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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PEACHMONK ***

PEACHMONK

A SERIO-COMIC DETECTIVE TALE IN WHICH NO
FIRE-ARMS ARE USED AND NO ONE IS KILLED
BEING A THREE DAYS EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF
THE DUKE OF BELLEVILLE AS RELATED BY
LORD EDWARD LYNDON

JOHN EYERMAN

NEW YORK
1917

The fabric of this tale is based largely upon the use of Book-Titles, and the names, several names in connection, or expressions in CAPITALS, which indicate these titles, should in no way interfere with the continuous reading of the story.

No Title, of either one or more words, is used more than once, unless such title is represented by more than one Author.

Approximately, Nine Hundred Book-Titles have been used.

No Literary Merit is claimed for this Tale, as none has been attempted. The following Letter explains itself:

BARCHESTER TOWERS,
KENILWORTH.
Saturday.

Dear Eyerman:

When we were talking the other night at MRS. PERKIN'S BALL, I was just about to ask you a favor, when OUR MUTUAL FRIEND, ADDISON, with his usual lack of GOOD FORM FOR ALL OCCASIONS, decided to fasten himself to us: AFTERWARD, AT THE CASA NAPOLEON, THE AMERICANS tied me up. I am glad to say that I am now FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWDS, and VILETTE, THE BEAUTIFUL WRETCH that she is, has urged me to write you.

When Scarlett's eye-troubles began he decided to amuse himself by dictating to MISS MARJORIBANKS, THE STORY OF MY LIFE, as he called it * * * * Ten days ago, and to my AMAZEMENT, he was ordered to INDIA and his work is not completed, and I am no good at that kind of thing. I want YOU to undertake the WORK, and Scarlett wants you too. Don't refuse, please.

Present or absent, I trust, my dear fellow, that you will think of me always as your sincere friend.

Belleville.

My PRINTERS have informed me that ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, it will be best to omit the Introduction, as it is "NOT IN IT" with the tale, WHICH was to have followed.

NOW, at first, I considered this all STUFF AND NONSENSE, for I am sure I know MORE about CLEVER TALES, than they do about printed MATTER, and I believe that I am considered one of the best DESCRIPTIVE WRITERS in GREAT BRITAIN, and certainly can write SKETCHES AND STORIES; however, "IT'S UP TO YOU," but when the printers told me that the question would be asked "WHO WROTE THAT?" to be followed by the remark "IT'S GREAT TO BE CRAZY," I decided that as MY BROTHER AND I are PALS FIRST, FOR HIS SAKE, the Introduction, AS A MATTER OF COURSE, must be omitted.

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PEACHMONK

I: BEGINNING OF THE TALE.

When one sees THE HONEY BEE constructing his little hexagonal CELL, and the SPIDERS weaving their webs and bridges, with all the accuracy of the ENGINEER, which operations are not ACCIDENTALS, one is inclined to ask: is one MAKING THE MOST OF ONE'S MIND? Candidly: I DON'T KNOW: perhaps not; but I do know from a scientific standpoint, the comparison is not permissible; still it makes ONE think. However, what is most apparent to me is that I am in THE CLUTCH OF CIRCUMSTANCES, and I have to write this tale; THEREFORE, ONCE UPON A TIME, as all stories should begin, a certain successful debutante, known as LADY ROSE'S DAUGHTER, THE LADY EVELYN, sat in her boudoir in THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT, IN LONDON TOWN, looking at THE FACE IN THE GIRANDOLE, and listening to THE CHIMES of the SILVER BELLS, announcing THE ELEVENTH-HOUR. This room, like THE CIRCULAR STUDY on the floor below, was hung with GOBELINS, between which, at regular intervals, were hung original DRAWINGS OF GAINSBOROUGH, the floor being covered with that world-famous textile, THE CARPET FROM BAGDAD, while upon a magnificent LOUIS XIV stand were some exquisite specimens of SALT-GLAZED STONEWARE, stamped with THE GREEN SEAL.

Through THE OPEN SHUTTERS came the VOICE OF THE STREET, and from distant KENNEDY SQUARE, the occasional bark of THE GOLDEN-GREYHOUND, intermingled with the soft lapping noise of THE MOVING OF THE WATERS in THE POND IN THE MARSHY MEADOW.

MAMZELLE FIFINE, her ladyship's maid, was in the act of affixing THE JEWEL OF THE SEVEN STARS to her ladyship's beautiful new Peqiuin CREATION, when VIVIETTE, one of the parlour maids entered, carrying a box. "MILADI," said THE EXPERT MAID-SERVANT, "this box was left

but a moment ago and DENIS DUVAL told me to bring it to your ladyship at once, as THE MESSENGER said it contained FAMILY SECRETS; there is a key in this sealed envelope."

THE VERMILION BOX, upon being opened with THE DIAMOND KEY, disclosed A RED LILY, to which was attached a card bearing the short inscription, "LEST WE FORGET," and the INITIALS ONLY, TO M. L. G.

NOW, the Lady Evelyn, being A DIPLOMATIC WOMAN, NOWADAYS, not unusual, expressed her astonishment in but seven WORDS, "AT LAST, THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CASE," and continuing said, "Viviette, draw THE CRIMSON BLIND, see that MY STUDY FIRE is lighted, and ask ANN BOYD, the housekeeper, to come to me at once."

The housekeeper entered almost immediately.

"Boyd," said HER LADYSHIP, "I shall postpone MY IRISH JOURNEY, TO-DAY; I believe that before the TWELFTH NIGHT from now, I shall know who this GABRIELLE TRANSGRESSOR is, in fact I intend to know if it take FIVE YEARS TO FIND OUT; go to the Circular Study, and consult the last WHO'S WHO IN MUSIC AND DRAMA, and let me know what it says about MADEMOISELLE CELESTE of the Gaiety THEATRE; then telephone 2835 MAYFAIR, and ask WERNER, THE COUNT'S CHAUFFEUR to go to number NINETY-THREE, MANSFIELD PARK, to-night at nine o'clock, and finally tell BETTY THE SCRIBE to write a note of acceptance to the private séance of VERA THE MEDIUM; and this afternoon, if you care to, you may take your sister HELEN'S BABIES, SUSANNA AND SUE, to WUTHERING HEIGHTS to see the HYPOTEMNODON, or, if you prefer, to WAVERLEY to visit your UNCLE REMUS AND BR'ER RABBIT."

II: INTRODUCES THE HERO.

THE Duke of Belleville, having arrived at THE STAGE DOOR of the Gaiety Theatre, just ten minutes late, had failed to keep his appointment, and had been informed by the door-man MR. PRATT that Mademoiselle Celeste had left word that he was to go on to the Savoy, where she expected to have supper and wanted the Duke to join the party.

The Duke, somewhat annoyed, but being made of THE RIGHT STUFF, as let us hope all gentlemen are, merely remarked:

"I shall go IN SEARCH OF MADEMOISELLE" and turning, he pushed his way through A MOTLEY crowd, the usual TYPES FROM CITY STREETS, regained his motor, at the same time deciding to FIRST go to his chambers, ROUND THE CORNER IN GAY STREET, to have a little chat with his friend, HENRY ESMOND, who had adjoining chambers and who was THE FIRST SECRETARY to THE PRIME MINISTER, and who was leaving on the morrow for EQUATORIAL AMERICA to study THE NEGRO PROBLEM and the AFTERMATH OF SLAVERY.

AT THE OPEN DOOR to his chambers, the Duke was met by his man, Jameson, who said,

"There is a LADY awaiting your Grace."

"Well, Jameson, who is THE MIDNIGHT GUEST?"

"I really don't know, your Grace, THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER is closely veiled and will not give her name."

"Very well, there is no ALTERNATIVE, I'll see her, and, Jameson, remain within call."

"GOOD EVENING, MY LADY OF DOUBT," said the Duke, "may I ask to whom—great heavens, Evelyn, what are you doing here at this time of NIGHT? Surely the WORLD'S END IS NEAR; WHAT WILL PEOPLE SAY? Your independence, to say the least, is somewhat disconcerting; why not telephone?"

"JACK, you are positively hateful; I could not telephone my message—no EAVESDROPPER, I trust—I believe I am on the verge of discovering LORD CAMMERLEIGH'S SECRET, and I want you to accompany ME to-morrow to THE MATRIMONIAL BUREAU of THE PRINCESS DEHRA, that SORCERESS OF ROME, who has many LITTLE STORIES, LAID UP IN LAVENDER and can always find THE MAN HIGHER UP."

"OH, I SAY, Evelyn, you certainly do lead A SINGULAR LIFE; you know I am not interested in these so-called TRUE STORIES OF CRIME and most unfortunately, too, I am taking THE 10.12 EXPRESS to Brighton; however, I shall be very pleased, you know, to go with you on Monday."

"Thank you, JACK, but I AM AFRAID that is quite impracticable, and I am sorely disappointed: you certainly took more than a passive interest in the recovery of THE EUSTACE DIAMONDS; now, it seems you never have the time for anything; of course it is well known that THE BEAUTY, this Gaiety star, always goes to BRIGHTON on Sunday, and I am told, by the 10.12 Express; I really do not understand your INFATUATION for this WILD WINGS; but I dare say it's the WAY OF MAN, IN THE ARENA of course; it's THE TREND of the times: however, MAJOR VIGOUREUX will be only too delighted to go with me, but I wanted you, you foolish boy, you are certainly A CHANGED MAN, and I do hope you are not PLAYING WITH FIRE, but..."

"Beg pardon, your Grace," interrupted Jameson, entering, "Detective-Inspector Morgan is below, and desires particularly to see your Grace."

"Let him come up, Jameson, and conduct the lady to the North lift."

"And, BY THE WAY, Evelyn, I'm opening the Eaton Square house and shall have a surprise for you: here, don't forget THE VANITY BOX."

"Well, JACK, good-bye, I suppose I'm turned out, MARION'S VACATION, begins next week, and I'm taking her to THE DOCTOR'S LITTLE GIRL, ELIZABETH HOBART AT EXETER HALL."

"Inspector Morgan," announces Jameson.

"Sorry to trouble you, your Grace: the lady...."

"Now, look here, MY MAN, the lady is my cousin."

"EXCUSE ME, your Grace, I quite understand: no harm intended: I thought I recognized the LITTLE LADY as one of the LIGHT FINGERED GENTRY; beg pardon, I'm sure; I came particularly to ask your Grace's aid regarding the so-called MYSTERIOUS MR. SABIN; we believe he was THE MAN INSIDE, THE MYSTERY OF THE MIDDLE-TEMPLE, although fortunately for himself, he keeps well WITHIN THE LAW; this slippery TENNESSEE SHAD was at lunch to-day with Miss Celeste of the Gaiety—nothing wrong with your Grace, I hope—great show on there; your Grace probably recalls the timely advice you gave us regarding THE CARLTON CASE; well, SIR MORTIMER, my chief, had HOPE that your Grace would again be able to advise us."

"I fear not, in this case, Morgan, in fact I don't want to stand in ANOTHER MAN'S SHOES, THE MAN IN THE BASEMENT was really responsible for that advice."

"Then I shall INTERVIEW, THE LODGER; WHAT'S HIS NAME, your Grace?"

"That is OUT OF THE QUESTION, Morgan; you are like the DOG in the hands of the express company: you've eaten your TAG and don't know where you are to go; too late; THE PEOPLE DOWNSTAIRS, I am told, left yesterday for TROIS SEMAINES EN FRANCE, which means, of course, SOJOURNING, SHOPPING AND STUDYING IN PARIS; and now you must go, as I have an appointment, long overdue; take a cigar, Morgan, from THE BRASS BOWL, over there, and IN AFTER YEARS, you will remember that particular brand, as it is pure HEMP, and if you are going HOME, take that PURPLE FERN to your wife's MOTHER, for a chance like this only comes ONCE TO EVERY MAN, and GOOD NIGHT."

III: INTRODUCES MARJORIE.

MARJORIE'S VACATION was fast approaching its end; SHE and her friend MARIETTA, BY FORCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES, were conducting a flourishing TYPE-WRITING establishment, JUST BETWEEN THEMSELVES, at THE HOUSE ON CHERRY STREET, on THE SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET, so that PASSERS-BY could see THE WAY UP, and they always allowed themselves, as a VACATION, LITTLE JOURNEYS of a fortnight's duration IN THAMESLAND or among THE ALPS.

Marjorie and her very best friend, BETTY STANDISH, were seated under THE PLUM TREE, but obviously, not at a time when the fruit was over-ripe, in THE GARDEN AT NO. 19, in that historic spot, CHANTREY LAND, as the old village of Norton, DERBYSHIRE, is called, having just been served with a second instalment of TEA, by TILLIE A MENNONITE MAID, who carried with her, THE GLEAM of LOCAL COLOR. The girls had just had an exceedingly trying two hours' visit from THE MAYOR'S WIFE, one of THE RAVENELS, and whose only TOPICS FOR CONVERSATION, IN A NUTSHELL, were invariably IN DEFENSE of her FAMILY; that she was following IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BRONTES, and always ended with the statement that her BIG BROTHER, JOHN HENRY SMITH, THE ARCHDEACON, had ordered the removal of THE OLD PEABODY PEW, despite THE WARNING OF SEXTON MAGINNIS, that THE MONK'S TREASURE would not be found in that part of THE LONELY CHURCH OF ST. JUDE'S and to-day, in addition to these thread-bare topics, she announced to her hearers, that ON GOING TO CHURCH, she had passed AT CLOSE RANGE, LORD LONDON, and his SISTER CARRIE, taking some STRAY BIRDS and TOY DOGS to the ABANDONED, HILL-TOP FARM (to see the DOG STARS) and finally, that her husband, SIR JOHN CONSTANTINE, had always been A SERVANT OF THE PUBLIC: in fact, with the Mayor's wife, it was always, I MYSELF and my family, and the young girls were at the point of collapse, when THE CRISIS came, and THE EGOTISTICAL I, lady took her departure.

BETTY had picked up the INEVITABLE, MRS. RORER'S COOKBOOK, for she liked THE FUN OF COOKING, in order to decide WHAT TO HAVE FOR DINNER, and with the HOPE of making an entire change in the SUNDAY NIGHT SUPPERS, for one can not subsist solely on BAKERS' BREAD or CREAM TOASTS.

"BETTY dear," said Marjorie, "I have come to the conclusion that THE CARD SYSTEM IN THE OFFICE is valueless to US."

"Of course it is, if you say so; what does Marietta think? but listen; is that MUSIC or someone in distress?"

For from HERE AND THERE came the sound of MUSIC; Oh! such NERVE-racking, BROKEN MUSIC; Marjorie, at once, hastened to THE GIANT'S GATE, the last remnant of Blunderbore castle, which once occupied the site of the present house, to find the guilty person, and there discovered a wretched-looking individual, with two still more wretched-looking ANIMALS, which

the man called THE TEDDY BEARS.

Now, as Marjorie believed, that in THE TRAINING OF WILD ANIMALS, one should first secure their FRIENDSHIP, she, WITH THE BEST INTENTION, gave each of the bears a piece of COTTAGE PIE, and this is no joke, either; for bears LOVE this particular kind of pie; as a matter of fact, DIDO THE DANCING BEAR, considers it THE RIGHT STUFF, and much prefers it to the flesh of THE SALAMANDER, and in A SPIRIT OF MIRTH, she gave THE IMMORTAL CHARLATAN some SIX PENNY PIECES, to take his PETS to NORTHANGER ABBEY, to SERENADE the Mayor's wife, for, thought the young girl, harmless REVENGE is sweet, and moreover she may be AT DEATH'S DOOR, after the trying time she gave us.

"Betty, DEAR, I am so happy; we have had so many HAPPY DAYS and yet, I shall be glad to return to THE CITY OF PLEASURE; is it not strange that I, A MILLIONAIRE GIRL, should have to earn my own living, because of AN OPERA AND LADY GRASMERE? but what am I saying? THE DAWN OF A TO-MORROW is still far away; Horrors; there goes that fearful client of mine across THE LONG ROAD: I am frightened. WHAT IS COMING? what does she want here?"

"Marjorie, tell me, what is worrying you? let us be COMRADES IN ARMS; let me help you as I helped the FIVE LITTLE PEPPERS, IN THE LITTLE BROWN HOUSE; let me be THE CUSTODIAN of your secret."

"Yes, dear, I'll confide in you: I AM not, as you have supposed, THE DAUGHTER OF ANDERSON CROW; I truly believe I am Lord Cammerleigh's CHILD, that I have a sister, who is none other than CELESTE, THE PRIMADONNA at the Gaiety Theatre; and from what I have gathered from a WOMAN, the same woman who just entered THE DEVIL'S GARDEN, who comes to our office to have senseless letters type-written and apparently to no purpose, so far as I can understand; I say, I believe my FATHER does not know where we are and more than that, dare not look for us on account, I say, of what this wretched woman calls THAT AFFAIR AT ELIZABETH: a question of WATCHFUL WAITING; it is certainly A DESPERATE CONSPIRACY, and I shall not rest until THE CONSPIRATORS are UNMASKED AT LAST; but no more to-night: WHAT'S THE USE, you are CHILLY: put on THE GREENMANTLE and we will stroll along PIDGIN ISLAND, as far as DARK HOLLOW to see if our little favorite the PUFFINUS EYERMANI is still there, and TO-MORROW we will go to SHREWSBURY to see JOEY AT THE FAIR feeding THE DRAGON."

IV: INTRODUCES THE VILLAIN.

SHERLOCK HOLMES once remarked: "By far, the most daring investigator and most successful elucidator of criminal mysteries is Martin Dhragnet, but unfortunately, he always gives you the impression of being HALF A ROGUE." In less than two years' time this same Dhragnet, having had charge of the famous case of THE INFAMOUS JOHN FRIEND in which THE DETHRONEMENT OF THE CITY BOSS was a possibility, sold out his principal client, SIR HENDER O'HALLORAN, V. C., THE MEMBER FOR ARCIS, and with two of the principals, THE GREIFFENSTEINS, FATHER AND SON, he fled to THE REPUBLIC OF CHILLI, where they BEACHED KEELS, and on the following CHRISTMAS, with EMPTY POCKETS, and being in need of MONEY to buy the THINGS required on CHRISTMAS DAY, took a CHANCE by stealing THE GOLDEN DOG of THE PRESIDENT OF QUEX: escaped capture, under the cover of one of those dark ARIZONA NIGHTS, by crossing to BOLIVIA, where as ELECTRIC ARCS were in use on dark nights, they were finally CAGED; but this is THE SECRET HISTORY OF TO-DAY, and really digression.

Dhragnet finally escaped WITHIN AN INCH OF HIS LIFE, by gnawing a hole through the WHITE PINE boards of his TINDERBOX prison, swam the OCEAN and THE PANAMA CANAL, and with THREE MEN IN A BOAT, crossed the Atlantic to FRANCE; retired to a secluded spot in BRITTANY: then travelled in CENTRAL ASIA AND TIBET: played THE HONEST LAWYER, INSIDE THE GERMAN EMPIRE, hobnobbed with KINGS AND QUEENS on the RIVIERA, and IN MONTE CARLO, met AN AMERICAN GIRL, called the CAPTIVATING MARY CARSTAIRS, with whom he became infatuated, as she had a bank account, and notwithstanding the fact that all her friends said, "Oh: MARY MARY, you are sailing UNCHARTED SEAS," she was CAUGHT IN THE NET, and they were MARRIED, and the bank account disappeared, as Dhragnet was given A FREE HAND: after THE STORM, THE BAD TIMES came; he then formed, secretly of course, THE ROBBERIES CO. LTD., grew a beard, and drifted to ENGLAND; located in LONDON: formed the firm of DOMBEY & SON, in Suite 813, NUMBER 101, PARK LANE, as purveyors of wines and where every BRAND was on sale except the one you wanted.

Strange as it may seem, Dhragnet, alias Dombey, had given considerable thought to THE DRINK PROBLEM IN MODERN LIFE, and to all appearances did nothing more than play DOMINOES and EAT AND GROW THIN; however, he was merely KEEPING UP APPEARANCES, for the rear room of this suite was the rendezvous of MANY FAMOUS IMPOSTERS, HYPOCRITES AND SINNERS: THE SHORT CUT to prison.

V: WHAT THE VILLAIN DID.

IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, and after strangling with a POISON BELT, THE FOX TERRIER, asleep BEHIND THE SCREEN, and then removing his BOOTS, the INTRUDER, Martin Dhragnet, keeping well within the SHADOW of the CANDLE LIGHT, stealthily approached the couch, upon which the girl, Marjorie, had thrown herself, but a short time before, to read for a fifth time, the LETTERS OF HORACE WALPOLE as she had become much interested in THE CASE OF DR. HORACE; but five times are too many to read, no matter whose LETTERS they are and she was soon IN THE CLOUDS, and SLEEP overcame her.

Dhragnet gave the figure a LIGHT touch, at the same time muttering, "MY CAPTIVE, LITTLE NEMO IN SLUMBERLAND:" but THE LAW OF LIFE at once asserted itself, for THE HUMAN TOUCH awakened the girl, but chloroform soon silenced her, and throwing one of the ORIENTAL RUGS over the form, and leaving his boots behind, and which fortunately for him, did not, later, give a clue to the owner, THE INVADER carried his burden to THE ONE WAY OUT, down THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE, out INTO THE NIGHT, where THE ACCOMPLICE, one of THE GANG, awaited him, and taking THE MIDDLE COURSE across the YARD AND GARDEN, the TWO SINNERS passed out upon THE COUNTRY ROAD, THE ROAD made famous by JOHN GILPIN, and none too soon, for THE TENANTS OF THE TREES were BEGINNING to announce the approach of DAWN, the end of THE LONG NIGHT, THE MORNING OF TO-DAY.

Marjorie was indeed KIDNAPPED BY PIRATES, as the TESTIMONY OF WITNESSES, had there been any, later on, would have proved. A short walk along THE DRUID PATH brought THE GENTLEMAN with the KIDNAPPED girl and CHERRY, his pal, to DEEP MOAT GRANGE, where a motor awaited them.

"Now, PICCADILLY JIM, don't ask any FOOLISH QUESTIONS," said Dhragnet, THE DAREDEVIL; "don't stand there as if you had been STRUCK BY LIGHTNING: this is not A FOOL'S ERRAND: we've not COME OUT TO PLAY: GREAT SNAKES, I LITTLE KNEW what a HANDICAP the girl was going to be, an' I never have much SUCCESS WITH HENS, an' she must weigh a ton, I GUESS: but WHEN THE HOUR CAME, and IN SPITE OF THE HANDICAP, I had to grab her ROYAL HIGHNESS and skip; but THE DANGER MARK is passed, an' we'll soon have POLLY PEACHUM, IN CHAINS, aboard our merry captain's leaky OLD CIDER MILL: grind your engine, LADDIE, and get away from this DESERTED VILLAGE, for this may be a ZEPPELIN NIGHT, an' you know only innocent people, like ourselves, are killed on those nights, an' don't get twisted up in your untied SHOESTRINGS, an' don't SOUND your horn."

And THE MAN AT THE WHEEL soon had the motor ON SIXTH SPEED, rushing in FULL SWING, along THE ROMANTIC ROAD.

VI: INTRODUCES THE HEROINE.

The Brighton EXPRESS, having arrived at WATERLOO, some FORTY MINUTES LATE, the Duke and his newly-made DUCHESS at once proceeded to HIS WIFE, Celeste's APARTMENT in THE HOUSE IN SPRING GARDENS, where dinner awaited them.

"SWEETHEART," said the Duke, "you look a DREAM in that COSTUME; to-day a DUCHESS OF FEW CLOTHES, TO-MORROW, of many: do you know, I feel we are like THE CHILDREN WHO RAN AWAY: I really don't deserve all this HAPPINESS: WHEN A MAN MARRIES or the woman goes IN SEARCH OF A HUSBAND, they naturally have GREAT EXPECTATIONS for a HAPPY LIFE, and I know we are not going to be disappointed."

"And I am going to be a SUCCESSFUL WIFE," said the Duchess.

"But to RETURN to our talk about your parents: I must find this so-called NURSE NORAH; I am convinced that you are not the DAUGHTER of Anderson Crow."

"Of course I'm not, JACK, but whose daughter am I? I am IN THE DARK; when JUST A LITTLE GIRL, I was sent to school at STRATFORD-ON-AVON where on SATURDAY MORNINGS, I was visited by a woman who called herself MY AUNT JEANNETTE, and spoke of me as A DAUGHTER OF THE RICH; MY SCHOOL LIFE taught me THE VALUE OF COURAGE, but played HAVOC with my disposition: the HOUR OF CONFLICT had to come, of course: and then DIMBIE AND I ran away to TOWN and I soon became one of THE PLAYERS O'LONDON, and you know the REST."

"I shall certainly see YARBOROUGH THE PREMIER: he is familiar with LONDON of twenty...."

"His Grace is wanted on the TELEPHONE," said the maid.

"Yes: Jameson: NO: very well: GREAT CATHERINE: very well."

"I must leave you for a while, my dear; SANDY wants to see me and Inspector Morgan is coming to my chambers; Jameson says something important: ALL ABOUT ME: JUST FANCY: so GOOD BYE SWEETHEART, you are going to be A JOY FOREVER, and these are going to be GREAT DAYS for us; LIFE IS A DREAM really."

After leaving SPRING Gardens, the Duke, who did not consider WALKING A FINE ART, proceeded slowly along KENSINGTON road, ON THE LOOKOUT for FAMILIAR FACES, and at THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT, was stopped by a sign NO THOROUGHFARE, where a subway was under construction, and was accosted by a bibulous INDIVIDUAL, who had just waded through a mortar box, and who said:

"Greash Scott: ole BOY" said THE MAN WITH THE IRON SHOES, swinging his GOLD HEADED CANE, "who'd thought—hic—it'd snowed so hard in thish one spot: Sir: wantchew t'know, I'm fren' of Sir Jaff'y Gotdough: an' he's dead."

The Duke had proceeded as far as Addison Road station, when a hansom pulled up towards him, and he immediately recognized the occupant as his cousin the Lady Evelyn, who said—

"Jack: I've been watching for you: Jameson said you were in SPRING Gardens, but preferred not to give the number: said it was NORTH OF FIFTY-THREE: jump in, please; I know it is not GOOD FORM FOR WOMEN to be driving ALONE in a public vehicle, and I feel like one of THE GIRL ROUGH RIDERS."

"Well; MY LADY CAPRICE, I WAS THINKING OF YOU; what's on HER LADYSHIP'S CONSCIENCE?"

"Jack: I want this to be A CHRONICLE OF FRIENDSHIPS: I know you will ask BY WHAT AUTHORITY, am I interesting myself in your affairs, but do let us be COMRADES, let me tell you that the Major has been telling me about your FRIEND, THE CHORUS LADY, THE IDOL OF THE TOWN, as she is called—now keep your temper—please, only nice things to say—I AM convinced that she is a lovely and remarkable girl, and not a mere FLUFFY RUFFLES: the Major says she is not the daughter of THE ADVENTURER, Crow."

"But, my dear EVELYN, you of all others; you are THE ONE WOMAN to interest yourself: it is amazing."

"No sarcasm, JACK, you know I care lots for you, FOR SUCH IS LIFE, and if you really want to marry the girl, you may count on me: but I came to tell you, that ONE DAY, some time ago, ON OUR STREET, my motor ran down a WOMAN; of course you will say the INEVITABLE, WOMAN IN THE WAY, and thinking her only stunned ordered her carried into the HOUSE, and called THE DOCTOR, and after an examination, DR. DAVID ordered absolute quiet and forbade her immediate removal: for three days, the woman raved about THE MALEFACTOR, Celeste, Cammerleigh, Crow, and THE FRUIT OF THE TREE: ordinarily, one does not give these ravings a second thought for delirious persons seem to have A PERFECT PASSION for raving ON ANYTHING, but the things next to their HEART, but the names struck me very forcibly; is it not curious THE WAY THINGS HAPPEN; NIGHT AND MORNING, from NINE UNTIL SIX-THIRTY, she kept it up: I think, at the time of the accident, the WOMAN was being followed, as Denis has seen the same man watching THE HOUSE: the woman finally recovered and upon being interrogated, admitted that she expected to need a large sum of MONEY, and asked if I would be willing to give two thousand pounds for her SECRET: of course I agreed, with a string attached, meaning of course, that being a woman, you have a perfect right to change YOUR MIND, whereupon, she said that when I receive a box containing a red lily, I must at once visit the PRINCESS Dehra: TO-MORROW, I shall tell you what I have discovered at the PRINCESS Dehra's."

"Truly, EVELYN, you're a wonder: I believe you are going to help this LITTLE DUKE, as you helped LITTLE ROB ROBIN: the deed has been done, I have paid THE PRICE OF LOVE: I was MARRIED at BRIGHTON this morning."

"I am very glad, JACK; and I WISH YOU JOY: I KNOW she is a dear girl.... By-the-bye, I am still undecided about becoming SIR JAFFRAY'S WIFE: I had hoped to make something out of him, but...."

"About how much: a million?" forgetting, for the moment, that he had just heard of the death of this unfortunate individual.

"Sarcastic again, Jack: but here we are at Brook street: driver: No. SEVENTEEN Grosvenor square: Good-night, Jack; come to see me TO-MORROW, and trust to my JUDGMENT."

VII: THE CRISIS.

"HELLO! Sandy, OLD MAN: how are you? is THE LURE OF THE CITY too much for you? take that chair, please."

"Thanks: I really would not know what to do with it."

"Same old joker, I see: but tell me about THE MARRIAGE OF THEODORA: when I heard of THE SUICIDE of her UNCLE WILLIAM.... By-the-bye, WHY DID HE DO IT?"

"Well: I suppose THE UNFORSEEN happened, and, I dare say, he feared BARON TRIGAULT'S VENGEANCE and moreover, I fancy he could not have stood THE TEST of the probable revelations of RAILWAY MISRULE: SO THEY WERE MARRIED, not AT THE VILLA ROSE, but at THE HOUSE OF SERRAVALLE, you know THE RED-HOUSE ON ROWAN STREET, on THE UP GRADE from WOODSTOCK, on THE SUNNY SIDE OF THE HILL: THEODORA'S HUSBAND, MR. OPP, is, by LONG ODDS, the nicest chap I have met in years: of course, it was a MARRIAGE A LA MODE, as he has inherited the greater portion of JOHN MARSH'S MILLIONS, and he has undertaken THE EDUCATION OF JACQUELINE, THE RED HEAD, you know: rather AN EMBARRASSING ORPHAN, but a jolly keen one, just the same: knows about THREE HUNDRED THINGS A BRIGHT GIRL CAN DO, and she will be A SUCCESS IN LIFE: but of all the FAIRIES I HAVE MET...."

"Inspector Morgan, your Grace," announces Jameson.

"Sorry, Sandy, I'll see you later. Morgan, I've been AN EXILE FROM LONDON for one whole day: what's the news?"

"I thought your Grace would like to be in at THE ROUND-UP to-night, as I believe you will have some personal interest in the case: I have not all the ends joined: there are a few FRAGMENTS THAT REMAIN unattached, but it is only a question of getting UNDER THE CRUST: but before I forget it; the DOVER incident is closed: THE PASSENGER FROM CALAIS has been CAPTURED and THE CAREER OF KATHERINE BUSH has been brought to a close: always hate to run down THE WEAKER SEX, but QUICK ACTION was necessary. We are going to Ratcliffe, your Grace, and I have The Yard's Rolls-Royce below, and if you have no objection, we'll make a start. I have taken the PRECAUTION to bring THE SCARLET RUNNER, as we call it; pretty heavy car, but greater SECURITY; LIGHT MOTOR CARS AND VOITURETTES are no good for rough roads."

"JERRY," said Morgan, as they reached the curb, "GO-AHEAD, don't be a 'FRAID CAT, High street, Ratcliffe."

It took but a moment to get FROM LOW TO HIGH GEAR: through Hobart Place, into VICTORIA Street, across New Palace Yard, and on to the Embankment.

"Give this motor HALF A CHANCE," said Morgan, "and you are GOING SOME: Does your Grace see the man AT THE CROSS ROADS? that's MY FRIEND PROSPERO: he has been connected with more CELEBRATED CRIMES than any man at the Yard."

On HIGH SPEED, THE SCARLET CAR rushed past The Metropole, under Charing Cross bridge, past The Needle and the imposing facade of SOMERSET HOUSE: across Blackfriars entrance, and then into EARLY LONDON. "BREAKERS AHEAD," called Morgan, "Jerry: careful of the mud." There really wasn't any mud, only CITY DUST, but the sentence had to be interpolated here in order to give a REASON for the next question.

"I don't suppose your Grace is interested in ROAD MATERIALS? Last year, MY SON AND I made A STUDY OF SPLASHES."

The motor continued on its CROOKED WAY through Upper and Lower THAMES streets, past THE TOWER OF LONDON, over THE BROKEN ROAD of Lower Shadwell.

"Your Grace, I venture to say, A BIT OF ROUGH ROAD."

"Very, Morgan, but good for OUR DIGESTION, but THESE SHIFTING SCENES are rather disconcerting."

The motor was stopped at Love Lane, where the party was met by POLICEMAN BLUE JAY, who accompanied them to the THAMES Wharf, BEYOND the No. 3 shaft of Rotherhithe Tunnel.

"Inspector," said THE PILOT, "here's A STROKE OF LUCK; this is no WILD GOOSE CHASE; your trip is not IN VAIN; you're JUST IN TIME, for the boat is still at ANCHOR."

"WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?" asked the Duke, not KNOWING, OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS.

And Morgan, pointing through THE PURPLE MISTS, to the SURREY side, for the early DAWN was upon them, said:

"We have now reached THE END OF THE JOURNEY: do you see the ship in MIDSTREAM off the Surrey Locks, in front of the gas tanks? That's our destination: the DEAR ENEMY."

"But, Morgan, for THE LIFE OF ME, I fail to see where I come in."

"All in good time, your Grace: IT'S ALL IN A DAY'S WORK: again I say, don't WORRY: but I see the EBB-TIDE is on," and blowing two blasts upon a whistle, the Police-Boat, THE SEAWOLF, shot through THE OUTLET from Shadwell Basin, where she was always HELD FOR ORDERS.

"Be careful, your Grace: get away, ANTONIO: THE BLACK BARQUE, you know: and when we get aboard, all be careful of the OPEN HATCHWAYS."

And IN ANOTHER MOMENT, Morgan, standing in the bow, shouted "Ship Ahoy: IN THE KING'S NAME, I want the captain of THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT," after which they began climbing UP THE LADDER.

(A fight occurs here, a description of which has been omitted as it contains some BLANKETY BLANK VERSE.)

"And now, my worthy CAP'N GID, cut out the SMILES: THE GAME is up: the POPULATION of your HAPPY SHIP has dropped one; we have secured two prisoners and if you don't want to be the third, COME down, and besides, BY WHAT AUTHORITY are you SAILING, UNDER TWO FLAGS: IN SPITE OF ALL the WHITE LIES you have told us, you have A YOUNG LADY aboard and we propose to have THE GIRL: WORDS TO THE WISE, you know. I admit that you have been A VICTIM OF VILLAINY, but you are playing A DESPERATE GAME, and THE RECKONING is at hand. Where is THE HIDDEN VICTIM? what, may I ask, have you over there IN GRANDMA'S CHEST, there in THE SHADOW, UNDER THE RED ROBE? Put down that gun: anyway I can see it is not THE REAL THING."

(A fight occurs here, a description of which has been omitted, as there was some PISTOL AND REVOLVER SHOOTING.)

"My CAPTAIN with the FAIRY TALES, THE CONFLICT is over; THE DAY'S WORK is finished; as a FIGHTER, you're a monumental failure: go buy a scrap-book, and learn how to become a prize-fighter, and as to SHOOTING FIRE-ARMS like WILD FIRE, it was simply FURTHER

FOOLISHNESS; but FOR THE LOVE OF TONITA. come off your PIRATE BRIDGE; pull up, and remember IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND: no more MONKEY SHINES: this HAPPY-GO-LUCKY business has been EASY MONEY to you, you with THE ITCHING PALM; but it is really not one of the THINGS WORTH DOING, and IT NEVER CAN HAPPEN AGAIN: I PROMISE to let you off, and these are no IDLE WORDS, for you have been THE DUPE, and I WISH YOU JOY in your FREEDOM, but OH! MARY BE CAREFUL, hereafter. And NOW, my MAN, draw up at the ROYAL ALBERT Dock."

"EXCUSE ME, MY LORD DUKE," said Morgan, "I think instead of awaiting the return of the motor, THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY will be to begin THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY, by taking a tram here for West Ham, and then the District to THE WEST END, THE LAND OF MAKE BELIEVE."

"GO-AHEAD BOYS: FOLLOW ME, your Grace," and carrying the still LIMPY figure of the RELEASED girl, the party crossed the road.

VIII: THE GRAND FINALE.

The Duke of Belleville had just finished going through his morning's post, and still held in his HAND a lengthy letter from his financial adviser, RICHARD ELLIOTT, FINANCIER, THE MONEY MASTER dealing with THE FINANCES OF SIR JOHN KYNNERSLY, one of THE BOOMERS of the day, and with THE CONTEST FOR SOUND MONEY. The Duke was, at the moment, reclining rather lazily, with his TWO LEGS outstretched, and was thinking, neither of the contents of THE LETTERS, nor of WHAT TO WEAR, but listening rather, as THE MUSIC LOVER, to THE SONG OF SONGS, THE SONG OF THE CARDINAL, perched upon THE ELM TREE ON THE MALL.

Oh! What is there to equal a SPRING IN LONDON?

This, the Duke's favorite room, was at once the admiration of the artistic, containing, as it did, wonderful examples of THE CHIPPENDALES, and FRAGMENTS OF OLD FURNITURE, collected by HIS OWN PEOPLE, his very own ANCESTORS: the room, too, was an historic one; many A PRINCESS OF INTRIGUE had occupied that very chair, and the GHOSTS OF PICCADILLY had met there on more than one occasion, for every house must have a GHOST, even if it be JUST FOR FUN.

THE BRONZE BELL of distant Big Ben had just proclaimed the hour of noon, when Inspector Morgan was announced.

"AT LAST," said the Duke to himself, "THE REVELATIONS OF INSPECTOR MORGAN."

"THE TOP OF THE MORNING to your Grace: I am here, as you see, AT THE TIME APPOINTED: I trust your Grace is well, after the ORDEAL BY FIRE last night? I am A COURIER OF FORTUNE. RECORD NO. 33 is now complete."

"I AM WELL, Morgan: but out with THE GREAT SECRET: I take it that THE WELDING of the chain is complete: that THE GREAT PLAN has been successful: but allow me to suggest that you are not FRANKS DUELLIST, so for goodness sake, stop bending THE SILVER BLADE of that knife: it is not a rapier, as you seem to imagine, and I am afraid you will break it: it really belongs IN THE KITCHEN."

"MY STORY, your Grace, is rather long, and in a manner proves that there has been MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING: but before I begin, let me say that Sir Jaffray was FOUND DEAD this MORNING: of course it was DRINK that killed him: I fancy that lets your cousin, HER LADYSHIP, out of a bad bargain: THE MESSAGE, BY TELEPHONE from Broadstairs stated further that Sir Jaffray and THREE COMRADES were BOXING and drinking quantities of BAD WHISKEY at BAR-20 of THE FLYING INN, and à propos were discussing the ART OF AVIATION, and FLIGHT WITHOUT FORMULAE, which only added FUEL to THE FLAME, and became so noisy, that THE MASTER OF THE INN threw them OUTDOORS: but to RETURN; this MORNING, I had a long INTERVIEW with Miss Marjorie Crow, and she has helped me to BRIDGE, THE CHASM: LINK BY LINK, have I welded the chain: your Grace will probably recall that affair at ELIZABETH, when Lord Cammerleigh, having been at THE OPERA with Lady Grasmere, was found dead, two hours later, in High street, ELIZABETH; his apparently lifeless body carried into THE RUNNING HORSE INN, to await the arrival of the Coroner of THE 13th DISTRICT: how the body disappeared IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY, after having been viewed by THE VEILED LADY: the NEXT MORNING, one of the Yard's men, PENDENNIS, in passing along QUALITY STREET, saw Lord Cammerleigh at THE WINDOW AT THE WHITE CAT: with the aid of a FORCING BOOK, THE BOLTED DOOR was forced open and his Lordship, even although AT BAY, denied having been at ELIZABETH: said he had been MOTORING through the HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN KENT. Nevertheless, he quite innocently gave us THE CLUE: ONCE BITTEN TWICE SHY, you know; THE WOMAN IN QUESTION was traced to CHIPPINGE BOROUGH, where we found she made A CHANGE OF DRESS, and in the garb of a CHARITY sister, visited prisoner NUMBER 99, at DARTMOOR: here, then, was THE MAN IN THE CASE, No. 99, being none other than the celebrated DR. NIKOLA. FROM THE BOTTOM UP, by DEVIOUS WAYS, by PERSUASION, and I might say, almost by FOUL-PLAY, have we worked out this case: the WOMAN, I have no doubt, finally realized that she was being HUNTED DOWN, for we took every OPPORTUNITY to let her

know that we had her under surveillance, but here our theory failed us, THAT IS TO SAY, the woman, NO DOUBT realizing that she was UNDER FIRE, instead of coming to US with a proposition, wrote a confession, then took A FATAL DOSE of Coniine. Now, your Grace, I understand that you were married yesterday, and you will recall that last night we rescued a young girl, named MARJORIE Crow...."

"What! Morgan, you certainly don't mean SISTERS: but I know the Duchess hasn't a sister."

"AS YOU LIKE IT, your Grace: right you are, her Grace is quite unaware of the fact; but THE TURN OF THE BALANCE came this morning, when I informed his Lordship about THE WOMAN AT KENSINGTON, HOW SHE PLAYED THE GAME: that her husband was still alive and IN DURANCE VILE, although, as I SAID TO MYSELF, this is not THE TRUTH as his RELEASE came last night. Lord Cammerleigh then related his story: strange how all the FRAGMENTS should be found at the same time: IN A NUTSHELL, the woman's CONFESSION is that she and her sister were the nurses to his Lordship's two daughters...."

"It will be news to most people to hear of Cammerleigh as a FATHER," said the Duke, "but continue."

"At this time his Lordship was very fond of the gaming-table and thoroughly knew THE RULES OF THE GAME: one night, finding himself cheated, knocked down the offender, AS A MATTER OF COURSE, and fled from THE CLUB. AS IT HAPPENED, the man was not injured: continued his prison-in-the-end career, and came into public notice TWO YEARS AGO, in the case of THE FOURBE Soapstone and Leather Co. vs. THE GREAT AMERICAN PIE COMPANY: was convicted and is now at DARTMOOR as No. 99, which is, as I told you, NOT EXACTLY SO. The morning after the club affair, the WOMAN, the nurse, informed Lord Cammerleigh that he had killed HER HUSBAND and demanded twenty thousand pounds; to keep silent: for the moment, she knew she had THE UPPER HAND: his Lordship thought HIS HOUR had come, but he put up A GOOD FIGHT: but YOU NEVER KNOW YOUR LUCK, for the nurse did not know that his Lordship only had a very small life-interest in his wife's estate, and could not comply with her demands, her scheme had failed: then she spirited away the infants, and it was not until to-day, that his Lordship knew that they were still alive, so thoroughly did THE BLACKMAILERS do their work."

"Why did he not call in the police: COWARD...."

"JUST A MINUTE, your Grace, the reason is obvious: he had the murder, so-called, in mind, and he also hoped to locate the kids himself: for eighteen years, he was HELD IN THE TOILS, until one day he saw the woman, driving in a VICTORIA, in THE ENGADINE: she seemed to be moving IN HIGH PLACES (ALTITUDE, 5935 ft.): he followed her and made A BID FOR FREEDOM, but without SUCCESS: the WOMAN informed HIS LORDSHIP that the moment she heard of his DEATH, she would reveal HER SECRET to his lawyers: hence the two sham deaths: on both occasions, he had some one AT HAND, to immediately come FORWARD to claim the body and spirit it away, so that proper restoratives could at once be applied, without the aid of an inquisitive medical MAN: Doctor Phaue thinks he must have used a powder, composed chiefly of Dimethyloxyquinizine and Myosin to produce this STATE: the same person was to at once inform the NEWSPAPERS of the death: unfortunately, on the first occasion and ON THE EVE of SUCCESS, the woman, having followed him to ELIZABETH, at once saw through the trick. The second attempt proved equally disastrous: we had the details of the Norton abduction, by arresting the man left behind, A WATCHER IN THE WOODS; the woman had arranged THE GREAT PLAN, HERSELF, when she realized that she had divulged entirely too much to Miss MARJORIE Crow but MAN PROPOSES, you know: the Nikola man's real name is Anderson Nicholson Crow. How is that for A STORY OF A LIE? Lord Cammerleigh is now with his DAUGHTER, MARJORIE, and expects to call upon her Grace very shortly: he really believes himself quite ill; I found him studying A TREATISE ON APPENDICITIS, and he TALKS about being put UNDER THE KNIFE: A DIAGNOSIS of his own, AS I REMEMBER; PEOPLE LIKE THAT are NOT EXACTLY RIGHT; they get on my nerves; they should have PEACE AND QUIET behind THE FIVE BARRED GATE."

"Oh! COME, Morgan, take THINGS AS THEY ARE: But your success has been truly marvellous: HERE'S TO YOU: you deserve a big COMPENSATION, and A TOY SHOP, FOR THE CHILDREN. Jameson, telephone THE SLEEPING CAR office in Cockspur Street, to reserve rooms on THE ROME EXPRESS for to-morrow night, as the Duchess and I want to get away from the TUMULT OF THE CROWDED STREET; and TO BE AMUSED: and now, Morgan, LAUGH AGAIN, and GOOD-BYE."

OF COURSE EVERYTHING HAS BEEN EXPLAINED, BUT NOBODY WILL UNDERSTAND THE EXPLANATIONS ANY BETTER THAN THE AUTHOR UNDERSTOOD WHAT WAS SOUGHT TO BE EXPLAINED.

Transcriber's note:

Minor printing errors have been corrected without note, although inconsistent punctuation and capitalisation has been left as per the original.

The following is a list of notable changes made. The modified line is shown first and the original line is shown second:

to amuse himself by dictating to [MISS MARJORIBANKS](#),
to amuse himself by dictating to MISS MAJORIBANKS,

to take his PETS to [NORTHANGER ABBEY](#), to SERENADE
to take his PETS to NORTHRANGER ABBEY, to SERENADE

[stealthily](#) approached the couch, upon which the girl, Marjorie,
stealthily approached the couch, upon which the girl, Marjorie,

shaft of [Rotherhithe](#) Tunnel
shaft of Rotherhite Tunnel

The line "[BOOK](#), THE BOLTED DOOR was forced open and his Lordship," was left as per the original although it should probably have started with HOOK.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PEACHMONK ***

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