

The THOUSANDTH WOMAN

BY ERNEST W. HORNING

Author of *The Amateur Cracksmen*, *Raffles*, Etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY O. IRWIN MYERS

CHAPTER XI—Continued.

The trusty, stately, sensible voice, half bantering but altogether kind, genuinely interested if the least bit inquisitive, too, would have gone to a harder or more hardened heart than beat on Blanche's balcony that night. Yet as Cazaleet lighted his pipe he looked old enough to be her father.

"I'll tell you some time," he puffed. "It's only a case of two heads," said Blanche. "I know you're bothered, and I should like to help, that's all."

"You couldn't."

"How do you know? I believe you're going to devote yourself to this poor man—if you can get him off—I mean, when you do."

"Well!" he said. "Surely I could help you there! Especially if he's ill," cried Blanche, encouraged by his silence. "I'm not half a bad nurse, really!"

"I'm certain you're not."

"Does he look very ill?"

She had been trying to avoid the direct question as far as possible, but this one seemed so harmless. Yet it was received in a stony silence unlike any that had gone before. It was as though Cazaleet neither moved nor breathed, whereas he had been all sighs and fidgets just before. His pipe was out already—that was the one merit of bush tobacco, it required constant attention—and he did not look like lighting it again.

Until tonight they had not mentioned Scruton since the motoring began. That had been a tacit rule of the road, of wayside talk and indoor orgy. But Blanche had always assumed that Cazaleet had been to see him in the prison; and now he told her that he never had.

"I can't face him," he cried under his breath, "and that's the truth! Let me get him out of this hole, and I'm his man forever; but until I do, while there's a chance of falling, I simply can't face the fellow. It isn't as if he'd asked to see me. Why should I force myself upon him?"

"He hasn't asked to see you because he doesn't know what you're doing for him!" Blanche leaned forward as eagerly as she was speaking, all her repressed feelings coming to their own in her for just a moment. "He doesn't know because I do believe you wouldn't have him told that you'd arrived, lest he should suspect! You are a brick, Sweep, you really are!"

He was too much of one to sit still under the name. He sprang up, beating his hands. "Why shouldn't I be—"



"Look Here, Blanche! If You Had a Friend, Wouldn't You Do It?"

to him—to a poor devil who's been through all he's been through? Ten years! Just think of it; no, it's unthinkable to you or me. And it all started in our office; we were to blame for not keeping our eyes open; things couldn't have come to such a pass if we'd done our part, my poor old father for one—I can't help saying it—and I myself for another. Talk about contributory negligence! We were negligent, as well as blind. We didn't know a villain when we saw one, and we let him make another villain under our noses; and the second one was the only one we could see in his true colors, even then. Do you think we owe him nothing now? Don't you think I owe him something, as the only man left to pay?"

But Blanche made no attempt to answer his passionate questions. He had let himself go at last; it relieved her also in a way, for it was the natural man back again on her balcony. But he had set Blanche off thinking on other lines than he intended.

"I'm thinking of what he must have felt he owed Mr. Craven and—Ethel!" she owned.

"I don't bother my head over either of them," returned Cazaleet harshly. "He was never a white man in his lifetime, and she was every inch his daughter. Scruton's the one I pity—because I've suffered so much from that man myself."

"But you don't think he did it!"

Blanche was sharp enough to interrupt.

"No—no—but if he had!"

"You'd still stand by him?"

"I've told you so before. I meant to take him back to Australia with me—I never told you that—but I meant to take him, and not a soul out there to know who he was." He sighed aloud over the tragic stopper on that plan.

"And would you still?" she asked.

"If I could get him off."

"Guiltily or not guiltily?"

"Rather!"

There was neither shame, pose, nor hesitation about that. Blanche went through into the room without a word, but her eyes shone finely in the lamplight. Then she returned with a book, and stood half in the balcony, framed as in a panel, looking for a place.

"You remind me of 'The Thousandth Man,'" she told him as she found it.

"Who was he?"

"He's every man who does a thousandth part of what you're doing!" said Blanche with confidence. And then she read, rather shyly and not too well:

"One man in a thousand," Solomon says. "Will stick more close than a brother. And it's worth while seeking him half your days."

If you find him before the other. Nine hundred and ninety-nine depend on what the world sees in you. But the Thousandth Man will stand your friend.

With the whole round world again you."

"I should hope he would," said Cazaleet. "If he's a man at all."

"But this is the bit for you," said Blanche:

"His wrong's your wrong, and his right's your right.

In season or out of season. Stand up and back it in all men's sight—With that for your only reason! Nine hundred and ninety-nine can't bide the shame or mocking or laughter. But the Thousandth Man will stand by your side.

To the gallows-foot—and after!"

The last words were italics in Blanche's voice, and it trembled, but so did Cazaleet's as he cried out in his formula:

"That's the finest thing I ever heard in all my life! But it's true, and so it should be. I don't take any credit for it."

"Then you're all the more the thousandth man!"

He caught her suddenly by the shoulders. His rough hands trembled; his jaw worked. "Look here, Blanche! If you had a friend, wouldn't you do the same?"

"Yes, if I'd such a friend as all that," she faltered.

"You'd stand by his side to the gallows-foot—if he was swine enough to let you?"

"I dare say I might."

"However bad a thing it was—murder, if you like—and however much he was mixed up in it—not like poor Scruton?"

"I'd try to stick to him," she said simply.

"Then you're the thousandth woman," said Cazaleet. "God bless you, Blanche!"

He turned on his heel in the balcony, and a minute later found the room behind him empty. He entered, stood thinking, and suddenly began looking all over for the photograph of himself, with a beard, which he had seen there a week before.

CHAPTER XII.

Quid pro Quo.

It was his blessing that had done it; up to then she had controlled her feelings in a fashion worthy of the title just bestowed upon her. If only he had stopped at that, and kept his blessing to himself! It sounded so very much more like a knell that Blanche had begun first to laugh, and then to make such a fool of herself (as she herself reiterated) that she was obliged to run away in the worst possible order.

But that was not the end of those four superfluous words of final benediction; before the night was out they had solved, to Blanche's satisfaction, the hitherto impenetrable mystery of Cazaleet's conduct.

He had done something in Australia, something that fixed a gulf between him and her. Blanche did not mean something wrong, much less a crime, least of all any sort of complicity in the great crime which had been committed while he was on his way home. But she believed the worst he had done was to emulate his friend, Mr. Potts, and to get engaged or perhaps actually married to somebody in the bush.

There was no reason why he should not; there never had been any sort or kind of understanding between herself and him; it was only as lifelong friends that they had written to each other, and that only once a year. Lifelong friendships are traditionally fatal to romance. They had both been free as air; and if he was free no longer, she had absolutely no cause for complaint, even if she was fool enough to feel it.

All this she saw quite clearly in her very honest heart. And yet, he might have told her; he need not have shown

to see her, the instant he landed, or seemed so overjoyed, and such a boy again, or made so much of her and their common memories! He need not have begun begging her, in a minute, to go out to Australia, and then never have mentioned it again; he might just as well have told her if he had or hoped to have a wife to welcome her! Of course he saw it afterward, himself; that was why the whole subject of Australia had been dropped so suddenly and for good. Most likely he had married beneath him; if so, she was very sorry, but he might have said that he was married.

Curiously enough, it was over Martha that she felt least able to forgive him. Martha would say nothing, but her unspoken denunciations of Cazaleet would be only less intolerable than her unspoken sympathy with Blanche. Martha had been perfectly awful about the whole thing. And Martha had committed the final outrage of being perfectly right, from her idyllic point of view.

Now among all these meditations of a long night, and of a still longer day, in which nobody even troubled to send her word of the case at Kingston, it would be too much to say that no thought of Hilton Toye ever entered the mind of Blanche. She could not help liking him; he amused her immensely; and he had proposed to her twice, and warned her he would again. She felt the force of his warning, because she felt his force of character



"I Guess I'm Not Fit to Speak to You," He Said.

and will. She literally felt these forces, as actual emanations from the strongest personality that had ever impinged upon her own.

In the day of reaction, such considerations were bound to steal in as single spies, each with a certain consolation, not altogether innocent of comparisons. But the battalion of Toye's virtues only marched on Blanche when Martha came to her, on the little green rug of a lawn behind the house, to say that Mr. Toye himself had called and was in the drawing-room.

Blanche stole up past the door, and quickly made herself smarter than she had ever done by day for Walter Cazaleet; at least she put on a "dressy" blouse, her calling skirt (which always looked new), and did what she could to her hair. All this was only because Mr. Toye always came down as if it were Mayfair, and it was rotten to make people feel awkward if you could help it. So in called Blanche, in her very best for the light of day, to be followed as soon as possible by the silver teapot, though she had just had tea herself. And there stood Hilton Toye, chin blue and collar black, his trousers all knees and creases, exactly as he had jumped out of the boat-train.

"I guess I'm not fit to speak to you," he said, "but that's just what I've come to do—for the third time!"

"Oh, Mr. Toye!" cried Blanche, really frightened by the face that made his meaning clear. It relaxed a little as she shrank involuntarily, but the compassion in his eyes and mouth did not lessen their steady determination.

"I didn't have time to make myself presentable," he explained. "I thought you wouldn't have me waste a moment if you understood the situation. I want you to promise to marry me right now!"

Blanche began to breathe again. Evidently he was on the eve of yet another of his journeys, probably back to America, and he wanted to go over engaged; at first she had thought he had bad news to break to her, but this was no worse than she had heard before. Only it was more difficult to cope with him; everything was different, and he so much more pressing and precipitate. She had never met this Hilton Toye before. Yes; she was distinctly frightened by him. But in a minute she had ceased to be frightened of herself; she knew her own mind once more, and spoke it much as he had spoken his, quite compassionately, but just as tersely to the point.

"One moment," he interrupted. "I said nothing about my feelings, because they're a kind of state proposition by this time; but for form's sake I may state there's no change there, except in the only direction I guess a person's feelings are liable to change toward you, Miss Blanche! I'm a worse case than ever, if that makes any difference."

Blanche shook her yellow head. "Nothing can," she said. "There must be no possible mistake about it this time, because I want you to be very good and never ask me again."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

IS IT BABEL TOWER?

Ruins in Euphrates Valley Interest Archeologists.

Many Believe Tower Famous Structure Mentioned in Bible—Built of Colored Brick in Succession of Stages.

It is doubtful if there is any place in the world so rich in ancient remains as the valley of the Euphrates, in Mesopotamia. The result is that to archeologists and scholars the place is a veritable "Tom Tiddler's ground," and new "finds" are constantly being reported. When it is remembered that tradition places the site of the Garden of Eden here, while amongst its many ruins are those of ancient Babylon, the promising nature of the valley to the scientific excavator becomes apparent.

It is near the ruins of Babylon that we find what many scholars believe to be the remains of the Tower of Babel—an immense cube of brick work



A Lonely Pile, Worn by Ages of Weather Is the World's Only Claimant to the Honor of Being to Tower of Babel.

called by the natives Birs Mimirud. Recent exhaustive examination of the strange pile and its site has revealed the fact that the tower which once stood here consisted of seven stages of brick work on an earthen platform, each stage being of a different color. The tower boasted of a base measurement of nearly six hundred square feet, and rose to an unknown height. Even today the ruins rise some hundred and sixty feet above the level of the surrounding plain.—Popular Mechanics.

Dog Knows Phone Ring.

Bud, a Boston terrier, owned by W. P. Pinney, an employee of the Southern New England Telephone company and a member of the volunteer fire brigade, can distinguish his master's telephone call—two rings—from the other numbers on the 316 line, according to a Winsted (Conn.) dispatch to the New York Herald.

When the bell rings twice and Pinney is at home and does not hear the call the dog searches for him. By barking and other means he attracts his master's attention to the telephone.

When Pinney fails to respond at night to the double ring Bud dashes to his master's room and rouses him. That is one reason why Pinney never fails to report for duty at a night fire.

Napoleon in Opera.

Long ago dramatic authors put Napoleon I upon the stage. But until the present the little corporal has only appeared. Now he is going to sing. The libretto of the opera is ready and a Genevese musician, M. Joseph Lauber, is to write the music. The title is simple, "1815." The theme will include the flight from the Isle of Elba, the hundred days, Waterloo and St. Helena. The role of the emperor will be taken by M. Zimmerman, who joins to a strong tenor voice the Napoleonic face. The idea of making Napoleon sing does not lack in audacity and one may well ask if it will be accepted by the French public.

London Short of Doctors.

The operation of the English insurance act, with its free medical attention to the low-waged class, is seriously hampered by lack of doctors. In London, the 1,440 panel doctors have been reduced by 170 who have joined the forces at the front, leaving 1,270 to look after the city's 1,500,000 insured persons. If the remaining number is further reduced by the new armies, the medical benefit of the insurance act may be allowed to lapse, which would bring great suffering upon the poor.

South Africa's Fruit Exports.

It is anticipated that large quantities of oranges and other citrus fruits will be available for shipment from South Africa to England during the coming season. In another four years the South African shipments of such fruit will, according to the estimate of C. du Chiappini, British government trades commissioner to South Africa, amount to 400,000 boxes, and in ten years to 4,000,000 boxes annually.

Greece Exports Much Opium.

Opium is such an important article of export from Greece that it ranks third in the country's export list, coming after tobacco and currants. There was an enormous increase in the opium exports in 1914 on account of the war, which reflected to Saloniki shipments of the drug which would otherwise have been landed elsewhere. Opium shipped from Greece is used for the manufacture of morphine.

HE APPRECIATED COLD DRINK

Farmer, in Enjoyment of His Refreshment, Calls on Wife and Children to Join Him.

Claude Martin of St. Louis county says this really happened: A farmer in the Creve Coeur district whose wife greatly deprecates his intermittent convivial tendency, came to St. Louis in the holidays and greatly enjoyed himself. Upon returning home he was extremely thirsty, desiring above all things, a drink of cold water, and yet fearing to arouse his vigilant wife. He put up his horses and cautiously approached the old draw well. The bucket rose almost noiselessly as he pulled the windlass and he secured a mighty draft.

He drank till he could hold no more. The night was quite cold and the water splendid.

Suddenly, in the gratitude of his refreshment, he lifted up his voice.

"Maria!" he shouted. "Oh, Maria!"

"Whatever do you want?" demanded his wife, from the house. "What are you standing out there in the lot, bellerin' like a calf for?"

"Oh, Maria," the husband pleaded, "you and the children come on out here and get some of this good water."

—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Out of the Ordinary.

"I'm very much afraid my wife is going to have brain trouble," said the druggist.

"What reasons have you for thinking so?" queried his friend, the doctor.

"Last Sunday," explained the pill-maker, "when she returned from church she repeated the text and never said a word about what the other women had on."

DIDN'T UNDERSTAND.



The Farmer—Hev you noticed how purty Silas Cornstassie's daughter is getting to be?

The Parson (somewhat of an artist)—Why, she's as beautiful as Hebe.

The Farmer—No; she's a heap sight purtier than he be. She gits her beauty from her ma.

Rapid Progress.

"I understand you have a new hostler from England."

"Yes, I'm giving him a few lessons in hanging on to his 'atches."

"What's the first lesson?"

"He repeats after me, 'Harry Hastings had a hotel in Hoboken.'"

"How's he getting along?"

"Fine. He can say that sentence now and only drop two out of the five 'atches.'"

Might Be Worse.

"Doppel certainly does look ridiculous in his motor car."

"Why so?"

"He wears big goggles, the latest agony in motor caps, a coffee-colored coat and a pair of enormous gauntlets."

"Well, I don't object to a man dressing up like that, just so he doesn't plaster his car with pennants when he makes a tour through the country."

Strategy.

Hub—I told Bohrsun that we might drop in on them tonight.

Wife—Oh, fudge! You know I don't want to visit those people, and I can't see why you do.

Hub—I don't. I told him that so that we can stay at home tonight without fear of having them drop in on us.

Ma's Too Suav.

"Everybody's sick at your house."

"Yep. Pa's got the grippe. So has Aunt Mary and Sister Jane. I'm just getting over it."

"And your mother? Has she the grippe, too?"

"Gee, whizz no! Ma ain't got no time to have it. She's got to wait on all the rest of 'em."

Growing Family.

"Taking a cheerful view of life is all a matter of habit," said the philosopher.

"Perhaps so," answered the man with a worried look, "but so long as the stork continues to show such partiality to my household, I fear it's a habit I won't be able to acquire."

Youthful Egotism.

"Miss Flivver will read a paper before the Thursday Literary club on 'British Bards.'"

"That's a rather large order, I should say."

"Depends on how you look at it. She says she can do Browning nicely in a paragraph."

Very Unusual.

"Then you say you have a model husband?"

"Quite. Since we have been married he has never given the neighbors a moment's anxiety."

HUBBY IN HARD LUCK

MEANT WELL, BUT FRIEND WIFE IS HARD TO CONVINCE.

Fact Is, He Merely Wanted to Inquire if His Neighbor Would Exchange Seats, and the Catastrophe Followed.

Just to please his wife the obliging man bought tickets for a play that he did not want to see, on a Saturday afternoon when the only two seats available were the width of the house apart. The ticket seller was sorry and correspondingly generous with suggestions for relief.

"It won't make much difference, since the lady is your wife," he said; "still it would be nice for you to sit together. If the person sitting beside either of you happens to have bought a single seat perhaps he will change. It would be worth trying, anyhow."

The obliging man thought it would be. He had an end seat. His neighbor was a lady. She was good-looking. She talked to no one, she looked at none. The obliging man concluded that she was seeing the play alone.

It took courage to put his conclusion to the test, but the ticket seller's suggestion hammered away persistently, so during the first intermission the obliging man leaned sideways and said:

"I beg your pardon, are you here alone?"

His tone was courteous, his manner chivalrous, but the rudeness of a navy would have inflamed her less.

From a kindly, gentle lady she was transformed into an outraged goddess. She looked at the obliging man just once, but that was enough; he fell back limply.

Then she spoke, not to him, but to an usher passing down the aisle.

"Can you get me another stall?" she said. "I can't sit here any longer. This man has insulted me."

"I only—" began the obliging man, but the usher wouldn't let him finish. He looked nearly as ferocious as the lady.

"Fortunately I can," he said. "A lady on the other side of the house is not pleased with the seat she's got, so I'll bring her over here. He won't bother her."

Before the obliging man could get up to let her pass the insulted lady had walked right over him, and, under the guidance of the usher, was marching over to the opposite side of the house.

They stopped before a woman who looked most uncomfortable in her loneliness.

"Perhaps this lady will change seats with you," said the usher.

"I shall be glad if you will," said the injured one, "but before you go it is my duty to warn you. You will have to sit beside a regular beast of a man. He insulted me. That is why I had to leave."

The lonely woman was standing up. She saw where the other woman had come from. Her face flamed.

"What did he say?" she demanded.

"He wanted to know if I was here alone."

The usher tried to show the lonely lady the way, but she got there before him. Without ceremony she dropped into the unoccupied seat.

"Now," said she, "I want to know all about it. What did you mean by asking that red-headed woman if she was here alone?"

He tried to tell her then, he has tried to tell her since, and no doubt he will be trying to tell her on his death-bed, but he might as well save his breath. She will never believe him.—New York Times.

Misunderstood Direction.

Many suites of the high-class apartment houses in New York use the alphabet instead of numerals to designate them. It is more classy, you know. The other day Mary Miles Minter, the winsome little film star, according to Bide Dudley, offended a man, and she would not have done it intentionally for the world. He called at the Minter home, apartment A, in a Harlem flat building, seeking a friend who lives in apartment H. He had misunderstood the elevator boy.

"Does Mr. Smith live here?" he asked, as Miss Minter appeared at the door. She shook her head. "Go to H," she replied. The man went downstairs and complained to the building's superintendent. When he was made to understand what Miss Minter meant he cooled down. But he was pretty mad for a while.

Operates in Red Light.

The sensitiveness of the eye to red light has led Doctor Bergonie of Paris to employ such light in surgical operations and in making radiograms of the human body. The operating room is lighted by only a red lamp. The patient is radiographed upon a fluorescent green screen of platinum cyanide of barium and the image is seen with a distinctness far greater than when the observer was in a white light before looking at it. During the operation the red light makes venous blood appear almost black in strong contrast with arterial blood, while the slightest asphyxia in the anesthetized subject shows itself instantly in a blackening of the wound.

New Source of Paper Pulp.

Recent experiments in England have shown that paper pulp of a good quality can be made from sudd, the inextinguishable vegetable product of the White Nile.