

ALL THAT IS GOOD IN BEER

## A MOST STRENGTHENING BEVERAGE

# THE MYSTERY OF THE GREEN RAY

By William Le Queux

### Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

The outbreak of war sends Ronald Ewart, a young London barrister, to the Highlands to say good-bye to his fiancée, Myra McLeod. On the train he meets Hilderman, who calls himself an American and a stranger in those parts, but later Ewart finds that he has built a hut on a cliff above the falls opposite General McLeod's lodge. While fishing in the river Myra is suddenly blinded by a flash of green light. Gen. McLeod tells Ewart of a strange experience at the same place, known as Chemist's Rock. Hilderman is very curious as to the cause of Myra's blindness. The famous London oculist holds out no hope and Ewart, after taking Myra home, brings Dr. Garnesk from Glasgow. In the meantime Sholto is also blinded, then chloroformed and stolen. Garnesk asserts his belief that Hilderman knew of Sholto's affliction. The next morning the two men find footprints and keel-marks on the beach, and the name-plate from the dog's collar. Ewart telegraphs for his friend, Dennis Burnham.

### CHAPTER X.

"You don't really believe that there is anything curious about the river itself, do you?" I asked. "We have agreed that some human agency is responsible for the tragic affliction that has fallen upon poor Myra. In that case we are not safe anywhere."

"That's true enough," he agreed, "but everything that has happened so far has happened here. Sooner or later, no doubt, the operations will be extended to some other region, but at present we know there is a possibility of our being overcome by some strange peril between the Chemist's Rock and Dead Man's Pool."

"Well, as we don't know how to deal with the danger when it does arrive," I suggested, "suppose we see as much as we can from the banks. I will go up the centre of the stream and report to you, if you like, but you stay here."

"You'll do nothing of the sort," he cried. "I can't imagine what we can possibly learn by standing on that rock, but if either of us goes, we go together, or I, in my capacity of barrister unattached, go alone."

"Naturally, I naturally applaud such generous sentiments, and at the same time refuse to countenance his proposal. So we sat among the heather, some distance above the bank, and awaited developments."

"It is four-twenty now," said my companion presently, looking at his watch. "If anything is going to happen it should happen soon."

"Don't you think it was mere coincidence that Myra's blindness and the General's strange illusion occurred about this time? Why should this green ray only be visible between four and five?"

"It hasn't really been visible at all," Garnesk pointed out. "Miss McLeod saw a green flash, and the General saw a green rock, which had taken upon itself the responsibilities of transportation. That's all we know about the green ray, except the green veil that Miss McLeod tells us of. I wish I knew what we did expect to see."

"Exactly," he replied solemnly. "By the way," he added after a pause, "do you see anything peculiar about the rocks or the pool between four and five? I mean anything that you couldn't notice at any other time of the day?"

"Nothing at all," I answered despondently. "It is pleasant here then than at any other time—or was until we came under this mysterious spell."

"Why is it pleasant?" he asked. "It is just then that it gets most sunshine," I pointed out.

I made the remark idly enough, for the course of the river, with its rugged banks and great massive rocks, looked particularly beautiful as the sun streamed full upon it, and I was immeasurably surprised when Garnesk jumped to his feet with a shout.

"What is it?" I cried in alarm.

"You're not—"

"The sun, Ewart, the sun!" he exclaimed, and, snatching a pair of binoculars which I carried in my hand, he dashed up the slope to the foot of a cliff that overhung the stream. I gazed after him for a moment of astonishment, and then set out in pursuit.

"Stop where you are, man!" he called to me as his lips moved, and saw me tearing after him. "No, no, I don't want you there. Don't follow me."

I did as I was told, for I trusted him implicitly, and I knew that he would not run any risk without first acquainting me of his intention, and I took it for granted that he had not had time to tell me what it was. But my astonishment increased as I watched him climb the rock, for when he arrived a few feet from the summit he sat down on a ledge and calmly lighted a cigarette.

"What is it all about?" I called to him, when I had fully recovered from my surprise.

"I only wanted to have a look at the view," he laughed back, and put the glasses to his eyes. First he examined the house, and then he turned his gaze in the direction of the river. It was then that it dawned on me that he was looking for a yacht. This was the fateful hour, and it had naturally struck him that the unknown yacht might be in the vicinity.

"Well," I shouted, "can you see the yacht?"

"No," he replied, "there's nothing in sight, only a paddle steamer, looks like an excursion of some sort."

"Oh! that's the Glencairn," I explained; "she won't help us at all. She runs with tourists from Mallaig."

"She seems to be barely able to take care of herself," he laughed. "I shouldn't like to be on her in a storm."

We conversed fairly easily while he was on the cliff, for we were not many yards apart and I began to wonder when he was coming down again.

"Have you any objection to my joining you?" I asked presently, as there seemed to be nothing for me to do below.

"Stop where you are for a bit, old man," he advised. "I shall be down in a minute."

"As long as you like," I replied. "You've got a fine view from there, anyway. Don't worry about me."

I sat down on a rock, refilled my pipe, and prepared to wait till he rejoined me.

"Hi, Ewart!" he called presently, for my mind had already wandered to that darkened "den" at the house.

"Hallo," I answered, jumping to my feet. "What is it?"

"Do you notice anything unusual?"

"No," I shouted, "nothing that—"

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of the past few days had told on my strength. The nerves, sheer nerves, Garnesk must give me his arm to the house, and I should be at rest, and I should be all right in a few moments. It was nerves that was all. But if Garnesk were not very quick about it I should have burst a blood vessel in my brain before he reached me. I missed my chance, seemed to have swayed to twice its size. Garnesk, as I looked, seemed to be farther off than ever, a tiny speck in the distance.

The singing in my ears became a rushing torrent. It was the waterfall I told myself; how stupid of me! Of course I should be all right in a minute. But my friend must hurry. I collapsed on the rock and gasped for breath. I looked for Garnesk. Still he seemed to be as far away as ever, and he scarcely seemed to be moving at all. I must tell him to be quick. It was simply nerves, of course; but I mustn't let them get the better of me, or what would poor Myra do? I staggered to my feet to call Garnesk. "Hurry up; I'm not well," I framed the words in my brain, but no sound passed my lips. I struggled for breath, and called again with all the power I could muster. I could not hear myself speak. And then I understood! My knees rocked beneath me, the river swirled round me, a rowan tree rushed by me in a flash, and as I fell sprawling on my face among the heather, a thousand hammers seemed to pound the hideous, stinging truth into the hearing pulp that was once my brain.

### CHAPTER XI.

How the Unexpected Happened.

When I came to myself I was lying with my head on the ground, and Garnesk's arm. My coat and collar were on the ground beside me, and my head and shoulders were dripping with water.

"Ah!" said my companion, with a sigh of relief, "that's better. You'll be all right in a few minutes, Ewart. Take it easy, old chap, and rest."

"Where am I?" I asked. "Good heavens!" I exclaimed, as I heard my own voice, and sat bolt upright in my excitement. "I thought I was dumb!"

"Well, never mind about that now, old fellow," Garnesk advised. "We'll hear all about that later. Shut your eyes and rest a minute."

"All right," I agreed, "pass me my pipe and I will."

Garnesk laughed aloud as he leaned over to reach my coat pocket.

"When a man shouts for his pipe he's a long way from being dead or dumb of anything else," he said.

Truth to tell, I was feeling very queer. I was dizzy and confused, but I felt that I wanted my pipe to help me collect my thoughts. So I lay there for some minutes quietly smoking, and indeed I felt as if I could have stayed like that for ever.

"I must have fainted," I explained presently, overlooking the fact that Garnesk probably knew more about my ridiculous seizure than I did myself. "I don't know when I did a thing like that before."

"Well, I hope you won't do it again," said my friend fervently. "It's a thing to make a hobby of. And don't you come near this infernal river any more until we know something definite."

"You mean that the place has got on my nerves," I said. "I suppose it has." "I'm very sorry."

"Do you know when I did a thing like that before?" he asked, "or would you rather wait till we get up to the house?"

"Oh, I'll tell you now," I agreed readily. "I mustn't say anything about this at the house. So I told him exactly how I first came on to the house."

"When I heard you shout, and jumped up to see what it was. By the way, what was it?"

"Well," he replied, "we'll discuss the matter if you wouldn't mind releasing my arm?"

"My dear fellow," I cried, sitting up suddenly, as I realized that he was still propping up my head, "I'm most awfully sorry."

"Now then," he said, as he lighted his pipe and made himself comfortable, "we'll go into the latest developments, and you'll remember what made me rush off and leave you there?"

"I remember saying something about the sunlight, and you suddenly dashed off."

"Tell you the truth, I had very little faith in the theory that at this hour, above all, the spook of the Chemist's Rock was active, until you pointed out that only about that time is the whole of the river course up to the rock, and the whole of the rock itself, flooded with sunlight. Then, when you made that remark, I suddenly felt that I ought to be on the cliff on the look out for this unknown yacht. We connect the two together in some way which we don't yet understand, so I meant to go and have a look for the ship. I saw nothing of any importance until I shouted to you. Just then I was looking through the glasses at the shore. I turned them on the landing-stage and along the beach, and I had just lighted on the bay where we explored this morning when suddenly, for half a second, so, all the shadows of the rocks turned a vivid green, and then as suddenly resumed their natural color again."

"Green again! Can you make anything of it at all, Garnesk? I'm sorry I'm such a duffer as to faint at the critical moment, when I might have been of some assistance to you. What in God's name can it all mean?"

"I'm no further on," he replied bitterly; "in fact, I'm further back."

(To be continued.)

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### The Pines.

Down aisles of white in tall solemnity they raise their arms to reach the winter sky.

A white dove whose arches strong and high— who an organ's rolling melody; low like the far off murmur of the sea.

And now like summer winds that wander by, Careless some frail flower that blossoms night.

Do wait its fragrance over hill and dale.

Never they waver, though the years be long, Never they falter, though the dawn be far.

But lift serene to heaven their step— see! And ever through their houghs there runs a song

Joyous and sweet, unto the vesper star, Hung like a jewel against the sunset fires!

—Elizabeth Soolland.

### The Leopard in the Cabin.

Africa isn't quite so wild as it used to be, said the gray-haired missionary, smiling. The narrow escape I ever had was on board ship: a thousand miles from Cape Town. I lay in my berth with my clothes on, trying to get my strength back after a spell of seasickness, when I saw a big leopard standing in my doorway. At first I thought it was some one's pet and spoke to it. Growling and flattening its short sharp ears, it crouched as if to spring. Even then I thought that it was playing, but I was in no condition to play with it. "Lie down," I said sharply.

It sprang and vanished. The flight of it was so swift and silent that for a moment I thought it had gone through the porthole above the upper berth. Then I saw the sag of the springs and knew it had landed in the berth. A moment later its long tail switched back and forth over the edge, then, turning, it put its great ugly head within two feet of my face. Its mouth was open, and I could see a cavernous red gullet and teeth as sharp as sabre points. I tell you that was as close as I ever want to come to a live leopard. I yelled and burrowed under the bedclothes.

A calm heavy voice with a slight German accent sounded at the door. "Be not afraid. Keep on talking with it, but don't move." The man was one of the keepers. I learned later that there were other animals on board.

It was easy enough to lie still, but it was not so easy to talk to the beast. The muscles of my throat seemed paralyzed, but at last I managed to repeat hoarsely, "Lie down! Lie down, I say!"

The cage the leopard had escaped from was brought and set in the doorway; but before the beast could be induced to leave its perch two men had to go over the side of the ship and prod it with long iron bars thrust through the porthole. Before it finally entered the cage it turned on me again, and I never yelled so loud in my life. The men with the bars were doing the best they could, but they could not quite reach the leopard as it crouched on the floor. I think my preacher's voice saved me. Snarling, but brightened at the strange uproar, the beast backed away into the cage, and the keepers slammed the door in its face.

Pat's Luck.

At a mine one day, John was walking round a turning. Looking up he saw an Irishman searching eagerly for something.

"What is it you're lookin' for?" said John.

"Oim huckin' for me waistcoat," said Pat.

John laughed and replied, "Wab, man, you've got it on."

"Shure, now," Pat replied, "an if ye hadn't told me, Oi would have gone home without it!"

The Spinster's Age.

The census registration officer had learned the spinster's name, occupation and parentage and at last broached the dangerous subject of age. Then this conversation took place:

"Have you Misses Hill, who live next door, given you their ages?" she snapped.

"No, Miss Brown."

"Well, then, I'm the same age as they."

"That will do," murmured the officer, and he proceeded to fill out the space with these words: "Miss Brown, as old as the hills."

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