

The Green Cloak

By
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CHAPTER X—Continued

We went downstairs and out of the house in silence, and as we moved down the path we were instantly challenged by Mallory, who came running up to us.

"Where's Wilkins," he asked. "What have you done with him?"

"Lost him," said Ashton sourly.

"But he can't have got out of the house," protested Mallory. "I'm sure nobody has got out of the house."

"We've lost him, I tell you," said Ashton. "Can't you understand plain English?"

We all halted just then, and started, a little expectant. A man's footsteps were approaching, and the next moment he halted, rather undecidedly, at the front gate. But seeing us, he turned in and came promptly toward us.

"Where's the car, gentlemen?" he asked. "What have you done with the car?"

"What's that?" Ashton roared.

"The car—the automobile that I drove you out in! Where is it?"

For a moment there was no answer to that but silence. But the silence and the dismayed astonishment on our faces, gave the man his answer.

"So you went to the fire, did you?" said the doctor grimly.

"Not for more than five minutes," the man protested. "I thought I'd see if I could be of any help."

The man's explanation trailed off volubly—pretexting, incoherent, but we paid very little attention to it. We knew what had happened, all too well.

"Well," said the doctor, "if Wilkins only appreciated the fact, he owes us a large debt of gratitude. We told him about the map; and then we brought the girl out to him, and let her, together with an automobile for him to disappear in."

"He's better not try to thank me," said Ashton grimly, "until the score is settled. I'll get him yet."

"No," said the doctor, "I don't believe you will. Wilkins is playing in luck, perfectly unmerited good luck. And when you combine luck with the more solid and reliable qualities which Wilkins possesses, you get a result that is almost sure to be successful."

Ashton turned away impatiently.

"But the car?" the chauffeur cried.

"I'm responsible for it. What am I to do?"

Ashton told him what he might do, in three or four short, explosive words.

CHAPTER XI

The doctor's prediction regarding the escape of Wilkins and the girl came true. It was all of twenty-four hours before the wires were working again; and the search, which could not fairly begin until that time, proved absolutely futile. The automobile was found next day, very early in the morning, standing in front of the Western station, the very place where we had started in it on our ride to Oak Ridge. But the oddly assorted pair, who must have driven back to town in it that night, disappeared as completely as if the earth had swallowed them up.

It was a long while before Ashton would admit the probability, or even the possibility, that he had lost them. Their escape must have rankled, for he never, voluntarily, spoke of the Oak Ridge affair, and he treated all reference to it, however indirect, in a manner which did not encourage discussion.

I think that, in his heart, Doctor McAllister found it impossible to be sorry that Wilkins had got off. It is one thing to know, as a matter of fact, that a man is a knave and that he richly deserves to be hung; but it is another thing to wish, devoutly, for such a consummation. We had liked Wilkins, and the strange, uncanny revelations regarding his past, which the doctor's meretricious instruments had betrayed to us, were not strong enough to change that liking.

What we regretted most, in our discussions over the affair, was our fragmentary knowledge of it. One thing certain about it all seemed to be that we should never know.

But in that conclusion, strangely enough, we were wrong. Only a few days ago (and it is now more than two years since the events I have here chronicled took place) the doctor came into my office waving a letter.

"Look at the handwriting first," he said, "and see if you can guess who it's from."

I took the thing in my hand, and frowned over it for a moment in complete perplexity. It was familiar, almost as familiar as my own, and yet I could not place it.

But as I gazed upon the vague suggestion of delicate French potages and entrées came into my mind. I started, and dropped the letter on my desk.

"Not—Wilkins!" I cried.

The doctor smiled broadly. "Read what he's got to say."

I needed no second invitation.

"Doctor McAllister:

"Respected Sir: I have long intended to write to you to tell you how Jane Perkins and I are getting along, thinking you might be interested. I have taken up the white man's burden, as the poet says, and I find that it takes up most of my time, even though this island of mine is small (about ten square miles) and the population not numerous.

"Perkins and I (or Fanenna as she is called by her own people) are mar-

ried and living very happy. Now that I am, in a sort, king here—trusting that you will pardon the liberty, sir—and obliged to make all the laws as well as enforce them, I am filled with regret for my former irregularities, though I may say that they have turned out well in the end.

"I did not murder Henry Morgan, Fanenna did, although she does not know it, and I would not tell her so for worlds. Perhaps I had better tell my story in order.

"Morgan was a villain and he deserved exactly what he got—if I may be allowed that opinion, sir. Circumstances may have justified him in killing Captain Franklin; indeed, there is no doubt that it had to be one or the other of them; and in robbing him of his money and his map, he only did what others, perhaps, would have done in his place. But he did an execrable thing, when he lodged an information with the authorities against the rest of us. The act was not necessary to his escape, for he could have got off scotfree anyway. But he wanted Franklin's treasure all to himself and he thought if he could get us all hanged there would be none to dispute it with him. I found out in time what he had done, and I escaped; but the other poor fellows were caught and paid the penalty of their faith in a traitor.

"I went to America, but not in pursuit of Morgan. I did not know that he had gone there, and I wanted nothing more to do with him anyway, as I had decided to settle down and lead

a respectable life. It pays just as well as the other and it's much more comfortable. This may surprise you, but it's true—I do not refer to the tips I earned as head waiter at The Meredith. That was not my trade so much as it was my recreation. In my youth I made the acquaintance of a palm reader and spiritualist, and this was the profession I took upon coming to your city. It was not long before I was able to organize this industry and to hire others to do the actual work. I supervised it all, and as head waiter at The Meredith, as I suspect that you do also. From her talk I discovered that she was my old captain's daughter, and that she had inherited his secret. This was coming rather too close to home for comfort, as you will well understand, so I took her out of the spiritualist business, much as I regretted to do so, for she was very valuable, and got her employed as chambermaid at The Meredith.

"We were out walking together one day when her subjective state came over her without warning. She darted ahead of me, and I saw that she was tracking some one through the streets, by the scent. I followed her. Luckily it was dark, and we were not molested. She traveled very fast and overtook the person she was following, just as he was entering the Western station. I caught one look at him and saw that he was Henry Morgan.

"I succeeded in rousing her out of her state, for I did not want anything to happen just then and there. But I was determined to find where he lived and to get his map away from him. It did him no good, as there was neither latitude and longitude marked upon it, and this was the secret which Fanenna had told me.

"On the night when the unfortunate

incident occurred which caused you and Mr. Ashton to interest yourselves in the case, we had gone out to Oak Ridge to make an attempt to secure the map. Nothing more than that, I assure you, sir. I had hypnotized her in order that she might lead me, by means of her extraordinary sense of smell, to the house where he lived, but she ran on ahead too fast for me to follow her. The crime was already committed, if you call it a crime, before I reached the house.

"I tried to get her to go home with me, making no attempt to find the map at that time, but she was greatly excited and dangerous. So I was obliged to go away without her. I was unable to find her from that time, until she came back to The Meredith of her own accord, the day after she made her second visit to the Morgan house at the time when you were there.

"It was during my absence from the hotel, and without my knowledge, that she answered the advertisement for the cloak, indeed, I did not know that she had done so, until you spoke to me concerning it that night at dinner. At that time it seemed safer to permit you to make the examination which you wished to make, than to try to prevent the examination from taking place, for she was now Jane Perkins, perfectly ignorant of everything connected with the affair.

"How you found out her true connection with it, as well as mine, I have no idea. I do not know you had done so, until I tore open the envelope in the hall and found it empty. Then I knew that it was time to act.

"There is one thing more, before I close, which you may think wants an explanation. I said just now that Fanenna did not know that she had killed old Morgan, and yet she is Fanenna rather than Jane Perkins, although she is not exactly either one of them. She is no longer subject to those trance states of hers, and her character seems to be a mixture of the two distinct persons which she was before that night when you took her out to Oak Ridge with you. Her memories of all her past are, I am thankful to say, extremely vague, though she remembers some things out of both of them. She can talk both Maori and English as well as I, and she says it is because when she was a Maori girl she heard a voice speaking to her in English, and ordering her to understand it. This seems great nonsense to me, but it may be that you will see some meaning in it.

"I will close by saying that the map which I found in old Morgan's house that night was worth all the trouble it cost me to get it, for it has made us very comfortable and well-to-do, and has made it possible for me to make many improvements on this island of mine. It is a very beautiful place, and with the comforts of civilization, which I have been able to add to its natural attractions, is a very good place to live.

"Fanenna wishes to be remembered to you and Mr. Phelps, and also to Mr. Ashton, whom she used to admire very greatly when she was chambermaid at The Meredith.

"I should enjoy a visit from you very much, but I fear it will be impossible, for reasons which you will doubtless understand, for me even to suggest such a thing. But please believe me, sir,

"Yours most gratefully and respectfully,

"WILKINS,
"Rona Island.

"P. S. You have seen a map of this island, or a part of it, and above is the name I have given it; but I must imitate the wisdom and discretion of my old chief, and omit to mention latitude and longitude."

The doctor met my eye as I laid the paper down. "You don't happen to know the latitude and longitude, do you, Phelps?" he asked, laughing.

"Do you?" I exclaimed, with a rather startled look into his twinkling gray eyes.

"Do you remember those queer syllables that Fanenna repeated to us that night when she told us her story, the syllables that neither she nor I understood?"

"Then, mimicking her strange guttural voice (and I will admit that even now the mere sound of it made me shiver a little), he said, 'Ouan feef, ti oest, Ten south.'"

Over and over he repeated them, his smile growing broader and more tantalizing, as I still failed to understand. Then, all at once, I got it.

"One fifty west. Ten south!" I shouted.

"Not so loud," he said in mock alarm. "Ashton might hear you. And, on the whole," he added, smiling thoughtfully, but still half-seriously, "on the whole, I'd rather Ashton didn't know."

"You can show him the letter, at any rate," said I.

"There came a knock at the door just then, a knock we knew.

"Come in," called the doctor. "Come in, Ashton. Here's a letter that may interest you."

One Ordinary Day in Life of Statistician

Arose, feeling on the peak of the chart. Consumed average breakfast. Assumed average intellectual attitude toward life. (I am an average statistician with a mean disposition.) Organized new end-to-end toothpick circuit, New York to Detroit. Cable from India: Calcutta agent reports terminus reached for Spitter fountain pen line. Spitter pens now circle five-eighths of globe. Estimated potential heat in celluloid collars, with and without necks. Issued report re fact that five out of every nineteen fat men sink anyway; also that more than 24.37 "poor" golf balls are in plain sight all the time.

Statistics during lunch hour on maximum girls of the common garden mole (fam. Talpidae) wrote to Reach old Extend bureau about pyramid made of rear collar buttons lost in Hawaii in one year. Mailed circulars on Reversible Statistical Charts for This and That, and Surreptitious Studies in Statistics for Strutters.

After dinner attended lecture on

"Facts and How to Avoid Them." Re-flected on the futility of the end-to-end spaghetti problem in Italy. To bed, and fell asleep dividing the sheep jumping over the customary stone wall by some of the digits.—Los Angeles Times.

More Worth While

The man who with a microscope tries to discover in his fellows blemishes and imperfections is engaged in very unprofitable business. He would be far better employed if he used a telescope to find in them beauty and substantiality of character.—Grit.

Giant Only in Intellect

Biographies of Napoleon show that his height reckoned in English measure was a little over 5 feet 6 inches.

Explains Everything

But Job never had to stand being cut off during a telephone talk.—Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Howe About—

By ED HOWE

Best Syndicate. WNU Service.

John Quincy Adams said: "With most men reform is a trade—with some a swindling trade—with others an honest yet a lucrative trade. Reform for its own sake seldom thrives." A clever paragraph, yet it isn't true. Millions of men and women advocate reforms of various kinds consistently, intelligently, honestly, and without hope of reward, for the good of their children, their friends and neighbors. All reforms are forwarded and finally established by the efforts of the silent majority. The efforts of those who make reform a trade are not very effective; we are suspicious of the professional good man, but all respect and heed those among our neighbors who believe in a better world because of the knowledge, born of experience, that a better world will prove more profitable and comfortable for every body.

It is generally said there was never before such shiftlessness as exists today. Millions of men are recklessly squandering money who will later need a few miserable pennies to provide necessities. Statistics proved, a quarter of a century ago, that 80 per cent of men are very poor after reaching sixty five, and become charges on public charity or grumbling relatives. If the general shiftlessness is greater now than then, and increasing, will it be possible to provide a sufficient number of almshouses in the immediate future?

Men, women and children have had habits; all are familiar with the fact, from hearing it bawled by critics all their lives. Why are new books issued every day to tell us of our faults? Critics do not cause us to give them up; indeed, it seems only to cause us to behave worse. Look how we behave about profanity! Have we not been fully warned as to the devilishness of rum? Therefore why do not the critics engage in raising corn, and thus do good by reducing the price of food supplies? Why keep up their snarling, to the detriment of their lives and ours?

The great writing men seem to have a notion that they have a special mission to point out the shame of the world. We common people know it as well as the critics do, and are doing more to get rid of it.

A man's accomplishments must be genuine. Pay a man a tribute he does not deserve, and the other men will promptly rip it to pieces; but half the compliment for women are manufactured.

Some of his critics say Mussolini is a great scoundrel. I do not so estimate him. His only ambition is to bring peace and prosperity to his country. He is in revolt against peace, but against tyranny. He is not actually a great leader, compared with leaders like Napoleon, who lost a million of his followers in a single campaign? Good causes must have leaders as surely as bad causes. Mussolini certainly found his country going to pieces, and has now made it whole.

Philosophy is no more than an attempt of an individual to think and act as intelligently and honestly as his natural equipment will allow. William James said philosophy was an unusually thorough attempt to think clearly. I don't see why James should have used the term "unusually thorough." That means effort. No effort is required to think clearly, providing one is capable of it.

I rarely read that I do not encounter a reference to "the poor sinner" who attempts "to make an honest living." No good workman, honest or intelligent man, ever wrote such a sentiment. It is one of the sentiments that belong in the realm of dishonesty or insanity.

When what is called a divine spark is struck and flashes out, it may be traced to some man and candid man.

Millions of foolish people are not fools; there is not one in a thousand who does not "know enough."

A woman spends years in plotting to get a husband, and then isn't satisfied with him. This queenly person expects her man to act toward her with the gallantry displayed by those she rejected or couldn't get. I don't see why a woman should be so exacting with her man. She knew her mother was dissatisfied with her father; she never knew a wife who was satisfied. Why should she expect to be?

This is the great age of cranks. In the past, the cranks devoted their attention to spiritual things. Modern cranks expect more than is possible from practical things, precisely as the ancients expected too much of spiritual things. One is about as mischievous as the other.

People are as moral, as kind, as intelligent as they ever were; the trouble in 1927 is they are more shiftless, lazier, than they ever were before.

I despise any woman at all like Madame de Staël. You will recall she had a salon, where the men gathered to listen to her brilliant conversation; she displayed womanly charms as a cunning little speaker displays oratory about fictitious things; he has polished with great practice and care, admire Napoleon largely because he understood Madame de Staël, and ordered her out of Paris. I admire only womanly women. The natural charms of women are enough; when they are greatly polished, they lose their attractiveness for me.

Serious Floods in Northwestern New York



Air view of the flooded region in northwestern New York, where great property damage was done and many families were driven from their homes.

Kansas Farmers Inspect the Effete East



Thirty-two Kansas dirt farmers who have been touring the East at the invitation of Senator Capper. They visited the Stock exchange in Wall street and other financial and interesting places of New York city, and attended the opening of congress in Washington.

New French Stamps Are Beautiful



France is about to issue new postage stamps, and above are three of the beautiful designs selected. At the top is the Arc de Triomphe, in the middle the harbor of La Rochelle and at the bottom Mont St. Michel.

Santa Claus Gets Pilot's License



Although there may not be sufficient snow for his reindeer sleigh, Santa Claus will still be able to deliver his load of presents on time this Christmas by using the air route. The old saint called at the Commerce department in Washington, where he is shown receiving an airplane pilot's license from Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Aeronautics William P. MacCracken, while Clarence M. Young (right), director of aeronautics, looks on.

JOTS FROM HERE AND THERE

There are more thunderstorms inland than near the sea. There are about 2,000 species of fish in waters about the Philippines.

Mind reading is now being tested by radio, and in some cases proving successful.

The Tombs, New York's famous prison, occupies the site of the old pond on which Fitch launched his first steamboat.

Tarahumara children of Mexico run distances of 20 to 30 miles a day after their fathers.

Ocean cables corrode most seriously near the shore, because of the refuse and other material in the water.

Arab tradition says that in building a famous mosque mask was placed in the concrete so that the building would be haunted.

WROTE PRIZE ESSAY



Miss Bethel Pugh of Pueblo, Colo., winner of the national safety essay contest, was congratulated by President Coolidge when she called at the White House. She was escorted by Senator Waterman of her native state.

FACES REPRIMAND



Capt. Richard D. White, United States naval attaché in Paris, whose remarks at a dinner in Paris are under inquiry by the Navy department, Secretary Wilbur demanded a full text of the officer's speech.

DRY PUBLICITY



Dr. Ernest H. Cherrington of Ohio, selected as the director of the new Anti-Saloon league department of policy, education and research.

Which the Better Half?

It is said that more than 50 per cent of the women in this country have defective eyesight. That accounts for about 50 per cent of the men who are able to get married.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Insta

When you consult for our ward application to make a nation of millionaires, you will find equal opportunity for all.