

SOLACE.

You say you are not strong enough, dear heart, To bear misfortune's sting and scarring smart.

My Strangest Case

BY GUY BOOTHBY.

Author of "Dr. Kikola," "The Beautiful White Devil," "Pharos, The Egyptian," Etc.

CHAPTER I.—CONTINUED.

Next day I made my way to the great metropolis, and installed myself at a small private hotel, while I looked about me preparatory to commencing business.

As I have a long and curious story to tell, and this book is only intended to be the narration of a certain episode in my life, a detailed description of my first three years in London would not only be superfluous, but in every way a waste of time.

remaining directors of the bank, in which they inquired if I could make it convenient to call upon them at the head-office that day.

Needless to say, I called upon them at the hour specified, and after a brief wait was conducted to the board room, where the directors sat in solemn conclave.

The chairman, Sir Walter Bracebridge, received me on behalf of his colleagues. "We wrote to you, Mr. Fairfax," he said, "in order to find out whether you could help us concerning the difficulty in which we find ourselves placed."

I seated myself, and we discussed the affair to such good purpose that, when I left the board room, it was on the understanding that I was to take up the case at once, and that my expenses and a very large sum of money should be paid me, provided I could manage to bring the affair to a successful termination.

As will be remembered, it was a case that interested every class of society, and press and public were alike united in the interest they showed in it.



"YOU ARE MR. FAIRFAX, ARE YOU NOT?" INQUIRED THE TALLER OF THE MEN.

the offenders, the excitement rose to fever heat. I can see the whole scene now as if it had occurred but yesterday; the learned judge upon the bench, the jury in their box, the rows of counsels, and the benches full of interested spectators.

CHAPTER II.

All business London, and a good many other people besides, must remember the famous United States Empire bank fraud. Bonds had been stolen and negotiated, vast sums of money were discovered to be missing, and the manager and one of the directors were absent also.

take such an interest in the case. The smaller was guiding his friend along the crowded pavement with a dexterity that was plainly the outcome of a long practice.

"You are Mr. Fairfax, are you not?" inquired the taller of the men. "That is my name," I admitted.

"What can I do for you?" "If we could persuade you to vouchsafe us an hour of your valuable time we should be more grateful than we could say," the man replied.

"We know it perfectly," returned the blind man. "It would be strange if we did not, seeing that we have stood outside it repeatedly, trying to summon up courage to enter."

"I fear not," I said. "I am tired, and stand in need of rest. If you care to come to-morrow morning, I shall be very pleased to see you."

"We are not afraid of our case," the man replied. "I doubt if there has ever been another like it."

My readers must remember that this conversation was being carried on at the corner of Ludgate Hill and the Old Bailey.

"Very well," I said, "if you are really desirous of consulting me, I shall be very glad to see you at my office at ten o'clock to-morrow morning."

"We shall not be late," the man answered, "you may rely upon that. We have too much at stake to run any risks of losing your assistance."

He thereupon bade me good-by, and, raising his hat politely, was led along the street by his companion in an opposite direction to that I was taking.

"Good morning, gentlemen," I said. "Allow me to congratulate you on your punctuality."

so particular that we did not want to run any risk of losing our appointment."

"Perhaps you will now be good enough to tell me what that business is?" I replied, taking my notebook out of a drawer, preparatory to writing down what they had to say.

"In the first place, sir," the man began, "we of course understand that everything we have to tell you will be regarded by you as strictly private and confidential?"

"That goes without saying," I replied. "If I were to divulge what my clients tell me, my business would not be worth a day's purchase."

"We thank you," said Kitwater. "The story I have to tell you is perhaps the strangest that has ever been told to mortal man."

"But why have you not come to me before?" I inquired. "You have seen me in court every day. Why do you wait until the case is at an end?"

"You must excuse me," I said, "if I remind you that my time is valuable, and that, however interested I may be in the missionary work of China, I cannot allow it to interfere with my business."

"I must implore your pardon," the man continued, humbly enough. "I am afraid our calling, however, is apt to make us a trifle verbose."

I bowed and signed to him to proceed.

[To Be Continued.]

THE WHIRLIGIG TABLE.

An Ingenious Three-Story Affair Made by a Connecticut Yankee Years Ago.

A lounge in a second-hand furniture shop asked the man behind the counter whether he had ever seen one of the queer merry-go-round tavern tables described recently in a New York newspaper, relates the Detroit Free Press.

"Yes," the second-hand man answered, "and I can go ahead of that New York man's story. I've seen a whirligig table three stories high. The New York man's table had only one story, with pigeon-holes for the dishes of food in the revolving center."

"Down in a Kentucky town, now, I could show you a three-story revolving dinner table. It was carefully constructed years ago by a man who came west from Connecticut; he made it of beautiful inlaid woods, and the family used it with doilies under the plates instead of a tablecloth."

Church Going in the Olden Days.

Those who are concerned about the present condition of church attendance, now being discussed in our columns, might like to return to the state of things prevalent in George II.'s reign. The mediaeval laws for fining people who did not go to church, and even those who harbored absentees, were still in force, which looks as though the church still entered a good deal into the daily life of the people.

Prominent in Literature.

"I tell you," said "Shiny Patches," as he addressed five of his companions while all were basking in the sunshine and resting between rests, "we are the prominent figures in modern literature. I don't pick up a paper without reading something about some member of our ancient order. The very thought of our fame makes me eloquent."

"We are indeed famous. Every intelligent man recognizes the names of 'Weary Willie,' 'Dusty Rhodes,' 'Meandering Mike,' 'Tired Thomas,' 'Hungry Hawkins,' 'Resting Robert,' and a score more of names that we are proud of. Literature has made us"—Stray Stories.

Gossipy Gossip of Prevailing Fashions

Little Hints of What to Wear That Are of Timely Interest—Some Charming Gowns.



EMININE raiment for the coming season is bewildering in its variety and loveliness. An extensive choice obtains in dress materials, ranging from regal brocades to fabrics of gossamer lightness.

Our old favorite, alpaca, is again smart wear. Some of the recent



A Charming Afternoon Gown of Crepe de Chine, Made Up With Appropriate Embroideries and Applique Materials.

specimens are beautifully silky in appearance, and frequently have fancy designs imprinted on them. In pearl gray, willow green and soft dove color these are suitable for dressy toilettes and dust cloaks.

Foulards in silk, and in their excellent cotton counterparts, are prettier than ever, and are especially suited for wear in this month of tears and smiles.

Delaines, in exquisite colorings and designs, are not only stylish for dresses, but are much used for blouses, of which the narrow turn-over collars and cuffs are fashioned of hemstitched or lace-edged silk, matching the prominent shade in the pattern.

All transparent fabrics over silk will be much worn. Sometimes the silk underslip is of a contrasting shade, such as green under pink, yellow under mauve, etc.

Soft grenadines in stripes and floral designs, d'esprit net and voiles are trimmed liberally with lace and made



Summer Street Gown of Mercerized Pongee and Chantilly Lace.

fussy with many lace-edged tiny flounces. Plain, clear white muslin is made up into simple gowns and blouses. The latter have a tucker of pink or blue ribbon, ending in a rosette and streamers at the back of the neck.

Where the sash is, there also one usu-

ally finds the dainty frilled white net or muslin flieu.

Skirts are still built to cling closely round the hips and back, which means that the underskirt or petticoat must fit equally smoothly without ruck or wrinkle.

Dress skirts made of diaphanous materials are often gauged at the back, or flat plaits employed to give substance to the back width.

For country and morning wear short all-round skirts with boleros of square-cut pretensions, or with simulated basques, are seen in light tweed, covert coating, linen, pique and drill.

Blouses, or rather slips, as they are termed, are daintiness personified in fancy and embroidered muslin, and especially in black, white and cream d'esprit net.

The mixture of black with cream or white is very modish; and pale blue—real Cambridge blue—is one of the spring colors, and is seen in all dress goods, and also in millinery.

Full neck ruffles of chiffon, net and tulle fasten at the neck with long streamers of black ribbon velvet.

Some are furnished with a wide frill,



Summer Street Gown of Satin Foulard With Valenciennes Lace Insertion, Ribbon Velvet, Silk Herringbone and Arabian Lace Gimpes.

which droops over the shoulders in cape fashion.

All the smaller yet now essential dress accessories are very pretty, and much skill is expended on their manufacture. Narrow collar and cuff bands are made of lace or finely embroidered muslin, and used to decorate cotton and silk blouses.

Transparent lace yokes and collars are worn. These should be lined always with white chiffon, as it makes the skin look whiter, and also affords more protection from the too ardent attentions of King Sol.

Silk petticoats have deep flounces of muslin and lace made to button on, so that they are easily removed for the laundress. The petticoat worn should, if possible, tone with the predominating color in hat or costume.

Cream lace veils are la mode, worn either as a veil pure and simple or draped carelessly round the brim of the hat to end in a cachepeigne drooping over the hair.

Why Everybody Laughed. A Baltimore lady donned an \$15 new hat for a promenade and wondered why the first admiring glances on the street were changed to stares. Eventually she found that the hat had dropped off, and a search for it proved vain.