The MAN in LOWER TEN

by MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

AUTHOR OF THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY M. G. KETTNER

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SYNOPSIS.

Lawrence Blakeley, lawyer, goes to Pittsburg with the forged notes in the Bronson case to get the deposition of John Gilmore, millionaire. A lady requests Blakeley to buy her a Pullman ticket. He gives her lower 9 and retains lower 10. He finds a drunken man in lower 10 and retires in lower 9. He awakens in lower 7 and finds his clothes and bag missing. The man in lower 10 is found murdered. Circumstantial evidence points to both Blakeley and the man who stole his clothes. The train is wrecked and Blakeley is rescued from a burning car by a girl in blue. His arm is broken. The girl proves to be Alison West, his partner's sweetheart. Blakeley returns home and finds he is under surveillance. Moving pictures of the train taken just before the wreck reveal to Blakeley a man leaping from the train with his stolen grip. Investigation proves that the man's name is Sullivan. Mrs. Conway, the woman for whom Blakeley bought a Pullman ticket, tries to make a bargain with him for the forged notes, not knowing that they are missing. Blakeley and an amateur detective investigate the home of Sullivan's sister. From a servant Blakeley learns that Alison West had been there on a visit and Sullivan had been attentive to her. Sullivan is the husband of a daughter of the murdered man. Blakeley's house is ransacked by the police. He learns that the affair between Alison and his partner is off.

CHAPTER XXVII.—Continued.

And when the endless meal was over, and yards of white veils had been tied over pounds of hair—or is it, too, bought by the yard?—and some eight ensembles with their abject complements had been packed into three automobiles and a trap, I drew a long breath and faced about. I had just then only one object in life—to find Alison, to assure her of my absolute faith and confidence in her, and to offer my help and my poor self, if she would let me, in her service.

She was not easy to find. I searched the lower floor, the veranda and the grounds, circumspectly. Then I ran into a little English girl who turned out to be her maid, and who also was searching. She was concerned because her mistress had no dinner, and because the tray of food she carried would soon be cold. I took the tray from her, on the glimpse of something white on the shore, and that was how I met the girl again.

She was sitting on an overturned boat, her chin in her hands, staring out to sea. The soft tide of the bay lapped almost at her feet, and the draperies of her white gown melted hazily into the sands. She looked like a wraith, a despondent phantom of the sea, although the adjective is redundant. Nobody ever thinks of a cheerful phantom. Strangely enough, considering her evident sadness, she was whistling softly to herself, over and over, some dreary little minor air that sounded like a Bohemian dirge. She glanced up quickly when I made a misstep and my dishes jingled. All considered, the tray was out of the picture; the sea, the misty starlight, the girl, with her beauty—even the sad little whistle that stopped now and then to go bravely on again, as though it fought against the odds of a trembling lip. And then I came, accompanied by a tray of little silver dishes that jingled and an unmistakable odor of broiled chicken!

"Oh!" she said quickly; and then, "Oh! I thought you were Jenkins."

"Timeo Danaos—what's the rest of it?" I asked, tendering my offering. "You didn't have any dinner, you know." I sat down beside her. "See, I'll be the table. What was the old fairy tale? 'Little goat bleat; little table appear!' I'm perfectly willing to be the goat, too."

She was laughing rather tremulously.

"We never do meet like other people, do we?" she asked. "We really ought to shake hands and say how are you."

"I don't want to meet you like other people, and I suppose you always think of me as wearing the other fellow's clothes," I returned meekly. "I'm doing it again; I don't seem to be able to help it. These are Granger's that I have on now."

She threw back her head and laughed again, joyously, this time.

"Oh, it's so ridiculous," she said, "and you have never seen me when I was not eating! It's too prosaic!"

"Which reminds me that the chicken is getting cold, and the ice warm," I suggested. "At the time, I thought there could be no place better than the farm-house kitchen—but this is. I ordered all this for something I want to say to you—the sea, the sand, the stars."

"How alliterative you are!" she said, trying to be flippant. "You are not to say anything until I have had my supper. Look how the things are spilled around!"

But she ate nothing, after all, and pretty soon I put the tray down in the sand. I said little; there was no hurry. We were together, and time meant nothing against that age-long wash of the sea. The air blew her hair in small damp curls against her face, and little by little the tide retreated, leaving our boat an oasis in a waste of gray sand.

"If seven maids with seven mops
swept it for half a year
Do you suppose, the walrus said, that
they could get it clear?"

she threw at me once when she must have known I was going to speak. I held her hand, and as long as I merely held it she let it lie warm in mine. But when I raised it to my lips, and kissed the soft, open palm, she drew it away without displeasure.

"Not that, please," she protested, and fell to whistling softly again, her chin in her hands. "I can't sing," she said, to break an awkward pause, "and so, when I'm fidgety, or have something on my mind, I whistle. I hope you don't dislike it?"

"I love it," I asserted warmly. I did; when she pursed her lips like that I was mad to kiss them.

"I saw you—at the station," she said suddenly. "You—you were in a hurry to go." I did not say anything, and after a pause she drew a long breath. "Men are queer, aren't they?" she said, and fell to whistling again.

After awhile she sat up as if she had made a resolution. "I am going to confess something," she announced suddenly. "You said, you know, that you had ordered all this for something you—you wanted to say to me. But the fact is, I fixed it all—came here, I mean, because—I knew you would come, and I had something to tell you. It was such a miserable thing I—needed the accessories to help me out."

"I don't want to hear anything that distresses you to tell," I assured her. "I didn't come here to force your confidence, Alison. I came because I couldn't help it." She did not object to my use of her name.

"Have you found the—your papers?" she asked, looking directly at me for almost the first time.

"Not yet. We hope to."

"The—police have not interfered with you?"

"They haven't had any opportunity," I equivocated. "You needn't distress yourself about that, anyhow."

"But I do. I wonder why you still believe in me? Nobody else does."

"I wonder," I repeated, "why I do!"

"If you produce Harry Sullivan," she was saying, partly to herself, "and if you could connect him with—Mr. Bronson, and get a full account of why he was on the train, and all that, it—it would help, wouldn't it?"

She Was Sitting on an Overturned Boat.

I acknowledged that it would. Now that the whole truth was almost in my possession, I was stricken with the old cowardice. I did not want to know what she might tell me. The yellow line on the horizon, where the moon was coming up, was a broken bit of golden chain; my heel in the sand was again pressed on a woman's yielding fingers; I pulled myself together with a jerk.

"In order that what you tell me may help me, if it will," I said constrainedly, "it would be necessary, perhaps, that you tell it to the police. Since they have found the end of the necklace—"

"The end of the necklace!" she repeated slowly. "What about the end of the necklace?"

I stared at her. "Don't you remember"—I leaned forward—"the end of the cameo necklace, the part that was broken off, and was found in the black sealskin bag, stained with—with blood?"

"Blood," she said dully. "You mean that you found the broken end? And then—you had my good pocket-book, and you saw the necklace in it, and you—must have thought—"

"I didn't think anything," I hastened to assure her. "I tell you, Alison, I never thought of anything but that you were unhappy, and that I had no right to help you. God knows, I thought you didn't want me to help you."

She held out her hand to me and I took it between both of mine. No word of love had passed between us, but I felt that she knew and understood. It was one of the moments that come seldom in a lifetime, and then only in great crises, a moment of perfect understanding and trust.

Then she drew her hand away and sat, erect and determined, her fingers laced in her lap. As she talked the moon came up slowly and threw its bright pathway across the water. Back of us, in the trees beyond the sea wall, a sleepy bird chirruped drowsily, and a wave, larger and bolder than its brothers, sped up the sand, bringing the moon's silver to our very feet. I bent toward the girl.

"I am going to ask just one question."

"Anything you like." Her voice was almost dreary.

"Was it—because of anything you are going to tell me that you refused Richey?"

She drew her breath in sharply.

"No," she said, without looking at me. "No. That was not the reason."

"I knew that, too," I said bitterly, and moved away from her a trifle. I was brutal, but the whole story was a long torture. I think she knew what I was suffering, for she showed no resentment.

"It was early and there were few people around—none that I cared about. And mother and the nurse played cribbage eternally, until I felt as though the little pegs were driven into my brain. And when Mrs. Curtis arranged drives and picnics, I—I slipped away and went. I suppose you won't believe me, but I had never done that kind of thing before, and I—well, I have paid up, I think."

"What sort of looking chap was Sullivan?" I demanded. I had got up and was pacing back and forward on the said. I remember kicking savagely at a bit of water-soaked board that lay in my way.

"Very handsome—as large as you are, but fair, and even more erect."

I drew my shoulders up sharply. I am straight enough, but I was fairly sagging with jealous rage.

"When mother began to get around, somebody told her that I had been going about with Mrs. Curtis and her brother, and we had a dreadful time. I was dragged home like a bad child. Did anybody ever do that to you?"

"Nobody ever cared. I was born an orphan," I said, with a cheerless attempt at levity. "Go on."

"If Mrs. Curtis knew, she never said anything. She wrote me charming letters, and in the summer, when they went to Cresson, she asked me to visit her there. I was too proud to let her know that I could not go where I wished, and so—I sent Polly, my maid, to her aunt's in the country,

"Did You Marry Him?" I Demanded.

pretended to go to Seal Harbor, and really—went to Cresson. You see I warned you it would be an unpleasant story."

I went over and stood in front of her. All the accumulated jealousy of the last few weeks had been fired by what she told me. If Sullivan had come across the sands just then, I think I would have strangled him with my hands, out of pure hate.

"Did you marry him?" I demanded. My voice sounded hoarse and strange in my ears. "That's all I want to know. Did you marry him?"

"No."

I drew a long breath.

"You—cared about him?"

She hesitated.

"No," she said finally. "I did not care about him."

I sat down on the edge of the boat and mopped my hot face. I was heartily ashamed of myself, and mingled with my abasement was a great relief. If she had not married him, and had not cared for him, nothing else was of any importance.

"I was sorry, of course, the moment the train had started, but I had wired I was coming, and I could not go back, and then when I got there, the place was charming. There were no neighbors, but we fished and rode and motored, and—it was moonlight, like this."

I put my hand over both of hers, clasped in her lap. "I know," I acknowledged repentantly, "and—people do queer things when it is moonlight. The moon has got me to-night, Alison. If I am a boor, remember that, won't you?"

Her fingers lay quiet under mine. "And so," she went on with a little sigh, "I—began to think perhaps I cared. But all the time I felt that there was something not quite right. Now and then Mrs. Curtis would say or do something that gave me a queer start, as if she had dropped a mask for a moment. And there was trouble with the servants; they were almost insolent. I couldn't understand. I don't know when it dawned on me that the old Baron Cavalcanti had been right when he said they were not my kind of people. But I wanted to get away, wanted it desperately."

"Of course, they were not your kind," I cried. "The man was married! The girl Jennie, a house-maid, was a spy in Mrs. Sullivan's employ. If he had pretended to marry you I would have killed him! Not only that, but the man he murdered, Harrington, was his wife's father. And I'll see him hang by the neck yet if it takes every energy and every penny I possess."

I could have told her so much more gently, have broken the shock for her; I have never been proud of that evening on the sand. I was alternately a boor and a ruffian—like a hurt youngster who passes the blow that has hurt him on to his playmate, that both may bawl together. And now Alison sat, white and cold, without speech.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Lucky He Was Not Vain

Rather Keen Thrust Given Traveler Passing Through the Mountains of Tennessee.

According to a Washington official, whose public business occasionally takes him to the mountains of Tennessee, the inhabitants of those parts evince a naivette that is at times disconcerting to the stranger's amour propre.

This official had one day stopped at a mountain retreat for a few minutes to change horses.

"Purty fair lookin' hoss you've been ridin'," observed the not uncomely young woman who had met the traveler at the door.

"Yes, purty fair."

"Purty fair lookin' yourself," was the next observation, delivered in a cool, level tone.

"Thanks," said the official, slightly blushing.

"Are you married?" asked the young woman.

"No, I'm a bachelor."

"Well, I reckon you're 'bout as well off that way, an' mebbe a little better. I'm married myself."

Charmed by this show of confidence, the official observed that perhaps his own condition would have been better had he married some good, sensible girl years before. "I'm sure," he added, "that I should have been a happier man."

The young woman smiled reflectively. "Mebbe," she concluded; "but how'd the girl be feelin' by now?"—Lippincott's Magazine.

How Cowper Would Open His Eyes.

In the eighteenth century, as to-day, your poet sometimes gave himself up to rueful reflection on the market value of his wares. In a letter of Cowper's, lately sold at auction, occurs this reference: "I am no very good arithmetician, yet I calculated the other day in my morning walk that my two volumes at the price of three guineas will cost the purchaser less than the seventh part of a farthing per line. Yet there are lines among them that have cost me the labor of hours." How Cowper would have opened his eyes at the "oodles of money" made by some of his successors, such as Tennyson or Kipling.

STATE CAPITAL LINCOLN CHAT.

No Politics at Peru Normal.

State Superintendent-elect Crabtree has named the following appointees, and declares that partisan feeling will not hereafter be tolerated at that institution:

G. A. Gregory, re-appointed inspector of normal training in high schools.

Miss Anna V. Day, Beatrice, assistant.

Superintendent A. H. Waterhouse, Fremont, member board of inspectors.

Superintendent Fred M. Hunter, Norfolk, member board of inspectors.

Superintendent E. J. Bodwell, Beatrice, re-appointed member of board of inspectors.

Superintendent James E. Delzell, Lexington, inspector of graded schools.

Superintendent Clifford M. Penney, Blair, examiner and rural school supervisor.

Miss Jennie B. Adams, re-appointed head secretary.

Miss Elizabeth I. Pollock, re-appointed stenographer.

Miss Dora M. Goethe, re-appointed stenographer.

Effie A. Denham, re-appointed recorder.

Helen C. Mathewson, re-appointed secretary on certification.

Minnie Morrell, re-appointed stenographer.

Findings Are Approved.

Governor Shallenberger has approved the findings of the court martial which sat on the delinquencies of about forty members of the national guard, and these findings will be embodied in an order from the department. They will not be found to be harsh. It is the first court to sit on the members of the guard and to hold them accountable for their deeds and misdeeds, and the adjutant general and the members of the court did not feel like dealing too harshly in the first lesson. Indeed, the adjutant general, under whose inspiration the inquiry was instituted, has reduced the sentences in some instances. Nothing but fines have been imposed and these usually not more than $10 per man. In some cases the fines have been remitted.

Jefferson's Fat Cattle.

Fairbury.—This county had the distinction of topping the live stock market in South St. Joseph with one of the largest shipments of cattle that has been received at that point in a long time. These fat cattle were from the feed lots of James Hughes, a well-known farmer living west of Fairbury. The shipment was made up of three cars, or sixty-one head of fat steers, which averaged 1,413 pounds apiece and sold straight for $6 per hundred.

Come Near Catching Him.

Governor-elect C. H. Aldrich was in a state of siege at the Lindell for a time after he arrived in Lincoln from David City to get some pointers from Governor Shallenberger on official decorum things which the outgoing governor has learned by experience and which the incoming governor wants to learn by an easier route. He got no farther than the Lindell when he was compelled to take refuge, the hotel people coming loyally to his aid by refusing to know anything about his presence there.

Secretary of State-elect Wait has announced the appointments in his office. George W. Marsh, who was secretary of state from 1900 to 1904, and under whom Mr. Wait was once employed as a bookkeeper, is appointed deputy. The other appointees are those now in the office. All of them have been employed at least two years. The appointments are: T. W. Smith, bookkeeper, four years in the office; Walker Smith, corporation and brand clerk, four years; Adair Galusha, voucher clerk, six years; Nellie M. Leach, recorder, three years, and May E. Holland, two years.

The position of president pro tempore of the state senate has begun to draw out the aspirations of several senators who want to preside over the senate when the lieutenant governor is not on the job. It is understood that G. W. Tibbetts of Adams county, president pro tempore in 1909, wants the place again; that J. A. Ollis, Jr., of Ord is a candidate, and that J. H. Moorehead of Falls City also wants it.

Dr. Charles E. Bessey, head of the department of botany at the university, has accepted an invitation to speak at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which will meet in Minneapolis during the holidays. He will talk on the subject of "The Results of Our Teaching of Botany."

A portion of the prize cattle exhibit representing the University of Nebraska at the International live stock exposition held in Chicago last week has reached Lincoln, accompanied by Herdsman Charles Shumate and Assistant Bert Cozad. All of the older cattle were sold for beef at the close of the show, for holiday displays. Of the younger cattle returned, one brings the distinction of being the champion Angus steer of America (all ages), and the other a like distinction for the Galloway breed. These, with other prize winners, will be used in the judging classes.

Secretary Whitten of the Lincoln Commercial club and A. W. Field, its legal counsel in rate matters, will attend a session of the interstate commerce commission at Chicago on December 19, when the freight tariffs recently suspended, advancing first class rates from 51 to 60 cents between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers on shipments from the Atlantic seaboard, will be considered. All points in the Missouri river territory are combatting this increase.

The M. W. A. of Lincoln has arranged several boxing and wrestling matches for the winter.

A LINGERER.

The Eldest Daughter—If Harry had lived in the old days he'd have made a good knight.

Her father—I don't know much about that—but it takes him a long time to say 'good night' now.

Sense of Taste.

From a series of experiments recently made at the University of Kansas it is evident that the average person can taste the bitter of quinine when one part is dissolved in 52,000 parts of water. Salt was detected in water when one part to 640 of the liquid was used. Sugar could be tasted in 228 parts of water and common soda in 48. In nearly all cases women could detect a smaller quantity than men.

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For children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic. 25c a bottle.

It's a pity that more sermons are not as deep as they are long.

44 Bu. to the Acre

In a heavy yield, but that's what John Kennedy of Edmonton, Alberta, Western Canada, got from 40 acres of Spring Wheat in 1910. Reports from other districts in that province showed other excellent results—such as 7,000 bushels of wheat from 125 acres, or 33 1-3 bu. per acre, 2,500 and 40 bushel yields were numerous. As high as 152 bushels of oats to the acre were threshed from Alberta fields in 1910.

The Silver Cup

at the recent Spokane Fair was awarded to the Alberta Government for its exhibit of grains, grasses and vegetables. Reports of excellent yields for 1910 come also from Saskatchewan and Manitoba in Western Canada.

Free homesteads of 160 acres, and adjoining pre-emptions of 160 acres (at $3 per acre) are to be had in the choicest districts.

Schools convenient, climate excellent, soil the very best, railways close at hand, building lumber cheap, fuel easy to get and reasonable in price, water easily procured, mixed farming a success.

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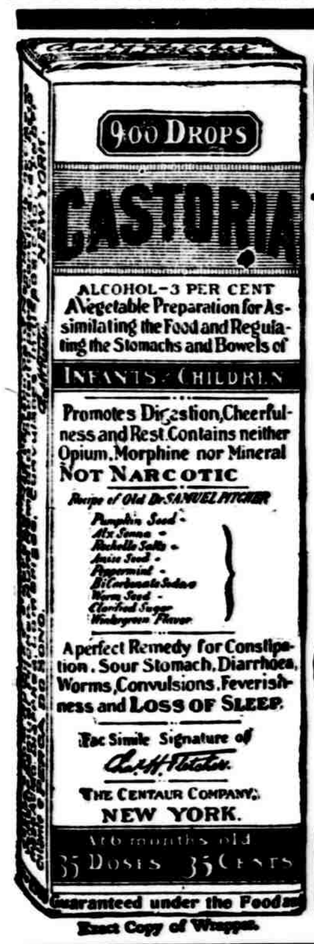

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