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## The Hidden Hour

BY J. B. HARRIS-BURLAND

### CHAPTER VII.—(Cont'd.)

The maid put down the tray on a table, went to the big lacquer wardrobe, and took out the fur coat. An expression of relief came into Ruth's eyes. At any rate the woman had not removed the coat for other eyes to see. But when had she gone to the wardrobe and why had she gone to the wardrobe?

Fletcher brought forward the coat and laid it on the bed and answered the questions before Ruth had asked them.

"You will remember, my lady," she said, "that you asked me a few days ago to take more care of your ladyship's furs, and knowing that you went to the theatre last night, and not in the car either, I thought that perhaps your ladyship's beautiful coat might be rumpled, and those cabs aren't always very nice, are they, my lady? So when I came in to draw up the blinds this morning, my lady, I had a look at the coat, and I'd have taken it to my workroom if it hadn't been for the tear. I thought I'd better ask your ladyship about that."

It was a reasonable explanation, and it was quite true that Ruth had asked her maid to pay more attention to the furs. Ruth could only say, "Oh, that was very nice and thoughtful of you, Fletcher. But this tear—oh, it is dreadful! I can't imagine how it happened. I must have caught it on something. Sir Alexander would be furious if he knew. One of the skins is torn, Fletcher."

"Yes, my lady," said the servant, fingering the sleeve of the coat. "I can see how there's a slight tear. It was there when I came in for a moment—so as no one would notice it, but it wouldn't last. Oh!"

Her fingers were thrust between the silk lining and the leather of the fur, and she suddenly withdrew them and held a small piece of broken twig between her finger and thumb.

"It pricked me," she said, "and it must have been that as did it, my lady."

Ruth needed all her self-control as she replied sharply, "Nonsense, Fletcher!" and held out her hand.

She examined the twig as though it had been some curiosity from a museum. It was no more than an inch in length, but it was stout and it had a rough sort of point. It was not a thorn. If she had been pitched into a thorny hedge she would not have come off so lightly.

"It must have been there for ages, Fletcher," she said. "How could I possibly have torn my coat last night on a twig like that?"

"I cannot say, my lady," the servant answered stiffly, "but I don't think it can have been there very long, my lady, because the wood is quite fresh and green."

Ruth Bradney could stand no more of this. It was almost like a cross-examination. What a woman! With the eyes of a lynx. Nothing had escaped her notice.

"Well, it doesn't matter, Fletcher," she said with a smile. "The coat is torn, and there's an end to it. You'd better stitch it up now and I'll take it down to the furrier's myself. I shall have to see the man about it."

The servant placed the tray outside the door and returned for the coat.

"I'll take it to my room, my lady," she said, "and bring it back in half an hour. Your ladyship can rely on me to do the best I can for you."

"Thank you so much, Fletcher. I really don't know what I should do without you."

The maid left the room and Ruth closed her eyes. The light from the window seemed to hurt them. She concentrated her thoughts on Fletcher. The woman had been in her service for five years—a thoroughly reliable, honest, and pleasant woman. How was it that Fletcher had seemed—well, just a little different this morning—not quite so pleasant, perhaps? Surely Fletcher would not imagine that her mistress had not gone to the theatre. One can tear one's fur coat anywhere if one is careless enough. But that twig! How sharp of Fletcher to have found it—how wonderful of Fletcher to notice that it had been recently broken off some shrub or tree!

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of potassium is not easily soluble in cold alcohol, and whoever prepared the mixture must have heated the liqueur. A woman about to take her own life would not be very likely to do anything of the sort, even if she had the knowledge. She would have put the poisonous salt into water, which dissolves it easily.

"That, gentlemen, I think, is all I need say about the medical evidence in this case, except that the deceased must have taken the poison between 9.30, the hour at which Sir Alexander Bradney left the flat, and 10.20, the time of the maid's return. Indeed, we can narrow down the period to half an hour—from 9.30 to 10 o'clock—for the deceased showed no signs of life at 10.20.

"Now with regard to the other evidence, it is a matter of regret that Mr. John Merrington is unable to be present. As you have heard, Mr. Merrington met with a minor accident on his way to stay with his friend, Mr. Ardington, at Dedbury. Mr. Merrington has not only lost his memory, but according to the latest report, lies in a critical condition at the house of Dr. Trehorn. We have listened to a statement made by one of the best brain specialists in London to the effect that possibly Mr. Merrington will never recover his memory of a certain period in his life, and I may say that I have been guided by that statement in my decision not to adjourn the inquest in the hope of getting Mr. Merrington's evidence."

(To be continued.)

### Hill Barn.

I have grown weary of this languid land;  
Sick of the low horizon line that flows  
Like a great sombre river; sick to death

Of rose and laurel, eucalyptus, palm,  
Brooding in lavish sweetness. I am mad  
For the harsh glory of my own far hills,  
For the stern masculinity of home.

They do not have sunrise or sunset here;  
Rather the shameful day slinks cowering in

Over gray waste waters and gray land,  
Under a muted, melancholy sky.  
And never does it burn away in one  
Swift, splendid blast of sanctifying flame

As day once did, but shambles grayly past  
Under the mantle of the leper fog,  
To the dull stupor of a starless night.

O God—for splendid spaces in this dawn—  
For glimmering vastness—for the wind that swings

For the tempestuous magic of a sky  
Torn into shreds of fire—and for the hush  
Of aspen leaves black on an amber heaven—

For all the mighty pageant of day  
That made life epic large, I am athirst.  
They have been music in my memory;  
They will go echoing with me till I come

Home to my hills.

Feet that have trodden granite  
Can never be content with milder ways.

Eyes that have held high converse  
with the stars  
Cannot be tamed to blinking servitude  
In molelike burrows. Hearts that  
have followed the wind  
Beat with a wind of insurgence till  
they spur

The timorous fowl to skyward trails  
again.

And mine to-night is wild with all rebellion;  
Blind to all other beauty—hungering  
only

For hill horizons and a coyote moon—  
Sage in my nostrils—milling, maverick stars—  
And then the flame clad riders of the dawn  
Loping across the sky with hoofs of thunder.

—Ted Olson.

Minard's Liniment Heals Cuts.  
He Helped.

The train was going up a very steep grade, and with unusual difficulty the engineer succeeded in reaching the top. At the station, looking out of his cab, the engineer saw the new brakeman and said with a sigh of relief: "I tell you what, my lad, we had a job to get up here, didn't we?"

"We certainly did," said the brakeman, "and if I hadn't put on the brakes we'd have slipped back."

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## EDDY'S MATCHES

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### The Great Disillusion.

Disillusion, alas! comes to all of us. My first disillusion, says Mr. Arthur Porritt in the Best-I Remember, came when I was a boy of nine years, and every detail is burned upon my memory.

At my day school in a Lancashire town the boys had a mad craze one year for a particular form of sweets. All our pocket money went on a sort of sherbet, which we ate dry with a spoon, and which we called "kall." It was sold in little flat wooden boxes, and there were several varieties, lemon, orange, pineapple, and so forth. Opinions varied sharply as to the merits of the various kinds. One boy praised lemon kall; another cared for nothing except orange; and a third vowed that all other varieties of the sweet were simply uneatable compared with pineapple kall. We quarreled and almost came to blows over the relative merits of the flavors. We formed groups of orange kall boys and felt bitterly toward the avowed champions of lemon and pineapple kall. In fact, we boys blindly elevated the kalls into real party issues.

Now the summer holidays came while our differences of opinion were at a height, and I went to visit relatives in an East Lancashire town. While there I had the supreme joy of being taken over the factory where the kalls were made. On my round I entered a room where four girls in white overalls were filling the familiar flat wooden boxes, which were already labeled; there was a mountainous pile of the toothsome powder on a huge round table. I looked at the boxes; they bore colored labels, yellow for lemon kall, red for orange kall and green for pineapple kall. But all the boxes were being filled from the same pile! Aghast, I asked one of the girls if a horrible mistake was not being made. "Aren't you putting orange kall into a lemon kall box?" I asked in a tone that must have sounded horror-struck.

"Oh, no," she replied; "there's no difference in the kall; the difference is only in the labels on the boxes." I left the factory, a sadly disillusioned boy.

### Minard's Liniment for Dandruff.

#### Woman's Tool.

Engine-Driver—"The reason we are kept waiting here, ma'am, is because the engine has broken down. I have examined it, and if I only had the proper tools I could fix it in half an hour."

Helpful Old Lady—"Here's a hair-pin."

#### Hair Waved in Sleep.

Its inventor has patented a rather complicated device to hold a woman's hair and form permanent waves in it while she sleeps.

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# WRIGLEYS

a good thing to remember

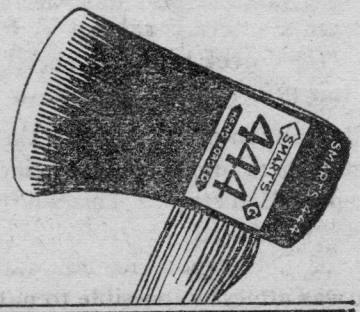
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THE FLAVOR LASTS

### Worry.

It is not the work we have actually done, the burdens we have actually borne, the troubles that have actually come that have furrowed deep wrinkles in the faces of many of us, and made us prematurely old; it is the useless fears and worries about the things that have never happened that have done all the mischief.



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