



THE MYSTERY OF THE GREEN RAY

By William Le Queux

CHAPTER I.—(Cont'd.)

"Still," said Dennis, "you've got a thundering lot to be thankful for too. To begin with, she'll wait for you, and then, if necessary, marry on your twopence-halfpenny a year, and make you comfortable on it, too. As far as her father is concerned, she's very devoted to him, and would never do anything to annoy him if she could possibly help it, as I easily spotted the night we dined with them at the Carlton. But she's made up her mind to be Mrs. Ronald Ewart sooner or later; that I will swear!"

"I'm very glad to hear you say so," I answered, "but the thing that worries me, of course, is the question as to whether I have any right to let this go on. If war is declared—"

"Which it will be," said Dennis. "Well, then, my practice goes to the devil, as you say. How long after the war is it going to be before I could marry one of Myra's maids, let alone Myra? And, supposing, of course, that I use the return half of my ticket, so to speak, and come back safe and sound, my own prospects will be infinitely worse than they were before the war. The law, after all, is a luxury, and no one will have a great deal of money for luxuries by the time we have finished with it and wiped some money about there's nothing to go to law over. So there you are, or rather, there I am."

"What do you intend to do, then?" my friend asked. "I shall go up to Scotland to-morrow night—well, of course, it's tonight, I should say—and see her—and—"

"Yes—well, and—"

"Oh, and tell her that it must be all—over. I shall say that the war will make all the difference, that I must join the army, and that she must consider herself free to marry someone else, and that, as in any case I might never come back, I think it's the best thing for us both that she should consider herself free." I ended weakly.

"Just like that?" asked Dennis, with a twinkle in his eye. "I shall try and put it fairly formally to her," I said, "because, of course, I must appear to be sincere about it. I must try and think out some way of making her imagine I want it broken off for reasons of my own."

Dennis laughed softly. "You delicious, egotistical idiot," he said. "You don't really imagine that you could persuade anyone you met for the first time even that you're not in love. By all means do what you think is right, Ron. I wouldn't dissuade you for the world. Tell her that she is free. Tell her why you are setting her free, and I'll be willing to wager my life all that you two ridiculous young people will find yourselves tied tighter together than ever. By all means do your best to be a good boy, Ronald, and do what you conceive to be your duty."

"You needn't pull my leg about it," I said, though somewhat half-heartedly. "I'm not pulling your leg, as you put it," Dennis answered, in a more serious tone. "If ever I saw honesty and truth and love and loyalty looking out of a girl's eyes, that girl is Myra McLennan."

"Thank you for that, Den," I answered simply. There was little sentiment between us. Thank heaven, there was something more. "And so you see, you lucky dog, you'll go out to the front, and come back loaded with honors and blushes, and marry the girl of your dreams, and live happy ever after." And Dennis sighed.

"Why the sigh?" I asked. "Oh, come now," I added, suddenly remembering. "Fair exchange, you know. You haven't told me what was worrying you."

"My dear old fellow, don't be ridiculous; there's nothing worrying me." I pressed him to no purpose. He refused to admit that he had a care in the world, and so we fell to talking of matters connected with the routine of army life, how long we should be before we got to the front, the sport we four should have in our rest time behind the trenches, our determina-

tion to stick together at all costs, etc. Suddenly Dennis sat bolt upright. "Gad!" he cried savagely, "if you beggars weren't going, I could stick it. But you three leaving me behind, it's—"

"Leaving you behind?" I echoed in astonishment. "But why, old man? Aren't you coming too?"

"I hope so," said Dennis bitterly; "I hope so with all my heart, and I shall have a jolly good shot at it. But I know what it will be, worse luck." "But why, Dennis?" I asked again. "I don't understand."

"Of course you don't," he replied, "but you've got your own troubles, and there's no point in worrying about me, in any case."

"I begged him to tell me; I pleaded our old friendship, and the fact that I had taken him into my confidence in the various vicissitudes of my own love affair. It struck me at the time that it was—"

"How, my dear chap?" I asked incredulously. Here was Dennis Burnham, who had put up a record for the mile in our school days, and lifted the public schools middle-weight pot, a champion swimmer, a massive young man of six-foot-two in his socks, calling himself a croak.

"You remember that summer we did the cruise from Southampton to Stranraer?"

"Heavens! yes," I exclaimed, "and we capsized the cutter in the Solway and you were laid up in a farmhouse at Whithorn with rheumatic fever. Am I ever likely to forget it?"

"I'm not, anyway," said Dennis, ruefully. "That rheumatic fever left me with a weak heart. I strained it rowing up at Oxford, you remember, and that fever business put the last touches on it for all practical purposes."

"Are you sure, old man?" I asked. It seemed impossible that a great big chap like Dennis, the picture of health, should have anything seriously wrong with him.

"I'm dead sure, Ron; I wish I weren't. Not that it matters much, of course; but just now, when one has a chance to do something decent for one's Motherland and justify one's existence, it hits a bit hard."

"Is it serious?" I asked—"really serious?"

"Sufficient to bar me from joining you chaps, though I'll see if I can sneak past the doctor. You remember about three weeks ago we were to have played a foursome out at Hendon, and I didn't turn up? I said afterwards that I had been called out of town, and had quite forgotten to wire."

"Which was extremely unlike you," I interposed; "but go on."

"Well, as a matter of fact, I was on my way. I was a bit late, and when I got outside Golders Green Tube Station I ran for a bus. The rest of the day I spent in the Cottage Hospital. No, I didn't faint. The valve struck, and I simply lay on the pavement a crumpled mass of semi-conscious humanity till they carted me off on the ambulance. It's the fourth time it's happened."

"Of course you had good advice?" I asked anxiously.

"Heavens! yes," he exclaimed; "any amount of the best. And they all say the same thing—rest, be careful, no sudden exertions, no strain, and I may live for ever—a creaking door."

"My dear old Den," I said, for I was deeply touched. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"Plenty of worries of your own, old man," he answered, more cheerfully; "and, besides, it would have spoiled everything. You fellows would have been nursing me behind my back, to use an Irishism, and trying to prevent my noticing it. You know as well as I do that if you had known I should have been a skeleton at the feast."

"You must promise me two things," I said presently. "One is that you won't try to join the army; there is sure to be a rush of recruits in the next few days, and the doctors will be hurried, and may skip through their work roughshod. The other is that you will take care of yourself, run no risks, and do nothing rash while we are away."

The first he refused. He said he must do what he could to get through, if only to satisfy his conscience; but he made me the second promise, and solemnly gave me his word that he would do nothing that would put him in any danger. Then, at last, at his suggestion, we turned in; he insisted that I had an all-night journey in front of me. And so eventually I fell asleep, saddened by the knowledge of my friend's trouble, but somewhat relieved that I had extracted from him a promise to take care of himself.

Little did I dream that he would break his promise to save one who was dearer to me than life itself, or that I should owe all my present and

future happiness to poor old Dennis's inability to join the army. Truly, as events were to prove, "he did his bit."

CHAPTER II.

The Man Going North.

We "maids" Richmond about half-past eleven, and completed the necessary arrangements for the housing of the boats and the disposal of our superfluous fodder, as Jack called it, for by this time we had all made up our minds that the war was inevitable.

The bustle of mobilization had already taken possession of the streets, and as we stepped out of Charing Cross Station we stumbled into a crowd of English Bluejackets and Tommies and French reservists in Villiers Street. We parted for the afternoon, each to attend to his private affairs, and arranged to meet again at the Grand Hotel Grill Room for an early dinner, as I had to catch the 7.55 from King's Cross.

I dashed out to Hampstead to my flat, and packed the necessary wearing apparel, taking care to include my fly-book and my favorite split-cane trout rod in my kit. I should only be in Scotland for a couple of days, but I knew that I should be fishing with Myra at least one of them, and no borrowed rod is a patch on one's own tried favorite. I snatched an hour or so to write to the few relatives I have and tell them that I was joining the army after a hurried visit to Scotland to say good-bye to Myra. And then I got my kit to Dennis's rooms in Pantons Street, Haymarket, just in time to have a chat with him before we joined the others at the Grand Hotel. I found him hopefully getting things ready for a long absence, sorting out unanswered letters, putting away papers, etc. On the table was an open copy of a stores catalogue. He had been trying to find suitable presents for his two small step-sisters. Dennis invariably thought of himself last of all, and then usually at someone else's request.

"Well, old man," I asked, "how do you feel about it now?"

"Rotten, Ronnie," he replied, with a rueful smile. "I've been on the phone to my silly doctor chap, and he shouted with laughter at me. Still, I shall have a jolly good shot at it as soon as the thing is definite."

"I only pray to heaven," I said seriously, "that no slipshod fool of a doctor lets you through."

"They won't let me in, old chap; no such luck. It's a ghastly outbreak. What an exorcism I do with myself while the war lasts?"

"My dear chap," I exclaimed, "it won't be as bad as all that. There will be thousands of men who won't go to the war. I shan't be surprised if you see very little difference about town when the war's in full swing. You can't go, although you want to, and it's jolly bad luck, old man. Don't think I don't understand, but believe me, you won't be the only man left in London by a million or two."

"I know," he said penitently. "I'm grousing and worrying you. Sorry! But I can see you setting out for the Temple in the morning and leaving your house on fire. It wouldn't make it easier simply because you knew you weren't able to do anything to put out the fire. In fact, it would be a jolly lot worse. Still, we'll cut that and change the subject. When you get back from Invermullach give me a look up. I expect I shall be here. And, of course, give my kindest regards to Miss McLennan and the General; he added, as an afterthought.

(To be continued.)

One of His Gifts.

A sudden sound of whistling disturbed the air of the class-room, and the strains of "I'm For Ever Blowing Bubbles" floated over forty small heads bent over forty small slates.

"Who's that whistling?" screamed the teacher, as soon as she had recovered from her surprise.

"It's just mase!" answered little Jack McGay, with true Scottish imperturbability. "Did ye no kin Ah cud whistle?"

A "Fare" Agreement.

Isaac boarded a bus with his little son Moses. "How much to the Spurs' ground, conductor?" he asked. "Twopenny," said the conductor. "And how much for my little boy?" asked Isaac. "There's no need to pay for him," said the conductor. "Isaac rubbed his hands. 'Sit where you are, Moses,' he said. 'The conductor will put you down at the Spurs' ground, and I will walk.'

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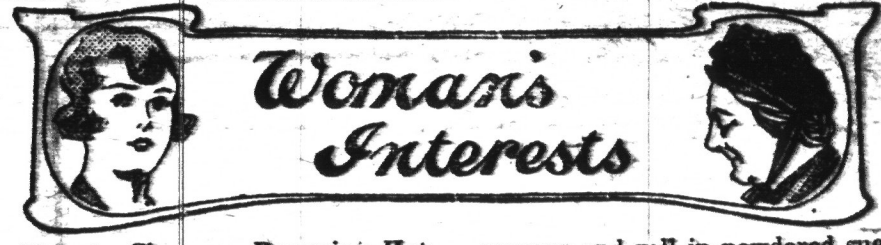
The first modern battleship to cost over one million sterling was H.M.S. Invincible, launched in 1906.

Minard's Liniment for Colds, etc.

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Woman's Interests

How to Choose a Becoming Hat.

An expert offers these suggestions to aid women in selecting becoming hats:

A brim which rolls up gently on the right side and down on the left. Whether this is a wide or narrow brim will depend on the face beneath it.

A stout woman, generally speaking, must wear a wider brim than the slender one, since width in the brim and height in the crown will tend to overbalance roundness of the face.

The short, slender woman with a small face should almost never wear a hat with a brim averaging more than three to three and a half inches in width.

The long-faced woman, especially if she is tall, should avoid the tall crown or tall trimmed hat. She may, however, wear a wider brimmed hat than the short, slender woman.

The tall stout woman is often stunning in a large brimmed hat, because her height makes it possible for her to wear a hat which would make the short, stout woman appear grotesque.

Hats with mushroom brims belong entirely to youth. Downward turning lines in the face, are not desirable, and should, therefore, be not emphasized by downward turning lines in brims of hats.

For the person who wears glasses, hard lines and edges in hats should be studiously avoided. An edge may be softened by a bias fold, a ribbon slightly full, or a band of fur.

A hat with a stiff monotonous edge is not likely to be becoming to many persons especially to those who are no longer young.

The most successful child's hat is the soft, pliable kind which may be pulled down on the head and subjected to more or less rough treatment without very materially injuring its looks and wearing qualities. Stiff, fussy hats have no place in the wardrobe of the child.

For every day wear, a Tam O'Shanter made from old dress skirts, coats, or woolen materials will serve well.

The Palatable Prune.

With the approach of winter the varieties of fresh fruits become fewer and we find ourselves searching for new ways of serving the ever serviceable dried fruits.

Among these fruits, prunes, which are merely a dried plum, lend themselves readily to a variety of attractive dishes. They furnish material for body building and energy, give bulk to the diet (which stimulates the regular activity of the digestive tract) and supply acids and minerals which tend to counteract the acidity of the blood and body fluids and regulate the body processes.

Prunes are economical and contain considerable nutritive value. They are a splendid substitute for children for candy and sweets because in addition to the high percentage of sugar they contain iron and other minerals useful in diet.

There are three simple processes in cooking prunes: 1. Soaking to restore the water lost in drying. 2. Slow cooking in the water in which soaked until tender, and juice has been soaked up by the fruit. 3. Addition of smallest amount of sugar necessary to sweeten without destroying the natural flavor of the fruit.

The following practical recipes offer a pleasing variety of ways for serving prunes:

Stewed Prunes.—1 lb. prunes, 1 quart water, 1-3 cup sugar, 2 teaspoons lemon juice. Wash the prunes thoroughly; put in clean water and let soak for several hours. Leave the fruit in the water it soaked in, cover and cook slowly until the skins are tender. Add the sugar and lemon juice when almost done.

Prune Whip.—1 cup strained stewed prunes, 3 egg whites, 1-3 cup sugar, 1 teaspoon lemon juice. Wash, soak and cook the prunes until soft. Rub through a sieve. Add the sugar and lemon juice to the thick pulp. Beat the egg whites stiff, fold into the prune pulp, place in a buttered baking dish, and bake 20 minutes in a moderate oven. Serve cold with cream, whipped cream or a custard made from the yolks.

Prune Cake.—1/4 cup butter, 1/2 cup sugar, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1 egg, 1/2 cup milk, 1 1/2 cups flour, 3 teaspoons baking powder, 1 teaspoon vanilla. Cream the butter, add sugar gradually, and egg well beaten. Sift the flour and add alternately with the milk. Then add the vanilla, and lastly fold in the baking powder, sifted over to top. Pour batter in two greased layer pans, cover top with strained pitted prunes and sprinkle with nuts. Bake 30 to 40 minutes in a moderate oven. Frost with uncooked frosting or whipped cream.

Prune Pudding.—1 cup stewed prunes, 1/4 cup sugar, 4 eggs, 1 teaspoon lemon juice. Beat the egg yolks and the sugar until light; add the chopped prunes and fold in the stiffly beaten whites. Add the flavoring, pour into a buttered baking dish, bake in a moderate oven.

Parisian Sweets.—1/2 lb. prunes, 1/2 lb. nut meats, 1/2 lb. dates or raisins, 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice. Put all through the meat grinder; add the lemon juice and mix thoroughly. Roll out on a molding board 1/4 inch thick. Use powdered sugar to keep mass from sticking to the board. Cut into

squares and roll in powdered sugar.

Stuffed Prunes.—Wash, soak the prunes for a few hours and then steam until the skins are soft. Remove the stones and stuff with nuts. Serve with cheese balls for a salad. Roll in powdered sugar and serve for a confection.

Paint for Wall Decoration.

The flat wall paints now obtainable afford immense variety of shades and tints from which to choose. Delicate French grays, light buffs, cream tints and ivory whites for the bedrooms, rich browns, blues and greens for the dining-room and living-room, provide an almost endless variety of pleasing combinations to harmonize with any desired color scheme. On the border or on the body of the walls attractive stencil designs, which bring out in relief the color combinations, may be applied. The use of flat wall paints is not limited to new work, but is equally effective on old unpapered surfaces or those from which old paper has been scraped.

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