A STRANGE ADVENTURE.

BY W C MORROW

(As Mr. Ambrose Bierce has suffered much annoy (As Mr. Ambrose Bierce has suffered much annoy-ance lately from rumors connecting him with a cer-tain peculiar happening of which I have full knowl-edge, he has urged met to publish the facts. This I finally have consented to do, but it is only a strong sense of justice to him that impels me to thrust my personal affairs on the public; and as for the extraor-dinary light in which this relation may place me, I fear nothing from the opinion of my friends, and am not concerned with that of strangers.)

Not long ago I met Mr. Bierce on the street and asked him to go with me to the Cliff House. He assented. We took a car, and at the terminus of the sented. we took a car, and at the terminus of the cable we seated ourselves in one of the open cars of the steam road. Facing us, two or three seats away, were two women, evidently mother and daughter, both well-dressed and in appearance ladylike. The both well-dressed and in appearance ladylike. The younger woman was an exceedingly pretty girl of about nineteen years. She was a brunette, with an uncontrollable mass of black hair, splendid black eyes, rosy cheeks, a delicious mouth, and a tempting neck, the better displayed by a collariess gown. She was dressed in black, and wore a very handsome broad-brimmed black hat with rith ostrich feathers. broad-brimmed black hat with rich ostrich leathers. Her sealskin coat was open. We could not help noticing so beautiful, healthy and radiant a creature, in whom all the very richest treasures of feminine youth were entrancingly invested, but she did not degree even to look at us.

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We were soon talking, almost forgetting the radiant Presence; but, suddenly, we became aware that they were talking about us, that is to say, they were using our names with perfect freedom, and yet were not regarding us at all. Without being conscious of our rudeness, we ceased talking for a moment, and listened. The two women handled our names pretty freely, but we did not clearly hear their remarks. I had an idea that they were saying uncomplimentary things about us. I am very certain that the mother said something savage about Bierce.

We had not noticed a man sitting near; but at

We had not noticed a man sitting near; but at once, while the ladies were talking and we were unconsciously listening, he attracted our attention by his uneasy manner. Then, as the train halled at a his uneasy manner. Then, as the train halted at a station, and the words of our judges became distinct, he evidently could control his impatience no longer, he evidently could control his impatience no longer, for he crossed over to the ladies, and, bending over them, whispered something to them. Both were shocked with surprise, and both looked quickly at us, the elder woman paling a little, the younger blashing crimson. It was clear that the man had told them we were the persons whom they were discussing. They remained in silent embarrassment some time, and we, pretending to have noticed nothing, enjoyed the little comedy.

Before the train arrived at the final station a curious thing happened. I chanced to look at the girl, and discovered her gazing steadily at me, a ouger expression on he face. Her eyes dropped upon

girl, and discovered her gazing steadily at me, a queer expression on her face. Her eyes dropped upon encountering my glance, and her face became rosy. I found her again regarding me steadily, but this time she had more courage, and she held her ground. Her look was so direct and intent that it embarrassed me, and it was my turn to be looked out of countenance. Evidently this was fine entertainment for the girl.

contenance. Evidently this was fine entertain the content of the c

the red hed), and the rascal old old uncle (wich had been in Injy and everywhere) and Bildad (that's the new dog), and the Devil's Dictionary, and the whim-sical nonsense of Dod Grile, and the fables, and My Favorite Murder, and things like that.

Favorite Murder, and things like that.

My senses become more and more turbulent, for there was riot within me. My heart went at a furious pace, and the breakers sounded dull and distant. I called myself a fool, a fool, a staring madman. The control of the cont

not more many on the rocks than did 1 on my ruth-less environment.

I hardly know how it all happened, but before I understood it the Radiance had arisen, and, behind her mother's chair, had made a sign that might have meant nothing, that might have meant everything; but a slight returning sign from me, given wholly without volition, brought a flush into the winsome face, and then a strange look of fright and a painful pallor. She said something to her mother, and left the place.

on afterward one of the waiters, having a quizzical Soon afterward one of the waiters, having a quizzical look and a peculiar smile on his face, came out, and in tones loud enough for us to hear, said that the young lady had just been taken into the carriage of some passing friends, and had gone to the city, and hoped her mother would overlook the unceremonious departure and go home without her. The elderly woman looked a little surprised and more annoyed, but without long delay she left, and Bierce and I were alone on the veranda.

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Am I expected to confess all my meanness? Well, perhaps, after all, Bierce might be willing to go back to the city without me. But I am always so slow and stupid, and then, I had invited him to come with me to this place! If I had not been so blind and raging I might have seen a queer look in his face. The irks someness of the situation became unbearable. Finally Bierce, with that queer look, half annoyance and half mischief, remarked:

mischief, remarkec:
"Shall we go? I have an appointment for twelve o'clock, and it is now twenty minutes past eleven."
"Really," I replied, trying to yawn and look drowsy,
"It is so delightful out here that I feel an almost irre-

"It is so delightful out here that I her an aimos. He-sistible inclination to lie down and sleep."

"Then stay, by all means," he said; and he added with hardly discernable irony, "I trust you will have pleasant dreams." With that he went away.

I wish I could close this painful narrative here where he steps out of sight, but ah, me! his ghost hovers

about to the end The waiter with the quizzical look—how sharp these scoundrels become—came to me and insinuat-

ingly asked:
"Is there anything you wish, sir?"

I got to my feet again, slipped some money into his prehensile claws, and bade him clear out and not let prehensile claws, and bade him clear out and not let me see him again. Then with a great show of indif-ference I sauntered to the parlors, and the wild riot within me increased; hot flames swept over me; fear, eagerness, madness, stirred me to the profoundest depths. No longer had the gentle spicy wind from far Japan a sweetness for me, and the sound of the

depairs awestoes for me, and a control of the contr tières of the little stalls were looped back in decorous fashion—with one exception. To that one I went, and my heart bounded with an activity that was near to strangling me. I arrived at the portière and thrust it aside. Standing there, her wrap thrown aside, was the matchless Radiance of the train and the verauda, waiting for me! Every outline of her fine, dainty figure stood out clearly in the light of the window behind her. A tremulous vibration pervaded her form. Her ripe lips were apart and the intense light which shone from her eyes accentuated the unnatural pallor of her face.

my hand and filling all my soul with gladness. Here alone with poor ignorant me. Think of it! A man alone with poor ignorant m. Think of it! A man of genius, whom people quote, and whom they fear as the Evil One, standing here alone with poor insignation of the poor in the control of the poor in the poor i sneers are precious to me.

sneers are precious to me."
"I rail at women? Why—"
"I read everything you publish," she resumed, with the same breathless eagerness. "Oh, the terrible stories you write, that keep me awake and make me afraid when I am aloue! What a master mind to do these things! I have worshiped you so long from a great distance, and you didn't know even that such an insignificant thing as I am existed at all. Now, you will despise me for saying I have worshiped you, but I can't help it; it is the truth. And when you writings don't terrify me they make me husch. your writings don't terrify me they make me laugh.
What a funny old man Uncle Ned is, and then there's Misses Doppy, aud——
"Heavens! what——

Misses Doppy, and—"
"Heavens! what—"
"And now," she resumed, with increased excitement, "the supreme happiness of my life has come, and I could lie down now and die content; for have I not at last taken Authrose Bierce to my heart?"
God forgive me! Before I could move a finger the poor gift had thrown her arms around my neck, clasped me close to her breast and pressed her lips to mine.

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