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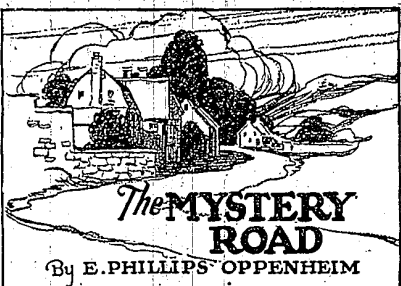
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By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

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CHAPTER I—Continued

"Pauline," he said, leaning a little forward, "you are adorable."

"I suppose it goes without saying that you should do me no," she answered composedly. "I suppose, also, that I must permit you the privilege of my Christian name. On the other hand, do not try to get on too quickly. I will not! I must wait until you have reached the extreme limit of my complaisance."

His eyes flashed for a moment. He was much too polite to resent her difference at anything more than part of the game. It was a duel between the two, the result of which he scarcely doubted, but with his usual impetuosity he resented delay.

"You will accept me some day," he said. "Why not now? We could spend the honeymoon in Paris and go on to the Italian lakes. Or we could be married at the embassy in Paris if you liked."

"You are taking base advantage of this lonely spot," she murmured, dipping her hand in the water. "I have told you that I am in love with another man."

"You will forget him in a week," Gerald assured her. "I am a most companionable person."

"I have no doubt that you have given many people the opportunity of finding you so," she replied dryly. "However, I am not prepared just yet for such an experiment."

"Pauline, do you like me a little?" he asked earnestly.

"She looked him in the eyes. "Not very much," she admitted frankly. "You see, the clear part of me—the part with which I should care—is numb—numbed with misfortune. The rest that I can say is that if you are very kind, I may change to some extent. Personally, I think it hopeless."

"You wouldn't consider, I suppose," he suggested, "telling me your history now that we are on a slightly different footing?"

"Nothing would induce me to anything of the sort," she replied. "I think that we have left my sad alone quite long enough."

He took up the scull and dug it into the still, stagnant water. He did not speak again until they reached the landing stage.

"Is this other man?" he asked, as he handed her out.

"She thought for several moments before she answered. Then she turned toward him with the air of one who has arrived at a decision.

"The other man," she declared, "is my brother. He is in prison, condemned to what you call, I believe, penal servitude."

CHAPTER II

Lord Hinterleys leaned back in his chair and prepared to enjoy his greatest treat during the day—his one glass of vintage port.

"So you didn't go to Scotland after all, Gerald?" he remarked, on the evening of the latter's arrival at Hinterleys.

"No, I didn't go, sir," Gerald replied. "Some old friends of mine turned up to town. I have been spending a good deal of time with them."

"I would have preferred hearing that you had been on the moors," his father observed, with a glance at his son's pallid face and careworn expression. "London in August always seems to me intolerable."

"It was certainly very hot," Gerald admitted. "I was on the river, a great deal of the time, though."

There was a short silence. Lord Hinterleys was, as a rule, a reserved man, and he much disliked the task which he had set himself. He talked with it for a few moments, looking through the high window, across the terrace to the gardens below. His face softened as he glanced at the two girlish figures seated under the cedar tree, where coffee was being served.

"You have been guilty, I suppose," he said dryly, "of the usual number of indiscretions, but one action of yours which threatened to count under that heading. I shall always remember with gratitude. Myrtle is the most wonderful child who ever came to brighten a somewhat dull household."

"If you and you approve of her, sir," Gerald replied indifferently.

"The more I study her," Lord Hinterleys went on earnestly, "the more she fills me with amazement. It seems as though she must be some sort of a spiritual changeling; I have always been, as you know, rather a stickler for race. Myrtle is one of those marvelous exceptions which upset all arguments. She is an aristocrat, small or great, that counts. It seems as though it were absolutely impossible for her to do an ungracious or ungraceful thing. She has destroyed

every prejudice I ever possessed."

Gerald was interested at last. It was many years since he had known his father as an enthusiast.

"I am very glad you kept her here, sir," he remarked.

"I am more than glad—I am thankful," was the fervent reply. "I look forward with a pleasure which I can scarcely describe to the hours she gives up for my entertainment. To watch her development, too, during the last year, has been like watching a beautiful flower."

"She made a conquest of you, at any rate, dad," Gerald remarked. "I thought myself that she looked perfectly sweet tonight at dinner time."

"She has made a conquest of me to an extent which I should never have believed possible," Lord Hinterleys admitted, glancing across at his son. "I have had an elderly man's desire. Gerald, to welcome home to Hinterleys the woman whom you might decide to choose for a wife. I have kept a little list in my mind of the young women at present known to society, whom I would give my pleasure to see here. I have never for one second contemplated the addition to that list of an unknown person. And yet—"

"There is no question of anything of that sort between Myrtle and me," Lord Hinterleys declared, breaking a somewhat embarrassed pause.

"Lord Hinterleys slipped his port and looked once more out of the window. Gerald, a little startled by his father's unexpected suspension, was suddenly conscious of that one wild moment after his party at the Hotel de Paris.

"Myrtle's attention had momentarily wandered. Her eyes were fixed upon the man who was looking paler and more tired than ever in the clear evening twilight.

"You found it hot in the city?" she asked softly, as she poured out the coffee.

He frowned impatiently. There is nothing which irritates a selfish man more than the evidences of an affection which he does not covet.

"If it was, I don't deserve any sympathy," he replied. "I was only there because it suited me."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Javanese Houses by No Means Things of Beauty

The clay walls which surround a Balinese farm in Java are usually two or three meters high. Very often they rest upon a foundation of stones and are covered with a heavy layer of mud which is to protect them from destructive tropical rains. A door in the wall is closed at night with wooden or bamboo planks, the Detroit News states.

The walls around farms of "poeng-gava" or district mayors, are usually built of more substantial material. The same is true of the homes of Balinese princes. Yet while these latter houses may be elaborately decorated they resemble the more humble dwellings in that they are exceedingly filthy. The numerous members of the family—parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, nephews, married or unmarried—live in a single house.

The pig, dogs and goats found on every Balinese farm are kept in a separate hut. The lean huts are usually built upon wooden elevations and are exceedingly ugly and uncleanly.

On each farm one will also find bamboo baskets to house the fowls.

Famous the World Over

Epsom, England, 44 in the county of Surrey, 16 miles southwest of London. Epsom was formerly celebrated for a mineral spring, from the water of which the well-known Epsom salts were manufactured. A number of the sons of medical men are educated at the Royal Medical college, and adjoining the school is a home for aged physicians or their widows. The principal attraction is the grand race meeting held on the downs, which is attended by hundreds of thousands of persons.

"You are ready, sir?" he asked. "Will you take my arm?"

"Not for a moment," was the quiet reply. "You perceive, from my reference to Myrtle, that I am in a confidential frame of mind. I shall go even further to prove it."

"You won't mind my cigarette, sir?"

"Not in the least. Gerald, I do not, as a rule, interfere in such matters, as you know, but I take a certain natural interest. I think, in your associates and your affairs generally, it has come to my knowledge through various channels that you have spent the greater part of the last month with two ladies bearing a French name—an aunt and a niece, I believe—both unknown to English society."

"That is true, sir," Gerald admitted. "Furthermore," Lord Hinterleys continued, "though again I am a little outside my province, I must confess that I was somewhat disturbed to hear from Mr. Bendover that you had offered for sale a portion of the Lutal property and were considering a mortgage upon Rybalski."

"I do not know why Mr. Bendover

should have troubled you with these details," Gerald said, a little uneasy, "but in the main they are correct."

"I make you an allowance, as you know," his father continued, "as my only son and the heir to Hinterleys, for a thousand a year, which I can well afford to do. You have yourself a portion of Hinterleys house in town, and you have the use of my servants there. Your polo ponies, by express arrangement, have always been charged to my own stable expenses. You must forgive my feeling some surprise, therefore, at the fact that you have found it necessary to raise these large sums of money."

Gerald was silent for a moment, conscious of and inwardly resenting his father's anxious scrutiny. Something of the bitterness which he was feeling showed itself, perhaps, in his tone.

"I needed the money, dad," he said. "It will probably all come back to me, or its value."

"If the necessity is occasioned by your losses at cards or on the turf," Lord Hinterleys continued, "I should prefer making you some advance myself, to having you part with land which belonged to your great grandmother or great-aunt, and mortgaging any part of your property."

"I have needed the money for quite a different purpose," Gerald explained, "a purpose which precluded my applying to you. There are other people involved."

"You have never presented yourself to my mind, Gerald," his father admitted, "as being a likely tool for the adventures or harpies of the world. I shall continue to believe that you are able to take care of yourself, although I am bound to say that I regret your lack of confidence."

"I shall be in a position to tell you the whole story very shortly," Gerald promised. "The element of secrecy about it at present has nothing to do with me."

They made their way through the window, on to the terrace, down the steps and across the lawn to the cedar tree. Myrtle was standing behind the coffee tray, and Gerald, remembering his father's recent words, gazed at her with a new, though somewhat languid interest. The bluntness of a year ago had given place to the slender perfection of early womanhood. She had the air of being wholly and gracefully at ease, yet the sweetness of her smile, a certain ever-present but unobtrusive desire to please, seemed like the hallmarks of her constant but unexpressed gratitude. Lady Mary, sunburnt and amiable, lolled in a hammock, with a cigarette between her teeth. There was a telegram upon her knee. She seemed content with life.

"Have you heard the news?" she asked. "Christopher has been invited to stand for West Leeds. It is a certain seat and he has accepted. He is coming down tomorrow afternoon."

"Good old Chris!" Gerald murmured. "Though what on earth he wants to spend half his time pottering about the house of commons for, I can't imagine."

"Your friend Christopher Bent," Lord Hinterleys observed, "finds his pleasures, without a doubt, somewhat interfered with by the possession of some out-of-date principles. He will be very welcome here. My coffee and the evening paper, if you please, Myrtle."

Myrtle's attention had momentarily wandered. Her eyes were fixed upon the man who was looking paler and more tired than ever in the clear evening twilight.

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