

# The RECLUSE of FIFTH AVENUE

By WYNDHAM MARTYN

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because McKimber bombarded him with questions and made innumerable notes. He was a shrewd and hard-headed man. Malet took the midnight train back to New York feeling he had made a friend. Robin changed attitude was amusing. He listened with the greatest deference to Malet's remarks and thrust something into his hands as he boarded the train.

"Thank you," Malet said, "but I don't deserve a tip."

"It's a letter for her," Robin flushed a little.

On Thursday evening, which was for ever afterward memorable in the lives of Peter Milman's guests, Paul Raxon walked down Fifth avenue wondering



A French Manservant Admitted Him.

for what purpose he had been asked to confer with the recluse. Over the telephone Milman had said it was a matter of urgent import and had to do with his political ambitions. Ordinarily Raxon would have suspected danger, but not where Peter Milman was concerned.

The Milmans had been a great family intermarried with those who wielded immense financial power. Their prestige was undoubted in New York. Perhaps Peter Milman, brooding over his misfortunes, had some scheme to utilize the influence of his kin. The message was given in such a way as to enlist Raxon's lively interest. It was impossible to think of a visit to this austere mansion as in any sense perilous.

A French manservant admitted him. The financier was shown into a splendid drawing room. The brilliant group which Malet had done many years before took Raxon's eye immediately, although he was ignorant of the sculptor's name. He was examining the group closely when Peter Milman entered. Raxon looked at him intently. He saw a slim man of late middle age wearing the correct garb for the evening. There was a coldness about Peter Milman's manner that was not reassuring. It was almost as if the presence of Raxon were an offense. Milman looked toward the sculptured group.

"I see you are interested in that." "I am," Raxon responded. "Who did it?"

"One who should have been our greatest sculptor but for an unjust accusation which ruined him." Milman saw Raxon's eyes narrow. "Floyd Malet."

"Malet?" Raxon repeated slowly, as if searching his memory. "Oh, yes, I think I call his case to mind. Wasn't he mixed up in a studio orgy where a woman was killed, or died under mysterious circumstances?"

"Something of the sort," Milman answered. He pointed to a seat. "Please sit down, Mr. Raxon."

"I'm wondering what you can possibly have to say to me."

Peter Milman smiled.

"I'm quite sure you are. It has to do with your political future mainly. It seems you wish to go to the senate from this state. My grandfather was a senator for many years, and I still retain an interest in politics."

"You didn't ask me to call just to hear that," Raxon said bluntly.

"There is more to come, much more."

The door opened and Fleming Bradley came in. He had been compelled to shave off his few days' growth of beard. Raxon looked up at him, frowning.

"Professor Bradley," said Milman genially. "One of our great physicists now brought down by unkind circumstances to being footman in the house of lesser men. No, not in this house, Mr. Raxon. Here Professor Bradley is an honored guest." Milman turned to Bradley. "This is Mr. Paul Raxon, who aspires to high office."

Paul Raxon turned on his host with a snarl. He had been tricked.

"If you are harboring a dismissed servant of mine who left under circumstances which point to his dishonesty, let me remind you it's a dangerous thing to do."

"After a lifetime of orderly quiet one welcomes such dangers." Peter Milman's eyes peered into those red-flecked ones of his guest.

The door opened again and Neeland Barnes, in evening dress, entered.

"This is Mr. Neeland Barnes," said Milman. "Perhaps you know him best under his name of Enry. He tells me he enjoyed every minute of his stay at your delightful home."

Paul Raxon, who had staged so many unhappy scenes for the men he had enmeshed, was now to experience the unpleasant sensations of the victim. He saw, very plainly, that he must suffer what these men chose to inflict and hear what they chose to say. He had not the physical power to escape. Not idly had they sauntered into this room.

"Ah," said Neeland Barnes, with a large gesture, "this is the little fellow I had to throw off the pier at Narragansett years ago. It was my intention to drown him as one does unwelcome kittens, but some misguided Samaritan of the sea defeated my purpose."

Raxon said nothing. But he had not come to his present eminence by being physically above the average. He had risen because of a brain more skilled in craftiness and cunning than the majority. These were not the sort of men to hurt him. He must keep his nerve and let them commit themselves to verbal follies.

Barnes had hardly finished when another entered whom he recognized, despite the absence of mustache and imperial, as M. le Vicomte Raoul de Guillain.

"This is Mr. Floyd Malet," said Peter Milman. "I think you are indebted to his knowledge for ridding your house of porphyry forgeries."

Paul Raxon rose to his feet.

"This reception," he said, "stimulating a yawn, grows wearisome. I seem to be a guest at a manservant's club. What is it staged for? Money? If so, there's absolutely nothing doing."

"Sit down," said Peter Milman suavely; "you will be told when to go."

The next to enter was Sneed, who had been his own butler. Raxon saw clearly that by some ruse yet to be discovered his house had been entered by a band of confederates. They had defeated him there.

"Mr. John McKimber," Sneed announced.

When Raxon had seen McKimber a week before he had looked upon a crushed man from whom ambition had fled. The McKimber who came in was again the big, dominating type, radiating confidence, sure of himself and his position. This bearing could only mean that McKimber knew of the theft of the stolen page from the registry and the letters. He understood that the weapons with which Raxon had threatened him were gone. The aura of danger was about Paul Raxon, and he comprehended his position with horror. Somehow or other they had tricked him, but he would pay them back. What a scandal it would be which would involve Peter Milman in a conspiracy of this sort.

"This is the Raxon who wished to go to the senate," Milman explained. "Wished," Raxon repeated. "Who isn't to be kept out of it by the foot tricks of you amateurs?"

"He's trying to keep his courage up," Barnes volunteered. "He knows he's beaten. You can see it in his face. The man's white as chalk."

"One can't blame him for trying to bluff it out," Bradley exclaimed impartially. "The cornered rat fights, invariably."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," Peter Milman said, "remember that at the present minute Mr. Raxon has no idea that he is beaten. I can see him scheming a thousand plans of revenge, all of which seem reasonable because he has no idea what we hold over him."

"You don't hold anything," Raxon snarled.

"In the interests of truth I must contradict you," said his host. Milman took from his pocket a blue manilla envelope.

"I have here," Peter Milman went on, "those documents with which you threatened Mr. McKimber."

"You stole them," Raxon cried, "and that's a penitentiary offense."

"Stole them?" Milman returned. "You pain me, Mr. Raxon. They were offered to me for sale just as they were offered to you. You bought them in the first instance, I in the second. You are not yet aware that every word of that long interview in your tower with Mr. McKimber was taken down in shorthand by an expert and transcribed. I have three copies, of which the one in this blue envelope is only a carbon. One copy will be given to Mr. McKimber, and the original is in my safe deposit vault at my bank. I

am afraid you were a little careless in guarding the sanctity of your home. On one occasion you mistook an operative for a sewer rat. Enry here was greatly afraid lest you should shoot."

"I don't believe it," Raxon cried hoarsely.

"I thought you would not. Perhaps you will realize your mistake when you hear a few paragraphs."

Raxon listened in distressed silence. There was no doubt that someone had been listening and had taken the conversation down accurately. He had no room to doubt. The place where he had heard what he thought was a rat, the place where he had been thrust, bound and gagged, had been prepared for one end—his downfall.

Raxon saw McKimber open the envelope and look at the page cut by Raxon's private detective from the register. This page, never to be replaced, together with the letters bought from relatives of McKimber's first wife, were torn into little pieces and dropped in the blazing fire. Then McKimber turned to his enemy.

"You'll get a whole lot of help from me now," he jeered.

"You aren't run for office," Raxon cried. "You've nothing on me."

Milman waved his hand warningly and elevated the incipient verbal warfare to a higher level.

"You shall judge," he said urbanely. "I may tell you this embodies the work of years. It cost time and money, again Mr. Raxon's own words, but it was money well spent. I have here, for example, an affidavit from Thomas Minnerly, formerly elevator boy in the studio apartment where that poor girl died. He says, under oath, that you paid him money for services the details of which are set forth. There is also the confession of Patrick Ford, once a well-known jockey, but later a stablehand at Pimlico, who was badly burned in a fire there and died later from injuries. He implicates a trainer named Ache, son and Paul Raxon in the plot which disgraced Neeland Barnes. And I have the testimony of Edward Nygren, who was the go-between in the matter of offering a bribe to Professor Bradley. In all I have seven documents, each one of which will prevent you ever from running for office. Do you care to see them? I dare not put them into your hands for fear that you might throw them into the fire, but Mr. Barnes will no doubt secure your arms while I show them."

Raxon waved the suggestion aside, and Barnes sat down disappointed.

"And there are other things," Milman went on. "Your attorney Lodon, when heated with wine, has been more than indiscreet. I have had his conversations transcribed. If I were you, I think I would employ another lawyer, one not given to boasting of his influence over his chief client. Truth, you know, lives under a cork."

Raxon said no word. This man Milman, whom Lodon hated, had tricked him in the end.

"We shall see about it," he said striving for calm. "I'm not the sort of man that you can try this sort of game on. What I know about McKimber I know and the world shall hear of it."

"Would that be wise?" Milman asked solicitously. "You see, you have no evidence. In order to give credence to your story you would have to explain the ordering of that page to be cut out. Very awkward, Mr. Raxon, as you will find, to tamper with vital statistics. That is not all. If Mr. McKimber finds you are acting against him, either directly or indirectly, he will see that the opposition papers get copies of the affidavits in this envelope. You are defeated at every point. Salvation for you lies in abandoning all political ambition."

Paul Raxon knew Milman spoke the truth. Here, definitely, once for all, was the end of his ambitions. He realized as he went down the stone steps into the avenue that he dare make no move against the men who had invaded his home and brought him low.

McKimber, sitting before the fire, felt as one might whose death sentence had been respite at the last moment. He had been told to come as though he already knew he was victor. And if he had deceived Raxon he had not convinced himself. There were tears in his eyes when Nita came in.

"My dear," he said, "you are too good for any son of mine, but if you will marry him you'll make me happier than I ever thought to be again."

Someone put a strong arm round his shoulder. It was Robin.

"It's all right," said Robin gleefully. "She is going to do it."

McKimber looked up at his son and smiled.

"Nita," he said, "never forget what you owe to Mr. Milman. I can never repay him, never."

McKimber took from his pocket a long legal envelope. He balanced it in his hand a moment.

"It would give me great pleasure, Mr. Milman, if you would throw that on the back of the fire. It's something I want to get rid of."

"Certainly," said Peter Milman courteously. "It seems to amuse you."

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placed in charge. Mr. Schoenfeld's work, being regional in character, will require that considerable time be spent in Seattle.

For a number of years the bureau has maintained several local offices in the Pacific northwest serving that important agricultural region with crop and livestock production forecasts, shipment and market price reports, fruit and vegetable inspection, and for the enforcement of the United States grain standards act. The new office will render further service to this region which is steadily increasing in importance as an agricultural area.

Mr. Schoenfeld will devote his attention particularly to developing and coordinating economic research work of the bureau in the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. He will cooperate with state institutions, research and agricultural extension agencies, farmers cooperative associations, chambers of commerce, and other commercial associations and civic bodies. The establishment of the office at Portland follows the establishment of a similar office at San Francisco to serve the Pacific southwest.



"It's All Right," Said Robin Gleefully.

he added, seeing McKimber's face break into a smile.

"Do you know what you've done?" McKimber demanded. "You've burned up the mortgage I hold on this house. Yes, sir, I bought it yesterday, and now can't collect."

"Really," said Peter Milman, red-denying. "I could not possibly accept such a thing—no, indeed."

McKimber waved his hands. "You can't help yourself. I've more to say. I've had my lawyers going through the Hazen Brewer affairs, and you didn't lose all your money. There will be enough saved out of the wreck for you to live on here." For a man who prided himself on his word, McKimber lied with prodigality and fluency. "Lodon trimmed you, but Brewer was honest."

McKimber turned to Bradley. He felt like a super-Santa Claus handing out presents for the deserving young.

"You may not know it, professor, but I've a lot to say in the management of a small up-state university." He did not tell them he was its most munificent donor and chairman of trustees. "We want to specialize in one thing which will put us on the educational map in a national sense. I've suggested your name, and that was approved, too. All you have to do is to signify your acceptance or rejection to me."

"Rejection?" Bradley cried, his eyes lighting up. "Mr. McKimber, you are offering me my career?"

"As for the father of my future daughter-in-law, if he cares to run my stock ranch near Sacramento, I want a good man at once. He can go as soon as the wedding is over. What about it?"

"Man," said Neeland Barnes earnestly, "there isn't one chance in a trillion I'll refuse." He turned to the others. "And how I hated him for the ice water he drank!"

Floyd Malet, standing in the background, saw another man reborn in the former Enry. Not again for Neeland Barnes would there be the life of little things and daily financial worries. Malet looked on the scene with no spirit of envy. That there was no place in McKimber's plans for him seemed of little consequence. Nita had won her happiness, and that was enough.

He looked up as the girl came to his side.

"Dearest of my uncles," she whispered, "do you think I don't know who gave me my Robin?" She kissed him before them all.

"My friend Floyd," Milman announced, "is going to live at his house near Florence, where he will do the great things we expect from him."

"My house?" Malet cried.

"Your house," said Peter Milman firmly. "The deed of gift will be drawn up as soon as possible. It is useless to me. I—I shall remain here." Milman looked about him. "There are some trees that cannot be transplanted and some men who die if they are uprooted." He embraced the others in his gaze. "I wish I could tell you what a different man you leave from the one who asked you to join him."

Never before had Peter Milman been so genuinely affected. The envelope upon which Raxon had looked with such horror, that envelope containing the affidavits that would forever hold him inactive, Peter Milman threw into the glowing fire. McKimber saw the action too late. There was no possibility now of saving infinitely important documents.

"Man," he cried, "don't you realize what you have done?"

"Better, perhaps, than you," said Peter Milman, smiling. "I have destroyed an envelope containing a dozen sheets of blank paper."

[THE END.]

**NEW FEDERAL AGENCY IS ESTABLISHED IN PORTLAND**

Bureau of Agricultural Economics Has Contact Man to Work With Northwest.

A regional office to serve as a contact station between the bureau of agricultural economics, United States Department of Agriculture, and public and private marketing and research agencies in the Pacific northwest has been opened in the new post office building at Portland. William A. Schoenfeld, formerly assistant chief of the bureau has been

ly satisfied that the figures were so real, relates Popular Mechanics Magazine. Cats bristled defiance when a large dog appeared on the screen, domestic fowl showed fright at the sight of a hawk hovering over a field, and wild birds showed different degrees of interest. An excitable rooster flew repeatedly at an imaginary enemy on the screen. When pictures of flies and worms were shown in their natural size on a white screen, various reptiles snapped at them and evidenced astonishment when they caught nothing.

**Saving Search**

The kind woman noticed an old man, whose right leg was gone, standing on a street corner with a perplexed look on his face.

"My poor man," she said, "are you lost?"

"No, ma'am," he replied. "I'm looking for a feller that got his left leg shot off in battle."

"What is his name?"

"I don't know that," was the reply, "but he wears a number ten shoe."

"For heaven's sake, if you don't know who he is, how do you know he wears a number ten shoe?"

"I ain't sure he does, but it stands to reason that if he don't, one or other of us is going to have trouble with his bunions. Lady, I'm looking for a right-legged feller to go partners with on a new pair of shoes."

**Early Cradle Formed From Hollowed Log**

Cradles, in their earliest form, were merely logs, scooped out to form more or less comfortable resting places for babies. They were without rockers, since the natural shape of the logs made their use unnecessary. Cradles have varied with different modes of living and reflect in their diversity of form and adornment the progress of the cabinetmaker's art. The Romans are said to have used cradles of considerable refinement, but after the decline of the empire, accompanied as it was with the decay of living, the cradle, with other furniture forms, assumed a crude and humble aspect. One of the early forms of the cradle was the oaken chest without a lid. Baskets of osiers were sometimes used, in which the child, wrapped in swaddling clothes, was placed. The American cradle of oak in the Metropolitan museum in New York dates from the early Seventeenth century. Fabulous wealth and the skill of the greatest craftsmen have been lavished on the cradles of royal children throughout history. These important beds have been gilded and carved, intricately inlaid with gold and gems, upholstered in the choicest silks and fitted with the most sumptuous coverings of velvet and fur.—Dorothy Bent, in Art and Decoration.

**Dogs Readily Detect Unreality of "Movies"**

Cats, birds and snakes respond to motion pictures as if they were real, but dogs cannot be fooled, according to tests made by a German scientist. The dogs paid no attention even when pictures of other dogs were shown. The only exception was when a little dachshund ran up to the screen, sniffed at the people shown on it and then suddenly lost interest, apparently satisfied that the figures were so real, relates Popular Mechanics Magazine. Cats bristled defiance when a large dog appeared on the screen, domestic fowl showed fright at the sight of a hawk hovering over a field, and wild birds showed different degrees of interest. An excitable rooster flew repeatedly at an imaginary enemy on the screen. When pictures of flies and worms were shown in their natural size on a white screen, various reptiles snapped at them and evidenced astonishment when they caught nothing.

**Field of Peterloo**

The Field of Peterloo is a name popularly given in England to the scene of an attack by the yeoman cavalry upon a political meeting held in St. Peter's field, Manchester, on August 16, 1819. The meeting was attended by 60,000 persons, and in the clash with the cavalry eight persons were killed and many wounded. The word Peterloo was formed from the name of the field in burlesque imitation of Waterloo, the scene of Wellington's famous victory over Napoleon, won four years and two months before the clash at St. Peter's field, Manchester.

**Effort Alone Gets Results**

Character is the individual's peculiarity of dealing with life. Character is to life what efficiency is to working. Indolence plays a persistent hand in human nature. Effort is the sole reality from which any definite result can be expected. If failure comes, in spite of added knowledge, nothing remains but further effort. We have only to renew effort in the light of still better knowledge.—Psychology Magazine.

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**MONTANA'S RICH REDWATER VALLEY OPENED BY NEW RAIL LINE**

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**RAPID** development of the great farming country in the Redwater Valley of Southeastern Montana is seen in the opening of 1,000,000 acres by a new branch line of the Northern Pacific Railway running 63 miles from Glendive.

Here the Northern Pacific will sell direct to farmers a half million acres, obtained from the U. S. Government, at prices ranging from only \$10 to \$20 an acre, with 20 years to pay. Taxes are extremely low—only 10 to 16 cents an acre. Special advantages are available to neighbors and colonies desiring to settle together.

Diversified or mixed farming is successful throughout this area. Corn has increased by hundreds of thousands of acres in the last few years in Southeastern Montana. Production has grown rapidly. All classes of livestock are raised. The dairy industry is getting a good start. Communities already are established. Churches have been built. Schools are open. There is progress ahead. With the coming of the railroad markets will be closer. More farmers will come in. Land values will increase.

The Northern Pacific Railway will help farmers in getting started right. Settlers are wanted who seek a real chance for themselves and their families. The Northern Pacific will send a representative to talk the matter over, if desired. Investigate this opportunity. Let us send you booklets, prices and easy payment plan. All sent free.

**MAIL COUPON!**

J. M. Hughes, Land Commissioner, Northern Pacific Railway Co., Drawer 165 St. Paul, Minn.

Without obligation on my part please send all information about Redwater Valley Country.

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