

**HEARTS AND MASKS**

By **HAROLD MacGRATH**  
Author of "The Man on the Box," etc.

With Drawings by Harrison Fisher

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CHAPTER II.—Continued.

I drew out my wallet. I had arrived in town too late to go to the bank, and I was carrying an uncomfortably large sum in gold-bills. As I opened the wallet to extract a small bill, I saw the stranger eyeing me quietly. Well, well, the dullest being brightens at the sight of money and its representatives. I drew out a small bill and handed it to the proprietor. He took it, together with the mask, and sidled over to the cash register. The bell gave forth a muffled sound, not unlike that of a fire-bell in a snowstorm. As he was in the act of wrapping up my purchase, I observed the silent customer's approach. When he reached my side, he stooped and picked up something from the floor. With a bow, he presented it to me.

"I saw it drop from your pocket," he said; and then when he saw what it was, his jaw fell, and he sent me a hot, penetrating glance.

"The ten of hearts!" he exclaimed, in amazement.

I laughed easily.

"The ten of hearts!" he repeated.

"Yes; four hearts on one side and four on the other, and two in the middle, which make ten in all,"—raillery in my tones. What the deuce was the matter with everybody tonight? "Marvelous card, isn't it?"

"Very strange!" he murmured, pulling at his lips.

"And in what way is it strange?" I asked, rather curious to learn the cause of his agitation.

"There are several reasons,"—briefly.

"Ah!"

"I have seen a man's hand pinned to that card; therefore it is gruesome."

"Some card sharper?"

He nodded. "Then again, I lost a small fortune because of that card,"—diffidently.

"Poker?"

"Yes. Why will a man try to fill a royal flush? The man next to me drew the ten or hearts, the very card I needed. The sight of it always unnerves me. I beg your pardon."

"Oh, that's all right," said I, wondering how many more lies he had up his sleeve.

"And there's still another reason. I saw a man put six bullets into the two central spots, and an hour later the seventh bullet snuffed the candle of a friend of mine. I am from the west."

"I can sympathize with you," I returned. "After all that trouble, the sight of the card must have given you a shock."

Then I stowed away the fatal card and took up my bundle and change. I have in my own time tried to fill royal flushes, and the disappointment still lingers with a bitter taste.

"The element of chance is the most fascinating thing there is," the stranger from the west volunteered.

"So it is," I recalled, suddenly recalling that I was soon to put my trust in the hands of that very fickle goddess.

He nodded and returned to his revolver, while I went out of the shop, hailed a cab, and drove up town to my apartments in Riverside. It was eight o'clock by my watch. I leaned back against the cushions, ruminating. There seemed to be something going on that night; the ten of hearts was acquiring a mystifying, not to say sinister aspect. First it had alarmed the girl in Mouquin's, and now this stranger in the curio-shop. I was confident that the latter had lied in regard to his explanations. The card had startled him, but his reasons were altogether of transparent thinness. A man never likes to confess that he is unlucky at cards; there is a certain pride in lying about the enormous stakes you have won and the wonderful draws you have made. I frowned. It was not possible for me to figure out what his interest in the card was. If he was a westerner, his buying a pistol in a pawnshop was at once discovered of its mystery; but the inconsistent elegance of his evening clothes doubled my suspicions. Bah! What was the use of troubling myself with this stranger's affairs? He would never cross my path again.

In reasonable time the cab drew up in front of my apartments. I dressed, donned my Capuchin's robe and took a look at myself in the pier glass. Then I unwrapped the package and put on the mask. The whole made a capital outfit and I was vastly pleased with myself. This was going to be such an adventure as one reads about in the ancient numbers of Blackwood's. I slipped the robe and mask into my suitcase and lighted my pipe. During great moments like this, a man gathers courage and confidence from a pipeful of tobacco. I dropped into a comfortable Morrie, touched the

gas logs, and fell into a pleasant dream. It was not necessary for me to start for the Twenty-third street ferry till nine; so I had something like three-quarters of an hour to idle away. . . . What beautiful hair that girl had! It was like sunshine, the silk of corn, the yield of the harvest. And the marvelous abundance of it! It was true that she was an artist's model; it was equally true that she had committed a mild impropriety in addressing me as she had; but, for all I could see, she was a girl of delicate breeding, doubtless one of the many whose family fortunes, or misfortunes, forced them to earn a living. And it is no disgrace these days to pose as an artist's model. The classic oils, nowadays, call only for exquisite creations in gowns and hats; mythology was exhausted by the old masters. Rome, Paris, London; possibly a bohemian existence in these cities accounted for her ease in striking up a conversation, harmless enough, with a total stranger. In Paris and Rome it was all very well; but it is a risky thing to do in romantic New York and London. However, her uncle had been with her; a veritable fortress, had I overstepped the bounds of politeness.

The smoke wavered and rolled about me. I took out the ten of hearts and studied it musingly. After all, should I go? Would it be wise? I confess I saw goblins' heads peering from the spots, and old Poe stories returned to me. Pshaw! It was only a frolic, no serious harm could possibly come of it. I would certainly go, now I had gone thus far. What fool idea the girl was bent on I hadn't the least idea; but I easily recognized the folly upon which I was about to get sail. Heigh-ho! What was a lonely young bachelor to do? At the most, they

my opera hat. Outside the storm was still active; but the snow had a promising softness, and there were patches of stars to be seen here and there in the sky. By midnight there would be a full moon. I got to Jersey City without mishap; and when I took my seat in the smoker, I found I had ten minutes to spare. I bought a newspaper and settled down to read the day's news. It was fully half an hour between Jersey City and Blankshire; in that time I could begin and finish the paper.

There never was a newspaper those days that hadn't a war map in some one of its columns; and when I had digested the latest phases of the war in the far east, I quite naturally turned to the sporting page to learn what was going on among the other professional fighters. (Have I mentioned to you the fact that I was all through the Spanish war, the mix-up in China, and that I had resigned my commission to accept the post of traveling salesman for a famous motor car company? If I have not, pardon me. You will now readily accept my recklessness of spirit as a matter of course.) I turned over another page; from this I learned that the fair sex was going back to puff-sleeves again. Many an old sleeve was going to be turned upside down.

Fudge! The train was rattling through the yards. Another page cracked. Ha! Here was that unknown gentleman-thief again, up to his old tricks. It is remarkable how difficult it is to catch a thief who has good looks and shrewd brains. I had already written him down as a quail-swail. For months the police had been finding clues, but they had never laid eyes on the rascal. The famous Haggerty of the New York detective force,—a man whom not a dozen New

**MENACE TO ALL**

**Giant Mail Order Concerns Are Sapping Country of Its Wealth.**

**SMALLER TOWNS CRUSHED**

By Assisting in the Centralization of Wealth, Patrons of These Institutions Contribute to Their Own Injury.

(Copyright, 1906, by Alfred C. Clark.)

Every year millions upon millions of dollars find their way from the towns, villages and rural districts of the country to the coffers of the mail order houses in the cities, and go to the upbuilding of enormous institutions in the centers of population. Naturally, the sources from which the contributions are made suffer accordingly.

Figures ever tell a better story than words. Here are figures which tell a story so stupendous that its full significance cannot be grasped in a moment, but the mere sight of which are awe inspiring:

In the year 1905 two mail order houses, located in Chicago, did a business amounting in round numbers to \$80,000,000. In the year 1904 these same concerns did a business of about \$62,000,000, a gain of \$18,000,000 or nearly 30 per cent. in a single year being thus exhibited.

These figures represent the sale last year of one dollar's worth of merchandise for every man, woman and child in the country by two catalogue houses alone, and those operating from the same central point. Dozens more of varying size and importance are operating all over the country from coast

to coast and from border to border. A fact not generally known is that hundreds of concerns throughout the country which now are doing business through the regular trade channels are awaiting only a parcels post law to unloose literature, already prepared in many instances, which would project them into the mail order field, and this does not take into account the hundreds and perhaps thousands of entirely new mail order concerns which inevitably would spring into existence under such friendly auspices.

The two Chicago institutions referred to, already occupying immense buildings, found themselves cramped for room. One of them expended not less than \$1,000,000, and probably more, for a new home. The other lately has secured a new location and also will expend at least \$1,000,000 for an immense new building.

Anyone who will reflect even casually on the subject must become impressed that the influence of the mail order business is toward the centralization of wealth, and how enormous a part it is playing in this direction will be understood from a second glance at the figures which have been given above.

It is due to himself that every patron of the mail order house should inquire honestly of himself what the final outcome is to be if the mail order business shall continue to make the great strides which have marked its progress during the last half decade.

It is useless to repeat the well worn argument of the mail order concerns that they are selling goods enough more cheaply than the merchants in the regular channels of trade to leave their customers more money than ever to devote to home enterprises and institutions. The fallacy of this statement has been proved over and over again by actual and minute comparisons of goods, as to their quality and prices. To refute it finally and indisputably by a simpler and more direct method it is necessary only to ask the reliable business men of any of the smaller communities to show the evidence from their books and accounts of the harm the mail order habit is doing their communities.

It is a truth as old as the hills and as certain as the rising and setting of the sun that no country or section of a country can prosper unless the people as a whole shall be prosperous. Such general prosperity as may exist cannot be retained if the institutions of the already larger and wealthier communities are to continue to be built up by contributions that should be spent at home from the thousands of smaller communities.

The need of the country, a desperate need upon which the welfare of the individual depends, is for the upbuilding and continued progress of the smaller communities, so that the wealth of the country may be distributed over the entire country, and not congested and controlled in large amounts in a comparative few centers of population.

Therefore, the man who sends away from his own community money which he might have spent at home and permitted a fair profit to the home merchant to be retained there for the benefit of the community, is injuring his community, and thereby the prospects for his own future prosperity.

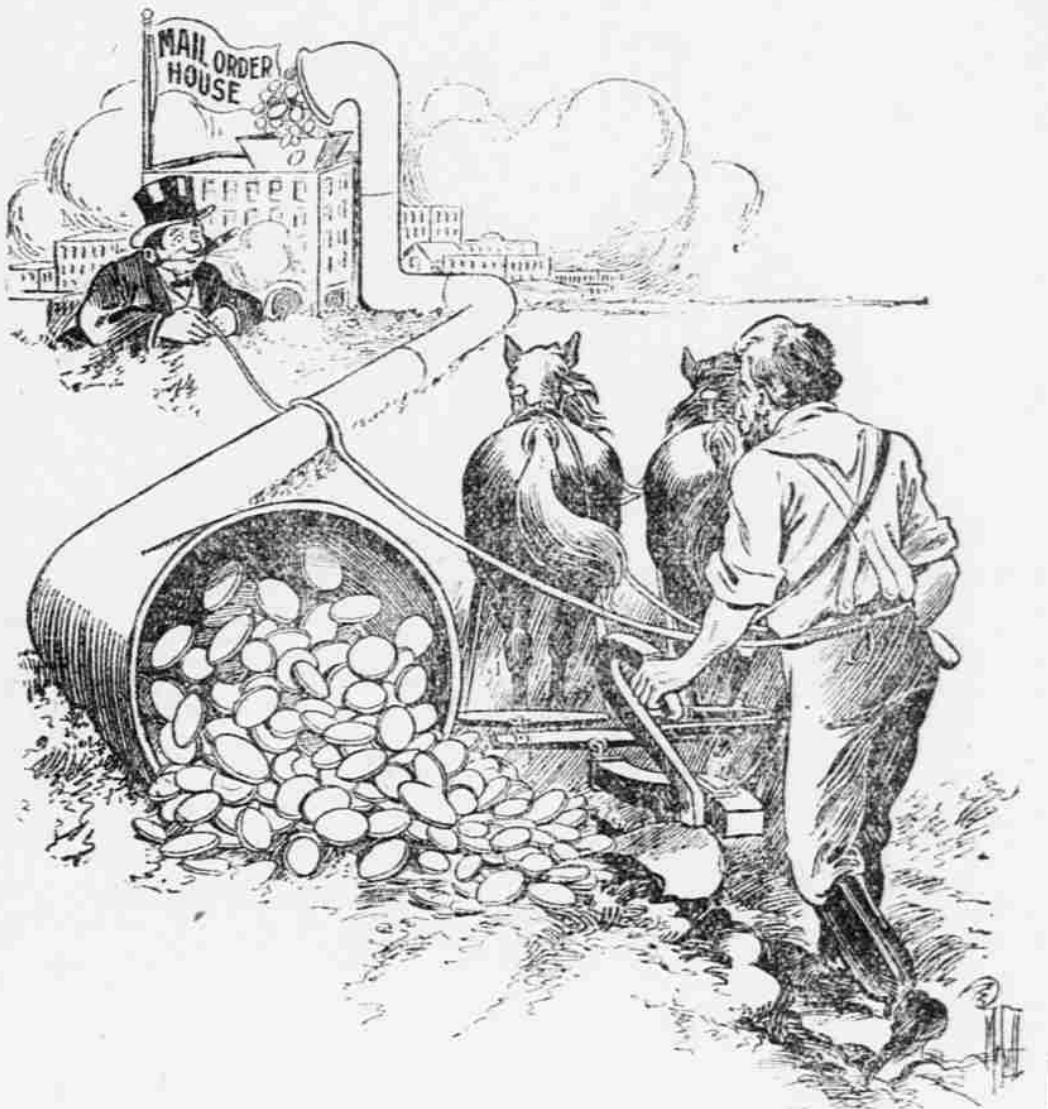
In a large number of instances he is doing more than this. Unwittingly, or unthinkingly, perhaps, he is violating his own principles of right and justice, for, at the expense of his own community, he is needlessly contributing profits to the capitalistic combinations which he continuously cries out are menacing the country.

The mail order giants direct their energies particularly toward the people of the smaller towns and the agricultural districts. In hundreds of thousands of the homes of these the catalogue of the mail order house is as regularly received as the home paper. The man on the farm last year sent a very large portion of eighty millions of dollars to two of these institutions, in one community, alone.

In all sincerity we ask: Admitting, purely for the sake of the argument, that the farmer or the resident of the small community can save a few dollars on some of his purchases, or even



Too a Look at Myself in the Glass.



The "Man Behind the Plow" last year contributed a large portion of the vast number of millions which found their way into the coffers of the mail order houses. The smaller communities were thus deprived of it, suffered accordingly.

**BALM OF SCRIPTURE**

HEALING PROPERTIES OF PINE KNOWN TO ANCIENTS.

Oil of the White Pine Tree Used Successfully by Physicians in Treating Consumptive Patients.

The Oil of the Pine Tree is supposed to be the balm of Scripture. It contains great medicinal properties and was regarded with the utmost esteem by the ancients, and to the present day is peculiarly prized by the people of the East.

A noted authority on diseases of the throat and lungs, who established a camp for consumptives in the Pine Woods of Maine, says that his entire treatment consisted of fresh air, nourishing food and the Pure Virgin Oil of the White Pine Trees, mixed with Whisky and Glycerine in the following proportions:

Virgin Oil of Pine (Pure) . . . 1/2 oz.  
Glycerine . . . . . 2 "  
Good Whisky . . . . . 8 "

Used in teaspoonful doses every four hours.

It is claimed the above mixture will heal and strengthen the lungs, break up a cold in twenty-four hours, and cure any cough that is curable.

The ingredients can be secured from any good prescription druggist at small cost, and can be easily mixed in your own home.

Virgin Oil of Pine (Pure) is put up only in half-ounce vials for dispensing. Each vial is securely sealed in a round wooden case with engraved wrapper with the name—Virgin Oil of Pine (Pure), prepared only by Leach Chemical Co., Cincinnati, O.—plainly printed thereon. There are many rank imitations of Virgin Oil of Pine (Pure), which are put out under various names, such as Concentrated Oil of Pine, Pine Balsam, etc. Never accept these as a substitute for the Pure Virgin Oil of Pine, as they will invariably produce nausea and never effect the desired result.

People who are fond of music usually draw the line at amateur concerts.

Lewis' Single Binder straight 5c cigar. Made of extra quality tobacco. Your dealer or Lewis' Factory, Peoria, Ill.

Some day a long-suffering genius will invent a safety razor with a phonograph attachment—then it will be good-by for the garrulous barber.

**TO CURE A COUGH IN ONE DAY**  
Take LAXATIVE BROMO Quinine Tablets. Brought a refund money if it fails to cure. Dr. W. D. BOY'S signature is on each box.

Choose always the way that seems the best, however rough it may be; custom will soon render it easy and agreeable.—Pythagoras.

**Scrupulous Senator.**  
Senator Spooner of Wisconsin surprised some members of congress with whom he was chatting the other day by announcing that he has never taken part in a congressional junket of any kind. "I never shall undertake such a journey at government expense," he said. "There is something very objectionable to me in members of congress going on such expeditions." For the same reason that made him sidestep a congressional junket Senator Spooner said he had never been shaved in the senate barber shop, which is maintained at Uncle Sam's expense.

**AWFUL EFFECT OF ECZEMA.**  
Covered with Yellow Sores—Grew Worse—Parents Discouraged—Cuticura Drove Sores Away.

"Our little girl, one year and a half old, was taken with eczema or that was what the doctor called it. We called in the family doctor, and he gave some tablets and said she would be all right in a few days. The eczema grew worse and we called in doctor No. 2. He said she was teething, as soon as the teeth were through she would be all right. But she still grew worse. Doctor No. 3 said it was eczema. By this time she was nothing but a yellow, greenish sore. Well, he said he could help her, so we let him try it about a week. One morning we discovered a little yellow pimple on one of her eyes. Of course we phoned for doctor No. 3. He came over and looked her over, and said that he could not do anything more for her, that we had better take her to some eye specialist, since it was an ulcer. So we went to Oswego to doctor No. 4, and he said the eyesight was gone, but that he could help it. We thought we would try doctor No. 5. Well, that proved the same, only he charged \$10 more than doctor No. 4. We were nearly discouraged. I saw one of the Cuticura advertisements in the paper and thought we would try the Cuticura Treatment, so I went and purchased a set of Cuticura Remedies, which cost me \$1, and in three days our daughter, who had been sick about eight months, showed great improvement, and in one week all sores had disappeared. Of course it could not restore the eyesight, but if we had used Cuticura in time I am confident that it would have saved the eye. We think there is no remedy so good for any skin trouble or impurity of the blood as Cuticura. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Abbott, R. F. D. No. 9, Fulton, Oswego Co., N. Y., August 17, 1904."

Guard within yourself that treasure, kindness. Know how to give without hesitation, how to lose without regret, how to acquire without meanness.—George Sand.

**The Puzzle Solved.**  
Some time ago a merchant in Marblehead, Mass., was discovered in his store at a very late hour, and in reply to inquiries, he said:  
"My confidential clerk is missing."  
"And what of it?"  
"Why, I'm looking over the books, but they seem to be all right."  
"Have you counted your cash?"  
"Yes; and it is correct to a dollar."  
"Looked over your bank book?"  
"I have, and it is satisfactory. That's the puzzle, you see. He's skipped, and I can't make out what for."  
"Been home since noon?"  
"No."  
"Perhaps he's eloped with your wife."  
He hurried home, and found this to be the case.

**Wise David.**  
Wife—"Why do you always sit at the piano, David? You know you can't play a note!" David—"Neither can anyone else, while I am here!"

NAME Hawthorne  
COSTUME Blue Domino  
TIME 5:30 P. M.  
RETURNED \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS West 8th Street  
FRIARD'S

could only ask me to vacate the premises, should I be so unfortunate as to be discovered. In that event, Teddy Hamilton would come to my assistance. . . . She was really beautiful! And then I awoke to the alarming fact that the girl in Mouquin's was interesting me more than I liked to confess.

Presently, through the haze of smoke, I saw a patch of white paper on the rug in front of the pier glass. I arose and picked it up.

York policemen knew by sight and no criminals save those behind bars, earthly and eternal,—was now giving his whole attention to the affair. Some gaily dressed lady at a ball would suddenly find she had lost some valuable gems; and that would be the end of the affair, for none ever recovered her gems.

The gentleman-thief was still at large, and had gathered to his account a comfortable fortune; that is, if he were not already rich and simply a kleptomaniac. No doubt he owned one of my racing cars, and was clear of the delinquent lists at his clubs. I dismissed all thought of him, threw aside the paper, and mentally figured out my commissions on sales during the past month. It was a handsome figure, large enough for two. This pastime, too, soon failed to interest me. I gazed out of the window and watched the dark shapes as they sped past.

I saw the girl's face from time to time. What a fool I had been not to ask her name! She could easily have refused, and yet as easily have granted the request. At any rate, I had permitted the chance to slip out of my reach, which was exceedingly careless on my part. Perhaps they—she and her uncle—frequently dined at Mouquin's; I determined to haunt the place and learn. It would be easy enough to address her the next time we met. Besides, she would be curious to know all about the ten of hearts and the desperate adventure; upon which I told her I was about to embark. Many a fine friendship has grown out of smaller things.

To be Continued.

**Carry Much Freight.**  
One of the largest lake steamships can carry about as much freight as four of the most powerful locomotives can pull in four trains, on a level railroad of the best construction.