

A MAKER OF HISTORY

By E. PHILIPS OFFENHEIM,
Author of "The Master Mummer," "A Prince of Sinners," "Mysterious Mr. Sablin," "Anna the Adventuress," Etc.

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(Continued from Page Three.)

combe remarked. "Let me make you a whisky and soda, old chap. You look a bit tired."

"Very good of you. I think I will," Andrew answered. "And, George, are you sure that I should not be putting you out at all if I were to stay—say another couple of days—with you?"

Duncombe wheeled round and faced his friend. His reply was not immediate.

"Andrew," he said, "you know very well that I haven't a pal in the world I'd sooner have here than you for just as long as you choose to stay, but—forgive me if I ask you one question. Is it because you want to watch Miss Fielding that you have changed your mind?"

"That has a good deal to do with it, George," Andrew said quietly. "If I left without meeting that young lady again I should be miserable. I want to hear her speak when she does not know that any one is listening."

Duncombe crossed the room and laid his hand upon the other's shoulder.

"Andrew, old fellow," he said, "I can't have it. I can't allow even my best friend to spy upon Miss Fielding. You see—I've come a bit of a cropper. Quick work, I suppose, you'd say. But I'm there all the same."

"Who wants to spy upon Miss Fielding?" Andrew exclaimed hoarsely. "She can be the daughter of a multi-millionaire or a penniless adventurer for all I care. All I want is to be sure that she isn't Phyllis Poynton."

"You are not yet convinced?"

"No."

There was a moment's silence. Duncombe walked to the window and returned.

"Andrew," he said, "doesn't what I told you just now—make a difference?"

Andrew groaned.

"Of course it would," he answered, "but—I'm fool enough to feel the same about Phyllis Poynton."

Duncombe, in the full glow of sensations which seemed to him to give a larger and more wonderful outlook on life, felt his sympathies suddenly awakened. Andrew Pelham, his old chum, sitting there with his huge, disfiguring glasses and bowed head, was surely the prototype of all that was pathetic. He forgot all his small irritation at the other's obstinacy. He remembered only their long years of comradeship and the tragedy which loomed over the life of his chosen friend. Once more his arm rested upon his shoulder.

"I'm a selfish brute, Andrew!" he said. "Stay as long as you please and get this idea out of your brain. I'm trying to get Miss Fielding and her father down here, and if I can manage it anyhow I'll leave you two alone, and you shall talk as long as you like. Come, we'll have a drink together now and a pipe afterward."

He walked across to the sideboard, where the glasses and decanters were arranged. Then for the first time he saw upon the tray awaiting him a telegram. He gave a little exclamation as he tore it open. Andrew looked up.

"What is it, George?" he asked. "A telegram?"

Duncombe stood with his eyes glued upon the oblong strip of paper. A curious pallor had crept into his face from underneath the healthy tan of his complexion. Andrew, sightless though he was, seemed to feel the presence in the room of some exciting influence. He rose to his feet and moved softly across to the sideboard.

"Is it a telegram, George?" he whispered hoarsely. "Read it to me. Is it from Spencer?"

Duncombe collected himself with an effort.

"It's nothing," he answered, with a little laugh in which all the elements of mirth were lacking, "nothing at all. A note from Heggs, my head keeper, about some poachers. Confound the fellow!"

Andrew's hand was suddenly upon the sideboard, traveling furtively across its shining surface. Duncombe watched it with a curious sense of fascination.

He felt altogether powerless to interfere. He was simply wondering how long it would be before those long, powerful fingers seized upon what they sought. He might even then have swept aside the envelope, but he felt no inclination to do so. The fingers were moving slowly but surely. Finally with a little grab they seized upon it. Then there was another moment of suspense. Slowly the hand was withdrawn. Without a second's warning Duncombe felt himself held in the grip of a giant. Andrew had him by the throat.

"You have lied to me, George!" he cried. "There was a telegram!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

IT seemed to Duncombe that time stood still. Andrew's face, wholly disfigured by the hideous dark spectacles, unrecognizable, threatening, was within a few inches of his own. He felt his hot breath upon his cheek. For a moment there stole through his numbed senses fear of more terrible things. And then the grip which held him relaxed. Andrew stood away gasping. The crisis was over.

"You lied to me, George. Why?" Duncombe did not answer. He could not. It was as though his body had been emptied of all breath.

"You meant to keep the contents of that telegram a secret from me. Why? Was I right, after all? Read me that telegram, George. Read it to me truthfully."

"The telegram is from Spencer," Duncombe said. "He is coming here."

"Here? Is he giving up the search? Has he failed, then?"

"He does not say," Duncombe answered. "He says simply that he is coming here. He has wired for a motor to meet him at Lynn. He may be here tonight."

A discordant laugh broke from Pelham's lips.

"What about your Miss Fielding now?" he exclaimed. "Why do you suppose that he is leaving Paris and coming here? I was right. I knew that I was right."

Duncombe stood up. His expanse of shirt front was crumpled and battered. His white tie was hanging down in ribbons.

"Listen, Andrew!" he exclaimed. "I am speaking of the girl by whose side I sat tonight at dinner, who calls herself Miss Fielding, who has in plain words denied that she knows anything of Phyllis Poynton. I want you to understand this. Whatever she may choose to call herself that shall be her name. I will not have her questioned or bullied or watched. If Spencer comes here to do either, I have finished with him. I elect myself her protector. I will stand between her and all suspicion of evil things."

"She has found a champion indeed!" Pelham exclaimed fiercely. "With Miss Fielding I have nothing to do. Yet you had better understand this. If she be Phyllis Poynton she belongs to me and not to you. She was mine before you heard her name. I have watched her grow up from a child. I taught her to ride and to shoot and to swim. I have watched her listening to the wind, bending over the flowers in her garden. I have walked with her over the moor when the twilight fell and the mists rose. We have seen the twinkling of the stars, and we have seen the moon grow pale and the eastern sky ablaze. I have taught her where to look for the beautiful things of life. She has belonged to me in all ways save one. I am a poor, helpless creature now, George, but by the gods, I will let no one rob me of my one holy compensation. She is the girl I love, the better part of myself."

"Phyllis Poynton may be all these things to you," Duncombe answered. "I do not know her. I do not recognize her. Find her if you can. Make of her what you will. All that I ask of you is that you divest your mind of these senseless suspicions. Seek Phyllis Poynton where you will, but leave alone the woman whom I love. I will not have her troubled or annoyed by needless importunities. She says she is Miss Fielding. Then she is Miss Fielding. It is enough for me. It must be enough for you!"

"And what about Spencer?" Pelham asked grimly.

"Spencer in this matter is my servant," Duncombe answered. "If his search for Phyllis Poynton entails his annoying Miss Fielding, then he is dismissed. I will have no more to do with the business."

"I have heard of this man Spencer," Andrew answered. "If you think that he is the sort of creature whom you can order about like that, I fancy that you are mistaken. You may try to call him off, if you like, but you won't succeed. He is searching for Phyllis Poynton, and he is coming here. I believe that he will find her."

The windows were wide open, and both men suddenly turned round. There was no mistaking the sound which came to them from the road outside—the regular throb and beat of a perfectly balanced engine. Then they heard a man's voice, cool and precise.

"Here you are, then, and a sovereign for yourself. A capital little car this. Good night!"

The little iron gate opened and closed. A tall man in a loose travelling coat and carrying a small bag entered. He saw Duncombe standing at the open window and waved his hand. As he approached his boyish face lit up into a smile.

"What luck to find you up!" he exclaimed. "You got my telegram?"

"An hour ago," Duncombe answered. "This is my friend, Mr. Andrew Pelham. What will you have?"

"Whisky and soda, and a biscuit, please," was the prompt reply. "Have not upset you, I hope, coming down from the clouds in this fashion?"

"Not in the least," Duncombe answered. "You've made us very curious though."

"Dear me," Spencer exclaimed, "what a pity! I came here to ask questions, not to answer them. You've set me a regular poser, Duncombe. By Jove, that's good whisky!"

"Help yourself," Duncombe answered. "We won't bother you tonight. I'll show you a room as soon as you've had a cigarette. Fair crossing?"

"No idea," Spencer answered. "I slept all the way. Jolly place you've got here, Duncombe. Nice country too."

"There is just one question," Pelham began.

"Shan't answer it—tonight," Spencer interrupted firmly. "I'm dead sleepy, and I couldn't guarantee to tell the truth. And when tomorrow comes—I'll be frank with you—I've very little to say. Pardon me, but where does Mr. Pelham come in in this matter?"

"Pelham," Duncombe said slowly, "was a neighbor of Miss Poynton's in Devonshire. It was through him that I first went to Paris to search for her."

Spencer nodded.

"Glad to meet him, then," he remarked. "There are a few questions I shall be glad to ask him in the morning."

"There is one," Pelham said, "which you must answer now."

Spencer raised his eyebrows. He was standing with his back to them now, helping himself to sandwiches from a dish upon the sideboard.

"By Jove, your cook does understand these things," he remarked, with his mouth full. "No idea I was so hungry. What was that, Mr. Pelham? A question which must be answered now?"

"Yes. You telegraphed to Duncombe to know the names of Lord Runton's guests, and now you have come here yourself. Why?"

Spencer helped himself to another sandwich.

"I came here," he said, "because I didn't seem to be getting on in Paris. It struck me that the clew to Miss Poynton's disappearance might, after all, be on this side of the channel."

Pelham guided himself by the table to the sideboard. He stood close to Spencer.

"Mr. Spencer," he said, "I am almost blind, and I cannot see your face, but I want you to tell me the truth. I expect it from you."

"My dear fellow," Spencer answered, "I'm awfully sorry for you, of course, but I really don't see why I should answer your questions at all, truthfully or untruthfully. I have been making a few inquiries for my friend Duncombe. At present I regret to say that I have been unsuccessful. In their present crude state I should prefer keeping my discoveries, such as they are, to myself."

Pelham struck the sideboard with his clenched fist so that all the glasses rattled upon the tray. His face was dark with passion.

"I will not be ignored in this matter," he declared. "Phyllis Poynton and her brother are nothing to Duncombe. He acted only for me. He cannot deny it. Ask him for yourself."

"I do not need to ask him," Spencer answered. "I am perfectly well aware of the circumstances of the case. All the same, I go about my business my own way. I am not ready to answer questions from you or anybody else."

"You shall tell me this at least," Pelham declared. "You shall tell me why you telegraphed here for the names of Lord Runton's house party."

"Simplest thing in the world," Spencer answered, relinquishing his attack upon the sandwiches and lighting a cigarette. "I did it to oblige a friend who writes society notes for the New York Herald."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

TAYLOR NAMED MAYOR OF 'FRISCO

Dean of University of California Succeeds Schmitz.

San Francisco, July 17.—Dr. Edward R. Taylor, physician and lawyer, dean of the Hastings law college and of the University of California, was, by a board of supervisors, elected mayor of San Francisco and by the open avowal of the bribery-graft prosecution the so-called "reign of the big stick" came to an end.

ALBERT LISCOMB FOUND DEAD

Merchant Formerly Connected With Marshall Field & Co. Ends Life.

New York, July 17.—Albert G. Liscomb, a merchant connected with the firm of Marshall Field & Co. of Chicago, was found dead in his apartments at the Chatsworth house, asphyxiated from gas which was escaping from several burners. The police believe Liscomb committed suicide. His family is absent in the country.

ROBBERS STOP FREIGHT TRAIN

O. J. Brown Shot and Killed and Otis Taylor Seriously Wounded.

Cherryvale, Kan., July 17.—Two robbers held up a St. Louis and San Francisco freight train five miles east of Cherryvale, shot and killed O. J. Brown and seriously wounded Otis Taylor, harvest hands.

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