BOVRIL
ALL THAT IS GOOD IN BEEF
A MOST STRENGTHENING BEVERAGE

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 Ewart 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. Gen. McLeod tells Ewart of a strange experience at the same place, known as Chemist's Rock. Hilderman is very curious as to the cause of Myra's blindness. The famous London oculist holds out no hope and Ewart, after taking Myra home, brings Dr. Garnesk from Glasgow. In the meantime Shoito is also blinded, then chloroformed and stolen. Garnesk asserts his belief that Hilderman knew of Shoito's affliction. The next morning the two men find footprints and keel-marks on the beach, and the name-plate from the dog's collar. Ewart telegraphs for his friend, Dennis Burnham. At Chemist's Rock, Garnesk sees the green flash and Ewart is suffocated. While in the darkroom where the two young men are developing snap-shots, Myra discovers that she can see in the red light. The oculist departs as Burnham arrives. Hilderman and his friend Fuller invite Ewart and Burnham to return from the station in the latter's boat.

CHAPTER XIII.—(Cont'd.)

"The trivial but necessary question of edible stores will detain us for a few moments," Fuller said. "But we shall be more comfortable here than wandering about among the herrings." So we made ourselves comfortable in deck-chairs in the stern, while the steward went ashore and made the all-important purchases.

"You cruise a good deal, I suppose?" was my first question.

"Yes, a fair amount," our host replied. "I pretty well live on board, you know, although I have a small house further north, on Loch Duich, if you know where that is."

Mr. Ewart was born up here, and knows it backwards," Hilderman informed him. And we chatted about the district and the fishing and the views until the steward returned, and we got under weigh. I should have liked to have seen the accommodation below, but the journey was a short one, and I had no opportunity to make the suggestion. Dennis was sitting nearest the rail, and there was a small hank of rope at his feet.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Burnham," said Fuller suddenly. "I didn't notice that rope was in your way." And he leaned over and tossed the rope away. As he did so some hard object fell with a clatter from the coil.

"It's not interfering with me in the least," laughed Dennis, and looked down at a large, bone-handled clasp-knife which had dropped in front of him. He picked it up idly, and weighed it in his hand.

"Useful sort of implement," he said.

"Oh, these sailor-chaps like a big knife more than anything," said Hilderman; "and, of course, they need them strong. I daresay that has been used for anything, from primitive carpentry to cutting tobacco. The one knife always does for everything."

We continued our conversation while Dennis idly examined the knife, opening it and studying the blade absently. Presently Fuller, noticing his absorption, began to chaff him about it.

"Well," he laughed, "have you compiled a complete history of the knife and its owner? If you're ready to sit an examination on the subject I will constitute myself examiner, then we'll find who the knife belongs to, and corroborate or contradict your conclusions."

"It's a very ordinary knife to find on board a boat, I should think," said Dennis.

"Oh come, Mr. Burnham," Hilderman joined in, "you mustn't wriggle out of it. Surely you can answer Mr. Fuller's questions."

"If Mr. Fuller will allow me to put one or two preliminary questions to him," Dennis replied, entering into the spirit of the fun, "I am ready to go into the witness-box and swear quite a number of fanciful things."

"Come now, Fuller," chaffed Hilderman. "You must give him a run for his money, you know. He is risking his reputation at a moment's notice. I think you ought to let him ask you three questions, at any rate."

"Fire away, Mr. Burnham," said our host. "I'll give you a start of three questions, and then you must be prepared to answer every reasonable question I put to you, or be branded publicly as an unreliable witness and an incompetent detective."

Dennis puffed at his pipe and smiled, and I was surprised to see that he really was bringing his mind to bear on the trivial problem with all the acuteness he had in him.

"Well, in the first place," he asked, "do you stop in port very often overnight, or for any length of time during the day?"

"I never stop in port longer than I can help," laughed Fuller, "or the owner of that knife would probably take the opportunity of buying a new one, and throwing this old thing away. All the same, I don't see how that is going to help you."

"Ah," said Dennis, in bantering vein, "you mustn't expect me to give away my process, you know. The secret's been in the family for years."

"What's your second question, Den?" I asked.

"Is there a hotel within reasonable distance of your house on Loch Whatever-it-is, Mr. Fuller?"

"Loch Duich?" our host replied. There's one about six miles by road and eleven or twelve by the sea."

"I don't think I need ask you the third question, then," said Dennis. "You can begin your examination now."

"Now, Mr. Burnham," Fuller commenced, "you quite understand that anything you say will be taken down in writing, and may be used as evidence against you?"

"I assure you I have a keen appreciation of the gravity of the situation," Dennis replied seriously.

"Well," said Fuller, "I'll begin with an easy one—one that won't tax your powers of observation beyond endurance."

"Yes," I urged, "let him down gently. He does his best."

"What profession does the owner of that knife follow?"

Hilderman and I laughed.

"We may as well count that answer as read," he said.

"There's a catch there, Dennis," I warned him. "The legal designation is 'mariner.'"

"I don't think it is," said my friend.

"We won't quarrel about terms," laughed our host graciously. "Sailor or seaman or deckhand will do just as well."

"No," said Dennis, "it won't. The owner of this knife is not a sailor by profession."

"But," Fuller protested, "it must belong to one of my crew, and it is obviously a seaman's knife."

"In that case," Dennis answered, "I think you'll find that you have a man on board who is not a professional seaman in the ordinary use of the term. I'll tell you what I think of this knife, shall I?"

"By all means," urged Hilderman and his friend together, and I began to take a keen interest in this curious discussion, for I could see that Dennis was no longer playing. He turned the knife over in his hand, and looked up at Fuller.

"Mr. Fuller," he said quietly, "the owner of this knife is not a sailor by profession. He is probably a schoolmaster. I can't be sure of that, but I can say this definitely: he is a professional man of some sort, possibly an engineer, but, as I say, more probably a mathematical master. He is left-handed, has red hair, a wife, and at least one child."

I shouted with laughter when I realized how thoroughly my friend had pulled my leg, but I broke off abruptly when Hilderman sat bolt upright in his chair and Fuller's cigar fell unheeded to the deck. But in a second they took their cue from me, and roared with laughter.

"Oh, excellent, Mr. Burnham," said Hilderman between his guffaws. "But you forgot to mention that his sister married a butcher's assistant."

"Ah, but I don't admit she did," Dennis protested.

"I'm very much indebted to you for exposing this masquerader," said Fuller. "I shall have the matter inquired into. But seriously, Mr. Burnham, you made one extraordinary fluke in your deductions, which almost took my breath away. I have a man on board with red hair, and when the boat came into the harbor he was working about here. I saw him leave his work to come ashore for us. I shouldn't be at all surprised to find that the knife belonged to him."

"Oh, well," Dennis laughed, "one shot right is not a bad average for a beginner, you know."

"No," said Hilderman, puffing a cloud of smoke, and dreamily following its ascent with his eyes, "not bad at all. Not bad at all."

And then, the joke of the clasp-knife being played out, we admired the scenery, and conversed of less speculative subjects till we arrived at Glasnabinnie.

We were pulled ashore by the man with the red hair, and when our boat confronted him with the knife he promptly claimed it.

"I think you won, Mr. Burnham," laughed Fuller, and Dennis smiled in reply. We slid alongside the landing-stage and stepped out, and Dennis's schoolmaster was about to slip the painter through a ring and make the boat fast. But evidently the ring was broken. The man came ashore, and Hilderman began to lead us up the path. But Dennis deliberately turned and watched the sailor. Hilderman and his companion strolled ahead while I stood beside Dennis. The man with the red hair fished among a pile of wire rope, and picked out a small marline-spike. Then he lifted a large stone, held the marline-spike on the wooden planking of the landing-stage, and hammered it in with the stone. Then he threw the painter round it, and made the boat secure in that way.

"Yes," murmured Dennis quietly, as we turned to join the others, "I think I won."

For the man had held the stone in his left hand.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Further Mystery.

"Well," said Hilderman, as we caught them up, "what about lunch? After his journey I daresay Mr. Burnham has an appetite, not to mention his excursion into the realm of detective fiction."

"We lunched at Mallaig," I explained, "with Mr. Garnesk before we saw him off."

"Oh, did you?" he asked, with evident surprise. "I didn't see you at the hotel."

"We went to the Marine," I replied, "to save ourselves a climb up the hill."

"We had a snack at Mallaig, too," the American continued, "intending to lunch here. Are you sure you couldn't manage something?"

"It would have to be a very slight something," Dennis put in. "But I daresay we could manage that."

"Good!" said Hilderman. "Come along, then, and let's see what we can do."

We strolled into the drawing-room through the inevitable verandah, and though Hilderman was the tenant of the furnished house he had contrived to impart a suggestion of his own personality to the room. The furniture was arranged in a delightfully lazy manner that almost made you yawn. The walls were hung with photographic enlargements of some of the most beautiful spots in the neighborhood. I remembered what Myra had told me as to his being an enthusiastic photographer, so I asked him about them.

"Did you take these, Mr. Hilderman?"

"Yes," he answered. "These are just a few of the best. I have many others which I should like you to see some time. I always leave the enlarging to keep me alive during the winter months. These are a few odd ones I enlarged for decorative purposes."

"They are beautiful," I said enthusiastically, for they were real beauties, more like drawings in monochrome than photographs. "And you certainly seem to have got about the neighborhood since your arrival."

"Yes," he laughed, "I don't miss much when I get out with my camera. Most of these were taken during the first month of my stay here."

"These snow scenes from the Cuillins are simply gorgeous, and surely this is the Kingie Pool on the Garry?"

"Right first time," he admitted, evidently pleased to see his work admired. I thought of Garnesk's suspicion that our American friend was engaged on detective work of some kind, and it struck me that with his camera and his obvious talent he had an excellent excuse for going almost anywhere, supposing he were called upon at any time to explain his presence in some outlandish spot.

"You must have kept yourself exceedingly busy," I remarked in conclusion.

(To be continued.)

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Wind and Weeds.

In Sumatra the length of time a widow must wear her weeds is determined by the wind. After her husband's death she plants a flagstaff at her door, upon which a flag is hoisted. While the flag remains untorn by the wind etiquette forbids that she should marry. But as soon as a rent appears, no matter how tiny, she can lay aside her weeds.

Minard's Liniment for Grippe and Flu.

"Just Wummun."

It is odd that two of the most appealing and renowned Scottish songs of lowly life—songs that anyone not informed to the contrary would surely guess to be true folk songs born of the people—were written by titled ladies. Auld Robin Gray was written by Lady Anne Barnard, and Caller Herrin' by Lady Nairne. Both are admirable achievements of sympathetic imaginative art; yet the shrewd Laird of Dalziel was able to pick a flaw in Auld Robin Gray, as Lady Anne herself has appreciatively recorded. She was the eldest daughter of the Earl of Balcarres, and never a professional writer; and she tried hard to preserve her anonymity. But in the end the immense vogue of the song proved too much for her.

"I was persecuted to avow whether I had written it or not, or where I got it," she wrote in 1823. "However, I kept my counsel in spite of the gratification of seeing a reward of twenty guineas offered in the newspapers to the person who should ascertain the point past doubt. I must also mention the Laird of Dalziel's advice, who in a tete-a-tete afterwards said, "My dear, the next time you sing that song try to change the words a wee bit and, instead of singing, "To make the croun a pund young Jamie gaed to sea," say "To make it twenty merks"; for a Scottish pound is but twenty pence, and Jamie was na scuh a gowk as to leave Jennie and gang to sea to lessin his gear. It is that line,' whispered he, 'which tells me that sang was written by some lassie that didna ken the value of the Scot's money quite so well as an auld writer in the town of Edinbro' would have kept it.' "

Lady Nairne made no such slip when she was moved to composition by the cry of the fishwives passing along George Street, Edinburgh, burdened with their creels of fish that weighed from one and a half to two hundred pounds and calling musically the traditional words, 'Caller (fresh) herrin'! Caller herrin'! Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?"

She set the words of her song to an old familiar tune of Neil Gow, and they caught the public heart and fancy at once. There is no smallest false touch of ladyship to mar the unforgetable appeal of the fishermen's wives: Wha'll buy my called herrin'?
Oh, ye may ca' them vulgar farin';
Wives and mithers, maist despairin',
Ca' them lives o' men!

"Aye," said a Scotch fishwife with whom a tourist chanced to fall into a conversation in which Lady Nairne was mentioned. "Aye, ma'am, she was a leddy, nae doot; but the hairt in her was juist wumman!"

Why Stars Twinkle.

If you look at the heavens on a clear, starry night, you will notice that some of the myriad bright points twinkle, whilst others shine with a perfectly steady light.

Those which shine with unwavering brilliance are the planets, worlds like our own earth, which revolve as it does, round the sun. But the twinklers are stars. They are themselves distant suns, many of them bigger than our own.

Our sun, for instance, is 800,000 miles in diameter, but Betelgeuse, a star in the great constellation of Orion, is no less than 200,000,000 miles across.

Now, why should planets shine steadily and stars twinkle? Some people are satisfied with the answer that twinkling is caused by the mistiness of our atmosphere. But that is no explanation at all, for planets must send their rays through just the same amount of atmosphere as stars.

The real reason is twofold. In the first place, the stars are thousands and thousands of times more distant than the planets, so that their rays have to pass over far greater distances of space to reach us. Now, though there is no air in space, there are countless millions of tiny bodies constantly travelling through it. Some are no bigger than pebbles others are of great size It is those bodies passing through the rays of a star that are the main cause of its twinkling.

The other reason is that, whilst the planets have no light of their own, but merely reflect the sun's brilliance, the stars are always sending out their own light, which is more brilliant at some times than at others.

Christening the Months.

The names of the months, as we know them today, date back to the days of the Caesars, and several of them show the influence of the belief in pagan deities.

January is named for Janus, the two-faced god, in order to signify the idea that this month looked forward to the new year as well as back upon the old. February takes its name from the Latin februare, to purify, because in that month ceremonies of funeral purification were held in Rome. March was called after Mars, the god of war, while April was derived from the Latin aperire, to open, this being the period of the yar when trees commence to bud. May was named for Maia, the goddess of growth, and June, July and August perpetuate the names of three of Rome's famous men—Junius, Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar.

As the Roman calendar originally began with March, the month which we know as September was the seventh, and owes its name to this fact—as do October, November and December, which were to the earlier Romans the eighth, ninth, and tenth months.

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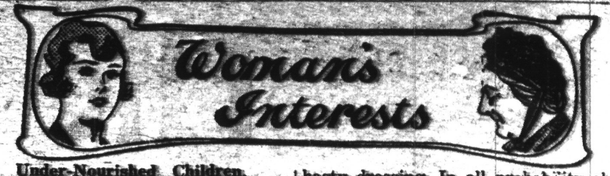

Under-Nourished Children.

During a recent inspection of school children by a trained nurse in a small city some startling facts were brought out about poorly nourished children. Many families with two or three children had not a pint of milk for the daily allowance for the whole family, while butter was rarely seen on the tables. These poor families aroused the sympathies of club and church ladies, who immediately took steps to supply the children with pure fresh milk daily, so that their poor little starved bodies might have a chance to develop to the standard of normal beings.

But among the poorly nourished youngsters were a number who had recently moved in from the country, and whose indignant parents had much to say that was unkind and impolite in regard to the reports of the nurse. But when they took the children to the family physician the verdict was the same. Under weight, poorly equipped to resist disease, under size and not normal physically because of lack of proper food. Then it came out that the children "hated" milk and would not touch butter. They ate greedily of meat, white bread and potatoes, but used little fruit and eggs. The parents trusting to time to bring them out all right had not attempted to force them to eat wholesome things; indeed, they hardly knew what children should eat. Yet the man could talk intelligently on balanced rations for pigs and sheep and horses, and his wife could raise chickens better than most of her neighbors, as she proudly informed folks. They knew how to feed for pork and lambs and eggs, but they did not know what was good for children.

With many children it is a whim that they will not touch milk, and often economical parents rejoice when the larger amount of whole milk or cream or butter goes to market because the children do not care for it. But those who are informed as to the needs of growing boys and girls disguise the milk so that the boys and girls get enough each day while thinking they dislike it. In milk soups, gravies, custards, ice cream, puddings and bread the life-giving elements are introduced and the boys and girls eat them unknowingly. To be sure, fresh, sweet milk uncooked is better than milk boiled, but by going at the thing gradually it is easy to inculcate a liking for milk and cream and butter. Take mashed potatoes, for example. Fresh, sweet cream and butter can be beaten into the mashed potatoes without the long boiling that milk gets in gravy, and the effect is almost the same as if the butter were spread on bread and the cream used on cereal. Whipped cream sweetened and mixed lightly with warm tapioca or served with berries is relished by children who will tell you that they do not like milk. By calling it pudding, sauce or salad dressing, the youngsters will eat cream and butter unhesitatingly and get all the benefits therefrom.

Children must have butter, milk, eggs, cream and fruits to thrive and to gain in weight and height. The farmer is alarmed when the pig or the lamb or the colt does not thrive, and immediately changes the feed and tries to discover the cause, but few families ever think to weigh the children and change their diet when they lack vigor. The common idea is to buy something in a bottle with which to dose them, when good food would accomplish the same or better results in less time and without injury to the stomach. A visit with the children to the family physician two or three times a year, and a heart to heart talk with him about the proper food would save many wrecked lives and many undertakers' bills. Be sure that your children are getting at least a quart of pure milk daily for each one, with butter thickly spread on good bread, and cream on cereals. Then you will see results just as you see results in feeding animals correctly. If it pays to study the needs of animals, and it does, it pays much better to study the proper diet for your children.

Her Back Hair.

She sat directly in front of me, and as the lecture was not especially interesting, I found myself studying the characteristics revealed by the back hair of my neighbor in front.

To begin with, the hair was heavy for nature had been generous, but the close, clinging strands showed an over-oily condition, and when the rays of sunshine slanted across the loose mass, it was clearly dusty. So I decided that my neighbor in front was not particular about herself or she would not permit her crown of glory to be other than delightfully clean.

Then, the arrangement of her hair showed me several things. Part of the strands were twisted up without having been properly combed into a soft, smooth mass, and the hairpins were stuck in any old way to hold it up. It was evident that it looked all right in the front and at the sides, but in the back it was a "sight."

By this time I had lost all track of what the lecturer was saying and had decided that my neighbor in front was not only slack about her person, but careless and rather lazy. The reason I decided she was lazy was because her hair showed evidences of constant hasty dressing. In all probability she slept until the last minute and then wisped it up any old way.

Her belt did not cover her skirt band neatly, for when she arose at the close of the lecture her waist was pulled up too far, showing that it had not been fastened properly in the first place.

The woman who sat in front turned slowly around, and really she was quite attractive and there was nothing especially to criticize in the front view, but it was a case of a "Queen Ann front and a Mary Ann back."

As I went out from the audience room I couldn't help wondering if her clothes closet was not in disorder at home, her bureau drawers more or less upset, the kitchen cupboards in a state of confusion, and her parlor quite respectably tidy, giving a rather false impression of what would be found elsewhere.

After all, one's back hair does reveal a lot concerning character, and the artists on the stage and on the funny page have not been too wide of the mark when they have represented particular women as anxious on this point. One's back hair is more or less of an index or barometer. Take your own hand miror occasionally and see if this isn't true!

Revive This Old Custom.

It used to be the custom for one member of a family to seat himself by the fireplace on a cold winter's night, after the chores were done and the dishes washed, and read aloud to an interested and attentive audience. Many of the conditions which formerly encouraged the practice of reading aloud no longer exist, for in earlier days reading matter was scarce, the fireplace was the main source of heat, and the tallow candle or oil lamp furnished accommodation for but one person.

If we of to-day have gained much, we have also lost much; from this practice there are benefits to be derived as valuable to-day as they were fifty years ago. Among these benefits, was the exchanging of ideas made possible by the whole family's consideration of the same subject. The voicing of various opinions led to conversation and argument and discouraged any one from becoming unreasonably set in his own ideas. The reading took the minds of the family away from the weather, neighborhood gossip or family troubles.

Homes where family singing is the practice have another source of endless pleasure at their own hearth, for the good old songs, gaily sung, are wholesome and cheering.

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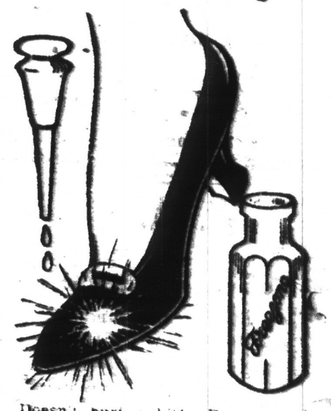

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