

AVICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCE

By C. R. FENN.

My servant showed her in, and I gave a start, for the new patient was Estelle Varnay, the charming young actress, of whom all the country, the reigning section of it, at least, were talking. Hers was a sad face, and had been deep trouble there, I thought, as I asked her to sit down. Her voice was extremely musical.

"Dr. Raymond," she said, "I have been told that you were a specialist on nerves, and, therefore, I came to ask you if you could do anything for me. I feel the strain, and then—" She checked herself quickly.

"Your profession is a very arduous one, madam."

"Yes; and yet to me the world has been kind. But I was told that, perhaps you could authorize me to take a slip—handing me a slip of paper, containing on it the name of a drug—stimulant—harmless, I believe, and more efficacious than other medicines. I was tired out last night with the new piece, and I have so much to do—so much. Tell me, could you recommend such a drug?"

"And there was a quaint, appealing touch in her voice.

"Humph! I'm not sure. It is only on the experimental stage as yet. Still, it might have the effect you wish. One has, though, to proceed very cautiously with a drug like that."

"Oh, yes," she said eagerly. "But, of course, I will be careful. I promise that."

"Then let me see," I said, and I walked across the room to my desk, where I wrote out the required pre-

"Let me die," he said, in a faint voice. "It is the only thing I ask now. Here, doctor, you are the last—and you seem a friend. Take it; it's gold! take it—no scruples; and he thrust a small bag into my hand.

The bag fell with a clinking sound to the floor, as I leaned over my visitor.

"Dead. Quite dead," I muttered.

"There could be no doubt of that. Not a scrap of identification—not so much as a letter, a card, an initial on his linen. It was hopeless. Not a word of his story, of how he came to be fainting at my door, of what trouble it was, the nature of the blow that had caused him to quit the world without a regret.

What could I do? Here was a man who wished to hide everything, to be a nameless victim; and he had selected my surgery in which to die.

But there would be police inquiries, and every kind of publicity, necessary and unnecessary—the unknown, the mystery of Dr. Raymond's surgery, etc.—I saw it all! Lurid contents bills, a crowd in the street, and—ting, ting, the bell again—this time a District Messenger boy who handed me a note.

"Dear Dr. Raymond—Please come to me at once. I badly need your help. You will think perhaps that I have not been fair to you; but I dared not explain. Yet now come—please. You have proved yourself a friend.—Yours sincerely,

"ESTELLE VARNAY."

"Very well," I said to the messenger.

"There is no answer."



THREW THE LONG COAT OVER THE PROSTRATE FORM.

scription. "I must ask you to report progress. Let me see you again." And that was the beginning.

Subsequently I saw Miss Varnay on a good many occasions, and she seemed brighter; while now it was I who suffered as our friendship grew, and I hated the thought of the battle she had had to wage with the world, for her life was not all flowers and incense—her beauty and histrionic talent.

Her reason in town was only brief—for once in a way I had read the theatrical announcements with sedulous care—and then she was going to the Argentine for a tour through South America, which commenced at Buenos Ayres; and a month later I called upon her at the hotel where she was staying, and asked her to be my wife; but the look which came into her face told me at once how vain were my hopes.

Yet the way in which she refused was, perhaps, worth it all.

"If you can talk like that to me," she said, tenderly, as she laid a hand on my arm, "you can be a friend, and I want a friend. But for the rest there is only one answer now. Can you be a friend?"

"You have hundreds?" I said doubtfully.

"No—scarcely one."

I took my leave, and went back home at heart, feeling that work was the only panacea, though may be at times the doctrine of toil is rather overdone.

And as I thought and thought, the night I rang.

It was nothing extraordinary. Sometimes the police require my help, but I opened the door it was not to see silver buttons and a bull's eye lantern but a wizened looking man.

"You are a doctor?"

"Yes."

"Then let me come in."

I did as the visitor desired, and led the way to my consulting room, where I turned up the light, to see that the man—a clean shaven, one-time smart individual—did indeed require aid.

"Heart?" I muttered.

"Yes," he said.

"Who are you?"

"It doesn't matter. I'm going, and somehow, the red lamp—its habit—I came in"; and he sank into a chair with the air of a runner who is far spent.

Not much help was required. I was surer of that, for there was a tell-tale something pressing the end.

"I want to be blotted out of the world," said the newcomer—"forgotten forever—I know it's near"; and he sat farther back in his chair. "I am quite beat. Good-bye."

"Come, come," I said. "That for a story, and I forced him to swallow some brandy and water. "Now—"

"It is no use, doctor."

"But I tell you it is."

"No, no. I am one of the beaten. Let me go."

"Be a man."

In her private sitting-room at the hotel I found her; but she was not alone. I went forward eagerly.

"Is there something to be explained away?" I said. "Can you—"

She checked me with a glance.

"It is not that."

"No?"

"No, no. It is because—"

"You said farewell this afternoon, and told me not to hope," I jerked out.

"I know," and she held out her hand toward the young man, who seemed to wish to blot himself out in a corner of the apartment. "Come," she whispered to the stranger, "this is our friend"; and then to me, "Do you care for me still?"

I bowed my head.

"Then," she cried earnestly, "surely only the better part of that feeling will be left to a man like you—deep friendship—when I tell you that this man is my affianced husband, and that, therefore, there was only one answer I could make to you."

"Your affianced husband!" I cried.

"Yes," she said excitedly. "You should hear all. He came to England on business, and suddenly he seemed to be lost, for we heard nothing, and we might never have heard but for the detectives—"

"But for you, Estelle," murmured the stranger.

"He killed a man in a fight—not in self-defense, but in defense of a woman who was being ill-treated, and—"

"It was about like that," said the stranger; "but, sir," he went on, turning to me, "I did not want my own name, Dallas, in this. Well, well, I don't suppose I should have struggled to be free of it if it had not been for her."

"His enemies were ruthless," cried the girl. "It was not his fault, and he is my love. I have lived and worked to save him—he who would not help himself by declaring who he was."

"You are an actress, Miss Varnay. Tell me—you are not acting now—is this all true?"

"This man is no friend, Estelle," came in a husky voice, and the speaker, a youngish-looking, bearded, but strong man, muffled in a long cloak, took a step forward, and I noticed the well-cut refined features. "We will manage without his aid."

"You will help us?" she pleaded.

"Yes, if I can," I replied.

"There," she cried, "I know it! Lawrence, Dr. Raymond is our friend, and I hope I am, Mr. Dallas," I said, and I held out my hand, which the other now eagerly grasped.

"You can help. Believe me, I shall endeavor to show my gratitude."

A sudden idea had struck me.

"There might be a way," I said.

"Oh, tell it to me!" she pleaded.

"I will. But we must leave here at once, and go to my house."

"You can help."

The girl acquiesced at once, and en-

route passing through the shadowy streets I learned fully how the escape had been accomplished, and how she had contrived and plotted to get a message through others would have failed, just because a lovely woman's wit is transcendent when difficulties are great.

A medical man is like a priest so far as the inviolability of those things which come to his ears are concerned, but I should be sorry to be the repository of many such secrets. But just then calm thought was impossible, for I could feel that the girl's arm touching mine trembled, and I thought "what might have been."

"Here is the house," I said, at last, rousing myself. "You feel that you are in no immediate danger, sir?"

"On the contrary, I feel that I am always in danger."

"Ah! Keep back in the shadow—good!"

Two policemen passed us, talking, and it was only when they had turned the corner that the girl gave a sigh of relief.

"Now quick! Come!" I said.

For I had made up my mind. My visitor of the night—the bearer of an impossible burden, of a tremendous sorrow, wished to be lost, to be unknown. Was I doing him a wrong? I thought not. It was not he, but his form, his existence, or, rather, what had been his existence, that I wished to subserve in the interests of these two.

That there would be inquiries about a piece of cold clay seemed a matter of extreme doubt. It was not probable that anyone had seen that solitary wayfarer of the night who lay there dead, and now that all was well with him, he would, I doubted not, have cheerfully consented to aid the cause of these two friends—my friends.

"This is what I propose," I said, averting my glances from the girl. "You are in convict garb?"

"Yes, yes."

"Then quick, come with me!" And leaving the girl who had sunk into a chair, I led the ex-captive up to my dressing-room, through the hall, past the surgery door, which was ajar, showing the light within. "Now you must change," I said.

The transformation did not occupy him long, and when we rejoined Miss Varnay he was a different looking individual, and might have walked the streets with safety.

I felt eager for them to go.

"Good-by," I said; and the girl seized my hand.

"Will there be no—"

"Pursuit?" I cried. "No. Mr. Dallas will have no need to look around now. I promise you that."

"How can I thank you?" she said, wistfully.

"By insuring the success of my plan. Farewell! Go!"

It was an hour later that the scheme was completed, and then the cast-off garments of the ex-prisoner had another owner, and I wiped my streaming brow.

"There can be no mistake," I said to myself, and I took a turn up and down the room, before throwing the long cloak Dallas had carried over the prostrate form. "Now for it," and giving one more glance around I seized my hat and went out into the street, where I did not have to look long for what I sought—a constable, leisurely making his rounds.

"Officer," I said.

He turned sharply.

"Dr. Raymond, sir!" he said. "What's wrong?"

"A man is lying dead in my surgery—heart failure—and he is wearing convict clothing."

"Dead, sir? I will come at once."

Half an hour later all that was mortal of a supposed captive who had fought his way to freedom was taken away. If doubts arose I never heard of them—in fact, the affair died away except in my mind.

She had told me that if matters had been different I should not have asked in vain; but, ah, she loved that man as though he were a god. Heaven grant that he loves her as well. Well, it is not every man who loses that has that much to the credit side in the ledger of the past.

The Happy Dutch Cow.

Pastoral scenes are proverbial for their quiet beauty and the spirit of contentment which they breed, but you must go to Holland to find the highest type of this idea.

In Holland cows are as much a part of the family as the Irishman's pig, for one member of the family always sleeps in the stable to watch and often the place is made a sort of family sitting room.

The cow stable is generally a large building, paved with brick, upon which the cow lies, straw being scarce. There is a brick paved passage down the centre, at one end of which is a fireplace, and the windows are covered with white curtains as daintily as those used in the house proper.

Sometimes the entire family will gather in the stable in the evenings, enjoying the warmth of the fire and exchanging the talk of the day, while the cattle, always placed with their heads facing the central passage, chew their cud and seem to thorough-

ly enjoy the human companionship. These cows are seldom brown, most of them being either black or white or of the two colors mixed, and because of the fertility of their pastures and the care taken in their keep they are capable of giving large yields of rich milk. In no place in the world are cows as a rule made as much of, and from the annual yield of butter it would seem that the care is not taken in vain.

Norway's Caution.

From the Detroit Free Press.

Having taken note of how things are going in Russia, it is not surprising that Norway should have displayed no greater haste in securing a ruler.

KAISER AN ART CRITIC.

Small Talks on Continental and Canadian Affairs.

It is well known that the German Emperor has a fine taste in matters of art. He has recently given a demonstration of his own imperial will and severe judgment in such matters.

Sometime ago the German Protestant community of Moscow solicited his aid in building a church, to be named the Temple of St. Peter and Paul. His majesty readily undertook to be responsible for all the lamps and candles to be used, and asked for their designs for these things, as well as for a plan of the interior. On examination, the Kaiser found the designs so far out of harmony with his own taste and with the style of the building that he at once set to work correcting and sketching, and when the whole had been made to his mind, he entrusted them to the architect charged with the restoration of the Metz Cathedral, with instructions to execute the work "according to my ideas and intentions."

On his recent visit to Paris, the Shah of Persia was fanned night and day by relays of perspiring attendants.

Little Prince Edward of Wales is already showing a delightful sturdiness of character. He has a profound dislike for arithmetic and shares the axiom: "Multiplication is vexation."

The matter of a minute may be fraught with the greatest importance. The old saying, "First come first served," holds good when sons of the British aristocracy make their entry into the world. In 1881 twin sons were born to the Countess of Clan-carty, the elder of whom made his infantile bow to the world as Lord Kilconnel, a future double baron and viscount, an earl, a marquis of Holland and lord of 25,000 acres, while his younger brother had to content himself with the modest appellation of Master Power Francis Le Poer Trench, and the prospect of a younger son's portion.

Mlle. de Rosen, daughter of the Russian Ambassador, when she makes her debut in society will receive from the Czarina the badge and the title of "Titular Maid of Honor to her Majesty."

The Canadian Government House at Ottawa, known as Rideau Hall, is a quaint, old-fashioned palace of gray stone, replete with queer chimneys, and odd corners. It is on the east bank of the wild Rideau River, and in winter, when the trees are leafless, is in full view from the other bank. The Canadian Government House social functions during the "season" include a couple of dances at Christmas time, a state ball after Easter, musicale in the Lenten season skating and tobogganing parties every Saturday in winter, several garden parties in the early summer and a never-ending round of dinners. Many of the customs and courtesies traditional of the old monarchial days are faithfully preserved.

Russia's cross of St. Andrew has a remarkable peculiarity attaching to it. All who are decorated with it have the right once to demand a pardon for a Russian subject condemned to death.

Japan was the last nation to enter the circle of the world's powers, but her Emperor's decree makes the pedigrees of other sovereigns look shabby. He is the 112th in unbroken, direct descent, the founder of the house being contemporary with Nebuchadnezzar, 608 B. C.

Five thousand dollars is about the average cost of a dinner in the Turkish Sultan's palace. The meal comprises fifty or more dishes daily and the Sultan generally partakes of from five to six. Every dish, before it reaches the royal table, is tasted in the kitchen by the royal Grand Vizier to guard against poison. It is then sealed and taken to the Sultan. The vast cost of these repasts comes from the fact that the guests and retainers who dine at the Sultan's expense daily number several thousand.

Swell London Attire.

The latest notes from London state that fashionable young men during the spring and summer seasons have been ideally clad in green. The outfit was as follows: Olive green Tilly hat, Lincoln green flannel suit (like Robin Hood's archers) with sea green stripes, emerald green tie, sea green striped flannel shirt with collar to match, and sage green socks relieved with pale green spots. The boots were to be left to the taste of the wearer. A green whangee cane was considered the thing. An American contemporary remarks that in this country a shotgun would be the most effective.

A Tempest in a Watermelon.

Great oaks from little acorns grow! So also has a law suit, in which \$10,000 damages are claimed, arisen out of a 35-cent watermelon. It appears that a groceryman, of Washington, D. C., had caused the arrest of one of his neighbors, charging her with the theft of "one watermelon, of the value of 35 cents," and that when the police court judge heard the testimony he solemnly declared her not guilty. The lady has felt very much hurt over the charges of her grocer, and so now has entered suit in the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia for \$10,000 damages.

KAISER WILHELM.

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