

The Thousandth Woman

By ERNEST W. HORNING

Author of "The Amateur Crackman," "Raffles," etc.

SYNOPSIS.

—9—

Cazalet, on the steamer Kaiser Fritz, bound for Australia, cries out in his sleep that Henry Craven, who ten years before had ruined his father and himself, is dead, and finds that Hilton Toye, who shares the stateroom with him, knows Craven and also Blanche Macnair, a former neighbor and playmate. When the daily papers come aboard at Southampton Toye reads that Craven has been murdered and calls Cazalet's dream second sight. He thinks of doing a little amateur detective work on the case himself. In the train to town they discuss the murder, which was committed at Cazalet's old home. Toye hears from Cazalet that Scruton, who had been Cazalet's friend and the scapegoat for Craven's dishonesty, has been released from prison. Cazalet goes down the river and meets Blanche. Toye also comes to see her and tells Cazalet that Scruton has been arrested, but as he doesn't believe the old clerk is guilty, he is going to ferret out the murderer. Cazalet and Blanche go to Cazalet's old home and meet Mr. Drinkwater of Scotland Yard. Cazalet goes with Drinkwater to the library where the murder was committed, shows him a secret passage he knew as a boy, and leads the way through it. In town Toye, talking with Cazalet about the murder, suggests finger prints on the weapon found in the secret passage as a means of tracing the murderer and succeeds in securing a print of Cazalet's hand. Toye traces Cazalet's movements, while a passenger on the Kaiser Fritz, finds that he left the boat before the murder and returned just after it, and warns him.

CHAPTER X.

The Week of Their Lives.

"Toye's gone back to Italy," said Cazalet. "He says he may be away only a week. Let's make it the week of our lives!"

The scene was the little room it pleased Blanche to call her parlor, and the time a preposterously early hour of the following forenoon. Cazalet in her sunny snuggery rather suggested another extravagant taxicab. But Blanche saw only his worn, excited face; and her own was not at its best in her sheer amazement.

"Italy!" she ejaculated. "When did he go?"

"Nine o'clock last night."

"But"—she checked herself—"I simply can't understand it, that's all!"

"Why? Have you seen him since the other afternoon?"

His manner might have explained those other two remarks, now bothering her when it was too late to notice them; on the other hand, she was by no means sure that it did. He might simply dislike Toye, and that again might explain his extraordinary heat over the argument at Littleford. Blanche began to feel the air somewhat heavily charged with explanations, either demanded or desired; they were things she hated, and she determined not to add to them if she could help it.

"I haven't set eyes on him again," she said. "But he's been seen here—in a taxi."

"Who saw him?"

"Martha—if she's not mistaken."

This was a little disingenuous, as will appear; but that impetuous Sweep was in a merciful hurry to know something else.

"When was this, Blanche?"

"Just about dark—say seven or so. She owns it was about dark," said Blanche, though she felt ashamed of herself.

"Well, it's just possible. He left me about six; said he had to see someone."

MAJESTY OF SEA REVEALED

Traveler in Airship Tells How He Was Impressed by His Passage Over the Ocean.

From an airship H. Warner Allen claims that for the first time he realized the full solitude of the sea.

"To right and left," he writes, "the sea, flecked here and there with foam and its blue expanse cut sometimes by the ash of a seagull's wing (the seagull itself far below was invisible, but its wings flashed bright as they caught the sun), stretched out to a horizon line which was a perfect section of a circle.

"Behind us, and ahead where the land lay, a screen of light mist interposed and cut short our view in a straight line.

"The sensation was one of perfect content mingled with a solemn reverence for the vastness of the sea; not a sail in sight and nothing to divert attention from our swift arrow-like flight.

"The shadow of the bag moved lightly across the waves. There were

too, now I think of it. But I'd give a bit to know what he was doing, messing about down here at the last moment!"

Blanche liked this as little as anything that Cazalet had said yet, and he had said nothing that she did like this morning. But there were allowances to be made for him, she knew. And yet to strengthen her knowledge, or rather to let him confirm it for her, either by word or by his silence, she stated a certain case for him aloud.

"Poor old Sweep!" she laughed. "It's a shame that you should have come home to be worried like this."

"I am worried," he said simply.

"I think it's just splendid, all you're doing for that poor man, but especially the way you're doing it."

"I wish to God you wouldn't say that, Blanche!"

He paid her the compliment of speaking exactly as he would have spoken to a man; or rather, she happened to be the woman to take it as a compliment.

"But I do say it, Sweep! I've heard all about it from Charlie. He rang me up last night."

"You're on the telephone, are you?"

"Everybody is in these days. Where have you lived? Oh, I forgot! And she laughed. Anything to lift this duet of theirs out of the minor key!"

"But what does old Charlie really think of the case? That's more to the point," said Cazalet uneasily.

"Well, he seemed to fear there was no chance of bail before the adjourned hearing. But I rather gathered he was not going to be in it himself!"

"No. We decided on one of those sportsmen who love rushing in where a family lawyer like Charlie owns to looking down his nose. I've seen the chap, and primed him up about old Savage, and our find in the foundations. He says he'll make an example of Drinkwater, and Charlie says they call him the Bobby's Bugebear!"

"But surely he'll have to tell his client who's behind him?"

"No. He's just the type who would have rushed in, anyhow. And it'll be time enough to put Scruton under obligations when I've got him off!"

Blanche looked at the troubled eyes avoiding hers, and thought that she had never heard of a fine thing being done so finely. This very shamed-facedness appealed to her intensely, and yet last night Charlie had said that old Sweep was in such tremendous spirits about it all! Why was he so down this morning?

She only knew she could have taken his hand, but for a very good reason why she could not. She had even to guard against an equivocally sympathetic voice or manner, as she asked, "How long did they remand him for?"

"Eight days."

"Well, then, you'll know the best or the worst today week!"

"Yes!" he said eagerly, almost himself again. "But, whichever way it goes, I'm afraid it means trouble for me, Blanche; some time or other I'll tell you why; but that's why I want this to be the week of our lives."

So he really meant what he had said before. The phrase had been no careless misuse of words; but neither, after all, did it necessarily apply to Mr. Toye. That was something. It made it easier for Blanche not to ask questions.

Cazalet had gone out on the balcony; now he called to her; and there was no taxi, but a smart open car, waiting in the road, its brasses blazing in the sun, an immaculate chauffeur at the wheel.

"Whose is that, Sweep?"

"Mine, for the week I'm talking about! I mean curs, if you'd only buck up and get ready to come out! A week doesn't last forever, you know!"

Blanche ran off to Martha, who fussed and hindered her with the best intentions. It would have been difficult to say which was the more excited of the two. But the old nurse would waste time in perfectly fatuous reminiscences of the very earliest expeditions in which Mr. Cazalet had

no varying air currents, and the airship kept smoothly on with an even motion.

"The sea beneath gave an added sense of security, as though, if need were, it would break our fall.

"Even the mechanics, men hardened to every form of danger, seemed touched by a feeling of awe and were silent; they had nothing to do but gaze across the sea, as the even roar of the motors told that all was well."

Napoleon's Warsaw Romance.

There will never be so many books written about the Kaiser's capture of Warsaw as were inspired by the occupation of that town a little more than a century ago by Napoleon. The French monarch's stay there became a famous episode in history, not because of its military significance, but because of the romance involving the Countess Walewski.

Books are still being written about that love affair of Bonaparte. Of his many affairs of the heart that was the most enduring, barring only his admiration for Josephine. And Napoleon's son, who went by the name of

Count Walewski, became a big figure in France when Napoleon III occupied the throne within the memory of many men still living.

Count Walewski was president of deputies, a senator, a minister of state and a foreign ambassador. He had the pleasure of telling Lord Palmerston in London that Louis Napoleon had jumped from the presidency of France into the throne of an empire.

Self-Abasement.

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"Perhaps," said the mere man; "but in doing so, he wastes a lot of time that might be spent in making more desirable acquaintances."—Judge.

Loyal.

"He's loyal to his friends, isn't he?"

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led and Blanche had followed, and what a bonny pair they had made even then, etc. Severely snubbed on that subject, she took to peering at her mistress, once her bairn, with furtive eagerness and impatience; for Blanche, on her side, looked as though she had something on her mind, and, indeed, had made one or two attempts to get it off. She had to force it even in the end.

"There's just one thing I want to say before I go, Martha. You know when Mr. Toye called yesterday, I was out?"

"Oh, Mr. Toye; yes, I remember, Miss Blanche."

"Well, I don't want you to say that he came in and waited half an hour in vain; in fact, not that he came in at all, or that you're even sure you saw him, unless, of course, you're asked."

"Who should ask me, I wonder?"

"Well, I don't know, but there seems to be a little bad blood between Mr. Toye and Mr. Cazalet."

Martha looked for a moment as though she were about to weep, and then for another moment as though she would die of laughing. But a third moment she celebrated by making an utter fool of herself, as she would have been told to her face by anybody but Blanche, whose yellow hair was being disarranged by the very hands that had helped to imprison it under that motor hat and veil.

"Oh, Blanche, is that all you have to tell me?" said Martha.

And then the week of their lives began.

The weather was true to them, and this was a larger matter than it might have been. They were not making love. They were "not out for that," as Blanche herself actually told Martha, with annihilating scorn, when the old dear looked both knowing and longing-to-know at the end of the first day's run. They were out to enjoy themselves, and that seemed shocking to Martha "unless something was coming of it." She had just sense enough to keep her conditional clause to herself.

Yet if they were only out to enjoy themselves, in the way Miss Blanche vowed and declared (more shame for her), they certainly had done wonders for a start. Martha could hardly credit all they said they had done, and as an embittered pedestrian there was nothing that she would "put past" one of those nasty motors. It said very little for Mr. Cazalet, by the way in Martha's private opinion, that he should take her Miss Blanche out in a car at all; if he had turned out as well as she had hoped, and "meant anything," a nice boat on the river would have been better for them both than all that tearing through the air in a cloud of smoky dust; it would also have been much less expensive, and far more "the thing."

But, there, to see and hear the child

after the first day! She looked so bonny that for a time Martha really believed that Mr. Cazalet had "spoken," and allowed herself to admire him also as he drove off later with his wicked lamps alight. But Blanche would only go on and on about her day, the glories of the Ripley road and the grandeur of Hindhead. She had brought back heaps of heather and bunches of leaves just beginning to turn; they were all over the little house before Cazalet had been gone ten minutes. But Blanche hadn't forgotten her poor old Martha; she was not one to forget people, especially when she loved and yet had to snub them. Martha's portion was picture postcards of the Gibbet and other landmarks of the day.

"And if you're good," said Blanche, "you shall have some every day, and an album to keep them in forever and ever. And won't that be nice when it's all over, and Mr. Cazalet's gone back to Australia?"

Crueler anticlimax was never planned, but Martha's face had brought it on her; and now it remained to make her see for herself what an incomparably good time they were having.

Above all was it delightful to feel that their beloved car was waiting for them outside, to whirl them where they liked; for quite early in the week (and this was a glaring aggravation in Martha's eyes) Cazalet had taken lodgings for himself and driver in those very Nell Gwynne Cottages where Hilton Toye had stayed before him.

CHAPTER XI.

The Thousandth Man.

It had been new life to them, but now it was all over. It was the last evening of their week, and they were spending it rather silently on Blanche's balcony.

"I make it at least three hundred," said Cazalet, and knocked out a pipe that might have been a gag. "You see, we were very seldom under fifty!"

"Speak for yourself, please! My longevity's a tender point," said Blanche, who looked as though she had no business to have her hair up, as she sat in a pale cross-fire between a lamp-post and her lighted room.

Cazalet protested that he had only meant their mileage in the car; he made himself extremely intelligible now, as he often would when she called him in a serious voice.

"Well, it's been a heavenly time," she assured him just once more. "And tomorrow it's pretty sure to come all right about Scruton, isn't it?"

"Yes! Tomorrow we shall probably have Toye back," he answered with grim inconsequence.

"What has that to do with it, Walter?"

"Oh, nothing, of course."

But still his tone was grim and heavy, with a schoolboy irony that he would not explain but could not keep to himself. So Mr. Toye must be turned out of the conversation, though it was not Blanche who had dragged him in. She wished people would stick to their point.

"There's one thing I've rather wanted to ask you," she began.

"Yes?" said Cazalet.

"You said the other day that it would mean worry for you in any case—after tomorrow—whether the charge is dismissed or not?"

His wicker chair creaked under him.

"I don't see why it should," she persisted, "if the case falls through."

"Well, that's where I come in," he had to say.

"Surely you mean just the other way about? If they commit the man for trial, then you do come in, I know. It's like your goodness."

"I wish you wouldn't say that! It hurts me!"

"Then will you explain yourself? It's not fair to tell me so much, and then to leave out just the bit that's making you miserable!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Authority on Steel Production.

Sir Robert Hadfield, who has been selected by the British government to assume charge of the engineering works that it has obtained power to take over for the manufacture of war material, is one of the greatest living authorities on the production of steel. In addition to the Bessemer medal, which is the blue ribbon of the Iron and Steel Institute of Great Britain, he has received equally high awards from similar societies in almost every country of the civilized world. Inventor of manganese steel, he is chairman of the Hadfield Steel Foundry company Ltd., at Sheffield, one of the biggest ordnance and projectile concerns in the United Kingdom, in fact, in the world.

A Puzzle.

"Some differences are very puzzling."

"Like what, for instance?"

"If you write mean and bad things about a man in a book, it is biography. If you tell the same things about him on the back porch, it's gossip."

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A Projecting Personality

The Ford peace trip, besides being somewhat to the gale of national opinion, has been the subject of a number of pictorial satirists in the quarters of the world an opportunity of a lifetime. Two rather echoes of the junket appear in the March number of Cartoons Magazine. One is from the Christiana, New Vikingon, and represents the New Idealist as a rat leaving a drop of ship. A touch of humor is added the cartoon by reason of a hat suit hung on a clothes line in the of the boat. The bathing suit is posed to be the property of M. Schimmer.

The other cartoon is from the land, New Zealand, Weekly News shows "Ford's ark" plowing across seas. Placards reading "Buy cars" and "Votes for women" are conspicuously displayed upon the roof of the craft while Ford is trying to launch the dove of peace and asking it: "Why don't you fly?" This Auckland newspaper, like many of the English journals, seemed to regard the peace trip mostly in the of an advertising campaign.

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About Time.

One evening the young mistress who had seemed rather attracted "Big Sister" Grace, was dining with the family. Little Sister was talking rapidly when the visitor was asked to ask the blessing. Turning to child, he said, in a tone of mild proof:

"Laura, I am going to ask grace."

"Well, it's about time," answered Little Sister in an equally reproductive tone. "We've been expecting you to do it for a year, and she has, too." Chicago Journal.

Stood Under Fire.

Commanding Officer (enthusiastically, after the sham battle)—"You make a great soldier! I tell you staff, as well as the ladies, were attacked when the enemy made that surprise attack on your trench and you all of the 'Rookies,' did not run! Rookie—Thanks, sir; but you see—I was right in the middle changing my pants, sir.—Puck.

Polish Acquired.

Compensation—A rolling stone gathers no moss, but it gets so smooth nobody has anything on it.—Puck.

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