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Builder and Contractor 259 RIVER ROAD gentle artist-prince took up the task of forcing her back to the lost Golden Age, won, by sheer strength, an amazing recovery in a brief twelve years, and was murdered like a cornered rat, in a drain.

Save for one or two small deliberate liberties, none of which vitiates the truth of his picture, Mr John has kept very closely to his facts, developing and interpreting them with a strong and penetrating imagination that gives them flesh and blood. The achievement is the more notable in that the author is an Englishman: he is helped, no doubt, by the fact that for much of the book he sees his hero in an English setting: but by the time he has James restored to his kingdom the king has a life that reflects on all about him. The other characters are for the most part in low relief, and wisely, for the theme is the conflict of James with the web of forces which they represent. But the book has no thinness. It marches through thirty years of vivid life and fuses all its crowded mass of detail into a rich and satisfying whole which lights not only the fierce and tragic beauty of something that happened five hundred years ago but matters that are immediate to all ages: the Stewart conception of the ideal state has never been more relevant than now.

No Mean Tartar, by L. F. Hay, is truly a sinister tale of the Essex Marshes, and readers will recognise many of the characters as having been used by the author in his publications of "It Wasn't a Nightmare" and the "Terrible Hand." Barbanian, a ruthless Armenian and evil genius of finance, spins a web of intrigue and revenge by which the calm of the Marshes is broken by perfervid activity. Archibald Beldrum again crosses swords with the relentless Armenian. Nigel Blair disappears, a murder is committed, and later Blair is blamed for its committed, and later Blair is blamed for its committal. Grant Douglas, otherwise known as "No mean Tartar," is also one of the cast. A colossal plot of sabotage and treachery to cover the chemical market of Great Britain and turn it inward upon herself is revealed. Thrills and shocks follow each other rapidly, including the capture of Beldrum, Blair, and Douglas by Babanian's minions, and the story is brought to an amazing and thrilling climax by their escape.

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