

Mr. Markham's Private Secretary.

By ROBERT CROMIE.

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SYNOPSIS.

Mr. Henry Markham, M. P., visits the country house of his political friend, Sir George Howard. He brings his secretary Mr. John Warrington, with him, as the latter is informed to assist in their conference, and is also writing a book on the life of Sir George Howard. He also holds views on social reform, which comes unpopular in the house, especially with Miss Marion Howard and the young people. Some of the boys take a tiff with a quarrel with Warrington, who scares the man of with a pipe case masquerading as a revolver. Miss Howard is much amused at this, but resents Warrington's indifference to her. One day he works later than usual in the study and she finds him there while on her household rounds. She is very prettily dressed, and he thanks her for coming in. She takes him up for insinuating that she has come to exhibit herself. He denies this, and a further exchange of remarks.

PART II.

At last the book was finished. Mr. Markham was delighted with the tone and argument, and signed his name thereto with a flourish and without noticing his secretary's look. The contentment, Miss Howard was indignant when she heard of this; though the signature really meant much, including a publisher, she declared Mr. Markham more or less, but Warrington's conduct was inexcusable. He had no spirit, she told him. He replied that it was impossible for her to see the matter from



Miss Howard fell exhausted into his arms.

his point of view, that of a man who had to work for his living, and that she could not grasp the complex influences at work in society, and the political sphere. She left him with unaffected disgust.

Mr. Markham's visit was nearly over. The last evening he came to a large skating party had been improvised. All the guests except the secretary, were on the ice, a lake five miles over a lonely moor. Warrington was there, too, but only to look on. He did not care to join the skaters. They did not care either. One, perhaps—but that would anticlimax. At the evening advanced snow began to fall. It came gently at first and the skaters enjoyed it. It made them white and picturesque. It dulled the start of their skates into a muffled rumble as they sped over the fast coating ice. It clung in delightful little frosty filaments to the eyelashes of the girls and whitened the mustaches of the men. It was grand. Then the snow thickened and his mind suddenly. He went forth in a moment. The little deuce-fakelets were followed by blinding drifts. Darkness covered the land and an impenetrable mist enveloped the skaters. Facing blindly for the lake shore they found bank here and there in detached groups; sometimes three or four together, hand-in-hand, often one by one, blinded, dazed, demoralized.

The secretary sat on a tree-stump by the bank and watched the careless snow-jockey. He was interested in nothing—nothing more. He told himself that he did not care a straw for the whole party, and that he would be satisfied to see the skaters perished in the drifts. Still he waited persistently. He did not tell himself for what. At last he arose. Just then the muffled hum of a pair of skates sounded far out on the ice. The sound waxed louder and fainter alternately. Like the traveler in a primeval forest who had lost his way, the skater was moving in a circle. Let him circle there till he perished. She must now will on the way to the castle. But "stay!" Warrington put his two hands to his mouth and sent a deafening shout across the ice. A faint cry answered back. He shouted again in the same direction. Then he heard the sound of skates plowing through the deepening snow straight for him. The sound swayed to the right. "This way," Warrington roared from the shore. "This way—hang you!"

In ten seconds Miss Howard fell exhausted into his arms. It was impossible to keep the snow off. He could only wait until she had recovered breath, and then without a word of apology he took her up in his arms and carried her into the partial shelter of a belt of underwood. The cold became intense. Warrington soon saw that before she had even recovered strength the girl's circulation was running down. She must be kept moving or she would freeze to death. She was already half asleep. Fortunately he had a small flask of brandy. He took the house-keeper at the castle, who took pity on him, "he seemed so lonesome," had pressed upon him when he started. He forced some down the girl's lips and, when she partly revived, said, sharply:

"Now, then! March!"
"I cannot breathe! This awful snow! He shook her roughly. She would not stir. He hardened his heart and struck her in the face with his open hands. She only moaned and her head upon his shoulder. He tried to cover her from the awful downfall, which momentarily increased. Then,

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falling in this, he burst out passionately. "Listen to me. Where are your friends gone? Why have they deserted you? (They had not really missed her). Do you hear me? I am going to stand by you. And won't you even try to save yourself?"

"I cannot, save myself," she moaned.
"No; I am not that sort. Now, then!" He turned her in his arms and stolidly nodded through the snow. He had tramped that way often and knew it well. But the snow was terrible. Down it came, thickening every minute. It beat him soon. He was knee-deep in it—and he was off the track. When he discovered this by the uneven footing underneath the deep coating he stopped. Warrington was no coward. But his heart failed him. He was physically incapable of carrying the girl farther. No shelter was near. The girl herself was absolutely exhausted. He appealed to her again:

"Could you not try to walk a bit—just to rest me. I can do no more. Do you not see?"
"What's the good of trying?" she answered feebly. "It is impossible. Why don't you leave me? I want to sleep. I don't care for anything else."
"That's where the trouble is. I don't want you to die."
He drank some brandy. The snowfall only changed for the worse. It came down with a force that had actual weight in it. He staggered doggedly on. Once he fell heavily. The relief from the cutting wind was delightful. The snow was soft. It was a downy pillow—and to rest just for a single moment! He struggled to his feet and clutched his teeth in desperation. Again he appealed forward. Some shelter must be at hand; some help must be near. If neither one nor other—he would take a leaf from the book of the dainty little aristocrat he carried in his heavy democratic arms. He too could die game. And so, forward! The snow was worse than ever. The girl by a great effort aroused herself and said: "You have done enough, too much. I am sorry I have not quite understood you. I know you now. God bless you. Save yourself, if you can. I will not save myself," he cried hysterically. "I will not leave you. I will fight on!"

But he was dead beat. The girl flung herself from his arms, saying: "To gether then." Hampered by her dress the exertion of forcing her way through the drifts was terrible. Her stockings gave her strength. The end came soon. They faced each other silently; each waiting for the other to speak. Then she spoke first: "The snow must be clearing off or we are in the lee of something—some shelter."
"God grant it!" said the woman. "I noticed it, but feared it might not be true."
"They could not see a yard ahead. Another effort then. After a few steps they were brought up by a wall. It must be an outbuilding of some farm. They found the door. They were saved for the moment. The house, a mere cattle shelter, was fortunately nearly full of hay. He twisted a firm wisp and brushed her skirts, boots and stockings clear of the snow. She must have perished if the thick coating had been allowed to thaw and drench her. He craned his neck and looked over the wall and indeed her to swallow a few more drops of the brandy. Then he incontinently finished the flask himself; he needed it. "Going to the open doorway of the shelter he stood on guard."

As the night wore away the snow gradually ceased. The moon at last shone out. To his surprise Warrington recognized the locality—a half-mile half way between the castle and the rectory where Miss Howard's married sister lived. She was asleep when he went to her. He awoke her gently. She was now well rested and almost strong. He craned his neck and looked over the wall and indeed her to swallow a few more drops of the brandy. Then he incontinently finished the flask himself; he needed it. "Going to the open doorway of the shelter he stood on guard."



"To come back tomorrow for—"

ground-floor window. "This will serve better," he said, as he unfastened the clasp and threw up the sash. "Let me help you." He took the girl up in his strong arms and set her in the room. The wind was rising; the fitful moonlight faded; snow began to fall again. "Good night," he said softly; "and I hope you won't be anything the worse."
She seized his outstretched hand and held it. "Where are you going?"
"Going! O, going! In the first place, to lose myself in the snow again."
"For what purpose?"
"So that you may see? When I find my way again I will be at the castle, you hear. That's what cattle-shelter business is all a myth. I say so who should know. You see now?"
There was a pause, and then the girl said with a slight sob:
"You are sure you will find your way to the castle?"
"O, yes, sure enough, and not very particular whether I do or not."
"Else what?"
"I go with you. I know what it means, but will go, unless you prefer to find the way to the castle, and—"
"How much more?"
"To come back tomorrow for—"
She kissed him on the lips. He forgot the pleading cold, the merciless snow. He took her little perished face in his hands and drew it close to him again.
"Do you mean it?" he asked, in a trembling voice.

"Yes, with all my heart."
"Then I promise."
He turned from her and set his face against the snow. Soon he passed out of her sight into the snow.
"He will come tomorrow," she said in a low, happy voice.
(THE END.)

INDUSTRIAL.

A meeting of the bituminous coal operators will be held at Philadelphia on Feb. 25 to try and agree upon some plan by which the production can be curtailed and prices maintained. The change in the market of the Consolidation Coal company has somewhat upset the plans of the operators, as it is not known how the new officers stand in the matter. C. F. Mayer, the ex-president of the company, was in favor of a plan for uniting the trade, and it is thought that the new officers will be of the same inclination. The railroad association, which has been a part of the bituminous coal trade for a number of years, is likely to soon pass out of existence, and a new one is being organized. The operators are very anxious to have something done, as the time for making the yearly contracts is growing near. The railroad association is considering a proposition to advance the freight rates on bituminous coal, and a movement is on foot to advance the miners' wages from 2 to 10 cents a ton.

At the annual meeting of the Lehigh and Wilkes-Barre Coal company, held at Philadelphia Thursday, the following ticket was elected: President, J. Rogers Maxwell; directors, George E. Baker, James A. Garland, Charles Parkin, Joseph S. Harris, Samuel Dickson, C. Pardee.

Philadelphia Inquirer: There seems to be little question that the new anthracite coal combination will be investigated by the New York legislature, and there seems to be less probability of any trouble arising out of it than out of any previous inquiry of this kind. The motive for aggressive prosecution is lacking. The investigation of the coal trade by a committee of the legislature is a step that has not been followed by any such advance, nor will it be. The trade will not be so ready to come, and no advance in prices will be made in that period, and yet if the combination is investigated at all it will be within six months. It is not probable that the coal trade will be damaged by the advance of 50 cents a ton for the domestic sizes that will go into effect in the next few days. The little benefit because of the demoralization in the trade. The advantage of reduced prices was nearly all secured by the wholesale agents and dealers, the middlemen, who were alive to the speculative movements of the trade and were able to take advantage of them. This is really no complaint of the coal owners, and it must be admitted this is the weakest combination that has been formed in recent years. The coal trade company went into it unwillingly, there is still much ill feeling and still an intention on the part of some companies to withdraw from the Eastern conditions point, therefore, to an attempt that will prove ineffectual.

RAILROAD NOTES.

The annual meeting of the Lehigh and Wilkes-Barre Coal company was held at Philadelphia Thursday. The reports showed that the business done during the past year was very profitable. The company's earnings were \$1,000,000. The company's assets were \$5,000,000. The company's liabilities were \$2,000,000. The company's net worth was \$3,000,000. The company's dividend was \$100,000. The company's stock was sold at \$100 per share.

The Lehigh railroad has introduced a feature to provide for the best of surgical care for persons who may be injured while riding upon their line, and for the care of their employees who may meet with an accident while on duty. In every station is placed a complete surgical outfit. The outfit consists of a first aid kit, a bandage, a pair of rubber boots, six six-inch wide and five deep. In the box are the following: Two long rubber bands, six six-inch wide and five deep. In the box are the following: Two long rubber bands, six six-inch wide and five deep. In the box are the following: Two long rubber bands, six six-inch wide and five deep.

A new and novel system, known as the numeral system, was inaugurated on the entire Lehigh Valley road, Sunday. The new order affects all passenger trains. The conductors are engaged, musters and brakemen; and they will be henceforth known by numbers instead of by name. The conductors receive the new numbers, the brakemen the highest. The oldest conductors are assigned the lowest numbers, and thus with the other trainmen. The object of this rule is to simplify train running, and the bookkeeping of the department. The system originated with the Pennsylvania railroad some years ago, but was later abandoned. It is now in use on the New York Central and on some other roads, and is said to be satisfactory to the road and to the passengers. The men generally take the new order indifferently, and as a matter of course. The naturally merry employees take now and then a calling opportunity by name, but they will soon become accustomed to the system and call by numbers mechanically.

"RUN-DOWN,"

"I'm tired out," says a woman who complains of headache, loss of appetite, nervousness, irritability and indigestion, and who will not get back to her normal health until she has used Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. The object of this medicine is to restore the system to its normal health, and to remove all the causes of the "run-down" condition. It is a powerful and reliable remedy for all the ailments mentioned above, and for many other ailments of a similar nature. It is a true and honest medicine, and it is the only one of its kind. It is the only one that will give you a permanent cure. It is the only one that will give you a permanent cure. It is the only one that will give you a permanent cure.

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In the Most Obstinate Cases, Where All Other Remedies Fail.

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Mr. Charles Becker, manufacturer of fine cigars, at No. 211 Robinson street, Scranton, Pa., says: "I have spent hundreds of dollars for my catarrh, but when I began to use Munyon's Remedies I found that the use of the Catarrh Cure and the Catarrh Remedy made a perfect cure in less than two weeks."

Munyon's Rheumatism Cure never fails to relieve in 1 to 3 hours, and cures in a few days. Price, 25c. Munyon's Dyspepsia Cure positively cures all forms of indigestion and stomach trouble. Price 25c. Munyon's Catarrh Remedies positively cure. Price 25c. each. Munyon's Kidney Cure speedily cures pains in the back, loins and groins, and all forms of kidney disease. Price, 25c. Munyon's Female Remedies are a boon to all women. Price, 25c. Asthma Cure, with Asthma Herbs. \$1.00. Munyon's Headache Cure stops headache in three minutes. Price, 25c. Munyon's Pile Ointment cures all forms of piles. Price 25c. Munyon's Blood Purifier cures all impurities of the blood. Price, 25c. Munyon's Vitalizer restores lost power to weak men. Price, \$1.00. A separate cure for each disease. At all druggists, 25c. a bottle.

Personal letters to Professor Munyon, 1205 Arch street, Philadelphia, Pa., answered with free medical advice for any disease.

BASE BALL GOSSIP.

Manager Irwin, of New York, says it will not be given to the team returning from Jacksonville which of the young players will be placed on the Jersey team. If any one of "sen" players, he will be kept with the National League.

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This cream is a true and honest medicine, and it is the only one of its kind. It is the only one that will give you a permanent cure. It is the only one that will give you a permanent cure. It is the only one that will give you a permanent cure.

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One lot of the Persian velvets, very latest for trimming and vests, worth \$1.50.
Leader's Price, 98c.
25 pieces of new spring dress goods, worth 40c.
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10 pieces of all-wool, black serge, 46 inches wide, worth 80c.
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All of Our Fine Novelty Dress Patterns in Winter Weights at Half Price.
125 pieces of fine dress flannels in dress lengths, regular 10c. quality.
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Leader's Price, 5c.
25 pieces of new printed cambric, 22 inches wide, worth 9c.
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One lot of blankets, slightly soiled, worth \$2.50.
Leader's Price, \$2.49
40 inches heavy brown muslin, worth 8c.
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42 inches bleached pillow casing.
Leader's Price, 7 1/2c. a yard
White outing flannel, good quality.
Leader's Price, 3 1/2c. per yard
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44 Hill bleached muslin.
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Best Standard Printings.
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Fine pearl buttons worth 10c. a dozen.
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Danger Signals

More than half the victims of consumption do not know they have it. Here is a list of symptoms by which consumption can certainly be detected—
Cough, one or two slight efforts on rising, occurring during the day and frequently during the night.
Short breathing after exertion.
Tightness of the chest.
Quick pulse, especially noticeable in the evening and after a full meal.
Chills in the evening, followed by a slight fever.
Perspiration toward morning and pale face and languid in the morning. Loss of vitality.
If you have these symptoms, or any of them, do not delay. There are many preparations which claim to be cures, but Dr. Ficker's Catarrh Remedy for Consumption has the highest endorsements, and has stood the test of years. It will arrest consumption in its earlier stages, and drive away the symptoms named. It is manufactured by the Acker Medical Co., 16 and 18 Chambers St., New York, and sold by all reputable druggists.

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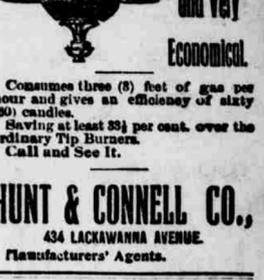
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