THE MYSTERY OF THE GREEN RAY

By William Le Queux

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

The outbreak of war sends Ronald Ewart, a young London barrister, to the Highlands to say good-bye to his fiancee, Myra McLeod. On the train he meets Hilderman, who calls himself an American and a stranger in those parts, but later Ronald finds that he has built a hut on a cliff above the falls opposite General McLeod's lodge. While fishing in the river Myra is suddenly blinded by a flash of green light.

CHAPTER IV.—(Cont'd.)

"Master Ronald! I am glad," Mary cried, when I accepted her invitation to "come in." Mary had boxed my ears many times in my boyhood, and the fact that we were old friends made it difficult for me to tell her my terrible news. I broke it as gently as I could, and warned her not to alarm the servants, and very soon she wiped away her tears and went downstairs to see what she could do. I went out into the fresh air for a moment to pull myself together, marvelling at the unreasoning cruelty of fate. I turned into the hall, and met the General coming out of Myra's room. He was talking to Mary and one of the housemaids.

"These things often occur," he was explaining in a very matter-of-fact voice. "They are unusual, though not unheard of, and very distressing at the time. But I am confident that Miss Myra will be quite herself again in a day or two. Meanwhile, she had better go to bed and rest, and take care of herself while Angus fetches Doctor Whitehouse. No doubt he will give her some lotion to wash her eyes with, and it will be only a day or two before we see Miss Myra about again as usual. You must see that she has no light near her, and that she rests her eyes in every possible way. There is nothing whatever for you girls to get anxious or frightened about. I have seen this sort of thing before, though usually in the East."

The old man dismissed the maids, and went into the drawing-room, while I spent a few moments with Myra. I was delighted to see the General taking it so well, as I had even been afraid of his total collapse, so I took what comfort I could from his ready assurance that he was quite accustomed to that sort of thing. But when, some twenty minutes later, I went to look for him in the drawing-room, and found him prostrate on the sofa, his head buried in his arms. I realized whence Myra had derived her pluck. He looked up as he heard the door open, and tears were streaming down his rugged old face.

"Never mind me, Ronald," he said brokenly. "Never mind me. I shall be all right in a minute. I—I didn't expect this, but I shall be all right in a minute." I closed the door softly and left him alone.

I found Angus had harnessed the pony, and was just about to start for Glenelg to fetch Doctor Whitehouse. So I told him to tell the General that I should be better able to explain to the doctor what had happened, and, glad of the diversion, I drove in for him myself. But when he arrived he made a long and searching examination, patted Myra's head, and told her the nerve had been strained by the glare on the water, and rest was all that was needed; and, as soon as he got outside her door, he sighed and shook his head. In the library he made no bones about it and her father and I were both grateful to him.

"It's not a bit of use my saying I know when I don't," the doctor declared emphatically. "I'm puzzled—indeed, I'm absolutely beaten. This is a thing I've not only never come across before, but I've never even read about it. This green flash, the suddenness of it, the absence of pain—she says she feels perfectly well. She could see wonderfully well up to the second it happened; no warning headaches, and nothing whatever to account for it. I have known a sudden shock to the system produce instantaneous blindness, such as a man in a very heated state diving into ice-cold water. But in this case there is nothing to go by. I can only do her harm by pretending to know what I don't know, and you know as much as I do. She must see a specialist, and the sooner the better. I would recommend Sir Gaire Olvery; that would mean taking her up to London. Mr. Herbert Garnesk is the second greatest oculist in the country; but undoubtedly Sir Gaire is first. Meanwhile I will give her a little nerve tonic; it will do her no harm, and will give her reason to think that we know how to treat her, so that it may do her some good. She must wear the shade I brought her, and take care her eyes are never exposed to the light."

"The fact that you yourself can make nothing of it is for us or against us?" asked the General, in an anxious voice.

He was looking haggard and tired out.

"In what way?" queried the doctor. "I mean that if she had—er—totally lost her—the use of her eyes—for all time, could you be certain of that or not? Or can you give us any reason to hope that the very fact of your not understanding the nature of the case points to her getting over it?"

"Ah," said the doctor, "I'm not going to be so unfair to you as to say that. I will say emphatically that she has not absolutely hopelessly lost her sight. The nerves are not dead. This green veil may be lifted, possibly, as suddenly as it fell; but I am talking to men, and I want you to understand that I can give no idea as to when that may be. I pray that it may be soon—very soon."

"I'm glad you're so straightforward about it, Whitehouse," said the old man, as he sank into a chair. "I don't need to be buoyed up by any false hopes. You can understand that it is a very terrible blow to Mr. Ewart and myself."

"I can indeed," said the doctor solemnly. "I brought her in to the world, you know. It is a tragic shock to me. I'll get back now, if you'll excuse me. I have a very serious case in the village, but I'll be over first thing in the morning, and I'll bring a small bottle of something with me. You'll need it with this anxiety."

"Nonsense, Whitehouse," declared the General stoutly. "I'm perfectly all right. There's nothing at all the matter with me. I don't need any of your begad slush."

"Now, my dear friend" said the medical man cunningly, "it's my business to look ahead. In the next few days you'll be too anxious to eat, so I'm going to bring you something that will simply stimulate your appetite and make you want to eat. It's not good for any man to go without his meals, especially when that man's getting on for sixty."

"Thank ye, my dear fellow," said the old man, more graciously. "I'm sorry to be such a boor, but I thought you meant some begad tonic." The General was getting on for seventy; to be exact, he was sixty-nine—he married at forty-six—and when the medicine came he took it, "because after all, it was begad decent of Whitehouse to have thought of it."

I spent a miserable night. I went to bed early, and lay awake till daybreak. The hideous nightmare of the green ray kept me awake for many nights to come. The General agreed with me that we must waste no time, and it was arranged that we should take Myra up to London the next day.

"You know, Ronald" said the old man to me as we sat together after the mockery that would otherwise have been an excellent dinner, "I was particularly glad to see you to-day. I've been very worried about—well, about myself lately. I had an extraordinary experience the other day which I should never dare to relate to anyone whom I could not absolutely rely on to believe me. I've been fidgeting for the last month or two, and that window that you say you saw to-day has got on my nerves. I've been imagining that it's a heliograph from an enemy encampment. Simply nerves, of course; but nerves ought not to account for extraordinary optical delusions or hallucinations."

"Hallucinations?" I asked anxiously. "What sort of hallucinations?"

"I hardly like to tell you, my boy," he answered, nervously twirling his liqueur glass in his fingers. "You see, you're young, and I'm—well, to tell you the truth, I'm getting old, and when you get old you get nerves, and they can be terrible things, nerves." I looked up at the haggard face, drawn into deep furrows with the new trouble that had fallen on the old man, and I was shocked and startled to see a look of absolute fear in his eyes. I leaned forward, and laid my hand on his wrist.

"Tell me," I suggested, as gently as I could. He brightened at once and patted my arm affectionately.

"I couldn't tell the little woman," he muttered. "She—she'd have been frightened, and she might have thought I was going mad. I couldn't bear that. I hadn't the courage to tell Whitehouse, either; but you're a good chap, Ronald, and you're very fond of my girlie, and your father and I were pals, as you boys would say. I daresay it was only a sort of waking dream, or—" He broke off and stared at the table-cloth. I took the glass from his hand and filled it with liqueur brandy, and put it beside him. He sipped it thoughtfully. Suddenly he turned to me, and brought his hand down on the table with a bang.

"I swear I'm not mad, Ronald!" he cried fiercely. "There must be some explanation of it. I know I'm sane."

"What was it exactly?" I asked quietly. "Nothing on God's earth will persuade me that you are mad, sir."

"Thank you, my boy. I'll tell you what happened to me. You won't be able to explain it, but you shall hear just what it was. You may think it's silly of me to get nervous of what sounds like an absurdity, but you see it happened where—where to-day's tragedy happened."

"What Myra calls the Chemist's Rock?" I asked, by this time intensely interested.

"At the Chemist's Rock," he replied. "It was a lovely afternoon, just such an afternoon as to-day. I had been going to fish with girlie, but I was a little tired, and—er—I had some letters to write, so I said I would meet her later in the afternoon. It was agreed we should meet at the Chemist's Rock at half-past four. I left the house about a quarter past, and strolled down the river to the Fank Pool, crossed the stream in the boat that lies there, and walked up the opposite bank past Dead Man's Pool towards the Chemist's Rock. I mention all this to show you that I was feeling well enough to enjoy a stroll, and a very rocky stroll at that, because, if I hadn't been feeling perfectly fit, I should have gone up the back way past the stable, the way you came back this afternoon. So you see, I was undoubtedly quite well, my boy. However, to get on with the tale. As soon as I came in sight of our meeting-place I looked up to see if girlie had got there before me. She was not there. I looked further up stream, and saw Sholto come tearing down over the rocks. I knew that he had seen me, and that she was following him. I naturally strolled on to go to the rock—I say I went—" He broke off, and passed his hands across his eyes.

"Yes," I said softly; "you went to the rock, and Myra met you—"

"No," he said; "I didn't. I didn't go to the rock."

"But I don't understand," I said as he remained silent for some moments. The old man leaned forward and laid a trembling, fever-scorched hand on mine.

"Ronald," he said, in a voice that shook with genuine horror, and sent a cold shiver down my spine, "I did not go to the rock. The rock came to me."

(To be continued.)

Work and Weather.

It has been found that there is a distinct relation between one's capacity for work and the intensity of the light in which that work is performed.

After the sun turns northward, for instance, at the close of the year, the gradual increase of the natural light leads to a rise in the average man's working powers. This rise continues throughout the spring and is arrested only when the summer heat begins to have its effect.

During the hot months the favorable influence of the light is a good deal counteracted by the enervating temperature; but when, in the late summer and early autumn, the temperature has fallen, the capacity for work again increases.

Then, when the dark days return, the effect is seen in the diminished output of the worker. This apparently becomes more noticeable if the weather is unusually cold with the darkness.

A dark, cold winter, therefore, is much more likely to affect one's working capacity adversely than a dark, warm one.

There is an additional advantage with the latter, it seems to the writer, namely, that a dark, warm winter would mean a lower air pressure than if the winter were cold.

This lower air pressure would most probably be good for the health of both the manual and brain worker.

Why Hair Turns Grey.

The color of our hair is due to the secretion of a varying amount of pigment or coloring matter, which, in turn, depends largely upon the percentage of various chemical constituents in our systems.

For example, a person with a large amount of iron in his blood usually manifests this by dark hair and eyes, while there are other characteristics of blondes, brunettes, and red-faced persons which have been worked out to a varying degree of precision by students of human nature.

As we grow older, this pigment loses some of its intensity. The highly-colored cheeks of childhood and youth are replaced by the sallow, ashen complexion of advancing age, and the hair reflects this decrease by turning a silvery white. Prolonged worry, fright, or lack of sufficient light also have a marked effect upon the pigment cells which supply the hair.

On account of the fact that hair needs a large supply of pigments, brunettes turn grey much sooner than blondes, while persons with extremely light hair frequently go through life without any alteration in color, though usually their hair loses most of its life and lustre.

Towns Built on Lakes.

One of the remarkable results of the recent drought was that it lowered the Swiss lakes to levels that have not been reached for centuries. It brought to light some of the earliest houses built in Europe.

When our early forefathers began to construct homes they were worried by fear of the gigantic beasts of prey which wandered over the land at that time.

Some of them built rude shelters in lofty trees. Others drove posts into the bed of a lake, constructed a platform on top of the posts, and built their wooden huts on the platforms. The huts were single-storeyed, with sloping gabled roofs and around each was a wide verandah.

Each platform was joined to that of its next-door neighbor by a small bridge. In many cases the bungalows were so numerous that they formed a little town, which was connected with the land by a long narrow bridge, either end of which could be raised in a moment.

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Woman's Interests

The Farm Laundry.

Doing the family washing is one branch of domestic life that is often drudgery, but since it is just as necessary to our living as eating and sleeping it must be removed as far from drudgery as modern conveniences and the housewife's intelligence can get it.

Since machinery is cheaper than labor; a good washing machine is a good investment. Such machines are very helpful for heavy clothes, and for large washings. The wear it saves on the clothes will soon pay for it, to say nothing of the backache it prevents.

The machine must be kept clean, free from dust and rust, and out of the weather. Use a wringer. Twisting clothes is destructive, besides the wringer presses out much dirty water that the hands cannot remove. Keep the wringer oiled and cleaned. The rubber rollers will last much longer if the thumbscrews are loosened when wringer is not being used.

The boiler should be largely of copper, not only because of greater durability and immunity from rust, but also because copper transmits heat more readily than any other metal which is used to make boilers. The clothesstick may be made of an old broomstick.

Most women agree that soaking all the white articles the night before makes it easier to remove the dirt. Rather than spend part of Sunday sorting over clothes, many women have changed washday to Tuesday. Another very good reason for breaking away from the customs of our ancestors in regard to "blue Monday" is that as far as possible it is desirable to mend the clothing before it is washed. A two-inch tear may very easily extend to ten inches in washing, hanging out and ironing.

The garments should be looked over for stains and the stain treated according to the best means of removing each particular stain, for soap sets practically every kind of stain except plain, ordinary dirt. If there is plenty of soft water, a little melted soap may be added to the soaking water, but if one must use hard water, do not use soap, but only a small amount of some mild softener such as washing soda, ammonia or whatever acts best on the water you use. Use only "a small amount," for all those softeners are chemicals, and too liberally used, they injure the fabrics and cause them to wear out rapidly.

In the whole process of laundering there is nothing as important as thorough rinsing. No matter what care has been taken with the work, if the clothes are not thoroughly rinsed they will never have a good color.

Always wash colored fabrics in warm soapsuds—never apply the soap direct. Rinse in two or three waters to remove every particle of soap.

When You Hang Pictures.

A few go a long way is the general rule—that is, don't hang too many pictures in one room. The living-room should contain pictures which guests would enjoy, while the bedroom may be hung with the family portraits and photographs of a more personal nature. The shape of wall space should be considered and pictures or prints of similar shape or ones which belong to that space should be chosen. Unless a picture is hung with screws directly on the wall, see that the wires up to the molding are parallel with the sides of the picture rather than forming an angle at the molding. Hang them as nearly as possible opposite the level of the eye when you are standing. Whenever possible, hang them so that they are under a side light. A plain side wall is better than a figured for setting off pictures.

A Hobby Party.

For an entertainment that is unusual, inexpensive and most entertaining, try a hobby party. Ask every guest to wear something that indicates a hobby of his or hers that is not too familiar to the rest of the group. When all are assembled give each person a lead pencil and a white card with a hobbyhorse sketched in one corner. Have everyone write on his card his guesses about the hobbies that are represented; then, after an evening of old-fashioned games and stunts, see who has guessed correctly the greatest number of hobbies.

At a hobby party one of the boys carried a yeast cake, a toy flagpole, and a sapling; his hobby proved to be raising poultry. A girl who enjoyed piecing quilts wore small squares of bright-colored material pinned to her dress. Another guest, arriving with a loaf of bread tucked under her arm, definitely established her reputation for disliking work of any kind.

There are any number of possibilities—for example, a twelve-inch ruler and a rubber ball for the football enthusiast, a bagful of flour for the girl whose hobby is her garden, a picture of a tramp for anyone who likes to hike.

Have plenty of room in which to play the games. Serve ice cream and cake.

If you wish to give a prize to the person who successfully guesses the greatest number of hobbies, offer her a pair of toy reins with which to hold her hobby in check.

Minard's Liniment for Colds, etc.

Mother at Eighty-One.

What does it mean to be eighty-one,
with the most of life gone by?
It means a journey of many miles,
sometimes 'neath a cloudy sky;
Sometimes the path was rough and
steep, sometimes the sun shone
bright;
And in between were peaceful vales,
and a place to rest at night.
It means alternate sun and shade, alternate smile and tear;
Sometimes to make a bridal wreath;
sometimes to deck a bier.
But now it means an eve of rest; the
busy day is done;
A time to think, to read, to pray, to
watch the west'ring sun.

What are the thoughts of eighty-one,
when sinking sun dips low?
The thoughts are dreams of other
days, of friends of long ago.
They dream of childhood's sunny
hours; of youthful joys, so fleet;
Of wedded love and happiness, of
motherhood so sweet,
And of the many dreams of age, the
sweetest and the best
Are dreams about the little ones who
slept upon her breast.
Oh, wondrous are the dreams of age;
so clear 'twould almost seem
That dreaming is the real life, and
real life a dream.

Does hope still live at eighty-one? Ah,
yes; but 'tis the truth
That hope in age is not the same as
hope in restless youth.
The aged hope that clouds will pass,
the sun shine warm and bright;
For tidings of the absent ones; for
restful sleep at night.
They hope that love and tender care
will fail not till the light
Of earlier days shall fade away, and
God shall send the night.
And hope most sure and steadfast
as they near the "silent" land;
Eternal life, a starry crown, a place
at God's right hand.

Finding Ships in Frogs.

Although the use of the hydrophone, the sound-conveying instrument by means of which ships detected the presence of submarines during the war is in its infancy, steps are being taken to apply it to commercial uses.

It is suggested that it would be of great use in determining a ship's position at sea in a fog. Four or five hydrophones would be placed under water about five miles apart, each being connected by a cable to a recording station ashore.

A second recording or receiving station would be established at a suitable distance, the two stations forming the extremities of a base of known length and bearing. Any ship within the working limits of these two stations could have her position determined by dropping a depth charge.

The position could be obtained by photographically recording and measuring at each station the differences in time of the receipt of the sound of the explosion. From these differences of time a line of direction or bearing of the source of the explosion and the position of the ship could be ascertained.

Seeing Our Breath.

We "see our breath" on a cold winter's day because the warm air which we exhale is condensed in the much colder air surrounding us, and remains visible until the surrounding air can absorb it.

One day in the Antarctic, when there were seventy-two degrees of frost, Captain Scott found that by standing still, bareheaded, and exhaling a deep breath he could actually hear his breath freezing a moment or two after it had left his mouth.

The sound, it seemed to him, was produced by the forming of the ice-crystals. It was he admitted, a sound not easy to describe, but "rather like that produced by the movement of sand on a beach when a wave washes up."

We do not "see our breath" in summer, generally speaking, because the warm surrounding air has such a large capacity for holding moisture—water vapor—that the warm moist air we give out is absorbed immediately, and therefore remains invisible.

A very cold, wet day at almost any season of the year makes the breath visible because the atmosphere at such times has enough moisture of its own, and rejects, on the ground of non-necessity, the moisture contained in the exhaled breath.

Father's Admiration.

Old Mr. Fatheleigh was seated in his study with his pipe and the evening paper.

To him came his wife, smiling and important.

"John," she said mysteriously, "I peeped into the drawing room, and guess what I saw?"

John waited. He knew she would not rest till she told.

"Gladys our daughter, was seated on the piano stool, and"—the mother's voice was proud—"that rich young man was holding both her hands!"

"He made his money by his wits, that chap," replied her husband. "That's a great scheme to keep her from playing the piano!"

Below five hundred fathoms' depth in the ocean there is no light.

$30 a Week Mechanic Jumps to $750 a Month

Out in Chehalis, Washington, U.S.A., lives W. E. Pence, "Electrical Expert." Chehalis isn't very much of a town, somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000 people—and Pence doesn't pretend to be a whirlwind "Master of Finance" by any means. But his income is the "talk of the town." With great pride he exhibits the books of his Electrical Business, which show a net profit of $750 a month.

Pence himself says that two years ago he never dreamed of earning so much money. At that time he was making $30 a week and wondering if the time would ever come when he could buy anything he wanted, like he now is able to do.

Owes Success to Electricity.

Pence doesn't talk much about his success. He isn't that kind. But when he does talk about Electricity and the great future which it holds for men and boys—he hits "right from the shoulder." Without any reservation he gives all credit for his amazing success to the thorough Electrical training which he has received in spare time during the past months.

But let Pence tell his own story. Read his letter dated October 9, 1921, to L. L. Cooke, Chief Engineer of the Chicago Engineering Works:

"Dear Mr. Cooke:

Less than 2 years ago I was an ordinary mechanic earning $25 to $30 a week. To-day, thanks to you, I am an "Electrical Expert," in business for myself, and making over $750 a month.

My success, Mr. Cooke, is entirely due to the invaluable help you have given me. The thorough, practical training I secured through your Easily-learned, Spare-Time, Home-Study Course in Electricity, has made me financially independent, and a highly respected business man in this community.

Sincerely yours,
W. E. Pence."

For 15 years Mr. Cooke has been training men at home during their spare time, for Big Electrical Positions, and he has received thousands of letters like the above. His system offers every man, regardless of age, education, or previous experience, the chance to become, in a very short time an "Electrical Expert," able to earn $3,500 to $10,000 a year.

Electrically-Trained Men Scarce.

Because of its prominent position in the Electrical Field, The Chicago Engineering Works frequently is called upon, by industries in the larger cities in the United States and Canada, to supply trained men for electrical work.

To meet these demands Mr. Cooke is now enrolling a Special Class for quick training. He expects to develop from this class "Electrical Experts" who can go out and take over the big Electrical jobs that are now open.

Complete particulars and actual proof of the great demand for "Electrical Experts" is contained in a booklet entitled "How To Become An Electrical Expert," which may be had without cost by writing to Chief Engineer Cooke, Chicago Engineering Works, 2148 Lawrence Avenue, Chicago, U.S.A.

Minard's Liniment Used by Veterinarians

Thought is another name for fate.
Choose, then, thy destiny, and wait—
For love brings love, and hate brings
hate.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

When in Toronto visit the
Royal Ontario Museum
253 Bloor St. West, Near Avenue Road
Largest permanent exhibition in Canada. Archaeology, Geology, Mineralogy, Palaeontology, Zoology. Open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, 2 to 5 p.m. Bloor Belt Line, Dupont and Avenue Rd. cars.

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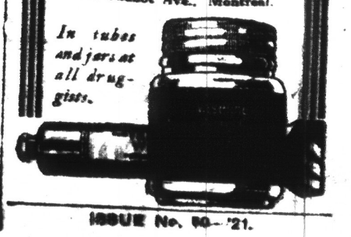
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