

## CHAPTER VII. THE TOSS OF A COIN.

ILLARD made an inercusably careless shot. He grounded his cue and stood back from the table. That was the way everything seemed to go-at tennis, at squash, at fencing, at billiards, it was all the same.

"I say, Jack, what's the matter with you anyhow?" asked Merrihew, out of patience.

"It was bad," Hillard agreed. "Perhaps I am not taking the interest in the game that I formerly took."

"And when I make a proposition," pursued Merrihew, "to ride to the Catskills and back, something you would have jumped at a year ago, you shake your head. Think of it! By George, you had a bully time last year! You swore it was the best trip we ever took on the horses. Where's your spirit of adventure?"

"I'm sure I don't know where it is. Shall we finish the game?"

"Not if you're going to throw it like this," declared Merrihew. "Ten and a string against your half

a string," said Hillard, studying the score. "I'll bet a bottle that I beat you."

"Done!" said Merrihew. Being on his mettle, he made a clean score of twenty, five to go. "I can see you paying for that check, Jack."

But the odds tingled Hillard's blood. He settled down to a brilliant play

and turned sixty-one in beautiful form. Later the two passed upstairs to the secluded alcove. Merrihew filled the glasses with the air of one who would like to pass the remainder of his days doing the same thing-not that he was overfond, but each bottle temporarily weeded out that crop of imperishable debts. To him the world grew roseate and kindly viewed through the press of the sparkling grape, and invariably he saw fortune beckoning to the card tables.

"Now, then, Jack, I've got you where I want you. Who is she?"

"On my vord, I don't know." "Then there is a woman!" cried Mer-

rihew. "I knew it. Nothing else would so demoralize you. Drink a health to

Hillard raised his glass and touched that of his comrade. For the peace of his mind he determined to tell Merrihew the whole adventure.

"To the lady in the fog!" he said. "Fog?" blankly.

"Well, the lady in the mask."

"Fog, mask? Two of them?"

"No, only one. Once I met her in the fog, and then I met her in the mask." "I'll drink to her, but I'm hanged if

I don't believe you're coddling me," said Merrihew disappointedly. "This is New York." "The whole story, Jack, details and

all; no half portions."

Hillard told the yarn simply, omitting nothing essential. He even added that for three weeks he had been the author of the personal inquiry as to the whereabouts of one Mme. Angot.

"But I'm not going to give it to you," Hillard protested. "I am going to lend If we can get booking. That will be in ality was no less fascinating-the less than two weeks."

"And could I ever pay you back if ]

In the loby of the club as they accepted the loan?" humorously. were about to enter the coat room Hil-"There's Monte Carlo. You might lard ran into one of several gentlemer were about to enter the coat room HIIpull down a tidy sum." said the temptissuing.

"Pardon me." he said, stepping aside. "Non importa?" said the stranger. with a graceful wave of the hands. Hillard locked quickly into the gen-

"Now, listen to reason, Dan, If you tleman's face. "I am clumsy," he said wait for the opportunity to go to Euin Ita'inn. Then the other stared at him and rope you'll wait in vain. You must

make the opportunity. One must have smiled. Fo: a moment there was a youth to er joy Italy thoroughly. The brief tableau, in which each took the desire to go becomes less and less as other's measure and noted the color of one grows older. Besides, it completes the eyes. The man was an exceedingly every man's education. I'll put the handsome Italian, for all that a scar ran from his cheek to his chin. It was all over in a moment, and Hillard and

Merrihew proceeded to the street. "Handsome duffer," was Merrihew's comment. "But you never can tell a man by his looks. Gaze on me, for in-

stance. "Go home!" Hillard slapped him jovially on the shoulder.

"Home! Ab, yes! But shall I have a home to go to when I get back? You have coped me in nicely. My poor little twenty-five hundred! But Swiss champagne at \$1.40 the quart! Well, every cloud has its lining."

As Hillard never received any answer to his personal, he discontinued it. Truly, she had returned to the fog out of which she had come. But it was no less difficult for him to take up the daily affairs again. What mystery veiled her? Whither had she gone? Giovanni was delighted when he

heard the news. He would go, too, unpack the trunks, happy enough to and act as valet to the signor and his friend till they put out for Rome. Then, of course, he would be obliged to leave them. would reason with him regarding his tion. So far he was as safe as though declares that he has seen through blood, persuasions, arguments, entreatles, threats do not prevail. He comforted himself with the opinion. however, that Giovanni's hunt would come to no successful end.

of the police."

by this time they will have forgotten

"But your man might be dead."

"He is not dead. If he were something would tell me."

It is nothing. I am rich after my

. . .

It was a drizzling, foggy morning when they drove down to the boat. But the atmospheric effects made no impression on the volatile Merrihew. And he had an eye for all things, from the baskets of fruit and flowers, messengers with late orders from the stores, repeated farewells, to the squalling babies in the steerage.

"The first Saturday in March, then. The dream picture faded, and the rewhite sails of the fishermen winging across the sapphire waters, leaving ribboned pathways behind; proud white pleasure yachts, great vessels from all ports in the world, and an occasional battleship, drab and stealthy, and the hundred pink and white villages, the jude and amethyst of the islands, the ruined temples, the grim giant ash heap of Vesuvius.

its romantic splendor.

was always longing.

They lingered at Amalfi three days

and dreamed away the hours under

the white pergola. Merrihew was

loath to leave, but Hillard was for go-

ing on to Sorrento, for which his heart

incline, and it followed them over the

mountains and down into Sorrento

They finally drew up in the courtyard

of the Hotel de la Sirena, and the

long ride was at an end. The little gar-

den was white and pink with roses

and cameilias, and the tubbed manda-

"And this is March," said Merrihew,

his thought traveling back to his own

Their rooms were on the northeast

corner, on the first floor, and from the

windows they could look down upon

the marina piccola and the tideless

sea, a sheer 150 feet below. Every

body welcomed the Signor Hillard.

The hotel was his and everything and

Later, when they were alone, Hillard

"They remember my father. He used

to live like a prince in Sorrento. Ev-

can to keep the luster to his name.

Tomorrow I shall point out to you the

villa in which I was born. A Russian

"A real live princess!" said Merri-

"Once upon a time," returned Hil-

Giovanni did not return till late that

"I have been to see a cousin," said

Giovanni, "who lives on the way to El

"Ah! So you have a cousin here?"

How old he looked, poor devil! Hil-

lard had not taken particular notice

of him during the past week's excur-

sions. Giovanni had aged ten years

"And was this cousin glad to see

"Both, signor. He had some news,

"Would you like me to give you the

necessary money to go to Paris and

bring her back to the Sabine hills?"

"I shall go to Paris, signor-after."

never till this moment asked this ques-

"I know it. That is sufficient. 14

Giovanni signified that he = & "Does not the God of all athribes.

of all Christians, in fact-o es be not

say that vengeance is his ad fast he

"But there are so int y of us, si

gnor, so many of us ene and of slight

importance, that, like | erough, God,

pen to him in the hereafter does not

concern me, for he will certainly be

in the purgatory of fac rich and I in

ts high, signor, very high, yet I she

reach him. If I told you his name"

"There would be the possibil't

"That is why I hesitate."

"You are a Catholic, Giovand"

"What is his name?" Hillard had

She-the girl-is a dancer in a Paris

you? And is he to be trusted?"

night, and on the morrow Hillard

rins were heavy with fruit.

everybody in it.

princess owns it now."

lard, laughing.

questioned him.

"Yes, signor."

since they landed.

Hillard asked softly.

my warning him."

will repay?"

Deserta."

cafe."

tion.

hew. "Is she beautiful?"

A spring rain fell as they took the

"See that village on the cliffs to-ward the south?" asked Hillard. "That's Sorrento, where I was born. Sh! Look at Giovanni!"

Merrihew looked at the old Roman. Tears were running down his cheeks, and his gaze strove to pierce the distance to the faroff Sabine hills. Italy! Hillard leaned over and touched him on the arm, and he started.

"Take care, Giovanni."

"Pardon! I am weak this day, but tomorrow I shall be strong. Seven years! Have you not longed for it bleak country, where winter is so long yourself? Has not your heart gone out and summer is so short. many times across the seas to those cliffs?" pointing to Sorrento.

"Many times, Giovanni. But remember and control yourself. Presently the carabinieri will come on board. You will see that all our luggage goes promptly to the Bristol once we are through the customs." "Trust me, signor."

They landed at the custom house at began to explain. 2 in the afternoon and passed without any difficulty.

Hillard obtained rooms pleasantly ery time 1 come here I do the best I situated looking out upon the sparkling bay. Glovanni began at once to have something to occupy him till after dark, when he determined to venture forth. The dreaded carabinieri Occasionally Hillard had paid him not the slightest atten-

It was yet so early in the day that the two young men sallied forth in quest of light adventure. Besides, Merrihew was very eager to find some Roman and Florence newspapers. The American Comic Opera company was somewhere north. They found stationed outside the hotel a rosy cheeked cabby who answered to the name of Tomasso, or Tomass, as the Neapolltans generally drop the finals. He carried a bright red lap robe and blanket, spoke a little English and was very proud of the accomplishment. He was rather disappointed, however, when Hillard bargained with him in his own tongue. Tomass shook his fingers under Hillard's nose, and Hillard returned the compliment. Finally Tomass compromised on 1 lira 50 centesimi (30 cents) per hour, with 50 centisimi (10 cents) as a pourboire (tip). Crack, crack! Down the hill they went, as if a thousand devils were after them.

"By George," gasped Merrihew. clutching his seat, "the fool will break our necks!"

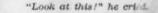
Tomass grinned and cracked his whip. He did not understand the word slowly in his own tongue or in any other, at least not till be reached the shops. A dozen times on the Via Roma Merrihew yelled that they would lose a wheel. But Tomass knew the game.

Merrihew had never seen such shops. Coral, coral wherever the eye roamed-where did they get it all, and to whom did they sell it? Neekwith all his larger c res, and not the time to remember us. What may haplaces, tiaras, rings, brooches, carved and uncarved-were there women enough in the world to buy these things?

"If I had a wife"- he began. "Well?" "I'd feel devilish sorry for her hus-

the purgatory of the poor. It must be now, now!"

added a new smell to his collection ed by the managers in Florence, Genoa, every hour. Pompeli by moonlight, Milan and Venice was so exorbihowever, was worth a thosand orditant (although they had agreed to a nary dreams, and Merrihew, who had moderate term in the beginning) that abundant imagination, but no art with it would have been nothing short of foolhardiness to try to fill the bookwhich to express it, happily or unhappily, saw Lytton's story unfold in all ings. The singing of the prima donna,



however, had created a highly favorable impression among the critics, but she was unknown. The writer also advised Mr. Hillard not to put his money in any like adventure."

"That's hard luck," mowied Merrihew, who saw his horse go down the horizon.

"But it makes me out a pretty good prophet," was Hillard's rejoinder. The angel's money gave out. Too many obstacles To conquer a people and a government is light opera-it can't be dony here. And so the American Comic former company at the present mome: a vegetating in some little boarding house waiting for money from he a."

Merr low grawed the end of his cane. All his pleasant dreams had bury. Itke soup builbles. Had they not always dane so? There would be no is min with Elity, no pleasant little e arusions, no little suppers after the pe formance. And what's a Michelgelo or a Titian when a man's in love? "Brice up, Dan. Who knows? Kitty may be on the high seas-that is, if she has taken my advice and got a return ticket. I'll give you a dinner at the Bertolini tonight, and you may have the magnum of any vintage you like. We'll have Tomass drive us down the Via Caracciolo. It will take some of the disappointment out of your system."

They had ridden up and down the Via Caracciolo twice when they espied a huge automobile, ultramarine blue. It passed with a cloud of dust and a rumble which was thunderous. Hillard half rose from his seat. "Somebody you know?" asked Merri-

hew.

"The man at the wheel looked a bit like Sandford."

"Sandford? By George, that would be jolly!" they will come this

"We'll settle this argument right here now." Merrihew drew out a coin. vanni, who had been arranging the luggage, came up on deck. He had two packets of letters and telegrams One he gave to Merrihew and the other to his master.

more than twenty-five hundred my "It is a bad business, and I wish you self. We'll go on equal terms. Why,' confidently, "besides living like a prince you'll have four hundred to to luck." Giovanni smiled easily. Wishes selthrow away at roulette. Boy, you dom interfere with any one. "I will double your wages," said Hilhave never seen Italy; therefore you land, "if you will go where I go and do not know what beauty is. When return with me when I come back to we eventually land at Bellagie, on America." Lake Como, and I take your lily white A deprecating movement. "Money? hand in mine and lead you up to the terrace of Villa Serbelloni and orkind." der tea, then you will realize that you

"Are you still in the church?" "I confess regularly once a week

Oh, I am a good Catholic." "Take yourself off. I am displeased

with you."

At 4 o'clock they were on the high seas, heading for the Azores. Hillard was dreaming, and Merrihew was studiously employed over a booklet on how to speak Italian in one day. Gio-

deadly projects. But when a Latin he were in New York. "You will surely fall into the hands "What God wills comes true. But

"I don't know, Dan, but this has taken so strong a hold on me that I shan't forget it soon. Imagine it yourself. Oh, but she could sing! I am a man not to be held in the leash of an adventure like this, but she held me. How? By the hope that one day I might see her face with no veil of mystery to hold her off at arm's length."

Merrihew was greatly excited. He was for ordering a second bottle, but Hillard stayed him.

"By George! And you are sure that It was at the Sandfords'?"

"I am positive. But there is a puzzle that I have failed to solve-Sandford's cable and the caretaker's declaration. I know that I was in that house. The patrolman says that he has seen no light in the house since the family sailed for Africa. It is no dream, but it begins to look as if I were the victim of some fine hoar."

"It is more than a hoar, in my opinion. Wait till Sandford returns and finds his silver gone." Hillard started.

"And his gold plate," continued Merrihew, pleased with the idea. "My boy, that's what it is-the best dodge I ever heard of. It will make a good story for the Sunday papers. You won't be in it unless she ropes you in as an accomplice."

"I'm a romantic ass!" Hillard sighed. Leddy Lightfinger! If this turned out to be the case he would never trust a human being again.

"Let's take that ride on the horses Merrihew urged. "That'll clear your brain of this sentimental fog."

"No!" Hillard struck his hands together. "I've a better idea than that. I shall go to Italy, and you shall go with me.'

"Impossible. Why, I'm all but broke.

"T'll take you as a companion. I'm a sick man, Dan. I'm likely to jump overboard if some one isn't watching dress." me every minute."

"Td like to go, Jack. Heaven and earth, but I should! But I can't possibly go to Italy with a letter of credit no more than twenty-five hundred, and that's all there is in the exchequer at present."

"Between such friends as we are"-"That racket won't work. I could sage. We'll try the Celtic." not take a moment's peace if I did not feel indeper dent."

"Call it" he cried reckless "Heads!"

A scar ran from his cheek to his chin.

proposition in a way you can't possibly

get round. You will always have that

thousand, so don't worry about that.

You have twenty-five hundred on hand.

you say. With that you can see Italy

"What's the proposition?" Merrihew

"This-I'll agree to take not a penny

have only begun to live-gardens, tow-

ering Alps, the green Lecco on one

side and the green Como on the other

and Swiss champagne at \$1,40 the

"And then," Hillard added, "there's

Kitty Killigrew singing her heart out

to a people who can't understand a

"Can it be done for twenty-five hun-

Merrihew chewed his cigar with sub-

dued fierceness. He knew very well

that he was destined to go to Europe

Kitty Killigrew, who had promised to mail the route they were to play and

"It is written, Dan, that you shall

like a prince for three months."

drained the bottle.

quart! Eh?

dred ?"

hadn't!

go with me."

word she's singing."

The coin flickered in the light, fell and proved that all money is perverse by rolling under the davenport upon which they were sitting. An amusing hunt followed. They ran their hands over the floor, turned the rug, pulled out the davenport and looked behind, burned innumerable matches and finally rang for the attendant. The situation was explained, and he procured a candle. He was ultimately successful. "Here it is, sir."

"What is it, head or tail?" asked Merrihew weakly.

"Head, s'r," said the attendant.

"Keep it," said Merrihew generously, even sadly. He never got up a game of chance that he did not get the worst of it. And now, Italy! All that way from home! "Boy, bring up a bottle of '96."

"And the lady in the mask?" asked Merrihew as they at length stood up. "I must relegate her to the fog she came out of. But it would be a frightful thing if-if"- He hesitated to form the words.

But Merrihew had no such scruple. "If the silver and plate were missing when the Sandfords return?"

"Oh, bosh! It's all some joke, and I'm the butt of it. She was in that house by the same authority she rode the horse."

"A woman of that sort would have no difficulty in hoodwinking the stablemen," declared Merrihew.

"By the way," he continued, "received a postal from Kitty this morning the house and the address typewritten. from Gibraltar. Fine trip. Visited the gun galleries and the antique furniture shops. Says no sign of prima donna as yet, but believes her to be on board. O'Mally's on the water wagon. But Kitty aggravates me."

"What has she done now, refused you by marconigraph?"

"No, but she promised me her ad-

"Address her care Cook's, Florence, Rome, Venice. It's the popular mail box of Europe, and if she has given them the address they will forward." "That helps considerably. I'm glad there's one Cook which can be relied

on. "In the morning I'll arrange for pas-

"I'll leave the business end of the trip to you."

Hillard found among his a bulky envelope postmarked Naples. Naples!

A crumpled black silk mask

He sat up. It had been addressed to "Look at this!" he cried. "Good Lord!" Dan gasped, his feet coming down to the deck. Hillard was holding up for his in-

## WHAT MERRIHEW FOUND.

"HE great ship had passed the of Ischia, and now the bas of Naples unfolded all its variant beauties. Both he and Merrihew were foremost in the pross against the forward rail. To the latter's impressionable mind it was like dream-yonder, the temples and baths of Nero of the golden housed thither, the palaces of the grin (1) berius; beyond, Pompeil with Giau-

"But isn't the color great?" said Hillard. It was good to be in Naples again.

"I never saw so many kids," Merrihew finally observed, "so many dirty ones," he added. "Herod would have had his work cut out for him here. Now where can we get some newspapers? I must know where she is." At the bookshop in the plazza they found the Rome and Florence papers. Hillard went through them thorough

ly, but nowhere did he see anything relative to the doings of the American Comic Opera company. "Not a line, Dan."

"But there must be something in

the Florence paper. They should be what he saw: playing there yet." "Nothing. These papers are two weeks old."

Merribew stared blanking at the sheet. "I should like to some what it means."

"We will write to the consulate in Rome. If there has been any trouble he will certainly while the Til write tonight. Now, h re's Ooak's nort door. We'll ask if the - is any mail for Kitty Killigrew."

But there wamp't nor had there been, and the mame was not on the forwarding books

"Looks as if your Kitty were the needle in the haystack."

"Cut it!" savagely. Pictures and churches and museums were all well that bandwriting before." enough but Merrihew wanted Khy Killigrew above all the treasures of back in Naples after spending a week eart'

pagnificent bey at their feet, Merrihaw's disappointment softened somewhat It was the fashionable hour. The band was playing near by in the With Naniouale. Americans were evcess or countess flashed by inert and breaking the seal. intiese sgalast the cushions and invaloss. And beggars of all sorts and de-

grand rich Americans."

"Go your own way," said Hillard, dismissing him. "I shall never urge you agata."

Glove and gone, Hillard leaned against the casement. The sun was bright this morping, and the air was clear. He could see Naples distinctly. Below, the fishermen and their wives, their bare feet plowing in the wet sands, were drawing in the nets, swaying their bodies gracefully.

And then Merrihew burst in upon him wildly excited and flourished the hotel register.

"Look at this!" he cried breathless IF. He flung the book on the table and pointed with shaking finger.

Hillard came forward, and this is

Thomas O'Mally James Smith Arthur Worth La Signorina Capricciosa Kitty Killigrew Am. Comic Opera Co., N. Y. "Kitty has been here!"

"Perfectly true. But I wonder"-"Wonder about what?" asked Merrihew.

"Who La Signorina Capricciosa is Whimsical, indeed. She must be the mysterious prima donna."

Hillard studied the easy flowing hand and ran his fingers through his hair thoughtfully.

"What is it?" asked Merrihew curiously.

"I am wondering where I have seen

Another fortnight found the pair on Capri. At the hotel they found a When they turned down to the Via batch of mail. There was a letter

Caracciole, with the full sweep of the which held particular interest to Merrihew. It was from the consul at Rome, a reply to Hillard's inquiries regarding the American Comic Opera company.

"We'll now find out where your erywhere. Occasionally a stray prin- charming Kitty is," Hillard said,

But they didn't. On the contrary, riably overdressed. And when men ac- the writer hadn't the slightest idea companied them the men (if they were where the play actors were or had hunbands) lolled back, even more list- gone. They had opened a two weeks' engagement at the Teatro Quirino. scriptions besieged the "very great There had been a good house on the opening night. The remainder of the

They were nearly a week in Naples. week did not show the sale of a hun-They saw the gallerics, the museums dred tickets. The American manager and churches; they saw underground had shown neither foresight nor comcus. Ione and Nydia, the bund and ful accent of Vesuvius, and Merrihew his support. The percentage demand- closed their saloons,

again. Tomass, follow that motor."

Sure enough, when the car reached the Largo Vittoria it wheeled and came rumbling back. This time Hillard had no doubts. He stood up and waved his arms. The automobile barked and groaned and came to a stand.

"Hello, Sandford!"

"Jack Hillard, as I live, and Dan Merrihew! Nell," turning to one of the three pretty women in the tonneau, "what did I tell you? I felt it in my bones that we would run across some one we knew."

"Or over them," his wife laughed.

When we meet an old friend in a foreign land, one who has accepted our dinners and with whom we have often dined, what is left but to fall on his neck and weep? There was, then, over this meeting much ado with handshaking and compliments, handshaking and questions, and, as in all cases like this, every one talked at oncehow was old New York, how was the winter in Cairo, and so forth and so on-till a policeman politely told them that this was not a private thoroughfare and that they were blocking the way. So they parted, the two young men having promised to dine with the Sandford party that evening.

"What luck, Dan!" Hillard was exuberant.

"Saves you the price of a dinner." "I wasn't thinking of that. But I

shall find out all about her tonight." "Who?"

"The lady in the fog, the masquerading lady!"

To be Continued.

The peculiar properties of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy have been thoroughly tested during epidemics of influenza, and when it was taken in time we have not heard of a single case of pneumonia. Sold by Hood Bros.

Indiana Legally Dry.

Indianapolis, Ind., Dec. 16 .- The Supreme Court of Indiana today held constitutional the county option election election law, enacted in 1908, under which sixty-five of the ninety-two countles of Indiana ........

