

White", "Dracula" or "The Beetle". Here, too, the novelist must retain his sense of proportion for an excess of villainy, even as a multiplicity of villains, inclines towards the ludicrous. Personally, the celebrated Professor Moriarty, the master-mind of crime, has always left me cold, probably for the simple reason that Sherlock Holmes leaves no place for a second super-man upon the canvas. The renown of that interminably spun-out tale "The Woman in White" rests uniquely upon the character of the villain. In creating Count Fosco, with his birds and his mellow tenor voice, the prac-

tised hand of Wilkie Collins distributed the values so perfectly that the figure of the Count haunts the reader's mind long after the intricate plot has been forgotten.

The trouble is that the standard of mystery stories is extremely high, all the way from those glowing opening chapters of *Monte Cristo* to the strange ship in "The Wrecker". Today celebrated novelists, their fame already secure in other branches of their calling, have begun to try their hand at shockers, with a varied degree of success which suggests that the writing of thrillers is not quite so easy as it looks.

VISITER WISE

Being Some Episodes in the Life of

Maurice Montmorency Wise

Taken Down and Edited by

Ethelreda Reddy

CHAPTER I

IMMEJETLY on arriving in New York which is a big city but not as big as they think it is I looked up my old friend T—— the whitest man that ever was except for his liver and his blood was true blue. The first thing he said was Will you have a wet, so after our first duck and doris I said, Where do you get the Stuff I thought you could not get any lickier hear. That is only a rumour, he replied.

After another wet, Put on your hat said my pal and we will take a promenade round this burg and I will have you meet some of the Girls. He was as good as his word and a little better for I met many of the Girls and must say there is no finer built race though sometimes their feet are big.

As the shades of night were falling we par-took of dinner at the R—— hotel, a palatial eating house but very full of chatter and re-

minded me of the monkeys on the Ogowe. (And after all what else are we except that we do not know so well what is good for us?) And from there we went to a theater where we were unwilling witnesses of an entertainment in which many of the so-called performers were half naykid. Whew let me out of this, I said to my pal for I saw all this long ago in Africa and it has no Novelty for me. I think you are right he answered and we had better go and have another wet. This I preferred.

* * *

"How do you like it so far? My spelling may be a bit Shaky, though John did say it was noble, but better the right word spelt wrong than the wrong word spelt right! And style—that's what counts! Style plus common sense! The trouble with most of these so-called writers is that they haven't either. Style in books is like charm in people—they're very unattractive without it.

"Judy — she had style — too much of it. It rattled as she walked. . . . Oh, didn't I tell you about Judy? Well, we'll get to her soon. Always keep the good bits for the next chapter! Not that Judy was a good bit — far from it. But then goodness is out of fashion in America. Morality there is whatever you want; but as none of them know what they want morality preserves its mystery.

"Well, ma'm, I'll be getting along to sell some more insurance. I'd sooner be earning an honest living, but you can't afford to be honest till you're rich, and by then you've lost the habit."

CHAPTER 2

Punkchel to the minute my friend came in the morning. It was Sunday and I joined him in his lengthy auto and lay nonchalantly back into the de luxe upholstery. Fifth Avenue is really a snappy street. Every time the lights on the towers went red which they do to block the traffic, out would come with the speed of lightning my friend's Flask and we would just have time for a tot before the lights turned green and the shoffer trod on it again. Our course lay over a long cacophonous bridge and then through savage villages. It seemed an Aeternity. At last my pal informed me We are in the country now but it looked to me more like an automobile show. Only I did not say so because my pal is still in some ways an American. The shoffering was very funny and the Antics of the fords full of sudden variety so that I wished I had my gun with me. Snipe shooting is the best but next after that I would like to take pot shots at a flighty ford.

With only a few stops to examine our fenders which had suffered in the fray we reached our Destination and drew up in front of a mansion which my pal said was the largest gabled house in that part of the island built of brick on clay soil. As soon as I got inside and saw on a table several thousand magazines and Periodicals I said, Oho this looks like a hotel. Ssh, said my friend T—, of course it does and that is just how he wants it to look because he is the second richest man in the state and this godawful thing is the

Klimax of his Desires. At lunch there were many guests and all of them were second richest men somewhere so I began to wonder why we were included. The explanation was that in all such gatherings one or two poor men are asked in order that there may be a Sprinkling of intelligence. Champagne was served Constantly. After lunch we sat about in the grounds while few if any spoke until it was time for tea when they served more champagne.

As the shadows lengthened we wended our way back to the metropolis but so many others had the same idea that the procession was like a Funeral in speed and I said to my friend, I hope no snail jumps out and asks us to have a race.

I found Judy with whom we had arranged a Date waiting for us. She was dressed up to the Nines that is to say very little. I told her I could not see what kept her dress up, Of course you cant she said. We wound up this amusing day by painting the town Red which we did until the Wee Small hours.

* * *

"Yes, ma'm, I kept off Judy on purpose. Never put all your girls in one basket. . . . I was a hit with the women in those days, but I wasn't paid according. Women, saving your presence, they're all gold-diggers, but some of them don't let you see them at it. . . . Funny lot, American women! A very moral lot really, but desperately anxious not to seem so. Got up to kill, but won't touch the corpse.

"Are all the theaters bad? No. Only the successful ones. There are folks trying to be arty in New York same as anywhere else, but the New York public is choicy about art. They'll only tolerate it when it's spicy.

"Yes, those millionaires sure do love their champagne — get all careless on it. Did I tell you that after that lunch I saw two of them playing tennis? One went to serve and was so blotto he missed the ball completely. But he made such a striking gesture with his racket his opponent thought the ball had come over, so he went to return it. . . . Quite a long rally they had, with the ball lying in a corner of the court."

CHAPTER 3

The first place to which my friend conducted us was what is known as a Cabber A. Giving the pass-word and a present of do to a man stationed there for that purpose, we wended our way amongst crowds of the rich and Ornate. Presently we were trying to sit at a small table closely pressed by male and female legs. I asked, And now we are here what of it and what do we do. Well, he answered, you can take the Girl here and dance with her and I will overlook it and applaud, and when you feel tired come back here and there will be a wet waiting for you.

With this I gripped my lady friend firmly round the waist though you never can tell in these days and using her as a battering ram forced my way into the very midst of the motley crowd. All was confusion. The lack of breathing spayse seemed if anything to add to the general air of mock enjoyment. The atmosphere which was thick with penetrating perfume was rent with cries of Hoaya

(How do you do) and Kanyabetit (How extraordinary). However the Proximity of a beautifully constructed damsel was not without its Effect which grew greater as the evening progressed and we had several tots. At last I was hardly surprised to here what seemed to be my own voice inquiring Will you marry me say yes or no. Why, she replied I would gladly say yes but it so happens that I am married Already. But I may be divorced one day soon because that often happens in the Staytes and if so shall be pleased to wed with either you or your friend T—— just as you decide.

The three of us had quite a laughing discussion on our way home sweet home as to who should be the Unlucky one. My pal lost the tossup and was married next week in fine style in the cathedral while overhead airoplanes winged their way emitting clouds of white smoke which spelled out across the blue vault the words lucky strike.

— GEOFFREY KERR

The End

THE SLEEPER

(George Sterling—November 1926)

By Dwight L. Clarke

FOR one who lies in slumber on an eve
 When every happy thing with life is warm
 For such should we feel pity? Should we grieve
 That eyes and ears and nostrils do perform
 Their wonted tasks no longer; that the air,
 So vibrant with a music of its own,
 Caressing, finds the sleeper unaware?
 Nay, rather should we leave our friend alone,
 Attended by the concourse of the spheres
 And envy him that mantling time with grace
 As tender shed as any mother's tears,
 Enwrapping him, draws peace across his face.
 For that dark nurse who touched his brow the last
 But lifted crushing weights from off his soul;
 The infinite he groped for in the past
 Become the common trappings of his goal.