



HIS FLEETING IDEAL

The Great Composite Novel.

THE JOINT WORK OF
W. H. Ballou, Ella Wheeler Wilcox,
Maj. Alfred C. Calhoun,
Alan Dale, Howe & Hummel,
Pauline Hall, Inspector Byrnes,
John L. Sullivan,
Nell Nelson, Mary Eastlake,
P. T. Barnum, Bill Nye.

Synopsis of Previous Chapters.

Chapter 1—By W. H. Ballou.—Henry Henshall, a young artist, while traveling in a parlor car, mentally sketches the personnel of his ideal wife. To his astonishment he sees his ideal reflected in the mirror, she being one of a party of four, consisting of an old man, presumably her father, a governess and a man with a villainous countenance. He makes a sketch of the party. He determines to make her acquaintance, but upon arising in the morning finds that the train has been in the depot some hours, and that the party of four has disappeared.

Chapter 2—By Ella Wheeler Wilcox.—Mr. Crawford, his daughter Edna, Miss Brown, a governess, and Dr. Watson occupy a flat on West Thirty-eighth street. Their names are all assumed to hide some secret. Edna tells her father that she hates Dr. Watson and objects to his presence in the house, but Mr. Crawford insists that the doctor's presence is necessary to him. Watson possesses hypnotic influence over Edna, and is leagued with Miss Brown in a secret compact. A month later Henshall recognizes Watson at a hypnotic exhibition. By means of the sketch made in the car a detective locates the doctor, but upon calling finds the party has moved. The same day a strange woman called seeking a Dr. Henshall, and leaves muttering threats against Dr. Watson or Henshall.

III.—A MIXING OF PICKLES.

By Maj. ALFRED C. CALHOUN. Illustrated by T. A. FITZGERALD.

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Henry Henshall was in despair. In vain he tried to banish the shadowy ideal from his heart by a greater devotion to his art. Whether he worked at a landscape or a marine scene the face of the beautiful girl he had seen in the car would appear in the foliage or rise from the waters like another Undine.

A hundred times he would turn away from the canvas, thinking by force of will to dispel the torturing illusion, but as it was the creation of his own brush it would not vanish.

One afternoon he dashed his palette and brushes on the studio floor, and, springing to his feet, called out in a voice of agony:

"Merciful powers! Am I never again to paint anything but that face? Can I never again think of anything but that face?"

As if in reply to his question a quick double rap sounded on the door behind him, and in response to his nervous "Come in," stood Wogly, his own private detective, tom before him, his face as impassive as a tobacconist's Indian.

"Any news, Tom?"

"Any news, Tom?" cried the desperate young man, and he looked as if an immediate homicide would follow a reply in the negative.

But Tom Wogly showed no alarm. Shaking out the crown of his soft felt hat he looked carefully inside, as if trying to discover how he had lost the lining, and then answered with that double antiquity for which ancient oracles and modern detectives are alike celebrated:

"Well, sir, there ain't nothin' as you might call downright startling to report. I ain't got what I'd call a regular straight tip on the gal, but I kinder think I'm enter the heavy villain get, jidgin' entirely by the face in the pictur'."

"Where did you see him?" interrupted Henry Henshall, and he picked up his hat to be ready to dash out when he got the information.

"It was last night, sir, a talkin' to a mysterious woman, whose face was hid by a veil. Them two was right under Lafayette's stater, on Union square, and the woman acted as if her dander was up and she didn't care who knowed it; and the man he tried to soothe her and set her an example of street etiquette by talkin' low."

"Well, I sneaked round to see what I could hear, but the man got onto my little game, and hurried to a cab that was standin' near, and as he drove off he called out, 'I'll see you, Louise, some hour to-morrow night'; then I tried to talk to the veiled lady, but she threatened to call the police. I apologized, and she started off at a go-as-you-please gait that would have won first money at a walking match if she could keep it up."

"I shadowed her to Second avenue, near Seventeenth street, where she vanished into an every day kind of boarding house. That's the report, sir, and if you could let me have another fifty to hire a side partner, for I've got to have one or die for the want of sleep, why, I'll credit you with it when the job's over, which I hope'll be very soon."

After this long speech Tom Wogly coughed into his hat until the crown threatened to burst, and Henry Henshall handed him five ten dollar bills.

The young man was about to question the detective further when a heavy step

was heard outside; then the door opened without any preliminary knock, and a handsome old gentleman, with a troubled face, entered and said:

"Harry, my son, I must see you alone at once."

The detective jammed the money into his pocket and his hat on his head, and vanished with a curt "Good day, gents!"

"What is the matter, father? You look troubled," said Henry, as he placed a chair for his unexpected visitor.

"Then I look as I feel," replied Mr. Henshall, with a groan that came from his heart. "On the top of the failure of Higgins & Lewis, our western agents, I this morning learned that my cashier has been faithless. He fled to Canada on Saturday, and a hurried examination of his books shows that he has robbed me of at least \$300,000."

"But you are rated at a million; surely you can weather the storm," said Henry, hope rather than reason prompting his words.

"If you were a business man, as I wanted you to be," said Mr. Henshall impatiently, "you would know that a man's rating by an agency is never an evidence of the cash he can command."

Then, rising from his chair, he laid his hands on his son's shoulders, looked eagerly into his eyes and added, "Harry, you can save me if you will!"

"I, father?" and behind the old gentleman Henry Henshall saw the Undine face peering at him from the pictured water on the easel.

"Yes, you, Harry. Sit down and when I have told you all I am sure you will fall in with my purpose, for I have been to you a good father, and I feel that you will be to me a dutiful son."

Henry sat down, and, taking a chair facing him, his father went on to explain his troubles.

"I am in the power of one man," he said, "and by a scratch of his pen he can ruin or save me."

"Who is that?" asked Henry.

"Edward Hartman."

"The banker?"

"Yes, Edward Hartman, Lena Hartman's father. Harry, you and Lena played together as children, and Mr. Hartman and I—were neighbors and good friends in those days—often laughingly spoke of the marriage of you and Lena. From that time to this she has loved you. She is an only child and her father is worth \$6,000,000."

"If you will call on her at once I may get time to think, and if you ask her to marry you it will save me and your mother from an old age of poverty, and in the end you will bless the day that you took my advice."

Mr. Henshall held out his trembling hands appealingly, and Henry, who sat with his back to the picture, took them and said impulsively:

"I would give my life gladly to save you from trouble, father, so I will do as you request; though it will be unjust to Lena Hartman to offer her my hand when I cannot give her my heart."

Rejoicing much at his son's obedience Mr. Henshall left the studio.

Then Henry turned to the easel, and more distinctly than it had yet appeared he saw the beautiful, mysterious face looking up appealingly from the water.

He contrasted this exquisite ideal with the real Lena Hartman, the art child that haunted him sleeping and waking, with the large, full faced and stupidly good natured banker's daughter.

Henry Henshall's mind was certainly in an unusual state of perturbation, but it was placidity itself compared with the condition of his unknown idol.

The sudden disappearance of Mr. Crawford and his family from No. 3—West Thirty-eighth street was at the suggestion of Dr. Watson, whose keen ears and sharp eyes were quick to discover the hourly increasing curiosity of their neighbors in the apartment house, and it was Dr. Watson who secured the new and more secluded quarters on Kowenhaven place, near Sixty-seventh street and Central park.

Being retired, well furnished and on the ground floor, the new apartments were preferable to the old ones, and Miss Brown, the governess, who of late had shown a coquettish interest in Mr. Crawford, declared to Edna that it was "a perfect little paradise of a home."

To Edna Crawford, who seemed to have lost interest in life, it mattered not where she was or whether she went, so that the place offered her a refuge from the haunting eyes of Dr. Watson.

To avoid meeting this man at table she feigned sickness and had her meals served in her room; but the very means used to avoid him brought him into her presence with an eager tender of his professional services.

When he was out of sight she loathed him; when he was near, with his strange eyes burning into her face, or his fingers pressing her pulse, while he pretended to look at his bird, she was as powerless to resist as a wild under the fascination of a snake.

Fortunately, the doctor was now away the greater part of every day, and Edna would take advantage of his absence to comfort herself with the magic violin.

She shunned her father, because he was forever sounding the praises of the doctor; and, for the same reason, she avoided Miss Brown as much as possible, though that lady's increasing devotion to Mr. Crawford did not escape her notice.

One evening after supper she heard Dr. Watson saying to her father in the hall, "I expect to see a party from the west to-night, and if there is anything of importance to communicate I'll walk

you up on my return after 12."

To this Mr. Crawford replied in a nervous voice: "If there is not a certainty of arranging the terms, so as to prevent publicity, we must sail for Europe on Saturday. I feel as if I could not hold up much longer under the strain."

After the doctor had gone out Mr. Crawford came into his daughter's room, and, to his great delight, she was less excited and more demonstrative in her affection than usual.

After an hour's talk she kissed him good night, saying that she felt weary and would lie down, and requesting him to tell Miss Brown that she need not see her again till morning.

As soon as her father had gone out Edna quickly placed her violin and several rolls of music in the case, then hurriedly put all her jewelry and a change of clothing into a little valise and lowered the light.

She waited for an hour after Miss Brown had gone to bed in the adjoining room, then quickly put on a street dress, and carrying the valise and violin case she left the house as noiselessly as a shadow.

Looking neither to the right nor left she made her way to the Third Avenue Elevated road and took a car bound south.

She got out at Fulton street, utterly ignorant of her whereabouts, and quite as uncertain as to her destination, but to her great joy she saw a respectable looking hotel near the station, and this she entered with a confidence of manner that in no way indicated her feelings.

She wrote her name on a blank card "Miss Louisa Neville," and asked the waiter who appeared in the parlor to have her registered and a room assigned her.

She had \$32 in cash, besides her jewels, and this, so she thought, would enable her to live till she could find a place for the exercise of her talents.

Although not hungry, Edna Crawford went down to the dining room the following morning, and while waiting for her coffee she looked over a paper that lay on the table.

It was a copy of that morning's World, and a glance at the "want" columns decided her as to what she should do next.

After the merest apology for a breakfast she put a veil over her hat and hurried to The World office, on Park row. She was about to write out an advertisement, applying for the position of governess, when a handsome, middle-aged man, with a refined German face, raised his hat and said, as he handed her a slip of paper:

"Blease to ogle me, mees, but I am not sure if mine is good English. Is dot spelled ride?"

With a flushed face and trembling hands Edna read the following:

WANTED—Immediately, a young lady who can play violin solos in a European concert company. Apply in person and with own instrument to Herr Karl Steinhelm, No. 8 Union square, New York.

IV.—ONE PURPOSE AND TWO ENDS.

By ALAN DALE. Illustrated by WALTER H. M'DUGALL.

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Lena Hartman, the banker's daughter, was one of those matter of fact maidens who seem to have been created as a useful foil to the sentimental gushfulness of the romantic damsel.

Miss Hartman was more than delicately plump. Her appearance suggested an intense regard for meals. Like the German frau, who is not at all disinclined to talk love over a steaming dish of Frankfurter sausages, supplemented by sauerkraut, Miss Hartman was eminently healthy.

As for her amiability, it was simply without limit. Miss Hartman was impervious to the petty worries of life. One of her friends always declared that nothing less than an earthquake would ever cause her the least agitation.

Henry Henshall called upon this portly maiden in due time, and her appearance filled him with a vague affright.

His artistic instincts told him at once that he need never expect from her either sympathy or even interest in his plans and his aspirations.

But his promise to his father dwelt in his mind secretly intact. He would be a martyr and he must feel some consolation in that. Most men do.

It is well to reflect that one is a martyr, even though too late to be included in Fox's book.

The face of his unknown ideal blotted from his mind the large, immobile features of Miss Hartman the instant he left her, and he felt that as a reward for his sacrifice he could at least indulge in the luxury of thinking of this strangely met, strangely lost woman.

Lena Hartman was motherless, and had recently engaged as companion a woman whom Henshall regarded with undefined mistrust. She was a light haired, blue eyed woman, who years ago must have been extremely handsome, but her features were now livid with care. Her movements were furtive and catlike, and she seemed to regard the life she was living as unreal.

"What induced you to engage her, Lena?" asked Henshall one day, with the privilege of a newly made fiancée. He had glided into this position in such an unutterably commonplace manner that the chains so easily forged were hardly galling.

"Because she interests me," declared Miss Hartman. "I feel that she has a history. You always tell me, Harry, that I am the most unromantic being on earth. I know it. I can, however, appreciate romance in others, though I am aware that you think even that impossible."

Mr. Henshall sighed. He wondered stupidly if Lena would feel interested in his own brief, pointless romance.

He dimly saw the jealous demon rapping for admittance at the smooth doors of Miss Hartman's placidity. He saw the baffled retreat of this demon. He declined to admit even the possibility of Miss Hartman's jealousy.

His acquaintance with women was very slight. He imagined that the passionless affection evinced for him by his

promised wife was one of those airy trifles, the presence or absence of which was but of slight significance to the welfare of the woman.

One morning Mr. Henshall called at Mr. Hartman's house, more with the object of "reporting for duty," as he styled it in mental irony, than with any well defined object in view.

Mr. and Miss Hartman were out, he was informed. Mrs. Smith, the chaperon, was at present the only member of the family now at home. She was in the drawing room, ventured the domestic, discreetly.

Henshall never knew afterward what it was that prompted him to enter instead of leaving the conventional card to indicate his unsatisfied visit.

He told the servant he would stay for a time and wait the arrival of the father and daughter. Then leaving his hat and cane in the hall he walked to the door of the drawing room, and with a slight, premonitory knock entered.

The room was unlighted save by a full, red shaded lamp that cast a pink effulgence on objects in its immediate neighborhood.

The young man saw seated on a low chair close to the lamp the apathetic form of Mrs. Smith, the chaperon. She had not heard his knock and remained seated, her hands folded listlessly in front of her, her head bent slightly forward, until the sound of his light footfall reached her ear. Then with a start she rose and placed her hand upon the region of her heart.

"You alarmed me, Mr. Henshall," she declared, with an attempt at a smile that was a signal failure. "I did not expect anybody, because Mr. Hartman and Lena have gone out. Let me see," hesitatingly. "I think they went to a reception at Mrs. Van Anken's house on the avenue. Did you wish—"

"Nothing," interrupted the young man with a reassuring smile. "I thought I would come in for a few minutes and rest myself."

The absence of Miss Hartman was by no means regrettable. In fact Mr. Henshall felt a distinct relief at the respite from bald platitudes that her visit on the avenue afforded him.

He looked at Mrs. Smith's face. She had evidently been weeping. He had undoubtedly interrupted a painful meditation.

Well, he reflected, she ought to thank him for that at any rate. That she was not inclined to express any gratitude either by words or by looks was very apparent. It was clear that she did not consider herself bound to entertain Miss Hartman's guest.

After a few uninteresting remarks, uttered uninterestingly, she rose and announced her intention of retiring to her room.

"I leave you," she said, "provided with a couple of readable books, and am sure that you will find them capital entertainers. Of course you will wait to see Lena and Mr. Hartman. I know it would be a great disappointment to you if you failed to meet them."

She accompanied these with a faint, significant smile that was irritatingly visible to Mr. Henshall. He colored slightly, and bit the end of his mustache to restrain the rather impatient retort that rose to his lips.

Mrs. Smith moved noiselessly about. There was the same feline suggestions about her walk that he had noticed before.

"Good night," she said indifferently. As she passed him something fell at his feet. He saw it there before him, but made no effort to pick it up for a few seconds. Then he stooped and raised it from the floor. It was an old fashioned gold brooch, one of those trinkets that we have seen our grandmothers and great-aunts wear, and had admired in the days of our childhood.

At the back of the brooch was a portrait, beautifully colored, standing out conspicuously from the dull gold frame.

As he looked at it Henry Henshall was conscious of a mental shock such as he had rarely received. The picture conjured up a whole train of reminiscences that for the last few weeks he had hardly ventured to disturb; for in the startling eyes and uncanny expression of the photographed face he had no difficulty in recognizing the man whom he had seen in the Wagner palace car, and whom he had mentally dubbed the heavy villain of the episode.

In an instant he was on his feet; his hand was upon the bell; his intention was instantly to send a servant to Mrs. Smith, summoning her to his presence.

He was spared the trouble. The door was noiselessly opened and the lady herself entered the room.

"I dropped my brooch," she said apologetically. "No, do not trouble," she added as he made a movement. "I think I know where to find it."

The young man's heart was beating violently. He wanted to tell her that he had picked it up, but was unable to find the words.

He held it up and tried to speak. In an instant she had snatched it from his hand.

"A Millionaire's Small Wages."

"How much do you make a day, my lad?" asked ex-Commissioner O. B. Potter of the newsboy from whom he was waiting to receive change.

"About fifty cents," the boy answered.

"That's just twice as much as I could earn when I was 13 years old," said the millionaire. "I might have been a rich man now if I had only had the start that you are getting."—New York Times.

In the Way.

Engineer—That drug store has got to be moved back from the railroad track.

Director—What's the matter with it?

Engineer—I forgot about it's being there last night, and when I saw that red light in the window I thought it was a danger signal, and I stayed here for one blessed hour before I remembered.—Harper's Bazar.

In Paris.

Mme. Prudhom—What is this Tariff Bill in America we read so much about now in France?

Mr. Prudhom (with superiority)—Madam, I am surprised! It is of course the kinsman of Buffalo Bill, whom I lately saw among us with so much pleasure.—Epoch.



He held it up and tried to speak.

"I would not lose it for the world," she said.

Henry Henshall struggled with his emotion for a moment and overcame it. "You know that man?" he asked harshly.

She looked at him for a moment, then burst into a loud, unmusical laugh.

"If I know that man? Ha! ha! ha! Do I know him? Ah, it is too good! Ha! ha! ha!"

She sat down and laughed hysterically, he looking at her in mute amazement. Suddenly she seemed to secure control of herself. Her laughter ceased. The expression on her face became one of unexpressed. She advanced quietly to Henshall and said, with an indifference which was unconvincing even to the young man:

"Do you know him?"

He answered at once: "I do not know him. I wish I did, for I believe he is a—"

He paused in embarrassment.

"Go on," she said.

"I was going to say," he resumed, "that I believe he is a villain."

"You are right," she said deliberately, fixing her blue eyes on Henshall's white face. "He is a villain, and it is his wife that says so."

Henshall recoiled. Intense surprise momentarily bewildered him; then came, like a ray of sunshine, the knowledge that here was a clue to the recovery of his ideal. Not a thought of Lena Hartman entered his mind to thwart his plans.

"You know his wife?" he asked.

Again she laughed mirthlessly. "I am the woman unfortunate enough to bear that relation to him," she said. Then in alarm: "Mr. Henshall, I do not wish to acquaint you with my past life. You have come into possession of a secret through no fault of mine. I beg of you not to betray my confidence."

Her evident sincerity overcame his animosity to the woman.

"Mrs. Smith," he said, "your secret is safe. Tell me, I implore of you, as much about this man as you conscientiously can. To show you how much in earnest I am I will tell you my reasons for asking this."

He then related to her the story of his journey in the Wagner palace car, omitting no detail likely to interest her.

He then told her (and strange to say, he really believed it himself) that his object was to find the girl, although engaged to Miss Hartman. He would be perfectly loyal to Lena, but he felt that he could not go through life without having met his ideal, if only to speak with her briefly, to study her beauty for one hour.

He must see her. He would perhaps forget her if his curiosity were satisfied. Ah! how easy it is to "talk one's self in," as the saying is. What a delightful thing an eased conscience!

Mrs. Smith was a woman of the world, and she understood the complexion of the case far more thoroughly than did young Henshall. But apparently it served her purpose to gratify him.

"Do you know the names of the people with whom you saw him?" she asked.

"Crawford," he answered.

"Did you learn that they stopped at No. 3—West Thirty-eighth street?"

"Yes," in intense surprise, "I called there."

"So did I," she said quietly, "but the bird had flown."

"Have you any idea who the Crawfords were?" It was his turn to question.

"None at all," she replied bitterly. "I need hardly say that Watson is not my husband's name. He has assumed many aliases, but the name to which he was born is Leopard. He is an Italian by birth. He has called himself Rimaldi, Duval, Schimmerlein, Henshall and Watson, as far as I can remember. I met him two years ago. I knew him as Dr. Henshall, the mind reader."

"Hypnotism was a subject in which I was deeply interested. I attended all the lectures on the subject that I could possibly find. I met Dr. Henshall at his house. I was rich. I had money and jewels."

"How it came about I can never thoroughly understand, but we were married. Two months later he left me penniless. I waited for his return, and waited in vain. A child was born to me. Thank goodness it died. I took this position temporarily. I live for revenge, and, fiercely, 'I will have it.'"

Grave fears for the safety of his ideal surged up forcefully in the bosom of Henry Henshall as he listened to this story. That she was in danger was now very evident. His mind was made up.

"A man and a woman, both in earnest, and working together in union, ought to be able to accomplish a great deal. I want to find this man for chivalry's sake," he said, again furnishing excuses to himself. "You want to find him as a wronged woman. Shall we join forces?" She hesitated for one moment. Then her mind was made up.

"Willingly," she said.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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