



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, is practically reduced to penury through the misfortune of a friend unwisely trusted. Learning of his friend's suicide, which means the destruction of his last hope, Milman sends letters to Prof. Fleming Bradney, Floyd Malet and Neeland Barnes, men once of high position. In response, the three call on him at his home. Each relates the circumstances that wrecked their careers. Milman convinces them that their misfortunes were all due to one man, Paul Raxon. Himself impoverished through Raxon's financial crookedness, Milman proposes an association of the four men—an association outside the law—which shall pull down Raxon and force him to disgorge his ill-gotten financial gains. Raxon's political ambition is the national senatorship from his state. McKimber is the admitted party nominee, and must be eliminated. Returning to his humble abode, Neeland Barnes finds his daughter, Anita, who had been living with relatives in England.

CHAPTER VI—Continued

"I'm afraid cozy little flats on Fifth Avenue where you were born aren't exactly within my means. The view is just as pretty from Central Park west." He groaned to think they were just as difficult to attain.

"Anything you like," she said happily.

Peter Milman and his two guests had finished dinner and were in the large drawing room when Achille came in with the news that Neeland Barnes had returned with a lady!

Bradney looked at Malet and shook his head. It was in Bradney's mind that Barnes had spent his money on liquid refreshment and had so far forgotten himself as to seek to introduce a lady friend to a bachelor establishment. He could see that Peter Milman was much disturbed.

A moment later Neeland Barnes was introducing a very pretty, gracious girl with charming speaking voice as Anita Barnes newly come from England. Peter Milman's annoyance was banished momentarily as he thought of the ramifications of his family tree. The girl must be, remotely, a distant cousin. He greeted her with distinguished courtesy and introduced the other men to her.

"Most extraordinary," Neeland Barnes began. "Entirely unlooked for. I feel as if I had come in for a fortune." He smiled at his daughter. "I have, and that's a fact. She has been living with her aunt in England."

"Till I couldn't stand it any longer," Nita informed them.

Her father was greatly troubled. Circumstances, as he would presently explain to Mr. Milman, had compelled him to bring his long-lost daughter here. But what he had to say could not be said in her presence.

"I wonder," he said ingenuously, "whether Mr. Malet would mind showing you the Japanese garden. You'll be simply crazy over it, especially the 'Stone of the Unfortunate Burglar.' Mr. Malet understands these things so much better than I do." He winked ponderously at the sculptor. He tried to convey the impression that he must speak privately with his host.

"A Japanese garden?" she cried. "How delightful. Please, Mr. Malet, show me its wonders."

"Look here," said her father when she had gone. "I couldn't help this. She made things so hard for her that she ran away. She had an idea I was sick and in need of her. She actually earned her passage money. The first of my breed to earn money! She was waiting at Peekskill for me. Lippsky saw his chance and made the most of it. I had to pay everything. You see me now penniless again. She thinks I am staying here overnight and will take an apartment on Central Park tomorrow." He looked appealing at the two men. "Could I help it? I had to bring her here. She has nothing left. The Barnes breed of cattle's not economical. Here we are beggars, outcasts in our own city."

"Neither beggars nor outcasts for three months—at least—" Peter Milman said cheerfully. "Of course, your daughter must remain here. It will be pleasant to have someone young and beautiful with us." He lowered his voice a little. "She must never suspect what brings us all here. It can be supposed that we are engaged in some promotion concerning oil." He put his hand on Barnes' shoulder with a friendly gesture. "I envy you. I am going to see that a room is prepared for her."

Barnes looked at Bradney when the door was closed.

"Outside here," he said. "In the world which calls itself society, Peter Milman has the name of being a

soured old grouch and a disgrace to his name. I ask you, as man to man, if you've ever run across anyone more considerate? My God, Bradney, if you knew the sort of life I've led since that trouble at Saratoga trying to keep my end up when my people had dropped me and my old pals cut me dead, you'd understand just what this means. I'm going the limit for Peter Milman. You've just seen how he saved me from another humiliation. I should have had to tell my girl her father was such an utter failure he couldn't even get her a room in a cheap hotel."

"I know how you must feel," Bradney commented.

"We've got to get the money out of Raxon," Barnes went on, "even if I'm the goat and end up in Sing Sing. Frankly, Bradney, I'm not much of an original thinker. I can carry out another man's conception absolutely and add a few improvements of my own, but I look to people like you and Malet to do up the plans first."

Bradney stirred a little uneasily. He saw that the man of action was looking to him for guidance. The more ardently Bradney desired to pull down Paul Raxon, the more difficult the task seemed. This move of the financier to Great Rock had nullified most of the laborious details garnered by Peter Milman concerning the vacated home in Short Hills. In New Jersey the domestic arrangements had been on a simple plan and the servants few. In the Long Island mansion much greater style was kept up. There were extensive grounds and many outdoor servants.

"I'm afraid you must not look for much help from me," Bradney said. "Milman has assured me absolutely that it is to Raxon I owe my downfall. He has literally stolen my existence. Yours, too, and poor Malet's also. If I had accepted a bribe disguised as a usual form of commission, I should probably have been what the world terms a great man today. If you had not been afraid your aged aunt would see you in an altercation concerning a roof-garden actress, you would not have been disgraced. Had Malet possessed a less generous nature, he would have been talked of in a breath with Rodin. Raxon, Raxon everywhere. Let me tell you I'm just as ready to go the limit as you are. As a matter of simple fact, we were looking to you to make the first concrete suggestion."

"That scoundrel Lippsky drove every idea from my mind," Barnes confessed, "but we have plenty of time." He stopped short as his daughter came in with Floyd Malet. What a beauty she was, he thought affectionately, and how gracefully she carried herself. Breeding in every line of her! Then the thought of his financial inadequacies came to him like a dull pain. What had he to offer? Nothing. A few months' respite and a new life would offer itself. What would that be? He did not like to think. To live for the day was a Barnes motto. He hoped Peter Milman had, indeed, some definite working plan. If it were only a matter of wading through the Raxon men servants and beating their master it would be simple. He had not in his past been noted for subtleties, and laborious, slow processes soon wearied him.

Nita slipped her arm into that of her tall, handsome father.

"Don't look so glum," she chided. She was in very good spirits. The shock of the Lippsky episode had been forgotten when she entered this unique home. She could associate neither failure nor poverty with any of the men beneath its roof. She was curious to know what had brought them together here. It was difficult to conceive of her father as a successful business man. Lady Horsham had often declared few men had been offered such opportunities and made less of them than Neeland Barnes.

"What innocent plotters you all were!" She laughed. "Did any of you really think you were deceiving me? Poor old dear, you don't know even the a b c of the thing. I've been living in an atmosphere of petrol—or gasoline, as you call it here—for half a year. It fills the air in Europe. People like Sir John Crowhurst, who are the heads of oil companies, have political affiliations everywhere. How do I know? I wrote all Sir John's private letters, of which he kept the carbon copies locked up in his safe. I grew to know as much as an outsider could. That's why it amused me to hear you four prattling away like mechanics talking weights and hand-caps to a steward of the Jockey club."

"My dear Nita," he said, "was it fair to keep pumping us?"

"Why not? I was certain you knew nothing about oil, and I wanted to make sure the rest didn't. The only thing I could assume was that they were trying to swindle you. It was horrid to imagine poor Mr. Milman as a swindler."

"Most emphatically he is not," her father exclaimed.

"Then what about the others?"

Neeland Barnes groaned. It was going to be very difficult to put Nita off the scent. She was half Fessendon, and the Fessendons invariably got what they went after. Pertinacity was theirs in a large measure. The idea of imagining Bradney and Malet trying to swindle him brought a smile to Barnes' face. Literally, he had not one cent in the world.

"Nita," he began earnestly. "I put you on your honor not to repeat what I am going to tell you to anyone on any pretext whatsoever."

"All right," she said. "Agreed. Go on."

"I have not a nickel in the world. Bradney and Malet have a hundred dollars apiece, maybe a little more. Peter Milman will have to sell this house and its contents in three months' time. All his money was tied up in International Motors. We are four gentlemen on the chorus of any beggars' opera. It's true we aren't here on any oil promotion business, but we have come together for a very serious business. We are trying to stage a come-back."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"Later, I see we shall have to take you into our confidence," Mr. Milman said, smiling. "At present we do not want anything known. You understand the need for caution?"

"Oh, rather," said the former secretary of Sir John Crowhurst. "It was because of an overheard conversation that we lost the Bogotan fields, which are tremendously valuable." But she did not leave the subject. To the four men she seemed an eager, pretty girl who had been by accident near enough to oil to catch a little of its idiom. They were in love with her when she bade them good night.

"Well," said Bradney when she had gone, "for amateurs you did pretty well. I envied you your flights of fancy."

"A woman has not dined in this house for over ten years," said Peter Milman. "I might have had a daughter of her age now. Barnes, there is another reason for our need to succeed. She must marry well."

Uneasily Barnes thought of the possibility of his daughter having for a father one who wore stripes at his state's expense. "Yes," he agreed soberly.

When he had lighted a cigarette and was sitting in a big chair in the girl's room, he thought there would be many to offer themselves. She had her mother's slim figure and unforgettable eyes added to the vivacity and cheerfulness of the women of his own family.

"Not All Can Worthily Wear 'Elijah's Mantle'"

History is full of instances of men of whom it has been said: "The mantle of Elijah descended upon him." It means that he was a worthy successor of some still more famous master. For instance, Pitt the Younger worthily succeeded to the mantle of his father, the famous earl of Chatham. On the other hand, Richard Cromwell quite failed to wear the mantle of his father, the mighty Oliver.

The phrase is obviously Biblical. When Elijah the prophet went up "by a whirlwind into heaven," the mantle with which he had divided the waters of the River Jordan fell from his shoulders. Elisha, his servant and successor, picked up the fallen cloak. For it seemed to him that it would serve to prove whether he was a true successor or not.

The story goes on: "He took the mantle of Elijah which fell from him, and smote the waters . . . and they parted hither and thither; and Elisha went over. . . . And when the sons of the prophets . . . saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha."

Famous London Prison

Newgate was long the chief prison of London. It was a gloomy building standing east of Holborn viaduct. Its history went back to 1218. It was destroyed by the great fire of 1696, and rebuilt, but partially destroyed during the Gordon riot of 1790. In 1902 Newgate prison was pulled down, and its site was erected the Central Criminal court.

By adroit questioning of the four she learned their secret. They were engaged in promoting a company to operate in the Torrance oil field in south California.

"How interesting!" she cried. "As it happens, I know a lot about oil companies and their way of doing business. You see, my last position in London was as secretary to Sir John Crowhurst, chairman of the Persian-Bagdad Oilfields, Limited."

"You?" cried her astonished father, and then suddenly remembered the thousands of words she could take a minute.

"Yes, Me. Really it was tremendous luck, but I was the only girl in the business school that sent me there who could write as well in French as in English. We had a great many stockholders in Paris. It was rather jolly being his secretary. Sir John was one of those quiet, clever men, like Mr. Milman, who deal in millions. I may look like you, daddy, but I've the business brains of my mother's people. Let me do your correspondence for you."

"I know how you must feel," Bradney commented.

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(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Improved Uniform International Sunday School Lesson

Lesson for July 24
DAVID AND GOLIATH

LESSON TEXT—1 Samuel 17:1-58.
GOLDEN TEXT—The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?
PRIMARY TOPIC—A Boy Overcomes a Giant.
JUNIOR TOPIC—A Boy's Brave Deed.
INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Why David Was Not Afraid.
YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Victories of Faith.

I. The Contending Armies (17:1-3).

On the north side of the Valley of Elah, on the highlands, stood Saul and his army, and on the south side stood the Philistine hosts, eyeing each other for battle. According to an ancient custom, the Philistines, having a warrior among them of great strength, sought to decide the war by a combat between two selected champions. The nation whose champion was slain was to be subject unto the other.

II. The Champions (17:1-37).

1. Goliath of the Philistines. (a) He was a giant (v. 4), perhaps eleven and one-half feet in height. The appearance of such a man greatly intimidated the Israelites. Saul, who once was brave, made no attempt or effort to meet this giant.

(b) He was filled with proud conceit. His size, his panoply of war, and his strength, caused him to believe that no evil could befall him. His conceit became his snare.

(c) He was boastful. No doubt he was a much-talked-of man among the Philistines. Their possession of such a man recalled the former experience of their nation when Sampson, the Israelite giant, wrought such great mischief among them.

(d) He was defiant. He openly defied the army of Israel—the people of the Most High. That is just like the champion of Satan's hosts now. He is becoming more and more defiant of the Lord's people, and ultimately will defy the Almighty Himself.

(e) He was scornful. He treated the Israelites with the utmost contempt. This is what Satan is doing daily. He treats God's people with the utmost contempt.

2. David, the Israelite.

In the providence of God, David was sent to the camp at a time to hear the blatant boasting of this proud and contemptible Philistine champion. His three eldest brethren were in the army, and his father sent him with some provisions for them as well as for the captain. While David was talking with his brothers, Goliath made his appearance. The sight of Israel's cowardice and lack of zeal for God prompted David to offer his services. Note the character of David. (a) A mere youth, a stripling not used to war. (b) He was courageous. When all Israel were afraid, he undertook this task. Besides, he had proven his bravery before in defending his flock against the lion and the bear. (c) He had a mighty faith in God. He argued that what God had done for him He would do again. (d) He had meekness and self-control. This he exhibited in a remarkable manner under the gibes of Eliab (v. 28). (e) He was skillful. He had become such an expert in the use of the sling that he had absolute confidence in the issue of his attack. He was not a blind enthusiast who disregarded the use of means, but was careful to use means, and most particular as to what they should be. He put aside the untried armor of Saul. He knew that God's will for him was to use by faith that which he had thought insignificant. This is God's will for us.

III. The Battle (vv. 38-48).

When Goliath beheld David coming up against him, he cursed him by his gods—Dagon, Baal, and Astarte, showing that it was not merely a battle between David and Goliath, but between true and false religion. David hastened and ran to meet Goliath. The stone from his sling smote Goliath in the forehead and he fell to the earth upon his face. David went forth in the name of the Lord of hosts—that all the earth might know that there was a God in Israel. The whole matter shows that the battle is not with the strong, but with those who put their trust in God.

IV. The Victory (vv. 49-58).

The Philistine champion was killed and the army routed. This victory is a prophesy of a greater one when the devil, the defiant enemy of God and man, shall be slain and his army put to flight. David is thus the type of Christ and Goliath a type of Satan. Goliath's sword was turned against himself and typified that Christ shall turn Satan's weapons against him for his own destruction.

Trial of Your Faith

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.—1 Peter 1:7.

Souls That Surrender

Souls that surrender to the Lord will have the witness of the Spirit given and they will know beyond one doubt whether or not they belong to the Lord.—Ephesians.

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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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