

The Fair Unknown

"Good-by, old fellow. You'd better brace up and come along."

Eugene Merle stood at the head of the wide stairs and looked after the speaker without replying. His face was dark, moody, weary. He shrugged his shoulders and turned away with a gesture more eloquent than words.

"It's all very well for you to say that, my fortune friend," he thought. "He made his way back to his studio."

Merle was an artist who lived and worked on the fourth floor of a large apartment house devoted to professional artists.

"It's easy to say brace up," he muttered as he entered the studio, the door of which had been left ajar during his brief absence.

"I can't stand it," he said aloud. "I am in debt, penniless. I have pawned everything on which I could raise a cent."

He sprang to his feet and paced the floor in nervous excitement.

He went to a little cabinet and took out a small bottle of dark liquid, eyeing it with a gleam in his eyes that suggested impatient madness.

"A few drops of this and all would be over," he muttered. "All the struggles and disappointments and poverty. It's the only way to get the best of fate. Shall I do it?"

Something stayed his hand. What was it a spirit from the other world? A slender form in gray draperies with a misty veil, enshrouding her face, stood beside him and a white hand took the glass from his lips. Merle stood transfixed.

"Who are you?" he asked in low tones.

"Your guardian angel," said a sweet tremulous voice. "You must not do this thing you contemplate."

"My God!" he said in low tones. "I was going to kill myself! But how came you here?"

Even then it seemed as if that gray clad figure must be supernatural.

"You have saved me," he said emotionally. "I am weak, ill, but the moment of madness is passed. You believe me?"

She took the bottle from the cabinet and emptying the contents into the glass, threw away the entire quantity.

"Tell me now to whom I owe this debt of gratitude," he said, but the gray-robed figure shook her head.

"Remember only my words, keep up courage," she answered, and moved away.

Slowly she moved toward the door and Merle was too bewildered to doubt but stand there and look after her until she disappeared.

At that instant he caught sight of a small, lace-edged handkerchief lying upon the floor near the chair, an object toward which he picked it up. In its folds was a bill of small denomination. A hot flash swept over the artist's face. She had left the money to him!

He rushed out into the hall, but she was gone. He came back picked up the hat and hurried to the street, but there was no sign of the lady in gray.

"I might indeed think it was an apparition but for this," he thought, closing his fingers on the bill. "This is substantial enough. Keep up your courage, he said, well, I'll try. I was a mad fool to think of ending my life but God knows everything was against me!"

He went into the cafe, ate his dinner, and went out to consult a physician. Then he went to his studio and changed man.

Two days later a letter reached him from a wealthy, retired gentleman living in the suburbs and he desired an interview with the artist.

Eugene Merle felt that in some way the Fair Unknown had something to do with the message, and he quickly observed the summons.

When he saw Mr. de Monde he found that the old gentleman was a lover of art and a liberal patron.

"I want a portrait of my daughter," he said. "You have been recommended to me. The sittings will have to take place here. Will that suit you?"

Merle replied that it would.

Mr. de Monde sent for his daughter and, as she entered the room, Eugene Merle was conscious of a strange emotion, a mingling of hope and disappointment that made him at once elated and downcast.

The young lady was slender and graceful, with large, dark eyes and luxuriant black hair.

"My daughter, Alberta," said the old man, and the artist bent over the white hand in silence.

Merle began his work the following day. All the while that he was transferring Alberta de Monde's big-browed beauty to canvas, his heart and mind were full of conflicting emotions.

"How stupid I am!" he thought one day. "It is not likely that she has sought to do with the Fair Unknown. My fancy traces a resemblance that is all. Alberta de Monde is as dark as the other one was fair, and yet—her eyes, her voice—but there, what non-sense! Dark eyes and silvery voices are not uncommon, after all."

The portrait was a complete success. Merle knew that much depended upon it, and he worked as he never had worked before.

It was finished, liberally paid for, and he had no excuse to visit the de Monde mansion any longer.

After that, other patrons of art came to his studio, and the artist found that his tide of fortune had turned.

Over a year after they had sailed for foreign shores, the de Mondes returned, and by that time Eugene Merle was on the top wave of success.

He was attending a fashionable reception one evening when he saw a familiar, graceful form in rosy gauze gliding toward him, and the dark, handsome face of Alberta de Monde came through the throng.

She was surprised to see him, but she greeted him pleasantly, although there was a constraint in her manner.

"I have heard of your success, Mr. Merle," said she. "Papa and I are greatly pleased."

"I see him coming this way now," said Eugene, and at that instant Mr. de Monde approached with a beautiful girl beside him.

Her slender, graceful form was robed in white and strands of pearls banded her throat and arms. Her yellow hair was secured in a loose coil by a jeweled fillet, and her eyes shone like stars.

"Mr. Merle, my daughter Fay," said Mr. de Monde, and the artist knew that the moment he had longed for had come.

He was standing face to face with the Fair Unknown.

"I know you, Miss Fay," he said. "Why did you wish to deceive me?"

"I thought it were better you should not know it would have been easier raising for both of us," she answered. "In the first place I had no right in your studio. I had gone to see a girl who painted on silk for me. Your door was open and the picture on the easel attracted my attention. I saw that the face was mine, and I stepped in with my eyes, and that the room might be Father's. Then you returned and I hid behind a curtain hoping you would go out again and save my knowing what to do. I induced papa to send for you, but I did not want you to see me. I knew we were going abroad soon and I did not think you would ever suspect my complicity in the matter."

One summer night just such a night as it was when Eugene Merle saw that lovely vision on the moor, it was on the artist's walk through the fragrant shadow garden with the white hand taking from his lips a sweet fair face spotted to his mind I was the same thing as a girl from London, and all his hopes were fulfilled. His dreams realized he had won first fortune every gift she could bestow.

ELLA RANDALL PEARCE

FOUR FISH ON ONE CAST.

Two Perch and Two Trout, According to This Angler's Story.

It is something after all to be the hero of a record even if it does not mean much and perhaps the successful landing of four fish on one cast is not unworthy of being rescued from oblivion.

It happened with me on the Shannon in Ireland some few years ago. The last or very nearly the last of the seasons with the weather and the more remarkable as I have not fished with four flies on my cast half a dozen times in my life. I was fishing from a boat anchored at the tail of the strong broken water of the weir and I cast and hooked what I saw was a trout of about half a pound.

Presently as I was paying him his freedom he would pull heavily down and I would instantly take another cast. A movement down stream would become a movement up with a suddenness quite unexpected, and I had come that the moment he had longed for had come.

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FEASTS THAT LASTED HOURS.

Long Drawn Out Chinese Dinners—When an Esquimau is Hungry.

Sir Robert Hart, the veteran inspector general of the Chinese customs, speaking at a dinner in London the other day said that he once in Peking sat out a banquet that lasted seven consecutive hours. There were 125 courses, and he tasted them all.

Mr. Ward, the American envoy in China, who tried to secure an interview with the Emperor Hien Pung, told us that he was entertained at a dinner that lasted from noon on one day until 6 o'clock on the evening of the day following. The total number of courses was not given but Mr. Ward said that he had to give in after partaking of 128 different dishes. "We ate," he said, "and wondered greatly, especially at the absence of any conversation," however the Esquimau's last to get than any other and the quantity of food consumed was proportionately greater. However, words that seven of his party of the time they were once again continuing a further day of the feast during which time they consumed 200 pounds of seal meat.

It is a curious story and one that is not often told. It is a story of a man who was once in the land of the Esquimaux and who was once in the land of the Esquimaux and who was once in the land of the Esquimaux.

Real Luck

In Love

"I haven't any luck!" cried Kitty, flinging the cards on the piazza table and leading the way to the hammock.

"Not at cards," I suggested, consolingly. "But in love—"

"I don't see it," she remarked, petulant, disposing her ruffled skirts to the best advantage above her red kid shoes.

"And yet," I sighed, settling myself comfortably on the turf at her feet, "you are looking right at me!"

Kitty smiled and shrugged her shoulders.

"Luck in love, Mr. Curtis," she declared sweetly, "consists in getting somebody you want."

"Not at all," I objected, serenely lighting my pipe. "It's just the other way."

"What?"

"Getting somebody who wants you," I explained briefly.

"But," Kitty sat up and gazed at me in astonishment, "anybody can do that!" she exclaimed scornfully. "Anybody can become President!"

"I don't think so," I retorted laconically, but most of them don't. Luck in love is in any other thing else is merely the result of common sense in the choice of opportunities."

Kitty sniffed cynically and earned in the hammock again.

"But a piece," she objected, looking at me. "There isn't any chance in it."

"There is a way," I said, "and it is to get somebody who wants you."

"What person who wants you?"

"The person who wants you," I said. "The person who wants you."

"What person who wants you?"

"The person who wants you," I said. "The person who wants you."

nightmare, and the other has the best of everything on the table. It just depends on what you consider 'luck.' There will always be plenty of fools in the world who will cling to the belief that happiness consists in making a martyr of oneself. Look at the poor little women wearing out their hands and hearts, slaving for big, brutal chaps, who accept their adoration with a yawn and one eye on the newspaper, and at the miserable, overworked men, slaving themselves into nervous prostration to buy frocks and hats for their wives to wear for other men. It's the folly of the idealist that gives the common-sense people a chance for their luck."

"Yes," sighed Kitty, "but I wish you hadn't told me. You've taken all the glamour off and rubbed off all the gilt and closed up all the gateways to happiness."

"What?" I sat up in astonishment.

"Well," said Kitty, "if you aren't happy without the person you love and can't be happy with him—"

"Be happy with the person who loves you!" I interrupted promptly.

"I can't!" sighed Kitty again, gazing pensively at the horizon.

"I've given you plenty of chances," I said reproachfully.

"Kitty sat up so suddenly that the hammock squeaked in protest.

"Do you think," she cried vehemently, "that I'd spend my days sitting at the foot of a throne?"

"I puffed my pipe and remained discreetly silent."

"Why don't you marry that Colonel Grim?" asked Kitty, "and leave forward with inspiration on her eyes."

"Why should I marry her?" I demanded.

"She adores you," said Kitty. "Humph!"

"Or the red-haired Miss Briggs?"

"Kitty," I said, "if you are a girl of Catherine De'Vaux or the Martin or Gertie Craig or—"

"I haven't any name," I protested. "I don't want any of them."

"But they all want you," declared Kitty, sweetly, and they would all wear out their hearts and hands polishing your hair and making your shoes and—"

"I don't want anybody to lace my shoes," I objected. "I want you're passing all the nice girls by—"

"Persisted Kitty sadly.

"Not all I promised hopefully.

"And you'll miss your luck in love."

"What?"

"Pursuing an ideal!"

"I dropped my pipe."

"Oh well," I said after I had recovered the meershaum and my composure. "It's different in my in our case."

"It's always different in our case," sighed Kitty. "But she added, 'If your ideal is as anything like me.'"

"She is," I exclaimed hastily, "extra like you."

"You'll never have to lace her shoes, nor slave to pay for her hats, nor wait on her, nor be an object of charity, nor—"

"Why not?" I demanded.

"Because," explained Kitty, rising and shaking out her ruffles, "she'll marry her own ideal."

"Kitty," I cried, "give me a chance."

"Yes," retorted Kitty sweetly. "I'm going to give you a chance to marry somebody who adores you."

"What?"

"And who will mend your socks and run your errands and give you the seat nearest the radiator, and bore you to death."

"Kitty," I cried, "I wish you'd finish holding out her hand in love."

Sea Mystery Solved.

Another story of the sea has been solved recently. The British steamer "Lark" Vancouver left the Clyde for Adelaide on line 14 the 11th and was never seen after September 11. A letter containing a slip of paper purporting to have been written by her, was received in Glasgow and dated 11th October 29. It stated that the ship had struck on the Altophos near Kangaroo Island and was not expected to float. It then said that the ship was not launched but it was not thought that they would live as the sea was very rough.

Promising New Fruit.

A promising new fruit from Uruguay grows on a laurel-like plant having leaves that are green and shining on the upper surface. The fruit described as having the size of an apricot has the shape of the apple, yellow and scarlet when mature, and it has a perfume of a delicacy equaled in no other fruit. The seed is like a large hazel nut. The edible flesh, part is small, but is expected to increase with cultivation, and its taste is extremely agreeable. This edible pulp is credited with remarkable digestive properties.

Reporters and Orators.

There have been errors in reporting of course. There always will be such errors. But in character of this kind are usually insignificant and they are more than balanced by the dressing up and revision which good reporters do to careless, illogical and sometimes ungrammatical speeches. If it were not for the malignant reporter, the speeches in ten that are not delivered from manuscript would read like a combination of bad grammar and delirium tremens, as Mark Twain put it. It is the saving grace of the reporter's revision that has made many an oratorical reputation in this country. The public speaker who does not recognize his obligations to the men who report him is an ingrate. A just punishment for him would be to print his speeches exactly as he delivers them. After two or three experiences of that regimen he would have nothing to say of "inaccurate reporters."

An Anxious Question Answered.

Felicia R. of Towson wants legal advice. She writes an excited hand, and says:

"Dear kind editor I wish to consult you about my neighbor. He has a goat and he got into a yard and ate two quilts and the wash boiler, and when I spoke to him about it he sneered and laughed, and that same evening he caught my little boy in the alley and butted him in the fence. Should I have him arrested?"

"There is something wrong with that neighbor. The eating of the bedding and the boiler may be set down as mere idiosyncrasy, yet when he butted the boy in the fence he went too far. Have him arrested. By the way, why do you mention the goat?"

The Real Cinderella.

Cinderella's real name was Rhodope and she was a beautiful Egyptian maiden who lived 450 years before the common era, and during the reign of Psammethis, one of the twelve kings of Egypt.

One day she ventured to go in bath in a clear stream near her home, and meanwhile left her shoes which had been in unusually small fitting sandals, and mistaking them for a toadstool (it pointed down and carried off one in his beak).

The bird then unwittingly played the part of fairy godmother for, flying directly over Memphis where King Psammethis was dispensing justice, it let the shoe fall right into the king's lap. Its size, beauty and daintiness immediately attracted the royal eye, and the king determined upon a shoe sent throughout all his kingdom in search of the foot that would fit it.

As in the story of Cinderella, the messengers finally discovered Rhodope, fitted the shoe and carried her in triumph to Memphis, where she became the Queen of King Psammethis.

Why Horses Shy and Donkeys Don't.

A curious question in evolution was once put to a scientist prominent in the service of the Government. "Why is it," some one asked, "that horses shy and donkeys do not?"

The answer was to the following effect:

The ancestors of the horse were accustomed to roam over the plains where every tuft of grass or bush might conceal an enemy waiting in ambush. In these circumstances they must have been and again saved their lives by quickly starting back or else suddenly jumping to one side when without warning some strange object appeared to them. The habit must have indeed been a strong one, seeing that so many years of domestication have not eradicated it.

On the other hand the donkeys descended from animals that lived among the hills with the oak and pine and dangerous destinations of from these conditions it was to be expected that they should be suspicious and sure-footed. The donkeys at the time were not then as they are now, and they were not then as they are now, and they were not then as they are now.

A Survival of Type.

When Lucy Ellen Morse was born, it was in the year 1840. She was a girl of great beauty and was married to a man of great wealth. She was a girl of great beauty and was married to a man of great wealth. She was a girl of great beauty and was married to a man of great wealth.

Troops Formed of Foreigners.

The Foreign Legion is composed of a very heterogeneous lot who have fought Europe too hot for them and found a curious thing that the German element seems to predominate in this French force. Most of these Germans are deserters from their own army.

Though in the Legion they soon find that it is even worse than an ordinary case of out of the frying pan into the fire.

The Legion is now almost the last survival from the days when kings and governments accepted the service of foreign troops, unless indeed another instance of the same kind is furnished by the Pope's present Swiss Guard, though this is composed of men of first rate character.

The Garde Kroassaise of the Kings of France was another good example of those alien mercenaries, the Scots, a hundred in number who formed for centuries the body guard of the French kings had their modern counterpart in the famous Cent Gardes who settled the Tuilleries under Napoleon III.

Nothing Doing.

"I suppose," said the poor but otherwise truthful young man, cautiously feeling his way, "that you wouldn't be satisfied with love in a cottage?"

"Way not?" queried the fair maid.

"I'm sure I'd rather marry the right man with an income of only \$10,000 a year than a millionaire I didn't love."

And having sense enough to see through the hole in a doughnut, the young man quietly faded away.—Chicago News.

A Distinction.

Prospective Tenant—How many families does this apartment building accommodate?

Truth-loving Landlord—it has room for forty-two.

ROCHESTER, N. Y.