

That Mysterious Major...

...BY...
ETHEL A. SOUTHAM

CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)
"Dropped it! You do not mean to say that the letter is lost?" exclaimed Falkland, starting forward with a look of terrible anxiety on his face. "Really, Miss Luttrell, how very—" But, discovering Miss Luttrell's gaze concentrated upon him in absolute amazement, he seemed suddenly to bethink himself, for, leaning back against the cushions, he folded his arms with an air of calm complacency and laughed indolently. "It is so annoying, I always think, to lose one's correspondence; one never cares to have one's private affairs published from the house-tops. But, great heavens, why are we stopping here?" Falkland sprang up from his seat and let down the window with a bang as the train began to slacken speed.
"Why, what do you mean? We stop at Redhill, of course; this is where Parker will be waiting with the luggage," and Evelyn commenced rubbing vigorously at the window nearest her, at the same time peering out anxiously through the dimmed glass in the hope of catching a glance of the missing maid.
But Falkland, who had his head half way out of the window as the train came to a standstill by the side of the lamp-lit station, all at once drew back into the carriage and brought up the window again with a resounding bang.
"Redhill, Miss Luttrell? Oh, did I not explain?" As he turned his face toward her Evelyn noticed that he was deadly pale. "This train was not down on the time table to stop here. Lynwood is the first stopping place; so that it will be the next station where Parker is to be found."
"Are you sure?" Evelyn bent forward anxiously. "Had you not better ask somebody to make certain? Yes, here comes a guard; ask him."
She had risen to her feet and was

likely," was the major's reply in a voice which made Evelyn survey him in silent wonder, whilst Falkland's face became simply livid. "Only, as it happens, it was fully ten minutes to nine when I took my departure from the hotel; and I can assure you that barely two seconds before I was in your aunt's room, talking to Lady Howard herself!"
"At ten minutes to nine you were talking to Aunt Lydia at the 'Royal George!' What on earth do you mean?"
"I mean what I say, Miss Luttrell; and, if it is true that you are now off to join her in London—because this is the express, which does not stop before you reach town—I am afraid you are the victim of another forgery and some vile scheme concocted simply with an idea of inveigling you away."
And, having so delivered himself, the major folded his arms and, with an air of studied calmness, stood looking from one to the other of the two horrified countenances.

CHAPTER XIV.
There was an awful silence, and then Evelyn bent her hand with a gesture of dazed bewilderment across her eyes and slowly recovered herself.
"A forgery—that letter!" she gasped.
"Oh, surely, you are mistaken! It—it cannot be!"
Yet, even as she spoke, even as her eyes rested for one brief moment upon the major's face, a terrible fear took possession of her, and, starting to her feet, she made one quick movement toward the door. Instantly, however, a hand was laid upon her arm.
"Miss Luttrell, what are you doing? Are you mad? Have your senses forsaken you?" expostulated Falkland, with a sudden vehemence, "that you can believe such an absurd, really outrageous fabrication?"



"MOST LIKELY YOU WILL RECOGNIZE IT."

about to lay her hand upon the window, but Falkland was before her. He had seized the strap and seemed to be making a vain attempt to let the window down, when suddenly a key was inserted in the lock, the door was hastily thrown back, and the light of a lantern was directed into the carriage.
There was a momentary pause as both Falkland and Evelyn, completely dazzled by the light, stared vacantly at the dark figure before them, and then—
"Great heavens! Miss Luttrell, is that you? I thought I must have been mistaken."
It was Major Brown himself who stood there indistinctly defined in the darkness; and at the sound of his voice Evelyn's heart gave a great bound, whilst every particle of color retreated from her face. Only now did she realize that after that evening she would most probably never see him again—never again! Full of this new thought, she immediately thrust out her hand, forgetting as she did so all terrible suspicions of the past four-and-twenty hours.
"Yes, I am here," she answered; "and, as there can be only a second to wait, I suppose it is—good-by? I am going now," she added falteringly, "to join my aunt, who has hurried off at a moment's notice to one of her boys, who has met with an accident at school."
"I do not understand. An accident? And Lady Howard has left Saltcliffe?"
"Certainly! Lady Howard left by the 8:30 express," supplemented Falkland in a tone of some impatience. "Miss Luttrell had a letter to that effect; but of course, it is quite likely that you have heard nothing. The whole affair has occurred in the space of about an hour."
"Oh, no, of course not—that is quite

"You mean to say—"
"That it is a lie—a downright lie," he exclaimed, all his pent-up fury bursting into a flame—"as I myself happened to see Lady Howard passing on her way to the station now more than an hour ago!"
"You saw her driving past?" Evelyn gave one wild despairing glance around.
"And at ten minutes to nine I left her sitting in her own room at the 'Royal George,' Miss Luttrell," declared the major in the same peculiarly calm tone. "Which do you believe?"
"Which? Great heavens, do you suppose there is any question?" interrupted Falkland, with a harsh laugh.
The major smiled.
"Well, perhaps not, when one takes into consideration that on the one hand the statement comes from a man who would stoop to anything in order to secure his own ends—an individual, in fact, who habitually carries about with him a supply of a most dangerous drug, which he administers, as occasion requires, to any passing acquaintance. That reminds me, Mr. Falkland. For the future, a third of that amount which you gave to me last night will be quite enough; and even then you will have plenty of time to make a thorough search and disappear, bag and baggage, before your unfortunate victim, whoever he may be, has enjoyed more than his allotted share of dreams; only be quite sure he does drink it—that is all. I had the sense not to do so."
"I beg your pardon, Major Brown; but, if you wish to insinuate—"
"Thank you, I wish to insinuate nothing. I am merely anxious for you to know that you have not been quite as lucky as usual in the choice of your subjects." Here the major raised his foot to the carriage step and looked

steadily at Falkland. "You may never have seen me before—I do not suppose so, or you would hardly have behaved as you have—but I once had the pleasure of seeing you. Possibly," he continued, "you may recollect the time of which I am thinking. It was at Monte Carlo, just before the notorious forgery affair was made public. But perhaps my name is not altogether unfamiliar to you. Most likely"—and he pulled out a case of cards and handed one across to him—"you will recognize it."
A deathly paleness came over Falkland's face.
"Sir Adrian Beauchamp indeed!" he muttered, flinging the piece of paste-board to the ground in a sudden tumult of wrath. "Who do you suppose would be fool enough to be taken in by such a piece of trickery as that?"
"Yet the mere question of identification becomes the simplest matter in the world," was the major's reply, as he gave one swift, furtive glance in Evelyn's direction, a smile involuntarily crossing his face. "The difficulty has been to remain incognito all this time. As for you, I suppose you would prefer to sail along under false colors as long as possible. As Gilbert Falkland you have more scope altogether—a better chance, in fact, of claiming an acquaintance with the absent relatives of any of your fellow travelers—than as plain, unvarnished Samuel Cripps, the forger."
"You blackguard—you—"
"Pray do not forget that Miss Luttrell is present," interrupted the major in low, concentrated tones. "But it is useless to attempt to argue the point. Your guilt is now thoroughly established. That check, which fortunately fell into my hands last night, also a few lines of your writing and the impression of the forged signature upon a piece of blotting paper, are all the proofs that were needed to join the links in one long chain of evidence; and, since the whole affair rests with the authorities at Scotland Yard, you will very speedily have an opportunity of explaining anything that you wish to be made known to one of their representatives."
Here a warning shriek from the engine made him suddenly stop short and, with an anxious glance at the advancing porter, turned hurriedly to Evelyn.
"Miss Luttrell, what can I say for myself? You have heard both Falkland's statement and my own. Which do you believe? I am afraid that my story sounds almost as suspicious as his. In fact, you know less of me. But, on my honor, I assure you that Lady Howard is now at the hotel! If you can trust me—with a supplicating look that was far more potent than words—"come! I will take you straight back to her at once."
Already the train was beginning to move. The porter had actually reached the carriage; his hand was on the door. For one instant Evelyn hesitated, whilst her gaze wandered from the cold, cynical countenance of Gilbert Falkland to the dark, handsome one of Major Brown, and then, with a little shiver, she thrust out her hand to the one held out to her, and answered in a low, hurried tone—
"I will come!"
And the next moment she was standing on the platform watching the crimson lamp of the departing train rapidly disappearing in the gathering mists of the summer evening, alone with the man whom for the past four-and-twenty hours she and her aunt, and even Falkland himself, had been regarding in the light of the most notorious criminal.
A few minutes' conversation with one of the porters elicited the fact that there was no train back to Saltcliffe that night. There was, however, a gig available which would convey them the eight miles to their destination.

(To be continued.)

CHRISTIANITY IN BUSINESS.

Its Principle Applied to Commercial Affairs Would Work a Glorious Revolution.
"There is not the least question that as the commercial world is organized and run today it is run at a fearful loss along the side of money," writes Rev. Charles M. Sheldon, author of "In His Steps," in the November Ladies' Home Journal. "Even the rules of success that business men lay down do not insure success. Perhaps no age has equaled this for disturbance and unrest and warring interests in the business world. If the principles of Christianity were applied to the whole business world it would cause a shock that for the time being would result in what might indeed prove to be the greatest financial panic of the ages. But out of that result would emerge a new order of buying and selling that would result ultimately in more financial success on the part of more people than the world has ever witnessed. Ultimately love will pay in dollars and cents better than selfishness. On selfish principles the business world today does not succeed even in the matter of making money—that is, not for any length of time nor for the masses of the people. Love in business would lose less money, and actually distribute the real earnings of toil among a far greater number of human beings, than is possible now under the present system."
She Didn't Mean It.
Under the impression that he was saying a good thing, he asked his partner why men never kiss one another, while ladies waste a world of kisses on feminine faces. "Because," the lady replied, "the men have something better to kiss, and the women haven't."

THOUGHTS FOR THANKSGIVING

UNCLE EZRA'S THANKSGIVING.

Yep, Thanksgiving Day is playin' out, er so it seems to me, Fer it don't make no comparison to what it use' to be; Though the turkey and the mince pies is the same we've always known, An' I'm here, an' Sary Ellen, but we're eatin' 'em alone.
It's the buildin' of the railroads that hes made it that-a-way— Thet hes tuck our children from us an' hes sp'ilt our holiday— Holdin' out their wild shameseries about lan's that can't be beat. (But whar clyones digs the taters, an' whar chinch bugs mows the wheat).
Why, it use' to be thet youngsters didn' seem to want to go From the homestead of the ol' folks




BUT WE'RE EATING 'EM ALONE.
any more'n a mille er so; They 'ud take things 'twas given 'm, an' they'd settle thar an' stay, An' they'd fill the homestead table when it come Thanksgivin' Day.
Law me! yes, them times is ended! Little Sary married fust, An' Jim Medders 'lowed he'd take her out to Idyho er bust, An' he bustid, an' I've ben a-sendin' money ever sence, Though it's more fer little Sary thet I care than the expense.
An' then Chrissy went to Texas— Chrissy alwys was our pride, But he headed off some cattle, an' he hurt his spine an' died. An' now Sammy's in the city, an' that ain't so fur away, But he's writ us that a baby's brought 'em their 'Thanksgivin' Day!
So we nattered down the table, bein' by ourselves, you see, An' the turkey'll las' forever, jes' fer Sary an' fer me; An' the raisins in the mince pie, bought fer Sammy's special taste, Sence he didn't come to eat 'em, sorter seem to be a waste.
Yep, the railroads tuck 'em from us, an' we're all alone at last, An' Thanksgivin's like I told yeh, jest a mem'ry of the past; But we're countin', me an' Sary, on a better place, an' then We will have a big 'Thanksgivin', an' the child'n home again.
A. B. P.

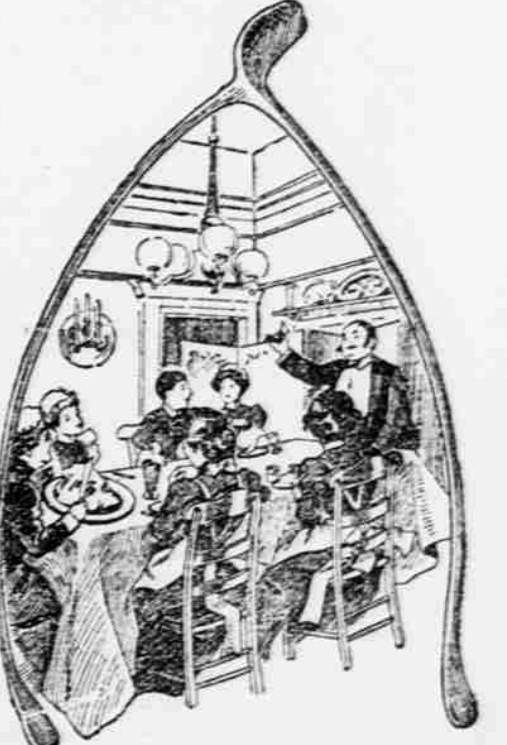
HIS THANKSGIVING.

Tinkle-tinkle, tinkle-tinkle, tinkle-tinkle.
The leading man engaged in an attempt to remove a black spot from his dress cravat by means of an application of white grease paint, paused and listened.
"It's a mandolin," he said. "That's a new wrinkle. We've had all kinds of fends in this company since we started out, everything from cigarettes to bicycles. Who's the musician, I wonder? Oh, I say, Jenks! Jenks! Who's the band wagon?"
There was a step in the narrow passageway that led to the dressing rooms, and Jenks, the property man, appeared in the doorway. "Sh!" he said, "not so loud. The old man'll hear you."
The leading man started. "The old man, did you say—not Merriam?"
"Yes, Merriam," in a whisper.
The leading man sat on his trunk. "That beats me," he said. "The Ancient Mariner tinkling a mandolin. Now I'm prepared to see Father Time playing sentimental ditties on a jew's harp."
Jenks did not laugh, a fact which helped to sober the other man. "It's no surprise to me," said the property man, gravely. "I says to Mrs. Jenks, 'jest before I left the hotel, says I, 'Mrs. Jenks, you know what night this is?' 'Thanksgiving,' she says. 'Why, right,' says I, 'and it'll be a hard night for Merriam.'"
"Poor old man," says Mrs. Jenks, a-wipin' of a tear. "Poor old man, I suppose he'll be playing of his mandolin again." That he will, says I.
"He hasn't missed it, as near as I can judge, for thirty years. As sure as Thanksgiving night comes, just so sure he gets out that old mandolin of his and tinkles away. And it's always the same tune. God! But it does make my mind go back. I'll never for-

real reason for the change, but in the tomb scene I don't see how they could help feeling it.
"Those of us who saw it from the wings will never forget it. The women were in hysterics and the stage hands and flymen were nearly as bad. I don't know how Merriam ever lived through it, but this I do know. He was a different man from that night. He seemed to lose all his ambition and he withered up so, that when I met him at a rehearsal two years later, I hardly knew him. He was bent much as you see him now, and was playing character old men. Every year he dropped down further, until they wouldn't trust him with anything better than bits and servants. Yes, sir, and that old man has played Romeo with the best of them."
The story was finished, but the mandolin still tinkled. The leading man's face was drawn, and Jenks sat thinking. Perhaps the former was thinking of his own high tide of prosperity, and of what the future had in store for him.
But sympathy and curiosity are closely allied, and soon the two men were tiptoeing through the passageway. They paused before the old actor's room. A ray of light filtered through a crack in the thin pine door. Merriam was dressed and made up for



A CROWD AROUND THE STAGE DOOR.
a comedy servant. His green livery coat hung on a peg on the wall, and the red wig with which he covered his own white hair lay on the dressing table before him. There, too, was a faded photograph of a pure-faced girl in the dress of Juliet. The actor was bent over his mandolin and the leading man now caught the tune for the first time, broken, but recognizable.
"When other hearts and other lips Their tales of love shall tell, Then you'll remember, you'll remember—"
Twang! There was the sound of a broken string.
"First act! All up for the first act!" The callboy came tumbling down the passage and the listeners hurried up to the stage. A few minutes later the callboy came up, too, and he found the stage manager fuming.
"Where's Merriam?" he cried. "I can't hold the curtain all night for that doddering old fool. Hurry him up, will you?"
The boy disappeared, and reappeared almost instantly.
"Mr. Merriam's—" The tears choked his voice and he got no further. The stage manager made a rush for the stairs. Ten minutes later he came up dressed for the comedy servant, but the man whose name was down on the bills for the part lay in his dressing room clutching an old mandolin, with his eyes fixed on a faded photograph.
The Soldiers in Battle.
It is not easy for the hearts in darkened rooms today, mourning sons and brothers to see God's face in the gloom, and if we give thanks for brave men and brave deeds, for the heroism that faced death unflinchingly in the trenches or on the seas, it should be in humility, that the world has not progressed far enough in God's way to be relieved of the curse of war, but we can be unreservedly thankful for the voices that have rung out in all the land for peace. Let us be thankful that never before have so many men and women been pleading for the right in defiance of the wrong. Never before have so many thoughtful ones faced the evils of the times, the great underlying causes of sin and misery, and sought to solve the knotty questions of our modern civilization.



Servants at Dinner.
Thanksgiving dinner in the servants' hall. The butler and housekeeper at the head and foot of the table.