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DEAR SIR—We beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of the 11th, enclosing check No. 10 for \$100, the same being in full payment of our claim under policy No. 5, covering insurance on our first Gray Drey Horse, which died on the night of the 11th inst.

We wish to thank you for the promptness in which your company has handled this loss and will say, in passing, that a company of this character has long been needed in our State, and in view of the small premium asked, we are glad to be without insurance on this Gray Drey.

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## A MAKER OF HISTORY

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM,

Author of "The Master Mummer," "A Prince of Sinners," "Mysterious Mr. Babine," "Anna the Adventurer," Etc.

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"I see no object in any further discussion between us," Andrew said calmly. "Don't be a fool!" Duncombe answered. "That woman you are with is a spy. If you have anything to do with her you are injuring Phyllis Poynton. She is not here to give you information. She is at work for her own ends."

"You are becoming more communicative, my friend," Andrew said, with something which was almost a sneer. "You did not talk so freely a few minutes back. It seems as though we were on the eve of a discovery."

"You are on the brink of making an idiot of yourself," Duncombe answered quickly. "You were mad to bring that blundering English detective over here. What the French police cannot or do not choose to discover, do you suppose that they would allow an Englishman to find out a stranger to Paris and with an accent like that? If I cannot keep you from folly by any other means, I must break my word to others. Come back into the smoking room with me, and I will tell you why you are mad to have anything to do with that woman."

"Thank you," Andrew answered. "I think not. I have confidence in Mr. Lloyd, my friend here, and I have none in you."

"Andrew?" "I speak as I feel!" "Leave me out of the question. It is Phyllis Poynton you will harm. I see that your friend is listening and mademoiselle is impatient. Make your excuses for ten minutes, Andrew. You will never regret it."

The detective, who had evidently overheard everything, stepped back to them. "You will excuse my interfering," she said, "but if this case is to remain in my hands at all it is necessary for me to hear all that Sir George Duncombe has to say. The young lady will wait for a moment. This case is difficult enough as it is, what with the jealousy of the French police, who naturally don't want us to find out what they can't. If Sir George Duncombe has any information to give now," the man added with emphasis, "which he withheld a few minutes ago, I think that I ought to hear it from his own lips."

"I agree entirely with what Mr. Lloyd has said," Andrew declared. Duncombe shrugged his shoulders. He looked around him cautiously, but they were in a corner of the entrance, and no one was within hearing distance. "Very well," he said. "To save you from danger and Miss Poynton from further trouble I am going to break a confidence which has been reposed in me, and to give you the benefit of my own surmises. In the first place, Mr. Lloyd is mistaken in supposing that the French police have been in the least puzzled by this double disappearance. On the contrary, they are perfectly well aware of all the facts of the case and could have produced Miss Poynton or her brother at any moment. They are working not for us, but against us."

"Indeed?" Mr. Lloyd said in a tone of disbelief. "And their object?" "Here is as much of the truth as I dare tell you," Duncombe said. "Guy Poynton while on the continent be-

whom I have spoken—Sir George Duncombe, M. Pelham and his toy detective—forgive me that I smile—walk all the time in the palm of our hand. But they remain unharmed. If by any chance they should blunder into the knowledge of things which might cause us annoyance, why, then there would be more trouble in Paris. Indeed, Monsieur, we do not seek to abuse our power. My errand to you today is one of mercy."

"You make me ashamed," Spencer said, with a sarcasm which he took no pains to conceal. "of my unworthy suspicions. To proceed."

"You have sent for Sir George Duncombe to come and see you?" "Spencer was silent for a moment. His own servant. It was not possible. "Well?"

"Even you," the baron continued, "have not yet solved the mystery of l'affaire Poynton. But you know more than Sir George. Let me recommend that you do not share your knowledge with him."

"Why not?" "If you do, Sir George will at once share your indiscretion."

"I begin to understand," Spencer said. "How otherwise? Send Sir George home. You see the delicacy of our position. It is not so much that we fear Sir George Duncombe's interference, but that we are afraid of his own."

"What do you think of this, Lloyd?" he asked. "I am afraid, sir," the man answered, "that some of the clever ones have been imposing upon Sir George. It generally turns out so when amateurs tackle a job like this."

Duncombe looked at him in astonishment. "Do you mean to say that you don't believe me?" he exclaimed. "I wouldn't put it like that, sir," the man answered, with a deprecating smile. "I think you have been misled by those who did not wish you to discover the truth."

Duncombe turned sharply on his heel. "And you, Andrew?" "I wish to do you justice," Andrew answered coldly, "and I am willing to believe that you have faith yourself in the extraordinary story you have just told us. But, frankly, I think that you have been too credulous."

Duncombe lost his temper. He turned on his heel and walked back into the hotel. "You can go to the devil your own way," he declared.

CHAPTER XXXI. SPENCER tried to rise from his sofa, but the effort was too much for him. Pale and thin, with black lines under his eyes and bloodless lips, he seemed scarcely more than the wreck of his former self. His visitor laid his stick and hat upon the table. Then he bowed once more to Spencer and stood looking at him, leaning slightly against the table.

"I am permitted," he asked gently, "to introduce myself?" "but he, again, is followed and watched over by our enemies, who would easily possess themselves of any information which he might gain."

Spencer nodded. "It is good reasoning," he admitted. "Listen!" M. Louis continued. "I speak now on behalf of my friends. You know whom I mean. You have solved the mystery of our existence. We are omnipotent. The police and the secret service police and the government itself are with us. We have license throughout the city. We may do what others may not. For us there is no crime. I kill you now perhaps. The police arrive. I am before the commissioner. I give him the sign—it is l'affaire Poynton. I go free. It is a certain thing."

"Granted?" Spencer said. "Proceed with your killing or your argument." "With the latter, if you please," M. Louis answered. "I do not choose to kill. L'affaire Poynton, then. Harm is not meant to either of these young people. That I assure you upon my honor. In three weeks, or say, a month, we have finished. They may return to their homes if they will. We have no further interest in them. For those three weeks you must remain as you are—and you, if you have influence over him, Sir George Duncombe. If the other two fools we have no care for. If they blunder into knowledge—well, they must pay. They are not our concern, yours and mine. For you are an officer, M. Spencer."

"Timeo Danaos dona ferentes?" Spencer murmured. "My gift," he answered, "will not terrify you. You are a journalist. I offer to make the fortune of your paper. You shall be the first to announce an affair of the greatest international importance since the war between Russia and Japan was declared. No; I will go further than that. It is the greatest event since Waterloo."

"L'affaire Poynton strikes so deep?" Spencer remarked. "So deep," the baron answered. "It is the fortune which drops the way into great places. So did the boy Poynton. You, my friend, shall be the one brilliant exception. You shall make your name the king of journalists, and you shall be quoted down the century as having achieved the greatest journalistic feat of modern days."

Spencer turned his drawn, haggard face toward his visitor. A slight flush of color stained his cheek. "You fascinate me," he said slowly. "I admit it. I have found the weak spot in my armor. Proceed! For whom do you speak?"

M. Louis abandoned his somewhat lounging attitude. He stood by Spencer's side and, leaning down, whispered in his ear. Spencer's eyes grew bright. "M. Louis," he said, "you play at a great game."

The baron shrugged his shoulders. "M. Louis," he answered, "I am but a pawn. I do what I am told."

"To return for a moment to l'affaire Poynton," Spencer said, "I am in the humor to trust you. Have I then your assurance that the boy and girl do not suffer?"

"Upon my honor and the honor of the country to whom I belong," he answered, "with some show of dignity. It is a pledge which I have never yet broken."

"I am a married man," Spencer answered. "M. Louis threw away his second cigarette. He cast a look almost of admiration upon the man who still lay stretched upon the couch. "You are the only Englishman I ever met. M. Spencer," he said, "who was not pigheaded. You have the tenacity of your countrymen, but you have the genius to pick out the right thread

## GOOD ROAD PROBLEM

Importance of Laying Out a Highway Properly.

AVOID ALL STEEP GRADES.

Straight Roads the Right Kind to Have, but in Hilly Countries Their Straightness Should Be Sacrificed to Obtain a Level Surface.

All the important roads in the United States can be and doubtless will be macadamized or otherwise improved in the not distant future. This expectation should govern the present location and treatment everywhere. Unless changes are made in the location of the roads in many parts of the United States it would be worse than folly to macadamize them. "Any costly resurfacing of the existing roads will fasten them where they are for generations," says General Stone. The chief difficulty in the United States is not with the surface, but with the steep grades, many of which are too long to be reduced by cutting and filling on the present line, and if this could be done it would cost more in many cases than relocating them, says Motor News.

Many of our roads were originally laid out without any attention to general topography, and in many cases followed the settler's path from cabin to cabin, the pig trail, or ran along the boundary lines of the farm regions. Another objection, most of them remain today where they were located years ago, and where untold labor, expense and energy have been wasted in trying to haul over them and in endeavors to improve their condition.

The great error is made of continuing to follow these primitive paths with our public highways. The right course is to call in an engineer and throw the road around the steep hills instead of continually going over them or to pull the road up on dry, solid ground instead of splashing through the mud and water of the creek or swamp. Far more time and money have been wasted in trying to keep up a single mile of one of these "pig track" surveys than it would take to build and keep in repair two miles of good road.

Another and perhaps greater error is made by some persons in the west who continue to lay out their roads on "section lines." These sections are all square, with sides running north, south,

east and west. A person wishing to cross the country in any other than these directions must necessarily do so in rectangular zigzags. It also necessitates very often the crossing and recrossing of hills and valleys which might be avoided if the roads had been constructed on scientific principles.

In the prairie state of Iowa, for example, where roads are no worse than in many other states, there is a greater number of roads having much steeper grades than are found in the mountainous republic of Switzerland. In Maryland the old stagecoach road or trapline running from Washington to Baltimore makes almost a "bee line," regardless of hills or valleys, and the grades at places are as steep as 10 or 12 per cent where by making little detours the road might have been made perfectly level or by running it up the hills least abruptly the grade might have been reduced to 3 or 4 per cent, as is done in the hilly regions of many parts of the country.

It is true that in hilly regions, straight roads are the proper kind to have, but in hilly countries their straightness should always be sacrificed to obtain a level surface, so as to better accommodate the people who use them.

Graceful and natural curves conforming to the lay of the land add beauty to the landscape, besides enhancing the value of the property. Not only do level roads add beauty to the landscape, but make lands along them more valuable, but the horse is able to utilize his full strength over them. Furthermore, a horse can pull only four-fifths as much on a grade of two to one in 100 feet. This gradually lessens until with a grade of ten feet in 100 feet he can draw but one-fourth as much as he can on a level road.

"About yourself, Spencer," he said. "Have you seen a doctor?" "Yes, I am not seriously ill," his friend answered. "The worst is over now. And, Duncombe, it's hard for you to go, I know; but look here, I believe that you will be back in a month and taking Miss Poynton to lunch chez Hill. I never felt so sure of it as I do today."

Duncombe remembered the answer to his note and found it hard to share his friend's cheerfulness.

More For Government Aid. W. F. Hill, master of the state grange of Pennsylvania, is quoted as saying in a recent address that "the grange of that state believes that the government should assist in building the public roads and that it is the purpose of the national grange to undertake to obtain the passage of a bill through congress to appropriate \$50,000,000 for this purpose. This appropriation, it is contemplated, shall be divided over five years, \$10,000,000 being available each year, and to be paid to states for expenditure through the state highway department. I recommend that the state grange give to this movement its cordial indorsement."

The state board of highway commissioners of Minnesota is endeavoring to have the time honored custom of "working out" road taxes abolished. The Niagara county (N. Y.) board of supervisors has ruled that no wagon with tires less than two and five-eighths inches wide will be allowed on improved highways.

The business men of Mount Pleasant, Mich., have taken hold of the good roads movement for Isabella county and will make strenuous efforts to have the county road system adopted.



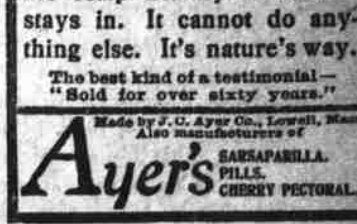
"I am permitted," he asked gently, "to introduce myself?"



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