

THE MAN WITH THE GLASS EYE

By Charles Playfair.

Chapter I

IN a primitive, out-of-the-world Norwegian sky station, about one hundred miles north of the snow-capped Jotunheims, my companion...

We were the only travellers, and, shut up in the lonely posthouse for three days, it was but natural that we should exchange views upon life in general, and discover that our ideas were identical on many points.

On the fourth day, when the sun shone again, we grasped each other's hand in farewell; not, however, before I had promised to call on him when I returned to the capital on my way to England.

It was six weeks before the wheels of my carriage rattled over the uneven cobbles of Christiania, and on the evening following my arrival I took train for Bygdo, a pleasant suburb overlooking the picturesque Fjord, to find my friend, it was already dark when I alighted, but the chief of the rural station directed me to Larsen's house, which, he said, was a small white cottage near the water.

Built, like most Norwegian houses, of pine logs, it stood secluded and isolated, facing the Fjord. There was no light in the window, and the wooden porch was so dark that in feeling for the knocker I placed my hand upon the flap of what was evidently the letter box, producing a loud rattling and causing me to start.

I was passing my hand over the woodwork in search of the knocker, when the door was suddenly thrown violently open, a hand grasped my shoulder and I was dragged into a dark passage. The door was closed quickly; then a woman's soft bare arms were thrown around my neck, hot, fervid kisses were rained upon my head and face, while a voice murmured in my ear the words in English:

"Returned at last! My love! So many months I have been waiting! Oscar! My own—"

The remainder of the sentence was lost in a terrible shriek. The arms loosened their hold upon my neck and a body fell to the floor with a thud!

I stood motionless in horror. The awful intensity of the darkness unnerved me. Had the woman who had caressed me so affectionately been struck down?

Bending down to the body that lay at my feet, I listened eagerly. My strained ears caught only the sound of heavy breathing and an occasional gasp.

Again I bent down. My fingers came into contact with something wet and warm. No light was required to tell me it was blood!

I shouted for help, but my voice echoed weirdly through the house, and no one stirred. Just at that moment, however, there was the click of a key in the door, and some one entered.

"A light!" I cried. "Quick! This lady has fainted!"

The newcomer, uttering a cry of surprise, pushed past me, presently returning with a lamp. Upon the floor in a pool of blood lay a handsome girl with a wisp of dark brown hair straying across her blanched cheek.

"What have you done to my daughter?" gasped the woman in alarm.

"Help me to raise her. I will tell you all afterward," I said.

We carried the unconscious girl into a sitting room, and I remained while her mother went for medical assistance.

The doctor, upon examination, found a curious triangular wound in her back, evidently inflicted with a strangely-shaped but exceedingly keen knife. In the darkness she had been struck down by an unknown hand.

I remained an hour, until the doctor, assuring us that the wound would not prove fatal, departed. Then the elder woman followed me to the door, and I told her all I knew.

"I have not the pleasure of knowing your name," she said. "Mine is Tremayne. Will you—will you promise to keep our secret? Remember no one must know of this extraordinary affair—no one. Do not mention the matter even to your dearest friend, for scandal would result, and my daughter Eve would be the sufferer."

I promised secrecy, and left. To speak Larsen at that hour was, I considered, not desirable, for the weather had changed and a dense fog overhung everything. Therefore I groped my way toward Bygdo station. I had not gone far before I became conscious that some one was walking about a hundred yards behind. I quickened my pace, when, to my surprise, the heavy shuffling steps also hurried.

Suddenly I stopped, grasped the swordcase I carried and waited. Nearer the footsteps came, until I confronted my pursuer.

Time has not dimmed the memory of that moment. In the darkness I could just distinguish a countenance

bizarrely distorted, the face of a demon more than of a man. One eye flashed and rolled, the other was fixed in a calm, stony stare. It was of glass!

The man, who grasped me by the shoulder roughly, ground his teeth, and gave vent to a fierce growl. Then he cast me from him as if in contemptuous disgust, and disappeared in the darkness.

Chapter II

On the afternoon of the next day I returned to Bygdo. Mrs. Tremayne welcomed me warmly, and so did the invalid. As she lay with her half-falling over the pillow, her dark eyes peered up into mine, and in a weak voice she thanked me sincerely for saving her life. I assured her that I had done nothing, as the blow had been struck so suddenly and mysteriously that I had no opportunity of protecting her. But she repeated her words of thanks, and her white hands grasped mine and held them for a moment. She was undeniably beautiful.

My friend Larsen was away mountaineering in Telemarken. Nevertheless, I did not return to England. How frequently I called at Mrs. Tremayne's suburban retreat, or of the happy halcyon days I spent there, during Eva's convalescence, I need say nothing. Before long we were engaged to be married. Whenever I asked her for explanation of the events that terrible night, she would shudder and simply reply: "I was stabbed!"

Of the cause I could learn nothing. One day, accompanied by Mrs. Tremayne, we had driven to Sundvolden, a little village overlooking the Tyri-Fjord. We had made the ascent of the rocky Krogkleven by mules, and spent the evening watching the sun disappearing behind the snow-crowned Gausta. It had turned chilly, and the mists were rising before we commenced to descend. Our way lay down a steep, winding saeter-track that ran through a dark forest of pines, and then we entered a narrow gorge where the birch trees met overhead and the mountain torrent splashed down noisily.

With careful steps, our mules jogged along; but it was so dark we could scarcely distinguish anything. I was riding a little behind, when I suddenly felt conscious of some unknown danger. A second later I saw the figure of a man laboriously toiling upward. He paused, peering involuntarily into my face. I started involuntarily and held my breath. His features were distorted by an expression of intense hatred, his teeth showed even and white in a cruel, hard mouth, the line between his eyebrows was deep, the cheeks sunken and sallow. Every line of the forbidding-looking countenance was already graven indelibly upon my memory. It was the Man with the Glass Eye!

He passed, and in a moment was lost in the darkness.

"Did you see that man?" I asked my companions when I came up to them.

"What man?" asked Eva.

"Why, the man who just passed by. He had a horribly ugly face."

"I saw no man," she replied, laughing. "You must have been mistaken."

"But I saw him plainly. He halted and stared as we passed," I said, feeling convinced that she, too, had noticed him.

"I saw no one," Mrs. Tremayne exclaimed, and I felt half inclined to believe that I had only seen the sinister-faced man in imagination, that the sudden feeling of insecurity I had experienced had conjured up a reminiscence of that terrible night.

Eva uttered some words in Norwegian to her mother, and then, turning to me, asked:

"What sort of man was he?"

"He was ill-dressed, pale, thin, and looked like a tramp. He had a glass eye."

"A—glass eye!" she gasped, in a harsh, strained voice, as Mrs. Tremayne also uttered an exclamation of amazement. "Are you absolutely certain?"

"I am positive it was of glass."

"Perhaps he was a thief," she said. "Possibly we have had a fortunate escape. We were foolish to remain on the summit so long."

Chapter III

Eighteen months had passed, and I had at last induced Eva and her mother to come to London.

One winter's evening I entered the train for Ealing, where they were staying with friends, flung myself into a corner of a second-class carriage just as the guard blew his whistle. A moment later, while the train was in motion, the handle rattled, and the door flew open to admit another passenger. Without glancing at him, I pulled an evening paper from my pocket and read.

It was the third week in December, and the weather was detestable. Driven against the windows by violent gusts of wind, the rain showered like hailstones upon the panes.

Suddenly my attention was attracted toward my fellow passenger, who rose and crossed quickly toward me, uttering strange, unintelligible sounds. I looked up, and saw, to my horror, the man with the glass eye! A fierce fire of murderous hatred leaped from his one living eye as he raised his bony hands toward my throat. I felt the touch of his sinewy fingers upon my neck.

Then I struggled. It was for life. Evading his grasp at last, I sprang to my feet, and, drawing the sword from the cane I carried, stood ready for a second attack.

"You shall die!" he growled, darting to the opposite side of the carriage and opening the door, then returning to me. I saw his intention to throw me out upon the rails. I know well that my strength would be nothing against his.

Grinning hideously, the man plucked on me and wrenched the blade from my grasp. His fingers met around my throat; then, with the physical agony, my superstitious dread of the man vanished, and I grappled with him, rending his shabby clothes to shreds and tearing his flesh in the paroxysms of pain.

The open door flapped backward with the oscillations of the train, and we swayed to and fro, gradually nearing it. He had his back toward it, yet my efforts seemed to have no effect, until, taking him off his guard, I suddenly exerted my whole strength, wrenched his hands from my throat, and flung him from me.

He staggered backward with an oath upon his lips, and a second later I was alone in the compartment.

Hardly realizing what I had done, I closed the door, just as an express rushed on its way to London, and a few minutes later the train drew up at Ealing, where I alighted. Need I say how anxiously I scanned the papers the following day? They contained a few lines headed, "Shocking Discovery," and I learned that the body had been found but so mutilated by a train as to be unrecognizable. A description of his dress was circulated, and stress was laid on the fact that one of his eyes was artificial. Eagerly I watched the reports of the inquest, but no one came forward to identify him, and the jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

Eva and I were married, and had taken up our abode in a pretty villa at Sandgate. Six months afterward, as we were sitting together by the open window in the summer twilight, she took my hand in hers suddenly, saying, "Jack, do you remember that it is just two and a half years ago since we first met?"

"Yes, I had not forgotten," I said, for, strangely enough, the curious circumstances of that first meeting had recurred to me only a few hours before.

"It was remarkable that we should meet at a moment when I almost lost my life," she continued. "Yet the secret is even more strange."

"The secret! What do you mean?" I asked.

It was, indeed, an extraordinary story of love and suffering that she related. It appeared that, five years before, Eva was engaged to marry Oscar Larsen, brother of my friend Hans, and a rising young member of the Storching. They were extremely fond of each other, but as the marriage day approached Oscar's friends were alarmed to notice that his manner and actions were eccentric and mysterious. Doctors were consulted, and they all agreed that it was lunacy. Quickly homicidal symptoms developed, and instead of marriage and a bright future his friends were compelled to have him confined in an asylum in the vicinity.

Eva was broken hearted, but a year afterward he was discharged as perfectly harmless, and on his return to his brother's house a keeper was engaged for him.

He still retained his love for Eva, but it was the maudlin affection of idiocy, and sometimes when he could evade the vigilance of the man responsible for his well-being he would visit her, but only under cover of darkness, because he entertained a dread of being recognized. To humor him, Eva arranged that he should rattle the letter box when he called, and she would, if at home, open the door to receive him.

Thus all was explained. On the eventful night I had unwittingly given the signal, and she had welcomed me affectionately, believing me to be her demented lover.

The maniac must have previously gained access to the house from the rear, and, enraged at seeing her throw herself into my arms, he struck the murderous blow. He met me later in the fog with the intention, no doubt, of taking my life. Afterward, believing that I had stolen Eva's affections, he would have killed me had I not acted unhesitatingly in self-defense.

I listened to Eva's story without uttering a word.

"He lost his eye while shooting," she said in conclusion, "and the doctors substituted a glass one. It is most remarkable, too, that he disappeared mysteriously about a fortnight before our marriage, and has not since been heard of."

I agreed it was strange, for I saw no necessity to increase her pain by telling her of the tragic end of "The Man with the Glass Eye."

Trapping an Embezzler.

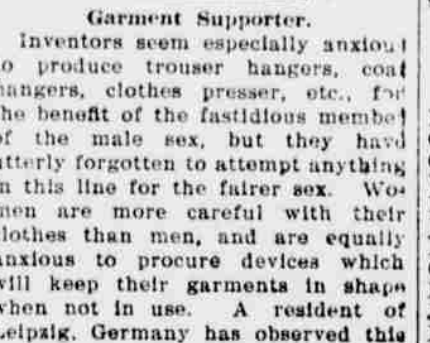
After embezzling a large sum belonging to a New South Wales firm, a man suddenly disappeared. Detective Hickey of Sydney was sent after him and, after touching at different ports in Europe, India, America, France, Holland, Canary Islands and the West Indies, effected the arrest at Santiago, Cuba. Detective and prisoner then travelled to Europe. When they arrived at Sydney the officer had travelled 32,000 miles and occupied nine months in his mission.

Of all European cities Rome has most frequently been in the hands of enemies. It has been entered and sacked more than forty times since 290 B. C.

THE VIRTUE OF LEANNESS. A Parisian Writer Regards Short People With Suspicion.

"Let me have men about me that are fat," Shakespeare makes Cæsar say to Marc Anthony, when confiding to him his mistrust of the "lean and hungry" Cassius. But, according to a Parisian writer, it is the fat people who should be regarded with most suspicion. He has just written a book to prove that an abundance of adipose tissue, in man or woman, far from indicating a frank, honest, generous disposition, often serves as a mask for rascality and cunning. He cites numerous examples from contemporary French criminal annals to support his contention that the most successful swindlers are generally fat people, and that their victims among the lean are legion. Mme. Gueria Cesbron, the heroine of the fraudulent matrimonial agency which furnished Parisian sensation, is as rotund as a beer barrel. Mme. Therese Humbert, whose phantom millions long enabled her to revel in the most costly luxuries, is another of his examples of embonpoint, combined with dishonesty. Houllains, the banker, who was gifted with such rare talents for transferring money from other people's pockets into his own, was a man of aldermanic proportions. According to the French author, not only are fat folk more likely to be dishonest than thin ones, but their obesity renders it easier for them to perpetrate frauds. This, he says, is because of the mistaken notion that rotundity of figure is an indication that its possessor has a clear conscience; whereas in most cases, it is the result of dealing dishonestly with one's stomach. On the other hand, the lean person, he contends, is naturally less disposed to be dishonest, and because of the suspicion which his slim figure arouses, finds it harder to carry out financial swindles on a large scale.

Garment Supporter. Inventors seem especially anxious to produce trouser hangers, coat hangers, clothes presser, etc., for the benefit of the fastidious member of the male sex, but they have utterly forgotten to attempt anything in this line for the fairer sex. Women are more careful with their clothes than men, and are equally anxious to procure devices which will keep their garments in shape when not in use. A resident of Leipzig, Germany has observed this



absence of garment supporters for women and has designed the one shown in the illustration. It consists of an arm pivoted in a bracket on the wall or door. Suspended by a hook on the free end of the arm is a foldable ring, from which skirts and petticoats can be supported and prevented from creasing, as they invariably do when placed in chests or bureau drawers.

Vulgarity and Sex. Vulgarity, again, is certainly commoner among men than women; and, indeed when a woman is vulgar, she is apt to display the quality in high perfection. The reason why it is rare among women is that the emotional nature is stronger among women than among men; and thus, where men are ambitious, fond of displaying power, of recognition, women are sympathetic, tender, affectionate subtle; they value relations with others more than performances they encourage and console, because they are interested in the person who desires sympathy more than in the aims which he nourishes. If one's main interest in life is in the personalities that surround one, one is not likely to be tempted by vulgarity; because the essence, again, of vulgarity is that it tends to affix on altogether fictitious value to material things. A man who pursues wealth, comfort, power, position, is always in danger of vulgarity.—Atlantic Monthly.

Home Remedies. Severe sore throat is often relieved by sipping sweetened water in which there is a pinch of cayenne pepper. Witch hazel is excellent for the eyes, though one should be certain the liquid is absolutely pure before using. Do not overlook the value of proper and rational exercise. All the muscles of the body must be used to be of value to one.

To Keep Paint White. The best way to clean white paint is to take a soft flannel cloth, dip in warm water, wring out and then dip in a saucer of clean bran. The friction of the bran will remove any stain without injuring the paint.

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A Growing Form of Insanity.

The Pennsylvania railroad has put a stop to the hazing of bridal parties at its Wilmington station. The Lewistown Sentinel thinks that the application of the rule is too limited. The railroad company ought to enforce it at every station, and if necessary the local police, Constabulary and National Guard should be called out and put an effectual ban on this form of insanity that breaks out so many weddings. It is a wonder that the railroads have tolerated this nuisance as long as they have. It may be fun to those who do it, but it is a great annoyance to a modest young bride and disgusting to passengers on the train who have to endure it.

Nature has just one pigment on her palette with which she produces all the marvelous tints of beauty, and that one pigment is the blood. The shell-like pink beneath the finger nails, the delicate rose of the cheek, the cherry ripeness of the lips, the iridescent brilliance of the eyes are all produced by the blood. Just as the permanence of a beautiful painting will depend upon the purity of the colors with which it is painted, so the permanence of beauty depends on the purity of the blood. Paint, powder and cosmetics won't avail to preserve beauty. Beauty begins in the blood. Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery is a true beautifier, because it provides for nature that pure blood with which alone she can paint. The use of this medicine will cleanse the skin, heighten the complexion, brighten the eyes, and give to the face and form that radiance of health which is the greatest charm of beauty.

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