The Man Nobody Knew

By HOLWORTHY HALL

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CHAPTER XIV—Continued
—16—

"I suppose that has to be the answer. Well—"

"I'll tell Embree you didn't accept." Hillard reached for his hat. "And I mustn't bother you any more this morning; we've both too much to do. I only wanted to see you a moment and tell you the news and get your check. But when Cullen and I come back—" His smile was glorious.

They were shaking hands at the door of the ante-room.

"That'll be before the holidays, won't it? We expect you to take Christmas dinner with us, of course. Mrs. Durant and Carol would never forgive you if you didn't, and neither would I."

Hillard flushed with pleasure.

"Nothing would please me better . . . and you'll tell Mrs. Durant and Carol how pleased I am . . . and how sorry I am I can't even stop now to

"Surely I Will. Good-By. Good Luck—My Boy!"

say good-by, won't you?" As a matter of fact, he wasn't going to stop because he knew that if he did he could never get to Montana. And there was need of quick action against Harris's cut-throat partners in New York.

"Surely I will. And I'll also tell them what an altruist you are. I still don't feel exactly right about it, but the world's the world . . . And I'm not going to refuse an investment just because there happens to be money in it! Good-by . . . Good luck . . . my boy!"

CHAPTER XV.

Already at daybreak it was a white Christmas; white underfoot, white overhead, dancing, swirling white of snow in the winter air. Hillard, lifting himself on his elbow to watch it from the car window, was unreservedly thrilled by the appropriateness of it. Nature, which had been sulking for a week or more, had finally consented to dress the season. But the thrill dissolved and anxiety took its place when he discovered that it was past eight o'clock, and this was only Buffalo. His watch and the railway folder gave him indigest the food for thought, and the snow, taking upon itself the role of a barrier to traffic, was suddenly less agreeable to look at. Wreaths in the windows of nearby houses, holly berries and red ribbon, glimpses of feathery fir boughs and tinsel through the curtains—all these awoke within him a new and a disturbing fancy that at the end of two thousand miles of visioning he might be irretrievably late! Illogically he made haste to rise; he wanted to flavor his impatience by counting landmarks.

The diner was half filled when he arrived for breakfast, and the train was still standing in the yards. As the conductor wished him a perfunctory Merry Christmas, Hillard smiled obliquely.

"Not unless you make up some speed between here and Syracuse," he said.

"Not much chance of that," said the conductor, punching the order slip. "It's deep snow from here on, sir. Lucky if we're in in time for your turkey!"

Hillard sighed, brightened as the train dragged itself into sluggish motion, and gave his attention to the landscape. It was typically a scene from a Christmas card; and it needed, at any moment, was a few lines of engravings in the foreground to be a very fair counterpart of the cards which Hillard had ordered sent out to all his friends. He smiled expansively at the conception of what the name of Hillard on these cards now meant to Syracuse. They were an honestly magnifying his grandeur now; he knew enough of human nature to realize that in his homecoming he was certain to be greeted as a multi-millionaire. And it wasn't that . . . it was only the possibility of a single one.

The thought of Embree turned his mind to the individuals who would share in them. Dr. Durant, who, unless he chose, need never keep office hours again, he could devote himself to the research he loved; Cullen, whose dogged bulldog faith had made both forever independent; even Ruthie Waring, whose modest contribution, accepted out of splendiferous commiseration, had swelled to the dignity of four figures, and given him the means to show the world to Angela. And Hillard himself had made far more than all the other ventures combined—not in money, perhaps, but in dividends payable in the medium of his self-respect.

And yet, as the realities stood now, he was sensitive to the incompleteness of his triumph, until such a time as he had some one to divide it with him. For there is little pleasure in a monopoly of happiness, not even a joke is full-established until some one appears to share it; a secret is delectable only when it is repeated; a conquest is empty without the popular acclaim, or the arrival of the historian. He felt this keenly [illegible]

[illegible]

"I said, a penny for them," she repeated, amused.

"Oh!" Hillard's awakening was explosive. "Why, that's queer . . . I was just thinking about that myself! I mean the first Sunday I ever came up here to dinner. You said the same thing then. Remember it?"

"Yes, indeed . . . and they were a wonderful bargain at the price!" He didn't seem to recall that she had ever looked so mischievous.

"They are now, then," he said. "Because it's just as it was before. I was thinking about you!" Regarding her, he was transported anew by her loveliness. And it wasn't only her exterior loveliness that he adored. It was what she had of sympathy and kindness and sweetness of disposition. A very woman a girl she was . . . not a flaming character to blaze and die, but a steady and enduring soul . . . such as he craved . . .

She turned her head away.

"I was very angry at you this morning," she said. "I thought you'd forgotten about me entirely."

Hillard affected alarm. "How could that happen?"

"Not even so much as a little card with 'Merry Christmas' on it," she said. "Father and mother had one from you, but as for me—" She opened her hands in emptiness. "I looked over every one of them twice."

Hillard felt his pulses quicken.

"Doesn't my coming to you make up a little for it?"

"No, I'm afraid it doesn't—not in that way. I'm still very childish about Christmas. I have to see it—even if it's only in the tiniest little remembrances. I'm very much hurt. I've been telling myself it must be the postman's fault."

He denied it bravely. "It wasn't the postman's—it was mine. Because I didn't intend to send you a remembrance at all. I intended to bring it. I planned to give it to you before dinner, but when I was so late, and everybody was waiting—"

She turned with gratifying quickness.

"Did you bring it?"

"Yes," he said. "I brought it. I'm not quite sure whether you'll like it or not."

"I'll like anything you brought!" The pronoun had [illegible] emphasis all to itself.

Hillard cleared his throat.

"When I was young . . ."

[illegible]

"When I was young, Mother Grundy had a very small selection to choose from—books and candy and flowers. If I'd send you anything by mail, I think I'd have had to obey the rules. My early training was pretty severe . . . But I thought—I thought to myself, perhaps I could be more original."

"How original?" she asked with [illegible]

[illegible]

"And . . . he's not just a little bit [illegible]"

"Not at all . . . I suppose he did it deliberately, and after a great deal of thought. Just on the chance that it might please you. When it would either do that, or end their friendship?"

She fingered the small package over and over.

"Why, I should think that if this [illegible] person were so very anxious to please she he wouldn't take quite so much risk."

"But what I'm the [illegible] of person [illegible] that's different [illegible]."

"Why, should it be?" She gave him no opportunity to see her face.

"You've forgotten a great deal. I [illegible] if you knew all that I've been . . . all that I've done . . . you'd not be so willing to have my [illegible] anyway."

"No," she said, subdued. "I've not forgotten, but you have. I said that I [illegible] believe you."

"You're holding it all in your hands," said Hillard. His expression, as he gazed at her, was infinitely yearning;

"It's My Gift to You. But Before You Open It."

but his voice was even and low. "I spent a good many hours over this . . . wondering whether it was right for me to take such a risk on this day, above all others . . . and finally, I thought it out this way; if it pleases you, it ought to make the day better yet . . . If it doesn't, it would have been just as unwelcome to you at any other time. Understand, I'll never attempt to excuse anything . . . we're beyond that. All I can do is to wait. I'm giving you . . . will you open it now, please?"

Her fingers bungled with the knot, and he made as though to help her.

"No," she said, holding the package away from him. "I want to open it all myself!"

Hillard, rigid, watched her. A phrase was beating heavily against his consciousness . . . one of the Proverbs . . . something about the bread of deceit and ashes . . .

The knot gave way, and the tissue wrapping, falling aside, disclosed an oblong pasteboard box. Carol lifted the lid and Hillard caught his breath. There were two cabinet photographs; uppermost was a very excellent likeness of Hillard himself. She looked at it [illegible]; he was getting out his handkerchief. His hand was cold [illegible].

"It was something, too!" he said in an undertone. "Let me have it a moment." While she followed his every movement, he wrote, with a pen left hand and somewhat painstakingly, an inscription and gave back the picture.

"Christmas, 1916," she read, "with love from Henry Hillard." She [illegible]

[illegible]

"Carol!" he said, point-blank. "Carol!"

Mute, she stood, her head. Looking him full in the eyes, she flinched suddenly, and a great sob burst in her throat. The photograph of Dicky Morgan was in her hand; she held it a moment, trembling, and then, while her breath came faster and her shoulders quivered, she tore it across and across, finer and finer until only fragmentary scraps remained—and these she let fall in her lap, unheeded. The likeness of Hillard, the lying, radiant face of the man nobody knew—this she had seized, and this she had clutched to her breast, spasmodically, as though in fear to have it snatched away from her.

Hillard was very close to her; and his whole being was concentrated in his eyes.

"Carol!" he said to her again in that stranger's voice. "Carol . . . You . . . you knew!" To him the fact was unbelievable.

Tardily, unwillingly, she raised her head.

"From the very first day," she said brokenly. "Both dad and I . . . and no one else; not even mother . . . your eyes told us both, and we've trusted you so . . . and wanted so surely . . . we knew it would come out all right in the end . . . somehow . . . and . . . and . . . I do like my gift! It does make the day better!" And then, in a soft whisper, "Henry!"

She had called him "Henry" and even in the spell of his confusion, he thrilled to the significance of it.

The lover was eager, but the prodigal was startled back from the very threshold of love.

"From the first day!" he breathed, electrified. "And you trusted me like that . . . when you knew what I was doing."

She was laughing and crying at the same time; his hungry arms went out to her and found her; words were coming tumultuously to him and he said them as they came. Somehow the ring was on her finger; and she had kissed it there. Between them, partnered, a sacred understanding as imperishable as bronze had arisen; they both knew, without the necessity of prolonged speech, what his future was to be. They both knew in what capacity he was to face the world; they knew the brimming fullness of her pardon and the brimming fullness of his regret. Those truths were mutually confirmed; the shabby past was indistinguishably merged with the fresh and vivid present; their pledges to this end were upon their lips. The world was lying helpless at their feet . . . the wonderful, sensitive, receptive world which had respected and honored and admired him in the days of his regeneration and would continue, paying the reward of his repose.

In an irresistible passion of humility and shame and courage, he tried to tell her the sums of his deceits; her lips prevented him.

"You mustn't!" she murmured. "Never! You let me choose. I want it this way."

Dazed, triumphant, he was reliving by gone incidents, seeing faint clues develop into mighty revelations, comprehending at last the supreme love and supreme faith of the two who had waited for his victory, and kept his secret close within their hearts, that he might stand the ordeal and prove triumphant. And now the reputation that was already his . . . the loft[illegible]

[illegible]

THE END.

SOUL'S ORDEAL AFTER DEATH

Old Volume Known as "Judgment of the Dead," Is a Fancy of the Ancient Egyptians.

"Book of the Dead" is a very old book known in ancient Egypt as the "Judgment of the Dead," and it contains the funeral ritual of the Egyptians describing in mystical language the experiences of the soul after death and the text it must utter to escape the torments and traps of the lower world. In one chapter, the longest in the book, is a picture showing the judgment which the defunct before entering into the fields of the blessed, will undergo in the lower world, in the presence of Osiris and 42 judges of monstrous form, who are on hand to devour the guilty and drink his blood. Anubis, the god of the dead, and Thoth, the god of wisdom, examine the deceased by weighing his heart in the "sacred" balances of Justice. The famous "negative confession" enumerates 42 capital sins from which the deceased must be free. Should he fail to pass the ordeal, he is either handed over to be devoured by the monster, part hippopotamus, part crocodile and part lion, which represents the Egyptian Cerberus, or is thrown into the fiery lake.

Old Weights and Measures.

"Steelyards," beams and all manner of weights and measures, as might be expected from their importance in the life and interchange of the populace, are frequently mentioned in old chronicles, and one quaint allusion reads, "this lying weight was by the Balance, the weight lying in one scale, and not hanging or sliding on the Beam of a Stilyard, as in aunsel weight." But the "stilyard" was also not beyond reproach, for Arnold, in 1500, tells how "this wayght is forbodden in England by statute of Parliament and also holy Church hath cursed in England all that beyen or sellen by that aunsel wayght." However, in spite of church and law, the "aunsel wayght" continued in use till 1582, ten years after that one we have been considering began its long career, when the jury appointed by Elizabeth set up a new standard of weights and measures, which remained in force down to the present time.

Remembered Father.

Stanton understands that his father is a traveling man, and tries to count the days until the two or three weeks' trip has been made, and a few hours' [illegible]. At the end of two weeks recently he received a card from father explaining it would be a few days longer before he came home. Shortly after receipt of the card he was heard talking to his baby brother and quiet peeping enabled us to observe him holding the card over the baby's crib while he kept repeating, "This card is from father; don't you remember father?"

Tunis Agricultural State.

The regency of Tunis, having its northern or Mediterranean limit in the same latitudinal position as the state of North Carolina and, like North Carolina, supporting an estimated population of 2,000,000 on an area of about 50,000 square miles, is essentially an agricultural country, deriving its wealth from farm and mine.

Wooing by Temperature.

A West Dallas widow says the reason she broke her last engagement was because her fiance was a doctor who wanted to keep a thermometer in her mouth while he held her hand.—Dallas News.

THE FIRST ROBIN

By NELL ADAIR

They sat on the platform before the little faraway station, vainly trying to veil their impatience. The girl in a modish spring suit, swung her shoes with their pearl-colored spats to and fro, as she perched on the end of a hand car, while the man strode up and down in his high-topped rubber boots. The girl glanced askance at the rubber boots and the flannel shirt without a collar; she was not accustomed to friendliness with men of so rough appearance.

But in this desolate spot friendly companionship seemed necessary to allay one's fears of solitude. Why in the world had Elizabeth urged her visit at this time when muddy roads made autoriding an impossibility.

Elizabeth should have considered that the junction would be far from a pleasing spot in which to pass a waiting hour. It would be at least an hour the surly station agent had told her before the next train came in. Nora Dean had been the only passenger to leave the incoming car at the junction. The patch of meadow land before the crude station was almost [illegible] in the spring flow from the lake. Nora gazed dolefully out to where other car tracks stretched beyond. Presently the big man gave an exclamation and stood still before the [illegible]

[illegible]

"Whatever will I do?" she murmured, troubled.

"It's evident," the man said, "that neither did the officials expect this flood. And few passengers, it seems, step off at just this spot. However, don't you worry, we'll find a way." And marvelously at his tone of assurance Nora abruptly ceased to worry.

He would find a way as he had said. She regarded the stranger's broad figure admiringly as he again strode thoughtfully down the platform. Why couldn't the men of her world possess this man's quality of inherent strength and power, she wondered. They were nice boys, the boys she knew, attentive escorts of polished refined appearance. She could fancy the incredulous expression of Tommy Brisbane's face, for instance, if he might see her now in easy conversation with this roughly clad chance acquaintance of a rural station.

"There's the train about," the big man said. "Is that little bag all your baggage? Well, if you'll pick it up we will cross."

Nora picked up the bag and was to turn immediately and as easily picked up herself. It was not until the stranger had carefully deposited her upon the raised ledge of land beside the incoming train that she found her scattered senses sufficiently to say: "Thank you."

For surely he had saved her an uncomfortable perplexing time. The pearl spats were still immaculate and as the big man snatched the felt hat from his head in acknowledgment, he at once relieved her of his presence.

The unusual assistance has been, she smilingly told herself, most gracefully and thoughtfully given.

Nora upbraided her friend, Elizabeth, however, when that young person met her at the journey's end.

"Never again," she admonished, "invite me to visit you when I have to come by train route."

Elizabeth laughed.

"Why there are lots of interesting things there in the junction section," she said, "incidentally some interesting people there to meet. As soon as the road is passable Brother Bill will insist on driving you over to meet his old college friend, now the noted civil engineer who is putting through the big new railroad. He has a picturesque shack near the junction and Bill adores him."

And later when Nora, after Bill's proud introduction, stood looking up into the face of her remembered station-platform companion, the kind twinkly eyes smiled suddenly down into hers.

"That was a trustworthy little first robin," the big man said. "He has made my wish come true in bringing you back."

These Mad Wags.

"This is truly a special flight," said the young lady as they climbed the stairs [illegible]

"Rather personal, I would call it," replied her stout escort, mopping his heated brow.

World's Species of Insects.

The most conservative estimate places the number of species of insects in existence at 5,000,000, while the estimate of Riley, the famous entomologist, is 10,000,000.

HAD CHRONIC BRONCHITIS FOR TWENTY-SIX YEARS NOW WELL AND HAPPY

THIS IS WORTH READING

The experience of Mr. E. J. Toupalik, 1418 Rose street, LaCrosse, Wisconsin, is chiefly remarkable on account of the length of time he was afflicted.

He writes: "I have been suffering with chronic bronchitis for twenty-six years and every winter I would catch cold and become so hoarse I could not speak for six or eight weeks. I could get only temporary relief.

"This winter I was taken with Grip and was in awful shape. A fellow workman advised me to take PE-RU-NA. By the time I had used three-fourths of a bottle, the hoarseness was gone, also that tired feeling. I am on my second bottle. Hereafter PE-RU-NA will be constantly in my house. It is the best medicine ever put up for the purpose."

For any disease due to catarrh or catarrhal conditions, PE-RU-NA is equally dependable. Coughs, colds, catarrh of the head, stomach trouble, constipation, rheumatism, pains in the back, side and loins, bloating, belching gas, indigestion, catarrh of the large and small intestines, are some of the troubles for which PE-RU-NA is especially recommended.

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DEATH

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Far From H. C. L.

According to William J. Linton of Ketchikan, Alaska, Ketchikan is one place where there is no need to worry about the high cost of living. He says: "You could come to Ketchikan and build your own shack in the country near by, catch fish as quickly as you could cast your line in the rippling streams, shoot deer and other game enough to last you for months, make your own maple sugar, render your own lard, trade some extra fish for bread or flour, trade a little meat for furniture or make it yourself, and be comfortably happy."

Agricultural Missionaries.

To heighten agricultural production the world over and thus increase the world's food supply with the resultant blows at old H. C. of L., an international association of agricultural missions has been formed. Its members will carry modern agricultural methods into every land.—World Outlook.

Restricted.

"How do you like your new flat?"

"We have no room to complain."—Kansas City Star.

DEATH WAS NEAR

Florida Woman in Critical Condition From Dropsy, But Doan's Brought Recovery

"Dropsy brought me right down to the shadow of the grave," says Mrs. Ila B. Atwell, 904 William St., Key West, Fla. "For fifteen years I was a hopeless wreck, struggling between life and death. The pains were so severe in my back I screamed in agony. My head ached so severely I thought my skull was being crushed. Black specks floated before my eyes, and I had to grasp the bed to keep from falling.

Mrs. Atwell

"The kidney secretions burned and scalded and I could pass only a few drops at a time. My body bloated. The pressure of so much water on my chest almost smothered me. My feet also swelled and large sacs of water hung beneath my eyes. My skin had a waxy, white appearance and anywhere I pressed a dent would remain for hours. I became a nervous wreck.

"A friend told me about Doan's Kidney Pills and oh! I felt so happy when I found they were helping me. Continued use of Doan's completely cured me." *Sworn to before me,* ARTHUR GOMEZ, *Notary Public.*

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