

THE UNKNOWN MR. KENT

GEORGE H. DORAN CO., 1916 COPYRIGHT.

"Disappointed?" queried the American, with cool insolence.

"Not much," came the ready reply with equal coolness. "The way you passed the combination over was well-significant."

"Suppose we sit down," Kent suggested. "We've got quite a lot of things to discuss, haven't we?"

"That depends on you. Of course if you are quite amenable—I seem to be in the position of strength. I'll listen to anything you've got to offer."

"You'll listen? That's good. If you only came to listen, why did you come at all? Say, Provarsk! You think I'm fool enough to believe you came here merely on a polite visit, do you? Just because you wanted to hear the sweet sound of my voice? You came because I've got things you want. Things you think I might trade. Things that if you don't get, might upset your little pile of bricks and tip you over into the gutter. Come, let's not try to play blind man's bluff. What are you after? What card do you need to fill your flush?"

"Pretty fair talk for a man who is shut in his own room under arrest," commented Provarsk. "What is it the English call it—Swank. Yes, that's it. Bluff, I think you style it, you Yankkees."

"Not at all," Kent insisted, seriously. "A real bluff is where you haven't got the goods, but try to make the other fellow believe you have. Swank, on the contrary, is merely an exaggeration of what you possess. Neither word is applicable, because I've got what you have to have. I under arrest? Poof! That's nothing, because I've got what is known as the moral supremacy, the initiative. Also because you are afraid of me and that I might possibly kick your apple cart with a lot of freckled wares into the garbage pile."

"Good!" gaily responded the baron. "Quite good! Nothing like frank admission to get to a business basis, is there? You can make it a lot more certain for me. And in return I can at least make it certain that you shall have a chance to wander farther afield with a whole hide."

"And if I don't prove agreeable?" questioned Kent.

"Then," declared the conspirator, with a great air of regret, "I am afraid you won't wander anywhere at all. About the cheapest thing in Marken is a lot in the cemetery."

"Um-m-h," mused the American. "If you are so certain of your ground, I can't quite see why you bother with me. You wouldn't do it. No, indeed! You'd order the lot."

"Right again," cheerfully agreed the baron.

"Well, then let's get down to brass tacks. What are you after?" Provarsk got up and began to move about the room, much to Kent's disturbance.

"Sit down," he said. "I don't like to talk business to a man who is running a race with himself."

Provarsk sat down and came straight to the point. "I can get your transfer of that mining concession whether you give it or not," he said, meaningly.

"In the same way you got my signatures to letters I never wrote, eh?" "Exactly," admitted Provarsk, with a grin. "But it might save some further trouble with your employer, John Rhodes, if I actually got the transfer from you."

"I believe you are right about that," Kent agreed. "But you haven't yet explained where I come in, I'm not fool enough to believe you are doing this for the good of the state, you know."

"Of course I'm not!" Provarsk declared, contemptuously. "I'm doing it for my own good and no one's else."

"How do you propose to handle the king?" demanded Kent.

"He'll have to do what I want him to, for the simplest of reasons, that I shall have the people behind me. He'll get nothing! He can be king. That's enough for him."

"Yes?" said Kent, invitingly. "Now about me. You have already written to Rhodes. Do I get nothing, too?" "That's just what I'm coming to," observed the baron. "You've been a good gamester, but you've lost, all the way round. You and I agree on just one thing, which is that either of us keeps his word when he can do so. That's right, isn't it?"

"Yes, I think it is."

"Then if I gave you my word as a gentleman on anything, you'd accept it, wouldn't you?"

"I think I should."

"Very well, that simplifies matters. The king has been getting 10 per cent. of the net revenues from the mines. From now on he gets nothing, and you shall have 5 per cent. hereafter, to be forwarded to you whenever you

choose to hide from Rhodes, provided that you give me that concession. Only, of course, you've got to stay away from Marken. That's understood in any event."

With a studied air of deliberation Kent looked up at the ceiling, until Provarsk began to move restlessly.

The latter consulted his watch and got hastily to his feet.

"I've no further time to waste in politeness," he declared, with sharp emphasis. "I shall give you just five minutes more in which to decide."

"Why this haste? Got anything important to do?" asked Kent in bland surprise.

"I have," asserted the baron, crisply.

"Well, Provarsk, you can spare yourself the trouble," said Kent with the utmost sarcasm. "I know your full plans. I even surmised you might try to seize me and instructed Von Glutz, who, by the way, will be on hand with sufficient strength to act this very morning, that unless it became a question of saving my life he was not to interfere with you. With the exception of perhaps a half dozen men, the palace guard is still loyal and awaiting my orders. I could have summoned assistance last night with a single call!"

Provarsk looked incredulous. He concealed the fear that slowly gripped him, and snapped his fingers.

"Bluffing again," he said. "Come, my time is up."

"Going to read a proclamation to the people, or anything like that? If so you may as well save yourself the trouble. By this time the king is already reading his."

Provarsk's face, at this statement, went white with rage.

"You lie!" he shouted.

"I don't," calmly disputed Kent, in his turn arising to his feet. "I've already returned him his concession and he is by this time presenting the manganese mines, gratis, to the citizens of Marken. Another thing! You needn't worry about what John Rhodes might do to me. I happen to be John Rhodes, myself! You are—"

There was a shout, a curse, a woman's scream and a pistol shot sounding together in confusion. Provarsk, infuriated, had whipped a gun from his pocket so unexpectedly that Ivan had not time to reach him; but the princess had, with desperation, flung the screen heavily against Provarsk's arm, and the bullet, deflected from its mark, splattered itself in minute particles of flying lead over the tiled floor. Outside, the sentry battered clamorously on the stout door. In the debris of the screen two men now struggled furiously, Ivan and Provarsk, the latter striving with desperate intent to twist his pined hand once more in Kent's direction, and swearing, that no matter what happened, he would at least kill him. His persistence angered the giant, who had seized his forearm, and threw him to the floor. With a roar like that of a charging lion he seemed for the first time to exert his full strength. He was unswerving and pitiless. His huge right shoulder suddenly lifted until the muscles of his neck were swollen and rigid, there was the harsh snap of breaking bones, an agonized scream from Provarsk, and Kent leapt forward.

"Ivan! Ivan!" he shouted, forgetting that the latter could not hear. The princess backed away against the wall, with a stare of fascinated, expectant horror; for Ivan, with all the hatred he had sustained for the chancellor unleashed, was intent on killing him this time, regardless of Kent's entreaties. He snatched the pistol from the floor and spite Kent's efforts planted the muzzle against Provarsk's temple. He tried to discharge it; but in his haste had unwittingly thrown the safety clutch. Provarsk, helpless beneath him, glared upward with eyes that did not quail. The curious, reckless, fearless daring of the man did not desert him in the least now that he was at the end. Kent caught Ivan's arm in both his own, but the enraged giant threw him off, dexterously dropping the pistol, caught it by the muzzle, and lifted his arm high above his head intent on crushing Provarsk's skull with the butt of the weapon. Quick as light, Kent saw his opportunity, and caught the upraised wrist from behind, threw all his weight against it, and slowly bent Ivan sidewise from over his victim. The giant, though taken at this disadvantage, yielded only inch by inch, overborne by the strength of Kent that, with any ordinary man, would have been overpowering. Kent's jaws were set until the muscles of his cheeks shone in knots and his eyes were aflame.

"Let me kill him! For God's sake, don't interfere!" Ivan shouted, and then, pleading for the privilege of de-

stroying Provarsk, was toppled over, breathing hoarsely and looking up into Kent's face. "Howdy the rad flame burned out of his eyes, as he recovered control of himself. The pistol fell from his hand, and the princess, with a spring as graceful as a leopard's seized it and retreated to a safe distance.

"Promise me that you will not hurt him, Ivan! I tell you not to! Are you mad, man?"

"I promise," said Ivan, sullenly, but relaxing himself, and Kent arose. Ivan got slowly to his feet, with a stare of hatred and defeated intent at Provarsk, who was painfully trying to extricate himself from the pieces of splintered screen.

Kent put his hand firmly, but gently, beneath him and assisted him to his feet, and then to a chair. There was no need to ask his condition. The loosely swinging arm told its own story.

The door gave way under a fresh onslaught and several guardsmen fell into the room. Behind them could be seen two others holding Provarsk's mercenary between them. Kent smiled grimly and said, "Thank you men; but I do not require your help. Pull what's left of the door shut and at once go and arrest or kill Provarsk's hired men. Leave one man on guard outside in case I want him."

They saluted and obeyed with convincing alacrity.

"Provarsk," said Kent, "I'm very sorry! I didn't wish that done to you!"

"That's all right, Rhodes, or Kent, if you prefer it. It's nothing to what I wanted to do to you," gamely retorted the baron.

"Or nothing compared to what Ivan wanted to do to you," remarked Kent. "Why didn't you let him finish it? In your place I should have done so." Provarsk asserted, without rancor, and clutching his shattered arm.

"Because," declared Kent, with quite dignity, "I have punished you enough. You are finished as it is. Somehow, I'm sorry! You're a game man, Baron, and—I like them. I shall send for a surgeon."

"Oh, may as well put that off for a few minutes," the chancellor said, wincing with a physical pain that barely exposed itself in his level voice. "May as well tell me the worst."

"There's not much to tell," Kent said, gently. "Only that I've beaten you past any chance of your coming back. By this time you are not even the chancellor, I think. I fancy Von Glutz, the loyal, has come back to his own. And you are broke. Broken like an empty egg shell!"

Provarsk shut his teeth, tried to get his arm to a less painful position, attempted a brave smile, and said, "I think not. The Marken Mineral company, my dear Mr. Rhodes—"

"Is worthless! I couldn't quite forgive your trying to bribe my secretary, Provarsk. That wasn't playing the game. I went after you on that. It's a rule of finance to get a man who tries to bite your leg under the table. I got you! The only unprofitable, completely worthless enterprise in Marken, is the one in which you've put every dollar you could get. I saw to that. I kept it going at a total loss just for your benefit. You're not worth a copper centime. You'll have to borrow money to buy your railway ticket out—unless—unless I relent. Maybe I shall. There are a lot of things I like about you. There are a lot of places where I can use brave men, if they are willing to be honest, and you are at least brave."

"I don't think," said the baron, biting his lip to hide his mental and physical pain, "that I can accept anything from you; but I will say this—just to show you that in my way I am fair—if I can learn this game you play—this thing of finance, and I can find any way to have another go at you, I'll do it! And—while I'm doing it, all the time, I'll like and admire you, and—"

He shut his teeth savagely in a determined effort to subdue the giddiness and weakness that was mastering him, and then, with a long sigh, fell sidewise and would have fallen to the floor had not Kent leapt forward and caught him in his arms.

He picked him up as if he were of no weight, and strode across the room, followed by the princess, and Ivan, whose eyes had roved from his lip seizing the spoken words.

"Princess Eloise," the American called anxiously over his shoulder, "please summon some one to help me. And also a surgeon. Send them to my private room. And—"

He stammered desperately—"wait for me—here!"

Her face flushed, as if, in this turmoil, she had interpreted some hidden significance in his words; but she ran across the room, called the sentry from the corridor, and Kent heard her words.

"Send two men from the guard room at once to assist Mr. Kent. Then go—quickly—as fast as you can, and summon the court surgeon. Hurry! Mr. Kent asks you to. Go quickly!" Ivan closed the door, dumbly, and the sound of her voice was cut off.

"Here, Ivan," Kent's lips moved as he turned his head toward his fol-

lower from the side of his own bed on which he had deposited the chancellor. "Help me to get his clothes off while he is unconscious. You should not have done this. I can't fire you, because after a fashion you and I are pals. But I'd give \$1,000 to be big enough to take it out of your hide, you big, ill tempered chump!"

And Ivan, knowing a lot was not embodied in his employer's speech, and having absorbed that strange but true philosophy of Owen Wister's conveyed through the Virginian, merely grinned and began unlacing the baron's shoes.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN.

The Princess Eloise tiptoed to the shattered hall door, and, with infinite care, passed through and closed it behind her. Then, hesitant, perturbed, distressed, she looked down the long reaches, lonely as a deserted avenue, as if considering a direction for flight. She paused, torn between the tugging hand of convention and desire, that dragged her in diverse ways. Convention urged her that she was of the blood of proud and lasting kings, certain to find her place upon some potent throne, inevitably destined to rule, endowed by nature, and trained religiously to that small caste whose slightest wish becomes a necessity with the people beneath. But desire cried aloud that all was vain, all happiness lost, the world barren, the future a desert, if now she closed her ears to the cry of her heart. A choice of quondam lay before her; one over a vast number whom she might serve, and assist, with a high nobility of purpose, and the other over one subject, a strange, brusque, many-sided man who would give of strength, and soul, and fealty, all that he had to give and if need be, uncomplainingly as a duty, reverently as a sacrifice, his life.

Life stretched before her like the corridor, in two directions, each leading from the other. Steadily, with clear eyes and clarity of mind, she weighed one route against the other, and then, with bent head, and trembling breath, she made her decision. She turned, retraced her steps, opened the door very gently, stepped inside the room she had left, and closed the door behind. Kent, grave, embarrassed, and yet determined, came but a moment later from his sleeping chamber, and closed the door leading to it; but not with his habitual directness and decision. This was not the man she had seen confidently striding his way, staring direct with the radiation of personal power and purpose, intent on some goal beyond other eyes. Instead, there was about him a curious attitude of awkwardness, appeal and reverence, a strange lack of confidence. For an instant, only she forced herself to meet his eyes. They cried their message to hers across the silent, waiting room. The sounds of the outside world, in which that day the future of a nation was being irrevocably decided, became hushed and still. She seemed to hear in that same soundless silence the struggle of his mind as it fell upon and conquered his tongue. Forced by decision to meet this portentous issue, she heard him coming toward her. His voice sounded as if reaching her from a long distance, so quiet, so gentle, so grave it was in this decisive moment of its existence.

"You," it said, "are a princess. I am nothing, save that which I am—a man who has done his best. A plebeian man, Princess Eloise, because all that I have tried and all that I have done, may seem insignificant in your eyes. But what I am, I am."

The voice paused in that time she stood with hands crossed above her breast not daring to lift her eyes to his; paused as if gathering power to find the way.

"I should not dare to speak," it proceeded, more firmly, "had you not said what you did a while ago. You said that you would have given anything—"

He hesitated and spoke scarcely above a whisper, as if a repetition of her words were profanation, as if he, a peasant, approached slowly on hands and knees to a saint. "You said that you would give anything for my friend, my esteem! That you had helped me—always!"

He spoke word like one reading the word of life from the open book of destiny, laid once before us. Eloise! he cried with a tear beyond all she had dreamed, "I like that poor, foolish juggler of Notre Dame, who, unable to do more than juggle gay balls upon his hands and feet, yet dared toss them at the shrine of Our Lady, and thus gave all he had to give! I am helpless! I am nothing, in this fight—the only one from which I've ever flinched. I wanted to go before I gave myself away; but you said—you said—"

(To be continued next week.)

The Real Offense. From the Washington Star. "I hear you were arrested for three garding one of the traffic signs." "I don't think it was exactly that," replied Mr. Chuggias. "Then what were you arrested for?" "Not speaking with proper politeness to the officer."

Kill That Cold With

HILL'S CASCARA QUININE
FOR Colds, Coughs AND La Grippe

Neglected Colds are Dangerous
Take no chances. Keep this standard remedy handy for the first sneeze.
Breaks up a cold in 24 hours—Relieves Grippe in 3 days—Excellent for Headache
Quinine in this form does not affect the head—Cascara is best Tonic Laxative—No Opium in Hill's.

ALL DRUGGISTS SELL IT

Organization, Responsibility, Integrity — In Other Words the Reputation of

RICE BROTHERS

Cattle Live Stock Commission, Sioux City Stock Yards Cattle
Hogs GUARANTEES SATISFACTION Hogs
Sheep A Reliable Firm to Ship to Sheep
Accurate market reports gladly furnished free. Write us. Also Chicago, Ill., Sioux Falls, S. D.

She Knew!
Teacher (to new girl)—Now, Dolly, I'll give you a sum. Supposing your father owed the butcher fifteen pounds eleven shilling and twopenny halfpenny, seven pounds three shillings to the bootmaker, fourteen pounds and ninepence to the milkman, and thirty-one pounds nineteen shillings and threepence three farthings to the coal merchant—
Dolly (confidently)—We should move!—Edinburgh Scotsman.

Use Both Hands.
A French surgeon has recommended the French Academy of Medicine to advocate teaching school children to make equal use of both hands.

"Pape's Diapepsin" for Indigestion
"Pape's Diapepsin" is the quickest, surest relief for indigestion, Gases, Flatulence, Heartburn, Sourness, Fermentation or Stomach Distress caused by acidity. A few tablets give almost immediate stomach relief and shortly the stomach is corrected so you can eat favorite foods without fear. Large case costs only 50 cents at drug store. Absolutely harmless and pleasant. Millions helped annually. Best stomach corrective known—Adv.

USE "DIAMOND DYES"

Dye right! Don't risk your material in a poor dye. Each package of "Diamond Dyes" contains directions so simple that any woman can diamond-dye a new, rich, fadeless color into old garments, draperies, coverings, everything, whether wool, silk, linen, cotton or mixed goods.
Buy "Diamond Dyes"—no other kind—then perfect results are guaranteed. Druggist has "Diamond Dyes Color Card"—16 rich colors. Adv.

WAR AGAINST THE BELUGA
French Oceanograph Society Starts Fight on Enemies of the Fishermen.
A campaign against the beluga or white whale was recently started from Douarnenez to Concarneau, in Brittany, by the French Oceanograph society, in which nets and poison tubes were used. The beluga, pest of the fishermen, is generally cream white in color, feeds mainly on marine fish and commits ravages among the shoals. The average length of the adult male is about 18 or 20 feet. To hunt down the white whale a net 1,100 yards long was set up at Douarnenez, while another was placed in a suitable position by the fishermen at Concarneau. Furthermore, the skippers of the sardine boats used 4,000 Yves deluge poison tubes against the belugas.—Indianapolis News.

Iron Ores Formed by Bacteria.
Geologists are realizing more fully as they extend their studies the magnitude of the work done by plants and animals in building up and tearing down parts of the crust of the earth. Even microscopic organisms perform a large part of this work. Pasteur long ago showed us the deadly power of bacteria in disease and their efficiency in promoting fermentation, but their influence on the fertility of soils and their work in expediting rock decay are still subjects of scientific study.

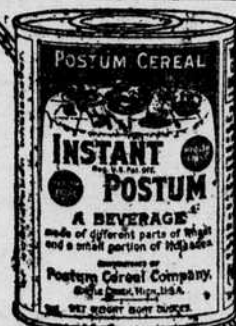
TO KEEP EXPERIENCED HELP
Colorado Beet Sugar Company Plans to Provide Houses for Mexicans Next Season.

At least one big sugar company in Colorado is already planning a nucleus of Mexican beet workers for next spring. It has just ordered the construction of 25 small frame buildings in the outskirts of Montrose for the Mexicans to occupy this winter, so that they will not drift to other districts and force the sugar company to bring in inexperienced beet workers again next spring.
This year the company imported several hundred inexperienced workers from Mexico. Many of these have become valuable beet workers and the company intends to do all it can to keep them in this locality.

Tornadoed.
Traveling Man—Some tornado that was we had around here last night. Do any damage to your new barn?
Pneumatic Farmer—Dunno. Hain't found the darn thing yet.—American Legion Weekly.

No, I Can't.
"I can read my wife like a book," bragged Mr. Naylor.
"I'll bet you can't shut her up like one," growled Mr. Gab.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Your table drink will never bother nerves or sleep if you quit coffee and drink



INSTANT POSTUM

If coffee troubles you, isn't it better to make the change now rather than later?

Better health results and you'll appreciate the economy and convenience.

AT GROCERS EVERYWHERE

There's a Reason for Postum

Made by Postum Cereal Co. Inc., Battle Creek, Mich.