ADMIT ONE

BY SIDNEY HORLER.

SYNOPSIS.

When Philip Crane, a young aeroplane designer, arrives in London on a holiday, through a coincidence of like names, he is taken for the crook Crane, who is a tool of a band ruled by a mysterious "Empress."

He rescues Margery Ferguson and learns that her father is held captive by "The Empress' in Mandling. Placing Margery in a convent, Philip goes to Mandling and meets Charles Whittle, an American detective. When Crane is abducted Whittle calls in Scotland Yard. Then Margery disappears from the convent and Whittle is captured by the gang. However, Abe Goldschmidt, a notorious criminal lawyer, effects his escape. Stevensson, the Empress' right-hand man, questions young Crane.

CHAPTER XIX.—(Cont'd.)

Stevensson poured himself another glass of wine.

"We'll get on," he said abruptly. "Granted that you came down here for—'a few days' rest'—why were you prowling round this house last night?"

"I was out for a walk."

"And, during that walk, you broke into private property—the grounds of this house?"

This took some answering, but, then, he remembered.

"I heard a scream—and thought someone was being hurt or"—looking straight at his interrogator—"ill-treated."

"And you resolved to do a little rescuing—is that it?"

"I hadn't much time to think. I'm afraid I acted more or less on impulse."

Stevensson raised himself in his chair. His thin face now looked vulpine.

"And the man who was with you—was he also actuated by these unselfish motives?"

This was tricky ground. It would be useless to refuse to acknowledge the existence of Whittle; the only thing he could do was to pretend that the man was a stranger.

"You don't deny that you had a companion?" put in Stevensson swiftly.

This gave him an opening, which he eagerly seized.

"A fellow certainly did come up and speak to me outside this house last night, but I didn't know who he was."

"You don't now, I believe?"

"He told me he was an American."

The cross-examiner flung his empty wine-glass with an oath into the grate. It smashed into a hundred pieces.

"I'm not going to waste any more time with you, Crane," he said; "you have certain information which I want and unless you give it to me without this paltry fencing, you will regret it. You've just this one more chance before I call in someone whose influence on the matter you will find very effectual. . . .

"In order to refresh your apparent poor memory, let me put the case as concisely as possible. By a very curious coincidence, you became mixed up in my affairs. You were mistaken for a man who is very much like you in appearance, and brought to my house in London. Knowing quite well that an error had been made, why did you go?"

"You'll probably be amused by what I am going to say," was the reply; "but I did it for a lark."

"What?"

"Yes, a lark. You see, I was fresh up from the country—Truro I come from—and when I found myself in that extraordinary position, which was like a scene out of a book, I thought I'd carry on with in in order to discover what would happen. It promised to be exciting."

"It will be," was the grim answer; "what's happened to you so far is trifling compared to the future, unless you're sensible—and stop this lying. It was through the girl that you decided to go on with the affair. And a fine mug you were," his words now ringing with contempt; "if you only knew how that girl bluffed you—!"

Before he could control himself, Philip had sprung forward, his manacled hands uplifted to strike.

Stevensson merely smiled—he had good reason to, apparently, as before Crane could reach him, the would-be assailant was seized from behind and swept abruptly to the floor.

At that moment the telephone rang. Stevensson took off the receiver in a jocular mood. But this soon changed. It was The Empress speaking, and her words were cold and biting.

"You'd better prepare yourself," she said, "for a visit from the Police. . . . No, don't interrupt; listen to what I have to sap. The fellow Crane—by the way, he's still there?"

Satisfied at his reply, she went on:

"The man who was with Crane last night was the American detective Whittle. Don't ask me what he's doing in England—because I don't know. It's sufficient that he's here. . . Oh, I'm not mistaken; I remember him from the 'Carapanthia'—the Lowenstein affair. But he had the nerve to call on me just now, pretending to be a man from Jardine's, the caterers. Said he'd come to make me a proposition; he knew where Crane was, and he advised me to ring up and order his release. If I didn't, he would know what to do, he said. That's why I tell you, Stevensson, that you'd better be prepared for a visit from the Police. . . . No, I shan't be down today."

Before he could make any comment, the woman had rung off.

Stevensson's thin face was livid as he turned away from the instrument.

"That was a call from London," he told the two men who had felled Crane to the floor. "The Empress says the Police may come here. Take him," pointing to the prisoner, "and Ferguson downstairs. You understand—*downstairs.*"

* * * *

As the car sped up the drive, Simon Stevensson, fresh from a cold bath and a change of clothes, smoothed his tie and smiled like a man who, having made careful preparations, is ready to face a crisis. Let the fools come. . .

A couple of minutes later, a shrewd-faced, keen-eyed man of middle-age, wearing a police inspector's uniform, and accompanied by two obvious detectives, was shown into a well-furnished library. An immaculately-dressed man, giving every evidence of complete self-possession, rose to greet him.

"You are—Inspector Laidley—of the Folkestone Police—what?"

"That's right, sir. I've come from Folkestone to make a few enquiries about a certain matter. It's very good of you to receive me." The words were pleasant enough, but beneath them was an undercurrent of determination.

"Oh, that's all right, my dear Inspector," drawled his host. "I don't quite know what I can do, but—" He broke off to look at the two plain-clothes officers standing by the door.

"— I must say, however, my dear fellow, that this invasion is somewhat overwhelming. I sincerely trust that I am not under any suspicion?"

The uniformed visitor, before replying, made a sign to his men.

"Wait in the hall," he said.

He made no apology, and, to any ordinary man, the hint might have been disturbing. But Simon Stevensson remained very much master of himself.

"Sit down, won't you?" he went on to remark; "cigar?"

The visitor shook his head.

"Thank you—I won't smoke, Mr. Stevensson."

"Now, exactly what is the trouble, my dear Inspector?" asked the master of "The White House."

Laidley did not waste time.

"We have received information that a young man named Philip Crane, who arrived in Mandling from London yesterday, has mysteriously disappeared."

The eyes of the listening man narrowed.

"And, assuming your information to be correct, why this descent upon myself, accompanied by two assistants?"

Laidley would have liked to have accepted the challenge in the spirit in which it was made, but he was too discreet for that.

"We are going through the neighborhood," he replied, "calling at many places. From that, you will gather that this visit has no particular significance. We just want your word that you have not seen this young man."

"Why should I have seen him, my dear Inspector? I live a very secluded life here—seldom going out even into the grounds—and I see no reason why this young fellow who takes it upon himself to disappear mysteriously—to use your own words—should worry me with his presence. However, to relieve any possible anxiety on your part, I am quite willing to allow you and your assistants to search not only the grounds, but the entire house. You will then be completely satisfied, I have no doubt, that my humble abode will not require any more of your attention."

The Folkestone Police Inspector gnawed with his strong teeth the fringe of his moustache. The man was a crook, right enough—but he was damned sure of himself. Perhaps someone had put him wise. Still, even at the risk of being scoled off, he would have to make the search.

"Just as a matter of form, Mr. Stevensson, I should like to go through the house. One can never tell in a case like this."

"Really? These people who 'disappear mysteriously' have curious habits, no doubt. . . Well, if you do find him trussed up in a cupboard, all covered with blood and things, you won't forget to let me know, will you? . . . . I'll give instructions to my butler."

He rang a bell, and to the servant who appeared said:

"Graham, this gentleman wishes to go through the house and grounds. Apparently, some dreadful crime has been committed in the neighborhood, and we are under suspicion."

The butler winced as though suffering a personal insult.

"Under suspicion, sir?"

"So it seems. You will give the Inspector every facility for inspecting the entire house and grounds, Graham. That will do."

"This way," said the butler gloomily.

"I'll see you again before you leave, Inspector!"

Stevensson remained master of the situation until the end.

Inspector Laidley was very quiet during the ourney from 'The White House" to The Jolly Sailor Inn. He had drawn blank—and he was far from being satisfied. Stevensson had fooled him somehow; there was a complete lack of incriminating evidence. "The White House" might have been inhabited by an Archbishop; on the surface, at least, the place was entirely above suspicion.

(To be continued.)

Lilian Ellis, famous continental actress, born in Wales, whose features will beautify Barcelona's bonds. The Spaniards know how to pick them, don't you think?

Soviet Levies Special Tax For Cultural Development

Mosow.—Soviet citizens, heretofore paying only one general tax on their incomes, must now meet a special new tax for cultural purposes. The levy is being collected to help achieve the government's five-year plan for cultural and economic development in the villages, the schedule contemplating erection of schools, clubs and theatres.

Workers who receive less than $37.50 monthly are exempt from the new tax. For others it runs from $4 to $65.

"Kulaks" or peasant farm owners, and other "declassed" sections of the population, already taxed heavily on their property holdings, must pay 100 per cent. more in cultural taxes.

Swiss Flier, Without Oxygen, Rises to 24,606 Feet Oltitude

Geneva.—Without the use of oxygen, the Swiss aviator, Nyfenegger, piloting the 200-horsepower monoplane Comte of the Schroeder Swissair Company, attained an altitude of 24,606 feet last week. The temperature recorded was 36 degrees below zero Centrigrade (approximately 33 degrees below zero Fahrenheit).

At an altitude of 18,000 feet, M. Nyfenegger reported, he began to experience an almost unbearable headache and was unable to utter a word, but he continued upward.

M. Nyfenegger said he will try to rise to 28,000 feet in another attempt to be made shortly, this time using oxygen.

Wisdom of Content

Who would not be covetous, and with reason, if health could be purchased with gold? Who not ambitious, if it were at the command of power, or restored by honor? But alas! a white staff will not help gouty feet to walk better than a common cane; nor a blue riband bind up a wound so well as a fillet; the glitter of gold or of diamonds will but hurt sore eyes, instead of curing them; and on aching head will be no more eased by wearing a crown instead of a common night-cap.—Sir W. Temple.

Against Clocks

By Amanda Benjamin Hall in "Troubadour."

Put not your trust in clocks, I say
For clocks are faithless fellows,
Begrudging further stint of day
Poor lads before the gallows!

Such tedious talkers, tick on tick,
Their discourse is the bane
Of persons lying parched and sick,
For they inform the pain.

How long it's pulse, how long 'twill run
Before it finds surcease
At last. When fevered nights are done,
When there is light and peace,

They set a swift, impatient pace
With a beguiling chime,
I've known one wear the straightest face
And tell the falsest time.

Once on a hill-top wreathed with flower,
In thyme and sun-sweet clover,
A clock's face, leaning from a tower,
Espied me and my lover:

Two, having neither dials nor charts
To count the minutes by,
With but the beating of their hearts
To gauge eternity.

Affronted, then it told the town,
It drove its engines hard
And fast—It would not throttle down
Their fury, nor retard

Their haste. When love lay like a seed
Sown deeply, silently,
It still ticked on—nor seemed to heed
That time had stopped for me.

Roman Treasures Found in Algeria

Algiers, Algeria. — Important discoveries have been made in the ruins of a former Roman town near Sauk-Ahras, south of Bona in the Department of Constantine, Algeria.

It is evident that the excavated area was the necropolis of the ancient town, for a large vault has been unearthed containing several niches for lamps, and gold and silver ornaments. Hidden in a deep well that has not yet been sounded were three marble statues. One probably represents the Roman god Silvanus, similar to a statute in the Louvre.

Cut Flowers

Amid the clangour of the city's street,
The busy plying of industry's loom,
There is a spot where noise and nature meet,
A spot whence comes the soft sweet scent of bloom.
Fresh as the morn, the fragrant flowers lend
A touch of colour to the drab and grey;
And heavy-laden toilers as they wend
Look on them, and are spirit-borne away
To some far, lonely garden, where the sun
Is shadowed by the tree-tops all day long.
Where harmony and happiness are one,
And naught is heard save all the birds' sweet sound.

—Ruddick Millar.

Tom—"When I was calling on Betty last night I suddenly remembered that I had a two days' growth of beard on my face. Do you suppose she was annoyed by it?"

Tess—"Well, I understand she said she felt it very much."

SAVED IMPORTED DRESS

"After a little wearing, a lovely green voile—an imported dress—lost colors so completely that it was not wearable. A friend who had admired it asked me why I wasn't wearing it any more. On hearing the reason, she advised dyeing it and recommended Diamond Dyes. To make a long story short, it turned out beautifully. I have a lovely new dress that really cost just 15 cents—the price of one package of Diamond Dyes.

"I have since used Diamond Dyes for both tinting and dyeing. They do either equally well. I am not an expert dyer but I never have a failure with Diamond Dyes. They seem to be made so they always go on smoothly and evenly. They never spot, streak or run; and friends never know the things I dye with Diamond Dyes are redyed at all!"

Mrs. R. F., Quebec.

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The Household Word For Tea

"SALADA" TEA

"Fresh from the Gardens"

Soviet To Stage Own Fashion Revue This Spring

Moscow.—The Soviet capital will soon witness its first "fashion show." It will be so different from similar shows in the outside world that it scarcely deserves the name.

An exhibition of sartorial models submitted by designers, artists, scientists and ordinary mortals is being organized, with prizes for those adjudged most suitable for Soviet conditions. Practical and sanitary considerations, it is pointed out here, rather than "fashion" or "style," will determine the winners

The exhibition, under the auspices of the clothing trust, raises an interesting question about the future of Soviet clothes. Will the new Russia follow the dictates of Paris and other foreign style centers? Or will it develop styles of its own? As yet the question is somewhat academic. There are not enough clothes to go around and no margin to spare for style.

Women in Moscow, Leningrad and other large cities, who are interested in clothes, do not think twice in answering the question. They definitely want to follow European styles. They watch carefully foreign motion pictures, the few foreign fashion magazines that are smuggled into the country and the dress of foreign visitors for guidance.

The clothing trust, however, is not so sure about this issue. Its officials talk about the "socialistic aims" of their industry rather than its fashion side. A spokesman of the trust said that capitalistic countries spent millions of dollars in producing new styles and discarding old ones. This was a form of waste, he said, which the Soviets would avoid.

The "fashion show" is one of the methods for interesting the public in this undertaking. Every one has been invited to submit sartorial ideas. The prize-winning models will become standards for mass production.

Egyptian Cotton for Hungary

The Egyptian Government has made an offer to the Hungarian Textile Works for supplying them with cotton, according to "Hungary of To-day." The proposition has not been accepted yet, especially because the Egyptians wish to fix their prices only some six months later and give as reasons that the prices of to-day may not be regarded as real ones. As the Hungarian works do not wish to undertake such a risk it is probable that no business will be entered into with the Egyptians.

Chances

We miss the best chances for doing good by fixing dates. The commonest days may be made immortal to us and to others by fidelity to every passing moment.

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