

near as I could go, but it was impossible to be quite sure."

"I'm sorry," said Hugh quietly, "it's impossible for me to be here before two."

"You think of bidding?"

"Perhaps."

"At what hour could you be here?"

"At half-past two or three at the latest."

"Make your mind easy, Mr. Limner. Naturally I would like to give you a chance to bid for it. I'll promise you the picture won't be taken before three. I know his lordship will be in a rage, but he is certain all the same to wait on for the sale."

Hugh's plan was complete in every detail before the other had finished speaking.

At two o'clock on the day of the sale he stepped out of his motor under the Ionic portico of Sternholt Towers with a large picture done up in a thick wrapper in his hand. He bid his man wait; he would return in less than half an hour.

Then leaning his picture against one of the pillars he pressed the button of the electric bell.

At the first jangle of the bell the great doors flew open, and two resplendent footmen showed themselves in the hall.

THERE was no trace in their manner of the insolence they had shown old Pallacio. The lackeys were quick to recognize Hugh as a friend of their master's, and received him with cringing deference, enhanced, no doubt, by a sight of his well-appointed motor at the door. One of them even condescended to lift the picture into the hall while the other answered his inquiries.

Hugh found with apparent surprise that Lord Sternholt was from home. The footman thought he was expected back to lunch. Abdallah would know. Abdallah was sent for. "Yes," the Indian said, "Lord Sternholt was expected back at three o'clock at the latest. If Mr. Limner could wait?"

Hugh could wait until three o'clock. Would Abdallah kindly have the picture brought to the gallery?

Without a word Abdallah shouldered the heavy picture and led the way up the broad stairs.

Hugh had another opportunity of admiring the supple grace and strength of the man as he moved easily with light footfalls in front, apparently unconscious of the weight on his shoulder.

At a word Abdallah laid the picture down on the vacant space on the oak panel. His task done he stood there silent and motionless as a statue. So far Hugh's plan had worked without a hitch. Now he grew impatient of the motionless Indian.

He could not know that Abdallah had strict orders that, in his master's absence, no one on any pretence was to be allowed alone in the gallery. Lord Sternholt had no more confidence in his fellow mortals than in his own. For a quarter of an hour Abdallah stood impassive as a statue. The precious minutes were slipping away—something must be done.

"Are you sure your master will be back for lunch?" Hugh asked.

"Almost sure, sahib. But you can have your lunch served at once if you prefer it."

"Thanks, no," Hugh answered, but if I might trouble you so far I will have a cup of coffee and a biscuit here. I have a very pleasant recollection of your coffee, Abdallah."

The Indian paused for the fraction of a second, then with a grave salaam turned away. As he passed Hugh, whose ears were very sharp, heard the lock click in the bolt. It was plain Abdallah was taking no chances. It was plain also that he did not know the secret of the revolving panel and the hidden picture.

The door had hardly closed behind him when Hugh pressed the knob in the heart of the hidden rose, and the hidden Velasquez swung noiselessly into view. Even in that moment of haste and fierce excitement, its beauty thrilled as in the old days. But there was no time for rapture. He had it down from its place in a moment. The canvascase in which

his own picture was stored opened with an artful flap. He hoisted the frame to the hook on which the Velasquez had hung, and settled it in its place. Then the knob was pressed again, the picture swung round on silent pivots, and the square of black panel showed as before.

And Hugh had the twice stolen Velasquez snugly ensconced in its padded canvas sheath a good five minutes before Abdallah reappeared with the coffee.

He noticed with infinite amusement that Abdallah carefully scanned the walls, and made sure that none of their treasures were missing before he set the little table which he had carried in with the coffee service at his side. The coffee and the liqueurs were perfect, and Hugh sat and sipped for a good twenty minutes in unaffected enjoyment.

Three o'clock had passed, and it drew on to half-past three.

"Abdallah," Hugh said, "I fear his lordship has been unexpectedly detained; I am sorry I cannot wait."

"You will leave the picture for him, sahib? It will be quite safe."

"I fear I cannot. There is someone to whom I am anxious to show it—someone who wants particularly to see it. You may tell his lordship I could not wait. Tell him I brought a picture to show him. I hope he will soon have an opportunity of seeing it, and I am sure he will appreciate it when he does. May I trouble you again?"

Abdallah, deftly shouldering the heavy canvas, carried it without an effort down the broad stairs, and deposited it in Hugh's motor.

Hugh slipped a sovereign into the dusky palm—he was in a mood to be generous—and drove off unsuspected and triumphant, blessing the discreet and ingenious Mr. Yorke.

(To be continued.)

Calgary Orchestra in Edmonton

THE first visit of the Calgary Symphony Orchestra to Edmonton took place a few weeks ago, and is well worthy of passing notice, not merely because it happens to be a musical event. The programme of a Young People's Matinee, given in the McDougall Auditorium, was as follows:

1. Rossini (1792-1868) Overture, "William Tell."
(Cello Solo, C. E. Booth.)
2. Haydn (1732-1809) Allegretto from Symphony "Militaire."
3. Humperdinck—Song of the Sandman and Evening Prayer from "Hansel and Gretel."
4. Strauss, Johan (1825-1899) Waltz, "Voices of Spring."
5. Offenbach (1819-1880) Interlude, Minuet and Barcarolle, from "The Tales of Hoffman."
6. Cheshire—Harp Solo, "Believe me . . . charms." (Moore.)
Miss Eva Bohmbach.
7. Smetana (1824-1884) Dances from "The Bartered Bride."
(a) "Polka."
(b) "Furiant."
(c) "Dance of the Comedians."

Which calls to memory what about ten years ago would have been the programme of an average aggregation from Calgary visiting Edmonton at this time of the year. The scene would have been the skating rink, and the programme very fast hockey; interludes—the men knocked out, one broken head, one dislocation, and two black eyes.

Civilization moves. The Calgary Symphony Orchestra must be reckoned as one of the most useful civilizing influences in the West. Edmonton also has musical organizations which will yet do something for the further refinement of Calgary. But the once and not so very long ago cow town is the only city in Canada west of Toronto with a touring symphony orchestra.

Only Papa.—Robbie ran into the sewing room and cried: "Oh, mamma. There's a man in the nursery kissing Fraulein."

Mamma dropped her sewing and made a rush for the stairway.

"April fool," cried Robbie, gleefully, "it's only papa."



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