

Half A Chance

BY FREDERICK S. ISHAM.

Author of "The Strollers," "Under the Rose," "The Lady of the Mount," Etc.

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Something fell from the velvet covering in her hand. She was vaguely aware of it gleaming there on the cold white marble, a small disk—a gold coin. Then slowly she took it as if asking herself how it came there on her handkerchief, which, she dimly remembered, had been lying on the floor. Some one, of course, must have picked up the handkerchief, but no one had been in the room since she had noticed it except—

More closely she scrutinized it, the shining disk on her rosy palm. A King George gold piece! Above the monarch's face and head with its flowing locks appeared a tiny hole, as if some one had once worn it. Beneath, just discernible, was the date, 1762. She continued to regard it, then looked again at the bit of velvet near by. It had been wrapped in that carefully— for what reason. Like something more than what it seemed—a mere gold piece.

"1762." Why, even as she gazed at the cloth, felt it, did the figures seem to reiterate themselves in her brain? "1762." There could be nothing especially significant about the date. Yet even as she concluded thus by some introspective process she saw herself bending over, studying those figures on another occasion. Herself, and yet—

She was looking straight before her now. Suddenly she started and sprang up. "A King George gold piece!" Her hair, unbound, fell around her, below her waist. Her eyes, like sapphires, gazed out from a veritable shimmer of gold. "Date!" She paused. "Why, this belonged to me once as a child, and I!"

The blue eyes seemed searching—searching. Abruptly she found what she sought. "I gave it to the convict on the Lord Nelson." She almost whispered the words. "The brave, brave fellow who sacrificed his life for mine." Her warm fingers closed softly on the coin. She seemed wrapped in the picture thus recalled.

"Then how?" Her brows knitted; she swept the shining hair from her face. "If he were drowned, how could it have been left here by?" Her eyes were dark now with excitement. "Him? Him?" she repeated. "Unless," her breast suddenly heaved, "he was not drowned, after all. He!"

A sudden shot from the park rang out. The coin fell from the girl's hand. Other shots followed. She ran out upon the balcony, a stifled cry on her lips. She stared off, but only the darkness met her gaze.

Not far from one of the entrances to Regent's park or the hum of Camden Town's main artery of traffic lay a little winding street, which because of its curving lines had long been known as Spiral row. Into this byway there turned late in the night of the second day after that memorable evening at Strathorn House a man who, looking quickly around him, paused before the closed gate of one of the dwellings. After a moment's hesitation the man pulled the bell, waited for some time, but no response came. When from the end of the street he heard a vehicle coming rapidly toward him he more firmly jerked at the handle of the bell. This time his efforts were successful. A glimmer as from a candle appeared at the front door, and a few minutes later a dark form came slowly down the gravelled walk.

"Good evening, Dennis," said the caller. The faint gleam of the candle revealed the drowsy and unmistakably Celtic face of him he addressed, a man past middle age, who regarded the newcomer with a look of recognition. "I'm afraid I've interrupted your slumbers. This is rather a late hour at which to arrive."

"No matter, sir. Sure and I sat up expecting you, Mr. Steele, until after midnight and had only just turned in when?"

"What?" The newcomer, now fairly within the garden, could not suppress a start of surprise, which, however, the other, engaged in relocking the gate, did not appear to notice. "Expecting?"

"Although I'd given up thinking you'd be here tonight," the latter went on. "But won't you be stepping in, sir?"

The other silently followed, walking in the manner of one tired and worn. "My master did not come back with you, sir, from Strathorn House?"

"No; Captain Forsythe's gone on to Germany."

The servant's glance rested now in some surprise on the newcomer's garments—a gamekeeper's well worn coat and cap—and on the dusty, almost shabby looking shoes.

"A wagger," said John Steele, noting the old orderly's expression. "From Strathorn House to London by foot within a given time, don't you know. Fell in with some rough customers last night who thought my coat and hat better than these."

"Just wagger me—a scraich," replied John Steele, with an indifferent shrug, sinking into a chair near the fire, which burned low.

"One moment, Dennis." John Steele leaned back. The dying embers revealed a haggard face. His eyes half closed as if from lack of sleep, but immediately opened again. "You spoke of expecting me. How," he said, stretching out his legs, "did you know?"

"Sure, sir, by your luggage. It arrived with my master's heavier boxes that he didn't take along with him over the water."

His luggage there—where no one knew—could have known—he was going! The place he had selected under what he had considered propitious circumstances as a haven, a refuge, where he might find himself for a brief period, comparatively safe, could he reach it, turn in without being detected! This last he believed he had successfully accomplished, and then to be told by the man—All John Steele's excuses for coming in this unceremonious fashion that he had planned to put to the servant of Captain Forsythe were at the moment forgotten. Who could have guessed that he would make his way straight hither—or had any one? An enemy, divining a lurking place for which he was heading, would not have obligingly forwarded his belongings. What then? Had Jocelyn Wray ordered them sent on with Captain Forsythe's boxes and bags in order that they might be less likely to fall into the hands of the police?

"Here you are, sir." The servant had entered and re-entered, had set the table without the man in the armchair being conscious of his coming and going. "Remembered my master inviting you once when you were here to pitch your camp at Rosemary Villa any time you should be after yearning for that quietude essential for literary composition and to wind up the campaign on your book. So when I saw your luggage?"

"Exactly." It was curious the man should have spoken thus, should have voiced one of the very subtleties Steele had had in mind himself to utter to show pretext for his too abrupt appearance. But now—

As he ate mechanically, but with the zest of one who had long fasted, John Steele listened; again a vehicle went by; then another.

John Steele rose with an effort. No, there was nothing more to be required except rest! Which room would he prefer, he was asked when he found himself on the upper landing. The man had put his things in a front chamber, but the back one was larger. John Steele forced himself to consider. He even inspected both of the rooms. That on the front floor had one window facing the row; the second chamber looked out over a rear wall separating the vegetable garden of Rosemary Villa from the shrub adorned confines of a place which fronted on the next street. The visitor decided on the former chamber. He carefully closed the blinds and drew across the window the dark, heavy curtains. This would answer very well. Excellent accommodations for a man whose own chambers in the city were now in the hands of renovators—the painters, the paperhangers, the plumbers. And the back room? He paused as if

considering the servant's assumption of his purpose in coming hither. He might as well tell the fellow that.

No one must know where he was under any circumstances. His voice sounded almost jocular, at singular variance with the heaviness, the weariness of his face. He, the old servant, had been a soldier, knew how to fulfill, then, a request or an order. Something crinkled in the speaker's hand, passed to the other, who was now busying himself with the bath. The man's moist fingers did not hesitate to close on the note.

Half an hour later John Steele, clad in his dressing gown, sat alone near the fire in his room. Every sound had ceased save at intervals a low creaking of old timber.

John Steele smiled grimly, but soon his thoughts seemed floating off beyond control, and, rising suddenly, he threw himself on the bed.

The afternoon was well advanced when, as half through a dream, John Steele heard the rude jangling of a bell. The loud and emphatic closing of the front gate served yet more speedily to arouse him. Hastily he sat up. His head buzzed from a long needed sleep that had been over-sound.

"So it's the meter man you are?" John Steele recognized the inquiring voice as that of the caretaker. "Sure, you're a new one from the last that was here."

(To Be Continued.)

Pawns His Skeleton.

SAN JOSE, Cal., June 28.—The skeleton of the mother-in-law of J. D. Scott of Los Angeles, which is an unredeemed pledge in a local pawn shop, was advertised for sale by Nat B. Weinberg of 25 Post street. Nine months ago Scott brought the bones of his wife's mother to Weinberg's place and raised \$5. He said that he had carried the skeleton with him for many years. The woman was bitten by a rattlesnake in San Migule Island in 1869, while in a lonely part of the mountains. The bleached bones were found several months later.

Hogs Mutilate Man

STERLING, Ill., June 28.—A large drove of hogs mutilated and killed Charles Anderson, a farmer. His body was found and both arms had been eaten off by the animals.

HELEN TAFT MAY NOT GO BACK TO BRYN MAWR.

WASHINGTON, June 28.—Mrs. Taft will leave tomorrow morning for New Haven, where she will attend the commencement of the class of 1919 at Yale, of which her son, Robert A. Taft, is an honor member. Chas. Taft left this city last night and Miss Helen Taft went several days ago to New Haven several days ago where she has been a prominent figure in the commencement festivities.

Late in the week Mrs. Taft and her family expect to go from New Haven to their summer White House at Beverly, where the President, who was unable to attend the commencement, will join them at the close of the Congressional session.

It is generally expected that Miss Helen Taft will return to the White House with the family in the autumn, and that she will resume her course at Bryn Mawr the coming season. Miss Taft, despite her fondness for study and college life, has keenly felt her separation from the family and is desirous to aid her mother in discharging the duties of mistress of the White House. Miss Taft for the first time presided at the White House dinner when the president entertained in honor of Prince Fushimi and charmed all the guests by her quiet dignity and graceful manner. That she will be invaluable social aid to her mother the coming season is freely predicted.

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Breathe Hyomei—give it a faithful trial and then, if you are not satisfied, you can have your money back.

Hyomei is sold by druggists everywhere and by Charles Strang. A complete outfit costs but \$1, and consists of a hard rubber inhaler that will last for years, one bottle of Hyomei and full instructions for use. If a second bottle of liquid is needed you can get an extra bottle of Hyomei inhalant for 50 cents.

SCHOOL DISTRICT BOND ELECTION NOTICE.

Notice is hereby given that a school meeting of School District No. 49 of Jackson County, Oregon, to be held at the high school building, in said district, on the 15th day of July, A. D. 1910, there will be submitted to the legal voters of said district the question of contracting a bonded debt of fifty thousand (\$50,000.00) dollars, thirty thousand (\$30,000.00) dollars thereof to be used for the purpose of erecting and equipping an east side school building, and twenty thousand (\$20,000.00) dollars thereof for the purpose of repairing and constructing an annex to the Washington school and installing a new heating plant thereon, the vote to be by ballot, upon which shall be the words, "Bonds—Yeas," and the words, "Bonds—No." Polls to be open at 1 o'clock p. m. and remain open until 4 o'clock p. m.

By order of the Board of Directors of School District No. 49 of Jackson County, Oregon.

Dated this 25th day of June, A. D. 1910.

ORIS CRAWFORD, Clerk.

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Tickets will be on sale May 2d and 9th; June 2d, 17th and 24th; July 5th and 22d; August 3d; September 8th.

The above rates apply from Portland only. From points south of Portland, add ONE WAY local rate to Portland, to make through rate via Portland. One way through California, add \$15.00 to above rates. Except that fares to St. Paul and Minneapolis one way via California will be \$2175 higher, and fare to Duluth \$24.75 higher than fares via direct routes.

Ten days provided for the going trip. Stop-overs within limits in either direction. Final return limit three months from date of sale, but not later than October 31st.

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