

pression on his face, seemed battling vainly to regain a knowledge of something which eluded him.

The doctor watched him, and this scrutiny was returned by the patient, who realized something was wrong as he returned to the workhouse.

There, in the observation ward, he stood with knitted brows in deep thought.

"Mad!" he muttered. "Mad! Impossible! But—who—am—I?"

Tense and rigid, he made a desperate effort to recapture some memory which floated on the edge of his brain, like a half-forgotten dream; then he gave a groan of despair.

A sponge might have been passed over his mind, wiping out the past and leaving a clean surface to receive fresh impressions.

No glimmer of light revealed anything to him beyond the fact that he was in the workhouse, an inmate of the observation ward.

"I'm like a parcel lost in transit, with the label torn off," he muttered, then, remembering his unenviable position, smiled grimly at the conceit.

"I've not dropped from the sky, or been born a full-grown man in a tweed suit."

HE glanced at his clothes, holding out his arms, and feeling in the empty pockets, but the scrutiny revealed nothing to him.

"I must belong to someone, or someone must belong to me! Surely I shall be missed, and searched for. But mad!"

That was a terrifying idea.

"Am I mad?"

He combated this thought for some seconds, then shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"Sane enough, but for this confounded numb feeling in my brain. I know what I am doing—what other people are doing—but if these Johnnies here get the idea into their heads that I am insane, they'll clap me into the asylum, and then—good-bye!"

He shuddered.

"Something's got to be done, even if it is only to pretend that I remember things. I've got to fool that little chap in glasses, and get away from here, and that very soon, too."

An expression of nervous desperation came into the dark eyes. Sitting on his hard bed, his head in his hands, he pondered sombrely, sifting, rejecting, and collating his ideas, until finally he pieced a story together which he thought was plausible.

When the doctor saw him again, the man in tweeds met him with the smile of an assurance that he was far from feeling. His story was ready.

"You're looking brighter to-day, my man," said the doctor cheerily. He took off his glasses, polished them with a silk handkerchief, kept his eyes fixed on the patient during the performance, re-adjusted them on his long nose, and studied the figure in front of him afresh, as if by a comparison of views he hoped to find the better one.

"I feel better," said the man in tweeds, glibly and untruthfully. "My brain has cleared wonderfully. I slept well last night, and woke up this morning quite myself."

"Ha!" exclaimed the doctor with interest. "I thought those last pills would do you good. Prescription of my own—mean to patent them one day." He blew his nose noisily, fussing about with it, till his listener became quite nervous.

"Let us hear what you have to say!" he then ordered curtly. "Pray proceed."

"My name is John Grey," came the bold assertion.

"Common name," commented the doctor, his eyes like those of some human owl boring into the man's face.

"I came to London a month ago from Belfast," persisted the narrator desperately.

"Quite so! quite so!" punctuated the doctor. (Would he keep quiet, and let him get it over?)

"A poor clerk, looking for a job, I walked all over London in answer to advertisements. My money was nearly done, and I had had very little to eat for the last two weeks. After a long day in the city, vainly seeking for work, I walked out to

Hammersmith. Some hooligans set on me. I got away and ran, they gave chase, knocked me down, hit me over the head, rifled my pockets of what little was in them, and left me unconscious."

The man in tweeds paused. Would his story be believed?

His heart beat anxiously, his eyes were on the doctor's face.

"What time did this happen?"

"Between nine and ten o'clock."

"Where were you lodging?"

"I intended to get a bed for the night at Hammersmith, but being chased, I got away from it."

"Where was your luggage?" rapped out the doctor.

"I only had a small bag, which I was carrying. They wrenched it out of my hands."

"H'm!" mused Doctor Binks. "A bowler was found near you—the police brought it to the station. Was it yours?"

"Yes," admitted the man recklessly.

"It bears the name of a first-class firm of hatters in the West End; do you get your hats there?" this in a casual tone.

"In that case, it can't be mine," was the hurried reply.

"Ah! I see. Well, you must give these particulars elsewhere. I will report what you say."

"THERE is nothing against me?" said the man in tweeds, anxiously. "I suppose I can leave?" (He was in a hurry to get away.)

"Well, well, we shall see!" replied the doctor with caution. "By the way, who did you say your people were in Belfast?"

The man was not to be caught. He answered calmly—

"I have no people there. My mother, a widow, died some years ago. I was her only child."

"Ah! And your age?"

"Thirty-five." A minute study of himself in a small, cracked looking-glass had led to this conclusion. His own face, familiar as the face of some old friend whose name one has forgotten, had failed to illuminate his mind, or suggest the elusive name which had distinguished him from his fellows.

He started. The doctor was speaking.

"Born in Belfast?"

"No. Born at sea. Mother was going to Canada. Father died there twenty-five years ago." Surely that disposed of his family, neatly and effectively!

"I—see! Well, John Grey, you must repeat your story to the authorities. I congratulate you upon your recovery from—er—temporary loss of memory, caused, no doubt, by the blow on the head—very distressing, but unfortunately, in these days of stress and strain, loss of memory is far from uncommon, but decidedly distressing."

John Grey agreed, with certain mental reservations. His loss of memory bid fair to be permanent so far as he could see, unless help came from the outside. So it was that his assumed cheerfulness gave place to deep dejection when the doctor left.

The case of John Grey, in all its fresh bearings, was discussed once more at the police court, and he was called upon to repeat his story, which he did with the fixed resolve not to be caught tripping.

Questions and cross-questions made it a trying ordeal, but he came through it successfully.

There was no previous record against him, and apparently nothing was to be gained by his further detention.

(To be continued.)

Not So Bad Off.—A broker, brooding over the heavy expenses of maintaining his office, thought he would save money by having a cheap lunch.

He wandered into a little restaurant off Cheapside and ordered a frugal meal costing a few pence. Looking up, he recognized in the waiter an old stockbroker.

"Halloa, Harry, have you come down to this?" he asked.

"Oh, I'm all right. I only wait; I don't dine here!" was the reply.—Tit-Bits.



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