

The Recluse of Fifth Avenue

By WYNDHAM MARTYN

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STORY FROM THE START

From the comfortable financial situation to which he had been born, Peter Milman, American gentleman of the old school, and last of his family, is practically reduced to penury through the misfortune of a friend unwisely trusted. Learning of Brewer's suicide, which means the destruction of his last hope, Milman engages a French butler, Achilles Luty who speaks no English, and is to replace Sneed, servant of long standing. By Luty, Milman sends letters to Prof. Fleming Bradney, Floyd Malet and Neeland Barnes, men whom the world has classified as failures, once of high position. In response, the three call on him at his home. After dinner each relates the circumstances that wrecked their careers. Milman convinces them that their misfortunes were all due to one man, Paul Raxon.

CHAPTER IV

When midnight was passed and the four men very comfortably seated about the fire, Neeland Barnes began to think there was to be no unmasking of his past. In a sense he was glad. These two men whom he had begun by despising seemed, after all, to have cut considerable figures once. Barnes was a shrewd judge of men. He thought that he had spoken only the truth. The big man with the eager, gray eyes was most certainly no knaffer. And as to the other, Barnes recalled his case well now it was brought to his notice. He had sneered at the sculptor's odd defense and believed it with most men about town a very poor excuse. But now he believed absolutely in Floyd Malet's integrity. In comparison, Neeland Barnes, professional man-of-the-world, felt rather a poor specimen.



A Few Hundred Spent in Bribery.

"We now come," said Milman, breaking in on his reflections, "to the case of Mr. Neeland Barnes."

Mr. Neeland Barnes groaned inwardly. Exteriorly he was urbane and gracious.

"Shearing the black sheep," he said. "A lesson to all young men. How not to live."

"Mr. Barnes," said Peter Milman, "is not so complex a type as his fellow-guests. He aimed at physical attributes rather than intellectual or artistic achievements. And he succeeded just as they did. I doubt if there is an American living who excelled in certain phases of sport as Mr. Barnes did."

"He was a man who might have passed a blameless life had his money lasted. There came a time when his relatives would not help and his horses could not win races. Finally, he was accused of some trickery at Saratoga and found his racing career at an end. Since then he has been living insecurely on what his few remaining relatives choose to give him."

"Mr. Milman," Barnes said, and there was a certain dignity in his bearing. "I have been almost every sort of a fool in my day. I have thrown away fortunes and gambled and drunk like a madman, but I never pulled any dirty tricks on a race track. I was always out to win and never betted against my own horses. I'm not what you might call a reliable man, and I've done things I'm heartily ashamed of now, but I did not do what the Saratoga stewards believed of me."

"What did they believe?" Bradney demanded. He knew nothing of racing.

"My trainer gave evidence before them that I instructed him to dope my entry for the Saratoga cup so that I might bet on another horse. Mine was the favorite. It did go to the post full of bromide, and the horse I was reputed to have bet on won at long odds. I had the trainer against me and the bookmaker, and, because I was known to be in monetary difficulties, I was disbelieved. Not that I blame the stewards. They did their duty as they saw it. Somebody fixed my trainer and the jockey. I was forced out of the racing game, and found I hadn't a friend in the world. My wife would have believed me, but she was dead. I used what money I could get hold of to fight the thing, but the man, or men, who framed me had more money. I shall never know who it was."

"I know," said Peter Milman quietly. "You were not framed, as you term it, by any crooked owner of thoroughbreds. None of them was big enough to pull down a man of your sort. You had traditions and a name behind you. Your downfall came because you threw a man from the pier at Narragansett into the Atlantic ocean. Do you remember?"

"Yes," Barnes said slowly. "I think I do. There was a woman mixed up in it, but I forget her name now. She was one of those little fluffy blondes that were fashionable that season. Ah, I have it. She was a roof-garden star. A man came up and tried to make a scene. My Aunt Sarah, who was most particular, was coming toward us. The thing would have been most disastrous because I had turned over a new leaf the previous evening and a codicil was to be added to her will. Fortunately, the man struck at me, and I thought the simplest way out of it was to drop him in the sea. Aunt Sarah, being short-sighted, did not even see him disappear." Mr. Barnes mused on the thing for a few moments. "Most extraordinary. I never saw him again. There was no summons, no publicity—nothing. I was a bit uneasy at first but he should have been drowned, but somebody saw him crawl

ashore. I never knew his name, and I never saw the blonde again."

"The man you threw into the water was the man who arranged matters so that you should be compelled to give up racing." There was a trace of triumph in Mr. Milman's manner. "You will never be able to prove it, so don't try."

"And I hoped he didn't drown," said Barnes, looking about for sympathy. "What's his name?" Barnes did not doubt his host's sincerity for a moment.

"All in good time," said Milman; "first let me show you his photograph." He unlocked a drawer and took the picture from an envelope. "Is that he?"

"As I remember it, yes," said Barnes; "but it's years ago, and there might be a possibility of error."

Milman passed the photograph to Floyd Malet.

"Do you recognize him?"

There was excitement in the sculptor's voice. "It's the man with the

far coat who came to my studio that night. This is the man, I'll swear. What's his name?"

"That is the man to whom you all owe your misfortunes—Paul Raxon."

It was a thin, narrow face that stared back at them, but it was not the face of a fool. Few men without the early advantage of financial training had impressed themselves on Wall Street as he had done. The collapse of International Motors and the failure of the Hazen Brewer crowd to break him made Raxon for the moment the most spectacular figure in New York. And yet none of Milman's guests had ever before seen a photograph of him. He had a knack of outwitting the newspaper photographers. He had smashed many cameras. It had come to be understood that to attempt to photograph him was to incur the enmity of a man who never forgave or forgot.

"That he broke Professor Bradney was a precautionary measure and not born of any personal malice. No doubt his subordinates had found the professor was not rich and supposed him ripe for the fall. There is hardly a doubt that he has made enormous amounts by these methods, always covering himself with hopelessly compromised lesser men who dared say nothing. As to Mr. Malet, that was merely bad luck and not in the first design. I don't suppose Raxon had anything personal against him, but he recognized the opportunity to escape from a troublesome position. The only purely personal spite was in the case of Mr. Neeland Barnes. Raxon was intending to buy a big house at Narragansett and entertain largely."

"I don't remember the name there," said Barnes.

"He left the pier," Milman answered. "Raxon is curiously sensitive to ridicule. He could not remain to be pointed out as the man Neeland Barnes had contemptuously tossed into the ocean. It took him several years to get his revenge, but it was a complete one. He boasts that he never lets up, and ascribes Indian ancestry to this unamiable quality. His most spectacular hatred was that my poor friend Hazen Brewer incurred."

"Brewer committed suicide because he had plunged into penury a man who was near and dear to him. This was a man unused to finance, who trusted Brewer with his fortune and mortgaged his home in a vain effort to save his friend. Brewer felt disgraced. I think this emotion was far more potent than the fact of his financial collapse. He did not know that his friend harbored no hard thoughts of him and would have made no complaints. After all, the friend's loss was very little compared with his downfall."

Fleming Bradney, perhaps the closest observer of Milman's guests, was becoming possessed with a vast impatience to know for what reason he had been summoned. Bradney had the analytical mind of the scientist. There were several things in Milman's narrative which needed elucidation.

"Why," he asked suddenly, "did you subscribe to a press-clipping agency and put a detective on Raxon's track?"

"Because I had learned through a source entirely confidential that it was Raxon who had ruined Mr. Malet. I was interested in Mr. Malet. I think that marble group proves it. And I have said I was interested in your work too. If it had been possible to clear you, I should like to have done so. I am not sure there was not something of childish vanity in it. I liked to sit here in my lonely, unvisited house and feel I was learning day by day, hour by hour, more about a man who believed himself above the law and building up this knowledge into a weapon against him. But I found he was so secure as to be able to boast of things that no legal evidence could charge him with. Neeland Barnes, for example. A few hundreds spent in bribery, or a few promises dropped as to future patronage, and the thing was accomplished."

"All you have done," said Bradney, who was suddenly assailed with doubts as to Milman's ultimate purpose, "is to get us here and show us what failures we are. That is not kind, unless you have a remedy. Don't you see it puts us in a very poor light? A man may fall and still have self-respect left. I decline to consider myself a black sheep. You tell me Raxon ruined my career. I shall make a point of seeing the editors of all the great New York papers and telling them what you have said. Too long a certain type of man has ruled our cities in the name of democracy."

There was no doubt now about Peter Milman's uneasiness as he listened.

"I thought you understood," he said quietly, "that this conversation was privileged. If you go to your editors you will do two things: One will be to convince them that you have brooded so long on your troubles that you are mad. The other will be to disclose the confidences a dead man gave me."

"But you want me to give up the only chance I may ever have of clearing my name," Bradney complained.

"You can never clear it that way. I don't think you can ever hope to defeat Paul Raxon that way." His tone changed a little. "Tell me this Mr. Bradney. Which counts more with you: the clearing of your name of suspicion of dishonesty—not actual conviction of it, remember, for your case never came before a court of law—or the opportunity to devote your life to your chosen science?"

"The latter, of course," Bradney cried. "It is only if I establish my innocence that I can hope to get another appointment. Such work as mine is very costly. I must have large funds at my disposal and elaborate equipment."

"And you?" Milman said, turning to the sculptor.

"If enough mud is thrown at a man, no matter how innocent he is, some of it will stick. I have long since abandoned any hope of being whitewashed. In a sense, the equipment of the sculptor is expensive. If I were a painter, it would be a different thing. There is no institution to endow broken, middle-aged men."

"It is for that reason I asked you all to come here," Milman answered. "You don't understand? Gentlemen, I am a broken middle-aged man. In Hazen Brewer's failure my entire fortune went. I mortgaged this house to help him. Out of the wreck I may save enough to live in a couple of humble rooms for the rest of my life. We are all in the same boat, all four of us victims to Paul Raxon's whims."

"You," Neeland Barnes cried. "You had all sorts of money, I thought."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Find Red Riding Hood Character in Legend

Little Red Riding Hood was a real girl, but her history has been altered in its journey down to modern nurseries. Abraham of China, a knight of the Seventh century, who claimed a girl named Mary as his niece, walked himself up in a solitary cell as a monk after changing his mind at the altar about matrimony. Mary used to don her red hood each day and carry bottles of milk and butter to her uncle, passing it to him through the one window of his cell. The former knight also was visited by a monk whose name was Wolf and whose character, according to ancient historians, quite justified the appellation. He used to fall in with Mary and would make pleasant inquiries concerning the condiments beneath the napkin in her

basket. Arriving nowhere with his suit he carried the damsel off to a neighboring city where he finally deserted her. The uncle's wrath was so aroused that he left his seclusion to search for her in the guise of a cavalier, and finding her after a great expenditure of time, energy and money, brought her back and wedded her up in a cell beside him. There she spent 15 years and tradition has it that many miracles were wrought by the two for pilgrims who visited them.—Kansas City Times.

Bass Viol Forms Cart
A Bertha musical instrument house uses a double-bass viol of full orchestral size, mounted on a tricycle, for delivery cart.

Improved Uniform International Sunday School Lesson

REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. (© 1927, Western Newspaper Union.)

Lesson for June 26

Review—Life and Letters of Peter (Read I Peter 5:1-11).

GOLDEN TEXT—Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.
PRIMARY TOPIC—Lessons from Peter's Life.
JUNIOR TOPIC—Peter in the School of Christ.
INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Peter as a Leader.
YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Peter's Life and Work.

At best, suggestions as to the method of review have only a relative value. The individuality of the teacher, the aptitude of the pupils and the department of the school are factors which determine the best method to use. Three methods are suggested, the first two of which are in part taken from "Peloubet's Notes."

I. Peter's Characteristics.
Among the outstanding characteristics of Peter may be mentioned impetuosity, leadership, courage, cowardice, changeableness, outspokenness. These traits and others are to be found in the quarter's lessons.

II. Biographical.
The features to be stressed in this plan are Peter's early life, discipleship, and fall, restoration, preaching at Pentecost, imprisonment, writings.

III. The Summary Method.
Lesson for April 3.

Jesus had first called Peter and John to become His disciples. Afterwards he called them to become fishers of men. He first calls sinners to come to Him for salvation and then calls those who are saved to serve Him in winning others to Christ.

Lesson for April 10.
Following the feeding of the five thousand, some were disposed to compel Christ to be king. Seemingly to prevent the disciples from entanglement in this movement He sent them across the sea. From His place of prayer in the mount He saw them struggling against the storm on Lake Galilee and went to their rescue, speaking words of comfort. At his invitation Peter walked on the water, but when he took his eyes off of the Savior he began to sink.

Lesson for April 17.
To give the disciples a clear conception of His person, to prepare them for the dark hour of the cross, Jesus put to them two questions, "Who do men say I am?" (R. V.) "Who say ye that I am?" (R. V.) One's conception of Christ's person determines his character and his service.

Lesson for April 24.
To revive the crushed hopes of the disciples and to show them how the kingdom was to be realized, Christ was transfigured before them.

Lesson for May 1.
Peter's downfall began when he refused to hear about the cross. The steps in his downfall were self-confidence, sleeping at the post of duty, lack of prayer, zeal without knowledge, following Christ afar off, warming himself at the enemy's fire, and open denial. The look of Jesus brought him to repentance.

Lesson for May 8.
Upon word by Mary that the Lord's tomb was empty, Peter and John hurriedly made an investigation. After Jesus had shown Himself to be alive by many infallible proofs He recommissioned Peter. Resurrection must be beyond a peradventure before there can be missionary effort.

Lesson for May 15.
Fifty days after Christ ascended the Holy Spirit was poured out. When the promise of the Father was sent the disciples were empowered for witnessing of Christ.

Lesson for May 22.
In the power of the Holy Spirit Peter wrought miracles and witnessed for Christ with such power that great numbers were added unto the church.

Lesson for May 29.
After Pentecost Peter, who had covered before a Jewish maid and shamefully denied his Lord, witnessed for Christ in spite of persecution.

Lesson for June 5.
In keeping with Christ's command to witness to the ends of the earth, the missionary program had so widened as to include the Gentiles. Cornelius, a prominent Gentile of good reputation among the Jews, was used of God to break down the middle wall of partition.

Lesson for June 12.
Peter was imprisoned for preaching the gospel. A great crisis was upon the church. The church prayed and God sent an angel to deliver Peter.

Lesson for June 19.
Though Christians are sojourners in the earth they have responsibilities as citizens. They should be obedient to the laws of the country.

Dwell Deep
It is God's will that I should be serene and strong and brave. He does not mean for me to be despairing or depressed. Day by day He will give me a measure of strength adequate for each emergency. "Dwell deep, my soul, dwell deep!"—Christian Observer.

True Faith
True faith detaches from the world and sin in proportion as it attaches to Christ.—F. B. Meyer.

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"Give Him One of Your Cards, Bob!"

Two men in a sedan and a farmer and his boy in a smaller car had stopped on a country road for a short discussion of business in general. The farmer and one of the men from town were old friends. The other was unknown to him.

"Give Mr. Hartley one of your cards, Bob," suggested the farmer's friend. "You ought to do some business with him before long."

Now, if Bob had presented his card to Mr. Hartley, there would be little of interest to us in the transaction. But Bob did not have a card to give him!

Whatever your business or profession may be, you can't afford to be without a supply of personal cards. Your business is built by making yourself known favorably to a lot of people. When folks need, or consider, something in your line, you want them to think of you. If they have your card the chances are in your favor.

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