Gems of Peril

By HAZEL ROSS HAILEY.

SYNOPSIS.

Mary Harkness plots to catch The Fly, whom she believes "framed" her brother, Eddie, with the murder of old Mrs. Jupiter, and later killed him to keep him from talking. She is aided by Bowen of The Star.

Bruce Jupiter, absent many years, returns from Europe with a woman friend. His father orders him out and makes Mary his heir. Bruce swears to rout Mary. Mary's fiance, Dirk Ruyther, forbids her to continue the investigation. He tells Mary that people are repeating Bruce's charges, and says that if she goes to Miami on the Jupiter yacht he will also believe them.

Mary goes and meets Count De Loma, owner of The Fly's horse. She promises to dance with him at a hotel fete.

CHAPTER XXX.—(Cont'd.)

Mary sighed. "You ought to let me stake you," she insisted. "It's my war you're fighting. Mr. Jupiter's, too. He'd insist on paying your expenses, if he knew."

"Forget it, Bowen ordered curtly. "We'll get the picture. I'll wait in the street till you and the others come out. You tip me off to which one is her, and bing! We'll snap Her Highness' picture that way. And we'll do it tomorrow."

They left it at that. Mary felt she must get back before her absence was discovered. She was resolved Bowen should come to the party. His presence would steady her. He promised to telephone her next day and hear what final arrangements had been made for The Fly's reception on board the Gypsy—if he could be lured aboard.

Back in the Ambassador lobby she turned aside for a minute at the magazine stand. Suddenly the smooth flow of a familiar voice made her lift her head with a start. Not ten feet away, with their backs toward her, the Countess and De Loma sat close together on a mulberry velvet lounge.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Mary walked swiftly to the elevator and breathed a sigh of deep relief when the operator closed the door and started the car upward.

Almost immediately she was sorry, though. Why hadn't she concealed herself and tried to catch at least a word of what was passing between those two? It might be of tremendous importance to her plans. If the Countess guessed, or if Bruce had broken his promise and told her the purpose of this trip, might she not pass the information on to De Loma?

Well, it was on the lap of the gods. Whatever was happening down there would have to happen.

When Mary awoke next morning the hot Florida sun was streaming in her window and the telephone at her elbow was ringing madly. It was nearly 10 o'clock.

"Aren't you ever coming down?" Louise's half-scolding tones reverberated in the telephone. "We go to ride along the Jungle Trail and up the coast for lunch. Hurry!"

"Don't wait for me," Mary told her coolly. "I shan't go this time."

"Oh, but—" Quite evidently the other was not prepared for refusal. She did not know what to say next. She could not command. Yet she knew quite well that so far Bruce had managed to thwart the girl's every effort to be alone.

She must have turned to Bruce for Mary heard a low-voiced colloquy. Then Bruce spoke, coaxingly: "Surely you're not going to spend this gorgeous day in bed. Come along! Dad's anxious to get started!"

"Not I," Mary rejoined unflustered. "I have an appointment with the hairdresser. I'll just stay here and loaf."

It was pleasant to go down to breakfast alone. The dining room was cool and dark and blessedly empty. Early bathers had breakfasted and gone. And it was too early for lunch. Apparently she was the only lazybones in the hotel.

Soothing just to be alone . . . . . not to be surrounded by people one loathed, or feared, or despised, just pitied. Delightful to relax, not to have to keep up the complex game of pretense that she had had to play, sleeping and waking, for so many tense, unhappy days of late. For the time being, she was freed of the ache for Dirk, even. Peace, like a narcotic, numbed all her senses temporarily.

Someone stood in the doorway, looking about. She looked up and saw him wave away the headwaiter and come toward her. Her faint annoyance at the entrance of another diner into her enchanted solitude changed to pleased surprise when she saw it was George Bowen.

"Aren't you taking a risk in coming here?" she asked. It would not be well is they were seen together, but she did not seem to worry.

"Safe as a church," he returned. "I met your gang starting out for somewhere in a big Lorimor car."

Mary almost dropped her fork.

"Lorimor!"

Bowen eyed her in surprise. "Sure! Big Lorimor limousine. Why, you don't think—"

"Nothing," Mary answered "It's probably a private taxi, and I don't suppose J. J. noticed what make of car it was. It just reminded me of something Dirk told me—"

She repeated to him what had seemed so suspicious to Dirk—that the manufacturer of Jupiter motor cars should buy a Lorimor car and keep it in hiding. At least, not even the members of his household knew that he had it.

Bowen frowned over that for a few minutes.

"By George," he exclaimed, "I never would have thought of that! Maybe the old boy's slyer than we think—" He shook his head, discarding the suspicion. "No, I don't believe it."

"Neither do I," Mary agreed, relieved to have some one back up her confidence in Jupiter.

"Keep it in mind, though," Bowen advised, as one who believed in thoroughness and efficiency. "Now, what's on the books for today?"

"Just waiting for tonight, mostly," Mary said shivering. "I must find out what kind of costumes will be de rigeur at the party and find myself one. And here's something else—"

Gone was her peaceful interlude, as last night's fresh worry recurred to mind. She told Bowen of seeing De Loma and the Countess Louise in close and animated conversation in the lobby, when the latter was supposed to be in bed with a severe headache.

"You don't suppose she knows this so-called pleasure trip is really a hunt for The Fly? You don't suppose she's told him?"

Bowen's usually placid brow took on some real corrugations. He was obviously more worried than he would admit.

"Well, I know a quick way to find out," he said, and got up. Presently he returned with the information, "He's checked out. Last night—late." And sat down heavily. Despair took him in hand for a moment, and shook him as a cat shakes a rat.

"You don't suppose that she-cat of Bruce's has given the show away?" he moaned. "Woman or not, I'll poke her in the nose, if she has! I swear I will! I've followed that bird this far, but this is no round-the-world cruise." He writhed silently for a minute.

"No, I'll tell you what it is," he said presently. "He had to get out anyway. This is no free flophouse and he's down to his last thin dime. Probably just saying goodbye—talking over old times a bit. Didn't you say he and the Countess were pretty thick once upon a time?" he added hopefully.

"There's something between them," Mary asured him. "He's probably been her lover at some time or other. Yes, it might have been that—only that." She tried to believe herself. "Well, then I suppose my date for tonight is cancelled . . ." It was hard to say whether disappointment or relief was her principal reaction to this thought. "But he said it so firmly —'I'll be there!' As if he'd swim rivers and climb mountains and that sort of thing, you know."

"Probably just his line, meant to impress you," Bowen said. "Still, I'll bet he shows up. The necklace is his best bet now. Anyhow, you'd better be there with bells on, in case he does come."

A bellboy insinuated himself into the conversation at this point, with a message from the room clerk.

"The clerk says to tell you he was mistaken about the matter you just asked about," he told Bowen. "The man did check out of Parlor C but later he came over and paid his bill and took another room. It's No. 802 if you want to reach him, sir. Thank you, sir."

When the boy had departed, enlightenment rested on the faces of those whom he had just left.

"Looks like the girl friend staked him," Bowen mused. "Now, why would she do that? He must have been her Big Moment at some time or other. Or maybe she had to do it to keep his mouth shut. Maybe anything. We don't need to worry about it. We'll know all about it one of these days."

He took a cigaret and pushed back his chair.

"Well our time may be short. We'd better get busy. I want to buzz around and borrow that trick camera and get a picture of the Countess if I can. If we can get some dirt on her maybe we can scare her with it. How're you going to work it to get The Fly on board the Gypsy tonight? Have you any idea?"

"None at all" Mary confessed. What I'm afraid of is that I won't get a chance to talk to Mr. Jupiter first. He's off now for the day and Bates with him. What if we need extra men? Bates will be with me but there ought to be another secret service man at the affair whom De Loma doesn't know. I wonder. . . ."

Here the same bellboy hovered about again: "Are you Miss Mary Harkness?"

Startled, Mary assented.

"Gentleman in the lobby to see you."

"I'll go—you stay here," Mary whispered to Bowen.

Bowen nodded. "Don't worry about me. I'll go take a look at the kitchen if I can't get out any other way."

Mary followed the bellboy, her limbs quaking treacherously.

The outstretched legs, garbed in white linen, were uncommunicative. As she came face to face with the man in the chair, who rose swiftly to meet her, her relief was almost equal to her puzzlement.

He was not, as she had feared, De Loma, but a stranger. Try as she would, from a quick scanning of the good-looking, sunburned face, she could not recall ever having seen the man before in her life.

(To be continued.)

Dinnertime In Java

Margaret Holloway, writing in Overseas Magazine of Javanese food, says:

"In Java I had the biggest meal I ever enjoyed. Seated at a large table 20 odd Javanese waiters silently bear down on us, carrying shoulder high groaning dishes of food. As a foundation, I take my share of the mountain of rice, then portions of Java rooster submerged in a sea of curry sauce. Now a taste of the vegetable dishes as the 'boys' file past in quick succession—cabbage, beans, young corn, and many others. 'This nice, Mem,' said the bearer of the heart of a coconut palm, fearing I may overlook that delicacy. Then liver, minced meat, sausage, small fish, 'ikan kering,' delicious prawns, and a fried egg to crown the formidable plateful. Beware of the man now standing at your side and take sparingly of the biting pounded chiles, hot chutney and highly flavored anchovies, grated coconut, and 'hell-fire sauce.' And still they come with further additions to the feast, which etiquette demands to be placed on one's small plate. Rumor has it that the Chinese duck's eggs have been buried for 20 years, but their present piquant flavor soon overcomes any question of their past. Stuffed scarlet peppers, salted monkey nuts, fried bananas, 'kroeboeks' ..... the end is in sight ....a stick of pork 'sateh' and a wedge of cooling, refreshing cucumber as the last 'boy' leaves my side. 'The Mem has enough?' asks an attentive waiter."

A Mother's Love

Youth fades; love droops; the leaves of friendship fall;
A mother's secret hope outlives them all. —Holmes.

LEVITY

There is always some levity, even in excellent minds; they have wings to rise, and also to stray.—Joubert.

Latest Findings Of Science

Judging Distance of Stars—Tasting By Electricity

The New York Times published last week an enthusiastic endorsement by Professor Harlow Shapley of Harvard College Observatory of the work which Professor Joel Stebbins has been doing in judging the distances of stars. "Judging" is the only word that can be used. Measurement by surveyor's methods is out of the question when stars are so remote that there is no apparent shift in their positions in the course of centuries because of their staggering distance. There is nothing for it but to judge distance by brightness. In this field Stebbins has made an international reputation for himself.

When the intrinsic luminosities of nearby stars of known distance have been determined, a yardstick, based on light, is at the disposal of the astronomer. Thereby he can gauge the remoteness of stars of the same luminous type. Thus, if one star of a given color and brightness is known to be fifty light-years away, it follows that a star of the same color but of only half the brightness must be four times as far away, since the brightness of any light falls off as the square of the distance. By carefully measuring the brightness of stars with the photoelectric cell Professor Stebbins has laid down the probable distances of many stars with what is regarded as a high degree of accuracy.

EFFECT OF DUST IN SPACE

Recent studies by Professor Stebbins have convinced him that there is an absorbing medium, probably dust, in space. "Just as the setting sun appears red because the amount of air we look through near the horizon is greater than the amount through which we look when sun is overhead, so do the stars and clusters near the central line of the Milky Way appear reddened," explains Professor Stebbins. Because of this dust or gas in space, he reaches the conclusion that the distances of some objects, such as globular clusters, are only a quarter as far off as astronomers supposed they were. At right angles to the Milky Way, where there are fewer stars and where we can see better out in the open, the obsorption of light is not nearly so marked, so that the old distances need be corrected by only 10 per cent.

Dr. Shapley is a specialist on the size of the universe. He has devoted years to a study of the subject and has laid out a program of research for Harvard which can be carried out only in many years more. In his eyes the results and the technique of Professor Stebbins are of the highest importance in carrying out the Harvard program.

ELECTRICAL TASTING.

While he was sitting at luncheon in the Westinghouse Laboratory in East Pittsburgh, Pa., it flashed on R. C. Hitchcock that an ordinary apple is acid and that the acid must have some electrical response. Out of sheer curiosity he inserted the two dissimilar pins of a very sensitive recording meter into an apple. "I got the shock of my life when the meter began to register," he says. "I immediately conducted the same experiment on an orange and a lemon with the same astonishing results."

Physicists will of course realize that Hitchcock had extended the discovery which Volta made 130 years ago and which ended in the invention of the battery. The two dissimilar pins were simply the poles of a battery, and the acid juice of the fruit the solution, or electrolyte. It needed a very sensitive meter to register the feeble electrical currents thus generated. Fortunately Hitchcock had been working on a meter to measure the minute currents that flow in the photoelectric cells used in sound motion picture projectors and in television. With an intrument that could record one millionth of an ampere, or about one-tenth the wing-power of an ordinary house fly, it became possible to test fruits.

Testing in this case is more accurate than tasting. There is a distinct relation between acidity and flavor. With accurate charts of the current generated by the most luscious fruits and by the best foods with an acid content, possibly the whole system of testing and simpling will be revolutionized. A fruit with a sour taste has a high electrical reading, while a sweet fruit will register few microamperes.

It is even possible that, with further development, patients will no longer exhibit their tongues to the doctor. The prongs of the electrical instrument will be placed in the mouth and the acid content of the saliva of the tongue will be recorded on a meter.

HOW THE UNIVERSE BEGAN

It was at the 1931 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science that the Abbe Georges Lemaitre promulgated a new theory to account for the beginning of this expanding universe, the cosmic rays and a few other mysteries that are uppermost in the minds of physicists. The theory was briefly presented in this department soon after it was announced. Apparently it did not make nearly the impression that its ingenuity merited. So the Abbe has been presenting it again in American universities. Lemaitre accepts the expanding universe as an astronomical fact, because of the discovery that the outermost nebulae are receding away with the explosive speed of 12,000 miles a second. This expansion began not less than 1,400 or more than 2,000 millions of years ago. It is certain, however, that the stars are much older. Here we have a discrepancy that relativists and physicists have been trying to reconcile.

The Abbe asks to imagine the universe beginning in an extraordinary atom. It had more weight than any star, and it was more fiercely radioactive than radium. "The whole universe would be produced by the disintegration of this primeval atom," says the Abbe. A world full of radiation transforms itself into matter, which it does by condensing into stars.

The original atomic star soon acquired an atmosphere. After that its more highly penetrating rays were imprisoned. We seen in the cosmic rays that puzzle physicists those that escaped in the first place. The Abbe bids us also look for other products of primeval disintegration, such as fast beta rays (electrons), alpha particles and even rays still undiscovered.

According to this theory the universe has not been expanding at a constant rate. In fact, it is only by invoking some such supposition that it is possible to account for stars much older than the universe they constitute.—Waldemar Kaempffert in The N.Y. Times.

Say This of Horses

Across the ages they come thundering
On faithful hoofs. the horses man disowns,
Their velvet eyes are wide with wondering;
They whinny down the wind in silver tones
Vibrant with all the bugles of old wars;
Their nostrils quiver with the summer scent
Of grasses in deep fields lit by pale stars
Hung in a wide and silent firmament.
And in their hearts they keep the dreams of earth
Their patient plodding furrowed to the sun
Unnumbered springs before the engine's birth
Doomed them to sadness and oblivion.
Across the swift new day I watch them go
Driven by wheel and gear and dynamo.

Say this of horses; engines leave behind
No glorious legacy of waving manes
And wild proud hearts, and heels before the wind.
No heritage of ancient Arab strains
Blazes within a cylinder's cold spark;
An engine labors with a sullen fire,
Hoarding no dreams of acres sweet and dark;
No love for man has ever surged through wire!
Along the farthest slopes I hear the rumble
Of these last hoofs—tomorrow they will be still;
Then shall the strength of countless horses crumble
The stanchest rock and level the highest hill;
And man who made machines to gain an hour
Shall lose himself before their ruthless power.

—Minnie Hite Moody, in The Nation.

"Well, Jake, did you follow my advice and buy two pairs of trousers with your new suit?" "It was a good idea, but when I began to think it over I realized that two pairs of trousers would keep my legs too warm."

Power is never a good thing unless he is good who has it.

Famous Runner Now Proud Father

In some things, Paavo Nurmi is as slow as can be. Recently the famous runner became a proud father and did he spread the news about? He did not. A month after the event he posed with Mrs. Nurmi and the youngster.

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