

His Heart's Desire

By SIR WALTER BESANT

CHAPTER I.

"I will now," said the German, "read your statement over, and you can sign it if you like. Remember, however, what your signature may mean. As for what I shall do with it afterward depends on many things."

"Do what you like with it," replied the Englishman, slowly and huskily. "Send it to the police in London, if you like. I don't care what becomes of it, or of myself either. For I am tired of it; I give in. No one knows what it is like until you actually come to fight with it."

He did not explain what "it" was; but the other seemed to understand what he meant, and nodded his head gravely, though coldly.

The two men were a most curious couple to look upon, set among most remarkable surroundings. The scene was, if possible, more interesting than the couple in the foreground. For in front there stretched the seashore, the little waves lapping softly and creeping slowly over the level white coral sand; beyond the smooth water lay the coral reef with its breakers; at the back of the sandy shores was a gentle rise of land, covered with groves of cocoa palms and bananas; among them were clearings planted with fields of sweet potatoes and two or three tufts were visible beneath the trees. Again, beyond the level belt rose a great green mountain, five or six thousand feet high. The time was about an hour before sunset; the air was warm and soft; the sloping sunshine lay on grove and clearing, seashore and mountain side, forest and green field, making everything glow with a splendid richness and prodigality of color.

As one saw the place this evening one might see it every evening, for in New Ireland there is neither summer nor winter, but always all the year round the promise of spring, the heat of summer and the fruition of autumn; with no winter at all, except the winter of death, when the branches cease to put forth leaves and stretch out white arms, spectral and threatening, among their living companions in the forest.

One of the men—the German—was of colossal proportions, certainly six feet in height. He was still quite young—well under thirty. His hair was light brown, short and curly; an immense brown beard covered his face and fell over his chest. His eyes were blue and prominent, and he wore spectacles. His dress was modeled on the dress of the inhabitants of these islands. His only robe was a great piece of Fesje's tapu cloth, white, decorated with black lozenges and a brown edging; it was rolled once round his waist, descending to his knees, and was then thrown over his left shoulder, leaving the right arm bare. The sun had painted this limb a rich warm brown. He wore a cap something like that invented, and patented for the use of solitaires, by Robinson Crusoe; it was conical in shape, and made of feathers brightly colored. He had sandals of thin bark tied to his feet by leather thongs, and he wore a kind of leather scarf, from which depended a revolver case, a field glass, a case of instruments and a large waterproof bag. These constituted his whole possessions, except a thick cotton umrella. This he constantly carried open.

The other was an Englishman. The rough fannel shirt, which had lost all its buttons and one of its sleeves; the coarse canvas trousers; the old boots broken down at heel—all spoke of the soil. His gait and carriage sung aloud of plowed fields; his broad and ruddy cheeks, his reddish-brown hair and beard, spoke of the south or west of England. His age might be about six or eight-and-twenty. His hair hung in masses over his shoulders, and his beard was thicker than his companion's, though not so long. His face, which had been once a square full face, was drawn and haggard; his eyes, which were meant to be frank, were troubled; and his carriage, which should have been upright and brave, was heavy and dejected. He seemed, as he stood before the other man, at once ashamed and remorseful.

"Listen; I will read it carefully and slowly," said the German. "Sit down while I read it. If there is a single word that is not true you can alter that word before you sign."

The man sat down obediently—there was a curious slowness about his movements as well as his speech—while the German read the document, which was written very closely on two pages of a notebook.

"Listen," he said again, "and correct me when I am wrong."

This was the paper which he read on the shore of the Pacific ocean and on the island of New Ireland one evening in the year 1884:

"I, David Leighan, farmer, of Challacombe, Devonshire, being now on an island in the Pacific ocean, where I expect to be shortly killed and eaten by the cannibals, declare that the following is the whole truth concerning the death of my uncle, Daniel Leighan.

"He jockeyed me out of my property; he kept on lending me money in large sums and small sums, and making me sign papers in return, and never let me know how much I owed him; he made me mortgage my land to him; he encouraged me to drink, and to neglect my farm. At last, when I was head over ears in debt, he suddenly brought down the law upon me, foreclosed and took my land. I stayed about the place till my

money was nearly all gone. Then I must either starve, or I must become a laborer where I had been a master, or I must go away and find work somewhere else. I had but thirty pounds left in the world, and I made up my mind to go away. It was a day in October of the year 1880. I went to see my uncle and begged him to lend me thirty pounds more to start me in Canada. Said my uncle—I shall not forget his words—'Nephew David,' he said, grinning, 'you've been a fool and lost your money. I've been a wise man and kept mine. Do you think I am going to give you more money to fool away? I wonder I did not kill him then and there. He sat in his room at Grator, his account books before him, and he looked up and laughed at me while he said it, jingling the money that was in his pocket. And I was his nephew, and by his arts and practices he'd jockeyed me out of a farm of three hundred acres, most of it good land, with the brook running through it and a mill upon it.

"I remember very well what I said to him—never mind what it was—but I warrant he laughed no longer, though he kept up his bullying to the end, and told me to go to destruction my own way, and the further from my native parish the better.

"So I left him and walked away through Watercourt to John Exon's Inn, where I sat all that day drinking. I told nobody what had happened, but they guessed very well that I had a quarrel with my uncle, and all the world knew by that time how he'd got my land into his own possession.

"About 6 o'clock in the evening Harry Rabjahas, the blacksmith, came to the inn, and Grandfather Derges with him, and they had a mug of elder spiced. And then I began to talk to them about my own affairs. I said I should go away that very evening. I should walk to Bovey Tracey, I said; I should take the train to Newton-Abbot, and so to Bristol, where I should find a ship bound for foreign parts. That was what I said, and perhaps it was lucky I said so much. But I don't know, because the verdict of the jury I never heard.

"We shook hands and I came away. 'Twas then about eight, and there was a half-moon. As I crossed the green the thought came into my head that I was a fool to go to Bristol when Plymouth and Falmouth were nearer and would suit my purpose better. I could walk to Plymouth easy, and so save the railway money. Therefore I revolved to change my plan, and instead of turning to the left I turned to the right and walked across the church yard, and took the road which goes to Widdicombe.

"It was only a chance, mark you, that I took that road. I did not know, and I did not suspect, that my uncle had ridden over to Ashburton after I left him. All a chance it was. I never thought to meet him; and he might have been living till now if it hadn't been for that chance."

The man who was listening groaned aloud at this point.

"The first two miles of the road is a narrow lane between high hedges. Presently I passed through Heytree Gate, and so out where the road runs over the open down, and here I began to think—what I would do if I had my uncle before me; and the blood came into my eyes, and I clutched the cudgel hard. Who do you think put that thought into my head? The evil one. Why did he put that thought into my head? Because the very man was riding along the road on his way home, and because I was going to meet him in about ten minutes.

CHAPTER II.

"I heard the footsteps of his pony a long way off. I was in the middle of the open road when I saw him coming along in the moonlight. I stood still and waited for him. 'Murder him! Murder him!' whispered a voice in my ear. Whose voice was that? The evil one's voice.

"My stick was a thick, heavy cudgel with a knob. I grasped it by the end and waited. He did not see me. He was looking straight before him, thinking, I suppose, how he had done well to get the nephew out of the way—he had robbed and ruined. So, as he came up to me I lifted my arm and struck him on the head once, saying, 'Give me back my land, villain!' But I do not know whether he heard me or saw me; for he fell to the ground without a word or a groan.

"He fell, I say, from his pony clean on to the ground, his feet slipping away from the stirrups. His face was white. I stood beside him, waiting to see if he would recover. I hoped he would, because it is a dreadful thing to think that you have murdered a man, even when you are still hot with rage. If he would only recover a little and sit up, I thought, I should be a happy man. But he did not. He lay quite still and cold.

"Then I began to think that if I were caught I should be hanged. Would they suspect me? Fortunately, no one had seen me take that road. I must go away as quickly as I could, and leave no trace or sign that would make them suspect me.

"Then I thought that if I were to rob him, people would be less inclined to think of me; because, though I might murder the man who had ruined me, they would never believe that I would rob him.

"I felt in his pockets. There was his

watch; no, I would not touch his watch. There was some loose silver, which I left. There was a bag containing money. I know not how much, but it was a light bag. This I took. Also he had under his arm a good-sized tin box in a blue bag, such as lawyers carry. The box I knew would contain his papers, and his papers were his money. So I thought I would do as much mischief to his property as I could, and I took that box. Then I went away, leaving him there, with his white cheeks and gray hair, and his eyes wide open. I felt sick when I looked at those eyes, because they reproached me. I reeled and staggered as I left him.

"I was not going to walk along the road. That would have been a fool's act. I turned straight off and struck for the open moor, intending to make for Plymouth. And I remembered a place where the box could be hidden away, a safe place, where no one would ever think of looking for it, so that everybody should go on believing that the old man had been robbed as well as murdered. This place was right over the down, and on the other side.

"I climbed the hill. On the way I passed the Gray Wether Stone, and I thought I would hide the bag of money in a hole I knew of at the foot of it. Nobody would look for it there. Not twenty people in a year ever go near the Gray Wether. Then I walked down the hill on the other side and got to Grimspond, where I meant to hide the other bag with the box in it.

"Tell them, if you ever get away from this awful place, that the box lies on the side nearest Hamil, where three stones piled one above the other make a sort of little cave. The stones are in the corner, and are the first you come to on your way down. There I put the box. I went on walking all the way without stopping—except to sit down a bit—to Plymouth. There I got a newspaper, but I could read nothing of the murder. Then I took the train to Falmouth, and waited there for three days, and bought a newspaper every day—one would surely think that a murder in a quiet country place would be reported—but I could not find a single word about my murder.

"Then I was able to take passage on board a German ship bound for New York. I got to New York and I stayed there till my money was all gone, which did not take long. There I made the acquaintance of some men, who told me to go with them, for they were going West. They were all, I found, men who had done something, and the police were anxious to take them. I never told them what I had done, but they knew it was something, and when they found out that I knew nothing about robbery and burglary and couldn't cheat at gambling and the like, they set it down that it must be murder. But they cared nothing, and I went along with them."

"Your confession, my friend," said the German, stopping at this point, "of what followed—the horse stealing adventure, your own escape, and the untimely end of your companions; your honesty in California, and its interruption; and your experience of a Californian prison—is all interesting, but I cannot waste paper upon it. I return, therefore, to the material part of the confession. And with this I conclude.

"I desire to state that from the first night that I arrived in New York till now I have every night been visited by the ghost of the man I killed. My uncle stands beside the bed, whether it is in a bed in a crowded room, or on the ground in the open, or in a cabin at sea, or on the deck, he always comes every night. His face is white, and the wound in his forehead is bleeding. 'Come back to England,' he says, 'and confess the crime.'

"I must go back and give myself up to justice. I will make no more struggles against my fate. But because I am uncertain whether I shall live to get back, and because I know not how to escape from this island, I wish to have my confession written and signed, so that if I die the truth may be told."

Thus ended the paper.

"So," said the big German, "you acknowledge this to be your full and true confession?"

"I do."

"Sign it, then." He produced from his bag a pencil and gave it to the man, who signed, in a trembling hand, "David Leighan." Under the signature the German wrote, "Witnessed by me, Baron Sergius von Holstein." This done, he replaced the note book in his wallet.

"The reason why I wanted you to sign the paper to-night," he said, "is that there seems as if there might be a chance of your getting away from the island."

"How?"

"Look out to sea."

They were almost at the extreme south point of the island—the maps call it St. George. In the west the shores of New Britain could be seen, because the sun was just sinking behind them; to the south and the east there was open sea.

"I can see nothing."

"Look through my glass, then."

"I can see a ship—a two-masted sailing ship."

"She is in quest of blackbirds. She will probably send a boat ashore. Fortunately for you, the people are all gone off to fight. You will, therefore, if she does send a boat here, have a chance of getting away. If she sails north, and sends a boat ashore fifty miles or so further up the coast, that boat's crew will be speared. Now, my friend, the sun is about to set. In ten minutes it will be dark, and we have neither candles nor matches. Go to your bed and await the further commands of the Herr Ghost, your respectable uncle. On the eve of your departure, if you are to go to-morrow, he will probably be more pre-emptory and more terrifying than usual. Go to bed, David, and await the Herr Ghost."

(To be continued.)

A man is rich in proportion to the thing he can afford to let alone.—The resu.

OUR OLD MAINEVILLE BAND



MYRTLE SEDAM TULLIS ***

Talk about yer simph'ny concerts, with their furbelows and frills, An' yer recitals an' yer prodigies, with their quavers an' their trills— Why, fer real soul-stirring music, I'd have you understand, These paw-fangled doin's ain't a patch on our old Maineville a-band.

That 'ere band has a history. Way back in sixty-two It marched away with banners gay to cheer the Boys in Blue. An' when the war was over and back they'd come to stay There warn't as many, not by half, as when they marched away.

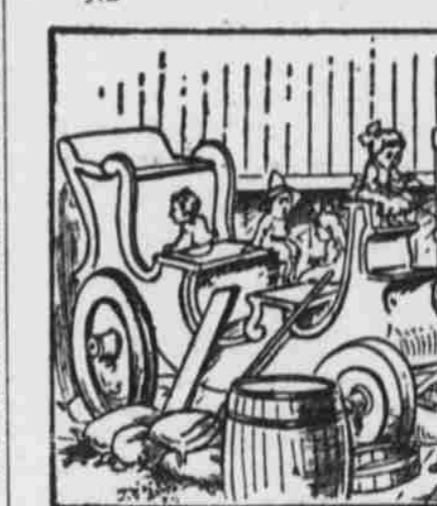
So we alibst had to make the hull thing over, so to speak, An' we gathered in the school house fer to practice twice a week; An' we'd parade on Decoration Day, when 'twas hot enough to brile— But we didn't care, when the women folks 'ud wave their hands and smile.

John Clinton was the leader (he was Mayor of Maineville, too), An' 'er you'd a bit of talent, wby, he'd get it out o' you; An' there was Tafts an' Stevens, East-man, Gilky, Owens, Shawan, Legge and Cain, Dwinell and Shields (the tuba player), Develvus, Witham and McClain.

Of course there's lots of others, their sons and their grandsons— In all more'n three hundred—but them are the oldest ones That did the organizin'; but Death's de-vastatin' hand Has only spared three fellers from that first old Maineville Band.

An' then our great band waggin'—'twas the regulation kind— With the driver's seat high up in front an' the drummer's up behind, An' 'other seats sloped grajerly, and— well, I'll explain to you By sayin' they resembled jest a great, big, shaller U.

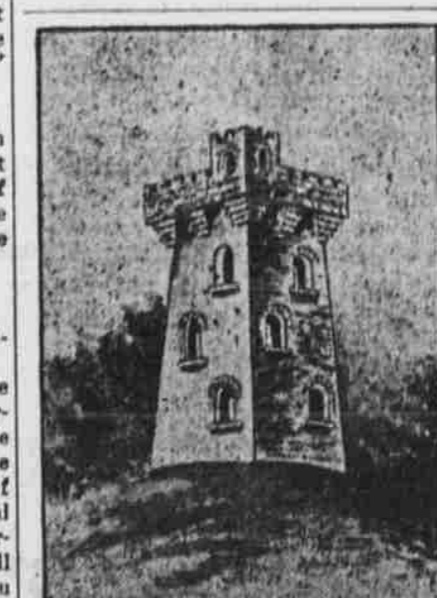
'Twas built right here in Maineville, an' the blacksmith bossed the job— His surname slips my mem'ry, but his given name was Bob— An' old "Daddy" Stearns he made the wheels, so powerful, strong and fit That, thou' five and forty years have passed, they're strong and stiddy yit.



HONOR ETHAN ALLEN.

Monument Erected to the Memory of the Hero of Ticonderoga.

This year on the holiday known in Vermont as Bennington Battle Day, there was dedicated on the farm at one time owned by General Ethan Allen, of Revolutionary fame, a tower in memory of the hero of Ticonderoga.



ETHAN ALLEN MEMORIAL TOWER.

Ethan Allen Hitchcock, Secretary of the Interior and a direct descendant of Ethan Allen, was present as the official representative of President Roosevelt.

The farm, of 800 acres, is located within the limits of the city of Burlington, about three miles from the City Hall. Before the time of the Revolution it was owned by a staunch Tory, who on account of his disloyalty

The runnin' gear was yellor, but the waggin' it was red, An' feather plumes, red, white and blue, adorned each horse's head. An' with them six horses pracin' with all their might and main, Sich an inspirin' spectacle I'll never see again.

They subscribed six hundred dollars fer to fix up that old band, But the buildin' didn't cost much, fer the hull town took a hand, An' the Squire an' the Mayor'd come in whenever work was slack, An' the minister 'ud often doff his coat an' take a whack.

We played our first engagement in the year of fifty-nine, Down to Mason, on July the Fourth, the weather it was fine. An' as we started playin', with the drum a goin' thr-a-p! That 'ere part of Warren county was a credit to the map.

Once a week we gave a concert so the Maineville folks could hear, An' we made a heap o' money at engagements for an' near. But at night when home returnin' we'd wake our kith an' kin, An' rouse the sleepin' echoes with the strains of "Home Agin'."

Well, the band got so famous they was wanted everywhere, To play at celebrations, sir, an' at the County Fair, An' at Lebanon an' Wilmington, an' as fur as Morrowtown, In fact from several counties did glowin' praise resound.

But now the organization that was once the city's pride Is busted up, an' all the boys are scattered fur and wide. One's in the Legislatur, and one's an actor great, An' one in Congress represents this district of the State.

An' now the old band waggin, with all its glory shed, Like a faded specter of the past it stands in Stephen's shed. An' sometimes when children play in it, It heaves a creaky sigh, As if longin' for its cronies, and the days that have gone by.

But, like the old band waggin', I am shaky now and old, An' I callate soon to take a trip where all the streets are gold. But I feel sure that some old comrade will grasp me by the hand An' say, "Member how we used to play in that Old Maineville Band?" —St. Louis Chronicle.

to the then embryo State of Vermont was forced to leave the country. His estate was subsequently confiscated by the State of Vermont and the property turned over to the land commissioner of the State. By him it was sold to General Ethan Allen, and he was living upon it at the time of his death, in 1789.

In 1902 the farm was purchased by W. J. Van Patten, of Burlington, and he presented that part of the farm known as Indian Rock, a bluff, from the summit of which the Adirondacks and Green mountains are seen, to the Vermont Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, on condition that they take steps without delay to erect on the rock a memorial tower to Vermont's great hero, General Ethan Allen. The project was pushed by the society with considerable enthusiasm and the necessary funds secured.

The tower is of a bold military order. The dimensions are 40 feet high, 24 feet square at the base and 20 feet at the narrow part, the battlements being wide enough so that the top corresponds in size with the base.

The name Indian Rock has been given to the spot by reason of the legend, which is said to be well established, that it was the point of outlook for the Indians for long ages before the white man came into this country. The rock has an elevation of nearly 200 feet and affords an extensive view in all directions.

The children are wearing the kind of sandals seen on the feet of Justice in the pictures.

Wit, when we amateurs engage in it, is sometimes pretty ghastly.