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The Man From Home

A Novelization of the Play of the Same Name
By BOOTH TARKINGTON and HARRY LEON WILSON

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"Why, that's too bad," answered Pike, fishing for a nut in the bottom of the tonneau.

"It is too bad—absurdly—monstrously bad! Lady Creech tells me that my sister did you the honor to present you to the family with which we are forming an alliance—at least to a portion of it."

"Yes, sir," answered Pike, "and promised to present me to the whole possetucky of 'em."

"I'll not listen to you!" cried Horace in a rage. "And I warn you that we shall act without paying the slightest attention to you!"

Pike straightened up a trifle. "Your sister kind of hinted in her letter that you think a good deal of this French lady—the widow. I suppose you have made up your mind to take her for richer or poorer, eh? Now, what's she going to give you?"

Horace stopped short in horrified amazement.

"Why, I thought you'd charge her something—just a little. Ain't that the way over here?"

"It seems impossible for you to understand our motives in trying to lift ourselves above the common herd. You are trying to interfere between us and the fine flower of Europe," went on Horace excitedly.

Pike straightened up and looked him in the eye quizzically.

"I never heard none of the folks around Kokomo speak of your pa as a 'fine flower,' but we thought a heap of him, and when he married your ma he was glad to get her, and I never heard that he asked for any settlement. When she took him he was a poor man, but if he'd had \$750,000 I'd bet he'd 'a' given it for her."

Horace turned short about and retired from the scene. It was evidently impossible to argue with this plebeian. As he went toward the gates he met Almerie and Lady Creech and informed them eloquently of the ill success of his attempt to reason with the lawyer. Then he went out again to the cliff.

Almerie accompanied him a few steps and then turned off to the village, for he said he simply must take another look at that pup. And Lady Creech announced that she intended to have "forty winks" in her own room. Five minutes later Daniel, looking up from a superb rendition of "Dolly Gray," saw her glaring at him from her window.

Then came the Herr von Grollerhagen from the hotel. He was the same calm, imperturbable individual as ever, and he smoked with the languid abandon of a man born to ease. He approached Daniel with a smile.

"You make progress, my friend?" he asked, and Daniel smiled at him.

"Your machine's like a good many people, doc. It's got sand in its gear box."

At that moment Mariano hastened out and fumbled nervously with the lock on the big gates. Von Grollerhagen turned instantly.

"You are locking us in," he said.

"No, herr," replied the servant; "I lock some one out—that bandit who have not been captured. The carabinieri warn all to lock the gates for an hour. Soon they will capture that wicked one. M'sieu, this convict is a Russian."

With a keen glance, Von Grollerhagen waved the man aside. Daniel smiled.

"They've got two companies of the tin soldiers. Out my way the town marshal would have had him yesterday."

"My friend, you are teaching me to respect your country, not by what you brag, but by what you do."

"How's that?" asked Pike.

"I see how a son of that great democracy can apply himself to a dirty machine while his eyes are full of visions of one of its beautiful daughters."

"Doc, there's sand in your gear box!" Then he looked up. "Now, you go down to the kitchen and make signs for some of the help to give you a bunch of nice clean rags."

For an instant the German drew himself up laughingly.

"What is it you ask me to do?"

"Get me some more rags," said Daniel quietly, and Von Grollerhagen bowed low.

"I'd go myself, but it wouldn't be safe to leave the machine."

"You fear this famous bandit would steal it?" laughed the German.

"No; there's parties around here might think it was a settlement."

"My friend," Von Grollerhagen said gravely, "I do not understand."

"That's where we are in the same

fix, doc," said Pike, with a chuckle, and bent over the machine again, while Von Grollerhagen departed on his mission.

While Pike worked he thought, and the thoughts finally arrived at the point where he saw that all he had to do to save the girl he had come so far to see was to sit tight on his refusal. He had accurately gauged the noble earl and his interesting son and sister-in-law, and he knew that it was a thousand to one that they would not agree to a marriage if there was no money in sight.

"They'll make more'n one bid for old Simpson's money," he assured himself and then looked up quickly, for the leaves on the pergola were rustling in a way that no wind should have caused.

As he looked the figure of a man appeared over the top of the vines and a pale face looked into his with imploring eyes. Pike looked at him calmly and knew at once that this was the man the carabinieri were pursuing.

"Est ce que vous etes un homme de bon coeur? Je ne suis pas coupable!" ("Are you a kind hearted man? I am not guilty!") he began, when Pike cut him off with a shake of the head.

"There ain't any use in the world your talking to me like that," he said mournfully, and the refugee's eyes gleamed with hope.

"You are an American?" he said, making preparations to descend.

"They haven't made anything else out of me," answered Daniel, and the refugee climbed down and leaned weakly against the car.

"If you give me up I shall not be taken alive! I have no weapon, but I shall find a way to cut my throat!"

"Are you the bandit they're looking for?" asked Daniel, with interest.

"They call me that? How close are they?" asked the other, with sudden fright. Pike looked at the gates and heard a clank of sabers off on the road.

"There!" he said and stripped off his blouse. "Did they see you climb that wall?"

"I think not," murmured the man.

"Do you know anything about automobiles?" asked Daniel, holding out the coat.

"Not a thing in the world," replied the other despairingly.

"Then you're a chauffeur, all right," returned the lawyer, forcing the rough garment on the man. "Here; climb in under that machine, and don't you dare unscrew anything. Pretend you are fixing."

He pushed the refugee toward the machine and saw him wriggle beneath it, then heard Mariano's agitated voice calling in the hotel. An instant later the maitre d'hotel rushed out to the entrance gates and threw them wide open, revealing two carabinieri without, who immediately entered. Then ensued a conversation in French that was pure Sanskrit to Pike, who looked on with calm interest. The commandant of the file addressed the lawyer in a long speech, to which Pike smiled and waved a cigar.

"Wishing you many happy returns, colonel," he said genially, and Mariano hastened forward.

"It is the robber of Russia. They think he climb the wall, the assassin. The others, they surround all yonder. These two, they search here. They ask you please, signore, have you seen him climb the wall?"

"No," replied Daniel shortly, turning away.

"They ask, then, has any one crossed the lawn?" went on the servant.

"No," replied Daniel, and as he spoke one of the men pointed his gun beneath the car at the figure in the long blouse.

"He ask who that is, signore," said Mariano excitedly, also pointing.

"The new chauffeur for the machine from Paris," answered Pike casually, and, with a bow, the two went off, one to the right and the other to the left. As they disappeared Von Grollerhagen came walking across the grass with some white rags in his hands and an amused smile upon his face.

(To be continued.)

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