

Doctor Grant's Experiment

By H. A. NOUREDDIN ADDIS

"**S**AY," confided the brakeman, leaning over the keen-featured elderly man who sat absorbed in a medical review, "I'm sorry to have to tell you, but your trunk's busted."

A pair of piercing gray eyes sought the brakeman's face.

"Yes," he explained, "whole bottom's loose. Guess I can rustle you a rope, though. You'll need one. If you'd just come up to the baggage car you could see for yourself."

Without a word Dr. Morton Grant arose, and, turning down a page to mark his place in the periodical he was reading—it was an account of the resuscitation of a drowned man—thrust it into an outside coat pocket, and followed the brakeman through the door in the partition that divided the car into smoking and baggage compartments. There was a calm decision that marked his method of handling the medical journal as well as the manner in which he followed the brakeman—a peculiar mannerism that was no less apparent in his most trivial act, even to the closing of the door as he passed through.

Once inside the baggage compartment the brakeman pointed out to Dr. Grant how the entire bottom of his large, heavy trunk was about to burst out. It was easily seen. A large crack spreading both ways from a corner had already extended across the opposite side.

As it was the trunk sat upright. The brakeman, seizing the handle on the damaged end in both hands, demonstrated how the corner gave way on attempting to lift the trunk. Certainly, it could never withstand handling in that condition, and, as the brakeman pointed out, the most convenient way out of the difficulty was to rope it securely.

The trainman hustled about the little baggage compartment for a few moments, bringing to view many little odds and ends accumulated there in the ordinary course of the day's work, finally producing a fairly large coil of light rope such as is often used for cording heavy or insecure pieces of baggage.

"Here, this'll about fill the bill," he remarked, handing the coil to the doctor, and hurrying to the door through which they had entered. "I'll have to get busy now. We've got kind of a bad piece of

track ahead. Sorry I can't stay and help you. See you later."

The doctor nodded carelessly and flung the end of the rope across the trunk. Perhaps if nothing had happened then to prevent he would have gone on cording the trunk and finished without taking especial notice of his surroundings. But just as he threw the rope a sudden lurch of the train caused him to stagger and jerk the rope back in a vain attempt to retain his footing, and the next moment he was sitting upon a long, low, narrow box, which, with three others exactly like it, occupied the side of the car opposite a number of trunks, among which was his own.

For a moment the physician sat dazed. Not that he was injured at all, but the sudden, unexpected lurching of the car, together with his rapid efforts to save himself from falling had come so suddenly that his mind had been unable to keep pace with his movements, and he was trying to reconstruct the chain of events that had led up to his finding himself sitting upon the low, narrow box.

In the struggle the doctor had allowed the coil of rope to slip from his grasp, and now he reached forward to retrieve it from the floor, when another violent lurch of the train brought him back to his seat upon the box.

"The brakeman said this was a bad piece of track," he mused with a smile, "I'm inclined to agree with him."

Now for the first time Dr. Grant's attention was drawn by something in the shape and size of the four boxes. He sat for a moment studying them intently, and then a heavy wrecking-bar that lay on the floor nearby impressed itself upon his mind.

Reaching forward he picked up the bar, and inserting it deftly between two of the rough inch-boards that made up the cover of the further box, forced the board from its place.

As he anticipated the opening in the box-top revealed a human body, and, as the opening was near the center, the face was not in evidence, yet from what he could see he realized that the corpse was terribly mangled.

Replacing the board he proceeded to break into and examine one by one the other boxes. The next two revealed hu-

man remains even more horribly mangled than the first, but the last, the box on which he had been sitting, contained the body of a large-framed, rather thin, yet healthy-looking man of perhaps thirty-five years of age. He, unlike the others, had escaped mangling. Hastily enlarging the opening the scientist's experienced hands flew over the corpse, tapping here, pressing there, now forcing exploratory fingers deep into soft parts of the body, and again searching with practised eye for bruises or other surface wounds.

But the examination revealed nothing, or next to nothing. A long and ragged, but shallow scalp-wound above the right ear was the only external mark of violence on the body. That, together with the fact that rigor mortis had not set in, inclined Dr. Grant to the opinion that in this case death was due to asphyxiation.

"Must have been that accident at Blair's Crossing," he said to himself. "I was told that there were no deaths. Hoboes, I suppose."

He stood up, looking down thoughtfully at the corpse. "He'd be a fine subject . . . And nobody to crow about it if I failed."

He looked at the broken trunk. "By George! I've a great notion to take a chance. If I only had some rocks to put in this box. Ten to one they never look inside any of them again. Probably only a hobo—no relatives or anything."

The doctor unlocked his trunk and peered inside. The upper tray was filled with clothing; small things—shirts, underclothes, etc. He lifted that out. Below the trunk was packed with books and a typewriter/case stood at the broken end. The abnormal weight for a trunk explained the breakage.

THE physician looked at the body which he had drawn from the box, and was now lying on the floor of the car; then looked back at the trunk. "I believe I can do it," he said aloud. He went to the door, studying it a moment, then slipped a catch. "That'll hold 'em out for a little while.

"I hate losing these books, though—and this old typewriter—it's like parting with old friends, but—." A gesture finished the sentence.

To remove the books and typewriter wanted but a moment. Then, seizing the body in his powerful arms, he deposited it in the trunk. The tray would not go in now. He removed the clothing from it and packed it in around the corpse. The tray, he then broke up and threw it in the box from which he had taken the body. Then, grumbling as he did so, he placed the books and typewriter in with the broken tray. "It's heavy enough now," he growled, "but I hate to let that old machine go."

Carefully, so that he would not be heard above the rumble of the train, he nailed up the box that now contained books and typewriter.

Next he removed a worn leather case from his pocket. From it he took a small phial containing a brownish liquid and a hypodermic needle. Wetting a small piece of cotton in this liquid, he applied it gently to the eyes, nostrils, and mouth of the corpse, and injected subcutaneously a small quantity at a half-dozen or more places about the body. Then he closed the lid of the trunk and hastily corded it up. But before proceeding very far with the cording, he carefully unfastened the catch on the door. He need no longer fear interruption, and he breathed a sigh of relief that no one had tried the door while it was locked.

The train was already approaching the suburbs of Ironville, Dr. Grant's home city, when he had finished his work in the baggage car. He hastened back to the smoker to get his hand luggage ready before they should reach his destination. And, a few minutes later, he was standing on the platform watching the porters as they removed his trunk from the baggage car, making facetious remarks about its weight as they did so.

Had it not been for the contents of the trunk the physician would have taken a taxi to his home, leaving the trunk to follow. But he dreaded the possible delay in that case. If his experiment was to be a success there was no time to be lost. Consequently he found an expressman, and, riding on the seat with the driver, kept the trunk in sight all the way home.

To awake along somewhere in the late thirties or early forties to the fact that one is a failure in life, is by no means an unusual experience. What is unusual is found in the way the individual reacts to that awakening. Most men simply accept the bitter fact and plod along in their accustomed ruts, hopeless; although not usually without casting occasional envious glances in the direction of their contemporaries who have al-

ready achieved success, or those who are well on the road to its achievement. Some men there are whom this revelation merely causes to redouble their energies in the pursuit of their chosen professions, resolved that, however belated, their success shall be none the less brilliant. Then there are those—often unwise—souls who cast themselves adrift from their old moorings resolving to begin life anew, who seek entirely different surroundings, a different line of work, and a new set of friends. Of this type are many of the men who, on the threshold of middle age, with their families grown, or growing up, suddenly disappear from their homes and friends, in many cases never to be seen or heard of again; or, in a few rare instances, to appear again after an absence of ten, fifteen, or twenty years to lay a fortune at the feet of their loved ones.

Of the latter type was John Ransome, although his method was not typical of his class. John Ransome did not run quite true to form.

When he realized that in reaching his maximum of usefulness to the New York firm with which he held an upper clerkship he had also reached the maximum of his earning power in that capacity his first conscious impulse that followed a number of dark days and sleepless nights was to disappear quietly and completely. But somewhere in John Ransome's makeup there was a streak of caution. He was not the man to plunge headlong into anything new. First, he resolved, he must carefully study over the situation, then plan each consecutive move. Through a friend he learned the name of an employment agent in Cleveland. He wrote this agent and, after much correspondence, at last succeeded in landing a position there.

"New York doesn't seem to agree with me any more," John Ransome said to his wife the evening after receiving the promise of the Cleveland job. "I don't feel myself at all—haven't for months. Fellow I met down town told me he believed I needed the Middle Western climate. So I sat down and wrote an employment agency in Cleveland." He showed her the letter offering him a position.

Although because of the possible unfavorable psychological effect she had refrained from mentioning it Mrs. Ransome had for some time observed her husband's failing health; consequently she was not sorry to learn of this new resolution, even though it would entail the breaking up of many long standing friendships, to say nothing of more ephemeral social connections.

A week later John Ransome left New York City with the understanding that as soon as he was settled in his new position he would find a suitable home, then send for his wife and children. When he arrived in Cleveland he registered at a good medium priced hotel. Several days were spent in looking over the city; it was his first trip west of the Hudson, and there were many things to see. On the evening of his arrival there he wrote his wife. It was his first letter since leaving New York—as well as his last. The letter teemed with expressions of affection for herself and the children, and the wish that he might see them again. All absolutely genuine and true; so much so that throughout his stay in Cleveland Ransome was continually fighting with an almost overwhelming impulse to abandon his project and either go back home or go to work and send for his family.

Finally there came a morning when John Ransome was missing from his room at the hotel. His suitcases were still there, and they, together with the hotel dresser, contained all the possessions, clothing and personal belongings, that Ransome had taken with him with the exception of an old, well-worn blue serge suit, a pair of canvas shoes, and a gray tweed cap. Mrs. Ransome later identified the suit cases and their contents, and made note of the missing articles, upon which descriptions of the missing man were broadcast over the country.

WHEN the Eastbound freight drove its way through the middle of the string of empties at Blair's Crossing the first report that went out to the world was that there had been no casualties. True, no member of either train crew was killed, or even seriously injured, but when an hour or so later the wrecking crew reached the scene, the first thing they did was to uncover the bodies of four men under a heap of wreckage. The car in which these men had been riding was evidently directly in the locomotive's path, the horrible mangling of three of them told as much, but the fourth was almost uninjured. It seemed that he had been rendered unconscious by a blow above the car, then smothered by the bodies of the other three, which were heaped about his head.

"Hoboes," was the infallible inference.

"What shall we do with them?—nobody ever wants hoboes," demanded one of the crew.

"Couldn't possibly identify these fellows, anyway," said the foreman, indi-

cating the three. "Unless it might be by their clothes."

"This one's all right, though," indicating the fourth.

"Yes—but we might as well let 'em all go together," was the nonchalant reply. "Take some of their clothes for identification. Just a matter of form—nobody'll trouble to look at 'em."

So it happened that when the local accommodation train passed a short time later four rough boxes, each containing the remains of one of the men, were put aboard, accompanied by a bundle of such of their clothing as the boss of the wrecking crew deemed possible of identification.

Next day they were buried in Ironville. So far no one had attempted to identify them, or even seemed at all interested in the dead hoboos. But the clothes were preserved, and many days later Mrs. Ransome, overwhelmed with anxiety at the disappearance of her husband, came to learn that one of the hoboos who lost his life at Blair's Crossing was wearing a blue serge coat and a gray tweed cap. By dint of much persistent correspondence with the proper authorities she at last succeeded in getting these meager relics forwarded to New York. There she identified them as positively as might be under the circumstances; the names of makers and merchants bearing out the identification in every particular.

"Can I give you a hand with that trunk, doctor?" demanded a dark-bearded man, who stood at the curb watching Dr. Grant and the truckman as they unloaded the heavy trunk at the sidewalk in front of the physician's home.

"Very kind of you, Mr. Forsythe," replied the doctor. "One end of it is a pretty big load for an old man like me. If you'll just take hold here, I guess this expressman's husky enough to carry his end."

Then as his neighbor attempted to take the whole weight of one end of the trunk on himself, "Hold on there, man—I know you're strong as an ox, but that's no reason why you should try to show me how weak and decrepit I am."

"Any calls?" demanded the doctor of his housekeeper, as he turned to watch his neighbor returning to the less strenuous occupation of watering his lawn. "Too much blood-pressure for that kind of exertion. His face is purple now, what little of it shows around the edges of his whiskers."

"Nothing important, doctor," replied the woman, following the physician to

the laboratory door, just within which they had deposited the trunk. "I wasn't expecting you back yet—told everybody you wouldn't be back before tomorrow. Oh, yes, Mr. Mills wanted you to call up and make an appointment to see him about that Perkins case just as soon as you got in."

"All right, we'll let Mills think I got home tomorrow."

"And Mr. Forsythe had a bad attack a day or two ago. They came for you, then called Dr. Ellsworth."

"What was it?—about as usual?" demanded the physician keenly.

The housekeeper nodded. "I suppose so," she replied. "He was up and about next day. Seemed to feel as well as ever."

"Strange man," commented Dr. Grant, shaking his head. "Simply will not take care of himself. Of course he says he has no great interest in his body. Told me the last time I saw him professionally that he'd be glad to be rid of it. Still I noticed just now that he was proud as a boy to show off his great physical strength. I'm almost as keen on metaphysics as he is, but I haven't completely given up the physical yet."

The woman shrugged. "Mr. Forsythe is a deep student," said she with a judicial air which it seemed was meant to convey the impression that she herself was not wholly ignorant of such matters. "But here I am talking when I ought to be in the kitchen. I wasn't expecting you, doctor—dinner will be a little late, I'm afraid."

"Never mind that," replied Dr. Grant hastily, "I was called in consultation on a very serious case down at Red Falls and will have to do some laboratory work tonight. Just make up a few sandwiches and a pot of coffee. I'll take them into the laboratory and get right to work."

By the time the physician had settled with the expressman and run upstairs to wash and change into a light alpaca coat, the housekeeper was on hand with the sandwiches and coffee. Dr. Grant swept aside a rack of test-tubes, a spirit-lamp, two or three retorts containing strange-looking mixtures, and a skull, to make place for his food; then, telling the woman that he was on no account to be disturbed that night, locked the door behind her, and after eating a sandwich and drinking a cup of coffee, unrecorded the trunk.

No alteration was apparent in the appearance of the corpse. No indication of rigor mortis was yet discernible, which fact seemed to give satisfaction

to Dr. Grant, although he admitted to himself that it might not have set in yet in spite of the treatment he had given the corpse en route.

A long table stood under the chandelier in the center of the room. This Dr. Grant cleared of the mass of chemical apparatus under which it groaned, and placed the limp body upon it. First, he again applied the liquid that he used on the train, touching it to eyes, nostrils and mouth—then subcutaneously. Next he took up a large notebook in which he had kept a record of experimentation upon cavies and other small animals, and for half an hour or more diligently studied these records.

For hours the physician labored; at first psychically, then physically, as the phases of his experiment passed from the higher to the lower human functions. After the first few hours he came almost to despair of attracting the higher elements of the man into close relations with the body, but at last, at a little past one o'clock, his efforts were rewarded. A pulmotor went far toward completing his task when there remained only the reawakening of the physical functioning of the body. Dawn was already breaking when the man began to breathe ever so faintly.

Gradually the physical body began to function in response to external stimuli, but all day the spark of life was very faint, very uncertain. At noon Dr. Grant came out of his laboratory, locking the door securely behind him, and warning his housekeeper against any sudden noise or heavy jar, saying that the vibrations set up in such case might work disaster upon the delicate experiment which was in process of consummation within.

"Any news?" he demanded of the housekeeper when he came to the end of the list of instructions.

"Mr. Forsythe died suddenly in the night," she replied. "It was about one o'clock this morning. I happened to hear them calling for Dr. Ellsworth. Apoplexy, it seems."

"Forsythe!" exclaimed the doctor, "William Forsythe! At one o'clock! Good Heavens!" Then after a moment, "I don't know why I should feel surprised at the news; I've been looking for it for years. He was a perfect subject for apoplexy. No details, of course?"

The woman shook her head doubtfully. Dr. Grant was an anomaly to his housekeeper—an unfathomable mixture of the spiritual and the material. Most of the good old universally accepted superstitions which had come to be an integral part of her being were ridiculed by the

physician as the rankest of self-delusion, while he accepted and made use of practices that to her made ancient witchcraft a colorless business, mild and insipid. Consequently she was never sure where she would come upon her employer's line of demarcation. The deceased Mr. Forsythe had been a metaphysician of sorts, a student of the occult of no mean attainments.

"You remember the nail-marks?" she asked diffidently.

"The prints in his hands that developed when he was studying Christian mysticism so deeply?"

The housekeeper nodded. "You know how he concentrated for a clearer conception of the crucifixion—and, as a result, the nail-prints appeared?"

"Yes," replied the physician, "I have seen them. They were a reality."

"Mr. Thomas, the grocery solicitor, told me that the prints had disappeared since his death—absolutely disappeared."

"Eh?" ejaculated Dr. Grant, starting suddenly, and shooting the woman a lightning glance from under his ragged brows, "The nail-prints disappeared? Is he sure of that?"

"Mr. Thomas said he had it from Dr. Ellsworth himself."

"Well, Ellsworth has no business starting a lot of gossip about it anyway."

IN THE evening the patient sat up while the doctor stitched up the superficial scalp-wound above his ear. Physical strength was coming rapidly; although so far there seemed to be no mental clarity at all. He seemed to understand, in a dazed way, the simple instructions from Dr. Grant; he sat up when told, and drank the mildly stimulating beverages which constituted his diet. Later in the evening the physician dragged an old army cot downstairs under the pretext of seeking an opportunity to snatch a few minutes' rest in the laboratory before he would be able to leave off work for the night and go upstairs to bed. This, of course, was more comfortable than the hard table upon which the patient had been lying, and he was soon in a profound sleep, breathing regularly and deeply. On account of the wearing vigil of the previous night the doctor left his patient early, well pleased with his condition and expecting to find him much improved by morning.

As the days passed the man visibly improved. His frame, which had been rather gaunt, filled out amazingly, and

he became decidedly more youthful in appearance. His brain, though, never seemed to get clear. Nothing that he could recall, nothing that the doctor could suggest, sufficed to shed the slightest light on his identity. In fact any allusion to the subject only confused him more. He would spend hours looking in the mirror, a puzzled expression on his face, or sit vacantly stroking his cheeks and skin, as one might who wore a full beard. At such times his mental discord apparently reached its height.

From the third day Dr. Grant had not attempted to conceal the fact of his patient's presence in the house. He introduced him as a patient who was suffering from loss of memory, perhaps a trifle melancholy—and told his housekeeper that he wished to have the man where he could be under constant observation.

As the days went by the physician tried everything in his power to restore the man's latent mental functions. In most respects he was normal. There was no reason for this peculiar psychic condition. The most rigid scientific tests failed to reveal any physical deficiency in the man's brain. It was Dr. Grant's object to exhibit him to the world as the dead man whom he had restored to life. For a number of years the doctor had been experimenting on lower animals, and writing articles for the medical journals in support of his peculiar theories. In most cases they had been received with incredulity—often with ill-disguised ridicule. Here now was the undeniable proof of his theory, the justification of his life's work—yet he dared not exhibit this muddled intelligence as an example. A man who nearest approached the normal when sitting, his hands in his lap before him, staring wide-eyed at the open palms, was not the sort of proof he wanted.

Then came a night when the man disappeared, and with him passed Dr. Morton Grant's opportunity for fame as the man who had restored the dead to life. But the physician's sensation was not wholly one of disappointment upon discovering his loss.

ABOUT two years later Mrs. John Ransome was hurrying home to her children one afternoon. With the identification of the garments found upon the man killed at Blair's Crossing she had given up all hope of ever again seeing her husband. She had taken her eldest son out of school at once, and since that time the two of them had managed to

support themselves and the younger children. Life was hard, certainly, but not more so than in the cases of thousands of other women who are left each year with growing families and no means of caring for them. As she passed Eighth Avenue walking west on Twenty-third Street, she saw a familiar-looking figure in the garb of a street-worker. At first she received no more striking impression than just of familiarity. She hesitated—turned into Eighth Avenue and approached the man, eagerly scrutinizing his face and figure as she did so.

"John!" she cried, as, standing on the curb, she faced her long absent husband, who eyed her dully in half-dazed wonder. "John, why, where have you been all these years?—why didn't you come home?"

There was no reply. Only the strange, puzzled stare.

"Why don't you speak? Oh, what is it, John—what is the matter?" And half-crying, she ran forward and seized his hand. "What makes you stare so? Why do you look so strange? Don't you know me?—your wife?—Anne?"

"Wife!" he whispered thickly—"wife!" And he shook his head, "No, I don't know."

Her eager eyes fell upon the ugly jagged scar above his ear.

"Ah," she exclaimed, understandingly, "my poor boy! Your head has been terribly injured. And loss of memory has resulted from that injury."

For a moment she stood silent, thinking rapidly. "They said it was a hobo," she mused. Then to him: "Did some one attack you and take your clothes from you?"

No reply.

"Did some one—?" Then pointing to the scar on his head, "Was this bad, very bad?—was it just done when you can first remember?"

The man hesitated a moment, still puzzled—then nodded, "Yes."

"And the man who stole your clothes was the man that was killed."

"Oh, John, isn't it fine to have you home again? And we'll nurse you up and make you just as well and strong as you used to be."

Reluctantly, it seemed—dazedly the man followed as she led him to the pavement, and in the direction of the little apartment she called home. The memory that he searched in the attempt to place this woman was a dwelling place of shadows, and among those shadows there was none that resembled her.

"And look!" she cried, examining more closely the hand which she had

continued to hold as though she would never again let it go, "see what they have done to this hand! There are great scars as though nails had been driven through the palm, and"—as she held up the other, more for his own than her inspection—"the other is just like it! My poor boy! What you must have suffered!"

The keen feminine intuition of the woman sensed the quieting of the man's perturbed brain, sensed the soothing, calming influence that swept over him as he studied his scarred palms.

"My hands," he breathed contentedly.

"Yes, your hands, John," she murmured happily, pressing his arm, "John!"

"John?" the man queried, still studying his palms, "John?"

"You don't—" began the woman awkwardly, "you haven't forgotten your own name, have you? John—John Ransome. Don't you remember?"

"John," he repeated slowly. "John Ransome. It seems easy to say, but I don't remember. I—I don't think I ever heard it before. You say it used to be my name?"

His wife nodded, swallowing hard to keep back the tears, "Not only, 'used to be,' John; it is now. It's your name now!"

The man looked at her a moment, then with the intense singleness of purpose of the dying man who clutches grimly

at whatever yet remains to him of this life, looked back at his scarred hands. He made no reply.

"Surely you haven't been without a name. You've been working here, haven't you? You must have given some name?"

The man nodded. "Yes," he said, "I did give a name when I got this job. I—I knew I wasn't like other people. I seemed to have no past at all. Everything was so dark, so hazy and uncertain behind me. I—I didn't want to tell them I had no name; so when they asked me I just gave the first name that came into my mind."

"And what was that, John?"

"William Forsythe."

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