The deep fireplace is cold, and the small-paned windows let in just enough light to note the rough dges on the favorite seat of Dr. Johnson-rather hard and narrow for the portly gentleman, but making dignity conspicuous by denying comfort. There are tables, three of them, on the other side of the small room, and there is plenty of good cheer at each one.

Thackery and Dickens used to come here, too, but they have no portraits. Goldsmith lived just across the court for a long time, and there is no doubt about his taking a glass of ale here

But it is the Welsh rarebit and rab-bit pie which link today with the past, and you feel a subtle sympathy with

the "Arabian Nights" had suddenly turned him into stone (a trick they were much addicted to), and destined him to remain there an ornamental fixture for ever. Ormiston looked at him distractedly, uncertain whether to try moral sussion or to take him by the collar and draw him headlong down the

## FACTS ABOUT

A Fragment of a Comet's Tail-The In tense Cold of Space Felt by Man.

The atmosphere forms an armor which is almost impenetrable to the meteors that are constantly pelting the earth. Most of the meteors are small. They come rushing through space, strike the atmosphere, and the friction against the molecules of air heats them to a white heat, and sets them ablaze. Sometimes part of one may reach the earth; but as a rule they are consumed and the dust alone, cosmic dust, drops upon the surface. One of the earliest known meteors fell in 204 B. C. in Phrygia, where for a long time it was worshiped. It was carried to Rome, and was supposed to be a messenger from the gods. Livy de-scribes a shower of meteoric stones. The people were greatly alarmed, and The people were greatly alarmed, and the senators were demoralized, and declared a nine days' festival to propitiate the gods. There is at Mecca a meteorite which fell in 600 A. D., and is still worshiped by the faithful. In Chinese literature there is mention of meteors which fell in 644 B. C. The oldest metaorite which was seen to fall oldest meteorite which was seen to fall is now on exhibition at Ensisheim, Alsace, Germany. In 1492 it came crashsace, Germany. In 1492 it came crashing down through the air with a roar that prostrated the peasantry with fright. It buried itself deeply in the earth. It weighed 200 pounds, and hangs today in the parish church.

The Chupaderos meteorite, which weighed 25 tons, fell in Chihuahua, Mexico. The largest meteorite known is the Peary stone which weighs and

is the Peary stone, which weighs ap-proximately 10 tons. The stone of Canyon Diable weighs at least ten tons, and exploded high in air, the pieces found all over the surrounding country. In Italy several instances are known of the loss of life from meteorites. A peasant was sitting in his cabin and was killed by an iron mass that crashed through the roof; the act was regarded as a visitation of divine anger. The city of Milan is perhaps the only one that has been struck by a meteorite. A meteorite of several pounds' weight fell in the heart of that city in the year 1660, on the authority of Paolo Maria Tezzayo, and struck a Franciscan monk. More remarkable are the falls at sea. That a ship should be struck would seem an extraordinary chance, yet a Swedish ship was so struck, the stone killing two of the crew. On Dec. 1, 1896, the ship Walkomming was sailing from New York to Bremen, when her officers noticed a brilliant meteor that appeared to be bearing down on the vessel from southeast to north-

west. It passed with a loud roar and hissing sound, and plunged into the sea ahead of the ship. That is was a meteor of large size was evident, for a few minutes later the ship was struck by a tidal wave. Even more remarkable was the experience of the British ship Cawdor, which reached San Francisco Nov. 20, 1897. During a severe storm, a large and brilliant meteor was observed rushing down upon the ship, and with a roar and filling the air with fumes of sulphur it passed between the masts of the ship and fell into the sea not fifty feet from

the rail.

One of the greatest curiosities pos sessed by man today is a supposed fragment of a comet in Mazapil, Mexico. The fragment is believed to be a part of the tail or Biela's comet. In 1846 something happened in space; wreck occurred; Biela's comet may have collided with another comet; in any case, the comet divided and many flying observers remember seeing the two parts gradually separating. Some fatality pursued one part of the comet and it met its fate in infinite space, Mterally went to pieces and became a wreck upon the shoreless sea of space. Astronomers predicted that if the comet itself did not appear in 1872 its wreckage would become visible as shooting stars, and this prediction was realized apparently as on Nov. 27, 1872, there burst from the heavens cloud of shooting stars. During the display one piece dropped upon the earth and was secured at Mazapil, Mexico, and was declared to be a part of the great comet.

The average meteorite immediately after its fall is intensely hot; but at least one, which was handled immediately after falling still held the in-tense cold of space. A few men can say that they have experienced this. A meteorite exploded above Dhurmsala, Kangara, Punjaub, India, in 1860, a section was picked up immediately by some natives who dropped it with expresions of pain. The explosion had exposed the interior of the meteor which had been chilled by the intense cold of space and was so cold that its effect was like a burn. This fragment is to be seen in the Field Museum. Of It. Dr. Farington, the curator, said:
"This is perhaps the only instance known where the cold of space has become perceptible to human senses."



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The Maritime Express from Halifax, St. John and other points east, will arrive at Montreal daily, except on Monday, at 5:30 p.m.

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