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The MASQUERADER

By Katherine Cecil Thurston. Author of "The Circle," Etc. Copyright, 1904, by Harper & Brothers

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE letter through which the blow fell was not voluminous. It was written on cheap paper in a disguised hand, and the contents covered only half a page. Loder read it slowly, mentally articulating every word; then he laid it down, and as he did he caught Eve's eyes raised in concern. Again he saw something of his own feelings reflected in her face, and the shock braced him. He picked up the letter, tearing it into strips.

"I must go out," he said slowly. "I must go now—at once." His voice was hard. Eve's surprised, concerned eyes still searched his. "Now—at once?" she repeated. "Now—without breakfast?"

"I'm not hungry." He rose from his seat and, carrying the slips of paper across the room, dropped them into the fire. He did it not so much from caution as from an imperative wish to do something, to move, if only across the room.

Eve's glance followed him. "Is it bad news?" she asked anxiously. "It was unlike her to be insistent, but she was moved to the impulse by the peculiarity of the moment."

"No," he said shortly. "It's—business. This was written yesterday; I should have got it last night."

Her eyes widened. "But nobody does business at 8 in the morning," she began in astonishment, then she suddenly broke off.

Without apology or farewell Loder had left the fireplace and walked out of the room.

He passed through the hall hurriedly, picking up a hat as he went, and



Loder stood shocked and spellbound by the sight.

reaching the pavement outside, he went straight forward until Grosvenor square was left behind, then he ran. At the risk of reputation, at the loss of dignity, he ran until he saw a cab. Halting it, he sprang inside, and as the cabman whipped up the horse responded to the call he realized for the first time the full significance of what had occurred.

Realization, like the need for action, came to him slowly, but when it came it was with terrible lucidity. He did not swear as he leaned back in his seat mechanically watching the stream of men on their way to business, the belated cars of green produce blocking the way between the Strand and Covent Garden. He had no use for oaths; his feelings lay deeper than mere words. But his mouth was sternly set and his eyes looked cold.

Outside the law courts he dismissed his cab and walked forward to Clifford's Inn. As he passed through the familiar entrance a chill fell on him. In the clear, early light it seemed more than ever a place of dead hopes, dead enterprises, dead ambitions. In the onward march of life it had been forgotten. The very air had a breath of unfulfillment.

He crossed the court rapidly, but his mouth set itself afresh as he passed through the doorway of his own house and crossed the bare hall. As he mounted the well known stairs he recalled his first indication of life in the appearance of a cat from the second floor rooms. At sight of him the animal came forward, rubbed demonstratively against his legs and with affectionate persistence followed him upstairs.

Outside his door he paused. On the ground stood the usual morning can of milk—evidence that Chilcote was not yet awake or that, like himself, he had no appetite for breakfast. He snuffed ironically at the idea struck him, but it was a smile that stiffened rather than relaxed his lips. Then he drew out the duplicate key he always carried and, inserting it quietly, opened the door. A close, unpleasant smell greeted him as he entered the small passage that divided the bed and sitting rooms—a smell of whisky mingling with the odor of stale smoke. With a quick gesture he pushed open the bedroom door. Then on the threshold he paused, a look of contempt and repulsion passing over his face.

In his first glance he scarcely grasped the details of the scene, for the half drawn curtains kept the light dim, but as his eyes grew accustomed to the obscurity he gathered their significance. The room had a sleepless, jaded atmosphere that under his own occupation had shown a rigid, almost monastic severity. The plain dressing table was littered with cigarette ends and marked with black ink and tawny patches where the tobacco had been left to burn itself out. On one corner of the table a carafe of water and a whisky decanter rested one against the other, as if for support, and at the other end an overturned tumbler lay in a pool of liquid. The whole effect was sickly and nauseating. His glance turned involuntarily to the bed and there halted.

On the hard, narrow mattress, from which the sheets and blankets had fallen in a disordered heap, lay Chilcote. He was fully dressed in a shabby tweed suit of Loder's; his collar was open, his hair thin and unshaven; one hand was flung, grasping the pillow, while the other hung out over the side of the bed. His face, pale, almost earthy in hue, might have been a mask save for the slight convulsive spasms that crossed it from time to time and corresponded with the faint, shivering starts that passed at intervals over his whole body. To complete his repellent appearance, a lock of hair had fallen loose and lay black and damp across his forehead.

Loder stood for a space shocked and spellbound by the sight. Even in the ghastly disarray the likeness—the expression—of Loder's face that had become the pivot upon which he himself revolved—struck him like a blow. The man who lay there was himself, bound to him by some subtle, inexplicable tie of similarity. As the idea touched him he turned aside and stepped quickly to the dressing table. There, with unnecessary energy, he flung back the curtains and threw the window wide. Then again he turned toward the bed. He had one dominant impulse, to waken Chilcote, to be free of the repulsive, inert presence that chilled him with so personal a horror. Leaning over the bed, he caught the sheet nearest to him and shook it. It was not the moment for niceties, and his gesture was rough.

At his first touch Chilcote made no response—his brain, dulled by indulgence in his vice, had become a laggard in conveying sensations—but at last, as the pressure on his shoulder increased, his nervous system seemed suddenly to jar into consciousness. A long shudder shook him; he half lifted himself and then dropped back upon the pillow.

"Oh!" he exclaimed in a trembling breath. "Oh!" The sound seemed drawn from him by compulsion. His meek tone chilled Loder anew. "Wake up, man!" he said suddenly. "Wake up! It's I—Loder."

Again the other shuddered; then he turned quickly and nervously. "Loder?" he said doubtfully. "Loder?" Then his face changed. "Good God," he exclaimed, "what a relief!"

It was indeed so intense, so spontaneous and unexpected that Loder took a step back. Chilcote laughed discordantly and lifted a shaky hand to protect his eyes from the light. "It's—it's all right, Loder! It's all right! It's only that I—that I had a beastly dream. But, for heaven's sake, shut the window!" He winced involuntarily and pushed the lock of damp hair from his forehead with a weak touch of his old irritability.

In silence Loder moved back to the window and shut it. He was affected more than he would own even to himself by the obvious change in Chilcote. He had seen him moody, restless, nervously excited, but never before had he seen him entirely demoralized. With a dull feeling of impotence and disgust he stood by the closed window, looking unseeingly at the roofs of the opposite houses.

(To be continued.)

Remarkable testimony is advanced by Dr. Isabella Mears, of the Woodburn Sanatorium, Edinburgh, in a letter entitled "The Physical Soldier at the Front." It would appear that several patients suffering from consumption have passed the tests for the new army, and have gained amazing benefits from their subsequent military training and life. The first case instanced is of a man with pulmonary tuberculosis moderately advanced, who had been under sanatorium treatment for seven years ago. He joined the Territorial Force as a soldier in the new army, and is keeping well. A second case had been under observation for five years, and had recurrent hæmoptysis. After four months in a cavalry regiment doing field and trench work the man was splendidly fit, had put on weight, and found it difficult to believe that he had ever been ill. A still more remarkable illustration is afforded by a soldier who was in the sanatorium up to September, 1914, enlisted in October, and was quickly promoted to corporal, and is in splendid health. A newspaper representative, who made inquiries at the Brompton Hospital for Consumptives was informed by an official that they had no such happy results to show with respect to their patients joining the army and getting well. Indeed, there seem to be some scepticism as to the permanency of the improvements in the cases referred to, while the official expression was that there were more cases of men who had gone to the front in good health and through exposure, etc., had developed consumption.

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SPORTING NEWS

Football

COURIER CUP.

Results: P. S. A. 1, Tutela 0. Holmeale defaulted to Thistles. The finalists for the Courier trophy this year will be Thistles and P. S. A. This was decided Saturday when the P. S. A. club disposed of the holders and Holmeale did not appear to fight it out with the Thistles.

The Thistles did not get to the grounds to contest the issue until a few minutes past half past one and the referee had then awarded the game to the Thistles, who had appeared ready for any eventuality at the appointed hour. Running down the field they scored a solitary lone goal with no opposition and thereby obtained the right of contesting the final issue.

P. S. A. AND TUTELA

The holders of the Cup lost their grasp upon it in Paris where they were represented by ten men, P. S. A. were all out and had lots of determination. Nevertheless they were somewhat lucky to go into the finals for had Tutela been fully represented the score, a very close one, might, possibly have been altered. The Congregationalists were nervous and lost many chances. Tutela stuck to their guns but found the disadvantage too great to be overcome with the result that they were dismissed from the competition, and the record of last year blown to the winds. Tutela will not now be able to celebrate the possession of the three league trophies with a banquet, and the club will be lucky if they can hold a single honor this year.

P. S. A. 1, TUTELA 0.

The above teams met at Paris on Saturday, the game resulting in a victory for the Congregationalists. It was not what could be called a fast game, the P. S. A. had missing many chances. Tutela had only ten men out all through the game, but in spite of this they stuck well together. Fisher scored for the P. S. A., thus putting them into the final of the Courier Cup.

The P. S. A. football club will hold a practice at Agricultural Park on Wednesday evening, and will hold a meeting on Thursday evening in the basement of the Congregational church.

Bowling

Dominion Day will be a great red letter affair with the bowlers, for that celebration will be held the Brant County Lawn Bowling tournament. This will be the sixth annual affair of its kind, and as it has grown steadily since its inception, this is expected to prove a banner year.

Last year, one hundred and forty bowlers participated, and a splendid competition resulted, for their is keen rivalry among the clubs. This is not to be wondered at when the trophies are considered, included among which is the county trophy donated by Mr. Lloyd Harris.

The greens are in fine shape, and are said to be in even better trim than last year. All this is assured, and it was discussed at the meeting of the bowling sportsmen which took place last Saturday, of which Mr. Cohoe was chairman. A goodly amount of routine business was disposed of and the election of officers took place with the result that the following gentlemen were chosen for the season of 1915: Hon. Presidents—Lloyd Harris and W. F. Lockhart, M.P.

President—James Smiley, Paris. Vice-Presidents—W. H. Biggar and J. G. Cohoe. Sec'y-Treas.—R. C. Burns. Executive—Messrs D. Adams, J. C. Spence, A. A. Lister, J. A. Laing, Morgan Harris, E. E. Plummer, Dr. Anderson, W. J. McNeilly, J. R. Inksater. Umpires—S. Armitage, Dr. Wiley, R. Inksater, H. Stone, G. B. Wilson, W. R. Turnbull, W. Lahey, T. McPhail, E. E. Tench, F. E. Sheppard, W. Gowman, A. T. Duncan.

An offer of six motor ambulances from the Ontario Government has reached the minister of militia from Hon. Dr. Pyne, acting Prime Minister of Ontario. The offer will, of course, be accepted gratefully.

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Dick Smith.....10c	David Harum.....10c
Jack Canuck.....10c	Chocolate Soldier.....10c
Isle of Pines.....10c	Lovers' Delight.....10c
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AL LEAGUE.

Won	Lost	P.C.
24	15	.615
22	10	.579
21	20	.512
19	19	.500
17	17	.500
19	21	.475
17	20	.459
14	25	.359

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12	10	.545
14	12	.538
11	11	.500
11	12	.478
8	14	.364

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EAGUE.

on	Lost	P.C.
1	19	.620
1	21	.590
4	18	.571
6	20	.565
6	25	.510
3	23	.500
3	24	.489
23	489	
24	444	
24	429	

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n	Lost	P.C.
21	596	
23	540	
22	532	
23	517	
25	510	
25	510	
29	396	
24	358	

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