

His Bad Half-Hour

by
MARGARET SUTTON BRISCOE

IS Miss Tawnet at home?" asked Governor Worden.

Miss Tawnet's butler opened the door widely and stood aside with the grave genuflection by which he was wont to greet this personage, who was, no doubt, the Chief Executive of the State, but also, as he had cause to suspect, the favored lover of his mistress. With the latter growth of knowledge the genuflection,

the Governor had noted with amusement, became a degree less reverential. When the gods betray like passions as ourselves we may love more—we worship less.

"Miss Tawnet," recited her functionary, "is expecting your Excellency. She is unavoidably detained, but will join your Excellency presently in the library, if your Excellency will wait there for her."

His much betitled Excellency, with little choice in the matter, moved towards the library as one who knew the way, and entering the door, respectfully thrown open for him and softly closed, was in the room which through these latter days had held his happiest hours.

It was a room of stately furnishings, yet homelike, seductive, with an atmosphere as of combined reserve and peculiarly gracious welcome which induced easy talking, and then—easier talk. In a word, the room expressed its mistress. It would not have been like Millicent Tawnet to hold aloof from the political activities which were her father's life and make for herself a secluded feminine nest. Within these four walls State secrets had been discussed, diplomatic moves won and lost, and yet there were everywhere present those pretty, unmistakable signs of a dainty woman's constant occupation. A woman's carefully appointed desk stood in the shadow of the curtained window. A woman's gloves, her veil, lay on a chair—Millicent's.

Governor Worden crossed the room to where the gloves lay and stood drawing them across his palm slowly. Everything about Miss Tawnet was exquisite; even her gloves seemed to have the contagion of her sumptuous yet delicate personality.

Years older than the woman he loved, engrossed in his profession, it might never have occurred to Governor Worden to seek what it now seemed impossible to think of living without, but for a sudden suspicion that Millicent,—amazing suggestion!—cared for him. Since his childhood, when his friend's motherless little girl had appealed to his sympathies, he had been watchful over her, kind in unexpected ways, more than once interfering to suggest a stricter care, a more close fatherly attention; then suddenly it was his right, his privilege, to be to her all that her father was not in care and tenderness, and her lover as well.

The clock above the fireplace struck the hour, eleven, and Governor Worden laid down the gloves, looking up at the timepiece with dissatisfaction. He had an engagement to meet soon after the noon hour, and these lost minutes were shortening his time allowance. He hesitated, glancing toward the library bell as if half deciding to resummon Miss Tawnet's servant, but on second thought he turned and took up a package which, on his entrance, was laid aside with his hat and gloves. It had been handed to him by a messenger as he left his house; the seal was still unbroken.

Breaking open the package, he now drew out the contents—a second envelope with enclosures and a letter. He glanced at the signature of the letter, and his frown deepened as he attentively read the communication itself:

"YOUR EXCELLENCY,—In the course of a recent call at the office of a certain journal whose editors are under some slight obligations to me, I was shown a package containing several letters and photographs awaiting publication. One of each of these I take the liberty to enclose, having with difficulty obtained them. How they fell into the hands of the aforesaid journal I was not informed. The publications contemplated would probably be in the customary semi-disguised form, but it occurred to me that your Excellency might prefer entire suppression. If this is the case and I am notified, at the address above, by noon, or a little later, to-day, I think I can bring pressure that will secure the immediate destruction of the remainder of the package. Awaiting your pleasure in the matter. Yours respectfully, HENRY BERAND."

On the back of the envelope enclosed was scrawled the name of a notorious journal that lived by its license.

"Blackmail! And the cheapest kind of blackmail!" said Governor Worden, aloud. He stood with the unopened envelope in his hand, looking down at it.

He knew what Henry Berand wanted and the least that would satisfy him. A third-rate politician, yet called a "useful man," his claim to some recompense for services in the late campaign had been persistently urged upon the Governor, and the minor appointment where his Excellency had refused to place Berand was still unfilled. Persuasion having failed, this was the next move in order. Governor Worden had not passed through his many years of public life to escape attempts at blackmail, and his simple, invariable custom had been curtly to show the door to both evidence and sponsor. Why in this case he hesitated he hardly knew, but after a moment's pause he shook out the contents of the envelope; in so doing they somehow escaped from his hold and fell to the floor. As he glanced down, with a start of recognition he saw the lovely, pictured face, the girlish, appealing eyes, of the woman he loved looking up at him. His instant emotion was a quick, fastidious repulsion from the thought that Berand, a camp-follower of the great political army, whom Millicent could never have known, should never know, had yet held in his possession, however briefly, so intimate a memorial of her. It was a photograph, one he had never seen before, a charming likeness, but a younger Millicent, less formed, less conventional than the world now knew her, though no more freshly beautiful. Across the corner of the card in her unique, graceful handwriting—this, too, less formed than now—was traced "*Your Millicent.*" Beside the photograph lay the scattered pages of a letter. The letter-paper, blue-tinted, with an odd watered fibre, Governor Worden recognized as instantly as he had the photograph. Although a woman of mode, Miss Tawnet was independent and faithful in her fancies. This blue, watered paper, on which her lovely womanly letters now came to him, was the same that she had used in her young girlhood, when she had acknowledged the little gifts he sent to her. It was a paper her father imported for his dainty, fastidious daughter, whose whims he was thus as careful to indulge as if he were the thoughtful parent he never had been when more serious matters were in question.

Governor Worden stooped hastily, gathering up the letter and photograph. Millicent's light step was on the stair, the rustle of her gown at the door. But as he thrust the blue sheets, with the photograph, into their envelope, one of the loose pages unfolded in his hand, and his unwilling eyes identified that same immature handwriting, caught the repeated signature, "*Your Millicent.*" He flung the package aside on the table as the door opened.

"I have always thought," said Governor Worden, as he stood looking into the antique, round mirror that hung above the library fireplace, "that this was the most fascinating mirror I ever saw."

Apparently he was thinking aloud, his elbow on the mantel, his back to the room, but his eyes were not on the mirror's beautiful, gilded frame, with its ropes of wreathed garlands, its cupids; he was gazing at the charming image crossing the glass. The image responded by drawing nearer and lifting a laughing, mischievous face against his shoulder. She was so near that her lover had only to raise his arm to draw her close to him, only to bend his head, and his face was pressed upon her soft lifted cheek, her soft dark hair.

"Do you really like that mirror so much?" said Miss Tawnet. "I don't know—I don't think I admire it extravagantly, not today, anyhow."

"Now that is too barefaced, Millicent!" laughed Governor Worden. "Suppose I did not contradict you—how disappointed you would be."

"Yes, I think I should," she admitted, "for, you see, I kept you waiting in order to appear in my new, new gown. Don't tell me you didn't notice it, George. You would break my heart. Isn't it lovely?"

She tried to move aside to show her pretty flowing plumage, a gown of soft, shaded, pastel grays that both enhanced and subdued her brilliant face, her deep, dark eyes. It was the color which, as they both well knew, he loved best to see her wear.

"It is—it is perfect!" said Governor Worden, his eyes never leaving her face.

"Flatterer! But then I love to be flattered. I never was particular about hearing that *truth* some others make such a fuss about. It's these unblushing, delightful fibs, particularly from your Excellency"—she curtsied low in her frothy gray mist—"that I have a weakness for; when you, the Governor of the State—"

He stretched out his arm and drew her back to him, bending to close her teasing lips, but again she broke away, and from a little distance looked up at him, her manner, her face, altering suddenly, still laughing, but wistful.

"Why do you care for me, George? What made you? You could have had—Why, you could have had—any one! And yet, you—"

"Hush, Millicent! Come here, sit by me. I want to talk sensibly with you."

"Is that sensibly? Then tell me first what you have here in

your breast pocket?" She touched his breast lightly with the tip of her dainty forefinger. "Don't you know you ought not to carry stiff square boxes in a breast pocket? If I were your tailor—"

"As you are not, will you kindly sit down here by me and be what you are—my sweet-heart? That's better. Now—all this interest in my personal appearance does not deceive me. You know there is a present for you in my breast pocket, and that's your delicate way of asking to see it."

"Well, I may have suspected it—"

"Expected it, you mean! It will go well with the new, new gown. Beauty should go beautifully."

He drew from his pocket a small square package and dropped it in her lap. She glanced down at it, pleased and smiling.

"You know how I love presents. Give me my hands, George. I can't wait. Ah, let me go!"

He stooped and kissed her hands before he released them, then sat watching her deft fingers untie the knotted ribbon and unwrap the papers. A conventional jewel-box dropped from the wrappings. Her face fell; she looked up, shaking her head at her lover and not touching the case, which lay on her lap.

"What did I tell you? I said *no more jewels*."

Governor Worden laughed guiltily.

"I couldn't help it, Millicent—this time. To tell the sober truth, I bought it for you some while ago, and have been afraid to give it to you. I stumbled on it, and then I had to have it. It looked like you—sumptuous, and yet the most delicate, graceful thing. I admit it is a little superb, but you'll have to forgive it this one time. I seemed to see you wearing it. It sold itself to me—I didn't buy it. And then, at this season, I can't always find autumn leaves and daisy chains."

It was an old contention between them—his delight in showering costly gifts upon her, her insistence that his tributes should be extremely simple. She loved gifts, almost childishly, and her love of the beautiful was fairly a passion, but only the simplest gifts from him seemed to give her pleasure. He looked down at her with deepening tenderness as she sat fingering the still unopened jewel-box almost unhappily. He understood her. This was her only betrayal of sensitiveness as to the difference in their ages, the distinction of his official position. Lifting the drooping face, he kissed tenderly her lips, her flushed cheek, the beautiful eyes, before he answered her half-spoken protests.

"There is a story that goes with this gift, Millicent. You'll say I was right to buy it when you hear the story. You worship children so—and it's the story of a child, a little afflicted child. I bought this of Judge Wells. You remember him and his brasses and silver and collections of all kinds? Well, this was in his gem collection. He told me he had bought it of a young friend at a price much below the gem's real value, because the owner would accept no more than what would cover the expense of treatment for a little lame child in whom he was interested. He seemed, Judge Wells said, to wish, for some reason of his own, to dedicate the jewel to that special service. When he saw how the gem attracted me, the judge insisted that I might have it for the trifling price he paid for it. Now isn't that a charming history? And just suited to you?"

"Yes," agreed Miss Tawnet, laughing. "You ought never to have left the bar, George. Is this the logical, persuasive way you argued all your cases? But I won't take your gift—just yet. I am sure, by this elaborate brief and your look of supreme innocence, that this is one of the most superb 'little things' you have ever yet given me. And then I want to have a talk with you to-day before we open anything else. There—there is something I meant to tell you to-day. I have tried so often before, but—it hasn't been told. I don't want to tell it! That's why I didn't come down to you at once. I was waiting for courage."

"And is that the why of the new, new gown?"

"Perhaps." She laughed, hesitated, flushed; then spoke hurriedly. "I—I was engaged once before, George."

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"Once? Only once!" said Governor Worden.

"Don't laugh! I wanted you to know, because I really want to try to be worthy of you—to be as direct, as truthful as you always are."

"My dear, you are not a man!"

But she went on unheeding, "I don't want you to be thinking of me as better than I am."

"But, dear child, I don't. Have I ever said I thought of you as a particularly good little girl?"

"No; don't be nice to me yet. I haven't confessed the worst yet. I don't think you can know how hard it is for me to tell!"

"It's hard because it's so totally unnecessary, Millicent."

He looked down at her, smiling quizzically, but in earnest.

"Do you think yourself quite the type that is made in a nunnery? When you did me the honor to accept me, I never, not for a moment, was so fatuous as to imagine I dropped from a perfectly clear sky into your full, brilliant life. I knew I fell on my feet—that's enough for me."

Miss Tawnet laughed in spite of herself.

"I don't think this is very nice of you. You make me feel as if I were a morbid, confessing schoolgirl. But I know I am right. I know it is important for me to be frank with you."

"Is it half so important as that I cannot stay with you longer than noon today? All this retrospection and introspection is crowding out something infinitely more precious and enduring. But clear your conscience if you must, dear. Only, first understand clearly, whatever has been can only have helped to make you—just what you are; and that—to me—is perfect."

She drew a little away from him, as if his nearness unnerved her, and spoke gravely:

"From the day I was engaged to you I have known I should sometime feel I must tell you all this, and I have wondered over and over how, after I had told you, I could ever make you understand that it isn't ambition now that—that— Oh! it isn't like me, saying all this! No. Let me go on now. What I want you to know is— It was not just a schoolgirl fancy that came and went lightly. I wasn't much more than a schoolgirl—but I don't mean to begin with excuses. No one knew but our parents, and it was my father who broke the engagement. It had seemed to be a very wealthy marriage for me, and suddenly all the money was lost. It was then my father decided I was too young to know my own mind. But—he wasn't one to be lightly forgotten. I owed him, I owe him still, very much in very many ways. It was he who taught me to love little children. I have never seen any one who loved and perfectly understood them as he did. It was some time before I—got over it. I couldn't at first part with his ring. I did worse! I let him leave me, bound, and I free. I was to send his ring back to him if I ever wished to release him, and—I have only lately released him. I wore his ring on a chain about my neck up to the very hour you spoke to me. Then, of course, it was sent back at once. It had gradually come to be a kind of talisman to me, I think. It seemed to keep me from thinking of any one else; until I found myself caring before I knew it—or you knew it. I couldn't have acted worse, you see. I haven't always thought so, but now—I think I have been seeing it as I thought you would. That's why I must tell you. But do you understand that it isn't satisfied ambition now that makes—" Her voice died away.

Governor Worden had sat motionless, listening gravely, watching her white face, her quivering lips. As its tremor broke her voice he spoke at once, quietly and very gently.

"Yes, I ought to have known this. You were right to tell me. I have never seen you so stirred, Millicent. You are still so young there must be the natural appeal to you in the memory of a young lover with his future all before him. I have only the last of a life to offer you, and that—absorbed. I have always questioned my right to ask you for your youth, your bloom. Listen to me, dear! Don't speak yet. You say you have but lately released him. It is not likely that he has forgotten you— No! I can act as your father might—and this time—Millicent!"

She was in his arms, on his breast, clinging to him with a passion of sobbing, an abandon of distress. He could only soothe her, holding her close, comforting her, his face against her tear-wet cheek, answering her broken whispers by silent caresses. But she would be answered in words.

"Yes," he yielded at last. "Yes. Child, I am only too easy to convince! Yes, I promise. No, I never will again. But I can offer you so little that youth cares for— Love, can't you understand? . . ."

"It seems to me," said Governor Worden, "that this is the ordained moment for the presentation of my gift. We can regard it—can't we?—as a second betrothal love-token. Then you won't mind if it is a bit sumptuous; it ought to be."

Miss Tawnet smiled her assent. The bright color had come back to her cheeks, her eyelashes were still wet; behind them her dark eyes shone out, brilliant, yet softened.

"Give me your hand and shut your eyes," said Governor Worden.

He was stripping the rings from her right hand as he spoke.

"Now remember, this cost much less than its value; think of it, oh, woman, as a bargain! I confess it does rather burst out as one opens the box. It will be subdued on your hand. The setting is unusual, and the color is really magnificent. There! It fits to perfection—as if it were made for you. No, don't open your eyes yet. I'll tell you what it looks like. Of course you feel it's a ring. It's a great

blood-red ruby, blood, blood-red, held between two arabesque gold and diamond hearts. I told you not to look yet!"

Miss Tawnet had opened her eyes and she sat gazing at the ring on her hand. She did not move or speak. The smile had left her red lips, which were slightly parted. It was as if the sight of the jewelled ring had turned her to stone; she seemed not to breathe.

"You do like it, then?" said Governor Worden.

He looked at her questioningly, and her dark eyes met his, frightened, doubtful.

"You—you don't know?" she whispered, breathlessly, and as his astonished gaze answered her she cried out sharply, her hand held out to him.

"Oh, take it away! Take it off—quickly! Suppose I hadn't told you, suppose you had learned it—this way. I can't wear this. Don't you understand? It's the—the ring I told you of, the one I have worn!"

"As for this," said Governor Worden, closing the ring-box upon its contents, "you have no cause to wonder what we can do with it, for I have already decided. I mean to have the beautiful,



Sat gazing . . . as if the sight of the jewelled ring had turned her to stone

bewitched thing burned at the stake, and present the melted gold and the gems to the children's hospital. That ought to break the spell, and please every one concerned. As for you, Millie—can't you laugh at this, just a little, yet? No? Well, I don't blame you. It was—I hardly know what to say it was. Very *serio-comedy*? Now run up-stairs and change that becoming gray cloud for a plain walking dress. Mrs. Grundy to the contrary, we'll have a brisk walk together."

But Miss Tawnet shook her head.

"Not quite yet," she said, seriously. "This has been a lesson to me. I shall never keep any secret from you again. If you had given me your gift before I told you—and you almost did—oh! you would never have forgiven me! You couldn't, hearing by chance what I ought to have confessed to you long ago. I suppose my desk over there in the window will fall apart before I can say it, but lying in that locked drawer is a package of letters—my own old letters—and some photographs that were returned to me when I sent back the ring, with—with a letter, which is there too."

"You don't want me to read those letters, Millie? I will not—"

"I wouldn't have you read one of them, not for anything on earth!" She spoke quickly, startled; but recovering herself with a laugh. "Not altogether for the reasons you think," she added. "They are—they are love-letters, of course, but they are the oddest political documents as well. I must have been in love with politics even then. They are full of everything I ever overheard you and my father talking about, and I evidently overheard more than either of you knew. I read them with horror. And I ran across some almost damaging admissions of little negotiations made over your head and under your feet. That was in the days when my father dared to take more liberties with you than he would venture now. Then you weren't so important. They are the letters of an *enfant terrible*. If my father should see them—I really think he'd turn me out of the house; and I wouldn't blame him!"

"You know where to come when that happens."

"Oh, you might very well be angry too. They can't be burned too soon." Miss Tawnet was unlocking her desk drawer, taking from it a package of blue-tinted letters and some photographs. Returning to the centre of the room, she knelt down by the open grate, thrusting the letters and pictures into the fire, then stood watching them flame up and blaze to ashes.

"I have left," she said, with a little embarrassed effort, "the letter that came with these over there on my desk, and I would like to have you read it, please. The signature I have torn off, because I felt you might prefer not to know—as he has gone out of our lives now, forever. But if you think I should tell you—"

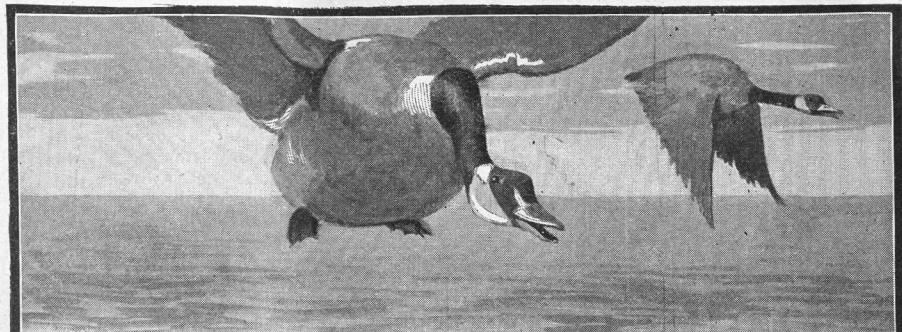
He interrupted her.

"If you want me to read the letter, Millie, I will, of course—with the signature gone. Do you think any one would know, by any present evidence, that I am due at an important meeting? Also I ought to send off a note by noon. May I write it at your desk? And will you be good enough to have a messenger called for me? No, I think I'll not use that delicate-fibred blue paper—if you don't mind, unless you are ready to announce our engagement. Now hurry into your street wrappings while I write my note."

Alone in the room, Governor Worden sat at Miss Tawnet's desk looking down at the sheet of blank paper before him. Berand had shrewdly left him but little time for thought. Two facts his communications had at once proved to Governor Worden.

First, that his peculiar interest in Miss Tawnet was no longer a strict secret from the world; secondly, he was not the freelance he had been; he had given at last the great hostage to fortune, and before he was fairly used to the new responsibility it was to be turned as a weapon against him. It had been his fearless custom to throw down the gauntlet and let follow what might; he had now to learn what it meant—facing penalty for a hostage.

He rose finally and went to the table where lay the vexatious package. Carrying



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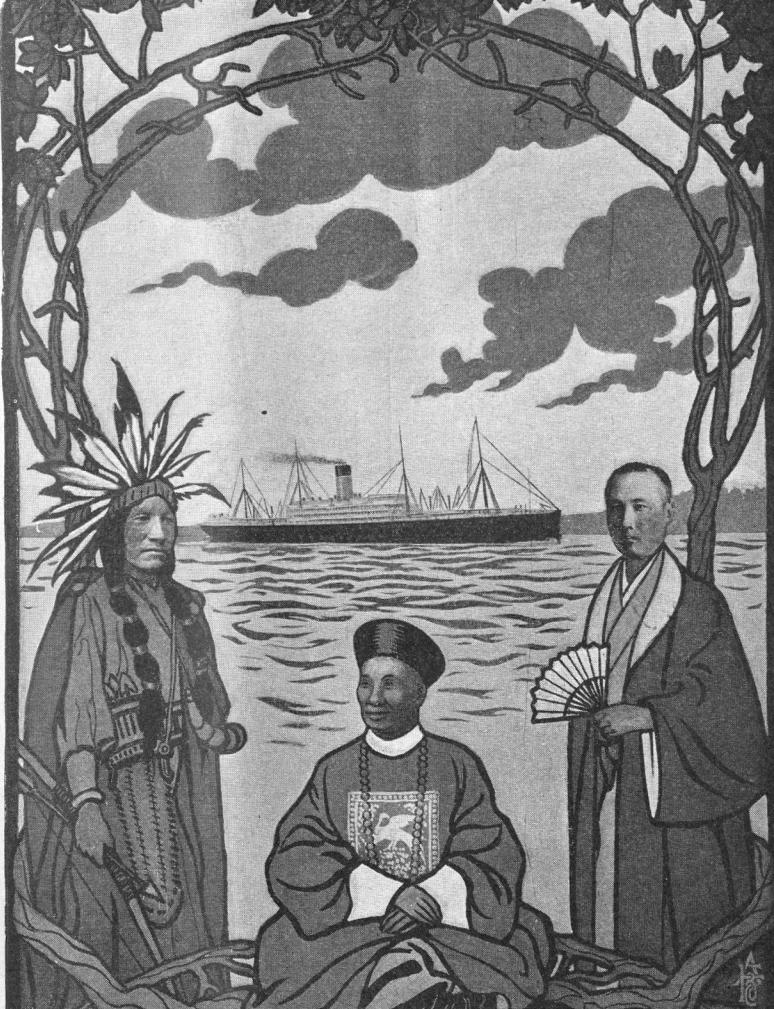
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it back to the desk, he drew out slowly from the envelope Berand's letter, the photograph, the blue-tinted sheets.

That he might evade the issue by yielding to Berand's implied demand was not one of the questions disturbing him, for the simple reason that it had not occurred to him he could thus escape. The upright habits of a lifetime had done their work.

He moved deliberately, lifting the photograph from before him and laying it, face down, upon the desk. Then, drawing the blank sheet of paper nearer, he wrote rapidly:

"To Henry Berand, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—What the journal you control may decide to print or suppress is a matter of no moment whatever to me. It is, however, proper for me to inform you, for repetition, if you so desire, that should any one, other than myself, be subjected to annoyance in this matter, the perpetrators shall very certainly find it a matter of moment for them. Yours truly,

GEORGE WORDEN."

The messenger was standing in the doorway as Governor Worden signed his name. Addressing his letter to Henry Berand, he dismissed it at once with instructions as to immediate delivery.

Once more alone, he again lifted the photograph, paused, looking down wistfully into the wistful, pictured eyes; then, gathering up both the photograph and the unread letter, he carried them to the hearth and laid them on the embers, where their fellows still smouldered. As he turned back to the desk his eyes fell on the letter which Miss Tawnet had left there, with the request that he would read it. For the moment he had forgotten his promise to do so. He opened the sheet, a little reluctantly, and glanced down the page. As he read, he started slightly and stood so intent upon the contents that he did not hear Miss Tawnet's soft step at the doorway. She stood between the parted curtains, looking in at him.

Above the torn portion of the paper, where the signature had been, Governor Worden was reading this:

"MY DEAR MISS TAWNET,—With all my heart I wish for you the happiness which I trust is already yours. With this I send you a package which should contain all your photographs and every line in your handwriting received by me. But to my distress, this is not the case. You will understand why I feel you should have the safeguard of this full knowledge. I am fairly sure that what is missing was stolen, years ago, from my desk in my room. I should hesitate to mention the name of the man—a house-mate—whom at the time I half-suspected of the theft, but his after-life as a corrupt politician, a consummate liar politically, and—as I believe—personally, has strengthened my earlier distrust. There are missing, I am positive, but one letter and one photograph, and the name of the man I refer to is Henry Berand—"

Governor Worden read no further. The blood rushed angrily to his face. He strode to the desk where Berand's letter lay, lifted it as if with the tips of his fingers, carried it to the fireplace, and tossed it on the flames.

"That's the warm reception I ought to have given you!" he said, between his teeth. "And I was fool enough to credit— You consummate liar! The other letters! There are none. And no journal ever saw letter or photograph. There goes my worst half-hour—smoke!"

"Why, what are you doing, George? To whom are you talking?" asked Miss Tawnet, entering the room.

Governor Worden drew himself together and stood upright, smiling at the delightful figure in the simple gray walking gown—his colors again—the soft gray hat, the gray veil thrown back from the beautiful, radiant face.

"I was talking," he said, "to a man who can keep a secret, even from Miss Tawnet."

She shook her head seriously, drawing close to him, her hand on his arm.

"Ah, no more secrets!—not between you and me. I have been thinking of it all the while I was away from you. I feel so grateful, as if we had brushed by a grave, great

danger. You can't say it wouldn't have made a—perhaps fatal—difference if I had opened the box *first*. You weren't tested. You don't know how you might have taken it if you had learned by some accident—"

"No," he agreed, gently. "One never knows surely until the test, but it could have made no difference; I am very sure it could have made none."

"But I think," she went on, "we both ought to take this as a lesson. I shall never again, for any reason, hide anything from you. You won't from me—will you?"

Governor Worden looked down tenderly at the flushed, entreating face, the cheeks like dark roses, the dark, beautiful eyes. He framed her lifted face in his hands, smiling down at her in her lovely eagerness.

"Yes," he answered. "Yes, you shall hear everything, whether you ought to hear it or not, dear. You shall know everything that concerns me, as it occurs. Yes, every single one—except some few!"

The New President of the New York Clearing-house

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DUMONT CLARKE, the new president of the New York Clearing-house, whose portrait appears elsewhere in this number, was born at Newport, Rhode Island, October 1, 1840. He is a direct descendant of Jeremiah Clarke, one of the early Governors of the colony of Rhode Island. Mr. Clarke was educated at the best schools of his native town; his first business employment was in the Bank of Rhode Island, and he became its cashier soon after attaining his majority.

After the death of his father, young Clarke, at the age of twenty-three, attracted by the Eldorado stories of California, decided to emigrate Westward and seek his fortunes on the Pacific coast. Upon reaching California he became a merchant, but the rough life of that section, at that time, was not congenial to him, so disposing of his stock of goods he crossed the continent by the United States Overland Mail Route (this was some four or five years before the Union Pacific Railroad was built), came to New York, and took a position as check clerk in the bank of which he is now president.

In the American Exchange National Bank, owing to his inherent ability and force of character, Mr. Clarke's promotion was rapid. Six months after entering the institution he was advanced to the head of his department, and soon after that he was made demand loan clerk. In 1868 he was assistant cashier, and on August 30, 1878, became cashier. In 1883 he was elected a director; in 1887, vice-president, and in 1894, president. In addition to his duties as president of the bank, Mr. Clarke is interested in many important financial institutions and business enterprises.

Too Long

THE Hon. William E. Chandler, Secretary of the Navy under President Arthur, tells this story of Assistant-Surgeon Ver Mulen.

That officer was 6 feet 4 inches in height, a fact that occasioned him much discomfort when he was serving on the old *Penobscot*, the height of the vessel between decks being only 5 feet 8 inches. As Surgeon Ver Mulen considered the matter, he remembered that long letters to the Navy Department were not always given that prompt attention he thought should be afforded in the present instance, so he determined to approach the authorities in a manner novel enough to impress them with the gravity of the situation. So he addressed his superior officer in this wise:

"The Honorable

"The Secretary of the Navy:

"Sir,—Length of surgeon, 6 feet 4; height of wardroom, 5 feet 8. Respectfully,

E. C. VER MULEN,
Assistant Surgeon, U.S.N."

Shortly after, the Navy Department detached Ver Mulen "until such time as a more suitable ship could be found for his assignment."