

HEARTS AND MASKS

By HAROLD MacGRATH
Author of "The Man on the Box," etc.
With Drawings by Harrison Fisher

CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

We entered the general assembly-room. It was roomy and quaint, and somewhere above us was the inevitable room in which George Washington had slept. The great hooded fireplace was merry with crackling logs. Casually I observed that we were not alone. Over yonder, in a shadowed corner, sat two men, very well bundled up, and, to all appearances, fast asleep. Moriarty lighted a four-branched candelabrum and showed us the way to the little private dining-room, took our orders, and left us.

"This is romance," said I. "They used to do these things hundreds of years ago, and everybody had a good time."

"It is now all very wicked and improper," murmured the girl, laying aside her domino for the first time; "but delightful! I now find I haven't the least bit of remorse for what I have done."

In that dark evening gown she was very beautiful. Her arms and shoulders were tinted like Carrara marble; and I knew instantly that I was never going to recover. I drew two chairs close to the grate. I sat down in one and she in the other. With a contented sigh she rested her blue-slippered feet on the brass fender.

"My one regret is that I haven't any shoes. What an adventure!"

"It's fine!" Two hours in the society of this enchanting creature! It was almost too good to be true. Ah, if it might always be like this—to return home from the day's work, to be greeted warmly by a woman as beautiful as this one! I sighed loudly.

Moriarty came with the chicken and ham and coffee.

"If ye would like, it won't be a bit of trouble to show ye George Washington's room; or"—with inimitable Irish drollery—"I can tell ye that he dined in this very room."

"That will serve," smiled the girl; and Moriarty bowed himself out.

His departure was followed by the clatter of silver upon porcelain. Of a truth, both of us were hungry.

"I was simply ravenous," the girl confessed.

"And as for me, I never dreamt I could be so unromantic. Now," said I, pushing aside my plate, and dropping sugar into my coffee, and vainly hunting in my pockets for a cigar, "there remains only one mystery to be cleared up."

"And what might this mystery be?" she asked. "The whereabouts of the bogus Haggerty?"

"The bogus Haggerty will never cross our paths again. He has skipped by the light of the moon. No, that's not the mystery. Why did you tell me you were an impostor; why did you go to the cellars with me, when all the while you were at the ball on Mrs. Hyphen-Bonds' invitation?"

She leaned on her elbows and smiled at me humorously.

"Would you really like to know, Signor? Well, I was an impostor." She sat with her back to the fire, and a weird halo of light seemed to surround her and frame her. "Mrs. Hyphen-Bonds accidentally dropped that invitation in my studio, a few days before she sailed for Europe. I simply could not resist the temptation. That is all the mystery there is."

"And they still think you were there rightfully?"

"You are no longer mystified?"

"Yes; there is yet another mystery to solve: myself." I knew it. Without rhyme and reason, I was in love; and without rhyme or reason, I was glad of it.

"Shall you ever be able to solve such a mystery?"—quizzically.

"It all depends upon you."

"Mr. Comstalk, you will not mar the exquisite humor of our adventure by causing me annoyance. I am sure that some day we shall be very good friends. But one does not talk of love on eight hours' acquaintance. Besides, you would be taking advantage of my helplessness; for I really depend upon you to see me safe back to New York. It is only the romance, the adventure; and such moonlight nights often superinduce sentimentality. What do you know of me? Nothing. What do I know of you? Nothing, save that there is a kindred spirit which is always likely to lead us into trouble. Down in your heart you know you are only temporarily affected by moonshine. Come, make me a toast!"—lifting her cup.

"You are right," said I. "I am a gentleman. But it was only consistent that, having been the fool, I should now play the ass. Here's!"—and I held up my cup.

But neither of us drank; there wasn't time.

For the door opened quietly, and in walked the two men we had seen upon entering the Inn. One of them gently

closed the door and locked it. One was in soiled every-day clothes, the other in immaculate evening dress. The latter doffed his opera hat with the most engaging smile imaginable. The girl and I looked up at him in blank bewilderment, and set our cups down so mechanically that the warm amber liquid splattered on the tablecloth.

Galloping Dick and the affable inspector of the cellars stood before us!

CHAPTER VIII.

"The unexpected always happens," began the pseudo-detective, closing his hat, drawing off his gloves and stuffing them into a pocket. "As a friend of mine used to say, it is the unexpected that always surprises us. We never expected to see these charming masques again, did we, William?"

"No, sir," said William, grinning affably, "we didn't. The gentleman was very nice and obliging to me, sir, when I was in the cellars."

"So I understand. Now," continued the late Mr. Haggerty, with the deadly affability of a Macaire, "I beg of you, Mr. Comstalk, I beg of you not to move or to become unduly excited. Physicians tell us that excitement wastes the red corpuscles, that is to say, the life of the blood."

"Your blood, sir, must be very thin," I returned coolly. But I cursed him soundly in my mind. William's bulging side-pocket convinced me that any undue excitement on my part would be exceedingly dangerous.

"William, you can always tell a gentleman," said the chief rogue ad-

"You have not entered this room," said the girl, her terror slipping from her, "simply to offer these banalities. What do you wish?"

"What perspicacity, William!" cried the rogue, taking out a cigarette case. "I don't know what that word means, sir, but as you do, it seems to fit the occasion proper enough."

"It means, William, that this charming young lady scents our visit from afar."

"I had a suspicion, sir, that it might mean that," William leaned against the wall, his beady eyes twinkling merrily.

The master rogue lighted a cigarette at one of the candles.

"Pardon me," he said, "but will you join me?"—proffering the hand some gold case.

I took a cigarette and fired it. (I really wanted it.) I would show up well before this girl if I died for it. I blew a cloud of smoke at the candle-flame. There was a sparkle of admiration in the girl's eyes.

"Mr. Comstalk, my respect for you increases each moment." The rogue sat down.

"And to whom might this handsome case belong?" I asked, examining it closely.

"Oh, that has always been mine. There was a time,"—blowing rings at the candelabrum,— "when I was respected like yourself, rich, sought after. A woman and a trusted friend; how these often tumble down our beautiful edifices! Yes, I am a scamp, a thief, a rogue; but not because I need the money. No,"—with retrospective eyes—"I need excitement,



Rested Her Blue Slippered Feet on the Fender.

mingly. "A gentleman always recognizes his opportunities, and never loses his sense of the balance of things."

"And he is usually witty, too, sir," William assented.

The girl sat pale and rigid in her chair.

"What do you want?" I demanded savagely.

"For one thing, I should like to question the propriety of a gentleman's sitting down to dine with a lady without having washed his face. The coal-dust does not add to your manly beauty. You haven't a cake of soap about you, William, have you?"

"No, sir." William's face expressed indescribable enjoyment of the scene.

The girl's mouth stiffened. She was struggling to repress the almost irresistible smile that tickled her lips.

"In times like these," said I, determined not to be outdone, "we are often thoughtless in regard to our personal appearances. I apologize to the lady."

"Fine, fine! I sincerely admire you, Mr. Comstalk. You have the true spirit of adventure. Hasn't he, William?"

"He certainly has, sir."

"Comes to a private ball without an invitation, and has a merry time of it indeed. To have the perfect sense of humor—that is what makes the world go round."

"Aren't you taking extra risk in offering me these pleasantries?" I asked.

"Risks? In what manner?"

"The man you so cleverly impersonated is at the club. I do not know what prompted me to put him on his guard."

The rogue laughed lightly. "I know Mr. Haggerty's habits. He is hustling back to New York as fast as he can. He passed here ten minutes ago in the patrol, lickety-clip! He wishes to warn all pawnbrokers and jewelers to be on the lookout for me to-morrow. Ten thousand in a night!"—jovially.

"A very tidy sum, sir," said William.

"A fourth of which goes to you, my good and faithful friend."

"Thank you, sir," replied William. Two cooler rogues I never wish to meet!

"But wouldn't it be well, sir, to hasten?" asked William.

"We have plenty of time now, my son."

To be Continued.

THE ARTISTIC WALL.

One of Solid Color Will Always Give Best Effect.

The dearest, daintiest, most artistic wall is a solid colored wall. It furnishes a perfect background for all kinds of pictures, it throws them out in their correct proportions, and does not detract from their artistic value. The solid colored wall is also much better as a background for furniture, and harmonizes much more artistically with carpets and rugs than any other method of wall treatment. The less breaking up of color on a wall the more artistic it is.

The most successful form of the solid colored wall is an alabastined wall. There is as much difference between tinted walls, as there is between shoddy and all-wool gowns. The shoddy gown holds its color for a few days, while the all-wool keeps its color to the very last thread, so also in solid colored walls, there are shoddy walls and permanently colored walls which retain their color down to the very last particle. The ideal wall coating never rubs off, never flakes nor chips off and is always ready for a fresh coat. If there is wallpaper on the wall, soak it off with warm water, then go over the plaster after you have removed the paper with warm water to remove every trace of paste. Have the wall thoroughly clean for a clean wall cannot be built on an unclean foundation. If there are any particles of foreign matter adhering to the wall scrape them off with a putty knife. Then if there are any discolorations on the wall, size it with a material made from cheap varnish, thinned down with benzine and japan added for a drier, then cover your wall with your tinting material.

Be sure your man uses a tinting material mixed with cold water. If he comes to you and asks for warm water, you can make up your mind that there is glue in the material which he proposes to put on your wall, and you can be certain that you are going to have a shoddy wall, for glue means shoddy. Glue means that it will hold its color long enough for the man to collect his bill and not much longer. Insist on your tinting material being mixed with clear, cold water. Be sure that your wall is made from pure materials, then you will have a permanent, artistic, sanitary wall. A wall that will be a "thing of beauty and a joy forever."

WILLING TO LET HIM DIE.
Stinging Message Sent by Farmer Worsted in Business Deal.

In the old colony town of Scituate, Mass., once lived Deacon J—, who had a yoke of oxen he desired to sell. The news reached the ears of Farmer T—, who lived in another portion of the town, who was in want of a pair. So he visited the deacon, who met him with a gracious smile and led him to the oxen, which were chewing their cud and to all appearances ready for any amount of toil.

After some bargaining a difference of five dollars remained. Finally the deacon said: "I am old and feeble, and shall not live long, and five dollars will be of no account," so the bargain was made. Farmer T— took the oxen home.

They proved worthless, could not work, and had been heated. He felt provoked at being sold, and, seeing a person the next day who was going to the part of the town where the deacon lived, said: "You tell Deacon J— he need not live another d— minute longer on my account."

Physiological Mystery.
According to some curious investigations conducted by English scientists, eldest sons tend to be criminals and youngest sons paupers. A great many thousand school children and many family histories have been examined to yield these results. First-born children were found to be, as a rule, taller and heavier, with greater ability and endurance than the others. This is in accordance with the popular feeling in many countries that the oldest child is superior to the others and deserving of special privileges. It is a well established fact that among men of genius an undue proportion are eldest sons.—Detroit Free Press.

FOOLED THE PREACHER.
A Doctor's Brother Thought Postum Was Coffee.

A wise doctor found out coffee was hurting him, so he quit drinking it. He was so busy with his practice, however, that his wife had to write how he fooled his brother, a clergyman, one day at dinner. She says:

"Doctor found coffee was injuring him and decided to give Postum a trial, and we have used it now for four years, with continued benefit. In fact, he is now free from the long train of ills that follow coffee drinking."

"To show how successful we are in making Postum properly I will relate an incident. At a dinner we gave, Doctor suggested we serve Postum instead of ordinary coffee."

"Doctor's brother, a Clergyman, supposed it was old fashioned coffee and remarked, as he called for his second cup: 'If you do preach against coffee, I see you haven't forgotten how to make it.'"

This goes to show that well-made—fully boiled—Postum has much the flavor and richness of good coffee although it has an individuality all its own. A ten days' trial will prove that it has none of the poisonous effect of ordinary coffee, but will correct the troubles caused by coffee. "There's a reason." Name furnished by Postum Co., Ltd., Battle Creek, Mich.

And some people are so industrious that when they haven't anything to do they proceed to do somebody.

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All philosophy lies in two words—"sustain" and "abstain."—Epictetus.

Happy Colors

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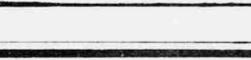
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