

THE MISSIONER

BY E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

"I will do so," he said, "if I hear any thing about him. It scarcely seems likely."

Wilhelmina sat quite still. Her head resting slightly upon the long delicate fingers of her right hand, was turned away from the young man who was darning to watch her. She was apparently gazing across the park, down the magnificent avenue of elms which led to the village.

"You are not a word!" he said, "How else? On the whole she could not but approve. And yet—and yet!"

"I read the account of the inquest on your father's death," she said, speaking very slowly, with her usual dazed, yet out of respect for the dead man. "Does it not seem very strange that the money was left untouched?"

"Yes," he answered. "Yet, after all, I don't know. You see, the governor must have closed with the fellow and shown fight before he got that knock on the head."

"I have scarcely ever seen one," he answered. "Wilhelmina turned her head slightly, so that she was now directly facing him. She looked him steadily in the eyes."

"It occurred to you, Mr. Hurd," she asked, "that this young man may not have been a tramp at all, and that his visit to your father may have been on other business than that of robbery?"

"My father's connections with the outside world," he said slowly, "were so slight."

"Yet it has occurred to you?" "Yes," he admitted. "And have you come to any conclusion?"

"None," he declared. "I do not remember any instructions with regard to my papers and documents belonging to the estate?"

"Certainly, madam," he answered. "Within five minutes of receiving your message, they were all locked up in the safe, and the key handed to your messenger."

"You did not go through them yourself?" she asked. "I did not," he answered, lying with admirable steadiness. "I scarcely felt that I was entitled to do so."

"So that you could not tell if any were missing?" she continued. "I could not," he admitted. "Your father never spoke, then, of any connections with people outside Thorpe—likely to prove a dangerous character?"

"The young man said," she said, "that he had not been farther than Loughborough for twenty years."

"There was a short letter," Wilhelmina, deliberately, and with an attempt at concealment, was meditatively watching the young man, studying his features with interest. Perhaps the slightly curving lip, the hard intensity of her gaze, suggested that he was disbeliever. Her lost color faded about it. It was a scrutiny not easy to bear, and she felt that it was going against him. Already she had written him down a liar.

letters, which she smoothed out with her fingers before beginning to read. Stephen Hurd stood with his back towards her, rearranging the bundles of documents in the safe.

"You have no idea then," she asked softly, "of the contents of this packet?" He turned deliberately round.

"Where is Wilhelmina? It was almost as though she could see through his tweed shooting-jacket into that inner pocket. "May I see which packet you refer to?" he asked.

"I tell him, and spells quite decently considering his profession. My conscience is feeling lighter every moment."

"And my heart heavier," Austin grumbled. "A most flirtatious correspondence!" She laughed softly.

"My next shall be to my dressmaker," she declared. "Such a charming woman, and so trustful. Behave yourself nicely, and you shall go with me to call on her next week, and see her manning."

"You, by all means," Wilhelmina answered. "I shall go tomorrow or the next day. Is any one coming to lunch?"

"His Grace, I fancy—no one else," Wilhelmina yawned. "Where is Wilhelmina?" she asked. "Asleep on the lawn last time I saw him."

"No one shooting, then?" "I am afraid I scarcely follow you, madam," he said, with a polite smile.

"I am asking you," she repeated deliberately, "whether amongst your father's private papers you did not discover anything unexpected?"

"I do not understand," he protested. "I have been reading the papers, but I do not trouble to explain your words."

"She turned towards the door. "No," she said, "do not ask me any questions. I have already said all that I can."

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glazed black hat, and he speaks every language without an accent. "I should know the best anywhere," he declared.

"Find out if he is there still. Let him take you out. Don't lose sight of him—and your presence!"

"Tomorrow night," he said, "I will renew my youth. I will search for him on the boulevards, and see the sights which make a gem of the travelling Briton."

"You're a good sort, Gilbert," she said simply. "Thanks!"

"(To be continued.)"

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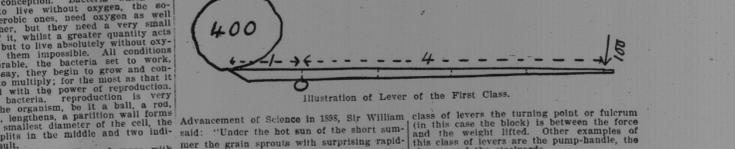


Illustration of Lever of the First Class.

Advancement of Science in 1908, Sir William Crookes, under the sanction of the British Association, has been studying the question of the relation of the grain sprouts with surprising rapidity, partly because the grains are supplied with water from the atmosphere during the summer in their own soil, and partly because the grains are found to be frozen at their own level. In some of his experiments, he has found that the grain sprouts are supplied with water from the atmosphere during the summer in their own soil, and partly because the grains are found to be frozen at their own level. In some of his experiments, he has found that the grain sprouts are supplied with water from the atmosphere during the summer in their own soil, and partly because the grains are found to be frozen at their own level.

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Castro Leaves Paris. Paris, Dec. 13.—President Castro, of Venezuela, and his party left here today for Cologne, where a consultation of physicians will be held to determine upon the advisability of an operation on the president. If an operation is found necessary, Dr. Israel probably will perform it in Berlin.