

# THE ADVENTURES OF A SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER.

By Howard Fielding.

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"My father," said the stranger, "was quite extensively interested in mill property in Manchester, England."

He addressed this remark to the clerk of the hotel, who sat on a high chair that belonged in the billiard room, but was always in the office nowadays because without it the clerk could not reach the top of the new stove with his feet.

The clerk, who had been regarding the back of the stove with gently affectionate interest, began to frown upon it.

"Oh, he was, was he?" said he in a somewhat unpleasant tone.

"I mention it," the stranger hastened to add, "because I want to tell you what he used to say about the matter of working hours per day, that you and this gentleman were discussing."

And the young man glanced smilingly toward the gentleman in question, Dr. Isaiah Barrows, who sat in front of the stove. But the gentleman was no longer interested in working hours. He was looking into the fire, the door of the stove being open, and he had an eye nearly closed and his head tilted aside with the air of one who meditates upon the past.

"Is your father living?" he inquired presently.

"No," replied the Englishman. "He died last June."

"Died last June," the clerk echoed softly.

With his feet still on the top of the stove, he slowly thrust his head over his right shoulder until he could catch the eye of Dr. Barrows, who removed his gaze from the coals long enough to exchange a glance. Then the clerk drew in his head, somewhat as a turtle does, and at the same time the doctor resumed his contemplation of the fire.

"I suppose he left you considerable property?" said the doctor.

"A few thousands only," replied the Englishman. "I am the second son."

"About \$12,000, should you say?" queried the clerk.

"Why, yes," responded the Briton, with surprise. "That is about the amount, though I don't see how you know it."

"The estate is not fully settled yet, I suppose," said the doctor, "but you're expecting advices from the lawyer any day."

"Well, upon my word!" cried the stranger. "I've always heard that the Yankees are great guessers, but this is too much. You must know about my affairs in some way. The world's a small place. Perhaps you have friends in Manchester."

The two Yankees shook their heads in a slow and melancholy manner.

"Never saw or heard of you, Mr. Perceval," said the clerk, "before you got off the train last night."

Old Jones, proprietor of the Walden hotel, came in from the street at this moment and advanced timidly to the stove. He was a very thin man, who always wore a plaster on the small of his back, and he used frequently to touch his coat over the spot with the knuckles of his right hand as if to make sure that the plaster was not slinking its work.

"Mr. Perceval has just told us that he is from Manchester, England," said the clerk.

Jones was about to receive the information with the conventional courtesy of his profession when he suddenly altered his manner and remarked:

"Sho! You don't say!"

"His father died last June and left him \$12,000," said the doctor, "and he's come up here to examine the mills with a view to buying the property."

would desert him in an emergency. Presently he and the doctor and the clerk had their heads together in earnest consultation, leaving the Englishman alone by the stove.

He remained alone from that time, a quarter past 11, until half past 12, which was the dinner hour. In the meantime several men whom he had met at a fair in aid of one of Walden's churches, held on the previous evening in the town hall, came into the hotel office, and most of them greeted Perceval cordially, but some mysterious influence at once took hold upon them, and they strayed away. Soon after they would be seen in earnest conversation with the clerk, the doctor or old Jones.

Perceval ate his dinner all by himself and at a little table in a corner of the dining room, and an acute observer could have seen that he was doing some hard thinking. Certainly the mysterious change in popular sentiment regarding him was enough to make any man so situated pause and consider. But Englishmen think slowly, and this particular Briton seemed not to have solved his problem when he rose from the dinner table and walked out into the office.

At the desk he made inquiry for the clerk, but that personage had gone down to the railroad station to meet a train. Perceval presently followed in his footsteps.

Passing the postoffice, which is on the main street, about midway between the hotel and the depot, Perceval encountered Miss Annie Wheeler, an agreeable young woman, whose acquaintance he had made at the fair. Miss Wheeler was a fine type of the blond New England girl, and there is no telling how deep an impression she might have made upon the rather susceptible Mr. Perceval if she hadn't been totally eclipsed a few minutes after she first dawned upon his view at the fair by the dark, bewitching beauty of her particular friend, Miss Dora Barrows, daughter of the physician already mentioned. But the truth is that after Perceval saw Dora Barrows he didn't know that there was anybody else at the fair. It was natural that he should prefer brunettes, for he was one of those big, blue eyed, yellow haired Saxons.

When he saw Miss Wheeler coming toward him on the street, he planned to turn about and walk a little way with her in order that they might talk about Dora, but Miss Wheeler passed him with no recognition except a queer little nod that could hardly be called a bow.

This proceeding was so obviously related to the events of the last few hours at the hotel that not even a slow thinking Englishman could be mistaken about it. He lifted his hat with grave courtesy and proceeded on his way to the station, pondering deeply.

The Boston train had arrived, and the clerk of the Walden House had gone back to the hotel in a bus, so Perceval remained only a moment at the station.

On Main street and almost in the exact spot where Miss Wheeler had come so near "cutting" him Mr. Perceval met Dora Barrows. When his eye first lighted on her, he was conscious of a thrill resembling fear lest she should treat him as her friend had done. No such catastrophe occurred, however. Dora greeted him with the heartiest cordiality consistent with maidenly modesty. He was so delighted that he forgot to let go of her hand at the moment when she seemed to expect him to do so. Nevertheless she was not offended.

"Thank heaven, I still have a friend in Walden!" said he.

"Well, it's a fact that you haven't many," she replied, with a directness of speech and an earnestness of manner which indicated that she considered the subject too serious for the complimentary commonplaces of ordinary social intercourse.

"In the name of all that's odd," he cried, "will you tell me what's the matter? Is it New England prejudice against the mother country?"

"It is even more absurd than that," said she. "I scarcely know how to tell you what it is. You'll be mad clear through."

He besought her to be frank and not to spare his feelings.

"Well, then," said she, "this is it: Four years ago last fall a man came to this town, and he said he was an Englishman from Manchester. He was a second son, and his father had just died, leaving him only about \$12,000 out of a great estate. He had come here to examine the mill property with a view to buying it for an English syndicate."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Perceval.

"The fellow swindled everybody," she continued. "He pretended that his estate wasn't quite settled, but that he might hear from his lawyers any day. He owed for his board at the hotel. He borrowed money of Mr. Jones and the clerk and anybody else that had any say to lend. He got people to cash drafts that weren't good. Oh, he was the rage for awhile! Everybody thought he would bring prosperity to the town, and all were anxious to oblige him. And then he went away, and gradually it all came out. Mr. Perceval, this town

was in mourning, and no man dared to look his neighbor in the face. You see, they were all ashamed of being taken in."

"Quite so—quite so," exclaimed Perceval. "But I really beg your pardon, you know, for being so stupid—eh—eh—just where do I figure in this affair?"

"Why, at the hotel this morning," she replied, "you just happened to speak almost the identical words to the clerk that this other man used. He and my father instantly thought of him, and they remembered that the detectives who investigated the case at that time told them that there were two or more swindlers playing the same trick in different parts of the country. It struck them that you were one of the—"

"Swindlers," said Perceval calmly.

"Well, if I must say it, that you were one of the swindlers who had drifted around to this town, not knowing that it had been robbed already."

"And what do you think?" asked the young man, looking straight into her great dark eyes.

"I think that you are exactly what you claim to be," she answered promptly.



HE BESOUGHT HER TO BE FRANK.

# SORES and ULCERS

**DRAIN THE SYSTEM, ENDANGER LIFE.**

That old sore or ulcer, which has been a source of pain, worry and anxiety to you for five or ten years—maybe longer—doesn't heal because you are not using the proper treatment, but are trying to cure it with salves and washes. While these are soothing and relieve pain to some extent, no real, permanent good can come from their use, because the disease is in the blood and far beyond the reach of external applications.

A sore heals promptly when the blood is in good condition, but never if it is diseased. The tendency of these old sores and ulcers is to grow worse, spreading and eating deeper into the flesh. A person's capacity for work or pleasure is soon lost in the great desire and search for something to cure. A S. S. S. makes a rapid and permanent cure of old sores and ulcers, and is the only medicine that does, because no other can reach deep-seated blood troubles. Ordinary Sarsaparilla and potash mixtures are too weak and watery to overcome a deadly poison that has taken possession of the blood. Do not waste valuable time experimenting with them.

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**A Gunshot Wound.** "Some time ago I was shot in the left leg, receiving what I considered only a slight wound. It developed into a running sore and gave me a great deal of pain. I was treated by many doctors, and took a number of blood remedies, but none did me any good. I had heard S. S. S. highly recommended and concluded to give it a trial. The result was truly gratifying. S. S. S. seemed to get right at the trouble, and forced the poison out of my blood; soon afterwards the sore healed up and was cured sound and well. I saw have perfect use of the leg, which was swollen and very stiff for a long time." J. H. McIKAVIA, Lawrenceburg, Ky.

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## SUITS OF ARMOR.

**The Last Battle in Which They Were Worn by European Soldiers.**

The last occasion, it is believed, on which suits of armor were worn in battle by European soldiers was in 1799. The incident, according to chroniclers of the Napoleonic wars, took place in that year, when a small French force was holding the little fort at Aquilla in the Abruzzi against a rising of the hostile peasantry of the district.

The French were not strong enough to fight their way through the lines of their opponents, who outnumbered them 20 to 1, while, as the latter had no guns, the Frenchmen could hold their position with confidence.

There were, however, left on the space lying between the opposing forces some dozen or so guns which the beleaguered had not been able to take with them into the fort.

An attempt was made by the besiegers to remove these guns by means of a long rope worked by a capstan placed in a house a short distance away, and, though their first endeavors resulted in failure, the French realized that the ultimate capture of the ordnance would seriously jeopardize the chances of the fort holding out.

The necessity of spiking the guns was apparent, but a sortie in the face of the overwhelming musketry fire of the insurgents was out of the question. At this juncture an idea occurred to an artillery officer. He remembered having noticed, in making an inspection of the magazine, some old plate armor, and, selecting from the best preserved 12 suits, he determined to try whether they would not afford sufficient protection for his men to attempt to work under cover of their own guns.

Twelve stalwarts, therefore, marched out clad in this cumbersome, unaccustomed accoutrement, taking with them the necessary tools, and succeeded in executing their purpose under a hail of bullets from the besiegers.



**SHE WAS BLIND.**

A blindness comes to me now and then. I have it now. It is queer—I can see your eyes but not your nose. I can't read because some of the letters are blurred; dark spots cover them; it is very uncomfortable.

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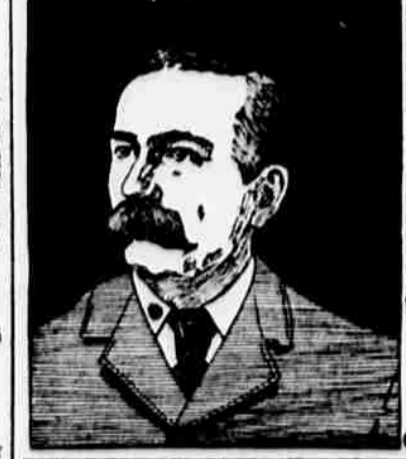
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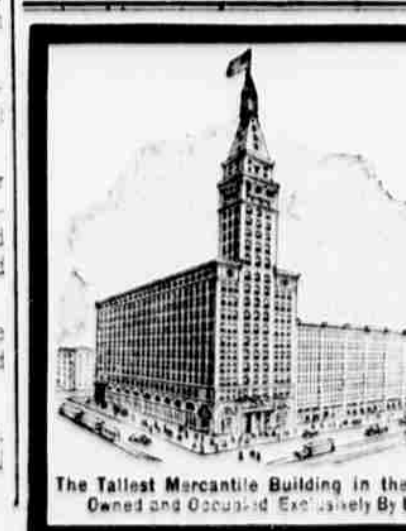
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OLD JONES ADVANCED TIMIDLY TO THE STOVE.

"How did you know that?" demanded the Englishman.

"I thought you said so," answered the doctor, somewhat confused.

"Well, I didn't," said Perceval, "but it's a fact just the same."

"He's going to buy the mills," murmured old Jones gently. "Looks as if we might have snow tonight. Don't you think so, doctor?"

He strolled toward the window, and it was observed that he was gripping hard at his plaster as if he feared it