"THE GOLDEN FACE"

by William Le Queux

IX—The Man Who Was Shy

erby Manor, a few miles out of Win- He does not wish to be seen with les of imprecations and vows of ven-

what obscure, yet as far as I could trolled the most dangerous criminal pected of having made a faux pas. gather it had no connection with gang in Europe smiled sardonically. That night I scarcely closed my days with one of the most charm- you, for you may be away a few Squire of Overstow. And I recoling families I think I have ever met. days, or longer.

tween Winchester and Romsey, and replies were sharp and firm. George Gaynes, who had made a "Act just as I've told you, Har- miles away, where lived Sir John-

Baynes, so I found Lola and we train and returned to Overstow in both went for a stroll in the beauti- the late afternoon. ful woods.

for she drew back with a strange, with a note, gasps, and when she found her fell. A second later I saw that he tongue, she replied;

"No, George, It is impossible-"Why?" I demanded quickly, "I in a rather thick voice, he said: love you, Lola. Can you never re-

ciprocate my affection?" little hand.

my father is a thief!"

"We cannot help that, Lola," I Rayne?" he asked, with a distinctsaid, in deep sympathy at her dis- ly Italian accent.

Unfortunately we can't," dolph inquiringly. she replied faintly, in a voice full of emotion. "But it would be fatal me, and my name upon my letter in to us both if we loved each other. which I have asked for this pri-Surely, George, you can see that!" vate interview." fondly on the cheek for the first ing you before!" path, and now I held her in my mind you of our meeting at the Bris-

"I love you, darling!" I cried. "I July night two years ago, and what must not-you cannot love me. I night? True, we never spoke toam only the daughter of a man who, gether, for you posed as a stranger at any moment, might be arrested to my friends. But you were point--a man for whom the police are ed out to me. You surely cannot eyer in search, but cannot find." ignore it?" "I know all that; but you, dear- "I have never been to Copenhagen

my being-with all my soul. She trembled and sobbed, but did well, signore, notwithstanding your not reply. Her tearful face was denials. You are the man known hidden upon my shoulder.

I repeated my question, until at it-you and your friend Stevenson, last she raised her face to mine, otherwise Duperre," and, though she did not speak, 1 Rayne turned furiously upon his knew with joy that her answer was visitor, and said; in the affirmative. And then I pour- "I am in no mood to discuss anyed out my secret to her, how ever thing with you. So get out! You since I had first seen her I had loved wished to see me privately, and I

happiest man in the world. For a long time we remained lock- quaintance with me, anded in each other's arms. Hew long Pardon me, but I do so, Signor I cannot tell.

sion concerning my welfare. George!" she cried. "I am ayways honorable family." so anxious about you when you are "What rubbish are you talking?" away, Father sends you on those demanded Rayne, strange and highly dangerous mis- "Rubbish!" echoed the stranger. sions because he trusts you, and "I am talking no rubbish. I am you, alast are compelled to do his simply reminding you of a very bidding. But do take care. You serious and secret matter, namely, know well what the slightest blund- the mysterious end of Monsieur er would mean—and you would Gerard, of the Chateau du Sierroz never clear yourself, you know!" in the Jura, and of the Avenue des

we returned to the Manor. had retired, the door of my room he looked Rayne straight in the face,

opened, and I found Rayne in his and asked: "Shall we? It rests He placed his finger upon his lips | Rayne was silent for a few secwith a gesture of silence. Then, onds. Then he said in quite a

losing the door noiselessly, he drew changed and genial tone; me to the opposite side of the room, "I am much mystified at you and, showing me a photograph, said: visit, Signor Gori, for I certainly recognize him, wouldn't you?"

man of bout twenty-five.

stone!" added Rayne,

hotel called the Talbot. Stop there quickly. "I have to be out son at half-past nine, and, leaving Ma- part of the day, and also I expecdame in her car, go in and have visitora" the Carlton. You will pick her up sullenly replied:

if his daughter was to play any part be here to see you, if you still perin this new piece of trickery, what- sist in pestering me. But I warn "She is going to Scarborough on

"And when I meet this Mr. Hous-

you. He's rather shy, you see!" and geance upon some person whom he The reason of our visit was some- the pleasant-faced man who con- did not name, but whom he sus-

lying back in a great park and sur- now planned. I tried to obtain from breakfast, which he ate with rerounded by woods, half-way be- him some further details, but his lish. I drove with him at his orders

fortune in South America, and greave. And please don't be so in- son Burnham, one of the old Yorkwhose wife was a Brazilian lady, fernally inquisitive." Then, wish- shire aristocracy, who was also ing me good night, he turned and chairman of quarter sessions.

For a long time we chatted mer- upon some mysterious businessrily, when, of a suuden-I don't ex- crooked without a doubt-so that I took her hand, and, looking and I played a game of billiards. plain when the butler, bowing him straight into her eyes, I declared my While we were smoking in the library prior to turning in, the foot-I must have taken her unawares, man tapped at the door and entered

Her Rayne tore it open, and as he read breath came and went in quick it, I noticed that his countenance was extremely annoyed.

few moments hesitated. Then, "Show him in." After the servant had gone he turned to me, and She shook her head sadly, but in a changed voice said: "Restill allowing me to hold her soft main here, George. But never breathe a word of what you hear

"You must not speak of love," to a living soul! Remember that!" she whispered. "You are an honest In a few moments a well-dressed, man who has been entrapped and narrow-faced, bald-headed, rather compelled to act dishonestly as you cadaverous man was shown in. He do. I know it all, alas! I-I know clicked his heels together and bowed -" and she burst into tears. "I with foreign politeness and with a have discovered," she sobbed, "that smile upon his sinister countenance. "I have the honor to meet Signor

"That is my name," replied Ru-

"Good! Then you will recognize

"I don't see it, dearest," I ex- "No. I certainly do not," he said. claimed, bending and kissing her "I have no knowledge of ever meet-

We had halted in the forest Then may I be permitted to rearms, though she resisted slightly. tol Cafe, in Copenhagen, on that happened to Henri Gerard, the Mar-"No! No!" she protested: "You seilles shipowner, later that same

est, are not a thief!" I urged, for in my life," protested Rayne, "What I loved her with all the strength of do you suggest?"

"The truth; one that you know, as 'The Golden Face,' declared the "Do you care for me in the least?" stranger bitterly, pointing his fin-I whispered to her. "Tell me, dear, ger at him. "You neither forget me nor my name, Luigi Gori, for you have much cause to remember

her to distraction; and how the have granted you this interview. I knowledge that she reciprocated don't know your name or your busmy affection had rendered me the iness, nor do I want to know them! You seem to be trying to claim ac-

Rayne," laughed the dark-eyed man. Suddenly, when she had dried her "It has taken me two years to trace tears, she seemed full of apprehen- you, and at last Isfind you here! I came at this hour because I thought "Oh! do be careful of yourself, I would find you apart from your

I promised I would take great care Champs Elysees. The Surete, in always, and again we moved along. combination with the Danish de-It was not, however, until dusk that tective service, are still trying to clear up the affair. You and I can Just before midnight, soon after I do it," he said; and, after a pause,

"Look at this well, George. You'd have no knowledge of you. But the hour is late. If you are staying in It was a photograph of a good- the neighborhood could you call anly, clean-shaven again at noon to-morrow, when we will go further into this tangled af-"Note his tiepin-a single moon- fair? We seem to be at cross-purposes to-night." "Yes," I said, as I gazed at the "As you wish," replied the visitor.

"Well, today is Monday," he said. am staying at the Fleece Hotel a "Next Thursday night I want you Thirsk, and I have motored out here to take Madame from London in the To-morrow at noon I will call upon Rolls. Go out on the Portsmouth you." And then he added in a hard. Road by way of Kingston and Dit- relentless tone; "And then I trust ton, through Cobham, and on to your memory will be refreshed. Sig-Ripley. There, about twenty miles nori, I wish you both buona sera." from London, you will find on the "Stay! I quite forgot! I shall not left-hand side an old-fashioned be here to-morrow," Rayne replied

a drink. Edward Houston will be a- "Then the day after?" suggested waiting you. Madame is just now at the visitor politely, to which Rayne "Then the day after?" suggeste "Yese The day after to-merro "And Lola?" I asked, wondering at six o'clock in the evening. I shall that by the Italian's visit he was

again wishing us good night, cross-

you, Signor Gori, that it is quite

COME two months after that curi- You will not meet openly. When I realized that a big cloud of six o'clock, Signor Gori was shown the Automobile Club. I found him turned the car into a narrow side the most magnificent houses in Eng-Sous experience in Sofia, we were you've had your drink and he has trouble had unexpectedly descended into a little room adjoining the great there just as he was going in to road which ran for miles through the great there just as he was going in to road which ran for miles through the great there just as he was going in to road which ran for miles through the great there just as he was going in to road which ran for miles through the great there just as he was going in to road which ran for miles through the great there just as he was going in to road which ran for miles through the great there just as he was going in to road which ran for miles through the great there just as he was going in to road which ran for miles through the great there just as he was going in to road which ran for miles through the great through t guests of some friends of Rayne's seen you, you will drive a little way upon Overstow. When he had gone hall, and there I joined him in the lunch with two ladles whom I had woods and coppless until at last, glary had been planned. called Baynes, who lived at End- along the road and there await him. Rayne broke out into a furious ser- capacity of a busy man's secretary. never before seen. "I much regret, Signor Gori," I

gather it had no connection with the has his intructions, and you will eyes in sleep. The Damoclean sword and asks whether you can manage myself spent a very pleasant four follow them. Take a suit-case with had apparently fallen upon the to meet him in London when it is Enderby was a beautiful old place I wondered what deviltry he had Next morning, directly after address of Rayne's rooms.

I waited at the wheel while he

Next morning we left Enderby by called. I knew that the baronet was not at home, as a week before Lola had told me that he had gone Duperre had gone up to Glasgow to San Remo. Nevertheless, Rayne half an hour. I was puzzled at his absence, but the reason seemed

"I am so sorry, Mr. Rayne, but

He rose from his chair and for not speak with from Overstow. As we drove back again, Rayne me in Paris, and for many months I Ripley, once noted in the late Vic- "To-night ought to bring us

In impatient curiosity I waited Then I went round to Half Moon "She'll probably tell you," was the until next day, when, punctually at Street, but found that Rayne was at fellow's reply, and, at his direction, I guess. We had broken into one

said, after we had bowed, "but Mr. Rayne was called to London quite unexpectedly upon some very urgent

"His apologies!" echoed the Italian, with a very marked accent and give you lunch, George, but I have a gesture of ridicule. "The apolo- two guests. I shall be anxious to gies of 'The Golden Face'! Ah! my know how you get on. Telephone dear friend, you are his secretary; to me in confidence after you've you are not the principal in this been in Ripley, won't you? Good- Madame introduced me.

"Serious. How?" I asked in prethereby to learn something. He looked at me strangely, and posed.

the telephone people are, I fear, very from the path of honesty-been ance. slack in these days. I takes so long made one of the tools of this man We went through the crooked I'll pilot you." whose marvelous brain controls the roads of Kingston and out through And then he turned to gossip mer- won't pay up, well, we are none the So, Rayne had gone to Heathcote actions of dozens of the most un- Surbiton towards Ditton. in order to telephone to somebody in scrupulous and dangerous thieves on Presently I pulled up before the

where I had a wash and a sleep till

for with excuse he left the ladies dimly lit by oil lamps. and of his threats.

me, George," he said. "But some- fur coat and small hat. She was how. I don't think he will! You know now what to do. Madame is her, for she walked straight up to alone at the Carlton and ready to it and entered, being greeted by accompany you. I'm sorry I can't | Madame and Houston, who were in-

his manner changed. His dark eyes At half-past eight I called for Du- "We'll drive through Merrow and sleep with a couple of drops of the

aroused by something a woman told house in the long, quiet village of ture. have been unceasing in my inquiries. torian craze of the "push-bike" as

.There we waited for about a quar-There I told him of Gori's visit ter of an hour, when the slow train from Waterloo ran in, and from a first-class carriage there stepped a "I only hope he will come and see tall, well-dressed girl wearing a rich evidently expecting the car to meet

> I followed the newcomer and got The old boy started up to see me at into the driver's seat, whereupon his bedside, and put on his dressing-

And he passed across the hall and knew she was American, and also a whisper for fear the servants overtense of ignorance, and hoping rejoined his two smartly dressed from her speech and expressions I hearrd. I told him I was thirsty, guests, crooks, like himself, I sup- knew that she was a crook who and he took me into his study. We

seemed to search mine, and then perre's wife at the hotel, and she over to Hindhead," Houston said. soothing syrup. When he comes to next instant he smiled mysteriously. came down wearing a plain, dark- "We'd better avoid the High Street himself he'll have the shock of his "I will tell you the truth," he said. brown motor coat with a small, of Guildford, for the police might life. Six months ago in Philadelphia "The reason is because I have un- close-fitting cap to match. She was, possibly spot the car. So we'll go -when I wanted some money-he wittingly-owing to a little lapse indeed, unusually dowdy in appear- by the side roads. I was over there defled me. Now it will cost the old three days ago on a motor-bike, so skinflint a very big sum if he wants

great urgency—somebody he dare the Continent. My suspicions were big old seventeenth-century posting- concerning our mysterious adven- had placed the unconscious form of

Duperre's wife.

"Going to make an unexpected and along the Bath Road to a lonely call upon old Bethmeyer," she re- house somewhere outside Hounslow, "Bethmeyer!" I exclaimed, "What,

old Sir Joseph Bethmeyer, the millionaire whom they call the mystery man of Europe, the man who is said to have a finger in every financial pie all over Europe?" "Yes, I guess it's the same man."

replied our sprightly companion. "He lives at Frenbury Park, a splendid place between Hindhead and

meyer, the man who had, it was had inquired for me about nine said, been behind the ex-Emperor o'clock. Carl in his endeavor to regain the throne of the Hapsburgs, and who to find you. But he told me to give great riches could never be discov- marked the man, We drove nearly to Petersfield.

and it was considerable past midnight when, on our return, we defrom Hindhead. Then, after turning ber," and he showed me the note he off the main road for some time, we came to a narrow lane, which led into a dark wood, where Houston That number was the one agreed suddenly stopped me and ordered me upon by all of us as a signal that to switch out the lights.

men emerged mysteriously from the to keep apart and disperse. shadow, and one of them, addressing Houston, said:

Sam isn't here yet. He's walking that hour silent and deserted, I drew from Haslemere."

ness, as a third man came forward. "May is in the car," Houston explained. "Is everything ready?" fifty yards more you can see the house. The old fellow sleeps in the on her return. first-floor room on the corner. The light has just been switched off, so

he'e gone to bed all right." them all as "boys," listened to what Hull that afternoon and bring her

fortably, eh?" she laughed gayly.

wasn't in service here as footman ing to Bergen. for six weeks for nothing," he added with a laugh.

who seemed to be the leader of the of Mr. Rudolph Rayne of Overstow "Well, come on," said Houston, adventurers. "Let's get to work," Hall, Yorkshire, upon an extradition and, picking up a bag which one of warrant applied for by the Danish the men had put down, he pressed Government. The prisoner had been into my hand a short, circular electric torch, saying:

"Be careful not to press the butlittle contretemps—or of its result. like a general in the field, and those In the rather dim light of that ton, because when the light is In due course Rayne was conveyed

Just before luncheon Rayne was I am in the fine house of the man from the photographs Rayne had with us, while in front the three alled to the telephone. I was in of mystery for whom the police are shown me—the man with the moon- men stalked quietly, speaking only in low whispers. Soon we came to revealed. "And what are your intentions?" I I ordered; my drink loudly, and a path which led into a great park, I can only suppose that my warnlooked him full in the face. Then, which we skirted, keeping still in when a few moments later I had the shadow of the trees, for the that she, her husband and all her drunk it. I wished the barman good- moon, though nearly gone, still shed friends took flight. night and went out. Ra-entering some unwelcome light. The silence Whether they obtained the money the car, I drove out of the village was only broken by our footsteps on they sought as ransom for old Sir idford, and there waited the leaves. Silhouetted against the Joseph Bethmeyer, I know not. expectantly. In ten minutes he sky was the magnificent old castle- Probably they did, for nothing aplike mansion with many turrets in peared in the papers concerning his

> am here in England to bring him to ognized Madame in the half-light, to the house, and, crossing the broad where, though her father's downfall justice, if only for one very serious It was plain that they were known terrace, we halted at the direction of is still a great blow to her, she is our guide who had acted as footman living in peace under another name,

"I expected Vincent would be with I tried to obtain from him you. Where is he?" asked the man Before us was a row of long ment in the office of a French ship-French windows. One of these the ping company in Bordeaux. and ask him to see me there. After lurther details of line and tri- "He's away. I don't know exactly man known as Sam attacked in a Lois is my flances, and we are to umphant. So in that spirit he left where he is," Madame replied. "But methodical way with a short steel be married next June. One subject me, and departed in the car he had what game are we going to play to- jimmy, and in a few moments he however, we have mutually agreed sly opened it, and while After a hurried dinner I got out "A very merry one. It may be somebody showed a torch, we all en-

> here!" said the girl Cranston, who our torch. All you have to do is

after passing through two small vil- I waited in the big, dark room for My presence seemed to afarm him, lages, we came to a wayside station nearly twenty minutes, when suddenly I heard heavy, stumbling footsteps returning, and became conscious that the men, aided by the woman were carrying with them a heavy human form. It was enveloped in black cloth and trussed up

> "Say, are you all right, Mr. Hargreave?" inquired the American girl-

I replied in the affirmative, whereupon she whispered: "Good! Come right along. It's worked beautifully. The moment she opened her lips I real fun! He dared only speak in had drinks, and I put him quietly to

A quarter of an hour later they a farewell to the three stalwart men. clear twenty thousand pounds," he who were, no doubt, professional thieves from London, we started "But where are we going?" asked back swiftly through Farnham and Aldershot, thence by way of Reading

where the American girl stopped me. There are unconscious man was carried in, and while the others remained in the house-which I think had been taken furnished and specially for the purpose-I was ordered to return to London alone, which I did, most thankful to end that exciting night's adventure.

On my return to the garage off the Tottenham Court Road at half-What, I wondered could they pos- past three in the morning, the man sibly want with Sir Joseph Beth- on duty told me that a man's voice "He seemed very anxious indeed

was declared to be immensely you a number—number ninety-nine! wealthy, though the source of his Sounds like a doctor, eh, sir?" re-I stood aghast at the message.

"Are you sure that was the number?" I asked "Yes, sir. I wrote it down here. scended that long hill which leads He gave a Mayfair telephone num-

It was a message from Rayne! some extreme danger had occurred, Scarcely had I done this when two and it became necessary for us all

I got into the car and drove out of the garage again, not knowing "You're pretty punctual, Teddy! how to act. In Oxford Street, at up, and, taking a piece of paper "No! he's here all right!" ex- from my notebook, I wrote down the claimed a voice clearly in the dark- figures "99," and, placing it in a small envelope which I fortunately, found in my wallet, I addressed it to Madame Duperre, and left it with "Yes; when you get along here the night porter at the Carlton, urging him to give it to her immediately,

Then I drove to the Strand telegraph office, and thence dispatched a well-guarded message to Lola at Meanwhile the American girl had Scarborough, telling her to meet me stepped from the car, and, greeting without fail at the Station Hotel at

This she did, and when we met I told her of her father's unwelcome "If he doesn't it will be the worse visitor, the man Gori, and that he for him! His wife is in Paris, or feared the police. Both of us decidshe might prove a bit of trouble to ed to pose as runaway lovers and leave the country, which we did, I "I know the ground exactly," re- having succeeded in obtaining two marked one of the three men. "I berths upon a Wilson steamer cross-It was not until a week later that

we read in the English newspapers the sensation caused by the arrest brought up at Bow Street, and, after certain mysterious evidence had been given, he had been remanded;

to Copenhagen, where he was tried for complicity in a great bank fraud on the Danish National Bank, and sent to twenty years' penal servitude. Hence to the British public Rayne's actual activities were never

turning to me. "You'll drive me into That is quite plain. But, signore, I the car, whereupon he at once rec-

never to mention, namely, the evil machinations and ingenious activities some mysterious reason of his own ascertained that I could sing, and who, in overconfidence at his own

NEXT-THE HILL OF THE

The Golden Face."



"Of course, George, you will never I have at last discovered the well-| being the Mecca of the daring cycle

y recognized the voice, and scribbled something upon the pad before

"Will you repeat that?" he asked "I want to be quite clear." Then he listened again very in

thirty up. You stay here and meet that Italian chap to-morrow at six, crime-a crime that a woman wit- to each other. and tell him that I'm up at Half ness I have can prove!" and ask him to see me there. After further details of his allegations,

structions I gave you on Monday."

Then he went to his room, changed now not in the least perturbed.

breathe a word of this well, this concealed chief who gives his orders who ran out of London and back. the room at the time. He apparent- ever seeking-'The Golden Face'!" stone in his tin. asked. "Surely you will go and see

The truth was out, and I saw that he Italian meant mischief. "Perhaps I shall go to the police towards Gu at once," he said. "Perhaps I shall to-night," he replied, and then hung go to London. I shall consider. He came out of the darkness.

hired from Thirsk. the Rolls, filled up the tank, and set amusing, it may be tragic," was the tered what was, I found, a long and of her father, the man who had, for out on the long journey to London. man's raply. "We're picking up luxurious drawing room. As hour after hour I swept along May Cranston at Horsley Station "Mr. Hargreave) you remain I drove him with Lola to York, the great North Road, my big head- presently. where he went to London and Lole lights glaring before me, I felt more The Italian smiled, bowed, and at the Station Hotel alone, and re- It was half-past eight when I America after that affair in Dinard!" drove into the garage off the Tot- "So she did, but she's back again.

When I'm up against the wall I orders are obeyed to the letter with-always hit bard. That's the only out question, and always to the with its wide, inviting chimney corway. I'm not going to be black- profit of those who execute them, ner, I saw four men. One of them, And here," he added, gazing around, facing the firelight, I recognized May Canston walked noiselessly

> made an appointment and he has "Mr. Hargreave?" he asked, and, which dwelt the world's mystery disappearance. broken his promise. He fears me! after replying, I invited him inside man of finance.

enham Court Road, and I took a May is a pretty shrewd girl, you Leave all the rest to us."

on." I asked, "what then?"