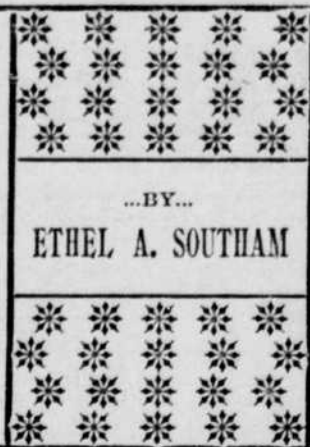


# That Mysterious Major...



...BY...  
ETHEL A. SOUTHAM

## CHAPTER VI.

"It is very awkward, but then it is just exactly what one might have supposed would happen." Lady Howard spoke in a strangely perturbed tone. For the past few minutes she had been occupied in reading the London paper, but the remark, which was accompanied by a faint sigh, was evidently the outcome of a previous conversation. "If one has a particular antipathy for a certain individual, one may be quite sure that, as ill-luck will have it, one will be brought in contact with that very individual at every turn and corner, and it has just been so with Major Brown. During the past four or five days we must have had occasion to speak to him at least a dozen times. What with lending us his umbrella on the day we were caught in that thunder shower, helping in the search for Sambo when you lost him the other morning, and to crown all, rescuing you almost from under the hoofs of that tiresome horse upon the shore yesterday, we seem to have passed our time in saying nothing but 'thank you,' to him. Really everything has happened as awkwardly as it could. Of course accidents are constantly occurring; still I cannot imagine how you managed to get under the hoofs of that horse."

"Well, yes—it was troublesome of me. It would have been almost better if it had killed me outright," was Evelyn's answer from the deep embrasure of the window, where she was sitting before a small writing table busily scribbling off several notes. "But, anyhow, we were under an obligation to him for getting wet through on our account the other night, when in that pouring rain he found us a cab after the theater. After that, we were obliged to be polite to him."

"Yes—polite of course," agreed her ladyship, twisting her rings somewhat thoughtfully round and round upon her fingers; "but you have to be more than

"No—I do not say that there is; but I dislike making promiscuous acquaintances. Mr. Falkland was talking about him only this morning, and it seems thoroughly to understand my feelings upon the subject."

"Yet a month ago Mr. Falkland was quite as promiscuous an acquaintance himself. It was only by chance we got to know him; and in his case he had not even done anything for which we were under any obligation to him," was Evelyn's prompt reply.

"My dear child, what are you talking about?" Lady Howard's tones were slightly impatient. "Mr. Falkland's was quite a different case. We made his acquaintance by chance; but I should have been just as reluctant to have anything to say to him as I am about this other man if we had not discovered in him an old friend of both my husband and your father. At the same time I must say I never met anybody before in whom I could place such complete confidence. He is so different from the general run of young men, who can talk of nothing but their shooting, their horses, and their dogs."

"Oh, yes—he is very nice, of course; but"—Miss Luttrell paused for a moment—"he is not exactly a young man!"

"Possibly not." The touch of impatience in her ladyship's tones was superseded by one of distinct annoyance. "Neither," she added, "is this mysterious individual with whom you have struck up such a warm friendship. I should imagine there are only a very few years difference in their ages."

"Now, Aunt Lydia, do not talk nonsense! Major Brown may be as old as Methusalem for all I care! And, as for saying that I have struck up a friendship with him—well, that is really mean of you!" Evelyn pushed back her chair, advanced to the middle of the room, and with her hands clasped behind her, gazed serenely at her aunt. "You surely know that you

thrusting it into her writing case, locked the key.



THRUSTING IT INTO HER WRITING CASE, LOCKED THE KEY.

ordinarily polite to a man who has saved your life."

"Yes—that is it," said Evelyn lugubriously.

"It is very annoying—the whole affair has been so unfortunate," proceeded Lady Howard with emphasis. "If it were absolutely necessary that you should be rescued by somebody, all well and good; but there is not another person in the hotel whom I would not have chosen to undertake the task in preference to that man."

Evelyn received the information in silence. Leaning her elbows on the edge of the table, she let her chin sink slowly into her two palms and gazed out reflectively through the open window.

"Still there is nothing really against him," she suggested at length, with slight though perceptible diffidence. "He—he is very nice to talk to. The only objection is that nobody knows who he is, and that his name is Brown"—plain common "Brown"—"without even an 'e' to add a little elegance to it. And of course one generally considers that an officer is at least a gentleman."

"An officer? Nonsense, child! Because he calls himself 'Major Brown,' do you suppose that is any criterion of his position in society?" Lady Howard spoke quite disdainfully. "He may be an officer, certainly—he has the appearance of a soldier—but it is far more likely, since nobody can discover what regiment he is in—and there is no such name in the retired Army list—that he is merely a major of volunteers in an obscure country town, following a vulgar but honest trade as soap boiler or sugar refiner."

"He may be, of course. Pigs, I believe, may fly," returned Evelyn, nibbling the end of her pen with a perfectly unconvinced expression. "But there is nothing suggestive of either soap or sugar about Major Brown."

did more towards making that acquaintance in the ten minutes when you talked to him last evening and overwhelmed him with thanks for rescuing me than I could have done in a whole year! Why, if I had not known that he was the one person in the hotel for whom you had the greatest respect?"

"Yet, what else could I do, when, but for his timely aid, you might at this very moment be lying lamed for life or even dead?" returned Lady Howard, with a little shudder.

"Oh, no! You did quite right, of course!" said Evelyn thoughtfully. "Perhaps nobody realized more fully than herself how much she had to be thankful for. 'But do not say it is my fault if he—well, if for the future he does not merely take off his hat and pass on with a distant bow when he chances to meet you!'—laughing lightly."

No; the distant bow was quite a thing of the past, their acquaintance was on a totally different footing now—a state of affairs to which Major Brown himself was thoroughly alive when, half an hour later, he chanced to meet Miss Luttrell in the garden. He welcomed her warmly, persisted in showing her some new plans for a projected golf course, and was still walking by her side when a turn in the path brought them face to face with Gilbert Falkland.

"So there you are, Miss Eve!" he began by way of greeting, utterly ignoring her companion. "I was just wondering where the bird had flown." The words were spoken lightly, in the same familiar half-patronizing strain which Mr. Falkland usually adopted towards the daughter of his old friend. "Five minutes ago, when I was passing along the verandah I noticed that the window of your sitting room was wide open, that the apartment itself was empty, and that

a check book was lying on the table."

"A check book?" Evelyn nodded. "Ah, I dare say it was mine."

"So I suspected," observed Falkland calmly. "Are you aware, though, that it is a most dangerous practice leaving your check book about like that?" "Dangerous!" Evelyn laughed. "Well, yes; I suppose that it would be considered dangerous by some people who go on the principle of locking up everything, from the wine cellar itself down to such trifles as penny stamps and halfpenny post cards."

"Yet check books, I should imagine, scarcely come under that category," remarked Falkland with quiet sarcasm. "But perhaps you have forgotten our conversation of a week ago?" he supplemented, with a significant glance from Evelyn to Major Brown, who was standing silently passing his stick along the edge of the gravel path, an edified listener to the discussion.

At his words the hot color rose quickly to Evelyn's cheeks, mounting to her forehead and spreading over throat and ears. Like lightning her thoughts had gone back to that morning when her first encounter with Major Brown had taken place; and, as she realized to what Mr. Falkland was alluding, a feeling of the utmost annoyance took possession of her.

But worst of all was the knowledge that Major Brown had raised his head and was wondering surveying the crimson hue of her cheeks, and probably even divining the cause of her confusion. This last thought was too much for her. Without another word, and giving Gilbert Falkland only one flash of her angry eyes, she suddenly turned away and walked off indignantly towards the house.

"The wretch!" I hate him!" she murmured a moment later, as she stepped through the open window of Lady Howard's sitting room and threw herself into a low chair.

One contemptuous glance she gave at her check book as it lay open on the table by her side, and then, as though annoyed by the very sight of it, she took it up, and, thrusting it into her writing case, locked the key angrily upon it.

## CHAPTER VII.

It was two days later—a soaking wet afternoon. Ever since early morning the rain had been descending in a steady persistent downpour, beating upon the scorched grass, dashing to pieces the rows of stately calceolarias and geraniums, and converting every path and flight of steps into as many miniature streams and turbulent cascades of seething waters.

Major Brown, driven almost to despair by the depressing prospects of the day, wandered aimlessly from billiard room to smoking room, from smoking room to library, and at last sat down before one of the writing tables and hastily dashed off one or two unimportant letters. His correspondence completed, he directed and sealed the envelopes, and was leisurely affixing the stamps, when his attention became suddenly arrested by something on the sheet of blotting paper before him.

What was it? With the exception of a number of indescribable hieroglyphics and the impression of a line of more boldly written characters, which had evidently been hastily blotted, the surface of the pink sheet was perfectly blank. Putting up his eye glass, he scanned them for at least a couple of minutes in absolute silence, and then, giving a cautious glance round the room, as though a sudden thought had struck him, he advanced, blotting book in hand, towards a fantastically-framed mirror which stood above the marble mantel. This further scrutiny was, to all appearance, even more successful, for, as Major Brown held up the strangely interesting sheet close to the glass, a smile of satisfaction immediately lit up his face.

(To be continued.)

## Two Happy Thoughts.

From far-away Ceylon comes a funny little story. A tea planter who had a glass eye was desirous of going away for a day's shooting with a friend, but he knew that as soon as the natives who were at work on the plantation heard that he was going they would not do a stroke of work. How was he to get off? That was the question. After much thought an idea struck him. Going up to the men, he addressed them thus: "Although I myself will be absent, yet I shall leave one of my eyes to see that you do your work." And, much to the surprise and bewilderment of the natives, he took out the glass eye and placed it on the stump of a tree and left. For some time the men worked industriously, but at last one of them, seizing his tin in which he carried his food, approached the tree and gently placed it over the eye. This done, they all lay down and slept sweetly until sunset.—Waverly Magazine.

## Strong Glasses.

Mr. Stubb—Can Sally see good through her new glasses? Mrs. Stubb—Yes, John, but she says they exaggerate. Mr. Stubb—Exaggerate, Maria? Mrs. Stubb—Yes, outrageously. The other night she declared the moon had a golden rim, and then she found out it was her glasses that had a golden rim.

## Grounds for It.

Quinn—I wore one of those new rubber collars to save laundry bills. De Fonte—Was it a success? Quinn—No, I had to throw it away. Every one I met yelled "Rubberneck."

## Spain's Sunday Schools.

In all Spain there are only 3,230 children in the Sunday schools.

## THEIR TRUE GENESIS

### TRUSTS ARE NOT CHILDREN OF THE TARIFF.

Quaint Allegory Illustrating the Deplorable Consequences Attending Miss Industry's Departure from Conjugal Rectitude.

(From advance sheets of "The Philosophy of Trusts," by Prof. Ernest Mas.)

Grandmother Independence had two beautiful daughters, both American to the core. The elder's name was Agriculture. She was a handsome girl of pure unmixed stock, calm, very laborious and of bucolic inclinations. The younger daughter had a little foreign blood in her veins. Her name was Industry; a very pretty girl, indeed, full of life, not averse to flirtation, and of extremely vivacious temperament. Scarcely indeed have two sisters presented a more striking contrast.

To complete her education, the younger daughter, the more promising, went abroad. She visited Lanca-shire and spent some time in the old ancestral manor. While there she made a lot of desirable and undesirable acquaintances, which were subsequently to exert a most disastrous influence on her happiness. This phase of her history would fill a good-sized volume.

The wayward girl came back home in cosmopolitan attire, affecting a London accent, a free thinker in matters of economy. As she exhibited all the outward signs of unrestrained prodigality, old Sister Agriculture could never get along with her. The original chasm had developed into an abyss.

It was not long before Mother Independence's keen eye could detect the dangerous propensities of her prodigal daughter; so she deemed it wise to apply a strong corrective at once, in the shape of a healthy, vigorous husband. Young American Industry needed it very badly.

Her mother had beforehand selected a virile companion of athletic frame, and equally well built morally. His name was The Tariff. He was not of noble extraction, had not been educated for diplomacy; but in place of a university diploma or a heraldic coat of arms could on almost every occasion show a lot of hard American common sense, character and individuality. He had been reared at the school of strictest economy, and was sure to be a model of domestic virtues. A marriage took place on a good day early in November, and the mother at last felt relieved of all anxious cares and responsibilities.

The young wife was at first very fond of her husband, whose kind attentions anticipated her smallest wants and most capricious desires. She had more pin money than any wife of a successful business man ever dreamed of. This was the beginning of the trouble, as Industry was too versatile to stand, like Sister Agriculture, uninterrupted prosperity and domestic felicity. A most happy event of providential timeliness prevented, or, better said, postponed a family cataclysm. Two lusty sons, twins, were the legitimate fruit of this union.

Father and mother decided to call the first one Labor and the second one Enterprise. As they had in their veins the virile blood of the father and the healthy constitution of the mother, both boys were very strong, full of health and appetite, but—and very likely owing to the widely different characteristics of the father and mother—they were far from being physically and morally alike. Baby Labor was fond of the milk bottle, but, for some reason or other, Baby Enterprise ever managed to have it most of the time in his little mouth.

"What a big glutton!" used to say the mother. "Each baby should have his turn. This is not fair." "Never mind," rejoined the father; "I shall make one boy a lawyer and the other a mechanic. With such blood in their veins as that of Father Tariff and Mother Industry, both will succeed in their respective callings." And this was to happen some day; but we must not anticipate.

Four years after marriage the temperament of Industry, for some time under restraint, asserted itself more violently than ever before. All was not harmony under the conjugal roof. To make matters still worse, the two children, Labor and Enterprise, had to be separated, as they were fighting all the time over the milk bottle. Baby Labor, like Aunty Agriculture, was of

## ILLEGITIMATE OFFSPRING.



"Mr. Tariff, being of kind and generous nature, forgave and welcomed Industry under the conjugal roof. . . . Father Tariff went so far as to adopt the 'little Trusts' and to look after them, but never consented to legitimize them nor allowed them to bear his name."—From Advance Sheets of "The Philosophy of Trusts," by Prof. Ernest Mas.

## The Masses in Two Hemispheres.

Archbishop Ireland, who but a short time since returned from a prolonged trip abroad, has said a few most significant words in respect to the contrast between conditions abroad and those in this country. His statement is that:

"The contrast between the masses in this country and the masses in the old world in and out of the church is more remarkable than ever. The American poor are happier and a hundred per cent more intelligent. Their surroundings are better, their chances are better. Where there is one case of misery here there are hundreds abroad, and by abroad I mean England as well as the continent."

The one thing which more than all else is responsible for the advantage which Americans have over the citizens of other countries is the protective tariff. That it is which keeps wages in this country high; that it is which makes employment sure for the laborers of this country; that it is which prevents the foreign manufacturers who employ the pauper laborers of other countries from sending their products to the United States to enter into free and unrestricted competition with the products of the well-paid labor of this country. Archbishop Ireland is a man whose word can be relied upon, and the contrast which he draws between the situation in this country and that abroad is worthy of most careful attention.

## Will Not Be Doubtful.

A short time since twenty-five buyers, representing the same number of departments in one of Chicago's department stores, arrived in New York city at the same time. It was stated that not only was this the largest number of department buyers ever sent to the New York market at one time by this concern, but that it was the largest number of buyers ever sent to New York for the purchase of goods at the same time by a single firm during the entire history of American retail merchandising. Apropos of this event, the son of one of the members of the firm represented by these buyers said in conversation with a reporter:

"Every trade condition in Chicago and throughout the West is indicative of a more prosperous fall season than has been experienced for many years. These evidences of prosperity are not confined to any single branch of commercial industry, but seem to cover the entire field. We have enjoyed a period of unprecedented activity this summer in every department of our establishment, and the statements of business associates in Chicago indicate that these conditions are well-nigh universal."

It is safe to say that the West will not be "doubtful" territory in the next campaign if the maintenance of the protective tariff is put in the balance.

## Tin Plate Prices.

Every one knows that tin plate has advanced considerably in price within the present year. The Democratic theorists claim that the advance in the United States is due incidentally to the tin plate trust and primarily to the tariff, it being their theory that a protective tariff is a promoter of trusts.

Now let us look at the prices which the Welsh tin plate manufacturers receive. They now obtain \$1.45 a box more than they did in January last. This is a greater advance than has been made in the United States.

We respectfully ask our Democratic friends to explain this. If the protective tariff and the trust caused the advance in the prices of tin plate in the United States, what caused a greater advance in price in Wales, where there is no tariff at all? We pause for reply.—Toledo Blade.

## Will Not See.

Senator Vest of Missouri will not see or believe that any prosperity has come to the farmer in the past two years. He said in an interview at Toronto, Canada, on Monday: "Republicans claim prosperity as due to the tariff policy, but farmers have received no particular benefit from the prosperity, and are as dissatisfied as ever." Facts from all sections of the country, especially the great farming west, disprove the sentence above uttered by Mr. Vest. Millions of mortgages in Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa and the Dakotas were in 1898 paid off by the increased sale of their products, and millions more will be paid and canceled before Christmas chimes are rung from the gold the 1899 crops will bring them.—Fremont (Ohio) Journal.

## Reason to Celebrate.

Labor day this year should have had an extra big celebration. It stands for more than it has stood for for a number of years past; for more, at least, than it has stood for since the free traders got in their knock-down blow at American industries in 1892. It is the year's holiday which is especially dedicated to the wage earners, and the wage earners of the country have plenty of reason to celebrate this year. They have had more work for which to celebrate and more money with which to pay for their celebration.

## A Mighty Nation.

Oswald Ottendorfer says that this country is no longer the ideal America to Europeans that it was. It must be confessed that it has changed in some of its features. At one time it was the Mecca of the poor of Europe, who migrated hither because it offered a welcome to the home seekers. Then it was also the market for European products. Now we are a mighty nation, invading the markets of Europe and growing prosperous at the expense of older countries.—Seattle (Wash.) Post-Intelligencer.