The Heart of a Woman

By BARONESS ORCZY

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CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued)

"Of course I do," he retorted gruffly, "but it's all nonsense."

"Of course it is. But worrying nevertheless."

"I don't see how such rubbish can worry you."

"Not," she said, "for myself. But for Luke. He must have got an inkling by now of what is going on."

"Of course he has. And if he has a grain of sense he'll treat it with the contempt it deserves."

"It's all very well, father. But just think for a moment. Place yourself in Luke's position. The very idea that you might be suspected must in itself be terrible."

"Not when you are innocent," he rejoined with the absolute certitude of a man who has never been called upon to face any really serious problem in life. "I shouldn't care what the rabble said about me, if I had a clear conscience."

Louisa was silent for a minute or two, then she said:

"Luke is different somehow. He has been different lately."

"He has a lot to put up with, with old Radclyffe going off his head in that ridiculous way."

But Louisa did not reply to that suggestion. She knew well enough that it was neither Lord Radclyffe's unkindness, nor the arrogance of the new cousin that had changed and softened Luke's entire nature.

The day that he had sat beside her on the stairs at Lady Ducies' ball, the completeness of the change had been fully borne in on her. When Luke said to her: "I would give all I have in the world to lie on the ground before you and to kiss the soles of your feet," she knew that Love had wrought its usual exquisite miracle, the absorption of self by another, the utter sinking of the ego before the high altar of the loved one. She knew all that, but dear old Colonel Harris had forgotten—perhaps he had never known.

That knowledge comes to so few, nowadays. Life, psychology, and sexual problems have taken the place of the divine lesson which has glorified the world since the birth of Lilith.

All that Louisa now remarked to her kind and sensible father was—

"You know, dear, suspicion has killed a man before now. It was but a very little while ago that a noble-hearted gentleman preferred death to such dishonor."

"You've got your head," he retorted, "full of nonsense, Lou. Try and be a sensible woman now, and think of it all quietly. Is there anything you would like me to do, for instance?"

"Yes, if you will."

"What is it?"

"Couldn't you see Uncle Ryder?"

"At Scotland Yard, you mean?"

"He is at the head of the Criminal Investigation Department, isn't he?"

"I've always understood so."

"Would he see you, do you think, at his office?"

"Tom not see me?" exclaimed Colonel Harris. "Of course he would. What do you want me to see him about?"

"He could tell you exactly how matters stood with regard to—to Luke, couldn't he?"

"He could. But would he?"

"You can but try."

"It's a great pity your aunt is out of town; you might have heard a good deal from her."

"Oh, Sir Thomas never tells aunt anything that's professional," said Louisa with a smile. "She'd be forever making muddles."

"I am sure she would," he assented with deep conviction.

"Do you think I might go with you?"

"What? To Tom's? I don't think he would like that, Lou; and it wouldn't quite do, you know."

"Perhaps not," she agreed with hardly even a sigh of disappointment. She was so accustomed, you see, to being thwarted by convention, whenever impulse carried her out of the bounds which the world had prescribed. Moreover, she expected to see Luke soon. He would be sure to come directly after an early visit to Grosvenor Square.

She helped her father on with his coat. She was almost satisfied that he should go alone. She would have an hour with Luke, if he came early, and it was necessary that she should have him to herself, before too many people had shouted evil and good news ,congratulations, opprobrium, and suspicions at him.

Colonel Harris, she knew, would get quite as much if not more information out of his brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Ryder, than he could do if she—a mere woman—happened to be present at the interview. Sir Thomas would trust Colonel Harris with professional matters which he never would confide to a woman, and Louisa trusted her father implicity.

She knew that, despite the grumblings and crustiness peculiar to every Englishman, when he is troubled with domestic matters whilst sitting at his own breakfast table, her father had Luke's welfare just as much at heart as she had herself.

CHAPTER XIX.

Not All About It.

Colonel Harris sent in his card to Sir Thomas Ryder. He had driven over from the Langham in a hansom—holding taxicabs in even more whole-hearted abhorrence than before. He inquired at once if Sir Thomas was in his private sanctum, and if so whether he might see him.

Curiously enough the chief, usually quite inaccessible to the casual visitor—whether relative or stranger—received his brother-in-law immediately.

"Hello, Will," he said by way of greeting, the way Englishmen have of saying that they are pleased to see one another.

"Hello," responded Colonel Harris in the same eloquent tone.

And the two old boys shook hands.

Sir Thomas then resumed his official chair behind his huge desk and motioned his brother-in-law to an arm-chair close by.

"Have a cigar," said the host.

"Thanks," rejoined the other.

The box was handed across, a Havana selected.

The cigars were lighted, and for quite three minutes the two men smoked in silence. One of them had come here to find out how much of his daughter's happiness lay in jeopardy; the other knew what was in the balance, the danger to his niece's happiness, the terrible abyss of misery which yawned at her feet.

But both sat there and enjoyed their cigars. They were dressed with scrupulous care, in the uniform prescribed by the world in which they lived as being suitable for gentlemen of their position and of their age; frock coats and dark gray trousers, immaculate collar, and tie with pearl pin. Both wore a seal ring on the little finger of the left hand, and a watch chain of early Victorian design. They might be twins but for their faces. Convention had put a livery on them which they would on no account have discarded.

But the faces were very different. Colonel Harris carried his sixty years as easily as if they had been forty. There were not many lines on his round, chubby face, with its red cheeks, and round, child-like eyes. The heavy cavalry moustache, once auburn, now almost white, hid the expression of the mouth, but one felt, judging by the eyes and the smooth forehead, which continued very far onto the back of the head, that if one were allowed a peep below that walrus-like face adornment one would see a mouth that was kind and none too firm, the mouth of a man who had led other men, perhaps, but who had invariably been led by his women folk.

Now Sir Thomas Ryder was—or rather is, for he is still in perfect health and full of vigor—a very different type of man. You have no doubt seen him about town—for he takes a constituional in the park every day on his way to his work, and he goes to most first nights at the theatres—and if so you will have admired the keen, sharp face, the closely set eyes, the mobile mouth free from moustache or beard: the face is furrowed all over, especially round the eyes, yet he does not look old. That is because of the furrows; they form a wonderful net-work round his eyes, giving them an expression of perpetual keen amusement. The hair is pale in color—not white but faded—and scanty. Sir Thomas wears it carefully brushed across the top of his head, with a parting on the left side.

He has a trick when he is thinking deeply of passing his hand—which is white, slender and tapering—over that scanty covering of what, but for it, would be a bald cranium.

Some people said that Sir Thomas Ryder was a man without any sentiment; others that he was a slave to red tape; but no one denied the uncontrovertible fact that he was the right man in the right place.

He looked the part and always acted it, and fewer blunders had undoubtedly been committed in the detective department of the metropolitan police since Sir Thomas Ryder took the guiding reins in hand.

"I suppose," he said at last, "that you've come to see me about this de Mountford business."

"I have," replied Colonel Harris simply.

"Well, it's not a pleasant business."

"I know that. The papers are full of it, and it's all a confounded damnable business, Tom, and that's all about it."

"Unfortunately it's not 'all about it,'" rejoined Sir Thomas dryly.

"That's what Louisa says. Women are so queer about things of that sort; and the papers are full of twaddle. She is anxious about Luke."

"I don't wonder."

"But it's all nonsense, isn't it?"

"What is?"

Colonel Harris did not reply immediately; for one thing, he did not know exactly how to put his own fears and anxieties into words. They were so horrible and so far-fetched that to tell them plainly and baldly to his brother-in-law, to this man with whom he was soberly smoking a cigar in a sober-looking office, while hansoms and taxicabs were rattling past in the street below within sight and hearing, seemed little short of idiocy. He was not a man of deep penetration—was Colonel Harris—no great reader of thoughts or of character. He tried to look keenly at Sir Thomas' shrewd face, but all he was conscious of was a net-work of wrinkles round a pair of eyes which seemed to be twinkling with humor.

Humor at this moment? Great Havens above!

"I wish," he blurted out somewhat crossly at last, "you'd help me out a bit, Tom. Hang it all, man, all this officialism makes me dumb."

"Don't," said Sir Thomas blandly, "let it do that, Will," and the speaker's eyes seemed to twinkle even more merrily than before.

"Well then tell me something about Luke."

"Luke de Mountford," mused the other as if the name recalled some distant impression.

"Yes, Luke de Mountford, who is engaged to Louisa, your niece, man, and she's breaking her heart with all the drivel these newspapers talk and I couldn't bear it any longer; so I've come to you, Tom, and you must tell me what truth there is in the drivel, and that's all I want to know."

Sir Thomas Ryder seemed, whilst the other thus talked volubly, to have suddenly made up his mind to say more than had originally been his intention. Anyway, he now said with abrupt directness:

"If, my good Will, by 'drivel' you mean that in the matter of the assasination of Philip de Mountford, in a taxicab last night, grave suspicion rests on his cousin Luke, then there's a great deal of truth in the drivel."

Colonel Harris received the sudden blow without much apparent emotion. He had been sitting in an arm-chair with one hand buried in his trousers pocket, the other holding the cigar.

Now he merely glanced down at the cigar for a moment and then conveyed it to his lips.

"What," he asked, "does that mean exactly?"

"That unless Luke de Mountford will, within the next forty-eight hours, answer certain questions more satisfactorily than he has done hitherto, he will be arrested on a charge of murder."

"That is impossible," protested Colonel Harris hotly.

"Impossible? Why?"

"Because—because—hang it all, man! you know Luke de Mountford. Do you believe for a moment that he would commit such a dastardly crime? Why, the boy wouldn't know how to plan such villainy, let alone carry it through."

"My dear Will," rejoined the other quietly, "the many years which I have spent at this desk have taught me many things. Among others I have learned that every man is more or less capable of crime; it only depends what the incentive—the temptation if you like to call it so—or the provocation happens to be."

"But here there was no provocation, no temptation, no——"

Colonel Harris paused abruptly. He felt rather than saw his brother-in-law's eyes in their framework of wrinkles resting with obvious sense of amusement upon his wrathful face. No temptation? And what of a peerage and a fortune lost, that could only be regained by the death of the intruder? No provocation? And what of the brother and sister turned out of the old home? The good, simple-minded man had sense enough to see that here, if he wished to speak up for Luke, he was on the wrong track.

"What questions," he said abruptly, "does Luke not answer satisfactorily?"

"How he spent certain hours of yesterday evening."

"He was dancing attendance on Louisa and me."

"Oh, was he? Well that's satisfactory enough. At what time did you part from him?"

"Well! he escorted us to the Danish Legation where we were dining."

"At what time was that?"

"Eight o'clock dinner."

"But he was not dining at the Danish Legation?"

"No. He came and fetched us again soon after eleven."

"That's right, but between whiles?"

"Between whiles?"

"Yes. Between eight and soon after eleven?"

"Well—I suppose—I don't know—yes, of course, I do! What a stupid ass I am. Luke told me himself that he was going to see his uncle at the Something Club in Shaftesbury Avenue."

"The Veterans'?"

"Yes, that's it—the Veterans'. Luke wanted to persuade old Radclyffe to go abroad for the benefit of his health—Algeciras—that was it."

"Quite so," rejoined Sir Thomas dryly, "and Luke de Mountford went to the Veterans' Club in Shaftesbury Avenue,and he asked to see Lord Radclyffe, who was a more or less regular habitue at that hour. On being told that Lord Radclyffe was not there that evening, but that Mr. de Mountford was in the smoking room, Luke elected to go in and presumably to have a talk with his cousin."

"I didn't know that," said Col. Harris.

"No, but we did. Let me tell you what followed. The hall porter of the club showed Luke into the smoking room, and less than five minutes later he heard loud and angry words proceeding from that room. That a quarrel was going on between the two cousins was of course obvious. One or two members of the club remarked on the noise, and one gentleman actually opened the smoking room door to see what was going on. He seems to have heard the words 'blackguard' and 'beggar' pleasingly intermingled and flying from one young man to the other. This witness knew Philip de Mountford very well by sight, but he had never seen Luke. But remember that Luke denies neither the interview nor the quarrel. The former lasted close on an hour, and Lord Radclyffe's journey to Algeciras was the original topic of discussion. At about 9 o'clock Luke emerged from the smoking room. The hall porter saw him. He was then very pale and almost tottered as he walked. Men do get at times intoxicated with rage, you know, Will."

"I know that, and I can well imagine what happened at that interview. Radclyffe had become such a confounded fool that he would not move or do anything without this Philip's permission: and Luke was determined to get him down to Algeciras at once. As Philip was at the club, he thought that he would tackle him then and there."

"Quite so. He did tackle him. And equally of course the two men quarrelled."

"But hang it all, one's not going to murder every man with whom one quarrels."

"Stop a moment, Will. As you say, one does not murder every man with whom one quarrels. But you must admit that this altogether an exceptional case. There was more than a mere quarrel between these two men. There was deadly enmity—justified enmity, I'll own, on Luke's side. We have already come across—it was not very difficult—two or three of the servants who were in Lord Radclyffe's house before. Luke and his brother and sister were finally turned out of it. They all have tales to tell of the terrible rows which used to go on in the house between the cousins. You Will, must know how Luke hated this Philip de Mountford?"

Again Colonel Harris was silent. What was the use of denying such an obvious truth?

"You wanted," continued the other man quietly, "to hear the truth, Will, and you've got it. For Louisa's sake, for all sakes, in fact, I made up my mind to tell you all—or most—that is officially known to me at this moment. You must get Louisa out of town at once—take her abroad if you can, and keep English newspapers away from her."

"She won't come," said Colonel Harris firmly.

"Oh, yes, she will, if you put it the right way."

Which saying on the part of the acute chief of our Criminal Investigation Department was but a further proof—if indeed such proofs were still needed nowadays—of how little clever men know of commonplace women.

"The case will be extremely unpleasant," resumed Sir Thomas who was quite unconscious of the ignorance which he had just displayed. "It will be hateful for you, and quite impossible for Louisa."

"Always supposing," retorted the other, "that Luke is guilty, which neither I nor Louisa will admit for a moment."

"That," rejoined Sir Thomas, "is as you please."

He put down his cigar, crossed one leg over the other, leaned back in his chair, and folded his tapering hands together, putting finger to finger, with the gesture of one who is dealing with a youthful mind, and has much to explain.

"Look here, Will," he resumed, "I have three men standing in my outer office at the present moment. Two of them have come back after having questioned the past servants of the Grosvenor Square household. There was the butler Parker, and an elderly housekeeper, both of whom are in service in the West End. The woman tried to screen Luke and to make light of the many quarrels which broke out between the cousins on all possible occasions; but she broke down under our fellows' sharp questions. She had to admit that the arrogance of the one man often drove the other to unguarded language, and that she had on more than one occasion heard the men servants of the house say that they would not be astonished if murder ensued one day. Well, we have these two witnesses, and can easily get hold of the two or three footmen who expressed those particular views. So much for the past six months. Now for last night. The third man who is out there waiting for me to see him is Frederick Power, hall porter at the Veterans' Club. The story which he told to our Mr. Travers is so important in its minutest detail, that I have decided to question him myself so that I may leave no possible loop-hole to doubt or to inaccuracy in the retelling. I am going to send for the man now. You come and sit round here, the other side of my desk; from this position you will be able to watch the man's face, as well as hear what he has got to say. Now, would you like that?"

"Right you are, Tom," was Colonel Harris' brief method of acknowledging his brother-in-law's kindness, in thus breaking a piece of red tape and setting aside a very strict official rule. He did as Sir Thomas directed, and sat down in the recess behind the chief's desk, in a comfortable arm-chair with his back to the curtained window.

He would not acknowledge even to himself how deeply stirred he was by all that he had heard, and now by the anticipation of what was yet to come. Emotion—like he was experiencing now—had never come his way before now. He had lost his only son on the Modder River—that had been sorrow of an acute kind; he had laid a much loved wife to rest in the village churchyard close to his stately home in Kent; and he had escorted his late beloved sovereign to her last resting place on the never-to-be-forgotten day close on five years ago now; those three events in his life had been the great strains to which his nerves and sensibilities had been subjected in the past.

But this was altogether different. The sensations which the good man experienced were such that he scarcely knew them himself; he had faced sorrow before, never dishonor—some one else's dishonor, of course—still it touched him very nearly, for, though he might not be a very keen obeerver, he dearly loved his daughter, and dishonor seemed to be touching her, striking at her through Luke.

CHAPTER XX.

And That's the Truth.

Frederick Power was shown in.

I won't have you think that there was anything remarkable about the man, or anything that would—even momentarily—distinguish him from any number of other hall porters, who wear a uniform and peaked cap, have the air of having seen military service, and wear a couple of medals on a well-developed chest.

He was perfectly respectful, all the more so because Sir Thomas was General Sir Thomas Ryder, K.C.B.—a fact which impressed the ex-soldier far more than any other exalted title, non-military in character, would have done.

He saluted and stood at attention, and as he gave answer to Sir Thomas's preliminary questions his words rang out clear and direct, obviously truthful, as if echoing in the barrack yard at 6 o.m. of a frosty spring morning.

"Your name is ——?"

"Frederick Power, sir."

"You are hall porter at the Veterans' Club in Shaftesbury Avenue?"

"Yes, sir."

"You were in the lobby of the club last night as usual?"

"Yes, sir."

"And Mr. Philip de Mountford, who is a member of the club, was in the smoking room at 8 o'clock yesterday evening?"

"Yes, sir."

"He came almost every evening, I understand?"

"That's right, sir."

"Alone mostly?"

"Not often, sir. Lord Radclyffe was with him most evenings."

"And Lord Radclyffe and Mr. de Mountford dined together on those occasions in the club dining-room?"

"Yes, sir."

"But last night Mr. de Mountford was alone?"

"Yes, sir. He had some dinner at about half past seven and then he went to the smoking room."

"Later on a gentleman called to see him?"

"That's right, sir. It was about a quarter past eight. The gentleman asked to see Lord Radclyffe, but I said that 'is lordship 'adn't came to the club this night. Then the gentleman asked if Mr. de Mountford was in, and I said yes."

"And you showed him into the smoking room?"

"I told 'im he would find Mr. de Mountford in the smoking room; yes, sir."

"Isn't that rather against club rules to allow strangers to walk in and out of the rooms?"

"Well, sir, the Veterans' is a new club—and the committee ain't very partikla'r."

"I see."

So far the questions and answers had followed on one another in quick succession. Sir Thomas Ryder, with his clever lean head held somewhat on one side, appeared to be reciting a well-learned lesson, so even and placid was the tone of his voice and so indifferent the expression of his furrowed face. One leg was crossed over the other and his tapering hands, white and wrinkled like his face, toyed with a large ivory paper knife hardly whiter in color than they.

He had not told Frederick Power to sit down, as he might have done in the case of a witness who was a civilian. He preferred to keep the man standing, and at attention, confident that he would thus get clearer and sharper replies.

"Well, then," he resumed after a brief interval during which he had modified his position somewhat, but had not varied the placid expression of his face, "you told the visitor that he would find Mr. de Mountford in the smoking room. What happened after that?"

"The gentleman walked in, sir. And he shut the door, sir, after 'im."

"Did you hear anything that went on inside the room?"

"No, sir. I didn't pay no attention at first, sir."

"Then afterward? After awhile, you did pay attention, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir, I did. The door of the smoking room is quite close to the entrance, sir, and presently I heard loud voices like as if the two gentlemen was quarrelling."

"Did you hear what was said?"

"No, sir, not the words. But the voices they sounded awful. And one other gentleman 'e come along from the dining-room, and asked me what the noise was about. There ain't many members now at the Veterans', sir, and being a foggy night we was partik'lar quiet. But this gentleman 'e was curious about the noise, so 'e just opened the smoking room door and peeped in, and then I did 'ear a few words."

"What were they?"

"Abuse, sir, mostly. One gentleman was goin' on awful, but I couldn't rightly say which one it was. I 'eard the word 'beggar' and 'lazy, idling, good-for-nothing' but I couldn't rightly say 'oo said 'em."

"How long did this go on?"

"Oh, a long time, sir! I couldn't say for sure. After a bit it got quiet in the smoking room. And at about nine o'clock or soon after the visitor come away, and 'e asked me for a light."

"What did he seem like then?"

"I thought 'e'd been drinking, sir. His face was all queer, and pale, and moist-like, and 'is 'and shook like anything when he lighted 'is cigarette."

"Mr. de Mountford did not come out with him?"

"No, sir, not just then, but 'e come out of the smoking room a moment or two later, whilst 'is visitor was stil lin the 'all. Mr. de Mountford 'e was quite calm, sir, didn't look at all as if 'e'd been 'aving a quarrel. 'E'd his cigar between 'is lips, his 'at on, and 'is overcoat over 'is arm."

"Did he speak to the visitor then?"

"Not right away, sir. 'E seemed to be 'esitating like at first, then 'e came forward and 'e says: 'I am going back to Grosnevor Square now. Would you like to see Uncle Rad about this business yourself? But I warn you that 'e is of the same mind as myself.'"

"And what did the other gentleman say?"

"'E just kind of laughed and shrugged his shoulders and said: 'I've no doubt of that.'"

"Then after that did they agree to go to Grosvenor Square together?"

"I don't rightly know, sir, if the two gentlemen said anything about that, but the visitor 'e went out first, and Mr. de Mountford followed 'im into the outer lobby. Then 'e turned and spoke to me."

"Who did?"

"Mr. de Mountford, sir; the other gentleman wasn't a yard away from 'im and must 'ave 'eard every word 'e said."

"What did he say?"

"'E said to me: 'Power, I say, you've no business to allow people to enter the club rooms like that. You must keep them waiting in the 'all, one will get hopelessly pestered by beggars at this rate.' Them were Mr. de Mountford's very words, sir, I'd take my Bible oath to every one of 'em; and the other gentleman 'e was in the outer lobby, sir, and 'e must 'ave 'eard every syllable. I caught sight of 'is face and, my word, there was murder in 'is eye."

"That'll do, Power," admonished Sir Thomas, thus checking the man's flow of excited eloquence.

"Very good, sir," replied the other humbly.

"And after that what happened?"

"Both gentlemen went off, sir. I tried to look after 'em but the fog was that thick one couldn't see one's 'and before one's eyes."

"So you lost sight of them just outside the club-house?"

"That's right, sir."

"And did you see either of these two gentlemen since then?"

"No, sir." And the man's voice dropped to a solemn whisper. "Mr. de Mountford was murdered in a taxicab, sir—must 'ave been soon after 'e left the club."

"Very soon, I should say. But the other?"

"I saw the other gentleman this morning, sir."

"Where?"

"Mr. Travers from the police, sir, 5e called to see me at the club, and 'e took me in a taxicab to Grosvenor Square, and told the shoffer, sir, to pull up by the curb on the garden side. Then 'e told me to watch a partik'lar 'ouse opposite and see 'oo was goin' in or out. I didn't 'arf like it, sir, because I'm not supposed to absent myself for very long of a morning, though the committee ain't very partik'lar. But Mr. Travers 'e was of the police, sir, so I thought it was right to do as 'e told me."

"Quite right. And what did you see?"

"Nothing much for close on an hour, sir; a carriage drew up to the door of the 'ouse and an elderly gentleman got out. Mr. Travers told me that it was the doctor. 'E rang the bell and went into the 'ouse. Then after a bit 'oo did I see walking down the street and straight up to the front door of the partik'lar 'ouse, I'd been told to look at, but Mr. de Mountford's visitor of last night."

"You recognized him?"

"Couldn't mistake 'im, sir."

"Did you call Mr. Travers' attention to him?"

"Yes, sir. I told 'im that was the gentleman 'oo'd 'ad an awful quarrel with Mr. Philip de Mountford at the club last night."

"That's all, Power. I won't trouble you further now."

"No trouble, sir."

"Your position at the club is a permanent one?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are always to be found there?"

"Always, sir, whenever you want me."

"Well, send a line to the chief superintendent at Scotland Yard in case yours plans get suddenly modified and you are no longer to be found at the club."

"Not likely, sir. Thank you, sir. Good morning."

"Good morning."

Sir Thomas touched the electric button in the wall behind him, and a man in a dark blue uniform appeared. Frederick Power was dismissed. He saluted both gentlemen and turning on his heel in proper military fashion, he marched out of the room, obviously delighted with his own importance and with the adventure which varied so pleasantly the monotonous evenness of his existence.

CHAPTER XXI.

Have Another Cigar.

"Well, William, what do you think of it all?"

The two men had sat in silence for quite a considerable time after Frederick Power had marched out of the room. Colonel Harris buried in thought was in no hurry to talk things over. Sir Thomas Ryder—a very busy man—was the more impatient of the two.

"I must tell you," he said, seeing that his brother-in-law seemed disinclined to speak, "that our man Travers, as soon as Power had pointed Luke out to him, went and rang the bell at Radclyffe house and quickly enough established beyond a doubt that the man who had just entered it was Mr. Luke de Mountford. I tell you this now, so as to disabuse your mind once and for all in case you should imagine that this might be a case of mistaken identity. Moreover you yourself know and have admitted to me that Luke's intention was to seek out his uncle and his cousin at the Veterans' Club, after he parted from you at eight o'clock last night."

"Yes," said Colonel Harris, "I know that. I was not thinking of mistaken identity."

"You," rejoined the other, "were thinking of Luke, and so am I. I have thought little of any one else since first the crime was reported to me last night. And long before Travers gleaned the outlines of the story which Power had just amplified for us, I vaguely guessed at the broad lines of it. Now that I know it in all its details, I can see the whole scene in the lobby of the Veterans' Club before me. You may believe me or not as you like, but as a matter of fact I know quite a good deal about Luke de Mountford. I have often met him, of course, and though we have never been very intimate—for I am a busy man and have but little time for intimacy with my fellow-men—I have had many opportunities of studying him. He has a very curious power of self-control—almost an abnormal one I call it, and a morbid hatred of public scenes or scandal. This of course he shares with a great many men of his class, and his self-control is all the more remarkable as he is not by any means the impassive young man about town which he pretends to be. Well, that same power, I suppose, stood him in good stead in the lobby of the Veterans' Club. In Power's picturesque parlance 'there was murder in his eye.' Of course he had been provoked beyond the bounds of endurance, and if he had rushed at Philip de Mountford and strangled him then and there, no one would have been astonished. I should," continued Sir Thomas with emphasis, "because it would not have been like the Luke whom I had studied. The picture of two gentlemen at fisticuffs like a pair of navvies would not have been an edifying one, and Luke—as I know him—would above all wish not to make a spectacle of himself before the hall porter or before a crowd in the ante-room of a second-rate club. He naturally—for that sort of thing becomes second nature—pulled himself together and walked out into the street."

You must not think for a moment that Sir Thomas Ryder was habitually a talkative man. Englishmen of his class and type are rarely talkative, and Sir Thomas' position and occupation had rendered him less communicative than most. But Colonel Harris and he had been brother officers, friends long before family ties were closely knit by marriage, and he considered the present crisis a very serious one.

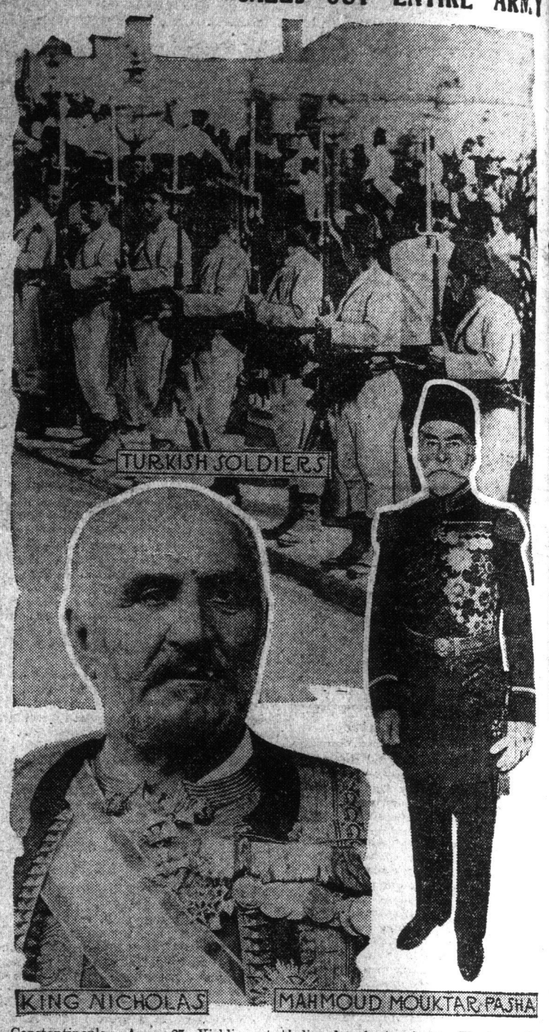
He had had enough to do with crime in the past few years since he had obtained the interesting post which he now occupied, but never with a crime which affected him personally as this one did. Luke de Mountford was of course nothing to him, except in connection with Louisa Harris. But this was a strong tie. Louisa was his own wife's niece; she was the daughter of a friend, of a brother officer. No one who is not in some manner or other in touch with military men can have the slightest idea of how much those two magic words mean: "brother officer": what magnetism lies in them: what appeal they make to all that is most loyal, most willing, most helpful in a man.

Sir Thomas felt that the mud of irretrievable disgrace which was bound to smirch Luke de Mountford would in no small measure redound on Louisa too. Instinctively too all his sensibilities recoiled against the idea of a gentleman, one of his own caste, being dragged in this peculiarly loathsome mire. It seemed impossible that that type of man should commit a murder—a murder—just an ordinary, brutal, commonplace murder, such as the rough and tumble herd of humanity commit when under the stress of vulgar passions: greed, avarice, jealousy. It was this juxtaposition of the mean and sordid against his own class that revolted Sir Thomas Ryder. He was loyal to his brother officer in his endeavor to induce him to keep out of all that mud which would be scattered all round presently, when the papers came out with their sensational headlines; but he was also—perhaps more so—loyal to his caste: his was the esprit de corps, not only of militarism but of birth and breeding. He would not, if he could, have a gentleman held up to opprobrium, and if this could be avoided by the unfortunate criminal's flight from justice—well, Sir Thomas was ready and willing to take upon his shoulders the burden of contempt and ridicule, which the press and the general public would presently be hurling at him and at his department for their hopeless incompetence in allowing a murderer to escape.

Therefore he was putting the case against Luke more clearly and with a greater wealth of detail before his brother-in-law than the conscientious discharge of duty should have allowed. In fact we see Sir Thomas Ryder—a hard disciplinarian, a hide and tape bound official—freely transgressing the most elementary rules which duty prescribes. He was sitting in his private office with his brother-in-law, giving away secrets that belonged not to him but to his department, conniving through the words which he spoke at the fleeing justice of a criminal who belonged not to him but to the State.

(To be continued.)

MONTENEGRO MAKES WAR ON TURKEY; KING NICHOLAS CALLS OUT ENTIRE ARMY



Constantinople, Aug. 27—Yielding to popular pressure, King Nicholas of Montenegro has signed a decree of mobilization and a declaration of war against Turkey is believed to be imminent. The two nations are already acting as though war had actually been formally declared. Fighting on the frontier is continuous, and the losses of the combatants have been very heavy.

GERMANS BITTER OVER PANAMA CANAL BILL

Berlin, Aug. 27—After maintaining reserve ever since the Panama canal bill was introduced in the United States Congress, the German press burst out in impatience with the signing of the measure by President Taft. The comment of the Tagliche Rundschau is typical of the rest. It says:

"Uncle Sam with the generosity of a great philanthropist, made a gift of the canal to all nations, then proceeded to frame it with cannon and armor, and now demands a big price for the gift. The United States repeatedly has given the German people to understand that it places little value on the traditional German-American friendship. The agreement with England applied to all nations, and its breach hits Germany and German trade.

"It is the duty of Germany and other nations to make the United States a counter gift in true American style."

DIDN'T CLAIM $15,000,000

Man Who Died in Australia Preferred to Remain a Gardener.

A London despatch says:

There are few men who would refuse to take the trouble of claiming $15,000,000 which was theirs by right. One such man is said to have just died at Point Chevalier, Auckland, New Zealand.

The estate, which is said to amount to the sum, is lying unclaimed in chancery in the name of Walters, an Exeter family. The heir has been advertised for, but no claimant has been forthcoming.

It seems probable that the man who has just died in New Zealand not only was the heir, but knew it and refused to claim the money. His name was Richard Walters. He was an old age pensioner and worked as a gardener for a Mr. Mayson.

He died suddenly, and an inquest was necessary, at which the facts were made public. It seems that the old man had shown his employer documents which the latter thought afforded quite conclusive proof that he was heir to the family estate of Walters.

The reason Walters gave for refusing to take any steps to secure the millions was that it was too much trouble. He was becoming an old man and preferred to continue in his occupation of gardener.

IDEAL WEATHER FOR WESTERN CROPS

Winnipeg, Aug. 27—The slow, cool ripening weather is undoubtedly making towards very high grades and the crop should be exceedingly profitable to western farmers, providing the three dangers threatening its successful making can be overcome. These are early frosts, shortage of binder twine and shortage of laborers.

Of the three, the latter just now presents the most serious aspect. There appears to be a total absence of loss from frost up to date, and very little from hail rust or other causes. In all districts heard from cutting has commenced under the most auspicious conditions, the percentage ranging from five per cent in the east to twenty per cent in the north and as high as fifty per cent in the south.

The Point of View.

(Kansas City Star.)

Col. Hal Corbett, a Kentucky orator, was up in the mountains of his native state last summer looking into the titles to certain coal lands. The task led him far into the interior, remote from the railroad, where he stayed a week as a boarder at a mountain cabin.

For three days he stood for half-melted butter and lukewarm drinking water, and then he suggested to his hostess that she buy some ice.

"Whar kin I git any ice this time of the year?" she demanded.

"You could send down to Middlesboro for it," he said.

"How does Middlesboro folks git ice in the summer?" she asked.

"They make it," he said.

"Mister," she said, "the Lord Himself couldn't make ice in the middle of August."

A stain on marble can usually be removed with fine table salt.

WANTED

WANTED—At Biggar Ridge trict No. 11, Aberdeen, take charge of school this Apply to W. A. Biggar, Secretary, Foreston P. O.,

WANTED—Second or third teacher for District No. Parish of Aberdeen; district Apply, stating salary, to Secretary to Trustees, Carleton 8902-9-11 s.w.

WANTED—A second-class for school district No. Kars. Apply to A. B. Jon

WANTED—Septe. 1st, two for the Netherwood Sch Apply to Miss Tees, Nerthe say.

WANTED—First class fem take charge of Emerson County, N. B. Apply to Ro Secretary, Emerson, N. B.

TEACHER WANTED—A male or female, to open as possible. District rated to G. R. Fulton, Castaway, C No. 16, stating salary.

WANTED—Second class for District No. 5, Lo county; state salary wanted W. H. Miller, secretary to taw, Victoria county, N. B.

WANTED—A first class ma or female teacher. App ary and experience, Scott D. Harbor, Grand Manan.

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