GREENMANTLE

BY JOHN BUCHAN.

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CHAPTER II.—(Cont'd.)

"It could be done," Sandy said. "You'd better leave that entirely to me. I'll find out the best way. I suppose the Foreign Office will help me to get to the jumping-off place?"

"Remember," I said, "it's no good getting too far east. The secret, so far as concerns us, is still west of Constantinople."

"I see that. I'll blow in on the Bosporus by a short tack."

"For you, Mr. Blenkiron, I would suggest a straight journey. You're an American, and can travel through Germany direct. But I wonder how far your activities in New York will allow you to pass as a neutral?"

"I have considered that, sir," he said. "I have given some thought to the pecooliar psychology of the great German nation. As I read them they're as cunning as cats, and if you play the feline game they will outwit you every time. Yes, sir, they are no slouches at sleuth-work. If I were to buy a pair of false whiskers and dye my hair and dress like a Baptist parson and go into Germany on the peace racket, I guess they'd be on my trail like a knife, and I should be shot as a spy inside of a week or doing solitary in the Moabit prison. But they lack the larger vision. They can be bluffed, sir. With your approval I shall visit the Fatherland as John S. Blenkiron, once a thorn in the side of their brightest boys on the other side. But it will be a different John S. I reckon he will have experienced a change of heart. He will have come to appreciate the great, pure, noble soul of Germany, and he will be sorrowing for his past like a converted gun-man at a camp meeting. He will be a victim of the meanness and perfidy of the British Government. I am going to have a first-class row with your Foreign Office about my passport, and I am going to speak harsh words about them up and down this metropolis. I am going to be shadowed by your sleuths at my port of embarkation, and I guess I shall run up hard against the British Le-gations in Scandinavia. By that time our Teutonic friends will have begun to wonder what has happened to John S., and to think that maybe they have been mistaken in that child. So, when I get to Germany they will be waiting for me with an open mind. Then I judge my conduct will surprise and encourage them. I will confide to them valuable secret information about British preparations, and I will show up the British lion as the meanest kind of cur. You may trust me to make a good impression. After that I'll move eastwards, to see the demolition of the British Empire in those parts. By the way, where is the rendezvous?"

"This is the 17th day of November. If we can't find out what we want in two months we may chuck the job. On the 17th of January we should forgather in Constantinople. Whoever gets there first waits for the others. If by that date we're not all present, it will be considered that the missing man has got into trouble and must be given up. If ever we get there we'll be coming from different points and in different characters, so we want a rendezvous where all kinds of odd folk assemble. Sandy, you know Constantinople. You fix the meeting-place."

"I've already thought of that," he said, and going to the writing-table he drew a little plan on a sheet of paper. "That lane runs down from the Kurdish Bazaar in Galata to the ferry of Ratchik. Half-way down on the left-hand side is a cafe kept by a Greek called Kuprasso. Behind the cafe is a garden, surrounded by high walls which were parts of the old Byzantine theatre. At the end of the garden is a shanty called the Garden-house of Suliman the Red. It has been called in its time a dancing-hall and a gambling hell and God knows what else. It's not a place for respectable people, but the ends of the earth converge there and no questions are asked. That's the best spot I can thing of for a meeting-place."

The kettle was simmering by the fire, the night was raw, and it seemed the hour for whisky-punch. I made a brew for Sandy and myself and boiled some milk for Blenkiron.

"What about language?" I asked. "You're all right, Sandy?"

"I know German fairly well; and I can pass anywhere as a Turk. The first will do for eavesdropping and the second for ordinary business."

"And you?" I asked Blenkiron.

"I was left out at Pentecost," he said. "I regret to confess I have no gift of tongues. But the part I have chosen for myself don't require the polyglot. Never forget I'm plain John S. Blenkiron, a citizen of the great American Republic."

"You haven't told us your own line, Dick," Sandy said.

"I am going to the Bosporus through Germany, and not being a neutral, it won't be a very cushioned journey."

Sandy looked grave.

"That sounds pretty desperate. Is your German good enough?"

"Pretty fair; quite good enough to pass as a native. But officially I shall not understand one word. I shall be a Boer from Western Cape Colony: one of Maritz's old lot who after a bit of trouble has got through Angola and reached Europe. I shall talk Dutch and nothing else. And, my hat! I shall be pretty bitter about the British. There's a powerful lot of good swear-words in the Taal. I will know all about Africa, and be panting to get another whack at the *verdommt rooinek*. With luck they may send me to the Uganda show or to Egypt, and I shall take care to go by Constantinople. If I'm to deal with Mohammedan natives they're bound to show me what hand they hold. At least, that's the way I look at it."

We filled our glasses—two of punch and one of milk—and drank to our next merry meeting. Then Sandy began to laugh, and I joined in. The sense of hopeless folly again descended on me. The best plans we could make were like a few buckets of water to ease the drought of the Sahara or the old lady who would have stopped the Atlantic with a broom. I thought with sympathy of little Saint Theresa.

CHAPTER III.

Peter Pienaar.

Our various departures were unassuming, all but the American's. Sandy spent a busy fortnight in his subterranean fashion, now in the British Museum, now running about the country to see old exploring companions, now at the War Office, now at the Foreign Office, but mostly in my flat, sunk in an arm-chair and meditating. He left finally on December 1 as a King's Messenger for Cairo. Once there I knew the King's Messenger would disappear, and some queer Oriental ruffian take his place. It would have been impertinence in me to inquire into his plans. He was the real professional and I was only the dabbler.

Blenkiron was a different matter. Sir Walter told me to look out for squalls, and the twinkle in his eye gave me a notion of what was coming. The first thing the sportsman did was to write a letters to the papers signed with his name. There had been a debate in the House of Commons on foreign policy, and the speech of some idiot there gave him his cue. He declared that he had been heart and soul with the British at the start, but that he was reluctantly compelled to change his views. He said our blockade of Germany had broken all the laws of God and humanity, and he reckoned that Britain was now the worst exponent of Prussianism going. That letter made a fine racket, and the paper that printed it had a row with the Censor.

But that was only the beginning of Mr. Blenkiron's campaign. He got mixed up with some mountebanks called the League of Democrats against Aggression, gentlemen who thought that Germany was all right if we would only keep from hurting her feelings. He addressed a meeting under their auspices, which was broken up by the crowd, but not before John S. had got off his chest a lot of amazing stuff. I wasn't there, but a man who was told me that he never heard such clotted nonsense. He said that Germany was right in wanting the freedom of the seas, and that America would back her up, and that the British Navy was a bigger menace to the peace of the world than the Kaiser's army. He admitted that he had once thought differently, but he was an honest man and not afraid to face facts. The oration closed suddenly when he got a brussels-sprout in the eye, at which my friend said he swore in a very unpacifist style.

After that he wrote other letters to the press, saying that there was no more liberty of speech in England, and a lot of scallywags backed him up. Some Americans wanted to tar and feather him, and he got kicked out of the Savoy. There was an agitation to get him deported, and questions were asked in Parliament, and the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs said his department had the matter in hand. I was beginning to think that Blenkiron was carrying his tomfoolery too far, so I went to see Sir Walter, but he told me to keep my mind easy.

"Our friend's motto is 'Thorough,'" he said, "and he knows very well what he is about. We have officially requested him to leave, and he sails from Newcastle on Monday. He will be shadowed wherever he goes, and we hope to provoke more outbreaks. He is a very capable fellow."

The last I saw of him was on the Saturday afternoon when I met him in St. James's Street and offered to shake hands. He told me that my uniform was a pollution, and made a speech to a small crowd about it. They hissed him and he had to get into a taxi. As he departed there was just the suspicion of a wink in his left eye. On Monday I read that he had gone off, and the papers observed that our shores were well quit of him.

I sailed on December 3 from Liverpool in a boat bound for the Argentine that was due to put in at Lisbon. I had of course to get a Foreign Office passport to leave England, but after that my connection with the Government ceased. All the details of my journey were carefully thought out. Lisbon would be a good jumping-off place, for it was the rendezvous of scallywags from most parts of Africa. My kit was an old Gladstone bag, and my clothes were the relics of my South African wardrobe. I let my beard grow for some days before I sailed, and, since it grows fast, I went on board with the kind of hairy chin you will see on the young Boer. My name was now Brandt, Cornelis Brandt—at least so my passport said, and passports never lie.

There were just two other passengers on that beastly boat, and they never appeared till we were out of the bay. I was pretty bad myself, but managed to move about all the time, for the frowst in my cabin would have sickened a hippo. The old tub took two days and a night to waddle from Ushant to Finisterre. Then the weather changed and we came out of snow-falls into something very like summer. The hills of Portugal were all blue and yellow like the Kalahari, and before we made the Tagus I was beginning to forget I had ever left Rhodesia. There was a Dutchman among the sailors with whom I used to patter the *taal*, and but for "Good morning" and "Good evening" in broken English to the captain, that was about all the talking I did on the cruise.

(To be continued.)

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Woman's Sphere

Little Great Elizabeth's Gifts.

Queen Elizabeth may be even greater than historians have admitted. At least one person, Mr. Frederick Chamberlain, the most recent student of the character and capacity of the great queen, thinks that historians have underrated her. She was, he says, by far the greatest woman of history; she was not only the greatest monarch who has ever occupied the throne of England but, if we except Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon, the greatest monarch who has ever occupied a throne!

The conclusion is interesting assuredly; and since the greater great folk become the more we are interested in them as children, we read with greater avidity Mr. Chamberlain's portrait of Princess Elizabeth in her childhood. Poor little girl, whose mother at the behest of her terrible husband Henry VIII. had been beheaded when Elizabeth was only two years old, and whose fortunes for the ten ensuing years lay at the mercy of four rapidly succeeding stepmothers!

The last of the stepmothers, Henry's surviving queen, Catherine Parr, seems honestly to have befriended the forlorn, courageous, ambitious and precociously intelligent child, whose scholarship was so remarkable that she might fairly be called an infant prodigy. Either from policy or from affection, though probably from both, Elizabeth responded with every attention in her power. The gifts that she gave her latest stepmother still exist.

She was only eleven years and three months old when she presented to Queen Catherine a translation in one hundred and twenty-eight prose pages of the French poem by Queen Margaret of Navarre entitled the Mirror of a Sinful Soul; she sent it with her love and duty as a New Year's offering "From Ashrige the laste daye of the yeare of our Lord God 1544." It was her first literary work. Mr. Chamberlain writes:

The pages are contained in their original binding, which is canvas worked over in large silk thread; the thing has been so carefully done that at first sight the surface appears like a piece of woven cloth. Embossed upon it on the front cover is an elaborate scroll in gold and silver braid in the midst of which are the initials of Catharine Parr. The edges are bound with gold braid, and there is a thin line in red silk at the top and at the bottom; a heartsease is embroidered on the cover in colored silk; three of the petals of each flower are in purple, and two are in yellow with small gold thread interwoven and a little green leaf between each two. The entire back cover is devoted to similar flowers, which are so worn as to be indistinct. As a piece of needle craft the production is of the highest excellence of this or of any age, but its great and lasting importance is that it is the sole work of the little Elizabeth.

No less beautiful and even more characteristic than the fine needlework of the covers is the clear, firm, exquisite handwriting within; and Queen Elizabeth's writing remained always a model of character, legibility and beauty. A year later she presented another marvelously executed book to Queen Catherine; and two years after that event she prseented one to her young brother, King Edward All are now cherished treasures of the nation, the foundations of which in her days of maturity and power she helped so wisely to lay firm and true.

A Lady's Lovely Hands.

We all should like to have beautiful hands, of course. We sometimes excuse ourselves and silence the whisperings of a guilty conscience by thinking, "my hands are useful if they are not beautiful."

They may be both!

Shall we start a Hands Beautiful Campaign?

First, let us take a trip to the store in town where the toilet goods are kept. Their fragrance greets us and and as we approach the counter, we almost involuntarily reach out to possess the numberless fascinating bottles and boxes.

For chapped red hands there are lotions, creams and hand pastes. Before applying these the hands must be thoroughly washed with warm water and a good grade of soap, then rinsed in cold water and patted perfectly dry with a towel. Experts tell us that wiping the hands loosens the skin and makes wrinkles, and what girl wants her hands to look old and wrinkled. Hands are the worst tattle-tales about age, anyway, especially if they are not given the proper care.

Dust and dirt and dishwater are perhaps the greatest enemies to lovely hands and so they must be conquered. We may protect our hands from the first two by wearing old gloves whenever possible at our household and outdoor tasks. There are people who wear rubber gloves for dusting and dishwashing. Old kid, cotton or silk gloves give quite satisfactory protection for general work and there is a way to wash dishes without having the hands all the time in hot, soapy water. You may already use a small dish mop and a little brush with bristles fastened in a wire loop on a small wooden handle. The mop is for dishes and the brush is for pots and pans. Then there is the metal dish-cloth for scorchy utensils that need scraping.

But to return to the toilet goods counter and inquire the road to shapely, well-kept finger nails. If we do not already possess a good steel file, that is first on our shopping list. The nails are filed into shape, never cut with the scissors. The cuticle is pressed back with an orange-wood stick. Powdered pumice made into a paste with water assists in this process. There are also cuticle removers, which when used should always be followed by the application of a little olive oil or cold cream, to soften the cuticle and prevent hang nails. Olive oil softens the hands too if applied at night when retiring and loose, soft gloves worn at night.

Liquid nail polish is one of the new ideas for saving time in giving the nails a lustre but many of us still cling to the old buffer and nail powder for the shining-up process.

To develop tapering fingers, press the finger tips, one at a time, between the forefinger and thumb after the manicure and after washing the hands.

For stiff and awkward hands, one of our great music teachers recommends massaging each finger. Begin at the base of the finger and rub with a round and round motion down the finger to the tip. A few moment's massage has a wonderfully soothing and comforting effect.

For special occasions, talcum powder dusted over the back of the hand gives a soft velvety finish.

The Lights of Home.

The white lights, the bright lights,
How fair they shine to-night!
I love the glint and gleam of them,
The changing topaz gleam of them,
Against the towering height.
They are to me a beacon set
To guide my barque aright.

Those far lights like star lights
Aflame along the bay—
No prince of India's envied gems
Nor flash of Lombard diadems
Entice my soul as they—
Lodestars that draw me home again
If I perchance might stray.

Oh, dear lights, oh, near lights!
The last long league is passed;
The winds among the cordage sleep;
Gray veils of mist from shoreward creep;
The anchor now is cast.
How bright they be to welcome me,
The lights of home at last!

—Agnes Montgomery.

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It helps digestion, allays thirst, keeping the mouth cool and moist, the throat muscles relaxed and pliant and the nerves at ease.

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To one cup of mashed potatoes, add two eggs beaten light, two teaspoons of baking powder, salt, and three tablespoons of lard or other shortening, and one cup of sweet milk. Mix thoroughly and add enough flour to make a stiff batter. Drop into greased gem pans and bake in a quick oven. Serve hot with butter.

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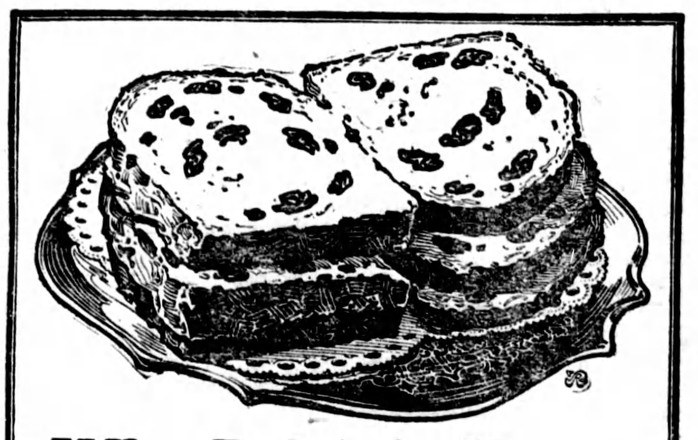

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