



SYNOPSIS.

Lawrence Blakeley, lawyer, goes to Pittsburgh with the forged notes in the Bronson case to take the deposition of the chief witness for the prosecution, John Gilmore, a millionaire. In the latter's house the lawyer is attracted by the picture of a girl whom Gilmore explains is his granddaughter, Alison West. He says her father is a rascal and a friend of the forger. Standing in line to buy a Pullman ticket Blakeley is requested by a lady to buy her one. He gives her lower eleven and retains lower ten. He finds a man in a drunken stupor in lower ten and retires in lower nine.

CHAPTER III.

Across the Aisle.

No solution offering itself, I went back to my berth. The snorer across had apparently strangled, or turned over, and so after a time I dropped asleep, to be awakened by the morning sunlight across my face.

I felt for my watch, yawning prodigiously. I reached under the pillow and failed to find it, but something scratched the back of my hand. I sat up irritably and nursed the wound, which was bleeding a little. Still drowsy, I felt more cautiously for what I supposed had been my scarf pin, but there was nothing there. Wide awake now, I reached for my traveling bag, on the chance that I had put my watch in there. I had drawn the satchel to me and had my hand on the lock before I realized that it was not my own!

My mine was of alligator hide. I had killed the beast in Florida, after the expenditure of enough money to have bought a house and enough energy to have built one. The bag I held in my hand was a black one, sealskin, I think. The staggering thought of what the loss of my bag meant to me put my finger on the bell and kept it there until the porter came.

"Did you ring, sir?" he asked, poking his head through the curtains obsequiously. McKnight objects that nobody can poke his head through a curtain and be obsequious. But Pullman porters can and do.

"No," I snapped. "It rang itself. What in thunder do you mean by exchanging my valise for this one? You'll have to find it if you waken the entire car to do it. There are important papers in that grip."

"Porter," called a feminine voice from an upper berth near by. "Porter, am I to dangle here all day?"

"Let her dangle," I said savagely. "You find that bag of mine."

The porter frowned. Then he looked at me with injured dignity. "I brought in your overcoat, sir. You carried your own valise."

The fellow was right! In an excess of caution I had refused to relinquish my alligator bag, and had turned over my other traps to the porter. It was clear enough then. I was simply a victim of the usual sleeping car robbery. I was in a lather of perspiration by that time: The lady down the car was still dangling and talking about it; still nearer a feminine voice was giving quick orders in French, presumably to a maid. The porter was on his knees, looking under the berth.

"Not there, sir," he said, dusting his knees. He was visibly more cheerful, having been absolved of responsibility. "Reckon it was taken while you was wanderin' around the car last night."

"I'll give you \$50 if you find it," I said. "A hundred. Reach up my shoes and I'll—"

I stopped abruptly. My eyes were fixed in stupefied amazement on a coat that hung from a hook at the foot of my berth. From the coat they traveled, dazed, to the soft-bodied shirt beside it, and from there to the collar and cravat in the net hammock across the windows.

"A hundred!" the porter repeated, showing his teeth. But I caught him by the arm and pointed to the foot of the berth.

"What—what color's that coat?" I asked unsteadily.

"Gray, sir." His tone was one of gentle reproof.

"And—the trousers?"

"He reached over and held up one creased leg. "Gray, too," he grinned.

"Gray!" I could not believe even his corroboration of my own eyes. "But my clothes were blue!" The porter was amused; he dived under the curtains and brought up a pair of shoes.

"Your shoes, sir," he said with a flourish. "Reckon you've been dreamin', sir."

Now, there are two things I always avoid in my dress—possibly an idiosyncrasy of my bachelor existence. These tabooed articles are red neckties and tan shoes. And not only were the shoes the porter lifted from the floor of a gorgeous shade of yellow, but the scarf which was run through the turned over collar was a gaudy red. It took a full minute for the real import of things to penetrate my dazed intelligence. Then I gave a vindictive kick at the offending ensemble.

"They're not mine, any of them," I snarled. "They are some other fellow's. I'll sit here until I take root before I put them on."

The MAN in LOWER TEN

by MARY ROBERTS RINEHART
AUTHOR OF THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE
ILLUSTRATIONS BY M. G. KETTNER
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"They're nice lookin' clothes," the porter put in, eyeing the red tie with appreciation. "Ain't everybody would have left you anything."

"Call the conductor," I said shortly. Then a possible explanation occurred to me. "Oh, porter—what's the number of this berth?"

"Seven, sir. If you can't wear those shoes—"

"Seven!" In my relief I almost shouted it. "Why, then, it's simple enough. I'm in the wrong berth, that's all. My berth is nine. Only—where the deuce is the man who belongs here?"

"Likely in nine, sir." The darky was enjoying himself. "You and the other gentleman just got mixed in the night. That's all, sir." It was clear that he thought I had been drinking.

I drew a long breath. Of course, that was the explanation. This was number seven's berth, that was his soft hat, this his umbrella, his coat, his bag. My rage turned to irritation at myself.

The porter went to the next berth and I could hear his softly insinuating voice. "Time to get up, sir. Are you awake? Time to get up."

There was no response from number nine. I guessed that he had opened the curtains and was looking in. Then he came back.

"Number nine's empty," he said. "Empty! Do you mean my clothes aren't there?" I demanded. "My valise? Why don't you answer me?"

"You doan' give me time," he retorted. "There ain't nothin' there. But it's been slept in."

The disappointment was the greater for my few moments of hope. I sat up in a white fury and put on the clothes that had been left me. Then, still raging, I sat on the edge of the berth and put on the obnoxious tan shoes. The porter, called to his duties, made little excursions back to me, to offer assistance and to chuckle at my discomfort. He stood by, outwardly decorous, but with little irritating grins of amusement around his mouth, when I finally emerged with the red tie in my hand.

"Bet the owner of those clothes did not become them any more than you do," he said, as he piled the ubiquitous whisk broom.

"When I get the owner of these clothes," I retorted grimly, "he will need a shroud. Where's the conductor?"

The conductor was coming, he assured me; also that there was no bag answering the description of mine on the car. I slammed my way to the dressing room, washed, choked my fifteen and a half neck into a fifteen collar, and was back again in less than five minutes. The car, as well as its occupants, was gradually taking on a daylight appearance. I hobbled in, for one of the shoes was abominably tight, and found myself facing a young woman in blue with an unforgettable face. ("Three women already," McKnight says: "That's going some, even if you don't count the Gilmore nurse.") She stood, half-turned toward me, one hand idly drooping, the other steadying her as she gazed out at the flying landscape. I had an instant impression that I had met her somewhere, under different circumstances, more cheerful ones, I thought, for the girl's dejection now was evident. Beside her, sitting down, a small dark woman, considerably older, was talking in a rapid undertone. The girl nodded indifferently now and then.

"I'm sorry to hear of your loss," she said, looking at me with a sympathetic smile. "I'll give you \$50 if you find it."

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I fancied, although I was not sure, that my appearance brought a startled look into the young woman's face. I sat down, and, hands thrust deep into the other man's pockets, stared ruefully at the other man's shoes.

The stage was set. In a moment the curtain was going up on the first act of the play. And for a while we would all say our little speeches and sing our little songs, and I, the villain, would hold center stage while the gallery hissed.

The porter was standing beside lower ten. He had reached in and was knocking valiantly. But his efforts met with no response. He winked at me over his shoulder; then he unfastened the curtains and bent forward. Behind him, I saw him stiffen, heard his muttered exclamation, saw the bluish pallor that spread over his face and neck. As he retreated a step the interior of lower ten lay open to the day.

The man in it was on his back, the early morning sun striking full on his upturned face. But the light did not disturb him. A small stain of red dyed the front of his night clothes and trailed across the sheet: his half-open eyes were fixed, without seeing, on the shining wood above.

I grasped the porter's shaking shoulders and stared down to where the train imparted to the body a grisly suggestion of motion. "Good Lord," I gasped, "the man's been murdered!"

"I don't know him at all," I replied. "Never saw him but once before."

"Then you don't know if he is traveling alone?"

"No, he was not—that is, I don't know anything about him," I corrected myself. It was my first blunder; the doctor glanced up at me quickly and then turned his attention again to the body. Like a flash there had come to me the vision of the woman with the bronze hair and the tragic face, whom I had surprised in the vestibule between the cars, somewhere in the small hours of the morning. I had acted on my first impulse—the masculine one of shielding a woman.

The doctor had unfastened the coat of the striped pajamas, and exposed the dead man's chest. On the left side was a small punctured wound of insignificant size.

"Very neatly done," the doctor said with appreciation. "Couldn't have done it better myself. Right through the intercostal space; no time even to grunt."

"Isn't the heart around there somewhere?" I asked. The medical man turned toward me and smiled astutely.

"That's where it belongs, just under that puncture, when it isn't gadding around in a man's throat or his boots."

I had a new respect for the doctor, for any one indeed who could crack even a feeble joke under such circumstances, or who could run an impersonal finger over that wound and those stains. Odd how a healthy, normal man holds the medical profession in half contemptuous regard until he gets sick, or an emergency like this arises, and then turns meekly to the man who knows the ins and outs of his mortal tenement, takes his pills or his patronage, tea to him like a rudderless ship in a gale.

"Suicide, is it, doctor?" I asked. He stood erect, after drawing the bed-clothing over the face, and, taking off his glasses, he wiped them slowly.

"No, it is not suicide," he announced decisively. "It is murder."

Of course, I had expected that, but the word itself brought a shiver. I was just a bit dizzy. Curious faces through the car were turned toward us, and I could hear the porter behind me breathing audibly. A stout woman in an negligee came down the aisle and querulously confronted the porter. She wore a pink dressing-jacket and carried portions of her clothing.

"Porter," she began, in the voice of the lady who had "dangled." "Is there a rule of this company that will allow a woman to occupy the dressing-room for one hour and curl her hair with an alcohol lamp while respectable people haven't a place where they can hook their—"

She stopped suddenly and stared in to lower ten. Her shining pink cheeks grew pasty, her jaw fell. I remember trying to think of something to say, and of saying nothing at all. Then—she had buried her eyes in the nondescript garments that hung from her arm and tottered back the way she had come. Slowly a little knot of men gathered around us, silent for the most part. The doctor was making a search of the berth when the conductor or elbowed his way through, followed by the inquisitive man, who had evidently summoned him. I had lost sight, for a time, of the girl in blue.

"Do it himself!" the conductor queried after a business-like glance at the body.

"No, he didn't," the doctor asserted. "There's no weapon here, and the window is closed. He couldn't have thrown it out, and he didn't swallow it. What on earth are you looking for, man?"

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RALEIGH AND THE STATE.

PRIZES WON ON CORN.

This State Made Good Showing a Corn Exposition at Columbia.

First zone classes—Best white corn, ten ears—First prize, one King weeder, given by King Weeder Company, Richmond, Va., won by R. P. Hayes, Asheville; second prize, one steel-beam walking plow, given by Chattanooga Pawn Company, Chattanooga, Tenn., won by Mary Breeze Brevard; third prize, one cultivator given by Barton Agricultural Works, Tusculuma, Ala., won by Wm. Breeze Brevard.

Best single ear, any variety—One steel beam walking plow, given by Chattanooga Ploy Company, Chattanooga, Tenn., won by R. P. Hayes Asheville.

Second zone classes: Best white corn, ten ears—First prize, one ton fertilizer, given by Royster Guano Company, Norfolk, Va., won by J. C. Lewis, North Wilkesboro; second prize 1,000 pounds of fertilizer, given by Pokoma Guano Company, Norfolk, Va., won by Shirley Schoolfield, Greensboro; third prize, 600 pounds of fertilizer, given by Pocomoka Guano Company, Norfolk, Va., won by J. B. Batts, Garner.

Best yellow corn, ten ears—First prize, 40 rods of "49" woven wire, given by American Steel Wire Company, N. Y., won by J. H. Sharpe, Greensboro.

Best single ear, any variety—One farm level, given by Bostrum & Brady Manufacturing Company, Atlanta, Ga., won by Exum Goodwin, Apex.

Third Zone classes: Best white corn, any variety—First prize, one ton of fertilizer, given by Royster Guano Company, Norfolk, Va., won by Allison Farmer, Bailey; second prize, one steel beam walking plow, given by John Deere Plow Company, Baltimore, Md., won by R. A. Thompson, Aurora; third prize, one pair of International stock food, given by International Stock Food Company, Minneapolis, Minn., won by B. H. Thompson, Aurora.

Best single ear, any variety—One steel beam plow, given by Lynchburg Foundry Company, Lynchburg, Va., won by Allison Farmer, Bailey.

Sweepstakes classes for North Carolina only: Best white corn, ten ears—One farm level, given by Bostrum, Brady Manufacturing Company, Atlanta, Ga., and one ton of fertilizer, given by Royster Guano Company, Norfolk, Va., won by J. C. Lewis, North Wilkesboro.

Single ear, any variety—One ton of fertilizer, given by Virginia-Carolina Chemical Company, Richmond, Va., won by Exum Goodwin, Apex.

Best 50-ears, any variety—One feed grinder, given by Duplex Mill Manufacturing Company, North Wilkesboro, won by J. W. Lewis, North Wilkesboro.

325 MILLS IN THIS STATE.

Aggregate Capital \$53,097,454—3,348,022 Spindles.

That there are 325 cotton, woolen, and silk mills in North Carolina with 300 of them showing aggregate capital \$53,097,454 and running 3,348,022 spindles, 56,516 looms, 550 braiders, 7,762 cards and employing 135,356 horsepower is the showing made in the annual report of commissioner of Labor and Printing M. L. Shipman.

Number of employes 62,440, supporting 138,810 people dependent on them. One per cent. of the reports from mills indicate that State labor laws are not being complied with. Wages paid range from \$2.54 high average to 56 cents low average. The average day for work is 10 hours and 45 minutes. Eighty of the mills are equipped with electric power.

As to knitting mills 77 are reported with the aggregate capital of 57 of them amounting to \$3,619,100; spindles operated 109,680;

Summary.

During the month of November 504 prescriptions for intoxicating liquors were issued and filed in Guilford county, 20 of the number being for beer. The total amount prescribed was about 75 gallons.

Congressman H. L. Godwin has taken up with Logan Walter Page, director of good roads in the Department of Agriculture, the matter of sending an expert road man to North Carolina in the near future to investigate the highway project from Wilmington to Charlotte.

Rev. Solomon Helzabeck, aged 89, died near Rural Hall. He was the oldest member of the Western North Carolina Conference, Methodist Episcopal church, South, and was actively engaged in the ministry for more than half a century.

In the federal court at Greensboro, two men, Quaster and Napier, charged with violating the white slave law, were found not guilty by direction of Judge Boyd on the grounds that the law was unconstitutional, in that it interfered with the principles of State rights.

The rabbit industry in Chatham is a prosperous one this year. Over 3,450 rabbits and 890 birds were shipped from Siler City in one week. The record from that place is 20,000 in one season.

Hunter Sharp has been appointed to be consul at Belfast, Ireland. His first appointment was as marshal at Osaka and Hiogo in 1886.

The census of school children in Forsyth county between '6 and '21 years of age shows that there are 9,369, exclusive of those in Winston-Salem and Kernersville.

GIVE HER ANOTHER.



Fondpar—You say baby swallowed a spoon? Did it hurt her?
Mrs. Fondpar—I'm afraid so; she hasn't been able to stir since!

SAVED OLD LADY'S HAIR

"My mother used to have a very bad humor on her head which the doctors called an eczema, and for it I had two different doctors. Her head was very sore and her hair nearly all fell out in spite of what they both did. One day her niece came in and they were speaking of how her hair was falling out and the doctors did it no good. She says, 'Aunt, why don't you try Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment?' Mother did and they helped her. In six months' time the itching, burning and scalding of her head was over and her hair began growing. Today she feels much in debt to Cuticura Soap and Ointment for the fine head of hair she has for an old lady of seventy-four.

"My own case was an eczema in my feet. As soon as the cold weather came my feet would itch and burn and then they would crack open and bleed. Then I thought I would flee to my mother's friends, Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment. I did for four or five winters, and now my feet are as smooth as any one's. Ellsworth Dunham, Hiram