

The Bee's Home Magazine Page

THE PROFESSOR'S MYSTERY

by WELLS HASTINGS AND BRIAN HOOKER
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS by HANSON BOOTH
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CHAPTER I.
In Which Things Are Turned Up-side Down.

"Has the two-forty-five for Boston come yet?"
The train announcer looked at me a long time; then he shifted his plug of tobacco to the other cheek and drawled: "Naow. Reported forty minutes late."
At this point I believe I swore. At least I have no recollection of not doing so, and I should hardly have forgotten so eminent an act of virtue under such difficult circumstances. It was not only that I had worked myself into a heat for nothing. But the train could hardly fall of losing yet more time on its way to Boston, and my chances of making the steamer were about one in three. My trunk would go to Liverpool without me, a prey to the inquisitive alien; and as for me I was at the mercy of the steamship company. For a moment I wondered how I could possibly have doubted my desire to go abroad that summer and to go on that boat though the heavens fell. I thought insanely of automobiles and special trains. Then came the reaction and I settled back comfortably hopeless into the hands of fate. After all I did not care an improper fraction whether I stayed or went; let the gods decide. Only I wished something would happen. The shining rails reached away to lose themselves in a haze of heat. Somewhere a switching engine was puffing like a tired dog. Knots of listless humanity stood about under the dingy roof of the platform; and the wind across the harbor brought a refreshing aroma of tidal mud and dead clams. It occurred to me that my collar was rather sticky from the inside.



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I walked the platform fanning myself with my hat. I bought cigarettes, magazines and a shine. I explored the station, scrutinizing faces and searching vainly for matters of interest. I exhausted my resources in filling up fifteen minutes, and the hand of the electric clock seemed as tremulous with indecision as it had before been jerky with haste. Nothing happened. Nothing would happen or could happen anywhere. Romance was dead.

Feet scraped, a bell chattered; then breathing flame and smoke, and with a shriek that would put St. George to utter rout, the down express rumbled between me and the sky, and ground heavily to a standstill. And there, framed in the wide Pullman window, was a face that altered all the colors of the day, and sent me back among sleigh bells and holly. Not that I had known her well; but the week of intimate gaiety at a Christmas house party had shown her so sweetly merry, so well fashioned in heart and brain and body that the sight of her renewed pleasant memories, like the reopening of a familiar book. She was smiling now; not at me, but with the same humorously pensive little smile that I remembered, that seemed to come wholly from within and to summarize her outlook upon the world. Her dark brows were lifted in cool and friendly interest as she glanced over the comfortable crowd; and although I was now somewhat more at peace with the world, and no longer hot nor hurried, she seemed to me to sit there in the window of her swiftest car, a thing aloof and apart, the embodiment of all unruffled daintiness.

Her eyes found me and she nodded, smiling. I went forward eagerly. Here, at least, in a stuffy and uninteresting world, was somebody cool, somebody amusing, somebody knew. I picked up my bag and ran the steps of her car. As I came down the aisle she half rose and stretched out a welcoming slim hand. I dropped into the chair beside her.

"Well, this is luck," I said. "But what are you doing here in the world in July? You belong to Christmas in a setting of frosty white and green. You're out of season now."
She laughed. "Surely I have as much right in July as you have, Mr. Crosby. You are only a sort of rutilate phantom yourself."
"Wasn't it a jolly week?" I asked.

"Miss Tabor's smile answered me. Then turning away with a face grown suddenly and strangely bleak: "I think it was the best Christmas of my life," she said mechanically. And then with a sudden return to sunshine: "I suppose I see the professor starting on his learned pilgrimages. Is it Europe this summer, or the great libraries of America?"
"She had twitted me before upon my lack of scholarly bearing which, as I had always explained, was but a mask to unsuspected profundity."
"Well," I began, deliberately groping for a decision among the tangled fates of the afternoon, my doubtful steamer and my grudging plans, "to tell you the truth, Miss Tabor—"

"She touched my arm and pointed out of the window. "Look," she said, "you haven't nearly time enough for that now. Do hurry—you mustn't take chances."
The platform was slipping by faster and faster, and with it sobriety and common sense and the wisdom of the beaten path. On the other hand lay the comedy of the present and that flouting of one's own arrangements which is the last word of freedom. I glanced down at her ticket, where it lay face upward on the window sill.

"To tell you the truth, Miss Tabor," I said, "I am on my way to Stamford. And I settled back comfortably in my seat."
Miss Tabor regarded me tolerantly, with the air of a collector examining a doubtful specimen: one eyebrow a trifle raised, and an adorable twist at the corner of her mouth. As for me, I tried to look innocently unconcerned. It may be possible to do this; but no one is ever conscious of success at the time.
"I'm going there myself," she said suddenly. "Isn't this a coincidence?"
"Really that. Let me amend the word and call it a dispensation. But appearances are against you. You ought to be going to a lawn party—in a dog-cart."
"I wonder where you ought to be going," she mused. "Probably to the British museum to dig up a lot of dead

NO GOOD EVER COMES OF HALF-UNDERSTANDINGS.

kind of a person you'll catch hold of it and pull. It may be only a root; or it may be the tail of a dragon. And in that case you ought to thank heaven for excitement, even if you're scared to death."
By this time I almost believed in my own explanation. But Miss Tabor did not seem particularly impressed.
She put on the voice and manner of a child of 10. "You must be awfully brave to like being afraid of things," she lapped; then, with a sudden change of tone, "Mr. Crosby, suppose—only for the sake of argument—that you're making this up as you go along and that you did know perfectly well where you were going, where do you think you would have gone?"
Then I gave up and explained, "I was going to Europe to study," I said. "For no better reason than that I had nothing more interesting to do. Then my train was late and I should have missed my steamer anyway and—then you came along and I thought I might just as well make the most of the situation. Now I can go down and tell the Ainslies they want to see me and all will be well."

"After some meditating she said, "Are you as irresponsible as that about everything?"
"I don't see where all the irresponsibility comes in," I protested. "It isn't a sacred and solemn duty to follow out one's own plans, especially when they were only made to fill up the want of anything more worth while, and have fallen already. I didn't care about going to Europe in the first place; then I couldn't—at least not at once; then I found something else that I did care about doing."
"Men," said Miss Tabor, "usually find a logical reason for what they do on impulse, without any reason at all."
"And the reason that women always act reasonably," I retorted, "is that they never give you the reason."
Instead of taking that for the flippancy it was, she thought about it for some minutes; or else it reminded her of something.

"Besides," I went on, "this is an adventure, as far as it goes; a little one. If you like, but still with all the earmarks of romance. It was unexpected, and it fits into itself perfectly—all the parts of the scene match like a picture puzzle—and it happened through a mixture of chance and the taking of chances. It's just that snatching at casual excitement that makes things happen to people."
"Don't things happen to people without their seeking them out?" she asked.
"Not to most people; and not nowadays, if they ever did. Do you remember Humpty Dumpty's objection to Alice's face, that it was just like other faces—two eyes above, nose in the middle, mouth under? Well, that's the only objection I have to life: days and doings are too regular; too much according to schedule. Why is a train less romantic than a stage coach? Because it runs on time and on a track; it can't do anything but be late. But the stage coach dangles along through the countryside, with lions and highwaymen, and pretty girls driving cease to market, and all the chances of the open road. The horse of the knight errant was better still, and for the same reason."

"I don't think anything very much has ever happened to you," she said slowly. "Well," said I, "I'm not pretending to be Lysses; and you've reminded me of my tender age so often that I can hardly forget it in your presence. But I have had a few exciting moments, and I want more. I don't care whether they are pleasant or not, so long as I come safe out of them somehow. They'll pay for themselves with the gold of memory."
"That's just what I mean," she returned. "You talk about things as if the only question of importance were whether they are exciting. One looks at books that way, and pictures, and things that are not real. A moment ago, you put highwaymen in the same class with inns and goosegirls. Do you suppose any one that was actually held up and robbed of his fortune would think of the robber as merely a pleasant thrill?"
"I'd rather be robbed by a highwayman than by a railroad, anyway. At the worst, I'd have had a run for my money."
She went on without smiling. "And even trains run off the track sometimes. Do you think you would enjoy the memory of a railroad accident—even if it weren't hurt yourself?"
"Perhaps not. But there's another disadvantage of the train. It's so regular and mechanical that if anything does go wrong there is an ugly smash. It's the same way with modern people. Most of us live such an ordinary habitual life that if we get thrown off the track we're likely to break up altogether."
I had struck the wrong note again. The light went out in her face, as a cloud shadow darkens a sunny field, and she looked away without answering. Not to make my mistake worse by taking notice of it, I said, "After all, what should we do if things always went smoothly and there wasn't any adventures?"
She said quietly, "We might be normal and wholesome and comfortable," and continued looking out of the window and toying with her chain, while I cursed myself for a tactless clodhopper without the sense to avoid a danger sign. Then I found myself wondering what the mere touch of an accidental allusion could strike the joy out of a creature so naturally radiant. Whatever it was, it had come upon her within the last six weeks, or the chances of our Christmas week had been singularly free from reminders of it. Could there be possibly any connection between it and that chain with its hidden pendant? Or was it only by accident that her hand went to it in her moments of brooding? I seemed to have noticed the chain before, and her habit of playing with it in idleness, but I could not be sure.

She roused herself presently, and the talk went on, though with an undercurrent of discomfort. For my part, I was still repenting my clumsiness; and she, I suppose, felt annoyed at having shown so palpably an emotion which she had not intended for my eyes. So that, in spite of regret for the approaching end of the adventure, I was hardly sorry when our arrival at Stamford supplemented speech with action.
"Are you expecting any one to meet you?" I asked, as the platform emptied and left us standing alone.
"No, they didn't know what train I was coming on. But there's the trolley now. And it's your car, too, that is, if you're still going to the Ainslies."

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Fashion A Forecast of Summer Fashions and a Costume Tailleur



Manteau D'ete
Over a gracefully arranged gown of satin and lace, with Medici collar, is worn the latest idea in light wraps for the summer, a charming mantlet of lace lined with chiffon and garnished with a large col de fourrure, which renders it very becoming as well as giving a touch of warmth.

A Tailor Suit in Fine Ratine
In the curious long tunic effect and tablier, beneath the short tunic of the coat, will be observed the new tendency toward several divisions in the skirt—the style which in more flimsy materials develops into flounces. The short-waisted coat is cut with wide drooping shoulders.

A Jupe Nouvelle
The dernier cri is a skirt with deep flounces, of which a very pretty example is illustrated here. It shows three flounces of plisse mousseline de soie surmounted by a deeply scalloped skirt bound with satin. This toilette also makes it evident that short sleeves may still be worn.

Work and Education

By ELBERT HUBBARD.
In Herbert Spencer's "Essay on Education," the author says, "The first requisite to be a good animal is that he should be a good animal."

Educated people simply take food for granted. They may know all about ancient Palestine, Greece and Rome, but nothing about North Dakota.

girls how to do practical work, you will look long before you find your man, and when you locate him you'll find he has a good job already.



College graduates with teachers' certificates are plentiful. Combined teachers and teachers are not hard to find. But when it comes to showing boys and

For 500 years teachers have been trained to have a sort of contempt for anything in the line of useful, physical endeavor. Good school teachers are plentiful, and can be secured all the way from \$60 to \$100 a month. But teachers who not only can meet the book requirements, but who know enough about practical agriculture to make a study of farming attractive, today command \$300 or more a month.

The Longing for Love

By BEATRICE FAIRFAX.
The universal longing for love is responsible for more "missed matrimonial mates than anything else in this love-it-old world.

A man loves love. A woman is the embodiment of that sentiment to him, and loving love and wanting it, he thinks he loves the first woman who attracts him.

at once. Those who have known this divine passion know that she doesn't know what love means.

He looks at me in pity and replied, "Why, those fellows are not students here. We have entered into a pact to the effect that at this university no useful thing shall be done."

If a youth is not brought up to work before he is 12, he probably will never be able to acquire the habit afterward.

There is one test when one is not sure of one's own heart. Elizabeth Barrett Browne gives it to all uncertain lovers.

Shakespeare Up-to-Date :: The College Girl to the Watchman

By CONSTANCE CLARKE.
How far that little candle throws its beam:
Ah, yes, too far; for as I sit and dream
And ponder on the letter I must write
Before I go to bed and say good-night,
I fully realize my errand light.
Quite unprotected by a light cut, might
Be seen outside, and that would soon indict
Poor me, but then that letter I must write.
Then there's my hair, I did not put it up last night,
I'll be reported, but it must be curled.
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

Oh, fear to call it loving!
That is loving—a love for the individual that will survive sorrow, and suffering, and penury, and abuse, and indifference, and pain, and even time. It is not a love for love, a sentiment that is satisfied with every new object upon which it can fasten. It is not a feeling that knows a moment's hesitation or doubt. One never loves two. It is too engrossing, too painful, too joyous, too all-absorbing and too complete, to love more than one. There never was, there never is, there never will be a love for two.

That your beauty itself wants proving:
Unless you can swear, "For life, for life, for life."
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