

***HAROLD  
MACGRATH***



***THE MAN  
ON THE BOX***

**Harold MacGrath**

# **The Man on the Box**

EAN 8596547214458

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: [DigiCat@okpublishing.info](mailto:DigiCat@okpublishing.info)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<a href="#">I</a>
<a href="#">II</a>
<a href="#">III</a>
<a href="#">IV</a>
<a href="#">V</a>
<a href="#">VI</a>
<a href="#">VII</a>
<a href="#">VIII</a>
<a href="#">IX</a>
<a href="#">X</a>
<a href="#">XI</a>
<a href="#">XII</a>
<a href="#">XIII</a>
<a href="#">XIV</a>
<a href="#">XV</a>
<a href="#">XVI</a>
<a href="#">XVII</a>
<a href="#">XVIII</a>
<a href="#">XIX</a>
<a href="#">XX</a>
<a href="#">XXI</a>
<a href="#">XXII</a>
<a href="#">XXIII</a>
<a href="#">XXIV</a>
<a href="#">XXV</a>
<a href="#">XXVI</a>

# I

## Table of Contents

### **INTRODUCES MY HERO**

If you will carefully observe any map of the world that is divided into inches at so many miles to the inch, you will be surprised as you calculate the distance between that enchanting Paris of France and the third-precinct police-station of Washington, D. C, which is not enchanting. It is several thousand miles. Again, if you will take the pains to run your glance, no doubt discerning, over the police-blotter at the court (and frankly, I refuse to tell you the exact date of this whimsical adventure), you will note with even greater surprise that all this hubbub was caused by no crime against the commonwealth of the Republic or against the person of any of its conglomerate people. The blotter reads, in heavy simple fist, "disorderly conduct," a phrase which is almost as embracing as the word diplomacy, or society, or respectability.

So far as my knowledge goes, there is no such a person as James Osborne. If, by any unhappy chance, he *does* exist, I trust that he will pardon the civil law of Washington, my own measure of familiarity, and the questionable taste on the part of my hero—hero, because, from the rise to the fall of the curtain, he occupies the center of the stage in this

little comedy-drama, and because authors have yet to find a happy synonym for the word. The name James Osborne was given for the simple reason that it was the first that occurred to the culprit's mind, so desperate an effort did he make to hide his identity. Supposing, for the sake of an argument in his favor, supposing he had said John Smith or William Jones or John Brown? To this very day he would have been hiring lawyers to extricate him from libel and false-representation suits. Besides, had he given any of these names, would not that hound-like scent of the ever suspicious police have been aroused?

To move round and round in the circle of commonplace, and then to pop out of it like a tailed comet! Such is the history of many a man's life. I have a near friend who went away from town one fall, happy and contented with his lot. And what do you suppose he found when he returned home? He had been nominated for alderman. It is too early to predict the fate of this unhappy man. And what tools Fate uses with which to carve out her devious peculiar patterns! An Apache Indian, besmeared with brilliant greases and smelling of the water that never freezes, an understudy to Cupid? Fudge! you will say, or Pshaw! or whatever slang phrase is handy and, prevalent at the moment you read and run.

I personally warn you that this is a really-truly story, though I do not undertake to force you to believe it; neither do I purvey many grains of salt. If Truth went about her affairs laughing, how many more persons would turn and listen! For my part, I believe it all nonsense the way artists have pictured Truth. The idea is pretty enough, but so far as

hitting things, it recalls the woman, the stone, and the hen. I am convinced that Truth goes about dressed in the dowdiest of clothes, with black-lisle gloves worn at the fingers, and shoes run down in the heels, an exact portrait of one of Phil May's lydies. Thus it is that we pass her by, for the artistic sense in every being is repelled at the sight of a dowdy with weeping eyes and a nose that has been rubbed till it is as red as a winter apple. Anyhow, if she *does* go about in beautiful nudity, she ought at least to clothe herself with smiles and laughter. There are sorry enough things in the world as it is, without a lachrymal, hypochondriacal Truth poking her face in everywhere.

Not many months ago, while seated on the stone veranda in the rear of the Metropolitan Club in Washington (I believe we were discussing the merits of some very old product), I recounted some of the lighter chapters of this adventure.

*"Eempossible!"* murmured the Russian attache, just as if the matter had not come under his notice semi-officially.

I presume that this exclamation disclosed another side to diplomacy, which, stripped of its fine clothes, means dexterity in hiding secrets and in negotiating lies. When one diplomat believes what another says, it is time for the former's government to send him packing. However, the Englishman at my right gazed smiling into his partly emptied glass and gently stirred the ice. I admire the English diplomat; he never wastes a lie. He is frugal and saving.

"But the newspapers!" cried the journalist. "They never ran a line; and an exploit like this would scarce have

escaped them."

"If I remember rightly, it was reported in the regular police items of the day," said I.

"Strange that the boys didn't look behind the scenes."

"Oh, I don't know," remarked the congressman; "lots of things happen of which you are all ignorant. The public mustn't know everything."

"But what's the hero's name?" asked the journalist.

"That's a secret," I answered. "Besides, when it comes to the bottom of the matter, I had something to do with the suppressing of the police news. In a case like this, suppression becomes a law not excelled by that which governs self-preservation. My friend has a brother in the War Department; and together we worked wonders."

"It's a jolly droll story, however you look at it," the Englishman admitted.

"Nevertheless, it had its tragic side; but that is even more than ever a secret."

The Englishman looked at me sharply, even gravely; but the veranda is only dimly illuminated at night, and his scrutiny went unrewarded.

"Eh, well!" said the Russian; "your philosopher has observed that all mankind loves a lover."

"As all womankind loves a love-story," the Englishman added. "You ought to be very successful with the ladies,"—turning to me.

"Not inordinately; but I shall not fail to repeat your epigram,"—and I rose.

My watch told me that it was half after eight; and one does not receive every day an invitation to a dinner-dance

at the Chevy Chase Club.

I dislike exceedingly to intrude my own personality into this narrative, but as I was passively concerned, I do not see how I can avoid it. Besides, being a public man, I am not wholly averse to publicity; first person, singular, perpendicular, as Thackeray had it, in type looks rather agreeable to the eye. And I rather believe that I have a moral to point out and a parable to expound.

My appointment in Washington at that time was extraordinary; that is to say, I was a member of one of those committees that are born frequently and suddenly in Washington, and which almost immediately after registration in the vital statistics of national politics. I had been sent to Congress, a dazzling halo over my head, the pride and hope of my little country town; I had been defeated for second term; had been recommended to serve on the committee aforesaid; served with honor, got my name in the great newspapers, and was sent back to Congress, where I am still to-day, waiting patiently for a discerning president and a vacancy in the legal department of the cabinet. That's about all I am willing to say about myself.

As for this hero of mine, he was the handsomest, liveliest rascal you would expect to meet in a day's ride. By handsome I do not mean perfect features, red cheeks, Byronic eyes, and so forth. That style of beauty belongs to the department of lady novelists. I mean that peculiar manly beauty which attracts men almost as powerfully as it does women. For the sake of a name I shall call him Warburton. His given name in actual life is Robert. But I am afraid that



nobody but his mother and one other woman ever called him Robert. The world at large dubbed him Bob, and such he will remain up to that day (and may it be many years hence!) when recourse will be had to Robert, because "Bob" would certainly look very silly on a marble shaft.

What a friendly sign is a nickname! It is always a good fellow who is called Bob or Bill, Jack or Jim, Tom, Dick or Harry. Even out of Theodore there comes a Teddy. I know in my own case the boys used to call me Chuck, simply because I was named Charles. (I haven't the slightest doubt that I was named Charles because my good mother thought I looked something like Vandyke's *Charles I*, though at the time of my baptism I wore no beard whatever.) And how I hated a boy with a high-sounding, unnicknamable given name!—with his round white collar and his long glossy curls! I dare say he hated the name, the collar, and the curls even more than I did. Whenever you run across a name carded in this stilted fashion, "A. Thingummy Soandso", you may make up your mind at once that the owner is ashamed of his first name and is trying manfully to live it down and eventually forgive his parents.

Warburton was graduated from West Point, ticketed to a desolate frontier post, and would have worn out his existence there but for his guiding star, which was always making frantic efforts to bolt its established orbit. One day he was doing scout duty, perhaps half a mile in advance of the pay-train, as they called the picturesque caravan which, consisting of a canopied wagon and a small troop of cavalry in dingy blue, made progress across the desert-like plains of Arizona. The troop was some ten miles from the post, and as

there had been no sign of Red Eagle all that day, they concluded that the rumor of his being on a drunken rampage with half a dozen braves was only a rumor. Warburton had just passed over a roll of earth, and for a moment the pay-train had dropped out of sight. It was twilight; opalescent waves of heat rolled above the blistered sands. A pale yellow sky, like an inverted bowl rimmed with delicate blue and crimson hues, encompassed the world. The bliss of solitude fell on him, and, being something of a poet, he rose to the stars. The smoke of his corn-cob pipe trailed lazily behind him. The horse under him was loping along easily. Suddenly the animal lifted his head, and his brown ears went forward.

At Warburton's left, some hundred yards distant, was a clump of osage brush. Even as he looked, there came a puff of smoke, followed by the evil song of a bullet. My hero's hat was carried away. He wheeled, dug his heels into his horse, and cut back over the trail. There came a second flash, a shock, and then a terrible pain in the calf of his left leg. He fell over the neck of his horse to escape the third bullet. He could see the Apache as he stood out from behind the bush. Warburton yanked out his Colt and let fly. He heard a yell. It was very comforting. That was all he remembered of the skirmish.

For five weeks he languished in the hospital. During that time he came to the conclusion that he had had enough of military life in the West. He applied for his discharge, as the compulsory term of service was at an end. When his papers came he was able to get about with the aid of a crutch. One

morning his colonel entered his subaltern's bachelor quarters.

"Wouldn't you rather have a year's leave of absence, than quit altogether, Warburton?"

"A year's leave of absence?" cried the invalid, "I am likely to get that, I am."

"If you held a responsible position I dare say it would be difficult. As it is, I may say that I can obtain it for you. It will be months before you can ride a horse with that leg."

"I thank you, Colonel Raleigh, but I think I'll resign. In fact, I have resigned."

"We can withdraw that, if you but say the word. I don't want to lose you, lad. You're the only man around here who likes a joke as well as I do. And you will have a company if you'll only stick to it a little longer."

"I have decided, Colonel. I'm sorry you feel like this about it. You see, I have something like twenty-five thousand laid away. I want to see at least five thousand dollars' worth of new scenery before I shuffle off this mortal coil. The scenery around here palls on me. My throat and eyes are always full of sand. I am off to Europe. Some day, perhaps, the bee will buzz again; and when it does, I'll have you go personally to the president."

"As you please, Warburton."

"Besides, Colonel, I have been reading Treasure Island again, and I've got the fever in my veins to hunt for adventure, even a treasure. It's in my blood to wander and do strange things, and here I've been hampered all these years with routine. I shouldn't care if we had a good fight

once in a while. My poor old dad traveled around the world three times, and I haven't seen anything of it but the maps."

"Go ahead, then. Only, talking about Treasure Island, don't you and your twenty-five thousand run into some old Long John Silver."

"I'll take care."

And Mr. Robert packed up his kit and sailed away. Not many months passed ere he met his colonel again, and under rather embarrassing circumstances.



[Table of Contents](#)

## **INTRODUCES MY HEROINE**

Let me begin at the beginning. The boat had been two days out of Southampton before the fog cleared away. On the afternoon of the third day, Warburton curled up in his steamer-chair and lazily viewed the blue October seas as they met and merged with the blue October skies. I do not recollect the popular novel of that summer, but at any rate it lay flapping at the side of his chair, forgotten. It never entered my hero's mind that some poor devil of an author had sweated and labored with infinite pains over every line, and paragraph, and page-labored with all the care and love his heart and mind were capable of, to produce this finished child of fancy; or that this same author, even at this very

moment, might be seated on the veranda of his beautiful summer villa, figuring out royalties on the backs of stray envelopes. No, he never thought of these things.

What with the wind and the soft, ceaseless jar of the throbbing engines, half a dream hovered above his head, and touched him with a gentle, insistent caress. If you had passed by him this afternoon, and had been anything of a mathematician who could straighten out geometrical angles, you would have come close to his height had you stopped at five feet nine. Indeed, had you clipped off the heels of his low shoes, you would have been exact. But all your nice calculations would not have solved his weight. He was slender, but he was hard and compact. These hard, slender fellows sometimes weigh more than your men of greater bulk. He tipped the scales at one hundred sixty-two, and he looked twenty pounds less. He was twenty-eight; a casual glance at him, and you would have been willing to wager that the joy of casting his first vote was yet to be his.

The princess commands that I describe in detail the charms of this Army Adonis. Far be it that I should disobey so august a command, being, as I am, the prime minister in this her principality of Domestic Felicity. Her brother has never ceased to be among the first in her dear regard. He possessed the merriest black eyes: his mother's eyes, as I, a boy, remember them. No matter how immobile his features might be, these eyes of his were ever ready for laughter. His nose was clean-cut and shapely. A phrenologist would have said that his head did not lack the bump of caution; but I know better. At present he wore a beard; so this is as large an inventory of his personal attractions as I am able to give.

When he shaves off his beard, I shall be pleased to add further particulars. I often marvel that the women did not turn his head. They were always sending him notes and invitations and cutting dances for him. Perhaps his devil-may-care air had something to do with the enchantment. I have yet to see his equal as a horseman. He would have made it interesting for that pair of milk-whites which our old friend, Ulysses (or was it Diomedes?) had such ado about.

Every man has some vice or other, even if it is only being good. Warburton had perhaps two: poker and tobacco. He would get out of bed at any hour if some congenial spirit knocked at the door and whispered that a little game was in progress, and that his money was needed to keep it going. I dare say that you know all about these little games. But what would you? What is a man to do in a country where you may buy a whole village for ten dollars? Warburton seldom drank, and, like the author of this precious volume, only special vintages.

At this particular moment this hero of mine was going over the monotony of the old days in Arizona, the sand-deserts, the unlovely landscapes, the dull routine, the indifferent skirmishes with cattle-men and Indians; the pagan bullet which had plowed through his leg. And now it was all over; he had surrendered his straps; he was a private citizen, with an income sufficient for his needs. It will go a long way, forty-five hundred a year, if one does not attempt to cover the distance in a five-thousand motor-car; and he hated all locomotion that was not horse-flesh.

For nine months he had been wandering over Europe, if not happy, at least in a satisfied frame of mind. Four of

these months had been delightfully passed in Paris; and, as his nomad excursions had invariably terminated in that queen of cities, I make Paris the starting point of his somewhat remarkable adventures. Besides, it was in Paris that he first saw Her. And now, here he was at last, homeward-bound. That phrase had a mighty pleasant sound; it was to the ear what honey is to the tongue. Still, he might yet have been in Paris but for one thing: She was on board this very boat.

Suddenly his eyes opened full wide, bright with eagerness.

"It is She!" he murmured. He closed his eyes again, the hypocrite!

Permit me to introduce you to my heroine. Mind you, she is not *my* creation; only Heaven may produce her like, and but once. She is well worth turning around to gaze at. Indeed I know more than one fine gentleman who forgot the time of day, the important engagement, or the trend of his thought, when she passed by.

She was coming forward, leaning against the wind and inclining to the uncertain roll of the ship. A gray raincoat fitted snugly the youthful rounded figure. Her hands were plunged into the pockets. You may be sure that Mr. Robert noted through his half-closed eyelids these inconsequent details. A tourist hat sat jauntily on the fine light brown hair, that color which has no appropriate metaphor. (At least, I have never found one, and I am *not* in love with her and *never* was.) Warburton has described to me her eyes, so I am positive that they were as heavenly blue as a rajah's sapphire. Her height is of no moment. What man ever

troubled himself about the height of a woman, so long as he wasn't undersized himself? What pleased Warburton was the exquisite skin. He was always happy with his comparisons, and particularly when he likened her skin to the bloomy olive pallor of a young peach. The independent stride was distinguishingly American. Ah, the charm of these women who are my countrywomen! They come, they go, alone, unattended, courageous without being bold, self-reliant without being rude; inimitable. In what an amiable frame of mind Nature must have been on the day she cast these molds! But I proceed. The young woman's chin was tilted, and Warburton could tell by the dilated nostrils that she was breathing in the gale with all the joy of living, filling her healthy lungs with it as that rare daughter of the Cyprian Isle might have done as she sprang that morn from the jeweled Mediterranean spray, that beggar's brooch of Neptune's.

Warburton's heart hadn't thrilled so since the day when he first donned cadet gray. There was scarce any room for her to pass between his chair and the rail; and this knowledge filled the rascal with exultation. Nearer and nearer she came. He drew in his breath sharply as the corner of his foot-rest (aided by the sly wind) caught her raincoat.

"I beg your pardon!" he said, sitting up.

She quickly released her coat, smiled faintly, and passed on.

Sometimes the most lasting impressions are those which are printed most lightly on the memory. Mr. Robert says that



he never will forget that first smile. And he didn't even know her name then.

I was about to engage your attention with a description of the villain, but on second thought I have decided that it would be rather unfair. For at that moment he was at a disadvantage. Nature was punishing him for a few shortcomings. The steward that night informed Warburton, in answer to his inquiries, that he, the villain, was dreadfully seasick, and was begging him, the steward, to scuttle the ship and have done with it. I have my doubts regarding this. Mr. Robert is inclined to flippancy at times. It wasn't seasickness; and after all is said and done, it is putting it harshly to call this man a villain. I recant. True villainy is always based upon selfishness. Remember this, my wise ones.

Warburton was somewhat subdued when he learned that the suffering gentleman was *her* father.

"What did you say the name was?" he asked innocently. Until now he hadn't had the courage to put the question to any one, or to prowl around the purser's books.

"Annesley; Colonel Annesley and daughter," answered the unsuspecting steward.

Warburton knew nothing then of the mental tragedy going on behind the colonel's state-room door. How should he have known? On the contrary, he believed that the father of such a girl must be a most knightly and courtly gentleman. He *was*, in all outward appearance. There had been a time, not long since, when he had been knightly and courtly in all things.

Surrounding every upright man there is a mire, and if he step not wisely, he is lost. There is no coming back; step by step he must go on and on, till he vanishes and a bubble rises over where he but lately stood. That he misstepped innocently does not matter; mire and evil have neither pity nor reason. To spend what is not ours and then to try to recover it, to hide the guilty step: this is futility. From the alpha men have made this step; to the omega they will make it, with the same unchanging futility. After all, it *is* money. Money *is* the root of all evil; let him laugh who will, in his heart of hearts he knows it.

Money! Have you never heard that siren call to you, call seductively from her ragged isle, where lurk the reefs of greed and selfishness? Money! What has this siren not to offer? Power, ease, glory, luxury; aye, I had almost said love! But, no; love is the gift of God, money is the invention of man: all the good, all the evil, in the heart of this great humanity.

## III

### [Table of Contents](#)

## **THE ADVENTURE BEGINS**

It was only when the ship was less than a day's journey off Sandy Hook that the colonel came on deck, once more to resume his interest in human affairs. How the girl hovered

about him! She tucked the shawl more snugly around his feet; she arranged and rearranged the pillows back of his head; she fed him from a bowl of soup; she read from some favorite book; she smoothed the furrowed brow; she stilled the long, white, nervous fingers with her own small, firm, brown ones; she was mother and daughter in one. Wherever she moved, the parent eye followed her, and there lay in its deeps a strange mixture of fear, and trouble, and questioning love. All the while he drummed ceaselessly on the arms of his chair.

And Mr. Robert, watching all these things from afar, Mr. Robert sighed dolorously. The residue air in his lungs was renewed more frequently than nature originally intended it should be. Love has its beneficences as well as its pangs, only they are not wholly appreciable by the recipient. For what is better than a good pair of lungs constantly filled and refilled with pure air? Mr. Robert even felt a twinge of remorse besides. He was brother to a girl almost as beautiful as yonder one (to my mind far more beautiful!) and he recalled that in two years he had not seen her nor made strenuous efforts to keep up the correspondence. Another good point added to the score of love! And, alas! he might never see this charming girl again, this daughter so full of filial love and care. He had sought the captain, but that hale and hearty old sea-dog had politely rebuffed him.

"My dear young man," he said, "I do all I possibly can for the entertainment and comfort of my passengers, but in this case I must refuse your request."

"And pray, why, sir?" demanded Mr. Robert, with dignity.

"For the one and simple reason that Colonel Annesley expressed the desire to be the recipient of no ship introductions."

"What the deuce is he, a billionaire?"

"You have me there, sir. I confess that I know nothing whatever about him. This is the first time he has ever sailed on my deck."

All of which perfectly accounts for Mr. Robert's sighs in what musicians call the *doloroso*. If only he knew some one who knew the colonel! How simple it would be! Certainly, a West Point graduate would find some consideration. But the colonel spoke to no one save his daughter, and his daughter to none but her parent, her maid, and the stewardess. Would they remain in New York, or would they seek their far-off southern home? Oh, the thousands of questions which surged through his brain! From time to time he glanced sympathetically at the colonel, whose fingers drummed and drummed and drummed.

"Poor wretch! his stomach must be in bad shape. Or maybe he has the palsy." Warburton mused upon the curious incertitude of the human anatomy.

But Colonel Annesley did not have the palsy. What he had is at once the greatest blessing and the greatest curse of God—remembrance, or conscience, if you will.

What a beautiful color her hair was, dappled with sunshine and shadow! ... Pshaw! Mr. Robert threw aside his shawl and book (it is of no real importance, but I may as well add that he never completed the reading of that summer's most popular novel) and sought the smoking-room, where, with the aid of a fat perfecto and a liberal

stack of blues, he proceeded to divert himself till the boat reached quarantine. I shall not say that he left any of his patrimony at the mahogany table with its green-baize covering and its little brass disks for cigar ashes, but I am certain that he did not make one of those stupendous winnings we often read about and never witness. This much, however: he made the acquaintance of a very important personage, who was presently to add no insignificant weight on the scales of Mr. Robert's destiny.

He was a Russian, young, handsome, suave, of what the newspapers insist on calling distinguished bearing. He spoke English pleasantly but imperfectly. He possessed a capital fund of anecdote, and Warburton, being an Army man, loved a good droll story. It was a revelation to see the way he dipped the end of his cigar into his coffee, a stimulant which he drank with Balzacian frequency and relish. Besides these accomplishments, he played a very smooth hand at the great American game. While Mr. Robert's admiration was not aroused, it was surely awakened.

My hero had no trouble with the customs officials. A brace of old French dueling pistols and a Turkish simitar were the only articles which might possibly have been dutiable. The inspector looked hard, but he was finally convinced that Mr. Robert was *not* a professional curio-collector. Warburton, never having returned from abroad before, found a deal of amusement and food for thought in the ensuing scenes. There was one man, a prim, irascible old fellow, who was not allowed to pass in two dozen fine German razors. There was a time of it, angry words, threats, protestations. The inspector stood firm. The old gentleman,

in a fine burst of passion, tossed the razors into the water. Then they were going to arrest him for smuggling. A friend extricated him. The old gentleman went away, saying something about the tariff and an unreasonably warm place which has as many synonyms as an octopus has tentacles.

Another man, his mouth covered by an enormous black mustache which must have received a bath every morning in coffee or something stronger, came forward pompously. I don't know to this day what magic word he said, but the inspectors took never a peep into his belongings. Doubtless they knew him, and that his word was as good as his bond.

Here a woman wept because the necklace she brought trustingly from Rotterdam must be paid for once again; and here another, who clenched her fists (do women have fists?) and if looks could have killed there would have been a vacancy in customs forthwith. All her choicest linen strewn about on the dirty boards, all soiled and rumped and useless!

When the colonel's turn came, Warburton moved within hearing distance. How glorious she looked in that smart gray traveling habit! With what well-bred indifference she gazed upon the scene! Calmly her glance passed among the circles of strange faces, and ever and anon returned to the great ship which had safely brought her back to her native land. There were other women who were just as well-bred and indifferent, only Warburton had but one pair of eyes. Sighs in the *doloroso* again. Ha! if only one of these meddling jackasses would show her some disrespect and give him the opportunity of avenging the affront!

(Come, now; let me be your confessor. Have you never thought and acted like this hero of mine? Haven't you been just as melodramatic and ridiculous? It is nothing to be ashamed of. For my part, I should confess to it with the same equanimity as I should to the mumps or the measles. It comes with, and is part and parcel of, all that strange medley we find in the Pandora box of life. Love has no diagnosis, so the doctors say. 'Tis all in the angle of vision.)

But nothing happened. Colonel Annesley and his daughter were old hands; they had gone through all this before. Scarce an article in their trunks was disturbed. There was a slight duty of some twelve dollars (Warburton's memory is marvelous), and their luggage was free. But alas, for the perspicacity of the inspectors! I can very well imagine the god of irony in no better or more fitting place than in the United States Customs House.

Once outside, the colonel caught the eye of a cabby, and he and his daughter stepped in.

"Holland House, sir, did you say?" asked the cabby.

The colonel nodded. The cabby cracked his whip, and away they rolled over the pavement.

Warburton's heart gave a great bound. She had actually leaned out of the cab, and for one brief moment their glances had met. Scarce knowing what he did, he jumped into another cab and went pounding after. It was easily ten blocks from the pier when the cabby raised the lid and peered down at his fare.

"Do you want t' folly them ahead?" he cried.

"No, no!" Warburton was startled out of his wild dream. "Drive to the Holland House—no—to the Waldorf. Yes, the

Waldorf; and keep your nag going."

"Waldorf it is, sir!" The lid above closed.

Clouds had gathered in the heavens. It was beginning to rain. But Warburton neither saw the clouds nor felt the first few drops of rain. All the way up-town he planned and planned—as many plans as there were drops of rain; the rain wet him, but the plans drowned him—he became submerged. If I were an expert at analysis, which I am not, I should say that Mr. Robert was not violently in love; rather I should observe that he was fascinated with the first really fine face he had seen in several years. Let him never see Miss Annesley again, and in two weeks he would entirely forget her. I know enough of the race to be able to put forward this statement. Of course, it is understood that he would have to mingle for the time among other handsome women. Now, strive as he would, he could not think out a feasible plan. One plan might have given him light, but the thousand that came to him simply overwhelmed him fathoms deep. If he could find some one he knew at the Holland House, some one who would strike up a smoking-room acquaintance with the colonel, the rest would be simple enough. Annesley—Annesley; he couldn't place the name. Was he a regular, retired, or a veteran of the Civil War? And yet, the name was not totally unfamiliar. Certainly, he was a fine-looking old fellow, with his white hair and Alexandrian nose. And here he was, he, Robert Warburton, in New York, simply because he happened to be in the booking office of the *Gare du Nord* one morning and overheard a very beautiful girl say: "Then we shall sail from



Southampton day after to-morrow." Of a truth, it is the infinitesimal things that count heaviest.

So deep was he in the maze of his tentative romance that when the cab finally stopped abruptly, he was totally unaware of the transition from activity to passivity.

"Hotel, sir!"

"Ah, yes!" Warburton leaped out, fumbled in his pocket, and brought forth a five-dollar note, which he gave to the cabby. He did not realize it, but this was the only piece of American money he had on his person. Nor did he wait for the change. Mr. Robert was exceedingly careless with his money at this stage of his infatuation; being a soldier, he never knew the real value of legal tender. I know that I should never have been guilty of such liberality, not even if Mister Cabby had bowled me from Harlem to Brooklyn. And you may take my word for it, the gentleman in the ancient plug-hat did not wait to see if his fare had made a mistake, but trotted away good and hearty. The cab system is one of the most pleasing and amiable phases of metropolitan life.

Warburton rushed into the noisy, gorgeous lobby, and wandered about till he espied the desk. Here he turned over his luggage checks to the clerk and said that these accessories of travel must be in his room before eight o'clock that night, or there would be trouble. It was now half after five. The clerk eagerly scanned the register. Warburton, Robert Warburton; it was not a name with which *he* was familiar. A thin film of icy hauteur spread over his face.

"Very well, sir. Do you wish a bath with your room?"

"Certainly." Warburton glanced at his watch again.