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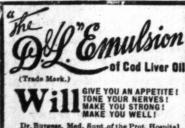
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The Whole Story

THE STRANGER AND THE PRINCESS

BY SEWARD W. HOPKINS

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"I am as ready," he said slowly, "to lose my life in the interest of humanity as I was to end it in the Seine last night."

His examiner sprang from his chair. He did not notice any reservation in Wallace's speech. Men do throw themselves into the Seine for various reasons. There was no doubt in the minds of any of the regular habitues at Jacques' that Wallace had been on the brink of death when snatched from it by the gentleman of the cloak. "Make me one promise," said the

owner of the room. "Promise me you will not attempt your life before this evening.' Buckford could scarcely restrain his

desire to laugh. "I promise," he said surlily. "But it is long. I have nothing."

"Oh, as to that! Take this." A purse was put into his hand. "It makes the matter easier," said Wallace. "A day without a sou! Ah,

it was promising too much!" "My young friend," said the other, "I feel for you. Suddenly plunged into poverty, unable to find work, unable to beg or steal, nothing but starvation seems before you. But, listen! After I have stated your case to my-to certain persons who are interested, it is possible that you will receive a commission to perform a certain piece of

work in the interests of humanity that is very dangerous. If you accept and perform this service faithfully, you may find at once that long rest which seems so desirable. If you escape with your life, you will no longer be suffering for money. You will have more than you know what to do with. Come! An opportunity is before you-an opportunity that would be eagerly embraced by any of a hundred I know, but from whom it is

withheld because they have not your gentlemanlike appearance." "What do you wish me to do today?" asked Wallace. "Keep your promise and return to

this place by 9 o'clock tonight." "I will."

"You need breakfast. Come with

They descended into the not overinviting dining room of the inn of M. Jacques, and breakfast was ordered. "By the way," said Wallace carelessly, "if I return and do not find you, for whom shall I ask?"

A quick, startled look came into the

eyes of the conspirator. "Now, now," he said, "you must not be too inquisitive. One would think you were of the bureau of safety. When you return, if I am not in sight, go simply to M. Jacques and ask for the person in whose room you slept

last night." "Very well," said Wallace. He regretted that he had said anything to arouse suspicion.

While they were eating, another sauntered in and whispered to Wallace's companion. Buckford could hear now and then a portion of a whispered

"Arrived-this hotel-and the princess-incognito"-"Excuse me. I will see you again tonight," said the man, rising abruptly from his unfinished breakfast.

"I will be here," said Buckford. The American took his time and made a good meal. He then called for a cigar, lighted it and sauntered care-

lessly from the place.

As the gaze of Buckford roved up and down the somewhat squalid quarter he seemed to feel new emotions, new sensations of life, that were vastly different from the careless and even reckless boyishness of former days. He seemed filled with a sense of responsibility and duty. He felt that he had in his keeping the safety and well being of several people, all of exalted station and all perhaps of noble nature. He alone, with the exception of the conspirators, knew that an attempt was to be made to destroy a family. The interest he felt, the impulse that

was so strong upon him to save this princely family from the assassins, drove from his mind all bitterness concerning his own affairs. It was Buckford's nature to throw his whole being has an interesting project, Therefore he had no affairs now save the protection of the three persons whose photographs he had seen in the conspira

> His poverty was forgotten. His many disappointments and failures faded into nothing. He was alert, strong and ready for the fray. He felt capable of grasping the weapons of craft and grappling the mystery before him. Curious eyes followed him from the cafe, but he did not see them. He would not have cared if he had seen them. He walked with a light tread.

> He felt himself a conqueror.
>
> After this little exhilaration had passed the stern realities and necessities of the case forced themselves

> He did not know the name of one of the persons whose champion he had become. He had heard the name Marie Alexia, it was true. He had also heard the name Princess Margaret. But he had also heard the whispered

This little word brought disquieting thoughts. It proved two things. One was that the persons involved were of

higher degree than he had supposed for only princes of royal or ruling houses traveled incognito. Surely this prince was of a powerful house or was a man of exalted position and great wealth and sought freedom from annoyance and attacks by the use of an adopted name. The other thing proved was that the matter of protecting or warning this prince was going to be no

light or easy matter. One can go to Brown, Jones or Robinson and say: "Beware! An enemy is on your track." But when one approaches the person of a prince he is as likely to be arrested as to have an opportunity to give his warning. And when the prince is incognito the difficulty of finding him is added.

Buckford thought all these things out as he walked along. "Well, if I expect to accomplish any-

thing I must make a beginning," he said to himself. "The way to begin is to begin. Now, what shall I do first?" He had pondered this question but a oment when another idea struck him. "It is a good scheme to know your

resources," he said. "I will count my money. He withdrew into a secluded place and counted the money in the purse the conspirator had given him. "Good!" he said. "Money must come

easy to those fellows. There is enough

"Excuse me, I will see you again to-night," said the man, rising abruptly. here to keep me a week. Now let's see. If these people are already in Paris, their names must be on the hotel register at police headquarters. If they are incognito, I could never find them.

I must go to the police." This seemed not to please him, for a rueful look came on his handsome face. "I don't like that, either," he said. "I'll never see that lovely princess." Then again:

"But what the mischief has a lovely princess to do with you, Buckford Wallace? Go to the police, tell your story, let them take measures to protect the prince and his family, and then you go about your business of finding a way, to earn your living."

It would be folly for him to study the registers of the hotels. Even if the prince had come in his own name Buckford did not know what that name was, and there were a good many princes of one stripe or another in Paris.

The more he studied the more it seemed certain that his only course was to go to the police. And so he went there. He called a

cab, and ordered the driver to take him to the prefecture de police. He was ushered with considerable ceremony into the presence of the pre-

The prefect of the department of the seine sees a good many people in the course of a day and hears a good many strange stories, a few of them being true. He has little time to spend on unimportant matters. He cultivates a brusque demeanor which has the effect of cutting off bores and bringing out the salient points of a story quick-

"Well, monsieur, what can I do for

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you?" he asked when Buckford came

Buckford could tell a story in few words. The prefect seemed pleased at the manner in which the young man plunged into his subject.

"Come!" he said to himself. "Here is a fellow who knows how to talk." With as little delay as possible, in clear, concise language, Wallace told just what had happened to him. As he talked on the eyes of the prefect dilated. He scented a great mystery or crime. He would win the friendship of this young American. He would unravel the mystery himself. Whatever honor and reward was forthcoming he would reap himself.

This was a laudable ambition in the prefect. Promotion and honor in the police service the world over comes from success. One cannot succeed unless he does something. He cannot do anything if he lets others do it all. Buckford spoke on, and then came

suddenly to a stop.
"Then what?" put in the prefect.
"That's all. I left the inn and came here to tell you. I do not consider my-

self capable of combating all the criminals in Paris. I discovered the plot by accident, and now give you the facts so that you can protect this family.

A blank look of dismay and disappointment came on the face of the prefect. He twirled his thumbs, he stared at Buckford, he coughed. A tinge of red showed on his bronze

"I regret-I very much regret, monsleur," said the prefect, "that your story ended so abruptly and so weak-It was interesting-very interestly. ing, as far as it went. But you see yourself it amounts to nothing."

"Nothing! Is it nothing when a band of nihilists or socialists or anarchists or something plot to kill a man in

Paris?" "It is something, surely, when we know the man. We can then do something for his protection. But to act on the meager information you have given me would be simply to endeavor to protect every man in Paris not personally known to us. Every man whose name might be other than the one he bears would need two police officers. The force at my disposal will not stretch to that extent."

"But surely the police know when a prince visits Paris incognito?" True. That whittles the thing down somewhat," said the prefect, looking as though he had made a blunder. "There are at present, to the best of my knowledge, 43 persons, all of more or less exalted station, in Paris incog-

"But they are not all princes." "All but two. They are English

dukes." "But is there no Princess Marga-"Ah! That is something. I will look

that up, certainly, "And a Princess Marie Alexia?" "Another clew. I really think after

all I may do something." "And you certainly know where M. Jacques has his inn. That cannot run away. Why not arrest the gang?" "Now you are getting reckless, my young friend. To arrest them and fail to prove that such a plot exists would

be very awkward." "But not as awkward as to have a prince dynamited in Paris."

The prefect shrugged his shoulders. "I scarcely fear any such crime. However, there is time. You say those rascals spoke as if they were going to give you the work to do."

"Yes, that seemed to be their intention. They wanted a man of good appearance who was tired of life. That proves the contemplated act to be of great violence." "It seems so. But since you are to

do it there is time. You can, if you will, act with the police in this mat-

To be Continued.

The Force of Cyclones. Careful estimates of the force of cyclone and the energy required to keep a full fledged hurricane in active operation reveal the presence of a power that makes the mightlest efforts of men appear as nothing in comparison. A force fully equal to over 400,000,000 horsepower was estimated as developed in a West Indian cyclone. This is about fifteen times the power that can be developed by all the means within the range of man's capabilities during the same time. Were steam, water, windmills and the strength of all men and all animals combined they could not at all approach the tremendous force exerted.

A Test of Friendship. A gentleman has tried the following peculiar way of probing the ties of friendship. He sent letters to twenty intimate friends asking for a loan of a pound. Thirteen of the two dozen friends did not reply at all, five declined to lend the money, two promised to send it on the next day and did not do it, one sent his "last 10 shillings," and only three sent the full sum asked for. The supplicant and all the "friends" he had written to are well off.-St. Petersburg Novoe Vremya.

One Sign of Old Age. Henry-How can a man tell when he egins to get old? John-Well, a man has begun to get old when he finds out that he would rather sit by the fire than go sleigh rid-

Nerve Required. Perdita-Did you say, "This is so sud-

Constance-I didn't have the nerve You know how he stutters.-Chicago Record-Herald.

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