

The THOUSANDTH WOMAN BY ERNEST W. HORNING Author of The AMATEUR CRACKSMAN, RAFFLES, Etc. ILLUSTRATIONS by O. IRWIN MYERS

SYNOPSIS.

Cazalet, on the steamer Kaiser Fritz, homeward bound from Australia, cries out in his sleep that Henry Craven, who ten years before had ruined his father and himself, is dead, and finds the Hilton Toye, who shares the stateroom with him, knows Craven and also Blanche Macnair, a former neighbor and playmate. When the daily papers come aboard at Southampton Toye reads that Craven has been murdered and calls Cazalet's dream second sight. He thinks of doing a little amateur detective work on the case himself. In the train to town they discuss the murder, which was committed at Cazalet's old home. Toye hears from Cazalet that Scruton, who had been Cazalet's friend and the scapegoat for Craven's dishonesty, has been released from prison. Cazalet goes down the river and meets Blanche. Toye also comes to see her and tells Cazalet that Scruton has been arrested, but as he doesn't believe the old clerk is guilty he is going to ferret out the murderer. Cazalet and Blanche go to Cazalet's old home and meet Mr. Drinkwater of Scotland Yard. Cazalet goes with Drinkwater to the library where the murder was committed, shows him a secret passage he knew as a boy, and tells the way through it. In town Toye, talking with Cazalet about the murder, suggests fingerprints on the weapon found in the secret passage as a means of trapping the murderer and succeeds in securing a print of Cazalet's hand. Toye traces Cazalet's movements while a passenger on the Kaiser Fritz, finds that he left the boat before the murder and returned just after it, and warns him.

CHAPTER X.

The Week of Their Lives. "Toye's gone back to Italy," said Cazalet. "He says he may be away only a week. Let's make it the week of our lives!"

The scene was the little room it pleased Blanche to call her parlor, and the time a preposterously early hour of the following forenoon. Cazalet in her sunny snugger rather suggested another extravagant taxicab. But Blanche saw only his worn, excited face; and her own was not at its best in her sheer amazement. "Italy!" she ejaculated. "When did he go?"

"Nine o'clock last night." "But"—she checked herself—"I simply can't understand it, that's all!" "Why? Have you seen him since the other afternoon?"

His manner might have explained those other two remarks, now bothering her when it was too late to notice them; on the other hand, she was by no means sure that it did. He might simply dislike Toye, and that again might explain his extraordinary heat over the argument at Littleford. Blanche began to feel the air somewhat heavily charged with explanations, either demanded or desired; they were things she hated, and she determined not to add to them if she could help it.

"I haven't set eyes on him again," she said. "But he's been seen here—in a taxi."

"Who saw him?" "Martha—if she's not mistaken." This was a little disingenuous, as will appear; but that impetuous Sweep was in a merciful hurry to know something else.

"When was this, Blanche?" "Just about dark—say seven or so. She owns it was about dark," said Blanche, though she felt ashamed of herself.

"Well, it's just possible. He left me about six; said he had to see someone, too, now I think of it. But I'd give a bit to know what he was doing messing about down here at the last moment!"

Blanche liked this as little as anything that Cazalet had said yet, and he had said nothing that she did like this morning. But there were allowances to be made for him, she knew. And it to strengthen her knowledge, or rather to let him confirm it for her, either by word or by his silence, she stated a certain case for his aloud.

"Poor old Sweep!" she laughed. "It's a shame that you should have come home to be worried like this."

"I am worried," he said simply. "I think it's just splendid, all you're doing for that poor man, but especially the way you're doing it."

"I wish to God you wouldn't say that, Blanche!" He paid her the compliment of speaking exactly as he would have spoken to a man; or rather, she happened to be the woman to take it as a compliment.

"But I do say it, Sweep! I've heard all about it from Charlie. He rang me up last night."

"You're on the telephone, are you?" "Everybody is in these days. Where have you lived? Oh, I forgot!" And she laughed. Anything to lift this duet of theirs out of the minor key!

"But what does old Charlie really think of the case? That's more to the point," said Cazalet uneasily.

"Well, he seemed to fear there was no chance of bail before the adjourned hearing. But I rather gathered he was not going to be in it himself."

"No. We decided on one of those sportsmen who love rushing in where a family lawyer like Charlie owns to looking down his nose. I've seen the chap, and primed him up about old Savage, and our find in the foundations. He says he'll make an example of Drinkwater, and Charlie says they call him the Bobby's Bugbear!" "But surely he'll have to tell his client who's behind him!"

"No. He's just the type who would have rushed in, anyhow. And it'll be time enough to put Scruton under obligations when I've got him off!"

Blanche looked at the troubled eyes avoiding hers, and thought that she had never heard of a fine thing being done so finely. This very shamefacedness appealed to her intensely, and yet last night Charlie had said that old Sweep was in such tremendous spirits about it all! Why was he so down this morning?

She only knew she could have taken his hand, but for a very good reason why she could not. She had even to guard against an equivocally sympathetic voice or manner, as she asked, "How long did they remand him for?" "Eight days."

"Well, then, you'll know the beat or the worst today week!" "Yes!" he said eagerly, almost himself again. "But, whichever way it goes, I'm afraid it means trouble for me, Blanche; some time or other I'll tell you why; but that's why I want this to be the week of our lives."

So he really meant what he had said before. The phrase had been no careless misuse of words; but neither, after all, did it necessarily apply to Mr. Toye. That was something. It made it easier for Blanche not to ask questions.

Cazalet had gone out on the balcony; now he called to her; and there was no taxi, but a smart open car, waiting in the road, its brasses blazing.



Blanche Looked at the Troubled Eyes Avoiding Hers.

In the sun, an immaculate chauffeur at the wheel.

"Whose is that, Sweep?" "Mine, for the week I'm talking about! I mean ours, if you'd only buck up and get ready to come out! A week doesn't last forever, you know!"

Blanche ran off to Martha, who fussed and hindered her with the best intentions. It would have been difficult to say which was the more excited of the two. But the old nurse would waste time in perfectly fatuous reminiscences of the very earliest expeditions in which Mr. Cazalet had led and Blanche had followed, and what a bonny pair they had made even then, etc. Severely snubbed on that subject, she took to peering at her mistress, once her bairn, with furtive eagerness and impatience; for Blanche, on her side, looked as though she had something on her mind, and, indeed, had made one or two attempts to get it off. She had to force it even in the end.

"There's just one thing I want to say before I go, Martha. You know when Mr. Toye called yesterday, I was out?"

"Oh, Mr. Toye; yes, I remember, Miss Blanche."

"Well, I don't want you to say that he came in and waited half an hour in vain; in fact, not that he came in at all, or that you're even sure you saw him, unless, of course, you're asked."

"Who should ask me, I wonder?" "Well, I don't know, but there seems to be a little bad blood between Mr. Toye and Mr. Cazalet."

Martha looked for a moment as though she were about to weep, and then for another moment as though she would die of laughing. But a third moment she celebrated by making an utter fool of herself, as she would have been told to her face by anybody but Blanche, whose yellow hair was being disarranged by the very hands that had helped to imprison it under that motor hat and veil.

"Oh, Blanche, is that all you have to tell me?" said Martha. "And then the week of their lives began."

The weather was true to them, and this was a larger matter than it might have been. They were not making love. They were "not out for that," as Blanche herself actually told Martha, with annihilating scorn, when the old dear looked both knowing and longing-to-know at the end of the first day's run. They were out to enjoy

themselves, and that seemed shocking to Martha "unless something was coming of it." She had just sense enough to keep her conditional clause to herself.

Yet if they were only out to enjoy themselves, in the way Miss Blanche vowed and declared (more shame for her), they certainly had done wonders for a start. Martha could hardly credit all they said they had done, and as an embittered pedestrian there was nothing that she would "put past" one of those nasty motors. It said very little for Mr. Cazalet, by the way, in Martha's private opinion, that he should take her Miss Blanche out in a car at all; if he had turned out as well as she had hoped, and "meant anything," a nice boat on the river would have been better for them both than all that tearing through the air in a cloud of smoky dust; it would also have been much less expensive, and far more "the thing."

But, there, to see and hear the child after the first day! She looked so bonny that for a time Martha really believed that Mr. Cazalet had "spoken," and allowed herself to admire him also as he drove off later with his wicked lamps alight. But Blanche would only go on and on about her day, the glories of the Ripley road and the grandeur of Hindhead. She had brought back heaps of heather and bunches of leaves just beginning to turn; they were all over the little house before Cazalet had been gone ten minutes. But Blanche hadn't forgotten her poor old Martha; she was not one to forget people, especially when she loved and yet had to snub them. Martha's portion was picture postcards of the Gibbet and other landmarks of the day.

"And if you're good," said Blanche "you shall have some every day, and an album to keep them in forever and ever. And won't that be nice when it's all over, and Mr. Cazalet's gone back to Australia?"

Crueler anticlimax was never planned, but Martha's face had brought it on her; and now it remained to make her see for herself what an incomparably good time they were having.

Above all was it delightful to feel that their beloved car was waiting for them outside, to whirl them where they liked; for quite early in the week (and this was a glaring aggravation in Martha's eyes) Cazalet had taken lodgings for himself and driver in those very Nell Gwynne Cottages where Hilton Toye had stayed before him.

CHAPTER XI.

The Thousandth Man. It had been new life to them, but now it was all over. It was the last evening of their week, and they were spending it rather silently on Blanche's balcony.

"I make it at least three hundred," said Cazalet, and knocked out a pipe that might have been a gag. "You see, we were very seldom under fifty!" "Speak for yourself, please! My longevity's a tender point," said Blanche, who looked as though she had no business to have her hair up, as she sat in a pale cross-fire between a lampost and her lighted room.

Cazalet protested that he had only meant their mileage in the car; he made himself extremely intelligible now, as he often would when she rallied him in a serious voice.

"Well, it's been a heavenly time," she assured him just once more. "And tomorrow it's pretty sure to come all right about Scruton, isn't it?"

"Yes! Tomorrow we shall probably have Toye back," he answered with grim inconsequence. "What has that to do with it, Walter?"

"Oh, nothing, of course." But still his tone was grim and heavy, with a schoolboy irony that he would not explain but could not keep to himself. So Mr. Toye must be turned out of the conversation, though it was not Blanche who had dragged him in. She wished people would stick to their point.

"There's one thing I've rather wanted to ask you," she began. "Yes!" said Cazalet.

"You said the other day that it would mean worry for you in any case—after tomorrow—whether the charge is dismissed or not!"

His wicker chair creaked under him. "I don't see why it should," she persisted, "if the case falls through."

"Well, that's where I come in," he had to say.

"Surely you mean just the other way about? If they commit the man for trial, then you do come in, I know. It's like your goodness."

"I wish you wouldn't say that! It hurts me!"

"Then will you explain yourself? It's not fair to tell me so much, and then to leave out just the bit that's making you miserable!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Authority on Steel Production. Sir Robert Hadfield, who has been selected by the British government to assume charge of the engineering works that it has obtained power to take over for the manufacture of war material, is one of the greatest living authorities on the production of steel. In addition to the Bessemer medal, which is the blue ribbon of the Iron and Steel Institute of Great Britain, he has received equally high awards from similar societies in almost every country of the civilized world. Inventor of manganese steel, he is chairman of the Hadfield Steel Foundry company Ltd., at Sheffield, one of the biggest ordnance and projectile concerns in the United Kingdom, in fact, in the world.

HIGH PRICES—GOOD CROPS

And Good Demand for All Farm Products.

It is no new experience for settlers located in a fertile country such as Western Canada, where lands may be bought at very reasonable prices, to harvest a crop that in one season pays the entire cost of their farm. Undoubtedly this was the experience of many farmers during 1915, but one instance may be quoted. A settler who came to Canada from the United States some years ago decided to add to his holdings by buying an adjoining quarter section near his home at Warner, at \$20.00 an acre, with terms spread over a period of years. He got the land into a good state of cultivation and last spring put the whole quarter section in wheat. When the crop was threshed he found that it only took half the wheat on the farm to pay the whole purchase price of it; in short a single year's crop paid the cost of the land, paid all the expenses of operation and left him a handsome surplus as profit. This settler had some adjoining land, and his whole wheat crop for the season amounted to over 18,000 bushels. He is now planning to obtain some sheep and invest his profits in live stock which will assure him a good living irrespective of what the season may happen to be.

Canada's financial position is excellent. All speculation has been eliminated, and trading is done on a cash basis, with restricted credit.

Detailed figures of Canada's trade for twelve months ending October 31 show how the war is forcing Canadian trade into new channels. One of the most extraordinary changes is in commerce with the United States. A couple of years ago Canada imported from the United States two or three hundred million dollars' worth of goods more than she exported. The balance of trade was all with the United States. The balance is rapidly disappearing, and the present outlook is that by the end of this year Canada will have exported to the United States more than she has imported.

The figures for the past four years are illuminating. They are as follows:

Table with 3 columns: Year, Exports, Imports. 1912: \$145,721,650 / \$412,657,022. 1913: 179,050,796 / 442,341,840. 1914: 213,493,406 / 421,074,523. 1915: 314,118,774 / 346,569,924.

Four years ago, in 1912, the balance of trade in favor of the United States was no less than two hundred and sixty-seven millions, and this year, the balance is reduced to only thirty-two millions. The figures are extraordinary and reflect the changed and new conditions in Canada. It looks as if for the first time in nearly half a century this year Canada will sell more to the United States than she will buy from the Americans.—Advertisement.

Considerable of a Snub. Mr. Asquith recently administered a grim snub to a certain M. P. Some time ago, on the death of a noted public man, there was a great deal of gossip as to who should succeed him. The M. P. in question had a friend whom he wished to get the appointment, and determined to be first in the field, he went to Mr. Asquith on the day after the late holder of the post had died. "May my friend So-and-so have Mr. Blank's place?" he asked, eagerly. "He may," answered Mr. Asquith, gravely, "if he thinks the coffin will fit him comfortably!"—London Mail.

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The Soldier's Estimate. A member of the first Canadian contingent, writing home, says: "I guess the first seven years of this war are going to be the worst."—Canadian American.

Girls will be girls—if they can't be married women.

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Privilege Denied Them. "Here's a picture of a woman golf champion." "I see. And she looks almost graceful." "Why shouldn't she look graceful?" "I guess it's because golf champions cannot consistently adopt the pose made famous by Annette Kellerman." Her Idea. "Do you think Cholly Primrose ever thinks?" "If he does, he takes pains to hide it." Market Language. "How are the chickens today?" "I ain't heard a one of 'em complain ing, sir."

When a man makes a fool of himself over a woman, it's a sign that it doesn't require much of an effort. A man's intellect doesn't seem to have anything in common with his happiness.



Efficiency Efficiency built the Panama Canal, after inefficiency failed. The efficiency of the Panama Canal doubled the effectiveness of the U. S. Navy without adding a ship to it. It took over 8,000 miles out of the trip from New York to San Francisco and changed the highway between London and Australia from Suez to Panama. Efficiency insures against lost motion—it produces the utmost service out of equipment and yields the finest product, at the least cost.

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