PREACHER LAUGHS AT MAKERS OF WAR

The Rev. J. Howard Melish Ridicules the Invoking of God to Kill Enemy.

"How to kill their neighbors before they themselves are killed is the only aim in life of men who have written wonderful books on ethics and men who have been living and working for right relations between men," declared the Rev. J. Howard Melish, in a Lenten sermon in St. Stephen's Church, 10th street above Chestnut street, this noon. "If there are fiends in hell, how they must jeer and laugh at the world-wide confusion as to religion and morality!

"What is religion? But a mere whitewash which is rubbed off in the first rain, men say. What is morality? But an iridescent soap bubble which the first touch of the air destroys! Love? The very word sounds hollow, and is dismissed as the sentimental novel and banished from the realities of life.

"From the utterances of Czar and Kaiser, of university professors and church leaders, one would think that the European conflict is a crusade, a 'religious war.' The warriors who are victorious will ascribe unto God the victory. Those who are defeated will feel they have been deserted by their God and their faith in His Fatherhood will be weakened or lost. As for their morality, confusion like an impenetrable fog rests upon all. If there are tears in Him how must they flow as He looks down upon His children on earth."

Mr. Mellish took a hopeful view in concluding his address. "It is good for the world to have its senses torn and its rotten spots exposed," he said, "if it can catch a chance vision of what it ought to be. However painful the progress, the race is on the march and the path leads upward and from the brute."

OUR GREAT OPPORTUNITY

Self-sacrifice Road to Happiness, Preacher Says.

Opportunity in life was the subject of the sermon preached by the Rev. J. W. Walker, rector of the Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter, at the noonday service in St. Peter's Church, 3d and Pine streets, today.

"Our opportunity in life," he said, "is in learning the lesson of love."

He explained why some people missed learning this lesson, and said:

"Many people have the usual notion that they can get happiness from this life through the church. They also believe they can get it by going to church on Sunday, and perhaps by obeying the laws of the church, of man and of nature. True happiness does not come to us by virtue of the merit we possess. It comes to us only through self-sacrifice, and this is our great opportunity in life."

AT OLD ST. PAUL'S

Too Much Preaching Today, Says Speaker.

"The same traits in the men that crucified Christ almost 1900 years ago are manifest in human nature today," said the Rev. Charles Townsend, Jr., rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, of Rosemont, Pa., at the noonday service today in Old St. Paul's Church, 3d street below Walnut street. He compared Herod with modern Christians, and said they had the same characteristics in that they held religion too familiarly, as a curiosity or sensation, and were religious only to the degree of sympathizing with good, but not to the extent of hating evil effectively.

These traits Mr. Townsend said, are the reasons for the weakness of religion today. He said the church needed less preaching and more of the real fighting spirit.

BIBLE "LEAST READ BOOK"

Though the Most Widely Circulated, Says Rev. Alexander MacColl.

"Although the Bible is the most widely circulated of books, it is often the least read," said the Rev. Alexander MacColl, pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, in a noon sermon in the First Presbyterian Church, 7th street and South Washington Square, today. He said that a revival of interest in the Bible was the greatest result to be desired from the Lenten services.

"The great Bible classes gathering week by week in our churches give hope that it may be realized," he said. He quoted Martineau, who said that "want of time is want of moral energy." "We find time for what we want most to do. A single verse, committed to memory as one dresses in the morning and summoned to one's aid in hours of stress and perplexity, would often change the atmosphere of life and point the way of duty and the way of peace."

CATS HAVE MILK FEAST

Breakdown of Milk Wagon Brings Joy to "Kitties."

A white flood filled the gutters of Ellsworth street, between 16th and 17th streets, this morning, when a six-horse supply wagon of the Dolfinger Standard Dairies, of 16th and Tasker streets, overturned with a load of more than 4200 quarts of milk.

The cats of the neighborhood are satiated and many of them are not feeling well. They flocked to the scene of the accident by the scores and lapped up many quarts of the milk before it disappeared in the drains.

The trouble began when a rear axle of the wagon, loaded with 92 46-quart cans of milk, snapped at 17th and Ellsworth streets. The driver, Thomas Haskins, of 161 South Chadwick street, chased away the advance guard of expectant cats and telephoned for help. Trolley traffic was blocked.

The trolley repair wagon came and the crew jacked up the sagging side of the dairy wagon, without first removing the load. Just as the wagon appeared lighted, it all gave way and the big cans were dashed to the street. There was a mild explosion and a mighty splash of white, as 46 of the cans opened and their contents spilled into the street. The wagon was badly damaged.

COMMUNITY CENTRES SOUGHT

Education Board Asked to Permit Use of School Rooms.

Free lectures on vocational subjects and the use of school buildings as "community centres" are asked for in a petition to the Board of Education, which is being circulated among residents of the northeast. The board will be requested to give the use of school houses not occupied at night, and to supply speakers to lecture on textiles, general business methods, salesmanship and similar topics.

The appeal is the result of a successful series of 10 lectures on salesmanship which were held under the auspices of the Public Educational Association in the Hunter School. The "community centre" idea includes the project of having debates held in the school buildings.

G. W. Hummel, 2448 Kensington avenue, is chairman of the committee circulating the petition.

Fire Damages Prison Plant

JACKSON, Mich., March 16.—Fire which started early today in the Jackson prison took a plant called out every engine in the city and badly damaged the prison proper. More than 150 convicts at work in the binder twine plant nearby, were hurriedly escorted by guards to their cells.

NEW COMET, GOING AT GREAT SPEED, APPEARS

Astronomers Greatly Interested in Latest Addition to Celestial Wonders.

A new comet is with us. It isn't as big as the famous Halley's comet, or as this crusty old earth with its wars and politics, but as for speed, it has them all "skinned." With a clear road and no slow downs, it averages 29 miles a second or 72,000 miles an hour. Of course, like any other comet, it takes its spurts and slow downs as a matter of daily routine, but if during the time between your breakfast and evening meal it hasn't covered 864,000 miles, or approximately 35 times around this earth, it sees to it that this distance is made up the next day.

When first discovered by Mellish, a Wisconsin astronomer, on February 10, the comet was about 500,000,000 miles away, and, as they say on the race track, "coming strong. Scientists say that the sun's attraction was the cause of the comet coming in this direction. Discovered on the 10th of February, it has swooped down from space, passed under the sun, and is tearing back into the same space. It will never be seen again.

According to scientists, it is a very modest comet. It almost refuses to be seen. Just before the break of day, it can be seen way off to the southeast, near the sun. The brightening skies and proximinity of the sun make the comet difficult to see, but it can be noticed with an ordinary pair of opera glasses or a small telescope. According to Prof. Charles Doolittle, of the University of Pennsylvania, the comet will not be visible much longer except with powerful telescopes, such as the one in the Lick Observatory in California. That observatory will be able to watch the movements of the comet until it passes through Jupiter's orbit, a distance of about 480,000,000 miles.

CITY HALL EMPLOYES URGE PENSION LAW

Committee Named to Call on Governor and Ask Him to Sign Bill.

A bill, which has passed the Legislature and is now before Governor Brumbaugh to establish a fund in all first-class cities in Pennsylvania to pension all employes more than 50 years of age who have served the city for 20 years or more, is being vigorously championed by employes of the municipal departments and county officers at City Hall.

Representatives of the employes in every department have held conferences, and at a meeting today a committee was named to call upon Governor Brumbaugh to request him to sign the bill.

The measure specifies that no employe under 50 years of age shall be benefited unless such employe be totally and permanently disabled.

Each first-class city will be required to set aside and appropriate for the municipal pension fund a sum not in excess of one-half of 1 per cent. of all taxes. The employes are to contribute 1 per cent. of their salaries each month until they retire on pension, when their payments cease.

Annual pensions to retired employes will be one-half of the salary received each year for the two years previous to retirement. Pension payments will be made by the department in which the pensioner was employed.

BIG DROP IN ROLLS

U. of P. Students in Roof Garden Shower Food on Pedestrians.

Rolls scattered over the sidewalk at 13th and Chestnut streets today caused many persons to believe that an end to the high cost of living had come at last. There was an emphatic drop in rolls. They fell in bunches from the roof garden of the Hotel Adelphia, where the Phi Delta Theta Fraternity of the University of Pennsylvania held its annual beefsteak dinner.

When the celebrants became frolicsome and found they had too much food, they tossed the rolls, mingled with confetti, into Chestnut street. Passersby thought they were attacked by an early spring hailstorm, and those who looked up to investigate saw the rolls coming their way and dodged about the street to escape them.

When several spring hats had been crushed out of recognition, Policeman Suebeck ran to the roof and stopped the storm. The students were clad as chefs, and although each was armed with a large carving knife, decided to stop their "cutting up" at once.

CHARLES BLANCKE DIES

Old P. R. R. Employe, Choir Singer and Magazine Writer.

Charles Blancke, 64 years old, for 42 years an employe of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, died today at his home, 4612 Sansom street. Death resulted from heart disease. He had been an invalid for several years, but until one year ago was an accountant in the railroad's offices.

Mr. Blancke was noted as a choir singer, having sung in the Church of St. Luke and the Epiphany, 13th and Spruce streets; the Swedenborgian Church, 22d and Chestnut streets, and the Tabernacle Presbyterian Church. He also contributed special articles to magazines.

Mr. Blancke was born in Cheltenham, England, and was graduated from Cheltenham College. He is survived by a widow and one son, Wilton W. Blancke, who is a teacher of Latin in Central High School.

Funeral services will be held Thursday from the undertaking parlors of Oliver H. Bair. The Rev. David M. Steele, of the Church of St. Luke and The Epiphany, will conduct the services.

WIFE PLEADS FOR PRISONER

Sentence of Man Who Posed as Army Officer Postponed.

Sentence of Harry M. Schneider, a New Jersey lawyer, who posed as a United States army officer to obtain money, was again deferred today in the United States District Court. His wife made a dramatic plea for clemency, blaming herself for not having known that political associations were leading him on a downward career, and declaring that she would work with him to pay back the money.

Assistant United States District Attorney Kremp asked for a postponement of sentence, in order to examine letters sent in Schneider's behalf to Judge Dickinson.

When one of Schneider's victims appeared and urged that another chance be given to him, Mr. Kremp declared that she was "as gullible today as when she was victimized." Another woman testified that Schneider had restored the greater part of the sum of which he defrauded her.

CONNECTICUT DAMAGED

Battleship Will Arrive Here in a Few Days for Repairs.

The battleship Connecticut, whose starboard propeller shaft was broken Sunday as the vessel was entering Guantanamo Bay, according to an announcement today, will be brought to the Philadelphia Navy Yard in a few days for repairs.

The rudder also was badly damaged, but the hull escaped injury, and the vessel will proceed to this port under her own power, convoyed by the collier Orion.

The accident occurred when the ship was returning from a short practice cruise. There were no casualties.

SCIENCE PRACTITIONER FREED BY CORONER

Parents of Victim of Diphtheria Also Liberated on Insufficiency of Evidence.

The parents of 7-year-old Josephine May Wood, of 1727 Sydenham street, and the Christian Science practitioner, who were arrested following the death of the child a week ago from diphtheria, were discharged today by Coroner Knight at the inquest because of insufficient evidence. The Coroner declared that while there was not enough evidence to hold the three for criminal responsibility, they were near the border line.

Assistant District Attorney Finley Brown asked that the parents and the practitioner be held for court, but the coroner directed the jury to bring in a verdict discharging them. The parents are William Wood and Mrs. Emely May Wood. Dorothea Wohmuth, of 1614 North Sixteenth street, is the Christian Science practitioner who treated the child.

She testified she was called in February 22, and "according to the law of God," offered "scientific prayer." After this, according to the witness, the condition of the little girl improved, "according to my sense." Mrs. Wood also testified that her daughter's condition improved, declaring that the child asked when she could return to school.

Several days later, however, the child became worse. Miss Wohmuth had been making scientific prayers for her recovery every day.

When symptoms of contagious disease became manifest, Miss Wohmuth called in Dr. Bella Shissler, of 2830 Diamond street, but by that time it was too late to save the little girl's life.

Both parents of the dead child testified that they did not call in the Christian Science worker in the expectation she could cure the little girl. They said they sent for her to appeal to a higher power to effect the cure. Miss Wohmuth testified she had treated hundreds of cases and none of her patients had died.

LOSERS IN CONTEST TO BE PAID FOR WORK

Those Unable to Win Place in "Lucky Fifty" Will Receive Compensation for Efforts.

Some hundreds of Philadelphians are going to find the losers' end of the great subscription contest being run by the EVENING LEDGER and the PUBLIC LEDGER of considerable value next July. The share for the losers in this contest, unlike others, will be worth something, as every man and woman participating in the contest who does not win one of the great free trips to the Panama-Pacific and Panama-California Expositions will be paid the full newsdealers' commission on each subscription obtained.

The contest editor and his staff are still at work figuring out the most advantageous itinerary for the prize winners. As has been announced, this will include stop overs at virtually every point of interest between this city and the Pacific coast. The Grand Canon of Arizona will be visited by the EVENING LEDGER-PUBLIC LEDGER contestants, as well as other notable points of interest.

This itinerary will be announced within a short time, and it probably will add impetus to the contest. New contestants are still flocking in and even those who got in at the start and have now thousands of points to their credit have learned they will have to keep working if they expect to get one of the free trips.

Those who still wish to join the contest may do so by sending in their names and addresses to the contest editor, second floor of the PUBLIC LEDGER building. He will see that they are supplied with all necessary information and hints on how to get subscriptions.

MAKING A PLAYGROUND

Emergency Aid Committee Puts More Than 50 Men to Work.

More than 50 men were at work today for the Emergency Aid Committee on a plot of land known as the White Hall Commons in Frankford, which will be developed into a playground. Emergency Aid officers believe the plan will hold out work for the unemployed for nearly two months.

The tract being improved is 27 acres in extent. J. W. Osborne and Charles E. Vogdes, two engineers in the 5th District of the Municipal Highway Bureau, have been working as inspectors. Many of the men knew so little of shoveling that the inspectors were obliged to hold instruction classes. The work is mainly leveling.

Slow Mail Delivery Deplored

Renting a private box and hiring a boy as a solution to the slow mail delivery system in this city was suggested by a Philadelphia postal inspector, according to an official of the Chestnut Street Business Men's Association. Members of this association, it was stated yesterday, maintain quarters in office buildings, and one of the business men was offered the mail box idea when he went to the Postoffice to register a complaint.

Resolutions were adopted yesterday at a meeting of the Board of Trade, protesting against the curtailed service in the city and pointing out that unless the force of employes is increased there "is little hope of improvement."

U. S. Job for William Saulsbury

DOVER, Del., March 16.—William Saulsbury, a cousin of United States Senator Saulsbury, has been appointed superintendent of the Bureau of Corporations in the Department of Justice. The appointment was recommended by Senator Saulsbury. William Saulsbury formerly was publisher of The Delawarean Printing Company. Two years ago he removed to California. Last summer he was a candidate for the postmastership here.

Detectives Fight Crowd in Arrest

A riot was narrowly averted this morning at 258 North Simpson street when Detectives Smith and Epley, of the 61st and Thompson streets station, went to the house to arrest Frank Gentile on a charge preferred by Elizabeth Piccola. The detectives had to use their blackjacks on a number of men who tried to prevent the arrest. Gentile was arraigned before Magistrate Boyle and held without bail for a further hearing.

Northwest Business Men's Officers

The following officers were nominated at a meeting of the Northwest Business Men's Association last night: President, Walter B. Bertolet; vice president, Edward A. Noppel; second vice president, J. George Schemp; third vice president, Patrick Lynch; secretary, Edward Martin, and treasurer, Thomas Winchell.

McAdoo Out of Danger

WASHINGTON, March 16.—The condition of Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo, who last week was operated on for appendicitis, today was reported much improved. His physicians declare that his recovery now virtually is assured.

THE BLUE BUCKLE

A BAFFLING MYSTERY AND BREATHLESS TALE OF ADVENTURE

By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

Author of "The Red Mouse," "The Running Fight," "Catspaw," Etc.

SYNOPSIS.

On board a transatlantic liner, returning from Europe, Craig Rutherford falls in love with a woman, a Mrs. Talcott. She seems to be troubled by something, but refuses his help, and spends most of the time with her invalid husband. Also on board is J. Baron Helderman, an unscrupulous financier, who makes a business proposition to Rutherford, and in a conversation says that he suspects the Talcotts of something. He directs attention to a blue buckle worn by Mrs. Talcott. Later Helderman bribes the wireless operator to let him take a message.

The message he takes is that a valuable diamond necklace is being smuggled into this country. An elderly man and a young woman are guilty. Again suspicion is directed against the Talcotts. Later Mrs. Talcott is attacked by a ruffian, who attempts to snatch the blue buckle from her. Craig Rutherford rescues her. Following the woman he loves, he catches a glimpse of her in Helderman's suite with her arms about his neck.

At the dock, New York, Mrs. Talcott forces her way into Craig's cab and asks him to drive her home. As they examine the house Craig attempts to declare his love, but Mr. Talcott's voice is heard, warning him of his presence.

Craig then finds that he has been made a tool for the smugglers. In his pockets are the blue buckle and the string of diamonds. Ruffians break into the room, and again the voice of Mr. Talcott saves the day. Craig keeps the blue buckle for safety and turns the diamonds over to the secret service agents. They tell him that Helderman has been seen at his home every night for the last two weeks. Craig goes himself to investigate and through the glass wall of Helderman's house he sees that gentleman parading up and down. Craig calls on him. Helderman exhibits his dogs, two bloodhounds, which are absolutely under his control. They talk about the smuggling incident.

CHAPTER VIII—(Continued).

"Then you don't know—?"

"I haven't the remotest notion who that person is."

"Not even a suspicion, I suppose," said Helderman sourly. "Well, I'm older and less beauty-blinded than you, and I can guess."

Again, as on shipboard, the financier seemed determined to cast suspicion on the Ballantynes. Rutherford was more than ever determined to get at the bottom of his relations with them. He recalled how Helderman had studiously denied knowing the girl, and avoided an open interview with her. That last little tableau in his cabin, however, had burned itself too deeply into Craig's memory to be thrust aside. Craig's working theory now was that the girl was the innocent tool of her unscrupulous father, and that Helderman was using his knowledge of the affair for his own ends. Her manifest sincerity in returning the jewels to him could be explained in no other way.

"Well, as I had no interest in the matter," said Craig, "I took the diamonds direct to the customs people, and told them all I knew. Now I'm going to let them—and the smugglers—do the worrying. I'm through!"

"And what did you tell the customs people?" asked Helderman.

"Why—about our receipt of the wireless message, that night—and the curious part about it is, that they insist no such message was received!"

"Humph!" grunted Helderman. "Did you mention any names?"

"Naturally. Why not?"

"The Talcotts, I presume?"

"No. I think I overlooked them," replied Craig, unconcernedly. "But I spoke of you as having received the message."

"You spoke of me!" repeated Helderman, glaring in spite of himself—then more facetiously, "Why, my dear young man! Let me commend your discretion! You take particular pains to mention J. Baron Helderman, to whom the necklace would be nothing, while you as carefully refrain from mentioning an unscrupulous man and a pretty and probably vain woman who probably could use the money or enjoy the bauble. It was clever of you, Mr. Rutherford! Nothing could more successfully have kept your inamorata out of difficulties!"

Rutherford turned red; the blood mounted slowly. For the first time he was in danger of forgetting himself. His eyes shone under frowning brows.

"Please do not make the mistake of supposing that I regard it as a compliment to be mixed up in an affair of this sort," he said deliberately. "I probably know Mrs. Talcott a good deal less than you do."

"That cannot be, my friend," Helderman replied, with a sudden return of his geniality, "I do not know her beyond the barest speaking acquaintance aboard ship. That, unfortunately, is nothing. I wish it were more. However, believe me, my young friend, you served your country a bad turn when you gave up the necklace." Plainly his host was disappointed.

"I cannot see it," Craig disagreed.

"I will show you. If you had kept it, sooner or later the smuggler would have made an effort to secure it. You would have been on your guard. You would have caught the criminal red-handed and could have made your terms with him—or her; or—I know your patriotic spirit—you could have turned your criminal over to Uncle Sam — and got Carnegie hero medal!"

"The smuggler did not make an effort to secure it," replied Craig.

"Was she successful—but no, else you would not have flown to the arms of the Government," observed Helderman, an irritating laugh following his words, and the set eye behind his monocle gleaming spitefully. "I'm afraid, Mr. Rutherford, that you have cooked your goose with the lady. Now, with our young and handsome hero out of the running, an older—and perhaps wiser—man might—"

Rutherford arose. He was utterly at loss to fit any kind of theory to the facts he knew; but he was not in a shade of doubt as to his feeling for his host. He cordially hated him.

"We must meet again, Mr. Rutherford," said Helderman, with suave courtesy, when he saw his guest inclined to end the interview. "In business, perhaps—I am not without influence in that world, even if the ladies find me less interesting than others we might mention—in business I may be of service to you. Command me, please."

"Thank you; we probably shall meet—in the business world," replied Rutherford.

As he reached the door, he glanced toward the useless little balcony on the wall over the fireplace.

"Does that unique place serve as a kennel for your dogs?" he asked.

Helderman laughed.

"That is my one mistake in this house. I proposed to have a desk up there out of the way, but I was abroad at the time, and the architects hung the thing there without arranging a way to reach it. I have left it because of its quaint railing. It's a treasure of carving from an old church in Italy. The railing is now an excuse for the balcony!"

Craig entered the dimly lighted hall—then stopped short.

Against the gorgeous curtain on the landing, under the soft glow of the oriental lamp, a slender figure in a white evening gown stood out as though framed. A light scarf shrouded the hair, and a dark cloak had slipped half off and was trailing fro mone shoulder. The features were indistinct, but Craig's eyes were caught and held by the crystal fringes on the hem that shimmered and glistened in the light. He had seen the moonlight gleaming upon them, on a certain memorable night at sea.

He whirled about quickly, in time to see that Helderman was also regarding the statuesque figure with a frown.

"I thought you said you did not know—"

His voice rang through the hall like a bell. The girl, who had stopped with bent head to loosen the trailing cloak, started, and without a backward glance ran up the stairs.

"An elderly cousin presides over my household," replied Helderman. "She evidently has a caller this evening."

Rutherford shot one look at his host. The excuse sounded stumbling and futile. Scarcely able to articulate, he bowed, took his coat and hat from the butler, and hurried out of the marble mansion.

Down the broad landings he stumbled, almost blindly, eager to put all posible distance between himself and this hateful place. At the gate he gave one backward glance. There in the great bare room paced Helderman, with his eccentric stride.

Craig walked mechanically along the drive, his brain in a whirl. "Deceived again! Deceived again!" a dozen spiteful little imps seemed to be saying to him. Here was the girl, who to know was to trust, calling as a favored guest at the home of an utterly unscrupulous man. The thought galled him.

Suddenly he stopped and faced about. He might wait and see when the girl came away—whether she was coming or not.

His abrupt stop seemed to act like a barrier to two men who had been walking quietly behind him. One of them involuntarily edged into the shadow of the fence; the other moved on with a show of unconcern. They were following him.

Just then a cab came along. Craig hailed it and leaped in.

X

THE NEW VALET.

The next morning Craig slept rather late, then after a lazy, luxurious bath he donned dressing-robe and slippers, ordered some toast and coffee sent to his room, and set himself to the task of completing the going-through of his mail.

The bell at the hall door sounded.

"What can I do for you?" he asked, admitting the caller.

A stout, smooth-faced man with considerably more upper lip that lower handed him a card and bowed respectfully.

"M. Goulet. Gentleman's gentleman," Rutherford read aloud and remembered. "Oh, I see, you're a valet."

"Oui, m'sieu. M'sieu Kelley of the Kelley Employment Agency sent me around here, M'sieu Rutherford."

Craig looked keenly and amusedly at his visitor. The canopied lip and the French went queerly together.

"What's the M for?" he asked.

"Michele."

"You are looking for a job—Michele?"

"Oui, M'sieu."

"Say that again!" said Craig, smiling. The man obeyed uneasily.

"Why don't you say it in French?" asked Craig.

"I have said it in French, M'sieu."

"It's a beautiful brand of Irish!" Rutherford asserted. "But I'm glad of it. I'm tired of Frenchmen, and I don't want a gentleman's gentleman. Now if you only knew where I could find a man's man—even if he were Irish—"

M. Goulet's face grew radiant.

"Yis, sor! Ye wouldn't mind an Irishman, sor?"

"I certainly would—if his name was Michele Goulet."

Craig liked the look of red-blooded manhood and blue-eyed intelligence that now took the place of the badly-assumed French composure and elegance.

"Me mither named me Mike Gooley, sor!"

"Do you drink, Mike?" asked Craig, a good deal more entertained than he showed on the surface.

"I do that, sor."

"Do you smoke, Mike?"

"When it's to me liking, sor."

"Pipe or cigar, Mike?"

"Which ever ye have, sor," Mike answered with a twinkle.

"I guess you'll do," said Craig, glad to find a man whose honesty actually enjoyed itself in the exertion.

"Thank ye, sor."

"Just remember, Mike, to keep your hands off of me, and keep out of my way. I'm just able to get up and go to bed alone. I have mind enough to decide which shirt to wear; and I usually prefer to put in my own buttons. The less you do for me, the better we'll get along. Do you follow me?"

"I do, sor," said Mike heartily.

Craig crossed the room and opened up a cellarette built into the wall.

"My liquors and cigars are here."

"Thank ye for showing me, sor."

"I did it so that you may know what particular place—to avoid. These are for me, Mike," announced his new master with a definiteness that must make its impression on the new man.

"And where will I find me own, sor?" asked that worthy imperturbably.

From another this seeming impertinence would have deserved rebuke; but from Mike it came as naturally as his brogue. And the look of the man was of such adoring loyalty that he was reminded of a similar expression which had lit up young Maxwell's face.

"Have we met somewhere before, Mike?" he asked.

"I caddied for ye once in the links, sor," he answered; "and I can name the hunts ye've been in. I've read ivery line—"

"That's all right, Mike. I guess we're doomed to agree."

He was right. Mike was not a ladies' man, nor yet a gentleman's gentleman, but a man's man from start to finish. He was installed at once; and Rutherford prevented possible temptation by providing a bottle or so of the best Irish ever distilled and a box of good cigars.

The new valet assisted at his toilet, and Craig left him as much at home as if he had always lived there, and set off downtown to enter on his new career in banking circles.

Craig was eager to get to work; but the caution that had always prompted him to get good and ready before he entered into any project now led him to stop in at the specialist's office. It was the same doctor who had sent him abroad after his accident upon the field; and he now firmly opposed the idea of Craig's entering anything so confining as business for another six months at least.

Rutherford was disappointed, but went on down to see how things were getting along in the bank, anyway. It made him feel somewhat reconciled to find that Ferguson, the cashier, was sorry not to have him at once.

"We are all itching to show you how easy jumping hurdles is, compared to what we are up against," he said, looking with somewhat envious admiration at the athletic figure and healthy, clear-eyed countenance. "We want you to see how easy it is to come croppers in high financiering."

"I've already met one high financier," replied Craig.

"Who was he?"

"J. Baron Helderman."

"Helderman!" exclaimed Ferguson. "You met him, eh? You're making a fine start."

"Is he then so wonderful?" asked Craig, interested to know just how his singular acquaintance stood with business men.

"He's one of the seven wonders," Ferguson smiled. "Nobody knows what he'll be doing next."

"In what way?"

"Rutherford, he's a wizard! He's going to be a giant down here on Wall street!" said the cashier, "or else—he'll go to smash."

Craig made no reference to the house on Riverside drive. Instead, he set himself to make Ferguson tell more of its owner. This was easy to accomplish, as Ferguson shared with many others the wonder which Helderman's amazing and freakish operations had inspired.

"Everything he touches turns to gold or seems to, at any rate. He has unlimited nerve to carry through enterprises that we cautious fellows would not dare to swing. There's something that inspires respect just in the bold look of the man. I saw him last fall; and with that foreign walk of his and the full beard he looked like a Russian Grand Duke."

"Full beard?" Rutherford repeated. "Why, he has a goatee—a small one—now. Makes him look more like Mephistopheles."

"Yes, I heard he had changed the style of wearing his beard. Everything about him is of interest, so the Street learns even that."

Rutherford left the bank and started him. He stopped at his club for lunch, but ate in abstracted mood. He kept wondering when and why Helderman had changed his full beard to a goatee.

At his apartment he found Mike in full charge, with the place looking shipshape.

"How goes it, Mike?" he nodded to the man.

"Very well, sor. There was two men here today."

"To see me?"

"No sor, to see me."

"You?" Rutherford turned to his man with some severity. Mike must not be allowed to take too many things for granted.

"They wanted me to do them a bit of a favor, sor," explained the man.

"That will do, Mike," cautioned his master, starting toward his dressing room.

"Excuse me, sor, I don't think so. They wanted a peep at the insides of your safe, sor."

"What?" Rutherford whirled about to exclaim.

"Yis, sir; and they offered me a fiver for the look."

"Did they get it?"

"Not for a fiver, sor. They see my indignation, and they made it 50."

"Did they get it for that?"

"It still wasn't enough, sor," Gooley replied, and between master and man flashed a look of understanding.

"Tell me about it, Mike," said Craig, sitting down.

The man did so, describing his visitors with a wealth of humorous and telling detail which left no doubt in Craig's mind of the identity of the men.

"Did they tell you why they wanted to see the inside of the safe?" asked Craig.

"No, sor," Mike answered, shaking his head.

"Look here, M'sieu Michele," said his master suddenly, "do you think you could be bribed—with a big roll?"

"Is there a man living that can't be, sor?" asked the man, his blue eyes opening wide.

Rutherford smiled at the candor. The two seemed to understand each other in spite of speech.

"All right, Mike. The next time they come around—for they will be around!—you just make them come down handsomely."

"And what's that for?" asked the man in surprise.

"Never mind. You take the bribe—get all you can—and you'll be doing your duty by me, too."

"Put it that way, sor, and it's easy money!" replied Mike with alacrity.

The two men did not return that day, however.

In the evening Craig returned from a dinner with two or three of his friends, to find Gooley standing guard on the outside of the door, with his finger on his lips.

"Did they come, Mike?" he asked.

"No, sor. But there's a gentleman and a lady in there, sor. I said you was expected back soon, and they said they would wait."

Rutherford guessed from his man's attitude that he was considerably impressed with the new callers. He could not guess who they might be himself, so without any comment he handed his topcoat and hat to Mike, and entered the room.

A single light glowing in the centre of the room indicated, without clearly revealing its occupants. He saw a man standing, tall and straight, awaiting him, while by his side in the lounging chair sat a girlish figure gracefully clad, her head crowned by the sweeping brim and plumes of a large hat. Rutherford was reminded of the lady who had called so unceremoniously the day before, and imagined that Miss Arany was back again in quest of the blue buckle.

"We'll have more light," he observed quickly, and stepped over to the switch which controled the side lights.

The illumination brought his two callers into sharp relief. They were the Ballantynes.

XI.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

"Will you be seated, sir?" asked Rutherford, indicating a chair, and at the same time acknowledging the girl's presence. He was plainly surprised at the identity of his visitors and could not conceal the fact.

"Mr. Rutherford, I wish to apologize, first of all, for this informal visit," said Ballantyne, with the quiet self-possession of a man of the world.

Rutherford bowed. He was at a complete loss to place this man, who gave every appearance of being a gentleman, but one whose actions left him open to suspicion at every turn. If he had nothing to conceal, why had he behaved so mysteriously in the 10th street house, shouting out his warnings, but never putting in an appearance to make his threats good? And if he were not the diamond smuggler, why was he calling today, unless it were to reclaim the gems which the girl had insisted upon restoring to Rutherford himself? As he thought it over, he had been more and more convinced that the girl was being made the innocent tool of a wide-reaching plot. How else could he explain those clandestine visits to Helderman?

Miss Ballantyne was plainly embarrassed.

"Are we quite alone?" she asked glancing toward the door.

"Only my man out there," replied Craig, determined to put all the explanations upon their shoulders.

"Would you—would you mind closing the door?" the girl faltered. "It's—it's very important that we should not be overheard."

"Oh, I'm callous now," replied Craig, with a glance toward the elder man. "Mike wouldn't understand—and I'm used to being overheard!"

The blood rushed up Miss Ballantyne's throat and into her cheeks. The pearls above the edge of her low-cut gown gleamed white against the rosy flesh. She seemed almost ready to cry, but after a second her trembling lips suddenly curved into a smile. She also had recalled that first voice of warning sounding up from the lower hall.

Mr. Ballantyne glanced from one to the other, ill at ease and evidently understanding nothing of this contretemps.

Rutherford had already repented of his brusqueness. Somehow, it required only a look from this charming young woman to make him obedient to her every whim. He crossed the room, closed the door, and came back to a chair facing his guests.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Ballantyne?" he asked, purposely using the man's right name.

It appeared to pass unnoted by the man addressed.

"Mr. Rutherford," he began, hesitatingly, "it may seem strange to you that I should seek a favor from a comparative stranger—"

He paused, as if at a loss how to proceed, and Craig could not forbear a home thrust.

"I'm always glad to be of service, I hope, even to strangers—but I do object to being made a party to crooked schemes!"

"Crooked schemes!" exclaimed both visitors in a breath.

"I call smuggling about the crookedest business in which a man can engage!" asserted Rutherford. "And I want to say, once for all, that I am tired of being used in any such way!"

"Mr. Rutherford!" protested Ballantyne, with the controlled ire of an astonished gentleman.

"I tell you I'm tired of this subterfuge! Your whole scheme is exposed. You overreached yourself when you put that thing in my pocket!"

A moment of strained silence ensued, in which the two men glared at each other, each without wavering. Miss Ballantyne sprang from her chair, as if to prevent them from assailing each other bodily.

"Why, you don't think we were smuggling that old steel buckle, do you?" she cried.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW.)