

## When Trouble Comes

When trouble is a-comin'  
Lak de thunder wid his drummin'  
"Keep in de middle er de road,"  
It's mighty risky, climbin' high  
W'en de hurricane come by—  
So, "Keep in de middle er de road!"  
De word is big an' wide—  
So, look out for time an' tide—  
"Keep in de middle er de road."  
If you climb on high at all,  
You must pick a place ter fall.  
So, "Keep in de middle er de road!"  
—Atlanta Constitution.

# The MAN with the STEADFAST GAZE

BY FRANCIS G. MILLER

(Copyright, 1905, by Daily Story Pub. Co.)

With Miss Arline Kimball, prima donna of the Witches of Orloff opera company, I had just passed through the stage door to the street after a matinee performance, when, from among the bystanders grouped about the stage door, a ragged, degraded-looking man, bearing the marks of the ravages of drink suddenly sprang forth and, grasping my companion about the waist, kissed her repeatedly in spite of her violent efforts to free herself. Supposing him to be a maniac or crazed by drink, I was so fearful of violence that I stood for the moment unable to move. Arline's face flushed scarlet, her black eyes flashing angrily, as she finally broke away from him. Then I noted a quick change in her demeanor. She suddenly grew pale and her expression softened.

"Release him!" cried she in a strange tone. "Do not harm him; do not call the police."  
The pitiable looking wretch when freed from the rough hands immediately bowed his head in humiliation and in a broken voice began to beg pardon. Arline without a word pressed a bank-note in his hand, then drew me hurriedly toward her carriage. We drove off in haste.

Amazed as I was at this extraordinary affair, I was even more puzzled, for in it there seemed to be a deeper significance than there should have been in a mere sudden impulse of a maniac. But although we were close friends—we had been schoolmates when girls—I felt it a too delicate affair to pry into. She must have perceived my curiosity, however, or per-



Kissed her repeatedly.

haps expected it as most natural, for we had been seated in the carriage but a few moments when she addressed me with some agitation.

"Nell, you've witnessed a strange scene. Ah, that poor fellow. My heart aches for him."

"But your compassion is ill deserved," declared I warmly. "You should have had him arrested."

"No, no! A thousand times no!" replied she with spirit. "When I think to what a condition he has been reduced I feel a strange sense of guilt, and yet I know I cannot rightly be censured."

"Then you have met him before?"

"I have seen him many times, though not purposely, but I have never spoken a word with him. You see," she settled back in the seat a little more comfortably. "I first knew of him when I was playing a minor role in 'The Merry Wizard' opera, you know. That was four years ago." She looked reflectively out of the cab window and remained silent for some minutes, seeming lost in reverie.

"Four years ago—"  
"Oh, yes," resumed she, passing her hand over her forehead. "Pardon me for breaking off so abruptly. Well, I was making my first distinct success, although I had but a minor part. Every one said I was accomplishing a great deal with small opportunities, and as I reconsider, I can quite agree with them. The 'Wizard' had been running but a few days when one evening I received at the stage entrance a note from a stranger. Now, you must have heard, dear, of the audacious letters that a successful actress is sure to receive from the opposite sex, letters that deserve to be torn up and thrown away without as much as opening them."

"One, I suppose, of the many annoyances that you are obliged to endure."

"Only too true. But this note was quite odd in its way. The writer was so modest as to not even sign his name. He made no silly compliments, merely stating that he desired to be a good friend, but proposing no plan by which we could become acquainted. To appease my probable curiosity, I suppose, he mentioned the exact seat in the front row that he would occupy. There was a note of sincerity in the letter that impressed me strongly, but as you know I was at that time engaged to George, although that fact was kept to ourselves, and of course I placed no serious thought in this stranger. I was merely amused, curious, half expecting it would prove some sort of a joke.

"Later in the evening I was presented with an enormous bunch of roses. On the card attached was the simple inscription: 'A3.'"

"I expected that after the performance, as a matter of course, he would be waiting for me at the stage door and would there attempt to speak to me. I confess I was a bit troubled about that, so I purposely fell in with two girls who were going my way up town, though of course I didn't drop a word to them, about my new friend. As I walked out with them, there close by the door stood my mysterious admirer, faultlessly attired in evening dress, looking in every particular a gentleman. Not a word; not a move; not the slightest attempt to attract my attention. He seemed content to simply devour me with his eyes.

"The following evening I found him at the stage door like a sentinel on watch. As I passed by—I was alone this time, for I had forgotten all about him during the day—still no word; but he watched me go in as though his eyes could not rest on me long enough. More roses with a note sim-

ply saying that he would be in the same seat as on the evening previous. I went through my part with a strange burden weighing on my spirits. The gaze of a whole audience seemed to me to have concentrated in that one pair of eyes. After the performance he stood at the stage entrance as of fore with the same statue-like immovability, the same immutable silence, the same steadfast gaze."

"But why did you not manage to get an introduction?"

"But there was George, my dear."

"But you liked him?"

"I will not say."

After a pause I inquired: "You surely made some inquiries about him?"

"Oh, yes. Through a friend I learned his name, that he was wealthy, of high social standing, and of irreproachable character. Why he should have been so attracted to me is one of those things that we can't analyze. He was said to be rather odd. Well, I finally awoke to my responsibilities, and summoned the courage to do what I should have done at the beginning. My marriage to George was made known to him. The result was quite contrary to my expectations. Knowing him to be somewhat a man of the world, I had presumed that he would awake



"The same immutable silence, the same steadfast gaze."

from his dream and take a cynical view of the affair; and there comes the sad part of it all."

At this point I fancied that I saw a tremor sweep over her, but at the time I felt half inclined to attribute it to the jouncing of the carriage. In a moment she resumed her narrative, but with a slower and more mellowed tone.

"In a sort of desperation he seemed suddenly bent upon ruining himself as quickly as possible. Excessive drinking and gambling drew him rapidly from his high position to poverty and disgrace. He repulsed all his friend's efforts to help him. I racked my brains to discover an honorable means of assisting him, but in vain. Many a time I appealed to George, but he through, I think, a secret jealousy, claimed that all effort was both useless and uncalled-for. Until to-day I haven't seen him for months, and had hoped that he had at last succumbed to friendly persuasion."

"But does not his strange behavior of this afternoon indicate insanity?"

"No; from what I know of him I think not. More probably a desperate passion released of the bonds of propriety by his degraded condition. Nell, I ought to do something, but what? what can I do?"

For the moment the rattling of the carriage over the pavements was her only answer; then I indiscreetly gave vent to a sudden thought. "Arline, if George were suddenly lost from your life and memory, would you—"

"Nell"—she turned toward me with a startled look and pressed her fingers against my lips—"if you have read my heart, say no more."

When you see a girl picking lint off a young man's coat in public, it's a safe bet that her engagement ring is quite new.

## EACH WORE THE OTHER'S COAT

### An Amusing Incident Between a Short Man and a Tall Friend.

A coat comedy occurred recently in a Chicago press bureau. Two employees of the concern, one extremely short, the other tall, had been detained overtime, and did not leave the office until the hooks in the coatroom were practically bare.

The short man entered first, and after washing his face and hands turned to the hook where he was accustomed to leave his overcoat every day. What was his surprise and disgust to find nothing there. Then began a



"Who Stole My Coat?"

search among the divers garments which remained hanging on the wall to reveal the missing coat, but to no purpose. Finally giving up in despair, the little man seized the first coat he could lay his hands on and set out for home. It proved a fair fit, and although his heart was filled with anger at the usurper of his rightful coverings he was partially satisfied.

A few minutes later the tall man entered the coatroom and went through the same lavatory exercises as had his predecessor. This man was addicted to the use of an office coat. Removing the latter, he was surprised to find no garment where he was used to leave his undercoat while at work. After appropriately cursing the thief, he also seized the nearest coat available, and worrying his overcoat on over it, wended his way homeward.

The two met the next morning in the coatroom.

"I had a funny experience last night," said the small man, thereupon relating his difficulties.

"Why, you've got my overcoat," exclaimed the tall man sliding out of his garment which the short man had worn home the evening before.

The latter turned in astonishment



"You've Got My Overcoat."

and surveyed his tall friend with amazement. But his eyes opened still wider as he was unable to suppress the statement:

"But, by thunder, you wore my overcoat for an undercoat."

And then both laughed.

### Has Letter of Trafalgar Sailor.

A Manchester, N. H., man has a letter written by Hugh Folland on board of "his majesty's ship Bellona," July 12, 1812. He was taken prisoner by the Americans at the battle of Lake Champlain. He was afterward exchanged, but preferred to remain in this country. He spent the rest of his life in Vermont.

### Wanted Ladder to Reap Corn.

A farmer at Crows Fork, Mo., inquired the height of a ladder used by an aerial diver. Receiving the reply that it was about 90 feet, he said: "I just wanted to know, for I'm thinking of trying to borrow the thing to use in gathering some creek bottom corn I've got this time. Corn is so tall down my way this fall that a ladder like that would be just the trick when we get to gathering."