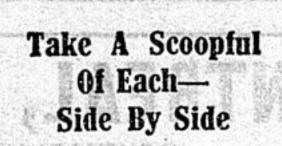
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# ONLY A MONTH;

OR, A CURIOUS MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

CHAPTER I .- (Cont'd)

"There is M'ss Morgan," exclaimed Cecil, "that lady in a blue ulster; and there is her uncle just joining her."

"Many thanks for your kind help," said Frithiof, and with a second bow and a smile from his frank eyes he passed on and approached Mr. Morgan.

exclaimed, greeting the traveler with the easy courteous manner peculiar to Norwegians. ."I hope you have made a good voyage."

"Oh, how do you do, Mr. Falck?" said the Englishman, scanning him from head to foot as he shook hands and speaking very loud, as if the foreigner were deaf. "Very good of you to meet us, I'm sure. My niece, Miss Blanche Morgan."

Frithiof bowed, and his heart began to beat fast as a pair of most lovely dark-gray eyes gave him such a glance as he had never before received.

'My sister is much looking forward to the pleasure of making your acquaintance," he said.

beautifully you speak English! And how you will laugh at me when I tell you that I have been learning er with a pitying eye, and perhaps Norwegian for fear there should would have enlightened his absurd be dead silence between us."

"Indeed, there is nothing which pleases us so much as that you should learn our tongue," he said, smiling. "My English is just now in its zenith, for I passed the winter with an English clergyman at Hanover for the sake of improving

"But why not have come to England?" said Blanche.

"Well, I had before that been with a German family at Hanover to perfect myself in German, and I liked the place well, and this Eng- happy-looking people somehow thought if I stayed there it would of-the-way thing for people to enjoy be 'to kill two flies with one dash,' to England that will be for a holiday, for nothing at all but plea- trouble. The death of his mother sure."

"Let me introduce my nephew," said Mr. Morgan, as Cyril strolled but it had in no way clouded his up. "And this is my daughter. How now, Florence, have you found enough to realize the greatness of your boxes?

you will tell me what to look for I will see that the hotel porter takes his twin-sister, Sigrid, and to the

it all." to the region of pushing and con- home life was an extremely happy fusion and luggage, and before long one to look back on, and now that Frithiof had taken the travelers to his year of absence was over and his father's carriage, and they were his education finished it seemed to driving through the long, pictur- him that all was exactly as he esque Strandgaden. Very few ve- would have it. Faintly in the dishicles passed through this main tance he looked forward to further street, but throngs of pedestrians walked leisurely along, or stood in groups talking and laughing, the women chiefly wearing full skirts of dark-blue serge, short jackets to match, and little round blue serge hoods surmounting their clean

white caps; the men also in dark blue with broad felt hats.

To English visitors there is an indescribable charm in the primitive simplicity, the easy informality of the place; and Frithiof was well content with the delighted exclamations of the new-comers.

"What charming ponies!" cried Blanche. "Look how oddly their "Welcome to Norway, sir," he manes are cut-short manes and long tails! How funny! we do just the opposite. And they all seem cream-colored."

"This side, Blanche, quick! lot of peasants in sabots! and oh! just look at those lovely red

"How nice the people look, too, so different to people in an English street. What makes you all so happy over here?"

"Why, what should make us unhappy?" said Frithiof. "We love our country and our town, we are the freest people in the world, and life is a great pleasure in itself, don't you think? But away in the mountains our people are much more grave. Life is too lonely "Ah!" exclaimed Blanche, "how there. Here in Bergen it is per-

Cyril Morgan regarded the speakignorance and discoursed of Pall Mall and Picadilly, had not they just then arrived at Holdt's Hotel. Frithiof merely waited to see that they approved of their rooms, gave them the necessary information as to bankers and lionizing received Mr. Morgan's assurance that the whole party would dine at Herr Falck's the next day, and then, having previously dismissed the carriage, set out at a brisker pace than usual on his walk home.

Blanche Morgan's surprise at the lishman was very pleasant, so I amused him. Was it then an outlife? For his own part mere existas we say in Norway. When I come ence satisfied him. But then he was as yet quite unacquainted with when he was only eleven years old had been at the time a great grief. after-life, he had been scarcely old his loss. Its effect had been to make "Allow me," said Frithiof; "if him cling more closely to those who were left to him-to his father, to little baby, Swanhild (Svarnheel), There was a general adjournment | whose birth had cost so much. The success and happiness; being a fer vent patriot, he hoped some day to be a king's minister-the sum mit of a Norwegian's ambition; and being human he had visions of an ideal wife and an ideal home of his own. But the political career could

very well wait, and the wife too, for the matter of that.

#### CHAPTER II.

Herr Falck lived in one of the pretty, unpretentious houses in Klavedalen, which are chiefly owned by the rich merchants of Bergen. The house stood on the right-hand side of the road surrounded by a pretty little garden, it was painted a light-brown color, and like most Bergen houses it was built of wood. In the windows one could see flowers, and beyond them white muslin curtains, for aestheticism had not yet penetrated to Norway. The dark-tiled roof was outlined against a wooded hill rising immediately behind, with here and there gray rocks peeping through the summer green of the trees, while in front the chief windows looked on to a pretty terrace with carefully kept flower-beds, then down the wooden hillside heights on the further shore and on one side a break in the chain of mountains and a lovely stretch of open country. To the extreme left was the giant Ulriken, sometimes shining and glistening, sometimes frowning and dark, but always beautiful; while to the right you caught a glimpse of Bergen with its quaint cathedral tower, and away in the distance the fjord like a shining silver band in the

As Frithiof walked along the grassy terrace he could hear sounds of music floating from the house; some one was playing a most in spiriting waltz; and as soon as he had reached the open French window of his father's study, a quaint pair of dancers became visible. A

slim little girl of ten years old, with very short petticoats, and very long golden hair braided into a pig-tail, held by the front paws a fine Esquimau dog, who seemed quite to enter into the fun and danced and capered most cleverly, obediently keeping his long pointed nose over his partner's shoulder. The effect was so comical that Frithoif stood laughingly by to watch the performance for fully half a minute, then, unable to resist his own desire to dance, he unceremoniously called Lillo, the dog, away and whirled off little Swanhild in the rapid waltz which Norwegians delight in; the languid grace of a London ballroom would have had no charms for him, his dancing was full of fire and impetuosity, and Swanhild, too, danced very well; it had come to them both as naturally as breath-

"This is better than Lillo," admitted the child. "Somehow he's so dreadfully heavy to get round. Have the English people come? What are they like?"

"Oh, they're middling," said Frithiof, "all except the niece, and she is charming."

"Is she pretty?" "Prettier than any one you ever saw in your life." "Not prettier than Sigrid?" said

the little sister, confidently.

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"Wait till you see," said Frithi-"She is a brunette and perfectly lovely. There now!" as the music ceased, "Sigrid has felt her left ear burning, and knows that we are speaking evil of her. Let us come to confess."

ing room to the right. Sigrid was still at the piano, but she had heard you, Sigrid," said Swanhild, mishis voice and had turned round chievously. "Prettier than any one with eager expectation in her face. we ever saw." The brother and sister were very much alike; each had the same wellcut Greek features, but Frithiof's face was broader and stronger, and

you could tell at a glance that he was the more intellectual of the two. On the other hand, Sigrid possessed a delightful fund of quiet common sense, and her judgment was seldom at fault, while, like to-morrow." most Norwegian girls, she had a most charmingly simple manner,

and an unaffected light-heartedness which it did one good to see.

"Well, what news?" she exclaimed. "Have they come all right? Are they nice?"

"Nice is not the word! Charm-With his arm still round the child ing! beautiful! To-morrow you will he entered the pretty, bright-look- see if I have spoken too strongly."

"He says she is even prettier than

"She? Which of them?"

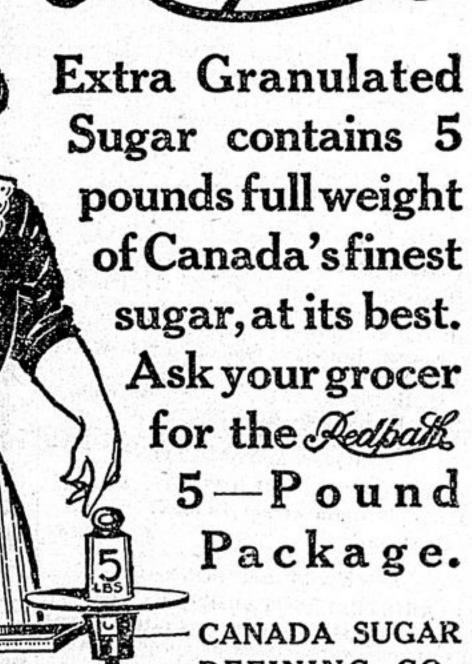
"Miss Blanche Morgan, the daughter of the head of the firm, you know."

"And the other one?"

"I hardly know, I didn't look at her much; the others all seemed to me much like ordinary English tourists. But she-well, you will see

(To be continued.)





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