

The Great Impersonation

BY E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM.

(Continued from yesterday.)

Dominey returned from the sideboard, carrying also a well-filled plate.

"I had a pretty useful night's rest myself," he observed.

Mangan raised his eyeglasses and gazed at his host's throat.

"Cut yourself, eh?" he queried.

"Razor slipped," Dominey told him. "You got out of the use of those things in Africa."

"You've managed to give yourself a nasty gash," Mr. Mangan observed curiously.

"Parkins is going to send up for a new set of safety razors for me," Dominey announced. "About our plans for the day—I've ordered the car for two-thirty this afternoon, if that suits you. We can look around the place quietly this morning. Mr. Johnson is sleeping over at a farmhouse near here. We shall pick up on route. And I have told Lee, the butler, to come with us too."

Mr. Mangan nodded his approval.

"Upon my word," he confessed, "it will be a joy to me to go and see some of these fellows without having to put 'em off about repairs and that sort of thing. Johnson has had the worst of it, poor chap, but there are one or two of them I'd like to see."

"I intend that there shall be no more dissatisfaction amongst my tenants," Mr. Mangan set off for another stroll towards the sideboard.

"Satisfied tenants you never will get in Norfolk," he declared. "I must admit, though, that some of them have had cause to grumble lately. There's a fellow round by Wells who farms nearly eight hundred acres—"

He broke off in his speech. There was a knock at the door, not an ordinary knock at all, but a measured, deliberate tapping, three times repeated.

"Come in," Dominey called out.

Mrs. Unthank entered, severe, more unattractive than ever in the hard morning light. She came to the end of the table, facing the place where Dominey was seated.

"Good morning, Mrs. Unthank," he said.

"I am the bearer of a message," she announced.

"Pray deliver it," Dominey replied.

"Her ladyship would be glad for you to visit her in her apartment at once."

Dominey leaned back in his chair. His eyes were fixed upon the face of the woman whose antagonism to himself was so apparent. She stood in the path of a long gleam of morning sunlight. The wrinkles in her face, her hard mouth, her cold, steely eyes were all clearly revealed.

"I am not at all sure," he said, with a purpose in his words, "that any further meeting between Lady Dominey and myself is at present desirable."

"If he had thought to disturb this messenger by his suggestion, he was disappointed."

"Her ladyship desires me to assure you," she added, with a note of contempt in her tone, "that you need be under apprehension."

Dominey admitted defeat and poured himself out some more coffee.

Neither of the two noticed that his fingers were trembling.

"Her ladyship is very considerate," he said. "Kindly say that I shall follow you in a few minutes."

Dominey, following within a very few minutes of his summons, was ushered into an apartment large and sumptuously elegant, an apartment of faded white and gold walls, of chandeliers glittering with lustre of Louis Quinze furniture, shabby but priceless.

To his surprise, although he scarcely noticed it at the time, Mrs. Unthank promptly disappeared. He was alone with the first lady alone with the woman whom he had come to visit.

She was sitting up on her couch and watching his approach. A woman? Surely only a child, with pale cheeks, large, anxious eyes, and masses of brown hair brushed back from her forehead. After all, was he indeed a strong man, vowed to great things? There was a queer feeling in his throat, almost a mist before his eyes. She seemed so fragile, so utterly, sweetly pathetic. And all the time there was the strange light, or was it want of light, in those haunting eyes. His speech of greeting was never spoken.

"So you have come to see me, Everard," she said, in a broken tone. "You are very brave."

He possessed himself of her hand, the hand which a few hours ago had held the dagger to his throat, and kissed the waxen-like fingers. It felt to her side like a lifeless thing. Then she raised it and began rubbing softly at the place where his lips had fallen.

"I have come to see you at your bidding," he replied, "and for my pleasure."

"Pleasure!" she murmured, with a ghastly little smile. "You have learnt to control your words, Everard. You have slept here and you live. I have broken my word. Wonder why?"

"Because," he pleaded, "I have not deserved that you should seek my life."

"That sounds strangely," she replied. "Doesn't it say somewhere in the Bible—'A life for a life'? You kill—"

"I have killed other men since in self-defence," Dominey told her. "Sometimes it is to a man that he must stay or be slain. It was Roger Unthank—"

"I shall not talk about him any longer," she decided quite calmly. "The night before last, his spirit was calling to me below my window. He wants me to go down into Hell and live with him. The very thought is horrible."

"Come," Dominey said, "we will speak of other things. You must tell me what presents I can buy you. I have come back from Africa rich."

"Presents?"

For a single wonderful moment, here was the face of a child who has been offered toys. Her smile of anticipation was delightful, her eyes had lost their strange vacancy. Then, before he could say another word, it all came back again.

"Listen to me," she said. "This is important. I have sent for you because I do not understand why, quite suddenly last night, after I had made up my mind, I lost the desire to kill you. It is gone now. I am not sure about myself any longer. Draw your chair nearer to mine. Or, no, come to me, here at the other end of the sofa."

She moved her skirts to make room for him. When he sat down, he felt a strange trembling through all his limbs.

"Perhaps," she went on, "I shall break my oath. Indeed, I have already broken it. Let me look at you, my husband. It is a strong thing to you, my love you, and took me away from the school children used to call him Dour Roger? Do you remember the school children used to call him Dour Roger? But that does not matter. Do you know, Everard, that since you left me, my feet have not passed outside these gardens?"

"That can be altered when you wish," he said quickly. "You can visit where you will. You can have a motor-car, even a house in town. I shall bring some wonderful doctors here, and they will make you quite strong again."

Her large eyes were lifted almost piteously to his.

"But how can I leave here?" she asked plaintively. "Every week, sometimes often, he calls to me. If I went away, his spirit would break loose and follow me. I must be here to wave my hand, then he goes away."

Dominey was conscious once more of that strange and most unexpected fit of emotion. He was unrecognizable even to himself. Never before in his life had his heart beaten as it was beating now. His eyes, too, were hot. He had travelled around the world in search of new things, only to find them in this strange, faded chamber, side by side with this suffering woman. Nevertheless, he said quietly:

"We must send you some place where the people are kinder and more understanding. Perhaps you have music and to see beautiful pictures. I think that we must try and keep you from thinking."

She sighed in a perplexed fashion.

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Dominey was for a moment at a loss. "I came to see Doctor Harrison," he ventured.

"Doctor Harrison retired from practice some years ago," was the courteous reply. "I am his nephew. My name is Stillwell."

"I understood that Doctor Harrison was still in the neighborhood," Dominey said. "My name is Dominey—Sir Everard Dominey."

"I guessed as much," the other replied. "My uncle lives with me here, and to tell you the truth he was hoping that you would come and see him. He retains one patient only."

Dominey still added, in a graver tone. "You can imagine who that would be."

His caller bowed. "Lady Dominey, I presume."

The young doctor opened the door and motioned to his guest to precede him.

"My uncle has his own little apartment on the other side of the house," he said. "You must let me take you to him."

They moved across the pleasant white stone hall into a small apartment with French windows leading out to a flagged terrace and tennis lawn. An elderly man, broad-shouldered, with weather-beaten face, grey hair, and of somewhat serious aspect, looked round from the window before which he was standing, examining a case of fishing flies.

"Uncle, I have brought an old friend in to see you," his nephew announced.

The doctor glanced expectantly at Dominey, half moved forward as though to greet him, then checked himself and shook his head doubtfully.

"You certainly remind me very much of an old friend, sir," he said, "but I can see now that you are not he. I do not believe that I have ever seen you before in my life."

There was a moment's somewhat tense silence. Then Dominey advanced a little stiffly and held out his hand.

"Come, Doctor," he said. "I can scarcely have changed as much as all that. Even these years of strenuous life—"

"You mean to tell me that I am speaking to Everard Dominey?" the doctor interposed.

"Without a doubt!"

The doctor shook hands coolly. His was certainly not the enthusiastic welcome of an old family attendant to the representative of a great family.

"I should certainly never have recognised you," he confessed.

"My presence here is nevertheless indisputable," Dominey continued. "Still attracted by your old pastime, I see, Doctor?"

"I have only taken up fly fishing," the other replied dryly, "since I gave up shooting."

There was another somewhat awkward pause, which the younger man endeavored to bridge over.

"Fishing, shooting, golf," he said, "I really don't know what we poor medical practitioners would do in the country without sport."

"I shall remind you of that later," Dominey observed. "I am told that the shooting is one of the only glories which has not passed away from you."

"I shall look forward to the reminder," was the prompt response.

His uncle, who had been bending once more over the case of flies, turned abruptly around.

"Arthur," he said, addressing his nephew, "you had better start on your own. I dare say you will find it hard to speak to me privately."

"I wish to speak to you certainly," Dominey admitted, "but only professionally."

"I am late as it is," Dominey excused himself. "If you will excuse me, Dr. Stillwell, I will be back in a moment."

"I will be getting on. You must excuse my uncle, Sir Everard," he added in a lower tone, drawing him a little towards the door. "If his answers are a little gruff, he is devoted to Lady Dominey, and I sometimes think that he broods over her case too much."

Dominey nodded and turned back into the room to find the doctor, his hands in his pockets, looking steadily at him.

"I find it very hard to believe," he said in a little curiously, "that you are really Everard Dominey."

"I am afraid you will have to accept me as a fact, nevertheless."

"Your present appearance, the old man continued, eying him appraisingly, "does not in any way bear out the description I had of you some years ago. I was told that you had become a broken-down drunkard."

"The world is full of liars," Dominey said quietly. "You appear to have met with one, at least."

"You have not even," the doctor persisted, "the appearance of a man who has been used to excesses of any sort."

"Good old stock, ours," his visitor observed carelessly. "Plenty of two-bell men behind my generation."

"You have also gained courage since the days when you fled from England. You slept at the Hall last night?"

"Where else? I also, if you want to know, occupied my own bedchamber—"

"With results," Dominey added, throwing his head a little back to display the scar on his throat, "although insignificant."

"That's just your luck," the doctor declared. "You've no right to have gone there without seeing me, no right, after all that has passed, to have even approached your wife."

"You seem rather a martinet as regards my domestic affairs," Dominey observed.

"That's because I know your history," was the blunt reply.

Uninvited, Dominey seated himself in an easy chair.

"You were never my friend, Doctor," he said. "Let me suggest that we conduct this conversation on a purely professional basis."

"I was never your friend," came the reply, "because I have known you always as a selfish brute; because you were married to the sweetest woman on God's earth, gave up none of your bad habits, frightened her into insanity by reeling home with another man's blood on your hands, and then stayed away for over ten years instead of making an effort to repair the mischief you had done."

(Continued tomorrow)

MARINE NEWS

PORT OF ST. JOHN.

Thursday, August 5.
Tugs Roebeling and dredge in tow from Norfolk, N.S.
Coastwise—Sch. Valtare, 95, Trahan from Bear River, N. B.

Cleared Wednesday.

Tug Roebeling for Boston.
Coastwise—Sch. Mildred K, 35, Ogilvie, for Parrsboro; Ethel, 22, Dewey, for Hillsboro; N. B.; Aggie Curry, 21, Saboon, for Harvey, N. B.; Valtare, 95, Trahan, for Bear River; gas sch. King Daniel, 29, Milton, for Apple River; auxiliary sch. Arawan, 31, Drew, for Advocate, N. S.

CANADIAN PORTS.

Campbellton, Aug. 3.—(C) from barge Queen of Scots, 1296, Westbury, Port Natal, South Africa, car go sawn spruce lumber.

Halifax, Aug. 3.—(A) tug Musquash

CUNARD ANCHOR

MONTREAL-GLASGOW

Aug. 7 Sept. 11 Oct. 16 ... Cassandra
Aug. 21 Sept. 25 Oct. 30 ... Saturnia
N. Y. S. S. COW (Via Moville)
Aug. 2 Sept. 13 Oct. 18 ... Columbia
NEW YORK-LIVERPOOL
Aug. 14 Sept. 11 Oct. 9 ... Victoria
Aug. 21 Sept. 18 ... Caronia
N. Y. PLYMOUTH, CHERBOURG & LONDON
Sept. 18 Oct. 25 Dec. 4 ... Caronia
N. Y.-CHERBOURG, SOUTHAMPTON
July 31 Aug. 28 Sept. 22 ... Aquitania
Aug. 12 Sept. 9 Oct. 7 ... Imperator
Sept. 2 Sept. 30 ... Mauretania
N. Y. DUBROVNIK & TRIESTE
July 31 ... Italia
N. Y. NAPLES DUBROVNIK AND TRIESTE
Aug. 28 ... Pannonia
"Via Queenstown
For rates of passage, freight and further particulars apply to local agents or
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GENERAL AGENTS
140 PRINCE WILLIAM STREET
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Furness Line

From London To London
Via Halifax
July 31—S. S. Comino—Aug. 20

Manchester Line

From Manchester To Philadelphia and Manchester
July 16—S. S. Man. Exchange Aug. 5

Passenger Ticket Agents for North Atlantic Lines.
FURNESS, WITHEY & CO., Ltd.
Royal Bank Bldg.
Tel. Main 2616 St. John, N. B.

GRAND MANAN S.S. CO.

DAYLIGHT TIME.
Commencing June 1st, 1920, a steamer leaves Grand Manan Mondays, 7.30 a. m., for St. John via Campbell and Eastport, returning leaves St. John Tuesdays, 10 a. m., for Grand Manan, via the same ports.
Wednesdays leave Grand Manan 8 a. m., for St. Stephen, via intermediate ports, returning Thursdays.
Fridays, leave Grand Manan 6.30 a. m., for St. John direct, returning 2.30 same day.
Saturdays, leave Grand Manan, 7.30 a. m., for St. Andrews, via intermediate ports, returning 1.30 same day.
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