

# THE HILLMAN

## An Unusual Love Story

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

### GRAILLOT, THE PLAYWRIGHT, WARNS LOUISE THAT BOTH THE PRINCE OF SEYRE AND JOHN LOVE HER, AND THAT THE PRINCE WILL BE A DANGEROUS ENEMY TO HIS RIVAL

**Synopsis.**—Louise Maurel, famous actress, was making a motor tour of the English Cumberland district, when her car broke down late one evening and she was forced to accept the overnight hospitality of Stephen and John Strangewey, reclusive woman haters living in a splendid old mansion on a great farm. Before she left next day she had captivated John and he had fascinated her. Three months later John, on a sudden impulse, went to London and looked up Louise. She was delighted to see him and introduced him to her friends of the artistic and dramatic world, among them Sophy, a light-hearted little actress, and Graillot, a playwright of remarkable mental gifts. The prince of Seyre, a wealthy French noble, whom he already knew, became his guide, and he entered the gay bohemian life of the city.

#### CHAPTER VIII—Continued.

The lights were lowered a few minutes later, and John paid the bill. "We've enjoyed our supper," Louise whispered, as they passed down the room. "The whole evening has been delightful!"

As they drove from Luigi's to Knightsbridge, Louise leaned back in her corner. Although her eyes were only half closed, there was an air of aloofness about her, an obvious lack of desire for conversation, which the others found themselves instinctively respecting. Even Sophy's light-hearted chatter seemed to have deserted her, somewhat to John's relief.

They were in the very vortex of London's midnight traffic. The night was warm for the time of year, and about Leicester square and beyond the pavements were crowded with pedestrians, the women lightly and gayly clad, fitting, notwithstanding some sinister note about their movements, like butterflies or bright-hued moths along the pavements and across the streets. The procession of taxicabs and automobiles, each with its human freight of men and women in evening dress on their way home after an evening's pleasure, seemed endless.

Presently Sophy began to talk, and Louise, too roused herself. "I am only just beginning to realize," the latter said, "that you are actually in London."

"When I leave you," he replied, "I, too, shall find it hard to believe that we have actually met again and talked. There seems to be so much that I have to say," he added, looking at her closely, "and I have said nothing."

"There is plenty of time," she told him, and once more the signs of that slight nervousness were apparent in her manner. "There are weeks and months ahead of us."

"Whenever you like. There are no rehearsals for a day or two. Ring me up on the telephone—you will find my number in the book—or come and lunch with me tomorrow, if you like."

"Thank you," she answered; "that is just what I should like. At what time?"

"Half past one. I will not ask either of you to come in now. You can come down tomorrow morning and get the books, Sophy. I think I am tired—tired," she added, with a curious little note of self-pity in her tone. "I am very glad to have seen you again, Mr. Strangewey," she said, lifting her eyes to his. "Good night!"

He helped her out, rang the bell, and watched her vanish through the swiftly opened door. Then he stepped back into the taxicab. Sophy retreated into the corner to make room for him.

"You are going to take me home, are you not?" she asked.

"Of course," he replied, his eyes still fixed with a shade of regret upon the closed door of Louise's little house. "No. 10 Southampton street," he told the driver.

They turned round and spun once more into the network of moving vehicles and streaming pedestrians. John was silent, and his companion, for a little while, humored him. Soon, however, she touched him on the arm. A queer gravity had come into her dainty little face.

"Are you really in love with Louise?" she inquired, with something of his own directness.

He answered her with perfect seriousness. "I believe so," he admitted, "but I should not like to say that I am absolutely certain. I have come here to find out."

Sophy suddenly rocked with laughter. "You are the dearest, queerest mad man I have ever met!" she exclaimed, holding tightly to his arm. "You sit there with a face as long as a fiddle, wondering whether you are in love with a girl or not! Well, I am not going to ask you anything more. Tell me, are you tired?"

"Not a bit," he declared. "I never had such a ripping evening in my life." She held his arm a little tighter. She was the old Sophy again, full of life and gaiety.

"Let's go to the Aldwych," she suggested, "and see the dancing. We can just have something to drink. We needn't have any more supper."

The cab stopped a few minutes later outside what seemed to be a private house. The door was opened at once. Sophy wrote John's name in a book, and they were ushered by the manager, who had come forward to greet them, into a long room, brilliantly lit, and filled, except in the center, with supper tables. John looked around him wondering. The popping of champagne corks was almost incessant. A pagne voluptuous atmosphere of slightly volupitous atmosphere of slightly voluptuous atmosphere, mingled with the perfume shaken from the clothes and

hair of the women, several more of whom were now dancing, hung about the place. A girl in fancy dress was passing a great basket of flowers from table to table.

Sophy sat with her head resting upon her hands and her face very close to her companion's, keeping time with her feet to the music.

"Isn't this rather nice?" she whispered. "Do you like being here with me, Mr. John Strangewey?"

"Of course I do," he answered heartily. "Is this a restaurant?"

"No, it's a club. We can sit here all night, if you like."

"Can I join?" he asked.

She laughed and she sent for a form and made him fill it in.

"Tell me," he begged, as he looked around him, "who are these girls? They look so pretty and well-dressed, and yet so amazingly young to be out at this time of night."

"Mostly actresses," she replied, "and musical-comedy girls. I was in musical-comedy myself before Louise rescued me."

"Did you like it?"

"I liked it all right," she admitted, "but I left it because I wasn't doing any good. I can dance pretty well, but I have no voice, so there didn't seem to be any chance of my getting out of the chorus; and one can't even pretend to live on the salary they pay you, unless one has a part."

"But these girls who are here tonight?"

"They are with their friends, of course," she told him. "I suppose, if it hadn't been for Louise, I should have been here, too—with a friend."

"I should like to see you dance," he remarked, in a hurry to change the conversation.

"I'll dance to you some day in your rooms, if you like," she promised. "Or would you like me to dance here? There is a man opposite who wants me to. Would you rather I didn't? I want to do just which would please you most."

"Dance by all means," he insisted. "I should like to watch you."

She nodded, and a minute or two later she had joined the small crowd in the center of the room, clasped in the arms of a very immaculate young man who had risen and bowed to her from a table opposite. John leaned back in his place and watched her admiringly. Her feet scarcely touched the ground. She never once glanced at or spoke to her partner, but every time she passed the corner where John was sitting, she looked at him and smiled.

His eyes grew brighter, and he smiled back at her. She suddenly released her hold upon her partner and stretched out her arms to him. Her body swayed backward a little. She was laughing at him and smiling.

"Why are you so foolish?" she murmured. "Louise is very wonderful, in her place, but she is not what you want in life. Has it never occurred to you that you may be too late?"

"What do you mean?" he demanded. "I believe what the world believes, what some day I think she will admit to herself—that she cares for the prince of Seyre."

"Has she ever told you so?"

"Louise never speaks of these things to any living soul. I am only telling you what I think. I am trying to save you pain—trying for my own sake as well as yours."

He paid his bill and stooped to help her with her cloak. Her heart sank, her lips quivered a little. It seemed to her that he had passed to a great distance.

"Very soon," John said, "I shall ask Louise to tell me the truth. I think that I shall ask her, if I can, tomorrow!"

#### CHAPTER IX.

John's first caller at the Milan was, in a way, a surprise to him. He was sitting smoking an after-breakfast pipe on the following morning, and gazing at the telephone directory, when his bell rang. He opened the door, to find the prince of Seyre standing outside.

"I pay you a very early visit, I fear," the latter began.

"Not at all," John replied, taking the pipe from his mouth and throwing open the door. "It is very good of you to come and see me."

The prince followed John into the little sitting room. He was dressed, as usual, with scrupulous care. His tie was fastened with a wonderful pearl, and his fingers were perhaps a trifle overmanicured. He wore a bunch of Parma violets in his buttonhole, and he carried with him a very faint but unusual perfume, which seemed to John like the odor of delicate green tea. It was just these details, and the slowness of his speech, which alone accentuated his foreign origin.

"It occurred to me," he said, as he seated himself in an easy chair, "that if you are really intending to make this experiment in town life of which Miss Maurel spoke, I might be of some assistance to you. There are certain

matters, quite unimportant in themselves, concerning which a little advice in the beginning may save you trouble."

"Very good of you, I am sure," John repeated. "To tell you the truth, I was just looking through the telephone directory to see if I could come across the name of a tailor I used to have some things from."

"If it pleases you to place yourself in my hands," the prince suggested, "I will introduce you to my own tradespeople. I have made the selection with some care. I have, fortunately, an idle morning, and it is entirely at your disposal. At half past one I believe we are both lunching with Miss Maurel."

John was conscious of a momentary sense of annoyance. His tete-a-tete with Louise seemed farther off than ever. At the prince's suggestion, however, he fetched his hat and gloves and entered the former's automobile, which was waiting below.

They spent the morning in the neighborhood of Bond street, and John had the foundations of a wardrobe more extensive than any he had ever dreamed of possessing. At half past one they were shown into Louise's little drawing room. There were three or four men already present, standing around their hostess and sipping some faint yellow cordial from long Venetian glasses.

Louise came forward to meet them, and made a little grimace as she remarked the change in John's appearance.

"Honestly, I don't know you, and I don't believe I like you at all!" she exclaimed. "How dare you transform yourself into a tailor's dummy in this fashion?"

"It was done entirely out of respect for you," John said.

"In fact," the prince added, "we considered that we had achieved rather a success."

"I suppose I must look upon your effort as a compliment," Louise sighed, "but it seems queer to lose even so much of you. Shall you take up our manners and our habits, Mr. Strangewey, as easily as you wear our clothes?"

"That I cannot promise," he replied. "The brain should adapt itself at least as readily as the body," the prince remarked.

M. Graillot, who was one of the three men present, turned around.

"Who is talking platitudes?" he demanded. "I write plays, and that is my monopoly. Ah, it is the prince, I see! And our young friend who interrupted us at rehearsal yesterday."

Graillot held out his left hand to the prince and his right to John.

"Mr. Strangewey," he said, "I congratulate you! Any person who has the good fortune to interest Miss Maurel is to be congratulated. Yet must I look at you and feel myself puzzled. You are not an artist—no? You do not paint or write?"

John shook his head.

"Mr. Strangewey's claim to distinction is that he is just an ordinary man," Louise observed. "Such a relief, you know, after all your clever people!"

John shook hands with everybody and sipped the contents of the glass which had been handed to him. Then a butler opened the door and announced luncheon. Louise offered her hand to the prince, who stepped back.

"It shall be the privilege of the stranger within our gates," he decided.

Louise turned to John with a little smile.

"Let me show you, then, the way to my dining room. I ought to apologize for not asking some woman to meet you. I tried two on the telephone, but they were engaged."

"I will restore the balance," the prince promised, turning from the contemplation of one of the prints hanging in the hall. "I am giving a supper party tonight for Mr. Strangewey, and I will promise him a preponderance of your charming sex."

"Am I invited?" Louise inquired.

The prince shook his head.

"Alas, no!"

They passed into a small dining room and here again John noticed that an absolute simplicity was paramount. The round table, covered with an exquisitely fine cloth, was very simply laid. There was a little glass of the finest quality, and a very little silver. For flowers there was only one bowl, a brilliant patch of some scarlet exotic, in the center.

"A supper party to which I am not invited," said Louise, as she took her place at the table and motioned John to a seat by her side, "fills me with curiosity. Who are to be your guests, prince?"

"Calavera and her sprites," the prince announced.

Louise paused for a moment in the act of helping herself to hors d'oeuvres. She glanced toward the prince. For a moment their eyes met. Louise's lips were faintly curled. It was almost as if a challenge had passed between them. Louise devoted her attention to her guest.

"First of all," she asked, "tell me how you like my little friend?"

"I think she is charming," John answered without hesitation. "We went to a supper club last night and stayed there till about half past three."

"Really," said Louise, "I am not sure that I approve of this! A supper club with Sophy until half past three in the morning!"

He looked at her quickly.

"You don't mind?"

"My dear man, why should I mind?" she returned. "It is exactly what I hoped for. You have come up to London with a purpose. You have an experiment to make, an experiment in living."



"I Want to See You Alone," He Said, "When Can I?"

cause I want you to see them again that I am here."

"Just now, at this minute, I feel a longing for them," she whispered, looking across the table, out of the window, to the softly waving trees.

At the close of the luncheon for a moment she and John were detached from the others.

"I want to see you alone," he said under his breath. "When can I?"

She hesitated.

"I am so busy!" she murmured. "Next week there are rehearsals nearly every minute of the day."

"Tomorrow," John said insistently. "You have no rehearsals then. I must see you. I must talk to you without this crowd."

It was his moment. Her half-formed resolutions fell away before the compelling ring in his voice and the earnest pleading in his eyes.

"I will be in," she promised, "tomorrow at six o'clock."

After the departure of her guests, Louise stood before the window of her drawing room, looking down into the street. She saw the prince courteously motioning John to precede him into his waiting automobile. She watched until the car took its place in the stream of traffic and disappeared. The sense of uneasiness which had brought her to the window was unaccountable, but it seemed in some way deepened by their departure together. Then a voice from just behind startled her. It was Graillot, who had returned noiselessly into the room.

"I returned," he explained. "An impulse brought me back. A thought came into my mind. I wanted to share it with you as a proof of the sentiment which I feel exists between us. It is my firm belief that the same thought, in a different guise, was traveling through your mind, as you watched the departure of your guests."

She motioned him to a place upon the couch, close to where she had already seated herself.

"Come," she invited, "prove to me that you are a thought reader!"

He sat back in his corner. His hands, with their short, stubby fingers, were clasped in front of him. His eyes, wide open and alert, seemed fixed upon her with the ingenious inquisitiveness of a child.

"To begin, then, I find our friend, the prince of Seyre, a most interesting, I might almost say fascinating, study."

Louise did not reply. After a moment's pause, he continued.

"Among the whole aristocracy of France there was no family so loathed and detested as the seigneurs of Seyre at the time of the revolution. Those at the chateau in Orleans and others who were arrested in Paris, met their death with singular contempt and calm. Eugene of Seyre, whose character in my small way I have studied, is of the same breed."

Louise took up a fan which lay on the table by her side, and waved it carelessly in front of her face.

"One does so love," she murmured, "to hear one's friends discussed in a friendly spirit!"

"It is because Eugene of Seyre is a friend of yours that I am talking to you in this fashion," Graillot continued. "You have also another friend—this young man from Cumberland."

"Well!"

"In him," Graillot went on, "one perceives all the primitive qualities which go to the making of splendid manhood. Physically he is almost perfect, for

which alone we owe him a debt of gratitude. He has, if I judge him rightly, all the qualities possessed by men who have been brought up free from the taint of cities, from the sneer of our spurious overcivilization. He is chivalrous and unsuspecting. He is also, unfortunately for him, the enemy of the prince."

Louise laid down her fan. She no longer tried to conceal her agitation.

"Why are you so melodramatic?" she demanded. "They have scarcely spoken. This is, I think, their third meeting."

"When two friends," Graillot declared, "desire the same woman, then all of friendship that there may have been between them is buried. When two others, who are so far from being friends that they possess opposite qualities, opposite characters, opposite characteristics, also desire the same woman—"

"Don't!" Louise interrupted, with a sudden little scream. "Don't! You are talking wildly. You must not say such things!"

Graillot leaned forward. He shook his head very slowly; his heavy hand rested upon her shoulder.

Do you think that Louise has been too close a friend to the prince? And is John Strangewey, with his old-fashioned ideas of rectitude, a fool to be letting himself fall head over heels in love with her?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

#### CIGAR AS OPIUM SUBSTITUTE

Aiding in Redemption of China, Where Natives Are Now Frequently Seen Smoking Their Cheroots.

The cigar is doing a large part in the redemption of China. It is no uncommon thing to see a native smoking his cheroot, which promises to enjoy the favor once bestowed on opium.

The import of cigars into various Chinese ports has been greatly on the increase in the last few years, and now amounts to about \$350,000 annually. Of this trade four-fifths normally is through Hongkong. There has been a marked increase in the quantity of Dutch-made cigars used in South China and other portions of the Far East during the last year or more, where, for various reasons, Philippine cigars have been losing in favor.

Previous to the outbreak of the war in Europe considerable quantities of cheap cigars were sold in China and the Far East through German firms in Hongkong, and a German cigar factory was operated in Hongkong for the manufacture of cheap cigars for the Chinese trade and also for export to Europe. This factory is still operated under Chinese control.

**New Talking "Movies."**

Application has been made for a patent on a very elaborate device which would produce a combination of the cinematograph and the phonograph to give us moving pictures wherein the characters not only move but speak. The idea of such pictures is not new, but the difficulties of synchronizing have hitherto proved insurmountable. By synchronizing is meant the exact coincidence of the motion picture, projected by one machine, with the speech supposed to proceed from the characters, which is produced by quite another. Unless the speech comes at the right instant, the result is laughable rather than impressive. In the proposed device the actual speech of the character is transmitted by wireless telephone to a phonograph whose complex receiving mechanism is synchronized with the movements of the moving picture camera.

**Knows When to Quit.**

Handled intelligently, a mule is a most willing worker; but there are a few unwritten laws that cannot be transgressed with impunity. A mule will seldom make more than two attempts to move a load. On the first strain he will throw his whole force into the collar, and a mule can pull 50 per cent more in relation to his weight than a horse. Science is again dumb at the question whence comes that latent force which neither horse nor ass possesses. After a short rest the mule will make a second attempt, but this is seldom as sustained as the first. If the load still refuses to move the team might as well be un hitched. At times the mules will not even exert enough force on a third attempt to move an empty wagon.

**Smoke Cigars by Electricity.**

In tobacco factories and also in many show-window displays it is found desirable to have an electromechanical device which will smoke cigars in a similar fashion to that followed by mankind in general, says the Electrical Experimenter. A flexible cord plugged into the nearest electric-light socket supplies the miniature motor with power to drive a multiple-vane blower, his blower creates a back draft, and thus the perfects of doubtful vintage may be smoked rapidly and naturally. The resulting length and character of the ash are noted by tobacco experts.

**Rough Stough.**

To indicate some of the difficulties that our language presents to foreigners, a subscriber sends us this: "I sat on the bough of a tree and began to cough, having some dough in my mouth and my feet in a trough. I was not thoroughly tired, though roughly used. Wasn't that tough?"—Youth's Companion.



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A Temperance Lesson.  
Newton Newkirk, who has been amusing newspaper readers for a number of years by chronicling the doings of rural folks in the Bingville Engle, studies local color in the Maine villages during his vacation periods.

On one of the trips he formed the acquaintance of an old resident who had the reputation of being inordinately fond of cider.

Uncle Hez presented a sorry spectacle when Newt met him in the road one day.

"What has happened to you?" inquired the writer.

"I wuz up t' Sim Spradin's and drank a couple of dippers of hard cider."

"I see—"

"On my way back here I crossed the bridge over Gander creek—"

"Uh-huh!"

"And just as I reached the middle of the bridge I heard a splash?"

"What made the splash?"

"Well, there was a man floundering about in the water, and when I looked around to see who it wuz, dermed if it wuzn't me."—Pittsburgh Chronicle.

**Of Course They Would.**

Election time was drawing near and an enthusiastic politician was addressing his constituents in a frolicsome speech. Not a few of his assertions, reduced to cold thought, were diametrically opposed to one another, but each proposal was received with applause. A judge turned to his companion and said: "This reminds me of the Irish leader who was cheering his men on to battle. 'Min,' said he, 'ye are on the verge of battle, an' I want to ask ye before ye start, will yez fight or will yez run?'"

"We will," came a chorus of eager replies.

"Which will yez do?" says he.

"We will not," says they.

"Aha, thank ye, me min," says he, "I thought ye would."—Philadelphia Ledger.

**Excruciatingly Suggestive.**

In a mining district where a great many soldiers are now quartered they are very kind to the Tommies and get up all sorts of entertainments, for their benefit. The other week-end the following notice was posted upon the door of the hall:

"On Saturday evening a potato pie supper will be given to the soldiers in the district. Subject for Sunday evening, 'A Night of Agony.'"

**Pessimistic.**

"All Gaul was divided into three parts."

"Automobilists, motorcyclists and pedestrians, I suppose."

All things come to him who waits—bad luck included.



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