THE HILLMAN

An Unusual Love Story

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

ALL the world loves a lover, and all the world chortles with delight when a charming girl fascinates an avowed woman-hater and trains him to eat quietly out of her hand. In the story which we offer here, the charming heroine does nothing so commonplace as to fascinate one man; she fascinates dozens. And in the end she has not one woman-hater eating out of her hand, but three of the crustiest bachelors you ever saw following her around like faithful dogs. "The Hillman" is altogether delightful, and we feel sure our readers will enjoy the serial thoroughly.

THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER I.

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Louise was leaning back among the cushions of the motionless car. The moon had not yet risen, but a faint and luminous glow, spreading like a halo about the topmost peak of the ragged line of hills, heralded its approach. Her eyes swept the hillsides, vainly yet without curiosity, for any sign of a human dwelling. Her chauffeur and her maid stood talking heatedly together near the radiator.

Louise leaned forward and called to the chauffeur.

"Charles," she asked, "what has happened? Are we really stranded here?"

The man's head emerged from the bonnet. He came round to the side of the car.

"I am very sorry, madam," he reported, "but something has gone wrong with the magneto. I shall have to take it to pieces before I can tell exactly what is wrong. It will take several hours and it ought to be done by daylight. Perhaps I had better go and see whether there isn't a farm somewhere near."

"And leave us here alone?" Aline exclaimed indignantly.

Her mistress smiled at her reassuringly.

"What have we to fear, you foolish girl? For myself, I would like better than anything to remain here until the moon comes over the top of that round hill. But listen! There is no necessity for Charles to leave us."

"You Are Indeed a Good Samaritan."

They all turned their heads. From some distance behind there came, faintly at first, but more distinctly every moment, the sound of horse's hoofs. Louder and louder came the sound. Louise gave a little cry as a man on horseback appeared in sight at the crest of the hill. The narrow strip of road seemed suddenly dwarfed, an unreasonable portion of the horizon blotted out. In the half light there was something almost awesome in the unusual size of the horse and of the man who rode it.

"It is a world of goblins, this, Aline!" her mistress exclaimed softly. "What is it that comes?"

"It is a human being, Dieu merci!" the maid replied, with a matter-of-fact little sigh of content.

A few moments later horse and rider were beside the car.

"Has anything happened?" the newcomer asked, dismounting and raising his whip to his cap.

"I have broken down," Louise said. "Please tell us what you would advise us to do. Is there a village near, or an inn, or even a barn? Or shall we have to spend the night in the car?"

"The nearest village," he replied, "is twelve miles away. Fortunately, my own home is close by. I shall be very pleased—I and my brother—if you will honor us. I am afraid I cannot offer you very much in the way of entertainment—"

She rose briskly to her feet and beamed upon him.

"You are indeed a good Samaritan!" she exclaimed. "A roof is more than we had dared to hope for, although when one looks up at this wonderful sky and breathes this air, one wonders, perhaps, whether a roof, after all, is such a blessing."

"It gets very cold toward morning," the young man said practically.

"Of course," she assented. "Aline, you will bring my dressing-bag and follow us. This gentleman is kind enough to offer us shelter for the night. Dear me, you really are almost as tall as you appeared!" she added, as she stood by his side. "For the first time in my life you make me feel undersized."

He looked down at her, a little more at his ease now by reason of the friendliness of her manner, although he had still the air of one embarked upon an adventure, the outcome of which was to be regarded with some qualms. She was of little more than medium height, and his first impressions of her were that she was thin, and too pale to be good-looking; that her eyes were large and soft, with eyebrows more clearly defined than is usual among English-women; and that she moved without seeming to walk.

"I suppose I am tall," he admitted, as they started off along the road. "One doesn't notice it around here. My name is John Strangewey, and our house is just behind that clump of trees there, on the top of the hill. We will do our best to make you comfortable," he added a little doubtfully; "but there are only my brother and myself, and we have no women servants in the house."

"A roof of any sort will be a luxury," she assured him. "I only hope that we shall not be a trouble to you in any way."

"And your name, please?" he asked.

She was a little amazed at his directness, but she answered him without hesitation.

"My name," she told him, "is Louise."

He leaned down toward her, a little puzzled.

"Louise. But your surname?"

She laughed softly. It occurred to him that nothing like her laugh had ever been heard on that gray-walled stretch of mountain road.

"Never mind! I am traveling incognito. Who I am, or where I am going—well, what does that matter to anybody? Perhaps I do not know myself. You can imagine, if you like, that we came from the heart of your hills, and that tomorrow they will open again and welcome us back."

"I don't think there are any motor-cars in fairyland," he objected.

"We represent a new edition of fairy lore," she told him. "Modern romance, you know, includes motor-cars and even French maids."

"All the same," he protested, with masculine bluntness, "I really don't see how I can introduce you to my brother as 'Louise from fairyland.'"

She evaded the point.

"Tell me about your brother. Is he as tall as you, and is he younger or older?"

"He is nearly twenty years older," her companion replied. "He is about my height, but he stoops more than I do, and his hair is gray. I am afraid that you may find him a little peculiar."

Her escort paused and swung open a white gate on their left-hand side. Before them was an ascent which seemed to her, in the dim light, to be absolutely precipitous.

"It isn't so bad as it looks," he assured her, "and I am afraid it's the only way up. The house is at the bend there, barely fifty yards away. You can see a light through the trees."

"You must help me, then, please," she begged.

He stooped down toward her. She linked her fingers together through his left arm and, leaning a little heavily upon him, began the ascent. He was conscious of some subtle fragrance from her clothes, a perfume strangely different from the odor of the ghost-like flowers that bordered the steep path up which they were climbing. Her arms, slight, warm things though they were, and great though his own strength, felt suddenly like a yoke. At every step he seemed to feel their weight more insistent—a weight not physical, solely due to this rush of unexpected emotions.

She looked around her almost in wonder as her companion paused with his hand upon a little iron gate. From behind that jagged stretch of hills in the distance the moon had now appeared. Before her was a garden, austere-looking with its prim flower-beds, the trees all bent in the same direction, fashioned after one pattern by the winds. Beyond was the house—a long, low building, part of it covered with some kind of creeper.

As they stepped across the last few yards of lawn, the black, oak door which they were approaching suddenly opened. A tall, elderly man stood looking inquiringly out. He shaded his eyes with his hands.

"Is that you, brother?" he asked doubtfully.

John Strangewey ushered his companion into the square, oak-paneled hall, hung with many trophies of the chase, a few oil-paintings, here and there some sporting prints. It was lighted only with a single lamp which stood upon a round, polished table in the center of the white-flagged floor.

"This lady's motor-car has broken down, Stephen," John explained, turning a little nervously toward his brother. "I found them in the road, just at the bottom of the hill. She and her servants will spend the night here. I have explained that there is no village or inn for a good many miles."

Louise turned graciously toward the elder man, who was standing grimly apart. Even in those few seconds, her quick sensibilities warned her of the hostility which lurked behind the tightly closed lips and steel-gray eyes. His bow was stiff and uncordial, and he made no movement to offer his hand.

"We are not used to welcoming ladies at Peak Hall, madam," he said. "I am afraid that you will find us somewhat unprepared for guests."

"I ask for nothing more than a roof," Louise assured him.

John threw his hat and whip upon the round table and stood in the center of the stone floor. She caught a glance which flashed between the two men—of appeal from the one, of icy resentment from the other.

"We can at least add to the roof a bed and some supper—and a welcome," John declared. "Is that not so, Stephen?"

The older man turned deliberately away. It was as if he had not heard his brother's words.

"I will go and find Jennings," he said. "He must be told about the servants."

Louise watched the disappearing figure until it was out of sight. Then she looked up into the face of the younger man, who was standing by her side.

"I am sorry," she murmured apologetically. "I am afraid that your brother is not pleased at this sudden intrusion. Really, we shall give you very little trouble."

He answered her with a sudden eager enthusiasm. He seemed far more natural then than at any time since he had ridden up from out of the shadows to take his place in her life.

"I won't apologize for Stephen," he said. "He is a little crotchety. You must please be kind and not notice. You must let me, if I can, offer you welcome enough for us both."

CHAPTER II.

Louise, with a heavy, silver-plated candlestick in her hand, stood upon the uneven floor of the bedroom to which she had been conducted, looking up at the oak-framed family tree which hung above the broad chimney-piece. She examined the coat of arms emblazoned in the corner, and peered curiously at the last neatly printed addition, which indicated Stephen and John Strangewey as the sole survivors of a diminishing line. When at last she turned away, she found the name upon her lips.

"Strangewey!" she murmured. "John Strangewey! It is really curious how that name brings with it a sense of familiarity. It is so unusual, too. And what an unusual-looking person! Do you think, Aline, that you ever saw anyone so superbly handsome?"

The maid's little grimace was expressive.

"Never, madam," she replied. "And yet to think of it—a gentleman, a person of intelligence, who lives here always, outside the world, with just a terrible old man servant, the only domestic in the house! Nearly all the cooking is done at the bailiff's, a quarter of a mile away."

Louise nodded thoughtfully.

"It is very strange," she admitted. "I should like to understand it. Perhaps," she added, half to herself, "some day I shall."

She passed across the room, and on her way paused before an old cheval-glass, before which were suspended two silver candlesticks containing lighted wax candles. She looked steadfastly at her own reflection. A little smile parted her lips. In the bedroom of this quaint farmhouse she was looking upon a face and a figure which the illustrated papers and the enterprise of the modern photographer had combined to make familiar to the world—the figure of a girl, it seemed, notwithstanding her twenty-seven years. Her soft, white blouse was open at the neck, displaying a beautifully rounded throat. Her eyes dwelt upon the oval face, with its strong, yet mobile features; its lips a little full, perhaps, but soft and sensitive; at the masses of brown hair drawn low over her ears.

This was herself, then. How would she seem to these two men downstairs, she asked herself—the dour, grim master of the house, and her more youthful rescuer, whose coming had somehow touched her fancy? They saw so little of her sex. They seemed, in a sense, to be in league against it. Would they find out that they were entertaining an angel unawares?

She thought with a gratified smile of her incognito. It was a real trial

His Bow Was Stiff and Uncordial.

of her strength, this! When she turned away from the mirror the smile still lingered upon her lips, a soft light of anticipation was shining in her eyes.

John met her at the foot of the stairs. She noticed with some surprise that he was wearing the dinner-jacket and black tie of civilization.

"Will you come this way, please?" he begged. "Supper is quite ready."

He held open the door of one of the rooms on the other side of the hall, and she passed into a low dining room, dimly lit with shaded lamps. The elder brother rose from his chair as they entered, although his salutation was even grimmer than his first welcome. He was wearing a dress-coat of old-fashioned cut, and a black stock, and he remained standing, without any smile or word of greeting, until she had taken her seat. Behind his chair stood a very ancient manservant in a gray pepper-and-salt suit, with a white tie, whose expression, at the entrance of this unexpected guest, seemed curiously to reflect the inhospitable instincts of his master.

The table was laid with all manner of cold dishes, supplemented by others upon the sideboard. There were pots of jam and honey, a silver teapot and silver spoons and forks of quaint design, strangely cut glass, and a great Dresden bowl filled with flowers.

"I am afraid," John remarked, "that you are not used to dining at this hour. My brother and I are old-fashioned in our customs. If we had had a little longer notice—"

"I never in my life saw anything that looked so delicious as your cold chicken," Louise declared. "May I have some—and some ham? I believe that you must farm some land yourselves. Everything looks as if it were homemade or homegrown."

"We are certainly farmers," John admitted, with a smile, "and I don't think there is much here that isn't of our own production. The farm buildings are at some distance away from the house. There is quite a little colony at the back, and the woman who superintends the dairy lives there. In the house we are entirely independent of your sex. We manage, somehow or other, with Jennings here and two boys."

"You are not both woman-haters, I hope?"

Her younger host flashed a warning glance at Louise, but it was too late. Stephen had laid down his knife and fork and was leaning in her direction.

"Madam," he intervened, "since you have asked the question, I will confess that I have never known any good come to a man of our family from the friendship or service of women. Our family history, if ever you should come to know it, would amply justify my brother and myself for our attitude toward your sex."

"Stephen!" John remonstrated, a slight frown upon his face. "Need you weary our guest with your peculiar views? It is scarcely polite, to say the least of it."

The older man sat, for a moment, grim and silent.

"Perhaps you are right, brother," he admitted. "This lady did not seek our company, but it may interest her to know that she is the first woman who has crossed the threshold of Peak Hall for a matter of six years."

Louise looked from one to the other, half incredulously.

"Do you really mean it? Is that literally true?" she asked John.

"Absolutely," the young man assured her; "but please remember that you are none the less heartily welcome here. We have few women neighbors, and intercourse with them seems to have slipped out of our lives. Tell me, how far have you come today, and where did you hope to sleep tonight?"

Louise hesitated for a moment. For some reason or other, the question seemed to bring with it some disturbing thought.

"I was motoring from Edinburgh. As regards tonight, I had not made up my mind. I rather hoped to reach Kendal. My journey is not at all an interesting matter to talk about," she went on. "Tell me about your life here. It sounds most delightfully pastoral. Do you live here all the year round?"

"My brother," John told her, "has not been farther away than the nearest market town for nearly twenty years."

Her eyes grew round with astonishment.

"But you go to London sometimes?"

"I was there eight years ago. Since then I have not been further away than Carlisle or Kendal. I go into camp near Kendal for three weeks every year—territorial training, you know."

"But how do you pass your time? What do you do with yourself?" she asked.

"Farm," he answered. "Farming is our daily occupation. Then for amusement we hunt, shoot and fish. The seasons pass before we know it."

She looked appraisingly at John Strangewey. Notwithstanding his sun-tanned cheeks and the splendid vigor of his form, there was nothing in the least agricultural about his manner or his appearance. There was humor as well as intelligence in his clear, gray eyes. She opined that the books which lined one side of the room were at once his property and his hobby.

"It is a very healthy life, no doubt," she said; "but somehow it seems incomprehensible to think of a man like yourself living always in such an out-of-the-way corner."

John's lips were open to reply, but Stephen once more intervened.

"Life means a different thing to each of us, madam," he said sternly. "There are many born with the lust for cities and the crowded places in their hearts born with the desire to mingle with their fellows, to absorb the conventional vices and virtues, to become one of the multitude. It has been different with us Strangeweys."

Jennings, at a sign from his master, removed the tea equipage, evidently produced in honor of their visitor. Three tall-stemmed glasses were placed upon the table, and a decanter of port reverently produced.

Louise had fallen for a moment or two into a fit of abstraction. Her eyes were fixed upon the opposite wall, from which, out of their faded frames, a row of grim-looking men and women, startlingly like her two hosts, seemed to frown down upon her.

"Is that your father?" she asked, moving her head toward one of the portraits.

"My grandfather, John Strangewey," Stephen told her.

"Was he one of the wanderers?"

"He left Cumberland only twice during his life. He was master of hounds, magistrate, colonel in the yeomanry of that period, and three times refused to stand for parliament."

"John Strangewey!" Louise repeated softly to herself. "I was looking at your family tree upstairs," she went on. "It is curious how both my maid and myself were struck with a sense of familiarity about the name, as if we had heard or read something about it quite lately."

Her words were almost carelessly spoken, but she was conscious of the somewhat ominous silence which ensued. She glanced up wonderingly and intercepted a rapid look passing between the two men. More puzzled than ever, she turned toward John as if for an explanation. He had risen somewhat abruptly to his feet, and his hand was upon the back of her chair.

"Will it be disagreeable to you if my brother smokes a pipe?" he asked. "I tried to have our little drawing room prepared for you, but the fire has not been lit for so long that the room, I am afraid, is quite impossible."

"Do let me stay here with you," she begged, "and I hope that both of you will smoke. I am quite used to it."

John wheeled up an easy chair for her. Stephen, stiff and upright, sat on the other side of the hearth. He took the tobacco jar and pipe that his brother had brought him, and slowly filled the bowl.

"With your permission, then, madam," he said, as he struck a match.

Louise smiled graciously. Some instinct prompted her to stifle her own craving for a cigarette and keep her little gold case hidden in her pocket. All the time her eyes were wandering round the room. Suddenly she rose and, moving round the table, stood once more facing the row of gloomy-looking portraits.

"So that is your grandfather?" she remarked to John, who had followed her. "Is your father not here?"

He shook his head.

"My father's portrait was never painted."

"Tell the truth, John," Stephen enjoined, rising in his place and setting down his pipe. "We Strangeweys were hillfolk and farmers, by descent and destiny, for more than four hundred years. Our place is here upon the land, almost among the clouds, and those of us who have realized it have led the lives God meant us to lead. There have been some of our race who have been tempted into the lowlands and the cities. Not one of them brought honor upon our name. Their pictures are not here. They are not worthy to be here."

Stephen set down the candlesticks and returned to his place. Louise, with her hands clasped behind her back, glanced toward John, who still stood by her side.

"Tell me," she asked him, "have none of your people who went out into the world done well for themselves?"

"Scarcely one," he admitted.

"Not one," Stephen interrupted. "Madam," he went on, turning toward Louise, "lest my welcome to you this evening should have seemed inhospitable, let me tell you this: Every Strangewey who has left our county and trodden the downward path of failure, has done so at the instance of one of your sex. That is why those of us who inherit the family spirit look askance upon all strange women. That is why no woman is ever welcome within this house."

Louise resumed her seat in the easy chair.

"I am so sorry," she murmured, looking down at her slipper. "I could not help breaking down here, could I?"

"Nor could my brother fail to offer you the hospitality of this roof," Stephen admitted. "The incident was unfortunate but inevitable. It is a matter for regret that we have so little to offer you in the way of entertainment." He rose to his feet. The door had opened. Jennings was standing there with a candlestick upon a massive silver salver. Behind him was Aline. "You are doubtless fatigued by your journey, madam," Stephen concluded.

Louise made a little grimace, but she rose at once to her feet. She understood quite well that she was being

"Those of Us Who Inherit the Family Spirit Look Askance Upon All Strange Women."

sent to bed, and she shivered a little when she looked at the hour—barely ten o'clock. Yet it was all in keeping. From the doorway she looked back into the room, in which nothing seemed to have been touched for centuries. She stood upon the threshold to bid her final good-night, fully conscious of the complete anachronism of her presence there.

Her smile for Stephen was respectful and full of dignity. As she glanced toward John, however, something flashed in her eyes and quivered at the corners of her lips, something which escaped her control, something which made him grip for a moment the back of the chair against which he stood. Then, between the old manservant, who insisted upon carrying her candle to her room, and her maid, who walked behind, she crossed the white stone hall and stepped slowly up the broad flight of stairs.

Louise has quite an interesting little chat with John before she resumes her journey, and in his mind is awakened something that hasn't been stirred for a very long time.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

LAST RECRUITS OF SLAVERY

Remnants of Cargo Brought to America in 1859 Make Up Interesting Colony Near Mobile.

Perhaps the most interesting colony of negroes in America today is to be found in Alabama, about three miles from the heart of Mobile. Here in a little town called Plateau lives a group of nine weather-beaten, grizzled old men and women, the remnant of the last cargo of slaves brought to American soil from the coast of Africa, says the Southern Workman. The youngest is entering on his sixty-sixth year; the oldest is not less than one hundred and ten; while just a few years ago one of their number died who had seen more than one hundred and forty years.

They were brought to America in the summer of 1859. In 1865 their emancipation came. For the next few years they were buffeted about by changing fortunes without any settled home.

One among them, wiser than the rest, saw the dangers of their unsettled condition. Not owning their homes they could be turned out at any time, and, hiring themselves to strange masters in search of laborers, they might some day be carried off again into slavery, perhaps to Cuba or Porto Rico, for they learned that slavery still existed there. With such incentive behind them they selected a tract of land just outside Mobile, on Three Mile creek, and began the purchase of homes.

As one goes over and about Plateau, he is struck with the appropriateness of the setting in which this African colony is to be found. About one-half the town is owned by negroes, and of the property occupied by them at least 75 per cent is owned by their own people. The largest single holding of land among them is between 50 and 60 acres. Another negro landlord owns and rents about 20 houses. There are nine stores, of which seven are owned and operated by colored men. The largest of them all is one of these seven and represents a volume of business amounting to more than $11,000 annually.

FOODS THAT CAUSE RICKETS

Disease Is Due to Too Little Animal Fat, Protein and Lime Salts in Dietary, Says Doctor.

"Beware of giving young children too much pasteurized milk, proprietary food, or even cereals, to the exclusion of brown bread and butter, stewed fruit or roasted apple, and a little meat once a day," writes Dr. Beverley Robinson of New York in giving a warning note about rickets in the New York Medical Journal.

He adds that he is "considering especially children two or three years old, who are healthy and vigorous unless rickets develops unawares by reason of faulty dietary." And he quotes the following from Osler:

"Like scurvy, rickets may be found in the families of the wealthy under perfect hygienic conditions. It is most common in children fed on condensed milk, the various proprietary foods, cow's milk and food rich in starches."

Rickets is the cause of knock-knees and bow legs. It is due to too little animal fat and protein in the dietary, together with too little lime salts.

Her Memory Faulty.

She was middle-aged, stylishly gowned and apparently sane. And she was looking at the paintings in the Corcoran Gallery of Art through a gold-framed lorgnette, that dangled from a jeweled gold chain.

Another woman was standing before a canvas, and, in a desire for information, or, perhaps, for the sake of social interchange, the lady of the lorgnette inquired, affably:

"Is that a picture of the death of the Lord?"

"No, madam; it represents the martyrdom of St. Sebastian."

"Ah, I see. I have the poorest memory. I knew that they killed the Lord, of course, but I disremembered just how."—Washington Star.

Dealers throughout Australasia note an increasing demand for woman's hats and sports coats of American make.

USES FOR FAMILY UMBRELLA

Mind of Woman Devises Two Ways in Which Rainstick May Be Pressed Into Service.

Two novel uses for an umbrella are told of in a recent issue of Popular Mechanics Magazine. The mind of woman devised them both.

Picnickers desiring to go in bathing are often handicapped by the lack of convenient places to change clothes. An umbrella and some paper muslin provides a light portable tent that is practical and inexpensive for such uses. Cut the dark paper muslin into as many nine-foot lengths as there are sections of the umbrella. Sew these strips together. At each seam tie a string about a yard long and a stout cord 15 feet long to the handle to hold up the tent. For use open the umbrella, invert it and to each rib tie one end of the cord to the handle of the umbrella and suspend it from a tree or other support, weighting or tying down the other end.

A clothes dryer that can be easily carried will appeal to travelers and persons living in small quarters. An umbrella, four yards of strong wrapping twine and several small brass rings are required. Knot the rings into the twine at intervals, measuring the distance between the rib points of the umbrella, and hook the twine to the points by the rings, providing considerable drying space for small articles. Hook the umbrella handle over a suitable support or tie it carefully to the supporting pipe of a light fixture in the middle of the room, ready for the articles to be dried.

That Was Different.

"I want," said the grim-faced commander, "a dozen men who will give their lives to their country." The entire regiment stepped forward. The commander selected twelve.

"Now," said he, "you are to hold this position until you are wiped out."

"But we shall be killed!" quavered one.

"Did you not volunteer to give your life to your country?" asked the commander sternly.

"Oh, 'life!' I thought you said 'wife!'"

Had Short Memory.

Landlord (to Pat, who has just paid his rent)—I hear you are a good judge of whisky, Pat. Now, here are two different bottles and I want you to tell me which is the best.

Pat takes a glass of each, smacks his lips and looks wise.

Landlord—Well, Pat, which is the best?

Pat—Begorra, yer honor, they are both good, but would you mind filling me another glass of the first. I have forgotten the taste of it.

Apology.

"I hear, Mr. Catts, that you said I was a wallflower at the ball."

"My dear Miss Passy, I remarked that you were among the conspicuous mural ornaments of the occasion."

"Oh, Mr. Catts, now that's something different, but you flatter me."

Accounts for It.

"Money is trouble."

"I guess that is why people are always borrowing it."

Boston may soon have women street car conductors.

to press the advantage thus gained | coast between Zeebrugge and Ostend. | Gen. Michael Alexieff, who recently | the object of attacks on his attitude |