

GRAND SERIAL STORY.

JUDGMENT.

The Most Amazing Story Ever Penned.

FOR NEW READERS.

SIR JOHN MILLBANK, a successful, but stern judge, quarrels with his only son,

JACK, who leaves his father's house to fight his own way in the world; and whilst serving with the Australian contingent, under the name of Dick Foster, he meets, and falls in love with

KITTY, the adopted daughter of Sir John. However, Sir John has arranged for her marriage with

LORD HAVERHAM. In a moment of despair, Kitty writes to Dick, asking him to meet her in the Blue Room at Rivercourt Mansions. At the appointed hour, Lord Haverham goes to the Blue Room to write some letters, and, unbeknown to the guests, Sir John meets him there. An altercation arises between the two men, resulting in the accidental death of Lord Haverham. Later, Dick arrives in the Blue Room, is caught and accused of murder, and found guilty. Whilst passing the sentence of death, Sir John recognises the prisoner as his own son Jack! A few days later, Sir John interviews the prisoner at his private residence under escort of the warders, and tells him he will have to serve at least three years' imprisonment. Just as they are leaving, Dick with the assistance of Kitty makes his escape, and that night they decide to drive into Wimmerleigh; but the car breaks down, and they are forced to accept the hospitality of

BEAUMONT CHASE, a millionaire. The following morning, Dick's host informs him that Sir John had called during the night and taken his daughter away. Dick, believing this story, leaves that morning for Wimmerleigh. Kitty goes down to breakfast, and is cross-examined by Mr Chase, but on his promise of assistance tells him the whole story. At a fabulous price Mr Chase engages the services of

MR PELHAM WEBB, a clever but unscrupulous detective, to find Dick Foster, and extracts a promise from Kitty not to attempt to see or write to her lover until a year has elapsed. Dick arrives at the residence of

CLARA CLARKE, a clever actress and a friend of Kitty's. With the aid of grease-paints she transforms Dick to a life-like representation of her father. Just at this moment Pelham Webb arrives and insists upon interviewing Dick alone. Dick realises that the detective has discovered his identity, and decides to make a fight for it. However, the detective explains that he has come to befriend him, and Dick, believing his story, accompanies him to the residence of Beaumont Chase, where he is installed as a gardener.

A BIT OF TWISTED PAPER.

Sir John Millbank sat alone in the great dining-room of Beaumont Hall. He had aged greatly; his figure was bowed, and there were deep lines on his intellectual face, but the cold grey eyes were still clear and keen.

His recent illness had made him the wreck of his former self, but his will-power was unbroken, and he seemed to be fighting proudly and defiantly against his physical weakness. He was glad to be the guest of his new friend Beaumont Chase, the millionaire.

He had never had many friends, and

since his breakdown in health they had been fewer than ever.

It had puzzled him at first that Beaumont Chase should want to know him, but now he began to understand, and a cynical smile curved the old man's lips.

"If he has taken a fancy to Kitty, so much the better," he muttered. "He is rich, and money is power, and power is everything. Yes, he will teach her to forget. She is young, and the young soon forget."

An involuntary sigh escaped him, and he stared gloomily straight in front of him.

"Sir John Millbank did not find it so easy to forget. On the contrary, old memories crowded thick upon him to-night."

Perhaps it was because he knew instinctively that his physical health was failing, and that the future held little worth fighting for. Certain it was that since his illness his mind went persistently to the past.

And in every picture of the past that rose before him he saw one face more prominent than any other—the face of his son.

"I have no son," he muttered again and again. "What is that worthless ne'er-do-well to me? Why should I give him a moment's thought? I owe him nothing. He has wrecked his life by his own folly and his base ingratitude. Let him lie on the bed he has made for himself. He had no right to come back into my life. And now I will banish him for ever from my mind!"

But it was easier said than done. Before his mental vision rose scene after scene in which his boy was the central figure. He saw him as a tiny toddler; he saw him as a schoolboy; and, above all, he saw him as a grown man, a prisoner, standing in the dock.

That last picture seemed indelibly printed on the old man's brain. It would not be dismissed. He now raised his unsteady hand to his eyes as though to shut out the sight.

"Why did he come back?" he muttered hoarsely. "Was it not enough that he so utterly disappointed me? Why should he come back and spoil my life again? Bah! I will think of him no more. I have still work to do. I have won success and fame, and now my race is nearly run. But before I go I will see that Kitty—dearer to me than a child of my own flesh—shall be firmly established in a position of wealth and power. Happiness I have been unable to win for myself; I will win it for her."

Outside the room, on the moonlit terrace, two figures were moving slowly side by side. One was Beaumont Chase, and the other was Kitty Millbank.

"It was kind of you to invite us down here, Mr Chase," said the girl. "I am sure it will do father good."

"I believe that, too," answered the man. "He is better already, and I think he likes me."

"He does very much. It has surprised me the way he has taken to you," said Kitty simply.

The man laughed softly. "It surprises you that anyone should like me very much, Miss Kitty?" he said, in a low, significant tone.

"Oh, no; I did not mean that."

"All the same, you know someone who does not like me over well," suggested the man.

"If you mean me, Mr Chase, you are wrong," said Kitty quietly. "I like you, and I am very grateful to you."

"Grateful?"

"Yes."

Beaumont Chase sighed ostentatiously. "I am afraid I am not the kind of man

who derives much satisfaction from gratitude. All the same, I am pleased that I have been able to do you even a small service."

"It was a not a small service," said Kitty gravely. "It was you who helped Dick to escape. But for you he would be even now in a prison cell. I shall never be able to thank you enough for that."

"You have not heard from him?"

"No, not yet."

"You expect to?"

"Oh, yes, he will write as soon as he can."

"Suppose he doesn't?"

"Oh, but he will!"

There was a note of quiet confidence in the girl's voice which somehow irritated the man.

"You remember your promise to me?" he said, almost sharply.

"Oh, yes, I remember," she said sadly. "And I—I will keep it."

Her voice faltered, and it was some minutes before she could go on, but when at last she spoke again she had recovered complete control of herself.

"You have promised to save Dick, Mr Chase, and if no harm comes to him within the next year I have given you my word I will marry any man you select. I do not know what your purpose is in making such a condition, but if you keep your part of the bargain I will keep mine. I am content if I can save Dick. It is not likely that he and I will ever meet again, but I will not forget him and he will not forget me."

"You are young, Miss Millbank," said the man quietly, "and even before this year is out many things may happen which will help you to forget."

She gave him a quick look of inquiry, but he made no further explanation. There was, however, a hard and resolute expression on his face which somehow frightened her.

She had the old uncomfortable feeling that this man had taken her life in his hands, and that he meant to shape it according to his fancy.

Hitherto her concern for Dick's safety had prevented her from giving even a thought to herself or to her own future.

But now she contemplated the man who had saved Dick with a certain anxiety and a certain fear.

Her gratitude began to be mixed with a touch of resentment. However, she was still prepared to keep her word. Romantic and unselfish as she was by nature, it seemed a glorious thing to sacrifice herself to save Dick.

A little later they returned into the house, and Kitty, after kissing her father good-night, retired, leaving the two men together.

"You are better, Sir John?" said the millionaire, looking at his guest.

The judge glanced up and smiled grimly.

"I am as well as I am ever likely to be now," he said. "Anyway, I am quite well enough to hear what you have to say. You want to talk to me, I think?"

The millionaire nodded.

"You have a gift for reading other men's thoughts, Sir John," he said. "Yes, there is something I want to say—and I can say it in a very few words. I am in love with your adopted daughter. I want you to help me win her for my wife."

"You think you will need my help?"

"Yes. The young lady has a prior attachment."

The old man gave a contemptuous wave of the hand.

"It is nothing. Utterly absurd! A private soldier. I believe. Romantic nonsense. He has disappeared. You need not trouble about that."

"She takes it seriously."

"Does she? She only spoke to me about the fellow once. I thought she had forgotten him. I don't even know his name. She will soon forget that girlish folly. You are wealthy and in every way desirable. I gladly give my consent."

"That is not enough," said Beaumont Chase quietly.

The other gave a quick look. "What more do you want?"

The millionaire hesitated, and then replied firmly:

"I want you to use your authority, Sir John. I believe I can make Kitty happy. I want you to insist that she shall accept me when I offer her my hand."

The eyes of the two men met, and in the judge's face came the old look of authority which had brought him so much success and so much suffering.

(Continued on page 6.)

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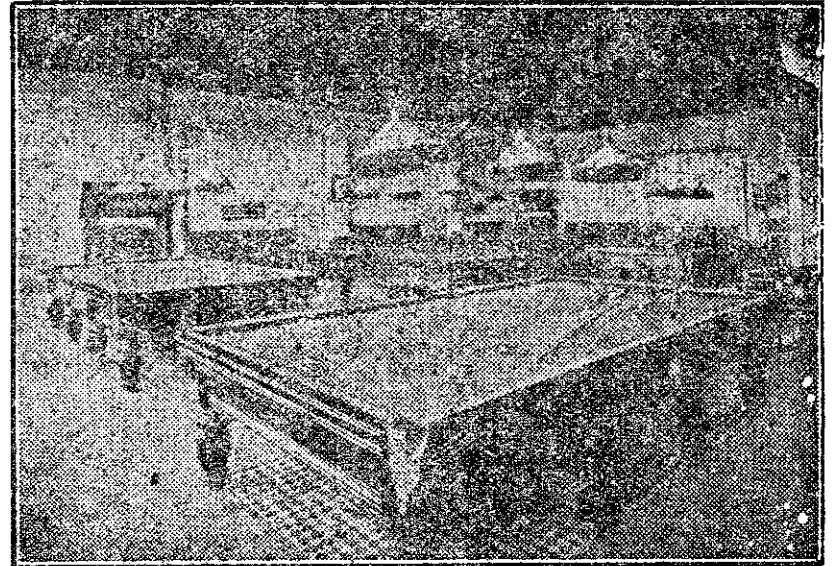
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BILLIARD NOTES

Last Friday evening there was a large attendance at the Civic Billiard Saloon to witness a game between Mr Clarke McConachy, the New Zealand billiard champion, and a local player. The play right through maintained the interest of the spectators. The champion breaks averaged about 50, and the greatest being 152. The local man had 400 of a start. At the close of the game of the Billiard display, a game of snooker was played and proved interesting. A fine display of shots was given at the termination of the game, after which Mr McConachy expressed satisfaction with the tables.

BREAK OF 604.

Close on 300 gathered in the Grand Saloon on Monday evening to see Clark McConachy, the New Zealand champion, in an exhibition game opposed to P. Cooke, an amateur, who is at the top of the tree among local billiardists. The game was the longest McConachy has played during his visit, being one of 1000 up, and his opponent received a start of 550 points. As was expected the amateur did not offer serious opposition, though he put up two nice runs, one of 32 and the other 30, but in all he did not score more than 115, which, added to his handicap made his total 665 when the visitor went out. The game, however, was a most interesting one and the applause which was so freely bestowed on the champion's efforts was indicative of the pleasure the spectators derived from them. In the first part of the contest, McConachy gave a display of break-building, the methods adopted being similar to those used by the average player, but, of course, he kept things going longer and went about his work in a masterly manner. It was pleasing to the spectators to see him at the all-round play, but this is not the most effective means by which large breaks are made and the champion tried to establish himself at the top of the table. Several attempts were made to get into this advantageous position, but he did not appear to be able to do so. A number of losing hazards were played and he resorted to all kinds of tactics

and ultimately gave a very fine exhibition at the top-end, his nursery cannon play being of an especially attractive description. His opponent opened the game and McConachy compiled a 27. His second visit to the table resulted in a contribution of 89, his next yielded no score and the course of his game after that was:—56, 8, 0, 59, 0, 3, 13, 16, 45, 93, 2, 0, 604. This last break is the biggest ever recorded in Invercargill, and showed the mastery the champion has over the balls. He aimed at securing top-of-the-table position and had put up 37 when he lost the white and so had only the red to play at. Most of those present probably expected that with only two balls on the table he would have little chance of making a break of any dimensions and there awaited them a pleasant surprise, for McConachy worked the red into position and set out on a journey that occupied over thirty minutes, during the whole of this time the champion being at the table using top and side pockets with faultless aim and remarkable touch and judgment. He reeled off century after century, and at the close of each received the enthusiastic plaudits of the spectators. Ultimately 600 was reached and he set out on his seventh hundred as if he would easily accomplish it but when he had scored only once and was about to strike the ball for his second shot a spectator suddenly rose from his seat and distracted the attention of the player, who failed in an in-off in a top pocket. All present voted this game the best they had seen in Invercargill. The rapidity of McConachy's scoring will be seen in the fact that during his red-ball play his average was 100 points every six minutes. He made sixteen visits to the table during the evening and compiled 1015 points, which works out at an average for each cue of a little more than 63 a decidedly creditable performance, accounted for, of course, largely by the phenomenal break he placed to his credit.

Grand Billiard Saloon.

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