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THE WHITE THREAD.

By ALLEN UPWARD.

Author of "Secrets of the Courts of Europe."

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SNYOPSIS.

The story is told to a friend by a French diplomat, erstwhile charge d'affaires at one of the petty principalities of the Balkan, which, while scarcely free from Turkish vassalege, is torn asunder by Austrian and Russian jealousy, In this instance Reigning Prince George Instance Reigning Prince George inclines to Austria, while Princess Catherine is by birth and sympathy attached to Russia. The French charge d'affaires is en-trusted by his Russian colleague with the interests of Russia during the latter's temporary absence. Shortly after this, at a banquet at the palace where the triumph of the Austrian party is announced and celebrated, M. Starovitch, the prime minister whose sympathies are Russian stealthily passes to the representative of France a sealed packet, of value to the Russian party. Princess Catherine, who appears to know of the transaction, warns him to leave with his precious document at once. While preparing to the property of the transaction of the transaction of the transaction of the transaction. obey a servant notices a long white thread attached to his overcoat. It is removed. On the way home the charge d'affaires meets a crippled beggar who seeks to de tain him. But sheking the mna off he pro ceeds to his house and locks the myste-rious packet up. In a few minutes there is a great commotion in the street and it is learned that M. Starovitch has been assassinated. Proceeding at once to the minister's house the Frenchman gains admittance and notices that on the vic tim's coat is a white thread exactly like the one that had been removed from his own. The dying man recognizes the am-bassador, beckons him to his side, is just able to whisper: "The cripple—the pa-pers," and expires. Thoroubly alarmed, the charge d'affaires orders a shirt of mail to be worn for protection.

PART III. "The two words uttered by Starovitch before he expired,' continued the ambassador, "had been sufficient to reveal to me the frightful plot to which I had narrowly escaped falling a victim. There could no longer be a question that the white thread which I had twice come across on this night first on my own clothes, and then on those of the unfortunate minister, was a signal of the most terrible kind. It was not for nothing that I had found mwy path so obstinately blocked by that cripple, till his confederate had time to catch me up from behind. But for the aciedent of the equerry's having drawn my attention to it, the assassin could not doubt, would have found on my back the token which he sought, and I should have shared the fate of the man whom I had just seen breathe his last.

"To the motives of the assasins Starovitch had also given me a clew It was evident htat he had connected has murderer with the mysterious packet which he had confided to me during the banquet. It was possible to resist the idea that this packet contained something which rendered it fatal to its possesor and in my excitement I even went so far as to accuse Baron Dourensk! in my own mind of having forseent his danger and purposely escaped it by a diplomatic re-

"In the meantime I saw myself confronted by an unseen peril, at whose nature I could only vaguely guess. You will have recognized, of course, my motives for saying nothing to the police officials. Where political considerations are involved, the police are not to be depended upon. If the crime which had been just committed were the work of private individuals, on the other hand, I had no doubt that the police would prove equal to the task of bringing them to justice." 'You did not find it necessary to

open the prime minister's envelope? I ventured to interpose, az his excellency allowed a few minutes to pass without speaking"

"By no means, my friend, Recollect, if you please that this envelope was sealed, and that its safety had excited the interest of the Princess Catharinc. All this time I had not forgotten th eremarkable warning which she had given me, and this element in the affair alone would have restrained me from placing my imprudent confidence in

"All I did was to dispatch a telegram to Dourenski, in the cipher which he had requested me to employ, informing him of what had occurred, and urging im to return immediately. "The news of the tragedy must in

my case have reached him within a lew hours. The most profound impresthis assassination of a statesman whose name was as familiar to the public as that of Prince George himself. The views taken of the event by the news- it is." papers wer conflicting, some hinting that the Austrian faction had had a hand in it, some attributing it to the secret influence of Russia, and others again affecting to consider it a matter of some private revenge. For my own part, I remained in doubt, and anxiousy walted for Dourenski's return for an explanation

"It is needless for me to describe the sensation produced in the principality itself. So great was the agitation and alarm in the capital that the governnent gave orders that the funeral of the murdered premier should take place at night, and should be attended by no and the immediate relatives and friends of the deceased.

BABY

rest for tired mothers in a warm bath with Cericuna Sear, and a single application of Corrcuna (cintment), the great skin cure

"The funeral was fixed for the second night after the murder, and it was the boat, I saw Harry Mason swimming and cried out to him. He paddled up to the boat, leisurely, it seemed to me. He was on the leeward side, and for a minute or more he kept clear of the boat, swimming backward as she drifted on, and sheltered by her from the breaking sea.

"Will she float us all, Frank?" he asked, calmly enough. was the answer; "the air "Yes."

tanks will carry us. Get hold here." When the next wave ewept us toward him, Harry flung his arm across the boat's keel near the bow, and clung there. I was next to him. Miss Woodward was between Shirley and me.

At first we hoped that Steve might come to our relief, and we wasted our breath in shouting; but the wind by this time was blowing so hard that the sound of a human voice was assimilated into it instantly, and became the gale's voice, wild and inar-We soon gave up all idea of rescue at our friend's hands, and faced the chances that remained. There was one chance that we should be able to cling to the boat till she should drift across the bay; and there were ten thousand against it. The bay is about ten miles wide from Ogden's Island to the head of the cape, Some small islands and a multitude of ledges lay between; but even should we enounter any of them, the odds were that it would prove our destruction, I believe that, had Alice Woodward

tot been there, I should have given up the struggle and have slid off the slippery hull of that boat into Davy Jones' ocker. Helping to hold her on kept me in good heart about holding myself on. I should have felt myself to be the weakest, but for her, and should not have waited for anyone else to give out first. Harry Mason was a stronger boy than I, but he became exhausted earlier, taking care of himself alone, than I did, being by my position on the boat constrained to help another,

The girl had splendid courage, but er strength and physical endurance were unequal to the strain. It was an crdeal that any human creature might thrink from. Though the night was the warmert that ever I saw in that part of the world, we were all chilled to the marrow of our bones. The water of the Maine coast is by nature so cold that you cannot warm it in a kettle over a fire. Before I had been on the ottom of that boat ten minutes I was c numb below the waist that I should not have known it if a dogfish had biten me in two. So much of my body as was out of water part of the time was freezing; the remainder had ceased to suffer; it was dead,

At first our minds directed us; we do this and that. The strength failed; then our minds failed; and at last there was nothing left but egged, instinctive resistance. I knew othing except that I would not let go f the keel of that boat, nor suffer my stiffening fingers to relinquish their grip on Alice Woodward's arm.

Shirley must have been in a little etter condition. He at least could see and hear, after those faculties seemed to have suspended operations for me, It was Shirley who discovered that we were drifting into breakers; it was he who waked me with a last appeal when were dashed against something black that towered above us, and frightened more than it cheered me.

After that I remember fighting my way up an interminable slope of rock covered with seaweed, while the waves pursued us and tried to drag the burien that was between us back into the sea. One last effort, and I saw that we were all together on solid lang again. and it flashed across my mind that we were safe. Then all the nerves and muscles in my body gave way at once. and I fell; but I have no recollection of any shock when I struck the hard sur-

face of the ledge. For an interval I was as destitute of lence to the contrary, I would have seld the rock on which I lay to be. And o the rock, I suppose, the period since t was created does not differ from a econd. I awoke to find my three companions busy with me. My first sensation was of cold; then I felt the others around me; and immediately a dash of water struck me in the face. I supposed that some one had thrown it on ne to revive me.

"Never mind that," said I, as cheerfully as might be; "I'm wet enough as

I sat up and again the water struck This time I saw that it was the spray of the wave that had broken on the rocks in front of me. "Why don't we go up higher?" I asked.

"We can't," replied Shirley, gloom-"We'er on top of the ledge now." I struggled to my feet. All around ne was a darkness so intense that I could see nothing but the foam of breaking waves. To windward was a great patch of white where the water was churning over a rough floor of rock, just awash. By this the waves were broken before they reached the except a few public functionaries edge of the upper ledge where we had found a rspite from the storm, and only the largest of them flung their spray up to us. Yet our elevation above the water was not more than three feet.

"In the name of heaven, Frank," I said, "how is the tide?" "Rising," said Shirley, "Bert, it's all over with us. We're on Gull rock or one of the other ledges in that bunch, and they're all covered at high

"Frank, are you sure?"

"We capsized a mile and a half due ast of Spruce Head, with the wind outhwest and the tide just beginning to run in," said he. "You can figure it out for yourself. You remember the course we laid out yesterday from Spruce Head across the Bay between the Gull Rock ledges and the Round islands? East northeast, a half east."

"Frank, we're lost!" "Steady!" he cried, clutching my arm nd wheeling me around till I faced the spot where the others crouched upon the ledge. "She knows, and she is not afraid. I won't let you go to tleces. I can't save your life, and that's a short thing, anyway. You've

oward here, eternity won't be long PART III.

In my native town, some years beore I saw the light, there was a man vho bad a salmon weir almost directly in front of his house. A welr, as everyone knows, is a fence, made of long poles bearing a net, that extends far out into the water and terminates in an inclosure where fish are en-

The man of whom I am speaking went out one morning to mend his welr; and he was at work at the far end of it when a peculiarly frightful thing happened. He had tied his boat to a pole, and was climbing along the side of the salmon trap when he lost his hold and fell. His feet were bare, and one of them struck upon a broken pole under the water. The wood was sharp as a speer, and it was shaped like a barbed hook. It pierced his oot, and the barb held him fast.

The tide must have been about breast high upon him as he clung to the weir. impaled as I have described. What cries he sent toward his own home, standing before his eyes upon the sunny slope, imagine if you can. No mortal heard them. And the tide rose steadily, no faster and no slower than on other days, and drowned him.

That story was the horror of my boyhood. It came to me with the vividness of a picture, on that ledge at night, with the same death before me as he had faced. Yet I was not so dethose who could hear my voice though they could not help me.

We key along the rock and discussed one slender chance of rescue—Alice might be missed, and a searching party might be sent out. On the other hand, she told us that her absence would probably not be noticed till morning, is she had gone to her room with the declared intention of remaing there A single consideration was enough to destroy our hope of assistance on her account. Her absence would have been discovered much earsier in the evening, if at all, and the searching party would be already embarked upon the bay carrying so many and so bright lights that we could not fail to see them. Yet not a single bleam could we perceive. Darkness was al around us like a wall. We could not even make out the lighthouse on the lower end of Ogden's Island, though on an ordinary night it should have been plainly vis-

The same argument proved to us that Steve had not succeeded in reaching the island. The squall must have blown him off shore. If he had crossed the bay and landed on the head of the cape, it would be morning before he could get a searching party under way. The situation was utterly hopeless, and we did not pretend to regard it in any other light

"If we only knew just what time it vas," said Shirley, "it would be some consolation. But my watch has stopped, and so has Miss Woodward'A.

"I have a watch," said I. "It's a little gold one belonging to my mother. She let me take it. You know mine is being repaired. The watch is going, but I can't see the face of it. Can we tell the time by feeling of the hands?" "I've got matches," said Harry. "They're in a metal case; they're dry. Let's all get together and shut off the wind while I light one. Hold your watch, Bert."

The first match was instantly extinguished; the second broke in Harry's nervous fingers; the third flared up, and by its light I saw the hands upon the dial. They were almost together at eleven. Harry saw the watch as well as I did, and he groaned as if he had been stabbed.

and the tide turned at eight. It's only half flood. I give up. Before this I couldn't quite believe that we were lost. It seemed to me that there must be some mistake. But there is not getting out of it row.

"One chance only remains, so far as to be tried, I'm glad it's earlier than we thought. We asked him what he meant, and he

told us his plan, which was to swim to Compass Island, the nearest land where anybody lived, and return for us in a

"Compass Island is over a mile from here," said Harry. "You can no more swim there in this sea than you can

"I shall have the wind and the sea with me," replied Frank. "It is worth trying."

But it was not. The feat was entire ly impossible. Frank was bigger and stronger and of greater endurance than most men, but he was only a fair swimmer. Under the most favorable conditions I don't believe he could have swam a mile. Chilled as he was by long exposure, and exhausted by consciousness as, in the absence of evi- previous efforts, he would do well if he should swim a hundred yards. He would probably drown within the range of our voices.

Yet he could not be prevented from making the attempt. Harry and I said what we could and Alice besought him in such words as I felt I could have given my life for, if I had at that time a life that was not as good as lost already. She could not stay him.

"I'm responsible for this," said he. "Listen, Alice; when I missed your boat the first time I did it on purpose. I wanted to fix it with Steve so that I could row you ashere in your boat. We gambled for the privilege and he won. Then, when you insisted on staying in my boat, I made him pull away in yours, though there was no need for it. If I had run alongside of you the first time, there would have been no collision. If I hadn't sent Steve away because I was jealous of him, we should have had the rowboat with us, and even if the squall had upset us we could have got ashore. So it's all my fault, and I don't deserve to come-out of it alive. Perhaps after I am out of the way, something will happen to save you, who are not to blame."

She told him in effect that he was desperately explating a wholly pardonoffense; and then she clung to him, but he disengaged himself from her hands. In a moment he had flung off coat and shoes, and was ready to start.

"Good-by," he said. "I'll bring you help if I can. At any rate, don't give up till the last possible moment. Res-

I nearly lost my wits with horror as ne went down into the black water our courage with him, and for a time we lay huddled together like fright-

ened children in the dark. The tide was rising over the level rock in front of us, and the waves were beginning to dash against the upper bulwark of the ledge, sending the spray hissing over us. We crouched close to the rocks and clutched them hard, preparing for the time when we must

make our last resistance. "Heavens! How fast it rises!" grasped Harry in my ear. "What time is it now, I wonder?" Again we looked at my watch in the

hours of flood tide, and already the water was breaking clear over us. It was impossible that we should survive another hour, for we were too weak to stand.

"Not even God himself can save said Harry in my ear. He did not mean to be profane. was merely the involuntary reaction from a dream of supernatural rescue, "God can save us now," said Alice, as easily as at any other time. Do you believe that the tide which He made

has ceased to obey Him?" "I believe that for a million years the tide has covered Gull Rock twice every twenty-four hours," said I, answering for him; "and it will not stop for us. I spoke earnestly. It seemed to me

veak to trust in miracles. It was like giving up. "It will stop if God tells it to," said

Men-and women too-have engaged in theological controversy while the flames of martyrdom were rising around them, and have forgotten the pangs of mortal agony. So I suppose it was not altogether unnatural that Alice should defend the doctrine of God's omnipotence at such a time. Perhaps it is stranger that we two boys should have had the hardlhood to deny supernatural interference at a time when our own lives depended on its reality.

Be that as it may, the fact is that we debated the question with an earnest-ness that-so far as I was concerneddrove out all fear. With a natural exaggeration of our own importance we tacitly accepted the present as a test case. If there had been anyone to listen to use he would have supposed that the validity of sacred history depended upon the question whether the tide would wait upon the moon as usual in Penobscot Bay that night.

We lay in the shelter of a little ridge of rock that we had found, and our physical discomfort was less than might have been supposed. The wind that swept over us was positively warm and the chill of the spray had ceased to strike through our clothing.

A wave, taller than its fellows, burst in front of us and sent green water clear across the ledge. It was the first that had done so-the beginning of the end. We started up to our knees, and, bending forward, with our heads upon the edge of rock, started out across the water. Wave after wave rolled in and broke, and flung its spray over our but no other reached the level of that which had alarmed us.

It may have been ten minutes that we waited thus. Then Alice leaped to her feet. "You may deny God's power, if you

I tell you that the tide has stopped ris-It was true, though by the closest calculation I could make, it lacked an hour and fifty minutes of the time of high

PART IV.

Before Frank Shirley had swam a stone's throw from the lledge he felt his strength failing. He knew that he would never cover half the distance between Gull Rock and Compass Island. If only his own life had been at stake he would have ceased to struggle. But for the sake of the girl whom his folly had led into deadly peril, he resolved that he would never yield while his power to move on hand or foot remained with him.

Had he fought for his own life only he might not have dared expect mercy from the sea, which is the most cruel tide? You're sure of it?" 'Five minutes of eleven," he cried, of God's creatures. But in an effort which he knew was good, he felt that there should be a power on his side. Even within the ordinary course of things it would be possible that should find some bit of driftwood that | in my house. would sustain him while he struggled I can see," said Frank, "and if that's ing but the water, and from the top ourselves that the seeming miracle of of each succeeding wave his eager ees saw nothing but white crests and

fet black billows. He lost account of time and distance. He knew only that the time seemed long to memory and short to hope. Whether he had won a hundred yards of a haif mile was a mere guess. His course he directed vaguely by the wind and sea, but what did it matter? Still he knew that it was besst to work a little to the right of the direct line of the waves, for Compass Island was not

quite truly leeweard of Gull Rock. It is wonderful how many strokes a swimmer can take after that one which seems the very last of which he is capable. Shirley swam on and on, though his arms had come to such a legree of weariness and cold that he had no feeling of where they were. The effort of each stroke was made in his brain, and he had no sensation of compliance with the impulses of his own

Then suddenly he was conscious of something vast and black towering beside him. A warning in his ears took definite form. He recognized the noise of waves dashing upon rocks. His hand touched a smooth wall, and he was hurled along it by the send of the sea. Again and again! He could get no hold. Then a big streamer of seaed entangled itself in his hand. He closed upon it with the drowning man's frantic clutch. It was wrenched from the rock. The reaction threw him upon his side. A wave rolled him over and over, and he sank, believing in his soul that he would rise no more. Interminable moments passed. Then he felt his foot shoot up in the air. The aves, no longer broke around him. Swiming was easy there. He took a great stroke, and another. He saw in ont of him a faint white crescent, and he knew what it was. A moment later he was sprawling on a smooth sand beach, out of the waves and sheltered

from the wind. Shirley needed only a moment of rest. The joy of triumph revived him. He had accomplished the impossible. He whispered to the beach on which he ay-hurriedly, over and over again-I have done it! I have done it!" it his excited fancy the long struggle with the waves was condensed into a single effort. He did not doubt that there was ample time to return and save his Criends.

Springing to his feet, he looked eag orly around. The little sand beach lay n a niche between steep rocks fifty feet or more in height. At the head o the beach there was a crumbling wall of rock which Shirley presently scaled. beyond the ledge. He seemed to take Straggling spruce trees fringed the low cliff, and beyond them the land seemed

to slope gently downward. Though Shirley did not recognize the spot, he judged that it must be about midway of the north shore of Compass Island. The two houses on the irland stood close together at the head of a cove in the eastern shore. Two brothers named Rodman, with their families, lived there, farming the rocky soil of the island and fishing in the al most deserted waters round about.

Shirley supposed that a run of quarter of a mile would bring him to the houses; so, with a good will h got to die sometime, and if you die, sudden flare of a match. It was only a plunged among the trees, reckless of you will live again. But if you're a few minutes after twelve. Two more the rough ground and the darkness.

It seemed to him that at a single bound he passed through the fringe of spruces, and came upon a house suddenly that he almost ran against it. In all respects it resembled Sam Rodman's dwelling, but how he had encountered it so soon, unless it had come

to meet him, was more than Shirley could understand. Even though the house had walked across the island for his convenience, it would not have added greatly, in his estimation, to the wonder of his being there, when he should have been forty fathoms deep in the bay. He gave but the briefest recognition to this new evidence of Heaven's favor. Running around the corner of the house, he found its principal door and began to beat upon it. A window almost over his head came up as if he had touched the spring that controlled it. A man appeared, and called out heartly: there?"

"I've swum here from Gull Rock," Shirley answered. "There are some people on the ledge and they will drown if we don't reach them. We were in a boat and she upset. We drifted across the bay.'

"You swum here from Gull Rock!" exclaimed the man. "Why it's more'n three miles! "No it isn't," cried Shirley; "but

never mind that. Come along. We must get back there before high tide. You've got a boat, of course?" The man did not answer. He had vanished from the window. There was a heart-breaking delay, and then Shirley heard the rattle of bars and locks, The door swung open, and the master

of the house appeared bearing a lamp. "Come in." he said: and Shirley followed him along a short hall and into what seemed to be the dining-room of the house, The man set the lamp on the manteldece beside the clock. The white dial seemed to start suddenly forward and

Shirley. The young man cointed at it. He could not speak, "That's right," said his host. "It's e minutes of two." "High tide!" groaned Shirley.

confront

'hey're lost." "Look here, young feller," said the man, slowly. "There must be some-thing wrong about this. You haven't swum from Gull Rock down here. The man doesn't live that could do it. You've lost your bearings somehow "I hope to heaven I have," rejoined Shirley. "Indeed, I know it's true. This isn't Compass Island.'

"Not by a jug full. It's Little Green, and I'm Bill Green."

"How did I get here?" "God knows," was the answer, "Tell ne your story again. We'll go along while you talk. We'll take these lan will," she said, "but it has saved us all. terns along, for I guess you've got ome friends marooned somewhere, hough they ain't on Gull Rock." He picked up a small boat lantern

and another that was a powerful affair with a big reflector behind its lamp. Shirley told his story as they walked down to the cove, where the islander kept his boat. His companion did not interrupt him once. When Shirley had finished, he said: "Your friends are all right. They're

off here on Black Ledge, not a quar ter of a mile from this island."
"It can't be," said Shirley. couldn't have drifted way down here.

The wind was southwest-"Till the squali struck," interrupted the islander; "then it came off to the west'ard. You was too busy gettin' upset to notice it; but the fact is that the wind shifted four points in a blast The time had come when he, too, ed second. I never see it act jest that looked beyond the visible laws of tide way afore. That's where you made and wave to Him who had made them. Your mistake. You drifted way to the south'ard of the Gull Rock ledges. "And Black Lege is out at high

"Certain. On a high run o' tides it's just wash, but it'll stick up like a sore thumb tonight. Don't you worry, my boy. In an hour from now your friends will be warm and dry and comfortable

His words proved true. Alice, and But his hands encountered noth- Harry and I had scarcely convinced the tide had actually happened, when a sudden, bright light flashed upon us The boat in which Shirley and Bill Green were coming to our rescue, had rounded the rocky northern end of the friendly hall. The boat drew near rap idly. We could see only the bright light in the bay, but presently those in the boat could see us plainly and they had no need to ask after our safety. And when we heard Shirley's voice and knew for a certainty that it was he, we danced and shouted for joydanced on the slippery rocks with the little strength that remained to us, and shouted with throats that were rough with salt spray that had beaten in our faces all the fearful night.

The mystery of the tide and of Shirley's coming to land were explained to us in a word. It was all in the shift of

the wind. And when I compared watch with the trusty old clock in Bill Green's house, and found a discrepancy of nearly two hours, I saw through a few more things that had puzzled me.

"That is always the way with mire cles," said I, almost disappointed by the simplicity of the matter.

"You don't understand it, that's all." rejoined Harry. "It was really much simpler to take us off Gull Rock and put us on to Black Ledge, than to stop the tide and interfere with the calcu lations of everybody in the bay." Steve turned up the next day on the head of the cape. He had been blown off shore as we had supposed, but having a staunch boat under him, he had weathered the blow. He had no idea what had happened to us, but believed

that we had managed to get up under the lea of the island, despite the squall, Yes, he had drifted to leeward, and he never worked back to the where he stood when he and Frank apsealed to chance on the question Alice Woodward and her boat. Frank had the weather-gauge after the adventure of Black Ledge, and Steve soon sheered off and sailed for another

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