

# The Return to Grace

By HENRY LINSLEY DOOLITTLE

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FOR the past year Kellogg has been kept busy refuting exaggerated stories of his mistaken identity. To his friends, therefore, the first true account should be of deep interest. In reviewing his last evening at the exposition he remembered having taken in a fair share of the Pike. The Tyrolean Alps, Creation, Hereafter, the Cliff Dwellers—he had seen them all, good, bad or indifferent. Thus far he had proceeded on his loose change.

And then he had come to the Naval Battle and to the end of his quarters. Diving into his hip pocket, his hand had brought forth not the expected wallet, but a paper of chewing tobacco. Too surprised for utterance, he sauntered back to the now deserted plaza to secure his assets in silence. An emer-



"I SHOULD THINK YOU WOULD BE ASHAMED TO OWN IT."

gency \$15, pinned to an inside coat pocket, was the sum total, aside from a few cents.

"Oh, well, I've seen all I want," he muttered philosophically. "Tomorrow I was expecting to start back to New York anyway."

New York? Good heavens, his ticket had been stolen too! The single fare was more than \$20, to say nothing of a sleeper and meals en route. The former luxury he might dispense with, he slowly conceded, but thirty hours without food—pshaw, what was he talking about? His balance would not even buy him a ticket.

He might have telegraphed his father for a loan, but the latter, always suspicious of bunko games, would doubtless cautiously await a letter of confirmation. That meant at least a forty-eight hours' delay, and he was due in New York but three days hence.

A new thought illumined his groping senses—the cut rate ticket brokers. They might supply the need within his means.

Next morning, suit case in hand, he made a dicker for a through ticket via the Big Four, Chesapeake and Ohio route. A dollar and eighteen cents remained.

Safely aboard, Kellogg heaved a sigh of relief. He had felt almost like a criminal while showing his ticket at the gate. "Remember your name is Charles A. Winter," had been the broker's parting instruction.

The conductor seemed interminably long in passing through the car. Nearly every passenger was traveling on the return portion of a limited excursion ticket, which meant a minute's inspection to see that the validation and transit limits were correct.

"Tickets, please!" Kellogg sleepily produced the long, buff slip.

"Charles A. Winter—um. Is that your name?" He nodded.

"Well, I should think you would be ashamed to own it."

"What?" Kellogg sat up, electrified. "Isn't my ticket good?"

"Oh, yes; it's good enough to get you into Indianapolis, all right," assented the other. "I reckon they can give you a free bed for the night, too, as far as that's concerned."

"But I don't understand. What have I done?"

For answer the conductor fished forth a copy of a New York "yellow" and began turning the leaves.

"Yes, here it is all right enough," he announced, with satisfaction. "Charles A. Winter wanted for bigamy. Black hair and eyes, very dark complexion, five feet ten. You're it all right. Wife No. 1 offers \$500 reward for your return, wife No. 2 promises as much, wife No. 3—"

a half dozen poor, trustful women into believing they're the only one always look young and innocent."

"But I tell you my name is Frank Kellogg," asserted the frightened passenger. "See, here are the initials in my hatband and on my suit case. As my wallet was stolen, I had to return on a cut rate ticket."

"That's what they all say." "Take me through to Cincinnati if you won't believe me. I've friends there who can establish my identity."

"Huh! I suppose you know I don't go in that direction and think you can work a smooth game on the next conductor. No, sir; Indianapolis is plenty good enough for such as you."

Thenceforth Kellogg was guarded at every station. It was a most ignominious experience for one who had never known the force of being a suspicious character. At times he felt almost guilty of some awful crime, and jail staring him in the face for at least a night. It was maddening. This was what came of relying upon his own resources.

But had he exhausted every resource? Reluctantly he recalled a rumor that Miss Morton had recently moved west to Indianapolis. His mind wandered back to that evening three years ago when she had all but literally thrown their engagement ring at his head. She had declared that she would never speak to him again, and she had a most mullish way of keeping her word. It had been so foolish of her to fly at him for merely reconstrating with her over the attentions of another fellow. No, he concluded hotly to himself, rather than that his name should have to stand on the Indianapolis police records.

After a minute's study of the documents in evidence the captain turned his scrutiny to the prospective prisoner. He was a kindly old man, far different from the officer of Kellogg's imagination.

"Now, let's hear your side of the case," he said presently. The young man recounted his troubles from the finding of the substitution. He glossed nothing over; he blamed no one but himself.

"Personally I believe your story," the captain declared at the close of the narration; "officially I do not dare. But, since I cannot hold you on the charge of using another man's ticket, no such alternative charge having been made, you will be set at liberty if you can identify yourself to my satisfaction."

This was greater clemency than the other had dared hope, but greater only if he could bring himself to court the ridicule of his former fiancée. As the officer's interest in the case seemed to warrant the confidence, Kellogg made a clean breast of his status with Miss Morton. "Did you ever hear of a more humiliating predicament?" he appealed.

"You should take your medicine like a man. It's part of your punishment," laughed the other. "I am relieved at 8. We'll go and hunt her up."

"She might refuse to identify me, and then what?"

"She would scarcely want you to spend the night behind the bars. Even so, I think I can detect the fact if she knows you."

An hour later they had reached the house, to the growing distrust of the prisoner. Miss Morton was at home and by good fortune alone.

Keeping young Kellogg partly concealed behind him, the captain lost no time in coming to the point.

"Here is a young man whose identity is involved," he began. "Perhaps you can help us out?"—quickly producing his charge.

"Why—What if I don't know the man?" she corrected.

"He would be held pending proof from the east."

The situation was too good for instant spoiling. "What is the charge?" she queried further.

The officer heeded not an appealing little tug at his coat sleeve. "He has been passing under the name of Charles A. Winter, who is badly wanted by three wives about New York city."

"The last time I knew anything about him he was a bachelor of the name of Frank Kellogg," she commented, "and he came from that self-same city."

"That is sufficient. Thank you for the information. Good evening." Turning to the open door, the captain vanished into the night.

For a full minute they stood facing each other in silence. A three years' breach is not to be bridged in as many seconds. Kellogg was the first to speak.

"Won't you shake hands, Grace?" he asked, extending his own.

Miss Morton laughed a delicious, provoking little laugh. "For getting you out of a scrape or for the sake of old times?" was the counter question as her hand rather doubtfully met his halfway.

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," she announced. "First of all, we'll go out and sit on the porch, where it's cool. Then in five minutes you can show me how in the name of creation you happened to land here under the arm of the law and can prove that you haven't been up to any monkey business with those other three wives—why, I'll see."

"Five minutes' Grace anyway," murmured he, with a faint attempt at wit as he followed her out to the vine clad porch.

"Well, I feel stranded now, I can tell you," rattling 52 cents, his total assets. "You might go back to the station house and demand your Mormon ticket," suggested she, curious to find what course he would pursue without an offer of assistance.

"No, thank you. I might run up against another amateur detective."

"Indianapolis is rather an expensive place to live in for any length of time on 52 cents," was her provoking comment.

"I'll set out and walk to Cincinnati," savagely. "I've friends there"—heavy accent on friends.

"Yes; it isn't much more than a hundred miles," she considered. "When do you start?"

"As soon as I can find"—"Because if you care to wait till tomorrow I might take you there in my auto," she concluded, with honeyed sweetness.

The northeast wind had suddenly veered to the west. Frank began sounding to see if port lay ahead—or rocks.

"Then you really aren't provoked with me for coming round tonight?"

"Of course not"—port in sight. "It was all too big a joke to see you—the worthy Mr. Franklin Reville-Kellogg—hailed in by a police captain"—rocks ahead. "Why, one would have thought I had out a search warrant for breach of promise, the way you were landed here."

"You like to carry a joke a good way?" "Yes; that's why I decided to take you to Cincinnati," was the ready rejoinder.

Nothing was to be gained in that direction. "Do you know, those three years have seemed an awfully long time," he began on a new tack.

"Dear me! Have you found them so, with three wives for entertainment? I've never had such a dandy time in my life."

Reaching out, he seized her left hand and felt for any telltale rings.

"But you're not engaged," he returned as she jerked away her hand.

"Well, what if I'm not?" "Oh, nothing. I was afraid you might be, seeing it's leap year."

"We're even now," she admitted. "I was beginning to fear you had lost your old time brilliancy. No; I am not engaged—yet. The idea of your supposing any engaged girl would be sitting here in the dark entertaining you! Why, it would be infinitely worse than kissing poor Cousin Tom goodby."

"Then he was your cousin?" asked Kellogg slowly, painfully. He breathed hard at the recollection of all he had said before, not knowing.

"A first cousin about to set out for the Philippines. Poor boy, he died there last year."

"You might have told me," he grieved. "You did not give me a chance. Besides, I felt too hurt at your circumstantial judgment to care to defend myself."

"Won't you forgive me now, Grace?" As he leaned eagerly toward her the street light sitting through the honey-suckle caught and reflected the diamond that sparkled on his little finger.

"Why didn't you pawn that for a passage home?" she queried irrelevantly, indicating the ring.

"When I put it there three years ago I determined that there it should remain until there was a change of heart somewhere. I suppose you would call it pig-headedness not to part with it under the present conditions?"

"No," Miss Morton considered thoughtfully. "It is sentiment that keeps the world on the move, though it does not pay one's transportation," she added.

"But I don't see where the change of heart was to come in if three wives could not effect it."

"I say, couldn't I pawn it with you?" he suddenly asked.

"Gracious! What could I do with it pending its redemption?"

"Why, wear it, I suppose," hopefully. "You used to know how."

She gave way to a perplexing little laugh.

"Diamonds are worth more than they were three years ago," he urged.

"Do you mean to insinuate that because I am older I stand a smaller chance of getting a ring?" she challenged.

"You stand the greatest chance in the world. If only you will forget that evening and let me see if this doesn't fit as well as ever."

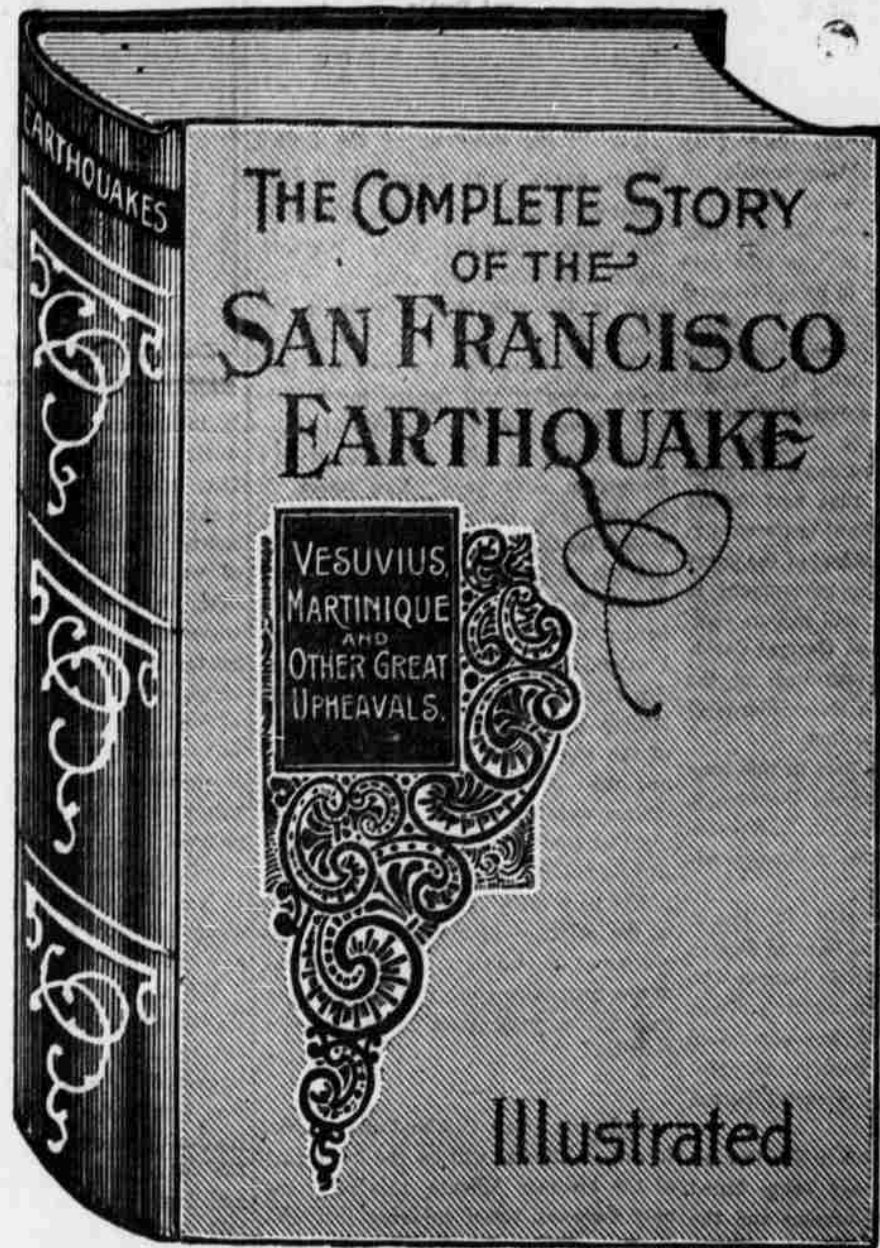
"How much do you want to borrow on it?" she procrastinated.

"No more trouble, but lifelong Grace." "Could you reach the city on such a loan, silly boy?"

"I believe I'd be happy enough to fly right up in the air and wait for New York to pass under me," asseverated he. "You are sure you would never get mad if I jollied you about those other three wives?"

"Never!" She laughed mischievously. "And you would never try to get even by asserting that I used my leap year prerogative to win you back?" she catechised further.

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When Boston Was Young. A book published in 1817 informs us that the fare by steamer from New York to New London, Conn., was 27, including board. The distance is given as 140 miles and the time twenty-one hours. The same book tells us that Boston is not yet a city, "because the people fear that the power invested in corporations would be injurious to their liberties." Further on it is stated that "this town is the headquarters of federalism in politics and Unitarianism in religion."

Placing a freshly washed hairbrush in the sunshine or near the fire to dry soon spoils the color of the bristles.