

THE AUGUST MOON

By Harrison Clark

Copyright, 1908, by Beni. B. Hampton

"Ah!" cried Wilber-ton, sitting up straight in his chair on the year-round resort hotel veranda. "Here is where Dull Monotony packs his things and hikes from the seaside."

"I should like to know why," commented Mrs. Wilber-ton skeptically. "I am sure nothing has occurred—"

"Well, something will occur very shortly," her husband assured her. "Why," he exclaimed, "things simply cannot be quiescent with a woman as pretty as that in their midst."

He nodded. Mrs. Wilber-ton, letting her gaze follow the direction of the nod, saw a young woman following the valet-encumbered porter toward the hotel entrance. She was a tall young woman, and slender, and her tan traveling gown was unquestionably in the latest style. By the hand she held a very small boy who was having great trouble with a very large straw hat.

"Your taste in women is constantly changing," Mrs. Wilber-ton averred in a tone which plainly conveyed her contempt for such inconsistency. Mrs. Wilber-ton was fat and she was not tall, and her eyes were not gray.

"Since when—"

"Oh, I always liked them tall and slender!"

"This one is positively thin!"

"And with dark hair and big gray eyes!"

"One can never be sure about hair."

"And clear, clean complexion, free of drug store blush—"

"It is certainly absurd to regard that complexion as real, or pretty, or even artistically done. And anyhow it will not last two days in this sun and sea breeze."

"She walks well, a sort of queenly gait—"

"Very carefully studied from some second-rate actress, I dare say—not at all natural, and decidedly—er—inolent."

"She doesn't seem to be very enthusiastic," agreed Wilber-ton.

"Probably some stenographer or dressmaker taking a vacation on her year's savings," commented Mrs. Wilber-ton, with an air of dismissing the subject. "No one seems to recognize her, and there are nice people here from everywhere. She is registering. It would seem, as you are so greatly interested in her, you would see who she is, or at least the name she registers, and where she is from," she added reprovingly.

"Oh, so I might! Hadn't occurred to me."

Wilber-ton arose deliberately and sauntered into the office. The new arrival was just leaving for her room, still under the porter's guidance and still holding by the hand the little boy with the big hat.

"Who is she, Julius?" he asked of the hotel clerk.

"The lady who just registered? The one wif the little boy? Just went out? In the cottage No. 43? The tall one wif the black hair—yes?"

Wilber-ton took possession of the register and read the name, Helen Alayne Brown, St. Louis.

"Is she 'Miss' or 'Mrs.' wondered Wilber-ton.

"Why she's got a little boy!" declared Julius.

Without enthusiasm he returned to his wife.

"Men do find out so little," complained that lady when he had reported. "Why on earth respectable people can't go to a hotel without being brought into contact with such persons—"

Wilber-ton, recognizing this as the beginning of a sermonistic disquisition which might lead into unpleasant paths, applied his usual preventive.

"Oh, I was about to forget my appointment to meet Stacy at the clubhouse for a game of billiards before luncheon. If you will be very careful," he called as he was leaving, "the new arrival may not contaminate you before I return."

Twenty-four hours later the Wilber-ton were again in their chairs on the hotel veranda, watching the morning train arrivals.

"Oh, isn't that the handsomest man!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilber-ton, as a six-footer built like a lumber cutter and carrying himself with the swing of a college athlete and the air of a colonel on campaign, crunched his way behind the porter over the crushed-shell walk.

"I don't think he is Adonis come to the seaside, so far as face is concerned," commented Wilber-ton. "His features are rather heavy and that jaw belongs to a prize fighter. But Lord, I should like to own those shoulders! I'd have something decent to eat, or I'd do things to that cook. He is certainly—a dandy!"

Mrs. Wilber-ton gave a little sniff of annoyance. "I sometimes believe you would not care if I eloped—"

"Why—is Ajax Hercules an old flame?" asked Wilber-ton.

"Certainly not!" was the positive

reply, accompanied by the flirt of a fan. "And at any rate I am sure that is not his name. I wish you would be more careful about holding your shoulders up! If you had taken my advice you would be as fine-looking as that man."

"Why I do believe that man has already registered!" said Mrs. Wilber-ton. Men do things so precipitately, I am willing to wager that he did not ask a word about the rates or the hours for meals, or whether his room had hot and cold water—"

"Or whether the chambermaid had a family, or whether tight sleeves would be worn in 1909," Wilber-ton interrupted. "I shouldn't be surprised if he had his trunk checks in his hand and didn't have to block the line while he searched for them at the bottom of an alligator-skin suit case."

"Men have pockets," Mrs. Wilber-ton began with dignity.

"Women are the architects of their own dresses," retorted Wilber-ton.

And he rose and went to the register.

"It's Brown!" he announced upon his return. "William J. Brown. How fortunate it is not Jones or Smith!"

"The husband of Mrs. Brown! Perhaps he is Mr. Brown!"

"No, I think he is 'Colonel' Brown. He registers from St. Louis, and that is in the colonel belt."

"Why that's where she's from."

"I wonder how they left the seven thousand other Browns of St. Louis!"

"I was sure there was a mystery about that woman as soon as I laid eyes on her."

"It is a mystery where she keeps herself. She hasn't been seen out of her room. She hasn't been in the water, and she wasn't in the parlor or on the veranda last night, and Miffin says she wasn't at breakfast—"

"Jeremiah Wilber-ton, I should think a man of your age and responsibilities—"

"Oh, that's all right. Charley Herpel was giving me the details, and he hasn't either age or responsibilities."

"Well, you seem to have remembered—"

"Just that instant!—remembered that Stacy was waiting for me to play billiards—"

And he sauntered away.

"No, he isn't her husband," said Wilber-ton confided as they entered the dining room for dinner. "I know he isn't, for he has a room in the annex, while she is in the cottage."

She turned to the soup silently. Wilber-ton dallied with a slice of tomato. Suddenly a shriek rang out. "Goodness me!" cried Mrs. Wilber-ton, starting nervously. "Those children!" as the shriek was repeated. "Why on earth they are permitted in the dining room, and why on earth mothers haven't any more sense and consideration—"

"She didn't bring her boy," said Wilber-ton, pleased.

"I daresay," Mrs. Wilber-ton began coldly, after a pause, "she is one of those intellectual persons who regard children as incumbrances and has the poor little thing locked in a room this very minute simply starving—Why, isn't that Mr. Brown?" she interrupted herself excited as the arrival of the morning walked thoughtfully down the dining room. "It is! And look!—he is going straight toward her table! I knew they must be acquainted!"

"I'll bet his chest measurement is one hundred," declared Wilber-ton under his breath, as Brown sat down. "I shall certainly incite him against the cook."

"See!" whispered his wife. "She has turned pale. And he doesn't look in her direction! I wonder what on earth!"

"His appetite's all right," declared Wilber-ton. "I hope he'll get indigestion so that he will be in proper mood for the cook."

"Oh!" gasped Mrs. Wilber-ton on the veranda some two hours after dinner. There was a chorus of similar gasps from the other women.

Helen Alayne Brown was entering the parlor. She was dazzlingly beautiful, her dark hair piled high, rose in it, a cloud-gray princess gown perfectly fitting her long, exquisitely rounded body, and not a jewel save the fiery opal blazing in one ring on her right hand. There was a slight flush in her cheek and she was smiling and talking vivaciously with the enchanted Herpel who was leading her to the piano.

There was a complete cessation for a moment of feminine chatter and a positive wave of masculine "whews" as she touched the keys. She smiled up at Herpel and laughed. "What shall it be?" And without waiting for his stammering reply began the Jewel Song. Her voice rippled gloriously through the parlor and the hotel corridors, and along the veranda out into the sweet moonlight.

"Lord!" said Wilber-ton as the last note died softly away. His wife was resuming the comment which he had silenced four times in the course of the song. He arose abruptly.

"I want a cigar," he said.

"All about him the hum of enthusiastic praise of the singer and the song, praise tainted here and there with envy and rendered offensive in many places by the absurdities of ignorance. He made his way to the hotel desk, which was also the cigar stand. Julius was in a state of fearsome perturbation, and queer foreign exclamations were exploding from his lips.

"I shall invite him to a challenge," he detonated as Wilber-ton came up.

"Let me have a cigar," begged Wilber-ton.

"He called me a chackass in my face," protested Julius.

"Certainly not!" was the positive

"A cigar, please," Wilber-ton repeated. "Who is this zoological expert?"

"Who? Why, that Prown—that pig proat—and he sputtered a volley of presumptively adequate expletives.

"Brown? What was the occasion for his succinct diagnosis?"

"Why he come up to the desk, and ask for a cigar—yes? Ant the lady is singink, ant while I reach for the cigar I say, 'The lady sing nice—yes?' Ant he—vot you say—groont!—oonh!—so! 'She haf a goot coive— better as many vot I hear in Berlin,' I say. Ant still more he groont—oouh! 'You know t'e laty?' I say. 'I see you start to sit by t'e same table wit' her—'. Ant right in my face he say, 'You Chackass!' and go stomp! stomp! out from the office!"

"And so he called you a damned jackass!" mused Wilber-ton.

"No," Julius corrected him hastily—"not t'e tam—he dit not say tam!"

Mrs. Wilber-ton was absorbed in talk about the cloud-gray princess with two other women when Wilber-ton returned to the veranda; and as the Mystery was singing again—a present-day ballad—he strolled away, listening and smoking. Presently he came to a seat under the salt cedars, and dropped into it, unconsciously listening to the voice. It was several minutes before he knew that a man was in the next seat, likewise smoking. The discovery did not interest him; for the Mystery had burst into a rippling, rollicking thing, which he recognized as belonging to the "Chimes of Normandy," or "Bohemian Girl," or the "Sultan of Zulu," or something—its origin being of infinitesimal importance, and the thing worth while being the delicious sweetness of its present rendering. And he listened, and smoked, and looked out over the moonlit bay.

"Something like a sigh came from the next seat as the song ended, and the glowing cigar was lowered and its ash flipped away. Wilber-ton left moved by compassion.

"That's a beautiful voice," he said; and he was surprised at the softness of his words—as though the song were not ended and he did not wish to interrupt it.

"The most beautiful I have heard since—ever," said the Next Seat.

"A Miss Brown of St.—" began Wilber-ton.

"Yes, I know," interrupted the Next Seat. "Mrs. Brown."

"Oh! Mrs.," agreed Wilber-ton. "She's beautiful, widow?"

"Widow—Yes," he answered. And then: "I knew her husband—name the same—related, you know. Knew them both before they were married. She was a beautiful girl—and has grown more beautiful every year. Used to like me pretty well; and I—well, you can guess about me. But—her husband was a high-kicking, hard-mouthed, mean-natured brute, and she blamed me for it. So, of course—"

"When a woman holds a man responsible for her husband's meannesses, he might as well plead guilty and accept banishment. There was a boy—"

"Some day, Jeremiah Wilber-ton, you will be sensible enough to pay attention to my intuitions," Mrs. Wilber-ton was declaring with much satisfaction. They were on the veranda and Wilber-ton had just been giving her an account of his conversation with Brown. Consideration for his own selfish desire to go to sleep had caused him to withhold the account the night before.

"I knew the minute I saw her," Mrs. Wilber-ton continued, "that there was something mysterious about that woman. How on earth men can be so completely deluded by such scheming creatures—"

"Why, what's she been scheming?" asked Wilber-ton.

"I am sure she simply drove poor Mr. Brown—her husband, I mean—to his grave," Mrs. Wilber-ton continued complacently. "And Mr. Brown—this Mr. Brown—has such a sad look in his eyes that I am sure he is suffering constantly—though why he hasn't found her out before now I certainly can't understand. But that is the way with men. They are perfectly devoted to women who are heartless, and make martyrs of women who are constant. For she is heartless, Jeremiah Wilber-ton. You saw how secluded she kept herself before he came, as though she were entirely too good for the rest of us—some princess of the blood—"

"She certainly can give most princesses forty pounds and romp under the wire an easy winner in the Good Looks stake—"

Mrs. Wilber-ton interrupted him with a sniff of impatience and continued: "But as soon as he came and after her disgraceful rudeness to him in the dining room—"

"I didn't see any rudeness—unless it has become rude to blush when a man turns away from a table!"

"Say—come—I've got to see Stacy and settled with him for that beating he gave me yesterday," said Wilber-ton, beginning a retreat.

"That woman spends a fortune on clothes," declared Mrs. Wilber-ton. She and Wilber-ton were at the table and Mrs. Brown followed by three-score of feminine eyes and four men, was sweeping into the dining room. "That gown is imported beyond any doubt. Paquin, I am sure; and he charges outrageously."

"Maybe she got it at a Thursday bargain," said Wilber-ton. "She certainly looks well in blue."

"It is simply disgraceful the way the men hang around her," declared Mrs. Wilber-ton. "The married men are worse than the single ones. I never saw any woman at a respectable bathing resort act as she did this afternoon."

"Try the prunes," urged Wilber-ton. "You can't think of other disgraceful

things when you eat these prunes. I haven't seen Brown myself."

Mrs. Wilber-ton's indignation was of the silent sort for the rest of the meal.

Mrs. Wilber-ton was one of a party of matrons who were enjoying themselves at cards. All the men who were not playing court to Helen Alayne Brown were in the hands of their wives. And there was nothing left for Wilber-ton but to stroll away with his cigar to the salt cedars. There he could hear the golden voice and not hear the chatter. He stretched himself comfortably over two chairs and smoked, and looked out over the bay, and listened. Another cigar was glowing a short distance away, and he had an idea that Brown was responsible for it; but Brown probably wanted to be alone, and Wilber-ton certainly did. So he smoked in solitude; and when his cigar was finished he continued to sit in solitude; and even when the voice of gold ceased—"

Wilber-ton awoke with a start. There was the rustle of a woman's garments and a woman, alone dropped with a sigh into a seat a few feet away. The shadows were dark under the salt cedars; neither the glare of the electric lights from the hotel nor the glow of the moonlight filtered through the thick foliage. But out on the rippling bay a silvery path of light was laid, and the woman was clearly silhouetted against this. . . . There couldn't be any doubt of it—she was Alayne Brown; and Wilber-ton stared wonderingly and went to making wild guesses as to why she had stolen away, and how she had managed to escape from her worshipful retinue. And while he was wondering and making guesses the dark head dropped and there was an outburst of woman's sobs—passionate, miserable.

And instantly there came the crash of an overturned seat, and the man who had been behind the other cigar came looming through the shadows. He stopped before the sobbing woman.

"Helen!" he cried. His voice was tender and low.

"Oh, why don't you leave me alone!" cried the woman. Her head was raised and her attitude was resentful—perhaps defiant. "You know I don't want—that I want to be left alone."

"Has anyone wounded you, Helen?" There was a queer, hard note in his voice.

"No—it is not your affair," she answered.

"Whatever concerns you must always be my affair," he said.

"Why do you pursue me?" she demanded. "Why did you come here?"

"I didn't know you were here," he answered; and then, with a trace of bitterness: "I believed the mistaken paragraph which said you had gone to Palm Beach. I thought the length of the Gulf of Mexico was distance enough between us to please even you."

"You had no right to think what would please me."

"There are some rights which cannot be withdrawn or surrendered," he answered sadly. "And I have not molested you—"

"You have! You have driven me to pretend that I was enjoying myself, when I wanted to rest—rest! For I am so tired!"

The last word was a cry; and throwing her arms against the back of the seat she leaned her head upon them and wept hysterically.

The man stood statuelike for a moment; then with a yearning cry he took a step forward, bent over, and caught the weeping woman in his arms.

"Good Lord!" cried Wilber-ton voicelessly. The mental exclamation was not of surprise at the man's action but for the sudden realization that he was an eavesdropper. He got carefully to his feet and stole away without disturbing a pebble. And he did not look back!

"Wake up, my dear," cried Wilber-ton at seven o'clock the next morning as he burst into his wife's bedroom. "I've been to a wedding," he cried, and began to Lum the Mendelssohn march very much out of tune.

Mrs. Wilber-ton assumed a sitting posture and cried, "Jeremiah!" with the same single and eye-defying motion.

"Tum—tum—tee tum, tum tum tum," hummed Wilber-ton. "You bet! Best man—gave bride away—"

"Who?" screamed Mrs. Wilber-ton. "And why didn't you take me?"

"Guess both answers," said Wilber-ton. "Tum—tee tum—tum, tee tu-tu, tu—Woman, unhand me!" For Mrs. Wilber-ton had him by both shoulders shaking him.

"I'll scream!" she cried.

"Do you think you can do any better than that?" he asked. "Hist!" he whispered, and tiptoed and listened in approved farce-comedy fashion. "It's—the Browns!"

Mrs. Wilber-ton collapsed to a seat upon the side of the bed. "What did she have on?" she asked breathlessly.

"Something green and yellow—" "Jeremiah!" she shrieked. "Impossible!"

"I don't know; but it was pretty. And she was more beautiful than ever—"

"I knew that woman would figure in a sensation! How did they happen to invite you?"

"Brown saw me on the beach (I went for a walk this morning) told me—asked me—I was delighted. He said they had made it all up last night—too late then to find a preacher—wanted to have it all over with before hotel woke up—"

"I always did say there was a eye—"

"Yes; I believe I heard you. Lady

MAINE'S DECK EXPOSED

Wreck of Battleship Comes into View After Thirteen Years.

The work of pumping the water out of the cofferdam which was built around the wreck of the battleship Maine in Havana harbor, was resumed. The water had been lowered a total depth of three feet, two inches. At that time the top and sides of the wreck's afterdeck were beginning to come into view and the sighting hood of the after-turret on the port side was just awash.

The greater part of the afterdeck is now clearly visible, showing the confused masses of wreckage covered with marine growths. The forward part of the ship, upon which the greatest force of the explosion was exerted, is still submerged.

It is the intention of the army engineers to proceed slowly with the pumping until the level of the water will have been lowered five feet, and then suspend all operations until the arrival of the board of American army officers.

After the American officers arrive the work of removing the water from the cofferdam and preparing the wreck for full inspection will proceed rapidly.

"Sand Statues" on Beach Removed.

The "sand statues on the beach" at Atlantic City, N. J., are gone. The workmen under the direction of the beach superintendent have destroyed them. This was a part of the annual cleaning order of Mayor Stoy, at the opening of the bathing season.

The "white wings" exposed cement blocks and several tons of steel and iron frame work when they tore away the sand covering of the "art," along with other "details." These were not known by the public, who have marveled at the clear-cut lines of the "sand" figures and showered coins on the broad white sheets bearing the inscription: "I do this to pay my way through college."

Carrying out of the mayor's order also brought some strenuous objection from men, who will not see forty agate. Then the public learned what the youths, who were thought to be "sand artists," were hired at so much a day.

Still another discovery was that one "artist" was a magnate. Four "galleries" were found to be the result of his enterprise. He was seldom seen at work except in the early mornings. His bank account is said to be sufficient to keep him during the winter months on the fruits of his summer toil.

The "artists" hereafter must keep their models down to a foot in height and must employ sand exclusively. The penalty for violation will cause their removal from the beach.

Slay Traitor Who Sold Battle.

"Red" Lopez, ordered imprisoned by Francisco I. Madero, Jr., on the charge that he had "sold out" to American interests while in command of a section of the insurrecto garrison at Agua Prieta, Mexico, has been put to death.

Lopez was being conveyed to Cananea to serve an eight-year sentence imposed by the court martial.

Conflicting stories are told by the guard which was accompanying Lopez. One is that the former insurrecto leader had been shot while attempting to escape; another that he pleaded to be executed rather than to be taken to prison.

It is alleged also that Lopez had confessed to having received \$4000 for the surrender of Agua Prieta to the federals.

When the guards of Arturo (Red) Lopez arrived at Cananea, they delivered his serape and sombrero to General Lomeli. "He tried to escape," reported the guards who were taking him to prison.

Few Die From Smallpox.

In nearly 20,000 cases of smallpox reported in the United States during 1909 there were only ninety-two deaths, making the average mortality rate less than one-half of one per cent.

The public health service statistics announced show that even this diminished number of cases by comparison with last year was excessive.

Dependable Goods.

We handle goods that are cheap, but not cheap goods. We want our goods to become your goods and our store your store. If it is

Clothing, or Shoes or Anything

to furnish man, woman or child up in classy, attractive and dependable attire, then we have just the articles you need. Give us a call now.

MAX MAMOLEN, LAPORTE.