

THE HILLMAN

AN UNUSUAL LOVE STORY

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

LOUISE HAS A CURIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THE BACHELOR BROTHER AND SHE STARTS A LITTLE FLAME BURNING IN THE SOUL OF ONE

Synopsis.—On a trip through the English (Cumberland) country the breakdown of her automobile forces Louise Maurel, a famous London actress, to spend the night at the farm home of John and Stephen Strangeway. At dinner Louise discovers that the brothers are woman-hating recluses.

CHAPTER III.

Louise awoke the next morning filled with a curious sense of buoyant expectancy. The sunshine was pouring into the room, brightening up its most somber corners. It lay across the quilt of her bed, and seemed to bring out the perfume of lavender from the pillow on which her head rested.

Aline, hearing her mistress stir, hastened at once to her bedside. "It is half-past nine, madam, and your breakfast is here. The old imbecile from the kitchen has just brought it up."

Louise looked approvingly at the breakfast tray, with the home-made bread and deep-yellow butter, the brown eggs and clear honey. The smell of the coffee was aromatic. She breathed a little sigh of content.

"How delicious everything looks!" she exclaimed. "The home-made things are well enough in their way, madam," Aline agreed, "but I have never known a household so strange and disagreeable. That M. Jennings, who calls himself the butler—he is a person unspeakable, a savage!"

Louise's eyes twinkled. "I don't think they are fond of women in this household, Aline," she remarked. "Tell me, have you seen Charles?"

"Charles has gone to the nearest blacksmith's forge to get something made for the car, madam," Aline replied. "He asked me to say that he was afraid he would not be ready to start before midday."

"That does not matter," Louise declared, gazing eagerly out of the casement window. Immediately below was a grass-grown orchard which stretched upward at a precipitous angle, toward a belt of freshly plowed field; beyond, a little chain of rocky hills, sheer overhead. The trees were pink and white with blossom; the petals lay about upon the ground like drifted snowflakes. Here and there yellow jonquils were growing among the long grass. A waft of perfume stole into the room through the window which she had opened.

"Fill my bath quickly, Aline," Louise ordered. "I must go out. I want to see whether it is really as beautiful as it looks."

Aline dressed her mistress in silence. Then, suddenly, a little exclamation escaped her. She swung round toward her mistress, and for once there was animation in her face.

"But, madam," she exclaimed, "I have remembered! The name Strangeway. Yesterday morning you read it out while you took your coffee. You spoke of the good fortune of some farmer in the north of England to whom some relative in Australia had left a great fortune—hundreds and thousands of pounds. The name was Strangeway, the same as that, I remember it now."

step with the plowman by his side, but without any of the laborer's mechanical plod—with a spring in his footsteps, indeed, pointing with his stick along the furrow, so absorbed in the instructions he was giving that he was almost opposite the gate before he was aware of her presence. He promptly abandoned his task and approached her. "Good morning! You have slept well?" he called out.

"Better, I think, than ever before in my life," she answered. "Differently, at any rate. And such an awakening!" He looked at her, a little puzzled. The glow upon her face and the sunlight upon her brown hair kept him silent. He was content to look at her and wonder.

"Tell me," she demanded impetuously, "is this a little corner of fairyland that you have found? Does the sun always shine like this? Does the earth always smell as sweetly, and are your trees always in blossom? Does your wind always taste as if God had breathed the elixir of life into it?"

He turned around to follow the sweep of her eyes. Something of the same glow seemed to rest for a moment upon his face.

"It is good," he said, "to find what you love so much appreciated by someone else."

They stood together in a silence almost curiously protracted. Then the plowman passed again with his team of horses and John called out some instructions to him. She followed him down to earth.

"Tell me, Mr. Strangeway," she inquired, "where are your farm buildings?"

"Come and I will show you," he answered, opening the gate to let her through. "Keep close to the hedge until we come to the end of the plow; and then—but no, I won't anticipate. This way!"

They reached the end of the plowed field and, passing through a gate, turned abruptly to the left and began to climb a narrow path which bordered the boundary wall, and which became steeper every moment. As they ascended, the orchard and the long, low house on the other side seemed to lie almost at their feet. The road and the open moorland beyond, stretching to the encircling hills, came more clearly into sight with every backward glance.

Louise paused at last, breathless. "Is it the home of the fairies you are taking me to?" she asked. "If you have discovered that, no wonder you find us ordinary women outside your lives!"

He laughed. "There are no fairies where we are going," he assured her.

They were on a roughly made road now, which turned abruptly to the right a few yards ahead, skirting the side of a deep gorge. They took a few steps further, and Louise stopped short with a cry of wonder.

and the lower hills on both sides, were parceled out into fields, inclosed within stone walls, reminding her from the height at which they stood, of nothing so much as the quilt upon her bed.

Her eyes swept this strange tract of country backward and forward. She saw the men like specks in the fields, the cows grazing in the pasture like toy animals. Then she turned and looked at the neat row of stacks and the square of farm buildings.

"I am trying hard to realize that you are a farmer and that this is your life," she said.

He swung open the wooden gate of the churchyard, by which they were standing. There was a row of graves on either side of the prim path.

"Suppose," he suggested, "you tell me about yourself now—about your own life."

"My life, and the world in which I live, seem far away just now," she said quietly. "I think that it is doing me good to have a rest from them. Talk to me about yourself, please."

He smiled. He was just a little disappointed. "We shall very soon reach the end of all that I have to tell you," he remarked. "Still, if there is anything you would like to know—"

"Who were these men and women who have lived and died here?" she interrupted, with a little wave of her hand toward the graves.

"All our own people," he told her. "She studied the names upon the tombstones, spelling them out slowly.

"The married people," he went on, "are buried on the south side; the single ones and children are nearer the wall. Tell me," he asked, after a moment's hesitation, "are you married or single?"

She gave a little start. The abruptness of the question, the keen, steadfast gaze of his compelling eyes, seemed for a moment to paralyze both her nerves and her voice. It was as if someone had suddenly drawn away one of the stones from the foundation of her life. She found herself repeating the words on the tombstone facing her:

"And of Elizabeth, for sixty-one years the faithful wife and helpmate of Ezra Cummings, mother of his children, and his partner in the life everlasting."

Her knees began to shake. There was a momentary darkness before her eyes. She felt for the tombstone and sat down.

CHAPTER IV.

The churchyard gate was opened and closed noisily. They both glanced up. Stephen Strangeway was coming slowly toward them along the flinty path. Louise, suddenly herself again, rose briskly to her feet. Stephen had apparently lost none of his dourness of the previous night. As he looked toward Louise, there was no mistaking the slow dislike in his steely eyes.

"Your chauffeur, madam, has just returned," he announced. "He sent word that he will be ready to start at one o'clock."

Louise, inspired to battle by the almost provocative hostility of her elder host, smiled sweetly upon him.

"You can't imagine how sorry I am to hear it," she said. "I don't know when, in the whole course of my life, I have met with such a delightful adventure or spent such a perfect morning."

Stephen looked at her with level, disapproving eyes—at her slender form in its perfectly fitting tailored gown; at her patent shoes, so obviously unsuitable for her surroundings, and at the faint vision of silk stockings.

"If I might say so without appearing inhositable," he remarked, with faint sarcasm, "this would seem to be the fitting moment for your departure. A closer examination of our rough life up here might alter your views. If I do not have the pleasure of seeing you again, permit me to wish you farewell."

He turned and walked away. Louise watched him with very real interest.

"Do you know," she said to John, "there is something about your brother a little like the prophets in the Old Testament, in the way he sees only one issue and clings to it. Are you, too, of his way of thinking?"

lectured grave. She tore out the spray of apple blossom which she had thrust into the bosom of her gown, and placed it reverently at the head of the little mound. For a moment her eyes drooped and her lips moved—she herself scarcely knew whether it was in prayer. Then she turned and came slowly back to her companion.

Something had gone, too, from his car. She saw in him now nothing but the coming dourness of his brother. Her heart was still heavy. She shivered a little. It was he at last who spoke.

"Will you tell me, please, what is the matter with you, and why you placed that sprig of apple blossom where you did?"

"Certainly," she replied. "I placed it there as a woman's protest against the injustice of that isolation."

"I deny that it is unjust."

"The Savior to whom your church is dedicated thought otherwise," she reminded him. "Do you play at being lords paramount here over the souls and bodies of your serfs?"

"You judge without knowledge of the facts," he assured her calmly. "Louise's footsteps slackened.

"You men," she sighed, "are all alike! You judge only by what happens. You never look inside. That is why your justice is so different from a woman's. I do not wish to argue with you; but what I so passionately object to is the sweeping judgment you make—the sheep on one side and the goats on the other. That is how man judges; God looks further. Every case is different. The law by which one should be judged may be poor justice for another."

She glanced at him almost appealingly, but there was no sign of yielding in his face.

"Laws," he reminded her, "are made for the benefit of the whole human race. Sometimes an individual may suffer for the benefit of others. That is inevitable."

"And so let the subject pass," she concluded; "but it saddens me to think that one of the great sorrows of the world should be there like a monument to spoil the wonder of this morning. Now I am going to ask you a question. Are you the John Strangeway who has recently had a fortune left to him?"

"He nodded. "You read about it in the newspapers, I suppose," he said. "Part of the story isn't true. It was stated that I had never seen my Australian uncle, but as a matter of fact, he has been over here three or four times. It was he who paid for my education at Harrow and Oxford."

"What did your brother say to that?"

"He opposed it," John confessed, "and he hated my uncle. He detests the thought of any one of us going out of sight of our own hills. My uncle had the wander fever."

man—inside. It swung into the level stretch beneath them, a fantasy of gray and silver in the reflected sunshine.

Louise had been leaning forward, her head supported upon her hands. As the car slackened speed, she rose very slowly to her feet.

"The chariot of deliverance!" she murmured.

"It is the prince of Seyre," John remarked, gazing down with a slight frown upon his forehead.

She nodded. They had started the descent and she was walking in very leisurely fashion.

"The prince is a great friend of mine," she said. "I had promised to spend last night, or, at any rate, some portion of the evening, at Raynham castle on my way to London."

He summoned up courage to ask her the question which had been on his lips more than once.

"As your stay with us is so nearly over, won't you abandon your incognito?"

"In the absence of your brother," she answered, "I will risk it. My name is Louise Maurel."

"Louise Maurel, the actress?" he repeated wonderingly.

"I am she," Louise confessed. "Would your brother," she added, with a little grimace, "feel that he had given me a night's lodging under false pretenses?"

John made no immediate reply. The world had turned topsyturvy with him. Louise Maurel, a great friend of the prince of Seyre! He walked on mechanically until she turned and looked at him.

"Well?"

"I am sorry," he declared bluntly. "Why?" she asked, a little startled at his candor.

him with that pleasant air of familiarity, shared by no other woman he had ever known.

Then the little scene faded away, and he remembered the tedious present. He had spent two dull days at the house of a neighboring land owner, playing cricket in the daytime, dancing at night with women in whom he was unable to feel the slightest interest, always with that faraway feeling in his heart, struggling hour by hour with that curious restlessness which seemed to have taken a permanent place in his disposition. He was on his way home to Peak Hall. He knew exactly the welcome which was awaiting him. He knew exactly the news he would receive. He raised his whip and cracked it viciously in the air.

Stephen was waiting for him, as he had expected, in the dining room. The elder Strangeway was seated in his accustomed chair, smoking his pipe and reading the paper. The table was laid for a meal, which Jennings was preparing to serve.

"Back again, John?" his brother remarked, looking at him fixedly over his newspaper.

John picked up one or two letters, glanced them over, and flung them down upon the table. He had examined every envelope for the last few months with the same expectancy, and thrown each one down with the same throbb of disappointment.

"As you see," "Had a good time?" "Not very. Have they finished the barley fields, Stephen?" "All in at eight o'clock."

There was a brief silence. Then Stephen knocked the ashes from his pipe and rose to his feet.

"John," he asked, "why did you pull up on the road there?"

There was no immediate answer. The slightest of frowns formed itself upon the younger man's face.

"How did you know that I pulled up?"

"I was sitting with the window open, listening for you. I came outside to see what had happened, and I saw your lights standing still."

"I had a fancy to stop for a moment," John said; "nothing more."

John Strangeway is able to stand this kind of dissatisfaction with life for just so long. Then he takes the bit in his teeth and goes tearing away.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

LAST OF THE CARIB INDIANS



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W. N. U., OMAHA, MO. 31-1917.

TIMES CHANGED IN KOREA
Government Which Twenty Years Ago Was Afraid of New Methods Now Welcome American Ideas.
Twenty years ago the old Korean government was so afraid of new ideas that a Korean student in the Methodist Episcopal School for Boys in Seoul was arrested and put into prison. He had formed a literary society that discussed matters of general interest! But times have changed and Korea now appreciates American ideas, says the World Outlook. The imprisoned boy, named Cynn, came to America to study and later became the efficient principal of his old boys' school in Seoul. And how the boys discuss current events nowadays! Mr. Cynn has since then distinguished himself in a general conference by a speech notable for its thought and its English. He is just one of the many Korean youths who have tested Uncle Sam's tree of knowledge and found it good.

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King Edward's Little Needs.
Many interesting reminiscences of famous people are given by Mr. E. Townsend Martin in "Things I Remember."

Referring to the late King Edward the author says:
"Lady Burton once told me an amusing incident which occurred when the late King Edward stayed at Glenquoich."
"I hope, sir, that you have found everything to your liking?" she said to the royal visitor.

"Yes," answered the king; "but, if I may make a suggestion, one little thing would add greatly to the comfort of your guests."
"Oh, sir, what can that be?"
"Well, Lady Burton," said his majesty, "the one thing needful is a book on the bathroom door."

Promise Easily Kept.
"Your honor, let me off this time and I'll never appear before you again," pleaded the culprit.
"Am I to take this as a promise to reform?"
"Yes, your honor. And I might add that I am on my way to Australia. If I should happen to backslide, some other court would attend to my case."

Natural Result.
"Banks looks all gone to pieces."
"No wonder. He's broke."—Baltimore American.

A doctor may give a patient hope, but he charges for the time it takes to give it.

Preparing for Tomorrow
Many people seem able to drink coffee for a time without apparent harm, but when health disturbance, even though slight, follows coffee's use, it is wise to investigate.
Thousands of homes, where coffee was found to disagree, have changed the family table drink to **Instant Postum**
With improved health, and it usually follows, the change made becomes a permanent one. It pays to prepare for the health of tomorrow.
"There's a Reason"