

for Peace dealt me so violent a blow that it sent me rolling down the roof into the darkness. And as I tumbled headlong from the ledge, the whole air seemed to burst into fragments about me—a mighty concussion that left me, deafened, shaken, bewildered, amongst the broken tiles and falling fragments on the ground below.

I was in my most comfortable chair, with old Jacob washing the cut on my head, and the inspector's nimble fingers twisting a bandage before I quite realized that I had escaped that great explosion. Vaguely, as in a dream, I remembered that two men, presumably Peace and the sergeant, had dragged me to my feet, had knotted a handkerchief round my head, had pushed me over the wall, and finally lifted me into a passing cab—all with a mad haste as if it were we who had been the criminals. Anyhow, I was at home, which was of the first importance to me at the moment.

"What blew up, inspector?" I asked, faintly.

"The dynamite hidden in the bust—but don't ask questions."

"Oh, I'm all right," I told him. "Do explain things."

"I'll call tomorrow, and—"

"No, tell me now, or I shall not sleep a wink."

He looked at me a moment, with his head cocked on one side after his quaint fashion.

"Very well," he said at last. "I'll talk, if you'll promise to keep quiet."

I promised, and he began.

"It's quite a simple story. Nicolin had got word that an attempt was to be made on the Czar, who is due in Paris the day after tomorrow, and that Ama-

roff was engineering the whole affair; also the Russian was making no headway, and he knew that his position was at stake if he failed. So he got desperate, and took the game into his own hands. He forced Greatman to fix a rendezvous, brought up his men and strangled Amaroff in the sanded parlor. It was a smart thing to do, for no one was likely to suspect them, especially as he gave out that Amaroff was one of his own officers."

"But how did you locate the place where the murder occurred?" I asked feebly.

"It was raining last night—do you remember?"

"Yes."

"When I first arrived at the mortuary, I went over Amaroff's clothing. On the soles of his boots was a patch of dry sand. Therefore he could not have walked through the wet streets to the spot where he was found. Also the sand must have been on the floor where he last stood. On the back of his coat was a slimy smear mixed with the scales of mackerel. If my first proposition was correct, he must have been carried from the place with the sanded floor; and the suggestion was that a fish barrow had been used, a fish barrow such as you may see the London costers pushing before them in their street sales. It was not likely that the men implicated would have risked carrying him further than was necessary. That limited the radius of the search. Indeed, we located the club in under three hours."

"Of course it seems quite easy," I told him. "But when did you first suspect that Nicolin was lying?"

"His search of the studio was simply

a blind," he said. "I soon caught on to that. Also in Amaroff's little bedroom stood his luggage ready packed. He was just off on a journey—that was plain. Nicolin had said nothing about a journey, which was in itself suspicious. I knew the Russian was not the bungler he pretended to be, and I admit that I was puzzled. Then you came along and told me of the business with the key. It was plain they were coming back—but why? It was to discover it that I left three men to watch the studio while I kept my appointment with Jackson in Maiden square. From what I learned from him it was evident that Greatman was a man who knew something; so I tried a bluff on him. It's quite simple, isn't it?"

"Oh, yes," I said; "but how did you know Greatman was going to the studio when he ran away?"

"Rather an unnecessary question, Mr. Phillips, isn't it? Consider a minute. Amaroff was a Nihilist; he was playing a big game—which means dynamite with folks of their persuasion. He had been knocked out of the running, but the dynamite remained. And where? In the studio where Nicolin was returning to search for it; where Greatman also would go to recover it if he desired to revenge himself on Nicolin by carrying out his friends' plot himself. Mark you, I do not believe that originally he had any active part in carrying out this assassination. But when he heard how Nicolin had fooled him, he was anxious to get square by risking all and smuggling the bombs to Paris himself. Moreover, Mr. Phillips, I wanted to locate that dynamite. It is not well to have bombs floating about London, ready to the hand of well-bred lunatics. They breed interna-

tional squabbles in which we, the police, get jumped upon."

"And they were hidden in the bust?"

"A very good place, too. With careful packing, they would have got to Paris safe enough. The Nero was a known work of art. No one would have suspected it for a moment. Of course, I had no idea that the dynamite was stored in the bronze till Greatman grabbed it, and I saw his face. Then I punched you in the chest and rolled after you myself."

"You saved my life, anyway," I said gratefully.

"Tut, tut, Mr. Phillips, that's nothing. Another day you may do the same for me."

"If I get a chance," I told him. "But what will be done now?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"I dragged you off to be away before the crowd arrived. There was no point in your being found in the neighborhood and asked questions at the inquest on what remains of their bodies. I shall report to Scotland Yard, and Scotland Yard will talk to the Foreign office, and the Foreign Office will make polite representations to St. Petersburg, and everything will be hushed up. After all, there's nobody left to punish and nobody to pity, barring Greatman, who had the makings of a man in him. Amaroff was a romantic murderer, and Nicolin a practical one; but neither of them were at all the sort of people to encourage. So I should advise you to keep quiet, Mr. Phillips, and not talk of your adventure. Do you agree?"

"Certainly," I said; and we shook hands on it.

(The End.)

The Pilgrim

(Continued from Page 4.)

"We hoped to welcome you to the club table," cried the Major.

"There are only the Major and myself," added the Colonel, with courteous entreaty.

"And the other—the new man," corrected the Major, with a wry face.

"Oh, yes—the bad rod. What's his name?"

"Langham," said the Major.

The English maid came down to conduct her mistress to her rooms; the two gentlemen bowed as their build permitted; the bull-terrier trotted behind his mistress up the polished stairs. Presently a door closed above.

"Devilish fine woman," said Major Brent.

Colonel Hyssop went to a mirror and examined himself with close attention.

"Good gad!" he said, irritably, "how thin my hair is!"

"Thin!" said Major Brent, with an unpleasant laugh; "thin as the hair on a Mexican poodle."

"You infernal ass!" hissed the Colonel, and waddled off to dress for dinner. At the door he paused. "Better have no hair than a complexion like a violet!"

"What's that?" cried the Major.

The Colonel slammed the door.

Upstairs the bull-terrier lay on a rug watching his mistress with tireless eyes. The maid brought tea, bread and butter, and trout friend crisp, for her mistress desired nothing else.

Left alone, she leaned back, sipping her tea, listening to the million tiny voices of the night. The stillness of the night made her nervous after the clatter of town. Nervous? Was it the tranquil stillness of the night outside that stirred that growing apprehension in her breast till, of a sudden, her heart began a deadened throbbing?

Langham here? What was he doing here? He must have arrived this morning. So that was where he was going when he said he was going north!

After all, in what did it concern her? She had not run away from town to avoid him, . . . indeed not, . . . her pilgrimage was her own affair. And Langham would very quickly divine her pious impulse in coming here. . . . And he would doubtless respect her for it. . . . Perhaps have the subtle tact to pack up his traps and leave. . . . But probably not. . . . She knew a little about Langham, . . . an obstinate and typical man, . . . doubtless selfish to the core, . . . cheerfully, naively selfish. . . .

She raised her troubled eyes. Over the door was printed in gilt letters:

THE PRESIDENT'S SUITE.

Tears filled her eyes; truly they were kindly and thoughtful, these old friends of her husband.

And all night long she slept in the room of her late husband, the president

of the Sagamore Angling Club, and dreamed till daybreak of . . . Langham.

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Langham, clad in tweeds from head to foot, sat on the edge of his bed.

He had been sitting there since daybreak, and the expression on his ornamental face had varied between the blank and the idiotic. That the only woman in the world had miraculously appeared at Sagamore Lodge he had heard from Colonel Hyssop and Major Brent at dinner the evening before.

That she already knew of his presence there he could not doubt. That she did not desire his presence he was fearfully persuaded.

Clearly he must go—not at once, of course, to leave behind him a possibility for gossip at his abrupt departure. From the tongues of infants and well-fed clubmen, good Lord deliver us!

He must go. Meanwhile he could easily avoid her.

And as he sat there, savoring all the pent-up bitterness poured out for him by destiny, there came a patter of padded feet in the hallway, the scrape of nails, a sniff at the door-sill, a whine, a frantic scratching. He leaned forward and opened the door. His Highness landed on the bed with one hysterical yelp and fell upon Langham, paw and muzzle.

When their affection had been temporarily satiated, the dog lay down on the

bed, his eyes riveted on his late master, and the man went over to his desk, drew a sheet of club paper toward him, found a pen, and wrote:

"Of course it is an unhappy coincidence, and I will go when I can do so decently—tomorrow morning. Meanwhile I shall be away all day fishing the West Branch, and shall return too late to dine at the club table.

"I wish you a happy sojourn here—"

This he reread and scratched out.

"I am glad you kept His Highness."

This he also scratched out.

After a while he signed his name to the note, sealed it, and stepped into the hallway.

At the farther end of the passage the door of her room was ajar; a sunlit-scarlet curtain hung inside.

"Come here!" said Langham to the dog.

His Highness came with a single leap.

"Take it to . . . her," said the man, under his breath. Then he turned sharply, picked up rod and creel, and descended the stairs.

Meanwhile His Highness entered his mistress's chamber, with a polite scratch as a "by your leave!" and trotted up to her, holding out the note in his pink mouth.

She looked at the dog in astonishment. Then the handwriting on the envelope caught her eye.

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