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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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Lady Creech put up her jorguette and stared at him and with a haughty sniff left the room with the air of a conqueror. Pike gazed after her whimsically.

"There goes the last of the empresses," he said and looked down at his feet.

Twice Ethel essayed to speak, and twice she put out her hand in his direction, and both times she failed. Then, with a choking little sob, she picked up her dress and fairly ran from the room. Horace followed her quickly, and still Pike stood there in an attitude of incomprehension.

The point he had striven for had failed. He had shown this girl the true rottenness of the people she had tried so hard to ally herself with, and the knowledge had failed to move her. His brilliant plan had recoiled upon his own head and had resulted in more firmly implanting a sense of duty in her heart. He saw no way out now. At first it had been a desire—now it had become a duty, and he wondered if he had the right to withhold from her her patrimony.

It was not until he saw a dark figure with a bag in its hand walk quickly down the steps and out through the entrance garden, not until he had heard the creak of carriage springs and the muttered directions and then the crunch of the wheels, that he awoke. He called a passing servant—Mariano, it proved it be—and questioned him.

"Who was that?" he asked.

Mariano bowed deeply.

"It is minor the Earl of Hawcastle," he replied. "He has gone to keep the appointment he have made some days since at Napoli, it is said."

CHAPTER XVIII.
MISUNDERSTOOD.

LADY CREECH was out early the next morning. Perhaps she had hope that something might be saved from the wreck and recollect the ancient adage about the early bird. She was seated on the terrace having breakfast and keeping a keen eye on the main entrance when the hopeful Almeric appeared, yawning and inexpressibly bored.

"Mornin', aunt," he said.

"Where's your father, Almeric?" she demanded.

"Flew the bally coop for Napoli last night. Seemed to be jolly well upset, you know. Feared this beastly convict chap would take a shot at him or something like that."

Lady Creech snorted.

"He always was a fool. Bah! He should have stayed. Where's the countess?"

"Naples; to look after the governor, I'd say. Went off this morning. Beastly about this convict chap, you know. What's to become of him?"

"I can at least give you some information," the old lady replied. "This grand duke person's obtained for the fellow a pardon by telegraph from St. Petersburg."

"How's the dear Ethel this morning?" asked Almeric when he had digested his astonishment.

"Behaving very peculiarly—outrageously, I might say."

"How?" demanded Almeric, stifling a yawn.

"Shedding tears over this Ivanoff's story. What's more, she has sent that dreadful Pike person to him with assistance."

"Money! By Jove! Good girl! Buying the beggar off to keep him from making a scandal for us! How's that?"

Lady Creech looked at him with something akin to admiration.

"Almeric! How clever of you! Of course she is! Your father will be pleased. What a pity he didn't wait!"

Daniel appeared at the top of the steps and, seeing the pair, came slowly toward them. As he reached the table where they sat he addressed Almeric.

"Your pa seemed in a hurry last night," he said.

Almeric started violently, but Lady Creech arose and, with a haughty

glance, swept into the hotel. Pike looked after her and then back to Almeric.

"Oh, yes," the latter answered. "Had to catch a train—the pater had—his easily worried by trifles, you know."

"Well, you don't worry—not too easy, do you, son?"

"Oh, one finds nothing particular this morning to bother one," the young man replied, yawning. "Nothing at all. Of course Miss Ethel is standing to her promise?"

"Yes, she is," replied Pike grimly, and Almeric went on:

"Yes, the governor only thought it best to clear out a bit until we were certain that she manages to draw off this convict chap—that you Americans call 'fixing him,' isn't it?"

Pike lifted a warning hand.

"Don't try to talk United States, son. Just tell me in your own way."

"Why," replied Almeric, "she's been giving him money, hasn't she? You took it to him yourself, didn't you? Naturally we understood what it was for. She's trying to keep the beggar quiet."

"So that's what she sent the poor cuss the money for, was it? That's the way you look at it, eh?" the American asked.

"Why, of course! What other reason could there be?" asked the other.

"Well, you know I'd sort of gathered it was because she was sorry for him—thought he'd been wronged, but, of course, I'm stupid!"

"Well, ray-they! I don't know that it was so necessary for her to hush him up, but it showed a very worthy intention in her, didn't it, eh, now?"

Pike looked at him carefully.

"Would you mind my being present when you thank her for it?" he asked, and Almeric laughed riotously.

"Shouldn't in the least if I intended to thank her. It simply shows that she considers herself already one of us. It's perfectly plain—as plain as you are, eh?"

He walked off whistling.

Pike gazed after him with an admirable chuckle. As he turned about he saw Ethel standing at the head of the steps, and there was a sad look upon her face.

"I hear that Lord Hawcastle has left," she said quietly.

"Yes. I saw him go last night," he answered, looking up at her.

"He left very quickly," she said absently.

"He did seem to be forgetting the scenery," the American replied. "Did you see Ivanoff?"

"Yes. I am almost sorry. He made so much of—what I could do."

"There are some good people over here, ain't there?" he ventured, and she looked at him quickly.

"When you are at home again I hope you will remember them," she said.

"I will," he replied.

"And I hope you will forget everything I ever said," she went on.

"Somehow it doesn't seem likely as if I ever would," he returned.

"Oh, yes, you will," she said. "All those unkind things I said to you—"

"Oh, I'll forget those easy," he interrupted quickly, and she went on, almost tearfully:

"And the other things, too, when you're once more among your kind, good home folks—and probably there's one—you'll be so glad to get back to you'll hardly know you've been away—an unworried girl, one that doesn't need to be cured of—oh, all sorts of follies—a kind girl, one who's been sweet to you. I can see her; she wears white muslin and waits by the gate for you at twilight. Isn't she like that?"

He shook his head.

"No, not like that."

"But there is some one there?" she asked.

He smiled sadly.

"Well, she's only been there in a way. I've had her picture on my desk for a good while. Sometimes when I go home in the evening she kind of seems to be there. I bought a homey old house up on Main street, you know; it's the house you were born in. It's

Attention, Pioneers.

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kind of lonesome sometimes, and then I get to thinking she's there, sitting at an old piano that used to be my mother's and singing to me—

"Singing 'Sweet Genevieve'?" she asked quietly.

"Yes, that's my favorite. But, then, I come to and I find it ain't so. No voice comes to me, and I find there ain't nobody but me—"

"You'll find her some day," she put in quickly. "I shall think of you often with her listening to her voice in the



"You'll find her some day," twilight. And I shall be far away, keeping the promise that I have made and living out—my destiny."

"What destiny?" he asked gravely.

"I am bound to Almeric by his misfortune. He has to bear a name that is disgraced, and it is my duty to help him bear it—to help him make it honorable again, to inspire him in the

struggle that lies before him to rise above it by his own efforts, in the product of his work."

"Work?" asked Pike in astonishment.

"Yes," she went on. "No matter how humbly he begins and no matter what it costs me, I must be with him, helping him. Isn't that true?"

"That's what any good, brave woman would do," he said.

"It must be done. I haven't seen Almeric since last night. I must see him now. I've shirked facing him today. He has always been so light and gay that I dread seeing him bending under this blow. It is my duty to help him bear it."

"Yes; it's your duty all right."

"Then you think I am right. You agree?"

"Yes; I agree," he answered gravely.

"I give my consent to your marriage."

"You do!" cried Ethel. And there was a distinct horror in her tone. It was as if the idea shocked her.

"I'll place it in your hands," he answered and then was rudely twirled about by Horace, who had approached.

"I protest against this!" cried the young man. "She does not know what she's doing! I for one won't have it!"

"Too late!" cried Ethel, with a choking sob. "He's consented!"

And with a bowed head she ran from them into the hotel.

(To be continued.)

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O. M. MURPHY,
Dated August 17, 1909. 137

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