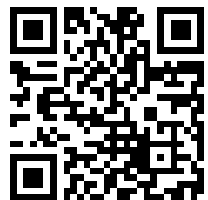


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# LIPPINCOTT'S 1935 MONTHLY MAGAZINE

A POPULAR JOURNAL  
OF GENERAL LITERATURE



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# LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

JANUARY, 1913



## TROPICANIA

BY

WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

*Author of "Fate Knocks at the Door," "She Buildeth Her House," "Routledge Rides Alone," etc.*

### I.

IT occurs to me, Thomas Ryerson, that I have a story to tell, and that I can tell it after a fashion.

The most important happening in my life, as I see it now, was a certain interview with Mary Galbraith. I had come in from Alaska a few weeks before, penniless but undismayed, feeling fit for any fate, and as pleased with myself and the world as if I had led back a mule-pack laden with golden globules. . . . My boyhood home overlooks Lake Superior from the south shore, and the cool, clean Michigan town, so queerly ordered and half-civilized, was happily stimulating after years prodigally spent in the desolate north. There, for the summer, was Mary Galbraith. We walked and rode and bantered and waltzed and dreamed and fished for three inspiring months. No finer, deeper, nor fuller days were ever given a man. I had not known that anything could be quite so important.

Something about her at first told me that here was a woman with whom a man must be just *himself*, if he would prosper. So she saw me ungloved, and my mind in its every-day working garb. Always I was lifted, strangely lifted, when we were together, but never out of myself. I wish I could suggest in a line or two the great mystery of her.

Sometimes I caught myself thinking, in the midst of a long day together, that we had been companions for years, and had not grown tired a single moment. She seemed to make me over anew each day. The first glance of her in the morning, some profile-inspiration, some new charm in what she said or wore, arranged the day and adjusted me to a pitch in the creative scheme, different always from yesterday and never exactly to be duplicated. . . . That last night together, I told Mary Galbraith I loved her, though it could n't possibly have been news.

"I thought you would say that to-night, Tom," she said.

"And what comes of it?" I asked her.

"I think you are fine and natural—the nearest to a real man I've ever met, and I won't forget you."

"You mean," I said, and I felt as if I were being shut for all time in a place where dead men lay, "that you are going to give yourself a chance to forget me?"

She began slowly to say things: "We've had great days together. Every day was in its place. It is the sort of time—that will look finer and more wonderful from a distance. I'm going to give it the chance. . . . I don't believe women take seriously enough the matter of choosing who will be their dearest among men. I don't want to make any mistake, and I don't want you to."

"I see," said I, and warm, vital air was about my world again.

"There was a look in your eyes, Tom," she went on, "that I did n't like when I saw you first. Perhaps it is n't in the eyes, but in the lines about them, or in the laugh. I don't believe it was there in your boy-years. I can't see it any more, because we've been together so much, but I'm not sure it is gone. I'm not going to tell you what it is—nor my theory of what caused it. . . . But in a year I'll know—if it's gone."

"Mary," I said, after a moment, "is n't there anything that you care to tell me, about this long, lean year—how I'm to bring back what you want?"

"No. . . . It's so important for you to bring it back—all of your own doing."

"I should have needed a year, any way," said I. "You know I have got to bring back the—the fire-wood and the antelope—to your tepee."

"I tell you that has n't anything to do with the other thing I want—"

"Does n't it really mean anything to you—that you are rich and I poor-for-the-present?"

"Have n't I shown you that it does n't, Tom?"

"Yes, but I like to hear you say it."

"It does n't really mean anything to me," she said decisively. "Why, if that were all, we could go out now together and get firewood and antelopes—and forget that I had anything like enough in my own right. We are well and strong. Oh, that's so simple——"

"Yet it's like a rope around the throat of the race," said I.

"And men hang upon it—until they are dead," she finished.

I seemed to see a boy and a girl hand-in-hand, setting out in search of the end of the rainbow. There was always that about her to bewitch me—her touches in the minor key. . . . We stood upon the rocky shore of Superior—a pine forest on our right hand, and on the left, that cold, fresh sea, always sounding. . . . And I said it again, "I love you, Mary Galbraith."

In the heart of man, it seemed to me, there could n't be more reality to put into those words.

When it was very clear that I was not to see Mary Galbraith again until a year had passed, I told her I should spend the year in South America. I could not see her face, for she had turned it from the starlight. She made no answer. The inky darkness of the forest into which she stared had gathered about her features. Yet I felt some strange disorder as the seconds passed, and finally I asked:

"Can't one get what you want in South America—as well as any other place?"

"South America means a man's dream of rivers of gold to me," she said slowly.

This was exactly what it meant to me—who had failed in Alaska.

"My mother and I learned—what the dream of rivers of gold will do to the mind of a husband and father," she added.

"But this is just for a year, dear Mary. The dream to me is what I may bring back to you. And wherever I am, thinking of you in my nights and days must put into my eyes—the thing you wish to see when I come home to you."

"You make it hard to let you go," she said unsteadily. . . . It was the only time she wavered. The moment was memorable. All about me was the warmth and strength of her emotions.

"A man in love will be anything a woman asks of him," I added.

"Yes, yes," she said quickly. "That's just it. Only, she must be wiser, and she must keep the man in love. People should n't relax and get used to happiness after they join together. . . . But I'll say no more. . . . Only, I must tell you that my father is in South America! . . . Yes, a man can get what he wants in South America, even though rivers of gold are there, if—but I must be careful and not give away my secret——"

"If he loves enough," I finished.

"How strange of you to say that—coming from those other rivers of gold in the north!"

"But, Mary, I have been three months with you."

"How dear you are to me! . . ."

## II.

If you have a map of the Americas on your wall, drive a pin into New York City, and drop a string from it. Falling naturally, the string will cut off a small, extremely western strip of South America that bulges out into the Pacific.

This little strip contains many properties wonderful to me: the highest mountains of the hemisphere; mountain-lakes that only the mid-day sun finds, and which live in a sort of dim enchantment mornings and afternoons; rivers that rush and leap and cut deep, silent ways to the sea; a rocky, serrated coast overlooking the Pacific; torrid, temperate, and frigid climate all in a day's climb; one river, the Rio Calderon, which the devil baited with gold to catch men; a ruined city—and the radiant valley, Tropicania. To this valley, through which runs the golden Calderon, came war, strategy, a complicated system of espionage, friends, foes, fortunes, beggary, ambition, dissolution, love.

. . . For me in everything and everywhere—in the nights and mornings, in the heights and gorges, by river and shore—was present the vision of a woman. And it is true that certain women found their way to the valley.

It must not be imagined that I reached Tropicania with ease; nor that I got into the heart of things there lightly—even after I reached Libertad, which is a little town on the slope of Mount Moloch, one of the hugest masses of the Andes, and a few miles to the north, overlooking the valley of Tropicania. As bad a town, this Libertad, as ever our West or Far North knew, but more quiet about it, as befits a place where sin is of age.

I heard first of Galbraith, "the old Master"—and my heart thrilled at the name—on the ship going down from Panama to Guayaquil. With the pack-trains journeying southeast for two days, en route to Libertad, there was little news, but many stories: how Galbraith had promoted gold-wars around the world, and once tried to sell a brood of torpedo-destroyers to Japan. One old prospector remarked that he'd rather contract to get the Ark of the Covenant away from the Children of Israel, than this river property from Nick Galbraith. Also, I heard that Galbraith was a fiend and a friend—a fire-eater, a fool, a king, and a wizard. Out of it all, I discerned that I must find out for myself.

I reached the town of Libertad in the dusk of evening. The town

sat upon a mountain-side, and Moloch's glacier was white with the early moon. I heard the restless voices of the miners—as I had heard them in the North with terrible gales beating about little shacks, whose every crevice was red with fire-light. And here, from the valley of Tropicania, came a soft, warm wind, fragrant as from orchard lands.

. . . Mary Galbraith's father was down in that valley, with an army barking around him, or tearing at his flanks, for all I knew. I felt it would be a good thing to serve the old Master.

Everything I had heard so far led to the fact that I could n't join Galbraith simply by going down into the valley. Vivera, a native leader, had cut off the American gold-seeker from Libertad. He was gathering to strike again, it was said, while Galbraith was spread out over the ten miles between his headquarters and the sea. . . . "Why is he spread out so?" I asked myself again and again. . . .

The hotel at Libertad was a broad, low, stucco affair, an ancient Spanish setting for a life as new and raw as the tented wildernesses of North American El Dorados. It was the balcony that saved the situation—the only feature not named in the price-lists—and the most desirable. Old leisurely Spain had built it—Spanish soldiers and their women had doubtless sung there. There was a partition in the balcony, but I heard occasionally the voices of a woman and a man in the room to the right. . . .

At supper I met Dickson, whom I had seen somewhere before. He caught me studying him. Perhaps it was his nervousness that made him introduce himself. From talk with Dickson and others, it became clear that I must not ask questions too freely. Vivera sympathizers were strong in Libertad. Their sympathy was based on the conviction that he would whip Galbraith in the end. Wherever sentiment entered, it was for the gold-king, whose history challenged the adventurous heart. The ebb and flow of his fortunes had altered great money-centres. When Galbraith was whipped, it took an army or a parliament.

These large sayings held my thought as I sat on the balcony, occasionally roused from them by the murmur of voices in the next room. At length a tap drew me to the door, and I admitted Dickson. His figure was small and slender, but the voice deep and desirable.

"We're in the next room," he explained, "and have been shut up for several days. Mrs. Dickson will be glad to see an American——"

He opened the door, and I saw the woman, smiling, within. "This is the little girl, Mr. Ryerson," he said half humorously, "who declared she never would get tired of me."

"I don't want to," she broke in. "I'm used—I'm used to a big family. . . . We've been shut up here for five days and nights——"

"'Sh-sh!"

"I know, but we really should see some one else," she went on, in a



slightly lowered voice. "You'll tire of me. Two people exhaust each other. I don't want to get so that I know always what you're going to do and say next."

This interchange shared my absorption in the woman herself, as she moved to and fro in the lamp-rays. She had a fair, frank face—a blonde woman with wide, blue eyes and full red lips. Her ears, which I instinctively look at, were lost in rolls of hair. She looked physically paramount, and yet square in the sense of its being unnatural for her to lie. The thought came to me that here was a natural outlaw—a woman dangerous only when shut up.

My first thought of Dickson had been that he was somewhat insignificant to carry such an elegant manner. His voice was out of proportion to his weight—deep, cultured utterances which made my eyes look over his head. My mind was deeply active, trying to trace where I had seen him. A face is always harder to discern in a dim light than dead objects. . . . This room was more livable than mine. A touch of the woman's hand was here and there.

He lit a cigarette, and I turned with the flare. His face was deeply, tensely lined; small, but not paltry; it was not exactly a gamester's face, but a gentleman's, in the sense of being well-bred. The whole had come forth with strange vividness in the slow flame of the match. Then the flash—that I had seen Dickson's face in a newspaper, associated with the loss of a great sum of money—one of the wanted. . . . I heard their voices vaguely for a moment; saw Dickson regarding me keenly.

Talk waned after that, except from the woman. The wine made her delightfully communicative, but Dickson again and again interposed in his gentle, humorous way. I liked and pitied him.

They were waiting in Libertad for a chance to get down into Tropicania. The daily danger of battle between Vivera and Galbraith's defenders was responsible for their delay. Dickson remarked that the settlement of Tropicania was worth trying for, by a man who wanted to make a fortune.

"It's just my kind of an adventure, if we can only get there," the woman said.

"If Galbraith is definitely whipped," Dickson added, "the valley will be wide open; but with the old Master out of the way and Vivera holding the river—the chance of making a big winning will be closed."

I told them that I had come to Libertad on the way to the valley, and presently I pleaded an overpowering drowsiness, and arose to retire. The woman asked me to remain longer, and I saw that Dickson was dismayed at the thought of my passing from sight. . . . I wished I could make him see in some way that I had no pecuniary interest in his past.

## III.

I COULD N'T find heart to hang up in Libertad and await a battle that might decide the fate of Tropicania or even end the life of Mary Galbraith's father. An idea suggested itself: to make my way westward from Libertad to the ocean—a distance of eighteen miles—and to obtain a small boat to take me down the coast to the mouth of the Calderon, and the outposts of Galbraith. It was the only way to avoid the lines of Vivera, which stretched between Mount Moloch to the west, closing every trail to Tropicania. . . .

Of course, it was clear to me by this time why Galbraith suffered himself to be strung out, when he might have kept a compact force around his river-property indefinitely. Only a ship-load of rifles and ammunition could make him take a chance like this. Perhaps he was running close on these essentials—and yet it did n't seem to me that he would invest a million in mining machinery, and provide only enough gun-metal for a few skirmishes.

Dickson came to my room the next day, while I was packing for the journey to the sea. I was on his nerves badly.

"I'd go with you—only, a woman could n't take such chances——" he began.

"I'll see you down in the valley, I hope," said I, looking up from my knees. I was straining at the buckle of my saddle-bags. He stood there uneasily, regarding me with a queer mixture of hope and alarm. I was n't so sure as I had been the first night, about his being yellow or insignificant. I could n't bear to torture him.

"Dickson," I said, straightening up, "I'm here for a year—among other things, to win or lose on the gold proposition down in the valley. Nobody sent me here. Nobody has a commercial hook on what I do. I pay my own expenses. All the reward I expect to get is a matter of river-bed luck. You've been square with me. The fact that I thought I saw you somewhere before does n't mean anything to me *but just that.*"

"I'm obliged to you, Ryerson," he said. "I've been shut up a bit lately, and it's drawn me rather fine. Do you—I speak purely as a friend—happen to be shy—in any way?"

I took it in the way he meant.

"I'm not flush," said I, "but, for the present—all fixed, thank you."

He bowed, and turned toward the hall, calling, "Lillian!"

She came to the door as she was—in a silk robe, held in place with one hand. The other was extended to me. Her hair was but half-done; yet she looked very fresh and attractive—in her fearless, wide-open way. I always thought of her as a creature of vast ranging.

"Mr. Ryerson is leaving," Dickson said. "We may overtake him in the valley, if luck favors——"

"I'm in favor of taking luck by the nearest handle," she remarked, laughing at us; and then added, in the queer, incomprehensible way of some women, "You two look good together. . . . Good-by."

Her hand was warm and small and strong; and Dickson's was lean and eager in mine. I was glad for the changed look in his eyes.

I reached the small town on the coast that night, and the following morning I set out to engage a boat. The fishermen were about—blown and faded brown men, the shine of black long since gone from their hair with sun and salt and wind—men used to looking into the wind's eye. There were plenty of boats—but, as I expected to go alone, it appeared that I must buy outright. . . . At this juncture a white man appeared.

"I'm going down the coast," said he. "I belong to the Geodetic Survey—and my name is Yarbin."

I tried not to smile, and refrained from asking what Geodetic Survey. Yarbin was young, had a big nose, and what would be a cold gray eye, if it were not swimming in inflammations. His lips were twitching from the night before, but they would n't twitch long, for he drew a black bottle as large as a rolling-pin from his pocket, and offered it to me, beckoning me away from the fishermen.

"Will you have a little slug?" he suggested.

"Thanks, no, Mr. Yarbin. I like the morning air. Where are you going?"

"Down the coast." He closed one inflamed lid over the left gray eye, and held it there with effort, his head cocked on one side, looking mysterious. . . . I noted pock-marks, a ruffle of scar-tissue around his throat, and a brown pigeon-chest. . . . It occurred to me to take a chance.

"I want to get to Tropicania," I said. "I believe—at least, I've heard—it's worth fighting for to get a claim there. I'm not a soldier—but one might learn the game, to judge by the look of those who play at it. I'm a miner——"

"Yep, I'm going down to Galbraith's diggin's. I'm drunk, you see——"

"That's all right—stay convalescent."

He acquiesced readily and sealed it with a "slug."

We procured a boat and stores. Late that afternoon I carried Yarbin aboard as a final package, and set sail. . . . It was a strange night to me. The sea was calm and brilliant, the moon a great mysterious pearl. The forest of South America was a black ribbon on the left, and the mountains were contours of denser night. Yarbin snored,

in a changeable way that broke monotony. I left him a few drinks for morning, and the rest washed overboard—with a little assistance.

Yarbin's mutterings were better than most men's self-conscious utterances. He had been vastly around—had fought everything, and alcohol everywhere. He spoke of cavalry outfits, Dannemora—and once he spoke of Galbraith as "king of the golden river." Then, toward morning, he began to come in closer to reality. Bits of ballads that I knew, and some that I did not, arose to his lips—and all had the color of sea and plain and mountain and wild women and poor suffering gamblers of men.

Presently he sat up, stopped his singing, to become ill; after which, he went off his head again. Then it all came out what he was doing. He was a spy from Vivera—on the way to join Galbraith and throw him—possibly in the battle. All this came in fragments. He spoke of himself as a stowaway, castaway, marine; and of Vivera and his men as "a running sore of an outfit." These varied matters appeared in his monologue with lavender gloves, barrel-houses, and girls who love a sailor. . . .

He had money—doubtless Vivera's. Plainly, he was a trained soldier. Such men are at a premium in new gold countries, where miners are many, but leaders of men few. Galbraith would not be slow to make use of Yarbin; hence the craft of Vivera. The time might come in action for Yarbin to turn the issue against the old Master.

I held the tiller as the dawn broke, and reflected upon the mystery of life. Here into my hands had fallen an instrument of deep menace to Mary Galbraith's father. Yet Yarbin was a friend of mine. It had been so with Dickson—Dickson was a friend of mine. . . . And now the great equatorial day broke; the mountains rolled up in the east; the shore was edged with dazzling lights where the morning sun fell upon the breaking waves; the sea swung in a great, slow, rhythmic breathing, changed from deep blue to radiant living green—and before me was Yarbin, his life in my hands—and sick he was. He opened his eyes, regarded me and the morning.

"You'll be all right," I said. "We'll get together a little later to-day, and make the grade inshore to the rebels. We've been sailing fourteen hours. At two or three miles an hour, we must be about far enough down the coast. Do you happen to know where we are?"

He turned around with a groan, and squinted at the shore-line ahead. "We're there," he said. "That's Galbraith's Headland. We go up the canyon here. Say, I didn't undertake to take you for a fool, did I, any time last night?" he added, with a ghastly smile.

"Not in the least."

"I'm really glad of that. Did I cry?"

"Not a tear."

"That was fine of me. I suppose I told you I had a mother once?"

"No, Yarbin. I had to hypothecate——"

"Are you an old hand at hyp——? I'll have to have a notch more steam on that."

"Well, you see, the night was calm. I crept offshore a bit to keep away the mosquitoes. It was so very still and fine—I had time to put two and two together."

He winced. "How many services did I say I had soldiered in?"

"I can't recall."

"Canadian Mounted Police—for instance?"

"No."

"You see, I'm not naturally a liar. I've never served with those Johnnies."

I did n't tell him anything. This seemed best, until I could get him straightened out. We rounded the Headland and ran into the canyon-mouth in mid-forenoon. Yarbin evidently knew that Galbraith held the promontory.

"You do the talking," he said, when the sentries hailed us from the heights. "Tell 'em you picked me up in Libertad."

I felt the soft spot in this. It was as if I were getting the spy through.

#### IV.

BUT I remembered that Yarbin would have taken the trip alone—that he was ill, and could n't think; that there was ample time for us to settle our standing in relation to Galbraith. . . .

The old Master had left the Headland headquarters but an hour before—ridden back to the valley after having passed the night with the outposts. The commander at the promontory was a grizzled old native, a Colonel Viringhy—a blend of Spanish and Indian. He gave us over to an escort and dispatched us to Galbraith with imprecations.

"Cheerful old Aztec," Yarbin remarked, as we rode together. My friend was improving.

The Headland was a small arrow-head of rock jutting out into the Pacific. Imposing as it was from the sea, the Headland was but the first step of the great mountain—a ledge to the attainment of the unattainable. The southern wall of the canyon was formed from these huge masses of earth and rock, stretching straight in to Tropicania, a distance of ten miles.

The trail was a shelf along the canyon wall, sometimes a thousand feet above the river-bed, often sinking into the gloom of the monster escarpment, but never rising out of the chasm. The opposite wall was everywhere lower and out of alignment, for a distance of seven miles in

from the Headland. At this point, the shelf of the trail widened and was directly opposite the summit of the opposite cliff, which was overshot naturally, so that a bridge of twenty-four foot span was sufficient to connect Tropicania with Libertad and the north. Galbraith (I learned later) had been quick to seize this strategic point, and before his dredging machinery was installed in the river-bed beyond, he spent a fortnight turning the stationary wooden bridge into a steel draw-structure, which, when raised, cut off the valley from the world. Here also he enlarged the shelf by cutting back into the rock, and established his fortifications, which commanded both the trail from the Headland and the road to Libertad, across the gorge.

The Headland itself was scalable with great difficulty from the sea-front, and in one place from the river-bed; but an inferior force with ammunition could hold it at either or both points against a great number. Despite the length of the trail, only one other point required a guard: the Libertad bridge, known as the Pass. . . .

Yarbin and I, with the escort, reached this bridge in mid-afternoon, and the party rested an hour. My friend reviewed the situation:

"You would n't think there was such a position in the world—and with a steamer-landing back at the promontory! Galbraith would have to run out of ammunition—to lose the Headland; and, even so, he could retreat to this bridge, yank it up, and defend the Pass with snow-balls."

"And the canyon is impassable, going and coming, from rocks and rapids," said I.

"Yes, and you'd have to be an eagle in the air to get over the mountains," Yarbin added.

"But they say it's a *valley* ahead," I remarked. "How can this be the only way down from Libertad, for instance, if there's a general drop into a valley?"

"There is n't," he answered. "It only falls away on this side. The other wall is sheer, worse than ever, all the way around Tropicania, to where the canyon tightens again—more rapids, more boulders—all the way down into Peru and the Horn, for all I know."

This gave me but a vague idea of what I beheld later that afternoon; as around the final bend of the descending trail, Tropicania appeared in one grand sweep of vision. The ledge had dropped into the river-bed, and the mountains fallen back, forming a broad glacis three miles or more long—and this was Tropicania. Its northern boundary was the unbroken canyon wall—in many places a thousand feet sheer. In the distance plainly could be seen the narrowing of the gorge again, the southern mountains closing in to reform the canyon, rock-strewn and impassable with rapids. Absolutely, it was cut off—at the will of bridge-holders at the Pass.

At this juncture Yarbin scored a point that was to live in my mind for months.

"Only the Lord of Hosts could conceive such a perfect position—but that's its trouble," he remarked.

"What do you mean?" I asked, sensing the big difficulty without grasping it.

"How's he going to get out with his gold?"

"He's a right smart man," I said weakly.

"It's a right smart fortress," Yarbin answered.

And all this time I was staring down into Tropicania. A strange pastoral—in the long afternoon shadows! The stamp of centuries was upon it—save for the mining machinery, the dredges, and the glistening tin roofs, new as Nome.

Thus we entered the valley, Yarbin speaking no word; and I out of the present, world-straying, among thoughts too big for me. . . . Now I heard the voices of my own countrymen, and saw the natives moving to and fro, bare-legged and hungry-looking, a strange ashen texture to the brown of the faces—the same weathered look that lay upon the ruined city. . . . At last we were among the ruins . . . and a lean old man came forth. His was an emperor's nose, and cheeks that were sunken and transparent. His dark eyes pierced my mind—and flitted to Yarbin. He spoke to our escort, which dissolved. So intensely was I watching the father of Mary Galbraith, that I did not understand his words, until he said a second time:

"Come in, gentlemen."

## V.

GALBRAITH'S quarters were apart from the settlement proper, high on the slope, and close to the largest of the ruins, dubbed the "Vatican." In the rear were canvas partitions for the sleeping-rooms of the leader and his staff; and in the front was the office and general headquarters. It was here that we three sat down to talk after supper.

"I am a miner," said I. "Six months ago I left Alaska. I reached Libertad four or five days ago, and determined to get down here with you." I added how I had reached him, and the incident of meeting Yarbin.

Galbraith reflected a moment. A long, slim black cheroot remained in his mouth constantly, mostly unlit. He talked with it, but did no chewing. Presently he asked several questions about Alaska, and then turned to Yarbin.

"I don't know much about anything except soldiering—and I have n't any papers as to that," my companion said. "Take it or not, I've been a success afield and a fool in garrison. I got drunk in Libertad

and on the shore. I've been drunk in a good many places, but I know how to get a fight out of a bunch of men."

"Very interesting," said Galbraith. "But why did you come here?"

"You've got a fight on, have n't you?"

"Yes—yes, I believe I have—but Vivera has also. It would have been easier to get to Vivera from Libertad."

"You looked to me the gamier proposition."

"Ah," said Galbraith.

The reply seemed right to him, and I saw myself being drawn, against my will, into the vortex between these men. What surprised me in Galbraith was his lack of suspicion—or could he be acting? I had looked for a man with the hard taint of gold upon him—a man who had hungered and thirsted, fought and contrived for gold, with such passion that he had desolated the hearts of his woman and child. It seemed to me now that there was a big other side; that some inner devil had kept him abroad in the ruck of new gold lands, but that a finer spirit was not dead.

And it seemed to me also that Yarbin was new at this spy business. The man whom he had come to betray, now poured wine for him, and had brought food of the best. More than this, Galbraith treated us both with his trust and a warming culture that is rare afield. Obstacles indeed were in the way of committing treason upon the person of this incomparable host. Doubtless Yarbin had expected first to be treated like a stowaway, to show his quality under fire. I saw that my friend was white enough to be troubled.

Quite frankly Galbraith appeared to expose his entire situation that night.

"If it were absolutely known whether Tropicania lay in Ecuador or Peru, there would n't be any fight on," he explained. "Possibly there would n't be any Tropicania. Peru says the Calderon marks the boundary; Ecuador says not. The two republics have been grumbling over the border-line since the beginning. Now there's a fight on because I find gold in the Calderon. I have learned that whenever gold is found, men are not as they were yesterday. But I missed no chance in my big machinery investment—ordered shooting-iron pound for pound."

Galbraith laughed a little. "I knew it would come. Libertad was first to hear there was big gold in the Calderon. Then Guayaquil, and up the Magdalena, from town to town, to Barranquilla, from isle to isle, quickening sleepy Mexico, and even New York—my God, how gold-news travels! Some ugly voltage seemed turned upon these mountains. The men about me took on a haggard, glaring look. Then I heard first from Vivera. The fact is, Vivera is a free-lance, just as I am. But *he* did n't discover an El Dorado. He did n't spend a fortune for mining machinery. Vivera, it appears now, represents Ecuador. They know



what a cheap adventurer he is—that's what makes me hate Ecuador for using him. I could have whipped Vivera in an afternoon, but it would only have meant another army trailing up from Peru to strike Tropicania."

The years had taken Galbraith over the rough places of aggressiveness. He had no hate in his heart, no time nor energy to spend in execrating his enemy, nor his kind. He placed the situation, most dramatic and absorbing, with the calmness of a man outlining a mere commercial manoeuvre. Here he had a republic on either flank, and while he temporized with each in turn, he bored for fortune in the gravel of the Rio Calderon. Galbraith fascinated me, as he added: "I hesitate to become the buffer between two republics fighting full tilt. The trouble is, they would not forget me in their excess of malice toward each other. . . . So, you see, I have a careful game to play, though I am well pleased at the way it is unfolding. There'll be another fight at the Headland presently. . . ."

Galbraith tossed a cheroot through the open doorway, and sighed wearily as he chose a fresh one. I heard his sentries abroad in the darkness, and in one of the huts below, a miner was singing Tosti's "Good-by":

" . . . Lines of white on a sullen sea."

The whole environment—the torrid night, the glowing stars, the thick walls of stone, the slow, soft pressure of a breeze upon the candles, the thought of two animated republics and their ancient exchange of hatred, the river flowing silently below—all blended into a mysterious enticement about the figure of this gaunt old man, with the kindly voice and tolerant mind. The picture challenged me in a way I can hardly express. . . .

I seemed to catch that instant, from the queer smile that lingered about his mouth, the bigger meaning for his second headquarters at the Headland; his stationing of a force there by the sea. Was not Vivera held there, too? Did he not need this ammunition as much or more than Galbraith? . . .

I saw more clearly now. The old fighter before me, dividing his force, one part to watch the sea, and to keep Vivera (who was n't sure of his ground with Ecuador) watching the sea; the other silently, swiftly, probing for gold bullets in the stony tissue of the Calderon—a big, quiet, masterful game of temporizing, where another would have been at blood-letting. And now each day was a big winning to Galbraith. I was glad I had come, glad to serve, glad his daughter's lustre was upon him. I saw where she had gotten her splendid capacity to wait. . . . I saw that Yarbin was stupefied, not with wine, but

with the quality of this gamester, whom he had come to deliver into a common disturber's hands.

Galbraith was speaking again. "You see, there are white men here who staked all they have with me on this venture. There are other golden rivers. I have lost many times before. I'm not going to cut my throat if we lose the Calderon and the dredge, but even *these* white men don't live by ventures as I do. I can't bear to see them lose. They're as clean-jawed a lot of chaps down in the settlement as I ever led, and I've led many a lot. They stand by me, sick with work and gold-fever; wounds, some of them have, and all are worn down with the tension and the magnetism of home. . . . Why, many a woman back in the States is planning lace curtains and carpets and cottages against the return of these fellows."

Yarbin gulped a glass of wine.

"Looks pretty dark at times," Galbraith added softly, "but I don't think it's in the cards for us to lose this trip. . . ."

We were shown to cots slightly apart from each other, and I lay awake for hours under the mosquito canopy, thinking in the darkness.

## VI.

TROPICANIA was cut off from the world of mails by Vivera's lines, stretching between the valley and Libertad. It was just for the present, Galbraith said. . . . A man's life is not where his body moves, but where his thoughts are; so I hungered for letters from Mary Galbraith, as I longed for the fullness of life—thin sheets of tough, crinkly paper, finely written (such as had overtaken me at Panama and Guayaquil), with a brown seal on the back, transcripts of her heart and mind and life.

As I lay awake thinking and longing, a sentry challenged outside, and Galbraith—an old man in the lightness of his eating and sleeping—was upon his feet before the courier was admitted.

"Hello, Santell," he said softly, and lit a cheroot. His face looked gray and gaunt in the flare of the match. The flash of his eyes left me thinking of his strange power. . . . Then lantern-light and Santell. The impressions came too swiftly for a second: a light rippling laugh, a blood-curdling oath—a tall, delicate, red-mouthed youth with black wavy hair. . . . I did not hear the news he brought.

From a doze toward morning, I heard the creak of machinery and found the dawn-gray in my eyes. The sun was rising through the end of the canyon—a portal to the gods was the gorge. . . . And down among the last shadows of night, the men of Galbraith toiled. . . .

"They're great fellows," the Master said, stepping up behind me. "I often think some of them are like migratory birds that would beat themselves to death in a cage, if held from their southern flights."

"A particular type of the man I mean is your friend Yarbin, I take it," he added, drawing a bit nearer. "I have several—many such. They are valuable—less down yonder at the dredge, than out on the lines with old Viringhy. Yarbin would fly at the throat of every department of holiness, as it seems to me—and yet he'd be *there* in the very pit of action when it came."

I looked at him squarely and said:

"I've only known Yarbin since day before yesterday. He does n't claim to be much—except a good man in action. I've seen him drunk—and, even so, it appeared that he was n't a liar constitutionally."

". . . . A rifle and a dozen rounds of ammunition," he mused. "Positively no mining tool is so important. A rifle disposed of to the enemy is two rifles——"

Yarbin was coming towards us.

"Let's have some coffee," Galbraith added, greeting my recent companion—who was plainly on the gain.

After breakfast, Galbraith led us through the ruined city. Yarbin was quicker than I to see the pits and emplacements. . . . The slopes everywhere, I now discerned, were ruffled with entrenchments. Yarbin's eyes gleamed as these matters broke upon his understanding.

"They don't breed 'em down here, that could take this away from a couple of hundred white men," he remarked. "But where's your arsenal?"

"Right at hand," Galbraith said readily. "The Vatican yonder lies in about the centre of the position, and its lower walls are very thick."

This was the eminent ruin.

"Huh!" came from Yarbin.

"I'd like to spend a day with you here," Galbraith said, at this point. "But I'm off for the Headland. Perhaps you two would care to ride with me. It *would* be companionable——"

Yarbin nodded. I assented eagerly. . . . The fourth of the party was Leek—whether orderly, armor-bearer, personal servant, or partner, I had been unable to make out.

We had travelled leisurely for an hour and a half, and the Pass was behind, when the sound of firing reached us from ahead. The look of Galbraith's profile was a shock to me. He beckoned to Leek, and the two spurred out of earshot. . . . It occurred to me that I had something to say in private to my companion at this juncture, which Galbraith had chosen for a secret conference with his second.

"You're a good fellow, and I like you, Yarbin," I said, "but we've got to split right here, if you mean to carry out your original idea in this mining outfit."

"I thought I must have slopped over that night," he said hoarsely. "You looked as if you had something on me in the morning."

"I did n't drill you for it. It was on your mind with the white line—and the white line would n't let it stay there. The point is, do you love Vivera?"

He cursed with soft eloquence. "No, but I'm in his service."

"And you've eaten the bread of Galbraith——"

"Yes, curse him! He makes it hard."

"We've only got a minute—tell me!"

"You have n't said anything yet?"

"Not a word, Yarbin; but I will if you wobble to-day. I'm for Galbraith."

"I won't wobble to-day."

I liked the look in his eyes as he said this, and it had to suffice, for Galbraith beckoned. . . . Leek passed us, as we spurred forward. He did not seem to observe that we were on the trail, as he quickened his mule back toward the settlement.

"If it's a skirmish down on the shore," Galbraith remarked quietly as we joined him, "it's only just begun, or Viringhy would have a courier on the way back to us."

He had hardly finished when we heard the drum of hoofs again, and a running mule appeared around a bend of the trail a few hundred yards ahead.

## VII.

"It's Santell—Viringhy's second in command," Galbraith muttered, as the flying courier appeared. His mule had gained full momentum, and apparently had lost the "feel" of the bit. It was like trying to stop a locomotive on a greased down-grade. . . . I could but laugh at the frail, feathery Santell—braced back and sawing, his woman's jaw set, and his slender arms bare to the white of the armpits. He got his mount down to a turning, a hundred yards past. Galbraith waited patiently. . . . The curses in the air as Santell spurred his beast back were startling as foulness in the mouth of a child. I found myself thinking he could n't comprehend what he said. . . . A dissipated, unshaven, dare-devil face; but feminine—a high, queer voice, and the fresh red mouth. The message he brought was but a thin shaving of substance in a thick layer of blasphemy:

"We sighted a steamer coming down at daybreak. She was within a mile of shore. Vivera started his attack ten or twelve minutes ago. Looks as if we could hold 'em off——"

Galbraith checked him. We four moved forward at a trot.

"Good mule—four-mile mule," Santell confided to Yarbin. "You

see, he was wound up for the whole journey. It's hard to stop him under a mile when he gets going like that. You have to talk to him——"

"I could see him beginning to listen, as he went by—ears turned right back toward you," Yarbin observed.

The day grew hotter as we neared the sea at a fast trot. The fierce, torrid light was thrown from behind. Through the rift of the gorge at last I saw the Pacific. The glare was blinding. Firing was steady ahead, but not thick.

Over the last bend in the shelving trail our mules swung, and below on the terrible slope from the river to the Headland, I saw the white puffs of Vivera's soldiers among the rocks. The stretch of trail approaching the Headland from Tropicania made a last deep sag. It was, therefore, open to the fire from the opposite cliffs. Vivera could sweep this exposed trail, designated "Causeway," from across the gorge, while he sent his forces in a charge up the slopes.

I wish I could suggest the tremendous setting of this little drama. It was like some of Wagner's music in the immensity of it—gorge, headland, mountain, and sea. . . . The shots from across and below came to my ears badly out of time and tune. The attack was half-hearted, it seemed to me, and the scorn of Yarbin was militant. . . . Vivera was finding it difficult to drive his men up the half-nude slopes, under the leisurely fire of Viringhy above. Instead of criticising these men, I rather admired them. It looked silly and abject to try to take such a position. Vivera was not leading any of these charges in person. And he was the one who had a fortune to win. I'd have needed a cell and a year to make Yarbin see this.

The adventure of the day now appeared clearly. To reach the Headland, we must cross the Causeway in more or less full sweep of Vivera's fire from the opposite cliff. Already I heard the nasty sound of steel cutting the air, and was coughing from the dust, as the bullets splintered the rock. Galbraith bent forward and spurred his mule to a gallop. Lean, gray, and old, that profile, all but the eyes, that flashed piercingly through the shade of his wide Peruvian hat.

The sound of a slug above my head was like a curse—a quick-growled curse, with a murderous force behind it. I dropped forward onto the mule's bristles. Santell rode lightly, apparently giving no thought to the gathering fire which we drew; his red lips slightly parted, his black eyes filled with a softness I could never understand—bland, wide-open, calm, yet some hell was in them which I divined, though I could not define. Yarbin was riding as if up and down in front of a red-hot battery, his face flushed with excitement—queer, humorous figures of speech dropping from his tongue. It was drink to him, and bread, too. And now we four were taking the Causeway at a gallop, and the air was venomous with bullets. It seemed as if they marked me off

as a knife-thrower outlines his accessory. . . . There was a cheer in the air, and Viringhy's soldiers were grinning around me, before I straightened up and reined. Looking back, I saw Galbraith and the old, white-haired Viringhy disappear into the latter's headquarters.

The steamer that had caused the attack was now a mile offshore, straight out, trailing her plume of jet, but making no change in course. The firing kept me restless. A big gun crashed at intervals, followed always by a cheer from the defenders. At the doorway of Headquarters, a steel slug drove into the masonry a foot from my head, and filled my eyes with rock-dust. It was too hot for tobacco. There was a binding regulation on the drinking supply, and Viringhy's soldiers had to have permission every time they fired a shot. Moreover, they had to show results. A pressure was brought to bear on this matter that filled me with a deep and morbid terror. Either Galbraith was exceedingly delicate about decreasing Vivera's force, or else he thought more of Springfield and Remington cartridges than he did of nuggets from the Rio Calderon.

The big gun crashed again. . . . Evidently, thought I, Galbraith has battery-fodder other than rifle-cartridges this morning. The cheer died away—and was raised again. I wondered what the big gun had struck this time. In any event, Vivera was n't stopped. His soldiers forming to charge—companies of his men queerly knotted, among the rocks below. Viringhy would centre his fire upon them; a few fallen would slow up the charge, as if their bodies were tied to the others; another careful volley, and the knots gave way. This was the routine.

A sudden crash of the big gun at the left shook the very centres of my being. In a kind of fascination, I had wandered close to the hooded part of the cliff, where Galbraith's artillery had held forth all day.

A strangely familiar smell was in the air. . . . I was compelled by the idea of peering in upon that tireless, implacable gunner under the hood of rock. Around the works I made my way. Galbraith's soldiers, hoarse with thirst, lay in the trenches. Their humor was dry and biting. They were attentive but not rushed. To save cartridges was the order—and they chafed when opportunities came and went. None minded me, and I crawled along the edge to the crevasse where the gunner was stationed. . . . And now the familiar odor moved my brain with boyhood memories, and the rock was drifted with burnt paper—a red and white litter and smudges of splintered wadding. . . .

Just at this instant Santell corralled me roughly. His face was evil, as he commanded me back to Headquarters. But I had seen. In the ledge of rock, with a sputtering fuse, sat a giant fire-cracker—lodged in the crevasse where it would reverberate with compounded effect.

"My God!" I muttered, "this is pure morality."

But I had not pleased Galbraith by my enterprise. His face was gray with anxiety, and often he stared back to the sea, where the steamer moved on almost imperceptibly, her smoke trailing off to the north. She was slow and heavily laden. . . .

And now Santell, striding jauntily ahead of me, began a report in his thin voice—but was silenced by Galbraith. . . . I was thinking how definitely Yarbin and I had hampered the old Master. Most men would have had us in irons. . . .

Just at this instant I saw a quick change in the back of Santell's neck—as if a blur of red had crossed my eyes. He had just turned into Headquarters behind Galbraith. The boy's bare, slim arms lifted, and he toppled over backward at my feet. . . . And now I was looking down at his face. His great eyes had darkened, some deep staring light far within, but all soft and expressionless about. The glare had softened. They moved to me—to Yarbin—to Galbraith—but could not hold nor see. . . . There was a quiver of infinite pathos about the mouth, and then I heard, directed to no one in particular—words which made me understand that he was going out in the arms of his father.

Galbraith held the frail figure—long after it had divided.

## VIII.

GALBRAITH, Yarbin, and I were riding back toward the valley late in the afternoon. The Headland had not changed hands. Vivera had withdrawn his lines, convinced at last that the steamer had no business with Galbraith. . . . The old Master had not spoken, since he waved an *adios* on the Causeway a half-hour before. The death of Santell—I alone knew how that had wrecked him. We were nearing the Pass, making the last up-grade through the darkening gorge. I could no longer bear to have Galbraith suspect me for a spy. I planned to make my attitude clear to him that night.

"Well, you see what I meant, by telling you I could have whipped Vivera in an afternoon," he said wearily.

Thus the old Lion-heart kept up his bluff:

"The fact is, I don't dare whip Vivera. My only business is to hold what I have, and to keep him thinking that he can take the Headland at the proper time. . . . Poor Santell! His room was ready." . . . He glanced at me.

Four or five rifles cracked slightly below us across the canyon—from the thick growths at the very edge of the precipice.

"Run for it!" Galbraith commanded, leaning forward and rowel-

ling his mount. We thundered down the rocky slope, the rifles emptying their magazines behind.

"That was clever of Vivera," Galbraith remarked faintly, as we turned past the valley outposts. "Lucky he did n't get one of you fellows. Vivera wants me badly. It was meant for me—this firing—and so was the bullet that got poor Santell to-day." He spoke in a wheezy way and jerkily, as one fighting for air.

"But *you're* hit," I cried, grasping his elbow.

"I guess I am," he said quietly, "but I can't be hard-hit—did n't even knock me out of the saddle. It's in the shoulder somewhere, I think. . . . Oh, I can make Headquarters all right."

And now, whether it was meant or not—I could not tell at that moment—Yarbin had uncovered, ridden around to the opposite side of the old Master—and *uncovered*. It was rather dark for me to study his face. . . . And thus we rode to the Pass and down the long darkening grade to the valley. . . .

Galbraith had been struck in the shoulder by a steel bullet, which luckily had not stopped there. His left arm was useless, but no bone appeared to be splintered. Jason, the young surgeon of the settlement, took care of the wound. That night I sat at the edge of Galbraith's cot. We whispered long.

"Vivera understands that one tired old man holds this outfit together. It was clever of him—that assassination party," he said, in great pain.

"I was a trouble to you to-day," I said. "I'm sorry for that." And I told him about my summer with Mary—and what she said, when I asked her if she would be my Mary always; how she had sent me away to make myself sure—how I had chosen South America.

There was a long silence, and through the dusk of the candles I saw the pain come and go.

"It's almost like having a son," he whispered. "It's worth a wound to hear. Mary, little Mary—I wonder if she knows how much I have thought about her—how I see her still in her ribbons? . . . Her mother and I never managed together—but I loved her mother. That's queer, isn't it? Mary and her mother cried in the same way. . . . I never could stay—when they cried."

Question after question he asked me for hours. I saw how he had loved the drama of gold-hunting, the great gamble; that his strong, fluent character found expression in far chances and difficult masteries among men.

"I remember when I was like you—afield with *my* Mary brimming in my brain! Oh, many years ago. I thought of her day and night—day and night. I went back with a bit of a fortune, too—but I could not stay. It's my devil. Some men have drink, some men have women,



and some men have money-devils—mine were the far chances. And yet, only afield does a man know how much he needs a woman! . . . Are you to be like that—as I was—with *my* Mary's daughter?"

"I speak it badly," I said. "I have great respect for the Lure that drew you away again and again. . . . But I think—if you'll forgive me—I see now, as I never could fail to see again at any time, the boyishness of all this, its commonness, compared with making a great woman happy."

"I think you've hit it," the old Master said. "Mary's mother could not make me see this—until I was old. I was old before these became boyish things to me. I did not put them away in time. And you're so young to know all this. . . . If you make Mary happy, you will do what only the giants of this world are able to do."

I bent forward.

"You know, when I was hit to-day," he said quietly, "I sort of saw the end. I'm an old man—times are running close. It's not all as I told you. We're strapped. There aren't two rounds of ammunition in my command. . . . And then, if I'm down—there's no other. I've learned command, Ryerson—there's no joy in it, no pride in any part of it—to an old man. . . . I should have seen these things as a young man—as you have——"

"I did n't see them—it was your daughter who showed me."

"It came from the misery of her mother," he added. "We're all bound together in the happiness-fortune now—the four of us. Just one realization—such is the fruit of four lives of hard service. And the result—it's too stiff, this thinking. . . . Good-night, Ryerson."

His hand came out in the dark and gripped mine—a lean, feverish hand. There were no more words that night.

## IX.

THERE followed two days with no change at the valley nor Headland. Galbraith did not leave his bed; Yarbin remained dry and brooded. I moved about the settlement, studying all the activities, and dreaming of letters to and from Mary—both cut off by Vivera's lines. She would doubt the world, the mails and all, but keep her faith. Only her lover, before her eyes, could break this faith. But I dreaded the misery of silence for her—as it came to me.

On the third morning after the fight at the Headland and Galbraith's wound, Yarbin disappeared.

Half-way between the Pass and the Headland, I overtook his mule. The fear came that Vivera's sharpshooters had picked off my friend; yet no shots had been reported at the Pass. Then the sickening dread was added, that Yarbin had been possessed of some way of communicat-

ing with Vivera. If he reported how low on ammunition was the force at the Headland, and the Tropicania outfit generally, there could be no doubt of the issue. Vivera would drive his army up the Causeway, and the man who had come with me would be responsible. Again and again the thought came: If he should tell Vivera of Galbraith's shortage, the Headland would change hands, perhaps this day, and Tropicania would be cut off from the ammunition-steamer. . . . Yet, in spite of the stress, I made no report to Viringhy of Yarbin's disappearance. Somehow, I had to give my strange comrade the benefit. At the sea, they thought him back in the valley; and in Tropicania, he was supposed to be at the Headland. . . . Had Galbraith inquired directly, I should have told him; but when I saw his suffering and anxiety, I was grateful that this was spared him. . . . The next morning the Chief sent for me early.

"Tom, it's going to be a noisy day at the Headland," he said wearily. "I should be there, but I can't. There'll be fighting. I'll keep Leek here for emergencies. You are to help Viringhy hold the Headland—until further orders. . . . It's the last fight there."

"Is the ship due to-day?" I whispered excitedly.

"Yes," he answered, and the pale shadow of a smile wavered over the gray face. "You'll be back here to-night with good news, I trust. Take care of yourself."

I was impatient to leave him before he could ask about Yarbin. . . . The passage to the Headland was painfully slow that morning, for I accompanied a mule-pack with the last dole of ammunition for Viringhy's fighters. It was pitiful to me—a dozen boxes of cartridges; and what a volley we drew on the Causeway, as the little train was driven across under the yells of the packers. . . . The ship was in the offing, and fighting was on.

This day's attack was identical with the other in its main features: little charges one after another repulsed up to noon and beyond. I could not help feeling that Vivera was toying with us—pulling our shots in preparation for his grand upward dash to the Causeway. At two o'clock in the afternoon, the steamer turned in from the offing!

This was the move that Vivera waited for. I saw his big force marshalling in the thickly wooded ways across and below—glimpses of line after line of heretofore unused native soldiery—a big fatuous reserve.

It would have been laughable, the seriousness of the preparations, if the stake were not life and death for Galbraith. And he had expected good news from me this night! A long line broke out of the entanglements below, and sped up the open slopes called the Glacis.

Viringhy answered the move; our men swarmed along the edges of the Causeway, and began firing in earnest. It will be seen that if

this line of Vivera's were not checked and broken, we of the Headland would quickly be cut off from the main force in the valley! Vivera, victorious, could outnumber us three to one. It meant butchery—and the men knew it. They defended with an eye ever on the Causeway—ready for the dash across at the last moment. I saw an altogether new zeal in the enemy, a determination not shown in any previous movement.

Now the last terrible strain on the ammunition-boxes. There was no holding back. The numbers of the charge had to be withstood by hard, steady fire.

Again and again the point was broken, but reformed; each time higher up the cliffs the charges reached; and each time certain of the most daring found places of refuge in the rocks, out of the range of our fire. They were ready to form the point of the final charge. For an hour this action held on terrifically.

There was a yell from behind at the seaward end of the Headland. Vivera had a half-dozen small boats at sea, cutting us off from the steamer, which was now but a third of a mile offshore; and a small column had been launched by boats at the Headland base, preparing to make a charge up the steep trail. . . .

I faced it that moment—*Failure*. 'They were too many. In another half-hour, our rifles would be useless save as clubs. . . . The ship crept nearer. The thought of Yarbin was poison to me. The cliffs up to the Causeway were filling with men from the charges.

And now Viringhy realized the crisis. He could not hold his soldiers at the point of the Headland. The defensive force crumbled there again and again. Their fear was plain. If the Causeway defense failed, they were caught. They fought willingly enough on the Causeway, where there still remained a chance of retreat, but Vivera's small boats stood between us and the ship's cargo.

I saw Vivera settle back for the last effort—a concerted charge on the Headland and the Causeway. Viringhy's command was out of hand. His men filled in along the Causeway, and there was a red-hot bit of action—a seething of bullets at close range; the enemy swarming among the rocks. . . . And now I have a confused picture of writhing, wounded, pitiful figures of barefooted men, hard hit and limply detached from the rocks to roll down the Glacis. Here was the ghastliness of a close-range fight. . . . A yell from the Valley trail drew my eyes. Leek was coming at a gallop, and behind him on foot—Yarbin, spent and staggering.

## X.

LEEK rode straight to Viringhy; I made for Yarbin. . . . He had not been drinking. He was not bloody, nor wounded apparently in any way; yet he was white and drooping.

"What is it?" I asked, glad of his life.

"Just played," he gasped.

The fighting was wild in our ears, but this I saw, before all: there was no shame on the face of Yarbin. . . . I drew him back from the rim of the Causeway, my arm upon his shoulder. It was just at this instant that I heard the call of "Retreat" from Viringhy. . . . There was a startled curse from Yarbin.

"They're giving up—for God's sake, what for?"

Viringhy's men had broken and were streaming across the Causeway. . . . It was all slaty and bitter to me—the yell of exultation from the enemy on the sides of the precipice; and the roar of the unimpeded charge, now rushing up the seaward face of the Headland. And I was supposed to carry back glad tidings to Galbraith. . . . A picture passed through my mind, of the old Master turning his face to the wall. . . . Yarbin was riding beside me, and we were in the canyon on the way to the Pass.

"What was the message Leek brought? That's what I'd like to know," I muttered.

"It was just after that—the old crocodile called 'Retreat'——"

"Yarbin," I began, "do you realize that I've had a hard time keeping you square—even in my own mind?"

"Yes; that's what I set out to do for myself—and it was n't a boy's job."

"What—where—and all that?"

"I came here with a mission from Vivera—to find out how Galbraith stacked up on ammunition. . . . Well, I found out, made my report, and now my slate is clean. I'm with you to the finish; only, just as I find myself ready, Viringhy calls a retreat. . . . Why, I'd have held off till night—even if I had to club Vivera to death soldier by soldier."

"Did you gain Vivera's lines?"

Yarbin grinned at me wearily.

"I could n't wing over the gorge," he said. "The bridge is swung. . . . So you've been thinking pretty hard about your old side-kicker?"

"But how did you get your stuff across the gorge?"

"Wigwagged. . . . I had climbed the cliffs, a mile this side of the Pass. All day yesterday I signalled, but did n't attract attention until night—then, when they got an operator to take me, it was too dark. But we got together this morning. It took all morning. I only had a couple of handkerchiefs, to begin with."

I was puzzled.

"What word did you send Vivera—that we were short of ammunition?"

"Did Vivera attack to-day as if he thought Galbraith was scraping the bottoms of his cartridge-boxes?" Yarbin asked in return.

"No—not until the steamer turned into the Headland——"

"Naturally, that was his cue for a big noise. Vivera had my message two hours before that."

"Then, you lied to him, Yarbin," I suggested curiously.

"No. I reported what Galbraith had confided to us. I did n't confirm it, nor use my own head to deny it. It was sent out as Galbraith's report on the matter."

"But that would n't mean anything to Vivera."

"Not a thing. But I took pains to close my deal, to let him know I was through. I told him he did n't owe me anything, that this report was the last from me——"

"You did all this to get on a square basis?" I asked.

"I've been a good soldier. It's all I have to say. Galbraith has got to me—hard and deep. The other was a money-job. . . . I sent in my resignation as a spy, before joining you again. . . . When a man does one thing well, he can't afford to play yellow to that——"

My hand sped across the dusk.

"You could have sent Vivera against us earlier—and hard," I said.

"It's turned out rotten, any way," Yarbin said moodily.

"Viringhy was all in for cartridges."

"It seems to me he could have held off a bit. My God, man—with this ship-load, Vivera——"

"He can't cross the Pass."

"He can if we're down and out of gun-powder. Any way, we can't get out."

We rode on silently. It struck me that the men already at the Pass grinned at us in a queer fashion. . . . The down-trail had a beaten, dusty look. The air was heavy, and Tropicania was veiled in dusk. Yarbin had become strangely close. . . . Far down I heard the braying of mules. We let Viringhy take the tidings into the valley. . . . The day's blood-letting had made me ill.

The thought of Mary Galbraith was like a vision of another world. I lost heart that hour of ever being with her again—so infinitely higher and lovelier was the estate of her presence, than this crude worldliness of gold and war. . . .

We rode down in the night. . . . The mules are strangely noisy, thought I. In the settlement I discovered a strange picket-line—and another. . . . It was like a mule-congress. The air was foreign with the smell of the beasts and forage and strange tobacco. Each ripple of laughter became an infection. It ran along the tents and cabins. Far below were sounds of men drinking and singing. . . .

The thought came that Vivera had taken the valley—that Galbraith was a prisoner. . . . The valley was thick with the mules.

“I guess I’m crazy,” Yarbin mumbled.

I hurried into Headquarters. . . . Galbraith held out his hand smiling.

“If somebody could only have been there at the Headland, when the steamer turned and put to sea!” he chuckled.

I sat down and stared at him.

“Tell me—did n’t she *look* empty?” Galbraith asked, draining the last essence of humor from the picture in his mind. . . . Finally, he saw how I was dangling, and explained:

“She unloaded her cargo of ammunition five days ago, some thirty miles north of Libertad. Two hundred mules were waiting there. They circled around Libertad and hung up on the shoulder of Moloch until to-day. I had to pull Vivera’s whole force to the Headland to get them over the Pass. That’s what all the manœuvring at the Headland was for. The trick was planned ninety days ago up in Barranquilla. . . . I’ve wanted to tell you, Tom—it was hard not to tell you—but I’ve found it bad luck to emit even the slightest crow ahead of time. . . . No, my son, we don’t need the Headland—and neither does Vivera. . . . To-morrow morning we all get to work gold-gathering.”

I went out to find Yarbin in the mulish night.

## XI.

AND now passed days of steady mining—days of zest and richness. The Rio Calderon gave up her heart to modern machinery. Viringny held the Pass, and peace brooded over the valley. Galbraith asked no more. The early dawn and the late dusk meant dollars—yellow condensed dollars—and Tropicania hummed with days of toil and nights of faro and nefariousness. At the end of a week, Galbraith promised letters.

“Do you mean that Vivera is going to let us keep the trails open between here and Libertad?” I asked in excitement.

“The fact is, Tom, the grocery store up on the slope of Moloch is still open to Tropicania orders. We can get our letters and keep in touch generally with the world, submitting our mail-bags and pack-trains to examination by Vivera’s force. Anything we need for the day’s work will come through unmolested. The point is, we’re to dredge the Calderon to its last nugget, and then to reckon with Vivera, Ecuador, and, doubtless, Peru—to get away with our winning. Our big pack-train of guns and ammunition settled all these matters. Vivera can’t get in and Galbraith can’t get out, but they’ll have everything ready to take what we’ve got—when the Calderon begins to run gray gravel. . . . One has to foresee a great many things in a game like this—”

"There's no trail out through the other canyon?" I asked.

"Absolutely not. Vivera knows that as well as I do. That part of Peru is marked 'unknown' on the maps. The canyon is narrow, filled with rocks, rapids, and falls. No trail has been shelved."

All of which Galbraith told me with unfaltering good cheer. He was ill; his face was lined with pain, but it was n't from worrying about his enemies.

The next evening I sat in Headquarters holding myself hard, until the mail-bags were carried in. . . . They came, and there was nothing for me. I could not see further. I locked the room and moved out into the dusk. There was a blur in my eyes, and a clutch at my heart. The mountains closed in. It was hard to breathe. . . . At last I heard a woman's voice calling my name. . . . It was the woman of the balcony room at Libertad, the woman whom I had met there with Dickson.

She was tall and cool and steady-eyed. She came toward me smiling, holding a lantern high. And the man was behind her. . . . There was a bloom upon this woman. She took my hand, and with her free one drew a packet of letters warm from her breast, the lantern swinging from her elbow.

I'll never forget. . . . I glanced at the writing, and then at the woman's face. She was laughing at me strangely.

"My God!—thank you," said I.

"That was one of the best things I ever did—to earn that look from a man," she said.

Then I greeted Dickson, and scarcely heard the woman's explanation that she had told them at Libertad she could get my letters to me quicker by taking them. . . . I thanked her again, and stole away to my candles. The postmarks were oddly smudged. . . . And then there was an hour of happiness. . . . I should always reverence Lillian Dickson. I felt something sacred about her. How she would have laughed at that! . . . Mary Galbraith carried me far out of the world, and its thoughts and ways. It was long after I blew out the candles that I recalled the Dickson woman asking me to find them when I had read. . . . Later I saw that a new tent had been raised near Headquarters, and as I approached, a white arm beckoned.

The events of Tropicania divide themselves into two rousing periods, and the first ended with the advent of the great pack-train of guns and cartridges. . . . The lull of rich mining lasted for more than six months. Apart from the coming of the Dicksons, there are few important tributaries to the narrative in this period.

Galbraith remained a sick man. His wound healed outwardly, but it had shaken the stronghold. My letters from Mary Galbraith came regularly from Libertad (date-marks invariably a smudge), and were

a heritage of sheer joy. Galbraith heard from his daughter—how often I never knew, nor any of the news therein—but he heard.

The old Master's courage and mastery of strategic chances had won Yarbin to his last breath. The professional soldier was given Santell's place—next to old man Viringhy in the fighting force. I was Galbraith's aide on a rather large and friendly basis; useful to him both in the departments of defense and labor. So far as I knew, only Galbraith had anything to do with the gold from the Calderon. Each day's yield was given into his hands at nightfall, and each day he was absent for an hour or more in the Vatican. The riches of the Calderon were prodigious.

During the long period of quiescence, it happened that I took several commissions of a secret nature to Libertad for our chief. My work done, on the latest of these journeys, I went as usual to the hotel; and that night I sat on the balcony (the same balcony that brought the Dicksons into my horoscope), and fell asleep over the third of a series of Galbraith's cheroots.

As I slept, I dreamed. . . . The exact matters of light and darkness and movement never cleared, but the dream was exquisite, and about Mary Galbraith. A sense of her nearness lulled me. The strange peace of it; a call to the high place of the world's elect; a swift realization of the crudities of life, and the realities of love and inner growth—out of all these came the thrilling sense that Mary Galbraith was near; that the tip of her third finger pressed against my lips—that cushioned tip of her frail third finger. . . . I awoke on the instant, and something swept from me—something that caught the moonlight in the swiftest glint. And there was a fragrance in the air that I used to sense when she was near, a fragrance that had to do with great pine forests and Superior's tonic freshness.

Startling as anything that ever happened, and altogether lovely! Of course, there was anguish in confronting an illusion, but there was such a beauty about it all, renewed reality of her tenderness, a consummate foretaste of the gladness when the year should end. . . . I could not sleep again; and never did I try so hard to sleep, in the hope that the exquisite touch might be repeated. . . . It was difficult to believe the incident unreal. . . . There was no sound from the next room. . . . A long, slender arm might have swept around the balcony partition and touched my face.

## XII.

THE next morning I met two Americans, Teck and Morgan, who asked permission to ride back to Tropicania with my party. They represented themselves as retired merchants from the States, taking a leisurely "look-see" around this rich and various world. . . . They wearied



me. I was out of training for such, and in the thrall of last night's vision. They seemed restless to impress upon me their station in life, as do only those who are not certain of their place. . . . A few remarks startled me. As "retired merchants," they became unstable in my mind. A laugh, a look, a word—and I caught a glimpse of an uncommon sophistication—the hardness of hard men's feelings—a larger comprehension than merchants usually have. . . . At the Pass—it struck me like a sudden illness that these men had come for Dickson.

Yarbin helped me. We detained the pair with refreshment for a quarter of an hour. Meanwhile a messenger was sent ahead to Galbraith, explaining the situation.

In the valley, I left Teck and Morgan with Galbraith, who had welcomed us cordially, and sought the Dicksons, who had hurriedly been ensconced in the Vatican, rarely entered by any one save the Chief. This was the heart of Tropicania's defense, the arsenal and storehouse and treasure-house. Entering the ruin, I found Dickson pacing in the gloom. The woman was calm. She sat on a stone in the midst of the stacked rifles and waited for me to speak.

"It was only a sudden suspicion," said I.

The two came close to me. It was a queer moment. I was fond of them. Dickson was a real chap, in spite of his—whatever it was. And the woman had brought me the first letters. From the first, she had liked me, liked to have the man with me. . . .

Another thing, the pair seemed to be getting along so well together, far better than at first. They had not been adjusted to each other when I encountered them in Libertad; rather, they seemed to have just met from far ways of misfortune. Each had lived hard—and had plunged. Something big had come to them, while they were hiding and working together.

"Granting that they want me—and somehow I've got the shot that it's so," Dickson said—"what are we to do—go or stay?"

I saw a way, but did not speak yet.

"Galbraith has been using up my currency," Dickson confided. "It has come in handy to him. I've got the stuff in gold, but we can't be turned loose in the mountains with a lot of gold."

I think the woman saw my idea now, and her face grew whiter.

Dickson went on: "The money came hard. We've paid the price. Here we can help Galbraith fight for it. Away from here—driven around the mountains—around the world—we could n't be sure. Nobody could. But it's a tough venture. Galbraith may lose—and all but a few thousand of mine would go. . . . I'd meet him some time, and all he could say would be, 'I'm sorry, Dickson—but it all went!'"

It became painful, following Dickson's fears. I saw how he had suffered.

"Galbraith is on the level," I said. "It's a fight to the death with him for your interests—for mine—for every man who has cast his labor or his earnings into this big pool. We can hold off an army; but at the last, we've got to get out of South America with the bullion—and that's what looks like the hard trick to me. . . . Yet, somehow, we've all learned to trust the old Master. When it looks blackest, he turns a new trick and the air is clear again. We've all seen him do this—one big one before you came——" I pointed to the stacked rifles. "He had that planned three months before it was pulled off—and we had all given up our last hope."

I was panting with my earnestness to enforce the squareness of Galbraith, to change the dull hopelessness in the eyes of the woman, and to steady Dickson's nerve. . . . Just now Dickson saw what I had in mind.

"You'll have to stay, Lillian. Yes, that's it! You stay here—and I'll do the vanishing act until things are quieter——"

"No," she said. "I thought of that, but turned it down. . . . If Galbraith thinks we'd better light out, we'll go as we came—together."

"He is n't well," she whispered to me. "He's all nerve and a lion in a scrap, but this waiting, hiding—this slow stuff—it's got him! He'd break, but for me. . . . You run along and find out how Galbraith stands on the matter—and hurry back!"

I nodded. It was more than ever great and deep to me—the light that a woman brings to a man's mismanagement, when she loves him.

### XIII.

MORGAN and Teck were after Movrill, alias Dickson. They told Galbraith, who treated them courteously, and showed them over Tropicania. The second night after their arrival, an interesting conversation took place in Headquarters. . . . Teck had proved the spokesman of the pair, and was saying:

"This fellow Movrill is here—and he's called Dickson. Moreover, he's got a woman with him. You're hiding them, Galbraith, and, so far as I can see, your position here is n't one that entitles you to get America—I mean North America—the States—after you."

I turned to the old Master. He was lying on his cot, his white, wasted hand covering his eyes. His mouth and nostrils might have been those of a dead man—so white they were. His courage had never ceased to thrill me. All that Teck said (with Morgan smiling sourly behind him) struck me as hard world's-truth.

"It is thus that my loves have died," came slowly from Galbraith's ashen lips.

"Huh?" broke from Teck; and from Morgan, "Huh?" They sat on the edge of their chairs. Morgan's hands gripped his knees. Teck twirled his hat nervously.

"If North America wishes to come and get this man whom you say is here, but whom you can't find, I'll be glad to entertain North America," Galbraith said presently.

Teck whitened and Morgan turned evil.

"It will be like the mountain coming to Mahomet," Galbraith added. "The fact is, I could use North America."

Morgan now spoke. "We came here and made no secret about what we wanted. We took it you were straight, in spite of what we heard on the way. We've got you—what's the use of writhing and talking big?"

Teck arose, walked to the edge of Galbraith's cot, and said in a low tone, "I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll shut up—if you'll let us search the Vatican to-night!"

Galbraith appeared perturbed. "Nonsense, the place is n't adequately lit. You could n't do it justice after dark. And I'm sure the men would n't like it."

Teck turned to his companion. Black clouds had settled upon my understanding.

"You're mighty particular about your men, all of a sudden," said Morgan. "We're out here for Dickson, remember that! We'll get him if we have to hang on to the finish, or get Ecuador and Peru to help us."

"And North America."

Galbraith's coolness blunted Morgan's tendency to bluster, as he added, "We'll get the pair if they're turned loose. Sure—we could go through the church—in a day or two. But we'd catch 'em with the goods to-night."

"Tom, if these gentlemen must see the Vatican to-night, go with them—but do be careful with the lanterns. There's a lot of powder there. . . . I'm sorry I can't go with you," he added in apology.

An analysis of my sensations could not be compressed into a page. The fact that I obeyed is enough; and yet every sense of mine was straining for some token of deeper understanding. I was Peter craving before the Lord for a sign. . . . None was offered, and I left Headquarters with nothing in my consciousness save the mild, tired glance of the sick man. . . . I explained to the sentry at the Vatican door, and we were admitted.

Teck and Morgan now suffered the pangs of reaction. They feared a trick—even imprisonment—but dared not withdraw. I shared the

thought—that Teck and Morgan were to be jugged in stone; that I was an escort to prospective prisoners, and must trust Galbraith to detach me at the proper time. . . . But this is artificial tension!

Dickson and his wife were not in the Vatican—only tiers and stacks of rifles, ammunition-boxes, the big pair of mountain bull-dogs, and other properties. The search lasted for a quarter of an hour. The two would have looked longer, but for the growing feeling that they might not be allowed exit as cheerfully as entrance.

The outer door opened at my first signal. We walked back to Headquarters without words. . . . Alone with Galbraith that night, I waited for him to speak; and at length, in the silence, arose to go to my cot.

“Tom,” he said, halting me, “you don’t think I’m using you right, do you?”

“Yes,” I answered. “Only now and then, when I find myself in the dark—quite as much in the dark, for instance, as these two mouthy man-hunters—I get the idea that you are a little afraid to trust me.”

“It is n’t so, Tom. Not a bit so. But I can’t bring myself to show my hand. Again and again I’ve done it—and lost. It’s superstition. It’s the game to win or lose here; the game to get away after we’ve got all the gold we want. And that’s not far off. I’d trust you with my life. Why, I’m trusting to you the life of our Mary—but I can’t let go to any one these poor fortunes of Tropicania—unless I should be passing out. . . . You’ll know all, in that event. The whole plan, the whole campaign, goes to you. The papers connected are written. I carry them night and day.”

“Is that the only reason—just this superstition?”

“Well,” he said, with a smile, “there is another reason. . . . But as for you—you’re all I could ask. The more I think of it, the more I see—that’s a whole lot.”

The next morning, I was passing behind the picket-line, temporarily stretched on the slope before the Vatican, when I noticed a cartridge upturned in the mud, and stooped to pick it up. I must have been thinking deeply, for the existence of the mules was for the moment out of my world. . . . An instant’s picture of a savage little gray beast, her head veered about to me, the white of her eyes as she strained against the halter-shank, and a sudden obliteration of sunlight!

She had levelled a hind-foot at my head, and all but struck twelve. . . . I was in the coolness and dark, and voices reached me. Again and again, waves carried me to some point where the voices began to contain words for my understanding—when I would lose grasp and sink once more. Finally, I drew close enough to the border-land to sense the presence of Mary Galbraith. Even then the unreality of it

obtruded, but I put it away to live the happiness in full. . . . She was very close and whispering, her lips close to mine—an unspeakable rapture, her nearness. . . . I did not understand her words, nor wish to. I feared to open my eyes lest the illusion vanish. There was something finished in the peace and delight of this self-deception and the curious detail and delicacy of it all. . . . At last I heard Galbraith say softly:

“He’s all right, dear, and coming to. . . . Better run back now—unless——”

“Yes, yes—but tell me everything——”

I felt a breath upon my cheek. I seemed then to open my eyes—but moments must have passed. When I could actually use my material senses—only Galbraith was there.

They had taken me to the Vatican. We were alone.

“It was a squeak, Tom, my son,” he said. “She just grazed you——”

I stared at him for long.

“Just creased,” he added, “but when I first got to you, I thought you were stove in. . . . It’s a happy day, Tom.”

“I surely had a pretty dream,” I answered, and fell to recalling it piece by piece.

#### XIV.

THE little gray mule was n’t shod—all thanks to that. There is a scar above my temple, where a man’s hair is first to whiten. And there was a forty-eight-hour headache—and the rest was the vision that had come and left no trace. . . . That same afternoon I went back alone to the Vatican, Galbraith smiling as I left. There was no fallen handkerchief, no flower lying on the dustless stone pavement of the ancient ruin; not so much as the pressure of a woman’s heel.

I had heard of a sudden terrible need, a closeness to death, calling the spirit of a loved one across the world. These things are traditions of soldiers—and their mothers. . . . But as the hours drew on, I think my baser faculties clutched more closely the illusion of it all.

Three weeks after my glancing concussion with the old gray’s hoof, Galbraith beckoned me to the side of his cot. It was night.

“Tom,” he said, “can we rely upon Yarbin?”

“Absolutely.”

“Good! Then I shall leave him in command of the fighting-end. . . . The time has come,” Galbraith went on, “when we must dispose of the sands of Pactolus.”

“Meaning gold,” said I.

“Exactly. It’s a long, hard journey, and will require at the outside, counting for small delays, eight weeks. You are to take my place

here. You are to be Galbraith. Viringhy goes with me, also Leek, also fifty men who will not come back. I leave Yarbin because he is the more valuable soldier."

"And I——?"

"Because you are the best man to take my place. You have brought me something more than you know—something to hold fast to besides gold, since poor Santell went out. . . . To-morrow I shall talk with the men."

"Vivera is waiting for you to start something in the way of getting the gold out!"

"If Yarbin does his part, holding the Pass, Vivera will never know that the gold, nor the party of fifty, has left Tropicania."

I believed him against what seemed absolutely contrary knowledge.

"I had to have a complete deck of trick cards before I began. I have n't played them all yet," he continued, and he pressed my shoulder affectionately.

Now follow in part the most important details of the old Master's plan.

"In ten days my steamer, the *Alcyone*, will be waiting for us at the mouth of the Rio Clara—a hundred and fifty miles down the coast. It's the same steamer that occupied Vivera at the Headland—while the mule-train came over the Pass with ammunition. She's a neat and new little packet. . . . She'll take us up to California, probably San Diego. There will be two weeks there making the assay, establishing a Tropicania office, paying off the men. I'll leave Leek in charge there, and steam back to the Clara and here. The gold already converted into money will be divided among my men. Each man shall have paper representing his shares, cashable at our California office. Meanwhile, the new gold will be ready, and we'll hang on as long as we care to, before making a final getaway. The ship will wait for us. . . . That's the whole proposition—except getting the second party down to the Clara."

"Will Dickson go with you?"

"No; he's safer where he is—and drawing rich interest——"

I wondered at this, believing Teck and Morgan outside with Vivera.

"I shall leave you papers covering everything. They are carefully written."

"But you are n't in shape—not physically fit for such a journey!"

"You don't know the old man, Tom. I shall do my part."

The next day marked a quiet rush of preparations. Galbraith talked to the men singly and in company. The answer in the main was silence and good faith. I marvelled at Galbraith's influence, since they permitted him to leave the valley with a year's gold. The selection of the fifty was a complicated process requiring a forenoon. . . . That night

at dusk, the party gathered in the Vatican. Yarbin was at the Pass. I was left in the valley with the packet of Galbraith papers. . . . At ten o'clock, Galbraith sent for me—met me at the door of the Vatican—embraced me in a quick, eager way, and the great iron door shut upon him.

The next morning, when Tropicania was intently set for trouble from Vivera, it was found that our company had vanished. The Vatican was empty. I alone knew the explanation, for my night had been spent in candle-light with the old Master's papers.

Galbraith had gathered good men about him, engineers, mechanical and scientific, and mining experts graduated both from schools and El Dorados around the world. . . . The men working for Galbraith were drawing more than wages. They had an interest in the final settlement. It takes a certain amount of stamina to support a dream of sizable fortune; rather a test of manhood, this. Galbraith was naturally fitted, and possessed the hardening of a life-training, to cope with the spirits of men inflamed with large earnings, restless dreams, and fluent chances. I had not the old Master's life-record of a gamester, absolutely square, for the eyes of the men down in the river-work.

As a subordinate, I had many friends. Now I was sure of none, except Yarbin. Chances favored a reasonably good result of my leadership, on the general tendency of men to sit tight—until the eight weeks elapsed. But if anything happened to detain Galbraith, I felt that I should have a war on my hands.

The departure of Galbraith with fifty men, without disturbing Vivera, started the men to thinking and whispering. . . . There was a way out of the valley which they did not know—and which I knew, *and fifty others knew*. . . . What was to prevent me, or one of the fifty, from throwing the secret to Vivera? The valley would then become a pen of loot and slaughter! . . . Again, their earnings of months—millions—were gone through some secret passage to the outer world. Plainly, here was the essence for thoughts of death and dissolution.

Moreover, I had come late and brought nothing—neither muscle nor expert knowledge nor money. I was one of Galbraith's secrets. . . . It was hard for the miners, many of them gold-poisoned. . . . And each night I took the day's yield of yellow—and the men knew no more of it. I watched with an anxious heart for the day that should end my leadership.

And now to the secret avenue of egress from the Vatican to the outer world. The fourth or western wall of this ancient ruin was the mountain itself, lined with a thin tissue of stone, resembling only in appearance the three great outer walls, whose two corners were massive monoliths; the masonry of which at the base was three feet through. The lower rocks were in many places unmortared, of a size

calculable only in tonnage, and fitted to each other so precisely that a pin could not be driven into the jointures.

The interior of the Vatican was absolutely featureless, except the cistern and the original megalithic monument—a huge, undressed, and honey-combed slab lying horizontally, and flush with the mountain-wall. This was the altar-stone, the very heart of the Quichuan civilization. Here the olden sacrifices had been made to the sun and fire gods. It had not been brought to the Vatican—rather, the latter seemed a temple builded around it.

It was a painstaking manuscript which Galbraith left for me on the night he vanished with the fifty.

First of all, I read how these ancient Peruvians were the greatest road-builders; they moved mountains, tongued and grooved mammoth rocks; preserved a subterranean arcanum for the priests in each temple. The monograph went on to state how granite hills were shaped; how steps and tunnels were made; and dealt intimately with tombs, altars, sundials, terraced fields, sunken gardens, fountains. It described the amazing facility with which the rivers were diverted; and how earthquakes and volcanic eccentricities were turned to use and ornament by these mighty men of the rocks—these masters of the Andes.

All night I had read Galbraith's document. And now to test the directions he had left. I entered the Vatican with awe. The great door was locked behind, and I stood alone before the altar. The sunlight came down through the broken superstructure and fell upon the altar-stone. The altar-rock was waist-high to a man, and was filled with round holes of varied diameters. The document had minutely described this feature, furnishing a chart of these ancient bores. A certain three, marked 3—13—43, in a peculiar system of enumeration, involved the entrance to the secret passage. These were to be filled with water, as nearly as possible at the same time. To fill all, or any other but these three bores, meant failure. The key-pipes were clear in my mind after a moment's study, and the water—in the cistern.

The lining of the west or mountain wall was formed from great panels of trachyte, taller than a man, and three feet wide. In the lower tier were twenty panels. Number Seven from the north was the door of the passage. It was absolutely identical with the others in weathering, and in its unbroken edges. And now I glanced again at the following paragraph of Galbraith's writing:

The big trachyte panel, Number Seven, is hung on a horizontal bronze pin. Unlocked by a certain exact water pressure, the weight of the hand against the lower part of the panel is sufficient to swing it inward, the upward half outward. . . . A pint of water is enough, for each of the three bores, but they must be filled as nearly as possible



at the same time. Then mark forty seconds on your watch, while the water sinks from sight. At the end of this interval, the panel will yield to the pressure of the hand for a space of seven or eight seconds, but not longer. Water placed in any one of the bores other than the three will clog the intricate arrangement of the inner passages in the rock, and no result will be obtained.

And here Galbraith supplied a long personal note, regarding the manner in which this knowledge had been obtained—an extended though mildly interesting story in itself. He touched upon his solitary labor of many days in the Vatican, clearing the group of bores with compressed air, before he had been successful; and how he had brought his bridge-builders from the Pass, to construct the great iron door of this inner defense, and to erect a frame above the cistern.

At last, when the sun had crept from the altar to the eastern wall, I stood where the ancient priests had bent in "sacred" murder over their victims—a vessel of water in my hand and a deep hush pervading my heart. . . . I poured, waited for the second-hand of my watch to mark off the forty seconds—then turned to Panel Seven and rested my knee against the lower part. The great stone swung noiselessly inward. Amply stocked with matches and candles, I glanced behind at the silent, deserted interior of the Vatican, and descended the dark stairway.

## XVI.

AND now appeared a vault approximately twenty-five feet square, the floor of which was ten feet below the floor of the Vatican. Before permitting the panel to swing back, I carefully examined the locking mechanism from the inside. The way out was simple as turning a door-knob. Here, I was told to store the daily yield of gold from the Calderon; and here Galbraith had kept the fortune which the fifty took away.

The other door, the inner mountain entrance, I tried sufficiently to find that the door *would* open; and pictured Galbraith laughing at my temptation, thoroughly enjoying this Bluebeard legacy. He did not command me not to explore the mountain, merely said it was for use in case of extremity—such as his failure to return, or the event of Vivera taking the Pass from Yarbin and driving the Tropicians into the Vatican.

In truth, I feared the mutiny of the miners more than Yarbin's inability to hold the outer position.

Seven of the eight weeks of Galbraith's calculated absence had passed before I gave way to the growing inclination to pass the inner door of the vault. . . . I felt as never before the temper of the men on the river

work, during this particular forenoon. A current seemed to come to me from each miner; his state of mind to register itself upon mine; until, from the whole company, my sensitiveness was overrun with misery. I was crippled by their suspicion and hatred. . . . More than ever I perceived that Galbraith had made an imprudent choice; that I did not belong in this post; that to rule well in such a capacity, I must needs have more of that very hardness which Mary Galbraith wished to eliminate. . . . It was in this condition of mind that I found myself at the Vatican and gave way to a protracted desire.

Ten minutes later I was inside the vault with the seven weeks' garnering of Tropicania—and the revolving panel closed from within. The mountain-door opened easily into a broad passage. The breeze that came forth caused me to exchange the candle for a lantern, though I pocketed the former, with plenty of matches.

The air was deliciously cool and fresh, and the sound of running water plain. Here was a tunnel, shaped like the outer door of the Vatican—straight across and narrow at the top (the ancient builders did not know the arch), ceiled with slabs of stone and broad at the bottom—a matter of ten feet, at least. The walking ledge was several feet above the surface of a running stream. Two could move comfortably abreast, but light was needed to avoid stepping off into unknown depths.

With each step forward, in spite of the fascination I was more largely conscious of the distance and darkness behind. It was difficult to hold fast to the facts: that the passage, in no sense a labyrinth, had endured for centuries; that I had candles and matches in the event of the lantern blowing out; that a touch of the hand would open the door to the vault, and another swing the panel to the Vatican.

The water smelled sweet enough to drink. In ten minutes, I had covered perhaps two hundred yards, constantly amazed by the miracle of this manhandling of great mountains; abased before the toil of these ancient men and their passion for Herculean labor. . . . Now there was a gradual turn to the tunnel, and presently light from ahead.

Swinging my lantern above, I made certain there was no parting of the ways to confuse the return, and hastened forward with fervid steps. I was neither hungry nor spent with thirst; indeed, I had not been a half-hour from the brilliant valley sun; and yet I almost ran—a man thrall'd in the lure of a great light. I sensed the land, as one who has been long at sea. It was the same fragrance that came to me the first evening on the down-slope to Tropicania. And now the blackness cleared from the water, running back toward the Vatican; and I heard it splashing upon the stones ahead. The narrow, archless ceiling of the passage ended in an abrupt skyward sweep, and the foot-path of the tunnel changed to an ascending ledge on the wall of canyon, small

compared to the Calderon gorge. The sun was still high, the light vivid in the ravine.

For the first time I grasped the conception of these early builders. They had perceived the strategic possibilities of the Pass in its relation to the beautiful valley, now Tropicania; and had sealed the second gorge, preserving the secret through their temple. I pictured the gorge as it had once been, breaking the mountain clear through to the Calderon. They had roofed its bed on the slope to the river, beneath the Vatican—and closed the face of the rift above from the Tropicania side.

And over this wild country ahead—this lost valley—was the way to the sea—the way of Galbraith and the fifty. . . . I ascended the sharp angle, which the trail now assumed upon the wall of the ravine, and halted near the top to rest,—to think out this astonishing business and my relation to it. The silence and the heat impressed me and added to the pervading unreality of the whole experience.

Over the rim of rock I discerned the hidden valley, broader and more sumptuous than Tropicania; and never in my mind was it apart from the mystery of being lost to the world. The little river broke out of its rocky gorge and lay far below, like a demolished silver spring, eccentrically coiled at the roots of impassable mountains—glacial altitudes and massive slopes that faced the morning in green and gold. There was a wonderful olive glow in the distances. The golden silence of the ages was broken into a million marguerites. . . . Again it came to me that all this had been lost to the world, and that Galbraith and the fifty had broken the spell of centuries. The Quichuans had known it. Perhaps hard-pressed in the Tropicania valley, they had fled through their temple—vanished from the face of the earth, in so far as their pursuers were concerned. Hundreds of years afterward, an American gold-hunter was using the fruits of their work to outwit the effete race which followed the terrible builders. . . . I must have fallen into a queer depth of thinking—when the light was struck from my eyes, and for a moment all motor control was taken from me! . . .

*“The crows have plucked all our flower-seeds!”*

. . . Rigidly I turned at last, stared over the rim of rock to the source of that voice.

Disorder or reality, flesh or spirit,—she was there—Mary Galbraith—standing in a little terraced garden and looking back toward some one as yet invisible.

## XVII.

I DID not call to her. If this were madness, I gloried in it. All the evil and complication of Tropicania swept from my mind like a foul dust-storm. I could face the miners now; I could fill the engineers with

new zest, could hold the steam in the dredge and ardor in the hearts of men. . . . She had come to this world of her father—not to shorten the year, but to be near. . . . Her fingers had indeed touched my face in that blackness of Libertad's night. To the far borderlands of consciousness where the accident on the picket-line had cast me, Mary Galbraith's ministrations had followed; and had been withdrawn only when she was certain I was not at the end of vitality. . . .

Into the passage I retreated, my limbs springing with life. . . . The darkness was alive with strange virtues, penetrable to this restored singing consciousness of mine. Pale, lustrous, she had stood on the little terrace among the mountain marguerites. . . .

The eight weeks passed, and Galbraith did not return. I watched Tropicania for the development of the leader inevitable in its growing disaffection. . . . The men had not murmured up to the last night of the eight weeks. On the morning which began the new period, I was pleased to see the work resumed as usual.

At noon, however, Maconachie appeared at Headquarters and sat down without asking permission.

The crux had developed Maconachie. . . . He was a tall young man, lank and brown-haired. He had colleged extensively and could not forget it. He had character—a bit of Scotch which made him a factor to deal with. I doubt if the miners could have chosen a better agent. While he was unyielding, he had the capacity to wait until elements settled, adjusting to his ways. Maconachie was a sort of abutment. He was in the steel business. He did n't drink. He had come to Galbraith needing outdoor work, and could plan a railroad from a pocket-atlas. . . . In his own mind he did not acknowledge my leadership. An older man would have appeared to. Tropicania, I discerned, had become a republic.

“What's the trouble?” I asked.

“The old man has overstayed his leave.”

“I appreciate your dropping everything to tell me. And then what?”

“The men don't like it.”

“Neither do I. Galbraith likes it least of all. He set out to return by last night. When he fails—well, you know what it says on the back of all transportation contracts—fire, earthquake, storm, and in general the reverses of God's providence——”

“Yes——”

“You are now officially informed—that something of the sort has happened.”

Maconachie did not go, however.

“Look here,” he said, “what's to prevent you and another small

party of your own choosing going out the same way Galbraith did, and leaving us here like a lot of brood-biddies at Easter-tide?"

"Nothing but the infallible integrity of the Tropicania proposition."

"Then, this Yarbin might fall asleep and let Vivera——"

"Overflow his banks, as it were. . . . True, Mac."

"The men don't like it," he repeated.

"And what do you propose to do about it?"

"Take over the last two months of gold."

I smiled. "The gold here in my hands is but one-fifth of what the old Master took away. It all belongs to us—to Tropicania. The year's work won't stack up very high—if we throw our chance on the big bulk of the fortune——"

Maconachie considered a moment before replying:

"If Galbraith is as good a man as you think, he's not going to forget the main proposition—our year of fighting and mining—because we break training a bit now. What I mean is, if he came back and found Tropicania in our hands instead of yours—if he's honest, it would n't make any difference."

"There's a chance that you are right, Mac," said I.

"A good chance."

"But you forget one thing."

"Yes?"

"That I'm in command."

"The men can overcome that. They don't think Galbraith considered them enough in putting you in command—you and Yarbin. You both came in here on a shoe-string. You just happened."

"The command was a surprise to me—but Yarbin is a leader of men," I said mildly.

"There are those who think that Yarbin was in touch with Vivera," Maconachie offered, regarding me closely.

"I would n't give much for an investment in Tropicania—or even in the lives of the men—if I thought that. I'm staking heart and hand on Yarbin's fighting for us to the last ditch—if he has the chance—and Galbraith, too."

"The trouble is, you're staking nothing but words. You did n't bring a fortune to this game, Ryerson. You did n't bring expert knowledge. You did n't bring even labor. . . . You're a sort of called-of-God proposition——"

"In which case—I like my chance."

Maconachie squinted at me peculiarly, and called in one leg, preparing to rise.

"The men don't like it," he said.

"That sentence is getting to be in the air. And what are the men going to do about it?" I inquired.

"They have n't exactly decided. If you should turn over your command and the gold quietly—now——"

"And so the men see in me nothing—neither money nor learning nor brute force? . . . I wonder what Galbraith saw in me when he gave me command."

"The men think—that's the point, Ryerson——"

"The men are on the point of learning," I remarked—"unless they think it over, and give the old Master a few days of grace."

"A day is all I can promise," said Maconachie, shaking his head.

"And all I can promise is orders from here as usual—until Galbraith or his messengers return. Tell the men that."

"You won't turn over the gold?"

"Precisely—not."

"It's in the Vatican. We can blast there——"

"Yes—and lay open to Vivera the only way of retreating in case of a pinch. You'd never get away with the poor little eight weeks' eke."

"I think we'll get together better than that, Ryerson."

"So do I."

#### XVIII.

I DID the natural thing, when Maconachie left—mounted a saddle-mule and took my trouble to Yarbin at the Pass. He led me to a high perch in the rocks, and listened with a sullen intentness, making me think repeatedly of an intelligent pit-terrier.

"I'm not sure," Yarbin commented, "but I think I'd have locked up this Maconachie—nipped him for being spokesman of a mutiny."

"I thought of that, but he always salved me a bit after irritating; and then it would be a show-down, to lock up the delegate. Any day may bring the old Master. My main question, Yarbin, is: Have you got the men—your men—so they'll mind you?"

"I've been honin' for a chance like this," said Yarbin. "You can count on my brigade. . . ."

He slapped my knee, and I saw the strong wine of active service in his eyes.

"You're in command here, Yarbin. Maconachie will send his walking delegate here—or come himself. I say, you're in command."

And now it came to me that *I* was in command in the valley, and that I had been rather soft so far. . . . I thought of the old Master abroad and doing his mightiest, perhaps failing. He might be dead, his ship foundered; or even now he might be back in Lost Valley, the California office established. Every third thought, at least, was of Mary, radiant among the marguerites, and the adorable complaint against the crows! . . . This crisis looked easy in the masterful mood which became

mine, as I rode back to the valley—the tingle of Yarbin's right hand still in mine, and Mary waiting beyond the Vatican.

That night the miners did not bring me the day's yield of gold. This was a sign of aggressiveness which must be answered with force. I sent for Maconachie. He came in and sat down, stretching out his legs.

"Had a bad day down at the river, Mac?" I asked cheerfully.

"No, good day."

"Saving the stuff to surprise Father later?"

"Father seems to anticipate," he laughed.

"In which case you'd better bring it up as usual."

"The men seem to object."

"Cut the men, Mac. If you're taking up their game for them, get down to first-person. I dislike this little shyster tendency of blaming everything on the client. It's your case, Mac. Galbraith will see that."

He winced. Maconachie did n't like the idea of being made an example, in the event of Galbraith's safe return.

"If I don't have the gold down here in three-quarters of an hour," I informed him, "I'll have to regard it as insubordination. We can fight it out after that. Galbraith is square. Yarbin is square. I'm square. Hot tongs can't move me. Dynamite the Vatican—and things will happen that you don't dream of—we're a bunch of rabbits."

Maconachie went away. . . . The gold did n't come. I put on a brace of pistols beneath my coat and walked down to the river.

Dole ran the bar. He called his place the Riverside Drive Inn. Here was the faro layout; and here came certain of the valley women with naturalness. The tension in the valley had lifted the whiskey sale, as tension invariably does. It was obvious that I had more to fear from this than from Maconachie. . . . Dole was a bland and mellow degenerate, with a pride in his hand-grip and noisy good-fellowship. . . .

"Dole," I said suddenly, "send out for Maconachie. I want to hear from the boys, but I want Maconachie about."

The delegate was not far off. Again the long unmuscled legs looped into view.

"Men," said I, "Maconachie is an engineer, and a good one. He's on a salary from Galbraith. As the representative of Galbraith, I object to his using his time as a spreader of contagion—that is, if these few unpleasant symptoms amount to anything."

The miners were gathering. Figures slipped in quietly from the outer dark. It was only where the liquor was apparent that I feared trouble. None of the miners offered to reply, though Maconachie waited before he spoke for them:

"Tropicania is against you, Ryerson—not personally, but as a leader. We think the gold might be put into safer hands. If Galbraith returned to find you out of power and Tropicania running along in

order—it is n't giving me much thought as to his accepting the situation like the gamester he is."

"You all forget that I am master of the situation," I answered coldly. "Galbraith chose me—confided certain inside matters. I still hold these. You can't take the gold of the last eight weeks. I might turn over authority, but I'd feel like a cur myself. And I don't propose to feel so. I'll run this valley until Galbraith comes back, or such time as I think it's best to lead you out."

I raised my hand against the growing murmur.

"My idea of service to Galbraith and to myself does n't include truckling, nor yielding to mob-fear," I added. "You're all right, you fellows, only you don't give the old Master credit for choosing his man. Sit tight for a few days—say ten days—every day making you richer. If the Chief does n't come back within ten days, I'll lead you forth with the gold you have, as quietly as the fifty went—without Vivera knowing until some morning when he wakes up to find the Pass undefended."

My talk made a dent. The men gathered into little knots. They saw they were up against *darkness* in the Vatican. . . . In the muttering I arose, and said to Dole:

"Now's a time when I don't want whiskey running free. Close within an hour, and come up to Headquarters before you open in the morning."

He looked at me peculiarly, as I drew out my watch. I said no more about the day's gold. . . . An hour passed, and Dole had not obeyed. I sent a message to Yarbin, and the next morning, when the opening time was past, and Dole had not come to confer with me as ordered, I sent Yarbin and a dozen men to close the bar.

A small guard was left at the locked door of the Riverside Drive Inn. Dole was brought to me.

"As I understand it," I said, "you're a sort of sutler to this outfit. You have n't any equity in Tropicania?"

"No," he answered sullenly.

"You don't know your business, Dole," I said. "Everybody hates a sutler—officer and man alike hate a sutler. He has n't any shine upon him. He's out for the naked dollar. His only excuse for living is to obey orders. You did n't know this. I'm going to lock you up for the present."

"Yarbin," I said, when we were alone, "how did the men take it?"

"They growled a bit."

"I've got another little job for you—but I think you'll need more men. How many men can you spare from the Pass?"



"The bridge is up," he answered. "The size of the force there is largely a moral dodge."

"You'd better get about fifty men down here within an hour or so—as quietly as you can."

This was done. The miners had n't counted upon the fighting-end being so morbidly fond of Yarbin. I sent the latter down to stop the work on the dredge—until the previous day's yield of gold should be delivered to me at Headquarters. . . . Yarbin left a guard on the dredge and returned to me.

"How did the men take it, Yarbin?" I asked when we were alone.

"They growled a bit," he said with a grin.

### XIX.

ON the night that ended the eight weeks of Galbraith's stay, I wrote to his daughter in Lost Valley—straight to her there—explaining how I knew, how I had seen her in the heights, and repeating the sentence I had heard from her lips. . . . A curious power came over me as I wrote, and something of her great meaning to me was expressed—the essence of my life on earth that she was to me. . . . I told her with what a new zeal I had grasped the work in Tropicania, since hearing her voice among the marguerites. In the night, I took this letter through the Vatican and vault and passage, and left it in the gorge, plainly to be seen from the top, pinned with a pennant to a bamboo cane.

. . . What with Maconachie, Dole, and other sullen affairs, I had no chance to make a love-pilgrimage on the next day—the first day of the ninth week; but now, with the dredge and Dole's bar shut down, and Yarbin spread like a fine metal armor over the valley and the Pass, I repaired to the Vatican. My last look from the great iron door still clings queerly to memory—the hushed valley, the silent dredge. . . . The little pennant fluttered in the shining gorge, a letter pinned to it—but not the one I had left! And this time there was no smudged *Libertad* post-mark. . . .

So I knew that I was not mad, and that I was not dead (with my spirit fixed in a strange Tropicania dream, centuries long). . . . From the pages, I looked up through the gorge, and along the trail I once climbed to the vision among the marguerites. Only the silent flaming day! If Mary watched for my coming to the pennant—it was not for me to know. . . . That half-hour, I forgot the valleys and the world of men.

She, too, was greatly troubled now about her father. . . . She had found it impossible to remain in the north, but hoped to be near us without breaking the covenant of the twelve months. She was glad she had come. . . . Yes, she had touched my face over the balcony at

Libertad; had given the letters to Lillian Dickson; had come to the Vatican when I was hurt. Her father had promised first of all to tell her if anything should happen to me, and he had not forgotten on that day. . . . The Dicksons were with her. There was food in abundance. Yes, they had tried to plant a garden. . . . There was six weeks more of our year. She was afraid to alter that—unless something untoward happened. It was our probation time. She had needed it as well as I. It was very wonderful and dear—every day of it—but I was to come to her in any sudden stress or misfortune. . . . “Yes, oh, come to me!” . . . Her father had told her of me. . . . She could not find words to express her happiness and her humility. She was trying to deserve this constant outpouring of goodness.

. . . Such was my letter. I uncovered my head and knelt for a moment on the rocks in homage and happiness. Then I wrote a hasty reply and returned to the valley.

The rest of the day was without significance. I rode to the Pass, which seemed amply guarded, in spite of the detachments which Yarbin had withdrawn. The river was silent. Spirits of all the forgotten and neglected Sabbaths communed there. I knew the evil of idleness, but at no time did I regret my decisions in regard to the Inn and the dredge. A magic strength came to me over the impassable range from Lost Valley—a strange sustaining.

Maconachie himself came and went; he seemed to contain hot inimical fluids, which hurt and pressed for utterance, but could not find the way forth. His position was a hard one. I made it harder because he was young and obstinate, and had consented to be the instrument of the men’s evil. He had misjudged me, as had the miners; all had misjudged Yarbin. The soldier in the latter had won his men; his was the stuff of captains. It was enough for the fighting-end that Yarbin obeyed me. The miners seemed to think my sudden hard-handedness was a pose.

The bit of Vatican knowledge in my brain was the most valuable and pertinent *thing* in the works. Naturally, the miners, in strong human need of venting their savagery upon something tangible, chose Maconachie. I let him worry, in no way prodding for the suppressed disorder of his mind. . . .

Yet I did not sleep. . . . Everything was in order at the river property at nine o’clock. Yarbin had left a guard at the dredge and the Inn, and stationed a detachment within easy reach, on the rising trail toward the Pass. He was with this party for the night. . . . As I lay in the darkness, somewhat of a reaction settled, following my various phases of effrontery during the day. . . . At midnight, there was a strangled cry

from my sentry, as if he were garroted from behind, a quick, almost noiseless struggle. I sprang from the cot, seized my pistols, and struck a match. This was precisely the wrong thing to do, but there was no right thing. In the flare, four masked men appeared, and I saw the ugly gleam of their pistols—with mine not raised. . . . I touched the match to the candle, and held my hand steady.

“Hello, here’s melodrama!” said I. “Or is it because you hate yourselves that you wear masks?”

They did not answer. The reek of whiskey engulfed me. Now a hoarse voice ordered my guns to the table, and I obeyed. The four closed upon me; the candle was struck out; an arm hooked about my throat from behind, a hand covering my mouth. I was nauseated by the fumes of alcohol. It was as potent to my nostrils as if pure spirit had been poured upon their clothing.

I did not give the men reason for excessive abuse by resisting. The cowardly nature of the whole proceeding disgusted me at first. I declare without a semblance of pride that I was more embarrassed and ashamed than frightened. . . . They gagged me, took the key to the Vatican from my clothing, led me there. There was no sound to arouse Yarbin and his detachment, as we gained the slope to the great iron door. . . . And now others joined the party, which numbered a dozen or more, masked to a man. Then the Vatican was closed from within, and I was helpless in the midst of a drunken crew.

Quite coldly it came over me that I was to be hazed for the secret. Manonachie tried to get in—for his voice I knew—but the men refused. . . . I wondered if this were a game for my ears, and decided it was not. . . . So Maconachie was against this night’s work. There was an instant of icy horror of inquisition, as a reeling pair stripped me to the skin above the waist. They removed the gag, bound my hands, and tossed the rope over the upper frame of the cistern, drawing it tightly. Flashes of insane fury passed through me as I felt the first tension, yet I kept my mouth shut. And now the group formed around and sat down in the circle of candle-light. . . . The utter ridiculousness of the picture struck my mind in one of its desperate reflexes. I did not suppress the impulse to laugh aloud.

“You fellows make me think of a lot of dime-novel train-robbers—all masked in my honor.”

A voice which I had heard before but could n’t identify, chuckled in answer:

“You’re pretty fresh yet, but you’ll get over that; that is, if you’re stubborn about our little request. Of course, if you’re nice about it, we won’t go no further.”

The speaker paused to take a pull at his flask, then resumed:

"Now, Mr. Ryerson, we want the eight weeks' gold and the way out through the Vatican."

"Can you read?" I asked.

"Yes," he said eagerly.

"Can you read what's printed on a man's brain?"

"No, but I think we can stretch it out of you before morning," the unknown one said slowly, and yanked the rope tighter. I lifted weight from my heels to ease the cutting on my wrists.

"It's your only chance," said I, as steadily as possible. Dark red flamed before my eyes. "Your only chance—to trepan for what I know. . . . And all I've got to add before my jaws shut for the night is that the time will come when you fellows will sicken at the thought of a mask and a rope."

And then they all heard my teeth click, as I intended they should—and I said no more. . . .

To describe the next three hours would be purposeless. I learned much about myself and was not mortally hurt, soul nor body. They were afraid—beyond abrasing the surfaces. I think my silence alarmed them; and then, in all justice, they were withheld in part by the growing appreciation of what they were about. The same voices gave a clue to the situation when I was at last on the waving verges of unconsciousness:

"He's the devil. He'll kill himself, and then where'll we be at?"

One lifted a candle to my face, and poked up my eyelid roughly. I think he was frightened at what he saw. I repeat, much was revealed to me about myself. . . . Dawn was in the broken places of the roof when the last stress was brought to bear. I resisted in half-stupor and absolute silence; and with—but I will not tell that, for drunkenness was to blame—they loosed the ropes. I was unconscious for a period of unknown length. The far sound of firing aroused me. I was alone in the Vatican. I arose, almost broken by excruciating pains in my arms and shoulders, and moved to the great door. The firing, which I had supposed a dream, became more and more startling to my faculties—and brought a sudden furious reverse from hatred to happiness. [It was like a plunge into a pool of sheer joy. . . . A fight was on at the Pass, and I held the Vatican. . . . If Vivera had surprised the diminished command at the bridge and taken the position, the beasts who had tortured me were penned in the valley.

For ten seconds, at least, I was a slave to this poison. My hand flew along the inner locks of the great door—effectually barring out the miners and Yarbin's soldiers. Yet the last lock had not been shot to place before I knew that I should open the door. Revenge was but another reflex of the savage pain. . . . And now I heard running feet and the spent, husky voice of Maconachie:

"For God's sake, Mr. Ryerson, open the door!"

"What's up, Mac?" I called, though I was already reversing the locks.

"There's a fight on at the Pass—and it sounds nearer. . . . I've gathered the men up for your orders—the drunken lot! For God's sake, open—and take over the command! It's all up, if you don't!"

I swung the door and squinted at the gray-red of morning. Maconachie fell back from the sight of me. . . .

"Yes, they thrawned me a bit, Mac. . . . Yes, I know you did n't have anything to do with it. . . . Dole's whiskey——"

"They surprised Yarbin's guard at ten last night and broke into the Inn!" he mumbled hoarsely. . . . Down by the river, the miners were running to and fro, many already started toward us. . . . And now I saw a mule galloping madly on the trail down from the Pass. . . . Maconachie signalled the rider, who was reining toward Headquarters. He reversed his mount like a flash. Fifty feet away, the poor animal, unused to such rowelling and speed, lost her balance in a rut—sprawled and slid with thud and groan. The courier launched forward until the bridle-rein, unrelinquished, brought him whirling to the turf. It was a sensational delivery. . . . Maconachie and I picked up the messenger, whose lips moved and eyes twisted with the torture of a midriff vacuum. It was several seconds before he had air enough to sound the words:

"Vivera has taken the Pass. . . . The men are holding a bit—but must give way. . . . Yarbin has joined them to slow up the retreat, so you fellows will have a chance!"

I ordered the man into the Vatican, sent Maconachie to bring up the miners and women in what order he could, and took the post at the great door, watching the ascending trail to the Pass. . . . I was still dazed.

The mule—the little gray vixen that had creased me—got up, snorted, shook herself, and turned about toward the Pass at a fast walk.

## XX.

AND now the miners passed by me, hastening into the Vatican—shuddered and shrank from me, many of them. Shame and fear and nausea twitched upon lip and nostril and eyelid; others, fresh-awakened from stupor, were even more swollen and deathly. I have seen it since where one is rudely aroused from the death of drink—that look of Lazarus newly-called.

It did n't occur until afterward how I must have appeared to them—my face altered from the horrible night and the fainting, my wrists purple and swollen, arms and breast still bare. . . . It was a hideous moment of my life, at best; and yet matters were conducted with scarcely conceivable speed.

"You men who are not too drunk—take rifles and man the nearest trenches—to cover the retreat of our soldiers. Give them something to fall back on. Make a show of reserves to check the rush of Vivera. . . . And you women go in and sit down."

Truly, swiftness was needed. Vivera had swarmed over the Pass, and was driving Yarbin three to one. . . . Maconachie was having food and valuables moved from the settlement, although extensive stores were in the Vatican-vault and beyond. A line was formed on the slope. The eagerness of the miners to obey me now, caught strangely at my heart. . . . Presently I saw Yarbin's men under fire, and crowded down from the Pass.

The morning was bright. The mighty grandeur of the mountain in daybreak was curiously foreign that hour. And after what I had known in the night, of men and myself and the world, the firing seemed a small and silly matter.

For hours, Mary Galbraith was driven from mind by hatred for my persecutors—hatred, a red rending thing that seemed since to have devoured itself. It was true, I did not hate these men now. Maconachie thrilled me with his zeal. His voice through the iron door—a hard man's giving up in great stress—had been all I needed. . . . And some of these who passed into the Vatican; and some who had gone forth into the line—had tortured me. How far was torture from their minds now! . . . And I might have done the cheap thing—repaid them in commonness and revenge! . . . What a different and finer way—to serve and save them! . . . And something came to me this moment from the woman beyond the mountain. I ran out happily to the line.

"Now, fellows," I called, "we want to give Yarbin and the boys a cushion to land on. They're fighting for us—and the Vatican is open and ours. And we've got a getaway that Vivera does n't know."

A cheer was returned from the miners. That cheer choked me to tears—as torture had not done. . . . And the fight was on—the steel singing in our ears.

"Fall back now—easy, my men! . . . There's plenty of time for a last look at the golden river—a last look at the old river and the dredge! . . . Vivera can have it now—and the gold is all *cached* away in the Vatican. . . . And I say, fellows, take a squint at Yarbin doing *his* day's work! . . . The old Master knew a soldier!"

"And he knew the boss of us all," a muffled voice said significantly, "but we did n't—"

"We're all one piece now," I called back, enthralled by the figure of Yarbin, who knew how to charge and how to stand, and, what was harder still for him, how to give way before an enemy. . . . He had disdained to leave his mule, but rode up and down between Vivera and our retreat—an attraction of shots and an inspiration of nerve.

"Keep the door open until the last man is in!" I yelled, turning toward the Vatican; and a moment later I was in the midst of Yarbin's soldiers, breasting through, and swept back with them laughingly. I heard their queer talk under a killing fire. . . . Vivera had formed on the open slopes, and was gaining ground in a business-like way—his troops charging as skirmishers, and dropping to cover and fire every thirty or forty feet. I saw the angle of his forward line of rifles, as it swung to cover Yarbin and his careening mule.

Now it occurred to me that my friend had once soldiered with the attacking party. Vivera would be eager to kill Yarbin. At this instant a shot felled his mule in full stride, and a cheer from the skirmishers answered the fall. Yarbin cut it short by regaining his feet and resuming his inspiration. I bellowed at him:

"Come in, old man,—we're all covered! Everything is safe inside. Come on to breakfast—it's cold with the door open!"

But the blithe ruffian would n't hurry. He had got his men safely home. All but a handful of his kind were covered in the massive walls. I made for the little party—thinking of what it meant to father wilful boys who refused to come in out of a storm. . . . Yarbin had retreated soldier-like—until it came to his own case. He saw me and called, "Go back! I'm all right—I'm coming!"—finishing the sentence from his knees. Again he popped up. And now I think he must have heard a last cry from one of our fallen—for he staggered forward toward a man who was down—bent over him and fell across the prone body. Vivera's point was less than sixty yards away.

I had to have Yarbin. A chap at my side saw I had to have him. . . . My friend, the commander, was grinning up at me, but the man beneath was dead. A hand helped me to lift the smiling one—a steady hand in that murderous swarm. It was Maconachie, who had not left me.

Vivera's men were upon us as we gained the Vatican. I heard the clang of the bullets upon the iron portal—and felt suddenly the whole weight of Yarbin. A dozen hands stretched out to help us in, and the big door slammed upon the new masters of Tropicania.

Maconachie was on his feet with a wound in each arm. The miracle of *my* escape did not occur to me until afterward. The yells of Vivera's men outside, and the silent crowding at hand, were but vague matters of consciousness. . . . I was bending over Yarbin, who had been hit a dozen times.

"It's queer," he said, smiling like a lad grown tired at play, "how the booze can throw you. . . . They got some of Dole's stuff at the Pass last night. Me, Yarbin, sleeping in between—and Tropicania drunk at both ends. . . . Vivera shoved a big bamboo bridge across at dawn—and struck a lot of all-winter sleeps at the Pass. I'll bet he

heard our sentries snore. . . . Queer how the booze threw me down, and I did n't take a drink——”

“Yarbin, old soul, you brought us in beautifully!”

He winced.

“Oh, I know,” said I; “it would have been a lot easier to charge—but it took a soldier to fall back. Only after you got the men within the shadow—you lost interest and forgot yourself——”

“Queer how the old red booze——”

“Yes——”

And just then I saw his forefinger wriggling—as if to beckon me closer.

“Back in St. Louis, there's a little old woman who can use what I've got coming. Tell her I was the original river-water kid—and saved the stuff for her. . . . She'd never got anything, if I did n't croak before there was a chance to blow. . . . I've got to laugh at the booze, after all—how it threw me. . . . And say, Ryerson, we pulled together, did n't——. . . . Why don't you get a shirt on?”

That was the last he said.

I remember one of the men coming up with my shirt and blouse. Yet I went about the work coldly. I could n't get it all straight—that Yarbin had crossed over—that just the machine he had fought with was there by the wall, covered. . . . The air was getting close. All Tropicania was packed in the temple—in sickening silence. They were waiting for me.

“Vivera thinks he's got us penned, and won't hurry,” I said to the nearest. “But we must get out of here—at least, all but a guard to keep him guessing. . . . Vivera can't break this iron door without artillery, and it will take time to get a big gun. The dynamite is all stored here. No pipes or cigarettes. Yes, I know how excitement makes one itch for a smoke. . . . Also, there are women present. . . . Fellows,” I went on, raising my voice, “in so far as I'm concerned, there'll be no tales told—when the old Master comes back. Vivera fooled us when they were changing guard at the Pass, and I had called Yarbin down for a conference. There was n't any trouble on the dredge or the river. As for the rest, we'll lay it to old King Alcohol, and we won't be far wrong. . . . Now I'm going to show you the gold and lead you out into daylight—but there are some chores first for a few men to do.”

Water was brought. I opened the panel, and in the vault, before opening the mountain passage, I explained to one of the men that he must carry a message through. This proved unnecessary, however, for no sooner was the door opened into the passage than I heard Dickson calling from the darkness beyond. My people crowded about me, terrified.



Dickson and I met in the blackness. I grasped his hand. He said that Lillian and Miss Galbraith had been alarmed by the firing, which reached them from over the mountain. I sent him back with good cheer. . . . And now I stationed a dozen men in the Vatican, while the gold was carried, through the passage and up the trail, to the place of the vision among the marguerites. The stores, rifles, and ammunition were then taken from the Vatican—all the big essentials except the dynamite.

All that day we toiled, and Vivera was more or less quiet outside. Evidently he meant to give us a taste of confinement and bad air before treating us in usual military fashion, for he sent no envoys to the iron door. . . . At mid-afternoon I ventured to climb the trail—and Mary Galbraith was waiting where she had stood before. . . . She waved at me. That was all—I asked no more. . . .

Late that afternoon, when all the dynamite had been carried from the Vatican into the vault, as I had ordered, I closed the trachyte panel for the last time. Yarbin and others—too many the sacrifice—were in the vault, under the tarpaulins that had covered the gold. . . . And now I detailed three of Maconachie's assistants—explosive-experts—to block the passage. I wanted the very heart of the mountain emptied into it, beyond the possibility of Vivera's getting through, even if he succeeded in wrecking his way into the vault itself.

Maconachie's aides went about the job scientifically, explaining that it would take half the night to get the powder planted. A series of three or four blasts would obliterate the wonder-working of the Quichuans. They appeared to figure the result, more or less exactly, of each blast. . . . Just now a miner hurried in from Lost Valley, with the word that a small party was approaching far down the seaward trail. . . . For an instant, the terror that Vivera knew another way and was flanking possessed me, but gave way to the primary hope in all our hearts. In the sweep of this emotion, I saw Dickson running toward me.

"It's the old Master," he whispered. "Galbraith and eight men. They're carrying him on a litter."

"Go ahead with the big noise stuff," I said to the engineers, and followed Dickson forth.

## XXI.

It was late that night. Mary Galbraith had left her father, and I was alone at the old Master's cot.

"I'd rather not leave here—if you'll stay," he said. "Mary will like the silence, with all the tension gone—until the ship can return again. It will be crowded, this trip. After the bad weather we had off Lower California, I'm—well, I always was a landsman, Tom—I like it here best."

I knew what the old man meant. He had kept his word about preserving vitality to see the end of his work—but there was not much left beside. . . . That tent upon the mountain-side was the hall of a dying emperor to me. . . . The *Alcyone* had been driven hundreds of miles off her course on the way up, and had reached San Diego ten days late—but with her lives and her gold. How Galbraith toiled can be imagined, since his return to Lost Valley had been but three days behind schedule. The office had been established; the assay completed. Each man's allotment for the first and main shipment was in the form of an order, ready to be delivered on the morrow. Leek was in charge at San Diego. The *Alcyone* was once more lying in the mouth of the Clara, ready to carry back the men and treasure. Dickson's currency had been restored.

The terrible Tropicania game was won.

"Dickson and his wife will stay. America is not ready for him yet. Five or six others will be enough to remain here," Galbraith went on. "We shall wait for the *Alcyone* to come again. There are provisions in plenty. It will be a great vacation for me. . . . I'll have a chance to draw a breath of real life—something that has n't to do with gold—"

His eyes held me, seemed to delight in my happiness. . . . Suddenly he caught my hand and held it up to the light, intent upon the thick, blackened wrist. He waited for me to speak. I told him of other things, and he asked nothing. . . .

And now one of the experts assigned to the work at the Vatican came in to report that the powder was planted—three *caches* which would seal forever the inner end of the passage. All this had been explained to Galbraith, who smiled and nodded now. . . . Three times in the next fifteen minutes, we felt the throb of gigantic forces—rending crashes that came up from the gorge like the end of all things. . . . The dawn proved the perfection of the work. . . .

I was not surprised when Maconachie volunteered to stay. The five others who offered were a mysterious attraction to me. Two of these men had been among those very drunk not many hours before; and the voice of one, it always seemed, I had heard in that evil night. . . . But I want no better friends. Many times I have found good men among those who have to be *shown* at first. Some of the hands I took at parting, I like to remember—and the faces of those fellows who did not try to make words work.

The days passed with unnatural swiftness. There was a high light upon them. An hour with Galbraith; a walk with Dickson, or a dinner with Dickson and his Lillian; long talks with Maconachie; an intimate association, bringing out the best of the miners, who had remained against every desire of their hearts; then alone with my thoughts—

hours and hours (during solitary ascents) of gratefulness and restoration.

And mornings and evenings across the mountain-side, from Mary's eminence to mine—the mute waving of hands! . . . Once, we reckoned badly, and I was approaching her father's tent, just as she was coming forth. She smiled and colored—passing on with bowed head. And I did not go to the old Master's cot that time, but up the mountain to the end of trails, where the air began to nip from the snows—alone, to realize the woman's beauty and the miracle of a woman loving a man.

Lillian Dickson tried hard to understand. I doubt if the splendid unbounded creature ever tried so hard to understand anything. But at last she shook her head.

“But she's here, and you're here—and you're dying for each other——”

That was as far as she could go. Mary must have talked to her on many nights. Dickson was interested, but there was the fineness I had always noted, to keep him from speaking. I believed he had a deep appreciation. It was a wonderful time for all. . . . Dickson never told me his trouble. He did not doubt that Teck and Morgan had come into Tropicania with Vivera, though we could not confirm that. The range between the two valleys might as well have been the Pacific. Galbraith planned to take the Dicksons to Honolulu on the final trip north.

We wrote to each other, Mary and I, just short notes. There was little that actually required expression—since we could see each other. In the nights, I would think of her lying very still and looking out at the stars, as I did. . . . Once I found myself giving a grown lad of my own—the secret of happiness. I was half-asleep likely, as I caught myself whispering devoutly: “And when you have found her—when you are very sure you have found her—go away for a year. Say to her that you go to search for a flower that takes root amid loving and dreaming and waiting.” . . .

The great Andean peaks were my real companion. I loved their imperial contours, their great ice-packs, and the interstellar stillness. . . . There were times, as the days drew on, when I thought of going to Mary, but the respect for her year prevailed. And at last something strange, but which I knew was excellent, came to me and remained—a stamina that had come before only in my highest moments. The meaning of it was that Mary Galbraith was mine in heart; that even if I never knew her more than now, we were twain; for flesh is but a tithe of the meaning of a great love. And this remained with me—a continuous lustre in the realization, a fresh fineness of patience, a new mastery over self.

The place of this realization became a shrine to me. It was high on the mountain above her tent—to the very end of the possible ascent.

It was there that I found a spring—traced it to a source ice-cold and pure. The very air held a breath of the higher snows. There were fronds about it; and parting the marvellous network of vines and creepers, a Jovian vista across Lost Valley thrilled the heart. In one note to Mary I touched upon this beautiful thing which had come to my consciousness—and the shrine of it, the gushing Spring. Strangely tucked away among the sentences of a later note from her, was a line—that some time I should find her there at the Spring.

. . . There remained but four days of our year. I had passed the afternoon with Mary's father. He seemed poised between the planes of life and death; yet on this visit he told me that the recent weeks had been the happiest of his life. He said there was a different spirit about the memory of poor wayward Santell—and that I had done something to fill the living place. . . .

I returned to my tent as the sun reddened the seaward range. . . . At just the moment (for we never needed words nor watches) I stepped out to look across the slopes where the marguerites had been to her eminence—and she was standing there.

She did not wave to me. It came clearly that instant, as if her thought had been in my mind—that there had come an end to waiting. And now her bare arm lifted toward the snows of the mountain. But even before that exquisite gesture, I knew the four remaining days were a gift of grace to me. A hush was upon my being, as I watched her turn, not to her tent, but to the trail.

. . . I was far behind, climbing with the shadow, as the sun sank oversea. Lost Valley deepened, became mystic with night, but a heavenly glow touched the leaves above. This was my "bright angel trail." . . . Sometimes it seemed as if I were not of flesh, but a spirit, following a brighter spirit, up to the place where the gods had touched a new world into creation. . . . It was the Spring where life began.

Only the best of the old life belonged to me now. . . . I heard the sounding of the great inland sea of my boyhood, and was purified in the breath of the pines. The woman's voice of that night when I told her my love, blended curiously with the voice of my mother. The spirit of things well done lived with me, and all the fever healed, and the cramped places of my heart breathed expansion.

The thin stream from the Spring whispered in low animation, as I climbed along it toward the source. Red and gold wavered from the heights, only the pale lustre of the snows lingering. There was no sound from the Shrine.

I parted the leaves. All was shadow—until the glow from the peaks left my eyes, and I saw her there among the contours of the darkness—still as the Night herself.

# THE MAGI AND THE FAERY FOLK

By *Edith M. Thomas*

◆

W HERE went the gifts the Magi bore  
To Bethlehem Village long of yore?  
As they rode all night through the haunted sands,  
There were whispering voices and touching hands:  
“Give us of that which your panniers hold!”  
Then they who rode to each other spoke:  
“They have followed us forth because of our gold—  
The eager clan of the Faery Folk!”

And the Magi answered those voices in air:  
“The gifts we carry we may not share.  
The myrrh and the gems and the gold from the mine—  
These are all for One—for a Child Divine.”  
Oh, then, how the silver laughters ran  
Till they made to quiver the Guiding Star:  
“We will visit, ourselves, this Child of Man,  
We will ask of Him when ye’ve passed afar!

“All that He hath He will give away—  
In the hands of the world a treasure will lay,  
Treasure so vast, so more than gold,  
That the hands of the world will scarcely hold  
All that He hath for them in store.  
We have no souls, that treasure to share:  
He will give us the lesser—the glittering ore!”  
Laughed the Faery Folk, unseen in air.

Thus, with the touch of asking hands,  
The Magi rode through the haunted sands,  
And silently followed their Guiding Star.  
They gave their gifts, and they passed afar.  
If any came after, there’s none to tell,  
And where went their gold is none to say.  
But this of a truth we know full well:  
“*All that He hath He will give away.*”

# THE MENACE OF CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT

*By Forbes Lindsay*

AT intervals since the inception of railroad building in China—that is to say, during the last thirty years—writers with more optimism than knowledge have drawn roseate pictures of the great advantages which they assume will accrue to the commercial countries of Europe and America from the development of the resources of the great empire that occupies one-tenth of the earth's surface and contains one-fourth of its population. Since the establishment of the Chinese Republic, this fanciful proposition has been more frequently advanced than ever before. The latest effusion of the kind is from the pen of Dr. Wu Ting Fang, formerly Minister from China to the United States.

These sanguine writers are correct in their promise that China has practically unlimited resources of material and labor. It is doubtless true, as Von Richthofen asserts, that the coal measures of the Province of Shan-si alone are sufficiently extensive to supply the demands of the world for several thousand years to come; that the adjacent fields of iron ore would keep every existent rolling-mill running for centuries; that Manchuria might be made to produce more wheat than the largest crop of the United States; and, in short, that under complete development China and her dependencies would be capable of providing all other peoples with nearly everything that they might need.

The fallacy lies in the deduction that these resources may be exploited chiefly for the benefit of foreigners; that the Chinese will be satisfied to produce and export raw materials, taking in exchange the finished products of America and Europe. Dr. Wu, an exceptionally intelligent and well-informed Chinaman, falls into this error, but in his case we may make allowance for a characteristically amiable desire to say what he thinks his readers will be pleased to hear. He predicts a growing demand on the part of his countrymen for western luxuries, but fails to tell us how they are to pay for these unaccustomed things. He expresses the belief that with the changing fashion in hair will come a new fashion in head-gear; and that millions of caps will be required by queueless Chinamen every year. He intimates that these will be bought from foreign manufacturers, but does not give any reason why the Chinese should not make them, just as they make their present hats.

As a matter of fact, there is every ground for believing that the China of the future, in its relation to the world at large, will figure much more prominently as a competitor than as a customer. This view of the matter was taken by Mr. J. J. Hill some years ago, when he stated that, unless the American laborer shall moderate his standard of living in the meanwhile, he may expect to be driven to the wall by the productions of Chinese workmen. The possibilities of the future are foreshadowed even thus early in the developments of the present. The Han-Yang Iron and Steel Works employs four thousand men. Its output is produced much more cheaply than the same material can be made in America. Charles M. Schwab testified within the year before a Senate Committee that he can import Chinese pig-iron to his plant in San Francisco more economically than he can supply it from his own mills in Pennsylvania. But for the tariff bar, the Chinese would export the finished product to the United States, and Mr. Schwab's factory would find itself unable to compete with the Hang-Yang Works, from which steel rails, armor-plate, and similar products are being put out.

Dr. Wu states:

The Chinese nature is not much different from that of other human beings. What at first is a luxury soon becomes a necessity in China, as elsewhere. I have seen this demonstrated in Shanghai, where at present I make my home, over and over again.

The mistake here is in holding up the Chinese of the treaty ports as representatives of the population at large. The fact that the former are showing some inclination toward the possession of luxuries is no indication that the vast hordes of Chinese wringing a bare living from the land will fall into line; nor that the ingrained disposition of the Chinaman to despise and dispense with non-essentials will easily give place to an inclination for the enjoyment of them. The fact that recent years have witnessed large importations into China of articles which the people never before used rather emphasizes than contradicts this statement. The Chinaman will respond to the offer of something calculated to promote his convenience or to serve a useful purpose. He is buying kerosene and cheap watches in large quantities and numbers, but he has not been induced to purchase expensive lamps or gold watch-chains. American millers have established an extensive market for flour in China, but it has not been accompanied by a demand for fancy biscuits. In late years the Chinese have recognized the food value of sugar, but they are not importing it in the form of candy. Even these successes of foreign exporters have been secured only after half a century of persistent effort, during which time they have, with less endeavor, made greater inroads into much smaller markets.

It may be taken for granted, as quite consistent with the situation

and the characteristics of the people, that if they acquire a desire for these superfluous things, they will set to and make them for themselves. It is hardly necessary to state that the wonderful adaptability and the extraordinary intelligence of the Chinaman render him equal to the task of producing anything which we may have to offer him. A sign that may be seen in the city of Shanghai reads,

Furnaces and umbrellas mended. Any mortal thing can do.

There is a world of significance in this advertisement. It truthfully sets forth the infinite resourcefulness and self-confidence of the Chinaman.

China has a vast surplus of labor. Its population of over four hundred millions is compressed into eighteen provinces, each of which has at least seventy inhabitants to the square mile. Thirteen of these provinces contain over four hundred souls to the square mile, and in one the density is over six hundred persons in the same area. The country contains scores of great cities, and large towns innumerable. In the Swatow district, one hundred and fifty miles long by fifty miles wide, are to be found ten walled cities with populations of from forty thousand to two hundred and fifty thousand, besides hundreds of villages and towns whose inhabitants number twenty thousand or more. This enormous population supports itself by agriculture, and supplies its needs by domestic manufactures. It has been said that if you will give a Chinaman one foot of earth and a quart of water he will make something grow. Despite the primitive methods, nowhere else on earth is agriculture made so effective. Holdings of one-twentieth of an acre are common, and by far the majority do not exceed one acre.

What will be the probable result of the application of capital to the resources of such a country, and the extension of railroads through it? Is it to be supposed, as some writers would have us believe, that a small proportion of this vast, struggling, surplus labor will devote itself to the production of the raw materials of commerce, to be shipped to manufacturing nations, while the great majority shall remain content to pursue their present precarious modes of living? And if such should be the case, what is to support the railroads, of which six thousand miles are now in existence, with an equal mileage in prospect? Surely the transportation of the output of the coal and iron mines will not suffice; yet there would be no other source of business to justify the contemplated railroad extension.

In considering this question, there are two or three basic facts which may not be lost to sight. Measured by purchasing power, the Chinese are a nation of extremely poor people. For many centuries they have sustained a severe struggle for existence. In the course of this time, it has of necessity become an inherited habit with them to disregard non-essentials. Emulation is a stimulus of which they have no knowledge.



Their only incentive to effort is the primitive prompting of self-preservation. They know nothing of, nor ever have known, what Veblen calls "the wasteful extravagance of western life." They despise it, and, as a rule, even when it is within their means, do not indulge in it. Witness the members of the Chinese colonies in our Pacific Coast cities, many of them born upon American soil and in constant touch since their birth with American civilization. Their earnings are considerably greater, and their savings immeasurably larger, than those of the average laborer in the same communities. Nevertheless, the Chinaman of San Francisco or Los Angeles lives in well-nigh equal simplicity with the Chinaman of Canton or Peking. In China itself this national characteristic is highly marked. Among the Chinese there is no fashion in dress. The man of rank is mainly distinguished by a button or a belt. His residence is restricted in form and capacity to his requirements. Its contents find justification for their presence in usefulness. He has comparatively little more of the world's goods than the coolie living in the neighboring hut.

Although the Chinaman looks with contempt upon the unnecessary extravagance of western peoples, he is glad enough to profit by it. While he will not commit the folly of wearing a starched shirt, he is willing to launder one for a price. Retaining his own simple fashion in shoes, he engages in the manufacture of more elaborate foot-wear for foolish customers. He makes the most enticing lingerie for American ladies, but does not supply it to his own womenfolk. Everywhere in the world the Chinaman has proved himself ready to take advantage of the commercial conditions and of the opportunities for trade in foreign luxuries, but this without himself becoming contaminated with the desire for them. If, however, a change in this respect should occur, which there is no good reason for anticipating, it is safe to say that the Chinaman, who is an economist of the highest order, will not be slow to see the benefit to himself in supplying his wants by domestic manufacture, rather than by purchase from foreigners.

In short, all the facts in the case seem to point to a conclusion contrary from that at which so many sanguine writers upon the future China arrive. This great country is on the eve of a boundless development. Its untold mineral resources will shortly be exploited. But at the same time its greatest resource, that of unlimited cheap labor, will also find a field for effort. If at first this stupendous store of available energy is devoted to mere mining industries, it will not be long before its extension to manufactures, for the purpose of meeting the needs of home consumption. From this it will be an inevitable step to the production of fabrics for exportation. When the day arrives, and it may not be distant, that China exports the products of her own factories in her own ships to the markets of Europe and America, the white laborer will be reduced to sorry straits in the competition. And no laborer will suffer to the degree that will

the American, whose highly artificial standard of living renders him incapable of competing with a people who will be making much and consuming little.



## ALL IN A COACH AND FOUR

BY ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

THE quality folk went riding by,  
 All in a coach and four,  
 And pretty Annette, in a calico gown,  
 (Bringing her marketing things from town,  
 Stopped short with her Sunday store,  
 And wondered if ever it should betide  
 That she in a long-plumed hat would ride  
 Away in a coach and four.

A Lord there was, oh, a lonely soul,  
 There in the coach and four;  
 His years were young but his heart was old,  
 And he hated his coaches and hated his gold  
 (Those things which we all adore).  
 And he thought how sweet it would be to trudge  
 Along with that fair little country drudge,  
 And away from his coach and four.

And so next day he went riding back,  
 All with his coach and four,  
 And he went each day, whether dry or wet,  
 Till he married the sweet little maid Annette  
 (In spite of her lack of lore).  
 But they did n't trudge off on foot together,  
 For he bought her a hat with a long, long feather,  
 And they rode in the coach and four.

Now, a thing like this could happen, we know,  
 All in a coach and four;  
 But the fact of it is, 'twixt me and you,  
 There is n't a word of the story true  
 (Pardon I do implore).  
 It is only a foolish and fanciful song  
 That came to me as I rode along,  
 All in a coach and four.

# MERCEDES THE MIND-READER

By Edna Kenton

“M ERCEDES” walked into her unspeakable dressing-room off of a remodelled bar-room that had been turned into a painted and gilded “Dreamland,” and stared about her angrily as she flung off her coat and cheap furs, and dragged from its nail a weak imitation of an Andalusian dress in red and gold and black, with its sash and mantilla. “Mercedes the Mind-Reader,” featured on the bills outside, was in reality Miss Mercedes Martin, with legitimate stage aspirations, reduced by the pressure of hard circumstance not only to the vaudeville stage, but to the extreme limbo of the “six-a-day.” She appeared in the five- and ten-cent shows scattered over the city, and her only good fortune in six months had been the thin streak of luck that gave her enough continuous engagements between Fourteenth Street and the Bronx to keep her on in the city of her heart.

Miss Martin’s co-laborer was a young man whom she had met the summer before, in an actors’ boarding-house. He was neither playwright nor budding actor, but had “barked” at a small Coney Island show long enough to make him enamored of “the profession.” Unfortunately, he had been let out to make room for a nepotic successor, the brother of the manager, and while scouring Fourteenth Street for another job had run across an act that gave him an idea. But it required a helper, and his mind turned instinctively to the girl who had sat at his table all through the hot, hopeless summer. Over the stewed beef and boiled potatoes and soggy puddings of the daily dinner menu, they had talked, each cherishing a secret and unsuspected pity for the other’s limitations, and finally, driven by that congeniality of need and supply that often outranks spiritual *rapprochement*, they joined forces, and together became “Mercedes the Mind-Reader.” Barney had been enthusiastic over their prospects, but so far they had climbed no higher than the round on which they started. Each of them, however, had contrived to eke out a living, and after her brief six months’ experience in the fooling of a willing public, “Mercedes the Mind-Reader” was freed forever from the thralldom of any last lingering superstition.

“Thirteen at a table, the moon full face, right, or left; a black cat

in the dark of the moon in a graveyard—anything!” said Miss Martin grimly.

She cast off her street clothes and was almost dressed in her stage gauds when a knock sounded and Barney’s sleek, oiled head was pushed through the doorway.

“Say,” he began gently—he was a street-reared youth with the poise of the streets athwart him, but though he had browbeaten cops and feared no man he shrank now and then from the glare in Miss Martin’s eyes—“say, have you got last night’s batch o’ questions answered yet? They ’s two girls an’ three men out there a’ready, callin’ for ’em.”

His partner’s eyes blazed. “My heavens, no!” she uttered harshly. “I ’m near dead as it is, an’ that part of the game ’ll have to be cut out quick! I never saw such marks! Dozens of ’em, writin’ down their silly questions, and then hangin’ round the box-office all day long to get their answers! I ’ve come down here a good hour ’n’ a half before my turn to get this lot cleared away, and then get jumped on before I get a full breath! Now, you clear out, and when I ’m ready I ’ll send a batch out front, and don’t you nor anybody else bother me again!”

She slammed the door, and sat militantly down to her hated task. As she had said, there were dozens of letters, all of them addressed to “Mercedes,” for which the writers of the questions enclosed had paid ten cents each, and whose answers were to be left for the writers at the box-office. It was a nice little side-game, but it took time and clever phrasing, and when one is sick of life and one’s work, one does not feel clever. But with a sniff of disgust she braced herself to her hated work.

She answered five questions within three minutes; one from a woman: “Is my husband still in love with me?” by “He loves you more than you think;” another from a woman: “Does my husband love any other woman?” by “Your husband loves you more than any one else;” and one from a man: “Will I get a raise any time soon?” by “Your employer is only waiting to be sure you are a good worker.” She sealed them vengefully in the self-addressed envelopes, and picked up the fourth one.

“Do I put money on Sunshine or on Lady Grey?” she read. Like an automaton, “Mercedes” wrote her answer: “Put your money in the nearest savings-bank to-morrow—you will never regret it;” then she slipped it in the addressed envelope, and rubbed her fist over the addressed side to seal it more firmly. By the merest accident, her lustreless eye read the address, and after a bit her dulled brain began to work—then she bent forward like a dog on the scent.

“Why, it ain’t *possible!*” she breathed. But she tore open the dampened flap with nervous fingers, and, after staring at the name again, began to write a different reply. Then she resealed the envelope,

and, opening the door, called imperiously, "Tommy!" When the orchestra leader's young son arrived, breathless, she handed him the single envelope. "Take it to the box-office, quick!" she said.

She shut the door with a half-scared look on her face. "Now what 'll I do?" she asked herself, beginning mechanically to cut the remaining envelopes that lay on her dressing-table. "Hocus-pocus or straight! It 's a ten to one shot either way, an' maybe he *ain't* the man! But if he is—oh, Lord!"

She turned sharply as a knock sounded at her door. "I told you, Barney——" she began, but the door did not open. "*Come in!*" she screamed.

"I told you——" she began again, and in her mirror caught sight of the intruder. "Is it—ain't it——" Her swift brain worked like a shuttle—"three men out there callin' for their answers"—and she turned toward the strange young man with her mind made up.

"You 're Dick Freek," she remarked affirmatively, and knew instantly that he was. Her quick glance had told her much, for these last six months had given her a fund of informative detail from which to draw many quick-witted conclusions. Already she had perceived that this youth was proud and sullen and stubborn, and withal uncertain of himself and of the world. He was black-haired and blue-eyed, and well-enough dressed, after a showy fashion. He had paid ten cents for a question card, but he was rather ashamed of it, and, more than half-believing, was determined to show, for what it was worth of *savoir faire*, his sullen doubt.

"It 's a straightaway and no choice," said Miss Martin to herself. "No time to cook up any snare, an', any way, he 's primed—or thinks he is!"

"You said to come back and have a personal talk about that question," the young man said, staring at her with a furtive boldness. The mind-reader nodded and sat down on the edge of her dressing-table, motioning her caller to the only chair the room held. She picked up a nail-polisher, and began to work definitely at her hands, but suddenly she raised her head and stared straight into the young fellow's eyes. Startled though he was, he did not avert them, and gazed clearly, although defiantly, back. She held the gaze for almost a moment; then she waved a careless hand and nodded.

"Well, I don't know much about you, Mr. Freek, though I could make you think I knew a lot. But though your clothes are flashy, and that stud pure glass, and the ring washed gold, you can look a woman in the eye. Now, forget what you came back here with, a lot of heppiness to the whole world; because, honest, you don't know a thing about this stunt o' mine, do you?"

"Well, I know it 's a trick all right," the young man flung back.

"Drop the hepness," begged the mind-reader good-naturedly. "If you knew it was rot, you was a fool, was n't you, to give up a good dime on a chance I could tell you how to beat the bookies? If I could do that, I 'd be whalin' 'em. You 're right; it 's a trick—only, you don't know it. Now, do you?"

"Well," ventured the young man after a pause, "it 's a blame' good one. Say, I don't see how you work it, anyhow. He, down there in the audience, don't ask you more'n a question or two, but you 're right there with the answer, an' blindfolded at that!"

"Well, now," volunteered Miss Martin, busy with the thumb-nail of her right hand, "if my pardner knew what I was up to, he 'd break the contract, and I 'd be out of a job. But I hate to see a young feller start into gambling, an' when he tries to mix gambling and mind-reading, God help him! You see, you say you don't believe, but you do! Here 's the answer I wrote you out first; then I got to thinkin'—a lot o' women in the business ain't got the conscience I 'm developing—and I thought: 'Here's a young man that probably, if he was once put wise to a lot he could n't be expected to know about, 'd be able to talk back to all the fakers, an' when they tried to nail him, tell 'em all to go to hades!' So I asked you to step back behind," she added simply.

"Now," she continued capably, "my game's *easy*. See here: A is H, and B is T, and C is S, and D is G," she rattled through the tossed-up alphabet. "Now, I don't never pay any attention to anything but the first letter of the first word in each sentence Barney hands me. Like your name. If F is E, and R is M, and E is F, and K is 'Pray,' and 'Hurry' means 'Repeat last letter,' then, if he takes your name, and says to me: '*Easy now. Make haste. Faster. Hurry. Pray* tell me this name,' why, that spells F-r-e-e-k, even if I never did hear of the name before. Sure, you 're fallin' to the whole scheme; learn the new alphabet like it was the old one, and you 're all right.

"Now, take dates. What year was you born in? Good: 1886. You hand that to Barney down in the audience. Now, if one is 'Say' or 'Speak,' and eight is 'Are' or 'Ain't,' and 'Well' means 'Repeat last number, and six is 'What,' and he says to me: '*Say* this number. *Are* you ready? *Well?* *What* is the number?' why, it 's 1886, an' nothing else."

"Well, I *am* —," said the young man earnestly, gazing at his hasty notes, and looking from them to "Mercedes" and back again.

"Of course the trick of the thing lies in the way Barney rattles it off all run together," the mind-reader went on, watching her victim like a hawk. "Then," she added casually, "there are the tables, in sets of ten each, of coins, and articles of dress, and colors, and jewels, and lodge pins, and watches, and all. Each set 's got a question that tells

what group of ten articles it is—the other question he asks gives the number in the set. For instance, ‘What article is this?’ means wearing-apparel set, and ‘What is this?’ means jewelry set. If ‘Glove’ is number three in the first set, and three is ‘Can,’ why, when he says, ‘*What article is this? Can you tell me?*’ it’s a glove, see? And if ‘Bracelet’ is third in the second set, ‘*What is this? Can you tell me?*’ is that cue, and that’s all there is to all of it.”

“Well, can you beat it!” murmured the young man. “Then, it’s all of it tricks, spirits and all?”

“And most of it poor tricks,” agreed Miss Martin. “For instance, again: At the sixteenth-rate show where we first got our idea of our act, a violinist in front of us got out his ‘mute’ and handed it to the audience man. He was stupid and had to ask what it was. Then he spelled by ear: “*Oh, here. Look. Please hurry!*” he said to her. Of course, since M is O, and U is ‘Look,’ and T is P, that’s m-u-t, and she said it loud and clear: ‘It’s a mutt!’ It near raised the roof.”

The young man laughed, but grew keen again. “*Last night I handed your pardner a match-box, and you told him what it was. Then he ast you how many matches in it, and you said eighteen. I did n’t know it, and I swear he could n’t, because he was holdin’ it down by his side. But it was eighteen all right. That’s why I wrote you about the gamblin’ tip.*”

Miss Martin laughed: “‘*Here is an article*’—clue to the set; five is ‘Will’ or ‘Won’t’—‘*Will you tell what it is?*’ While I was answerin’, he was counting the match-heads with his little finger. One is ‘Say’; eight is ‘are’—‘*Say how many matches are in it. Are you ready?*’ Eighteen! Correct, and count ‘em yourself!”

Young Mr. Freek grinned foolishly again, and put another problem: “But I had a question read through a sealed envelope once?”

“Written on a block of parafined paper, pencil-marked sheet underneath copped out and dusted with charcoal back behind, and there it stood out—like a lemon!”

“Written on my own paper,” corrected the young man triumphantly. “Sealed and taken up on the stage, read there and returned to me, still sealed. No chance for crooked work. I watched!”

“Oh, you watched!” his mentor retorted. “Sure you did! Did n’t happen to see that the plate the letters was dropped in was filled with alcohol, eh! Did n’t happen to catch the medium readin’ it while it was wet as easy as if it was tore open! Did n’t notice her wave it round to dry it out! And if you’d happened to smell the alcohol on it later, you’d ‘a’ thought it was your own breath or your neighbor’s, would n’t you? That’s easy. Give me another.”

“It’s my hardest,” said the young man soberly. “What a mutt, for sure!”

"I 'm tellin' you," remarked his hostess cordially, "because I can see you 're like me—you want to know things." It was not subtle flattery, but the subject felt flattered nevertheless.

"I knew it was all humbug," he asserted with a touch of his old defiance.

"If you take it in earnest, sometimes it 's fun—would be always if I did n't catch it serious now and then, in the letters. They 're what turn me sick."

"What all do they ask you about, any way?" he asked, advancing unconsciously to the centre of the web spread for him.

"About racin'!" Miss Martin flung back at him, and he grinned sheepishly. "That is, the men do, or about their jobs, and is they a raise in sight. Women always want to know if their men love 'em. I 've got a stock answer for that: 'He loves you more than you think.' I learned to be that discreet after an awful break I made when I first went into the business. One of my first answers was to a question a stage-hand wrote me: 'Is my wife true to me?' Like a fool, I wrote back: 'As true as you are to her,' thinkin' I 'd put over a bright bit of repartay. Next day he was missin'—jailed! He 'd got to thinkin' that smart alec answer over, and he nearly carved her to pieces that same night! No! Answer all they ask so as to make 'em feel good!—that 's the secret.

"But now and then," she added slowly, "I get a letter that breaks me all up. One came in just a few weeks ago that turned me sick. Say, it was the pitifulest letter—pages! There 's a man she loves more 'n anything on earth. She—why, she just loves him—that 's all. And he 's blew out, Mr. Freek. He 's just cleared out. Was n't he never comin' back? Where, for God's sake, was he gone? It was all she ast to know. She even went so far as to tell me her name—Mary Morse it was——"

"Mercedes the Mind-Reader" was polishing her nails too steadily to be accused of watching the young man's face, but over her hand she saw his hand tighten until the knuckles whitened. Finally, after a long, thick silence, she raised her head, and as she looked straight into his eyes his face began to flush, and his eyes to waver, and finally to fall away. She drew a long, half-hysterical breath, and then she got off the table's edge and stood before him. Her voice had changed; it was low and eager.

"It was a clear miracle, my catching your name at all—I answer 'em without hardly lookin'. But it 's a funny name, and I 'd remembered it from the letter where she 'd wrote it out—with the whole story, Mr. Freek; and I took a long chance that you might be the man, and asked you to step around. I took another, after you got in, in tellin' you God's own truth about my business—I could 'a' fooled you, you



know it! But I took a look an' chanced it. Now I 'm takin' another chance on you keepin' this that 's to come between you and me. I 'd ought to have burned it, but—here, take it; all I want is you should read it——”

She gave a quick look at the cheap clock standing on her table, and began to apply some make-up vigorously, while behind her, his head bent low so she could not see his face in her mirror, the young man read. There was no sound in the room but the rustle of the simple, desperate pages, and the sweat stood out on his forehead when he had finished.

“What did you—— I never had any idea of—— What did you tell her to do?” he asked huskily of the mind-reader's back.

“I told her under no circumstances to run no risks. I told her to buy her a weddin' ring, and go to the Salvation Army—that they 'd see her through. And I was afraid I was a fool, but I told her to go on hopin'—and trustin' some more—to the love she 'd already trusted to——”

The young man reached for his cheap derby and got up. Miss Martin saw him, in her mirror, and she continued to apply her powder scrupulously. More than all else with this sullenly wise youth she feared the word too much. How far she would have let him go in peace no one can tell; with a sinking heart she saw him cross the door-sill. But from the other side he turned and stammered awkwardly:

“Say—it 's easy to see how all this *could* just 'a' *happened*, but honest, ain't it awful queer? Why, if my hat had n't blew off an' rolled up inside them storm-doors outside there last night, I have n't got an idea I 'd have come in to see the show at all. Now, it *is* queer, ain't it?”

“Honest to goodness,” said the mind-reader, “it 's awful queer.” She sprang up, and faced him with so kindly a look in her black eyes that he spoke unspeakable things.

“When I dug out,” he stammered, “I did n't mean to play the cad exactly—fact is, I never thought what I *was* playin', I was scared so liver-white at the thought of gettin' *married*. I reckon that don't seem any excuse to you at all; nor even any reason why——”

“I never knew a man,” Miss Martin replied comfortingly, “that did n't *want* to run at the last minute—an' look at th' bunch of contented married men that 's walking the town to-day! That 's my cue. Say, you 're goin' down to see her to-night, ain't you?”

The young man put out his hand and gripped hers hard. Then he put on his hat at a new, straighter angle that made him no kin to the young bouncer he had seemed an hour earlier.

“Sure!” he said simply.

# THE HONOR OF BATTERY B

*By Angus Lynne*

FORT LONGWORTH, Kansas, is not, by a long shot, the pleasantest spot for a soldier's life. It is a dreary, barren place of sand and dust. The town itself, a collection of brick, wooden, and corrugated-iron shacks at the end of a branch railroad, serves but to accentuate the loneliness of the prairie, and, with its collection of drink-shops, dance-halls, and "dives," is better avoided by any one in search of harmless diversion.

We were a tough lot at the fort. Two batteries, "B"—my own—and "C," of field artillery, officered by a major, two captains, two lieutenants, a sergeant-major, and six sergeants, and consisting of one hundred and twenty toughs, scalawags, and gutter-scrapings, stewed and grilled at our twelve guns by day, and in our off-time "groused," fought, and drank in the township.

We sergeants—for I was one, the youngest and greenest—had our work cut out for us, but, backed by our major and working together as one man, we overcame the shirkers, grouzers, and incipient mutineers by sheer force of will.

There was also a keen and, among the rank and file, a bitter rivalry between the two batteries, which led to personal conflicts and reprisals not always conducted with honor on either side.

You remember the Indian uprising of '94? It was the usual thing. First, the dispute with the agent at the reservation over supplies; then the demand for redress, the aggravating delay at Washington, the protest of the few half-drunken "braves," the quarrel, first shot, and subsequent murder of settlers on the border. What have n't those agents to answer for?

We read of it casually in our Topeka papers, and speculated as to which of our cavalry friends would be sent to "clean 'em up." It came, therefore, as a shock and a surprise when, about a week after hostilities had commenced, a "rush" telegram ordered Battery B to the front. I will not dilate on the jealousy and hard-feeling displayed by the unfortunate "C" battery, doomed to remain inactive at the fort; but we of Battery B were glad when we were hurried into a troop-train and whirled through a long, black, rainy night to Wamo, the railroad depot

nearest to the front. At Wamo, the rain being over, we collected our belongings, limbered up, and in company with a troop of cavalry, as escort, were soon under way.

As we jogged along we learned from our new friends that the Indians, to the number of three hundred and fifty, were entrenched on a rocky plateau some twenty-five miles away, from which the cavalry had failed to dislodge them. Taunts only had followed demands to surrender, and the ears of a "friendly" Indian who had been sent as envoy had been thrown into the cavalry camp as a hint that no further parleys would be listened to. At this point we were sent for. Clearly it was "up to us," and very proud we were that our comrades of the cavalry had to take a back seat.

We arrived at camp in the afternoon about four, very hot and tired, and, as the scouts reported everything quiet in the enemy's camp, active hostilities were postponed until next day. Our officers, with those of the cavalry, rode out to inspect the ground and fix the position from which the battery would shell our troublesome neighbors, it was hoped, into due submission to United States law.

Let me say in excuse for what followed that I am of an unusually over-anxious nature, and if in this case it saved us from abject humiliation, if not actual disaster, let that be my excuse.

About nine, after we had had our evening meal, the desire to see that all was right prompted me to leave the sergeants' fire and prowl about the guns, parked round the ammunition tent and at safe distance from sparks. The sentries—four of whom guarded the square of guns—let me through after close scrutiny, though the harvest moon made seeing as easy as in daylight, and I pulled back the flap of canvas and let the light pour in upon the neat, plain boxes containing such fearful possibilities of death and disaster.

The shells, in clamped and sealed cases, formed the ground layer on which rested the tin, air-tight powder-boxes with their sausage-like cartridges inside, and, on top of all, the small boxes containing the firing-tubes reflected the moonlight from their tin sides. Something moved me to handle one of them. It seemed light. I shook it lightly, but there was no resulting rattle. I tried another: the same. A third. "They must be packed differently," I thought. But no, I had handled one identically the same a short while before, at firing practice, and it had *rattled!*

I stood thinking deeply. "A mare's nest!" I exclaimed, laughing to myself. "I am an imaginative ass!"

I left the tent, dropped the flap, and passed the sentries as I walked back to our fire.

The Sergeant-Major, old and grizzled in harness, stood up as I walked into the circle.

"Oh, Jerry," he said, "I want a word with you;" and he came over, linked arms, and pulled me to one side.

This was providential, as it was in him I wished to confide my suspicions. I let him talk over the arrangements for to-morrow, with a detached mind. He saw this.

"What's worrying ye, Jerry?" he asked.

"Joe," I answered, Scotch fashion, "where were the firing-tubes packed, and when were they examined last?"

His face was a study.

"Why, at the fort, Jerry, the night we started, last night as ever was. My own eyes saw them. Why, for the land's sake?"

"Come to the ammunition-tent," I answered, and led the way.

"Let me get my electric lamp first," said the Sergeant-Major, and I waited while he got it.

Again, after passing the sentries and guns, I lifted the flap of the ammunition-tent, and we stood inside. The Sergeant-Major took the top box of firing-tubes, shook it, and with a quick gesture tore open the lid.

"Faked!" he exclaimed, with a face of iron, and turned out a mass of earth and paper with which the box had been filled.

"The others, Jerry!"

Together we examined the remaining five. They were equally treated. We had n't a firing-tube in the camp. *The guns were useless!*

For a full minute we stared at each other. Twice the Sergeant-Major strove to speak, his dry lips working. Then he said, "This means my finish!" He pulled himself up and his voice grew firmer.

"Sergeant Brandt, I leave you in charge of this tent. See that no one enters or leaves it until I return"—he motioned to the revolver at my hip—"not even the Colonel, himself!" and he strode away.

Mechanically I drew my weapon and examined the charges while his footfalls receded. My mind refused to work. Our guns were useless.

Five minutes must have passed in dull waiting before the sentry's challenge shook me together. A murmured response followed, and a few seconds afterwards our major and the Sergeant-Major burst into the little tent.

"What is this, Sergeant Brandt?" the Major, who carried the lamp, asked in a fierce whisper. "What is wrong with the firing-tubes?" I gulped twice before I could answer.

"We have none, sir!" I got out.

Though the Sergeant-Major had told him everything, the truth only now seemed to strike him, for he sank heavily on a box of shells.

"Then, we are ruined, disgraced!" he said in a low voice, and dropped his head on his hand.

For barely a few seconds were we to see our trusted leader so overcome. There was a lightning change. He became himself.

"Have you examined the shells, fuses, and powder? No? Then do so at once! Come, lads!"

For ten minutes we were furiously busy, and at the end of that time had opened and examined every case and tin in the tent. They were in perfect order.

The Major stood up and wiped his hot brow. His tunic was open and his great chest heaving. Then he turned to us and glanced at the watch on his wrist.

"Five minutes to ten," he said, half to himself. "The reserve train was due at Wamo to-night. The convoy won't be here until to-morrow night at the earliest. Too late! Twenty-five miles—fifty miles—call it ten hours—that's eight o'clock to-morrow morning—call it nine. Too much—no horse could stand it. Perhaps——" He stood thinking for a space, then looked sharply at us.

It was a critical inspection. We guessed it, and instinctively drew up to "attention."

The Major's eagle eye ran over the Sergeant-Major's broad, generous figure. His fifty years sat lightly on him, yet the spring and suppleness of youth were gone. Then my turn came. There was a lightning decision.

"Sergeant-Major, turn out all the No. 1's and get each one to examine and overhaul his gun and equipment at once. Let them report anything missing or damaged to you, and you report to me at my tent in fifteen minutes. And remember, both of you, not a word of this to any one."

The Sergeant-Major saluted and withdrew.

"Sergeant Brandt"—the Major's voice had its usual hard ring—"I want you to start in fifteen minutes for Wamo. You will ride my charger, Brutus, as he has only been led to-day. You will be unescorted, and must take every precaution to avoid capture. You will give my order to the quartermaster in charge at Wamo, and will return at once with as many firing-tubes as you can carry. The battery will parade for action to-morrow morning at 9 A.M., and you must be here by then. Is this clear?"

I saluted. "Quite, Major," I answered.

His eyes softened, and he held out his hand.

"For the honor of Battery B!" he said.

"For the honor of Battery B!" I repeated.

Brutus and I were soon good friends. He was a great, ungainly brute, with no points about him, but his flat, shoeless hoofs held the rocky ground with a firm grip, and his huge lungs swelled easily between my knees as he covered mile after mile of the dark road.

We got off the trail, but although we had followed it only once

before, Brutus, when left to himself, was soon back on the right track. Once we were hailed in the darkness, but whether by friend or foe we did not wait to see, nor did we reply when a rifle cracked behind us.

The Wamo outpost hailed and nearly shot us about three A.M., as I discovered when dismounting at the guard tent. Brutus was sweating gently, but held his head high, and seemed in no wise distressed after his twenty-five-mile canter. I stroked his velvet nose and soon had him rubbed down, blanketed, and enjoying a few mouthfuls of fodder after a half-bucket of water.

A train was shunting as I knocked at the quartermaster's door which opened onto the freight yard, and ten impatient minutes elapsed before a lamp flared in the office and a sleepy man in hastily donned uniform tunic was examining my major's order.

"Have you blazed away all your ammunition already, Sergeant?" said the officer humorously. "You must be precious bad shots."

I smiled. "I have n't much time, sir," I said, "as I want to start back at four."

He took some keys from a drawer, and buttoned his tunic as he rose.

"Come, then," he said, taking an electric lamp from the desk. "I won't keep you."

He led the way down a passage in the warehouse and opened two locks in an iron-bound door.

"There are your stores," he said, pointing to a corner, and I gladly piled my arms with six of the well-known firing-tube boxes—this time with unbroken seals and distinctive rattle—and hastened back to the office.

After thanking the sleepy quartermaster, who retired to his bed, I busied myself strapping the boxes onto my saddle, and, after much trouble, succeeded in inducing a sleepy Oriental to make me a bowl of coffee. Warmed and soothed by its influence, I stretched myself on the bench of the waiting-room, and for half an hour lay with muscles relaxed.

Shortly after four I parted with the patrol, who, unmounted, could accompany me only a short distance on my journey, and got Brutus into his long, easy lope. It was getting faintly light now, and in the east the glow preceding sunrise was just visible.

I could easily make out the way, as the gun-wheel marks of the day before were cut into the sandy soil, and, taking advantage of Brutus's surefootedness, I was even able to cut off corners. But it was also easier for enemies to see me.

We had covered nearly twenty miles by seven, but the sun was fully over the horizon, and every rock and tree stood out in bold relief. I had made out the "Indian Hill," as we had called it for want of a better name, and was expecting to see the cavalry patrol I hoped would be

sent out to meet me, when a row of dots appeared against the bright sky on my right.

They were Indians without a doubt, and probably the same that had fired on me on my outward journey. I called on valiant Brutus, and the great beast responded nobly. Loaded as he was, he flew along, the sand and stones rattling behind us. The Indians were now in sight—six of them, mounted on fleet little ponies and riding like the wind on a diagonal course to cut us off.

Another mile was passed. They were drawing nearer. Weight was telling, and the great lungs sobbed between my knees. Half a mile more, and I could make them out clearly—the leader on a cream mustang of great speed. His feathers blew out grandly. The pace was killing—Brutus was nearly “all in.”

It was then that I remembered the Major's parting injunction as he stood at Brutus's head with his hand on his neck.

“He's a true beast, Brandt,” he had said, “and will go until he drops. Don't touch him with the spur, only speak to him, and, whatever you do, don't let him go loose, or he'll leave you like a streak and make for the other horses.”

“*Leave you like a streak. Make for the other horses.*” We were being overhauled. There was a chance.

Hardly giving myself time to reason, to calculate the consequences, I pulled Brutus gently to a standstill, dismounted, and with a chirrup and a smack on the quarter started him on the trail to the camp. For a few seconds he trotted, stirrups swinging, head in air, ears questioning; then his heels went out in a joyous kick, and “like a streak” he galloped down the trail.

A mad impulse to run after him was only checked with a great effort, and, biting my lips to stiffen them, I turned towards my pursuers.

My manœuvre seemed to have startled them, for at half a mile they pulled up in a semicircle and stared at my lonely figure, evidently fearing a trap. Then, with great deliberation, the leader dismounted, rested his rifle on his pony's back, and fired three shots in my direction.

I saw and felt nothing of them, as his weapon was probably sighted at two hundred yards, and backsights are usually an unknown quantity to the Indian mind. This was a signal for a general fusillade.

“If only they'll keep it up,” I thought, “it will bring the troopers in half an hour.”

For a while they kept at it, then, on a signal, mounted and galloped in a circle—of which I was the centre—until they had reached the opposite side. Here another bombardment took place, which I received in silence from behind a boulder.

“They will charge soon,” I thought, and rolled my revolver cylinder between my fingers.

At last they came, full charge, pennons flying, lying low behind their ponies' necks.

"Now for it!" I said, and clenched my teeth.

I saw the ponies' heads, their fierce, white-rimmed eyes, their tossing manes and sharp hoofs, then something—I think a piece of my friendly stone—hit me on the chin, a cloud of sand partly blinded me, and I rose to my knees, swearing hoarsely and firing wildly. A yelling, shooting cloud enveloped me, and I remember nothing more until a vast weight seemed to be pressing the life out of me.

Ages afterwards a distant booming struck upon my dulled senses. The weight was lessening upon my chest, and my eyes opened as a friendly face, very hot, red, and dusty, peered down at me.

"Wake up, son!" said a voice from the face. "It'll take more'n a dead cayuse to finish you off, even though he chose your chest ter lay down on, I'll swear!"

Kindly hands assisted me to rise, and I was soon weakly thanking two sunburned troopers who were feeling me for injuries.

Beyond the wound on the chin, which bled freely and was very painful, and many bruises, I was all right again, and able to recognize in the "cayuse" aforementioned the cream pony of the leader of my late enemies. Of them, with this exception, not a sight remained, but my trooper friends informed me that "the boys" were "rounding them up," and that "Bill" and they were to take me in to camp, if I "was worth takin'."

"Bill" and the horses were found further on, and as we mounted I learned that the battery was falling in as the troop, sent out to inquire the reason of the firing, was leaving camp. Soon to our ears came again the heavy boom of the field guns in action—I had heard the ranging guns when recovering consciousness—this time at regular intervals, so I knew Brutus had got into camp and all was well.

I was too done up to do more than report myself to the officer of the day and drag himself to my tent, where I lay, dead to the world, until noon. With one night in the troop-train, a heavy day afterwards, and a night in the saddle to my credit, I felt I had had enough.

The Sergeant-Major woke me, and his eyes gleamed with a glad light.

"We've shelled them out, Jerry Boy," he said joyously. "Forty-five rounds we fired, thanks to you, and the redskins are flying in all directions, with the troopers at their heels. We took position right on the tick o' nine, and the No. 2's had their pouches full of tubes, as if nothing had happened. I'd like to catch the dirty scoundrel that doctored those boxes. I'd—but what am I sayin'? The Major's mad to see ye and ask how ye came to let Brutus go and how ye got caught an'



all. But I wish I could tell the boys. There's no one knows but the Major and us two, and what d' ye think every one thinks ye went after?"

"What?" I asked.

"*The Major's cigars!*"

It was not until we got back to Fort Longworth that I had a chance to talk it out with the Major, and the few words he said made me very proud and happy.

"When you rise in the Service, Brandt," he said to me before I left him—"and if you stick to it, you will—remember that the honor of your regiment, battery, troop, or company comes first above all. Cultivate that belief in your men, and you will lead them anywhere. Had we failed when our country needed us, even for a day, it would have been forever against us. I have found out who caused the mischief. There is no need to mention names, but he has left the regiment and the Service forever. And now there is one more thing: Brutus is yours, and as long as I live I won't forget how you two saved the honor of Battery B."



## PAINTED ON A FAN

BY ALICE HARTICH

**D**EAR little lady, dressed in colors bright;  
 Always pleasant, always smiling, such a happy sight!  
 Funny little lady, painted on a fan,  
 Little, twisted, bowing lady of Japan!

My, how smooth your hair is rolled, very smooth and neat;  
 Peeping out beneath that skirt, such tiny little feet;  
 Great wide sleeves, and parasol, to shield you if they can—  
 Pretty, modest, quiet little lady of Japan!

Cherry-Blossoms, pink and sweet, dancing in the air;  
 Just one tiny little spray captured in your hair.  
 Purple pale wistaria, climbing up and down  
 Through the graceful flowing folds of my lady's gown.

Would n't an inviting cup of amber, steaming tea  
 Bring you tripping here to sup a little while with me?  
 Tranquil, queer, illusive little lady of Japan,  
 How I wish that you were not just painted on a fan!

# THE TUNING OF HULDAH

By *Amy Crosby*

HULDAH turned uneasily in bed. Again facing the window, she drew the crisp muslin curtain back a little and looked. "Umph!" she sniffed. "I s'pose he's tellin' the whole town; or else makin' the medicine."

For full quarter of an hour she waited. Then, more fretful, she reached her hand toward a small white table, and drew a bowl of ice toward her. With a kind of savage pleasure she crunched the ice loudly, and fixed her narrow gray eyes on the gate.

"I'd like to——" Suddenly her eyes closed, and Huldah pretended to sleep as Henry entered.

He tiptoed across the room to the foot of her bed, where he stood, hat in hand, mopping his brow.

"Huldah," he whispered, resting his big kind eyes upon her, "shan't I open this outside door a little? There's a breeze stirrin'."

"Do you want the flies to eat me up?" she snapped. "What'd the Doctor say?"

Henry draped himself on a chair.

"Don't screw that tidy all up into a little woodge," glowered Huldah. "Set down, if you're goin' to. Where's the medicine?"

"He did n't send any, Huldah. He's comin' up," ventured Henry.

Huldah sniffed. "Two dollars a visit! 'Course he's comin' up. Been here fifteen times now—fer nothin'! I want medicine!" she declared, drawing her lips tight at the corners.

"He says you don't," explained Henry slowly. "He says you want—want tunin'."

"Tunin'! What does he think I am?"

"He says you're a work o' God, Huldah. I guess he'd like you to go some place, and get——"

"He come from Noo York," broke in Huldah. "All they think about down there is *goin'* some place. Did you tell him 'bout this heat in my head?"

"He says it's your nerves," informed Henry quietly.

"That means it's nothin'! Dr. Boynton never harped on nerves, nor this here roof-sleepin'. Long as he lived here, I had somethin' to take. I ain't goin' to swaller *air*, nor suck eggs; and I ain't goin' to have my flesh tore off by no Swede. When he goes to doctorin' me with

medicine, I'll pay his bill; but I ain't pokin' money into no rat-holes. Bring me some o' that tansy tea. Don't be a week about it, Henry! I took tansy fer tonic when I was sixteen, an' I'm goin' to take it now, whatever he says. Don't leave your hat on that table. Hang it on the kitchen peg."

Just then Dr. Bliss drove his little white car in at the side gate. Throwing his gray linen coat over a porch chair, he darted into the kitchen, held his dusty hands under the shiny spigot, dried them on the fresh roller-towel, and followed Henry into the bedroom.

"Mrs. Dodge," he began jovially, flinging wide the shutters and the outside door, "a little light will show you how earnest I am when I ask you a favor. First, how motherly do you feel?"

"What are you talkin' about?" she asked doggedly.

"About mothers," he answered, smiling.

"Well, I ain't never been a mother to nothin' but chickens an' orphan cats. What did you mean when you told Henry that I needed tunin'? Did you mean tonin' or tannin'?"

"Neither, Mrs. Dodge. I meant tuning. It's exactly what I want to talk about. Women are like pianos—not always up to pitch, and you have to look into the case to correct the works. Trouble begins with the strings, usually. The tone's wrong. Bring up the loose ones, and let down the tight ones—ever so little—and there's harmony again. Nature's plan was harmony."

Huldah looked at him without moving, and the Doctor, resting his steady blue eyes on her skimpy face, leaned forward a little and continued:

"Now, what makes strings wrong? Sometimes they've been used too much, sometimes too little. Love notes, instead of being soft and mellow, sharpen or flat. And they remain so until some heart-work reaches them, restores and tunes them. The result is harmony. May I tell you a story?" he asked suddenly, drawing his chair a shade nearer.

Huldah nodded half-heartedly, and the Doctor began:

"Two years ago"—jerking his thumb toward the stable—"I came around that corner one morning and saw a frail little woman bending over the brook. She looked worried, so I stopped my car and walked toward her. The water was above her shoe-tops, but she waded out to a helpless little chicken, standing on a rock, peeping its heart out. It had followed a brood of ducks, and was very young. The woman told me it had hatched out by mistake under a duck-mother—that it needed a natural one. Then she put its little wet feet against her warm breast. 'I'll bring it up by hand,' she said, and went away briskly into the house."

"It's a hen now," attested Huldah proudly. "The best layer I've got."

"Paid, did n't it?" said the Doctor seriously. "Hand work always pays, Mrs. Dodge. That's what I want to talk to you about. I know a little girl in New York, and she's in deep water, too. She's with the wrong brood! I'm worried about her, Mrs. Dodge, and I'd like to get her up here in the country, away from those who are trying to swim. I think if she had a chance she'd—well, she'd like simple things. I want you to take her here to board. Will you do it?"

"Why, I ain't able to——"

"She'll help. She has n't money enough to pay much, but she's a kind of a—well, a niece, a foster-niece, of mine; so we'll jump accounts, you and I. She's nice to be with, too. You'll like her, and you can help her."

The Doctor stood. He looked very big, very masterful, as, stepping to the bed, he laid his strong fingers over Huldah's.

"That's all the medicine I shall prescribe, Mrs. Dodge," he said quietly. "Let me know in the morning, early, so I can run down in the car and bring her out."

A deep silence followed the closing of the door, broken only by the rasping notes of an early locust. Henry was no talker, so Huldah lay some time watching the car as it sped away down the narrow road, where tall elms formed an arch and a border. Still looking into space, she said slowly, more to herself than to Henry:

"It'll save pullin' that money out o' the bank—and I ain't obliged to keep a boarder after the bill's paid. . . . Henry!" she called abruptly. "Put a piece of ice into that tansy, and bring it along. Tell Sophie I'll need her the rest of the week. Don't set so logy, Henry. Go tell her 'fore she gets away."

"Why, Huldah," Henry exclaimed, "I did n't s'pose you'd like his prescription!"

"You ain't expected to *like* medicine, are you?" she snapped. "Ain't expected to take it forever, either. This cost o' livin' 's got to be met, ain't it? You an' me has both got to be laid out yet, an' buried. Who's goin' to save fer it?"

"Don't worry so about the cost o' things, Huldah," urged Henry. "We ain't begun to spend our interest money. Why, you kin——"

"I kin do my own figurin', Henry Dodge, an' I'm figurin' on gittin' well if you bring that tansy in here so's I kin drink it. You kin go across there now to the grocery an' telephone Bliss that I'll take his—his lady friend to-morrow evenin'."

Sleep came late to Huldah. Her tepid regard for affairs—not her own—bickered with a feminine suspicion of romance. "Foster-niece" was a vague term; "deep water," another; but the portion of board to be settled in cash was a matter of vital importance. Five dollars a week? But five dollars could be taken from thirty dollars just six

times, and Huldah had no intention of spending six weeks with a total stranger. Sophie was a good cook; she would keep her. With no work to do, and the prices of food still soaring, this girl should be willing to pay——

Huldah went to sleep thinking about it.

The great red sun had dropped out of the west next day when Dr. Bliss reappeared at the side of the bed, leading a brown-eyed, linen-coated girl by the hand. She looked scarcely twenty. The doctor raised the shade quietly, and said in a cheerful voice:

"Mrs. Dodge, this is Nina Boyd. She's got a nurse's cap and apron in this little straw grip, and she wants to be useful."

Huldah turned pale. For a moment her chin dropped. She felt angry, happy, and awed, all at once. "Nurse!" she exclaimed frigidly. "I thought she was to be a boarder."

The merriest kind of laugh followed. "I am," declared Nina. "But I know all about boarding, Mrs. Dodge. The Doctor's going to teach me to nurse."

Whereupon, with quiet speed, unaffected by Huldah's surprise, she pulled two dazzling hat-pins from a small brown toque, slipped off her coat, and knelt beside her grip. In the fraction of a second, she had unwrapped a flat package, and, still pinning a fresh white cap to her brown curls, turned a pink face towards Huldah.

"You see," she explained, smiling feebly, "it's two years since I nursed Mother; but I remember perfectly all the things she loved. You'll teach me about yours, won't you?"

Huldah frowned.

"Dr. Bliss," she stammered, "we've—we've got a room ready for a boarder. I was n't lookin' fer no nurse."

"So far as pay is concerned, Miss Boyd is a boarder," explained the Doctor. "She'll pay whatever you think is fair, Mrs. Dodge. Meantime, she's going to help me. The town needs a district nurse, and Miss Boyd wants to try. The benefit is mutual. We'll each have a share. I, however, will take all the risk of her inexperience, so when you're tired of the plan, tell me."

The Doctor left the room as quietly as he had come, and Huldah settled back among her pillows, exhausted. She lay there without comment, her eyes closed, until, after fruitless attempts at conversation, Miss Boyd went upstairs.

"Henry," Huldah asked, as he locked the street door, "is this nurse idea your'n?"

"All I know about it, Huldah, is what I just heard. Seems like a first-class notion for the town, though. There's considerable sickness. She's a pretty little thing, but young for the business. Folks'll kick," prophesied Henry.

"Kick!" exclaimed Huldah. "Then the Doctor'll hobble 'em! But I ain't so sure I like his way o' startin' and finishin' a thing in the same breath. I've run my house now for forty years, an' I'm goin' to continue! When I agreed to take a boarder, I did n't bargain on startin' a dispensary. I'm madder'n a March hare; but I would n't turn nobody outdoors just at nightfall. You go tell Sophie the second-best chiny in the mornin' is good enough. An' stand still, Henry! You act like a hoppergrass!"

The night and most of the day passed before Huldah would consent to interview Miss Boyd. Then it was with a feeling of uncertainty.

Nina opened the door gently, walked as far as the fireplace, and stopped. When six Jacqueminot roses had taken the place of a bunch of dried pampas-grass on the high shelf, Huldah's viewpoint wavered, and because at that moment Nina's fingers stealthily brushed a tear from her own round cheek, Huldah's viewpoint tottered.

"What's the matter?" she asked quickly, but gently.

"I don't know," swallowed the girl. "Things are so fresh and bright and clean out here. It's all so quiet and so sweet. We used to have roses like that growing by our kitchen door," she added, then stopped.

"And now?" questioned Huldah, narrowing her eyes a little.

"Every time I see any, my throat hurts. The other night——" Nina stopped again, and moved a cameo ring back and forth upon her slender finger.

"What about the other night?" questioned Huldah.

"It was the smell, I think," she explained. "You see, I used to put them on the breakfast-table, and if I picked them early, before the dew was off, they'd smell twice as sweet." Nina waited a long moment. "You see," she continued, "the other night at the theatre some one handed me a bunch just as I left the dressing-room. I broke. That's the way I got acquainted with the Doctor."

"Got acquainted with the Doctor!" exclaimed Huldah. "Ain't he an uncle of yours?" she asked quickly.

"No. He says I'm to call him Uncle Dudley, but I never saw him until four nights ago."

"Four nights ago!" cried Huldah sharply. "What was you doin' at the theatre?"

"Singing. They offered me more on the stage than I got at the café. The manager down at the café said I must wear better clothes—a train and low neck; but I did n't have any. Why, Mrs. Dodge, when I had paid my board, my room rent, piano rent, and car-fares, I did n't have enough left to buy a newspaper. Morse, the manager, spoke to me three times. Then he told me I must get the clothes somehow, or leave. What could I do?"

"The next day I got a place in a—well, a kind of music hall, where the manager promised to pay me eighteen a week and furnish the clothes. I did n't like the idea much. But when you've got to do a thing, you've got to, that's all."

Huldah sprang up in bed.

"Did Dr. Bliss bring you up here from one of them music halls?" she demanded sharply.

"The first night I was there," Nina explained, "he sat in the front row. I did n't feel up to it when I started to sing, but I knew I must n't flunk the very first night. I made a few flat notes, caught myself, found the piano again, and went on. Then, all of a sudden, everything began to swim. That was the last I knew.

"It seems, when they called a doctor, he came. He took me to a hospital. Then he said I must n't sing there any more. You see, I was all out of money—out of everything. Yesterday he brought me out here, because by nursing in the district, helping him, he says I can pick up strength and money enough to pay my board. He said you'd let me begin on you. But——"

"Bring in some o' that soup, Miss Boyd. I ain't et nothin' since yesterday," confided Huldah. "Then I'm goin' to get up. Pull this chair onto the stoop, an' I'll set out a spell."

Nina obeyed promptly.

"Did you say," Huldah asked a couple of hours later, as Nina thoughtfully supplied a hassock, "that he planned to take you to some case in the village?"

"Yes. Five dollars a week for a few hours each day. The mother has twins."

"Twins! I did n't know as there was any of them around," exclaimed Huldah.

"They're new; and a trained nurse steadily is too expensive. I love babies; don't you?"

"No, not much. You'll be down there prob'ly the very times I want you," opined Huldah.

"I'm to serve you first. He says the baby case is very interesting. He says——"

"Umph! He says a lot. I s'pose my case ain't interestin'."

"Oh, yes; he says your heart is bigger than your soul," quoted Nina.

"What'd he mean by that?"

"I don't know, but he said I'd find out if I lived here."

"Miss Boyd——" began Huldah confidentially.

"Do you mind calling me Nina? It makes it seem more like home," explained the girl warmly.

"That man Bliss," continued Huldah, "is the queerest doctor that ever set foot into a sick-room. He's got a way o' turnin' things wrong

side out so's they look fresher 'n new. New-fangled idee this—not givin' medicine. Did they give your mother medicine?"

"Yes, lots of it. She died."

"I ain't felt like dyin'," admitted Huldah simply. "I feel considerable like livin'. But when I ask fer things I want 'em. That's no disease," she added thoughtfully.

Two weeks passed, and with them many signs of Huldah's spleen. Her morbid anxiety about cobwebs and dirt gave place to a modified interest in Nina's new work, but the hours Huldah shared with the unknown twins seemed seriously to upset her. Besides, half Henry's time was now spent carrying and fetching for Nina. Huldah had lived a unit too long to become a proper fraction.

Sitting out one day under a low apple-tree, she hulled one great strawberry after another, feeling a dull sense of loss. Then there was a touch of rebellion. Why should Dr. Bliss choose her illness to promote his own schemes? What right had Nina to appropriate Henry? She was nothing to them, yet Henry seemed to feel that only the best carriage was good enough for Nina to ride in. Huldah's resentment grew. It had become almost a prejudice when a clicking gate disconcerted her. Raising her eyes suddenly, she met those of a loudly dressed stranger, who approached with something like a swagger and raised a silk hat.

"Mrs. Dodge," he said, "I'm looking for a young girl, and the loose end of a contract."

Five more berries were separated from their hulls and tossed into the glass dish before Huldah replied.

"What kind of a contract?" she asked.

"Business contract; money for music; promise for promise. I'm a man of a few words," he added, shifting his big cigar to the opposite corner of his mouth. "*She* made a hit at my 'Little Moonbeam.' I've got the dough, an' I'm no tight-wad where good looks is concerned." With a significant wink, he reached his hand deep into his trousers pocket. "What does she want?" he asked pompously.

"To be let alone," was Huldah's terse reply. "The end o' that contract ain't loose. I've got it."

"Then, you're why she skids? What's your price?"

"More'n your whole music hall's worth!"

The stranger raised his brows, pursed his lips, and wagged his head slowly. "Where's the girl?" he asked, taking his cigar out of his mouth and contemplating its lighted end.

"With her step-father, and he's more particular'n I be. You'll find a path right back o' that maple. It's a shorter cut to the station than you come, an' you ain't so apt to meet the bulldog."

The stranger faltered, but there was no sign of mirth in Huldah's eyes.



"I understood," he said slowly, "that Nina needed money—that she did n't have any father."

"You understood right," Huldah explained. "Her—her step-father an' me ain't always understood her needs; but she's back here now, an' she ain't lookin' fer work. So you need n't miss no trains palaverin'."

With a dish full of berries in one hand, and a basin of hulls in the other, Huldah rose, crossed the porch, and opened the screen door with her foot, evidently considering the incident closed.

"What was he, Miss Dodge?" asked Sophie, from the far end of the kitchen. "Another one of them land prospectors?"

"No. He's sellin' gold bricks made in his own brass foundry. He says Noo York's took 'em up, an' you can't tell 'em from the genu-*ins*. I bought one with a rubber end, Sophie. When you get that ham fried you kin examine it. The less you talk about it, the more it'll bring. That's part of your job."

Several days later Huldah sent for Dr. Bliss, met him at the side gate, and motioned him to a red seat under the maple.

"Set down," she said. "I only want to say that I ain't pleased with payin' Nina to nurse the whole earth."

"But, my dear woman," explained the Doctor, "Nina is to pay you. We have n't discussed terms, but at the end of the month——"

"At the end of the month I want this skitterin' stopped," declared Huldah. "The place for that girl is here. Get some husky nurse for them twins."

"That is n't altogether the point, Mrs. Dodge. In exchange for Nina's work, they offer their piano a couple of hours each day."

"I've been thinkin' about a piano fer Henry's birthday. An' I'd like to git you to pick it out," she added thoughtfully.

The Doctor hesitated. "A piano in the house alters the atmosphere," he reasoned slowly. "Nina Boyd might change character—become noisy, negligent, and selfish. The Smiths all practise. They're used to it. Even the twins are musical," he added, smiling.

"You can't run the whole thing," snapped Huldah, with old-time vim.

The Doctor ran his calm fingers back and forth over his chin. "Your choosing it is a different matter," he said deliberately. "I could run you over to Hicksburg in a couple of hours—that is, if you really want to get a piano. To-day is the last time I have free for over a fortnight. The birthday's to-morrow, is n't it?"

Never in Huldah's life had she entered an automobile. She had never been to Hicksburg. She had spent her whole life keeping house—*out loud*.

She waited a moment, then, after a stealthy glance at Henry's straw hat bobbing up and down in the garden, she made a rapid move toward the waiting car.

They had sped along some time, through a fragrant wood, up a steep and sandy pitch where a ragged bridge suddenly lowered the speed.

"Go slow a spell, can't you?" urged Huldah.

The car practically stopped.

"The truth of the matter is," confided Huldah, "I can't spare Nina! Her singin' fer Henry last night made me—well, it made my spine kinda shiver." Huldah became thoughtful. "I don't know as I've done right by Henry. He *is* gittin' old," she said slowly.

There was no reply.

"And so far as money's concerned," she continued, "I ain't felt so flush for sixteen years. I ruther pay some husky woman to wash up them twins regular than have Nina away so much."

"That's one side of it," ventured the Doctor, "but the main thing is this: Nina Boyd's talent deserves cultivation, and she's got to earn every penny she spends."

"No, she ain't," defended Huldah. "Me and Henry ain't so poor as we are lonesome. And Nina's put somethin' into me that I ain't ready to lose. When we had the farm, I could watch things grow, and I—well, I ain't felt so well since we sold it."

"She'd grow," declared the Doctor warmly, "if she had the cultivation and some one like you, Mrs. Dodge, to shelter her a little."

At this point Huldah's hand gripped the seat, for, after a quick dash, they took Piano Factory Hill on high gear, and swung around the turn to a broad factory door rolling slowly back to receive them.

Slightly awed by the hum of work, the bustling men, and the somewhat unctuous salesman, Huldah sidled closer to the Doctor.

"We've got the room," she whispered, after a quick inspection, "to house one o' them baby-grands. And I like 'em. There's another thing," she added dogmatically: "I want to see it all loaded up and started on that there auto-truck before we pull out ourselves."

It was late at night, and, though the lights were dim, Huldah's pale cheeks looked unnaturally pink as she sat there tapping one foot in time to the music. Beside her on the black hair-cloth sofa sat Henry, his pudgy red hand moving slyly toward hers.

The room grew still a moment. Then the quick, sprightly strain halted. Dr. Bliss struck a few deeper, major chords, and instinctively Nina's clear, sympathetic voice found and cradled the notes of Brahms' German lullaby. Their voices joined, and gradually softened, merging into one, like the deep notes of a cello. On and on they sang with no trace of discord—in sympathy and in love with life.

Huldah's thin hand clasped Henry's.

"Henry," she said softly, "seem's if I know now what he meant by *tunin'*."

# UNWRITTEN LAW

*By Elizabeth Winter*

“LADIES”—Mrs. Julius Thornton, President of the Dalton Woman’s Literary Club, had rapped on the table, and there was immediate, reverent silence—“ladies, before we take up our regular programme, I wish to call attention to this magazine article. The writer is new to me, but she so evidently appreciates both the difficulties and the possibilities that lie before the rural woman who is reaching out for a broader and higher culture, that I feel we can do no better than to get her point of view.”

She paused for breath, and the semicircle of faces beamed with interest.

“It will please me greatly to have the magazine passed about among you, and at our next meeting we will have a discussion—an earnest, intelligent one, let us hope.”

The President looked solemnly from face to face, beginning on her left and ending with the last one on her right; and each head, in turn, had responded with a gracious inclination. That is, all except Mrs. Bertram Lloyd’s. Hers was tossed to one side, and her eyes were rolled up to the ceiling. But she said nothing, which was as near an assent as could be expected, and Mrs. Julius Thornton had a perfect right to feel that her seed had fallen into good ground.

“And now we must get to work,” she resumed, in brisk, business-like tones. “Whom will you have, ladies, to fill our dear Mrs. Gorman’s place? Remember we have only *one* vacancy.”

The ladies looked at one another with serious, questioning eyes. Whom *could* they choose? Truly this club work brought great responsibilities! At last Mrs. Willet, over near the door, cleared her throat and ventured timidly:

“I nominate Mrs. Jim Thornton.”

Silence.

“Is there a second to that nomination?”

The ladies searched their President’s face, there was a distinct rustle, then—silence.

Two pink spots had come into Mrs. Willet’s cheeks.

“Ladies, I deplore the awkwardness of the situation,” Mrs. Thornton said suavely. “Nothing like it has occurred in the history of our organ-

ization. Of course, *all* of us would like to bring our special friends into this exclusive circle. As for myself, it is not necessary to say that I am very, very fond of my sister-in-law, Nannie Thornton; but"—she raised her eyes bravely—"like a great many other really good women, she is bound by her limitations. Forced to live in the country until last year, tied down with her little children and household cares, how could she be expected to find time for self-culture, for the expansion of mind and soul!"

"But she reads a great deal, and——"

"As for that, so does the colored lady in my kitchen," flashed Mrs. Bertram Lloyd, rolling her eyes to the ceiling above Mrs. Willet's head. "I said to Bertram when I started down here—'Bertram,' I said, 'I intend to express myself quite frankly at the meeting.' Unwritten laws never did scare me." She brought her eyes down, flaunted them at the others, pursed her lips to one side, and shrugged.

Mrs. Thornton hastily interposed:

"My friends, that the Club would be a great help and pleasure to Mrs. Jim Thornton, we do not question for one moment; but—we—must—have—*students*—in the Woman's—Literary—Club. We need wide-awake women with a broad view of life, and a real interest in the vital—issues—of—our—times!"

"But she *does* know, and she is a good worker when——"

"So is my cook a good worker—when!"

The ladies laughed and felt relieved; then turned again toward their President. Would she be equal to this crisis?

She would.

"Time passes, my friends, and we must settle this question. Mrs. Willet's nomination has not been seconded. Are there any others?"

"I nominate Mrs. De Long, our new rector's wife," said Mrs. Lloyd. "I told Bertram just this afternoon that I thought she ought to belong. She has a great long string of D.D.'s in her family, and ought to know all about French history and Napoleon Bonaparte. Don't you think so?"

"Why, she is a perfect stranger! How could we possibly know——"

The President heard a whisper at her elbow—"What is the matter with Mrs. Willet?"—and again measured up to the responsibility of leadership.

"I feel, ladies, that Mrs. Lloyd is right. It is far wiser to risk a—a pleasing probability than to accept a—a—positive—a——"

"I second Mrs. Lloyd's nomination!" blurted Mrs. Abbott; and no wonder, for Mrs. Lloyd had brought sudden pressure to bear on her tenderest toe. Mrs. Willet had seen it.

The election was declared unanimous, nobody noticing Mrs. Willet's silence. But she arose, the spots in her cheeks flaming crimson.

"Madam President, may I be excused for five minutes?"

A shade of apprehension crossed Mrs. Julius Thornton's face.

"I'll be right back," Mrs. Willet added gently.

"Why, certainly, certainly. We will wait for your return, Mrs. Willet."

A sigh of mingled relief and wonder passed, like a wave, around the room when the door closed.

"Shall we wait, ladies? Very well—yes, I *do* think it is due Mrs. Willet. And, ladies, I will use the opportunity to say that we must be very considerate and—patient; for no one tries harder than Mrs. Willet to do her part of the work, and you know, too, that there is not a house in town quite so suitable for our Christmas reception as hers."

The President looked at her watch, fluttered the leaves of the magazine, looked at her watch again, and frowned slightly as Mrs. Willet, pale and out of breath, came inside the door, and remained standing.

She had been gone six minutes!

"I just ran down the street to the nearest telephone and called up Nannie Thornton," she said in a timid, deprecating voice. "I asked her—she said I might tell you—*she* wrote that in the magazine!"

Her eyes faltered upward as high as the President's hands that held the book, just as Mrs. Bertram Lloyd's rolled down from the ceiling, and rested, fascinated, on the same spot.

"She did n't want it known about her articles and her—books, but I begged her—I thought you'd like to know."

Her eyes dropped again to her own hands, clasped tightly around a shopping-bag, and her voice almost failed her:

"If you should wish to have Mrs. Thornton—Mrs. Jim Thornton—in the Club, she can have—my place. I cannot—I am not going to be—any longer. I'm too busy——"

At last the President found her voice.

"My *dear* Mrs. Willet, we cannot for a moment consider your resignation! We will *create* a place for Mrs. James McClure Thornton in the Dalton Woman's Literary Club! To think of dear sister Nannie doing all those wonderful things, the quiet minx! Of course we could not know—how could we? But now everything is all right, and she must come right in! Going? And you will not reconsider? *So* sorry, every one of us is—but, ladies, let's dispense with the programme, and go down in a body to welcome Mrs. Thornton into our Club! Mrs. Willet, we should be glad to have you join us."

The ladies were on their feet in an instant.

Mrs. Willet had waited, holding to the door-knob, and the red spots had come back into her cheeks.

"Oh, I had forgotten! I told Nannie you *might* elect her, and she said, if you did, to thank you, and say she was sorry, but she did n't have time."

# POOR ART'S SAKE

*By Carl H. Grabo*

“WE’LL make it four thousand for the twelve,” said the Art Editor. “You ought to get five; but as you are new to the business, I’ll save the magazine the difference.”

“Of course,” assented the artist amiably. “I’ll stick you later, when you’re obliged to have my work.”

“That’s business,” agreed the Art Editor. “Understand, these covers are business, too. None of your artistic foolishness. We want something that’s conventional in a new way. Get that? Create a type—the Jenkins Girl. Every department-store must have pictures of the Jenkins Girl: pictures framed in burnt wood, embroidered on sofa cushions, and stamped on leather. That is Art.”

“Nice prospect, Art,” said Jenkins.

“They all kick up a bit at first,” the Art Editor agreed soothingly; “but they don’t mind after a little. It has its compensations, you know. If you are careful, you can marry rich, move in the best circles, join the most exclusive clubs, and, in short, be a Success. You will not cease to work hard, for you will always be afraid that your wife will reproach you because she supports you.”

The editor enjoyed his own conversation, and he had, besides, little to do. Observing premonitory symptoms of departure, he offered Jenkins a cigar. The artist twirled it in his fingers abstractedly.

“I’m afraid I can’t comply with your ideas of fashionable marriage,” he said. “Besides, when I’ve put by enough money, I’m going to discontinue this prostitution of art and take up portrait-painting. I want to study in Paris for a couple of years.”

“Oh, well,” said the Art Editor compassionately, “if you’re going to talk that way, why, go on and enjoy yourself. Renounce this material world and live only in the joy of creation—is that the idea? I said twenty-five hundred for the covers, did n’t I?”

“Oh, I have n’t reached the point where I can’t see the difference between a quarter and a half-dollar. Just satisfy my curiosity upon one point, and the artistic conscience will have kicked its last. Why, in doing the altogether for a magazine cover—say, a spring piece, or the ‘Spirit of the Woods,’ or some such original fantasy—why, I say, should the unadorned figure be plump and solid, whereas, if clothed,

she must be made svelte, diaphanous, and slinky? I have studied anatomy, you know, and I have always in mind the figure beneath the clothes in which it is sheathed."

"Your talk is piffle," said the Art Editor. "But I'm sorry you have studied anatomy. It restrains invention. If you will look over our leading illustrators, you will note that none of them have any knowledge of anatomy. Your reference to clothes is, however, important. You must realize, of course, how vital it is that you be not only up-to-date, but a little ahead of the styles. It is well to walk the Avenue a bit, but the best way of all is to study the latest imported shows. You will find that our leading actresses have a great function in the dissemination of new styles."

"I heed your words of wisdom. Any particular one you recommend?"

"Lipski tells me that the costumes for his prima donna cost him fifteen thousand. Better strike him for a pass. Just mention me."

"And who is the prima donna?"

"The delicious French comedienne, Yvette Crevecœur, no less, fresh from Iowa *via* Paris."

"I'm from Iowa myself," said Jenkins. "I'll drop in and see her. Iowa may thus furnish an Easter design for New York."

Lipski, manager of "The Prancing Princess" show, pink, blasé, and with the stripes running up and down, granted Jenkins a pass with scarcely an evidence of life.

"Great little chorus," he piped wearily through rolls of fat.

The hussar girlies of "The Prancing Princess" gamboled frivolously, clad in cobweb hosiery and the minimum of supplementary garments; the comedian gesticulated his silent encore; and Yvette Crevecœur, the *Prancing Princess* herself, attired successively in a riding-habit, a bathing-suit, a street dress, an evening gown, and coronation robes, sang songs variously inconsequential.

Jenkins was bored to death and looked about for a means of escape over or under the five large ladies between him and the aisle. Thereupon the *Princess* danced down-stage and sang the chorus of her song directly at him.

"Great Cedar Rapids!" said he under his breath. "It was the auburn hair that fooled me."

He called an usher to carry in his card.

She was having her hair revamped, and the maid hovered over her with deft fingers. But she extended a hand and smiled at him from beneath the curling-iron.

"It's your own hair, too," he said, aggrieved, "and such a color! No wonder I did n't recognize you."

"Art demands its sacrifices," she answered lightly, but he thought that she was a bit hurt.

"Why did n't you tell me, Mollie, that you were in this?" he reproached her. "I supposed you were still in Paris."

"How's the art, Will?" she evaded. "You must be prosperous if you can afford front row seats for such a rotten show."

"Oh, I got in on a pass—Lipski."

"I was afraid you were making money," she said, relieved.

"And why should n't I do that?"

"It would spoil your work, of course," she answered.

"You think so?" he asked and looked at her quizzically. "And you in this show?"

"I was n't going to let you know of this until later," she replied. "Then I saw you were about to leave, and I could n't resist throwing myself at you. I get so lonesome sometimes and long so to see a friend. That's why I signalled you. It was no especial compliment, you see."

The maid dusted her with talcum powder. Jenkins, out of habit, let his eyes wander over the objects of the room—the trunks, the forms with the costly dresses hung upon them, the bare walls and floor, the gas-jet in which the maid heated the curling-iron, and finally back to the dressing-table with its accessories of silver and cut glass, each a sculptor's tool for the modelling of beauty.

"Why are you doing it, Mollie? For the money?" he asked.

She shot a quick, apprehensive glance at him. But he was abstractedly noting the details of a dress.

"Oh, it's the easiest way to the legitimate," she said carelessly. "Then, too, it gives me training of a sort. And, best of all, it gives me money which will be of use. I make lots of money," she added, and tentatively, "more than I know what to do with."

The suggestion was lost upon him.

"I thought Shakespeare and Ibsen were the only boys for you," he said.

"They'll keep," she answered gaily. "A little more rouge, Marie. Now you may go."

He shook his head, frowning.

"You and I were to put Cedar Rapids on the map, remember. You the great actress, I the great portrait-painter. Now look at us!"

She stole a troubled glance at him.

"You will be the painter, I'm confident of that, whether I'm the actress or just a Prancing Princess."

"You think so?" he demanded again, sharply.

"One of us must make good, of course," she replied. "It's for the glory of Cedar Rapids and for each other. I'll feel I have a share in your success. And that is why I want you to let me——"



"Suppose I should go in for the commercial art myself?" he interposed, unheeding her words.

"But you won't," she said, and laid her hand upon his. "I have faith in you, Will, more than in myself."

He covered her hand in his and then let it drop.

"I might do it, just the same," he said. "Don't be too sure."

"I'm not afraid," she answered, smiling, but she studied him narrowly nevertheless.

He was not looking at her.

"Do you remember what we gave up for this life of art?" he asked.

"Yes—no—I guess so," she answered uneasily, for she saw there was no stopping him. She nervously snapped the cover of a jewel-box. Slyly she abstracted a pink slip of paper with a serrated edge. She unfolded it, read it, folded it again, and held it concealed in the palm of her hand. She snapped the cover of the box again and set it upon the dressing-table. Then she awakened to him. He was soliloquizing:

"I might create a type—the Jenkins Girl: Jenkins Girl walking down Fifth Avenue; Jenkins Girl at the altar; Jenkins Girl pouring tea; Jenkins Girl with arms about the neck of Jenkins young man. These works of art would appear on magazine covers and sofa-pillows. The bed-room of every sweet slip of a sixteen-year-old girl would contain one."

"No, not that," she said confidently.

"And we gave up for this," he went on, undeterred, "the art of Iowa. I might be painting cornfields and pumpkins for exhibition at the State and county fairs. And perhaps the Representative from my district would insist upon the purchase by the State of one of my masterpieces to hang in the capitol building. You would give dramatic readings at the church socials, and all the good people would shake their heads uneasily, but never fail to come and applaud."

"I should give scenes from Shakespeare," she said, smiling, "but I fear they would never stand for Ibsen."

"And we would have a pretty place with a large garden and trees and big verandas. And we should have children to bring up, perhaps. I think of them sometimes when I'm blue."

"Don't, Will," she said, and laid her hand over her eyes.

"I'm talking this way to work on your feelings." He laughed uncertainly. "Mollie," he said, "I want you now more than then. I can make a living for us both at my work. And though it may not be portrait-painting, I'd rather do it with you than be Rembrandt without you. I mean it. It's not a matter of sudden impulse, but deliberate. Maybe the better work would come later. And if not, no matter."

"It's good of you," she said, and turned to him that he might see the tears in her eyes. "But we've given up too many years now to go

back. We must keep on. Don't you see we could never forgive ourselves for the wasted years? Besides," she added, noting that he was unconvinced, "I can't give up this life now; it has grown upon me; I must have the notoriety and the lights and the music and all the things Cedar Rapids could never give me. It's true," she said in answer to his pained look. "And most of all I've set my heart on your success. I could never forgive myself if I should keep you from becoming all you should and will become."

She came over to him and, kneeling beside him, put her arms about him.

"I want you to promise me something," she commanded gently. "Promise?"

"I'd do 'most anything for you, Mollie," he said.

"It is this: I wish you to take some of my money for the years in Paris. Don't draw away. Promise me you will. The money comes so easily, means so little to me! And you would do so much with it. I should feel that all your success was mine, too, and that would make me glad. You would not begrudge me that happiness, Will? You care enough for me not to mind my having a part?"

He endeavored gently to release himself.

"Promise to take the money," she insisted, and, placing her hands on either cheek, she forced him to look at her.

"You won't?" she asked. "You won't do that for me?"

"I could n't do it, Mollie. I love you for it, but I could n't. Besides, there's no necessity."

"Why can't you?" she insisted.

"I should n't feel right doing it," he answered. "I'll get along all right. I can earn enough to make my way. And the credit will be yours just as truly as though you sent me a weekly allowance. I'm afraid I could n't take your money unless you let me marry you. Then, of course, it would be all right. Many of our best citizens live on their wives' money."

"I could n't go so far as that," she said, trying to laugh at his irony.

He kissed her gently.

"Will you do something for me?" he asked. "Something better for you perhaps than to marry me?"

"Why should I," she flashed, "when you will do nothing for me?"

"It is that you give up this sort of thing." He nodded his head to indicate the surroundings as a whole. "Go into the legitimate, Mollie. Save your money for the hard times you'll find there. Remember, I've my ideal of you. And I don't like to see you in this. So give it up for my sake."

She stood apart from him and her lips trembled, though she seemed to laugh through her tears.

"Would you have me do all that for your sake?" she asked in a queer voice.

"If it is n't too much to ask," he answered humbly.

She choked and replied between a laugh and a sob, "Then I'll do it—for your sake. You see, yours will be the credit when I'm playing *Lady Macbeth* to stupendous audiences."

"And yours," he said gravely, "when I paint the portraits of our leading citizens. Do you think we'll find compensation in the doing, Mollie?"

"We must n't ever think of that again," she said firmly. "Now go. Write me sometimes."

When he had kissed her good-by and gone away she dropped her head amid the toilet silver and cried quietly. Lipski found her thus when he came to discover the cause for the delay of the final act.

"It's a nervous breakdown," she said, and dried her eyes calmly. "I must quit. I can't stand it any longer."

"But the dresses!" he cried in consternation.

"You can have them refitted for Miss Dutton," she answered indifferently, and tore to bits the pink slip of paper somewhat blistered with tears.

"Eighteen thousand a week, contract, salary, trouble for me, all nothing!" said Lipski and spread his hands hopelessly. "Only a fool would be in the theatrical business and have dealing with these actresses. When can you take your part again?"

"When I recover," said she, "I shall go into the legitimate as an understudy to Mrs. Clarke in Shakespearean roles."

"Then, why did you give me all this trouble and expense, if you had such crazy notions as that? Why did n't you try to act Shakespeare before, if you think you can?"

"I thought I needed the money," she said, "and now I find I don't."

"You are crazy, girl," said Lipski, with utter conviction.

The Art Editor had much the same opinion to express of Jenkins.



# SHORT-STORY MASTERPIECES

SECOND SERIES—RUSSIAN

## IV. COMRADES

*By Maxim Gorky*

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY JOHN COUNOS, AND WITH  
INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR



### GORKY, THE BITTER

SOME day we shall be indebted to the clear-visioned critic who will expound for us the true place of the unpleasant, the terrible, even the horrible, in fiction; and the study would not be complete without a thorough-going examination of Russian literature generally, and the writings of Maxim Gorky in particular.

Such an inquiry—which I must only touch upon—would doubtless focus upon two factors of importance: the one a primary cause—the nature of the author as conditioned by self, environment and nationality; the other a secondary cause—the ultimate purposes of fiction. Phrased differently, we have the two elements: what an author writes because he is what and where he is, and what he writes deliberately.

Reference has already been made, in these introductory studies, to the sombre, hopeless, and even tragic tone of Russian life—a tone sounded deeply in its literature. In fact, the broader the sweep of view, the more instances stand forth to support the statement that all Muscovite art feels the same impulse—witness in an exemplary and typical way the paintings of Verestchagin and the music of Tschaikevsky. It is an inviting theme, this one of why one nation should drink fiery vodka, another phlegmatic beer, and yet another light wine. Are the national characteristics which plainly go with drinks and foods and pleasures, causes, in the final analysis, or effects? Do servitude and stolidity and hopelessness on the one hand, and thin-nostriled freedom and lofty spirit on the other, arise from forces which the historian may trace clearly to their political well-springs, or are there certain imponderable potencies in the air of different lands which in the very beginning of things instilled a spirit of fatalism into the Moslem, nihilism into the Russian, emotionalism into the French, and a nervous need for action into the American?

When outward national conditions change, or when nations are transplanted, precisely what is it in climate that breeds essentially the same strain cycle after cycle?

So we should have to dissect, weigh, and classify all available facts about Russia past and present in order to get an unclouded understanding of the national temper, just as a similar study of Gorky's antecedents and life, for instance, would illuminate his literary expressions. Each of these studies would be consistent with the other, for Gorky is a national figure, though, as all such iconoclastic spirits will, he out-russias his own middle-class countrymen in outspoken unfaith in and defiance of the god-of-things-as-they-are.

The second great factor for finding the place and potency of the unpleasant, the bitter, and the terrible in fiction consists in the purpose of fiction, which broadly is one of two: either to picture forth life or to interpret life. When the fictional artist—granted that he is clear-headed—sets out to hold the mirror relentlessly up to life, he becomes an extreme realist. When he faithfully paints life as he sees it, sincerely using his selective powers so as to present *what he conceives to be* types rather than mere personalities, and thus interprets life for those of less penetrative and constructive vision, we have a philosophical realist. When he takes liberties with the *spirit* of facts (not merely with the facts themselves, which may be just as real in one order as in another), he is a romancer. When he uses facts to support and enforce ideals of his own, he is an idealist.

Thus all fiction, so far as it has a respectable purpose at all, falls easily into one class or the other—that which merely re-presents life, or that which interprets life while it re-presents it. All the farther motives—amusement, teaching, excoriation, demagoguery, what not—line up behind these two prime purposes.

Now, how does all this bear upon the place of unpleasant fiction? Very vitally, and we are considering Gorky—a highly morbid and at times revolting writer—as a notable example of this rather Russian characteristic. In him we have a spirit who looks at facts, despises all palliations, dares greatly for his convictions, and in it all is Russian through and through. Such a man, of such a history, in such a period, in such a land, with such a motive of truth-telling, for such a purpose of reform, *could* not write pleasant, tinkly fiction. Russians read him because Russia must read him. An author draws men to his message either because they need it without liking it, or like it already. First of all, Gorky is himself—a soul sensitive to the tragic, the morbid, the bitter—then he boldly gives Russia her own self-made wormwood to drink while she thirsts in the hour of her crucifixion.

With two classes I have no sympathy: writers who pander to morbid, dirty tastes, and readers who support gruesome, nasty writers for pure

love of noisome pestilence. No more do we have need for the not-impure and not-revolting yet depressing and pessimistic fiction which serves no good purpose beyond that of producing revenue. The place for such unpleasant, unhappy-beginning, tearful-middle, and sorrowful-ending stories is precisely nowhere. But in Gorky we have a queer contradiction of conditions: some of his most revolting fiction is as important to the Muscovite land which bred it as light is vital to a dark place. Yet when some one of these poignant, dreadful diagnoses of Russian sicknesses is translated and spread abroad, say in English, it should be read only by those who are students of the writer and his country, and not by the young or the morbid. It is needful to expose ulcers in a clinic, it is indecent and disgusting to parade them on the street. In a word: the horrible in fiction needs be justified by a high purpose.

In "The Exorcism," a thousand-word sketch, Gorky has produced a terrible illustration of how worse than useless such material may be for purposes of general reading in translation, while originally serving a tremendous moral purpose by showing his own people what beasts some of their fellows are.

Along a village street a strange procession is moving slowly with wild howls. The dense, wave-like crowd surrounds a cart. Tied by her wrists to a rope attached to the cart is a slight, almost girlish woman—entirely nude. Dazed, halting, gazing into nothing with wide, lack-lustre look, she staggers bleeding on. Now and again a tall peasant standing in the cart, his white canine teeth showing, his eyes blood-shot from fury, lays a lash upon the woman's body, already covered with unspeakable slashes and bruises. And every fiendish brutality—detailed and repeated until the soul sickens—the men, women, and children of the mob acclaim!

"This," he concludes, "which I have written above, is not an allegorical description of the persecution and torture of a prophet, who has no honor in his own country—no, unfortunately, it is not that! It is called an 'exorcism.' Thus do husbands punish their wives for infidelity; this is a picture from life, a custom—and I beheld it in the year 1891, on the 15th of July, in the village of Kandybovko, Government of Kherson."

Need I say that I have toned down the horror of this presentment, and that I relate it, horrible still, to show the very futility of such pictures *as pictures*, and their very great worth, *to those concerned*, as pleas for reform?

The readers of modern fiction need to look this question full in the face and then make their feelings known to the magazines. There is a place for all pathological studies, whether of society, soul, or body, by priest, physician, sociologist, and novelist. But is that place either the market-place or a fiction-printing magazine whose pages invite the scru-

tiny of children as well as morbid adults? If we segregate bodily pestilence, why should the public magazine and the public playhouse be allowed to spread contagion? Is there no difference between an earnest fictional presentation of moral problems which must be solved more or less publicly, and the mere skilful portrayal of lust and degradation and easy morals, with no possible resultant good? If a hatter took it into his head to be interested in smallpox, what would the authorities say? Well, shall magazines be exposed for general circulation because that same hatter, and a million of his like, love dirty, crime-teaching, and viciously morbid fiction? Some one must be brave enough to declare the difference between "frank" fiction in books for those who really wish to study social problems (and there are too many filthy books sold under the guise of social study) and the printing of such material in the magazines which make appeal to families for their circulation. We *can* keep such books out of the home and the library if we wish, but when vicious short-stories creep into otherwise clean magazines, the damage is great enough to be serious.

But Gorky's fiction is not unclean, as a rule, even when it deals with "broad" subjects. He moves directly and simply among the facts of an unlovely and often brutalized life and tells the truth about it without interpretation or apology. For example, here is the story of "The Khan and His Son," as told by a blind mendicant. It is more romantic than most of Gorky's work.

Mosolaïma el Asvab, an old Crimean Khan, is possessed of many women in his harem, who love "the old eagle" for the noble fire of his spirit, which age has not quenched. One above all others is his favorite, a Kazák prisoner maid from the steppes of the Dnyépr. Once when the Khan's much-loved son, Alhalla, returns from a victorious raid on the Russians, the father exchanges with him words of affection and rashly makes the time-honored oriental promise: "What wilt thou take from the hand of thy father, Alhalla? Tell me, and I will give thee everything, according to thy desire."

And the son asks of his father the one thing the old man loves best and leans upon in his old age—the Russian prisoner maid.

The Khan spake not—for a space he said no word, for so long as was required to crush the shudder in his heart—and, after this pause, he said, boldly and firmly:

"Take her! Let us finish the feast, and then thou shalt take her."

The son knows what his request means, and soon they fall to talking of the sacrifice required. But to the pleadings of the old Khan the son returns only the argument of his own love for the girl. At length the young man proposes that "in mercy to each other" they fling her into the sea from the mountain, and in despair the Khan consents.

Summoned by her lord, the girl divines all, and asks only that she be carried to the place of sacrifice in the arms of her "old eagle," whom she loves. And so they slowly journey to the cliff, and by his arms she is flung into the sea.

The son at last turns away, but—

With swift strides the Khan approached the brink, and hurled himself down. His son did not hold him back, there was no time for that. And again nothing was audible from the sea—neither shriek nor noise of the Khan's fall. Only the waves plashed on there, and the wind hummed wild songs.

Long did Tolaſk Alhalla gaze below, and then he said aloud:

"And grant me, also, as stout a heart, O Allah!"

And then he went forth into the gloom of the night.

. . . Thus perished Khan Mosolaſma el Asvab, and Tolaſk Alhalla became Khan of the Crimea.

Of all his varied and acrid experiences the brain of "Maxim the Bitter," as his pseudonym means, is a bursting note-book. From it he selects with entire artlessness—that is, without either the patience or the knowledge which true art presupposes—whatever he needs for his fictional work. Hence his longer productions, novels and plays, are not well constructed. Indeed, they are marvellous mixtures of idealism, realism, humor, shocking openness, and drivel, illuminated in sudden patches by exquisite descriptions and lofty beauties. The best example of his novels is "Fomá Gordyéef," and his strongest play is "The Night Asylum."

The general tone of Gorky's work is not so depressing, because not so hopeless, as that of his fellow fiction-writers of the younger generation; but none of them dives so deep into the sub-silt of the great Russian stream, for none is native to its turgid, fetid flow. To witness before our eyes, for example, the dragging down of the girl in the short-story "Twenty-Six and One Other," is so terrible as to revolt the hardened. Yet in his tramps, his thieves, his broken-down derelicts, there is a certain impudent bravery that strikes a new note of hopefulness for submerged Russia. It is this, I think, that endeared the young apostle of the proletariat when from 1892 to 1897 his greatest short fictional work was done. He not only had a message for revolutionary Russia, but the spirit of his characters was precisely what so many of the drifting, sodden wrecks needed—boldness to look up.

For many superficial English and American readers Gorky furnished what Professor Phelps has aptly compared to a slumming party—they were pleased to be nauseated. Naturally, they soon dropped the new toy. But others have continued to read him, some because they are in sympathy with the reform movement, some from sheer enjoyment of the terrible, others for the flashes of genius which are frequent enough to remind us that he has not lived up to the anticipations his earlier writings



evoked. In this country, he has lost general sympathy, especially since his comparatively recent visit culminated in the disclosure of his illicit relations with his travelling companion, and much consequent newspaper gossip; so that on the whole we wait for another to wear the mantle of Tolstoi, which so many, six years ago, were ready to cast upon the shoulders of Maxim Gorky.

Gorky has had a wild and varied life,—but he may tell the story in his own words:

I was born March 14, either in 1868 or 1869, in Nijni Novgorod, in the family of Vassili Vassilezewitsch Kaschirin, dyer, to his daughter Warwara, and Maxim Sawwatjev Pjeschkow, who, according to his sign, was an upholsterer. Thenceforth I have borne honorably and without a stain the title of a member of the guild of artists. I was baptized by the name of Alexei, but in choosing a pseudonym I preferred my father's name, Maxim.

My real name is therefore Alexei Maximowitsch Pjeschkow. My father died in Astrakhan when I was five years old. After the death of my mother my grandfather placed me in a shoe-store. I was then nine years old, and my grandfather had taught me to read in the Psalter and Prayer Book. I ran away from my studies and became a draughtsman's apprentice; ran away from him and entered the workshop of a painter of saints' images; then I served on a steamer as a cook's boy; then I became a gardener's assistant.

Here I remained till my fifteenth year, spending all my time in zealously reading the productions of known authors, such as "Guak; or, Unshakable Fidelity," "Andreas Fearnought," "Jaschka, the Cut-throat," etc.

While I was serving as cook's boy on the steamboat, the cook, Smury, gained a powerful influence over my development. He persuaded me to read the "Legends of the Saints," Eccarthausen, Gogol, Glibe Uspenski, Dumas père, and various books on Freemasonry.

Up to that time I had been a sworn enemy of all books and of all printed paper, even including my passport. After my fifteenth year I felt a passionate wish to learn, in pursuance of which I betook myself to Kasan, under the impression that knowledge would be imparted free to all who desired it. It turned out, however, that this was not the case; so I went to work in a pretzel bakery, at a salary of three rubles a month.

Of all the kinds of work I have tried this was the hardest. In Kasan I came into relations with the "Lost People" and lived long with them. I worked in the villages on the Volga, now as a woodchopper, now as a porter, and during this time read every book I could lay my hands on, which various kind people supplied me with. I got along very badly, and in 1888 even tried to kill myself by shooting a bullet into my body.

I lay a long time in the hospital, but finally recovered and went into the apple trade. I finally turned my back on inhospitable Kasan, to try my luck in Zarizyn, where I got a job as a railroad-attendant. Then I returned to Nijni, where I had to go up for the army. But since they could not make use of fellows with holes in their bodies, I escaped the fate of becoming a soldier, and instead became a Munich beer seller.

I soon exchanged this calling for that of a clerk in the office of Lanin, a lawyer of Nijni Novgorod.

That was a turning point in my life. Lanin's influence on my development was immeasurably great. I owe this cultivated and great-hearted man more than to any one else. But, however agreeable I found life with Lanin, where my soul could at last find room to breathe, I was again impelled to the life of a tramp. And I have tramped all over Russia. Where have I not been! What have I not seen and suffered! What kind of work have I not done!

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## COMRADES

### I.

THE burning July sun blazed dazzlingly over Smolkena, pouring down upon the old huts a generous stream of resplendent rays.

A goodly share of the sunlight fell to the roof of the *Starosta's*\* hut, newly re-covered with smoothly-planed, yellow, fragrant planks. It was Sunday, and almost the entire population of the village had gone out into the street, thickly overgrown with grass and bespattered in spots with quantities of dry mud. A large group of peasants—men and women—had gathered in front of the *Starosta's* hut. Some sat on the earthwork around the house, others simply stood; while the children chased one another in and out of the throng, calling forth from the elders rebukes and blows.

The centre of the crowd was a tall man, with large, drooping mustaches. To judge from his swarthy face, covered with thick gray bristles and a network of deep wrinkles, as well as from the gray tufts of hair which forced their way from under the dirty straw hat, he might have been fifty years of age. He was gazing on the ground, and the nostrils of his large, gristly nose were quivering; and when he raised his head, throwing his glance upon the windows of the *Starosta's* hut, his eyes—large, melancholy, and even morose—became visible; they were sunk deep within their orbits, and the bushy brows cast shadows over their dark pupils. He was dressed in the brown under-cassock of a lay-brother, worse for the wear; it hardly covered his knees, and was girt with cord. Over his back was flung a bag; in his right hand he carried a long stick with iron ferrule; his left hand he held in his bosom. The people eyed him suspiciously, derisively, with contempt; and with evident joy in having caught a wolf before he had had time to do hurt to their flock. He was passing through the village, and had asked for a drink at the window of the *Starosta's* hut. The *Starosta* gave him cider and entered into conversation with him. The wayfarer, however, unlike his kind, answered unwillingly. The *Starosta* asked him for his pass-

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\* Head of village community.

port, but none was forthcoming. It was decided to send him to the local magistrate. The *Starosta* chose as the man's escort the village deputy, and was now in the hut giving him directions, having in the meantime left the prisoner in the midst of the mob which made sport of him.

The prisoner stood near the trunk of a willow and rested against it his stooped back.

Presently there appeared on the staircase of the hut a dim-eyed old man, with a foxy face and a gray, wedge-shaped beard. He lowered his booted feet step by step, measuredly, and his round stomach moved from side to side solidly under the long calico shirt. Just over his shoulder came to view the bearded, four-cornered face of the deputy.

"Do you understand me, Efimushka?" the *Starosta* questioned the deputy.

"Why should n't I understand? It's easy enough. Simply means I am to take this man to the magistrate—and there's an end of it!" The deputy, pronouncing his speech with measured emphasis and with comical dignity, winked at the public.

"And the papers?"

"The papers are stuck away in my bosom."

"Well, all right, then," said the *Starosta*, and, scratching his sides energetically, he added:

"Go, and God be with you!"

"Well, shall we march on, father?" said the deputy to the prisoner.

"You might furnish a conveyance," grumbled the prisoner at the deputy's proposition.

The *Starosta* smiled.

"A con—vey—ance? The idea! There are lots of you fellows tramping across fields and villages. Where are all the horses to come from? You've got to make it on foot; that's all there's to it!"

"That's nothing, father; let us go," said the deputy cheerfully. "Do you think it so far? Can't be more than twenty versts! You'll be there before you know it. We shall make a nice trip of it. And afterwards you shall have a rest."

"In a cool place," explained the *Starosta*.

"That's nothing," the deputy hastened to say. "A man, when he is very tired, will find rest even in jail. And especially after a hot day you will find it cool and comfortable there."

The prisoner eyed his escort sharply; the latter smiled good-naturedly and frankly.

"Well, come along, honest father! Good-by, Vasil Gavrilich! Let's go!"

"God be with you, Efimushka! Use both your eyes."

"Yes, you'll have to look sharp!" was the suggestion thrown at the deputy by a young peasant in the crowd.

"What, do you think I'm an infant?"

They started, keeping close to the huts, so as to be within the strip of shadow. The man in the cassock walked in front, with the loose but rapid gait of a being accustomed to roaming. The deputy, with a sturdy stick in his hand, followed.

Efimushka was a little peasant, low in stature, but built strongly, with a broad, good-natured face framed in an unkempt red beard beginning just below his bright gray eyes. He nearly always smiled at something, showing his healthy yellow teeth, and wrinkling his nose as if he wanted to sneeze. He was dressed in a long garment whose folds were caught up at the waist with a belt, so that they might not hamper his feet; on his head was stuck a dark green cap, without a visor, reminding one of a prisoner's cap.

His companion moved on as if oblivious of another presence. They walked along by a narrow by-path, which wound its way through a billowy sea of rye; and the shadows of the travellers glided along against the gold of the corn.

Looking towards the horizon, the crest of a wood appeared blue against the sky. To the left stretched endlessly field upon field; in their midst, like a dark patch, lay a village; and beyond the village again fields, losing themselves finally in the bluish haze.

To the right, from behind a group of willows, a church spire covered with tin-plate, as yet unpainted, pierced the blue sky. It glistened so strongly in the sun that it was painful to look at.

Up high the larks twittered; and in the rye the cornflowers smiled; and it was hot—almost stifling. From under the feet of the travellers the dust flew up.

Efimushka, clearing his throat, began to sing in falsetto voice.

"It's no use. I can't make my voice carry! And yet—there was a time when I could sing. . . . The Vishensky teacher would say, 'Well, Efimushka, make a start!' And we would sing together! A fine fellow he was, too!"

"Who was he?" asked the man in the cassock, in a dull bass voice.

"The Vishensky teacher."

"Was Vishensky his name?"

"No, brother; that's the name of the village. The teacher's name was Pavel Mikhalich. A first-rate sort he was. Died three years ago."

"Was he young?"

"He was n't thirty."

"What did he die of?"

"Of grief, I take it."

Efimushka's companion glanced at him askance and smiled.

“You see, my dear fellow, this is how it happened. He taught—seven years at a stretch he taught. Well, he began to cough. He coughed and he coughed, and then got to grieving. . . . Well, you know how it is—grief drove him to drink. And Father Alexei did not like him; and when he started drinking, Father Alexei sent a report to town—told this and that: the teacher is drinking, and that sort of thing. It’s a scandal, to be sure. And the people in town sent back an answer and a woman teacher. She was tall, bony, big-nosed. Well, Pavel Mikhalich saw how things stood. He felt hurt. ‘Here,’ thought he, ‘I have taught and taught . . . and now you—’ . . . From the school he went straight to the hospital, and within five days gave up his soul to God. . . . That’s all.”

For a time they went on in silence. They were approaching the wood, which with every step loomed larger and larger and was turning from blue to green.

“Shall we go by the wood?” asked Efimushka’s fellow traveller.

“We will only catch the edge of it, for a half-verst or so. But what are you up to? I shall keep my eye on you, my good man.”

And Efimushka, shaking his head, laughed.

“What ails you?” the prisoner asked.

“Oh, nothing! But you are a funny one! ‘Shall we go by the wood?’ says he. You are a simpleton, dear fellow; another would n’t have asked this question—that is, if he were any smarter. He would have made straight for the wood, and——”

“Well?”

“Oh, nothing! I see through you, brother. Your game is like a very thin reed! I should advise you to drop this idea about the wood! Do you think you can get around me? I can handle three like you; as for you, I can manage you with my left hand. Do you understand?”

“Understand you? You’re a fool!” said the prisoner simply but with emphasis.

“Ah, I hit the mark that time!” said Efimushka triumphantly.

“Blockhead! What mark did you hit?” asked the prisoner, with a wry smile.

“About the wood. I understand, I do. You were thinking that when we reached the wood you would knock me down—yes, knock me down—and then make a break for the fields or for the woods. Now, is n’t that so?”

“You’re a fool,” said the apprehended man, shrugging his shoulders. “Where could I go?”

“Well, where you wish—that’s your affair.”

“But where?”

Efimushka’s companion was either angry or else he really wished to know from his escort precisely in what direction he could run.

"I told you, where you wished," replied Efimushka calmly.

"There's nowhere I could run, nowhere!" said his companion quietly.

"W-well!" the escort pronounced incredulously, and waved his hand. "There's always some place where one could run to. The world is large. There will be always enough room in it for one man."

"Tell me, then: do you really want me to run away?" the prisoner, smiling, ventured to ask.

"Ah, you! You are terribly good! What will come of it? You'll run away, and in your place some one else will have to go to jail. And that one will be me. No, I'm simply making conversation."

"You are a blessed fool—otherwise you seem a good sort of fellow," said Efimushka's companion, uttering a sigh. Efimushka quite agreed with him.

"It is true I am called blessed by some people; and that I'm a good fellow is also true. I am a simple man—that's at the bottom of it. Other people say things with cunning, in an underhand sort of way, but why should I? I am alone in the world. Deal wrongly—and you die; deal rightly—you die also. And so I've kept straight, mostly."

"That is the right way," remarked the prisoner indifferently.

"How else should it be? Why should I let my soul go wrong when I am alone here? I am a free man, brother. As I wish, so I live. I have my own idea of life, and live according to it. So it goes. By the way, how are you called?"

"How? Well, you may call me Ivan Ivanov."

"So! Are you of the priesthood?"

"N-no."

"Well? And I thought you were——"

"Because of my dress?"

"Well, you look like a runaway monk or an unfrocked priest. . . . But your face is not at all suited; it looks more like a soldier's. God knows what kind of man you are!" Efimushka cast a curious glance at the stranger. The other sighed, readjusted his hat, wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and asked the deputy:

"Do you smoke?"

"Happy to afford you the pleasure. To be sure, I do!"

He drew out of his bosom a soiled pouch and, lowering his head, without decreasing his gait, began to fill a clay pipe with tobacco.

"Well, have your smoke." The prisoner paused, inclined his head to receive a light from a match held by the convoy, and drew in his cheeks. A thin blue smoke rose in the air.

"You have n't told me as yet to what class you belong."

"The gentry," replied the prisoner curtly, and spat out sideways.

"So that's it! How come you, then, to be strolling about without a passport?"

"I simply choose to."

"So—so! What an occupation! You gentry do not usually take to this wolfish life. Ah, but you are a poor wretch!"

"Well, let it go at that . . . and stop your chattering," remarked the poor wretch dryly.

Efimushka, however, surveyed the passportless man with increased curiosity and interest, and, shaking his head in a perplexed manner, continued:

"Eh, but how fate does play with a man, when you come to think of it! And it is very likely true that you are of the gentry, because you have a grand manner about you. Have you lived long like this?"

The man with the grand manner looked gloomily at Efimushka, and waved him aside like some pestering wasp.

"Drop it, I tell you! Why do you stick at it like a woman?"

"Now, don't be vexed," said Efimushka reassuringly. "I speak from the heart . . . and I am really kind-hearted. . . ."

"Well, that's lucky for you. . . . On the other hand, your tongue keeps on babbling without a stop—that's unlucky for me!"

"No more, then, since you object. I can keep quiet, since you want none of my conversation. Still, you're vexed for nothing. Is it my fault that you are leading a vagabond's life?"

The prisoner stopped and clamped his jaws together so that his cheek-bones stood out like two sharp corners and the gray bristle covering them rose rigidly on end. He measured Efimushka from head to foot with passionate disdain and with a screwed-up expression at the eyes. Before Efimushka could note this, the other once more began to measure the ground with a broad stride.

The face of the loquacious deputy assumed an aspect of distraught pensiveness. He gazed upwards, whence sounded the trills of the larks, and with them whistled between his teeth, at the same time swinging his stick to the measure of his steps.

They approached the edge of the forest. It stood there like an immovable, dark wall. Not a sound came from it to greet the travellers. The sun already had set, and its oblique rays colored the tops of the trees purple and gold. The trees exhumed a fragrant dampness; and the gloom and the concentrated silence which filled the forest gave birth to sombre feelings.

When a forest stands before us dark and immovable, when it is all plunged in a mysterious silence, and every tree assumes the attitude as of listening to something, then it seems that the entire forest is filled with something alive, and that that something is only hiding for a time. And you await the next moment in the expectation that it will bring forth something huge and incomprehensible to the human mind, and that it will speak in a mighty voice about the great mysteries of creation.

## II.

At the edge of the wood, Efimushka and his companion decided to rest, and so they sat themselves on the grass beside the trunk of a huge oak. The prisoner slowly took down the bag from his shoulder and asked his convoy indifferently:

“Do you want some bread?”

“If you’ll give me, I’ll not refuse,” Efimushka replied with a smile.

And in silence they began to eat their bread. Efimushka ate slowly and sighed continually, directing his gaze across the field to his left, somewhere into the distance, while his companion was all absorbed in the process of gratifying his appetite. He ate rapidly and munched audibly, measuring with his eyes his crust of bread. The dusk began to settle upon the field, and the corn had already lost its golden lustre and assumed a rose-yellow hue. Towards the southwest small, fleecy clouds advanced across the sky; they cast shadows upon the field and crept across the ears of corn towards the forest, where sat two dark human figures. Other shadows were cast on the ground by the trees, and they breathed melancholy into the soul.

“Glory be to Thee, O Lord!” exclaimed Efimushka, gathering up the crumbs of his piece of bread and licking them up from the palm of his hand with his tongue. “The Lord hath fed us—no one hath seen us; and He who hath seen us, His eye was unoffended! Comrade, what do you say to sitting here another hour or so? Plenty time for the cold cell, eh?”

His comrade nodded his assent.

“Well, well. . . . A very good place—it has a place in my heart. . . . Over there, to the left, once stood the manor of the Tuchkovs.”

“Where?” quickly inquired the prisoner, wheeling around in the direction indicated by Efimushka.

“Over there, behind that hill. All the land hereabouts belonged to them. They were very rich; but after the emancipation they did n’t do as well. . . . I too belonged to them—all of us belonged to them. It was a big family. . . . There was the Colonel himself—Alexander Nikitich Tuchkov. Then, there were four sons—where could they all have gone to? It is as if the wind carried them along, like leaves in the autumn. Only Ivan Alexandrovich remains—I am taking you to him now. He is our magistrate . . . quite an old man.”

The prisoner laughed. His laugh had a hollow sound in it; it was a strange inward sort of laugh: his chest and stomach shook, but the face remained unmoved; and when he showed his teeth, there issued from between them hollow, dog-like sounds.



Efimushka, trembling apprehensively, reached out for his stick and placed it nearer within his reach. He asked:

“What is the matter with you now?”

“Nothing. . . . It was just a passing thought,” said the prisoner abruptly, but kindly. “Go on with your story.”

“W-well, yes. As I was saying, they were important people, the Tuchkovs, and now they are here no more. . . . Some of them have died, some of them have simply vanished, and not a soul knows what’s become of them. One especially I have in mind—the very youngest. Victor was his name—Vic for short. He was a comrade of mine. . . . At the time of the emancipation we were, both of us, fourteen years old. . . . He was a fine lad, and may God be good to his soul! A pure stream! Running along beautifully all day—and gurgling. . . . Where is he now? Is he living or dead?”

“In what way was he so good?” Efimushka’s companion asked quietly.

“In every way!” exclaimed Efimushka. “He had beauty, good sense, a kind heart. . . . My dear man, he was a ripe berry. Ah, but you should have seen then the two of us! . . . The games we played! The merry life we led! There were times when he would cry, ‘Efimka, let’s go hunting!’ He had a gun—a birthday gift from his father—and I used to carry it. And off we would wander into the woods for a whole day, or for two days, or even three! Once back home, he would get a scolding, and I a birching; the next day you’d forget all about it and start life anew. This time he would call, ‘Efimushka, let us go after mushrooms!’ Thousands of birds we must have killed! We gathered these mushrooms by the ton! He used to catch butterflies and bugs and stick them on pins in little boxes. And he taught me my letters. . . . ‘Efimka,’ he said to me, ‘I will teach you. Begin,’ said he, and I began. ‘Say,’ says he, ‘A!’ I roared out, ‘A—a!’ How we did laugh! At the start I took it as a joke—what does a man like me want with reading and writing? . . . But he rebuked me: ‘You, fool, have been granted freedom that you might learn. . . . If you knew how to read, it would help you to know how to live and where to seek the truth.’ . . . To be sure, he was an apt child; and he had probably heard such speeches from his elders, and began to talk that way himself. . . . Of course, we know it’s nonsense. Real learning is in the heart; and only the heart can point the way to truth. . . . It is all-seeing. . . . And so he taught me. . . . Stuck so hard to his business that he gave me no rest! It was torture to me. ‘Vic,’ I would appeal to him, ‘it’s impossible for me to learn my letters. I really can’t manage it!’ . . . You should have seen him rage at me! Sometimes he threatened me with a whip! But teach me he would! ‘Be merciful!’ I’d cry. . . . Once I tried to

dodge the lesson, and there was a row, let me tell you. He sought for me all day long with a gun—wanted to shoot me. And later he told me that had he met me that day he certainly would have shot me! He was a fearless one. He was unbending and fiery—a real lord. . . . He loved me; his was an ardent soul. . . . Once my father used the birch on my back, and when Vic saw it, off he went at once to my father's house. Good Lord, but there was a scene! He was all pale and trembling, and clenched his fists, and followed my father up into the loft. Says he, 'How dared you?' The old man replied, 'But I'm his father!' 'So? Very well, father, I can't manage you single-handed, but your back all the same shall be like Efimka's!' He gave way to tears after that, and ran out of the house. . . . And what do you say to this? He actually carried out his word. He must have said something to his servants, for one day father came home groaning; he tried to take off his shirt, and it stuck to his back. . . . My father was very angry with me at the time. 'I'm suffering on your account. You are an informer.' And he gave me a good beating. But as to being an informer, that I was not. . . ."

"That's true, Efim, you were not!" said the prisoner, with emphasis, and trembled violently. "It's evident even now that you could n't have been an informer," he added hastily.

"That's it!" exclaimed Efimushka. "I simply loved him—this fellow Vic. . . . Such a talented child he was! All loved him, not alone I. . . . Fine speeches he used to make. . . . I can't remember any of them now—thirty years have passed since then. . . . Oh, Lord! Where is he now? If he is alive, he must be having a grand job, or else—he is having the very devil of a time of it. . . . Life is a most strange thing! It seethes and seethes—and still nothing comes of it. . . . And people perish. . . . It is pitiful, to the very death, how pitiful!"

Efimushka, sighing deeply, inclined his head on his bosom. . . . There was a brief silence.

"And are you sorry for me?" asked the prisoner cheerfully, while his face lit up with a good, kindly smile.

"You are a queer one!" exclaimed Efimushka. "Why should n't I feel sorry for you? What are you, when you come to think of it? If you are roaming about, that only shows that you have n't a thing on earth of your own—not a corner, not a chip. . . . And, aside from that, perhaps you are burdened with some great sin—who knows? In a word, you're a miserable man."

"That's how it is," replied the prisoner.

Once more there was a pause. The sun had already set, and the shadows grew more dense. The air was fragrant with the fresh moisture of the earth, with the smell of flowers, and with that pungent odor that comes from the woods. For a long time they sat there in silence.

"It is fine to sit here; but, for all that, we've got to go. Still eight more versts to do. . . . Come along, father; get up!"

"Let's sit here a while longer," begged the other.

"I don't mind it myself—I love to be near the woods at night. . . . But when shall we ever get to the magistrate's? I will catch it if I get there late."

"Never fear, they shan't say anything."

"Perhaps you'll put in a word for me," said the deputy, with a smile.

"I may."

"You?"

"And why not?"

"You're a wag! He'll try a little pepper on you."

"You mean, he'll flog me?"

"He's a terror! And right clever, too. He'll punch you with his fist on the ear, and I'll warrant you—you'll not be steady on your feet."

"We'll see to that," said the prisoner reassuringly, touching the convoy's shoulder in a friendly manner.

This familiarity did not please Efimushka. Everything else considered, he, after all, stood for the law, and this goose should bear in mind that Efimushka wore under his coat a brass badge. Efimushka arose, took his stick in his hand, rearranged the badge in a conspicuous place on his breast, and said gruffly:

"Get up! We've got to be on the move."

"I am not going," said the prisoner.

Efimushka was nonplussed, and, opening his eyes wide, remained for the moment silent—not comprehending why the prisoner had become all of a sudden such a joker.

"Well, don't make a fuss, and come along," said he more softly.

"I am not going," the prisoner repeated resolutely.

"What do you mean by saying you're not going?" shouted Efimushka, in astonishment and anger.

"Just that. I want to spend the night with you here. Come, build a fire."

"Let you spend the night here, will I? As to the fire, I'll build it on your back, I will," growled Efimushka. But in the depths of his soul he was amazed. Here is a man who says, "I am not going," and yet shows no opposition, nor any desire to quarrel, but simply lies on the ground, and that's all. What is one to do?

"Don't shout so, Efim," suggested the prisoner calmly.

Efimushka again became silent, and, changing his weight from foot to foot, he looked down on the prisoner with wide-awake eyes. But the other returned his gaze and smiled. Efimushka was thinking very hard as to what his next move should be.

What he could not understand was that this vagabond, who had been

all the time morose and malignant in his manner, should suddenly develop such good spirits. What was to prevent Efimushka from falling on the fellow, wrenching his arms, hitting him once or twice across the neck, and ending this farce? Assuming the most severe, authoritative tone of which he was capable, Efimushka said:

"Well, you piece of putty, enough of that! Up with you! Or else I'll bind you—and then you'll go along all right, never fear! Do you understand me? Well? I'll flog you!"

"M-me?" asked the prisoner, with a chuckle.

"Whom else do you think?"

"What, you'll flog Vic Tuchkov?"

"None of that, now!" cried the astonished Efimushka. "But who are you, really? What sort of game are you playing?"

"Don't shout so, Efimushka; it is time you recognized me," said the prisoner, smiling calmly, and rising to his feet. "Why don't you say 'how d'you do?'"

Efimushka drew back from the hand stretched out to him, and, open-eyed, looked into the face of the prisoner. Then his lips trembled and his face contracted.

"Victor Alexandrovich! . . . Really, is it you?" he asked in a whisper.

"If you insist, I'll show you my papers. But I'll do better—I'll remind you of old times. . . . Now, let me see—do you remember how you once fell into a wolves' lair in the pine forest of Ramensk? And how I climbed up a tree after a nest and hung head downwards from a limb? And how we stole cream from the old woman Petrovna? And the tales she told us?"

Overpowered by this recital, Efimushka sat down on the ground and laughed in a confused manner.

"Do you believe now?" the prisoner asked, as he sat down at Efimushka's side, looking straight in his companion's face and placing his hand on his shoulder. Efimushka was silent. The landscape had grown dark by this time. In the forest arose a confused murmuring and whispering. Somewhere from its distant depths came the sounds of a night-bird's song. A cloud was passing over the wood with an almost imperceptible motion.

"What ails you, Efim? Aren't you glad to meet me, or are you so glad? Eh, you holy soul! As you were as a babe, so are you now. Well, Efim! Say something, dear creature!"

Efimushka tried to control himself.

"Well, brother, why don't you speak?" said the prisoner, shaking his head reproachfully. "What ails you, any way? You should be ashamed! Here you are in your fiftieth year, and occupied with such trifling business! Give it up!" And, taking hold of the deputy by the

shoulders, he shook him lightly. The deputy burst into laughter, and at last delivered himself, without glancing at his neighbor:

"Well, who am I? Of course, I'm glad. . . . And it's really you? How am I to believe it? You, and . . . such a business as this! Vic . . . and in such a shape! Going to jail. . . . Without passport . . . without tobacco. . . . Oh, Lord! Is that the proper order of things? At least, if I were only in your place, and you were the deputy! Even that would have been easier to bear! But instead . . . how can I look you straight in your eyes? I had always recalled you with joy . . . Vic. . . . One sometimes thinks about it. . . . And the heart aches at the thought. . . . But now—look! Oh, Lord! . . . if one were to tell people about it, they would n't believe it."

His eyes fixed intently upon the ground, he mumbled his broken phrases, and now and then gripped his hand to his bosom or to his throat.

"Never mind telling people about it; it is unnecessary. And stop lamenting. . . . Don't worry on my account. I have my papers. I did n't show them to the *Starosta*, because I did n't want to be recognized. . . . My brother Ivan shan't send me to jail, but will help to put me on my feet. I will remain with him, and once more will we two go hunting. . . . Now, you see how well everything will end."

Vic said this gently, using the intonation which elders employ in calming their aggrieved young. The passing cloud and the moon met by this time; and the edge of the cloud, touched up with the silver rays, took on a soft, opal tint. From among the corn came the cries of the quail; somewhere or other the railbird prattled. The darkness grew denser.

"To think that it's really true," began Efimushka softly. "Ivan Alexandrovich will surely lend a helping hand to his own brother; and that means you will begin life anew. It is really so. . . . And we will go hunting. . . . And yet, somehow, it is different. . . . I thought you would do things in this world! But instead, here's what it's come to!"

Vic Tuchkov laughed.

"I, brother Efimushka, have done enough deeds in my day. . . . I have squandered my share in the estate; I have given up my position in the service; I have been an actor; I have been a clerk in the lumber trade; afterwards I have had my own troupe of actors. . . . Then I lost everything, contracted debts, got mixed up in a bad affair . . . eh! I have had everything. . . . And I have lost everything!"

The prisoner waved his hand and laughed good-naturedly.

"And, brother Efimushka, I am no longer a gentleman. I am cured of that. Now we will have good times together! Eh? what do you say? Come, cheer up!"

"What should I say," began Efimushka, in a subdued voice. "I

am ashamed. I have been telling you such things . . . such nonsense! . . . I am only a peasant. . . . And we will spend the night here? I'll light a fire."

"Well, go ahead!"

The prisoner stretched himself upon the ground, face upwards, while the deputy went into the woods, from whence soon came sounds of the cracking of twigs. Presently Efimushka reappeared with an armful of firewood, and in a jiffy a small serpent of flame was merrily working its way upward through the pile of wood.

The old comrades, sitting opposite each other, watched it pensively, and took turns at smoking the pipe.

"Just as in the old days," said Efimushka sadly.

"Only, the times are not the same," said Tuchkov.

"W-well, yes, life is sterner than character. . . . Ah, but she has broken you. . . ."

"That still remains to be seen—whether I'm stronger or she," smiled Tuchkov.

They became silent.

Behind them loomed the dark wall of the softly whispering forest; the bonfire crackled merrily; around it danced the silent shadows; and across the field lay an impenetrable darkness.



## JANUARY, CROWNED WITH SNOW

BY ETHEL HALLETT PORTER

**J**ANUARY, crowned with snow,  
 Crystalled, diamonded, agleam,  
 Deep within thy heart, we know,  
 Dwelleth June, a far, fair dream.

Sunset hints her distant hues,  
 Sunrise flushes rose and gold;  
 Lovely memory reviews  
 Spring's warm beauty, thro' the cold.

Proud or beggared, glad or meek,  
 Nature grants this gracious boon:  
 We must share with all who seek,  
 January's dream of June.

# REMINDERS FOR BOYS

*By Minna Thomas Antrim*

Author of "Don't's for Boys"

DON'T be "all in" too often. Invalids are bad business risks.

YOUR boss may be a boor; this, however, need not prevent you from being a gentleman.

SAVE a little from even a little; the habit will be your dividend.

DON'T be a "quitter"! When you find you are "in wrong," however, get out, no matter who hoots.

YOU may be a Kid, but refuse to be a shorn lamb.

HOBBY-HORSES need a tight rein, else they may hoof down Sense.

THE spur of the moment has fatally rowelled many a Boy.

To hedge is less manly than openly to refuse to betray your own or another's secret.

LOUD laughter belongs to the wilds. Where women are, or indoors, boys should modulate their mirth.

COWARDS are mighty Blow-Hards. If fight you must, fight, but don't Blow!

NOTHING so thoroughly emphasizes the importance of a rival or competitor as running him down.

YOU may be a winner among the girls; let them tell it.

FOR a lad with his way to make, it's more creditable to "stand in" with men than with girls.

BLUFF may go for awhile; but so may you, when your bluff is called.

IF you want your Customer to ask for you next time, give him your undivided attention.

THE aftermath of "cutting a dash" is a sadly bruised spirit.

GOOD manners, not parlor tricks, are valuable assets.

PLAY the game—if you are sure it's a game you can afford to play.

IT's a cheeky lad who introduces his "crowd" without a girl's say-so.

YOUR Dad being a Somebody does n't make you so. Buck up for your own.

# MRS. WARREN'S EARRING

A FANTASY

*By Harold Susman*

MRS. WARREN had an uncle named John Rawson. Mr. Rawson was an eccentric person. He spent all his time and all his money in old curiosity shops.

He bought books and pictures, chairs and tables, odds and ends, and goodness knows what not. Most of these things he kept for himself. But some of them he gave away.

He gave some to his niece, Mrs. Warren. He gave her a French vase, a Spanish comb, and a Persian rug. And then, at Christmas, he came to see her, and he brought a present with him. It was the most peculiar present he had ever given her.

He put his hand in his pocket and took out a box. He opened the box and took out a package. He opened the package and took out—a trinket. A small, carved golden trinket.

“What is it?” said Mrs. Warren.

“What do you think it is?” said Mr. Rawson.

“I don’t know,” said Mrs. Warren.

“Guess!” said Mr. Rawson.

“A brooch?” said Mrs. Warren.

“No,” said Mr. Rawson.

“A pendant?” said Mrs. Warren.

“No,” said Mr. Rawson.

“An—earring?” said Mrs. Warren.

“Yes!” said Mr. Rawson.

Mr. Rawson handed it to her. Mrs. Warren examined it.

It was an improbable ornament of an impossible design. It represented a gargoyle. An objectionable gargoyle. An indescribably objectionable gargoyle.

“It is an earring,” said Mr. Rawson. “A mediæval Italian earring. It is very curious. And very valuable. There is not another like it. That is the trouble. The mate is missing. And this one could not be matched. A copy would never look the same. So you cannot wear it. You must keep it in a curio-cabinet.”

Mrs. Warren did n’t know what to say. She could not say, “How



beautiful!" She could not say, "How charming!" She could not say anything but, "Thank you!"

Mr. Rawson departed. And Mrs. Warren fell to wondering. What should she do with it? What could she do with it?

It was not a thing that could be worn. It was not a thing that could be displayed. She must get rid of it. She must give it away. But to whom could she give it?

First she thought of this one. And then she thought of that one. Finally she thought of Mrs. Butler. Mrs. Butler's birthday was due. So Mrs. Warren went to see her.

"I have come to wish you many happy returns of the day!" said Mrs. Warren.

"How thoughtful of you!" said Mrs. Butler.

"And to give you a little gift!" said Mrs. Warren.

"How delightful of you!" said Mrs. Butler.

Mrs. Warren showed the trinket. And Mrs. Butler stared at it.

"I thought that you would be getting boxes of candy, and baskets of flowers, and all that sort of thing," said Mrs. Warren, "and I wanted to give you something different. Something entirely different. So I got you—this!"

"What—is—it?" said Mrs. Butler.

"It is an earring," said Mrs. Warren. "A mediæval Italian earring. It is very curious. And very valuable. There is not another like it. That is the trouble. The mate is missing. And this one could not be matched. A copy would never look the same. So you cannot wear it. You must keep it in a curio-cabinet."

Mrs. Butler looked at the trinket. And she looked shocked. Mrs. Warren departed.

Mrs. Butler looked at the ornament again. And she looked more shocked than ever. The gargoyle was certainly an odious thing.

Mrs. Butler did n't want it in her curio-cabinet. In fact, she did n't want it in her possession. So she set herself to scheming how to get rid of it.

She thought of Mrs. Holden. Mrs. Holden was going to get married again. Had Mrs. Holden been a young girl, and this her first marriage, the earring would not have seemed a suitable gift. But Mrs. Holden was a middle-aged woman, and this was her third marriage, so the earring appeared to be more appropriate. Mrs. Butler went to see Mrs. Holden.

"My dear," said Mrs. Butler, "I knew that people would be giving you asparagus-tongs, and clocks, and candlesticks. So I wanted to be original. And I think that I have been! I wanted my gift to be unique. And I think that it is!"

She showed the ornament.

"Oh, you *are* original!" said Mrs. Holden. "And your gift is unique! But—what—is—it?"

"It is an earring," said Mrs. Butler. "A mediæval Italian earring. It is very curious. And very valuable. There is not another like it. That is the trouble. The mate is missing. And this one could not be matched. A copy would never look the same. So you cannot wear it. You must keep it in a curio-cabinet."

Mrs. Butler departed. And Mrs. Holden considered.

She had, as Mrs. Butler had surmised, received asparagus-tongs, clocks, and candlesticks—in large quantities. She had also received brooches, bracelets, and rings—in small quantities. She had even received a pair of earrings. But this gargoyle was the only single earring she had received. In her innocence, she believed that it was the only single earring anybody had ever received.

She was disgusted and dismayed. How could she dispose of it?

She had sent superfluous furniture to an auctioneer. She had sent superfluous silverware to the pawnbroker. But what to do with a superfluous earring?

She finally took it to a dealer in bric-à-brac, art objects, and antiques. She displayed the trinket. The dealer scrutinized it.

"It is an earring," said Mrs. Holden.

"Yes," said the dealer.

"A mediæval Italian earring," said Mrs. Holden.

"I know," said the dealer.

"How much will you give me for it?" said Mrs. Holden.

"Ten dollars," said the dealer.

"Very well," said Mrs. Holden.

So she took the ten dollars. And the dealer took the earring.

Mr. Rawson came to see Mrs. Warren.

"A most extraordinary thing has happened!" said Mr. Rawson. "A most remarkable coincidence has occurred. In my rounds of the old curiosity shops, I have been fortunate enough to discover a duplicate of the earring I gave you, an exact match, a perfect mate! It is undoubtedly the original companion. So I have secured it, and have brought it to you. Here it is!"

And he produced the earring.

Mr. Rawson beamed. Mrs. Warren gasped. The gargoyle seemed more atrocious than ever. It seemed, in fact, the most abominable thing in all the world.

"I want you to accept it," said Mr. Rawson. "And, furthermore, you must no longer hide your light under a bushel. You must not keep these precious treasures in a curio-cabinet. You must wear them—in your ears!"

This time, Mrs. Warren could not even say "Thank you!"



## WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND  
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

### THE LAST REFUGE OF "ROMANCE"

WHERE may the last refuge of old, raw, unbridled romance now be found? I believe truly that the crimson-coated monster has discovered a new and unshakable lair in the moving-picture theatre. You enter one of these places and at once you find yourself in a remote world of false realism and mock heroics, all quite as insubstantial as the flickering shadows on the screen.

Knowing my own Far West, I am both amused and surprised at the childish faith the multitudes of the Eastern States and of England and, for that matter, of the world, display, for instance, in the impossible melodramatics of the Wild West *motifs*. Such cowboys, such Indians, such heroines, lie beyond all that is human; such adventures as bubble forth from the mad fancy of the cinematograph hack-writer and are acted by ambitious young actors and orchid-like maids before the crystal eye of the camera, would seem grotesque even in a dream. Nevertheless, to the uncritical audience, fed full with the bleak actuality of their days, these things are not lies but life, not hollow fiction but facts drawn from regions of fine adventure and keener air. The impregnable conviction that their own existences and their immediate neighbors' are humdrum and matter-of-fact only intensifies their firm belief in a better, nobler, freer existence possible only in that dim and nebulous Land of Romance. Tenaciously they cling to it and eagerly they demand it—in their reading, in their plays, in their "art." The factory-girl and the dry-goods clerk are all adventurous at heart—something *must* happen to cast a

glory of light and a shimmer of gold and the red blood of a burning passion into their machine-made lives. As experts, they know just how these things that do not befall *ought* to befall. For all their ideas of these things are preconceived, inherited, sedulously fostered, nor will they permit their own experiences to cancel or annul a single illusion. They are the victims of the spinners of fairy-tales, of the mongers of the crass melodrama.

The new lying moonshine that beguiles the millions of to-day is no longer reflected sunlight, but the harsher, deadlier white glare that streams through the lens of the picture-machine. Seeing is not only believing, but seeing done is knowing. In their shadow-shapes the villain is hissed and the hero is applauded—just as rapt Italians shout and cry over the antics of the wooden marionettes operated by heavy cords and thick iron rods.

What, then, is this strange romanticism which humanity, especially Anglo-Saxon humanity, hugs so fiercely to its heart? Is it a worship of idealized life, is it the rainbow or halo that imagination weaves about the fancied joys and happiness of a race of fairer and superior beings? Each man may furnish his own answer, and, again, each woman. One thing alone is certain—when one human being, great or obscure, is selected by fate to be the hero or victim of real romance, that unfortunate person but dimly realizes his part in the drama, and but seldom enjoys it. For it is of the essentially tragic nature of romance that it can never be realized from within. It is almost entirely a matter of appearances, of externals, of color and light, like that of the poor ghostly figures which flash across the screen in their two dimensions. The real taste of high romance is bitter as the brine of the sea, but it is as well that lovers should not too soon learn that this is so. Life is at once the mode and the arena of Nature's operations, and Nature, as we know, has need of many lies.

But the old and unregulated ideas of romance linger on in the world's heart, for the world's heart is always fuller and yet for all that always hungrier than the world's head. Once romance cast a splendor about kings, tragic lovers, and ruthless conquerors, and the false glamour these gave it still hangs about it like a poisonous phosphorescence; but steadily it sinks to levels that are more and more plebeian. Like a tree, it dies from the crown downward. The rose-fire of dawn has left the peaks of civilization, though its reflex is still artfully and artificially kept aglow for the folk in the valleys by an insidious conspiracy among writers and artists—and even syndicates!—who live by feeding the people with adulterated food for the soul and pernicious illusions about life and love.

"What!" comes the cry. "Is Romance to wither from the world and leave all things gray?" No, for that which is behind all real

romance is eternal and of the skies, but false romanticism is a disease that blights the sanity of life. It is like a drug that produces not dreams but distortion and delirium. For how much misery, frenzy, and jealousy may not blind "romantic" love be held responsible!

If the drift of the times discloses anything, it is that the more advanced elements among mankind are once more surely tending towards a new, sane, and vital classic spirit. Let none fear that sentiment, idealism, aspiration, or poesy will perish from among men, nor even a truer romance. For these are of the visions that feed the poets, and until the poets die these shall live on in the terrestrial field of the great solar cinematograph in whose beams we phantoms strive and dream.

HERMAN SCHEFFAUER

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### OVERLOADING THE CANAL

**N**OW that the opening of the Panama Canal—our canal—really draws nigh, we seem to be confidently expecting more and more of it. We seem to be pressing forward into the best seats, and waiting for the curtain to rise on an instantaneous prodigy of valor, a very miracle of industrial growth. Something—a new god of commercial prosperity, belike—will spring full-armed from the first tide through the isthmus.

In this case, not distance, but nearness, lends enchantment to the view. And with all honor and credit to the canal and its promoters, it is to be tried under a tremendous handicap.

The canal is a big project. Big projects move slowly. Their advance depends upon a host of lesser objects. Many jubilant citizens, the country over, apparently expect that the formal opening of the canal will disgorge from ocean to ocean an immediate stream of ships, scurrying to carry their cargoes by short-cut to profitable ports. These ports are waiting. Scarce a harbor on the Pacific Coast but anticipates (according to its home papers) a tremendous influx of shipping. The non-partisan observer might readily believe that with the opening of the canal a plume of coal-smoke, flecked with bellying sails, would band the Pacific horizon from Panama to Portland. From New Orleans and the Gulf up-floats a hum of satisfaction and of preparation; the Atlantic Coast and the trans-continental railroads are presumed to be vying at new schedules of transportation; and the American citizen, whether he be producer or consumer, plans (as would again appear) a new system of business and of living.

This is overloading the canal, at the very start of the journey. It is cruelty to animals, if you please to pursue the metaphor. The canal will live up to reasonable expectations; after it is adjusted and has obtained

momentum, it will doubtless live up to now unreasonable expectations. But grant it time to get its breath. A little figuring with pencil and paper should be a wholesome aperient for the present enthusiast who cannot bear disappointment. Yes, even a little quiet reflection, apart from the madding crowd, will convince the most optimistic that the canal, experimental in its conception, must be experimental for some months after its birth.

The canal is big; the industries which it presumably will aid are big; the life which it ought to affect is big: and results must percolate slowly.

So, ladies and gentlemen, don't crowd the canal. It will be a little dazed and awkward at first. Stand back, and give it air; and wait.

EDWIN L. SABIN

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## TEMPERAMENT

TIME was—and that not many decades ago—when we all had temperament of one sort or another. I might have a gloomy temperament, you a genial one, our friend a phlegmatic one; and the kindest, simplest soul among us was as temperamental as his nervous and complex brother. Nowadays we apply the word to but a single class of individuals, and the test of temperament seems to be that a man shall always do the unexpected, and shall be extremely difficult to live with. And as in Attic days there were but Greeks and barbarians, to-day there are but the temperamental and the commonplace.

Fortunately, an overwhelming proportion of us are commonplace; for no family could, with pride and difficulty, support more than one temperamental member. It is the commonplace who bear the brunt of living, offering themselves as buffers between those favored creatures of temperament and the daily friction of family life. We must needs be tender of them, for it is of them that geniuses are made. "Be careful of Edward's feelings," is the constant warning of an anxious mother. "He has so much temperament, and is so sensitive!" And Edward continues to go about with an ill-balanced chip on his shoulder, which his brothers and sisters dare not knock off, though among themselves they are well aware that knocking about is what he needs above all else.

If every individual of temperament became a full-fledged genius, no amount of forbearance would seem too great a price to pay on the part of the payers. Unfortunately, many fall just enough short of this desired culmination to keep us in doubt all the time. And he who falls short of ripening into the genius he has for years been expected to be is likely not to ripen in any direction, but to harden into a disappointed, ex-

acting creature, needing a still larger and more devoted group of buffers to save his tender mental shins.

At the risk of even losing a few geniuses out of the world, would it not be better to turn over all temperamental children to their commonplace brothers and sisters without reservation? Children are wise creatures, even the dullest of them. Their cruelties are, in the long run, kind. They will replace the aggressive chips upon Edward's shoulder with the burden that belongs there—that of serving as he would be served, and enduring as he would be endured. And if, with this fair play all around, he blossoms into a genius, we are only too thankful to rise up and call him blessed!

HELEN COALE CREW

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### THE PRIDE OF INFERIORITY

“DUGDALE is a fool!” exclaimed a smart young collegian, referring in flippant derision to a less superficially brilliant classmate whose resolute abstention from various forms of dissipation so seductive to the average student was working its natural effect on his scholarship and character. That was thirty years ago, and to-day Dugdale—though that is not his real name—holds a prominent place among the world's workers and thinkers, whereas he of the curling lip and ready gibe has become enveloped in that boundless contiguity of shade which even smart young collegians have been known to enter promptly after graduation. His total eclipse is noted in the alumni register of his college by a significant blank opposite his name—a name without even a local habitation that can be discovered.

The pride of inferiority that delights in belittling the virtue or the talent which one does not possess is no new thing. It has ever been found cheaper in expenditure of energy and grit to assume an air of haughty superiority toward the virtuous or the talented person, than to buckle down to the hateful task of acquiring some degree of the excellence in question. Rather let the odious object of one's dislike and secret envy be summarily consigned to the Ananias Club or the Ahab Association or the Judas Iscariot Society, or whatever more iniquitous confederation of scoundrels there may be.

Amusing are the airs of superiority, often a pitying and patronizing superiority, assumed through ignorance. Darwin's honest and matter-of-fact gardener looked upon his master as a poor, doddering, feeble-foolish sort of recluse, grubbing after worms and spending hours in vacuous contemplation of insignificant weeds and insects. What a blessing it would be, thought the faithful servant, if the poor gentleman could only have some regular occupation! The Göttingen professor

who, on a visit to America, took occasion to express in public his regret that one of his former pupils, of unusual early promise, now the foremost financier of his time and incidentally a munificent patron of art and letters and a generous benefactor to various other good causes, had not remained at Göttingen to succeed him as teacher of mathematics, may fairly be held to have indulged, in an innocent and amiable fashion, in something like the pride of which we are speaking. The glories of a mathematical professorship in the town famous for its university and its sausages not unnaturally shone resplendent to his mind's eye.

A certain great artist's factotum used to move the mirth of visitors to the studio by his manifest sense of the importance of his own services. Washing brushes, cleaning palettes, stretching canvases, adjusting window-shades—these and many other arduous duties were assigned to him, while the artist himself had nothing to do but lay on the colors when everything had been made ready for that simple operation. The maid-servant of a distinguished woman of letters was recently overheard deploring her mistress's habitual disregard of certain usages prescribed by fashion. "Would you believe it?" exclaimed the girl. "She actually started for the opera the other evening with her last winter's hat on her head and a rent in one of her gloves! But what can you expect of a lady that spends all her time just reading and writing books?"

Truly, the comfortable self-complacency of unenlightened inferiority is a thing almost to be envied.

PERCY F. BICKNELL



## LIFE SPEAKS

BY EDWARD WILBUR MASON

THEY do me wrong who say that I am pain,  
 Or grief, or error, or a shadow pale  
 More aimless than the dust blown on the gale,  
 And futile as the leaf drenched in the rain.  
 Nay, nay, not so; I am no trifle vain,  
 Nor monstrous lie foredoomed at length to fail;  
 And neither am I but an idle tale,  
 Nor yet a thing of horror and disdain.  
 But I am real and beautiful as truth:  
 Forever am I moved by starry law  
 Divine as that outshining death and doom.  
 I am the spirit bright of love and youth—  
 The Babe born in the manger on the straw,  
 The God that rose triumphant from the tomb!



# THE INVESTOR AND THE GOLD SUPPLY

*By Edward Sherwood Mead, Ph.D.*

## ARTICLE I.

IN a series of articles recently published in *Cotton and Finance*, dealing with the subject of the gold-production and its effect upon the prices of bonds, stocks, and commodities, Mr. Theodore H. Price reaches a conclusion which, if it can be established, is of vital moment to every owner of property in the United States, whether that property be bonds, insurance policies, stocks, or real estate. Briefly stated, this conclusion is, that the increasing production of gold is responsible for the great rise of prices which has been the characteristic feature of the last decade; that this increased production of gold will continue indefinitely, and that the world is facing an economic crisis arising out of the certainty of a persistent depreciation in its standard of value.

This subject has been much discussed in recent years as the steady rise of prices has brought home to every class in the community the importance of the problem presented. The fact of the advance of prices is well established. In 1896 Bradstreet's compilation of the wholesale prices of 106 commodities, including all the leading commodities of commerce, was 59,124; in 1900 this figure had risen to 78,839; in 1905, to 80,987; and in 1912, to 90,362. Specimen increases in particular commodities are even more striking. For example, during this period of seventeen years the price of wheat rose from 64 cents to \$1.22; the price of corn, from 33 cents to 86 cents; the price of beef cattle, from 4.6 cents to 9 cents; eggs, from 12 cents to 20 cents; raw cotton, from 7 cents to 11 cents; anthracite coal, from \$4.25 to \$5.50; and so on, with hardly an exception throughout the entire list. This rise of prices is mainly responsible for the high cost of living. The advance of prices is lessening the purchasing power of gold over the necessaries of life. On the other hand, because of the rapid multiplication of companies and the numerous safeguards which experience and information are teaching the bankers to throw about the stocks and bonds which they offer for sale, the competition of corporations for the money of the in-

vestor is growing constantly sharper, and is forcing down the prices of all securities which carry a fixed income, and which have no prospect of sharing in increasing profits. The investment fund, it is true, is steadily increasing, but since the purchasing power of 4 per cent. or five per cent. investment income is so rapidly declining, while at the same time the number of securities offering higher rates of interest is increasing, the natural result is that the investor discriminates against so-called "gilt-edge" bonds. While this depreciation in the price of bonds is apparently an advantage to investors making new purchases, it is threatening heavy losses to the owners of investments already in existence.

Few realize to what an enormous total the securities of bonds and stocks issued by American corporations has mounted. In an article by Francis Lynd Stetson, published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for July of this year, which is quoted by Mr. Price, the following statement is made:

In the fiscal year 1909, according to the report of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, there were in the United States 262,490 corporations of all kinds, with more than \$84,000,000,000 of stocks and bonds and \$3,125,000,000 of income, paying a Federal tax of about \$27,000,000. For the fiscal year 1910-11 the figures had risen to 270,000 corporations, with more than \$88,000,000,000 of stocks and bonds and \$3,360,000,000 of income, paying a Federal tax of \$29,432,000. As the total wealth of the United States has been estimated at \$125,000,000,000, it would appear that nearly two-thirds of it is held by corporations.

Approximately one-third of this immense mass of securities represents promises to pay gold at various dates in the future, and the value of the commodity which these bonds promise to pay is falling with every advance in the price of commodities. Standard railroad bonds, which fifteen years ago were selling on a 3½ per cent. basis, have now fallen in price until they yield between 4 and 4½ per cent., and the decline is persistent. During the past year the decline in the prices of all kinds of bonds has been noteworthy. Every variety of bonds, railroad, industrial, municipal, has suffered from the depreciation of investments.

On the other hand, this same period which has witnessed such a marked decline in the value of bonds has shown an even more pronounced advance in the prices of stocks. The average price of 36 standard railroad and industrial stocks in 1896 was \$62.50; on May 1, 1912, this average price had almost doubled, rising to \$118. The reason is as follows: A share of stock represents a right to participate in the distribution of profits of the corporation. These profits tend to increase during periods of rising prices because the costs of production and distribution, including as they do a large amount of fixed expense,

as, for example, for interest, depreciation, etc., do not advance to correspond with the increase in the selling-value of the product, so that the margin between cost and selling price, the profit margin, increases when prices rise. Every business which depends upon the sale of a commodity has felt the stimulating influence of rising prices, and even the public-service corporations, whose prices and rates are fixed by law and custom, the railroads, street-railways, gas, electric-light, and water companies, have profited enormously from the immense business which the advance of prices has so greatly assisted to produce. It is no wonder, therefore, that the prices of the stocks which promised their holders participation in this recent flood of industrial profits should have scored such rapid advances.

Here, then, is the situation. The advance of prices shows no sign of stopping. With every increase in commodity prices, the purchasing power of gold declines. All forms of corporate debt, every variety of bonds, represent promises to pay this commodity which is so rapidly depreciating in value. Of necessity, therefore, prices of bonds decline as the prices of commodities advance. On the other hand, rising prices mean rising profits, and the prices of stocks which participate in those rising profits advance far more rapidly than bonds decline.

The conclusion is inevitable, and Mr. Price has no hesitation in emphasizing it in the strongest possible terms; if the advance of prices is to continue, the investor should discriminate against all bonds, mortgages, and notes which are simply contracts to deliver at a future date so many grains of gold, since the purchasing power of that gold is constantly diminishing; and the investor should prefer agricultural, timber, and mineral lands, and corporation stocks. In other words, if the depreciation of gold is to continue, the prices of bonds must persistently depreciate. Any one buying a security carrying a fixed income, whether a bond or a preferred or guaranteed stock, must face the probability of a fall in the price of his investment. On the other hand, those who put their money into property or certificates of interest in corporations which give them the right to participate in the profits of industry, can look forward to a steady appreciation in the money value of their investments.

These statements challenge attention. I have stated them in the baldest possible manner, so that the issues which they raise can be set forth with entire distinctness. If the depreciation of gold continues, bonds must come down and stocks must rise. If a survey of the situation shall lead us to the conclusion that the depreciation of gold will at no distant date work its own remedy in arresting the increase in the production of gold, then these pessimistic utterances can be subject to the moderating influence of a heavy discount.

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## MISS PHOENIX

BY  
ALBERT LEE

## I.

THE fact that nine women out of ten are unpunctual was in no way a consolation to Henry Townsend, Esq., playwright, as he paced his study, impatiently awaiting the arrival of Miss Leslie. She had promised to come promptly at one o'clock, have a bite of luncheon with him, and spend whatever part of the afternoon might be required to help him whip the second act of "The Blue Radish" into shape. As she had most of the lines and practically all the situations in that act, and as she was very clever, besides being young and beautiful, Townsend felt that he really needed her collaboration. The new play was practically finished; the slump in the second act had been bolstered up into real action; and the playwright knew that a couple of hours' work, with the prospective star as a critic, would put the whole thing into shape. Joyman wanted to begin rehearsals next week. Townsend experienced the glow of accomplishment, and was mentally caressing the child of his brain.

Nevertheless, he was a little irritated at the lady's delay, and he pushed the bell-button with a vindictive vigor which seemed not wholly justified by circumstances. His placid little Jap man slipped through the half-open door as silently and as glowingly as an eastern dawn.

"I hope you have not prepared anything that will spoil by waiting," Townsend said, as he took another look at his watch, and then fell back resignedly into the arms of a great chair.

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"No, sir," replied the Jap, as he hovered silently round the little table set for two. "Nothing spoil, sir. Everything be all right. I know ladies be 'most always late, sir."

Townsend lit another cigarette, and was reaching over to a pile of manuscript that lay on his desk when the electric bell shrilled the expected announcement.

"Tomi," he called, rising quickly, "that's Miss Leslie now."

A tall, golden-haired, graceful young woman swept briskly into the room, with one hand extended to Townsend, the other arm loaded with bundles, and her face wreathed in a propitiating smile.

"Could n't help it, Harry," she said gleefully, as they shook hands.

"Of course not"—good-naturedly; "women never can; but you're forgiven."

"I am only half an hour late," she pleaded, heaping her bundles on a small table near-by. "It is just half past one. And, really, it was not my fault. I've had such a funny adventure!"

She pulled off her gloves, removed her hat, and proceeded to arrange her hair before the broad mirror that topped the quaint old sideboard at the far end of the room.

"If your adventure would complete the second act of my play," commented Townsend selfishly, "I should not mind. But you are here to do real work this afternoon, Laura, and the sooner we get at it the better."

"Don't be such a bear, Harry! I'll work—but don't you want to hear about my adventure with Jack Gray?"

"Jack Gray!" he exclaimed. "Well, well, well! I thought he had fallen off the face of the earth. I have n't seen him for weeks."

"Indeed, I have," returned Laura emphatically. "I've seen him this morning; and he has got himself and me into a nice mess. That's what delayed me. Then I had some errands to do afterward—shopping, you know; that's my plunder over there."

"Must be bargain day," observed Townsend, noting the parcels.

"Talk about bargains," she cried, "you ought to see the dear little red slippers I got for seventy-six cents, and the silk stockings for a dollar ninety-seven—marked down from six dollars!"

"No matter about that now," interrupted Townsend, as Tomi appeared with two small glasses on a tray. "Sit down; we'll have our luncheon first."

He pulled out a chair for his guest, and took his seat opposite, while the Jap placed the glasses, and disappeared as noiselessly as he had come.

"Now, what about Jack?" asked Townsend. "What has he done this time? He has always had a talent for doing peculiar things."

"This is the worst yet—the very worst." And, after a pause, "I am now Jack's wife!"

She leaned back in her chair, with both hands resting on the table, and stared at her host to note the effect of this startling announcement.

Townsend merely looked up with a vacant expression, and asked:

“What’s the joke, Laura?”

She laughed merrily: “Why, I am now Mrs. Jack Gray!”

“How can Jack have two wives? You know very well he has been married nearly three years.”

“Yes, I know,” she admitted, undismayed, “although I’ve never seen his wife.”

“Neither have I.”

“But she exists,—and I have been impersonating her this morning. I don’t like the part. I like my part in ‘The Blue Radish’ better. If you will listen calmly, I will give you the whole story from the beginning.”

Townsend begged her to proceed.

“I was on my way down-town this morning to see Ethel, my sister who lives in Chicago. She and her husband are stopping at the Holland House. I met Jack on Fifth Avenue, and we walked along together. I wanted to stop at the hotel a moment, so I let Jack go along with me. Ethel insisted upon my bringing him up,—and I was never so mortified in all my life. She asked us into the worst-looking room you ever saw. Her clothes and her husband’s were scattered all over the place. It was a pig-pen! To make matters worse, the first thing Jack did, in trying to find a place to sit down, was to upset a bottle of shoe-polish all over his coat. He had on one of those light gray, soda-water suits, you know.”

“Clever of Jack,” commented Townsend.

“Very. Of course I had to take off my gloves and get to work on that spot with benzine. Just then Fred, Ethel’s husband, telephoned from down-town that they must leave on the limited to-night, and told her to go right down to the office and see about the trunks and about getting berths and all that sort of thing, as he would not have time. So she rushed out, leaving Jack and me in the room.”

“Fine!” observed Townsend.

“Fine nothing!” retorted Laura. “Ethel must have stayed down in that old office for half an hour. Meantime, you can see a picture of Jack Gray wandering about the place in his shirt-sleeves, and me sitting on the bed in this wilderness of wearing apparel, scrubbing his coat!”

“How beautifully domestic!”

“Just so. Suddenly the door opens, and a fat old party flops into the room. Thought it was *his* room, you know. They let him off on the wrong floor, apparently. He started to apologize, and then all of a sudden he rushed up to Jack, grabbed him by the hand, and shouted, ‘Why, Jack Gray, I’m glad to see you!’”

"Who the deuce was it?"

"Jack introduced him as Colonel Crosby."

"Old Crosby! Why, of course! He always stops at the Holland."

"You know him, too?"

"Certainly. I've known him for years. He's the original jolly old Montana millionaire. He usually drops in to see me when he's in town. But what on earth did you do then?"

"Oh, Jack stammered and flushed like a Dutch bride. But the old fellow did not seem to notice his embarrassment. He just looked at me and said, 'I suppose this is your wife, Jack,' and, coming over to me, 'I am very glad to meet you, Mrs. Gray.'"

"Elegant!" shouted Townsend, bursting into peals of appreciative laughter. "Elegant!"

"My dear Harry, that is all very well; we might still have gotten out of it then and there. But that idiot Jack got completely rattled, and actually *introduced* me as his wife!"

Townsend bowed over the table in mock solemnity:

"Mrs. Gray—delighted, I'm sure."

"You may be sure *I* was not delighted! And then Jack launched into a long explanation as to *why* we were stopping at the Holland House—having our house redecorated, and all that sort of rot—and was getting beautifully tangled up when the old gentleman proposed that we dine with him at the Ritz this evening. He would not listen to a refusal. So Jack and I, as Mr. and Mrs. Gray, are to take dinner in public with Colonel Crosby."

"But surely you don't dream of doing such a thing!" exclaimed Townsend.

"Of course not. To accept was the easiest way out. I told Jack he'd have to break the date over the telephone, late this afternoon. He's almost delirious over it. I told him I was coming here, and he said he'd drop in about five and report progress."

"That's good; we'll have the second act in good shape by that time. But how on earth will he square himself with Mrs. Jack?"

Laura's reply was drowned in a shrieking of whistles and a clanging of bells. For some little time there had been evidences of a disturbance in the neighborhood; but the clamor in the street below—the shouting of men and galloping of horses—now made it evident that the cause of the tumult was not far away. Townsend stepped to the window, and, throwing it open, looked down into a street full of excited people. Several fire-engines were distributed along the block, and great clouds of black smoke were rolling up from their glistening bodies. He called to Laura to join him, and they leaned far out, enjoying the excitement of the occasion, and watching the movement and chaos in the crowd below.

## II.

THE fire appeared to be in a stable about half a block away, on the opposite side of the street, for men were rushing horses out of the doorway, and engines were pouring great streams of water into the lofts above. A gentle wind sent the smoke-clouds billowing and plunging over the adjoining buildings, and soon little yellow tongues of flame could be seen licking their way along the cornice of the next house. As soon as this was noticed, there came a great shouting and rushing of men, and presently our spectators saw policemen and rubber-clad firemen carrying people from the threatened building out into the street, through the swaying jam of curious humanity, into the shops and houses near-by.

"Is not that the Turkish bath?" asked Laura presently.

"That's just what it is," replied Townsend. "It's a woman's bath, too. I don't envy them. But, great Scott! what's that?"

The cause of this exclamation was a violent ringing of the apartment's front door-bell—a persistent, telegraphic summons of long and short dashes, that shrilled and whirred and buzzed without pause.

"Is n't that your door-bell?" asked Laura anxiously.

"I should say it was! Tomi, go to the door! Why, it sounds like a madman."

They turned from the window and followed Tomi expectantly with their eyes.

"It must be Jack," observed Laura, smiling. "He feels that way."

But it was not Jack. When Tomi opened the door, a tall, slim, much excited individual, with his hat hanging to the back of his head, strode into the apartment. Townsend gazed at him for a moment in silent wonder, and then recognized him as a man he had known slightly for some time.

"Talcott!" he cried.

"Ah, Townsend, I am glad to find you in!" exclaimed the intruder. Then, turning quickly to Tomi, he shouted, "Don't shut that door!"

"What the deuce is the matter?" demanded Townsend sharply.

"There's a woman coming up."

"A what?"

"A woman."

"Confound it, I can't receive any of your friends to-day! What do you mean?"

"She's not a friend. You *must* let her in. She——"

"But, you infernal idiot, I tell you I won't! I'm busy."

"But you *must*, old chap. She has n't any clothes on——"

"What!" shrieked Townsend.

Laura rose quickly from her chair and stared appealingly at Town-



send, who was wondering what he should do with this crazy fellow. But the latter stood unabashed.

"I tell you she has n't any clothes on," he repeated. Then, turning toward the door, he called to some one still outside, "Right this way!" and immediately there appeared upon the threshold a tall, brawny, helmeted fireman, bearing in his arms what appeared to be a limp bundle wrapped in a rough blanket, from out of the lower portion of which protruded two small, bare, pink feet.

"For Heaven's sake, what's this?" cried Townsend, aghast.

"It's a woman," vouchsafed the fireman stolidly.

"You should n't mind, old man," began Talcott in explanation. "They are taking them into all the houses. Rescued from the fire, you know."

"Where'll I drop her?" interrupted the fireman.

"Don't *drop* her!" cried Laura, eagerly rushing forward.

"Here, take her into my bedroom," suggested Townsend, coming to his senses. "Laura, please see what you can do;" and, opening the door that led to his chamber, he motioned to the burdened fireman to follow Miss Leslie, now all absorbed in the woes of the unfortunate member of her own sex.

Townsend turned and glared at his over-enthusiastic and misguided acquaintance.

"You jackass!" he snarled.

"I did n't think you'd mind," ventured the other meekly.

"Mind!" growled Townsend. "Do you take my apartment for a hospital?"

"I knew you lived here, and I thought you'd be glad to be of assistance. Of course, if you're not, I'm sorry. I hope you'll pardon me. I'll go back now and see if I can help any one else."

"Don't you help any one else up here, or I'll brain you with a chair!" But Talcott was out of earshot before this fierce threat was hurled after him.

Townsend turned toward the bedroom, and was met by the fireman coming out.

"Well?" Townsend asked.

"I guess she ain't hurt," said the man, grinning.

"That's good," Townsend replied sympathetically.

"Just scared. You can't blame a woman for being scared when she's yanked out of a Turkish bath without a rag to her back."

"Eh?"

"Sure, not a rag! I borrowed the blanket off'n the ambulance horse. I guess your lady friend'll look after her, and she'll come round all right." With which cheerful assurance, the fireman nodded pleasantly, and stamped out of the room.

Meanwhile Laura was not having such a disastrous time as she had anticipated with the unfortunate young woman of the horse-blanket. That lady was in no way burned or injured. Her emotions seemed to arise chiefly out of a realization of her lack of personal apparel.

"What on earth am I to do?" she inquired piteously, after Laura had tucked her snugly into Townsend's bed. "Everything around here looks so dreadfully masculine. Do—do you—I beg your pardon—but do you live here?"

"No, I'm only lunching here," answered Laura cheerily. "But we'll fix you up some way. Perhaps Mr. Townsend has a bath-robe, or something, that will do temporarily. And oh," she cried gleefully, remembering her morning's purchases, "I have a few things myself. Just wait a moment, and I will get them for you."

With a reassuring glance at the prisoner of circumstance, she hurried back into Townsend's study, where she found that melancholy young gentleman preparing a hot toddy.

"For our guest," he explained, with some pride. "She must need a bracer."

"But not a *hot* toddy, you imbecile! The poor girl does not want anything hot. Don't you realize that she is just out of a fire and a Turkish bath?"

Laura then turned to her parcels.

"We've got to get something for her to put on. It's lucky I bought slippers and stockings this morning. She can wear those. You don't happen to have any skirts or shirtwaists hidden away, do you, Harry?"

"No ladies' costumes at present, I'm sorry to say. Would a pair of pajamas do?"

"They'll help. But have n't you some sort of a robe or wrapper or something?"

"By Jove! I never thought I should have such use for it when I bought it," and he rang for Tomi. "I was going to have it cut up into pillows or lambrequins or some such rot. . . . Tomi," he continued, as the Jap entered at the door, "where is that elaborate what-you-may-call-it that I got in Tokio—that red silk thing with the gold dragons?"

"Yes, sir," nodded Tomi; "I can get, sir," and he vanished.

"The thing is a gorgeous kimono sort of affair, that was worn by a Shogun or a Tycoon or some other picturesque blackguard at some remote period of the last century," Townsend explained. "But I say, Laura," he continued, sipping gingerly at the beverage he had prepared, "what sort of—sort of—person—is this to whom I am about to lend my art treasures—my elaborate gold dragons?"

"Oh, she's all right," replied Laura confidently. "She's a lady, and she's a good sort."

"Then, we might ask her out to have a bite."

"As soon as we get her dressed," nodded Laura.

Tomi returned with a gorgeous oriental garment that blazed with gold-embroidered creatures on a background of scarlet satin. Laura exclaimed at its beauty, and was truly delighted at acquiring an article of apparel so nearly feminine in its nature.

"And now, what else?" she asked.

"You'll find pajamas in the dresser in my room; that's about all I can provide—unless a mackintosh——"

"No, these things ought to suffice. We'll try, at any rate."

### III.

THE pajamas, of course, were much too large for the graceful little woman who lay under the blankets, anxiously awaiting Laura's return. But she slipped gleefully into them, when they were presented to her, and by means of pins and tucks and twists the two women managed to wrest at least propriety out of the desert of a masculine wardrobe. The Tycoon's robe was an excellent fit, and when bound in at the waist by its silken cord proved a serviceable garment. The young woman coiled her thick, dark hair upon the top of her head, fixed it firmly with a comb—the only one of her personal belongings she had brought with her—then sat down on the edge of the bed and gazed helplessly at Laura.

"What am I going to do now?"

"You're going to come out and have some luncheon."

"Go out there like this!" she exclaimed, springing to her feet and attempting to get a look at herself in the mirror over Townsend's dresser.

"You surely could not go out any other way, could you?" asked Laura mischievously.

"Oh, I would not think of going out there!"

It took Laura nearly five minutes to persuade her that, after all, this was the only sensible thing to do, and that it would be a kindness to both Townsend and herself if she would come in and help them to finish their interrupted meal. As the young person looked exceedingly pretty in the red robe, she finally consented, and was thereupon conducted into the presence of Townsend, who was presented to her with due formality.

They all sat down to table, and the unbidden guest frankly and gaily confessed that she was nearly famished.

"One always is after a Turkish bath," said Laura.

"I have not had anything since breakfast. I expected to lunch there. I suppose you understand that I was forcibly seized in that bath place and carried up here?"

"Oh, we did n't think you came of your own free will," laughed

Townsend. "Now set to and retrieve yourself! Afterwards you shall tell us all about it. Laura, please pour some tea for Miss—er—Miss——" and he smiled inquiringly at her of the red robe.

"Harry!" exclaimed Laura reproachfully, as the girl colored and looked up appealingly at her.

"Oh, you dear good Samaritans," she finally said, "won't you be still further kind, and let me remain incognito?"

"Certainly," replied Townsend, "if you wish it. But we must address you in some way, so I shall call you—er—Miss Phoenix. Phoenix, because you rose from the flames."

"Quite so," laughed Laura.

"Miss Phoenix it shall be," bowed the young woman, with a grateful smile.

"I suppose you won't want to go into a Turkish bath again for some time," proceeded Townsend, after a brief pause.

"Dear me!" sighed Miss Phoenix. "The very words 'Turkish bath' make my hair stand on end. I feel as if a punishment had been visited upon me."

"For what sin?" he asked.

"Disobedience. You see, my husband has forbidden me to take Turkish baths." (The word "husband" gave Townsend an unexpected and positive start.) "Some silly doctor once told him they were debilitating for women, and consequently he will not permit me to go near one—and I just revel in Turkish baths!"

"Why, if I had a husband," said Laura, "and he tried to prevent me from taking a bath, I'd jolly well——"

"Now, Laura!"

"Oh, but, you see," persisted Miss Phoenix, "he is very positive in his antipathy. I sometimes think it is a mild form of insanity with him. I did take one after he said I must not, and we did n't speak for almost two weeks. So now I have to take my Turks on the 'Q T.'"

"There was not very much Q T about this one, was there?" observed Townsend, with woful lack of tact.

"No, it was more C Q D," retorted Miss Phoenix promptly, "and I am not by any means rescued yet! I'm afraid to go home. That's what it is to be naughty, you see," she added, with a smile. "Why, actually, if my husband should walk in now, and find me sitting here in this costume, I should almost rather he thought the worst than know I had been to a Turkish bath! Oh, dear, there goes my hair!"

In the earnestness and vigor of her conversation the little woman had nodded and shaken so much that her rich black tresses now came tumbling about her shoulders.

"Let me fix it for you," said Laura, rising. "I am quite an expert at hair-dressing. Oh, what a beautiful comb!" she exclaimed, holding

up an exquisite piece of tortoise-shell richly set in dark, carved gold, with here and there little enamelled cupids worked into the design. "Is n't that perfectly lovely work, Harry?"

"I got it in Naples the year we were married," explained Miss Phoenix. "It once belonged to the Countess Francesca, who was a favorite at the court of the last King of Naples. There is not another like it. Notice the work on the little coat-of-arms."

"It is certainly a beautiful and original piece," said Townsend, returning the comb to Laura, who by this time had made quite a wonderful construction of braids and tresses.

"At present it is my sole earthly possession—which leads me to the subject of clothes. I must have clothes to go home in. I suppose mine are ruined over in the Turkish bath."

"I'll call a messenger," said Townsend, rising, "and you can send home for some."

"Goodness gracious!" cried Miss Phoenix, aghast. "I would n't think of sending home! Can't we try the bath first? Fancy my sending home for an outfit of clothes to be delivered to me at a gentleman's apartment!"

Townsend walked over to the window and reported that the excitement seemed to have quieted down, and that people were walking in and out of the stable and the bathing establishment. He suggested that he could go over and, no doubt, rescue the lady's clothes. Miss Phoenix described her apparel, and told him where he might expect to find it, and, without wasting time in idle questioning, our gallant playwright seized his hat and started to leave the apartment. It is proper to say that he started to leave the apartment, because just as he opened the outside door into the hall his bell rang, and he found himself standing face to face with a cheerful-looking, grimy-faced young man, with his shirt-sleeves rolled to his elbows, and his coat hanging over one arm.

"Promptest door service I ever experienced," said the new-comer, with a grin.

"Why, Fred, you nearly scared me out of a week's growth," said Townsend.

"I want to wash up, if you don't mind. I've been looking after injured firemen for the last hour;" and then, as he noticed the two women, he half backed away. "I beg your pardon, Harry; am I intruding?"

"Not at all. Come in and wash up. But first let me present you to Miss—Miss Phoenix, Doctor Sterling, and—oh, I guess you already know Miss Leslie."

The two women nodded, and the young doctor expanded into a still broader grin. "Sorry I can't shake hands," he said, "and I hope you'll forgive me for rushing in this way. I was looking on at the fire when

a call came for doctors, if there were any in the crowd. Several of the firemen were badly hurt. I've just been setting one poor chap's leg."

He would have chattered on indefinitely if Townsend had not led him forcibly by the arm into the neighboring pantry.

"Is that man's name Sterling?" gasped Miss Phoenix, as the door closed behind the two. Her face wore a look of alarm.

"Yes," replied Laura; "Doctor Fred Sterling."

"Oh, heavens!" was all the little woman could reply, as she stared in a hopeless sort of way at Miss Leslie.

"What's the matter?"

"He's a friend of my husband's."

"Well?"

"He's the doctor who put that fool notion into his head about Turkish baths."

"Does n't he know you?"

"No; he has never seen me before. You see, I was ill nearly a year after we were married, and I have n't caught up with all my husband's friends yet. But he must not know who I am, or that I was brought here from the Turkish bath!"

"Well, I hope Harry won't blurt it out;" and Laura stepped quickly to the end of the big room and called for Townsend.

"Have you said anything about anything to the Doctor?" she asked in a stage whisper as Townsend appeared.

"What's the matter?" he replied, with some concern. But when Laura imposed secrecy upon him, he understood and promised to obey.

#### IV.

"Now, my dear young lady," began Laura, as she returned to the frightened little Miss Phoenix, "we must get you out of here as soon as possible."

"You can't get me out quick enough."

"I'll go over and get those clothes myself. But let me say something first. You may trust me implicitly. You cannot tell what may happen in a mess like this; and I may be able to save you from some awkward predicament if I know who you are. For your own good, won't you tell me?"

"I know I can trust you," replied Miss Phoenix, with a beam of gratitude. "But promise me to tell no one. I am Mrs. John D. Gray."

"Mrs. Jack Gray!" Laura almost shrieked.

"You know the name?"

"Oh, yes, I've heard it; or perhaps I've seen it in the papers;" and, without further parley, she began putting on her hat. In her excitement, she was muttering to herself: "Mrs. Jack Gray! Can you beat it?"

And Jack Gray due here any minute! Nice thing if he should walk in now! Wife, negligée, red slippers—I can see the rest!”

She turned to the little woman, who had sunk into Townsend's big chair with a sigh of resignation.

“It's only across the street,” Laura said. “I won't be gone five minutes.”

That was quite possible; but unfortunately, just at this crisis, the two men came back into the room, and Townsend wanted to know at once why Miss Leslie had her hat on. Was she going home?

“I'm just going around the corner, Harry,” she replied impatiently. “Now, don't ask any questions.”

“I'll go with you——”

“It is not at all necessary,” she returned sharply. “You had better stay here.”

“I shall certainly not let you go down into that crowd alone,” persisted the tactless man, and, taking his hat again, he started for the door. Laura felt there was no time to be lost in argument, so she accepted the inevitable. As the door closed, Mrs. Gray shuddered slightly, huddled closer to her chair, and threw a frightened glance up at the grinning Doctor, who, to tell the truth, was a bit puzzled at all these proceedings. But Sterling was not a bashful young man, and as he gazed in admiration at the brilliant red and gold kimono, he made a sweeping gesture downward with both hands and asked:

“Does Harry provide these gorgeous conveniences for all his friends?”

“Never mind what Mr. Townsend provides for his friends,” replied the little woman severely. “You may sit down, if you like.”

“Thank you;” and as he pulled a chair from the table, he added, “I did not quite catch your name when I was introduced.”

“Phoenix,” replied Mrs. Gray promptly. “Miss Phoenix.”

“Very unusual name,” observed the Doctor.

“Possibly,” returned Mrs. Gray, “but it's a very old name. We can trace it back to mythological times.”

“How very singular! I've never heard Harry speak of you. Have you known him long?”

“I don't see of what possible interest that can be to you.”

“It interests me, because, as my good old friend Jack Gray says, all things concerning lovely women are interesting.”

“That's what your 'good old friend Jack Gray' says, is it?” exclaimed Miss Phoenix, sitting up a little straighter in her chair.

“Yep; Jack has perfectly correct ideas about many things. I think you'd like him. Unfortunately, he's married. Another good sport gone to waste!”

“Is that also an aphorism of your 'good old friend Jack Gray's'?”

"No; that's mine."

"That's *your* view of married life."

"Well, not altogether. I dare say Jack is quite happy. I've never seen his wife. Most of the time since his marriage I've been in the Philippines. She may be very lovely, but more likely she's a pie-faced, slab-sided creature with dyspepsia."

"Is that the way Jack talks of his wife?" she inquired, with a cynical smile.

"Oh, dear, no!" laughed Sterling. "He always speaks well of her——"

"Speaks *well* of her?"

"Yes, you know what I mean. He always speaks very nicely of her. But you can never judge anything from what a man says to other men about his wife."

"No more than you can judge of a husband from what his wife says, I suppose."

"Well, I can't say as to that," mused Sterling. "If women spoke as well of their husbands as they do of their favorite baking powder, this would be a better world."

There is no telling to what philosophical heights the Doctor might have flown if, at this juncture, the front door-bell had not again shrilly proclaimed a caller. Tomi entered almost immediately, and Miss Gray, realizing that still another stranger must be coming, leaped from her chair and turned toward the bedroom door.

"Where are you going?" inquired Sterling.

"I'm going to escape," she replied, with her hand on the door-knob.

"Oh, please don't," urged the Doctor, and he quickly and impudently put his arm round her in an attempt to hold her back. Mrs. Gray wrenched herself away, opened the door, slipped into the other room, and turned the key. But, as ill luck would have it, these violent movements disarranged her hair again, and the comb fell to the floor at the Doctor's feet. He picked it up, glanced at it casually, smiled, and laid it on the table, just as Tomi opened the door and admitted Mr. Jack Gray.

The two men greeted each other pleasantly, and each asked the other what he was doing there.

"Well, I've come to meet Laura Leslie, if you want to know," said Jack frankly.

"You gay dog!"

"I don't feel very gay, I can assure you. Is n't Laura here?"

"She and Harry went out a few minutes ago, but will be back immediately," explained the Doctor. "They left me in charge of the prettiest little soubrette you ever saw. She's been lunching up here with Harry;" and he waved his hand toward the table with the finger-bowls still on it. "When I came in she was sitting around *à la Japonaise*."



"Japanese, eh?"

"Well, *she* was n't Japanese. She was only free-and-ease. She and I were just getting on friendly terms when you had to butt in——"

"Why, I'll go right out again, old man——"

"Nonsense, nonsense! She fled at your approach. But I wish you could have seen her. A peach! One of those dark, dreamy, delicious damosels."

"Who is she?"

"Don't know—some discovery of Harry's. Her name is Phoenix. Know her?"

"Never saw or heard of her. I don't like that brunette style, any way;" and Jack seated himself leisurely in the chair that but a few moments before had held his wife.

"What on earth are you looking so glum about?" presently asked Sterling.

"Because I'm in an awful hole," replied Jack, rising and pacing the floor in much apparent agitation. "I've made a confounded jackass of myself!"

"Don't take it so unnaturally, old chap," was his friend's consoling reply.

"I can't help it. It's a serious matter. I met Laura Leslie by chance this morning, and walked down-town with her to the Holland House. We went up to her sister's room; the sister was called away, and Colonel Crosby walked in and found me alone with Laura."

"Who is Crosby?" asked Sterling.

"He's an old friend of my uncle Hiram——"

"The uncle who is going to leave you that hundred thousand?"

"Exactly," continued Jack. "They live in the same town, and are great friends. If Crosby ever told Uncle Hiram he had caught me as he did this morning—that is, if he knew—I'd be cut off without a cent!"

"What did you do?"

"I said Laura was my wife."

"You idiot!" was Sterling's astonished comment.

"I agree with you," said Jack promptly; "but the situation was rather forced on me. However, it's the immediate future that's worrying me. Crosby expects Laura and me to dine with him at the Ritz this evening. There was no denying him at the time. I've been trying all day to get him on the telephone to say that my wife is suddenly indisposed, and that I will be there alone. He sails for Europe Wednesday, and between now and then I must keep him from calling at my house. He's a sociable old fossil!"

"Well, it does n't look so bad, after all," said Sterling. "Laura won't mind missing a meal."

"Oh, she said she would n't go, any way. But it's after to-night I must scheme for. You come around to my house right after breakfast to-morrow morning and help me lay out a plan of campaign."

"Certainly."

"It will be a good opportunity for you to meet Mrs. Gray, too," added Jack. "It's high time you knew my wife."

## V.

THEY were still plotting to thwart the genial Colonel, when Townsend's key turned in the lock, and he and Laura appeared. It was fortunate that Laura, with Mrs. Gray's bedraggled clothing, was walking behind Townsend, for when she caught a glimpse of Jack Gray in the room with Doctor Sterling she was able to drop her burden in the outer hall and to close the door behind her. She was greatly relieved to notice that Miss Phoenix was nowhere in sight, and from Jack's air and demeanor she gathered that he had not seen his wife. So far, so good. But how to get the clothes to the poor girl, and how to keep Harry, the tactless, from asking what had become of his guest? All these thoughts cavorted through her mind as general greetings were being exchanged.

Miss Leslie was a woman of prompt decision and quick action. She walked over to Townsend's desk and scribbled on a pad:

Get these two men into the pantry at once. Say nothing about the girl. Stay away at least five minutes. Make 'em a drink. Don't ask questions. Act.

"Here's that address, Harry," she said, pulling him aside and thrusting the paper under his nose. "Read it, so you will be sure the directions are right."

Townsend read. Then he began to stammer. Laura leaped into the breach.

"You're a fine host!" she cried, and glared at him savagely.

"Boys," exclaimed Townsend, as if coming to himself, "walk into my little pantry, and I'll show you how to make the newest one yet;" and he bravely seized his two friends by the arms and pushed them before him.

Laura lost not a second of time. She retrieved the bundle of clothes, and, rapping at the door, called softly that all was safe. Mrs. Gray opened, displaying a very pale and agitated countenance.

"You know, don't you?" asked Laura, slipping into the bedroom.

"I recognized his voice," she gasped, "but I could n't hear anything they were saying."

"Dress like lightning! Go out through that door, through the

bath-room. It will lead you into Tomi's quarters, and he will show you out the servants' way. Don't mind about Tomi. Once you get down to the street, there will be plenty of taxis."

"Do you think I can get home before he does?"

"I'll see that you *do*," replied Laura, with determination. "I'll keep him here. I'll make him take me out to dinner."

"Oh!" gasped Mrs. Gray.

"You don't mind, do you?"

"Oh, my, no!" Mrs. Gray laughed. "Anything to give me a chance to reach home safely and get to bed with a headache."

"All right, I'll keep him;" and Laura returned softly to the study, leaving Miss Phoenix already almost half-dressed for her flight.

Laura sat down with a fluttering sigh and listened intently for any sound which would indicate that Mrs. Gray was going. But she heard nothing, and in what seemed to her a perilously brief period the pantry door opened, and the men returned, laughing, chatting, and drying their lips. She felt that her particular job just then was to keep the conversation from drifting to the subject of Miss Phoenix long enough to allow of that lady's escape, and then to get Jack Gray away from the other two.

But Fate was against Laura Leslie this time. The three had hardly come into the room when Jack, walking toward the table, caught sight of the gold and tortoise-shell comb of the late Countess Francesca. He paused a moment, looked again, and then picked it up and examined it.

"Where did this come from?" he asked in a hollow tone.

"It's mine," replied Laura promptly, and reached to take it from him.

"It can't be yours," replied Jack, with a frown, "unless there are two combs exactly alike; and I was led to believe that this was the only one."

"Nevertheless, it is mine," persisted Laura.

"It can't be. I know to whom it belongs!"

"It belongs to *me*, I tell you," repeated Laura impatiently. "Let me have it!"

"Can it be possible?" muttered Jack, as he stood gazing at the comb. "Could *she* have been here?"

"Could who have been here?" asked Laura. "What are you talking about? Give me back my comb!"

"Not until I find out," returned Jack, almost savagely. "Harry, how did this comb come here?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," stammered Townsend. "Laura must have put it there; she says it's hers. What's the mystery?"

"Harry," growled Jack, "that woman—that woman in your room—did she wear this comb?"

"Woman?" interrupted Laura, before Townsend could answer. "There is no woman in that room." She hoped, she felt, that Miss Phoenix must have had time to escape. "What is the matter with you, Jack? Are you still as crazy as you were this morning?"

"Fred told me there was a woman concealed in that room," said Jack stolidly.

"Well——" began Townsend, but Laura pulled him aside.

"I think Doctor Sterling must have been telling you fairy tales," she insisted. "I am the only woman here, and the only woman who has been here."

"But *there?*" asked Jack, melodramatically pointing at the bedroom door.

"Go and see for yourself," answered Laura calmly, and she wiped the cold perspiration from her hands.

Mrs. Gray was a neat and methodical young woman, and before leaving she had hung the Tycoon's robe in Townsend's closet and had wrapped the slippers and the stockings in the papers they had originally come in. For this reason, when Jack flung open the door, there was nothing at all to show that the room had been occupied less than five minutes before. The three others laughed almost hysterically when the vacant chamber brought relief to their nerves, but Jack Gray remained solemn, and, after gazing again at the comb, thrust it into his pocket and reached for his hat.

"What are you going to do now?" inquired Laura nervously.

"I am going to find out about this comb."

"But you can't go, Jack," she pleaded. "You know we have to meet Colonel Crosby in less than half an hour."

"I don't care," snapped Jack. "I'm going to see about this matter first."

"But Colonel Crosby?"

"Colonel Crosby be—blowed!" he cried, with impatience.

Now, during these moments of excitement, none of the four had heard the bell again, nor had they noticed Tomi slip quietly through the room to answer its summons. It thus happened that the Jap ushered a stout, elderly gentleman into their presence just as Jack exclaimed, "Colonel Crosby be blowed!"

"I am blowed, my boy, I am blowed," replied that worthy, between breaths. "It's a long pull up those stairs!"

To Laura, the Montana Colonel came as an angel from heaven. She fairly fell upon his neck, and manœuvred so as to place herself, with the old gentleman, between Jack and the door. The Colonel was all puffs and grunts and smiles, and did his best to explain to Townsend that, having a minute to spare before his dinner engagement, he had felt that he must come in to see him.

"And I was beginning to think, Jack," he said, turning to the latter, "that I might not see you this evening."

"Perhaps you won't," muttered Jack, but Laura drowned his voice with:

"Indeed, you shall, Colonel! And why did you think you would n't see us?"

"Because when I got back to the hotel this evening and asked for Mr. and Mrs. Gray, the clerk told me there was nobody of that name stopping at the Holland House."

The guilty conscience of Mr. Gray here led him to flounder deeper into his own mire.

"Quite right," he began briskly. "We left the hotel this morning—quite unexpectedly. Went back to our house——"

"Back home, eh?" said the Colonel.

"Yes," continued Jack glibly. "The paper-hangers sent word that the work was all done, and so we moved right in again."

"Are n't you afraid of the dampness?"

"Oh, no," laughed Jack; "we don't mind that."

"Well, well, perhaps it won't prove injurious," commented the old gentleman. "I'll give myself the honor, Mrs. Gray, of coming round to see you to-morrow, and you can show me your new decorations."

Jack fairly staggered.

"But," he stammered, "the dampness, Colonel! Don't you think it would be dangerous for a man of your age to enter a house where——"

"Bah!" roared the Colonel. "I'm as young as I feel! And just now I feel like having a good dinner!" Then he proceeded to invite Townsend and Doctor Sterling to join his little party at the Ritz.

Jack stood first on one foot and then on the other. Finally he blurted out, almost peevishly:

"Colonel, I'm awfully sorry, but I don't think we can go, after all."

"Nonsense, *dear husband*," smiled Laura, coming over to the disconcerted Jack and placing her hand upon his shoulder. "I feel much better now" (which was true), "and we must go with the Colonel. Besides"—as Jack began to expostulate—"I telephoned to the servants that we should not be home to dinner, after you accepted the invitation this morning."

Then, with triumphant satisfaction, she stepped to the mirror and began pulling little curls about under her hat.

"Of course, you're all coming," insisted the Colonel; "and, what's more, you're coming *now*."

"Right now!" exclaimed Laura, and, taking the Colonel by the arm, she led the way out. She looked back mischievously over her shoulder at Jack, who had been seized on either side by his grinning friends and was being gently pushed along.

"Come on, husband dear," she called to him, and sent him a great big wink.

## VI.

THE Grays lived in one of those attractive and comfortable little American basement houses of which there are so many in the upper Seventies and Eighties of New York. Theirs was a quiet street, full of quiet little homes, where people came and went quietly, and where no greater excitement than an awning across the sidewalk ever appeared to disturb the perfect calm of neighbors who scarcely ever knew one another.

It was Sunday morning—the morning of the day following that in which Mrs. Gray had had her unfortunate experience in the Turkish bath—and elsewhere.

She had reached home safely in a taxicab, after her escape from the playwright's apartment; and she was in her own room, and quite ready for bed, although it was barely six o'clock, when her husband called on the telephone and inquired if she would mind if he did not come home to dinner. He was at the Ritz, he explained, with Colonel Crosby and Townsend and Doctor Sterling. She answered him, with repressed eagerness, that she did not mind a bit; that she had a headache—which was quite true—and that she preferred to take a cup of tea and go to bed. She urged him to remain with his friends and have a good time. So Jack remained, but whether he had a good time or not is another matter.

However, he was home long before midnight, and when he came down to breakfast this Sunday morning, he wore a slightly worried look, which he did his best to conceal from his little sister-in-law, Phyllis, who poured his coffee.

"How's Gertrude?" he asked.

"All right, I guess," replied Phyllis carelessly. "She had her tea in her room; but she is nearly dressed, and ought to be down in a minute."

As a matter of fact, Mrs. Gray was just about to emerge from her room at that very moment; and when Jack and Phyllis came up to the library from the dining-room they found her comfortably installed in the sunshine by the window.

Mrs. Gray, it may be said, had something to worry her, too; but she concealed her feelings very well. She had made up her mind that nothing should compel her to admit that she had gone to the Turkish bath establishment; she hoped that the rest of the day's misadventures would never be heard of, and, having a lively imagination and a keen sense of humor, she felt confident that if some explanation had to be offered, she could, as Phyllis might have said, "get away with it." As a rule, Gertrude Gray was a truthful and straightforward person; but

for this particular crisis she had determined to evade, dissimulate, conceal, and even lie.

She greeted her husband and her sister with a radiant smile over the top of the fashion page of the newspaper.

"Well, gadabout," she began, feeling a certain joy at assuming the offensive, "did you have a good time last night?"

"Oh, pretty good," grunted Jack. "But how about you? How about that headache?" and he came over and stood near his wife.

"All gone!" she smiled up at him.

"Well, you don't look very chipper, dear. You're a trifle pale. You must have done too much yesterday."

"Oh, no," replied Mrs. Gray leisurely, shrugging her shoulders, and making the fatal plunge into prevarication. "Oh, no; on the contrary, I spent a very quiet afternoon. I went up to Roosevelt Hospital to see Mabel Moore, and just sat around."

"How's Mabel?" inquired Phyllis.

"First rate. She's almost well. She says that an operation for appendicitis is much less to be dreaded than an hour in a dentist's chair."

"I'm glad to hear she's getting along," observed Jack, as he settled himself comfortably in his big chair; "but I don't think it's a good thing for you to sit around a hospital an entire afternoon. It tired you out——"

"Nonsense!" interrupted Mrs. Gray. "Stop your growling, amiable one, and set a good example to Timothy, who approaches stealthily."

Mr. Timothy Pitkin was the affianced of Phyllis. He was an ascetic and a trifle pompous young man, a student of theology at one of New York's big seminaries. He affected the costume of the clergy, and the voice and manner of the very high churchman.

Timothy appeared at the head of the stairs and stood for a moment in the doorway. He was not wholly unconscious of effective posing.

"Good-morning, good people," he began, with a kindly and patronizing smile.

His greeting was returned.

"This is indeed a beautiful domestic scene that I enter upon," he continued in drawling tones. "The quiet home; the peaceful morning hour; the happy husband; the trustful wife; the pure and bashful maiden. I rejoice at the prospect of marrying into a family so perfect in its harmony and connubial love!"

Jack glared at the young man, who meantime had found a seat beside Phyllis.

"As for that harmony and connubial business," put in Mrs. Gray, "you talk as if you had been reading a trashy novel, Timothy."

"Why, he would n't do such a thing!" cried Phyllis, and then, in

an endeavor to change the drift of the conversation, she turned to her sister and added, "Do tell us more about Mabel Moore. When does she expect to leave the hospital?"

"Oh, pretty soon, I guess," responded Mrs. Gray noncommittally.

"Are you talking about Mabel Moore?" asked Timothy.

"Yes."

"She is—or was—in Roosevelt Hospital, was n't she?"

"She *is*," affirmed Mrs. Gray.

"Well, well," drawled Timothy, turning to Jack, "that was a startling condition of affairs which developed up there yesterday, was n't it?"

"What condition of affairs?" asked Jack, with some interest.

"Have you not read the papers?" returned Timothy. "I mean the smallpox scare," and he unfolded a yellow journal which he had brought with him.

"There's nothing about it that I've discovered in my paper—so far!" exclaimed Jack, making a great to-do of folding and unfolding reams of printed paper.

"Well," continued Timothy, with the air of a person who was giving out exclusive information, "they found six cases of smallpox in the hospital yesterday noon; scattered around in different wards, too. It scared the doctors almost out of their beards. They closed the doors of the hospital at once."

"Why, Gertrude!" exclaimed Jack. "You did not tell us anything about this."

"Gertrude spent the afternoon at the hospital," Phyllis explained to Timothy.

"The paper says," announced Jack, who now had Timothy's newspaper in his hands, "that no one was allowed to enter and no one was allowed to leave after twelve o'clock, noon; and that the whole place was fumigated." He gazed inquiringly at his wife.

"How did *you* get out?" blurted Phyllis.

"Come, Gertrude," said Jack, with impatience, "you should have told us about this."

"I did n't want to frighten you, Jack," began Mrs. Gray propitiatingly. "I did n't think it would all be in those foolish newspapers. I don't see why you bring these yellow papers into the house, any way, Timothy. It was not in *our* paper, about the smallpox."

"But is it true?" insisted Jack.

"Have n't you just read it in the paper?" rejoined Gertrude.

"How did you get out?" continued her husband.

"Doctor Fuller let me out," replied Mrs. Gray, now well launched upon her course of fiction. "Oh, but I had an awful time!" and she began putting some real action into her story.



"Do tell us about it," ventured Timothy, moving gingerly to the far end of the sofa.

"You see," proceeded Gertrude bravely, "I got into the hospital before the cases of smallpox were discovered, and went up to Mabel Moore's private room. Then there was this terrible excitement and hullabaloo——"

"How many cases of smallpox were found?" asked Jack.

"Oh, I don't know. They did not tell me. They just gave orders that everybody must be fumigated, so as not to scatter the disease all over New York."

"Well, how did you get out?" repeated Phyllis.

"I sent for Doctor Fuller—you know he's been looking after Mabel—and I pleaded and begged and wept. Finally, late in the afternoon, after the excitement was over, the Doctor said he would try to smuggle me out. But he said I would have to be fumigated and disinfected first."

"Fumigated!" peeped Timothy.

"And disinfected!" added Phyllis.

"And *were* you?"

"I was," asserted Gertrude stoutly, smiling as she recalled the actual fumigation she *had* experienced.

"It was dreadful," she continued, allowing her imagination free play. "They took me into a little room and burned a lot of foul-smelling powders and turned on the steam and sprayed me all over with some dreadful stuff. My sailor suit is simply ruined!" (This, she thought, was a master-stroke.)

"I should say it was ruined!" commented Phyllis. "I saw Mary taking it down to the kitchen this morning, and I wondered what had happened to it. No wonder the dress smelled as if it had been through a fire."

The word "fire" gave Mrs. Gray an unpleasant shock, but she recovered quickly, and proceeded with her narrative.

"After they had smoked me all up, they smuggled me through a back way and let me out. And I jumped into a taxicab and came home. And that's all."

"And that's enough," snorted Jack.

"But I say, Gertrude," minced Timothy, "were you exposed to the smallpox?"

"Heavens, my dear!" interrupted Jack, "you don't suppose there is any danger that you caught it, do you?"

"Of course not," laughed Gertrude, in an unguarded moment. "I was not anywhere near it."

"You said you were in the building," insisted Timothy.

Gertrude did not reply, and her husband approached and looked at her anxiously.

"You don't look well," he said. "You look pale and nervous and not at all like yourself."

"My dear Jack," she smiled, "there is nothing at all the matter with me."

"I am worried about you, nevertheless. You ought to have told me the truth about this hospital business at first, instead of trying to conceal it from me. Doctor Sterling is coming here this morning, and I shall have him examine you."

"Doctor Sterling!" exclaimed Gertrude.

"Yes. He is to call for me at eleven. We were going for a walk."

"Well, you can go for a walk," broke in Gertrude, "and walk as far as you like, but Doctor Sterling shall not examine *me*"—this with firmness. "Besides, I shall be out at eleven. I am going to church."

At any other time this announcement would have been greeted with roars of laughter, for Mrs. Gray had not been to church for years—a matter which had been a source of many arguments between her and Timothy. But now her statement was received with amazement, and all her family insisted that she must *not* go to church, lest she endanger the health of the congregation. Even Timothy said he would forego church that day, on the mere chance of having caught a stray microbe from Gertrude; and then he suggested that perhaps he and Phyllis had better retire to some other room, where they would be perfectly secure from infection.

After the departure of the younger couple, there was a brief silence, during which Jack seemed to be nerving himself for some further conversation. He coughed a couple of times, looked out of the window as if for inspiration, and finally went over and sat on the arm of his wife's chair.

"There's another thing I want to speak to you about, dear," he began. "I was waiting for Timothy and Phyllis to get out."

"Well?" she returned inquiringly.

"Of course I know it's all right," he stumbled along, "but I want you to tell me all about it."

"Why all these prefatory remarks?" asked Gertrude, who was not quite sure what was coming next.

For answer, he thrust his hand into his coat-pocket and brought out the comb that had once belonged to the Countess Francesca.

"Why, that's my comb!" she exclaimed, with apparent delight, but with a sinking heart, and her little head was busy for a few seconds formulating a plausible story. "Where did you find it, Jack?"

"I found it in a man's rooms," he said seriously.

"Really!" said Gertrude, with well-feigned surprise.

"Can you tell me how it got there?" he asked.

"In a man's rooms?" repeated his wife reflectively.

"Exactly."

"Was the man's name Townsend?" ventured Mrs. Gray, with a little puzzled frown.

"Yes," said Jack firmly. "I found your comb in Harry Townsend's rooms. You seem to know something about this. Please tell me."

"Well, Jack," she began hesitatingly, "I will tell you. That is, I'll tell you all I know—if you'll promise not to get angry——"

"I am not in the habit of getting angry," said her husband, in a tone of severe self-righteousness, "unless there is cause for it."

Gertrude chuckled. "I was afraid," she said, "that you might disapprove of my lending this comb to any one."

"Lending it?"

"You see," she continued glibly, "yesterday afternoon, just as I got to Mabel's private room in the hospital, her nurse was going out. She was all dressed up in her best bib and tucker, and prinking before Mabel's mirror, and she was having a strenuous time with her hair. So I sailed in and arranged her hair for her, and stuck in my comb. It looked so well on her that I told her she could wear it, and give it back to Mabel for me later."

"A careful person to lend things to!" grunted Jack, looking at the comb.

"After the nurse went out," Gertrude continued, "Mabel told me she was very much excited because she was going to take luncheon with a man—a Mr. Townsend."

"That's where you heard the name," commented Jack.

"Yes, but of course I had no idea the nurse was going to his apartments."

"She lunched with him in his rooms. I dropped in there late, and you may imagine my surprise when I saw your comb on the table, and heard that a woman had been there."

"You thought it was I?" smiled Gertrude mischievously.

"No, I did n't *really* think it was you. But I did n't know exactly what to think," explained Jack frankly. "What kind of a looking girl is this nurse?"

"A rather good-looking girl," said Gertrude, with becoming modesty. "About medium height; dark."

"That answers the description," agreed Jack. "And what's her name?"

"Oh—er," stammered Gertrude—"ah—er—Miss—Miss Phoenix, I think."

"That's it!" cried Jack, rising. "That's the name. I could n't remember it." And then he kissed his wife, and asked her forgiveness, and begged her not to go to church, and announced that he was going upstairs to shave and dress preparatory to his walk with Doctor Sterling.

## VII.

MRS. GRAY, out of the corner of her eye, watched her husband leave the room, and then gave vent to a little chuckle, followed by a deep sigh.

"Doctor Sterling coming!" she mused. "And those idiots at Roosevelt had to go and get smallpox yesterday, of all days in the year! I think the safest place for me at present is out of this house, whether I go to church or not."

Mrs. Gray was still pondering what course she had better pursue when the maid appeared and announced a lady in the reception-room, a lady who gave no name, but who said it was important. "She's veiled," added the maid.

"Have n't I troubles enough already," thought Mrs. Gray, "without any veiled ladies?" But after a brief consideration she told the maid to show her up.

When the woman lifted her veil she disclosed the smiling countenance of Laura Leslie.

"I just had to come," she began. "I did not dare telephone."

"What's happened?"

"In the first place, your husband found your comb in Harry's rooms——"

"Oh, yes," interrupted Mrs. Gray calmly. "He showed it to me this morning, but I fixed it all right. I think I am one of the greatest liars on earth," she added, with a sigh. "I'll tell you all about it later."

"Then, there's another thing," continued Laura, who was not a very good fabricator, and who did not know exactly how to tell Mrs. Gray what she wanted to tell her, without telling her the facts. "Just after you got away from Harry's apartment," she went on, "an old gentleman came in——"

"Colonel Crosby?"

"Yes. You know him?"

"No. He is a friend of Jack's father and of Jack. I have n't met him."

"Well," pursued Laura slowly, "when he came into the room Jack got rattled for some reason, and when the Colonel said of me, 'This is your wife, I suppose,' he let it go at that, and presented me as you!"

Gertrude gasped, and then rippled all over with laughter.

"The Colonel invited us all to dinner," proceeded Laura, "and we went; and when we parted at the close of the evening—which, by the way, I don't think your husband enjoyed very much—the Colonel whispered to me that he would drop in to see me—you—this morning."

"Fine and daisy!" exclaimed Gertrude. "And what shall we do

about that?" (She did not know how worried her husband was to prevent such a contingency.) "I think," she continued presently, "you and I had better seek the seclusion of my boudoir, where we will put our heads together to confound the enemy!"

It was not long after the two young women had reached this seclusion that Doctor Sterling was ushered into the library. Jack Gray came down immediately, and did not even give his friend time to wish him good-morning.

"Fred," he began in the doorway, "I'm worried almost to death. In the first place, I'm worried about my wife's health, and in the second, I'm worried about that old fool Crosby."

"Don't bother about Crosby," said Doctor Sterling confidently.

"Suppose he calls here and meets Gertrude," insisted Jack. "How many wives do you suppose he'll think I have? And I can't very well tell Gertrude about it."

"And what's the matter with *her* health?" asked the Doctor.

"She was at Roosevelt Hospital yesterday afternoon, visiting a friend—yesterday, during all that smallpox scare! Do you suppose there is any chance of her having caught it?"

"Was she exposed?"

"I don't know. But she looks pale and unlike herself. I'm worried. I'd like to have you see her."

"By all means," returned Sterling.

"Could you tell as soon as this if there was any danger?" Jack inquired eagerly.

"That depends. Probably not," was the Doctor's noncommittal reply. "But, just as a precautionary measure, I'd tell her to go and take a Turkish bath this afternoon."

"A Turkish bath!" exclaimed Jack, aghast.

"Yes, that will open up her pores——"

"But you told me it was dangerous for her to take Turkish baths," protested Jack.

"When?" asked the Doctor blankly.

"Before you went east."

"Oh, well, that was three years ago," replied Sterling. "You said your wife was in delicate health at that time. She's all right now, is n't she?"

"Well, she's not all right enough for me to suggest a Turkish bath," asserted Jack, with emphasis. "Those words have been taboo in this house ever since I rowed with her about taking one against your orders. If you want her to take a Turkish bath, you'll have to tell her yourself. I would n't dare!"

"Oh, very well, I'll tell her;" and the conversation dropped.

By this time Mrs. Gray and Miss Leslie had settled the affairs of the

nation, and Gertrude stepped quietly from the boudoir to reconnoitre the stairways, to see if Laura might reach the front door unseen. Jack Gray and the Doctor were conversing in so low a tone that she did not hear them in the library; and thus it happened that she was standing almost in the doorway before she realized the trap she had walked into.

"Oh, come in, Gertrude," called Jack, hearing the rustle of her skirt. "Fred," he added, "come and meet my wife."

It is difficult to describe just how Doctor Sterling felt when he saw "Miss Phoenix" entering the room, and far more difficult to describe how he looked. The traditional feather would not only have knocked him down, but would doubtless have swept him clear into the middle of the street. He simply stood and stared. Mrs. Gray, on the other hand, having no doubt foreseen the possibility of the encounter, maintained her composure. She smiled pleasantly and walked toward the Doctor with outstretched hand.

"What's the matter, Fred?" asked Jack, who could not fail to notice his friend's peculiar action. "Did you expect to see a freak?"

"Or a slab-sided, pie-faced dyspeptic?" added Gertrude.

Her husband frowned at this levity, and was about to say something in mitigation, when Doctor Sterling took two steps forward, placed his hands on Mrs. Gray's shoulders, looked her dramatically in the eyes, and exclaimed:

"Smallpox!"

"You don't mean it!" cried Jack.

"There's no time to lose," continued the Doctor briskly, and now apparently quite himself. "Go to the drug-store at once, Jack, and have this prescription filled." He was scribbling rapidly on a small pad. "Go yourself, old man, go at once. Don't send a servant."

And Jack was gone in a second.

## VIII.

"Your presence of mind, Doctor Sterling," began Gertrude, as soon as they were alone, "is certainly far greater than your control over your features."

"I am not practised in deception," he replied coldly; and then, sardonically, "So you spent yesterday afternoon at Roosevelt Hospital, did you?"

"I'm not a very good guesser, am I?" she commented wearily.

"Do you consider this a subject for jesting?" he asked severely.

"I certainly do not. It may turn out to be a very serious affair."

"You don't display much perturbation," he added drily. "I should think you would feel some—some regret—not to say shame—at what occurred yesterday."

"Indeed!" returned Gertrude, a trifle haughtily. "I think it is you who ought to be ashamed."

"I?" stammered the Doctor. "I—I did n't know."

"Is that an excuse?"

"An excellent excuse."

"Because you did not know?"

"Certainly; I had every reason to believe——"

"Every reason to believe you might be familiar—I was going to say fresh—with a helpless young woman whom you happened to meet——"

"But I did not know——" began Sterling again.

"You did not know who I was," interrupted Mrs. Gray. "Is that it?"

"Exactly."

"Well, the next time you want to embrace a lady——" Gertrude continued sternly; but she was interrupted by Sterling.

"How did I know you were a lady—dressed up like that!"

Mrs. Gray disregarded the interruption. "The next time you want to embrace a lady," she repeated, "find out first who she is. It will spare you subsequent embarrassment."

"I shall take your advice," said the Doctor coolly. "But how about you? What have you to say?"

"Was my conduct anything but proper?" asked Mrs. Gray. "Did I do or say anything that was in the slightest degree censurable?"

"No," admitted Sterling; "you did not. But that is not the point. Why did you go to Townsend's rooms?"

"I can give you the same excuse you just gave me: I did not know."

The Doctor laughed. "Oh, Mrs. Gray," he said, "I am not so easily fooled as Jack!"

"But I am telling you the truth," she insisted earnestly.

"Jack will be back in a minute——" he began.

"With that ridiculous medicine of yours," interrupted Mrs. Gray.

"I have a few words to say to you before he comes. Jack is my friend. Can you tell me what attitude to assume, having learned by chance that you, his wife, are deceiving him?"

"Sir!" exclaimed Mrs. Gray, with all the outraged dignity she could assume.

"I have seen it with my own eyes," persisted Sterling.

"You are talking rubbish," asserted Gertrude calmly.

"I have seen you in a man's rooms——"

"Quite true."

"In a negligée costume."

"Better than no costume at all," commented Miss Phoenix, recalling her blanket.

"Do I need any better proof?" asked the Doctor, with satisfaction.

"You have not proved anything yet."

"I have proved that you are deceiving my friend," insisted the Doctor warmly. "You are a faithless wife——"

"Doctor Sterling!"

"You are proud of your mendacity. I wish to know what course to take, what I shall do with this scandalous knowledge?"

"You may do anything you please with it," replied Mrs. Gray icily, and walked out of the room.

It was not long before Jack returned with the medicine. He found Doctor Sterling alone in the library, wearing a very long face, and when he asked anxiously for his wife, the Doctor told him that she had gone to her room.

"That's the best place for her, Jack," he added. "Let her rest awhile."

"Any real danger, Fred?" asked Jack. "You look concerned yourself."

"I *am* a little worried, old man," answered Sterling truthfully. "I'll just run down to old Crosby's hotel now, and tell him not to call. Then I'll come back. Perhaps a closer examination of Mrs. Gray——"

"Shall I give her this now?"

"No, let it wait till I return. I'll be back in about an hour;" and, taking his hat and stick, the Doctor hurried to the street.

Jack made an ineffectual attempt to converse with his wife, but she insisted upon remaining in her room, with the door closed; and finally the troubled man decided to let her have her way. He concluded to walk over to his club, where he would write a note to Miss Leslie, urging her to be sure not to let herself be seen again by the Colonel.

He might have succeeded better in this endeavor had he remained at home; for he had scarcely turned the corner when a taxicab slipped up to his front door, and out stepped Colonel Crosby. The maid assured him that Mr. Gray had just gone out, whereupon the old gentleman insisted that his card should be taken to Mrs. Gray.

The card came into the boudoir like a little bombshell, and the council of war went into executive session at once. Gertrude felt that if she refused to see the Colonel, he would wait until Jack came home; and she knew matters would not be improved any by this. Yet she herself could not very well receive him, when—— But, of course, the solution was easy! The Colonel knew Laura as Mrs. Gray, and here providentially was Laura! Gertrude asked her if she would see the Colonel, and under any pretext get him safely out of the house. Miss Leslie was not enthusiastic over the idea at first, but allowed herself to be persuaded. She laid aside her hat and gloves, and went down to the library to impersonate the lady of the house, while Gertrude promised to keep guard in the hallway, and to give warning of any one's approach.



Miss Leslie scarcely gave her caller time to speak his greeting. She flooded him with words, and cut his answers to mere unfinished exclamations. She told him he should not even sit down; she assured him he must leave the place at once; she described the dangers of smallpox, and informed him that a case of it had been discovered in the house that very morning.

"Even now, this very moment, I must rush to the Hospital for Contagious Diseases, and see about getting a nurse!"

"Well, well, well," grunted the Colonel, "come along with me. I've got a taxi downstairs."

"Impossible! If you want to be a good, nice man, just get out of this house before you get contaminated!"

"Very well," assented the old gentleman, moving slowly. "But when shall I see you all again? That was a nice little dinner we had last night, was n't it?"

"Perfectly lovely," Miss Leslie assured him, leading him gently toward the door.

"That's the kind of little dinner I like," persisted the garrulous Colonel. "Jack's the right kind. Takes his wife out with him when he goes with his friends, instead of running around with actresses and such. I'll tell his uncle Hiram all about it when I get home. He had some misgivings about Jack, but my report will fix all that! Now, let's all dine together again to-night," finished the Colonel, planking himself immovably at the head of the stairs.

Laura felt that playing host must be the old fellow's hobby, and she quickly decided to take advantage of his weakness.

"We can't do that," she replied, "but I will lunch with you at Sherry's, if you like. I'll meet you there at one. That's in a little over an hour. If I see Jack, I'll bring him along. Now run." And she almost pushed him downstairs.

He repeated, "At Sherry's, at one," and hobbled out to his taxi.

"Well, *he's* safely out," whispered Laura to Gertrude, who was leaning over the banisters. "Now for me to do the same. Did you hear me make an engagement to lunch with him? I'll have to telephone him when I get home."

## IX.

THE two women had retired again to Gertrude's boudoir, where Miss Leslie was putting on her hat and gloves, preparatory to taking her departure, when the sound of hasty footsteps and presently a loud pounding on the door came to delay their plans.

"Gertrude, Gertrude!" shouted Timothy from the hall.

"Well?" drawled Mrs. Gray.

"Please come downstairs. I must have a few words with you."

"All right, I'll be down;" and as Timothy could be heard descending, the two women looked at each other in silence, and Gertrude whispered, "I wonder what's up now?"

She found Mr. Pitkin standing in the middle of the room, in a highly flustered state. He had an open letter in his hand, which he waved wildly as he spoke.

"You're a perverter of truth!" were his first words, as she entered.

"Look here, Timothy Pitkin," retorted Mrs. Gray, with some asperity, "what do you mean by talking to me that way?"

"I mean," replied Timothy, "that Phyllis and I have been in the kitchen, where Phyllis has been puttering ever since we had the pleasure of leaving your precious smallpoxed company this morning. There were two letters for Phyllis in the morning's mail, but she wanted to putter, and did not open the letters until a few minutes ago. One of them was from Mabel Moore, who is now at Dobbs' Ferry, and has been at Dobbs' Ferry since Thursday. She left the hospital Wednesday. Now, will you please tell me how you could have spent the afternoon with her at Roosevelt Hospital yesterday?"

With these words, he presented Miss Moore's letter to Mrs. Gray. Gertrude read it calmly, raised her eyebrows, and, handing it back to Timothy, remarked:

"I don't see anything for *you* to get excited about."

"Were you at Roosevelt Hospital yesterday afternoon?" asked the young man sharply.

"I did not see Mabel there, if that is what you want to know," replied Gertrude.

"You told us you *did* see her."

"That was before I knew this smallpox business was in the papers," explained Mrs. Gray blandly.

"But after you found out about the smallpox," he persisted, "why did you not tell the truth about Mabel?"

"Because nobody asked me about Mabel after that. I did not see the use of making a lot of explanations."

"I desire an explanation," said Timothy sternly, "as to the motive which prompted you to deviate from the truth!"

"You do, you do?" laughed Gertrude. "Well, you won't get it!"

"It is evident," he continued, "that you have some secret object in concealing your real whereabouts at the time you claim to have been at the bedside of a sick friend."

"That 'sick friend' racket is about played out, is n't it, Timmy?" smiled Gertrude.

"Timothy, if you please," retorted the theological student, with dignity. "And no levity! I have a right to demand an explanation."

"Well, keep on demanding," said Gertrude. "You'll soon get tired of that. It's none of your business."

"It is my business," asserted Timothy angrily. "If I'm going to marry into this family, I have a perfect right to know what you are lying about."

"Well, then, I am lying for my own edification. And as to your marrying into this family, nobody cares——"

"Phyllis cares!" shouted Timothy. "And if I'm to marry into a family of liars——" But he was talking to an empty room. Gertrude had run upstairs, and, as he spoke, he heard the door of her room slam behind her. He stood in considerable uncertainty as to what he should do. He would show the letter to Jack, of course, as soon as Jack came in. Meanwhile, he would return to the kitchen and consult with Phyllis. But he got only as far as the front door, which the maid was just opening to admit Doctor Sterling. The Doctor shook hands with Timothy, joked him about not being in church, and learned that Gertrude was locked in her room, and that Jack had not yet returned. He accepted Timothy's invitation to make himself comfortable in the library.

"If you have a few minutes to spare, Mr. Pitkin," the Doctor said, "I'd be glad if you'd sit down a moment. I want to ask your advice. As a man of the cloth, your judgment should be just and wise."

Timothy's chest expanded a trifle as he sat down stiffly, with the expression of one who must not fail in an emergency.

"It is a delicate affair, Mr. Pitkin," the Doctor began. "I trust you will treat what I say as confidential. I'll put the case hypothetically. Let us suppose that you have a friend named Jones, unmarried, and another friend, Smith, married. You don't know Mrs. Smith."

"Don't I?" asked Timothy.

"This is all in the hypothesis," repeated the Doctor. "Hypothetically, you know Jones and Smith, but you never saw Mrs. Smith. Now, suppose you go to see the unmarried Jones one afternoon in his apartments, and you find a young woman in a red kimono lunching with him. The next day you call on the married Smith, and you meet Mrs. Smith, who turns out to be the young woman of the red kimono, whom you saw lunching with Jones the previous day."

"You don't mean to tell me this is a true story, Doctor?" asked Timothy, puckering his eyebrows.

"True as gospel," asserted Sterling. "And it all happened not later than yesterday afternoon. I am simply overcome with this horrible secret. I don't know whether to tell the husband or to lick the friend, or what. On the other hand, perhaps it is all none of my business."

"But, indeed, it is some of your business," insisted Timothy. "And perhaps it is some of my business," he added presently. "When did you say this happened?"

"I don't think I said," sparred the Doctor; "but it was quite recently."

"I understood you to say it was yesterday afternoon," persisted the younger man.

"It was," admitted Sterling. "I stopped at Smith's on my way up here; and that's how all this thing happens to be on my mind now."

"Now, look here, Doctor Sterling," began Timothy imperatively, "you've got to fish or cut bait. You never met Gertrude until this morning. She was up to something yesterday afternoon, that she has been clumsily prevaricating about all morning. It looks to me uncommonly as if Mrs. Gray and Mrs. Smith were one and the same person!"

"Absurd, Mr. Pitkin, absurd!" protested the Doctor, very much embarrassed, however, and he would have tried further explanation if Timothy had permitted. But Timothy, on the scent, was not to be talked down.

"Not absurd at all," he retorted. "You've got to tell the truth. If you know where Gertrude was yesterday afternoon, it is your duty, as Jack's friend, to tell him."

"Confound it! I haven't said I knew where she was," argued the Doctor. "I asked you for some confidential advice, and you immediately connect my hypothetical case with your own family."

"Not my family *yet*," exclaimed Timothy, with a repelling gesture. "However, as Gertrude is Phyllis's sister, I am entitled to know the truth about her. Did you or did you not see Mrs. Gray in a man's apartments yesterday?"

Doctor Sterling ought to have lied like a gentleman. He ought to have said emphatically, "No." But, instead, he replied that he would refuse to answer so foolish a question.

"Then Gertrude shall answer it herself!" cried Timothy, and, going to the stairway, he set up a loud cry for Gertrude.

"Don't be an ass, Pitkin!" shouted the Doctor, endeavoring by physical force to quiet the young man. "Consider me, if you can't consider your own prospective sister-in-law!"

"It's too late for consideration now," snapped the excited youth, and, sure enough it was, for Mrs. Gray, hearing the calls, was on her way down from her room.

"What's the matter?" she asked blandly, as she entered the presence of the two men.

"Before Mr. Pitkin says anything, Mrs. Gray," began the Doctor nervously, "I should like you to know——"

"You can explain all that later," interrupted Timothy sharply. "Gertrude, where were you yesterday afternoon?"

"I have told you, Timothy," answered Mrs. Gray calmly, "that it is none of your business."

"You were in a man's apartment," he exclaimed, gesticulating wildly, "sitting around in a bath-robe! Can you deny it?"

Gertrude gave a cold and infinitely scornful glance at Doctor Sterling.

"Sir," she said to him, as she turned to leave the room, "I compliment you upon the quality of your manhood!"

"Then, it is true!" cried Timothy. "Don't try to run and hide now, Gertrude. The time has come when you *must* tell the truth! If you won't tell me, you'll *have* to tell Jack!"

Mrs. Gray paused for a moment in the doorway.

"If I were a man," she said calmly, looking straight at the excited theologian, "I would take you by the collar and give you a sound thrashing. If it is not too late, I advise you, even now, to hold your tongue."

"About your outside affairs?" snarled Timothy. "I who am going to marry into this family! I am going to find Jack at once and tell him everything."

He brushed Mrs. Gray aside and strode down the stairs two at a time, with the unfortunate Sterling, after a moment's hesitation, in full pursuit. The front door slammed behind them, and Mrs. Gray gave a little sigh of bewilderment.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Laura, who had heard the entire conversation from the floor above.

"The storm is breaking," observed Gertrude, a trifle hysterically; "but I'll give them a good storm for their money! And some day I'll *ruin* that fool Sterling."

"Why don't you explain the whole thing right now, and have it over with?" urged Laura.

"Admit I went to a Turkish bath?"

"Certainly."

"Never!" asserted Gertrude positively. "I have been accused of all sorts of things; and if Jack wants to believe them, he may. There will be a row, of course; but nothing half as bad as if I should say I had been to a Turkish bath."

## X.

THE two women had strolled across the library, and were now standing at the window, looking absently down the quiet, almost deserted street. For some moments neither spoke, then suddenly Mrs. Gray exclaimed, "Here they come!"

Four men, all apparently in much haste, had just turned the corner. Gertrude recognized her own husband and Doctor Sterling and the black-clad, long-legged Timothy, who seemed to be talking mostly with his hands.

"I wonder who the fourth man is?" mused Mrs. Gray, looking up inquiringly at Laura.

"From his size, I should say it was Colonel Crosby. He must have picked up Jack's trail, too."

"Well, I'll give them a good jolt!" said Mrs. Gray, with clenched teeth. "Will you stand by me, if I need you?"

"Indeed, I will," replied Laura warmly.

"Then, stay in the little study, where you will not be seen, and if I want you, I will call!"

The approach of the four excited gentlemen sounded very much like the assault of a booted army upon a walled city. Behind the men, attracted by such a riot, came little Phyllis, her sleeves rolled up to her elbows, and her face daubed here and there with flour. Mrs. Gray had seated herself in the great chair, and as the attacking party entered she looked up with quiet surprise and inquired:

"Will you please inform me as to the cause of this extraordinary disturbance?"

"Disturbance!" repeated her husband, with panting breath. "Disturbance! Indeed, I will inform you!"

"Gentlemen, won't you be seated?" said Mrs. Gray, quite unruffled.

"None of your affected innocence, madam," snorted the righteous Jack. "The time has come for me to know the truth. Where were you yesterday afternoon?"

Mrs. Gray rose with dignity and looked her husband calmly in the eyes.

"Don't you think, Jack," she said quietly, "that if you have any questions of a personal nature to put to me, it would be in better taste to propound them in private?"

"Make her tell before us all!" shrieked Timothy, who could not repress himself. "A woman who has done what she has need not try to hide behind such a weak subterfuge as a plea for privacy!"

"See here, Timothy," exclaimed Jack savagely, "I will conduct these proceedings. If there is to be any vituperation, I shall do it."

"Well, then," cried the other, hopping about, "vituperate, vituperate!"

"Shut up," growled Jack, and turned again to his wife. "Speak!" he commanded.

"I will answer you any time you come to me quietly," said Mrs. Gray firmly.

"This is quiet enough for me," retorted her husband, shaking with excitement. "But if you have qualms of conscience concerning the affair of yesterday afternoon, we will take up a more recent *galanterie*. Perhaps this is not too public an occasion for you to answer one other question I have to put. What do you mean by making an appointment to lunch at Sherry's with this man who is old enough to be your grandfather?"

"I have never seen this gentleman before in my life," replied Gertrude.

"Oh, perverted woman!" groaned Timothy.

"What?" shouted Jack, his back being turned to Colonel Crosby, who looked as if he were about to have a fit of apoplexy.

"I have never before laid eyes on the man," continued Mrs. Gray placidly. "But, Jack, if you are determined to have this disgraceful situation aired in public, you shall have it. I call all these people to witness that it is none of my doing." She turned and took a few steps toward the door of the study. Jack followed her, calling:

"Don't run away! What have you to say for yourself?"

Mrs. Gray rested her hand on the door-knob and spoke to her husband:

"It is not *I* who have an engagement to lunch at Sherry's."

"But," shrieked Jack, "Colonel Crosby, whom I met just as I was coming out of the Club, says you *have!*"

"Pardon me——" blurted the crimson and inflated old gentleman.

"You shall not shield her!" snapped Jack at him.

"I am quite able to take care of myself," smiled Gertrude, opening the little door. "If you have an engagement to luncheon, sir," she continued, turning to Colonel Crosby, "possibly it is with this lady."

And Laura walked slowly into the library.

"With Mrs. Gray, to be sure," snorted the Colonel.

"But——" began Jack, turning white.

"One minute, please," interrupted Gertrude. "Your engagement, Colonel Crosby, is with Mrs. Gray? You know this lady as Mrs. Gray?"

"Mrs. Gray," grunted the Colonel. "Why, yes, Mrs. Gray; of course she is Mrs. Gray—Jack's wife."

"Oh, Timothy!" moaned Phyllis.

"I also am Mrs. Gray," continued Gertrude blithely.

"Let me explain!" broke in Jack desperately.

"Explain!" snorted Colonel Crosby. "Are there *two* Mrs. Grays?"

"*Two* Mrs. Grays?" repeated Jack, in a daze. "Ha! ha! Yes, you see—now—oh, let me explain——"

"Explain?" interrupted Gertrude, again without pity. "What can you explain? A moment ago you were accusing *me!* Now who is the guilty one? John Gray, you are a self-confessed bigamist!"

This little announcement was quite too much for the Colonel. He gave a snort like a wild bull, shook his fists in the air, and, muttering something about "scandals" and "Uncle Hiram," stamped heavily out of the house.

No one spoke for a considerable period; then Timothy squeaked, "Oh, Lord, I am marrying into the criminal classes!" and likewise bolted.

## XI.

WHILE the strenuous drama of the Gray family was developing into a riotous climax in the quiet little house on the quiet little street, Harry Townsend was working hard in his study over the second act of "The Blue Radish," which had been so sadly neglected the afternoon of the day before. He worked so steadily and with such interest that he took no account of time, and was consequently wholly unaware of the lateness of the morning hour when his door-bell sounded the advent of a visitor. He did not even rise from his chair as Tomi ushered into the room a tall, thin young man clad in the conventional sombre garb of the clergy. The young man was no other than our excited and excitable young friend, Timothy Pitkin.

"Is this Mr. Townsend?" he asked somewhat brusquely, as he approached.

"It is," replied Townsend, rising from his work.

"Mr. Harry Townsend?" inquired Timothy, again.

"Henry Van Rensselaer Townsend is my name," said the playwright slowly. "Are you the census man?"

"No, sir"—severely. "I wish to have a few words with you."

"Be seated, please," said Townsend, wondering if he had to do with a lunatic or a canvasser for some charity.

"I think I can better say what I have to say standing up," asserted Timothy sternly.

Townsend shrugged his shoulders, smiled, and sat down again.

"You had a woman to luncheon with you in these rooms yesterday," proceeded Timothy.

"Will you kindly tell me what concern that is of yours?" inquired Townsend.

"Certainly," returned Timothy. "But I wish to ask you first if you are aware that she is a married woman?"

"A married woman!" exclaimed Townsend, with no thought whatever of Miss Phoenix, but assuming, of course, that the strange young man referred to his luncheon guest, Laura Leslie. "Impossible!" he added.

"Do not attempt to evade or deceive me, sir!" Timothy proceeded, with rising indignation. "I wish to say that your entertainment of another man's wife in these rooms——"

But Townsend, now thoroughly provoked, cut him short.

"I don't like your manner, sir!" he said sharply.

"I don't care whether you like it or not!" exclaimed Timothy. "Married women——"

"Rot!" cried Townsend. "She is not married!"

"I tell you she *is*," asserted Timothy hotly, "and I ought to know!"



"Well, if you know so much," said Townsend calmly, "perhaps you can tell me to whom she is married?"

"She is married to John D. Gray——"

"To Jack Gray?" interrupted Townsend.

"To Jack Gray," repeated Timothy, with conviction; "and as you make no denial of my accusation, I assume that what I have charged about having her here to luncheon is true."

"My dear sir," said Townsend, "this is perfectly preposterous. You don't know what you are talking about. I have known Jack Gray intimately for a long time. I know he is married. But he certainly can't have *two* wives, can he?"

"*Two* wives?" repeated Timothy, with horror. "*Two* wives, did you say? Did *you* know that he was suspected of having two wives? Then, this is all true, this horrible accusation of bigamy!"

"What have *you* heard?" inquired Townsend, with impatience.

"Heard?" cried Timothy. "I have heard and seen! I have been present, and am a part! It is scandalous, outrageous! To think that I should be mixed up with an affair of this kind!" He was quite beside himself.

"You are concerned in this matter?" inquired Townsend, greatly puzzled.

"Concerned?" repeated Timothy. "Ah, it is far worse! My honor is at stake, my honor, sir! I must be off at once! I must protect myself!" And without further ado he departed from the house of Townsend with the firm determination to break off his engagement to Phyllis immediately.

Townsend stood in the middle of the room for several moments, like a man in a daze. Then he scratched his head, as if for inspiration, and finally sought the great chair, that he might think over slowly and carefully the peculiar things the strange young man had just been telling him. First, he wondered who his visitor could be. He had said that his "honor was at stake," and he had asserted that he was "a part" of what they were discussing. From his dress, he was evidently a clergyman. What part could he have had in this affair? Townsend was at a loss to explain this, unless his visitor was the clergyman who had performed the ceremony. That might affect his "honor." And so Townsend finally concluded that Timothy had officiated at the marriage of Jack Gray to Laura Leslie. This was certainly bewildering; but he could see no other logical conclusion. It was also very distressing, for he liked Jack, and he was not wholly uninterested in Laura. He decided to dress at once and go out and satisfy himself as to the exact condition of affairs.

His investigation was momentarily delayed, however, by a second ringing of his bell, and the appearance of Doctor Fred Sterling, who

seemed to be only a trifle less excited than the erratic young man who had but recently departed.

"I want to see you!" he exclaimed, without previous formal greeting.

"Well, you see me, don't you?" replied Townsend, in surprise.

"I had always considered you my friend," continued the Doctor.

"What's the matter now?" asked Townsend.

"Do you think it was the part of a friend to keep me ignorant as to the identity of Jack's wife yesterday afternoon?" he asked.

"Why, confound it, Fred," returned Townsend wearily, "I did not know that she was Jack's wife until this morning. How did you find out?"

"I found it out this morning, too," said Sterling. "I went to Jack's house to see him, and came face to face with her there."

"You don't mean to tell me she was in Jack's *house*?" inquired Townsend, aghast.

"Did you suppose Jack kept his wife in the stable or the back yard?" retorted Sterling savagely.

"Both wives in the same house?" continued Townsend, who was beginning to think that something was wrong with this world.

"What are you talking about?" asked the Doctor, equally at a loss.

"I'm talking about Jack Gray and his two wives," snapped Townsend.

"Oh, that's all rubbish," laughed Sterling.

"About Jack and Laura?"

"Yes."

"Well, I happen to know it is *not* all rubbish," persisted Townsend. "Jack and Laura are married."

"Bosh!" roared the Doctor.

"But I *know*!" insisted the other. "I was told so this morning by the minister who married them." And so distorted at that moment was poor Townsend's mind that he really believed what he said was true. The Doctor was left speechless, and merely looked at his friend for further explanation.

"He was in here to see me just a little while ago—the minister," continued Townsend. "He was very much excited about it. Confound it, there goes that bell again!"

He was quite right. The bell had rung sharply, and Tomi was gliding across the room. The two men gazed in expectancy, and were distinctly shocked at seeing the smiling countenance of Miss Leslie appear out of the dim hallway.

"Good morning, Harry," she said gaily, "or, perhaps better, good afternoon." Then she turned to Sterling. "I had an idea I'd find you here, handing out the gossip——"

"Handing out the gossip!" exclaimed Sterling indignantly.

"Well, no matter," she continued. "You must go up to the Grays' house as quickly as you can. Take my taxi—it's waiting downstairs."

"What's the matter up there now?" asked the Doctor.

"Jack's been arrested."

"For bigamy?" quickly asked Townsend.

Laura laughed gaily.

"I suppose he ought to be," she said, "but this time it's for having a case of smallpox in the house and not reporting it to the Board of Health."

"Great Scott!" cried Sterling, snatching his hat.

"And it's all your fault, too," Laura said to him. "Go and explain. The drug-clerk reported to the authorities, after filling your prescription."

"Oh, the fool business!" groaned Sterling, and was off.

## XII.

UNDER ordinary circumstances, Harry Townsend would have been delighted to see Laura Leslie, and his manner would have been most attentive. But at this particular moment, filled as he was with false theories and twisted facts, he could with difficulty bring himself to his usual cordial manner toward his guest. Laura noticed, but paid little heed to his glum and cheerless demeanor, for she herself was figuring on how to tell him of Miss Phoenix's identity, and of the complications resulting from her unintended visit to his rooms.

"I want to tell you about yesterday," she began.

"I think I know all I care to know," replied Townsend solemnly.

"Then, you have heard?" she asked, assuming that Doctor Sterling had given him the information about Miss Phoenix.

"I have," he grunted.

"Don't you think it's funny?"

Townsend felt as if he could lay violent hands on the beautiful girl who sat smiling at him across the room. How a woman who had done what Laura had done—who had treated a man as she had treated him—could come to him and ask if he did not think it was "funny," was quite beyond his present mental comprehension. He merely glared at her, and as he glared his indignation rose.

"Funny!" he exclaimed. "You might, at least, have told me all the truth yesterday."

"But I could not," protested Laura, still in defense of Miss Phoenix. "I had promised not to."

"I suppose you know best," he continued. "But I can't help resenting it. We have always been good friends—more than good friends——"

"Don't talk that way, Harry," she broke in propitiatingly. "It's of no importance."

"Of no importance!" he cried. "Of no importance! Bigamy is a sort of joke, eh?"

"Well, that bigamy business," laughed Laura, wholly missing Townsend's point, "was the funniest scene I ever witnessed. You should have seen Mrs. Gray denouncing Jack as a self-confessed bigamist!"

Townsend was nonplussed. How an intelligent woman could make light of so serious an affair, he could not comprehend. To think that she could deliberately go and marry a man whom she knew to be already married!

"Don't you think you have rather made a fool of yourself?" he exclaimed dramatically. "Have you no conscience? Have you no respect for your friends, no consideration for your own position?"

"Bravo!" she chirped enthusiastically. "Bravo, Harry! Put that in the second act! It's fine! But what is it all about?"

"*You* ask me that!" he railed. "*You!* You, of all women; to *me*, of all men! You know how I have felt toward you, you know how I have striven to do the best I could to aid you in this foolish ambition of yours to become a great actress—I who have begged you to leave the stage! And now, suddenly, without warning, with piteous foolishness, you go and marry—marry a man who——" He was choking with emotion.

"Harry, dear!" Laura said quietly, with feigned alarm. "And so early in the day, too!"

He thought she was mocking him. He could stand it no longer. He feared his feelings would get the better of his language if he remained in her presence. He shook his head with a sort of despairing groan, and sought refuge in his bedroom.

### XIII.

COLONEL CROSBY had walked less than a block upon leaving the Grays' house, after having heard Gertrude Gray declare that her husband was a self-confessed bigamist, when the humor of the situation suddenly dawned upon him, and his momentary anger vanished into a hearty laugh. He realized that there must have been some mix-up of which he and the others were ignorant, and that, instead of going off in a huff, it would be much better for him to return and see if he could not help to get matters straightened out. With these good intentions in mind, he retraced his steps, and was considerably astonished to find at the front door of Jack Gray's residence a policeman who refused him admittance. The officer declared there was smallpox in the house. The Colonel insisted that there was not; but he might as well have argued

with the Sphinx. And while he was talking a patrol wagon drove up, and Mr. Jack Gray, accompanied by Doctor Sterling, was taken away from there.

The Colonel had to laugh again, but at the same time he felt there might be something serious in the affair, after all, and he determined to find Townsend and see if together they could not do something.

By this time he had walked as far as Central Park West, and, there being a gate a short distance below, he turned in that direction, believing his chances of finding a taxicab more likely in that quarter. He entered the gate and headed for the Casino, where he knew he could get a cab.

But not many minutes later he was aroused from his thoughts by a voice at his elbow, calling him by name. He stopped before a bench upon which sat a young woman whom he recognized as one of the Mrs. Grays, but not the one he had dined with.

"What on earth are *you* doing here?" he asked, with considerable surprise.

"I'm a fugitive from justice," she replied promptly.

"Well, justice has got Jack," asserted the Colonel, with a chuckle.

"Oh, if justice only did have him!" exclaimed Gertrude. "But I'm afraid it's merely the police."

"Yes, I saw it all," proceeded the Colonel meditatively, "when he was dragged off to the station house——"

"Did they *take* him?" interrupted Gertrude, in alarm.

"Take him?" repeated the Colonel. "Indeed, they did! In a nice covered wagon, with a loud bell on the front, and two husky grooms in blue liveries and brass buttons standing behind."

"Poor Jack!" sighed his wife.

"Doctor Sterling was with him," continued the Colonel. "He'll fix it up all right. I saw them off. Sterling sat with his legs hanging out behind, and he said it reminded him of his ambulance days. Clang! clang! and off they went!" The Colonel could not resist laughing again at the thought of it. "But how did *you* get away?" he asked.

"I was in the kitchen," she replied, "seeing about lunch; and I heard Jack at the front door, rowing with two policemen. I caught just enough of what was being said to know that that house was no place for me; so I slipped through the back yard and into our neighbor's basement, where I greeted my neighbor's cook, and walked quietly out of their front basement door and away. They would have taken me, too, I suppose; and this time they might have fumigated me sure enough!"

"I wish you would tell me what this is all about," begged the Colonel, who was still considerably in the dark. And so Gertrude launched into an elaborate narrative of the adventures of Miss Phoenix and of the erring Jack.

By the time she had concluded, the Colonel was in high good-humor, and his comment was that he proposed to make Jack look sick before he got through with him.

“What has Jack done to you?” inquired Gertrude, in surprise.

“In the first place,” replied the Colonel, “he has been lying to me for twenty-four consecutive hours. In the second place, look at this;” and the old gentleman fumbled in his pocket until he found a newspaper clipping, which he handed to Mrs. Gray. “There was so much quick action this morning that I did not get around to this.”

Gertrude read the printed paragraph:

#### NOTES OF THE GAY LIFE

Colonel Crosby, the Montana millionaire, is spending a few days in New York before sailing for Europe. He is evidently enjoying his visit to the metropolis. He dined last night at the Ritz with Miss Laura Leslie, the talented young actress who is about to create the leading rôle in Henry Townsend's forthcoming comedy, “The Blue Radish.”

Mrs. Gray leaned back on the bench and gave way to gleeful and unrestrained hilarity.

“I don't see anything funny about it,” growled the Colonel. “I took Jack out to dinner with a lady who I supposed was his wife, and this morning I find myself paraded in the public prints as one ‘leading the gay life’! I don't care so much about the New York papers, because I don't know many people here; but suppose that story is telegraphed out to Montana? What do you suppose they would think of me out there? I am a vestryman of the church. And, you know, the Montana idea of an actress is quite different from yours or mine. Out there they think every actress is a giddy young person in pink tights and short skirts.”

“But Miss Leslie is not that kind of actress,” argued Gertrude.

“Certainly not,” agreed the Colonel. “She is a very charming woman. But that confounded newspaper does not specify. And Jack got me into all this! If I should tell his uncle Hiram that he dined about town with actresses——”

“But surely you would not do that?” put in Gertrude.

“Well,” said the Colonel, “in this particular instance, perhaps not.” And they both laughed together.

It was decided that they should walk over to the Casino and telephone to the house, and to Miss Leslie, and to Townsend, and find out, if possible, how things were going with Jack. Then they would take a taxicab and join the others, wherever they were to be found. The first information they got was over Townsend's telephone, which was answered by Miss Leslie. She was in considerable distress, and affirmed that Townsend was acting in a most peculiar manner and had shut himself

up in his bedroom. She asked Mrs. Gray if she would come to her while the Colonel went to court, or any other place, to get Jack and Doctor Sterling; and then they would all make a combined assault on the sulking Harry. Gertrude agreed at once, and in less than twenty minutes she was again upon the scene of Miss Phoenix's unfortunate adventure.

Laura explained that she thought Townsend had in some way gotten it into his head that she was actually married to Jack Gray, and he had persisted in misconstruing everything she had said or tried to say that morning.

"Perhaps he'll come out for me?" suggested Gertrude. Whereupon it was agreed that Laura should step into the little butler's pantry and leave the field entirely to Mrs. Gray, who was to try to entice Townsend out of his cave and show him the error of his ways. The plan succeeded admirably, for after Gertrude had knocked on the door several times and had urged him in many different ways and intonations to come out and speak with her, Townsend realized that some strange woman had entered his apartments, for the voice was surely not Laura's. He opened the door and came into the study, where Gertrude greeted him with a radiant smile. Townsend blinked and stammered a moment:

"Is n't—is n't this Miss Phoenix?" he asked.

"The same," replied Mrs. Gray gaily.

"Of course!" laughed Harry Townsend. "I did n't recognize you at first, with your clothes on—oh, I mean, dressed in this way."

"Don't you think I look better?" she inquired.

"You looked very well yesterday," he replied gallantly. "But, Miss Phoenix, what are you doing here?" and he looked about the room to assure himself that Laura was not there. "How did you get in?"

"I came through the door," replied Mrs. Gray; "and I was not carried in this time. I have come because I have something to talk with you about."

"But, my dear Miss Phoenix," protested Townsend, "you should not come to my apartments like this. You must realize that it would be extremely compromising for you if any one came in and found you here."

"But, you see," smiled Miss Phoenix, "I am compromised already!"

"So!" exclaimed Townsend, whose mind was still balanced at a slight angle. "So you are 'compromised already'! To that, I presume, I owe the honor of this visit. I suppose you have come to seek reparation."

"Reparation!" queried Miss Phoenix.

"We will call it reparation," said Townsend, with a slight sneer, "to use a polite term. No doubt liquidation is more in the line of your purpose."

"Mr. Townsend!" exclaimed Mrs. Gray, in utter amazement.

"Now, don't carry on," he continued. "You may think I'm an easy mark, but I'm not. You can't hold *me* up. I regret that I must close this interview. Allow me;" and he stepped to the hall and opened the door to usher Miss Phoenix out.

Mrs. Gray, however, was in such a rage of indignation that, even if she had been willing to leave the room, she was actually too angry to move. Also, when Townsend threw open the door, two men, pounding up the steps, turned toward him, and were soon disclosed as Jack Gray and Doctor Sterling.

"Oh, I'm so glad you've come, Jack!" cried Gertrude, encouraged at the sight of her protector.

"What are *you* doing here?" he inquired fiercely. And then, looking about him, "Where is that man? Where is Townsend?"

"Right here," Townsend replied, coming forward into the little group.

Jack made an effort to control himself.

"I want a few words with you," he began. "Perhaps it might be better for us to retire to another room."

"Certainly, if you prefer," acceded Townsend, a trifle puzzled.

"No, indeed," interrupted Gertrude. "Have it out right here!"

"I thought I told you to go!" said Townsend to her, with scant courtesy.

"In spite of your insulting manner, sir——" began Gertrude.

"Have you been insulting this lady?" cried Jack savagely.

"I don't see that it's any of your business if I have," returned Townsend in kind.

"You don't, eh?"

"I want you to understand that this is my house——"

"Let me say a word!" begged Gertrude, stepping between the two.

"You shall not say anything here!" persisted Townsend. "The sooner you go——"

"I won't have you address her in that tone!" cried Jack.

"You let me manage my own affairs, will you?" retorted Townsend. "This woman——"

"Don't refer to her as 'this woman,'" snarled Jack.

"Well, then, this Miss Phoenix——"

"Miss *what*?" cried Jack.

But here Doctor Sterling, who had been standing like a wooden man, suddenly came to life, and, seizing Townsend by the arm, exclaimed:

"Harry! It can't be that you don't know who this lady is?"

"Confound it!" Townsend retorted, "how *should* I know? I have never seen her but once before in my life, when she was carried into my apartments nearly dead. And because Laura Leslie nursed her and cared for her, she comes back to-day to try to blackmail me——"



"Shut up, you idiot!" the Doctor yelled. "This lady is Mrs. Jack Gray!"

The silence that fell on that little group made the sound of taxicab horns in the street below sound like the bellow of the Bull of Bashan. Miss Leslie took advantage of the climax to emerge from her pantry into the middle of the group. She held up a warning finger, as if any one who spoke would be punished, and she spoke slowly but firmly:

"Jack thinks his wife has had an affair with Harry. She has not. Harry thinks I am married to Jack. I'm not. Doctor Sterling has a wrong idea about many things, too. Now, if everybody will agree to keep quiet until I get through, I'll tell everybody what everybody wants to know; and I guess I'm the only one who can do it, as I've been mixed up in the whole thing from start to finish."

There seemed to be a general desire for elucidation, and Miss Leslie proceeded with her informative discourse. First, she took Jack to the window and showed him the burned houses down the block. There were a lot of little shops on that street, and the houses that were destroyed by the fire might have been similar shops, from all one could tell by looking at them now. So Laura said nothing of a Turkish bath. She told Jack that Gertrude was in one of those houses when the fire occurred, that she was overcome, and that a fireman had carried her up to Townsend's apartments. Doctor Sterling interrupted the narrative to say that he had seen many women carried into neighboring houses.

"And that's why we came to christen her Miss Phoenix," explained Townsend.

Miss Leslie then put Jack on the grill, and told all about his stupid performances; and she had a little fun with Townsend about his wild ideas of bigamy and blackmail. When she had finished her story, and had answered volleys of questions from Harry and Jack, Doctor Sterling took the floor and asserted that Mrs. Gray must be a woman of iron nerve to be able to go through what she had during the past twenty-four hours without being a nervous wreck.

"You had better take the advice I gave you this morning, Jack," he said, with a nod of his head toward Gertrude.

"Yes, dear," said Jack fondly, taking his wife's hand; "you must be pretty well tired out. I think you had better go right from here to a Turkish bath, and get a good rub and a rest."

Gertrude nearly fainted. Doctor Sterling thought she had at last given way.

"Yes, a Turkish bath is the best thing in the world for you, and it won't hurt you to take them regularly," he added.

Gertrude put her arms around Laura's neck, and let out one or two gentle little sobs.

# THE HABITUAL USE OF ALCOHOL

*By Horacio C. Wood*

ALCOHOL has been used to such enormous extent by the human race since Noah drank of the wine of his vineyard, that the aggregate moneys expended upon it would make the united national debts of the world appear as a microscopic financial atom beside them; and as its literature is almost as vast as the centuries, a new article upon the subject would appear to be a superfluity. There are, however, at this moment cogent justifications for recalling popular attention to the subject.

Strange as it may seem, it is only within the last few years that we have learned with clearness and positiveness the action of alcohol upon the animal system. We know that applied in concentrated form to tissues, alcohol is a powerful irritant narcotic, which finally kills all varieties of living matter. Taken in sufficient amounts, it is a universal poison to all parts of the system of man or of any other animal. When alcohol enters the blood through the stomach, it is carried in its entirety to the liver, and in concentrated form invades all the tissues of that organ. This is why so many drunkards die of chronic inflammation of the liver, known as cirrhosis. Such of the alcohol as escapes destruction in the body is chiefly thrown off through the kidneys, and here again, when gathered together in comparatively concentrated form, it exerts its irritant influence, causing Bright's disease.

When alcohol is taken in small amounts, nearly all of it is burnt up in the system, the percentage of that which escapes destruction rising with the amount ingested, and also varying with the condition of the individual. Thus, a patient in typhoid fever is able to destroy very much more alcohol than is a normal man. The latest experiments show that when six ounces of whiskey are taken in a day, not over two per cent. of the alcohol usually escapes combustion. Within as well as without the human body burning alcohol must yield heat, a force which is convertible into mechanical and electrical forces, and therefore, theoretically at least, may serve the purposes of the body. The abnormal amount of fuel required for the production of the abnormal heat in fever is probably the reason why a typhoid fever

case has such remarkable power of destroying alcohol; *i.e.*, in the typhoid fever patient the internal fires are under forced draught, and must be fed with an abnormal amount of carbonaceous matter either through the mouth or at the expense of the fatty tissues of the body.

The best authorities calculate that two ounces of alcohol are equivalent in heat-yielding power to 9.3 ounces of lean beef, and if the body be capable of using it the alcoholic force may supply sufficient power to maintain the normal circulation and respiration of an average man for one day. In most admirable researches, Atwater and Benedict have experimentally proven that the human organism does have the power of utilizing the force derived from a moderate amount of alcohol, and that the power of alcohol in protecting the stored-up bodily fat from destruction during forced exercise is equal to that of a corresponding amount of ordinary starchy or oleaginous foods. It is perfectly correct, therefore, to say that alcohol is a food, but as it is incapable of being formed into tissues of the body, it is no more than a force-yielding food, and cannot entirely replace even starch and oils in a diet table.

That alcohol may be used as a food by the organism is confirmed by the fact that it is continually produced in the body and is a normal constituent of the blood. Ford obtained weighable quantities of it directly from the blood of animals. Lieben detected it in the urine of teetotalers, also in that of dogs, horses, and lions. Deschamp got it out of the urine of men who had not taken any of it for weeks. Rajewski distilled it, in sufficient amount to burn, from the bodies of rabbits. Hoppe-Seyler proved its presence in the brains, muscles, and livers of corpses of persons who had not been addicted to its use. The temperance reformer cannot help him or herself; day and night, week-days and Sundays, the internal distillery is at work. In justice, saints and sinners among us ought, as other, greater distillers, to pay a government alcohol-tax.

From time immemorial it has been the belief of ordinary folk that alcohol is a stimulant to the circulation. So was it with doctors until a few years ago; but experimental results were so discordant and seemingly so pointed in another direction that finally a large section of the profession began to believe that alcohol in any dose depresses the circulation. Very recently, however, the whole matter has been reinvestigated, and I believe settled, in the Pharmacological Laboratories of the University of Pennsylvania. It has been shown by Wood and Hoyt that the discrepancies have partly grown out of a curious duplex action of the drug, and partly out of the improper construction of apparatus previously used by experimenters. The hydraulics of the circulation is that of a pump giving propulsive force acting against the friction-resistance of an elaborate system of tubes of various and

varying sizes. It is plain that under such circumstances the pressure depends both upon the force behind and upon the resistance in front of the blood waves, and that the rate of flow is affected almost as much by the size of the tubes as by the power exerted of the propelling force. It was shown by Wood and Hoyt that alcohol increases the amount of work done by the heart and widens the blood-tubes. The increased pushing force and lessened resistance results in an enormous increase in the rate of the flow of blood without a constant rise of the arterial pressure. Wood and Hoyt experimentally demonstrated that in the dog nearly twice as much blood per minute will pass through the carotid artery after than before the exhibition of the proper dose of alcohol, and that a similar action is exerted upon human beings by the drug.

There is at present no clear proof that in any dose alcohol directly stimulates the nerve-centres, so that it is probable that the greater brilliancy and activity of conversation produced at a dinner by the circulating champagne depends solely upon the greater supply of blood to the brain. The carotid arterics supply the brain as well as the face, and the flushing cheeks are the index of a like flushing of the brain.

The whole drift of our present knowledge is to show that upon the general nutrition alcohol exerts no definite influence. At one time it was thought seriously to lessen the consumption of oxygen and the waste of the tissues of the body, but this appears to have been an error. Nor does it stimulate the production of animal heat, save only in such cases as there is lack of fuel, such as fatty and other carbonaceous matters, in the system.

The question as to the propriety of using alcohol habitually has a most important moral side, but with this the physiologist does not deal; the physical side, *i.e.*, whether such use is helpful or hurtful, alone claims his attention. As on the witness stand, in court, my answer to the question as to the practical food value of alcoholic drinks shall precede the explanation. The answer is, the habitual use of moderate alcoholic draughts may be helpful or it may be most hurtful, the diversity of result depending upon the circumstances of the individual involved.

I have been actively engaged in the practice of medicine for more than forty years, and my experience is, that the majority of deaths of men between the ages of fifty and sixty-five years are due to one or more of the three following causes: early sexual dissipation, the use or abuse of alcohol, and excessive eating. Of these, probably the most common and deadly physical sin is that of overeating. At least, among Americans in good financial circumstances, I should estimate its death-harvest as the largest of the three. In India, on the other

hand, the funeral palm belongs to under-eating. When the habitual overeating is combined with the use of alcohol, then the two co-acting forces are most deadly in their effects.

When the Norwich Union Life Insurance Company of England opened its offices in Italy, it was found that if the alcoholic limitations used by the company were adhered to no business could be done. Directed by the company, Dr. W. W. Baldwin, then the chief Anglo-Saxon practitioner upon the peninsula, examined into the matter and reported that the habit of the lower and middle classes of Italians was to take for each of the three daily meals a quart of native wine and a large dish of macaroni, animal foods scarcely appearing in the diet. Under such daily routine meals are enjoyed and physical strength is preserved, yet drunkenness is most rare, and, according to Baldwin, alcoholism never appears and gout or gouty degenerations are almost unknown. On the other hand, when the Anglo-Saxon, German, or other northerner settles in Italy, and adopts the wine habits of the Italian, maintaining his old eating habit, terrible gouty degenerations appear usually within one or two years. A similar thing may be seen in Germany. The poor man in Munich takes his family of an evening to the Loewenbrau, where for a few *pfenniges* he not only enjoys magnificent military music, but obtains also radishes, brown bread, and excellent beer. On this the family sups with the enjoyment that a prince might envy. Later, perhaps, the industrious husband accumulates riches, and Schinken and Wurst and other *delicatessen* grace the family table, whereupon gout drags Hades up to earth.

In Europe the lower classes are under- rather than over-fed. So it is that he who would deprive the poor European peasant of his stoup of wine or beer would take away from the peasant's meal that which gives zest to it, and by stimulating appetite and stomach aids in the digestion of the coarse food, and at the same time supplies to the body fuel which is lacking in the frugal repast. Such a reformer would increase the hardness of an already hard lot and diminish the life average. On the other hand, he who advocates the habitual use of alcoholic drinks by Americans not only directly by increasing the amount of food ingested but also indirectly by stimulating appetite and digestion adds to the food-burden which may be already causing widespread degenerations in heart, arteries, and kidneys.

The moral side of the alcohol question, which has not been considered in this article, is of tremendous importance, but I shall leave its discussion to others, after pointing out that from all time the love of alcoholic excess is a peculiar sin of northern races. The greatest amount of drunkenness I have ever seen in a limited space and time was in certain streets of London about the time of the night-closing of the taverns; the next greatest was in the railroad cars of Prohibition

Maine, when the autumnal migration of the lumber-workers to the woods was going on; while the Christian countries in which I have seen the least drunkenness are Italy and Greece. So has it always been; the Norsemen habitually made long sea expeditions without their wives but with abundant supplies of mead, and in Walhalla their chief joy was to be the quaffing of toasts to themselves and other heroes; the Romans and Greeks never journeyed far from women, and in their religious rites and their heavenly visions priestesses and goddesses played an important part. Mahomet knew well the tendencies of the races he desired to conquer, when, although forbidding the use of wine, he permitted polygamy, and filled the halls of his heaven with houris endowed with the beauty of eternal youth.

The Anglo-Saxon, the German, and the Celt represent the northern races, and the American of to-day is therefore by inherited instinct prone to alcoholic excess. He who among us would devise some practical means of uprooting or controlling this instinct would indeed be a benefactor of his race. Is there, however, any other way than getting the love and fear of God, and the full appreciation of the duty of self-control in all things, deep into the hearts of the people? For if prohibition is really to succeed in larger communities, it must be based upon an overwhelming public opinion, *i.e.*, upon an overwhelming majority of the voters.



## THE COMMON ROAD

BY JANE BELFIELD

**A** GARDEN and a desert stretch between  
 The Land of Nothing Known and All Is Clear;  
 And he who journeys Thence must both these tread,  
 Nor gain the There till he has proved the Here.

The garden and the desert! Both are fair;  
 And who the common road would disallow?  
 Or seek another way to reach the goal,  
 Attain the Then before he knew the Now?

Sometimes the garden withers. In the sands  
 A cool and green oasis may be found.  
 Sometimes from journey's end a Shadow stoops  
 To whisper to the Substance, "Godward—bound!"

# MRS. MARDEN'S PILGRIMAGE

*By Elizabeth Jordan*

THE train was slowly approaching Allendale. Mrs. Cynthia Marden had left that unostentatious village fifty years ago and had not seen it since, yet she thought she recognized familiar landmarks. Rapturously dropping her travelling-bag on the feet of the woman sitting beside her, she rose and flattened her eager features against the window-glass in an effort to enlarge her reminiscences. The victim of her excitement, an angular lady, with a clear but unemotional regard in life, turned a hardened visage upon Mrs. Marden, removing her feet, at the same time, from under the bag with such stolid but frank disapproval that her fellow traveller turned hastily to apologize.

"I do hope you will excuse me," she stammered, as she shamefacedly recovered the bag from the aisle. "I was getting ready to leave the car when I saw Cobb's Hill, and then I got so excited I just did n't know what I was doing. I do hope it did n't hurt your foot."

She looked down upon the other woman with a more than atoning regret, but that embittered individual vouchsafed only a frigid bow that by no means spelt forgiveness.

"It's the place where I was born," Mrs. Marden went on irrepressibly, ignoring this lack of interest. She felt that she had to talk to some one. "I'm coming back for my first visit since I left it at sixteen. Think of that! The old home belongs to my cousin now, and she lives there, so, you see, it's still in the family. I'm to spend Thanksgiving in it. Imagine how I feel! And the town does n't seem one bit changed!"

The train had nearly stopped, but it was obvious that no one else was getting off at Allendale. The men and women near Mrs. Marden, apparently destined for the larger delights of Phillipsburg, a thriving town three stations further on, regarded her excitement with tolerant interest. That lady continued to soliloquize aloud, because it was now less embarrassing to do so than to stop.

"I believe that's the very same station," she remarked quietly, as the dingy building came into view, "and, upon my word! if there is n't old Jonas Pringle standing on the platform! Yes—no—oh!"—her plump face clouded and she smiled consciously. "How silly of

me!" she added slowly. "Jonas Pringle was sixty when I left. He'd be more than a hundred now! That must be his oldest son, standing just as his pa used to, and looking exactly like him."

The grim stolidity of the woman beside her relaxed a little at this.

"I'm afraid you'll find a good many changes," she remarked, with calm precision, "if you have n't seen the town since that old man was a boy. Towns change quickly nowadays." She added, with a settling of her chin which took the place of a sigh from a less adamant breast, "So do folks."

Mrs. Marden smiled again, this time comfortably, as if it were a habit.

"That's so," she conceded with undiminished cheerfulness. "But Allendale is n't like most places. It's on a side line, you see. Folks don't come here much—and they leave here less. There is n't anything happening to change Allendale—at least, that's what my cousin writes to me. So I've thought of it, all these years, just like it was the day I left. Why, my children and my grandchildren know every nook and turn in it, from my descriptions. They could find their way around it if they dropped off here from an airship on a dark night. And I expect to find Grandma Moore's brass candlestick standing on the little table at the head of her bed, left side, just where it always used to be. I'll be hurt if it is n't there."

The austere lady relented still more.

"I hope you won't be disappointed about bigger things," she said. "I would n't want to risk it myself. I think you got courage. I'd feel like the last apple on the tree if I was doing it," she added frankly.

Mrs. Marden dropped the bag she had rescued, and stared at her in artless surprise.

"Risk it!" she repeated. "What's there to risk? Why, it's been the dream of my life to come back like this—no, not exactly like this," she added honestly. "I wanted my children and my grandchildren along, too, so's I could show them the place I've always talked about. I wanted them to see the old water-wheel, and the spring house, and the creek, and the swimming hole. But it could n't be that way, so I had to come alone. I decided that was better than never coming at all."

She sighed, and made a little grimace over her own sentimentality. Then she picked up the bag again, nodded to the other woman, and went forward, ready to descend the steps the moment the train stopped. Her cheeks were pink with excitement, and her gray eyes shone as she swept the foreground with quick, keen glances that missed no detail of her surroundings.

The station building was not the one she remembered, after all, she realized at once, but the group of idlers lounging about seemed reas-



surprisingly untouched by the years. That old man with the battered straw hat on the back of his head was certainly Jonas Pringle's oldest boy, or Jonas himself come from the grave to welcome her; and the young fellow whistling and whistling might be Dick Heminway, who had lent his youth, seemingly, to the upholding of the left wall of the former building. Then she remembered that Dick Heminway had redeemed his inglorious boyhood by a gallant death at Gettysburg, and she sighed and pulled herself back to the present.

"I must n't think of the folks who were old when I was here," she reminded herself. "Of course *they're* all gone. I must look for those who were children then. There ought to be some of them left. Wonder if I'll know them?"

Her cousin had promised to meet her at the train, but there was no one she recognized on the platform, though she realized that every man and boy probably knew her. The return of Cynthia Marden to her native hills after half a century was an event in Allendale. But no one elected to constitute himself a committee of welcome, so she waited patiently for her cousin, looking about her with interest, and glad of the opportunity to be alone for a moment with her memories. At the left of the station the town's main street wound upward, like a band of drab; but Mrs. Marden did not look that way. Her eyes were following the sunny slope of Cobb's Hill on the right, where the blackberry bushes once grew thickest, and her thoughts were vividly with a small, fat girl in a pink sunbonnet who used to pick them. She was recalled to the moment by an angular woman with snapping black eyes, who approached her with swift steps and a hand outstretched.

"Ain't this Cousin Cynthy?" asked the newcomer tentatively. And she added, "I'm Sadie Gardner. I'm sorry I'm late."

Mrs. Marden grasped the hand and kissed the other woman's thin cheek.

"Of course you're Sadie," she responded heartily. "You have n't changed a mite. I'd have known you anywhere! My, but you were a clip in the old days, Sadie! I don't believe you've got over it," she added hopefully, with a long, appraising glance at the other woman.

Her cousin laughed.

"Well," she said, "considerin' that I was fifteen when you left, an' I'm sixty-five now, that's claimin' considerable. I feel sometimes as if the years had used me pretty hard. They been good to you," she added, with an appreciative nod.

She relieved the visitor of her hand-bag as she spoke, and demanded her trunk-check.

"I'll just leave it here at the station," she explained, "an' Jeff will bring the trunk up this evening. Ain't some of the men had sense

enough to speak to you? They knew you was comin'. Scared, I guess. They ain't much used to city folks. You don't know Jeff," she added, as she led her guest to the baggage-room, and indicated a rustic youth waiting there. "He was n't the catch of the town in your day, like he is now, breakin' all the girls' hearts. But you an' me played with his grandma, Lizzie Simpson. Remember her?"

Mrs. Marden remembered, and offered her hand to Lizzie Simpson's grandson, who grinned sheepishly as he took it. He promised to deliver the trunk "right after supper," and turned to a bystander with a preoccupied manner, intended to show this visitor from the outer world that there was much going on in Allendale which might well escape the unobservant. It merely reminded her, however, of the youthful airs of his predecessor of fifty years ago, and another chord of memory echoed in her heart as she smiled and sighed.

Mrs. Gardner led the way up Main Street. She was a brisk little woman, with an unconquerable spirit and a big, comprehending heart, on which her family and neighbors leaned generously, and would continue to as long as it beat in her withered breast. It was plain that the years had used her badly, yet they seemed to drop from Mrs. Marden as she looked at this favorite cousin of her childhood, this Sadie, so bent, so worn, and yet, in essentials, so like the fiery, hot-tempered, honest-souled girl of years ago that the visitor's heart warmed gloriously in their reunion. Mrs. Gardner's acceptance of her, too, bridged the interval as if it had been a year. She was as simple, as natural, and as glad to see her cousin as if they were still the budding belles of Allendale. She had never heard of Mrs. Marden's widening life and worldly affluence in the West, but it would not have changed her if she had. She kept resolutely to the intimate note struck in the first moment of their meeting.

"I knew you right off," she said, as they walked up the street together. "Of course I ain't sayin' you ain't changed, but I guess there's some of the old Cynthy in you yet. See the creek? That's the hole where Johnny Miller did most of his fishin'. Remember the day we crept up behind him and pushed him in?"

The two laughed together, much as they had laughed then.

"You were a case!" ejaculated Mrs. Marden enthusiastically.

She kept step with her cousin, her handsome travelling costume, erect carriage, and fashionable hat in sharp contrast to Sarah Gardner's simple bonnet, rusty alpaca garments, and bowed old back.

"This visit means so much to me," she went on. "My, Sadie! I can't tell you how I've looked forward to it all my life! I never dreamed I'd wait so long. I was always planning to start soon, and then something came up to keep me home. But now John's dead, and all the children are married, so I've got plenty of time."

She paused, but Mrs. Gardner did not speak. Mrs. Marden hurried on, yielding to a sudden impulse to unbosom her heart even here in the town's familiar old highway, where she and Sadie had taken their tottering steps as babies.

"My children love me, but nobody really *needs* me," she continued. "That's what hurts. They've all got their own homes now, and they run them to suit themselves. Sometimes it seems as if I just *can't* sit down and fold my hands and admit that my work's done, and live the way they want me to. Isn't it terrible when we get old, Sadie, and nobody really *needs* us? I don't let myself think about it any more than I can help. I was getting so blue that I was glad to come away for a visit and try to forget it."

Her cousin laughed, not unsympathetically.

"I ain't had a chance to find out much about how you feel when work's done," she said. "I'm busy from sun-up to bedtime, an' I expect to be as long as I last. Joe's a sick man, and he'll never be better. I've got him to take care of. Mary's a widow, an' her and her children live with us. Of course she helps me all she can, but the children are little and they take most of her time. I—I do some sewing, too."

For the first time, her manner showed hesitancy. Then she went on with fine candor.

"We have n't much left, you see. We've lost about everything. I might's well prepare you for that. We've got the old place still, but it's more than I can do to keep it up. We've had to offer it for sale. There's a man lookin' at it now; I guess he's goin' to take it. Meantime, we've got our own chickens and eggs and potatoes, and we don't buy much else. I suppose you won't mind that for a while," she added—"livin' the simple life, I mean. They say city folks like it for variety."

There was a bit of anxiety in her tone now, though she tried to speak lightly. Mrs. Gardner was a generous soul, and it hurt her to seem to fail in hospitality to the cousin who had lived in her faithful heart so long, though their letters had often ceased for years at a time. Mrs. Marden took her arm and pressed it.

"Well, I guess not," she answered, falling into the other's colloquial style with a casual ease that would have horrified her married daughters. "We pay for fresh eggs, but we don't often get 'em in big cities. Anything real fresh will be a treat to me. My, I believe this street is n't changed a mite since I left, fifty years ago."

She looked around as she spoke, recognizing with delight the old landmarks, and missing the expression of outraged civic pride on her cousin's face.

"Why, Cynthia Marden!" exclaimed that offended townswoman.

"Where's your eyes? Three new buildings have gone up here since you left. There's the bank across the street. That's the new town hall on the corner. It was built ten years ago. And the library's right near our house. It went up last year. We been havin' quite a little boom. The *Allendale Citizen* says so."

She was so obviously hurt that her guest sought hastily to soothe her.

"Of course," she said quickly, "I know. I noticed them right off. They're beautiful buildings! What I meant was that the old buildings are left, too; the ones I remember. The same shops are here, and the same trees and houses, and—and the same all-round look. The children tried to make me believe it would all be different, but I knew better. There's the Rorkes' old red brick house! Dear, dear! what happy times we had there, playing with Addie and Kitty Rorke."

Mrs. Gardner nodded.

"Both dead," she said succinctly. "You'll find changes in our home," she added irrepressibly, returning to her one obsessing thought—the passing of her shelter of a lifetime. "Ours used to be the big place of the town in old times. Don't you remember? Now it needs paint and—oh, well"—she checked herself—"we've done the best we could."

Mrs. Marden hesitated. The news of the impending sale was something of a blow to her. Then she spoke, slowly.

"What are you going to do, Sadie, after you sell?" she asked. "Have you made any plans?"

The other woman's wrinkled face grew haggard under her gaze.

"I dunno what we'll do," she said at last. "We—we hope they'll be enough left, over the mortgage, to buy us a little home." She quickened her step now, and added briskly, as if glad to change the subject, "I did n't mean to say much about it, but of course you'll see the sign. Here's the old place. Would you know it?"

Mrs. Marden stopped in front of the wide gateway, where a dilapidated gate hung on rusty hinges, and looked hungrily at her birthplace. The trees she remembered were still there, and the archway of maples leading to the house was merely higher and darker; but the house itself looked lonely and forbidding. Many of its windows were uncurtained, several of its shutters hung awry, and its naked boards pleaded eloquently for paint. The new sign, "For Sale," seemed to have sucked in all the prosperity of the place, so arrogant was it in its trim freshness. But the front door sprang hospitably open, a rapturous puppy rolled out to meet them with shrill barks, and a small girl in a blue pinafore emerged from the hall and greeted the visitor with shy pleasure.

"My grandchild," Mrs. Gardner explained. "Mary's second—Allie. She's eight, and Mother's little helper; ain't you, Allie?"

Mary herself, a faded woman forty years old and looking fifty, was close behind her offspring. With a swelling heart, Cynthia Marden followed her along the hall after their greetings, and up the stairs so thinly protected by the worn carpet. Her hand touched the banisters as she ascended, and then clung there affectionately, as if in the loving grasp of a friend. She had made her first tentative journeys down those stairs as a baby, holding to that polished rail with all the strength of her tiny fingers, and sitting down every few steps to rest. When she was older she had crept tremblingly up those stairs to bed, seeing in the dim shadows of early evening the outlines of Indians and ghostly figures, and of crouching animals waiting to spring. In the morning she had slid down the polished rails, making up by daylight recklessness for her timorousness in the dark. All these and other memories crowded upon her as she turned to her cousin.

"Do you mind taking me to Mother's room first?" she asked. "And Grandma Moore's? I'd like to see them right away, before I even take off my things. I've thought of them so much, and wondered if they were changed."

Her cousin nodded.

"You're goin' to sleep in your mother's room," she said, "under the old risin'-sun quilt. I thought you'd like that. I'll take you to Grandma Moore's room now. It's got her four-poster in it yet, but most of the other things are changed. Some of 'em is in your mother's room, though—the one you're goin' to have."

They were in the hall of the second floor now, facing the door leading to a large front room, and, as she spoke, Mrs. Gardner pushed it open. The visitor crossed the threshold, and her hostess stepped back into the hall and closed the door. As she did so, she made a quick signal to the others, and they went downstairs obediently, marveling over this sentimentality in aged hearts.

Cynthia Marden was left alone. She walked slowly to the centre of the room, her skirts rustling oddly amid its silence, and there she stood still and looked around, while the years fell from her. In that instant fifty years and their crowding episodes were swept aside. She was a little girl again, with a stent of patchwork to show Grandma Moore. Instinctively her feet turned toward the sunny window where the old lady used to sit, her knitting in her lap, her Bible on the table close beside her. Cynthia saw her push her spectacles back on her brow as she bent to look at the child's needlework and pointed out the stitches that were crooked or too long. The sound of her voice came floating down the long avenue of the years. The old lady in the room, with the kisses of her own grandchildren still warm on her cheeks, actually

felt again the tentative weakness of the knees that accompanied the inspection of her childish sewing by Grandma Moore's keen old eyes.

She moved slowly about the room, stopping before the objects she recognized. The four-poster was where it used to be, and there was a familiar pie-crust table, on which she remembered cutting out paper dolls; but the little stand was gone, and the brass candlestick she remembered so well, and the snuffers. These things were merely memories now, like the old head that used to lie on the pillows when Cynthia crept in to say good-night. She recalled again her awe of Grandma's night-cap, and her interest in the great brass warming-pan that had mitigated the cold sheets for Grandma's thin body. Was it fifty years ago? Or were those fifty years a dream, and the sturdy children she had brought into the world mere phantoms of that dream? She experienced a strange sense of unreality.

Mrs. Gardner was waiting for her in the hall. She threw an affectionate old arm over her cousin's shoulders as they started for the next room, but her comment was terse.

"Must feel kinda queer," she said. "I'll leave you now," she added, when she reached the room her guest was to occupy. "We'll have supper in about an hour. I thought you'd like to rest and change your dress and get the dust off. Mary has left hot water for you, and there's a cup of tea and some little cakes on the tray, that you might relish."

Mrs. Marsden leaned forward and kissed her, and, finding something comforting in this tangible outcome of the flight of time, after so many ghosts, repeated the caress.

"You're just as kind, Sadie," she murmured. "You seem to know the way I feel. You always were one to understand, even when we were children."

The other laughed a little.

"Well, I always kinda thought things out," she conceded, "so I can guess how it must seem to you to come back here after fifty years, and go into the rooms where you and your folks lived when you was little. Don't hurry. Come down when you're ready."

She went away, and Mrs. Marden entered the room and closed the door. This had been her mother's room, the room in which, when Cynthia was ten, her mother had died. With a catch of her breath, the old lady looked around her. Here, too, the bed was the same—the bed in which her mother had fallen asleep for the last time. The rising-sun quilt blazed upon it. Grandma's table stood at its head, with the old brass candlestick, or its twin, ready for use. For a long time she stood looking at these things, and struggling with that growing sense of unreality. Then her eyes found and lingered on other familiar objects—the brass-framed mirror between the windows, a

high-boy, a sewing-table she thought she recognized, and—yes, the pictures she had loved as a child. There they were—pink and blue ladies with balloon skirts, offering ridiculous bouquets, which botany could not analyze, to gentlemen whose legs were of a surprising thinness, and whose deportment was formal to the last degree. Also, there were little girls with flat hats, wading in brilliantly colored brooks, with a hardihood that seemed foreign to them, and regarded with smirking indifference by boys standing with ideal ease on the perilously sloping bank. Suddenly an old-fashioned sampler caught her eye. She crossed the room quickly to look at it. Yes.

WROUGHT BY CYNTHIA MOORE  
SEVEN YEARS OLD

ran the needle-wrought text. Some of the worsted letters staggered slightly, but it was a fairly creditable achievement for an infant of such tender years. Standing before it now, nearly seventy, Cynthia recalled the pricked and bleeding fingers that had accompanied the production of this masterpiece, and felt a tingling sensation in her smooth finger-tips.

"I must ask Sadie to give me that," she said to herself. "The children would be glad to have it, I s'pose," she added doubtfully. She wondered if, after all, the quaint thing would find a place in any of the modern fashionable houses owned by her prosperous sons and daughters. Somehow, she could not see it there.

"I'll keep it myself, then," she said inwardly, answering her own thought.

She turned to the rising-sun quilt, flaming with still vigorous splendor on the bed. It was the work of Grandma Moore's mother's hands—almost the last work they did, it was said. But the colors seemed as vivid as they had a hundred years ago, and the elaborate hand quilting it revealed offered eloquent testimony to the patience of this indefatigable ancestor.

"I suppose the children would like it if I'd settle down to that sort of thing," mused Great-grandmother Capon's descendant, as she traced the design with an absent finger. "Grandmothers were willing to be grandmothers in those days. They put on caps and took up their knitting, and settled down in the chimney-corner at fifty, and they let the world rush by. I wish I could do it, but I can't—oh, I can't! I wish the children could understand that. But how can they, living their lives? I wish—I 'most wish I'd stayed here in this quiet place, and married and settled down, and lived my life like the rest, and never come up against those modern notions."

When she went downstairs, an hour later, a picturesque group awaited her. Joseph Gardner, the invalid husband of Sadie, sat in his

reclining chair, and Mary's little brood was clustered around him. A guest was a novelty in this simple household, she realized, and the children gazed at her with eyes widened by fascinated interest. There were three of them, beginning with a lanky boy of fifteen, already justifying his being by activities round the place, as his grandmother mentioned, and ending with little Janey, a mite of four, whose spine had been injured in her babyhood, but who was now able to crawl around the floor at her grandfather's feet. She and he were fellow invalids and great company for each other, the old man told the visitor. He added, with satisfaction, that Janey would soon be old enough to play checkers. "Meantime," he explained, "we take care of each other when the rest of the folks's busy."

Cynthia looked at Mary's gaunt face and Sarah's bent shoulders, and realized that here were two women who were "needed"; but she realized, too, what taxing and mournful ministrations must be theirs. During the evening meal, which was a cheerful one, she and Sadie recalled thrilling episodes of the days of long ago, and the children, experiencing an awful joy in these revelations of youthful depravity, listened to them spellbound.

"First thing to-morrow morning I want to see Ida Stevens," announced Mrs. Marden delightedly. "Do you remember how Ida and I ran away from school once, and slept at a farmer's house, and did n't get home till next day, with the whole countryside hunting for us? We were very, very wicked little girls," she added hastily, for the edification of the young ears taking in her words. The children shed this moral reflection with happy ease.

"Did you get whipped?" asked Janey hopefully.

"No, they were too glad to get us back. I—I mean," the raconteur hastened to add, "we were so worn out by exposure and—and sorrow over what we had done, that they did n't have the heart to whip us."

"You suffered enough for it afterwards, though," explained Mrs. Gardner. "At least, Ida did. You left town and went West and got away from it, but Idy Stevens ain't lived that thing down yet. Why, it gave her a reputation for being wild——" She checked herself. "I'll tell you about it afterwards," she added, with a knowing look, which the children duly observed and secretly resented.

Cynthia Marden ate strawberry preserves with a conscience at rest. "Ida and I will have a good laugh over that," she remarked optimistically, as she accepted her third hot biscuit. "I've always wanted to talk about it with her."

Old Joseph Gardner spoke up at this. His chair had been wheeled into the dining-room, and he sat like a patriarch at the head of his table, his grandson beside him to attend to his needs.



"I would n't count much on Idy," he contributed, nodding his venerable head sagely. "I think she holds it agin you yet, Cynthy. You was older 'n her, you know, and Idy thinks you led her astray."

Mrs. Marden stopped her bit of biscuit midway on its journey to her lips, and stared at him in frank astonishment.

"Holds it against me, after all these years? Nonsense!" she said frankly. "Ida Stevens is n't a fool, is she?"

"Well, she ain't married." Joseph Gardner offered this information as if it had definite bearing on Mrs. Marden's question. "An' ye know how cranky women gets," he went on. "I dunno that I'd count much on Idy, if I was you. She's been unfort'net, too. You know she's livin' at the poor farm now."

Mrs. Marden gasped. "The poor farm!" she exclaimed. Then she added quietly, "I'll go see her to-morrow morning."

Mary shook her head. "I dunno's I'd risk it," she muttered thoughtfully.

Mrs. Marden frowned.

"I guess Ida won't eat me," she added firmly. "I've remembered her all my life. I remember everything about her, and I'm certainly going to see her in her trouble. I've brought her a present. I've brought you all presents," she added, glad to turn her mind from the mediæval picture of Ida Stevens brooding in the poor farm over a fancied grievance half a century old.

The old man's dull eyes brightened. Not many presents came his way. There was a thrill in the knowledge that one was coming now.

"Presents!" he quavered. "Well, that's real kind of you." He tried to look interested in the conversation that followed, but it was plain his thoughts were on the coming gifts.

"As soon as my trunk comes, we'll get the presents out," announced Mrs. Marden, when supper was almost over. She was enjoying very much the unusual sensation of being a centre of interest. In the homes of her fashionable daughters and successful sons, so many interests crowded to the front that "Grandma," if conventionally cherished, was a subdued ornament of the background.

"It's coming now," cried little Janey, craning her neck to look past her mother's head and through the front window. "I see the horse. I see the trunk, too. It's a great b-ig trunk," she added, with flattering emphasis.

Her words were followed by a confirmatory bump in the hall.

"Want it took upstairs, Mis' Gardner," called the cheerful voice of Lizzie Simpson's grandson.

"I'll see to it." Mrs. Marden was out of her seat and into the hall before they could reply.

"I've had him leave it right inside the door, in the hall," she

explained when she returned. "You won't mind if I unpack it there after supper, and bring the presents in one at a time. Then every one can see every one else's presents," she added happily.

The children, restrained from speech by their grandmother, sat gazing toward the trunk with fascinated eyes. Seeing this, and the artless expectancy on the old man's face, Mrs. Marden inwardly thanked the fortune that had made her bring them "something worth while," as she expressed it to herself. She had really selected their gifts with the utmost care, after very thoughtful consideration of their various ages and conditions; and she had fiercely and successfully combated the efforts of a practical daughter-in-law to make her buy "useful things." She had even coldly declined to be the bearer of gifts made by other members of her family, if she herself did not approve of them.

"There's hardly a real useful present among them," she reflected now, with satisfaction.

They crowded round her as she started to unpack.

Janey's gifts came first, in deference to her tender years. A music-box in the form of a doll, that whirled on the stick under its stiff petticoats and produced a gay German air, smiled up at the little invalid as she opened her package. An angel would have been more astonishing, but not so agreeable. Mrs. Marden wound it up, and the delicate child, her face white with excitement and ecstasy, gazed and listened in a rapture that made her elders exchange glances.

"She's crazy about music," Sadie explained in an undertone, "and she ain't never really had none before. We ain't even got a melodeon."

There was another doll for Janey—a sturdy rag doll, made for much handling, that ejaculated "Mamma" when it was moved about in the owner's little arms, and had a smile superior to Fate. Before these wonders from the toy masters of Germany even the elders in the Gardner family sat dumb. There were blocks and picture puzzles for Janey, too, and paper dolls, and a soap-bubble set, and a Mother Goose book.

The old man's gifts came next, for the visitor could not resist his irrepressible impatience. His faded eyes grew dimmer over a handsome dressing-gown, soft slippers, an electric night lamp, which flashed out brilliantly at the touch of his fingers, a small mechanical airship, and a box of mechanical butterflies.

"They go all around the room when they're wound up," said the guest, illustrating with the pretty trifles as she spoke. "I thought they might amuse you and Janey. When they fall she can pick them up and hand them to you to be started off again. There's some more things, too, for you. John, my oldest son, is sending you a case of port by express, and Joe is sending a big box of new books and magazines. They ought to be here to-morrow."

The old man's voice trembled as he thanked her. He insisted on throwing the dressing-gown over his shoulders at once, and he snapped the electric light of his new lamp off and on till his wife nervously protested. But he experienced a delight in the airship and butterflies which dimmed these attractions, and almost obscured his interest in the gifts to the other members of the family.

Jim, the lanky boy, was made happy by a set of boxing-gloves and a new League ball and bat, together with a wonderful collection of marbles selected by a cousin his own age. A cap and sweater of the latest style—the last articles a concession to the demands of the practical daughter-in-law—seemed to appeal to him also, to the relief of the anxious guest.

"They're so pretty, it don't matter if they are useful," Mrs. Marden had murmured peacefully when she yielded. She experienced her reward for this philosophy in the moment when he put them on, and then, thinking himself unobserved, regarded them long and approvingly in a convenient mirror.

Little Allie received a beautiful doll, several picture-books, a box of dishes, gloriously complete, and an indoor croquet set, which she at once set up on the dining-room table, now happily cleared. Then Cynthia Marden turned to Sadie and Mary, whose tired faces had flushed a little in this atmosphere of joy.

"I brought you both black silk dresses," she said, almost shyly. "I got the material and all the trimmings and linings, and I want you to have them made in Phillipsburg, as part of the present. They have pretty good dressmakers in Phillipsburg now, have n't they?"

She opened the packages as she spoke, and the heavy lustrous silk gleamed in the soft light. Mary, a woman old before her time, sat and gazed at it, speechless. Mrs. Gardner put out a tentative hand and touched the soft folds, her gnarled fingers trembling.

"Why—Cynthy—Moore," she said huskily. "I ain't never had a silk dress in my hull life." And she added, "I never expected to have one, no more'n I expected wings. I wonder if I ain't asleep. I would n't know what to do with it. I s'pose I can be laid out in it, though," she added, with a sudden flash of satisfaction in her black eyes.

Mrs. Marden unfolded the package of trimmings with brisk, capable hands. She was aware that the atmosphere was tense with feeling, so her voice took on a crisp, matter-of-fact intonation as she held up the lace and embroidery for inspection. She had rarely experienced a more thoroughly satisfying hour than this one, in which she came back to her old home as a lady bountiful to her less fortunate kin. Certainly she had never appreciated more the advantages of a generous income.

"Well, I guess you'll wear it to church a good many years first," she explained, in answer to her cousin's last remark. "I expect to live a long time yet, and it would be mighty impolite for you to die first. You're too young! Handsome, is n't it?" she added, holding up the lace. "I think this is going to be real becoming to you, Sadie. We'll have a yoke of it, I think, and insertion in the sleeves. There's plenty. And the embroidery is for Mary's dress. You see, Mary, it's got a little color, dark and rich. I thought you'd like it."

Mary's eyes shone. "I never saw anything so handsome," she said, under her breath. Then Mrs. Marden produced her trump card.

"I've brought hats, too," she chirped delightedly. "There is n't anything in this trunk but presents. My own big trunk's coming on to-morrow. I wanted to surprise you. 'T was a risk to get the hats, I s'pose, but I got shapes I thought ought to be becoming, and they can be changed a little by the milliner in Phillipsburg if they need it. There's dresses for the children, too, and a new suit for Jimmy, from my sons. They wanted to give nice, sensible things. But I brought out my own presents first, because I've always hated sensible presents, and I always expect to. I hated them when I was a girl, and I hate them now. That's why these hats have plumes and buckles on them, instead of sober bows." She laughed happily as she ended. Then, for the next hour, the big trunk gave up its minor gifts, one by one, with explanations, exclamations, and an occasional shriek of delight from Janey, playing with her musical doll and the butterflies.

When the guest went to her room that night, at an hour unusually late for that simple household, her hostess followed her across the threshold.

"I dunno how to thank you, Cynthy," she began. "I dunno's I can ever do it, when I think how happy you've made all of us."

Her black eyes were soft, and her voice was full of feeling. Some of this was reflected in her cousin's eyes.

"Happy?" she said quietly. "Have I really made you happy? If I've done that, then I'm happy," she added solemnly. "I'm afraid it's a long time since I've made anybody really happy before. I used to do it, when John was alive and the children were little. Now I don't have the chance."

"Seems like it's too excitin' and wonderful to be true," Sarah Gardner went on, following her own thoughts. "I should n't be surprised to wake up and find it had been just a dream. I shan't forget it, but I ain't a hand to say much. I wish there was something we could do for you," she added longingly.

Mrs. Marden put her arm over her thin shoulder.

"There is, Sadie," she said. Her cousin stared at her. Then, as she read sincerity in the other's eyes, her own brightened.

"I'd just like to know what 't is!" she exclaimed. "Mercy, there ain't anything I would n't do for you, Cynthy," she added softly. "I guess you know that. I've always had a special feelin' for you, different from the way I felt for other folks, and you comin' this way now makes it seem like you're a good angel."

Mrs. Marden drew her toward the window-seat, and they sat down on it together, as they had often done when they were little girls. Both remembered this at the same moment, and instinctively their hands reached out and met and clung together.

"Use me, Sadie," said the visitor quietly. "That's what you can do for me. Don't make a visitor of me. Take me in, as one of your family. Let me help you. Let me feel that I am needed somewhere. We're not just cousins—we're friends. We've got a happy childhood in common. That means something. Take me in."

Her cousin stared at her, uncomprehendingly.

"You mean you want to *live* here?" she ejaculated dazedly.

"No, not always. Just part of the time. I want to go back and forth, and keep in touch with my children. They're good children, and they love me and I love them, even if they don't need me any more, and have n't much time for me, and don't understand how I feel. But, oh, you don't know how awful it is, after a long life, to feel useless—not needed! I've stood it for five years, since John died. I can't stand it any more. Indeed I can't, Sadie."

Her voice broke. The tears rolled, first slowly, then faster, down her cheeks. She let them fall, unchecked.

"That's *my* trouble," she said. "You've got yours; I've got mine. They're different, but they're both hard, and we can help each other to bear them. I've got money, and it's all I've got. The children are kind. They do their duty by me. But they're all busy. My sons are successful business men. My daughters are in society. They're all married and have their own families and homes and interests. I live alone—I knew enough to do that," she added grimly—"and I have my nice apartment and my two servants and every comfort. John left me well off; I'm not dependent on any one, thank God. But when I go to see the children they make me a visitor, and listen politely while I talk. They tell me their good news, but they keep all their cares and worries from me, because they don't want to 'worry' me. I'm too old to be 'worried'! Humph! And when I talk, I s'pose I bore them, usually. They're always talking about being 'bored' by other folks."

She checked herself, and, drawing her handkerchief from her pocket, wiped her eyes, almost defiantly.

"Don't mind my breaking down like this," she said, more quietly. "I suppose I'm tired and nervous from the long journey and the

excitement. But I've stood things out West as long as I can. I'm strong and well. I'll live ten years yet, if an automobile or airship don't kill me." She laughed a little; then her grip tightened on the other's hand.

"Sadie, I want to get something out of those ten years," she cried. "I've got to do something, to mean something to my kin. I did n't know what it was going to be, but now I do. I discovered it this very hour. It don't take me long to make up my mind. It's here in my old home, among my own folks. Will you let me try?"

Sadie Gardner pressed her hand. Her sharp black eyes were dim again. "I guess I know how you feel," she said, "an' I want you to feel now 't this is your home as long as it lasts. I only wish 't was going to last longer. But wherever we find a shelter, you'll be welcome there, too, Cynthia—always, *always*."

"I know it." Mrs. Marden's response was quick. "Do you suppose I don't know that? You're not changed. But this shelter's going to last a long time, Sadie, and it's going to be a shelter for all of us. That's what I mean."

Her cousin stared at her without comprehension. Mrs. Marden leaned back in her seat, ready to explain her project, her eyes shining now with excitement.

"I want to buy the place," she said slowly. "I'm going to buy it, pay off the mortgage, and fix it up, and ask you and your family to stay right here and keep it for me, so I'll have it to come back to whenever I want. And I'm going to leave it to you in my will, so you and Mary'll have it always."

Every feature in the brave old face before her quivered. The head that Sarah Gardner had held so proudly erect before her neighbors throughout all her trouble, dropped now into shaking old hands. Not daring to look at this overthrow of a dauntless spirit, which trouble could not have conquered, Mrs. Marden hurried on.

"I'm going to have it shingled and papered and painted. I'm going to have two bath-rooms put in it. I'm going to scour the country and buy back our old mahogany, and I'm going to get more old mahogany, too. We'll make it just as much like it used to be as we can. My, we're going to be busy," she cried, "and happy! Just think of it, Sadie! I'm going to be busy all winter, *doing things that need to be done*. And you're going to help me! Can't you imagine what that's going to mean to me? Why, it has given me something I have n't had since John's death—something to live for!"

Then she pulled Sarah Gardner's hard-working hands away from her wet face, and looked into her old friend's eyes.

"Oh, Cynthia!" the other woman sobbed. And then again, "Oh, Cynthia!"

It was a long time before she added brokenly, "You don't know what the burden's been all these years. I knew I could n't bear it much longer. I talked about getting another place, but I really thought we'd have to go to the poor farm! And Thanksgivin' comin' on, too. I'd lie awake nights, and wonder how it would seem to spend Thanksgivin' away from this home, if it went before then. Oh, *don't* let me wake up an' find it's a dream, an' that you ain't really come, after all! Don't *let* me!"

She caught at her cousin in a panic, like a frightened child in the dark. Cynthy drew the gray head down on her shoulder and held it close, with a rush of joy in having some one at last to comfort.

"It's no dream, Sadie," she said simply. "We're two happy old women, wide awake; and we're going to wake up Allendale, too, considerably, before we get through."

Then she drew a long breath.

"And, Sadie," she cried suddenly, relaxing, in her excitement, into the vernacular of her girlhood, "the very first thing to-morrow morning let's us, you an' me, go to the poor farm and see what we can do for Idy!"

"Let's have her live here!" cried Mrs. Gardner eagerly.

Mrs. Marden nodded.

"That's what I'd like," she said, "if 't ain't too much care for you. Of course we'll have a good strong girl here to do the heavy work—two, if we need 'em."

Then she threw back her head and laughed like a girl.

"Think of Idy being mad at me all those years," she said happily, "an' thinking I led her astray! Well," she added softly, "I'll lead her home again now—and it's high time!"



## QUATRAIN

*On the picture of Venus by Giorgione*

BY CHARLES WHARTON STORK

**D**EAD painter, what rare vision hast thou had  
 In thy two years and thirty, that thy hand  
 Could teach eternity to understand  
 That one soul-moment's glow of beauty glad!

# IN PONDOLAND

## A LOVE-STORY

*By May Edginton*

### I.

“**N**O, I'm not particular cussed this morning,” said Lagg—he was one of the Westmoreland Lagghornes, but we drop that since he did—to Stone, who was one of the Allstones of Uncestershire—but we drop that too. “And I don't often do it. A man just gets thinking sometimes of all the women at home.”

“Of a woman at home,” replied Stone.

“No,” said Lagg, cursing the troop-horse for clenching his teeth against reception of the bit. “The women. All of 'em. In a drawing-room at night, in their dinner-frocks especially. Not that it matters. Nothing matters. I've seen nothing nicer in the feminine way than a black for two months, and I don't know that I want to. Any way, the English women you occasionally see out here are n't the sort you have at home. Stock-keepers' wives and daughters, farmers' wives and daughters, post-office girls—not one with a decent strain in her, or a thread of any sort of culture to make her bearable.”

“Oh, culture!” said Stone, who had been at the Cape five years longer than Lagg, and who therefore accepted life with philosophy, much as it came. (Lagg's horse had taken the bit, and was unkindly swelling his barrel against the girths.) Stone added: “Culture is n't much out here. The girls are all right where you find 'em. Trouble is, you don't find 'em often enough.”

Lagg got into his saddle, sneering, and stayed back a moment, adjusting his bandolier and his rifle, and a pair of field-glasses that swung at his back.

“Much use,” he said, quitting the subject, “me patrolling by Keever's store. He left a good three days ago, and, any way, what's the stuff worth if the Kaffirs *did* loot it? I'd rather be out looking for him on the veldt.”

“A hundred pounds on his head!” said Stone, sucking in his lips derisively.

“But he quit three days ago,” Lagg repeated. “As soon as he'd



shot those two Zulus in the store, he up and ran. Keeping an eye on the store is a silly farce."

Their corporal walked towards them. In England he had, as a boy, been an under-gardener, and he knew a gentleman when he saw him, and, being a man of some constitution as well as penetration, he always spoke decently to the like of Lagg and Stone.

"Now, my lads!" said he.

"Yessir!" replied Stone. This kind of thing still amused him, but Lagg saluted without the obedient word, and rode off, pulling at his fair mustache. The corporal, with Stone and a couple more troopers, mounted and loped away west over the veldt.

It was a burning February morning. When Lagg had done the five miles at a trot, he suffered and sweated, in spite of his excellent condition. The hard Cape horse, on the contrary, remained very comfortable. Set solitary in the midst of rolling country, the small store which was the trooper's goal loomed into sight. From this emporium of blankets, beads, provisions, knives, concertinas, and such variety, had Kever, the Kaffir trader, escaped three days before, after shooting down two Zulus who had come in to buy. That the Zulus were refractory is possible; that Kever was provocatively drunk more probable. Lagg rode by the locked place at a walk, pushing back his hat and wiping his beaded forehead. The country was very still, except for the impression of pulsating heat. The slopes of the Drakensberg showed distantly, parched and arid, with the growth dried on them. The store, built of mud, brick, wood, tin roofing, and any material that had come handy to the trader who made it, was a shapeless construction, with some attempt at a façade, but rambling away into lumps like little rough huts all joined together at the back, as Kever had added wing by wing. It was shut now into profound silence, and Corporal Sandys had drawn down the blind before the glimpse of loot in the window, so that no hankering Kaffir might be unduly tempted, had locked the doors, and attached the keys. Before this emporium of precious plenty, then, Lagg patrolled that morning. He might ride three miles east and west, but that was the extent of his variety for the next eight hours. When he rode by the first time, at a foot pace, relieving a bored trooper, it was about nine o'clock. It was eleven when Lagg, sweeping the country with his field-glass for the twentieth time, about two miles west of the store, descried in its vicinity a figure which receded from it at a stiff half-run, which was brawny and tall, which hurried, which limped. The trooper sat in his saddle and took a long, leisurely survey. Into his lean, reddened face stole the joyful hunger of the hunter; his blue eyes snapped fires. "That's lame Kever!" said his brain, as he swung the field-glass to his back, and shortened his reins. "Kever! Hiding in the store all through it! And Sandys ransacking everything. My God! Go 'long, horse!"

So, at a gallop, he rode down upon the limping, running figure ahead. As he drew nearer and the thud of the pursuing hoofs came to him, the fugitive wheeled round, stopped dead, uttered a little savage short cry, and whipped his revolver from his hip. It was Keever, bloated, dirty, desperate. He was a clean-shaved man as a rule, but three days' growth of stubble was now trying to disguise his face. Lagg knew it, though.

"Hands up!" he roared, as he rode down upon him, loosening his own revolver from its holster. And before either gun could speak—though both had the reputation of being tolerably quick—the Cape horse crossed his legs and came down in a heap, pitching his rider over his head at the murderer's feet.

## II.

THE sick man opened his eyes.

He was in some underground place, on a mattress, among bales and bottles. It was not altogether dark, because light was admitted through a trap-door which presumably opened into a ground-floor room, and a little lamp burned by the mattress. "H-h-hullo!" he quavered to nothing in particular. It was the first word he had spoken for two days. He may have had a vague consciousness then of some change of position, but did not know that it was due to an arm sliding beneath his head; and of a different pillow with some ineffable quality about it, but did not know that it was a woman's breast.

He slept.

Two hours later he awoke again, and said, "Hullo!" His eyes, rolling up, found a bent-down face watching him—a young, dark, pale face that seemed filled by eyes of great intensity, and was shadowed by a cloud of loosened hair. He put up a hand to his upper lip, and stroked it vaguely, but there was no mustache there. He was a clean-shaved man, albeit with two or three days' growth of stubble upon him. He appeared to meditate in a childish way.

"How d' you feel?" said the girl's voice softly.

"I am—all right," he replied, in a voice that smote him to surprise by its faintness.

She smiled dimly.

"Lift yer head up," she invited. "Try."

He tried, and was seized with a dreadful pain that ceased only when he desisted and let his head lie helplessly again on her shoulder. She continued to hold him protectingly.

"Where am I—any way?" he whispered presently.

She looked out into the shadows of the bales and casks, and through the trap-door to the light above, before she answered:

"Don't you remember, then, Will?"

He tried, whereat the pain seized him again, and he desisted.

"I remember nothing," said he weakly.

"You're in the cellar of our own store," said the girl, looking down into his face.

He repeated feebly, "Our—own—store?"

"Yes."

"Who am I, any way?" said he.

"Why," said she, "don't you remember? You're Will Kever, dear, that killed two Zulu boys up above there, and the Mounted Rifles is patrolling for you everywhere."

He clung to her and whispered, "What? . . . I killed——"

"But they'll never find you," she said, holding him. Her hands were wonderfully lithe and strong, considering how small they were. She was a small made girl altogether.

"You promise——" he gasped.

"I promise," said she. "I'll take care on you."

He slept again.

His head was on the lumpy pillow when he awoke, but she was at his side at the sound of his stirring, with a cup of something steaming in her hand. She slid an arm under his shoulders, held him up, and put the cup to his lips. He was so hot and it was so hot, that he would have turned naturally from it, but she said: "You got to drink it all. It's corn flour, made with condensed milk out of the store. I put some nutmeg in to flavor it. Come 'long! This cellar's damp, and I can't hev you catchin' any low fevers."

So he drank it all. Afterwards, she straightened his bed as well as possible, he watching her. Then she trimmed the oil lamp and tidied up, and shut down the trap-door through which faint reddish rays had stolen. Observing his piteous look at this, she came to him and said tenderly: "I got to shut the door now, see? 'Cause the sun's settin', and the store'll get dark, and we must n't hev this little lamp shinin' up, never so faint, through the window. There'll be a trooper by directly."

He smiled, but shivered. She put her hand on his shoulder and repeated, "I'll take care on you."

"Where are you going to sleep?" he asked, seized with a sudden horror of being left alone.

"On those blankets," she answered, nodding at a heap in a dim corner. He was reassured, and lay holding her hand. Then his head began to put him to excruciating torment, and he said selfishly, "I wish you'd hold me like you did before, and put me to sleep."

The girl sat down on the floor—she had been kneeling by him—slid her arm under him, and took his head on her breast. So she bore his weight while unsupported herself, and she must have found him very

heavy. Her free hand touched his forehead and temples rhythmically. The pain grew less, and sleep was descending on his eyelids, when he roused himself once more to ask, like a curious child:

“Who are you, then?”

She was silent, looking out into the shadows before she replied. Then, “What, Will? Don’t you know me? I’m Mary.”

“Mary—Mary——?”

“Your wife,” said she, looking into the shadows.

He went to sleep without commenting. Half an hour later she laid him down, and curled herself up, trembling with more than fatigue, upon the blankets. Twice in the night she woke, crept over to him, and, finding him aching and restless, took his head in her arm and stroked him to sleep. In the morning, when by a watch she had hung upon the wall she knew the sun must be up—day and night were alike in the windowless cellar—she opened the trap door, and air and light flowed beneficently in. She fed him that day with Liebig Extract, invalid messes made from condensed milk, and the like. He grew more placid, and his head was clearer and more comfortable. And at moments when the circling pain overtook him he found peace on her breast, and home in the shadow of her hair. They talked.

“How long have I been ill, Mary?”

“Bout—three days.”

“And they’re looking for me, are they?”

“Yes, dear.”

“Because—I killed two blacks——”

“Yes, dear.”

“My God!”

“I tell you, I’ll take care on you.”

“You’re a small thing to take care of a man!”

“I’m a woman.” She looked very young and wan.

“What’s the matter with my head, any way?”

“You fell down—and hit it. It’s concussion, that’s what it is.”

He put his hand up to his lip, to pull the mustache that was not there, and became puzzled.

“Don’t ask so many questions yet,” said she, with some authority.

On the evening of the third day he wanted to get up and walk about the cellar. Red rays were peering in through the trap-door, and soon that blessed inlet for air must be closed.

“I could walk about now,” he said to her, raising his arms over his head several times to test his strength.

“Don’t you fret yourself.”

“Where are my clothes, Mary?”

“What d’you want yer clothes for yet? You did n’t ought to get up. You’re ill.”

He looked at her, very puzzled, and she shrank.

"Let me have my clothes, please, Mary. Quick, there's a good girl."

She went up the ladder into the store, and he began to look with distaste at the night-shirt he was wearing. The calico was coarse, and the buttons were off, so that it opened over his chest. He felt still confusedly the presence of alien things, and regarded her again more piercingly than he knew when she descended the ladder with a coat, trousers, and clean cotton shirt flung over her arm. "There y' are," she said, with a tender break in her voice, looking at him from beneath her cloudy hair. Then she caught his questioning gaze, and, throwing the garments on the bed, shrank back.

"You can put them on yourself, I s'pose," she gasped. "I want to get another tin of milk from the store 'fore 't is dark," and fled up the ladder. He felt some faint injury at this, but began to dress slowly, and found himself hardly weakened. It was only that his head still buzzed. He walked up and down carefully, fingering the clothes, which also puzzled him by their alienness. Her voice came softly down into the cellar, and, looking up, he descried the outline of her face peering down from the dimming store.

"These bags are awf'ly big," said he wonderingly.

She came a step down, and another, very slowly, looking at him askance with fear.

"My! You've shrunk!" said she. "But you're better—you're nearly well. You're——"

"I shall make a bolt for it to-morrow," he replied, nodding his head.

She came the whole way down, sat on the bottom step, and, throwing her apron over her head, laughed and laughed behind it. With one stride he was by her, and was pulling with anger at the apron, to find that she was weeping. A sort of amazed fear came over him, as over a child whose nurse has suddenly failed to afford protection.

"I'm only just tired," she quavered.

He dropped down by her, and, with a hazy consciousness that she was his wife, put a halting arm round her shoulders. As soon as he touched her, the arm grew more confident, and held her to him, where she stayed, wiping her eyes, and conjuring, by sheer will, some composure.

"Why, you *little* thing, you!" he said, and, lifting her chin, would have kissed her, but, "You ain't shaved!" she cried hurriedly, drawing away. He passed a hand reflectively over his rough cheeks, and remembered that of course one performed some operations every morning with a razor.

"I'll get yer things," said she, climbing the ladder once more. He could hear her padding gently about the room at the back of the store; then she came down again with very rough-and-ready shaving apparatus

and a jug of water in her hands. He received them gratefully, saying with his first sparkle for those three days, "Now I'll soon be nice enough to kiss you!"

She turned and went up again without speaking. So he shaved with infinite pleasure by the light of the oil lamp shed on a twelve-by-eight-inch mirror. Then he went below the trap-door, and called whisperingly, "Mary!"

"I'm getting yer supper," she called whisperingly back.

He sat down to wait with a brisker sense of anticipation. Incidentally, he thought. The alienness of things and of himself was still borne in upon him strongly. He held up his right hand and shuddered at it; yet hardly credited its murderous propensity. He thought of the patrol riding in the red twilight without, and shuddered again. To-morrow he would make a bolt for it. This was a rat's life. If all the Mounted Rifles at the Cape swarmed like vicious terriers over the veldt to-morrow, he would make a bolt for it. He resumed walking-practice up and down the cellar.

Mary brought his supper down, looking shy, fearful, and reluctant. He remembered his kiss, and, receiving the tray from her, took it and then another.

"You *are* tired," he said suddenly.

"I'm going to sleep up top to-night," she replied. "It's so hot down here, and why should two of us be smothered, when you're well enough now to be by yourself."

This seemed such excellent logic that he did not protest against being left alone. She proceeded:

"You've got everything you want for to-night. I may as well go up an' sleep. I'm dead tired, sitting up with you, and I want some better air. I'll leave things in reach, and you can hev the lamp lit, and I shall look down at you now and agen through the trap to see's you're all right."

He nodded, and drew her to him eagerly. "Kiss me good-night again," he demanded. She acceded, and withdrew in a sort of cold, frightened reserve that made his head ache with wondering about it. As she went up the ladder, he said: "I wish I could remember things better. Could n't you give me a start, with something that happened before I hit my head? Look here, when was it we got married? Try from that."

"Never mind to-night," she replied tartly, and shut down the trap-door.

He ate his supper, undressed, putting on the ill-favored night-shirt with annoyance, and slept.

It was late that night—perhaps eleven o'clock—when the patrol without passed the store for about the tenth time since he went on duty.

Quite by accident, for they had given up close observation of the place, he glanced at it, and, sliding through the chinks between the window-blind and the frame, streamed a slender shaft of light. The trooper pulled up, dismounted, and, advancing gingerly to the window, applied his eye. One could see nothing in the slight chink, save the ray of light, but while he looked, a shadow shifted lightly over the yellow blind, and fell again. He knew what it was. Some one had inadvertently got between the light and the window. Then the store was again in darkness. The trooper ran to his horse, and galloped back for reinforcements. Keever was known to be too handy with his gun for any crude stand-and-deliver method. Meanwhile Mary, who had opened the trap-door for that brief minute to look down upon the invalid, slept again among disordered merchandise in the store.

At half-past twelve, Corporal Sandys with a couple of troopers—of whom Stone was one—came loping through the darkness, leading a spare horse for a prisoner, and drew up. They pulled the horses' reins over their heads, and left them to stand while they unlocked the front door and crept in, Sandys first, on tiptoe, revolver cocked. "Now, boys!" said the corporal in an almost soundless whisper, and flashed on a little electric pocket-lamp. Then the three saw that they had walked nearly upon a girl who lay asleep on some folded blankets, near to a closed trap-door, on which one arm was flung protectingly.

"My word!" breathed Sandys, grinning from ear to ear. But Stone said, "Wake her up gently, Corporal," and, stooping over her, called on her quietly. She awoke quietly and stared at them, then leaped up, quivering so that she could hardly stand. She started to scream, but stopped herself and put both hands over her mouth, while her eyes, full of despair at the world, never wavered from Sandys's face.

"Now, now, miss!" said he. "Who've you got under that trap-door?"

"Nobody't all," she denied.

"I should like to look, miss," replied Sandys.

She stepped onto the door, and stood as if to defy them, trembling.

"Don't do that," said the corporal quite kindly. "We could lift you off as easy's easy, see? But we'd rather you'd step aside."

She stepped aside, looked round as if for escape, found it impossible, and crouched down upon the blankets. They lifted the door, and saw just beneath it the man sleeping on his mattress, with that betrayer, the little oil lamp, beside him. Sandys slapped his leg, and cried, "Lagg! Lagg as we reported missing!" and fairly tumbled down the steps into the cellar. Thus the sleeper was awakened rudely, to see a big man in khaki, with a soft smasher hat encircled by a black and amber band of beautiful familiarity, standing over him. His first impulse was one of fright; he sprang up and at Sandys, but the

corporal gripped him, crying: "What, Lagg, my lad! You'd strike your superior officer, would you?" Then it was that the beautiful familiarity of the khaki and the black and amber hat somehow seized Lagg, and he stood staring.

"What are you saying?" he asked.

Sandys repeated it.

"I'm not Will Keever, wanted for shooting two blacks, and this store's not mine?"

"Who's been telling you that, man?" said Sandys.

"She did," replied Lagg inadvertently.

"Oh, she did, did she?" said Sandys. "And what else did she tell you? The baggage!"

Lagg shut his mouth.

"You're very dazed, man," said Sandys, not pushing the question, having been, as we noted, an under-servant, and knowing that the English upper classes have peculiar ideas about women. "What happened to you? Can you tell me that?"

Lagg told all he knew.

"Put those trousers on," said Corporal Sandys, sitting down on a whisky-case, and pulling out the bottles one by one, to find them empty. "Now, I should say, you had some accident. Keever brings you in here, changes clothes, shaves your mustache, takes your horse, cuts over the hills, changes clothes again, goes through Basutoland into the Transvaal, and there's an end to *him's* far as we're concerned. That seems dead easy. So you've been nussed up, eh?"

Lagg went on with his dressing.

"Who's she?" ruminated Corporal Sandys. "I wonder, who's she?"

"She's Keever's wife," replied Lagg shortly. He remembered that.

"We'll take her to Umtata," said the corporal. "She'll have to be dealt with. She's bin fooling you."

But Lagg remembered the ineffable rest of her breast, and her hands and her lips, and shut his mouth.

"It's one o'clock," said the corporal. "The boys can begin gettin' breakfast out of the store, and as soon's the sun's up we'll start. I brought a spare horse for William Keever"—here he laughed so heartily that Lagg hated him—"but about her, I don't know. One of us'll have to take her in front."

"I'm the lightest," replied Lagg.

The Corporal said nothing.

They had an elaborate breakfast at two. The girl would take nothing but tea, though even Sandys descended to abject persuasion at the sight of her dreadfully big eyes in her little pale face.

"What'll you do with me?" she asked once, while two troopers



watched rashers broiling in the pan, and Lagg, withdrawn to a packing-case in the corner, watched her.

"You're my prisoner, my dear," replied Corporal Sandys, "and you been a very naughty girl."

By dint of dragged answers to his questions, she corroborated the theories he had exploited to Lagg. Then she drooped on the blankets with her face in her arms, and would say no more.

It was just after three when they started for the hills, into Umtata. She sat on the withers of Lagg's horse, and they all rode abreast. Things were not yet clear to Lagg, but they were clear enough for him to sight the position. When they had walked and cantered a couple of miles or so, Mary looked up at him and said:

"I suppose I'll go to prison."

"I don't know," said Lagg heavily. "I believe as you're his wife, that will—will—extenuate you."

She lay back against his right arm. He muttered a question at her ear:

"Why did n't you leave me to die when Keever brought me in, and get away? You could."

She would not answer, and circumstances did not favor coaxing. Besides, she was Keever's wife.

They rode on, Stone sang, and Lagg was grateful to him.

It was as they forded the Umsinivulu River, twenty minutes after she had last spoken, that she looked up at him with morning stars in her eyes beneath the cloudy hair, and whispered:

"I'm not Keever's wife; I'm his sister."

He was so shocked with surprise that he did not show it.

"Why did you lie, then?"

"'Cause I was all by myself, and you soldiers've got such a name . . . and when you came to know who you were . . . presently . . . I thought . . . you'd better think I was a married woman."

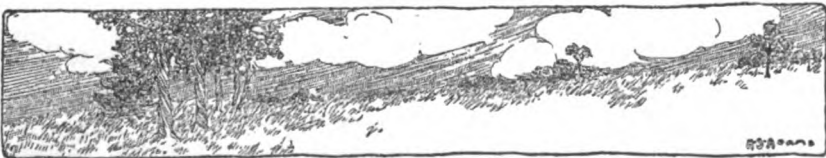
The horses drew themselves violently up the further bank.

"Corporal," said Lagg, "can't you ride on ahead? We're bound to go slower—double like this. I'll bring her on, all right."

Sandys looked at him once, and drew his troopers on. Stone still sang. Lagg's horse fell behind obediently.

"Mary," he whispered, "put your head back."

Culture? . . . I am laughing.



# THE FIRST VALENTINE

*By Nelle Parker Jones*

**H**AVE you ever quite forgotten it—the real “for-sure” one that came through the village post-office directed unmistakably to you in a boy’s chirography?

How your heart jumped into your throat and stayed while you ran into the parlor and closed the door! How your breath made a pillar of cloud in which you stood by day and tried with teeth and chilled fingers to untie the well-wrapped and beautiful mystery! For of course it was beautiful, penny dreadfuls of earlier years counting not at all in the genuine valentine list.

Do you remember how your eyes filled with glad tears, through which danced countless pink rose-wreaths and flaming hearts on paper embroidered artistically enough for a queen’s coronation robe? And the rotund, well-nourished Cupid, dressed only for a February day in the tropics, who stood in the middle distance and aimed love-tipped arrows straight at you?

Then, oh, the heavenly perfume of musk and Jockey Club arising from the plumpest of blue satin cushions in the upper right-hand corner! How superior to the attar of roses of to-day!

And the lilting lines in the foreground! The wonderful, rhythmical quatrains and couplets in which love more amazing than you had ever suspected was boldly proclaimed in melodious verse.

Has any “Be mine, dear one!” of later years thrilled you with quite the same unparalleled bliss as

The rose that blooms in June is fine,  
So are the stars above,  
And you must be my valentine,  
For you’re the one I love!

OR

As sure as the grape grows on a vine  
I’m going to have you for a valentine!

And is it not a fact that your first impulse was to show the rest of the family only an edition with the sentimental and piratical printing carefully expurgated, lest eyes twinkle through lack of sympathetic understanding?

Of course you did n't know who sent it! It might have been Ira C—— in the fourth grade, because his father was rich, or Horace F——, upstairs, who took you home on his sled so often after school, and it might have been—but at the glorious possibility you blush and tremble, but say never a word. Oh, if it only were from him! At the improbability of such a miracle, your heart left its lodging-place in your throat and gravitated swiftly to the shoes upon your feet, coming gradually back to a normal position under the influence of baked squash and pink roses, both before you at dinner, served promptly at noon.

That was many valentines ago, when your hair-ribbon was larger than you, and your cheeks the twenty-four-hour kind of rosy; but would a valentine of rubies and radium thrill you half so ecstatically to-day?



## THE BLIND

BY FAITH BALDWIN

PEOPLE?—But voices piercing through the black  
 Of utter darkness; their tones they cannot free  
 Of pity, which I loathe, and yet the lack  
 Of it would make it still more dark to me.  
 They cannot glimpse the bitter ways I've trod,  
 Yet, leaving me for the glad, sun-warm air,  
 They seek the light, to cry, "I thank thee, God,  
 That I am not as that poor fellow there!"  
 Their sympathy!—It stifles me with sweet,  
 I—I—a man, strong-limbed and wholly sane,  
 As quick of mind as they—why must they treat  
 Me as some small, sick child who cries with pain?  
 They bring me paper, put my hand upon the page:  
 "There is your verse," they tell me—and "There's  
 your tale,"  
 "And here, the line that calls you great—a sage."  
 There lies my cross, for herein must I fail.  
 I cannot rid myself of doubt, of fear.  
 How can I tell they do not lie to me,  
 From pity, though their tones ring true and clear?  
 I may not know—ah, God!—*I cannot see!*

# THE HIGHWAY

By *Eleanor M. Ingram*

Author of "From the Car Behind," etc.



IT stretched across the width of the road, enmeshing as a cobweb, deceptive as a quicksand, unavoidable as Fate. No vehicle passed along the highway leading to the city without fording, or failing to ford, its black waters. It was a puddle, merely a puddle, compounded of Jersey clay, road-oil, and the overflow from a ditch; a malevolent, efficient puddle, born of the nearby marsh.

The thin, sharp red of a frost-pinned dawn streaked the east when the swamp-spider snared its first prey. There was a curve in the road; around here the motor-truck swung, huge, heavily loaded, lamps still burning in mistrust of the reluctant morning, droning its ponderous way out of the city. Around it rolled, into the straight road—and fairly into the trap. The chauffeur sprang to action, too tardily. The checked wheels slipped, the truck lurched, roaring protest, and sank to its hubs in glue-like mire.

The chauffeur stood up, and reviewed the situation with the glance of an expert.

"The deuce!" he commented pleasantly, and sat down again, crossing his legs and reaching into a pocket.

The consolation he drew forth was neither the picturesque cigarette nor the immoral flask; it was a cake of milk-chocolate. He had been whistling when disaster intervened; now, as he stripped open his tinfoil package, he resumed the melody exactly where it had suffered interruption, continuing the blithe ragtime epic of a leading Alexander *not* Macedonian. He possessed the unusual combination of youth and serenity. There were both a history and a prediction in the tranquil philosophy with which he sat at his post, watching the sunrise and breakfasting upon a sweetmeat, while he awaited necessary assistance.

But for the early hour, the highway would have offered a succession of passers-by from whom to choose a rescuer. As it was, the March dawn brought no aiding vehicle. The red on the horizon warmed to ruddy gold; a vaporous blue began to invade the gray arch of sky and tinge the miasmatic mists that hovered over the meadows.

The little cream-colored automobile shot out of the general dimness with a reckless inattention to results that made its moderate speed more

perilous than a motor race. Aroused, the chauffeur faced toward the car bearing down upon him, then sprang up, raising his hand in warning.

"No road!" he shouted. "Stop! You'll be in!"

The girl behind the steering-wheel looked instead of acting, lifting her small white chin above the enveloping furs and fixing her dilated dark eyes upon the man in the other machine. There was a hissing splash, as wheels struck ice-glazed water, the little car settled down crookedly—and the second captive was in the web.

"Oh!" cried the girl. "Oh!"

"Just what I said, twenty minutes back," agreed the chauffeur, with cordial sympathy. "Had n't you better shut off? You're only churning mud."

In fact, that useless labor was all that was accomplished by the revolving wheels. The girl mechanically obeyed her adviser, then promptly repented the obedience.

"But I have to go on!" she protested desperately. "I must go on! Please, please, help me get the car out."

The expert appraised her situation, and regretfully shook his head.

"I'd like to do it, but I can't. We've both got to wait until some one comes along to pull us through. But it won't take a big pull to set you free, and of course you'll get the first chance. One good horse could fix *you*; it will take something like a locomotive for me."

She stood up in her car, pushing open her coat. Her companion in captivity was not able to gage the costliness of the silver-gray furs that wrapped her from head to foot, or the value of the jewelled button she detached in her haste and which rolled unheeded to be engulfed in the black mud. But he could, and did, appreciate the prettiness of her small, vividly-colored face, childish in its freshness and that innocent arrogance seen in the faces of the much-indulged young, and the value of the dark curls she pushed back under her fur toque.

"I cannot wait," she contradicted, less in anger than in the ag-grieved amazement of one unaccustomed to being thwarted. "I must go on now. You"—inspired—"you could walk back to find help. I will pay for help; I have to reach the city. You could bring men and horses."

"I'm sorry," he apologized. "I can't leave this truck, you see. It's loaded with a thousand dollars' worth of fancy silks, and any tramp could carry off a lot. We go out under orders never to leave the things alone. Otherwise, I'd have been hunting help, myself."

"I will watch your things while you are gone," she offered.

He smiled, unexpectedly and sunnily.

"Thank you for *that*. But I guess I won't leave you to beat off any stray yeggmen; they might not understand."

She smiled also, the absurdity compelling acknowledgment, and

looked at him more attentively. His gray eyes looked back at her, frankly direct, their clean steadiness repeated in every line of his squarely cut young face. He was not clad with the finished precision of motor-costume that she was used to associating with the term "chauffeur"; he wore an ordinary ulster, a pair of bulky fur-lined gauntlets, and had a leather cap pushed well back on his yellow hair. Virile reliability radiated from him; to it, she involuntarily and most femininely made appeal.

"I must go on *now*," she exclaimed piteously. "I must! Oh, I am going to be married!"

The confidence was made. Dismayed at herself, she sank back in her seat, averting her scarlet face.

The chauffeur sat down also, contemplating her across the stretch of quagmire that separated their vehicles.

"That's rough," he compassionated, and paused tactfully. The tin-foil wrapping of the chocolate package had fallen on the floor of the truck; he picked up the fragment and thoughtfully rolled it into a bright ball, which he dropped into the puddle, before continuing. "It's too bad no one could have come with you. A lady is open to trouble, travelling alone."

Her red mouth trembled.

"I—— He is waiting for me in Jersey City," she explained. "We will go to New York together. My father——" She glanced up suddenly and met his sober gaze. "I am running away; it is an elopement."

There was a pause.

"That is why I must hurry," she added. "If the household awakes and they find I am missing, my father will know and come after me, and take me home."

The chauffeur regarded the brightening sky.

"Gentlemen don't usually rise at six in the morning," he pointed out. "I guess you are safe for another hour or two, and long before then some one will have you out and off."

She drew an uncertain breath, relieved, if doubtful.

"Of course! That is true, Mr.——"

"I'm called Al Burke—sometimes the first half and sometimes the other."

"Thank you. It is true that I never come downstairs until eight o'clock."

He nodded satisfaction.

"Then we've just got to wait a bit," he affirmed cheerfully. "I was having breakfast when you came along; won't you make yourself comfortable with that robe I see beside you, and have some, too?"

"Breakfast?"

"Well——" He produced an unopened package of chocolate. "This

kind. Most people take it hot and out of a cup at this time of day, I know, but we're shipwrecked. I guess I can shoot straight, if you'll sit still."

Laughing, she raised her hands to ward off the sweet missile, as he stood up to launch it, entering into his humor. Burke had not over-estimated his accuracy of cast: the little packet fell safely on the floor of the car, beside the girl's diminutive, gray-shod foot.

"I believe I am hungry," she declared.

"It's the morning habit," he averred.

They sat opposite each other in silence, for a while, munching chocolate. A sense of comradeship united them; pleasant and candid as all natural intercourse should be, fine in simplicity and free of social affectations.

"It's strange," mused Burke, after a time, "how queer people can be, now and then, about their children."

The girl looked up quickly.

"Not my father!" she corrected, with warmth. "He—he is good to me, he loves me. It is only that he cannot appreciate Richard—I mean, my fiancé. We have known Richard only a short time, and my father wants me to wait until I am twenty-one; a whole year! Richard says he cannot bear it. People have slandered him; Father is prejudiced against him because men gossip of him at their hateful clubs. Richard has temperament—other men are too coarse to understand him. He says no one ever understood him except me, and he cannot wait for me a whole year. He says it would kill him. It might, indeed!"

"It might," said Burke, breaking off a square of his sweetmeat and contemplating it dispassionately. "That's why you are going to him, I suppose. It's nice of him to tell you, instead of stiffening up and trying to bear it by himself."

The girl hesitated, checked in the flow of her grievance.

"Yes," she assented half-doubtfully; "it is. Richard says that truthfulness is essential in life."

"Surely! Then, he has everything to take care of a wife, no doubt. It isn't as if he did n't have plenty of money."

"No, not exactly plenty. But I have a little, and we do not care about money. Richard says that father cares so much for me that he will forgive me, after it is done. I am sure he does!" Her eyes darkened with a rush of tears. "Daddy has to have me—he has no one else. I do not know how he will get his coffee this morning, with just enough cream. Every one puts in too much or too little, when I am not there. But he will send for us soon! He *must* send for us!"

"Of course he must," soothed the chauffeur. "It's a clever scheme of your friend's—to take advantage of the fact your father can't get along without you because he loves you so much."

The girl gasped, her slender fingers gripping together.

"Don't put it that way!" she besought. "It sounds—so mean. It is not that—at least, I hope not! Richard never thought of it so. It is only—only——"

He did not help her at all, listening with equable placidity.

"It is only that Richard is too fine and temperamental to make much money," she resumed, with pride. "So we must rely on my father for a while. We cannot wait a whole year; it is unreasonable to ask it of us!"

"Yes," he slowly agreed. "People are unreasonable sometimes. Now, there is *my* father."

"He does n't want you to marry?"—eagerly.

"As for that, I don't know; I never asked him. My mother would like me to bring home a girl, I guess, but I have n't seen the right one yet. No, he has another idea. Will you have some more chocolate?"

"No, thank you. Please tell me, Mr. Burke."

He leaned back, his gray eyes meditative, and she leaned forward to study him, her cheeks and lips glowing with the intensity of her interest.

"Well, it all started pretty far back, when he took me out of school as soon as I finished the first course," Burke complied. "He said, 'Fiddlesticks!' when I wanted to keep on through high school. Did you ever notice those big, glass-fronted garages every city has a few of? Not the little can-of-gas and plumber-shop kind—the big ones."

"Yes."

"I want to own and be master of one of those. And I need to be an expert on automobile matters to do it, because I can't put in any money, and I've got to work up by using brains as capital. Well, when I told my father that, he said it was a crazy dream. He said that he had supported me long enough, and the time had come when it was my turn to work for him. That was fair enough. I left school and went to work."

"You gave up all you had planned?" she marvelled.

"No, I did n't give it up. What for? By and by, I learned to drive one of these"—he flung a caressing arm across the stubby steering-wheel of his motor-truck. "Chauffeurs get pretty good wages, you know; I was able to give my folks all they thought right, and to save money besides. I've been driving this truck for five years. Last winter I had the equal of a year's income in the bank. Then I went to my father. 'Here is a year's pay,' I told him. 'You take it, and I'll take a year off, learning some things I need to know.'"

"He——?"

"He said no. He said he would have no loafers in his family, and if I spent a year idle, I'd be a confirmed loafer. He said I was big enough to take my own way, but either I would keep on working every



day, like the honest Burkes always had and always should, or I could clear out of his place, and he would look after Mother and himself, alone."

The girl exclaimed sharply, her brilliant, indignant eyes wide.

"He had no right! He was cruel, unjust! Oh, how could he? You left?"

"No," dissented Burke quietly. "That would n't have done. I stayed. They think a world of me—it's 'Here at last, are you, Al, and what kept you?' if I'm half an hour late. They could n't get along if I was n't coming home every night to keep the house cheerful and stir things up. Hello, here comes a wagon!"

Startled, she turned. A rattle and jingle drifted around the curve, accompanied by the gritting of wagon-wheels upon the frost-hardened road. As she looked, the vehicle appeared: a cart and venerable horse, driven by a small boy.

"Hello, kid!" the chauffeur hailed. "Want to help me pull this lady's car out of the mud? There is a dollar in it for you."

The boy reined to a standstill, his round eyes absorbing the scene.

"Gee!" he ejaculated. "Gee, a dollar!" His voice grew anguished. "What a chanst, mister—and look at me horse!"

The horse drooped its palsied head, as if conscious of the slur, and fell into the curious, three-legged attitude peculiar to the aged of its race, easing one ancient hoof by bent inaction. The three looked at the animal, then at one another.

"All right," Burke yielded resiliently. "Go on, then, and send us the first help you can find—the first horse, or the first people who can get one. Will you, old sport?"

"Sure," was the laconic agreement.

"And if you do, I will give you the dollar when you bring the help," the girl eagerly promised.

The boy and the chauffeur exchanged a glance of dry, masculine understanding, the confidence of man in man that has built up the civilized world. Burke extracted a bank-note from his pocket and passed it into the plump brown hand.

"Hurry things up, kid," he requested, resuming his seat.

The horse aroused itself with reluctance, stepped into the glue-like mass that had trapped two of its mechanical rivals, and waded through, unexultantly superior. The cart jogged on, out of sight.

"Suppose he does n't send any one to help us, Mr. Burke?"

"He will."

"He has the dollar——"

"Yes."

She drew the fur robe around her, abandoning or yielding the question.

"You stayed," she reverted to the interrupted theme. "Was that right, to give up your future, the ambition for which you had worked so hard, to please an unreasonable prejudice? Was that fair to yourself, or necessary?"

He shook his head.

"I did n't give it up that time either. I'm taking a course in motor construction in the evenings. I work with my hands all day, and with my head at night and holidays. No one minds my working overtime. It will take a good deal longer, this way, but I'm young, and it makes them happy. I can wait."

She sat quite still, hands clasped in her lap, gazing at him, at his smiling, tranquil face, at once strong and indulgently patient, at his unconcerned ease of glance and bearing—the ease of one at ease with himself.

"You are young, and it makes them happy," she slowly repeated. "You—can—wait."

Burke answered nothing. Suddenly the girl turned her back to him and faced toward the bleak Jersey swamps that stretched away to the right. The sun struck across the flat marsh-meadows now, glittering bravely on the burnished steel-blue line of the creek that bisects the brown desert. A white sail gleamed like a hovering wing, a lost page from the romance of the sea, wind-drifted inland.

A quarter of an hour passed, before the rescuing party clattered up to the prisoners. A pair of stout farm-horses, driven by a grinning negro, with an attendant train of three half-grown youths and four dogs, halted opposite the automobiles.

"Good enough!" the chauffeur welcomed, rising to take command from his quarter-deck. "The lady first, boys. Brought ropes? No? Well, I *have*, and here you are!"

He produced a length of clanking chain from a locker, and passed it to the man who waded out to him.

"Hitch it in front," he directed. "There—to the crosspiece. The lady is going to the city, so you will have to pull the car straight through and out on the other side. You'll have to go slow."

The girl turned to him.

"No," she contradicted decisively. "Tell them to take me the other way, Mr. Burke. I am going back."

"You——?" he queried.

"I am going home."

The chauffeur threw back his head, then swung toward the bewildered workers.

"Did n't you hear the lady? I mistook the way she was going. Round you go. Hitch your chain in there—that's the idea!"

Laughing and stimulated to activity, the emergency crew grappled

with the task. With tugging and shouts and rattling of chains, the little automobile was drawn from the sucking, semi-liquid pool and established on the firm highway.

"But we can't manage you, boss. Sorry," regretted the genial negro, contemplating the motor-truck, after receiving his reward from the girl.

"That you can't," Burke conceded. "But you can carry this message to the nearest telephone and have it sent in, and they'll send me help from the warehouse."

The man accepted charge of the card with its pencilled message, touched his cap to the lady, and departed in company with his assistants.

The girl made no movement to leave, following Burke with her large eyes as he came toward her. Nervous tremors were shaking her from head to foot.

"You'll let me crank the motor for you?" he offered.

"What time is it?" she demanded irrelevantly.

He drew out his watch.

"Seven-fifteen. You've far to go?"

"It took me an hour to come here. And I must be home by eight or not at all."

"But——"

"I must, I must!" she cried, beating down protest. "Do you not see? I must be there when my father comes downstairs—he must not know, ever, ever! If he is to know, I will not go back."

Nonplussed, the chauffeur stood with his hand on the car's hood.

"Make up time," he advised. "Drive faster."

"I cannot, indeed I cannot. I am not a good driver; I drove here as fast as I dared. Oh, it is too late! I will go on to the city!"

"No!"

"I will, I must, there is nothing else to do. I could not face my father if he knew I had meant to leave him—he has been so good to me all my life! Why were the men so slow?"

Tears were in her voice and eyes; even a young man's inexperience could divine her near hysteria. Burke drew a long breath, then, stooping, pulled up the crank.

"What are you doing?" the girl exclaimed, above the explosions of the motor. "Why did you do that?"

"I'm going to drive you home," stated the chauffeur calmly.

"And I'm going to make up that fifteen minutes."

Giddy, she clutched the offered relief, her eyes brightening behind their wet lashes.

"You will? Mr. Burke, you can?"

"I will and I can. Wrap that robe around you—it's going to be chilly—and let me take the driver's seat, please."

She obeyed him gratefully, her crimson, blossom-like mouth tremulous, her cheeks burning with excitement.

It was not a racing-machine, by any means, that started under Burke's guiding touch to retrieve the great mistake. If the girl did not yet realize how great that mistake, the man did. The pace maintained was not furious, but all the car could give was exacted, and the drive was not slow.

They were rushing through a drowsy village when the girl leaned toward Burke.

"Your own car!" she cried, remorse-stricken, "Oh, how selfish I am! You would not leave it to find help for yourself, for fear it might be robbed, and now I have taken you away. And how can you get back?"

Burke scattered a group of chickens by a blast of the horn.

"I guess, when a lady needs some kinds of help, men and men's things have to take their chances," he replied. "Don't you trouble about the truck. I don't think any one will touch it; it's later in the morning, and too many people are going past. And I'll get back all right on some wagon."

She was silent for another mile.

"Mr. Burke, I am Margery Hamilton," she told him. "My father is your employer, the head of Hamilton & Company. I saw the name on your truck. I want you to tell him all that has happened this morning, if anything goes wrong while you are helping me. Will you?"

"Thank you, Miss Hamilton. I'll remember."

There was a clock upon the dashboard of the automobile; the girl fixed her eyes upon the dial, watching the hands creep towards the hour. Now and then she spoke to give some necessary direction as to the route.

At five minutes to eight the car came to a halt before a handsome, tree-girdled country-house.

"Just time to get off my wraps," the girl laughed unsteadily. "Mr. Burke, what can I say?"

"Nothing, please," begged her chauffeur. "You'll wait the year now?"

"I will wait—as long as my father thinks best. Thank you, thank you."

She held out her hand, and he took it as frankly as it was offered.

"Good luck," they said, almost simultaneously, then smiled together. "Good-by."

The girl's small figure flashed, a gleam of silver-gray, between the trees. Burke took off his driving-gloves, put them and his hands into his pockets, and commenced the walk back.

The morning relaxed in frigidity as it advanced. The mounting sun thawed the black pool to a still more unpleasant consistency. Other vehicles, warned by the mired truck, crawled cautiously around the extreme edge of the snare. Still unconquered, the swamp-web stretched its sullen menace across the road.

A short automobile trip is a long walk. It is not always easy to meet drivers who offer rides to the casual pedestrian. So it happened that a long, dark-blue touring-car overtook and passed the walking chauffeur while he was still a mile distant from his truck; a touring-car bearing the letter H on its door-panel.

When Burke reached his goal, the touring-car stood opposite the truck. In the blue machine's tonneau was seated a precisely attired, inflexible-faced gentleman, frigid and keen as the temperature of the morning; a handsome old gentleman, who held his folded pince-nez and tapped upon the edge of his car.

The situation explained itself. The chauffeur saluted his employer, and waited.

"Burke, you go out under strict orders not to leave the machine you have in charge, for any reason whatever," Mr. Hamilton set forth crisply. "I have been here for a quarter of an hour, myself, and you have just appeared. You will call at the office to-night for your money. You are discharged."

Burke nodded.

"That's fair enough, sir," he acquiesced, without resentment.

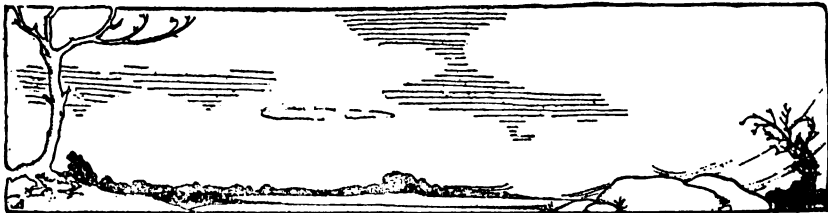
"You have nothing to say?"

"Nothing, sir."

Mr. Hamilton hesitated, unaccountably at loss.

"I am sorry, Burke," he briefly concluded. "You knew the rule. Drive on to the city, William; I am late. I lingered too long at breakfast this morning, with Miss Hamilton."

The chauffeur of the touring-car obeyed the order. Burke watched the machine glide around the curve in the highway, then he circled the huge puddle and swung himself easily into his high seat in the truck. Leaning back, he crossed his legs and proceeded to extract from his pocket a square of milk-chocolate. As the tin-foil covering stripped under his fingers, his smiling lips puckered; he began to whistle the rag-time epic of the Alexander not Macedonian.



# THE CHURAIL

By *Annette Thackwell Johnson*

KUDRATULLA stood first on one foot and then on the other. He was very miserable, and he wanted help, his mistress was certain, or he would never have come to a white lady for counsel in such an occult affair as this promised to be.

She looked down at him from her position on the veranda steps. He was certainly forlorn! His puggaree was bedraggled, and his brown complexion of an ashen hue. How queer these natives were! Here was Kudratulla, a Mohammedan bearer, quite limp with fright because of the threats of his delicate little wife. He had beaten her for years, had Kudratulla, and she had made no objection, but had taken his beatings, and then crawled around the house again, waiting humbly upon her lord's pleasure. Kudratulla, always complacent, felt that this was as it should be: women were meek creatures, and this wife of his exceptionally so. He could have wished that she showed more spirit; there was really not much fun in beating a woman who only snivelled!

He wearied of her at last—utterly and completely. Even her announcement of a coming heir did not affect him. He was sure the baby would be a girl—another sniveller like Karim-Bibi; and he deserted his wife's society entirely for that of a fascinating lady in the bazar.

Karim-Bibi wept about it frequently, then, losing her meekness, reviled her husband—only to be beaten once more.

Suddenly she did something—something that so terrified Kudratulla that it sent him to Mrs. Martin for counsel.

“And what is it that your poor little sick wife could possibly do to a big, strong man like you?” asked that lady wonderingly. “Karim-Bibi is too good a woman to poison you.”

Again Kudratulla shifted from one foot to the other, as he nervously fingered the ends of his *cummerband*.

“*Aie hai, mem-sahibje!*” The man positively groaned. “You know not the blackness of her heart. She says that she will die when the *bacha* [little one] is born, and will become a *churail!*”

“A *churail!* What is that, Kudratulla?”

“Ah, *mem-sahib,*” he whispered, “it is a woman who dies in child-bed, and comes back and *haunts*. She can always be told by her feet—

*they are set on backwards!* And if Karim-Bibi says that she will become a *churail*—she will!”

“Then, leave the other woman, Kudratulla, and be so kind to your wife that she will change her mind,” Mrs. Martin suggested.

“*Aie, mem-sahibje,*” the man moaned. “She—the bazar-woman—will not let me go!” and he covered his face with his hands and crouched on the veranda steps.

Helen Martin raised her head. Yes, this was indeed the East! The Compound with its surrounding hedge stretched before her. Here and there clumps of flowering jessamine sweetened the March air. There was a single palm-tree to the left of the Compound gate, a clump of feathery bamboo to the right. On the horizon could be seen the outline of the distant Himalayas. Winding around the bungalow, a path bordered with marigolds led to the servants’ quarters, where, in a tiny, mud-washed room, Kudratulla’s little wife sat and planned to die and become a *churail*.

It was absurd! Mrs. Martin shook herself; she would not believe such things possible.

“Nonsense, Kudratulla!”—her voice was harsh as she addressed the creature cowering at her feet. “Nonsense! She is only trying to frighten you; and you really deserve a little scare. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, tormenting your poor wife so—just now. Leave the other woman. What’s the good of being a man, if you are only a slave?”

“True, true”—Kudratulla’s puggaree wagged forlornly. “True, *mem-sahib*, but destiny is stronger than the will of man; and—the bazar-woman says that *I am hers*. If you would talk to Karim-Bibi, *mem-sahib*—?”

“Very well, to-morrow I will go and see your wife,” agreed Mrs. Martin. “The *tum-tum* is waiting for me now, and I must leave. I am sure, however, that Karim-Bibi will not die—people don’t die so easily, just when they want to.” And Mrs. Martin, with a vague sigh, hurried away, leaving Kudratulla hesitating between the path which led to the servants’ quarters and the high-road to the bazar.

That evening the Martins attended a dance, given by the Royal Fusileers.

The carriage which came for them at two in the morning found Mr. Martin more than ready to leave for home. He had spent a dull evening, watching his wife dance many dances with Captain Roger Desmond—a gentleman not much to Mr. Martin’s taste. So when the carriage arrived he thanked Providence for his release, and, putting his weary head upon one of the cushions, promptly fell asleep.

His wife sat bolt upright in her corner, staring into the blackness of the night. She was reliving the evening and vibrating once more

at the memory of a man's voice, deep, husky. Ah, how it broke as he told her:

"I never lived until I saw you, dearest—*onliest!* *You are mine!*"

She gasped. Oh, the words were sweet, were sweet; but where had she heard them before—quite lately? Her mind searched back over the day. Oh, yes; Kudratulla and the bazar-woman.

She gave a gesture of disgust, and peered into the darkness. The coachman was making the turn into her own gate.

"Why!" she cried out with astonishment. What was Karim-Bibi doing there by the trees, at that hour of the night? She could see her quite distinctly, for her whole figure was thrown into bold relief by the clump of bamboos. Her little brown face peered out from the folds of her *chudder*, and her eyes——!

It did not occur to Helen Martin until afterwards that it was odd that she should see the eyes so very clearly at two o'clock in the morning. Clearly? They seemed to speak—those eyes with their expression of dull pain and accusation.

"O bazar-woman," they said, "you have taken him, he is yours, but you shall have no rest!"

"Karim-Bibi!" Mrs. Martin spoke sharply, but there was no response. The figure seemed to melt into the sombre background; and the carriage jolted up to the door.

"*Mem-sahibje!*" The coachman salaamed profoundly as his mistress ascended the veranda steps. "This night the angel of death was within our gates, and Karim-Bibi went with him. Her son lived but for a moment; and Kudratulla is drinking hard (which is unseemly in a son of the prophet) in order to forget that which is to come to pass!"

Dead! Mrs. Martin staggered. She even forgot to say, "*Nonsense!* There is no such thing as a *churail*." Dead at twelve! It was two o'clock now. Why had she seen the dead woman?

The coachman picked up the reins, then paused, arrested by the sound of his *mem-sahib's* voice.

"Can *any one* see a *churail*, Nawab Din?" She was trembling.

"Any one with a guilty heart, *mem-sahib*," the man explained. "Those who have not evil desire in their breasts see nothing. It is desire that tears the veil from men's eyes. *Salaam, mem-sahib!*"

She turned towards the door—her husband had already disappeared within the bungalow. Any one with evil desire! What did the man mean? *She* had seen Karim-Bibi. Monstrous thought! But—was all desire evil?

Again the coachman's voice reached her:

"Although all whose eyes have been opened may see her, she comes back only for one. May Allah defend us, *mem-sahib!*"



"Amen," she murmured unconsciously, as she entered the silent house.

Karim-Bibi and the tiny, new-born son were buried the next morning, amidst many lamentations from the servants' quarters.

Mrs. Martin saw the pitiful procession pass the clump of bamboos, and then the gate, on its way to the Mohammedan burying-ground, where poor little Karim-Bibi was to be left with her baby in her arms.

Only eighteen years old! So young, so disillusioned, but so determined to have her own, though death itself should interfere!

What had Karim-Bibi, a table-servant's wife, to do with her—Helen Martin, the Commissioner's lady? Why had she appeared to her?

The question became insistent, and Captain Desmond found her pale and distraught when he rode over to call that afternoon.

"Why, sweetheart, what is the matter?" he asked, with genuine concern. "Surely this absurd superstition can have no influence over you!"

"Oh, don't!" she shuddered involuntarily, and shrank from his touch. "If my heart had been *quite, quite* clean, should I have seen her, Roger? I cannot forget those words: 'It is desire that tears away the veil from one's eyes.' It is n't as if the man even knew that I had seen her—he did n't. He was only telling me the legend of the *churail* as he knew it. Roger, I have always been a good woman; and when I think of my two children in England, I know I ought to give you up. Of course I realize that Tom does not care for me any more. He is so wrapped up in his career, and it's work, work, everlastingly. I am a very minor interest in his life."

"But not in mine!" cried Roger ardently. "My life would be empty, meaningless, without you. Sweetheart, don't cry so! You *are* good—of course you are good!"

It was that evening that she saw the *churail* once more. She had walked to the gate with Roger. It was dusk; and Roger, who held his horse's bridle over one arm, placed the other around her waist, just as they passed the clump of bamboos.

"Oh, don't, Roger!" she said. "It was there, *there*, that I saw her. Oh!" she screamed. "Look! She is there again!"

Roger turned. "It's some one playing a trick!" he cried, with an oath; and, lifting his riding-whip, he sprang towards the thicket. The reins on his arm drew taut, and the horse, whinnying madly, reared backward.

Roger struck fiercely about him. "Curse them!" he shouted. "To frighten you and the horse! It's a trick, it's a trick, and I'll get them yet! I'll get them yet!"

But, though they hunted carefully, there was not even a shred of cloth upon the bamboo spears to show that a woman had been there.

Captain Desmond rode away without the kiss Mrs. Martin had promised him; and Mr. Martin found his wife more quiet than usual at their tête-à-tête dinner.

March passed—the roses faded, and April began, hot, depressing, with hateful suggestion of greater heat to come. Mrs. Martin did not go to the hills. She explained to every one that she could not bear to leave poor dear Tom alone. The station smiled and nodded significantly. Roger was staying down also.

But Roger did not see as much of Mrs. Martin as the station thought he did. For one thing, his horse evinced an unconquerable objection to entering the Martins' gate; and for another, Mrs. Martin's society was not as enlivening as it once had been. Her constant depression amounted at times to active fear. In vain her lover used all his arguments; she would only shake her head mournfully.

"No, Roger; I know that we saw her, you and I, because our hearts are guilty. No!"—she silenced him impatiently. "No, we are not really so very wicked; but—the veil of ignorance has been rent from our eyes, and she—the *churail*—stands in our path to warn us of worse to follow. For there is worse, Roger. If you could see Kudratulla, you would think so. The man is dying of fear, I do believe, and yet—he cannot keep away from the bazar! He has come to me and begged me to cast out the evil spirit of his wife. Evil!" Mrs. Martin laughed mirthlessly. "Poor little Karim-Bibi evil! All she does is to stand and look at him, always silent, just conscience incarnate. Oh, Roger, Roger, why were we given souls?" And Mrs. Martin cast herself into her lover's arms.

That night, as she went home, she saw her again—the *churail*.

Indeed, every one saw her at different times—every one except Tom Martin, who would step right through the figure of the little native woman, disturbing neither her nor himself.

"What a clean heart Tom must have!" thought his wife; and, greatly to his surprise, began to show a distinct preference for his company. The station was almost scandalized at the many times Mr. and Mrs. Martin were seen riding and driving together.

June came with its terrible heat. This was the month when Helen had arranged to go to the hills. How long they had planned it—she and Roger! He had manœuvred successfully to get his leave to suit; but now she was so morbid, and made things so deucedly unpleasant for a fellow, that, when she refused to accompany him, he reluctantly acquiesced, and Simla saw him come up alone.

Helen Martin surprised every one by remaining down with her husband.

"I really want to, you know," she explained to Tom, who was the most astonished of all.

He looked at her awkwardly. "I was afraid you were tired of me, dear," he said. "I am so glad!" and he stooped and kissed her, the first time in many months.

As he did so, she slipped her hand into his. It was such a comfort to hold onto a man with a clean heart!

It was the third week in June. The Martins were ensconced under the punkah in the drawing-room after dinner when Tom spoke:

"What's the matter with Kudratulla, Helen? I believe the man's going mad. He is terribly nervous. Have you noticed how many dishes he has broken lately, and how he jumps when he is spoken to? I am sure that he is taking opium, and he probably drinks, too—though he should n't."

Helen smiled at her husband tenderly. She was white and washed out with the heat; a boil had come on her neck; she was not pretty any more. She knew it, but she was happier than she had been for years; and when Tom's contented eyes sought hers, he found there something he had missed for long.

"It's no wonder that he is nervous," she answered slowly. "No wonder. He is being hounded to death, so he says, by his wife, who comes back from the land of the dead, stands and looks at him, and then walks away, looking, still looking—while her feet point backward! He declares that he always sees her in the evening, just at dusk. I really fear that he will become quite insane."

"Of course it is all subjective," Tom observed comfortably, as he lit his cigar. "His little wife told him that she *would* come back, and he was foolish enough to believe her. The servants have given me the whole story; he has infected them with his fear; they swear that she really does return, and that any one may see her who has desire in his heart. They freely confess that most of them have. Such arrant nonsense!" and Tom puffed cheerfully.

Helen put her head on her husband's shoulder.

"I feel as if there were going to be a storm," she said, shivering nervously. "You know the rains should break any day now; and I can feel the electricity in the air. Poor Kudratulla! Pity him, Tom dearest! He would like to break away from the bazar-woman, and yet he cannot bear to give her up."

Mr. Martin nodded. "It is stifling," he observed. "Let's take a stroll in the Compound and see what the prospect for a downpour is."

"It is really going to begin. Look at those masses of heavy black clouds over there!" and he pointed skyward as they stepped out into the shuddering night. "I think it looks as if it might become a bit ugly. I'll tell the servants to close the shutters. Here, Kudratulla—Kudratulla!"

"Why, what's the matter with him? The man's mad!" ejaculated Tom, as Kudratulla appeared around the corner of the bungalow.

He looked distraught indeed; his turban was unfastened; his eyes were wild; he cringed before them.

"Help me, help me, oh, *sahib*, *mem-sahib*! Help me!" He stretched out his trembling arms beseechingly. "Do you not see her? She is calling me—there—by the clump of bamboos!"

"Nonsense!" Mr. Martin's tone was sharp. "It is but the first of the monsoon. Close the shutters."

Kudratulla paid no heed. With terrified, protruding eyes, he pointed. "Karim-Bibi! By the bamboos!"

The wind started suddenly with a roar; the bamboos swayed and bent, their long arms beckoning the crazed man; the clouds banked themselves, sullenly, portentously.

The Martins, almost blown off their feet, clung to the wall of the bungalow.

Kudratulla, his hands groping before him, trying to hold back, was nevertheless driven on, on, towards the clump of bamboos.

"Stop, stop!" shrieked Mrs. Martin. "This time you are mistaken! There is nothing there! Come back, come back!"

Her words were whirled away by the wind; and Kudratulla, groping blindly, holding back, was nevertheless forced on and on.

For an instant the whole world was in total darkness. The clouds covered the heavens. Then there was a terrific roar. In the blinding flash that followed, the Martins saw their servant on his knees before the clump of bamboos, holding out those beseeching hands to something which he could see, and they—merciful heavens—could not!

There was a blare as from a thousand trumpets; a quivering light, and then a stroke from the blue. The heavy drops fell: the rains had begun.

The servants found Kudratulla dead before the clump of bamboos.

"Fright," explained Tom Martin. "Subjective fright. You did not see anything, did you, Helen?"

"No—thank God!" she answered, with shaking lips.

But the servants knew; and to this day, around their evening fires, they tell the tale of Karim-Bibi, and how she kept her word.



# MOSES AND THE ROCK

*By Thomas Grant Springer*

“THERE’S the finest example of America in the Land of *Manaña*,” said the Consul, as Mr. Martin Trip left us. We were sipping tall, vermouth highballs in the Cantina of The Holy Saints, a place of spiritual comfort in Mazatlan.

“He seems a bright fellow,” I agreed, although I had only had the pleasure of his company for one drink, and knew no more of him than the name the Consul introduced him by.

“Bright!” exclaimed the Consul. “Why, he is the only human electric-light in Mazatlan, the one real live-wire on the west coast. His brains are so hot they set fire to his hair, and he became a human torch to light the way of progress in a country whose intellect is as brunette as its complexion!”

I admitted the Titian beauty of the gentleman, and marked its startling contrast to the inhabitants of the town. Then I begged the Consul to be a little more explicit and a little less flowery, so that I might rate Martin Trip at his full value.

“It could n’t be done,” he insisted. “All the garlands of speech that I can hang upon his achievements but wither in the sunshine of his accomplishments.”

I ordered another drink, with the stipulation that light be shed upon my ignorance; and, cheered by the sight of the bottle the carefully careless *moso* left on the table, the Consul lolled comfortably in his chair and held forth:

“One day some two years ago, when the dry season was making a white man disgusted with the yellow concoction they label beer here, the *Panama* on her down trip stopped long enough to drop off one case and one passenger. The passenger was Martin Trip, and the case contained the seeds of fortune he intended to sow broadcast in the land, to sprout, flower, and fruit, under his eloquence, like the plant of a Hindu juggler’s trick. Martin had been performing this miracle with unvarying success from San Francisco to San Diego. Then, seeing the long, dry stretch that separated Lower California from Mexico proper—or improper, depending upon how you look at it—he at once proceeded to take the water wagon for the first place that looked like a town. That is this.

"Of course the first thing he did when he got here was to come and interrupt my siesta. That's what you did, that's what every American does, that's what the Consul is for in this country: to be waked up when he can't wake up the government. Well, when Martin Trip came tripping in with a smile as sunny as his hair, he lit up the whole *patio*. He was a real cockadoodle Yankee, and so grinning a gringo, that my naturalized soul thought it heard a ninety-nine-cent alarm-clock breaking the hush of the Land of Afternoon at four a.m., or whenever it is the sun rises here. I've only seen it set. He was so energetic, it made the cold perspiration break out all over me.

"The first thing he asked me was how the water was down here. I told him that when applied externally it had a cooling effect upon the skin, and was not injurious unless acquired as a habit; also that, sifted through a *botajone*, it had been known to relieve headache brought on from overheating. I think he got me, for he turned the subject by asking me what a *botajone* was. When I explained that it was a native filter, I had to cover my eyes to escape the dazzling splendor of his smile.

"That's all I want to know!' he cried. 'Why, I got the 'bought alone' filter beat to a pulp!'

"A powder,' I corrected, for they're made of pottery.

"Any old way,' he said, and, diving down into his pockets, he brought out a handful of little metal contraptions. 'Here they are, the Fairy Faucet Filter—"all you have to do, madam, is to attach this to your hydrant, turn on the tap, and the crystal liquid of the mountain rills gushes from your pipe, pure as the newly distilled dew of heaven that the pure-food laws——"'

"Stop!' I cried, as he caught his breath. 'Turn off your own faucet, and don't pour the crystal stream of your conversation into the dry sink of my ears. All this listens to me like I would have to buy your ticket home on the next steamer, and feed you for the two days till it arrives.'

"What do you mean?' he asked, somewhat abashed, but not much, for that was n't his style.

"Why, you've got as much chance of selling those things here,' I told him, 'as you would have of putting up black lead in face-powder boxes and trying to sell it to the *señoritas* for their complexion.'

"How's that?' he demanded.

"Why, my dear young man, you came down here with a pipe-dream where there is n't a single water-pipe from San Diego to Balboa. Come here'—and I dragged him to the door of the *patio* and pointed across the plaza. 'There is the city water supply;' and just as I spoke the *peon* water-peddler came up with his burro saddled with *ollas* and proceeded to fill them at the public fountain.

"That's why the natives drink *pulque*,' I told him. 'It's cheaper,

for water costs a *centavo* an *olla*. If it was n't so far, I'd take you down to the river and show you the public laundry. There's a bunch of *lavaderas* down there now, walloping the tar out of my linen suit on a flat rock. Filters, faucets, water-pipes! Say, sonny, for all your liveliness, you want to wake up. Your own pipe has gone out.'

"I thought that would cloud his countenance, but it remained as bright as the sky here does for eight months in the year.

"'Well,' he said, 'if water is so expensive, you just head the procession, and, to show you I'm not asking government aid, I'll buy.'

"So I brought him right over here to The Holy Saints and baptized him.

"Well, he limped around here for a week or two, with his lame Spanish, making verbal mistakes and friends, and finally turned his energetic attention to making love to old Martinez's daughter Maria. The up steamer came and went without him, for it was full moon in Mazatlan, and Martin was full, too, full of love, for I tell you Maria was a mighty pretty girl, and they matched up about as well as a black thoroughbred and a scrub sorrel. They say love is blind, but I'll bet he had dazzled Maria, and, for all the mistakes Martin made in Spanish, his meaning was clear. Why, when he got her going so she could n't see, she said, '*Si*,' and he saw——"

The Consul choked, caught his breath, and shot a guilty glance at me, then took a drink to untangle his tongue, and proceeded:

"He saw it was up to him to talk business with her father. But before that he had to have some business to talk, for about all he had when he came down was a yellow-back and that case of his. The daughter of a *don* was not going to don the mantilla of matrimony if it was a ragged one, and it was up to Martin to show why the house of Martinez should honor him with an alliance. All he had was a silver tongue and his box of filters to coin his eloquence into the medium of commercial exchange, and it must have made his red head burn to figure out a way to do it. Maria was perfectly willing to be the jewel he was to wear on his heart, but she made it plain to him that as the daughter of a grandee of Spain, her setting should be a large one and up to the eighteen-carat test. It began to look like Mazatlan resembled Missouri in the show-me class. He told her, however, he was perfectly willing, and would go out and charm fortune and then return and lay the treasure at her dainty feet.

"Well, he hired a mule, and a *hombre* for guide, and with the box, and his somewhat improved Spanish—for Maria had been his animated dictionary for some weeks—he started out into the country. The eloquence he turned loose on the *señoras* of Sinaloa brought him back into Mazatlan in a couple of months with the mule loaded with 'dobe dollars. Yes, sir, that man's imagination amounted to genius. He had

assured those misguided *señoras*, in a manner so convincing that there was no chance to disbelieve him, that the water was to be brought down from the mountains to them in pipes as big as Montezuma's aqueduct in Mexico City, and carried to every *casa* and *hacienda* in the State. He drew them beautiful plans of the whole system; explained how clothes would not have to be beaten into pale submissive whiteness against the rocks of a running stream; how then the *señoras* and the *señoritas* need not walk many times to the creek or spring to fill their *ollas* for the family use; how with a simple twist of the wrist, by the gringo's magic, the waters of the mountains would enter the household as handmaid, dish-maid, laundress.

"Did they fall for it? Was there ever a Mexican, male or female, that did n't fall for anything that saved them work? The *señoras* and *señoritas* of Sinaloa tripped over the tripping tongue of Martin Trip and laid their dollars at his feet; for at the end he always sprung the little joker, the Fairy Faucet Filter, for to none would the waters descend when Moses smote the rock (he was the first guy who dealt in watered stock, was n't he?) unless they were equipped with this little talisman. Well, they were all equipped, and Martin brought in the rain of dollars as the first tap on the pipe-line.

"He came back to Mazatlan, took up his love-making where he left off, and began to edge up to the rest of the family. Now, Señor Martinez was some potatoes in Mazatlan, and not small ones. He had a nice little cocoanut grove dropping dividends into his lap, and so many 'dobe dollars coming in that he used to wear them on the outside of his pants, so people would know about them. So he did n't care to illuminate the house of Martinez with any *caliente*-topped gringo unless he could add to them. Martin's mule-load was only a start of the caravan he would have to drive into the *patio* of the *hacienda*, if he wanted to take up a permanent residence there. Martin knew there was n't any more coming to him where he got those, but something else was when the *señoras* woke up from his pipe-dream. So he wanted Maria to fly with him, but she was a timid girl, for all she loved him, and, knowing her father pretty well, she was n't strong on amatory aviation till she knew where her *frijoles* and *tortillas* were coming from.

"While Martin lingered around, trying to get the old man to take him in or Maria to let him take her out, the *señoras* of Sinaloa came in to market and began gossiping about the beautiful gringo *señor* who was going to bring the waters down from the mountains, and Martin's red head was n't any alibi for him. It got to circulating around town—the gossip, not the water—and as Martin was an American citizen my professional duty as consul was to advise him to make his getaway and save me a lot of useless correspondence when they put him in the calaboose. Instead of that, it seemed he was going to stay in Mazatlan



as long as Maria Martinez did, and if a fellow gets so bad he don't care where he lodges, what are you going to do for him? Why, simply send his things home and make the usual report to Washington.

"All the same, he kept making friends with all the biggest men in the place, and the more the gossip grew the more friends he made, and before I knew it he had incorporated the Northwest Mexico Water and Power Company, with Señor Martinez as president, and himself as manager, and every *don* in town as a director. Yes, sir, he talked them into the investment just as he had talked the *señoras* of Sinaloa into the filters, and he used the filter sales to line up the country and show the investors where they had a pipe, a real pipe, in every way, and all they had to do was to lay it.

"Why, it was n't six months before there were two steamers lying out there unloading material, and the surveyors were staking out the line they were to tap up in the mountains, and then the water was coming down to Mazatlan like it used to come down at Lodore, only more so, and every tap along the line was dripping dollars for the company. But do you think any faucet did n't have a filter? Why, there is n't a *señora* in Sinaloa would try to draw water without it.

"Did Martin marry Maria Martinez? Why, the old man himself paid for the ceremony in the cathedral, and that's some expensive down here. He would n't have let him get out of the family if he had to marry him himself. Martin was *El Presidente* of the *fiesta* last month when they turned on the current for the first electric-lights from their power-plant up near the dam, but I tell you they were not as bright as that boy's head."

The Consul dreamily stirred the ice in his glass and sighed voluminously.

"And me," he said sorrowfully, "I've been down here for twenty years, and all I've got is prickly heat."



## A FABLE

By *Emma White Shellenberger*

THE Rain was falling upon Sand, Rock, and Fir-tree.

"How fickle the Sand is!" thought the Rock, as he settled deeper in his softened bed.

"How obstinate the Rock is!" thought the Sand, as he slipped slowly down the hill-side.

"How strange that the Rain, which helps me heavenward, should push down both Sand and Rock!" thought the Fir-tree, as he, with a supreme effort, urged all his branches upward.

# THE WIDOW POLICHINELLE

## OUR FIRST TRAGEDIENNE ADDRESSES HER AUDIENCE

*By Jean Irvine*

PUNCH is gone. The Devil took him, you know. I am Judy, his widow. You thought he had killed me? Ah, no—no, he only broke my heart. And he did n't really mean to hurt me, I think. But, you say, it was all pretend, a puppet-play. Why, so it was, a play. And we keep forgetting, you and I. It seems so real to us. In particular, to each of us, one's own tears seem real. But it's only a puppet-play, of course—just pretend.

Hark! I thought I heard Punch's stick; but perhaps it was only the crocodile-serpent, the Spirit of Evil, falling off his hook. He is broken too, poor thing, and very wobbly. In public I appear to be at odds with the Spirit of Evil, but in private life we're very friendly. One must regard appearances, however—the Three Unities, the Ten Commandments, and all that, as my mother used to say—she was a slave to fashion, and such a lady, Mother was.

Now, Punch, he was a red-faced, bandy-legged, ordinary sort—all-the-money, talk-way-down-in-his-tummy, dog-and-gunny, have-him-or-noney sort of fellow. And—I loved him. He was my man. Now he's gone; down to hell-town. Sometimes—oh, dear! Oh, dear!—sometimes in the night I think I hear him thumping with his stick and saying my name. Dreaming, do you say? A dream is in one's head. This is—not in my head.

You remember how he used to call: "Judy, Judy, fetch the baby! Judy, where's the baby?" And I never could find it, really. That was the trouble, perhaps. Somewhere among the stars there is a baby lost, and it should have been his and mine, mine and—his! Then perhaps—ah, well, life only kills us, does n't it? La! la! one must laugh!

You know, God made man first, then, after a while, woman. He did n't make woman first, because He knew woman could not wait alone, even a little while. Well, after God had finished both and given each a heart, to the boy a brave red heart and to the girl a little pink one, there were left some fragments around beneath His feet. These He

gave to us artist-folk. That's what art is, the rose, the gray, the purple shreds of broken hearts.

As I was saying, it's lonely here without Punch. I quite miss him. Punch had such an extraordinary mind—the usual extraordinary mind that men do have, you know; very extraordinary mind, and such a strong will! Why, that man did n't enjoy having his own way unless it were forced upon him, bless his old wooden head! The world is full of Punches. That's what makes it beautiful for women. It is a low place, but so comfy—full of men! Sometimes, there are so many Punches, I suspect there may be other Judies, broken—here, you know.

Lots of people's husbands snore. Punch snored, but—not where he is sleeping now. And I am his widow, Judy, left to make the folk laugh. My mamma was a high-class manikin, and she always intended that I should be a lady—one of those you see in the shop-windows, all dressed in brocades and silken tissues, beautiful and patient and clean, still and smiling behind the glass. Mamma wanted I should be one of those waxen ones, but I turned out only a woman, like you. A bad woman, perhaps? Um-m, there are no bad women; only women who have failed to meet a good man or—have lost him.

There, I thought I heard it again! Punch's voice! Perhaps—it was only the Showman teasing me. He does that with us, you know, the Showman, the One who pulls the strings and hoists us up and draws us down and puts us hither and thither. You may have noticed this. He means well, does the Showman, but his animal spirits are very high.

Of course my own show-booth is the one I know about chiefly, but there may be another much like it—an old brown booth going round and round the circuit of the skies, with its red curtain drawing up in the east, and a gray curtain coming out of the west to cover it while the show is still. There may be other dolls to make the folk laugh, they that sit outside, the folk beyond. There may be other Punches, other Judies. Little Brothers, listen—don't break Judy's heart!



## DREAMS

BY ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

SLEEP gathers up the tangled threads of day,  
 Of many hues and meanings clearly seen,  
 And weaves odd fantasies, both grave and gay,  
 That leave our thought at loss what they can mean.

# SHORT-STORY MASTERPIECES

SECOND SERIES—RUSSIAN

## V. THE DISTRICT DOCTOR

*By Ivan Sergieevich Turgenev*

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY JOHN COURNOS, AND WITH  
INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

### TURGENEV THE EMANCIPATOR

**T**URGENEV was the most cosmopolitan of the Russian fiction-writers, yet with all his long residence in Berlin, Baden, and Paris, with all his broad culture and varied linguistic attainments, he never ceased to choose Russian themes and yield a passionate devotion to his fatherland.

Ivan Sergieevich Turgenev was born on the 28 October, 1818, in the government of Orel. His father, a dissipated Russian military officer, died while Ivan was still young, leaving the lad in charge of his mother, who was about six years the senior of her husband. The woman was even less fitted by temperament to be a careful mother than was Lady Byron, and the youth of the future novelist was stained with bitter tears. Her vindictive spirit she retained to the last, and dying in old age she constantly refused to receive the visits of her son.

Doubtless these disillusioning home experiences affected young Turgenev, for he early declared that he would never marry—and maintained his resolution. Likewise his ideals of motherhood seem to have suffered, for the maternal qualities of his women characters never rise to the highest.

German, French, and English he early learned from instructors at home—Russian he picked up from the servants of the ancestral estate on which he was born. First, he went to Moscow to study, later the University at St. Petersburg held him for three years as a student, and Berlin completed his academic training—particularly in philosophy, for the subject was at that time interdicted in the Russian schools for fear of its levelling effects.

That was a vitally formative thought-period for Europe, the years between 1835 and 1842, and during such of them as Turgenev spent in the German capital he became impregnated with free thought in all its

phases, and never thereafter could he breathe without oppression the air of his restricted Russia. Thus the propagandum of emancipation which the great novelist subtly spread by means of his fiction without ever becoming a physically present leader, was first of all inspired by his life at home and fanned to enthusiasm by contact with intrepid thinkers in Germany.

There must have been something sweetly noble in this fine, robust young giant for him to have emerged from his sad and jarring home-life, and the autocracy of his natal "Nest of Nobles," with so deeply rooted a hatred of serfdom and all cruel inequalities. Like the young Lincoln, he swore to strike a blow against slavery; like Lincoln he lived to witness its overthrow, though upon a more equitable and permanently satisfactory basis than did his American contemporary.

Turgenev, however, was not a militant emancipator. He was too calm, too forbearing, too much the typical man of culture, for this. Indeed, the Russian literary system of dealing with abuses may be said to be typified by Turgenev's method—he merely described. But his pictures were so vital that he must have mixed his reds with the bloody sweat of knouted serfs, and gotten his blacks from the smoky gloom of pestilent cabins which lined the noisome roadways on ten thousand manors. All Russia saw and gasped—and reformed. Thus did his first work of distinction, the twenty-five "Sportsman's Sketches"—published from 1847 to 1851, and in book-form in 1852—do their mighty work for mankind.

In earlier days Turgenev was, with all enlightened Russia, an admirer of the poet-fictionist, Gogol. A letter in eulogy of this author on his death in 1852 was severely rebuked by the Czar's banishing its writer to his estates, where he remained, busily engaged in writing, until 1855. Then he saw that Russia could best be served at a distance. He was out of sympathy with the extreme Slavophile party, yet he loved Russia. What better course opened before him than to live in an atmosphere where freedom could breathe, and where his powerful pen might not only do service for Russia among Russians but in all of Europe as well.

And this ambition he abundantly realized. His residence in Baden as the friend of Madame Viardot, and, be it said, of her husband, and his later life in Paris, whither he repaired shortly after the close of the Franco-Prussian War—for he never lived again in Russia—brought him brilliantly before a constantly increasing company of notables, of whom he was at the last easily chief. His gigantesque figure, crowned with that silvery hair and beard, was a loved and familiar sight until he succumbed to a malignant cancer which attacked the spinal cord, and Turgenev passed over, on the 3 September, 1883, at the age of sixty-five.

A pessimist is one who looks upon the unequal struggle of life

and can discern no hand to succor the deserving weak from the rapacious strong. Sitting while a lad in a Russian garden, Turgenev beheld a fight-to-a-finish between a serpent and a toad. Then and there began his doubts of a beneficent Providence, which culminated in his quiet, and never aggressive, spiritual pessimism. In this he is only one with most great Russian literary artists. And, singularly enough, he too passed into a final era of mysticism, though not so completely as did his compeer Tolstoi, as witness that fine symbolical sketch, "The Song of Triumphant Love."

An interesting contrast presents itself in the characters of Tolstoi and Turgenev. The one, aggressively Christian, harsh in the judgment of his opponents, and intolerant of what he adjudged to be error; the other, meek, gentle, considerate, largely tolerant, and quietly forceful. Tolstoi was the lion aroused and warring even when preaching non-resistance; Turgenev, the lion resting with dignified tolerance because of a great serenity within. Both were men of might, yet ethically and artistically at variance. It is pleasant to record, however, that the quarrel which separated them for sixteen years did not prevent Turgenev from responding at once when in later life Tolstoi sought a reconciliation. The interview was charged with amity, but, naturally, Turgenev could not adopt his old-time friend's extreme religious views. So when they had parted, Tolstoi's praise was modified—Turgenev was "an unpleasant man"—while the latter had only warm words for the religionist. It has been already recorded in this series how Turgenev from his death-bed besought Tolstoi to return to the field of Romance, in which "thou hast no rival amongst us."

Turgenev was one of the greatest novelists of all time—the greatest, as it seems to me, of all impressionistic novelists. Except in the one quality of unity—for his work was on its surface fragmentary in structure—this preëminent Russian met perfectly Poe's ideal of impressionism: he felt an impression of character or of nature and then reproduced in his reader just what he himself felt. And this impression was oftenest elevated above the merely physical. Brutalities, gaucheries, physicalities, were to him expressions of the man in whose inner life the novelist was more deeply interested than in the outer. Thus his realism is neither so physical as Zola's nor so materialistic in philosophy as Maupassant's. Turgenev's pessimism is social, and not primarily moral; hence character is always the big element in his novels and shorter fictional pieces.

As with Tolstoi, so with Turgenev, plot is a negligible quantity. Yet in a way that quite defies any explanation but one, the final impression is fairly unified, and certainly tremendously effective. That one explanation is, that all the scattered pictures of traits, appearances, oddities,

mannerisms of bearing and speech, and, above all, the marvellous reproduction of *characteristically* personal language, result in an individual presentment of character unequalled for vividness in all fiction. Turgenev lets no significant detail escape. The details are trivial, the entire effect is almost always big. The little thing he seizes upon shows us with the infallibility of a master diagnostician the trends of character. The sum of it all is wizardry.

All this is true first of all of his seven novels. Here I have space only for mention, at the same time venturing to place them in the order of their importance: "A House of Gentlefolk" ("A Nest of Nobles"), a masterpiece of depiction; "Fathers and Children," a severe castigation of the old and the new in Russia; "On the Eve," a pessimistic inquiry as to whether there is hope of better things for his fatherland; "Dead Souls," a humorous satire on Russian society; "Torrents of Spring," in which a devilish woman ruins the hero; "Smoke," a brilliant but bitter satire on things Russian; and "Virgin Soil," whose "villain," as in all of the author's novels, is a woman!

In discussing Turgenev's shorter fictions, we must remember that most of them were written from seventy to forty years ago, and all show that fine disregard of form which only a master may entertain without inviting failure. Here as in his novels character is all. Other story-tellers often make the story preëminent—Turgenev never. His favorite method is to hold up many facets of a character, letting the light—here a gleam, there a full radiance—fall on each. He is a master of monologue and of dialogue. Even the jerky pauses are eloquent. The vagueness of a mind is never asserted; it is shown indubitably. The inept man, the supernumerary of society, the man who is engrossed in self, the despairing peasant bound to the wheel, the reflective but weak-willed dreamer—speech, physical habits, and physical traits reveal them all as relentlessly as a scalpel uncovers diseased tissue. This is the wonder of Turgenev's fictional power. He has brought suggestive description to the *n<sup>th</sup>* power. No fictionist has even approached him in this respect.

One further quality deserves special mention, for I have already referred to his hatred of serfdom and his scorn for the superfluous social orders it built up. It is that of nature description. Turgenev was an Englishman in his love of gunning (although in later life he disapproved of the needless slaughter of innocents). Consequently, many of his tales—particularly his notable "A Sportsman's Sketches"—abound in fine nature passages. Here is one from "Yermolai and the Miller's Wife."

A quarter of an hour before sunset in springtime you go out into the woods with your gun, but without your dog. You seek out a spot

for yourself on the outskirts of the forest, take a look round, examine your caps, and glance at your companion. A quarter of an hour passes; the sun has set, but it is still light in the forest; the sky is clear and transparent; the birds are chattering and twittering; the young grass shines with the brilliance of emerald. . . . You wait. Gradually the recesses of the forest grow dark; the blood-red glow of the evening sky creeps slowly on to the roofs and the trunks of the trees, and keeps rising higher and higher, passes from the lower, still almost leafless branches, to the motionless, slumbering tree-tops. . . . And now even the topmost branches are darkened; the purple sky fades to dark-blue. The forest fragrance grows stronger; there is a scent of warmth and damp earth; the fluttering breeze dies away at your side. The birds go to sleep—not all at once—but after their kinds; first the finches are hushed, a few minutes later the warblers, and after them the yellow buntings. In the forest it grows darker and darker. The trees melt together into great masses of blackness; in the dark-blue sky the first stars come timidly out. All the birds are asleep. Only the redstarts and the nuthatches are still chirping drowsily. . . . And now they too are still. The last echoing call of the peewit rings over our heads; the oriole's melancholy cry sounds somewhere in the distance; then the nightingale's first note. Your heart is weary with suspense, when suddenly—but only sportsmen can understand me—suddenly in the deep hush there is a peculiar croaking and whirring sound, the measured sweep of swift wings is heard, and the snipe, gracefully bending its long beak, sails smoothly down behind a dark bush to meet your shot.

It is illuminating to observe Turgenev's well-nigh invariable method of story-telling. First he will draw in a setting with much attention to detail and introducing characters who add nothing to the story proper but do add immeasurably to the atmosphere—and atmosphere is miraculously handled by this master. Then he will begin to show phases of the leading character. And when at last we have formed a perfect picture of the person in his surroundings, a dramatic, a pathetic, a deep-revealing flash comes forth in the form of an anecdote or an incident—and the story is done. Character pictures, mostly *in statu quo*—these are the master's offerings. Plot, in the modern sense, is almost unknown to Turgenev—as character-drawing, alas, is almost a lost art to the short-story writer of to-day! But it must be said that only an artist of the first order could carry his method to success.

A list of Turgenev's short fictional pieces—technical short-stories they are not—would number more than fifty, many of them almost novelettes in length. Some of the best are "Rudin," "The Jew," "A Lear of the Steppes," "Mumu," "First Love," "The Brigadier," and "The Song of Triumphant Love."

In the following outline and translated passages taken from M. de Vogüé's distinguished discussion of "Russian Novelists," we may gain a good view of his method and style. In "The District Doctor," which is appended in a new translation, we find a fuller and even more charac-



teristic specimen of Turgenev's story-telling. Both reveal the warm heart of the great man, and his unflinching sympathy, which his own painful despair was never allowed to suppress.

In "A Living Relic,"\* he [Turgenev] wakes a more human, more interior chord. On a hunting expedition, he enters by chance an abandoned shed, where he finds a wretched human being, a woman, deformed, and unable to move. He recognizes in her a former serving-maid of his mother's, once a gay, laughing girl, now paralyzed, stricken by some strange and terrible disease. This poor creature, reduced to a skeleton, lying forgotten in this miserable shed, has no longer any relations with the outside world. No one takes care of her; kind people sometimes replenish her jar with fresh water. She requires nothing else. The only sign of life, if life it can be called, is in her eyes and her faint respiration. But this hideous wreck of a body contains an immortal soul, purified by suffering, utterly resigned, lifted above itself, this simple peasant nature, into the realms of perfect self-renunciation.

Lukerya relates her misfortune: how she was seized with this illness after a fall in the dark; how she had gone out one dark evening to listen to the songs of the nightingales; how gradually every faculty and every joy of life had forsaken her.

Her betrothed was so sorry; but, then, afterwards he married; what else could he do? She hopes he is happy. For years her only diversion has been to listen to the church-bells and the drowsy hum of the bees in the hives of the apiary near-by. Sometimes a swallow comes and flutters about in the shed, which is a great event, and gives her something to think about for several weeks. The people that bring water to her are so kind, she is so grateful to them! And gradually, almost cheerfully, she goes back with the young master to the memories of old days, and reminds him how vain she was of being the leader in all the songs and dances; at last, she even tries to hum one of those songs.

"I really dreaded to have this half-dead creature try to sing. Before I could speak, she uttered a sound very faintly, but the note was correct; then another, and she began to sing 'In the Fields.' . . . As she sang there was no change of expression in her paralyzed face or in her fixed eyes. This poor little forced voice sounded so pathetically, and she made such an effort to express her whole soul, that my heart was pierced with the deepest pity."

Lukerya relates her terrible dreams, how Death has appeared before her; not that she dreads his coming, but he always goes away and refuses to deliver her. She refuses all offers of assistance from her young master; she desires nothing, needs nothing, is perfectly content. As her visitor is about to leave her, she calls him back for a last word. She seems to be conscious (how feminine is this!) of the terrible impression she must have made upon him, and says:

"Do you remember, master, what beautiful hair I had? You know it reached to my knees. . . . I hesitated a long time about cutting it off, but what could I do with it as I am? So—I cut it off. . . . Adieu, master!"

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\* From "A Sportsman's Sketches."

## THE DISTRICT DOCTOR

RETURNING from a distant field one autumn day, I fell ill with a bad cold. Luckily for me, the fever caught me in the district town, in a hotel. I sent for the doctor. After a half-hour, the district physician appeared—a dark, meagre little man. He prescribed the customary sudorific and a mustard-plaster; and dexterously inserting into his cuff my five-ruble note—coughing dryly and glancing sideways as he did so—he was about to depart, but somehow began to talk and remained. The fever made me restless; anticipating a sleepless night, I was glad to have some one to chat with. Tea was brought in. The doctor was in a conversational mood. He was not a bad fellow, and expressed himself well and divertingly. How strange it is with men: you have known one for a long time and are intimate with him, yet not once have you ventured to talk with him frankly, from your very soul; another you have hardly become acquainted with, and yet—either you tell him or else he tells you, as if in confessional, his very inmost thoughts. I do not know how I earned the confidence of my new acquaintance; but he somehow or other “got started,” as they say, and told me a really remarkable tale, which I present here to the sympathetic reader. I shall try to express the story in the doctor’s own words:

“You don’t know,” he began in a faltering, trembling voice (such is the effect of the unmixed Berezovsk snuff)—“you don’t know the judge of this place, Pavel Luikich Muilov? . . . No? . . . Well, it does n’t matter.” The doctor coughed and wiped his eyes. “Any way, to be exact, it happened during Lent, in the thaw season. I was sitting in the judge’s house, playing ‘preference.’ Our judge is a good fellow, and loves to play the game. Suddenly”—the doctor employed the word “suddenly” often—“I was informed that some one came for me. ‘What does he want?’ I asked. ‘It’s some one with a note; it must be from a sick person.’ I read the note, and, sure enough, it was from some one ill. . . . Well, all right—that, you see, is my bread. . . . The note was from a widow, and here was the case as she put it:

“My daughter is dying; come at once, for God’s sake! I am sending the horses to fetch you.

“But that was not all. . . . Her house was some twenty versts from town; a black night outdoors, and the roads simply mean! She was as poor as a mouse, too; lucky, I thought, if I get two rubles. Still, duty before everything—you can’t let a person die! Suddenly I handed over my cards to Councillor Kalliopin, and started for home. To be sure, there was a coach waiting for me near the porch; and a couple of working horses, very big-bellied, and with hides like felt; the driver, out of

respect, was sitting with his hat off. 'Well,' said I to myself, 'it's plain to be seen your masters haven't got much gold.' . . . You may laugh, but here is a fact worth considering. . . . When the driver sits like a prince, and keeps his cap on his head, and even laughs under his beard, and flourishes his whip—you may count on a couple of bank-notes! But this, you could see, was an altogether different matter. Still, there was no way out of it; duty before everything. Quickly I collected my most indispensable medicines, and off I went.

"Believe me, I don't see how I got there. A wretched road, puddles, snow, mud, ruts, suddenly a dam burst somewhere—misery, in short! Any way, I got there. It was a small, thatched-roofed house. There was a light in the windows, it meant they were awaiting me. I was met by a little old lady, very dignified-looking, in a cap. 'Save her!' she cried. 'She is dying!' 'Don't be alarmed,' I told her, and asked to be shown the patient. . . . 'This way, please!'

"I was led into a small but clean room, in one corner of which hung an ikon-lamp. On the bed lay a twenty-year-old maiden, unconscious; in a high fever. Here also were her two sisters, frightened and in tears. 'Only yesterday,' they said, 'she was altogether well, and ate with appetite; but this morning she complained of pains in her head, and to-night suddenly she is like this.' . . . 'Don't be alarmed,' I once more reassured them—as you know, it's one of the doctor's obligations—and proceeded to my task. I bled her, applied mustard-plasters, and prescribed a mixture. And all the time I could n't take my eyes from her—upon my word, I never saw such a face . . . a beauty, in fact! I was torn by compassion. Such a lovely face, and eyes! . . . There, thank God, she had grown quieter; perspiration had set in. She was coming to herself; she glanced around her, smiled, moved her hand across her face. . . . Her sisters bent over her, they asked her, 'What is the matter with you?' 'Nothing!' she answered, and turned away. . . . When I looked again she was asleep. I advised quiet; and so we all, on our tiptoes, made our way out, and the maid alone remained in the room, in case of an emergency.

"In the drawing-room the samovar was steaming. They gave me tea, and I was invited to stay overnight. . . . I agreed; it was late, where else could I go? The little old lady continued to sigh. 'Don't worry,' I said to her. 'Your daughter shall live. And you too need some rest—it is two o'clock.' . . . 'And you'll see that I'm awakened if anything should happen?' . . . I promised.

"The old lady and the girls went to their rooms; my own bed was made in the drawing-room. I lay down, but could not sleep, which was unusual for me. I could not get my patient out of my mind. Finally, I could stand it no longer, and arose. I thought to myself I'd take a peep at her and see how she was coming along. Her bedroom was right

next to the drawing-room. I opened the door quietly—and my heart beat violently. There was the maid asleep, her mouth agape; and snoring, mind you, the wretch! As for the patient, she lay with her face turned in my direction, her arms stretched out, poor girl! I approached closer. Suddenly she opened her eyes and fixed them on me! . . . ‘Who are you? Who are you?’ . . . I became confused. ‘Don’t be frightened, miss. I’m the doctor come to attend to you.’ ‘You are the doctor?’ ‘Yes, the doctor. . . . Your mother has sent to town for me; and in a day or two, with God’s help, we’ll put you on your feet.’ ‘Yes, yes, Doctor, please don’t let me die . . . please.’ ‘Miss, what are you saying!’ ‘She’s feverish again,’ I thought to myself. I felt her pulse; sure enough, high fever. She looked at me . . . and suddenly she took my hand. . . . ‘I will tell you,’ she went on, ‘why I do not wish to die. I will tell you, I will tell you . . . now we are alone; only to you, to no one else. . . . Listen!’ . . . I bent over her; she placed her lips to my very ear, brushing my cheek with her hair—I must confess, it made my head swim—and began to whisper. . . . I understood nothing. . . . Delirious. . . . She continued to whisper very rapidly; it did n’t at all sound like Russian. When she ceased she trembled, let her head drop on the pillow, and shook a warning finger at me. ‘Remember, Doctor, tell no one!’ . . . Somehow, I managed to quiet her; I then gave her a drink, awakened the maid, and left her!”

At this juncture the doctor again, with a movement of exasperation, took a pinch of snuff, and for an instant seemed affected.

“However,” he continued, “the next day, contrary to my expectation, my patient did not improve. After some deliberation on my part, I suddenly made up my mind to remain, despite the fact that other patients were awaiting me. . . . As you know, one can’t afford to neglect these—the practice suffers. Well, in the first place, my patient was really in desperate straits; and then again, to confess the truth to you, I felt strongly attracted towards her; besides, I took a liking to the entire family. Though poor people, they were highly educated. . . . The father of the family was a learned man, an author; I need not add that he died poor. He managed, however, to give his children an excellent bringing-up. He also left quite a number of books. Whether it was because of this that I attended the patient so assiduously or for other reasons, there is no question that those in the house grew to love me like one of their own kin. . . .

“In the meantime the thaw made the roads very bad; all communication, one might say, was cut off. The medicine was obtained from town with considerable difficulty. . . . The patient did not improve. . . . Days came, and days went. . . . Just then something . . . something——” The doctor paused. “Upon my word,

I don't know how to express myself." . . . Once more he helped himself to the snuff; he laughed, and swallowed his tea in a gulp. "Well, not to beat about the bush, my patient . . . how should one put it? . . . she fell in love with me. . . . Or rather, you see, it was not exactly that . . . but . . . upon my word, how should one—" The doctor grew embarrassed and blushed.

"No," he went on with some animation; "how could she fall in love with me? One must know one's own value. She was an educated, clever, and well-read girl; while I had almost entirely forgotten even the little Latin that I once knew. As for my looks"—the doctor surveyed himself with a smiling glance—"it seems to me I also have nothing to boast of. Still, God did not make me a fool; I will not call black that which is white. I know a thing or two. For instance, I understood perfectly that Alexandra Andreyevna—that was her name—did not actually love me, but rather felt a sort of friendliness towards me, or perhaps it was just respect. Though it is possible she herself misunderstood this feeling, yet she was in such a state that—well, you may judge for yourself. . . . However," the doctor added, as he continued his broken speeches, which he uttered without stopping to take breath, and with evident confusion, "it seems I have gotten off the track somewhat. . . . You simply will not understand what I am saying. . . . Well, I will try to tell everything in its order."

He finished his glass of tea, and, speaking more calmly, resumed his story.

"That's the way it happened. My patient grew worse and worse. You, my friend, are not a physician; therefore, it is hard for you to understand just what the young doctor experiences in his soul when he begins to suspect that the disease is mastering him. Where is his self-confidence then? Your courage simply oozes out of you; words can't describe it. A notion takes possession of you that you have forgotten all you ever knew, that the patient has lost faith in you, and that the others are beginning to notice your bewilderment and to report new symptoms to you reluctantly; they glance at you from under their eyebrows, they whisper among themselves. . . . How mortifying! There should be some medicine, you permit yourself to think, to counteract this disease—if you only knew which one! Perhaps that's the one. You try it—no, that's not it! You have n't given the mixture sufficient time to work . . . and you try another. Or you turn the pages of your pharmacopœia . . . thinking you might hit upon something. . . . In the meantime a person is dying; another doctor might have saved him. A consultation is necessary, you argue to yourself; you don't feel like taking the entire responsibility. What a fool you are made to look, under the circumstances! After a time, of course, you get used to it. A person dies—well, it is n't your fault, you have done everything

according to rules. It is even more painful when the relatives show blind faith in you, while in your own heart you know you are unable to help.

"It was such a faith that the family of Alexandra Andreyevna exhibited towards me, forgetting that the daughter was in danger. I too, on my part, reassured them that it was nothing; and all the time my heart was in my mouth. To add to my misfortunes, the roads grew so bad from the thaw that it took the driver a whole day sometimes to fetch the medicines.

"As for me, I remained in the room of the patient, could n't tear myself away. I used to tell her amusing anecdotes and to play cards with her. I sat through whole nights with her. Her mother used to thank me with tears in her eyes; but I thought to myself, 'I'm not worthy of your thanks.' To be candid with you—nothing is to be gained now by concealing the truth—I fell in love with my patient. And Alexandra Andreyevna too became attached to me; there were times indeed when she would n't permit any one but me in her room. She loved to chat with me—she'd ask me where I had studied, how I lived, who were my kin, whom did I know? I felt that she had no right to talk; and yet I could n't think of forbidding her. I'd sometimes put my hands to my head, and I'd reproach myself: 'What are you doing, murderer?' . . . And she'd take my hand and hold it, and continue to look at me long, very long; at times she would turn away, utter a sigh, and then she would mutter: 'How good you are!' Meanwhile her hands were burning; her eyes grew large and dark. 'Yes,' she would say; 'you are a good, kind man, not at all like our neighbors . . . not in the least. . . . How my poor heart would go a-fluttering! And all the time 'Alexandra Andreyevna, be quiet,' I'd say to her. . . . 'Believe me, I am grateful, I don't know how I have earned it . . . only, please be quiet, for God's sake, be quiet. . . . Everything shall come out all right, and you shall get well.' I should tell you, however," added the doctor, bending forward and raising his eyebrows, "that they had had little to do with the neighbors, because the poorer folk were n't up to them, while pride stood between them and the rich. I tell you, they were a highly-educated family—which was flattering to me, to be sure.

"From my hands alone she would take her medicine. . . . She'd raise herself, poor girl, with my help, swallow it, and then glance at me. . . . How my poor heart would go a-fluttering! And all the time she was growing worse and worse. 'She will die,' was my thought, 'she will certainly die.' Believe me, I would as lief have descended into the grave myself; and there was her mother standing about; her sisters too were anxious, as they looked into my eyes. . . . Surely their faith could n't last much longer. 'Well, what to-day?' they'd ask. 'Nothing, nothing,' I'd reply; but, in truth, my mind was in a whirl.

"One night I sat as usual at the bedside of my patient. The maid too

was sitting in the room, and snoring for all she was worth. . . . She too, poor girl, was exhausted. Alexandra Andreyevna had been feeling badly all that evening; the fever tormented her. Until midnight she tossed about, and finally fell asleep; at least, she lay motionless. In a corner, before the ikon, a lamp was burning. I sat there, my head in my hands, dozing.

"Suddenly—it was as if some one gave me a thrust in the side—I raised my head. . . . Good God! Alexandra Andreyevna, with her eyes wide open, was gazing at me. . . . Her lips were parted, her cheeks burning. 'What is the matter?' 'Doctor, am I going to die?' 'God forbid!' 'No, Doctor, no, please don't tell me that I shall live . . . don't tell me. . . . If you only knew . . . listen to me, for God's sake, don't conceal from me my true state!' She said this with panting breath. 'If I were only sure that I shall die . . . I'd tell you all, all!' 'Alexandra Andreyevna, I entreat you!' 'Listen to me,' she said: 'I have n't slept at all; I have been looking at you a long time. . . . For God's sake! . . . I believe you; you are a good man and an honest man; I conjure you by all that is holy upon earth—to tell me the truth! If you only knew how important it is that I should know! . . . Doctor, for God's sake, tell me, am I in danger?' 'What am I to tell you, Alexandra Andreyevna, I beg of you?' 'I entreat you, for God's sake!' 'I can't conceal it from you, Alexandra Andreyevna, you are really in danger, but the Lord is merciful.' . . . 'I shall die, I shall die!' . . . And she actually seemed overjoyed; her face lit up with radiance; I became alarmed. 'Don't be afraid, don't be afraid; death does not terrify me.' Suddenly she raised herself, and propped herself up on her elbow. 'Well, now I can tell you that I am grateful to you from my very soul, that you are a good, honest man, and that I love you.' . . . I gazed on her as on one mad; it was painful to me, as you may well understand. . . . 'Do you hear? I love you!' . . . 'Alexandra Andreyevna, how have I earned your love?' 'No, no, you don't understand me . . . thou dost not understand me.\*' . . . And suddenly she stretched out her arms, seized my head between her hands, and kissed me. . . . Believe me, I nearly cried out. . . . I threw myself on my knees and hid my head in the pillows. She was silent; her fingers trembled in my hair; I could hear her weeping. I tried to quiet her, to reassure her. . . . I really don't know what I said to her. 'You'll awaken the maid, Alexandra Andreyevna,' I said to her. . . . 'Indeed, I am grateful . . . believe me . . . calm yourself.' 'Enough, enough,' she repeated. 'God be with them all; let them awaken, let them come—it is all the

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\* The change from *you* to *thou* is significant here, because among the Russians *thou* is employed only in familiar or intimate sense.

same; since I shall die. . . . But why do you tremble, why are you afraid? Lift your head. . . . Or perhaps you don't love me, perhaps I have been deceived. . . . If so, please forgive me.' 'Alexandra Andreyevna, what are you saying? . . . I love you, Alexandra Andreyevna.' She looked straight into my eyes, and opened her arms. 'Then embrace me.' . . .

"To speak candidly, I can't quite comprehend how it was that I did n't lose my mind that night. There was the feeling that she was consuming herself, also that she was not in her senses; and that were it not for the fact that she considered herself as dying, she would n't have thought of me. Say what you will, it's a hideous thought to be dying at twenty-five years of age without having loved some one; that is what tortured her, that is why in her desperation she clung to me—do you grasp the idea? She held me there in her embrace. 'Have pity on me, Alexandra Andreyevna, and have pity on thyself,' I said to her. 'Why, should I?' was her reply. 'What is there to pity, since I must die?' . . . She repeated this incessantly. 'If I only knew that I'd remain alive and go among respectable young ladies, I'd feel ashamed, dreadfully ashamed . . . but what does it matter to me now?' 'Who told you you're going to die?' 'Oh, no, enough of this, you shan't fool me, you don't know how to lie, look at yourself.' 'You shall live, Alexandra Andreyevna, I shall save you; then we will ask your mother for her blessing. . . . We will marry, we will be happy.' 'No, no, I have your word for it, I must die. . . . You had promised me. . . . You told me so.' . . .

"I felt bitter at heart, and for many reasons. And judge for yourself; often small things happen, trifling in themselves, yet they are painful. It occurred to her to ask me my Christian name. As ill luck will have it, I am called Trifon; yes, Trifon, Trifon Ivanich. In the house I was simply called Doctor. There was no help for it. 'Trifon, miss,' I replied. She looked amused, and she shook her head; then she whispered something in French—something that did n't sound quite nice; then she laughed; it was unpleasant to me, I assure you. In such a manner I passed almost the entire night with her. In the morning I left her, almost not in my own senses. I reëntered her room later in the morning, after tea. Good God! she was hardly recognizable; a corpse could n't have looked worse. I swear to you, upon my honor, I really can't understand how I endured the torture. Three days and three nights more my patient lingered . . . and what nights they were! And the things she said to me! . . . Then the final night—imagine to yourself; I was sitting beside her, and there was in my heart but one prayer to God: Take her as soon as possible, and me also. . . . Suddenly, unexpectedly, her mother entered the room. . . . I had already told her the day before that there was but little hope, and that it would be well to



have a priest. The sick girl, seeing her mother, blurted out: 'I'm glad you came. . . . Look at us, we love each other, we have promised ourselves to each other!' 'What is she saying, Doctor, what is she saying?' I grew deathly pale. 'She's delirious, it's the fever.' . . . But she went on: 'Enough, enough, only a little while ago you spoke differently to me, and even accepted a ring from me . . . why do you dissemble? My mother is good-hearted, she will forgive. She will understand; but I'm dying—there's no reason why I should lie; give me your hand.' . . . I sprang up and ran out of the room. The old mother, of course, guessed the true state of affairs.

"I'll not go on, however, tiring you with any further details. As it is, I find it painful to recall it all. The girl died the next day. May the Holy Kingdom be hers!" added the doctor quickly and with a sigh. "Before she died she requested her kin to go out of the room and to leave me alone with her. 'Forgive me,' she said to me. 'I perhaps am guilty before you . . . my illness . . . but, believe me, I never loved any one so much . . . don't forget me . . . take care of my ring.'"

The doctor turned away his face; I took his hand.

"Eh!" he sighed, "let's chat about something else; or perhaps you'd rather have a game of preference, for a trifle? It's not for our kind to give way to elevated feelings. There's but one thing left for us—to manage that our children don't squall, and our wives don't scold. Since those days, you see, I have entered, as one might say, into the legal bonds of matrimony. . . . Well. . . . I married a merchant's daughter, who brought me a *dot* of seven thousand rubles. Her name is Akulina; it goes just right with Trifon. She is an ill-tempered dame, but fortunately she sleeps all day long. . . . Did you say preference?"

We began to play preference, at a copeck. Trifon Ivanich succeeded in winning from me two rubles and a half and left late, much gratified with his victory.



## LIFE

BY HAROLD SUSMAN

A CHILD said to a Butterfly,  
 "You live but for a day!"  
 "But that's a lifetime!" said the thing;  
 And then it flew away.



## WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND  
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC



### ON A POPULAR FALLACY: THAT PARENTS OUGHT ALWAYS TO BE HONORED

# **H**AD it not been for the scandalous license which the late Mr. Ibsen indulged in thrusting out of their venerable closets house-skeletons of every description, I shudder to imagine how long this fallacy might have oppressed the human race. Till Mr. Ibsen dared to picture this universal tyranny, we futurists went tongue-tied, reverently regarded old age—itsself now proved a myth—stood up in the presence of people falsely reputed our superiors, and, unprotesting, endured the conspiracy of silence. That attitude is now obsolete in America, and youth has shaken off the shackles of slavery. Indeed, the contagion of liberty has spread from the occident to the orient. Japan is a modern monarchy, and China a republic. And, O thou tenuous shade of that perfect and superfluous Aunt, thou who wast fain to teach our paths the straight and narrow ascent to ancestor-worship, what wouldst thou do now for a living, now that thy fetich is tumbled in the dust? I make no doubt that Her Superficial Highness would laugh to scorn the profound theory that nations have risen to majesty only as they have freed themselves from this barbarous superstition. China might have dominated the world if Confucius had not anticipated the Fifth Commandment. Dear old Confucius, to have forestalled for centuries the Yellow Peril!

Did I intimate, however, that parents are not to be obeyed and honored, but merely borne with and tolerated? If I did, my style lacked perspicuity, as the rhetoricians fondly say. I yield to nobody in the

usefulness of the exercise of parental authority, and myself approve the application of the rod. Contrariwise, I deny the right of accidental man or woman to demand my filial regard unless the right can be justified by conduct worthy that regard. Is it not preposterous to enjoin affection and respect and loyalty upon William Jr., whose father is the pride of the gluttons and sots of the local club, "Bill," the medalist and glory of guzzlers? With the connivance of a well-regulated circle who are sufficiently amused by "Bill" to see to it that his job shall not be taken from him, he is successful and accepted. Therefore William Jr.'s school-teachers are wasting much good time on his observance of the Mosaic law. Reginald Prettyman is one of the most cherubic of lads I have ever watched. His father is a parasitic appendage of the Lighting Monopoly in our city, and his mother is a distinguished amateur actress. What are we to teach Reginald about good citizens when his daddy got that franchise for ninety-nine years through the Board of Councilmen? And what breed of hero will little Janet, his sister, mother in her day and generation?

To be sure, such incendiary talk as this is not to be put within the reach of Janet or Reginald or William Jr. Yet when I have my heart-to-heart moments with any of the trio, my secret being is thrilled with the conviction that the coming generation is the one of emancipation from false gods, that in ninety out of one hundred cases the children surpass their parents, because American ideas and teachers inspire them with devotion founded on the merit, not the spoiled parent, system.

PHILIP BECKER GOETZ

## PLAYER-PIANOS FOR PIANO-PLAYERS

**W**ITHIN a few years piano-playing in the home, as we know it to-day, will be a lost art. No more will Susie Jones, next door, lay aside the dust-rag and broom and "run off the scales" for an hour or two every morning. No longer will Mamma's Clarence be going "to take his music lesson" when he ought to be out in the lot trying to knock the cover off the ball.

Music is an art whose great value lies in its power to intensify the emotions and sway us into changing moods. Unfortunately, it has been too difficult of attainment by the busy man in a busy age. Only partial mastery of the keyboard has meant an hour or more daily at the piano for several years. This necessity for constant practice has weakened many a child's natural love of music. It has been the cause of many a seminary graduate laying her music aside after matrimony. Not having to play the piano any longer, she has let the dust gather on its keys.

Training the fingers to obey the will with mechanical accuracy and without mental effort has been the one great barrier to piano-playing—a

barrier that has prevented thousands from sharing in the midsummer visions of Chopin, the romance of Schumann, the depth and feeling of Beethoven, the tender fancies of Victor Herbert.

But with the perfection of the player-piano each man becomes his own Paderewski. The purely mechanical part of playing—touching the keys in harmonious sequence—is done for him. He discovers that tempo, accent, and expression are magic powers that are his all in a flash. With almost perfect technique, he can play one master work after another. And his interpretations are not mechanical. With no thought of sharps and flats, he is free to use all his feeling and imagination in drawing out the full beauty of the music. His repertoire is limited only by the amount of music that has been written. The possibilities are without limit. A wonderful new world lies before him—a world of which he had only occasional glimpses before the advent of his inner-player. The graphophone has given him hours of pleasure by introducing him to the operas and to opera singers. But now, with his player-piano, the greatest music ever written becomes an intimate part of his life. All hail the inner-player! It is to art what the mechanical calculator is to business. Eventually it will make us all musicians in the best sense of the word.

LITTELL McCLUNG

## HUMOR IN ART

**W**OMEN have been responsible for most of the decorative crazes and house-furnishing departures that have marked our gradual development from the epoch of the parlor stove, crowned with its funeral urn, to the restful Mission-Morris fashions of to-day.

Some of these times that we lived through turned homes into grotesque museums of useless incongruities. Since then it is evident that there has been great development in the feminine art-sense and in the humor-sense as well, for the humorous perception teaches the eye and the brain to detect bad art almost by instinct.

The women's magazines now have departments teaching us how to furnish rooms with an eye to color and harmony. We know one truth, which is that so long as we choose things for their use and their simplicity we are not far wrong. This helps us to avoid combinations of tint, form, and line that clash with one another like badly-tuned bells. And by degrees we are contracting a healthy horror of imitations—gilding, bronze paint, and the near-furs and near-jewels that used to win us simply because they were such excellent frauds.

Man's humorous sense, as a general thing, keeps him from adopting deceptive effects in his dress, but women revel in them. Several years ago there was a fabric called "snowflake" put on the market. The background was in solid color, and at intervals upon the surface there

were fluffs of white silky cotton wool about the size of a silver half-dollar. This was supposed to produce the suggestion of snow, and, despite the weirdness of the idea, woman made it very fashionable.

Yet there was an actual quality of humor in that cloth that made one smile back at it. It certainly did not look like snow, and anyhow why should one wish to wear a dress that suggested a snow-storm except for a fancy ball?

And another dress-cloth that was actually a good imitation of rag-carpet had a vogue for a while. Men do not go in for these landscape and rug effects in their clothes, because they would laugh too much at the idea and see its absurdity.

It was Wilde who in discussing decorative art in connection with china said truthfully: "I do not see the wisdom of decorating dinner-plates with sunsets, and soup-plates with moonlight scenes. I do not think it adds anything to the pleasure of the canvasback duck to take it out of such glories. Besides, we do not want a soup-plate whose bottom seems to vanish in the distance. One feels neither safe nor comfortable under such conditions."

The pictures of dead fish and game that used to adorn every dining-room some years ago have passed into the back of the beyond. They were terribly popular for a while, and no one recognized that their one good quality was as a market sign. Then there were the painted-plush era and the wax-flower years. In fact, there was a time when everything in the house, even the coal-scuttle, was gilded and hand-painted. Bric-à-brac had a cyclonic success, and every home was littered with meaningless things that had no relation to one another.

We have just passed through a rather virulent stein period and the disease which was known as the Cosy Corner. We have actually begun to realize the lovely restfulness of a mantel upon which two candlesticks are the only articles; the table with its lamp and a book or two; the cushion used to rest the head or back rather than to prop up against a wall for show. As women, we are getting on in humor and so gaining in artistic perception.

KATE MASTERSON

## PASSING CRIMINALS ALONG

**M**ANY municipal judges and chiefs of police have a way, in dealing with a certain class of petty offenders and vagrants and sometimes of positively dangerous characters, of ordering them out of town, giving them a certain number of hours in which to exile themselves under pain of punishment.

It requires no reflection to see that this is both a shiftless way for police authorities to acquit themselves of their responsibilities, and one that is decidedly unfair to neighboring communities. It is the easy

thing. It saves the expense of incarceration and punishment. It makes the criminal statistics of the city show up well, but, of course, it accomplishes nothing in a broad way.

On the contrary, it actually makes matters worse. A criminal who is told to move along is a criminal still. But isn't he more than that? Sent away from a locality where he is known and, therefore, can be watched, and where accordingly he is likely to be more careful, he goes to a strange locality where he may commit serious depredations before his character and tendencies are discovered.

The practice does no good to the criminal. It sends him away from whatever friends he may have. It has no reforming influence. It has no basis of reason from the standpoint of scientific criminology. From an ethical standpoint, it is likewise indefensible. It is a plain denial of the Golden Rule. To send one's criminals out to prey upon neighboring communities might have been the proper thing in the times when communities were detached and every community was the sworn enemy of every other community. But when communities in the same State and under the same general government act that way, it is about time for the general government to step in and stop the silly practice.

When Samuel ("Golden Rule") Jones was mayor of Toledo, he was often appealed to to drive certain classes of undesirables out of town. "Where shall I drive them?" was his invariable reply. "What right have I to inflict them upon others?" And in the long run, his policy was recognized as fair and just, and, as a consequence, he was reelected to the mayoralty as long as he lived. He died in office, and his secretary, Brand Whitlock, has since been mayor in his stead.

In the last analysis, too, the practice does not even benefit the city that selfishly indulges in it. That is to say, if the practice became general, it would simply mean that a floating population of criminals would be created, and in any given city the accessions from outside would be about equal to those who were driven away. It may be that our criminal laws are crude, but, such as they are, they should be applied in each municipality. For the authorities to shirk their duties makes them more criminal than the offenders they are called upon to punish.

ELLIS O. JONES

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## THE SPORTING WAVE

**T**HE assertion by Continental critics that the American athlete needs be a trained specialist is scarcely true. England long has claimed to set the example in popular sports; the Britisher is proud of the fact that his is an outdoor people, and that in his ranks amateur sport reaches its greatest amplitude. But what about America?

The Olympic games long being over and gone, Americans, and less

prejudiced observers from other nations, are content to let the records stand upon their own bottom. As a rule, the best men won. However, time is past when the brand of professionalism must ruthlessly be pressed upon the hide of the American who wins over foreign competitors in any game whatsoever.

Is the Britisher, for many a year representative of the best among amateur sportsmen, now any more addicted to out-of-door athletics or recreation generally than his rival, the American? He is not. A great change, which it is hard for him to realize, has come over the American people. Of all nations, we now perhaps are the most devoted to the out-of-doors and its games.

For this, American enthusiasm—that enthusiasm which sometimes has made us overreach—is responsible. Eager, not only imitative but ingenious, we are ready subjects to every sporting wave which sweeps from sea-board to sea-board. Other nations, more phlegmatic, less susceptible, may smile; but our trait works well.

The first pronounced wave was archery, succeeding the mild exercise of croquet, and devolving new duties upon eye and muscle. Then came tennis, in a towering crest, to increase wind and agility. Baseball spread itself wider, and the new was not like to the old, for its interests were more fascinating, calling upon keener faculties. After tennis followed the cycling era—that veritable craze which upon its flow bore into the fresh air of park and country thousands whom even tennis had not gripped. Cycling waned, but ere its ebb the billow of golf surged in, and all the public links must give out numbers. By its onrush golf embraced the elderly and the sedentary, whom cycling itself had not touched. Football, like baseball, expanded; and, like baseball, has developed into that best type of games—the game not necessarily of the fenced arena but of the corner-lot. Automobiling, which at first appeared to be a sport of the few, has gathered force until to-day, not yet at its climax, its scope envelops the average citizen. Air-flying is looming against the horizon.

That this vast country is ripe for another wave of sport, nobody may deny. The American people always is ripe for a new sport. We cannot have too many of them, one succeeding another; each inspires a set of devotees, and each, receding, leaves a cult behind it. Some few ideals in the way of general games we still lack. Lacrosse, for instance, might well be invited into our midst. However, the American of all ages is amply supplied with stimuli to health of body and mind. Indeed, the victories of the world are no longer won on the school-grounds of England. Here in America the very grammar-schools must have their "field day," their baseball and their football teams. Only in that intense and early application to competitive sports lies danger of truth lurking amidst the European admonitions as to "professionalism." Against this, spirit, and not practice, must guard.

EDWIN L. SABIN

# THE INVESTOR AND THE GOLD SUPPLY

*By Edward Sherwood Mead, Ph.D.*

## ARTICLE II.

IN the January number we reviewed the pessimistic conclusions expressed by Mr. Theodore H. Price, concerning the future of bond prices. These conclusions, it will be remembered, are, in effect, that the prices of fixed-interest bonds will continue to decline, while the prices of commodities and land will continue to advance, and they are based upon the assumption that the supply of gold will continue to increase for an indefinite period.

In order to see what basis there is for this conclusion, it is necessary to examine somewhat into the history of gold-production and prices. This is not the first experience the world has had with high prices. In fact, the prices of 1911, measured by the quotations of forty years ago, are extremely moderate. The highest prices ever reached since accurate records have been kept were in 1873, when the average of 45 staple articles of commerce stood at 111 per cent. of the average from 1867 to 1877, which was taken as the standard. From this point, during the next twenty years, prices rapidly declined, until in 1896, when the lowest point was reached, they stood at only 61 per cent. of the standard, a decline of 50 points in twenty-three years. This fall of prices was primarily due to a marked falling-off in the production of gold, which began in 1865 and continued until the lowest point was reached in 1883. While the output of gold mines was declining, industry and trade continued to advance, and the result was a very large increase in the demand for gold, falling upon a stationary or declining supply, with the result that prices suffered the unparalleled decline already indicated.

This fall of prices coincided with a series of disastrous commercial panics, followed by long periods of depression, in which bankruptcies were numerous, the number of unemployed large, prices declining, and trade stagnant and depressed. During this period the question of the fall of prices agitated the world even more seriously than the difficulties connected with the rise of prices perplex it to-day. Here and there a man of intelligence was found to express the opinion that the fall of



prices was a benefit, but the consensus of opinion was that it was an unmitigated evil. Writing in the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* for September, 1886, Mr. Augustus Sauerbeck, who has long enjoyed the reputation of the world's greatest price-statistician, summed up the situation as follows:

A decline of prices so far as occasioned by a reduction in the cost of production is a decided advantage for the consumer, as his principle will always be "the cheaper the better." The lower classes have therefore improved their position, as wages have only moderately fallen, while they can buy most of their requirements at lower prices. Altogether, they are much better off than in the first half of the century, and what was formerly considered a luxury forms now part of their daily wants.

If we, however, say "the cheaper the better," we must not forget that "cheap" is a relative expression, and cannot mean "the lower the better." If all prices, or the prices of most of the principal articles, fall, then it is a distinct disadvantage to all producing classes; they either lose heavily or have their profits curtailed. Capital is reduced, or does not increase at the usual ratio, and ultimately the loss to the whole community must be much greater than any small advantage to the consumer.

A real benefit is only derived by the classes with fixed incomes, and by capitalists possessing consols and similar safe investments, who can buy more commodities with their income. Many, however, had their interests reduced by one per cent., and their income therefore, say, by 20 to 25 per cent.

Producers have been the severest sufferers, and particularly those of agricultural produce, who had to sustain the strong competition of cheap soil in extra-European countries, which became more effective by the reduction of freight and charges. The consequence was a general decline in the value of land.

The ultimate range of prices is, on the whole, immaterial, as it is not prices, but quantities, which keep people employed; but it is not at all immaterial how prices move, and every strong decline is accompanied by a severe crisis. The income is reduced, and people find it difficult or impossible to retrench, particularly if luxury has increased during a period of great prosperity. It is the period of transition under which we suffer, and when this is passed we may again expect better times.

The better times which Mr. Sauerbeck predicted did not arrive for ten years after the article from which the above quotation was taken appeared, and the depression which he portrayed in such moderate terms continued to spread and to intensify with only occasional respites, caused by bountiful crops or some similar temporary relief, until 1896.

Contrary to the belief generally held, and so freely exploited during the campaign of 1896, that the investor profited by this decline of prices and the resulting depression, the reverse is the case. The investor suf-

ferred quite as severely as any other class. As prices declined, the profits of industry diminished, and the margin of security which is found, not in the case of productive property, but in its profitableness, rapidly diminished. At intervals, as a result of this decline in profits, therefore, came wholesale outbreaks of bankruptcy, in which the soundest and strongest corporations were carried down to ruin, inflicting enormous losses upon investors. Bond-holders and stock-holders alike were involved in this catastrophe. This was the period which saw the bankruptcy of the Union Pacific, the Northern Pacific, the Reading, the Baltimore and Ohio, and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe. Ten years before their bankruptcy, which followed the panic of 1893, four of these five railroads were ranked among the strong railroad enterprises of the country. Their failure affected bond-holders and stock-holders alike. This condition of prolonged depression characterized the entire period, 1873 to 1897, in the United States. The security of bonds was generally weakened, and the investor found slight compensation in the advance of the prices of those of his holdings which survived the shock, for the impairment of his security. At the same time, when he came to invest his surplus income in any security, the number of staple investments, owing to the persistence of depression and bankruptcy, was so much reduced, as just stated, as to carry the prices of strong investments up to figures at which they yielded between 3 and 3½ per cent. on the purchase price.

It is a mistaken notion that the investor profits during periods of falling prices in commodities; with the rest of the community, he suffers. Falling prices due to a scarcity of gold represent an unmitigated evil, a downward movement of prices which blights enterprise, discourages the purchaser, and injures the investor in hardly less degree. It is from this industrial "slough of despond" that the large increase in gold-production, which began with 1886, and has continued until the last few years, has rescued the civilized world. The past ten years have been years of world-wide and abounding prosperity, in which every class has participated. It is true that real wages—that is, the purchasing power of money wages over the necessaries of life—have declined; but, on the other hand, the aggregate of wages received, owing to the abundant opportunities for employment, has been far greater than it was during the low-priced years which preceded. The producing classes have everywhere prospered. The value of land has greatly advanced, and the farmer in every country in the world has established his financial position on a basis of prosperity.

The investors have also profited. In so far as they held stocks, they have seen these stocks rise to figures almost unbelievable. In so far as they held mortgages, they have had these mortgages promptly paid, in striking contrast to the frequent necessity of foreclosure which charac-

terized the years following the panic of 1893. If they held bonds, in so far as the security of these bonds has been impaired by the previous years of depression, the years of prosperity have repaired the damage done, and have elevated to the class of sound investments a very large number of railroad and industrial investments whose previous reputation had been bad. The rise of prices and the spread of permanence of industrial prosperity have also brought before the investors large numbers of issues, as, for example, timber-bonds and mining-bonds, which, during periods of depression, it would not be safe for him to touch; and these new securities, together with the large and growing class of public-utility bonds, offer him rates of income far greater than those which were open to him in safe investments twenty years ago. If the investor has suffered in depreciation of high-grade securities in recent years, considered as a class, he has obtained compensation several times over in increased opportunities for investment at higher rates of interest and the increased security of his holdings.

In the third and last article of this series, an attempt will be made to answer the question as to the future of prices concerning which Mr. Price has expressed himself in such pessimistic terms.



## WHAT EVERY DÉBUTANTE SHOULD KNOW

*By Ralph Bergengren*

THAT Paris is a better guide in clothes than in morals.

That because her great-grandmother smoked a pipe is no reason why she should smoke cigarettes.

That in affairs of the heart a young girl should be seen but not heard from.

That a young man's "Yes" does n't always mean that he can afford the expense.

That many a father seems mean when he is merely hard up.

That the chauffeur is not a hero in the eyes of the footman.

That the matrimonial race is not always to the fast.

That a little brother is a dangerous thing.

That the plainest wall-flower *may* some day marry an Opera-box.

That nothing succeeds like appreciation of other people's success.

That a great deal of time and bother is saved in the long run by thinking it over before she marries.

That the surest way for a girl to make friends is by not trying to be something else.

# LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

MARCH, 1913



## THE CHANGEABLE PROFESSOR

BY

EDGAR JEPSON

*Author of "Pollyooly and the Lump," etc.*

I.

ON the fourteenth of last April Sir Erasmus Blomfield was sitting in his consulting-room in Harley Street with an air of gravity on his round red face which would have appeared strange indeed to his many acquaintances who knew him only as a genial diner-out teeming with cheerful anecdote; but already that morning he had pronounced two sentences of death. Something had checked the steady flow of the stream of his patients who were wont to come, in the strict order of their appointments, from the waiting-room; and the finger-nails of his right hand were tapping an impatient tattoo on the table. He raised his eyebrows when the decorous Parkins, who ushered his patients in to him, entered the room alone, bearing a card.

"The Professor has n't an appointment, Sir Erasmus, but I thought I had better bring you his card at once," said Parkins, in the deep, deferential tones which had soothed so many impatient patients.

Sir Erasmus took the card; and as he scanned it his eyebrows sank to their natural level. On it he read:

PROFESSOR HEINRICH KRAIN

19 Burnham Square

"Yes; quite right. Show him in," said Sir Erasmus.

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Parkins went quickly, and, returning quickly, ushered in a very thin man of rather more than middle height, about forty-five years old. His face, with its admirable brow and well-shaped, arched nose, was arresting. But his black eyes were dull with the dulness which comes of persistent mental work, pursued without rest, recreation, or exercise. An unkempt, black beard half hid his mouth and hid his chin, and, like his long, unkempt, black hair, it was streaked with gray. His cheeks were hollow; and his half-hidden lips were of so pale a pink as to seem bloodless. He wore a black frock-coat, rather shabby, a black waistcoat, and black trousers. Even his watch-guard was a strip of black ribbon.

As he came into the room a racking fit of coughing shook him, and for a moment he leaned feebly against the door-post.

Sir Erasmus rose quickly, his eyes starting out of his round red face with shocked dismay, and cried sharply, "Good heavens, Krain! What on earth have you been doing with yourself?"

"My lungs—I've come to consult you," gasped the Professor.

Sir Erasmus wasted no time. He helped the Professor across the room into a chair, and made his examination. As he set the stethoscope down on the table his face was gloomier than ever.

"You ought to have come to me six—eight—months ago," he said in a bitterly reproachful tone.

"I know—I know. But I've been so busy—the Institute, and my book on the variations of Mendel's Law. Is there—is there nothing to be done?" asked the Professor.

Sir Erasmus shook his head, and said, "You've let it go too far, I fear."

The Professor gasped a short, wheezy gasp; then he seemed to pull himself together, shaking himself with a very feeble shake, and said, "Well, how long have I got?"

Sir Erasmus sat down in his chair and tapped the table with the nail of his middle finger. "Three weeks to a month if you stay in England. But if you start for Egypt within three days, you might make it seven or eight weeks," he said.

"It is n't worth the trouble of the journey," said the Professor. Then he smiled faintly and added, "You have relieved my mind. I had a fright last night—a bad fright: a hemorrhage there seemed no stopping. I was afraid I should not have time to finish my book. It will take me ten days. Three weeks is plenty. Well, well, there's no need for me to take up any more of your time. More hopeful cases need it. I'm much obliged to you for seeing me at once and not beating about the bush."

"One moment. I'll just write you a prescription which will ease your cough a little. And you had better have a good strong tonic too. You'll want it if you're going on working."

"Oh, I must. I must," said the Professor.

Sir Erasmus wrote out the two prescriptions; then he gave the Professor an arm to the door of the house, helped him down the steps, and into the taxicab waiting for him.

He stared gloomily at its swiftly receding back till it was out of sight. Then he went back to his consulting-room and sat down, frowning. Then he muttered:

"Confound these geniuses! Confound them! Overwork—mere overwork and nothing else!"

He rang the bell for the next patient.

## II.

WHEN three weeks had passed, Sir Erasmus Blomfield never looked through his *Times* without expecting to light on an obituary notice of Professor Krain; and that with a sinking heart. For all his German name, the Professor was an Englishman, the son of a naturalized German father and an English mother. An amazingly clever boy, unhampered by any devotion to games, at University College School he had swept the board of science scholarships and prizes. Then he had taken a science scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge, and after it every science prize and distinction the University had to offer. He was elected a Fellow of his college, and two years later was appointed to the Chair of Experimental Physiology. In five years he had a European reputation; his book on the physiology of the carnivores had been translated into nine languages; he received degrees, *honoris causâ*, from the chief universities of the world and was elected a member of every important scientific society. Germany made haste to try to annex him as her son; and the Berlin professors never failed to speak or write of him as "our illustrious countryman." Five years later he was appointed to the directorship of the Biological Institute of London, left Cambridge, and settled himself at 19 Burnham Square.

Sir Erasmus had indeed reason to be distressed by the prospect of his death, for not only was the Professor the greatest living English scientist, but in the course of his researches he had made more important contributions to Medicine than any Englishman for sixty years, and Sir Erasmus was looking for more. Besides, he had a strong liking for the Professor, who bore his honors with a singular modesty, and was a simple, cheerful, kindly soul.

The days passed, and no obituary notice caught Sir Erasmus's eye. Then on the 20th of May, after an excellent dinner, he went to an "at home" at Lady Marvin's, in Prince's Gate. In spite of the fashionable quarter in which she lives, the "at homes" of Lady Marvin are remarkable for their freedom from the presence of persons of rank

and fashion. The ill-natured assert that this is owing to the fact that her favorite saying is, "I do hate a fool!" But it is also to some degree owing to the fact that since Sir William Marvin is one of our leading physicists, all the lights of the scientific world flock to his house. Where they gather, other intellectuals gather, so her "at homes" are celebrated not only for the number of distinguished people one meets there, but also for the catholicity of their attainments. She is careful to leaven these gatherings with some pretty girls and cheerful young men, so that every one goes to them, because no one is bored.

Lady Marvin, very roundly and comfortably built, but with very bright, shrewd eyes, welcomed Sir Erasmus as if he were the only man in the world in whom she had ever taken any interest—a habit which invests her with great charm. Then with that knowledge of the tastes of her guests which adds to her success as a hostess, she made haste to introduce him to two young people who were sitting in a corner of the room. Like most men whose occupations are somewhat depressing, Sir Erasmus liked the society of the young.

"Let me introduce you to Miss Rivers," said Lady Martin. "You know her father, Sir John Rivers, who has just built the big bridge over the Irawadi. Mr. George Whitty—Sir Erasmus Blomfield. Mr. Whitty has just won an important patent case for my husband."

Sir Erasmus bowed with a grateful smile, for Miss Rivers was a very pretty girl, uncommonly like a kitten, a resemblance produced by the fact that her face was approaching the triangular in shape and her eyebrows were a little raised at the corners. None the less, set in its frame of soft brown hair, with its clear skin, dancing eyes, and alluring lips, it was a charming face. Sir Erasmus observed that the young man talking to her was her very opposite, with his black hair, black eyes, rugged features, and heavy square jaw.

Miss Rivers smiled at Sir Erasmus, a dazzling smile, and said, "We shall have to talk about something else. Our talk was quite below the level of this intellectual gathering. We were talking about cats and dogs—quarrelling about them—we always do. George—Mr. Whitty—loves dogs; and I adore cats; so we quarrel—naturally."

"Why change the subject?" said Sir Erasmus, sitting down on the other side of her, and thinking that she looked like a kitten, a very delightful kitten, herself. "Cats and dogs are always interesting. What I say is, dogs for the country, cats for the town. It's a shame to coop up a dog in London; but cats, they have the roofs—a splendid expanse of roofs. They use 'em, too—worse luck!—howling and yelling when I want to go to sleep."

Miss Rivers laughed, a delightful rippling laugh. "No, cats for the country, too," she said.

"They use it only for poaching—the brutes!" said George Whitty.

"He's always saying nasty things about them," she said to Sir Erasmus. "He never thinks about mice. Why, if it were n't for cats, we should be overrun with mice—nasty little creepy-crawly things!"

Sir Erasmus opened his polite mouth to declare cats the chief benefactors of the human race, when the deep tones of the butler announcing a guest rang through the drawing-room:

"Professor Heinrich Krain."

Sir Erasmus started, looked at the door, gasped, and nearly fell off his chair.

It would have been impossible to find any one of forty-five looking less like a dying man than Professor Krain. His black eyes, which had been so lack-lustre and dull, were shining brightly; his pale, hollow cheeks were fuller and ruddy; his black hair and beard had grown lustrous and even sleek—plainly they had been lovingly treated by an artist. He looked thicker, considerably thicker, but that might have been owing to the fact that he was wearing evening dress. It was quite new and very well cut. But Sir Erasmus was most surprised by his vigorous air. His legs no longer tottered under his weight; he entered the room lightly. Indeed, it was more than lightly; it was with the swift litheness of a cat. Sir Erasmus rubbed his eyes.

In a dream he saw the Professor shake hands with Lady Marvin, and heard her reproach him for his long absence from her house, and congratulate him on having grown ten years younger.

Then the Professor looked round the room, caught sight of Sir Erasmus, and came to him. As he shook hands with him he said with a gentle, mocking smile, "Not quite the way to be spending my last hours, is it, Blomfield?"

"Th-th-that m-m-medicine I p-p-prescribed is really g-g-good," stammered Sir Erasmus.

"Yes, yes—very soothing," said the Professor. "I took it for twelve days, and it was the greatest help to me. I worked ever so much easier for it, and finished my book in nine days instead of ten."

The beads of sweat shone plain on Sir Erasmus's brow. He found himself on the horns of the dilemma of his life: either he was suffering from a visual and aural hallucination, or he was looking on a miracle—an undoubted miracle. It is hard to say which alternative was the more unpleasant to him. His wits were hopelessly scattered; and he gazed wildly round the room, striving to collect them.

He needed time; and he said hurriedly, in a dying voice, "Here—here—let me introduce Professor Krain to you, Miss Rivers. He's a b-b-biologist. He knows all about cats." And he sank back in his chair and wiped his shining brow.

At the word "cats" the Professor drew himself up and seemed to expand. A flame of enthusiasm blazed in his eyes; and he said in deep,



ringing, sonorous tones, which drew the attention of the nearer groups to his words:

"I have lately come to the conclusion that all my life I have underrated the cat. It is the most noble of animals. No one, *no one*, has ever really done justice to its virtues, though I find that a French poet of the name of Baudelaire has shown a considerable understanding and appreciation of it. It's the most noble, the most intelligent, and the most graceful creature in the world. Of course the lion is one of the *Felidæ*, and has been acclaimed the representative of all that is noble and majestic in the animal world; but the cat, the domestic cat, surpasses him in everything but size—in beauty, grace, nobility." Under the impression that the Professor was making a humorous speech, somebody in the nearest group tittered. The Professor's face grew challenging, threatening, almost ferocious; and he said:

"I assert that there is no more beautiful, graceful, or intelligent animal than a well-trained domestic cat!"

The guest who had tittered under a misapprehension was hushed and looked sheepish. The other guests were a little astonished at the Professor's vehemence, but they ascribed it to the fact that he had foreign blood in him. Sir Erasmus rose. The Professor's fierceness had not in any way reassured him or helped him to collect his scattered wits. Suddenly the Professor became aware that he had been speaking with an enthusiasm out of place in a drawing-room. He stopped short and with a faint blush sat down beside Miss Rivers.

"Oh, I do agree with you," she said with warm approval.

The Professor gazed at her earnestly and smiled at her with almost caressing eyes.

"Oh, come! What about the dog?" said George Whitty sharply.

The Professor gazed at him across her, his face suddenly fierce again.

"The dog!" he said fiercely. "Of all the animals that evolution has produced, the dog is the vilest! Clumsy! Stupid! Greedy! Aggressive! If I had my way, I'd exterminate the whole tribe." He glared fiercely round the room and added, "The dog-license ought to be raised from seven-and-sixpence to twenty pounds a year."

"That would be jolly hard on people who are fond of dogs," protested George Whitty.

"What do people want with such pestiferous brutes when they can have an affectionate and intelligent cat?" cried the Professor. "If I had my way, there should n't be a dog outside the cages in the Zoological Gardens, where it would be possible to study them as safely as we can study lions and tigers."

"You speak as if you were rather afraid of dogs," said Miss Rivers.

The Professor turned his eyes from George Whitty to her pretty face; the sight of it seemed to soften him, and in a gentler voice he said,

“Well, to be quite frank with you, I have an extraordinary and unreasonable dread of a dog sneaking up behind me and springing at my back.” They saw him shiver at the thought; and he ground his teeth and added, “If a dog did that, I should do my best to kill it then and there.”

George Whitty thought that the Professor must be mad on the subject; but Miss Rivers, disliking dogs, thought his feeling natural, though somewhat violent.

The Professor shook himself, his face cleared, and he said, “But why do I spoil my temper by talking about the brutes? You’re fond of cats, Miss Rivers; let’s talk about cats. They’re much better worth talking about.”

They talked about cats and about kittens, their beauty and their virtues. George Whitty now and then contributed a disparaging phrase, which spurred them to finer eulogies. They began to find themselves uncommonly sympathetic. George began to grow annoyed. When they left the subject of cats and began to talk about themselves, he grew uneasy. He had known Kitty Rivers since he was a boy in the fourth form at Westminster School, and she was an engaging and gleeful child of five, whom he had by turns teased and petted. Their intimacy had grown and grown; and in the previous autumn they had drifted into an engagement. They were waiting only till he should have made such a success as would justify their marrying; and by an extraordinary piece of good luck that success had come to him a few days before. The leading counsel in an important patent case of Sir William Marvin had been injured in a taxicab collision on his way to the court, and the conduct of the case had devolved on George Whitty, his junior. He had won it in the most brilliant fashion, with the result that already two important briefs lay in a drawer of the desk in his chambers.

He had come to Lady Marvin’s in very good spirits. The course of his true love had always run smooth, and this success seemed to have brought it to a happy end. As Kitty and the Professor talked more and more intimately, George grew more and more uneasy; and when after a while he found that they received his interventions with a touch of impatience, he was filled with a veritable dismay. Indeed, Kitty had become so absorbed in the Professor that she seemed to have neither eyes nor ears for any one else.

George had had enough of it; and in a somewhat severe tone he invited Kitty to come down to the buffet in the dining-room, to eat ices.

Kitty declined somewhat impatiently, for she did not wish her talk with the Professor to be brought to an end. George lost his temper, which was always short, and rose and left them. Lady Marvin, mindful of the service he had rendered her husband, introduced him to several of her most important guests. As he talked to them, he kept an eye on

Kitty and the Professor, and saw that their interest in each other by no means waned. He grew angrier. He had never before had any reason to feel jealous; and he found the first twinges of that passion very unpleasant indeed. But his vanity prevented him from making any more determined attempt to get her away from the man who so interested her. Every now and then he saw a friend go up to the Professor and congratulate him on the improvement in his health. The Professor, in his absorption in Kitty, plainly received their congratulations with ungrateful impatience. George came to the conclusion that he was underbred.

George failed to observe the curious behavior of Sir Erasmus Blomfield, who kept hovering about Kitty and the Professor, staring at them with eyes still full of an incredulous amazement. He talked distractingly to the acquaintances who accosted him; and now and again, with an effort, he tore himself away into one of the other rooms. But always he came back to stare at the Professor, with a look of blank bewilderment on his round red face.

Then Kitty and the Professor rose to go down to the buffet; and George was struck by the fact that they were uncommonly alike in their gait. He had always admired Kitty's light, gliding walk; and he saw that the Professor's was the same. Both of them seemed to him to walk with the smooth, effortless ease of cats. He had often told Kitty that she was exactly like a kitten; now he said to himself, "Hang it all! The fellow's exactly like a cat. Hanged if he isn't as sleek as a cat!"

By the end of the evening George was in a very bad temper indeed; and as he drove part of his way home with Kitty and Sir John Rivers, who lived in Russell Square, he was not soothed by Kitty's manifest inability to talk of anything but the Professor.

At last he came to the end of his endurance, and growled, "The fellow's exactly like a cat!"

"Why, so he is!" cried Kitty, in the tone of one who has received a revelation. Then, after a pause, she added softly, "But how nice!"

For two or three minutes after Kitty had gone, the Professor looked for all the world like a man who has just awakened from a pleasant dream and does not quite know where he is.

Sir Erasmus restored him to the everyday world. "Then you've found it, Krain?" he said in a tone of great excitement.

"Found what?" said the Professor, blinking at him.

"The cure—the cure for tuberculosis!"

The Professor frowned. "I'm experimenting," he said sharply. "I've a lot to learn yet."

"Good! Good!" said Sir Erasmus, rubbing his hands.

The Professor bade him good-night, somewhat curtly; and then went to take his leave of Lady Marvin.

As he shook hands with her he said, "I am so much obliged to you for introducing me to Miss Rivers. She's the nicest kitten I ever remember meeting."

"Kitten?" cried Lady Marvin. "Kitten?"

The Professor blushed faintly and said, "Girl—of course I meant girl. What was I thinking about?" Then he looked her squarely in the eyes and said firmly, "But she is like a kitten—very like a kitten."

### III.

ON the first floor of the Professor's house in Burnham Square there had been a front and a back drawing-room running the whole depth of the house, and separated from each other by folding doors. He had taken away the folding doors and turned the two rooms into one long laboratory, replacing the ordinary panes in the lower halves of its long windows with frosted glass, so that not even with field-glasses could the inquisitive from the other side of the square or from the houses at the back see into it. Sometimes for days together no one but himself—no servant, not even one of his learned colleagues—was allowed to enter it.

Naturally, this precaution set flying rumors of horrors of vivisection committed in it. But they remained rumors, for in the matter of vivisection the Professor's reputation at the Biological Institute was above reproach. The students bore emphatic witness that he was most careful to observe the law concerning that method of investigation, that no experiment was ever made upon an unanæsthetized animal, and that whenever it was possible the animal was killed while it was still under the influence of the anæsthetic. His humanitarian enemies suggested that he was too cautious to do anything illegal in his public experiments, but that if he were equally careful to keep the law in his private experiments, he would not have been at the pains to conceal them so carefully.

As a scientific investigator, the Professor had been somewhat unfortunate in his choice of 19 Burnham Square as his abode, for his next-door neighbor, Major-General Perceval Whitty, D.S.O., K.C.G., was one of the most ardent anti-vivisectionists in London. Also, though he had been christened Perceval Whitty, for the greater part of his life he had been known as "Pepper" Whitty. At first he took the Professor's tenancy of number 19 as a deliberate insult; but reason came to his aid before he had resented the affront with the vigor he usually displayed in his resentments. Then he congratulated himself on the fact that the Professor had unwittingly settled down in the very heart of the enemy's country. As a gentleman, General Whitty would never have dreamed of spying on a neighbor; as an anti-vivisectionist, he made no bones whatever about keeping a close watch on a vivisector, regarding him as

beyond the pale of courtesy and humanity alike. The fact that the Professor had changed the glass in the lower halves of the long windows of his laboratory filled him with the greatest suspicion; and that suspicion was strengthened when presently he learned from his man, who had made haste to become friendly with the Professor's pretty parlor-maid, that for days together no one but the Professor entered the laboratory.

General Whitty was George's uncle; and it had always been a grievance to him that his nephew had become a barrister instead of a soldier. Against George himself, however, he had no grievance. Indeed, they were on excellent terms, and George dined with him every week. The General had often discussed with him his suspicions of the Professor, and complained bitterly of his failure to verify them.

On the morning after Lady Marvin's "at home" George did not awake in his usual stern eagerness to get with all speed to the work of the day. His jealousy had lost the painful acuteness of the night before, but it had left in him a strange uneasiness. On their way home Kitty had said that the Professor was going to call on her to see her Persian cats; and she had plainly shown herself looking forward to his visit with disquieting eagerness. In court that day George was by no means at his brilliant best; and when the court rose, and he came back to tea in his chambers, he bethought himself of his uncle's hostility to the Professor, and felt that it would be very agreeable to hear that interloper abused. Accordingly, he rang up his uncle on the telephone and inquired if he would be welcome to dinner that night. His uncle replied that he would be delighted to see him, that indeed he had been wanting to discuss a matter of importance with him for days.

When George arrived at 20 Burnham Square, he found his uncle wearing a graver expression than usual. As far as looks went, the General's nickname of "Pepper" seemed to approach the slanderous. He was a quiet-looking, dapper little man, with a small, clipped mustache, not unlike a depressed tooth-brush. His features were small, and Nature did not seem to have taken much trouble about the moulding of them. But his gray eyes were very keen, with a very direct gaze; and the whites of them were as clear as the whites of the eyes of a child.

He greeted George warmly and congratulated him on his success in the Marvin case. They went at once to dinner; and it was not till they had finished their soup that George asked what his uncle had been wanting to discuss with him.

The General's gray eyes sparkled with a sudden bright fire. It was almost as if a sun-ray had suddenly struck steel.

"It's that scoundrel next door!" he cried. "He's taken on a new lease of life. I told you a month ago that the ruffian was at death's door, and I was glad of it. There was nothing personal in my pleasure,

of course. I was just regarding him as a blackguard who was better out of the way. And Martin told me that he was very ill indeed. Martin has got very friendly with the servants next door; and if he had n't known my ways so well, I'd have sacked him for it."

"If that was really the case, the Professor certainly has taken on a new lease of life," said George gloomily. "I met him at Lady Marv'n's last night, and I never saw a man looking fitter. He was as sleek as a cat."

"But how has he done it? How has he done it? That's what I want to know," said the General; and he gazed at his nephew with a portentous, darkling air.

"Oh, well, he's a scientific man. Scientific men can do these things," said George. "Is Byngo as friendly with him as ever?"

"Confound that dog!" cried the General. "I should have thought that a dog of his size would have had more sense than to chum up with a confounded vivisector. And the odd thing about it is that that scoundrel is the only stranger I've ever known Byngo to take any notice of, except to growl at. When I saw him dancing round that ruffian and slobbering over him that day, you might have knocked me down with a feather."

"Those big Danes have n't a reputation for friendliness," said George. "How many cats has Byngo killed lately?"

"Not one!" snapped the General. "It grew too expensive. I've paid more than thirty pound compensation for cats that Byngo's killed; and I take jolly good care that he does n't kill any more. I take him on a leash till we get out of the Squares, and only let him run loose in the park."

He paused to drink, with serious appreciation, some of his port wine, which had so often been forbidden him by his doctor. Then he said with an air so grave that it was almost solemn, "If Byngo has n't killed any cats, that scoundrel next door has. It was one of the oddest things I ever saw. I had just come out of the house to go to the Club the other day, when I heard a yell at number 19. Then the front door flew open, and that scoundrel's fat cook bounced out-onto the steps; and instantly a barking cat——"

"A Barking cat?" said George. "I did n't know that Barking had a breed of cats."

The General gave him a sharp, suspicious look to see if he were joking. "I did n't say a Barking cat. There are n't any Barking cats. I said the cat was barking—barking like a dog—at least, as near like a dog as a cat could bark. It was a kind of screeching bark. I believe that scoundrel must have tortured it till it went mad and barked like a dog. That's what I believe."

"It sounds rather odd," said George.

“Well, the cat bolted across the road into the Square garden; and there was that big black tom of Mrs. Penderby’s. You know—the cat Byngo has tried to kill three times, but it was too sharp for him. Well, the mad cat—it was a little cat, half the size of the other—flew at the black tom and bowled him over. But the point is, it flew at him exactly as a dog flies at a cat. And I’m hanged if it did n’t get him by the neck and try to shake him exactly as a dog shakes a rat! But the black tom got away and went for his life, the little cat after him, still barking like a dog. They bolted across the garden and through the rails up Pangbourne Street, into Pangbourne Square, and I saw no more of them. But all the way the mad cat was yelping and barking like a dog. I looked round, and there on the top of the steps of 19 stood that scoundrel, watching the cats. I started to tell him what I thought of him, and I did n’t mince matters. No, I did n’t. But he began to cough; and presently he was holding on to the railings and coughing his heart out. Well, you can’t go on telling a man in that state what you think of him, so I just called him a scoundrel and went off to the Club. But the business gave me quite a shock; and I never played a worse rubber of Bridge in my life than I played that afternoon.”

“How long ago was this?” said George.

“Rather more than a fortnight. You did n’t dine with me last week, you know.”

“Well, the Professor had n’t a cough last night, or I should have noticed it,” said George. “Now I come to think of it, I never heard him cough once all the evening.”

“Cough? He never coughs now! I used to hear him through the wall,” snapped the General.

He paused and drank some more port. Then he bent forward with a portentous frown and said solemnly, “I tell you what: that scoundrel has sold his soul to the devil. I don’t know how he did it, but that’s what he’s done. He’s sold his soul to the devil!”

#### IV.

It was Kitty’s habit to fall asleep as soon as her head touched the pillow; but on her return from Lady Marvin’s, sleep held aloof. She found that she had to lie awake and think about the Professor—his face, his air, his tones, his gestures, the things he had said, and the way he had said them. Never before had a man so impressed her that she had lain awake thinking about him. Why, the night she had become engaged to George she had gone to sleep with her wonted quickness. Had it not been for that engagement, she might have suspected that this might be a case of love at first sight. But her engagement prevented any such suspicion. She lay wondering at the extraordinary

impression the Professor had made on her. Now and then she saw with extraordinary vividness his animated and admiring face. At last she fell asleep and dreamed about him—pleasant dreams.

When she awoke next morning the impression of the Professor's attractiveness was fainter; but she still felt that she had spent a delightful evening, one of the most delightful evenings of her life; and she was grateful to the Professor for having been the source of the pleasure she had enjoyed. He had promised to call on her to see her cats; she hoped he would come soon. It might be that he would come that very afternoon—it would be none too soon. In the middle of the morning, she found that she was looking forward to his coming with greater eagerness than she had ever looked forward to the coming of George; and the discovery took her aback.

In the afternoon, at about the calling hour, she found herself in a curious state of restless expectancy. Four times she went to the window in the hope of seeing the Professor approaching the house. Then, to her great joy, at a few minutes past five a taxicab stopped before the door, and he stepped out of it. She found it hard to bear in mind that she was twenty years old and not dance a short dance expressive of joyous delight.

As the Professor came into the room she observed how little his light, springy gait matched the streaks of gray in his black hair; his was not at all the walk of a middle-aged student. He greeted her with flattering warmth, and his eyes caressed her. He seemed to find some difficulty in letting go of her hand. She was a little fluttered.

Her three Persian cats were in the room. Exceedingly haughty cats, they showed themselves very disdainful of strangers, as a rule. But before she and the Professor had finished their greetings the cats were rubbing against his legs, purring loudly, and standing up and clawing gently at his trousers to invite his attention. It was settled once for all in Kitty's mind that the Professor was the nicest man she had ever met.

He did nothing to weaken the conviction. As they talked over their tea, his eyes were caressing, and the tones of his voice were caressing. He talked to her with an extraordinary display of interest in her. And he talked to her as no other clever man (she had met many) had ever talked to her. He seemed to take it for granted that she was his intellectual equal; and she was inexpressibly flattered by the assumption. The cats set the subject of their talk. They were untiring in demonstrations of their approval of the Professor: one of them took possession of his lap; another settled itself on the arm of his chair, and at intervals rose, put its feet on his shoulders, and rubbed its head against his cheek; and the third sat at his feet, gazing at him, as it seemed, with affectionate respect of a disciple for his teacher. He talked to her about cats as if she had a truly scientific mind. He discussed with her the question



which had been agitating the mind of biologists, whether the primates or the carnivores should be reckoned, after man, the highest creatures in the animal scale; and declared with enthusiasm his conviction that, from the point of view of intelligence, the carnivores were as highly developed as any of the primates.

Kitty was somewhat disappointed to hear that cats were only the intellectual equals of monkeys; and she said sadly, "But you said last night that cats were the *most* intelligent animals."

"Well, the Egyptians, the only race which has ever really recognized the intelligence of the cat, did train it till it became the most intelligent of their animals," he said thoughtfully. "They used cats just as a sportsman nowadays uses dogs. They even trained them to take to water, so that they retrieved the water-fowl they shot, just as a retriever retrieves duck."

Kitty was delighted to hear of this accomplishment; and she accepted eagerly his invitation to take her to the British Museum on the following afternoon, to see the picture of Egyptian cats at their work. He went on to tell her that the ordinary European cat of to-day is probably a descendant of the Kaffre cat of the Egyptians, and that they not only used their cats for sport, but revered them as sacred animals and embalmed them when they died.

He stayed talking with her for rather more than two hours. When they left the subject of cats, their talk never flagged. Only one thing checked for a moment its easy flow. The Professor rose and went to the window to look out into the Square. Kitty's canary hung before the window, high up, out of reach of the cats. When the Professor drew near its cage, it flew from side to side, dashing itself against the bars in an agony of terror. The Professor looked at it distastefully and returned to his chair.

"A curious bird," he said. "I wonder why it's frightened of me. It must be exceptionally timid."

"Perhaps it's your beard," said Kitty.

They bade each other good-by with great reluctance.

There was a little awkwardness at his departure: the cats followed him down the stairs and out of the house. They seemed so resolved to go with him that in the end he had to carry them back into the house himself, and shut them in the dining-room. All three of them were at the window, mewing disconsolately, when he went away.

When he had gone the world seemed to Kitty to have suddenly turned dull. She sat for a long while thinking about him and their talk. She was very pleased that she was going to see him next day. She did indeed find their visit to the British Museum, and their tea at the Carlton after it, very pleasant.

That night George Whitty came to dine with the Riverses in very

good spirits. The uneasiness inspired in him by the Professor's manifest attraction for Kitty had passed away, and it was his intention to get her to fix a day for their wedding. During dinner, however, his spirits were dashed by the discovery that Kitty could hardly talk about anything but the Professor; and he was bitterly annoyed to learn that the Professor had called on her the day before, and that they had spent that very afternoon at the British Museum. George was by no means a good-tempered young man, and, since he felt quite sure of Kitty, he let his annoyance have full expression. He said many disparaging things about the manners and appearance of the Professor, and taunted her with being on such good terms with a cruel vivisectionist. Kitty protested with no little heat that the Professor might be a vivisectionist, but she was sure that he was not cruel. Then George told the story of the mad cat, as he had had it from his uncle. Kitty refused to believe that the Professor had tortured the cat; and she was exceedingly annoyed with George for talking of a friend of hers in such an unkindly fashion.

Sir John Rivers observed George with searching, disapproving eyes. He seemed displeased with his attitude toward Kitty, and was curt with him when the ladies had gone to the drawing-room. George was not at all dismayed, for he felt that he had only asserted himself as a man should. But he was further annoyed later in the evening, when he told Kitty that he was going to spend a week in the country with his mother, and Kitty made no display of regret. Also she did not contrive the usual opportunity for him to kiss her good-night. Nevertheless, he went home feeling strongly that he had asserted himself as a man should. Kitty felt quite as strongly that he had shown himself a very disagreeable young man, indeed, and compared him, to his disadvantage, with the Professor.

She had also a feeling that it was in a way her duty to make up to the Professor for the unkind manner in which George had talked about him to her father's guests. Consequently, she indulged her desire for his society with an easy mind. During the week George was away they went twice again to the British Museum and once to the Natural History Museum in South Kensington, and once the Professor came to Russell Square and spent the afternoon with her. They were coming to know each other very well indeed. He always talked to her as to an equal, about himself, his work, his aspirations, and his ambitions. His confidence in her sympathy was very pleasing to her, after the taciturnity of George on all important matters. George always treated her as if she were a child, unable to understand serious things.

When he came back to London, George, who had been playing golf vigorously every day, had quite forgotten the firm manner in which he had asserted himself; and he was surprised and annoyed that Kitty did not welcome him with the warmth he expected. Then he met the

Professor at dinner at the Riverses', and was yet more bitterly annoyed. He saw quite plainly that Kitty and the Professor were on very familiar, sympathetic terms with each other. Promptly he tried, not without success, to make himself disagreeable. But he was not as successful as he would have liked; indeed, the Professor's attitude towards him was somewhat galling: from the height of his attainments, he treated George with a polite indifference. Sir John Rivers observed George's behavior with considerable disfavor; and after dinner Kitty gave him no chance of talking with her alone. He came away from the house with his dislike of the Professor increased to an aversion. Indeed, it was stronger than an aversion: George felt a basic repulsion from him, the repulsion George felt from cats. With Kitty, he was merely angry.

The next day he made up his mind that her intimacy with the Professor was growing to be a serious matter; and when the court rose he took a taxicab to his uncle's house in Burnham Square, in the hope of learning some more facts to the discredit of the Professor.

He found the General in high spirits; and as he shook hands with him he cried, "I'm thankful to say that Byngo's at last come to his senses about that scoundrel next door. The day before yesterday I was taking him out for a run in the park when we met the ruffian at the corner of the Square. Byngo flew at him. I'd got him on the leash, and he nearly ripped my arm out of the socket. It was a good thing he had his muzzle on, for as it was he nearly knocked the scoundrel down."

"Good!" said George vengefully. "And what did the Professor do?"

"He made one spring to the middle of the road, as quick as a cat. I should never have dreamt that he was so quick on his feet."

## V.

DURING the next ten days George found things go from bad to worse. Kitty saw the Professor every other day; and she seemed unable to talk with any interest of anything else. George was beginning to feel a little uncertain of his sovereign sway over her, and grew violently jealous. He was careful, but perhaps foolish, never to miss a chance of abusing the Professor to her.

Kitty was hurt by his abuse of her friend, and talked less about him. But one day in an unguarded moment she quoted something the Professor had said.

"I'm getting sick of the Professor!" cried George violently. "You seem to think and talk of nothing else. I believe you dream of him."

Kitty looked at him in some surprise; then she laughed softly and said, "Why, I believe I do. I dreamt of him last night. I dreamt that

he was a big Persian cat—such a splendid cat—and that I was stroking him.”

“Confound the Professor!” cried George furiously.

Kitty’s eyes flashed. “You’ve no right to speak about a friend of mine like that,” she said hotly. “I’m sure the Professor’s the nicest and most interesting man I ever met.”

“Oh, is he?” growled George, and he ground his teeth.

“Of course I was n’t including you,” said Kitty; but there was no conviction in her tone.

George was at the end of his temper; and he said with even greater violence, “You’re seeing a great deal too much of the Professor. And the way he dangles about after you, when he knows you’re engaged, is infernally bad form. That’s what it is.”

Kitty’s eyes opened very wide, and she laughed a short and rather cheerless laugh. “Why, I believe you’re jealous of the Professor!” she said in a tone of some amazement. “He’s old enough to be my father.”

“He does n’t think so,” said George. “And the sooner you stop gadding about with him the better.”

Kitty’s eyes opened wider and sparkled and flashed.

“But I like him,” she said. “We get on so well together.”

“A great deal too well! And it’s got to stop,” snapped George.

Kitty suddenly cooled, and said coldly, “It is n’t going to stop. The Professor’s a friend of mine; I like him; and I’m going to see as much of him as I like—so there!”

George’s dark face was a very unpleasant purple. He had the strongest desire to shake her; and he felt that in a few seconds that desire would be beyond his control. He snorted and flung out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

He went away furious with Kitty; and he left her furious with him. She felt that he had insulted her. It was some time before her anger waned and she could consider the matter calmly. George had done a very silly and dangerous thing: he had set the Professor before her eyes in a new light. She had been looking on him as a nice middle-aged friend. Considering him from George’s point of view, she perceived that, in spite of the gray in his hair, he was not middle-aged at all. In fact, he was really younger than George.

When he called next day she watched him with new eyes; and the longer she watched him, the more attractive qualities she saw in him. He was undoubtedly handsome in a strong, masculine way. He moved with an ease and a grace she found attractive. She liked his caressing eyes and the caressing tones of his voice when he looked at her and spoke to her. Most of all she like the certainty that if she gave expression to one of her more serious thoughts, it would meet with an immediate, sympathetic response from him.

Her cats seemed fonder of him than ever, and he spent some of the time teaching them tricks. He displayed in the occupation the simple joy of a child playing a new game, and it delighted her.

As he was taking his leave he said, "By the way, would you like to go to the Zoo to-morrow? I'm told that the Society has just acquired an excellent specimen of the *Felix Riverrina*, the fishing-cat of India."

"A fishing-cat? Does it really catch fish?" cried Kitty.

"Yes; it lies in wait in the bushes on the banks of a stream; and when a fish rises at a fly the cat springs and seizes the fish before it has time to dive."

"Oh, I should like to see it!" said Kitty.

"Good! I'll call for you at three to-morrow," said the Professor.

Accordingly, the next afternoon they went to the Zoo, and straight to the cage of the fishing-cat. Kitty did not like it: it had short, coarse fur, and looked very savage. But the Professor seemed quite careless of its fierceness, for he stepped over the barrier, put his finger through the wired bars, and scratched its head. Kitty cried out to him not to be so reckless; but, instead of biting the Professor's finger, the cat rubbed itself, purring, along the bars of the cage. The Professor's cool courage pleased Kitty exceedingly.

Then they went to the house of the lions and the tigers. The Professor complained, with evident sincerity, that the presence of the keeper prevented him from stroking the tigers. Kitty was very glad that the keeper was there: a fishing-cat was one thing, a tiger quite another.

They then went down to the cages of the wolves and foxes.

The Professor sniffed the air and frowned. "What a detestable scent these brutes have!" he said.

"It's not so bad as in the lion house. It's not so strong in the open air," said Kitty.

"But it's so different," said the Professor.

He was walking quickly past the cages, paying little heed to the beasts, when suddenly the yellow Australian dingo sprang from the back of its cage, thrust its muzzle through the bars, and snarled and yelped at him as if the one desire of its heart was to get its teeth into him.

The Professor leaped lightly away from the cage, and stood staring at it, with startled eyes, for five or six seconds. Then, in a sudden bristling fury, he sprang forward and whacked Yellow Dog Dingo on the head with his umbrella. Yellow Dog Dingo leaped back to the safe centre of his cage and snarled at him more savagely than ever.

"Oh, why did you do that?" cried the tender-hearted Kitty. "It could n't get at you."

The Professor walked on a few steps quickly, panting with anger;

then he said, "Well, really, I could n't help it. It was a sudden impulse—irresistible. I should n't have dreamt of doing such a thing a couple of months ago. But of late I have developed a loathing, a—a—horror of dogs. If a dog sneaked up behind me and nipped me, I believe I should scream. I do, really."

His frank confession of the weakness did him no harm in Kitty's eyes.

"I think I understand," she said sympathetically. "I dislike dogs myself; but not so badly as that. I have n't any horror of them."

"Lucky for you—there are so many about," said the Professor, smiling at her.

He was some time recovering from the start the dingo had given him; at least, so it seemed to Kitty. He did not talk about the other animals with the interest he had been showing; and over their tea in the Fellows' pavilion he seemed more thoughtful than his wont. He kept looking at her with meditative, questioning eyes; and he talked about her in an exploring fashion. He seemed to have something on his mind, something that had to do with her; and she wondered what it could be.

She was enlightened suddenly. At his suggestion, they walked home; and in Regent's Park, in an empty path, screened by shrubbery, he put his arm gently round her, drew her to him, and was on the point of kissing her.

"You must n't do that!" she cried, striving to free herself.

"Oh, but I must. It's the only way I can rightly tell you how dear you are to me—how I adore you," he said, gazing down into her eyes with his own all aglow.

"But you must n't! I'm engaged! Engaged to George—Mr. Whitty! Did n't you know?" she cried.

"Engaged!" cried the Professor, in a tone of blank dismay; and he loosed her.

"Oh, this is dreadful! I made sure that you knew!" cried Kitty, wringing her hands at the sight of the dreadful consternation in his face.

"I—I—never dreamt it," said the Professor. "He—he—he's fond of dogs! It's incredible!"

"Yes, yes: I know. But we've known each other years and years," said Kitty.

The Professor pulled himself together and moved on a few steps, rather jerkily. The light had gone out of his face; his eyes were full of trouble; and Kitty believed that his lips were twitching under his mustache.

"I understand—I quite understand. I have been very blind, I fear—yes, and presumptuous. The young to the young," he said sadly.

"Oh, no!" cried Kitty. "But I thought you knew. My ring—my engagement ring—it's—it's on the proper finger!"

"No, I did n't know," said the Professor sadly.

They were silent. Kitty's heart was beating very quickly; her mind was in a whirl. Her chief feeling was sorrow for the Professor. She kept looking pitifully at his downcast, disconsolate face and his brown eyes so full of trouble. But also there was in her an under-feeling of rebellion against the destiny which had linked her to George Whitty.

Presently the Professor frowned; then he looked at her with eyes more troubled, and said, "I'm distressed about this—very much distressed. Not only on my own account—though, I was hoping. But I cannot think that Mr. Whitty is the right man for you."

"But we're engaged," said Kitty miserably.

"It's a pity—though, of course I ought n't to say it," said the Professor.

Kitty said nothing; there was nothing to say. They came to the park gates, and the Professor hailed a taxicab. He put her into it, and bade her good-by. His sorrowful, disconsolate face hurt her.

## VI.

KITTY reached home feeling very miserable. She was miserable for the rest of the day, and awoke next morning in very poor spirits. The Professor's unhappy face troubled her. She told herself that she ought not to have let him become so friendly with her, without making sure that he knew that she was engaged to George. But she had been wearing her engagement ring; and it had never occurred to her that he would not know what it meant, that such knowledge did not necessarily come within the province of the biologist. Besides, till George had opened her eyes, she had looked on him as a man old enough to be her father, a middle-aged friend of an uncommonly sympathetic nature. And now her thoughtlessness had made him desperately unhappy.

She was troubled also by his saying that George was not in sympathy with her. She was beginning to perceive that that was the fact. Their engagement had been rather a matter of contiguity than passion. She had drifted into it, almost unknowing. It was beginning to frighten her; her rebellion against it was gathering strength.

Over their tea in the Zoölogical Gardens she had arranged with the Professor that he should come for her early that afternoon, to take her to explore Leadenhall market and the lairs of the cat-fanciers, in search of a tortoise-shell tom. During the morning she was in two minds whether she wished him to come or not; but when the afternoon came she found herself hoping that he would. She was eager to see him; also, she wished to try to comfort him, to banish the unhappiness from his

face. But she did not think that he would come; and he did not. He did not come the next day or the next. She was surprised how greatly she missed him; and it was with a sinking heart that she began to tell herself that he would not come again.

George was a little slow in perceiving the change in her; but presently her restlessness and her unhappiness forced themselves on his attention. He felt her shrink from his kisses, and became aware that she was slipping away from him. He laid the blame on the Professor; and his dislike of him grew to the heartiest detestation.

Sunday morning, after two hours' work, he set out for a brisk walk around Hyde Park before lunching with the Riverses. It was his Sunday habit; it cleared from his brain the week's cobwebs, and helped to keep him fit. He took with him his fox-terrier, Nibbs. He was striding along the northern edge of the park, and had nearly come to the entrance to Kensington Gardens, when he met the Professor. The Professor gave him a cheerful greeting and slackened his steps as if to speak to him. George gave him a little, ungracious nod, and was about to pass him brusquely by, when Nibbs intervened. He sprang at the Professor with a short, joyful yelp and danced round him, barking with enthusiasm and jumping up to lick his hand. George was so taken aback by this behavior that he slackened his pace, and before he could quicken it again the Professor had shaken him warmly by the hand and turned to walk with him.

"This is a jolly little dog of yours," said the Professor, snapping his fingers at Nibbs and patting his head as he jumped. "I must really get a dog. It would be very nice to have one about the house—quite a companion. Sometimes I feel rather lonely at home with no one but myself and the servants."

George was taken aback. "A dog! I thought it was cats you liked!" he cried in the liveliest surprise.

"Cats?" said the Professor, frowning. "Why should I like cats? They're such unsympathetic, cold-blooded creatures. In fact, now I come to think of it, I dislike cats. Yes; I do dislike cats."

George could not believe his ears. He looked at the Professor with eyes full of suspicion. He thought that he was trying to humbug him. After all he had heard from the Professor, and from Kitty too, about his fondness for cats, his words were incredible. Or had he been trying to humbug Kitty by pretending to be fond of cats?

George looked at the Professor with the keen eyes of the expert cross-examiner. Truly, there was no trace of deceit in the Professor's air or expression. As, with limpid eyes, he broke into a panegyric on the dog, its faithfulness, honesty, and courage, he had every appearance of a man revealing his real tastes with a real enthusiasm.

George had never heard words ring truer; and he walked along with



his mouth a little open in his amazement, his eyes glued to the Professor's face. Presently he became aware that the Professor had suffered a change. He had lost his smooth sleekness. His hair and beard were bushier. He had lost, too, his smooth, cat-like gait. His walk was brisk, almost jerky. His eyes were brighter and keener. It suddenly struck George that he looked uncommonly like a Scotch terrier.

It was very odd that this man should always suggest some animal or other to him, and such different animals. Then, suddenly again, he felt attracted to him; he felt that he had become a sympathetic spirit. He joined him in his eulogies on the dog quite heartily. His suspicion had vanished, and with it his detestation.

They walked right round Kensington Gardens along to Hyde Park Corner, talking all the way like old, intimate friends, discovering fresh points of sympathy.

They came out of the park, and George said, "I must take a cab here or I shall be late. I'm lunching with the Riverses." He paused and added, "You know I'm engaged to Miss Rivers."

"Yes," said the Professor. "I congratulate you. Miss Rivers seems to me a charming girl—of her type—of her type."

There was no great heartiness in his tone; he seemed to be making a mental reservation.

"What type?" said George.

The Professor hesitated; then he said, a little reluctantly, "Well, she reminds me of a kitten. She's of that type; and to me personally it does not appeal."

George stared at him. Once more he could not believe his ears. He felt greatly relieved. He had been quite wrong about the Professor: with that feeling about her, he could not have any great influence on Kitty. George begged him to come to tea with him in the Temple any afternoon that he was at leisure, and they could have a talk, dine somewhere, and spend the evening together. He wrung his hand warmly as he bade him good-by.

When George came to the house in Russell Square, he found that his uncle was also lunching with the Riverses. Kitty seemed unhappy; she was rather silent and took but a listless part in their talk. As a rule, she teased his uncle joyfully nearly all the time he was with her. His uncle liked it very much.

As they were finishing their soup, George said, "I met Professor Krain in the park this morning, and we walked round it together."

"That scoundrel!" cried his uncle. "There's something wrong with that ruffian—something very wrong. I told you he'd sold his soul to the devil, and I'm sure of it. Of course you advanced, scientific people will jeer at it. But that's my belief, and I'm not going to change it."

"What's he been doing now?" said Sir John Rivers, smiling at the General's vehemence.

"It's my dog Byngo," said the General. "The other day he flew at the Professor as savagely as ever I saw a dog fly at a man. If he had n't been muzzled, he'd have mauled him badly. I was glad of it; yes, I was glad of it. It's the right thing for a dog to do when he gets at a confounded vivisectionist. And then this morning I was at my bedroom window, shaving, and what do you think I saw?"

He looked round the room as if inviting some one to guess. Nobody tried.

"Well, I saw that scoundrel gathering flowers in his garden; and Byngo was with him—playing about him, licking his hand. I was so surprised that I cut myself—a thing I have n't done for years."

"Well, if Byngo changes about like that, I should say that there was something wrong with Byngo—not with the Professor," said Sir John Rivers.

"There's nothing wrong with Byngo," said the General warmly. "It's the Professor."

"I don't see anything odd in it," said George. "Dogs always know the people who are fond of them."

"But the Professor is n't fond of dogs," said Kitty quickly. "He dislikes them very much; and the horrid things hate him. The Professor likes cats."

"No, dogs don't hate him," said George. "All the way round the park this morning Nibbs was jumping up to lick his hand; and he wanted to go home with him. I had to lift him into the cab."

"And Byngo this morning," said the General.

"And you should have heard the Professor talk about dogs. He said they were the finest of all animals. And as for liking cats, he said that he hated them," said George.

A flat contradiction was on the tip of Kitty's tongue, but considerations of hospitality prevented it from slipping off it. She stared at George and the General in a blank amazement. What did they mean by saying that the Professor liked dogs and hated cats? There came a sudden suspicion that they were in league to depreciate him in her eyes. It was impossible: George would not deliberately deceive her; the General was plainly no plotter. Yet again and again the Professor had told her that he was fond of cats and hated dogs. Moreover, he had again and again shown himself fond of cats. No one could have kept up a pretense so long and so successfully. Besides, why should he pretend? And then, her own cats, they loved him.

Again, there was the episode of the dingo at the Zoo. That dog showed no love for the Professor. She had never seen a dog more savage; and with what fierceness had the Professor hit the snarling brute with

his umbrella! Moreover, there was the Professor's dread of dogs. She was sure that he had been telling the truth when he had told her of his fear lest a dog should sneak up behind him and bite him. Assuredly he had been telling the truth. Why should he not have been telling the truth? She looked at George and his uncle with a fresh suspicion: they *must* be trying to prejudice her against the Professor.

George had been expecting a pleasant Sunday afternoon, spent like so many other pleasant Sunday afternoons, with Kitty alone. He did not get two consecutive minutes alone with her. After lunch, instead of going to the drawing-room, where he would join her, she went with her father and the General into the smoking-room. Then, when the General had gone, she persuaded her father to go with them on their afternoon walk. George was irritated and then angry. He found himself helpless. If Kitty did not make the opportunity, he could not have her to himself. She went to dress for dinner early; and she did not come to the drawing-room till the guests who were dining with them arrived. He left the house that night very angry and disquieted. She was slipping away from him.

The next morning he had recovered somewhat from his anger and disquiet, and came to the conclusion that it would be wise to leave her to herself for a day or two. Her mood might change, and he might find again the old Kitty of whom he had been so sure. He did not go to see her till Wednesday afternoon.

He found her alone, but she showed no pleasure at the sight of him. She shrank away from him when, as was his custom, he bent to kiss her. She was quick to put the tea-table between them. He was nettled; but he kept himself in hand and did not show it. He began to talk to her with an easy air. As he talked, the change in her grew plainer and plainer. She was irresponsive; her interest in him and his doings was manifestly merely polite.

He had been uncommonly proud of himself for his wisdom and restraint in keeping away from her for three whole days, to give her time to recover from her foolish interest in the Professor. When it grew clearer and clearer that he had gained nothing by his abstinence, his anger got the better of him, and he began to reproach her.

In her unhappiness at having rendered the Professor unhappy, and in her distress at his having slipped out of her life, Kitty was very near the end of her temper. Presently they were engaged in as pretty a quarrel as ever parted lovers. The upshot of it was that it would be difficult to say which was the first to release the other from the engagement; and they parted on the worst of terms.

George accepted his release with a grateful warmth which faded in an hour and a half. Kitty found herself free with an amazing sense of relief. But the days passed and the Professor did not come. She

found them very empty days; but she was buoyed up by the hope that when the Professor heard that the engagement had been broken off, he would come. Indeed, she spent no little time trying to find some way of letting him know that it had been broken off.

As a matter of fact, the Professor did know that she was free; for he had come to tea at George's chambers on Friday, and had had the news from him. The Professor condoled with him on the breach in a half-hearted fashion, and went on to suggest that girls of the kitten type always were variable. George quite lost his belief that the Professor was responsible. He became more and more friendly with him; he found him more and more sympathetic; and he became more and more strongly impressed by the fact that the Professor had changed. He had let his hair and his beard grow almost shaggy. George found him more and more like a Scotch terrier.

Then for a few days George saw nothing of him. He took it that the Professor was too busy to go out. Then George came back from the Law Courts one afternoon, to find his uncle awaiting him in his chambers.

From the angry sparkle in the General's eyes, it was clear that trouble was in the wind; and at the sight of George he burst out:

"That scoundrel next door must be stopped! He's grown tired of torturing cats and dogs and rabbits; he's got a panther in his laboratory, and he's taken to torturing that!"

"A panther!" cried George. "No one could vivisect a panther!"

"I tell you he is!" cried the General yet more vehemently. "Last night it woke me up with its roaring. It roared and Byngo howled—you never heard such a noise as they made between them. I stood it as long as I could; and then I went down into the garden with a stick to quiet Byngo. I shouted at the panther. In fact, I yelled at the panther. It was n't the slightest use: it roared louder than ever. Then I went to lick Byngo. I thought he was just howling to keep the panther company. But he was n't. The brute was frightened to death. I've never seen a dog in such a funk. I had to take him up to my bedroom, and then he whined for twenty minutes. I could n't soothe him. And then this morning I saw the panther."

"Did the Professor let you into his laboratory?" said George quickly.

"No; I saw it from my garden. It came to the window."

"Look here, do you mean to tell me that Krain is vivisecting a loose panther?" said George.

"No, I don't suppose he's vivisecting it yet; but he's going to. But the panther is loose. I went out into the garden after breakfast to take a look at the scoundrel's house; I did n't hide, of course—I would n't hide from a scoundrel like that—but I stood among some bushes, screened a little perhaps; and the brute came to the window of the laboratory and looked out over the top of the frosted panes. I just saw its head:

it was a black panther. I thought at first it was a bear; but of course it could n't have been a bear, from its roaring. It's a black panther. I should have seen more of it, for it stood there looking round the gardens. But at the sight of it I jumped. I'm not a nervous man, as you know; but I dropped my cigar and jumped; and the brute saw me, and snarled, and disappeared."

George stared at him. He was beginning to think that his uncle was losing his wits.

"But look here: those frosted panes run half-way up the window, don't they?" he said. "They must be about four feet high."

"Four feet or four feet six," said the General.

"Well, I've never measured a panther," said George; "but I should think it was three feet high at the most. How the deuce could it look over those frosted panes if they're four feet six high?"

"It must have been standing on a table," said the General.

## VII.

THE amazing recovery of Professor Krain weighed on the mind of Sir Erasmus Blomfield. He was of an equable temperament; but he was very impatient for the day when the Professor should give his discovery to the world. Twice he had met him at the meetings of the Biological Society, and with the most diplomatic suavity he had suggested that he should be admitted to his confidence. At their first meeting the Professor had put aside the suggestion with a smooth suavity which matched his own. At their second meeting, on the Saturday before the Professor's walk with George in Hyde Park, he had put aside the suggestion with uncommon brusqueness. Sir Erasmus was disquieted. It was true that the Professor had freely imparted his earlier discoveries to the medical profession; but this was a far more important discovery. He wondered if the Professor intended to keep it to himself and make capital out of it. There was not only a huge fortune in it, but there was power. The man who held these keys of life and death could have thousands cringing at his feet.

It would indeed be quite unlike the Professor to make private capital out of his discovery. But Sir Erasmus was also troubled by the change in his old friend. At the first meeting he had bored several biologists by persistent disquisitions on the virtues of the cat; at the second meeting he had bored them by no less persistent disquisitions on the virtues of the dog. Sir Erasmus had noticed, too, the change in the Professor's appearance and manner: he had lost his sleekness and grown shaggy; he had lost his smooth litheness; his movements were quick and jerky. Sir Erasmus began to wonder whether the greatness of the Professor's discovery was affecting his mind.

Fully alive to his duty to humanity and to Medicine, Sir Erasmus was not deterred by the Professor's brusqueness from his endeavor to induce him to reveal the great secret. He assailed him thrice again, once at the house in Burnham Square, once at his club. Then an event filled him with the firmest resolve to have the secret from the Professor by hook or by crook. The Grand Duke of Lippe-Schweidnitz brought the Grand Duchess to consult him, and he found that both her lungs were so badly affected that there was very little chance that the known methods of combatting the disease would prove of any avail. The cure of a princess of a reigning house would set English Medicine on a height it had never yet attained. Either the Professor must cure her himself, or he must let Sir Erasmus cure her.

Sir Erasmus had not risen to his height in his profession without enjoying, besides his knowledge and skill, a considerable force of character. As soon as he had finished his work for the day, he drove off to the house in Burnham Square, resolved to drag the secret from the Professor.

When the door was opened he stepped briskly into the hall and said to the maid, "I must see your master at once."

The girl jerked nervously aside from the specialist's abrupt entry; and she said quickly, "I'm afraid you can't, sir. Master's ill. Leastways, he has n't been out of his laboratory for the last five days."

"What's the matter with him?" said Sir Erasmus anxiously, in a sudden fear lest the Professor's cure should have proved but temporary.

"We don't know, sir. We have n't seen him, sir. I did ask him to see a doctor—through the door—but he only growled at me savagely. It was dreadful; it nearly gave cook—she was with me—the horrors, though p'raps it was n't the master as growled."

"Not your master? Who was it, then?" said Sir Erasmus.

"We don't know, sir; but it sounded like an animal."

"An animal?" cried Sir Erasmus.

"Yes, sir. Cook and me, we listened at the door; and sometimes we heard the master swearing something dreadful—leastways, that was what it sounded like, though we did n't hear no words—and sometimes we heard the animal growling and roaring. It sounded as if he was having trouble with it."

Sir Erasmus took off his hat and scratched his head—his habit in perplexity. He stared at the maid and saw that she wore a nervous, harassed air. "And you say that this has been going on for five days?" he said in a tone of extreme bewilderment.

"Yes, sir," said the maid.

"But how does he manage about his meals?"

"I take them up and leave them outside the door; and he takes them in. Underdone chops, sir, six at a meal."

"They must be for the animal," said Sir Erasmus.

"Yes, sir. And the master is n't eating anything himself, sir, unless it's chops. Two or three times I've taken up a milk-pudding and vegetables for him; but he never takes them off the tray—only the chops. And he's always so partial to milk-puddings. But yesterday he did take a jar of cream I put on the tray. So I brought him another to-day; and he took that."

"Very odd, very odd," said Sir Erasmus; and he scratched his head again.

"And the animal nearly got out the night before last, sir."

"Did it?" said Sir Erasmus.

"Yes, sir. I put the tray down by the door and knocked and told the master it was his dinner. Then I went down the stairs and waited where I could just see the door through the banisters, over the edge of the landing; and it opened, and the animal put its head out."

"The devil it did!" said Sir Erasmus.

"Yes, sir. And I just screamed and ran downstairs to the kitchen; and we locked ourselves in. We nearly went out of the house then and there—up the area steps. But all our clothes were upstairs; and we did n't like to leave the master alone—he's such a good master, and it's such a good place. And when we got quieter-like and did open the door, there was nothing moving about the house. And cook said that the animal could n't have opened the door of itself; the master must have opened it, and he must have it under control. And he had it under control, for the cook went upstairs and peeped at the master's door; and it was shut, and the animal was growling inside."

"And what was it like?" said Sir Erasmus.

"It was a tiger, sir—a black tiger."

"There are no black tigers," said Sir Erasmus, in a tone meant to be scoffing.

"That's what it was, sir," said the maid, with dignity.

Again Sir Erasmus scratched his head; then he said abruptly, "Well, take me up to your master."

"Very well, sir; but he won't see you," said the maid; and she led the way upstairs.

She stood hesitating a moment before the door of the laboratory, biting her finger; then she knocked gently.

There came a sudden sharp growl from the room. Sir Erasmus jumped and backed toward the top of the staircase, ready to bolt downstairs.

"If you please, sir, it's Sir Erasmus Blomfield, sir. He wants to see you very pertickler," said the girl in a shaky voice.

"Tell him to go to the devil!" said a voice inside the laboratory, a deep, growling voice.

It was the Professor's voice, and yet it was not the Professor's voice. It was not a human voice; it was the growl of an articulate tiger.

The round red face of Sir Erasmus suddenly glistened in the electric light.

"Yes, sir. He's here, sir. Outside the door," said the maid.

Sir Erasmus pulled himself together and stepped forward. "Look here, Krain, I must see you," he said in a trembling voice. "I've got to see you. It's a matter of life or death."

"Well, you can't see me," said the deep, growling voice.

A little sparkle came into the frightened eyes of Sir Erasmus; and in a sudden blustering tone he cried:

"But I must see you! I insist on seeing you! You've got to see me. All this looks very bad—all this mystery—and this animal you've got in there. In fact, I don't believe it's Professor Krain at all. I must insist on seeing that it's all right, or I shall call in the police."

"The devil you will!" said the deep, growling voice; then there was silence.

There came the sound of a slow, padding footfall across the floor of the laboratory. Then, from immediately behind the door, the voice growled:

"Send that girl away."

The maid needed no word from Sir Erasmus; she bolted down the stairs.

"Is she gone?" growled the voice.

"Yes," said Sir Erasmus.

"All right. Come in!" snarled the voice.

The door was opened and Sir Erasmus stepped gingerly into the laboratory, looking round, somewhat fearfully, for the animal. He saw no animal, and turned to the Professor, who stood behind him, closing the door. Then Sir Erasmus nearly fell down. Leaning back against the door, facing him defiantly, stood Heinrich Krain. But not the Heinrich Krain he had known. The Professor's hair bristled on the top of his head; his beard and mustache bristled out from his face. His eyebrows were drawn upward and bristled, too. His nose seemed shrunken and thrust forward along with his jaw, into a kind of muzzle. Sir Erasmus stood gasping, with starting eyes, at a loss to know whether he was staring at a man or a gigantic cat.

"Well, what is it you want?" growled the creature.

Sir Erasmus gasped again and tried to find his voice. He could make no sound. Then, like the bulldog Englishman he was, he pulled himself together and said in a husky whisper, "It's your cure—your cure for consumption. I must have it."

"You must, must you?" growled the creature.

Sir Erasmus's voice came more strongly as he said, "Yes, I must.



It's the case of a grand-duchess—the Grand-Duchess of Lippe-Schweidnitz. Her lungs are too far gone for anything but your cure. And we must cure her—you can see it yourself—a princess of a reigning house!"

The creature snarled, and then growled, "The Grand-Duchess of Lippe-Schweidnitz? Do you think I care a hang for all the grand-duchesses in Europe? Do you know that my father had to fly from Germany and turn himself into an Englishman and spend the rest of his life in exile? A grand-duchess! I should like to get my claws into her!"

He held out both hands with the fingers curved like gripping claws. Sir Erasmus saw a patch of brown, furry down on the backs of them. He had never before noticed any down on the hands of the Professor.

But it was the Professor—the fathers of cats do not fly into exile. Reassured, he said, "Oh, hang it all, Krain! you can't let politics come into a matter of this kind. We've *got* to cure the Grand-Duchess. Look what such a cure means to science—to Medicine. It means thousands and thousands of pounds more devoted to research."

"There is that. Sit down," growled the Professor.

He dropped into an easy-chair; and Sir Erasmus sat down on a chair facing him. For the first time he let his eyes take in something besides the Professor's face, and saw that he was in his shirt and trousers, and that the shirt was open at the neck, showing the same brown, furry down just below the throat. His feet were bare; and there was the same brown down on them, coming nearly to the toes.

Sir Erasmus looked sharply round the laboratory for something that might give him the clue to the secret. He saw nothing but apparatus for biological research. He sniffed uncomfortably, for the air was heavy with a strong musky scent.

The Professor gazed at him steadily; and Sir Erasmus saw that in the bright light the pupils of his eyes were long and very narrow, like the pupils of the eyes of a cat.

"You'll really have to come to our help," said Sir Erasmus. "You know quite well the immense difference such a cure will make to science. Every rich man who makes his will for the next year and a half will leave something towards research. It's your duty either to put me in the way of curing the Duchess, or to cure her yourself."

An expression of horrible ferocity gathered on the Professor's distorted face; but Sir Erasmus was aware that it was only a frown. He was beginning to see more clearly the human being under the mask of a cat.

"Well, you see the cure," growled the Professor.

Sir Erasmus started up and cried, "What? Does it make you like that?"

"More or less," growled the Professor.

"But a grand-duchess!" cried Sir Erasmus. "You—you can't turn a grand-duchess into a—a—a——"

"Oh, say a cat and be done with it!" growled the Professor.

"This puts a very different complexion on the matter," said Sir Erasmus, in a tone of deep disappointment.

"I don't see why," growled the Professor, with a diabolical, cat's grin. "You're not in Germany: they could n't get at you for *lèse-majesté*."

Sir Erasmus shook his head. "It's practically impossible," he said. Then he walked to the end of the table and back again, bending a little forward, his hands behind his back, his brow knitted in a thoughtful frown. He groaned and muttered, "What a devil of a nuisance!" Then his face brightened a little; and he said, "After all, it might be done. If I were to explain carefully to them that it was the only chance, they might see it. But it is such a business to get anything into the thick heads of these royalties."

"You're taking it for granted that I'll cure her," said the Professor. "But I won't. I'm not going to go dead against the course of evolution by preserving the unfit. I'm going to cure only people of some value to the world—people doing good work. It would n't be fair to the world to prolong the lives of the others beyond their natural span."

"Yes, yes, of course," said Sir Erasmus quickly. "But you've got to bear in mind that it's a grand-duchess. You've got to consider the interests of science."

The Professor was silent; but the extraordinary expression of ferocity on his face showed Sir Erasmus that he was in frowning thought; then he said, "There is that. Well, if you can persuade her, let me know."

"Good!" said Sir Erasmus; then he hesitated and added, "Must it be a cat?"

"It might be mice," said the Professor, with the diabolical, cat's grin. "But I don't know how many it would need; and of course the result might be worse."

"Well, I must see if I can get their consent. But you know what women are," said Sir Erasmus gloomily; and he moved towards the door.

"All right," said the Professor, rising and opening it.

As he crossed the threshold Sir Erasmus said, "Transfusion of blood, I suppose?"

"Transfusion of grandmother!" snarled the Professor; and he slammed the door on the specialist's heels.

## VIII.

THE Professor turned the key in the lock and walked across the room to a looking-glass which he had brought from his bedroom. He looked at himself with an expression of horrible ferocity. It faded slowly as he became surer than ever that his distorted face was changing slowly back to its proper human shape. He fancied, indeed, that the talk with Sir Erasmus, compelling him to exercise his human faculties, had quickened the change. At any rate, there had been a great improvement since the morning. He turned away from the mirror and made an entry in a thin leather-bound book in which he was keeping the record of the experiment.

Then for a while he moved lightly up and down the room, noiseless on his bare feet. He looked like a great, restless cat. Indeed, an on-looker would have missed the impatiently waving tail. He was indeed restless, and impatient, and angry. He was longing, burning, to be again with Kitty. Now that her engagement to George was broken off, his hopes had sprung to vigorous life. Once he paused before the mirror and cursed aloud the slowness with which he was changing back to human form: it sounded a deep, angry growling. Then he sighed. His sigh was a faint, mewling roar. He began again his impatient prowl up and down the laboratory. Then his restless eye fell on a big book lying on a table in the corner. He picked it up, dropped into a chair, and began to read. It was the second volume of Professor Felbach's monumental work on the Cat.

There came a knock at the door and the jingle of his dinner-tray as the maid set it down against the threshold. He gave her time to go downstairs, and took in the tray. He ate the six chops, underdone, with a greedy gusto which annoyed him. Then he ate the jar of cream with a more delicate greediness. After the meal he went back to his book. At eleven o'clock he set down the book, with reluctance, switched off the electric light, picked up the looking-glass, and went to his bedroom. He did not trouble to switch on the light; he made his toilet in the dark. He even brushed his bristly hair before the mirror, and tried, in vain, to part it down the middle, as was his habit. He seemed to have no need whatever of light; all his movements were quite assured.

When he awoke next morning he threw back the bed-clothes and reached the mirror in a single leap from the bed. He grinned his diabolical, cat's grin at his image: his face had grown yet more human. His eyebrows were coming down to their old position; his nose had plainly lengthened. If he went on changing at this rate, he would be able to go to see Kitty in a few days. He dressed in very good spirits.

He was less impatient during that day. He looked into the mirror many times; the change continued. Once, in the lightness of his heart,

he tried to whistle. It was a dismal failure; he produced a dreadful sound. The next day he saw plainly that his humanity was asserting itself more strongly; and he was changing far more quickly. On the third day much of the bristliness had gone out of his hair; and the brown, furry down on the back of his hands was thinning. He brushed them with a hair-brush, and a lot of it came away. At lunch that day he ate only three chops, and much less greedily. After lunch he bade the maid let him have a milk-pudding with his dinner. His voice was much less of a growl; it was merely deep and hoarse. He ate the milk-pudding with great pleasure. He was more impatient than ever to see Kitty.

In the mean time Kitty had been going about the world in a very listless, spiritless fashion, taking little pleasure in life. Never once did she regret her breach with George, though she felt that she must be a hard-hearted, unnatural girl not to regret it. Her one desire, though she believed she felt others, was to renew her friendship (she called it her friendship) with the Professor. She could find no way of doing it, for though she went with her father to a scientific *conversazione*, and to three houses at which the scientific gather together, she did not meet him. Then she had a happy idea: she remembered their appointment to go in search of a tortoise-shell tom. She began to search for it alone. She found it a very difficult creature to find; she searched Leadenhall market, the shops of the cat-fanciers, the animal departments of the big stores, in vain. The search improved her spirits and brightened life for her. Then when she had almost given up hope of success, a cat-fancier from the Seven Dials brought a tortoise-shell tom in a basket to the house in Russell Square.

The impatience of the Professor was not in the least assuaged by receiving next morning a note which ran:

DEAR PROFESSOR KRAIN:

I have at last found a tortoise-shell tom. You said you had never seen one, and would very much like to. Will you come and see him on Thursday afternoon? I shall be very pleased if you will.

Yours sincerely,

KITTY RIVERS.

When the Professor had read the note, he danced round his laboratory with all the vigor and more than the lightness of a schoolboy who has received a large donation from home. He kissed the letter with extravagant fervor. Then he dashed to the mirror and examined his face with the liveliest anxiety. It was now Tuesday. Would he be sufficiently human to make a call on Thursday? He decided that he would; and he wrote to Kitty that he would be charmed to come. He did not express any very keen desire to see the tortoise-shell tom. He made it quite clear that it was she he wanted to see.

His letter set Kitty's heart beating very quickly. At lunch her father congratulated her on the improvement in her spirits. She slept much better that night; but that might have been owing to the fact that the Professor's letter was under her pillow.

The Professor spent most of Wednesday before his mirror. He decided that he did look human; fierce perhaps, but human. That night he gladdened the hearts of his faithful servants by taking his dinner in his dining-room. His parlor-maid, however, kept staring at him as if she were not quite sure that it was he. But she was growing used to changes in him. He had to put a strong constraint on himself not to eat his fish greedily. Also, he found that his evening dress had grown rather tight. He had grown stouter; perhaps it was the many underdone chops.

The next morning he was more human still; and his impatience assured him that he was quite human enough to present himself to Kitty. At noon he walked to his hairdresser to have his hair and beard trimmed. On his way he perceived that the people he met regarded him with respectful timidity. It was not unnatural, for he looked like a very fierce foreigner. His hairdresser assured him that he had never had a customer whose hair was so full of electricity; it was like the coat of a cat.

In his impatience, the Professor presented himself at Russell Square at a quarter past three. Kitty was not expecting him till half past four; but she had already put on her prettiest frock, and had had her hair dressed in the most attractive fashion. When the parlor-maid knocked at the bedroom door and told her that the Professor was in the drawing-room, she was barely five minutes making sure that she had done everything in woman's power to look her best.

When she came into the drawing-room the Professor decided on the instant that she was adorable. She was not in the least discomfited by his fierce aspect; she found it manly.

They greeted each other very shyly; and were very ill at ease. But the discussion of the tortoise-shell tom helped them to recover. The Professor with some sadness pointed out that the ingenious cat-fancier of the Seven Dials had deceived her: the cat was not really a tortoise-shell; it was a tortoise-shell and white cat. It's whiteness had been concealed by hair-dyes.

Naturally, the Professor had to console her in her disappointment; and the process of consolation brought them where they wanted to be.

Presently the Professor, with a fierce, subduing eloquence which charmed her, was making it clear that she was the only woman in the world for him, that it was the dearest desire of his heart to make her his wife.

Then he paused and said very gravely, "But there's a secret in my

life which you must know before you give me my answer. It's not a discreditable secret; but it's curious—very curious indeed. To-night I will send you my journal, my scientific journal, for the last two months. To-morrow I will come for your answer."

Kitty was taken aback; but she liked him the better for his honesty.

He was for taking his leave. Her face fell; and she said, "But—th-th-there's no need for you to hurry away like this. We haven't seen each other for such a long time. We could talk about—about other things."

They did not really talk about other things; none the less, they spent a very pleasant afternoon. When at last the Professor left her she felt that, whatever his secret might be, it would make no difference to her.

An hour later she received a thin, square packet from him by special messenger. She opened it and found a leather-bound book. She hurried quickly up to her bedroom with it. It was manuscript in the Professor's neat, clear handwriting.

#### EXPERIMENT 714

*April 24.* On the very verge of death, I begin my experiment on the transference of the Principle of Life. Science has demonstrated that the Principle of Life is a force, akin probably to electricity. As we can control and regulate electricity, we should be able to control and regulate it. At present when a human being or an animal dies by a violent death, its unexpended Life-Force is wasted. I have made an apparatus, not unlike a Leyden Jar, in which to catch and confine this unexpended Life-Force, and from which I may be able to convey it whither I wish by insulated wires.

To-day I chloroformed a cat. When it had been dead a quarter of an hour I placed a live cat, along with a sponge soaked in an anæsthetic, in the jar, sealed it hermetically, and connected the insulated wires with the sciatic nerve of the dead cat. Of course its body was physiologically perfect. It needed only the active Principle of Life to make it live and move as it had been living and moving an hour before. Presently, as the cat in the jar sank into the deeper stages of coma, the body of the dead cat began to be agitated by a vibratile movement, which appeared to pervade the whole of it and to radiate from the point at which the wires were inserted under its skin.

As the breathing of the cat in the jar grew fainter, the vibratile movement in the dead cat grew stronger, and presently it drew in its legs and sat up. It seemed feeble and dazed. I was careful to keep the wires in their place. Then, apparently at the very moment at which the cat in the glass jar expired, the other cat stood up, jumped down from the table, and walked to the door, mewing.

*April 26.* I have repeated the experiment several times, testing the length of time for which an animal can be dead before it is resuscitated. I have discovered that, apparently, the last moment at which an animal

can be resuscitated is coincident with the commencement of the coagulation of its protoplasm. The sooner the Life-Force is poured into it after its death, the quicker is its resuscitation.

*April 28.* I have repeated the experiment several times more, always with a satisfactory result. To-day I made the further experiment of transferring the Life-Force from a dead to a living animal. I put a dog in the jar and connected the distal ends of the wires with the sciatic nerve of a living cat. As the anæsthetic took effect on the dog, the cat appeared to grow greatly excited. It began to make a curious noise, uttering a kind of screeching bark. It was partly the yowling of a cat, partly the barking of a dog. At the close of the experiment an unfortunate incident occurred. When I loosed the cat, it began to dash about the laboratory with extraordinary vigor, smashing apparatus. I opened the door to get a cloth to catch it with, for I did not wish to be badly scratched. It bolted through the door and downstairs. The cook was in the hall; and I suppose it frightened her, for she opened the front door and it rushed out of the house, still uttering its screeching bark. When I came out on the front door steps, it was chasing another cat across the Square garden. They disappeared up Pangbourne Street. The curious old military man who lives next door was standing on his steps, and at once he began to abuse me furiously. He was exceedingly offensive.

*April 29.* To-day I have made the final experiment—with success. I have found the method of drawing from the great reservoir of Life-Force which surrounds us, the animal world. I have transferred some of that Life-Force to a human being—to myself. I put a cat in the jar and connected the wires with my own sciatic nerve. As the cat sank into the deeper stages of coma, I began to glow and tingle. It was a very pleasant feeling; I felt extraordinarily exhilarated. Then at the moment at which the cat must have expired, I felt, as it were, a sudden flood of vigor permeate swiftly my whole body. My heart was hammering against my ribs; my face flushed and burned; my temples throbbed. I wanted to dance about the laboratory. In fact, I did dance. I soon quieted down somewhat; but the sense of vigor was very strong. I have not felt so vigorous for years. It was not imagination: I *was* more vigorous. My pulse was quite steady, and stronger than it has been for years; my breathing was easier than it has been for months. It really seems as if my lungs were stronger. Oddly enough, when I took the dead cat out of the glass jar I felt a curious remorse for having killed it. I have not felt it since my earliest experiments more than twenty years ago. It was really very odd. I felt as if I had killed a fellow-creature.

*April 30.* I am stronger. My pulse has maintained its regular, strong beat. I slept well and coughed very little during the night. I awoke with an appetite and ate a good breakfast. I have not eaten such a breakfast for ten years. In the middle of the morning I went round to Wauchope, the doctor on the other side of the Square, who had been attending me. He seemed puzzled and said that there had been a marked improvement. He advised me to get away at once to Switzerland or Egypt. I suspect that I have no need, that the elixir is in my laboratory. In the afternoon I took a taxicab and drove out to Richmond and round the park. I do not remember such a beautiful spring day since I was at Oxford.

There is no need to transcribe the Professor's journal at length, though Kitty indeed read every word of it greedily. Finding that his health continued to improve, during the beginning of May he transferred to himself the Life-Force of a dog and three days later of another cat. He was noting not only the physiological but the psychological effects of the experiment; and he records that though he chloroformed the dog with satisfaction, since he had developed a new hostility to the whole tribe of dogs, at the end of the experiment he was filled with remorse and felt as if he had destroyed a fellow-creature. He experienced exactly the same change of feeling later when he experimented with the cat.

By the fifteenth of May his lungs were healed; and he found himself more vigorous and in better health than ever he had been in his life. He notes that he began to feel a far keener interest in his fellow-creatures than ever he had felt before, and a desire, quite new to him, to mix with them socially. Also, he discovered in himself a sudden new interest in his personal appearance. He was very particular with his hairdresser, and ordered five suits of clothes from his tailor, seven pairs of boots from his bootmaker.

Then came the record of his meeting, on May 20, with Kitty Rivers. He records at length the favorable impression she made on him, and dwells on the fact that till that meeting he had never been in the least attracted by a woman.

Kitty read this part of his journal with the liveliest interest. There was one passage, almost dithyrambic, which flushed her cheeks and brought tears of delight to her eyes. She failed to perceive how out of place are dithyrambs in a record of a scientific experiment.

But presently the light faded out of her eyes, the flush from her cheeks, when she came to the account of yet another psychological change in the Professor. Two days after he had learned that she was engaged to George Whitty, he had transferred to himself the Life-Force of a dog. He did not dwell at length on the change in his feelings; but he congratulated himself on the improvement in his spirits; and she gathered clearly enough that they had changed, that for the time being he had lost his interest in her. She cried a little.

She went on reading with somewhat less interest, and presently came upon a passage which bore out General Whitty's account of the inconsistency of Byngo. It ran:

Finding that the skin of my leg, at the points at which I had inserted the ends of the wires, was inflamed and burning, and after trying several remedies to no purpose, it occurred to me that a poultice of the bruised leaves of the *Phytolæra Gratiissima* might heal them; and I went out into my garden, in which there are several plants of it,



to gather them. I was greatly startled, and indeed frightened, when General Whitty's savage brute of a Great Dane, which attacked me furiously in the Square a few days ago, jumped on to the wall and sprang down towards me. To my surprise and relief, however, it did not attack me, but displayed the greatest friendliness, whining affectionately, licking my hand, and trying hard to lick my face when I stooped to gather the leaves. I cannot conceive how I ever came to dislike dogs.

Then came the record of the experiment which had transformed him. He had begun a series of tests to determine how much of the Life-Force a man might safely absorb at a time. Since he now detested cats, it was with a certain grim satisfaction that he had put two large and active toms into the jar. They were fighting with considerable fury when the anæsthetic began to take effect. When they expired, the Professor not only found himself changing, but he found himself enduring considerable pain in the process. His description of his pangs and of his horror when he found himself transformed into a gigantic cat was very graphic, and Kitty thrilled with quivering sympathy. She read of his slow return to human form with intense relief; and again she thrilled to read of the return, with tenfold violence, of his passion for her.

She sat for a long while, pondering what she had read. Then she read parts of the journal again, slowly. They were the parts in which the Professor's passion found expression. Most slowly of all she read again the account of his change of feeling after absorbing the Life-Force of the dog. That she pondered very thoughtfully indeed; it grew quite clear to her that the Professor must absorb the Life-Force of no more dogs.

It was but natural that after the despatch of his journal to Kitty the Professor should spend a restless evening. He had, it is true, a good appetite for his dinner, because, nowadays, he always had a good appetite; but after it he could settle to nothing. Soon after ten o'clock, since there was again some irritation at the points where he had inserted the distal ends of the wires under the skin of the leg, he went out into his garden to gather some more leaves of the *Phytolozera Gratissima*. As he opened the door into the garden, Byngo growled savagely on the other side of the wall. A sudden light sparkled in the Professor's eyes. He went back along the hall and fetched the stout blackthorn which he was wont to carry during his rare, recuperating holidays in the country. He came out into the garden.

At the sound of his footsteps the dog broke into a furious barking. The Professor heard his kennel grate on the ground as it moved to his violent jerks. Suddenly there came the clash of the links of his chain as it snapped to a yet more violent jerk. With a savage growl the dog leaped upon the wall, black against the moon. The Professor did not dash back to the house; he stood lightly poised, gripping the heavy stick.

His hair rose bristling on his head, and a curious tigerish yell burst from between his bared teeth.

The dog saw him, leaped from the wall, and sprang at the Professor's throat. He did not reach it. His spring was swift, but the Professor sprang aside yet more swiftly, and as swiftly struck the long body as it passed him through the air.

The blow sent Byngo sprawling as he came to the ground, with a howl as much of surprise as of pain. As he came to his feet the Professor was upon him and struck again. Byngo howled and sprang once more. Again the Professor jumped, cat-like, aside and struck him. Byngo came down with a howl, jumped away, and circled round the Professor, barking savagely, seeking an opening. The Professor, turning quickly, gave him none. He was dimly aware of the opening of the General's garden door. Then in his turn he made a spring and whacked Byngo hard over his thick head. The dog made another futile spring and received another blow, which rolled him over and over, yelping. The eyes of the General, who was standing on his garden roller, rose above the wall in time to see the Professor whack his pet.

"Byngo! Byngo! Come off, you brute!" roared the General.

Byngo paid no heed to him, but resumed his circling course. But he pursued it with less conviction. The Professor's instinct told him that he was winning. With another tigerish yell he sprang upon the doubtful dog, and struck, and struck, and struck, dodging his jaws. Byngo snapped, and yelped, and turned. The Professor leaped after him and struck and struck. Byngo yelped and yelped to the blows, then leaped for the garden wall. He did not catch it quite fairly; but the Professor's stick helped him scramble over. In an imperative need to bite some one, he bit the General in the leg. The raving warrior kicked him into his kennel.

Then the General again leaped upon his garden roller and told the Professor everything he thought about him, in a high-pitched voice which cracked several times on the upper notes. The Professor paid no heed to him whatever; he was calmly gathering the leaves of the *Phytolozera Gratissima*.

The next morning the Professor was again nervous, restless, anxious. At about eleven o'clock he could endure the suspense no longer. He resolved to hear the worst, or the best, at once, and betook himself in a taxicab to Russell Square.

As he entered the drawing-room Kitty came forward to greet him with flushed cheeks and shining eyes; she held out both hands to his clasp and said in a melancholy tone, "Oh, Heinrich, is n't it sad to think that you will always have to use those poor cats!"

# A FOREMOST AMERICAN LYRIST

## AN APPRECIATION

*By William Stanley Braithwaite*

I N a sonnet called "Poetry," Florence Earle Coates has a line in which she sings:

She has envisaged the veiled heart of things.

This "envisaging" the veiled heart of things is that transubstantiating power in the poet which enables him to evoke those images in which life symbolizes its manifold and myriad significations in the subtle woof that makes the warp of existence coherent and explicable. Life itself is a great mystery, and all the apparent realities in the visible world, however solid or imperative in form and color, are but the embodiment of what is eternally real in the secret and veiled spirit in man and nature. To manifest this eternal reality, to make an understandable language of exteriorities that will express and interpret the meaning and purpose of this vital, unsubstantial reality, is what makes poetry in its functional communication the most profound of the arts, and the poet the noblest benefactor of mankind.

Among contemporary American poets, Mrs. Coates holds a high position for serious and sustained work. In the four published volumes to her credit there is represented a varied and penetrative outlook on life in all its significant aspects which, expressed in the most compelling forms of lyric art, stamp her as the possessor of an extraordinary poetic gift. She has conceived the high function of poetry as an interpretation and criticism of life, adhering to the canons of her beloved master, Matthew Arnold, and has proven her worth, and the right to receive and exercise the spiritual influence inherited from that great and austere poet.

Her art becomes a criticism of life, but it loses nothing because of its seriousness, of those impalpable and exquisite qualities by which poetry itself is a special embodiment and expression of beauty. Because the message underlying the emotion and thought of her verse is the utterance of a soul that sympathizes with, and broods over, the "veiled heart"

of humanity, does not make her less conscious of that supreme beauty of form and language which Truth demands as the garment in which to present its shining purposes and the convincing realization of its secrets. But with all its subtle artistic forms, Mrs. Coates's poetry renders a lucid interpretation of life. Her lyrical work is at once poignant in feeling, melodious in tone, and emphatic in the substantive meaning that lies embedded in the thought or emotion. The purely art lyric is never deliberately shaped by her with that classical detachment practised by the poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; nor yet the over-elaborate decoration of the romanticist modern poet, that gives freedom to ambiguous sentiment rather than to spiritual grace. The chastity of thought and emotion is so deep in her as to create a poetic imagery tintured with subtle and unfading coloring from the mystery of life itself, and consequently her lyrics, both in music and substance, are as pure as crystal. Compelling lyric art must be personal, which does not imply that it must be emotionally subjective. In its significance, as the language of humanity rather than the voice of an individual, its authenticity widens into a sort of testament of the spirit, that all men, not of one particular class or creed, social condition or nationality, accept as the symbol of their aspirations and hopes. Mrs. Coates's lyrics fulfil this personate-universality, they are so distinctively a language, because the voice in which she speaks it is full of the feelings that lie dumb, or are imperfectly expressed, in the heart of the human race. No art could be more one's own than Mrs. Coates's. In this she is not different from many another of the world's accomplished poets. What I mean is, though she sees the world made up of individuals, each with their particular and isolated hopes and aspirations, joys and sorrows, desires and ambitions, these individuals make humanity as a whole, and it is the life of the whole, full of its mysteries, unaccountable promptings and progress, which she sings, bringing it into communion with destiny and fulfilment.

Once we recognize this completeness, this inclusive grasp of humanity, in Mrs. Coates's outlook upon life and the world, we come to realize the significance of that line already quoted, in which poetry is said to "envisage the veiled heart of things," and accept it as the particular function of her own work. Through the four books of her poetry, this steady purpose is seen. It never works in any isolated passion, in any emphasis where the emotion is the outcome of some detached motive of the individual. In all her poems the ideal is rendered articulate through some particular aspiration. Despite all the unhappiness and pain in the world, it is far better than it seems, because there is an ideal existence that man experiences in his nature, and this he strives to realize in his outer acts and relationships. His failure to realize these ideals fully, but which he perpetually acknowledges and sets as the standard of conduct, is what creates those intense aspirations of the soul, out of which are born those

moods and desires, with their pathos and joys, making humanity beautiful. Beneath the complex surface of life is a simple fact that justifies the optimism pervading the most compelling art. In Dante's lines,

*Quanto la cosa è più perfetta,  
Più senta il bene, e così la doglienza,*

is declared both the reward and the penalty the human soul must enjoy and pay in its steady progress through the world. And Mrs. Coates in one of her profoundest and most beautiful lyrics, "The Ideal," conveys this same thought, in which there is not the mere personal utterance of a passionate and aspiring soul, but the complex cry of the entire human race:

Something I may not win attracts me ever,—  
Something elusive, yet supremely fair,  
Thrills me with gladness, but contents me never,  
Fills me with sadness, yet forbids despair.

It blossoms just beyond the paths I follow,  
It shines beyond the farthest stars I see,  
It echoes faint from ocean caverns hollow,  
And from the land of dreams it beckons me.

It calls, and all my best, with joyful feeling,  
Essays to reach it as I make reply;  
I feel its sweetness o'er my spirit stealing,  
Yet know ere I attain it I must die!

In another beautiful lyric, one of the most perfect in all American poetry, the "Indian Pipe," a woodland herb, is made to symbolize an analogous perfection in man, and in pure rendering of the mystery in a natural object, lyric feeling has seldom shaped itself into finer or completer subtlety of expression. The second stanza, which suggests the inexplicable wonder behind the appearance, confirms by its questioning that influence which man also feels in those dim perceptions at the root of his being. The lines may be said to contain an essence rather than a thought or emotion, but it is the essence of a passion that has seized the spirit, and exalted the mood of the poet into communion with some rarefied intelligence:

Is this but an earth-springing fungus—  
This darling of Fate  
Which out of the mouldering darkness  
Such light can create?  
Or is it the spirit of Beauty,  
Here drawn by love's lure  
To give to the forest a something  
Unearthly and pure:  
To crystallize dewdrop and balsam  
And dryad-lisped words  
And starbeam and moonrise and rapture  
And song of wild birds?

If the essence of Mrs. Coates's poetry is its grasp of and aspiration towards the ideal in human nature; if also it recognizes with equal intensity that man can never fully realize the ideal of life completely,— what is the specific quality, then, that so luminously quickens one's spirit, and supports one's weakening faith, and the troublesome doubts that are pressed upon one by the forces of the world.

Mrs. Coates's poetry never fails to sustain the spirit under whatever influence of distress it goes for consolation and strength to the source of her outpouring music. It is because upon the clear and positive foundation of her ideals Mrs. Coates rears the spiritual edifices of man's eternal needs. In these needs are reiterated the larger human ideals. The needs themselves flourish chiefly in the beliefs and hopes and strivings for human contentment and peace, as they express and emphasize their promptings in her poetry, instead of in that fulfilment of deed and growth which brings about a partial realization of the ideal. The edifices of man's eternal needs are shaped in her poetry out of no dream-world, are made of no symbols that float on the surface of man's changing sea of experience. They are the verities of man's mental sanity, as well as the fundamental wholesomeness and grace of physical conduct. So everywhere in Mrs. Coates's poetry, Love, Justice, and Immortality are sung, not as texts with their teachings of morality, social compensations, and philosophies of good and evil, but as the embodiments of warm and vital human traits and characteristics that afford the substantive pictures of life, becoming expressive and interpretative through the medium of lyric art.

In the sestet to the sonnet called "Earth's Mystery" is a typical attitude towards Love, which is represented as the giver of joy:

But as I pondered, seeking, soul-oppressed,  
To read the riddle of a world like this—  
Where Nature still seems waiting to destroy,  
I saw immortal Love descend and kiss,  
With timid wonder, reverent and blest,  
The quivering eyelids and the lips of Joy!

Love, the very core of earth's mystery, is also the exaltation of man's soul. Mrs. Coates's lyrics never express it on that sentimental or sensuous side which reveals the sickliness and fleetingness of passion. There is a more enduring vitality, a commoner and more infectious charm to the love she sings, because it is the voice of an emotion that strikes its roots deeper in life than physical experience. The love of the sexes may be a sort of supreme mode of this human feeling, as rendered in that fine "Song" which has sung itself into the universal heart of man:

## A Foremost American Lyrist

For me the jasmine buds unfold  
 And silver daisies star the lea,  
 The crocus hoards the sunset gold,  
 And the wild rose breathes for me.  
 I feel the sap through the bough returning,  
 I share the skylark's transport fine,  
 I know the fountain's wayward yearning,  
 I love, and the world is mine!

I love, and thoughts that sometime grieved,  
 Still well remembered, grieve not me;  
 From all that darkened and deceived  
 Upsoars my spirit free.  
 For the soft hours repeat one story,  
 Sings the sea one strain divine;  
 My clouds arise all flushed with glory,—  
 I love, and the world is mine!

but it can only be perfect in this flowering since it controls wider motives, being "creation's breath and vital flame!" This love manifests itself through life, but it is touched with divinity; it flows out of the individual and becomes a human virtue. Because it is that which

. . . draws its deeper breath  
 From altitudes that know not death—

it is both the mystery and the revelation of that paradoxical goodness and strength leavening our more worldly tendencies. No American poet has so clearly visioned this radiance of the spirit, with its glimmerings, still pure white, lighting the way that man takes among his fellows. No influence of that austerity in her art, which is like a suppressed sensibility of all that is sad and perplexing in human life, can lessen the sweetness or tinge the joy for which she sees everywhere so great a capacity, so desirable a need, in human nature.

It is by some consistent shaping of truth, on the anvil of life, out of the elements of experience and intuition, of imagination and spiritual sympathy, that the poet comes to impress its substantive quality upon the world. At the heart of all significant poetry is this purpose, working intensely through the natural feelings of the singer. The soul broods and meditates upon a few great and mysterious questions of human experience, and the art that is engaged in becomes in substance so many declarations, in form so many manifestations of these spiritual interests. They are set forth in the abstract ministrations of beauty; and conveyed in moods that take on the palpable and various deeds of man in his private and public history: and is like a golden thread, running through that pattern of form and color woven in the effort to represent the changing and elusive impressions of nature. By personalizing these

questions, the poet achieves conviction; compels truth by emotional sympathy rather than by asseverating a doctrine. It is this way that the art of poetry becomes an interpretation and criticism of life. The embodiment is a ceremony of beauty, the whole spirit of which is a serious and vital message of life's deepest problems. In all the verses that a poet sings is imaged some intuition or feeling or sympathy, which, composed in the process of one's understanding, represents a picture of the poet's passionate realization of the secrets at the root of experience. The quality in the poet that endures is that power to see the workings of common influences upon the heart of humanity, and then visioning them forth into lofty and noble embodiments. The perfection of art makes these embodiments real, gives them an imperishable vitality. And so Mrs. Coates sees Justice at the secret root of all human goodness, and Immortality as the highest and best aspiration for which the soul of man strives through the multifarious shadows of the world. Nature, which Mrs. Coates loves, and whose spirit she renders with exquisite and subtle presentation of imaginative moods, hints to her everywhere, and in all seasons, of these two great attributes; and in man no less, there is a similar reliance, upon these mysteries which he is perpetually struggling to realize, and which by some inexplicable influence is constantly dominating, often against the perplexity of his more practical and temporary desires, the promptings of his inner life. No heartier note is struck, no note more quickening in its appeal to the human heart, carrying with it every sum and compensation of all life imposes, than that promise of immortality to the soul, which is the highest message of Mrs. Coates's art. "Life," to her, "is like a beautiful flower," which closes to the world at even, but to "unfold, with dawn, on heaven." Everywhere is this affirmation, with an insistence that only the greatest poets pursue with variety and freshness of form and imagery. She recognizes, however, the uncertain signs that beset man's path, to lure his faith from the goal, when "Doubt steals the light from immortality," and is ever ready with reassurance to stay the faltering step, never prompted with more solemn conviction than in the final stanza to "Pilgrimage":

Pilgrim, no: I cannot tell.  
 Strange my course, and stormy woes  
 And darkness may obscure its close;  
 Yet I feel that all is well,  
 For my Pilot knows!

Again, in the very remarkable poem "Easter" there is full avowal of this belief in language pregnant with significance and beauty, whose meaning widens like a circle of ripples upon calm water, linking man and nature in a permanence of growth. The impression this poem



leaves upon one, with its fine spiritual eloquence, its etching of nature's hues and forms, is like some vision come to one in sleep with so strong a familiarity that it does not vanish in daylight, but performs its alchemy upon one's experience with the world. How subtly in this poem is the saddened thought of the beloved dead, transfigured into the gladness of promise, with the recurring, eternal return of the abundant season. Elegiac in tone, in poignant substance it becomes a brooding affirmation of life:

I know the Summer fell asleep  
 Long weary months ago;  
 But ah! all is not lost, poor heart,  
 That's laid beneath the snow;  
 There wait, grown cold to care and strife,  
 Things costliest, dying into life:

All changes, but Life ceases not  
 With the suspended breath;  
 There is no bourne to Being, and  
 No permanence in Death;  
 Time flows to an eternal sea,  
 Space widens to Infinity!

In its process of artistic embodiment, poetry shapes itself into symbols that render by suggestion, with a lucidity unmatched, the complex emotions of the individual. Feeling is at the root of all consciousness, and the mind defines feeling, by the selection and grouping of images, in its endeavor to express experiences affecting the spirit, whose inward crises are registered upon the world through physical actions and events. In all vital and beautiful poetry, there is at core the continual functioning of a few of the many truths which in their infinite totality make up the standard of perfection for human life. Through the peculiar temperament of the individual poet, these few truths, by the mystery of some prenatal endowment, are woven into the nature as a divine obligation to be promulgated in the world. His art is the beautiful messenger, but these truths are the messages to which the poet is consecrated by the gift of his art; and through it, manifested and made articulate, in whatever substantive feeling that awakes his dream or inspiration,—full-orbed and glimmering,—are these real but unmaterialized objects given utterance. Always, in my endeavor to disengage the vital substance in poetry, I have tried to show what was the quality of that substance, what particular significance it took, in the thoughtful and lovely lyrical work of Mrs. Coates. To interpret her spirit, with all its delicate and subtle sympathies, touching with unobtrusive but familiar interests all human chords, sounding always a clear but subdued music, has been my purpose, rather than to emphasize the various

forms with all their felicities of diction for which she has earned as well so wide and enviable a reputation.

In summing up Mrs. Coates's achievement as a poet, one may refer to these rare and admirable qualities. The variety of her lyric forms are astonishing; and in them are moulded substances that in no case defect from the precise intention which instinct and taste have guided. Her lyrics, always spontaneous in communicative suggestion, possess nevertheless a deliberate ecstasy which hints an indwelling pondering of mood, bearing it full ripe fruitage of thought and feeling. Her kinship in this is very close to Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold, and like them her soul is receptive of objective influences that have a wide application in their personal shaping. She draws from the Olympian world figures that typify some motive or desire in human conduct, and in the modern world the praise of men and women, heroic in attainment or sacrifice; or laments events that effect social and ethical progress, showing how beneficently she has brought her art, without modifying in the least its abstract function as a creator of beauty and pleasure, into the service of profound and vital problems.

No American poet of to-day has mirrored life so faithfully. Adhering to the best traditions of English poetry, Mrs. Coates is one of a small group of contemporary singers who are intensely American in spirit. The note of this group may be an ethical note, against which the unstaple exuberance and passion of some younger poets rebel, but it is the very essence of our national life and institutions, and must be reflected in our truest art. This ethical quality was the virtue above all others that Ruskin, none too liberal in his recognition of America's artistic efforts, praised in Longfellow and Lowell, setting its value above the beautiful but unmoral art of Keats and Shelley. The social conscience of Whitman is only a more emphatic rousing of the ethical spirit to action. The cardinal virtues of democracy are Love and Justice; Whitman insisted on their being recognized in social and political relationships, as well as in private and domestic intercourse. The distinction of this sound human quality does not prevent an increasing elaboration of the art that preserves it, as Mrs. Coates's poetry exemplifies. Its contagious appeal reaches beyond the limitations set by the reiteration of a single note, which generally attempts to enforce a philosophic or psychologic attitude. By assertion and affirmation, not of a mood or a dream or a passion, but of life itself as a whole, equalizing all these substances in one optimistic glow of aspiration, does one succeed in "envisaging the veiled heart of things," and come to interpret and express what the vision reveals of those secrets which lie shimmering on the surface of mortal experience.

And this is what the poetry of Florence Earle Coates accomplishes.

In both substance and form it has added richly to the body of American art. Its sane and healthy outlook upon the world, rendered with a refined and subtle expression of language and form, maintains the clean and wholesome, and yet no less magical and passionate, standard which characterizes the superior achievement of English poetry. Certainly the promise which Matthew Arnold discovered in Mrs. Coates's earlier work, and was the first to voice—though since confirmed by the foremost critical contemporaries—has fulfilled itself in the wider, more general acceptance of the public, whose appreciation of her unusual gifts has by common election placed her in the front ranks of our native singers.



### “ IF A LAD LOVE A LASS ”

BY ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

**I**F a lad love a lass,  
 And the lass say nay,  
 What is the lad to do then,  
 Pray—  
 Really what should a lad do, would you say?

If the heart of the lass  
 Be a-feigning cold,  
 Smile at another—'t is a method  
 Old—  
 Many a maid is thus controlled.

If a lad love a lass,  
 But the lass say nay,  
 Be a little more kind—'t is a better  
 Way:  
 Let word and deed more love convey!

# WHAT THERE WAS OF IT

By *Anne Warwick*

## I.

“WHAT there is of it’s all right,” said Lodi plaintively, gazing at his pudding, “but there’s so confounded little!”  
“Are you talking now of marriage,” asked his wife, “or of the pudding?”

“Well—er—*both*, as a matter of fact—though I happened just then to mean marriage. You see”—he looked at her resentfully, though certainly the look of her was far from a thing to resent—“you’re all over the place, keeping up with your popularity and your profession——”

“And *you’re* all over the place, keeping up with *your* popularity and *your* profession!”

“Oh, well, for a man it’s different. At least, it used to be,” said Lodi impatiently—“and you’ve never taken up with suffrage, thank the Lord!”

“No, but”—she pushed her chair back a little from the table set in the charming old garden; and paired her slender fingers thoughtfully upon one another—“you see, Lodi——”

“That’s just it! I *don’t* see.” Lodi swallowed his last reluctant mouthful of pudding, and, too, pushed back his chair. “What you get out of it, I mean.”

“Out of our marriage?”

“No; out of *it*—your dancing and——”

Dolf stirred a little in her chair. “You mean that dancing as a profession is scarcely as highly rated as—well, opera-singing, for example? That it’s inclined to be lightly thought of, and—let’s be quite frank!—to put one down at once as doubtful—perhaps vulgar?”

“Well,” said Lodi uncomfortably, “something like that; yes.”

“Yet you can scarcely call ‘The Blue Bird’ or ‘Peer Gynt’” (mentioning the pieces in which she had been appearing) “vulgar?”

“My dear child, it’s not *I* who call ‘em vulgar or anything else! It’s *people*. And people who wonder why on earth my wife is dancing for her living!”

“Perhaps they forget,” said Dolf serenely, “that that is what she was doing when you married her.”

"No, but—oh, I'm bothered! You can see the difference easily enough, Dolf: before you were married you had to earn your living, yes! But since then—well, I've enough, have n't I? Don't we have everything we want? And I should think you'd occupy yourself with the house more—and sew, and things."

"I was not taught to keep house," said Dolf, her eyes lingering on the sketchy beauty of the villa that lay beyond them. "I was taught to dance. In this age, I think one is quite justified in disliking to do a thing one does badly. Whereas one's specialty"—her eyes now shone softly—tenderly almost, though Lodi could not see—"well, Lodi, you write operas. I should think you'd know."

Lodi rose, restively. "I—I—oh, it seems to me entirely different, that's all," he said, pacing up and down the garden path. "I suppose, if there'd been children——"

Dolf's mouth contracted. "There were n't children," she said abruptly. "Will you take coffee to-night?"

"Thanks." Lodi came over to a tray that a servant had brought a few minutes before and left on a little tabouret near Dolf. "I suppose you think I'm a crank," he said ruefully, "but I can't see it, that's all—for a woman."

"Are you sorry for the women who sing your compositions?" she wanted to know. "Don't you 'see it' for them either?"

"Oh, they!" said Lodi, ruffling his black hair. "They are n't women—they're geniuses!"

Dolf laughed a little. "And I am just 'talent,' eh? Well, my dear, I won't quarrel with you—and I don't think you a crank, no. I think you only unmodern. For my platform of woman's rights, Lodi, lies in the heritage of every woman to the *motif* of her life as she decides it: art, a profession, business, or——"

"Marriage?" suggested Lodi.

"H'm—yes. After all, marriage is more a background than a *motif*, is n't it? A much happier background," said Dolf lightly, "than drear spinsterhood." She came and stood by him. "You have made me very happy, Lodi."

He stroked her hand for a few moments silently. Their coffee, on the little table, was forgotten. "Ah, Dolf," he said at last, "Dolf!" There was yearning in his voice, and passion, but, for some reason, he checked it swiftly. "You're due at the theatre at nine, are n't you?" he remembered. "Shall I drive you in, in the big car?"

They had been married three years. During that time Lodithorne Clarke had achieved celebrity. Dolf had remained what she was: a successful classic dancer, rather better perhaps than when at twenty she had been forced to take the place of a mother who was famous; yet certainly not a genius. They are, supposedly, born; Dolf was, by con-

fession, made—at the expense of untiring energy and years of faithful training. She had talent, too, and a wistfulness for her art that rather more than matched her fellow-artists' self-satisfaction. And she was, in consequence of it (as Lodi said), popular—distinguished, as well, and *choyée* for her delicate charm and finesse. Yet—it was true—people thought it odd that she kept on dancing.

“Of course, it's awfully smart and all that, to have a fad,” said Reggie Thorman—one of Lodi's satellites; “something one's a regular wiz at, too, but—er—it seems a sort of pity that *his* wife——”

Every one who had known Lodi first thought of her as *his* wife: Lodi was *he* to a great many awe-struck idle souls, who kept him for their excitement some time longer than was usual with their weary interest. And not one of them was a bit surprised when it began to be whispered that *he* was seeing a great deal of little Mrs. Nesbit—a widow, “but so sweet and domestic, my dear!—such a *womanly* woman.”

Mrs. Nesbit had a house near Lodi's, and it seemed quite natural that he should fall into the habit of dropping in there when Dolf was at rehearsal or during the long evenings that she spent at the theatre. When he was not working, himself, he argued that he must have *something* to do, and—his friends kindly commenced to justify him to Dolf.

“Even if she is a widow,” said Reggie Thorman, “she's awfully quiet, and—and *all right*, you know.”

“I should n't worry a scrap, my dear,” Lodi's sister said anxiously. “Lodi's such a *steady* man; and you know, dearest, you would keep on dancing!”

“I know,” said Dolf quietly. Yes, she kept on dancing. And that spring her manager got her an excellent engagement in London, and she danced at the gala performance at the Coronation, and was invited by Royalty to a garden party. And Lodi stayed in America—to finish his new opera, he said. But at the end of the summer, when Dolf returned, the opera was still unfinished.

“And had you a successful season?” he asked smoothly, on the first evening that they dined together again in the fragrant garden. “Letters are rather curt on detail.”

“Oh, yes! In England they think rather more of dancing, Lodi—I was made to feel quite a personage.”

Lodi smiled. “I am glad,” was all he said. They talked desultorily of a dozen things—somehow, nothing lasted them very long as topic. Both were rather glad when at the end of the week Reggie and Lodi's sister came to stay.

On Sunday the four were out in the big car, and happened to pass Mrs. Nesbit's place. The widow, who was strolling toward the gate with her little son, waved to them. “Come in,” she called, “and have tea. Boy and I are boring ourselves frightfully.”

Lodi's sister glanced out of the tail of her eye at Dolf. But Dolf went in. When they were seated in Mrs. Nesbit's immaculate drawing-room, "Now, do tell me," said the lady sweetly, "did you make dozens of conquests in London, Mrs. Clarke? And were they, any of them, half as clever as your husband?"

"London," said Dolf calmly, "like my husband, is rather involved. They appeared to like me, but—they're of so many likings, one can scarcely count on them. . . . No sugar, please. . . . And, Lodi, I've forgotten how many you take, sweet-tooth?"

Mrs. Nesbit quietly dropped two lumps in Lodi's cup.

("Oh, I say, that was really too bald of her," murmured Reggie. "Poor Dolf! We ought never to have come!" wailed Lodi's sister.)

"But surely," said little Mrs. Nesbit, her left arm round her angelic little son, "surely you count on your husband, dear Mrs. Clarke?"

"Yes," Dolf said steadily; "I count on him." But it was to Lodi that she said it. And Lodi began, very fast, to talk of Mrs. Nesbit's wonderful roses—would she not show them? And Mrs. Nesbit's model dairy—he so wanted Dolf to see it. And Mrs. Nesbit graciously consented, and (Boy always at her side) led them from her spick-and-span drawing-room into her spick-and-span garden, delightful in its primness.

When Dolf admired it, "Well, it's a good thing I have it," Mrs. Nesbit said ingenuously. "I'm such a simple little person—I've no gifts of any consequence—oh, a little voice, that Mr. Clarke is kind enough to say is not such a *small* voice! But my house and garden and the dairy—I do live in them, don't I, Boy?"

"Yes, Mamma."

"And they're a great comfort to me. They take the place of so many things. A woman's home, I always think—I'm afraid I'm frightfully unmodern!" she told Dolf with a little laugh. Lodi was watching her—Lodi's sister and Reggie had contrived, as somehow they always did, to be left rather far behind. "I suppose, to be fashionable, I ought to want a career, but—I'm just a little red-headed stick-at-home, am I not, Boy?"

"Yes, Mamma," piped Boy obediently.

As a matter of fact, she had quite marvellous red hair—masses of it; very different from Dolf's gold-brown mane. And a softly animated manner, that was in direct contrast to Dolf's serene negligence. Lodi, obliquely, watched both women; and was unhappy. He wondered if he ought not to tell Dolf what was in his mind for Laura—Mrs. Nesbit; he almost thought he *ought* to tell her. And yet—

When they went home, Dolf noticed for the first time in her life that her drawing-room was dusty, and that there were magazines stacked under the piano. She spoke quite sharply to the parlor-maid. On Monday, to the gardener also. Then on Monday afternoon her man-

ager came out from town to talk over some new dances, and after that she gave not a thought to either the drawing-room or the garden. She was more and more in the theatre.

And it gave her a positive start when one of *his* intimates said languidly to her one day, "And what do you think of Lodi's getting little Mrs. Nesbit such a good berth? It's so frightfully difficult getting into The Comique, too!" Dolf had forgotten all about Mrs. Nesbit.

But, "You might have told me," she said to Lodi gently. "At least, I'm your wife and——"

"My dear," said he dryly, "if the background shifts, you have always the *motif* running excellently." Indeed, (by sheer hard work and perseverance) she was now almost more of a celebrity than he.

Dolf's color flamed suddenly high. "At any rate," said she, "Mrs. Nesbit seems to have got over her aversion to a career, and her passion for her house and garden, and the rest of her old-fashioned proclivities."

"She has a voice," said Lodi simply.

"And what about her child?" demanded Dolf fiercely.

"Why—I suppose he has his nurse. And——"

Dolf gave a ringing laugh. "It's really very quaint," she said, her lip curling.

Lodi stared. Never had he seen Dolf so unreasonable; so—so almost *feminine*. Of course, one might have looked for jealousy in the average woman; but Dolf—— "I regret if it has put you out," he said stiffly. "I was glad to do what little I could for Mrs. Nesbit. I'm sorry for her."

"Of course!" murmured Dolf. "The cleverness of the woman! But there, Lodi," (seeing his lowering face) "I won't tease you any more about it. No doubt" (lightly) "Mrs. Nesbit found, like all the rest of us, that in this age of specialty one requires something more blatant—that is, distinctive—than domesticity for advertisement. One must be advertised, you know."

"I don't know!"

"All except composers"—with a delicate laugh. "*Their* reputation seems to take care of itself—which is very lucky," added Dolf, in a different voice.

"Look here, Dolf, what are you getting at? I've never heard you talk like this before. You talk as if I——"

Dolf gave a little yawn. "Yes? As if——?"

"Nothing," said Lodi shortly.

They were sitting, as usual, in the garden—the fall morning shining about them, with its touch of crisp. Dolf had—actually—a bit of sewing in her hands: a torn tunic that she was mending. Lodi was reading. For some minutes there was silence. Then—

"Good-morning," said a small voice behind them. "I've brought a



note. How do you do?" It was Mrs. Nesbit's "Boy"—grave and round-eyed and very clean and starched, in his white sailor-blouse and knickers.

"How do you do?" said Dolf softly. She forgot that he was Mrs. Nesbit's—for the moment.

"I'm five," said Boy, regarding her with serious interest. "I was five yesterday. D'you want to see my rifle?"

"Rather!" laughed Dolf deliciously. "Have you it?"

"'Course I have—only, I left it on the porch, because Mamma says——"

"What about that note?" broke in Lodi.

The round eyes were transferred to him. "Oh, yes; it's here." Boy fished it out of a bulgy pocket. "That's chestnuts," he explained to Dolf, "for my dog, Nobs. He eats 'em. Only, Mamma won't let him, 'cause he chews up the rug. But I let him," said Boy calmly.

Lodi was reading the note. "Mrs. Nesbit wants me to meet her at The Comique at twelve," he told Dolf, with slightly heightened color. "It's to hear her run over her part. So I'll motor in, if you'll excuse me from lunch?"

"But certainly"—Dolf's head was bent intently over her sewing.

"I've got to have lunch with Miss Spink," said Boy, shaking his shock of brown hair resentfully. "That's the governess. She's got freckles."

"Then, you shan't." Dolf turned to him impetuously. "You shall stay here and lunch with me, and you'll show me your rifle, and we'll send for Nobs and feed him chestnuts, and we'll sail boats in the pond, and——"

Lodi gazed at her in amazement—at the flushed cheeks and shining eyes and tremulous smiling mouth. When he looked back at them from the house, Boy was on Dolf's lap, rapturously listening to the story of the new colt at the stables, and rumpling Dolf's gown, regardless of its freshness. It occurred to Lodi that he had never seen Boy rumpling Mrs. Nesbit's gown—only within the graceful circle of her arm. And he went rather thoughtfully from Dolf and the child, to Mrs. Nesbit at The Comique.

"And have you heard?" Lodi's sister asked Reggie breathlessly two weeks later. "They say the little boy simply *lives* there—with Dolf, I mean. They say he *adores* her, and that Mrs. Nesbit——"

"Mrs. Nesbit's pleased to death," said Reggie, with a grin. "She's going about saying how delightfully old-fashioned Mrs. Clarke is, but so domestic—such a little stay-at-home, 'quite different from *him*!' Oh, hat-pins!"

"They don't spike Dolf. I've never seen her looking happier—though she is a bit pale," said Lodi's sister.

“Who would n't be? Dancing all night, and tearing round with a child all day!”

“I think it would be rather nice to tear round with a child,” said Lodi's sister, half to herself. But he heard her.

And certainly Dolf found it nice. Though it did take it out of her. She was up at nine, to be ready for Boy when he came at half past, and they raced about the place or played in the garret until one, when he went home to lunch; or, more usually, stayed. In the afternoon Boy rebelliously “did lessons” with Miss Spink, and Dolf practised feverishly, and gathered up a hundred ravelled ends about the house. From four to six Boy was there again—shrieking and laughing with her over blindman's-buff and hop-scotch, and tea. At night she hurried to the theatre: it was breathless, this life of mixed *motif*; but Dolf thought that it was worth it.

Until, one day, the doctor told her certain things that sent her home white and terrified to Lodi. She had scarcely seen him lately. “He says I must stop dancing entirely for six months,” she repeated unsteadily, “or else—oh, Lodi!” The vision of a hospital, gleaming instruments, long months of suffering, rose up to paralyze her.

Lodi was tender, but a bit constrained about it. He patted her shoulder and told her not to worry—she had iron nerves (or had had); it would all come out all right. He saw her off to Florida the night that Mrs. Nesbit sang her hundredth performance. The little widow had triumphed. She was now “Laura Lauray,” and her name in two-foot lights above the theatre. A manager was negotiating with her for a London engagement in the spring. But she never forgot to whom she owed it all. She was very fond of Lodi.

And she graciously sent her little boy to Lodi's wife (now growing strong and brown-cheeked at the sea), that “poor dear Mrs. Clarke might have a bit of young life about her”; while she—Laura—went to England. It was very touching, her thoughtfulness. But Lodi wished she would not arrange her complexion for the street as she did for the footlights. Yet, half-heartedly, he promised to “run over” and be present at her first night, if he could manage it.

The next day he went down to the shore, to spend Sunday with Dolf and Boy. And the sight of Dolf (whom he seemed to see for the first time in months) struck him dumb. Tall, glowing-eyed, her tan cheeks delicately flooded with carmine, supple and lithe, as she had ever been, and with a touch of buoyancy added—he fairly leaped to her from the train.

“Dolf—Dolf—I”—he was stammering like a school-boy—“I—why—”

“Here's Boy,” she said demurely. And the small person was round his neck, with a shout. Nothing demure about Boy—these days!

"But you *have* changed him," said Lodi wonderingly, that night after dinner, when Boy was in bed.

"He's changed me, too," said Dolf quickly. "I—perhaps Mrs. Nesbit's right, Lodi. I believe she is: and I *am* an old-fashioned thing, after all."

Lodi caught her to him. There was nothing constrained about him this time. "Mrs. Nesbit," he began—"oh, Dolf, against your hair, I don't want to talk of *Mrs. Nesbit!*"

Three months later, "And do you know," cried Lodi's sister to Reggie triumphantly, "he never went to England at all? Not all summer!"

"Of course not," said Reggie loftily. "He stayed with *her*."

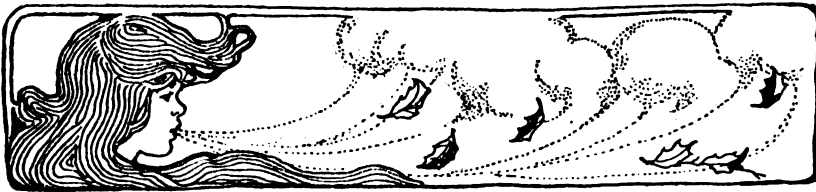
And over their breakfast-table—which was now the same breakfast-table—Reggie and Lodi's sister smiled at each other: a little secret smile of understanding.

While Dolf and Lodi were standing at the door of an empty, sun-lit room in their house, and choosing wall-papers—with camels and frisky elephants and Teddy-bears.

Boy had gone home to stay. But—"I should think he'd like that one," said Dolf anxiously. "*Boy* liked that one."

"He—he——" Lodi could not keep his voice steady. "After all, it'll be only his background, Dolf."

She looked up at him. "But background—background *has* been known to turn *motif*, though," she said. "Oh, Lodi, what there is of it—marriage—what there is of it is *everything!*"



## THE TRUE PROPHET

BY RICHARD KIRK

WHO'd believe what March-winds tell him,  
 When a crocus dare gainsay it!  
 Spring is coming!  
 Arch deceiver, book-and-bell him!  
 Truth is truth; though he delay it,  
 Spring is coming!

# A FALSE AURORA

*By Caroline Wood Morrison and  
Alice MacGowan*



## I.

“GUS muffed that ball, and did n't seem to care a bit. But Andy knocked him a hot one, and——”  
Don Harvey, eighteen years old, the height of a man, but with a child's eager soul looking out of his brown eyes, halted for breath—he had been going at this gait for some time. He grasped his chair-arms, and took fresh hold of his subject. It was one which engrossed him and apparently enthralled his listener.

“There was a man on third, you see—don't you, Miss Rose?—a man on third, and one on first, with two out—two out, you know. Rush Hammond was pitching for us, and he took the first drop of the game; and then Gus just romped in and claimed three bags, bringing two men home for us. You ought to have heard the grand-stand yelling to our boys, ‘Tighten up!’ ‘Put out the fire!’”

The woman facing him leaned forward in her chair, her white fingers, showing a plenitude of rings, clutched about a fluttering fan. She hung on her visitor's words with an absorption apparently as complete as his own. The experienced eye would have found her mature. Perhaps youthful enthusiasm was not the less welcome to her for that reason.

Don gazed at her, delighted. From the massive and highly-colored pompadour to the extremely pointed toe of her slipper, she was assuredly grown-up, and her interest was as plainly centred in him, whose conversation she treated as that of the most full-fledged of gentlemen.

“Gus flies out,” he was encouraged to continue. “That left Rush up against it. Billy Emmons was on second base, and he swings to right field. When I came to the bat, the grand-stand was raising Cain. It was up to us to show 'em——”

“And you—you—you showed them! Oh, you splendid Don! How proud I am of you!”

She swayed toward the boy, adulation in voice, look, and accent. It was a heady brew for a chap of his age. Don steadied himself, gazed at her uncertainly, then flinched and looked away.

"Aw, I did n't do anything, really—not so much. A fellow has luck, sometimes. Two home runs did help, of course; but Gus made one of 'em."

"With you at the bat, Don—with you at the bat," urged the listener, in actually tremulous tones, her bright eyes still fastened upon his face.

One could not expect a boy to see the pencilled line wherewith she had increased the size and brilliance of these features, nor to divine the commercial genesis of the roses that bloomed beneath. Yet the lad she flattered moved the heavy muscles of his shoulders as if tired. In a normal and strenuous boyhood, self-conceit had been hazed and beaten and mercilessly chaffed out of him. Fulsome praise alarmed him. He shied at it like a nervous horse, veering from the embarrassing subject.

"Say," he began ("say" is youth's Americanism for "sweetheart" when love is incipiently budding), "say, will you go to the next game with me?"

"Will I! Oh, Don, I'd love it of all things. But I thought you would n't want a girl bothering around there. How good and sweet and dear you are to me!"

He reddened sensitively under the tan, and got to his feet. He was actually afraid to find her words delicious—suppose one of the boys should overhear such a speech, applied to tough, strenuous, domineering Don Harvey?

"I'll come past for you, then, Friday afternoon," he hesitated. "I reckon I won't see you again till then. A lot of us fellows are going on a tramp out to Gunter's Springs and back."

"To where, Don?" his companion demanded sharply, with a startled glance.

"Gunter's Springs—over in Hiawasse County, you know," explained Don, and turned doubtfully toward the door. But Miss Heymore stopped him.

"Don—wait a minute," she said; then seemed doubtful whether or not to utter what was in her mind, while her visitor stood in some surprise, questioning her with his glance. Finally she broke out:

"Gunter's Springs—that's where I used to live before I came here, Don."

The boy's face—eloquent as his tongue was helpless and unskilled—showed instantly how impressive he found this statement, and she went on, breathing quickly:

"You—Don, if you hear anything against me there, you won't believe it, will you? The world is so cruel to a girl alone—as I've been. Other women are jealous, and—— There was one old woman there that talked wickedly about me. Promise me you won't believe a

word! Promise you'll come right to me with whatever they say. I'll tell *you anything*."

"Aw," said Don Harvey, when at last she had done and would let him speak, "aw, what would I care what they said?" Then, his contemptuous indignation waxing, "What would I be doing listening to 'em at all?"

He dismissed the whole matter with a shake of his shoulders. Once more he turned to go, hesitated, and looked at her dumbly. This was farewell, and there were things which instinct told him he might have for the taking. Dim visions of rapture swam before him. A clock struck twelve.

"Gee! I did n't know 't was so late," he muttered, brought suddenly back to realities. "Mother'll be on her head. Why did n't you tell me, Miss Rose, and turn me out?"

"Your mother," whispered Rose Heymore softly, laying her two hands in Don's strong brown fists. "I think your mother is the dearest, loveliest woman I ever saw, Don. I want so much to make her acquaintance. I know you adore her, and that's enough for me."

She raised her eyes with an effect of worship to the boy's face. But he was inept at this sort of thing.

"Ma's all right," he said loyally, as he fairly quailed before the situation. "She sure is a brick. We've always been full partners—Ma and me. I'll bring her 'round to see you some day, if you'd like me to."

"Oh, Don, don't ask her—yet." In the stress of the moment's emotion, Miss Heymore evidently forgot herself, for she leaned almost on the boy's shoulder, holding up a face exactly in the manner of a child waiting to be kissed. It would seem that even the dullest mind must have understood the situation.

And Don was not dull; he was only dazed—bewildered. At parties, in games of forfeit, he could kiss girls—oh, yes, and had. But this was a lady! To touch her hand had heretofore sufficed to set his head spinning. He pressed the soft white fingers now till her rings hurt, but she made no outcry. He was a little afraid of her at such times, and very much more afraid of himself and the emotions which possessed him.

"Good-night!" he ejaculated thickly, and hurried out into the quiet street.

For a while he stumbled toward home, unseeing. For him the sky was full of low-swinging moons that looked at him with Rose Heymore's eyes—old, old moons, dear boy, such as shone on ancient gardens where young lovers lingered to whisper long good-nights; the moon of Romeo and Rosalind—for Don, the moon that meant Juliet had not yet arisen.

## II.

HIS mother had sat late by the little table in the sitting-room. Now, having finally gone upstairs, undressed, and drawn a kimona over her gown, she fluttered uneasily about her chamber, going every few minutes to the window and peering around the shade.

"Better come to bed, Mattie. The boy's all right. He'll be in presently." Don's father offered the customary masculine comfort and admonition.

"Yes, dear," said the little woman softly, not at all as signifying that she meant to obey his suggestion, but only to make courteous acknowledgment that she heard and heeded. There was silence again. Once more Mrs. Harvey lifted the curtain and peered out. The way she stood, patient, mute, watchful, changed the man's mood. He hunched the sheet around his neck, and began to speak more at length than was his wont.

"Honey, Don's the kind that has to have lots of experience," he said gently. "He'll have a dozen love affairs before the right one comes. He's not like me. He's like his mother. Remember how you used to have the boys on a string, girl?"

"Oh, and I ran awful risks, too, Rob. I do so want to help Don over or past or around those places," murmured the little mother. "It is n't because this Rose Heymore is a milliner—I respect a woman that earns her own living. It's just because she is a woman, and too old to really care about a boy like poor Don. I've seen her—Mary Steel pointed her out to me yesterday—and she's nearly double his age. She was painted, too; I know she was. Oh, I—Rob, I'm so worried. It seems to me I must do something about it."

"I hope to the Lord you did n't say anything about paint to Don," put in the man, lifting his head to look around at his wife in alarm. "I have n't even spoken to the kid, myself. I went to Gus about it—there's a boy with an old head on his shoulders. He says the woman used to live up at Gunter's Springs, and when they go camping up there, he knows somebody that will open Don's eyes without seeming to be interested in the matter. Let him try. At least, we can't approach the boy ourselves. Don't you see?—if you and I put in a finger, it will be parental interference, and make matters worse."

Mrs. Harvey agreed inarticulately. She was wiping away some hard-wrung tears. The staunch little woman was as unused to weeping as Don himself.

"There's Don now!" she cried softly, and ran downstairs to open the door for her son.

Don came in noisily, blissfully unconscious that everybody else was not eighteen, in love, and eager to wake and meditate upon the sweet-

ness thereof. Somehow he was moved to extra tenderness when his mother met him and stood looking up into his face, a perplexed little figure with soft, rumpled, graying hair, and a tender, doubtful smile about her lips.

"Did you sit up just for me?" he began genially. Then with the fretful caretaking of males for the women of their household: "It'll make you sick to be up so late. You need n't worry about me. I'm all right. I can take care of myself." He laughed down at her indulgently, adding, "Say, Mother, sometimes I believe you don't know that I'm over three years old."

She stood dumb, troubled, afraid to speak.

"What's the matter?" he questioned, with a sharp side-glance so like his father that she realized his manhood, and her worried maternity quailed before it. "You don't mean to say you were uneasy about me, Mother," he asserted. "I was calling on a girl, and she ought to have told me it was gettin' late. I was so interested talking, I never noticed. Got anything to eat 'round the house?"

Somewhat reassured by this wonted query, Mrs. Harvey meekly took up the serving attitude, and ministered to the corporeal needs of her son, while her heart ached to save his soul a bad stumble in the dark. But the big hand of male youth does not cling to mother's fingers. She would try to be glad of his manliness, and find new ways of enlightening him where she felt sure he sorely needed her help. Words swelled and died on her lips like foreshortened waves running weakly to a barren beach. Don got up from the table, and she gathered courage to speak.

"Who—who were you calling on this evening?" she faltered. "If you don't mind, I'd like to talk to you a little about one of the—that is, a girl, or rather a woman, that you——" Her voice failed her utterly. He was drinking at the refrigerator. Don made a serious, absorbing business of pouring water down his muscled young throat.

"Hey?" He came toward the table and set the empty glass down, looking at her inquiringly. She was trembling from head to foot; but her emotion had been wasted, her wavering sentences unheard. She was glad of it. She feared to do more harm than good by her interference, and so merely shook her head and let him go on speaking.

"Gus and me and Jeff Hazencamp have changed our plans, Ma. We're going to tramp to Gunter's Springs," he repeated the information. "The grub and things we got packed will be all right. We got to get off before day. Do you know where my old shoes are? I'll need those pants you mended for me last night—we're all going to wear the worst duds we've got. I reckon we won't be gone more than ten days—we aim to make it in ten. You won't worry about me there, will you?"



He bent his tall head around and examined her countenance anxiously, uncomprehendingly; and he pounded her shoulder a little, under the impression that he was giving a caress.

"No, I won't worry," she assured him.

"We'll have about twenty-five pounds apiece on our backs, and it's mighty near sixty miles through the mountains. But Gus is a stayer. Jeff's as hard as nails—so 'm I. I'll bet we pull it off in ten days, and don't have a bit of trouble. Don't you fret, Ma."

How little he knew what danger she really apprehended for him! She reached up and kissed him silently; then, that there might be no disagreeables in the parting, cheerfully showed him the bundle ready, and the packages he had brought from the store and laid beside it.

"I told somebody this evening that you and me was full partners," he said softly, as they went out into the hall. "Dad asleep?" They had halted at the foot of the stairs, side by side. "I'd better take off my shoes." And she left him sitting on the lowest step to do so.

### III.

THE camping trip went through successfully, as did also Gus's scheme for enlightening Don on the subject of his charmer's past. It was contrived that the boys should hear an innocent old lady detail the facts that Rose Heymore had attempted to sue a man for breach of promise, and been bought off with money enough to go to Watauga and set up a millinery store; and how she had cruelly robbed of payment the widow with whom she boarded. He took these revelations silently. To his cousin's anxious eye, there was no evidence of whether he found them alienating or not.

It was the last evening, footing it back into Watauga, brown, tattered, inconceivably dirty, and footsore, when Augustus found out that a fool will not be turned from his folly merely by the things which his eyes can see or his ears hear. It had rained earlier in the day, and the evening was closing in with that clear light of lemon yellow or honey gold over everything, which trembles in the autumn air at such sunsets. The dust was laid, and a mingling of sweet, spicy odors came from the roadside. Jeff Hazencamp had turned off toward his quarter of the town, and Don and his cousin sat down in a fence-corner to rest and let it get a little darker before they entered town streets. Don lay on his back among the drying weeds, his eyes on the heavens, his heart with Rose Heymore. She had a dress just the color of that sky. No, it was n't a dress; it was an auto cloak, long, shimmering, and silken. She had shown it to him once, and put on a big white hat with a tremendous veil that tied in a great cloudy bow under her chin, and asked him how he liked the looks of it. He wondered if he could ever get

the money together for an auto ride for her. He wished he could. She ought to have such things. She was a lady. But it would cost almost as much as the engagement ring. He relinquished the fond fancy with a sigh.

Far down the road, as if evoked by his dreaming, sounded the faint "Honk! Honk!" of an approaching automobile horn. The boys drew back into the shadow as well as they could, to hide their tatters. Along the country way came a motor party, shouting, gesticulating, and making the quiet evening resound to the clatter of their mirth. A stout, red-faced man in goggles was driving the auto, and a woman on the seat beside him struggled for the lever. He was fending her off with one hand, and laughing loudly at her, while a couple in the tonneau applauded and cried on the fight. The scuffling woman on the front seat wore a long, shimmering blue automobile coat, and on her head was a great white hat, its tremendous veil tied in a cloudy bow under her chin. Don felt all the blood in his body rush to his face as he recognized these garments and appurtenances. Then he rolled over and hid his countenance amid the dusty weeds.

"Well," said Augustus, as the automobile whirled past them, "did you see who she was with?"

Don sat up, half defiant, half sheepish, and shook his head.

"It was Steiner, the man that keeps the saloon on the corner beyond her shop," Augustus told him.

"I guess that was Mrs. Steiner on the back seat," said Don, lifting his head a bit.

"Well, it was n't," Augustus contradicted promptly. "It was the woman that has the hair-store in her shop; and the man with *her* was Steiner's barkeeper. Gee, Don! that's a pretty crowd for any woman to be out motoring with—ain't it?"

"I don't believe it," said Don stubbornly. "She told me herself that she had to be very particular about—things, living alone as she did. She said that about my coming to see her, unless—well, she said it about me."

The boy knew that the speech he remembered was that which had led him to determine on buying the ring. Rose Heymore had pointed out that, unless a friend was serious, any attentions shown to her, in her lone, unprotected position, were likely to be misconstrued—not by her, but by a cruel, censorious world. Don rose suddenly to his tall young height and stood looking down at his cousin.

"Think of staying there all night?" he inquired agreeably. "I'm going home. I've got some business to attend to, and an engagement to keep this evening."

Augustus got up and meekly followed.

## IV.

DURING the week past, Mrs. Harvey had gone about her work a haunted woman. Whenever she was alone in the house, a small shadow bobbed at her knee and followed after her steps—the little boy that was. She could hear the baby voice that babbled on all day, like a rapid purling brook, mounting now and again to a fluty, liquid clamor as a stone checks its course; she could see his curly head and uplifted eyes, his small, eager, asking hands; but when she would have clasped the baby sweetness and held it close to her sore heart, the voice was silent—the little shadow was only a shadow.

“He’s gone,” she said to herself over and over. “My baby is gone; my beautiful, splendid boy is gone. And oh, the man that he has almost come to be does n’t love me as they did! Somebody else is more to him than I can ever be. God help me! God direct him! Oh, if I could only see some way to be of use in it!”

Darkness had just fallen when, upon these dreams and recollections, burst suddenly the real Don himself, ragged, unshaven, and dirty.

“Is there plenty of hot water? Did my laundry get back? Do you know what became of my red tie?” He fulminated these inquiries in swift succession, after he had kissed her hastily. She smiled up into his face of young virility.

“How tanned you are, Don—and how well you look! And did you have a good time?” Then she added tremulously, “Will you be going out to-night? Are n’t you too tired?”

“Yep, had a good time—great time,” responded Don. “Yep, I’m going out. I ain’t tired. Gee, but that laundry’s rotten! I wish you’d jack ’em up, Mother. Now, why the nation did n’t I take my suit to be pressed before I left?”

Mrs. Harvey’s intuition warned her upon whom it was that her boy intended to call. Her heart sank with the thought that any revelations which Augustus might have been able to bring about were ineffectual. Yet she set out Don’s supper and waited on him, and even managed to eat a bit with him, chatting all the time like a good fellow, and taking the greatest interest in the account of how many miles a day the boys had made, and what cormorant appetites they had brought to the evening meals around the camp-fire. Later, she found the red tie for him, and sat while he shaved himself and brushed his hair. Choking back the tears that wanted to come, as she looked at the soft young beard of manhood on the cheek of her baby of yesterday, she put a shaking, futile hand on the brown mop.

“I’ve saved one of your yellow curls,” she said almost defiantly. “How I did hate to cut them off! If I’d had my own way, you’d be going like Samson still.”

It had been a sore subject of old. But this evening Don only laughed at her indulgently.

"They made too good a handle for the other fellow when you got into a mix-up, those curls," he said. "Am I all right now, Mother? Will I do?"

She took her courage in both hands. Instead of answering, she asked, in what tried to be an unconcerned voice:

"Are you—are you going to call on that Miss Heymore this evening?"

"Yep. Made the engagement before I went away."

He did not look at her. His eyes stared straight ahead. Then there was a sudden, sharp movement; he was only squaring his shoulders, but it seemed almost like shaking off his mother's detaining hand.

"Are you going right there, Don?" she persisted, though inwardly shrinking.

"Nope. I've got another errand first. That reminds me, Mother; please give me the money you were keeping for me—I'll need it all this evening."

"For—for what, Don?" whispered his mother. "Are you going to spend it for her? I—I can't bear to seem to pry and spy on you, dear; but really, she's—she's not——"

In sheer terror the little mother broke off and stood trembling. Don's face had darkened. There was a look in it which had never before been turned upon her.

"You're against that poor girl, too," he said, and his voice rasped with the queer, rough edges of a boy's rage. "They're all down on her—my poor Rose! She's got to have somebody to take care of her." He paused a moment, then blurted out abruptly: "I want my money to buy a ring, because I'm going to ask her to be my wife." And he held his young head very high, but he still avoided looking at his mother. "You'd love her, if you knew her as I do," he went on, unconscious that his listener had slipped away. "You'll love her when she's your daughter."

A touch on his hand brought his glance down to see the money proffered, and his mother wiping her eyes softly. Of the things she had thought to say at this time, none now seemed possible to her, least of all any appeal to the boy's father, since the two strong masculine wills clashing could only bring pain and harm—maybe wreck and ruin. She let him go without a word. Yet after he was gone she began some hasty, feverish preparations of her own. Her fingers were all thumbs; she could n't find anything; she could n't see her own face in the glass, for blinding tears that stung and hurt as they welled. Yet, somehow, at long last, she managed to get on her outdoor wear, and was hurrying

toward the little millinery store on the side street before she had fully determined what her errand there was. She thought that perhaps, if she found Miss Heymore at all a womanly person, she would—well, she might say to her, "I am Don Harvey's mother. Did n't you want to meet me? Is n't there something you want to say to me?"

The shop seemed empty as her quiet foot reached the door; but at the sound of her step, there was a movement at the rear. The fluttered, laughing woman who came from behind a Japanese screen that cut off the back portion of the room; to wait on her unwelcome customer, had left in the shelter of its obscurity a visitor to whom she said:

"Just sit here a moment. I'll go out and make short work of that tiresome old dowdy."

She had hated the millinery business always. Avid for pleasure, admiration, and a life of ease, her instinctive outreach for these was toward the other sex; and, furious that she must still work and serve, she had been moved at times to treat with derision the women who were necessarily her sole patrons. To-night, flushed with the wine of triumph, she was a little beyond herself. She still wore the long blue silk cloak, and the big white hat, with its shrouding veil, was pushed back and hung on her shoulders like the head-gear of a little girl at play.

At Rose Heymore's first appearance down the long, dim room, Mrs. Harvey saw painfully good reason for her son's infatuation; then, staring into the face that met her own across the counter, Don's mother revised her impressions. Not a day under thirty, its shallow prettiness already scored with mean and peevish lines, an artificial bloom upon her cheeks, a dry, metallic tint to the spreading coiffure. Oh, something must be done to make the boy see this woman as she really was!

"Well, what do you want?" prompted Rose, as the new-comer continued to regard her with a steady, appraising gaze.

Mrs. Harvey stood silent, a small, stubborn figure. So many thoughts, questions, apprehensions, surged in her mind, that she found no words in which to reply, even to a second demand, uttered on a shriller note. Looking at the other, she felt that what she had hoped to be able to say was almost ludicrously impossible.

"You—you might show me some hats," she temporized.

At the suggestion, sudden rage took the milliner. She knew this type of customer—every piece of headgear in the house could be pulled down, spread upon the counters, tried upon the gray-tressed head, and pushed aside, no purchase made, while the proprietor's own highly interesting affairs waited.

"Not if I know myself, old lady!" was Rose Heymore's mental declaration of war. "Some hats?" she echoed insolently. "How many do you generally wear?"

She tittered at her own wit. The proprietor of the hairdressing portion of the establishment, coming in at the instant, offered her an audience. Masonic glances and signals passed between the two shop-women.

Mrs. Harvey, still half benumbed by the size and imminence of the problem, still studying the milliner only with a view of finding some avenue of understanding to the real woman, noted nothing, till Miss Heymore, approaching with a large red and black picture hat, made as though to remove her customer's headgear and substitute it. Mrs. Harvey drew back.

"I never wear red, or anything loud like that," she said quietly.

Both women laughed long and heartily, as though at an exquisite jest.

"Well, I should think not!" said the milliner, ceasing, her eyes bright with anger. "This hat requires a pompadour to rest on. You would have to have some hair before you could wear such a handsome thing to any advantage. Jen, I think the lady's your customer—not mine. You sell her about 'steen pounds of hair, and then maybe I can fit her with a hat."

She brought the words out with the gusto of a wrangling kitchen-maid. As though to punctuate her speech, the screen at the back of the room crashed over flat on the floor, and a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow strode across it, setting his ruthless foot upon its trumpery decorations as he came, and Don lined up beside his mother. It was like a battle-ship going into action to aid a distressed tug. His deep tones, guttural with rage, boomed through the room.

"Miss Heymore, do you think that's the way to speak to my mother?"

"Your mother!" shrieked the milliner. "Oh, Don, don't be mad at me! I did n't know who she was. Oh, Don, I'm so sorry!"

"You said you knew her." The boy spoke with a sudden clearing of vision, an impersonal stare at his charmer. "You told me you knew her, and you quoted some poetry about her hair, when I said it was the nicest gray hair I ever saw."

"Yes, but when she came in that way, I did n't. It was Jennie laughed at her;" and Rose Heymore turned helplessly to her associate.

"Jennie laughed!" echoed Don; then with a boy's brutality: "I reckon I know that giggle of yours. Why, you told me—not five minutes ago, you said—that my mother was your ideal of womanhood, and that her s'silver locks formed an aureole about her brow. I guess that did n't go with any of your hats. Come on, Mother. If you're ready, I am."

He had scowled down at them all from his man's height, studying the figure of her whom he had found so fascinating but so few moments

ago. Where now were the graces that had ensnared him? Of course she painted—anybody with eyes could see that. Of course she lied—he had just been hearing it. Of course she cared nothing about himself, except that such a marriage would patch up her social standing; and he would have a little money when he was twenty-one—she knew that—he had told her. All at once, something bleak but salutary blew over the boy's heart and quenched the flickering torch of a false Eros.

"Come, Mother," he repeated more gently. "I'll take you home."

At the door, he turned, looked long and steadily at the woman who still followed, dabbing imaginary tears from her eyes and volleying explanations. These he cut across with an abrupt "Good-by, Miss Heymore." And both women knew that the words were intended to be final. One of them—that one who had struggled with the turbulent, resolute baby Don—was aware that they were certain to be eternal.

While they remained in the shop, Don's attitude had been hostile, menacing almost. The boyish voice rang out loud and defiant. He spoke rapidly, as though afraid that if he hesitated he should break down and not speak at all. When they were out on the street and going home, he strode so fast that the little mother had twice to check and remind him. Then he was all penitence and called himself names.

"I—I forgot you, Mother," he said awkwardly. "I was thinking about that woman back there, and how cruel it is that such people—I wish I'd——"

He faltered into moody silence, his eyes on the pavement; and thereafter Mrs. Harvey mutely kept pace with his long stride as best she could. But when that haven of the vanquished and heartsick—home—was reached, Don followed his mother upstairs to her own room, and, as she dropped into her little rocker by the window, flung himself down on his knees beside her and hid his face in her lap.

It had to come. She was glad to be there to soothe the tumult of her boy's pain, which was mingled with a sort of terror. Short, difficult sobs interrupted his speech, such as she had not heard from Don since babyhood.

"The awful thing about it is to think that they're all like that," he said, raising a tear-disfigured face to his mother's. "They look so beautiful, and they seem so good, and they make you feel as if the world was—they make you feel as if you could just do anything for them—and then they turn out to be like that—that!"

"Oh, no, not all of them, Don—not many of them," his mother whispered, laying her cheek against his, smoothing down the ruffled hair. "You feel dreadfully hurt now, dear; but after it's been over longer, you'll remember that there are plenty of good women in the world; and love, when it comes to you, will bring happiness instead of pain."

Don flinched and crimsoned at the word, as though she had mentioned sacred mysteries.

"It does—it ought to—ought n't it, Mother?" he faltered huskily. "There's Father and you—I'm sure you're everything to each other—but, then, I can't have anybody that's perfect, like you are."

It was a blunt boy's clumsy compliment. Martha Harvey closed her eyes before the sweetness of it, and shivered a little. In the years of comradeship between herself and this man-child of hers, she had been building up in his heart, it seemed, an ideal; and now he thought her perfect. It made her feel like praying—or weeping. Instead, she laughed a little, very tenderly and softly, patting his head, whispering to him:

"There'll come a time, dear, when you'll find her. She'll be the one perfect woman then." There was a bit of a gulp, like a boy over a stone-bruise at this, and then the little woman went gallantly on: "She'll be your standard of perfection, Don; and God send that I've brought up my boy to win such a woman and be worthy of her!"



## THE GOOSE THAT LAID GOLDEN EGGS

(Revised)

By *Ellis O. Jones*

**A** CERTAIN Man had a Goose which laid him a Golden Egg every day. A foolish friend advised him to kill the Goose and realize at once on the future.

"No," said the man; "that is not the proper way. I know a better." Thereupon he organized a company and issued stocks and bonds which he sold at a good round figure. Then he gave out the report that the Goose had quit laying. This enabled him to buy the stock back at a low figure. Then he gave out the report that the Goose was laying two Eggs a day, which enabled him again to sell the stock at a big advance. After he had repeated this process a number of times, he was so rich that he did n't care what the Goose laid or when. Accordingly, he invested his wealth in gilt-edged securities, journeyed abroad, and went in for art.



# THE VACANT FORTY

*By Paul Lee Ellerbe*

AT noon Cranston stood at the door of his house and looked wearily towards the distant, snow-crowned mountains. Gloriously they stretched themselves before him, in all gradations of exquisite blue and white. He knew every slightest indentation of that serrated line, from the cone of Pike's Peak on the left to the sugar-loaf of Long's on the right. Steadfast, rigid, eternal, the line had never changed. Storms of snow and dust had shut it out; the seasons had splashed it with a thousand dyes; clouds had hung about it their filmy scarfs or swallowed it up in swirling gray; but ever when these things passed, the calm, cold face Mount Evans made stared straight up to heaven in the old way, and the Tudor castle farther south stood sharp against the sky immutably. During the hard, bitter months Cranston had found comfort there, in the West.

But now he looked unseeingly. He spoke aloud to himself, and his voice shook.

"It's no use. I'm done for. It's the hospital first and then the grave. I can't help it. It has been a hard fight, but I guess this is the end. And God knows I'm *tired!*"

He swayed and bent in the grasp of a deep-set, persistent cough, and the crimson spots on his sunken cheeks grew brighter. When it passed, he trembled and gasped, and seated himself on the ground beside a clump of cactus he had never found time and strength to remove. His well-worn clothes offered indifferent protection from the prairie wind. The full blaze of the autumn sun was grateful to his shrunken frame, and he warmed himself in its rays.

Pulling over his eyes the brim of the old flapping hat he wore, he reviewed the lamentable past.

He thought soberly that the thing had been foredoomed to failure. A prairie homestead five miles from anywhere, and neither health, experience, nor money—they might have known better, he and Mary. They had reached a desperate pass in Denver, but this was worse. Denver, he thought, was almost the hardest place in the world to get work, especially if one was ill.

He went grimly over the days he had spent there, fighting for a foothold: rising each morning with a little less hope; facing each night a

surer defeat; until at last he was beaten, and he knew he was beaten, and every one he talked to knew it, and he could not have sold silver dollars for ninety-five cents.

When a small check had come from home—the last, they wrote him, that it would be possible to send—he and Mary had decided to enter the land. They had often talked about it before, and there had been plenty of reasons for each to give the other why they should go where they could be together all the time and away forever from the wretched boarding-houses to which their poverty had reduced them in the city.

On his claim he had had constructed the simplest form of house, a dugout—which is a cellar beneath a pointed roof. Only the roof projected above the ground. Each of the two rooms obtained its light from the window set in the gable end. One entered the door through a kind of pit, protected by an overhanging roof. Rather a cosy little place, the storm-tossed couple had thought it when they moved in. And, indeed, they would have been happy there, for a strong love held between them, and they were young; but the money had slipped away, and Cranston had not had strength for the work.

He had grown fond of the prairie: of the sunrises over the level miles of featureless monotony; the sunsets behind the friendly hills; the hour before dark, when the range in solemn, purple mystery stood out against the orange sky; the calm, majestic nights; the little wandering winds, laden with clean, sweet odors, as full of mystery as the tang of the sea. He had caught in its fullness the love of life, and had worked to win. Early and late he had toiled, far beyond his strength. He had told himself he would rest in the winter. If he made one good crop, he could afford to rest. One good crop! He had staked everything he had on it, praying for rain. Heart and soul, he had played the game; and now, as he sat in the sun, the winter coming on, he said to himself that he had lost. The rain had not come. He remembered some one's summing up of homesteading a few days before, when he had been to town for supplies.

"The government," the man had said, "bets the homesteader one hundred and sixty acres of land against sixteen dollars and his time that he will starve to death in five years."

The government had won. His corn was dead to the roots; the sun had burned it like a flame. In the dugout there was fifty-two dollars and thirty-five cents, and this was his total capital. He had cut a little wild hay by the dry bed of the creek, and had managed to extract a few loads of shrivelled potatoes from the thrice-baked soil. For these he had given, he believed, his life. For the second time, he looked at death, and he was wondering how he could get his wife away.

"The sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep," he muttered.

He remembered wistfully the doctor's dictum that good food, rest, and peace would restore him even now. The stars were about as easy to get, he

thought, and rose stiffly to go in out of the wind, which was growing colder.

But from the west came a cloud of dust, golden in the sun, and he waited to see who travelled at the heart of it.

The road that led to Cranston's place was two faint tracks across the prairie sod. The real road—which it joined about a mile to the south—was an affair of some seven pairs of deep ruts, cut by countless wheels and heavily overlaid with dust. At the junction a vehicle drawn by two horses emerged from the cloud. Even at that distance, Cranston knew it at once. Every one knew it. It belonged to Al Jones. Once, long ago, it had served as stage between Sagebrush and a place of mushroom growth and duration, whose reason for existence had been summed up in its American name of Enterprise. Some five years before, Enterprise had been carted away, mayor, aldermen, and every plank and nail, and Al's stage was probably its only monument. A driver of recognized ability, as an orthographist and æsthete Al left much to be desired. His vehicle displayed the legend:

**ENTERPRISE**  
**AL. JONE'S HAK**

and he had chosen for its coloring the vilest shade of yellow in the world. However, little of the paint remained, and his passengers were not as a rule sensitive on the other score.

As Al drove up now, Cranston saw that two men occupied the rear seat. After a bit, he knew one of them for Willets, a real-estate man from Sagebrush. Just for a moment he entertained the hope that Willets had come to buy his relinquishment, but almost immediately he realized its futility. Only irrigated land was being sold in that part of the county. A new ditch had been constructed to water the land eight or ten miles farther east, and Willets was probably going there, with a customer.

The real-estate agent and his companion got down as Jones stopped his team.

“Hello, Cranston!” said Willets. “Hope you and the missis are well. Dr. Allen, shake hands with Mr. Cranston.”

The two shook hands tentatively. One of them did not like a certain unctuous consequentiality displayed in the clothes and bearing of the other, who, in turn, wondered if this ragged, ill-looking fellow was really the kind of person to whom a man of wealth and standing should be expected to extend the greeting of an equal.

“We thought likely your good wife could fix us up on the dinner proposition,” said the agent cheerfully. “The Doctor and I are going over to take a look at a piece of land under the Rattlesnake Ditch.”

Cranston flushed painfully under his coat of tan, but neither of them

noticed it. It was impossible to avoid giving dinner to people who passed that way, for they could get it nowhere else. Since he and Mary had become so desperately poor, they had been compelled to allow those who offered to do so to pay for what they got. Cranston remembered a week when they had lived on the small amount made in this way. The money he had was scarcely sufficient to enable him to carry out his plans for his wife, and, come what would, he could not waste *any* of it. There was very little food in the house: if these men ate, he must let them pay, however much he might dislike the transaction.

"Yes," said Cranston awkwardly. "Come in. I'll speak to my wife."

They followed him into the dugout, Dr. Allen with the air of a man approaching a lunch-counter, where it is an affectation to uncover one's head. Cranston looked round and saw him.

"My hat-rack," he said, "is a makeshift, but you will find it just behind the door, Dr. Allen."

Dr. Allen bowed ponderously, cleared his throat, and removed his hat.

"Mary," said Cranston, as his wife came to meet them, "these gentlemen wish to dine with us. I believe you know Mr. Willets. Allow me to present Dr. Allen."

"How do you do? How do you do, Mr. Willets? Of course you want dinner—there's nowhere else to get it. I only wish I could manage to give you a good one. But you will remember that I would if I could, won't you? Henry, is it possible that we have any canned things left?"

"I am afraid not," said Cranston, smiling and shaking his head.

"Never mind," she continued. "You will get a good supper to-night at Sagebrush. They say the new hotel is quite wonderful."

"Henry, have you really left Mr. Jones sitting out there with the horses! Go and get him at once."

She carried it off with a high hand, gaily and with complete success. Cranston told himself there was no one like her, and he vowed anew that he would devote the brains and the strength that were left him to cutting away the worthless hulk of his existence from her strong young life.

Mrs. Cranston seated her guests as far as possible from the stove in the little room that served her humble household for all purposes except sleeping, and while she prepared dinner managed to talk to them about the things they liked.

She served a meagre repast upon a small, deal table; but she served it daintily upon blue china and a cloth of snowy white. Dr. Allen talked loudly and rudely, but charmingly she bore him down, until his pompous insolence softened into friendliness before her buoyant courtesy; and a certain dangerous gleam in Cranston's blue eyes and ominous tightening of the muscles of his haggard mouth disappeared and he smiled.

During the course of the dinner, Dr. Allen talked a good deal about his own affairs.

"Ir-ri-gation, mad-am," he said, dividing his syllables with dignity and emphasis, "is a stu-pen-dous thing faw the West."

Then he took a loud sip of coffee, demanded attention by a mighty clearing of his throat, and fixed his eyes seriously upon Willets, who wagged approval as the moneyed man continued:

"This pro-ject that my good friend Willets is fostering, if the right kind of pro-gres-sive men get behind it, by putting water upawn these barrun acres, will make the desert blossom like the rose. If I decide to take a-holt of this thing, our ditch will water all this part of the county."

Cranston started, and his heart—which, after all, was young still—leaped within him. But Willets scowled, and it was plain to see that he kicked the financier under the table, for Dr. Allen hastily added:

"That is, of course, all this part of the county east of Rattlesnake Crick. Mr. Willets will tell you that the way the land lays on this side the crick would pro-hib-it its in-clusion within the scope of our op-er-rations."

"Yes, yes," said Willets. "The crick itself is east of here, and all the land slopes east from the crick. Could n't get any water here from Rattlesnake. It's up-hill all the way."

Cranston made no reply, but he watched Willets narrowly, and talked to Al Jones about the new hotel. He knew quite well that no water could be put on his place from Rattlesnake Creek, but he pondered Allen's obvious slip.

As soon as the meal was over, the real-estate man was apparently eager to be gone. Cranston determined that the unpleasant task of receiving payment should not devolve upon his wife, but when he had screwed his courage to the sticking-point, she forestalled him.

"It is too bad," she said frankly to Willets, "that Henry and I did n't make a crop. You see, everything failed, and we are compelled to let people pay for dinner when they stop here. Some day, when things are better, I hope all three of you will come and dine with us, as our guests."

And so the seventy-five cents was paid. Willets, who had been on the point of offering it, was immensely relieved, and so was every one else.

As Cranston watched the faded yellow stage take its eastward way, he thought bitterly of the money Dr. Allen would make by handing Willets a check, and of the failure of his own struggle for existence. Jones was driving across the prairie to gain the road again. At the top of the rolling hill he stopped his horses. Sharply defined against the brilliant blue of the eastern sky, the battered old vehicle took on new life in the glare of the sun. It stood motionless for some time. Willets was pointing, with outstretched arm, from the rear seat. Then he got down, and Cranston saw him tie his handkerchief to one of the rear wheels.

"By George!" he murmured, "they are going to measure that land."

As he spoke, he caught the flash of something in Sanderson's hand, and guessed it a compass. The horses started slowly south. Willets's head, thrust well out of the vehicle, was clean-cut against the sky. Cranston knew he was counting the revolutions of the marked wheel, and stepped quickly back out of sight, trembling from the excitement within him. A fierce rage took hold of him.

"The fat old scoundrel," he said aloud, "is going to put a desert filing on the land at my very door. If he does, it will be because the ditch is going there. Willets lied. They can't put water there from the Rattlesnake, of course; but how about Sunset Creek in the west? With water on that land, it will be worth fifty dollars an acre, and here I am, dying like a fool for the lack of a little money!"

With his head in a whirl, he went in quickly, to sit down and think it over. He found the table cleared and his wife bending over a large, hand-made map spread out upon it.

"I was just going to call you," she said; and Cranston saw that she too was a-quiver with eagerness. "Look at this, quick. Mr. Willets must have dropped it. He had a lot of papers in his pocket. When I picked it up the string came off, and I saw here your name—'Cranston'—do you see?—on this brown spot.

"It's a map of the land his ditch is going to irrigate. All the homesteads are colored brown, and all the desert land is blue. And here's the line of his ditch. Look! Mr. Willets was not telling the truth! The water is not to come from Rattlesnake Creek at all, but from the west—from Sunset Creek!"

"I always said it could be done," said Cranston, looking at the map intently. He tried to be quiet, but his voice broke in spite of himself. "It was I who first suggested the thing to Willets. Almost *all* the land he is going to water lies east of us. To get his ditch over the hill, he's got to bring it through the vacant forty acres north of us (and he and Allen are driving over that now), or else—else"—he commenced to cough—"or else through our land," he gasped out. "The forty is lower than our place. If they file on it and take the ditch through it, it might as well be a hundred miles away, so far as we are concerned, for we could not get water from it. If we had the forty, we would control the only outlet and could make them pay for a right-of-way: our land and the forty together form the gateway of their whole district.

"How has he marked the forty? Look at this, Mary: 'Dr. Allen?' He has a question-mark after it. He did n't know whether Dr. Allen would file on it or not. Well, by Heaven, Dr. Allen won't file! *I* am going to file—now. I can drive to Sagebrush and catch the three-o'clock train. It is slow, but it will get me to the land-office at Center in time to file to-day. I will pick up witnesses who know the land at Sagebrush. If I could make the drive over to Buffalo on the other railroad, I could

save an hour; there's a train about three from there that gets into Center in forty-five minutes; but Tony could not make it.

"If only this were Eldredge's day with the mail! With his fast team, he could take me into Center before either train. He knows the land as well as I do, and could act as one witness, and Tanner, the grocer in Center, could be the other. Eldredge often makes the trip without the mail, if any one wants to go, and he may pass to-day, but it would n't do to count on him.

"I must drive to Sagebrush myself. It's our last chance. It will take about half the money we have left, but if we win we can hold this place, and we can live."

"Shall I go with you?" she said, a little anxiously; for he looked too ill to make the trip alone. She would have liked to go in his place, but she knew he would never consent, and wisely she wasted no words.

"No, dear," he said. "I can travel faster without you. Besides, you must be here to return the map. Willets is sure to miss it and stop for it on his way back. If we were both gone and they could not find the map, they would suspect something at once.

"Thank Heaven, they have to go back to Sagebrush with Jones! If they went on to Buffalo and caught the fast train, I would have no chance.

"Tie up the map as it was, and pretend you did n't find it. I think I'd drop it behind the door, where they hung their coats."

"I'll manage all that," she replied. "But hurry. I'll help you hitch up. And for my sake, my darling, be careful. We've nothing left, you and I, but each other. All the land in the county would n't pay for another break-down. You must take no chances with my happiness."

Cranston put his arms very tenderly about her, wondering if even she knew how the sun of his world rose and set in her clear, frank eyes.

Hitching up was a matter of a few minutes, and he was soon in the seat of his light wagon, and on his way to Sagebrush. As he topped the last rise that allowed a view of the little roof of his dwarf home, he caught a glimpse of the big yellow stage slowly completing its survey of the vacant forty. And then he touched his little horse with the whip, and both of them settled to the task before them.

It was a perfect afternoon. Long's Peak stood up magnificently and took the light like the robe of Gallahad. The brilliant sun burned hard and clear, checkering the vast landscape with calcium brightness and big purplish shadows of clouds; setting a-glitter the fragments of mica on every little rolling hill.

A light wind sang pleasantly in Cranston's ears. But he did not hear it. He did not see a little desert lark, with delicately poised wings, that skimmed just ahead of him for a mile or more, a scant three inches from the ground, sailing with wonderful accuracy in one of the ruts of the road. Even an antelope, scarcely less fleet upon its delicate, twinkling

feet than the bird itself, went by unnoticed, gliding under the lowest wires of the fences like a graceful ghost and rapidly fading away into the neutral-tinted prairie.

The great plains about him and the folk who dwelt thereon received none of Cranston's attention, because Tony, his little horse, was favored with it all.

Tony was accustomed to take his own gait on his journeys to and fro. He left the dugout at a brisk, distance-devouring trot, and his master kept him at it steadily for a mile. Then, wishing to relax a bit and loaf along as usual, he found, to his surprise, that more speed was demanded. And so he bent to the work and rattled at an ever increasing pace over the dusty road, and trotted into town a wet and weary little steed.

Cranston had been able to do a kindly thing or two for Al Jones, in spite of his own ill plight, and so the liveryman's stable was ever at his disposal. He left Tony there as quickly as he could, and by dint of half an hour's vigorous search succeeded in finding two men who knew the land he wished to enter, and who would go with him as witnesses.

When he sat with them at last in the train, holding three blue round-trip tickets in one hand and mopping his forehead with the other, he was consumed with weariness. His cheeks burned ominously, and during the hour's ride he coughed without cessation. But his eyes were clear and steadfast, and his mouth was resolute. He lay back most of the way, scarcely able to speak to his companions.

With rough sympathy, they helped him off when the train stopped at Center. The land office occupied half of a little low white building, the front of which was Tanner's grocery store. It was plainly visible at the end of the wide street, sitting, indeed, in the middle thereof.

Cranston led the way along a dirt sidewalk, flanked by a little ditch that furnished water, in season, to the meagre gardens of the town, and overhung with cottonwoods that dropped their broken branches and twigs after the manner of their kind.

As he approached his goal he walked faster and faster, and his excitement increased. The town was very quiet in the clear light of afternoon. An inquiring hen, a shaggy, nondescript dog, one of whose remote relations had been a collie, and three or four people were the only things stirring in the streets. The rest of the population were at the depot, or indoors. Within half a block of the land office the three passed near Center's little hotel, called, of course, The Commercial House.

"Well, if there ain't Willets!" said one of Cranston's companions. "Thought he druv over this morning to'rds the new reservoy."

The name cut like a pain. Cranston stopped short and clutched the board fence tightly, as he stared at two men on the porch of the hotel. They were Willets and Dr. Allen. As he looked, the real-estate man held open the door and passed into the house after the portly figure of his



customer. Cranston stood for a few seconds, blankly gazing. Then his hope surged up again. Perhaps they had just come.

"Quick!" he said sharply. "Willets and I are after the same piece of land;" and he strode rapidly over the remaining half-block and into the land office.

"Hello, Turner!" he said in a tense, hard voice, to the receiver who came forward to meet him. "Will you tell me, please, if a desert-filing was put on the forty acres south of my place to-day? Here's the description."

Turner glanced at the piece of paper and sympathetically at the broken young homesteader before him.

"It was entered to-day," he said. "Hope you didn't want it, Cranston. My deputy took the filing while I was out. I didn't notice the name. Do you want to know who it was?"

"No," replied Cranston absently. "I know already. Thank you, Turner;" and he turned and stumbled blindly out into the glory of the setting sun. On the sidewalk he pulled himself up as best he could and faced his failure.

"It was good of you fellows to come with me," he said mechanically. "I am not well. I think I shall have to go somewhere and lie down awhile. We'll all have supper at the hotel, though, and go back—go back— When is the next train?"

"Why, at eight o'clock," they said wonderingly.

"Yes; that's it. We'll go back at eight o'clock. I'm going to lie down now."

He walked slowly back to the hotel, making no effort to think, all his mind intent upon securing rest. There was no immediate need of appraising the future. No hope remained in it, and no change would come. An hour's rest might enable him to take this knowledge quietly.

He went into the lobby and sat down in the first chair, intending to ask for a room in a moment; but Dr. Allen, who was standing by the stove, advanced towards him, extending a fat, newly warmed hand, and said, with an expansive smile:

"I con-gratulate you, Mr. Cranston. You see, I bear no malice. You are a very for-tu-nate man. And your wife is really wonderful."

Cranston clutched the arms of his chair and got slowly upon his feet.

"You old scoundrel!" he said with stinging emphasis. "You—you——" He struggled to hold it back, but his cough came convulsively, and in spite of himself he fell back into the chair and fought for breath.

Dr. Allen stood with open mouth and hand still outstretched, and watched him. At last Cranston conquered his weakness. Concentrating all his strength for the effort, he was on the point of expressing himself as explicitly and forcibly as his strength would permit, when the inner door opened, and there before his burning eyes, as though she were a

vision sent to comfort him; radiant with happiness, though covered with dust; bright-eyed and triumphant, in spite of disarray, stood his wife.

She came quickly to him, sat upon the arm of his chair, and put her hand on his shoulder. Her look told him that she longed to put her arms around him and comfort him.

“My poor boy!” she said. “What a time you have had! But it’s all right now. They came on the train from Buffalo, but I came with Mr. Eldredge, who passed our place, after all. Here’s their check for three hundred dollars for a right-of-way through the homestead, and all the land can be watered. I filed on the vacant forty.”



## OF MELODIES UNHEARD

(To John Keats)

BY MAHLON LEONARD FISHER

“**H**EARDED melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
 Are sweeter” ?—then, O Poet of All Time,  
 How sweet it is with thee, where endless rhyme  
 More softly flows than faery-tides unstirred;  
 Where, all day long, no hint of half-spoke word,  
 However lyric, falls on listless ears,  
 And the hushed rains, more tenderly than tears,  
 Drip near the nest of some unvocal bird!

Yet all arch-harmonies are there, and thou,  
 That knewest such, needs sense them in thy sleep,  
 And have sweet cognizance of seas where creep  
 The pristine Ships of Song, whose every prow  
 Doth cleave the Waves of Singing silence-crowned—  
 Lest some loud oar awake thee with a sound.

# AUNTIE JANE'S REMINISCENCES

*By Dr. Charles C. Abbott*

“**J**OHN, Henry, William, Ellis, Peter, Daniel, and little Anthony—and then came me. Folks used to say Father had a fine family o’ boys and Poor Jane. I s’pose they were tired o’ havin’ babies.”

Saying this, Jane Gilberthorpe smiled as well as her wrinkled face could change, shifted her needles, and commenced knitting again—but only for a moment, for she soon gathered her thoughts and went on with her reminiscences.

“Just as though one girl was one too many! One day I heard one o’ the neighbors say, speakin’ o’ me, that I was like the boards and bricks left over after the house was built—not much account. I never somehow could forget them words, and yet I could n’t see what they meant; but now, turned o’ eighty, it’s plainer. They’re all gone, and here am I, good for nothin’. Them things that’s least account, you know, never get lost or broken, and it’s what we set most store by that’s soonest taken from us.”

For a few moments Aunt Jane rocked slowly in her old chair and half closed her eyes.

“When I was a bit of a girl,” she continued, “somehow I was only in the way, and got pushed into the corner. It was n’t that any one was real unkind, but only too busy just then to bother with me; but I grew up, spite o’ all, and not one of the boys but found me helpful when they’d families o’ their own. I’ve no real cause o’ complaint, but somehow, when I get to thinkin’ things over, it seems to me they might ’a’ been different.

“The folks used to laugh when, at last, I’d a young man droppin’ in o’ evenin’s, but, spite o’ all, it would ’a’ come to somethin’ had n’t some folks talked too much, and, tellin’ what was n’t so, spoilt all for me. How folks can deliberately lie and murder a neighbor’s peace o’ mind and go unpunished, I can’t see. There’s trouble enough for ’em if they murder a neighbor outright, as if peace o’ mind was n’t somethin’ to consider. But, then, why tell all about it now, when everybody’s dead and gone, and better all round what I could tell should die with me!”

“But tell me about that young man,” I urged. “It will do no harm.”

“Nor no good. Ephraim was a well-built lad, and, what was better ’n

good looks, he would look you right in the face and say straight out what he had in mind. I don't mean to say he was handsome-like, for he was n't, but his face was good. To be sure, his hair was sort o' red, and his nose spread out like, and there was freckles; but then them eyes o' his made up for it all. I can see 'em yet. He sort o' did n't look at you, but into you, and it was the real thought talkin' to what you thought all the time. You could n't 'a' fooled him, had you tried. He was a risin' farmer at the time, and more 'n one, seein' that, considered his money more 'n an offset to his looks and set their caps. I had the lead, much to everybody's wonder, when Abigail Taylor said she always heard I was n't all right and the family all said so, and that the doctor shook his head when he heard about Ephraim, and said it all so she knew it would get to Eph's ears, and, sure enough, he fell off comin'. I was broke up about it, but too proud to let on, and then sickness came on me, and when I pulled together again and got around I was n't much more 'n a shadow, they said.

"It was all fixed between Abigail and Ephraim, and I was plucky enough to congratulate him one day, but what I said and what I thought did n't gee very well.

"Ten years after—oh, it was a long wait—Ephraim called at brother Henry's, where I was livin' then, and said to me, when nobody was 'round, 'Jane, I've been a fool!'

"'Just found it out, Eph?' says I. You see, Ephraim was a widower now, and it sort o' come to me he was tryin' to make up after all these years.

"'Yes,' says Eph. 'I was a fool. Such a life as I led!'

"'You should n't say nothin' again' the dead,' says I.

"'It 's so,' says Eph, 'I should n't, but Jane—'

"Here I did n't let him go on, but says I, 'Eph, I can't take up with a fool in my old age, whatever I might 'a' done when I was younger.'

"Now, you ought to have seen Eph look. But his wits come to him in time, and says he, 'Why, Jane, I never asked you nothin'.'

"Sure enough, comin' to think of it, he had n't, and it's a puzzle to me to this day how I happened to say out what I did. I s'pose I really was so wishin' he would speak that I got the notion he had, but la! it's almost fifty years ago, and here am I, turned o' eighty, still a-wonderin'."

Auntie Jane's was no longer the tireless tongue of younger womanhood. I was fortunate to have learned what I did. For a full half-hour I left her to herself, and then ventured to ask one more question:

"So, then, Ephraim was the only man in the world for you?"

"Yes, the only one. Anyhow, no one else ever came, but I think now that was 'cause my brothers frightened 'em off. I was always wanted to look after their babies. Ephraim tried once more—I think, to make me change my mind and marry him, even if he was once a fool.

"He happened in one Sunday afternoon. It was a May day, and the apple-trees all a-bloomin'."

"'Jane,' says he, after some ramblin' talk, 'I don't see why, because our partners are took away early, a man need to be mis'erable the rest of his days.'

"'Nor I, Ephraim,' says I.

"'Then, Jane, why not——'

"'No, Eph,' says I, pert-like, like a sassy child; and Eph, he got up out o' that garden bench, real red in the face, and walked down the path, never sayin' even good-by.

"I watched him a-goin' for a minute and then could n't stand it no longer. 'Eph!' I called, but he did n't stop. 'Eph! Eph!' I called louder, 'come back a minute!' but he just walked on out o' sight.

"I waited pretty near all summer for Eph to come back, but he did n't, so says I one day to brother Henry, 'I'm goin' to Daniel's for a visit.' They been a-askin me to come, and I went; and here I am with Daniel's children, and my next movin' will be my last one. I never saw Ephraim again. Now, sometimes, when I'm sittin' by the fire, and when it's spring and the apples is in bloom, sometimes I can see Ephraim walkin' down that path and can 'most hear myself callin' to him. But la! here am I, an old, worn-out woman, and talkin' in this way. I had n't ought to do it."



## EVERYDAY PHILOSOPHY

A PROFIT is not without honor in this country.

THE time to give a man taffy is before it's time to give him his epitaphy.

PESSIMISM is often the outcome of insufficient income to make a man optimistic.

THE man with last year's automobile is more likely to feel out-of-date than the man with last year's horse and buggy.

AMONG the greatest fools on earth are the miser who saves all of his money, and the spendthrift who does n't save any.

SOME men who drop nickels into the contribution-basket at church carry away more religion than some others who drop dollars.

*William J. Burtscher*

# THE LITTLE HOUSE

*By Annette Thackwell Johnson*

THERE by the roadside, with a peepul tree on one side of the gate and a clump of bamboos on the other, surrounded by a garden typically Indian, lay the little house—quaint, silent, deserted.

Often on my early morning rides I had looked at it and longed to know its story. That it had one, I was sure. Romance had been there! Behind those fine old veranda pillars and out there in the garden, love had perhaps walked hand in hand with sorrow. Had it been worth while? What was the story?

I strove to forget it, but, whatever my resolve in the morning when we left our bungalow, with Bobs's head firmly turned in the direction of the parade-grounds where fashion aired itself, before the ride was over we invariably found ourselves approaching the little house. Bobs would slow down his pace to a walk, and I would look and look at the old deserted garden and the white pillared veranda—look and look, and wonder! Once I thought I saw the laughing face of a girl peeping out at me from behind the big bushes of jessamine; sometimes I imagined that I heard the sound of sobs. Always I felt the call—the call of the little house. Who had built it? How came it there, so far from the station where the English lived—five miles, at least, in the heart of the Doon? And then, why was it deserted?

The road leading to it was very beautiful, winding through five miles of one of the most picturesque valleys in the world. Clumps of feathery bamboo and tallow trees bordered it; on either side lay prosperous-looking tea-plantations; above were the Himalayas, magnificently close. What a spot in which to dream—and love!

I pictured Her young, with dark, curling hair and deep, wistful dark eyes—graceful, dainty! She must have looked just so when she peeped at Him from behind the clumps of jessamine. She would laugh and dare him to chase her, and then she would run—I could see her, catching up her dress in front to keep from tripping. And He, when he would catch her—doubtless he made her very happy! But it had not lasted, for the bungalow was deserted now.

What was He like? I had no picture of him—nothing but the shadowy form of a man—stretching out his arms.

It was in March when I began to dream about the house and the garden. Always I saw Her walking with bent head, and hands locked in front—beside her an indistinct figure. I could smell the scent of the jessamine and the roses as she brushed the flowers aside and looked up at Him with piteous, suffering eyes. What was it? *What was it?*

One morning, as we approached the house, Bobs stopped, and I *koihaied* [called]. Obedient to my summons, from the back of the building appeared a decrepit gardener, whose presence on the premises accounted for the thrifty condition of the roses, marigolds, and jessamine.

I explained that both my horse and I were thirsty.

"If the *mem-sahib* will honor our habitation by descending," he salaamed respectfully, "the *ayah* will attend to her, while I promise that the horse shall receive every care."

"How does it come that so deserted a place can boast of an *ayah* and a *mali*?" I inquired of the ancient woman who immediately presented herself.

"Ah, *mem-sahib*, we have been here these twenty-five years, taking care of the old place—just taking care of the old place;" and she wiped her eyes with the corner of her *chudder*.

"I am so tired, *ayah*; may I sit down?"

"If the *mem-sahib* would so condescend," she responded eagerly. So in a moment I was ensconced in a large cane chair beneath the jessamine bushes, with the old woman at my feet. At last I was to hear the story of the little house!

"It was twenty-five years ago, *mem-sahib*," she began, "that we came out here—twenty-five years ago. It was lonely in this part of the Doon, but I did not care, for I had my birdling—my *missie baba*! Yes, *mem-sahib*, she was very beautiful, and her voice was like that of a bulbul in spring!

"Her mother died when she was born (we lived then in the big bungalow near the parade-ground), and her father, the *bara sahib*, employed me to take care of the motherless one. I was her wet-nurse first, and then, when my own baby died, I stayed on as *ayah* for the little miss. The doctor had given her up, *mem-sahiba*, but I saved her!" And the old woman folded her arms triumphantly across her withered breasts that had been life-giving once, years ago! "She loved me also, *mem-sahibje*, she was mine indeed, for had I not cheated death of her? The *sahib* noticed her sometimes, but not often; he mourned and mourned for the *mem-sahib*, her mother.

"We were grand folk in those days, *mem-sahibje*, and the *sahib* was invited out to many *barra khannas* [big dinners], but he always refused to go, and gradually people forgot him.

"Sometimes the ladies whom we met on the parade-ground would

ask me to show them my baby, and they would kiss her and hand her back to me and say, 'A beautiful child, *ayah!* What a pity the *sahib* is bringing her up so badly!'

"That made me weep bitterly, and finally I spoke to the *sahib*. 'Behold, your lordship, your lordship's daughter is growing up, six years old; she should go to school with the lady-*log*. I will speak to the *mem* at the Mission Ka-Iskul, if I am granted permission.'

"The *sahib* said, 'Is she indeed so old? Is she *only* so old? Is it not a hundred years since the light went out of my life?'

"But he let me do as I thought best, *mem-sahib*, and I made arrangements with the mission ladies for my lambkin to go to the Mission Ka-Iskul. The *padri's mem* cried when I told her about my little miss, and came to see the *sahib*, who gave her money so that she might buy the Miss *Sahib's* clothes and send her away. For nine months every year I gave up the apple of my eye; but when she would come home in the winter, so clever, I was so glad and proud that I forgot the bitter darkness of the nine long months when the light of the sun had been withheld from me. She would come dancing into the house, throw her arms around me, and kiss me. She always brought me some gift. These beads, *mem-sahib*, and these anklets and bracelets"—touching them tenderly—"are all from her—my little miss.

"She used to tell me about the wonderful things she learned. My heart would become as wax when she explained about the big seas down Bombay way; and the stars, and about the Christian's God. *Mem-sahiba*, that was the most terrible of all! It seems that there is a great fiery pit where wicked people are to be burned forever and ever! My Miss *Sahib* told me all about it—and how careful she would have to be!

"' *Ayah*, I want you to be good and get to heaven. You must, dear *ayah!*' and she would kiss me and love me.

"I would laugh and pat her head. It was hard for me to understand—these many paths out into the unknown!

"One day the *sahib* called me into his study. He was very white, and he sat there with a letter in his hand.

"' *Ayah*,' he said, 'I have just heard from the principal of the school where the Miss *Sahib* goes. She says that the child has done so well that she ought to be sent to England.'

"My bones turned to water within me. Sent to England! My birdling sent to England!

"'But, *ayah*,' he went on, and his face became even whiter, 'I have no money. The British government has given me my dismissal, and there is almost nothing left.'

"Then the *sahib* put his head down on the desk and sobbed, as a broken man may.

"All the servants had known what was coming. The *sahib* had been



taking opium for many months. The cook had already left, and the others were going.

"I fell on my knees before him, and begged him to let me stay with him and look after my little *missie baba*; but he did not seem to hear me, and by and by I saw that he was very ill. He could neither move nor speak.

"Then I ran out and sent for the doctor *sahib*, who came and helped us to lay the sick man on a bed. Then the doctor sent a *tar Khabar* [telegram] to the Miss *Sahib*. By nightfall my birdling was with us again.

"She had become a woman, *mem-sahibje*, a lovely woman. Only sixteen, and so wise! She went through her father's accounts and settled everything—all his debtors and creditors went to her, while her father lay and stared and stared at the wall. Sometimes his lips would move, but we were never able to make out a word.

"Among those who came to the house to see the Miss *Sahib* about her father's debts was Rugbir Singh. Ah, *mem-sahib*, a lion among men! He was the son of one of the richest natives in the city; he had been sent to England to be educated. Yes, he was very fair. Handsome? Ah, if the *mem* could only have seen him! Six feet tall, with the shoulders of a god! And his eyes! Ah, when those eyes looked at a woman, *mem-sahib*, they burned two holes through her breast! He had been married young, and had three wives in his *zenana*, but he did not care much for them, and was always looking, looking, for something he had never found. He played cricket and polo a great deal with the *sahib log*, for they liked him. He was a sight to restore the blind when he rode on his pony after the ball in the polo game, the end of his turban fluttering victoriously!

"I am an old woman, but even now I do not wonder that when my Miss *Sahib* first saw him she stood as if turned to stone; for as he looked at her his eyes seemed to send out flames that pierced her breast and wrapped themselves about her heart. That was the moment of their nuptials, *mem-sahib*. The gods had made them one!

"She gave him her eyes for an instant, and then she stepped forward. 'Will you see my father?' she asked. His only answer was, 'You!'

"I had learned to understand English, though I was never so impudent as to speak it, and I made up my mind that I would protect my little mistress. But when the gods arrange matters, who are men that they should strive? I strove—but to what purpose?

"He went into the room and helped her lift her father into a more comfortable position; then, after talking a little business with her, and looking at her a great deal, while the color came and went in her cheeks, he left her, and as he went I saw him kiss her hand.

"All evening she sat near her father, with the hand that had been

kissed next her heart. What could I do? I was always there—that was all; but he was always there also, and as the *sahib* was deeply in his debt, no one could send him away.

“After three weeks the *sahib* died, and the *Miss Sahib* was left, so they said, with nothing at all. I had saved a hundred rupees, and went and dug them out of the ground and gave them to the little miss.

“The day after the funeral people began to come. A *mem* came from the cantonments and said that she would take my *Missie Sahib* as her nurse, only she must come without pay, just at first. Oh, *mem-sahib*, *mem-sahib*, I could have spat upon her for wanting my little lady to do *ayah ka-kam* [*ayah's* work]. Then the *padri's mem* came and said:

“‘My dear child, accept the situation, by all means. It may be your salvation. You are too young and pretty to be alone in a world full of pitfalls for the unwary, and you must never see Rugbir Singh again!’

“My *Miss Sahib* turned very pale, and she looked at her and said, ‘Why?’

“‘Because, my dear, he has three wives already, and you are a lady, while he is only a native.’

“After the *padri's mem* had left her, Rugbir came, and my little *Miss Sahib* told him with white lips that she would have to ask him to stop coming, because people were talking about her, and—and——

“Then he stopped her, *mem-sahib*. He took her in his arms and kissed her as a man might kiss a woman he has thirsted for since time began. She put her head on his shoulder and said that she would give up the world for him.

“My poor little *Missie baba!* How little she knew what giving up the world meant!

“*Hai, hai*, it was to be, *mem-sahib*, it was to be! They were mated before the gods; their eyes met and melted into one. He would look and look at her as if she were his lost self. He looked at her, *mem-sahib*, as women dream of being looked at, and as so few men ever look. His eyes were little points of light, touching, boring, gripping down into her soul. He would talk to her, his arm around her, telling her wild, delicious things that sent little shudders through her. She had never heard such things—so few women ever do!

“Well, *mem-sahib*, they tried to get married. They went to every *padri sahib* in the valley, asking to be married, but the *padri sahibs* would become very angry, and say:

“‘How dare you think of such an iniquitous thing? It is impossible to marry a Christian girl to a heathen—a wretched native, with three wives already!’

“Then my *Miss Sahib* spoke up: ‘If I were a *Sikh*, could I marry him, and be his legal wife?’

“‘Yes—according to law.’

“‘Well, in that case, why can I not marry him now? I cannot become a *Sikh*, for I believe in the Christians’ God. I am a Christian.’

“‘You are a wicked woman,’ said the *padri sahib*, ‘and no Christian at all. Live with him, girl, if you want to—at the peril of your soul.’

“The ladies, none of them, spoke to her; nobody came to see her; and Rugbir Singh’s wives in the city were just as angry as the white ladies. You see, Rugbir never went near them any more.

“Then, after a month or so of dreadful misery in the station, her lover brought her out here. The house was an old canal bungalow, and he enlarged it for her use. They were very happy for a while. He would come home to her in the evening, and she would run to meet him; then they would walk down the paths together, while he picked the roses for her. She taught him to play hide-and-seek about the jessamine bushes, and he would catch her. Ah, *mem-sahib*, those two were very near paradise in those days.

“Then, one evening, when he met her he saw that she had been crying. He took her down through the garden until they reached the well, and she sat there with her hand in his. At last she told him. Ah, ah, she was so young, my lambkin. Love had come to her as he comes to few, but she had to pay, *mem-sahib*, she had to pay! We all do.” The old crone wiped her eyes with her withered hand.

“Well, she told him, and I, listening back of the jessamine bushes, heard her with wonder.

“‘You see,’ she said, ‘as long as it was only you and I, it did not matter, but now, Rugbir, my dear, my dear, there is going to be somebody else: a nameless, fatherless child. For its sake, can you not give me your name? For its sake, darling! These people, yours and mine, will be as cruel to it as they are to me. Rugbir, make its path easier!’

“Then he kissed her—he ate her up with his eyes! He told her that he would sell his soul for her—that he would marry her. Surely in all India there must be some one who would marry them! He would go out of the Doon and fetch a *padri*, and his heart’s delight, his own, would be herself once more. So they planned it all, sitting there on the curb of the well. By and by she put her head back on his shoulder, and together they watched the moon rise, while he kissed her fingers one by one, and then—her mouth.

“Ah, *mem-sahib*, I have had three husbands, but love such as that never touched me! As I watched them, my heart burned within me, and I called upon my gods to protect her, that she might not pay the full price of such happiness.

“I watched my lady very carefully those days, for Rugbir’s three wives were very angry. I said nothing about it, but twice I found that

poison had been put in her drinking water. Always I tested it upon the kittens we kept about the place. Once I killed a cobra in her bath-room. I feared for my lady, I feared—how I feared!

“Finally, Rugbir decided that he must go to Saharunpur. He had heard that there was a native Christian *padri* there who might be persuaded to marry them. I suppose, *mem-sahib*, that he meant to make it well worth the fellow’s while. He was going to be gone three days to fetch him.

“How happy and light-hearted my little mistress was when he left! She ran about, arranging the furniture and picking flowers. It was all going to be right, she said, at last.

“I was to sleep in the house, to be near her, but after I ate my dinner that night I fell asleep on the floor of my hut. The other servants had the same thing happen to them. We had all been heavily drugged—two of the men died.

“The first thing of which I was conscious was Rugbir bending over me, pouring cold water on my face, and brandy down my throat, saying:

“‘*Ayah, ayah*, wake up! Where—where is the *mem-sahib*?’

“*Hai, hai!*” and the old woman beat upon her breast, “from that day to this there has never been any sign of our hearts’ delight. A rumor spread in the city that she herself, wearying of Rugbir, had sent him away, and drugged us all, in order to have a chance to escape to England with a colonel *sahib* who used to admire her when her father was living.

“But we, her lord and I, knew differently. We hunted for her everywhere. He even searched the well. There was no sign or sound. For days he was like one mad. With outstretched arms, he walked the garden-paths, crying, ‘My beloved, my beloved, where art thou?’

“He almost expected to have her suddenly appear behind some bush, and put her little hands over his eyes, whispering, ‘Lord of my life, who is it?’

“Within two months his hair and beard were white as snow, and they said in the city that he was mad. His wives wanted him to go back to them, but he never did, and they died without seeing him. The last one was buried only five days ago. They did say that in her delirium—it was cholera—she seemed to see an apparition, and screamed over and over again, ‘Take her away, take her away! Who let her out?’ What could she have meant, *mem-sahib*?

“My master has paid me to watch here all these years. He comes but seldom now. It grieves him so, he says. He is to be here to-day, for the outside bedroom wall has begun to give way, and the workmen are to tear down part of it, in order to repair it properly. I think I hear them now, *mem-sahib*, on the other side of the house. Let us go and see.”

I rose, glad to change my position after listening to the old woman's story; and glad also to brush away some tears that had risen unbidden to my eyes. She was moaning, "*Hai, hai,*" as grief-stricken eastern women do, when we took the path leading around to the deserted bedroom. Several coolies were there, two or three working with pick-axes under the direction of a majestic-looking native gentleman, a Sikh with white eyebrows and snow-white beard. Surely, Rugbir himself!

The *ayah* was commencing to salaam when suddenly her arm was arrested. What was that—that thing within the wall? Bricks and plaster had been removed, and there in the aperture was *something*, a bit of cloth—terrible! I reeled with sick horror. A skeleton within the wall. Some one had been built up years ago. A bony hand protruded. Upon one finger was a ring placed there with solemn vows by Rugbir Singh when he was young.

The wall trembled, the ring slipped off and rolled to Rugbir's feet. He picked it up, looked at it dazed, then, shrieking, "My heart's delight, thou hast come back to me!" fell prostrate.

There was a terrible crash, and the whole wall crumbled to earth, covering the senseless man. Amidst the wild din of falling masonry and the uproar of human voices I heard the old *ayah's* shrieks:

"She has paid, she has paid—to the full!"



## RAPTURE

BY GEORGE PLATT WALLER, JR.

**O**DORS and Music and Stars,  
 And the Cup of the Springtide is full,  
 For the dawning of Night has loosened the bars  
 Which prisoned the pasture of stampeding stars  
 Ranged in the sign of the Bull.

Molten notes like honey-drops slow  
 Drip from the musical hive  
 Where the mocking-bird labors all night in the snow  
 Of the crab-apple blossoms whose odors all go  
 Into music—pulsant—alive.

Odors and Music and Stars,  
 And the cup of my joy overflows  
 In the scent of your tresses; and envious Mars  
 Glows at your voice, but your eyes pique the stars,  
 And they wink at us under the rose.

# HELD UP

*By Thomas L. Masson*

**K**OYTE, engaged to the richest girl in the State, was supremely happy. Not necessarily because she was rich, but because he loved her. They were to be married to-morrow.

For several weeks before a man is actually married—especially when he is marrying a very popular girl—he is more or less of a nonentity. But upon this eve of the ceremony there had come a lull. Everything had been arranged; everybody was waiting; and she had telephoned him to come up and see her and to have, as she expressed it, “a quiet half-hour all to themselves.”

She came into the room almost breathlessly a moment after Koyte himself had entered in obedience to her summons.

“Is n’t it grand, Jack?” she said. “Just look at what Papa has given us for a wedding present!”

She showed him a check on the First National Bank for fifty thousand dollars, made out to her order.

Jack Koyte was himself by no means a poor man, his father having long held a very comfortable berth in one of the largest trust companies; but he staggered a little at the sight of the check.

“That’s splendid, Margy!” he exclaimed. “The governor has always been good to you, has n’t he? But, then, we really did n’t need it. You know,” he added proudly, “I can always support you, although possibly I may not have as much——”

She put the check over his lips.

“Don’t say another word, Jack,” she said. “It’s all right. We’ll take this money and put it away for a rainy day. You had better take it yourself. Here.”

She ran over to the desk and wrote her name on the back and handed it to him.

“You take it,” she said, “and put it in the bank. I don’t know anything about those things; and you had better have charge of it.”

Jack Koyte hesitated. He felt diffident about accepting the responsibility. She saw his embarrassment and anticipated it.

“Don’t worry,” she said. “I will ask you for it again; but I’m so

excited about this whole affair that I don't want to think about that just now. I've had an awful time with the bridesmaids. You know the colors did n't match, and at the last moment——”

Koyte stopped her with a kiss. For him there was more important business than the details of a wedding ceremony, which he regarded from his man's point of view as being entirely superfluous, any way. Besides, his time was short.

An hour later he walked up the steps of his own home. Everything was quiet inside. He went upstairs to his room for a moment, and then came down again. He heard voices in the library. He recognized them. He entered.

His father and his mother were sitting together somewhat closer than usual, and talking in low voices. Jack, absorbed in his own happiness, did n't notice anything unusual. He did n't see that his father's head was slightly bent.

“ Well, what do you think ? ” he exclaimed. “ Maybe Margy's governor has n't done the handsome thing ! By Jove, I can't get over it ! Of course I knew he would give Margy a nice present ; but just look at this ! ”

He threw the check down on the table.

His father turned his head quickly and his eye fastened on the check. Then he looked at Jack, who for the first time suddenly realized that something had happened.

“ What 's up ? ”

Jack's mother spoke.

“ Something terrible,” she said quietly. “ You had better tell him, Arthur,” she said, as she turned to her husband.

Jack looked at them wonderingly. He had never seen such a look upon his father's face.

“ I am ruined,” said the old man.

“ Ruined ? ”

“ Yes. And that is n't the worst of it either. I 've disgraced you all.”

“ What do you mean ? ”

“ Well, I got involved in a deal the other day. It was a put-up job. I can see it now that it is over. At any rate, I used some of the bank's funds, and I could n't make good. To-morrow morning they are bound to discover it, and it will be all over.”

“ Is it true ? ” asked Jack, looking at his mother.

“ Yes. Your father tried to keep it from me when he came home ; but——”

“ I could n't,” said the old man.

He went on, slowly telling the details of the transaction. Jack listened mechanically. He was so paralyzed with the news that he had n't recovered his faculties. But when his father had finished he said :

“ Does any one know about this ? ”

"Not a living soul except you and your mother."

"But don't some of the directors suspect it? Is n't Margy's father on the board?"

"Yes; but it would be impossible for anybody to know about it, as the loss is n't even suspected. But to-morrow afternoon the papers will contain everything. I can see the head-lines now."

So could Jack.

There was a silence.

The old gentleman nervously moved his hands back and forth and twitched his chair. His eyes wandered. Suddenly they went down on the check that Jack had placed upon the table. It was upside down. He saw an endorsement. He straightened up a little and looked at his son.

"Did she endorse that check to you?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What's the amount?"

"Fifty thousand."

There was another silence.

The great ormolu clock over the mantel ticked solemnly.

At last Jack spoke.

"How much would pull you out of this hole, Dad?" he asked.

"Fifty thousand."

The old man turned and looked at him steadily for half a minute. Only for an instant did his gaze relax, when it rested rather furtively upon the face of his wife. Then he said:

"I don't suppose you could get married, Jack, after this thing comes out. You see, we can't keep it longer than to-morrow morning, when the exchange opens. Had you thought of that?"

"Yes."

Jack looked at his mother.

She got up.

Jack had seen the same look upon her face when, during his boyhood, she had had occasion to punish him; or when she had discharged some servant.

"Well, it's a good thing I was here!" she said sharply. "I declare, if you men are not all alike! You have n't got any more courage than a couple of scarecrows. I actually believe you would have done it!"

Her husband looked at her, his hand trembling slightly as it lay on the arm of the chair. His aristocratic old face began to show reproach.

"Now, Mary," he protested feebly, "you know perfectly well that I had no such thought."

"Nonsense! You don't suppose I have lived with you all these years without knowing you. You always did have a weak spot in you, any way. Now, you would have taken that check and used the money and saved yourself. But you, Jack——"



She held up her finger at her son.

"I had expected better things of you. You would have let your father use that money and help him out so you could get married to-morrow."

Jack's blood began to mount to his face. He had a strain of his mother's temper.

"Mother," he exclaimed, "you have no right to say a thing like that! Of course I should n't have done anything of the sort! Absurd! Preposterous!"

His mother went up to him and put her arms about him.

"Do you suppose, my boy," she said, "that I don't know what you are? Have n't I been fighting that particular thing in you all your life? Oh my! but I'm glad I caught your father when he came home to-night and got it out of him! If you two had met without me—well——"

"But what do you expect me to do?" said Jack defiantly.

She took up the check, folded it carefully, and handed it back to him.

"You go right back to Margy, return this check to her, and tell her the truth. Then if she wants to marry you——"

Their eyes met.

Jack took the check and sidled out of the door. He went down the steps to the corner, got a taxicab, and in fifteen minutes was ringing the door-bell at Margy's house. It was nearly midnight, and he had to wait. But at last she came—an animated interrogation-point.

"What is the matter?" she said.

"I came to bring you back this check. My father is mixed up in a financial transaction, and the whole thing will be disclosed to-morrow. We shall unquestionably be disgraced, and I've come to explain the whole thing to you so that you won't have to marry me. I simply *had* to do it to-night."

In reply, Margy went up to him and put her arms about his neck.

"You silly old thing!" she said. "Don't you suppose we knew all about that? Father found it out. That's the reason he gave me the check and told me to turn it over to you. You see, he's one of the directors, and he realizes that it was n't your father's fault; but of course he had to save him at this critical moment."

Jack straightened himself up. The same look of reproach came over his face that his father had displayed a short time before toward his mother. His voice rang stern.

"You don't think there are any circumstances under which I would accept that check, do you?" he said. "I would die first! How can you think such a thing?"

Margy laughed.

"Well, of course I knew you would n't," she replied, "because I have such faith in you; but, to save my life, Jack, I could n't tell you the truth! I was just dying to see how you would act under such circumstances."

# THE STRATEGY OF HEZEKIAH JOHN

*By Clara Odell Lyon*

IN the matter of nomenclature, Mrs. Gibbs was strictly just. "The first boy named after your father and mine, John; the first girl, after your mother and mine—a name from each family," she had said to her husband. So when the initial baby made its appearance the naming of her was quickly accomplished. The same impartiality was shown with the two succeeding daughters, Mrs. Gibbs being not at all disturbed by the strange combinations resulting from sentimentalism on the one side and religion on the other. She liked to do things easily, and what method could be simpler than the one she had chosen? Why, she had known some people worry a full six months over finding a suitable name for a child—as if it mattered! She shortened Pearl Hepzibah, Cordelia Mary, and Arethusa Ruth to Leppy, Cormy, and Thuser—reserving the long names for greater force in maternal speakings-to—and was satisfied.

When the longed-for boy arrived, however, Mrs. Gibbs decided that he must bear the full weight of his name, Hezekiah John, and even in his earliest infancy she never spoke to him in any other way.

Not so Leppy, the ten-year-old sister. She crooned pet-names in his ear when she rocked him to sleep; she turned a threatening twist of rosy lip into a smile with her terms of endearment, and lavished on the baby love-words without stint. Perhaps that is why, at six months, Hezekiah John's little fists went out at sight of Leppy, and his bobbing head could find no comfortable place to cuddle for a nap save in the small crook of Leppy's arm.

He was a satisfactory baby—most tractable. At Leppy's request, he never refused to "pat-a-cake," or "show-how-big-you-are," or point with his dumpling finger to his dab of a nose. And his readiness to perform these infantile accomplishments, as well as his bright blue eyes, round cheeks of delicious pink and white, and his curly fuzz of golden hair, made him beyond a doubt the show-baby of the tenement.

Leppy's pride in him was without measure. So sure was she of his undisputed first place, that she could and did, when occasion offered, praise the small charges of her friends.

"Nice thick hair, Willy's got," she would remark condescendingly to Mamie Wibben, knowing full well that straight, heavy black locks on a nine-months child offer no comparison to ringlets of gold.

Or to Maggie Martin of the great infant struggling in her arms, "Ain't he strong, though!" To which Maggie, who found small matter of pride or comfort in the wriggling twenty pounds, would reply:

"Ain't he! He 'll be walking soon, and I 'll be glad. He can stand alone now by a chair."

Next to Hezekiah John in Leppy's affections came Miss Adams, the teacher of the fourth grade. She stood to the little girl for all that was lovely and good in womanhood.

"When I grow up I'm going to be just like Miss Adams," she often told herself, and even at eleven she began to copy her in matters of dress, showing one day a very stubborn preference, as her mother thought, for a piece of blue serge over the bright plaid selected for her. But when first she wore the sober dress, Leppy was raised to a delirium of delight to have Miss Adams remark:

"You look like my little sister to-day."

Being a sympathetic teacher, Miss Adams knew much about Hezekiah John. From September, when he was but four months old, all through the school year, she learned of his advancement in the arts of babyhood. New teeth, his successful wrestlings with colic and croupy colds, his first "luh, luh"—abbreviations for Leppy, without a doubt—were all promptly reported to her for congratulation. She knew, too, of the comparative slowness of the other tenement infants, and how "the heavy lump of a Martin baby" had not a single endearing trick to commend him. Yes, Miss Adams heard and was interested, and after some particularly good bit of news would say, "I *must* come to see that baby some day." Then Leppy would float off in a cloud of happiness, from which she could see, as in a dream, a rosy gold-ringed cherub doing wonderful feats before a wondering and admiring teacher, while about stood the other small nurses with their respective charges, who would of course receive *some* attention—Miss Adams not being given to hurting any one's feelings—but—

One Friday afternoon, as the children were passing out, Miss Adams laid a detaining hand on Leppy's shoulder.

"Leppy dear, will you and the baby be at home a week from tomorrow? I think perhaps I will come to see you and some of the other little girls in your house."

"Oh, yes, 'm, we'll be home," answered Leppy, her eager, flushed face showing Miss Adams how welcome she would be.

"I want to see Hezekiah John, you know. I have n't heard any-

thing of that wonderful baby for quite a while. I suppose he 's walking, too. Maggie's baby took several steps yesterday, she told me. *Are n't* they cunning when they first learn to toddle!" went on Miss Adams innocently.

"Yes'm," stammered the child again.

"Well, good-by, dear," smiled the teacher. And Leppy went off, her joy drowned in the fierce waves of jealousy that surged through her. Hezekiah John could not take a step—not a step—and that Martin baby—that—that dumb, stupid, lumpy baby that never could do a *thing*—was walking! And Miss Adams had said they looked so cunning when they toddled. A great determination seized her. Before the week was out Hezekiah John should *learn* to toddle.

It was a hard week for the baby. To begin with, his sister developed a surprising firmness and a remarkable inconsistency of behavior. It commenced when she stood him by a chair, and after he had with considerable difficulty acquired a comfortable balance, so that he could amuse himself with the cord of the cushion, she immediately pushed the chair a little, so that the balancing had to be done all over again. And this she repeated at frequent intervals the whole of one day, paying no attention to the many beseeching looks he sent her. His legs were tired, oh, so tired, when night came, but he was glad, thinking of the next day, that the balancing was becoming less difficult.

But the next day brought new trials. Leppy stood him alone in a corner. And when he remained there, sweet and obedient, she frowned. If he slid to the floor, he was immediately jerked—yes, jerked—up again. If he made ready to cry at this unkind treatment on the part of his Leppy, she would show that her love for him was still unchanged, by producing a cracker or a lump of sugar.

Once he was so tired he could endure it no longer, especially with his sister and a peppermint stick a few feet away. He tried to come out of the corner where Leppy seemed determined to keep him, and took a step in her direction—when, to his surprise, she seized him and covered him with kisses, as though she was glad to have him in her arms again. Very foolish of her, when all she had to do was to pick him up and be happy.

After various experiments, Hezekiah John found out that leaving the corner, not by sliding to the floor and creeping out, but by making a lunge in the direction of his sister, was invariably rewarded; and matters then became considerably easier for both of them. For, as stated before, Hezekiah was a tractable baby, and when he found that Leppy preferred three or four steps to two, before he tumbled, he tried to do as she desired, and even succeeded in a few days' time in taking five.

Miss Adams's sense of self-importance, if she had any, would have been much gratified, could she have known of Leppy's preparations for her coming. Mrs. Gibbs had a business engagement which took her from home every Saturday, so her eldest daughter was left in charge, and from early morning till noon Leppy cleaned—the floor, the windows, the little girls, and herself. The baby's scrubbing was left to the last minute; and just as the clock struck two—Miss Adams having thoughtfully set an exact time for her visit at quarter past—Leppy thrust Hezekiah John's fat arms through the sleeves of his best white dress, and his fat feet into a pair of new shoes, which were her crowning achievement, the purchase of which had required the greatest diplomacy on her part. Then, with the baby held tightly in her arms, she took her place at the window to watch for teacher's coming.

Scarcely less excited were the little sisters, who hardly waited to announce, "Here she comes!" before they were off and down the stairs, that they might lose as little as possible of the happenings of the day. As Miss Adams made her ascent from apartment to apartment, they made flying and breathless trips to report their observations to the waiting Leppy.

Mrs. Ellerhorst had on her new dress. Willy Martin was wearing Freda's locket, but his dress was n't *near* so nice as Hezekiah John's. Teacher had a thing you take pictures with—yes, and an umbrella with a silver handle. The Martin baby walked all the way from the table to the door to meet the teacher—and she *kissed* him.

Leppy listened with complacency. And indeed Hezekiah John fully justified his sister's faith in him. He was a model of infantile behavior, and Miss Adams was fervent in his praise, warming Leppy's heart to the very core.

"And now let me see him walk. Or no, can't we take him up on the roof? I want to take his picture, and must have strong sunlight."

Miss Adams picked up the heavy baby, who settled down contentedly in her arms, and followed the guidance of the three little girls to the broad flat roof of the tenement. Here Hezekiah John was put down in a sort of corner in an irregularly built chimney.

"I must take a picture of him walking," said Miss Adams. "He has done everything else—and now for his latest accomplishment."

It was a great moment. The baby poised, ready, against the chimney; Leppy, expectant, a few feet away to the right; Miss Adams, all attention, to the left.

Leppy held out her arms invitingly.

"Come, honey-bun," she enticed. "Come to your Leppy." Honey-bun smiled and wriggled his little body on his turned-in toes.

"Oh, wait till I fix his feet," and Leppy sprang to correct this defect in arrangement. The small squares of patent leather were turned duly

out, as offering a better balance to a diminutive person of instability, and Leppy crawled hopefully back to her former position.

"Come, sweetness, come get the candy sister's got." But neither the saccharine appellation nor the saccharine offering moved Hezekiah John.

Miss Adams purred her entreaties, too, but all were unavailing.

Well did Hezekiah John know what was expected of him; but he knew, too, the impossibility of success. It was a strange world! Why, if Leppy wanted him to walk—why had she put stiff new shoes on his feet, when every one knows that walking is the hardest thing a baby has to do? Better no attempt than an ignominious failure.

Now, Hezekiah John had one accomplishment of which Leppy had never taken much account. A pucker of lips with the lower thrust out, and a sudden wrinkling of his face, meant tears, and tears argued unhappiness; but, nevertheless, there never was a baby who could send out a curl of rosy lip with a whimper so deliciously as Hezekiah John.

It was all that remained to him to do, and he would do it as best he could. The only way to end the torture was to cry. The rough chimney walls were giving way beneath his outspread palms; the smooth floor beneath his slippery shoes. He raised one patent-leathered foot in protest, a curve of dewy red shelved out, and Hezekiah John's face puckered in an adorable whimper. Then he sat down very suddenly, and gave vent to an expression of grieved and abused babyhood.

But not before Miss Adams had seized her black box and snapped it at him; not before Leppy, her heart bursting with wounded pride, broke down and cried. Then, to her amazement, she heard her teacher's voice, laughing in delight, and Hezekiah John's answering gurgle. Truly, it is a strange world! Leppy thought so. The same thing, too, had sometimes occurred to Miss Adams.

"Oh, Leppy, this *adorable* baby! You did n't see him, did you? Never was anything so utterly dear. I got his picture, Leppy. I'm going to use it for the article I'm writing. In a magazine, you know—his picture in a magazine."

Miss Adams was in an abandonment of joy. She was sitting on the roof, hugging and jumping the gurgling baby, who crowed and kicked his feet, now liberated from the offending shoes.

"They hurt him so, the darling, no wonder he could n't walk. Here, dear, he wants you."

She balanced Hezekiah John on his crumpled cotton feet, and the baby without more ado took two steps and fell into Leppy's lap—a lesser triumph swallowed up in the greater.

Hezekiah John that night was rocked to sleep by a happy Leppy.

"Just think, lovey dear, to be in a book some day—your picture in a book!"

Hezekiah John gazed into his sister's face with knowing eyes; a knowing smile was on his baby lips.

"Oh, honey-bun," exclaimed Leppy in sudden enlightenment, "I believe, I do believe, you did it all on purpose!"



## THE NEIGHBOR

BY MARGUERITE O. B. WILKINSON

**H**E set his hand to the plow one day,  
 While yet his years were few,  
 Resolved to mark a distant field  
 With furrows firm and true.  
 His arms were strong for the toil of life,  
 His heart was all afire,  
 Till a neighbor laughed, and turned him home,  
 Rebuking his desire:  
 "You are too young, you are too poor, you are too weak," said he.  
 "Best leave such tasks to the rich and great, and strive to be  
 like me!"

Then rosy Love brought grand largesse  
 To his very cottage door,  
 A maid of mystery and of charm  
 God never gave before;  
 And the lad held out dumb hands of Hope  
 To the mighty fires of Peace,  
 Till the neighbor passed with tongue in cheek,  
 And then he sought release.  
 "You are too dull," the neighbor said, "to shine by such as she.  
 "Find you a girl of common clay to wed, and be like me!"

So time sped by, till the fading day  
 Could bring but one last chance  
 To break the bonds of a sordid life  
 And conquer Circumstance;  
 And, well-nigh spent, he sought the road  
 To the heights where life is great,  
 Eager to reach one shining goal,  
 But his neighbor whispered, "Wait—  
 You are too old to do it now—it is far too late," said he.  
 "I could not do it myself, you know, and you are just like me!"

# SHORT-STORY MASTERPIECES

SECOND SERIES—RUSSIAN

## VI. THE SNOW-STORM

*By Alexander Sergyevitch Pushkin*

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY JOHN COUNOS, AND WITH  
INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

### PUSHKIN AND THE NEW ERA

ALEXANDER SERGYEVITCH PUSHKIN was born in Moscow, June 7, 1799, at a time when Russia was aswirl with various currents. Therefore, to gain some clear vision of the distinguished service which he rendered the literature of his native land, we must at least glance at the great intellectual and political tides—they were largely coincident—which swept Russia, first away from her own self-sufficient life, then toward France, next in the direction of Germany, and finally out into a national thought-channel of her own.

Pushkin is one of those writers who are big enough to have founded and dominated an era, not solely because of his own preëminent genius, but for the deeper reason that he represented in himself the culmination of a series of national steps, each as definite as it was important.

For all the centuries of her life up to the nineteenth, Russia had lived a separate existence from that of her great neighbors. In seeking a cause for this condition, we must remember that the imperial bigness of Russia, and her remote location, are not the only factors entering into her segregate character. The *great* factor is that Russia is much more largely Asiatic in spirit than it is European. The typical Slav of to-day is, temperamentally, though not in a precise sense racially, a mixture of Tartar fierceness, old Slavonic stolidity, and Hindu *Nirvana*, which, being translated into Russian, is essentially Nihilism. Yet, to-day as for many centuries, the Slavic race is as truly homogeneous as any can be.

During this long era of Russia's ultra-exclusiveness, the polished periods of Montaigne and the brilliant dramas of Corneille, Racine, and Molière were delighting France, and Spenser, Milton, and Dryden were doing rare things for English literature. At the same time, nationally unconscious of all this, Russia was singing its epical and ballad folk-songs, with only now and then a note of premeditated art sounding



forth. Here indeed was a true poetry of the people—which, as Dr. Gummere has pointed out, is a very different thing from that pseudo-folk-poetry which is merely *about* the people. Still, it required influences from without to bring Russian literature to artistic national expression.

The great autocratic rulers of Russia, and her leading nobles, at last began to feel the allurements of the French, and Peter the Great even travelled abroad, coming home imbued with new ideas for a progressive nation. When a giant people, long content to be sufficient unto itself, awakens to see that other ideals of life, other habits of thought, other standards of conduct, have brought other great nations to a brilliancy of position which its own solitary bigness has not enabled it to attain, the first feeling is one of contempt for "those others," as the French would say. Later, comes a naïve passion to imitate. And finally, enter a whole train of foreign influences, good and bad.

So it was with Russia after the powerful, rough, and somewhat benevolently autocratic reign of Catherine II, at whose court Pushkin's father was a complacent noble. The French tongue, which even Pushkin himself called "the language of Europe," already prevailed at the Russian court, and the literature of the country consisted chiefly of imitations of the pseudo-classical French school, adaptations, or even translations, from other languages, and here and there a struggling voice which lifted itself with difficulty above the imitative clack. All three of these types Catherine herself fostered—intermittently, though still with some success.

But the alarming revolutionary ideas bruited from France, and the Napoleonic campaign against Russia, caused a powerful revulsion of feeling toward Germany and away from France. In Germany, however, Young Russia met the same humanistic tendencies and passion for free thought with which France had been gradually impregnating the empire of the Slavs. Add to this the influence of Byron's poetry, now stirring Europe, and we have the external forces which drove Russia to look at her own self with honest eyes—forces which at length found their literary climax in Pushkin's giving to his native land a literature which was of the Russians, for the Russians, and by a Russian—a literature born of the Russian spirit, breathing her ideals, speaking her marvellously expressive tongue in new combinations of beauty, and set against a background of her soil and her cities.

A further remarkable influence was operating to prepare both Russia and Pushkin for the work of new creation: in the hands of Zhukovski and others who immediately preceded our author, the Russian language began suddenly to assume a flexibility and richness which, as I have intimated, was destined to be still more greatly enlarged by the gifts of Pushkin.

The author-to-be wasted no time beginning his career. Even at the

age of ten, while an unstudious but omnivorously reading school-boy, he made deft imitations of French verse and the French drama, while at twelve he knew four or five languages and was reading Rousseau, Voltaire, and Molière with avidity. At this age the lad became a pupil in the College Tsarskoïé-Siélo, in 1811, the year of its founding by Alexander I. But while he absorbed enough to cause his wild genius to flourish, he was incorrigible, and always in hot-water—except among his comrades, by whom his dash, impudence, and wit made him to be both admired and feared.

When Pushkin was only fifteen, the *European Messenger* published anonymously a series of clever but obscene Russian verses in the style of Ossian and Parny. The name of the author soon leaked out, however, and when the following year the boy read on a public speech-day a suitable poem entitled "Recollections of Tsarskoïé-Siélo," he was hailed as a gifted poet. The poetic form was miraculous—the thought, just about what a lad could produce.

In 1817 Pushkin was graduated, and entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At once he was lionized by literary society, and became the leader of a brilliant but rakish clique—the story of their escapades would read like a tenderloin police-docket. At length, in 1820, the year when "Ruslan and Lyudmila," his first great poem, was published, he committed some folly too outrageous to be condoned—probably an especially licentious expression in verse—and was banished to South Russia, where, wandering among the Caucasus ranges which color all his later work, and living near the romantic Black Sea, he remained for several years; until, in 1824, his banishment was commuted to confinement to his father's estates. In a literary way this date marks the beginning of his new era, for he now began to bring into final form the master-poem, "Eugene Onyegin," on which he had been working for several years—of which more presently.

Some—why, I cannot conceive—have attributed Pushkin's ungovernable disposition to the mixed blood that flowed in his veins, as was the case with the elder Dumas. Pushkin's maternal great-grandfather was that Abram Hannibal, "Peter the Great's Arab favorite," who was really an Abyssinian slave. The African youth was educated in France by his royal master and godfather, later admitted to his friendship, and eventually married to a Russian lady. Their son became a great Russian general. The poet himself bore unmistakable marks of his ancestry in his short curly hair and thick, sensuous lips, though his eyes were blue, his skin fair, and his hair light in hue.

During these earlier years of his short life, Pushkin was profoundly influenced by Byron, and even was willing to be called "the Russian Byron." Indeed, his license-loving and liberty-adoring nature was quite like that of his English model. This influence is seen not only in his

poetic methods, but in his teachings and in his themes. The poem "Poltava," published in 1829, takes Mazeppa for its hero, and his poetic masterpiece, "Eugene Onyegin," published in 1828, is really Don-Juanesque. Nor is it difficult to trace other evidences of this sincerest form of flattery.

Singularly enough, "Eugene Onyegin" (which Tchaikovski has made the subject of an opera) is at once in the style of Byron (somewhat resembling his "Beppo"), while in theme, locale, and handling it throws off the trammels of Byronism, and indeed all foreignism, and becomes the first really great work of modern Russian literature. Whatever the original debt Pushkin owed to the author of "Don Juan," in this and later work he strikes out with all the self-confidence and attainment of an original genius. So tender, so pathetic, yet so humorous, so full of human understanding, so informed with the spirit of contemporary Russian society, is this remarkable work that its author achieved immortality in its writing. Thus did the years of exile on the paternal manor bear notable fruit.

Because this creation sets so lasting an initial mark, by establishing Russian literature upon a basis of art, it seems worth while to recite its argument here in full.

Eugene Onyegin is a "Byronic young society man," who is recalled to the country from his city dissipations by his father's death. Here he lives, for a long time avoiding all contact with his less cultivated neighbors. A young poet, Vladimir Lensky, the son of one of these manorial families, returns from abroad, and a congenial friendship springs up between the young men. Lensky, who is betrothed to Olga Larin, persuades Onyegin to call upon her family with him. Tatyana, Olga's elder sister, at once falls in love with Onyegin, and writes him a letter of frank avowal—one of the most famous passages of the drama. But Onyegin gently turns her aside by assuming the rôle of a fatherly adviser, and the incident remains unknown to all except themselves and Tatyana's old nurse. Soon afterwards, Lensky induces Onyegin to go to the Larins' on the occasion of Tatyana's Name-day festival. For the sake of preventing gossip in a district given over to small talk, Onyegin yields and goes. At table, by the innocent scheming of her family, he is placed opposite to Tatyana, and finds the situation so embarrassing that he determines to revenge himself on the innocent Lensky by flirting with Olga, who is shortly to become Lensky's wife. During the evening, Olga, pretty but weak-natured, accepts Onyegin's attentions with such interest that Lensky challenges him. Heartsick at the results of his momentary unjust anger, Onyegin would gladly apologize, were it not that Lensky has chosen as his representative an old fire-eater and tattler who would misrepresent his motives and perhaps compromise Tatyana. Therefore, he accepts—and Lensky falls. Onyegin then goes off on his

travels. Olga soon consoles herself with a handsome officer, and after their marriage goes with him to his regiment. Tatyana, however, who is of a reserved, intense character, pines, refuses all offers of marriage, and, by the advice of friends, is finally taken to Moscow for the winter. There, as a wall-flower at her first ball, she captivates a prince from St. Petersburg—a distinguished and socially important general. She follows her parents' wishes and marries him. When Onyegin returns to the capital a few years later, he finds, to his great astonishment, "that the little country girl whom he has patronized, rejected, almost scorned, is one of the great ladies of the court and society." He falls madly in love with her, in his turn, but she gives him not the slightest sign of friendship. Driven to despair by this coldness, he writes her three letters, but she does not reply. Then, entering her boudoir unexpectedly through the carelessness of her servants, he finds her in tears, reading his letter. He again avows his love. She is obliged to confess that she loves him still, but finally makes him understand that she will be true to her kind and high-minded husband.

After the production of his masterpiece, followed a notable poetic tragedy, "Boris Godunov," in which may be discerned the author's admiration for the methods of Shakespeare, to whom he turned, yet not slavishly, after freeing himself from the overshadowing Byron.

It is inevitable that we should speculate upon the splendid work which might have come from the pen of this greatest of Russian poets had he not fallen in his prime. The story is sad and sordid enough. In 1831, having been restored to imperial favor, he had married the beautiful Natalya Nikolaevna Gontcharoff, and they plunged into society, loaded with recognition by the court.

He had been married but five years when society began to gossip about "the lovely Madame Pushkin" and Baron George Hekkeren-Dantes, the natural son of the Dutch minister to Russia. Pushkin attached no blame to his wife for the indiscretions of the infatuated young chevalier of the Guards, but challenged him nevertheless. Dantes averted a meeting by marrying Pushkin's sister. Still the gossip persisted, and eventually, being refused access to the Pushkin home, Dantes made his persecutions so patent, and was so seconded by the elder Hekkeren, that the poet challenged the father. The son intervened, adopted the quarrel, and in a duel at St. Petersburg Pushkin was killed, January 29, 1837, being only thirty-eight years old.

The last six years of Pushkin's life established his claim to greatness not only as a poet and a dramatist, but also as a master of Russian prose. We may not term him a novelist, but as a writer of prose tales he set a new mark in the literature of his land. When we recall that it was in the first years of that significant decade, 1830-1840, that

Poe, Balzac, and Mérimée perfected and brought to its modern form the short-story, we shall realize what a great forward step was being made in Russia at the very same time when Pushkin produced his "Prose Tales." His longer tales, "A Prisoner of the Caucasus" and "The Captain's Daughter," exhibit little plot, but they are notable impressionistic stories, full of rich and effective coloring.

Two of his shorter stories I outline, both on account of their intrinsic interest and for the fact that they illustrate the romantic vein which runs through all of Pushkin's work. Else how could he ever have turned to Byron? Gogol, a contemporary of Pushkin and in some senses his successor, was the father of Russian realism. The two may be said to be the joint parents of Russian fiction.

"The Queen of Spades" is like a "Weird Tale" by Hoffmann, or a conception of Poe's. It ranks as one of the world's great short-stories.

At the house of a cavalry officer, several young Russians are gambling. One of them asks Herman why he never plays. He replies, "Play interests me greatly, but I hardly care to sacrifice the necessities of life for uncertain superfluities."

Tomsky says that he can understand Herman's being economical, but that he cannot understand why his own grandmother, the Countess Anna Fedorovna, should not play, for, although she is eighty years of age, she knows a secret which makes winning at faro certain. Tomsky then goes on to relate how the old woman secured the secret from a friend of hers in order to save her from the disastrous results of enormous losses in cards. The secret consists of choosing three certain cards in succession. This she did, winning every time, and was soon out of debt.

Being in need of funds, Herman is impressed with the story, and begins to haunt the outside of the aged Countess's home. In order to gain admission and learn the secret, he contrives to flirt with Lisaveta Ivanovna, the Countess's ward, who at length arranges a way in which he can gain admission to the house while the family are attending a ball. He is to pass through the Countess's apartments and await the girl in her sitting-room, but instead of doing this, the young officer secretes himself in the apartments of the Countess. After she is in bed he emerges and demands the names of the three cards, placing a pistol at her brow, but assuring her that he means no harm if she will do as he asks. She tremblingly tells him that it was only a jest, that there is nothing in the report of her knowledge, but Herman insists, and after a short time he grasps her arm roughly and is about to renew his threats when he finds that she is dead.

Presently Herman makes his way to Lisaveta's apartment, where he tells her all. She realizes that she is not loved, and discerns the true reason why the young man has sought her acquaintance. However, she helps him to get out of the house safely.

The next night he drinks heavily and throws himself on his bed without undressing. During the night he awakes with a start and sees looking in at the window some one who quickly disappears. Presently he hears the shuffling of loose slippers, the door of his room opens, and a woman in white enters. As she comes close to his bed, the terrified man recognizes the Countess. "I have come to you against my will," she says abruptly, "but I was commanded to grant your request. The trey, the seven, and the ace are the magic cards. Twenty-four hours must elapse after the use of each card, and after the three have been used you must never play again."

The phantom then turns and walks away.

The next night he enters a fashionable gambling club in St. Petersburg, stakes forty thousand rubles, and wins a huge sum. The next night he chooses a seven-spot and wins ninety-four thousand rubles.

The following evening he went again. His appearance was the signal for the cessation of all occupation, every one being eager to watch the developments of events. He selected his card—an ace.

The dealing began: to the right, a queen; to the left, an ace.

"The ace wins," remarked Herman, turning up his card without glancing at it.

"Your queen is killed," remarked Tchekalinsky quietly.

Herman trembled; looking down, he saw, not the ace he had selected, but the queen of spades. He could scarcely believe his eyes. It seemed impossible that he could have made such a mistake. As he stared at the card, it seemed to him that the queen winked one eye at him mockingly.

"The old woman!" he exclaimed involuntarily.

The croupier raked in the money while he looked on in stupid terror. When he left the table, all made way for him to pass. The cards were shuffled, and the gambling went on.

Herman became a lunatic. He was confined at the hospital at Oboukov, where he spoke to no one, but kept constantly murmuring in a monotonous tone: "The trey, seven, ace! The trey, seven, queen!"

"The Shot" is in a different vein, being a tale of singular dramatic intensity. There is a legend that it is largely biographical, Pushkin himself having coolly eaten cherries, as did the Count, while under fire in a duel.

A group of military men stationed in the dull little town of N—— welcome to their society the one eligible civilian, a certain Silvio, a taciturn man of thirty-five, who has retired from the Hussars. He lives meagrely in a small house, where he frequently entertains the officers with the best he has, which always includes plenty of champagne. The walls of this house are punctured with bullet-holes, for its occupant is a marvellous shot with the pistol. Regarding his past, he says practically nothing, but every one feels that some tragic event has stamped his career.

One day a newcomer among the officers quarrels with Silvio, and slaps his face. Much to the surprise and disappointment of all, Silvio does not challenge him, but accepts a lame explanation. It takes some time for Silvio to rehabilitate himself with his friends, but his good qualities at last accomplish this, except with one officer, who tells the story.

One day Silvio, all excitement, announces that a change has come in his affairs, and that he must leave N——. He packs his goods, and invites the officers to a final feast. At its close he asks the narrator to remain, and tells him this story, to explain why he avoided challenging his offender.

Some years before, while serving in the Hussars, Silvio was known as a great rake and an incorrigible duellist. His popularity waned, however, with the advent of a brilliant young Count, of whom he soon became jealous, and upon whom he fixed a quarrel. In the duel which followed, the Count won the first shot, and pierced his adversary's cap, but showed such nonchalance—having coolly eaten cherries while standing to receive Silvio's shot—that the latter decided to relinquish his chance until a later time. In all these years a favorable opportunity had not come in which to make the Count show fear, and that was why Silvio was not willing to risk his life by engaging in another duel, even though he knew he was a remarkable shot: he was holding himself for his revenge. And now his revenge had come, for he had just learned that the Count had married a beautiful young woman and was enjoying his honeymoon.

The narrator never sees Silvio again, but some time after the strange man has left N——, the narrator goes back to his own native village, and there meets Count and Countess B——. At their first meeting their visitor is interested by seeing two bullet-holes which have pierced a painting. It transpires that Count B—— is the very one with whom Silvio fought his duel. The Count then narrates the sequel.

Shortly after their marriage, the Count returned with his bride to his estates, where he was startled to find Silvio, claiming the right of the shot which was his due. The Count gallantly yielded to him and stood up in his drawing-room, but Silvio a second time declined to shoot, and proposed that they again draw for the first shot. The Count won, and shot over Silvio's head, making one of the two bullet-holes. At this juncture the Countess came in and flung herself at Silvio's feet. In shame, the Count made her rise, and Silvio prepared to take his shot, whereupon the Countess threw herself upon her husband's breast. As he saw Silvio point his weapon at them both, at last the Count showed fear, although not for himself. Being satisfied with this exhibition of fear, natural though it was, Silvio declined to shoot. As he left the room, he turned, however, and, almost without looking, took a parting

shot at the painting, which he penetrated with a bullet-hole precisely below that which had been made by the Count's bullet. And so this strange man passed out of their lives.

"The Snow-Storm" seems to me to be Pushkin's greatest short-story. It has a well-defined plot, a surprising dénouement, the action marches on to its climax, and both local color and characterization are of a high order. It is especially remarkable for its having been produced at the very opening of the decade which produced the modern short-story.

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## THE SNOW-STORM

TOWARDS the close of the year 1811, during that very memorable epoch, there lived in the village of Nenaradova the good Gavril Gavrilovich R—. He was famed throughout the district for his hospitality and good-nature; and his neighbors continually kept coming to his house to partake of food and drink, and to play the game of Boston at five copecks with his wife, Prascovia Petrovna. Others came, however, to inspect their daughter, Maria Gavrilovna, a graceful, pale, seventeen-year-old girl. She was considered a rich match, and many a visitor had had designs upon her for himself or for his son.

Maria Gavrilovna had been brought up on French novels, and consequently was in love. The object chosen by her for her love was a poor army lieutenant, who was now on a leave of absence in his native village. It goes without saying that the young man returned her passion. The parents of the girl, however, having noted the mutual inclinations of the pair, forbade their daughter even to think of him; while him they received even worse than if he were a dismissed petty official.

Our lovers exchanged notes, and saw each other every day, alone, in the pine wood or in the old chapel. There they vowed to each other eternal love, bewailed their fate, and formed all sorts of plans. Their discussions carried on in this way naturally brought them to the following conclusion: "If we can't exist without each other, and the will of stern parents stands in the way of our felicity, why should n't we manage without them?" Needless to say, this happy idea originated in the mind of the young man, and that it appealed strongly to the romantic imagination of Maria Gavrilovna.

Winter came on, and interrupted their meetings. This, however, only served to quicken the correspondence. Vladimir Nikolaevich, in every letter, entreated her to give herself to him, to wed secretly, to remain in concealment a while, and then to throw themselves at the feet of the parents, who, to be sure, would be touched finally by the heroic constancy and unhappiness of the lovers, and undoubtedly say to them, "Children, come to our arms!"



Maria Gavrilovna hesitated a long time; and several of the plans to run away she rejected. At last she consented. On the appointed day she was to do without supper and escape to her room on the plea of a headache. Her maid was in the plot. The two of them were to make their way into the garden by means of the back-stairs. Outside the garden a sledge would stand ready to take them straight to the church of Jadrino, a village five versts away, where Vladimir would await them.

On the eve of the decisive day Maria Gavrilovna hardly slept at all. She spent the night in packing some linens and dresses to take with her; and wrote a long letter to a sentimental girl friend, and another to her parents. She bade them farewell in the most touching terms, and excused her action on grounds of a terrible overruling passion, concluding by saying that she should consider it the most blessed moment of her life when she should be permitted to throw herself at the feet of her beloved parents. Having sealed both letters with a Toula seal, on which were engraved two flaming hearts, accompanied by an appropriate inscription, she threw herself on her bed just before daybreak, and dozed off.

Terrible dreams, however, kept crowding upon her and constantly awakened her. Now it seemed to her that the very moment she entered the sledge for her journey her father stopped her and with a most painful rapidity dragged her over the snow and cast her into a dark, bottomless abyss . . . and she flew about precipitately, with an indescribable oppression of the heart. Then she saw Vladimir lying on the grass, pale, bleeding. Dying, he entreated her in shrill voice to make haste to wed him. . . . Still other shapeless, incoherent visions continued to pass before her. In the end she arose, looking more pale than usual, with a real headache. Her father and her mother noticed her agitation; their gentle solicitude and their ceaseless inquiries, "What is the matter with you, Masha? Are you ill, Masha?" rent her heart. She tried to quiet them, to appear cheerful, but she could not.

The evening came. The thought that this was the last day she would spend in the midst of her family oppressed her. She scarcely could breathe. Secretly she was bidding each one a separate farewell, as well as all the objects which surrounded her. When the supper was announced her heart beat violently. In a trembling voice she said that she could not eat, and wished her father and her mother good-night. They kissed her and, according to their custom, also blessed her.

Once in her own room, she threw herself into the arm-chair and wept. Her maid tried to prevail upon her to be calm and to take courage. Everything was ready—in another half-hour Masha would leave forever her paternal home, her room, her quiet, girlish life. . . .

Outdoors, the snow was falling; the wind howled, the shutters rattled and shook; all seemed to her to assume the aspect of a warning, the sad presaging of disaster. Soon everything in the house grew quiet and sank into slumber.

Masha wrapped a shawl around her, put on a long, warm mantle, took into her hands her treasure-casket, and walked down the back-stairs. The maid followed her with two bundles. They entered the garden. The storm did not subside; the wind blew in their faces, as if it sought to stop the young culprit. With the greatest difficulty, they reached the end of the garden. On the road a sledge awaited them. The chilled horses would not stand still, and Vladimir's coachman was restlessly walking in front of them, trying to quiet them. He assisted the young lady and her maid into the sledge, and in disposing of the bundles and the casket, then seized the reins, and off the horses flew.

Having thus committed the maiden to the care of fate and the skill of Tereshka, the coachman, we will now return to our young lover.

The whole day long Vladimir spent in driving about. His first morning errand was to the priest at Jadrino—it was with the greatest difficulty that he prevailed upon him; he then journeyed to find witnesses from among the neighboring land-owners. The first to whom he appeared was the retired, forty-year-old cornet Dravin, who consented with alacrity. This adventure, he assured Vladimir, recalled to him his earlier days and his pranks in the Hussars. He persuaded Vladimir to remain for dinner, and assured him that there would be no trouble about the other two witnesses. Indeed, immediately after dinner there appeared Surveyor Schmidt, with mustaches and spurs, and the son of the chief of police, a youngster of sixteen years, who had only lately joined the Uhlans. Not only were they in sympathy with Vladimir's plans, but they even swore to lay down their lives for him. Vladimir embraced them joyously, and returned home to get everything ready.

It had already been dark for some time. He sent off the trusty Tereshka to Nenaradova with his *troika*, after giving him most exact instructions; while for himself he ordered a small sledge with a single horse. He left alone for Jadrino, where two hours hence Maria Gavrilovna was also due to arrive. The road was familiar to him; and altogether it meant a twenty-minute journey.

Hardly, however, had Vladimir reached the open field, than the wind rose; immediately it developed into a blinding snow-storm, so that he could not see anything. In a remarkably short time the road became hidden under the snow, while the surrounding landmarks were obliterated in the nebulous, yellowish haze through which flew about great white flakes of snow. The sky and the earth merged into one. Vladimir found himself in the field, and it was in vain that he tried to find the road again. The horse advanced at random, and now drove into a snowdrift and now fell into a hole—the sledge kept on upsetting. Vladimir made an effort not to lose the right direction. It seemed strange to him, however, that after a half-hour's driving he had not yet reached the Jadrino wood.

Another ten minutes passed—still no wood in sight. Vladimir drove

across a field which was intersected by deep ditches. The storm did not abate, the sky did not clear. The horse began to grow tired, and the perspiration rolled down his body in large drops, notwithstanding the fact that he was being half-buried in snow almost continually.

At last Vladimir concluded that he was not driving in the right direction. He stopped, tried to recall, to consider, and decided that he ought to take to the right; which he did. His horse made way slowly. He had been on the road more than an hour. Jadrino could not be very distant. On and on he drove his horse, but there seemed to be no end to the field—only snowdrifts and ditches. The sledge kept on upsetting, he kept on righting it. Time passed; Vladimir began to fret.

At last a dark shape seemed to loom up ahead. Vladimir jerked the reins in that direction. On closer approach, he saw it was a wood. "Thank God!" he thought, "now it is near." He kept going along the edge of the wood, hoping to strike the familiar road, or to make a detour of the forest. Jadrino, he knew, was situated somewhere behind it. He soon found the road, and drove into the darkness among the trees, which stood in their winter nakedness. The wind could not make much headway here; the road was smooth; the horse braced itself, and Vladimir regained confidence.

On and on he continued his journey—and still no Jadrino in sight; there was no end to the road. In consternation, Vladimir became aware that he had entered an unfamiliar forest. Despair seized hold of him. He lashed the horse; the poor animal went off at a canter, but soon slowed down, and after a quarter of an hour relapsed into a walk, despite all exertions on the part of the unhappy Vladimir.

Gradually the wood grew less dense, and Vladimir came out again into the open. No Jadrino in sight. It must have been about midnight. Tears gushed from his eyes; he drove about at random. The storm quieted down, the clouds dispersed; before him lay a valley, covered with a white, undulating carpet. The night was sufficiently clear. He discerned not far off a tiny village, consisting of some four or five houses. Vladimir drove towards it. At the very first cottage he sprang out of his sledge, ran to the window, and began to knock. In a few minutes the wooden shutter went up, and an old man stuck out his gray beard.

"What do you want?"

"Is Jadrino far from here?"

"Is Jadrino far from here!"

"Yes, yes, is it far?"

"Not far—ten versts or so!"

At this answer Vladimir caught hold of his hair and stood motionless, like one condemned to death.

"And where do you come from?" continued the old man.

Vladimir had no courage left to reply to the question.

"Can you, old man," he asked, "procure me horses to take me to Jadrino?"

"How should we have horses?" answered the peasant.

"Can you at least give me a guide? I will pay as much as he wants."

"Wait," said the old man, lowering the shutter. "I'll send my son out to you. He'll guide you."

Vladimir waited. A minute had not elapsed when he began knocking again. The shutter went up again, the same gray beard made its appearance.

"What do you want?"

"Well, where's your son?"

"He'll be out soon. He's putting on his boots. Are you cold? Step in and warm yourself."

"Thanks, send your son out quickly."

The gate creaked; a lad came out with a heavy stick in hand. He went in front, now indicating, now searching for, the road hidden under snow-drifts.

"What hour is it?" Vladimir asked him.

"It will soon be daylight," replied the young peasant.

Vladimir spoke not another word.

The cocks were crowing and it was already light when they reached Jadrino. The church was closed. Vladimir paid his guide and drove to the priest's house. His *troika* was not there. What news awaited him!

Let us return, however, to the good land-owners of Nenaradova and see what is passing there.

Nothing out of the way.

The old people had had their sleep and had gone to the dining-room—Gavrila Gavrilovich in his night-cap and flannel jacket, Prascovia Petrovna in her dressing-gown of wadding. The samovar was brought in, and Gavrila Gavrilovich sent the maid to ask Maria Gavrilovna about her health and how she had rested. The maid returned, announcing that the young lady had slept badly, but was feeling better now, and that presently she would be in to breakfast. Very shortly, in fact, the door opened, and Maria Gavrilovna came forward to greet her papa and mamma.

"How is your head, Masha?" asked Gavrila Gavrilovich.

"Better, Papa," replied Masha.

"Masha, you must have got a headache yesterday from the fumes of the heater," said Prascovia Petrovna.

"Perhaps so, Mamma," answered Masha.

The day passed happily, but by night Masha was taken ill. A doctor was sent for from town. He arrived towards evening and found the sick girl in delirium. She developed high fever, and for two weeks the poor girl was at death's door.

No one in the house knew what had happened. The letters written by her on the eve of her planned elopement were burned; her maid, fearing the wrath of her master, had said a word to no one. The priest, the retired cornet, the mustached surveyor, and the little Uhlan were quiet, and with good reason. Tereshka, the driver, never uttered a superfluous word, even when in drink. The secret was thus well kept by more than a half-dozen conspirators. Maria Gavrilovna herself gave away her secret while in delirium. Her words, however, were so incoherent that her mother, who never left her bedside, could only gather that her daughter was passionately in love with Vladimir Nikolaevich, and that this love was apparently the cause of her illness. She held counsel with her husband, and with some of the neighbors, and in the end they unanimously decided that there was no getting around fate, that poverty was no crime, that the man was the thing—not wealth, and so on. Such moral discourses are astonishingly useful in those instances when we are at a loss to find justification for our actions.

In the meantime, the young lady was returning to health. Vladimir had n't been seen for a long time in the house of Gavril Gavrilovich. He had been frightened away by the previous receptions accorded him. It was proposed to send for him and to announce to him his unawaited good fortune: the consent to marriage. Imagine the amazement of the proprietors of Nenaradova when in answer to their proposal they received from him a half-insane letter! He informed them that his foot would never be set in their house, and implored them to forget an unhappy man, for whom death alone remained as an alleviation. In the course of a few days it was learned that Vladimir had joined the army. This was in the year 1812.

For a long time they dared not tell this to the convalescent Masha. She never spoke about Vladimir. Several months having passed, she one day discovered his name among the distinguished and the dangerously wounded at the battle of Borodino, whereupon she fainted, and it was feared that high fever would recur. God be thanked, however, the fainting fit had no serious consequences.

Another sorrow visited her: Gavril Gavrilovich died, leaving her heiress to all his estates. But her wealth did not comfort her; she free-heartedly shared the affliction of the poor Prascovia Petrovna, and vowed never to part with her. Together they left Nenaradova, the place of their sorrowful memories, and went to live on one of their estates.

Here also many suitors paid court to the lovely heiress; but she gave none the slightest hope. Her mother occasionally tried to persuade her to choose a mate; in answer, Maria Gavrilovna would only shake her head and grow thoughtful. Vladimir no longer existed; he had died in Moscow, on the eve of the entry of the French. His memory Masha held sacred; at least, she kept all that could remind her of him: there

were the books he had read, his drawings, his notes, and poems he had copied for her. The neighbors, who knew her story, wondered at her constancy, and with great curiosity awaited the hero who would in the end triumph over the melancholy fidelity of this virgin Artemis.

In the meantime, the war ended with glory. Our regiments were returning from alien soil. The nation greeted them with joy. The musicians played the victorious songs, "*Vive Henri-Quatre*," Tyrolese waltzes, the airs from "*Joconda*." Some of the officers who had entered upon the campaign mere lads were returning from the battles grown into manhood, decorated with crosses. The soldiers talked gaily among themselves, mingling constantly with their speech German and French words. It was a never-to-be-forgotten time! A time of glory and joy! How strongly beat the Russian heart at the word "fatherland"! How sweet were the tears at meeting again! How harmoniously did we combine the feeling of national pride with love for the Czar! And for him—what a moment!

Women—the Russian women—were in those days incomparable! Their usual coldness vanished. Their rapture was really intoxicating when, upon meeting the victors, they cried, "Hurrah!" And threw their caps into the air. . . .

Who from among the officers of that day does not confess that to the Russian women he owed his best, most valued reward? . . . During that brilliant time Maria Gavrilovna lived with her mother in the ——— Province, and did not see how both capitals celebrated the return of the troops. In the country districts and in the villages the general enthusiasm was perhaps even stronger. The appearance of an officer in such places was always the occasion of real triumph to him, and the lover in the frock coat had a hard time of it in his presence.

We have already stated that, notwithstanding her coldness, Maria Gavrilovna, as before, was surrounded by suitors. All of them, however, were compelled to step aside when there appeared one day in her castle the wounded Colonel of the Hussars, Bourmin, with the cross of St. George in his buttonhole, and with "an interesting pallor" on his face, to use the words of the young ladies of the place. He seemed to be about twenty-six years old. He arrived, on leave, at his estate, which neighbored upon that of Maria Gavrilovna. Maria showed him distinction. Before him her usual pensiveness vanished. It cannot be said that she played the coquette with him; but the poet, making note of her conduct, would have said:

*Se amor non è, che dunche? . . .*

Bourmin was indeed a most charming young man. He possessed precisely that sense which is pleasing to women—a sense of decorum and alertness, without pretensions; and an easy humor. His behavior towards

Maria Gavrilovna was simple and free; but, no matter what she said or did, his soul and his glances followed her. He seemed a quiet, unassuming sort of man, though rumor had it that he had been quite a rake in his day, which did not, however, injure him in the eyes of Maria Gavrilovna, who (like young ladies generally) was most willing to overlook little larks which indicated boldness and a spirited character.

But above all (more than his gentleness, more than his agreeable speech, more than his interesting pallor, more than his bandaged arm,) the silence of the young Hussar stirred her curiosity and imagination. She could not but feel conscious that she pleased him immensely; undoubtedly, he too, with his keenness of perception, and experience, had noted her preference for him; and she could not explain why she had not yet seen him at her feet and had not heard his declaration. What restrained him? Was it the timidity which is inseparable from true love, or pride, or the coquetry of a shrewd wooer? This was a riddle to her. Having reflected on the matter, she concluded that timidity was the sole reason; and this decided her to encourage him with greater attention, and, if the circumstances permitted it, even tenderness. She anticipated the most surprising dénouement; and with impatience awaited a romantic explanation. A secret, whatever its nature may be, is always oppressive to the feminine heart. Her aggressive tactics had the desired result; at least, Bourmin fell into such a pensive mood, and his dark eyes fixed themselves with such a fire upon Maria Gavrilovna, that the decisive moment seemed close at hand. The neighbors talked of the forthcoming marriage as of a thing settled, and the good Prascovia Petrovna rejoiced that her daughter had found at last a worthy mate.

The old mother was sitting one day in the drawing-room, playing patience, when Bourmin entered and immediately inquired after Maria Gavrilovna.

"She is in the garden," answered the old lady. "You go out to her, and I'll await you here."

Bourmin went into the garden, and the old lady crossed herself and thought, "The matter will be settled to-day."

At the pond, under a willow, Bourmin found Maria Gavrilovna, dressed in white, looking like a real heroine of a novel. After the first questions, Maria Gavrilovna purposely refrained from sustaining the conversation, intending in this manner to create a mutual embarrassment, from which it was possible to free oneself only by an instant and decisive explanation. That was, in fact, what happened. Bourmin, feeling the embarrassment of his position, said that he had long sought an opportunity to reveal his heart to her, and requested a moment's attention from her. Maria Gavrilovna closed the book and cast down her eyes as a sign of assent.

"I love you," said Bourmin. "I love you passionately." (Maria

Gavrilovna blushed and inclined her head even lower.) "I have behaved imprudently in yielding to the sweet pleasure of seeing and hearing you every day." (Maria Gavrilovna recalled the first letter of St. Preux.)\* "It is too late now to resist my fate: the mere recollection of you, your lovely, incomparable image, shall be the torment and consolation of my life. It is still left to me, however, to execute a weighty responsibility, to reveal to you a terrible secret which will raise between us an insurmountable barrier."

"It has always existed," interrupted Maria Gavrilovna, in an excited manner. "I could never be your wife."

"I know," he answered quietly. "I know that you once loved; and that he died, and that you had mourned for three years. . . . My good, adorable Maria Gavrilovna! Please don't deprive me of my last consolation: the thought that you would have consented to make my happiness, if— Please, not a word—for God's sake, not a word! You torture me. Yes, I know it, that you would have been willing to become mine, but I—I am a most unhappy creature. . . . I am already married!"

Maria Gavrilovna looked at him in amazement.

"Yes, I am married," continued Bourmin; "and this is the fourth year of my marriage, and I don't know—who my wife is, where she is, or whether I shall ever see her."

"What are you saying?" exclaimed Maria Gavrilovna. "How strange! But continue—I also have something to tell—do me the kindness, continue!"

"In the beginning of the year 1812," resumed Bourmin, "I was making haste to rejoin my regiment at Wilna. Having arrived late one night at a station, I ordered horses to be harnessed immediately, when suddenly a terrible snow-storm broke out, and the station-master and the drivers advised me to wait. At first I agreed, but an incomprehensible restlessness took possession of me; it seemed to me as if some one were prodding me on. The storm, however, showed no signs of abatement. I could stand it no longer, ordered the horses to be harnessed, and proceeded on my journey in the very height of the storm. The driver took a notion into his head to drive along the river, which would shorten the journey by three versts. The banks were buried under snowdrifts; we drove past the place where we should have turned into the road, and so chance took us into strange parts. The storm did not quiet down. I saw a small light in the distance, and asked to be driven there. We arrived in a village; there was light in the wooden church. The church was open; within the outside enclosure stood several sledges; people could be seen walking about on the porch of the church. 'This way!

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\* In *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.



This way!' cried a number of voices. I ordered my man to drive up closer. 'What made you so late, pray?' some one said to me. 'The bride has fainted; the priest does n't know what to do; we were just getting ready to go home. Come quickly!' Silently I sprang out of my sledge and entered the church, which was but dimly lighted by two or three candles. The girl was sitting on a bench in a dark corner of the church; another was rubbing her temples. 'Thank God,' said the latter, 'you have made up your mind to come! You have almost killed her!' The old priest approached me with the question, 'Shall we begin?' 'Begin, begin, Father,' I replied absently. The girl was raised on her feet. She seemed to me not at all bad-looking. . . . An incomprehensible, unforgivable heedlessness . . . I stood beside her before the pulpit; the priest made haste; three men and the maid supported the bride, and were giving her all their attention. We were married. 'Now kiss each other,' they said to us. My wife turned towards me her pale face. I made a movement to kiss her. . . . She cried out, 'Oh, it is not he, not he!' and fainted away. The witnesses directed on me their frightened eyes. I turned round and left the church without the slightest interference, threw myself into my sledge, and cried out, 'Let her go!'

"My God!" cried out Maria Gavrilovna. "And you don't know what became of your poor wife?"

"I don't know," answered Bourmin. "I even don't know the name of the village where I was married. I can't remember by what station I went. At that time I attached so little importance to my wicked lark, that, after leaving the church, I slept soundly and awakened only next morning, having reached by that time the third station. My servant, who was then with me, died in the campaign, so that I have n't the slightest hope of finding her upon whom I played such a horrible joke, and who now is so terribly avenged."

"My God! My God!" said Maria Gavrilovna, grasping his hand. "So, then, it was you! And you do not recognize me?"

Bourmin became pale . . . and threw himself at her feet. . . .



## LINES FOR A SUN-DIAL

BY HARVEY M. WATTS

NOR cloud, nor dark of night,  
 I count as mine;  
 The shadows I invite  
 Mark but the hours that shine!



## WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND  
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC



### AN IMPORTANT OPERATIC TREND

**I**N the last few months there have been many developments which serve to indicate the approach of an era of real comic opera, and this is something that should be hailed with great joy by a public to whom the insistent though forced vogue of musical comedy has at last shown evidence of reaching at least a temporary finish.

The success of "Robin Hood," which has attracted even larger audiences on its revival than when originally produced, and the remarkable success attending the Gilbert and Sullivan revivals, have naturally caused producing and house managers to regard with favor propositions that ten years ago they would have rejected.

Not only are we to have more De Koven operettas, more of the delightful Gilbert and Sullivan works, but it is significant that the amazing public response to these revivals all over the country has led Mr. De Koven and the Messrs. Shubert to create permanent stock opera-companies—one similar to that of the Bostonians of pleasant memory, the other similar to those of the McCaull and Aronson régimes at the Casino; and there are signs—unmistakable signs—that, as a result of the new conditions, the glories of the Casino are to be revived. But that is not all. Mr. De Koven, who enjoys the pleasantest relations with the gentlemen who own the Metropolitan Opera House and the New Theatre (now Century), has entered into an arrangement by which not only will light opera prevail at the last named establishment in the spring and summer of 1913, but the plans call for what in the opinion of the writer is the only

solution of the opera-in-the-vernacular problem: that of presenting, not native grand opera at Metropolitan Opera House prices, but rather the dear old melodious operettas which have scored in other days. These will now be reproduced with star casts, including some of the best known singers associated with the majestic opera house at Fortieth Street and Broadway. The *entente cordiale* existing between Mr. De Koven and the Metropolitan direction will also serve to remove the congestion at the latter institution.

In an interview with the writer, Mr. Hammerstein expressed himself as firm in the belief that such a chain of opera houses as this intrepid impresario has planned cannot be maintained solely through the presentation of distinctly grand operas. It was the great success of his own production of "The Chimes of Normandy" in London that convinced him that the greater public can be reached only through the less classical works, such as "The Tales of Hoffmann," "Martha," "Marriage of Figaro," etc.

And now what is to be? Are we to witness a return to the scores of Balfe-Wallace, Auber, and Flotow? Will America follow in the footsteps of all Latin Europe and demand a revival of Offenbach's "Belle Hélène," which, after lying dormant for nearly a quarter of a century, has been the musical sensation of 1912 abroad?

And if "Belle Hélène," why not "Barbe Bleu," "La Perichole," "Jolie Parfumeuse," and even "Grande Duchesse"? And if in the second decade of the twentieth century the Father of Opera Bouffe is glorified, who shall say that a lesser triumph awaits the manager who has the daring to tempt fate with the operettas of Milloecker, such as "The Black Hussar" and "The Beggar Student"? And if the Messrs. Shubert had the foresight to modernize "Die Fliedemaus," so that as "The Merry Countess" it has already survived all the musical comedy productions of the new season, why may not some other *entrepreneur* find a profitable occupation in doing the same thing with the same composer's "The Merry War," "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief," and "Queen Indigo," the last named being the first of Strauss's operettas and containing his best waltzes.

It is in the province of the managerial producer to watch the trend, and one must surely admit that for some strange reason or other the great American public has been deprived of a species of public entertainment that it has never rejected. Therefore, if the success of "Robin Hood" and "The Pirates of Penzance" means a return to the vast repertoire of similar works, it also means that only by such a policy on the part of our producing managers may we discover in this propitious musical era that vainly sought necessity, viz., another Gilbert and Sullivan.

ROBERT GRAU

## P. S.

I SHOULD like to add a postscript to the timely little warning in LIPPINCOTT'S not long ago, concerning the abuse of the telephone. Telephonitis is certainly a disease alarmingly on the increase, and one that calls for the same heroic measures demanded by appendicitis.

"Out with your appendix!" cries the surgeon. "Out with your telephone!" is the advice of one of the many who are called up, and one of the few who have chosen the better part of deliberately giving up a modern improvement for the sake of old-fashioned peace of mind.

I think perhaps the most unforgivable use to which the overworked telephone is subjected is as the transmitter of eleventh-hour invitations. The inviter has such an unfair advantage over the invitee. It is so easy to call a friend up and say, "Oh, Mamie dear, we are getting up a little impromptu Bridge-party to-night, and we are depending on you and Ned to join us." Of course when Mamie is held up in this way she cannot suddenly invent a plausible engagement that does n't exist. She wildly calls her husband to her rescue, but Ned's imagination is slow, and after a few ineffectual struggles poor Mamie throws up her hands, and the inevitable acceptance is pulled out like a tooth.

Better a loaded revolver at one's head, with the conventional alternative of your money or your life, than the telephone receiver loaded with an invitation, and the victim unarmed with a sharp and deadly refusal. All is fair in telephoning (which is apt to be a mingling of love and war), and to my suffering sisters I wish to extend—not a cure for telephonitis—I have already intimated that an operation is the only cure—but an alleviation.

Before I had my telephone cut out, I even planned having a little list of plausible excuses hanging close by the telephone, just next to "the numbers most frequently called." While receiving an invitation the sufferer's eye might travel up and down the little list, selecting the excuse best fitted to the emergency. Here are a few that might prove beneficial:

"Oh, I am *so* sorry, but John has brought home theatre tickets unexpectedly, so we can't accept."

"My dear, *what* a coincidence! *We* are having a very informal supper-party ourselves to-night, so *of course* we cannot come to yours!"

"Oh, how provoking! John has asked some tiresome old business friends of his to come and dine to-night just with us. What a nuisance!"

"I *wish* I could. But Aunt Sarah is coming to spend the day on Tuesday, and I *must* be here."

For extreme cases there should be a few antidotes and poisons, to be used sparingly. As, for example: "I'm dreadfully disappointed, but John has just come down with one of those awfully sudden attacks of grippe. An hour ago he was perfectly well—and I wish you could see him now!" (Fortunately she could n't.)

"I should have *loved* to come, but Baby is just getting a tooth, and I must be here when it comes through. He is so cross, I don't like to leave him."

"How good of you to think of us! But we really can't come, because John has just heard of the death of his cousin out west—oh, no, not a first cousin, but a *very* intimate one."

This little list is a mere word to the wise, and the wise are those who when attacked in unequal warfare make use of the nearest weapon for purposes of self-defense.

W. P.

## THE DANCERS

**T**HAT the goose hangs high and the dance goes on, seems to Folly all that really matters. For awhile she lives in a sunlit atmosphere, and pities the grubs who miss the joys of life. Suddenly the music stops. The Piper has come, and Folly cannot pay.

Than to think of the morrow, or "cut her garment according to her cloth," nothing seems more impossible to the modern woman; nor does she apparently even glimpse the futility alike of trying to befool this wise old world, or to stand off the Piper when his bill is due.

Everywhere False Pretense holds court. Young women, even as their elders, strain muscles and nerves to the danger line in order to equal or outshine those with whom they associate. The days of elegance, of leisure, of simplicity, are no more. Barbaric ideas prevail in dress. Homely homes have passed. Hospitality is a cramped delusion. Display is the fetich of the hour, and, as but few bank-accounts are exhaustless, Debt prowls wolf-like about many an over-ornate door. To spend is a craze; to pay, a nightmare. Than the "charged account," no indulgence granted to woman has caused more ructions in homes. It is the cue of the astute shopkeeper to allure the fickle fancy of the shopper. From all corners of the globe is garnered wondrous treasure intended for those who have money to burn on the pyre of senses. Sumptuous furs, wonderful jewels, priceless laces, hoary rugs, masterly pictures, and ceremonies of joy are everywhere. As she "shops," Folly, hypnotized by Covetousness, forgets the Piper, and rushes into extravagances that are to harass some man's mind for months to come.

If those who buy had first to earn, charge accounts would do no harm. It is the lust of the eyes that makes wives and daughters forget

to be honest; for is it an "honest deal" to make a too devoted father or husband "grind his bones," not to "make his bread," but to add ruffles of old rose-point to an ermine "dream"?

If the affluent, only, bought gorgeous wear, all were well. Such folk often refuse from principle to halo Caprice, or to act as shining examples for foolish imitation.

A good address is accounted unto Wisdom when one wishes to seem smart. A good address is one of the most costly luxuries. Nevertheless, to this fixed idea the costly home has been widely sacrificed. Rather a coop-like "apartment" in a fashionable neighborhood, than a roomy home where the nobodies dwell, is the modern decision and the abysmal folly.

Man pursueth (for greed) women who love things superfine. "On time" is the new lure. The instalment plan is yearly widening in scope. Through weekly or monthly payments, filched from the "market-money" often, luxury-mad women acquire things wholly out of proportion to their station. If scandal hisses, they wonder why—failing, poor bubble-chasers, to realize that no wife of a poor man can afford to dress richly, unless she has a private purse. If her bad taste continues, sooner or later will come a day of alarms, upon which she will see her own care-lined face in the mirror that never lies. To look well, to live well, and to be of some importance, is laudable. To do things that are worth while is contributory, but no one ever "arrived" in any sense through becoming an obvious copy of an authentic thing. The Real Thing is not always rich, but is convincing. It dresses well, because it wears the right thing always. It dominates; is not coerced by others. It lives where it can live best. It fears no Piper, because it pays as it goes. Thrice wisely, it buys only the suitable thing. Meanwhile, madly the Dance goes on. But after the lights go out the dizzy spenders remember the Piper. That such things need not be makes the matter all the more worthy of thought.

MINNA THOMAS ANTRIM

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## CAVIAR ON IMPULSE

"**T**HERE is more simplicity," says Chesterton, "in the man who eats caviar on impulse than in the man who eats grape-nuts on principle"; and indeed no one of us doubts, probably, that to be impulsive is to be instinctive, and to be principled is to have characteristics laboriously acquired. And while caviar thus impulsively eaten may induce, indeed, a passing physical nightmare, the conscientious swallowing of grape-nuts is liable to bring about a settled melancholy.

It takes no thought to kick over the traces and do the thing pro-

scribed; it demands a weary lot of brain-labor forever to follow the cut and dried path; and more especially if the path be cut and dried by oneself. What may have been in the beginning a simple enough routine becomes at length a ceremonial all the more monstrous because, being self-imposed, it carries with it the dead weight of pride. "Look at me, Lord; I live the simple life," said the mediæval hermit, drawing his unclean rags about him and chewing ostentatiously upon a root left over from breakfast. Nor did it ever occur to him how much simpler it would have appeared to God, looking down, to see him working, playing, laughing, weeping, sinning, and rearing babes, in ordinary, comfortable human fashion.

On the other hand there is Horace, a respectable Roman citizen, paying his weary duty calls upon Mæcenas and other patrons and writing his weary duty odes to the Emperor and other personages. Horace is too simple a man to endure this eternally without relief. So, impulsively, when the occasion offers and he has received an editorial check, he invites his friends, buys a cask of Falernian, orders roses, piles logs upon his hearth with generous hand, and makes such a night of it as shall become a glorified memory to his doddering old age. Is he cold next day, with an empty wood-bin, or hungry, with an empty larder? What matter; was he not full last night? Were not his *socii comitesque* warmed with his hospitality? And those of the absolutely ordered life look on with envious eyes, for their hearts have no knowledge of eager, irregular beats. And while they are "shaken with the ague of their doubts," the cheerful eater of caviar-on-impulse pays the fiddler ungrudgingly and maintains a bright and stable faith in the outcome of events and the future of the world.

But it is not only in the primrose path of caviar that the impulsive man finds satisfaction for his impulses. Nay, in times of stress, in danger, in grave crises, he is quite as ready to jump into the breach, not being held back by any uneasy thoughts of a pill due at half-past eight or a sacred siesta rigidly scheduled for three o'clock. He is not even afraid to get his feet wet, irregular as that would be. No, he will plunge thoughtlessly in and save you a life or two, or a whole nation, and go back to his duties as unconcerned as though he had n't missed his dinner! And at the last call, when Death lays a hand upon his shoulder, he is not deterred by having drawn up a plan of eating and drinking, of lying down and rising up, of sleeping and waking, of dressing and undressing—and all by the tick of the clock—designed to carry him safely through to his ninetieth birthday. "Death, is it thou? Well met!" And off he goes, impulsively, with all his sins upon his head, leaving a gaping wound in the heart of every friend.

HELEN COALE CREW

# THE INVESTOR AND THE GOLD SUPPLY

*By Edward Sherwood Mead, Ph.D.*



## ARTICLE III.

EVERY one who discusses the price question takes it for granted that prices will continue to advance, borne up on a constantly rising money supply. As prices of commodities go up, the prices of bonds and all other forms of fixed interest investment will go down, the purchasing power of salaries, rents, etc., will decline, the assets of large investment institutions will be depleted, and the investing class, generally, will suffer severe losses. On the other hand, it is urged that the advance in prices of commodities will put up the prices of stocks and all forms of property, except loan or rental investments or annuities. The conclusion drawn from this prediction is that the investor should discriminate against bonds and in favor of stocks and real property.

If, however, it appears upon examination that there is no warrant for believing that the supply of gold will continue to increase as it has in the past; if from an examination of the facts we reach the conclusion that the gold supply will advance much less rapidly in the next two decades than it has in the past, it is safe to predict that prices will not go much higher.

Before taking up the question of the future supply of gold, let us look for a moment at the other side of the price ratio. A large part of the advance in commodity prices has been due to the pressure of population upon the means of sustenance. In 1890 thirty-six out of every hundred inhabitants of the United States lived in cities and towns of more than 2,500 inhabitants. In 1910 the percentage of city and town dwellers had increased to forty-six. The population of the cities during this twenty-year period rose from 22,700,000 to 46,600,000, while the population of the farms rose from 40,237,000 to 49,348,000. This is a gain of 20,000,000 people for the towns, and 9,000,000 for the farms. The consumptive demand for food-products, in other words, is increasing much more rapidly than the number of people available to produce the food.



An examination of the yield of our principal cereal crops confirms this conclusion. In 1889 there was a record corn crop in the United States, and the total production reached 2.1 billion bushels. By 1911 the production had risen only to 2.5 billion bushels. The yield per acre in 1889 was 27 bushels, and in 1911 about 24 bushels. The wheat-yield of the United States in 1889 was 490,000,000 bushels, and in 1911 621,000,000 bushels. The yield per acre was almost the same: 12.9 bushels in 1889 and 12.5 bushels in 1911.

The statistics of farm animals make even a more disastrous showing. In 1890 there were 57,648,000 cattle on American farms; in 1911 the number had increased only to 60,502,000, although the total population of the country during the same period had risen from 62,947,000 to 91,972,000. The showing in the number of hogs is but little better: 50,625,000 in 1890 and 65,620,000 in 1911. These few comparisons prove conclusively that one cause of the advance of prices has been the diminishing yield from the farms, at a time when the demand for food-stuffs was greatly increased by the growth in city population. It is unreasonable to suppose that this condition will be allowed long to continue. At the present time, farming is the most profitable American industry, and yet American farms, if cultivated with intelligence and with sufficient capital, could easily double their yield. It is a poor farm that cannot show 50 bushels of corn to the acre, and yet the average for the United States is less than 24 bushels. A yield of 20 bushels of wheat to the acre, with ordinary cultivation and care, is not excessive; the average yield for the United States is only 12. Yields of oats from 50 to 60 bushels to the acre are very commonly secured by intelligent and competent farmers; the average yield for the United States is only 24.4 bushels. The widespread agitation of this subject, the constantly rising prices of farm-lands, and the growing interest of all classes in the problem of the food-supply, is certain to result in a very great increase in the production of agricultural products during the next decade, and it is a reasonable presumption that farm-products will be lower as a result. While superior cultivation will increase the yield from farms already in cultivation, enormous areas of new land are being opened up. The completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway is certain to make large additions to the wheat supply. Every year the agricultural area of the Argentine is expanding, stimulated by the enormous profits to be gained from wheat-growing. Agriculture, the world over, is feeling the stimulus of high prices and immense profits; the natural consequence will be a continued increase in the supply of food-stuffs, and a fall in their prices.

Space does not permit an indication of the corresponding development in other lines of raw-material production. It is sufficient to point out that the production of coal, iron, wool, cotton, copper, and, indeed,

all of the materials of industry, is advancing rapidly, and that the tendency everywhere seems to be toward lower prices as a result.

What now of the gold supply? Are we warranted in believing that the supply of gold will continue to increase, and that its value will progressively decline? It is impossible, on the basis of an examination of the history of gold-production, to reach such a conclusion. On the contrary, the indications are abundant that gold-production for the next few years has nearly, if not quite, reached its maximum, and that the production will continue to decline. The force of this conclusion can, I think, be indicated in a few words. Gold has a fixed price—\$20.67 an ounce. The gold-miner is producing money. Out of his daily production he must pay his expenses. He buys labor, timber, drill steel, candles, lubricating oil, quicksilver, wood, sulphuric acid, salt, scrap-iron, and rope, in addition to large amounts of machinery. He also hires a variety of skilled labor, besides many unskilled workmen. The lower the prices of these materials and the lower the wages of labor, the larger will be the margin which remains out of his daily production of money. When prices fall and when labor is cheap and abundant, this margin is large; as a result, the gold miner makes large profits, investors are anxious to put their money in his business, prospectors are active in discovering new deposits, the annual production is extended to ores yielding in some cases less than \$3 a ton, and a large increase in the output of gold is the result. When prices are rising, however, the margin of the gold-miner's profit is reduced, the rising prices, resulting in profits to other industries, compel him to pay more for his labor, the investors' money is directed into other channels, the prospecting activities, no longer stimulated by lack of opportunity for employment on the one hand and by the glittering prizes of discovery on the other, slacken, the miner is forced to abandon the immense bodies of low-yield ore, and as a result production declines.

This movement is at present taking place in every gold-mining country. Those who are counting on an increase in the production of gold should examine the statistics of production in the United States. The principal gold-mining States are Alaska, California, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, South Dakota, and Utah. Of these seven States, only one shows any large increase in gold-production: the State of Nevada, due to the development of a few camps of extraordinary richness. The production in Alaska, which was \$18,000,000 in 1907, in 1911 was only \$16,000,000. Colorado in 1905 produced \$25,000,000 of gold; in 1911 only \$19,000,000. The production of Montana during the same period fell off from \$5,000,000 to a little more than \$3,000,000. South Dakota about held its own. The production of Utah seriously declined. The production of Nevada, during the same period, rose from \$5,000,000 to \$19,000,000, and the production for the United

States increased from \$88,000,000 to \$96,000,000, an increase almost entirely due to the phenomenal discoveries in a single State.

These figures show that the gold-mining industry, taking the Western country as a whole, is declining—the natural inference from the extraordinary prosperity in competing industries throughout this section. Even taking the figures for the entire world, there is no reason to anticipate a continuance of the rate of increase. In 1906 the total production of the world was \$402,000,000. Five years later it was \$455,000,000. These annual increases in production, it must be remembered, are added to a stock of gold which has now reached immense proportions, so that the percentage of increase is small. It must also be remembered that the demands for money are rapidly increasing, increasing indeed far more rapidly than a gain of ten or fifteen million dollars a year can satisfy. Take, for example, the national banks of the United States. In 1900 these banks held in specie \$373,000,000, nearly all of this being gold. In 1911, twelve years later, the specie holdings had increased to \$711,000,000, more than double.

Every time a new bank is organized—and the number is rapidly increasing—a certain amount of money must be withdrawn from circulation and put into that bank's reserve. This represents an increasing demand upon the world's money supply. What is going on in the United States is but typical of development in other countries. Canada and South America are rapidly enlarging their banking reserves. Immense amounts of gold will be sent to China to assist in the industrial development of that country. The final settlement of the Turkish problem will open the immense resources of the Balkan Peninsula to exploitation, and will require large amounts of money to carry on this new business. In every part of the world, in immense regions which until recent years were untouched by civilization, railroads are being constructed, mines opened, farms developed, and money—that is, gold—required.

In view of the small increases in the annual production of gold, and in view also of the certainty that the next decade will see large increases in the production of commodities and also in the demand for money, it is unreasonable to expect that prices will much longer continue to increase. The investor who has been discouraged by a decline in the prices of his fixed interest securities, and who has been tempted to sell them out at a sacrifice or to exchange them for bonds of less merit, will do well to remember that economic history always repeats itself; that there have been periods of rising prices in the past, and that these have always been followed by other periods when prices were declining and bonds increasing in value.



LIPPINCOTT'S  
MONTHLY MAGAZINE

APRIL, 1913

DON'T TRIFLE WITH  
MONEY

BY

MRS. JOHN VAN VORST

*Author of "Bugsby's Daughter," "Second Quality," etc.*

## I.

ON the thirtieth of August, as Henry Walton sat alone in his office, he could see the dark moving silhouette of the *Lusitania* on its outward-bound way: flashes of red stacks against a blue sky, whose clearness was veiled by wreaths of smoke that curled upward, then a dimming of all lines, a gradual belittling of the gigantic gliding mass, a swallowing up in mist of the immense spectre.

Even after it had vanished, Walton gazed outward across irregular roof-tops and aerial telegraph poles, toward the diminishing trail of smoke. There was an expression of amazement in his eyes, as if he had come suddenly face to face with the realization of some decisive act; and his thoughts, as he tried to formulate them, also drifted outward, became vague, were engulfed in a region of mist, like the great ocean liner.

On that boat, he was saying to himself, travelled eastward the man who could—

But the fog descended, clouding his recollections, blurring the definite statements that concerned his own life and that of the east-bound traveller.

In this meditative solitude he passed, as we pass a frontier, from

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one land into another, and the milestone that marked the limits of the new domain bore an indication. In letters which, despite the fog, stood out distinctly, dancing about hard and cold and cruel, Walton could distinguish the terrible word "*Thief*."

Here and there they floated alone, these five little letters, suddenly assembling themselves into their right succession and pausing an instant with deadly distinctness before they began again their active whirl.

Henry Walton, in his busy life as a successful New York broker, was accustomed to agitation of all sorts, the most violent. But these small printed characters, in their mad race round the room, their sudden lining up, shook him, unsteadied him, left him inert.

Even as he looked at the clock in its leather case which stood before him on his table, the numbers shaped themselves into letters on its face, and the letters spelt out always the same "*Thief*."

With his head buried at last in his hands, his brow contracted, he presented so unwonted an aspect, that the office boy who had thrust the door open in a rush drew back and asked with something like pity:

"Don't you feel good, sir?"

Walton glanced up.

"What is it?" he asked, shaking himself into attention.

"Why, that lady's still here. She's been waiting about a couple of hours. She says her name's Mrs. Blair, and could n't you see her just for a moment?"

As the boy pronounced this name, Walton stealthily laid his hand against his coat-pocket. It seemed a precautionary measure against some invisible danger.

"Tell her," he said—"tell her that——"

But the lady had followed the boy, and she now crossed the threshold, letting the door swing back upon his retreating figure. She stood a moment in uncertainty before she spoke, and in her attitude there was something appealing, a slight embarrassment, as though she lingered in formulating a question upon which much might depend. She was, however, humble rather than timid, and as Walton met her eyes, with an ironical smile, she said hastily:

"You know why I have come? That's what you're going to say to me. It's an old story—I realize that better than any one! But you won't disappoint me again, you won't! This time you can't!"

She had shrunk into a chair by Walton's desk, where the light fell full upon her face, showing the lines of anxiety that grew deeper as she spoke, giving poignancy to her fairness. Her features, frail and exquisite, appeared for the moment more beautiful because of the suffering which threatened to destroy their loveliness.

Yet her supplication, quiet, ardent, intense, did not seem to touch Walton. He answered her gently:

"Yes, Margaret, I know why you have come."

"You are going to help me, aren't you?"

"I would do a great deal for you."

"Don't say that I am asking too much."

"No, not if you were asking it for yourself." As he said this, Walton looked up at her.

"But it is the same thing," she urged.

"Not quite," Walton responded. "Dudley Kendal came to grief through his own recklessness, not through any fault of mine. It is true that when he failed I was his principal creditor. I had believed in him, and I don't mean to suggest for an instant that there was anything off-color in what he did. Every severe break in the Market sees some lesser houses go under. But Kendal did not have that peculiar business instinct, that financial second-sight, which is as necessary to the knowledge of whom to trust and whom not to trust, in the transactions a stock-broker is called on daily to make, as it is useful for a man in a leaky boat to have some trifling notion about the art of swimming. Because Kendal, when he failed, was a victim of his own obtuseness, there is no reason why I should release him of his debts to me."

"Oh, reason!" Mrs. Blair repeated, with an arch expression which showed that she was still hopeful. "Reason is not everything!"

Walton shrugged his shoulders.

"My experience is that if you try to mix up business and sentiment, you make a mess of both. I don't say irrevocably that if Dudley Kendal were to get his start again in some other way I should not perhaps be tempted to go more easily on claiming the last cent of his indebtedness, but as things now stand, I have given you my final word."

Mrs. Blair, her slender hands clasped appealingly, cried out:

"But don't you see that, since you are his chief creditor, the very possibility of his getting his start again, as you call it, depends upon you, and upon you alone?"

Walton merely shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, it can't be!" Mrs. Blair pleaded. "You don't mean that you are going to refuse me this—that you are going to refuse him the clean slate that every man needs after a failure, in order to take up active life in the Street again!"

"Don't put it that way, Margaret; it makes me appear like a brute. There would be no end to this sort of thing if one man were expected to shoulder another's burdens to such an extent."

Mrs. Blair's hands dropped into her lap, and lay there a moment.

"Let me ask only one thing," she urged: "that you take time to think the case over. To be unfortunate, to be unsuccessful, is not an

unpardonable crime. If you will release Dudley from his debts, he has a future before him, and I with him. If you hold him to them, you will drive him to the wall." Her voice was full of compassion as she folded her arms across her breast, then held them toward Walton in a final appeal. "Please consider it!"

Walton's answer was deliberate:

"I can't do it, Margaret. I simply can't afford to."

As he spoke, a sudden change came over Mrs. Blair's face: her expression turned from supplication to hatred. Assuming full command of herself, she said deliberately:

"You will regret this. If I live to be an old woman or if I die to-morrow, I shall find my chance to avenge the man I love!"

Walton considered her thoughtfully a moment.

"Women are all alike," he said. "They can see no fault in the person they adore. I suppose it is the maternal feeling in them which is so surely roused by the weaker sort of man."

As he spoke, he set the papers before him in order, singled out the key he wanted, locked his desk, and then turned to Margaret Blair. Her eyes had wandered from him, and seemed to have fixed themselves with a narrowing of the lids upon some far horizon of despair.

"I am sorry, Margaret—it seems most ungracious—but I have a four-thirty train to catch."

With a graceful movement, Mrs. Blair swung out of her chair and toward the door. There over between the safe and the window Walton saw her stoop as if to pick up something. When she turned he was struck by the sudden change in her manner. She was smiling, and lightly she asked:

"Four-thirty train? Not for Rosedale, by any chance? I'm making that myself. How strange if we were to be guests under the same roof!" She was positively laughing now. "Not the Thurstons'? Is that where you are going? This is too amusing! And do you know"—she turned back, her hand on the door—"the beautiful Helena Boyd is to be at Mrs. Thurston's, too?"

He heard her laugh again as she went down the hall.

"The vengeance has begun, I suppose," Walton smiled to himself, and it occurred to him that it would be better if vengeance could take always a gracious form with women.

He lit a cigarette, and for a time watched the lighted end, which flashed a response to his deep inhalations, alternately glowing or turning to ashes. In a similar way, he reflected, Dudley Kendal's destiny waited on a breath from him to change from the gray of despair to the warmth of hope again, and with Kendal's destiny that of Margaret Blair. He had perhaps been too brusque, too relentless.

Walton had gotten up and was making a careful search about the

floor between the sofa and the window, where Mrs. Blair, as she went out, had stopped to pick up something.

"What in the world," he murmured, "could she have found here that seemed to make her so happy all of a sudden? Not just a plain pin! Perhaps, though. Women are superstitious creatures."

As he looked round, moving the chairs, trying the combination lock of the safe, he began again to see the dancing, whirling letters. They flew upward from the carpet, and in their pell-mell confusion they drew themselves into line, spelling out definitely the horrid word "*Thief*." He saw it against the blank panes of the window, he saw it on his handkerchief as he drew it out to wipe the moisture which had started to his brow, he saw it on the palms of his hands, he saw it on the buttons of the elevator-boy's coat as he left the office.

Had Margaret Blair seen it, too?

## II.

WALTON had heard of love at first sight, but this sort of love, like the other sort, left him sceptical. Where Cupid was concerned, the grain of salt with him preponderated, and he pictured the woman's heart strung up, transparent, on the dollar mark.

Partly by accident, partly from a reluctance to journey up the river with Mrs. Blair as travelling companion, Walton missed the four-thirty. It did not occur to him that Mrs. Thurston would send to meet the five-fifteen, but as he stepped out on the platform he heard some one call his name. There in a smart trap, quite alone, sat the prettiest girl he had ever seen. The wind held her in its searching embrace, driving her light muslin gown against the curves of her graceful figure. The scarlet ribbon that lay around her little, well-shaped head only half imprisoned the buoyant tendrils of gold. And this lovely creature, in a voice of sweetness indescribable, was calling to him!

He struggled toward her, his suit-case in one hand, his hat in the other.

"Do you mind putting it in behind?"—she nodded toward the valise. "Mrs. Thurston had people coming in every direction, and not a groom to spare."

"Thank God for that!" he murmured.

"So," she went on, sharing a bit of dust-robe as he clambered in, "as I adore driving this particular mare, I came to get you myself."

Walton still had his hat in his hand as he looked at her with growing admiration.

"I'm Helena Boyd," she said, as if his gaze might be explained by curiosity to know who she was. "You've probably never even heard of me."



‘Yes!’ he cried, eager to claim a bond.

She showed him her eyes a moment wide with amazement: two stars they appeared to him.

‘From Mrs. Blair,’ he said. ‘She was in my office this afternoon, and she spoke of you.’

‘Oh, do you know her, too?’ A sad note had rung out in this little question, and Miss Boyd, bringing the mare down to a walk, said, ‘I’m dreadfully sorry for Mrs. Blair. It must be awful to be just on the point of getting married and then have your fiancé fail in his business, and everything go back on you at once, credit to boot, with only unmerciful men dogging you for your debts.’

Walton disliked the subject. Putting some humorous question to Miss Boyd, he changed her solemnity to mirth. As they drove up to the house, he groaned at the thought of sharing her with others.

Mrs. Thurston, a somewhat substantial mass of fluttering white garments, greeted Walton with the preoccupied Saturday-to-Monday manner of the hostess who makes a business of receiving. She gave orders in various directions to the liveried men-servants who stood about, and Walton was shaken rather abruptly from his rapturous contemplation of Miss Boyd when he heard her say:

‘Take Mr. Walton’s things to his room, and unpack them.’

‘Oh, thank you so much’—he darted forward—‘but I believe I will ask you to have my things left just as they are.’

With the gesture of one accustomed to everything, Mrs. Thurston waved to the valet not to wait.

When Walton found himself alone in his room a few minutes later, he bolted the door into the outer hall, drew the shades down, and in the golden obscurity made by the rays thus sheltered from the westward sinking sun, he drew his valise toward him. There, however, in the middle of the floor, his position seemed too unprotected. A turn of the closet’s hinges brought a flash of light, and between deep walls, beshelved and hung with hooks, he opened at last his suit-case and took from it a small package of papers, which he turned over several times. The same ironical smile with which he had greeted Margaret Blair that afternoon in his office crossed his lips.

The position was grim, evidently grim. Why not take it, therefore, with a nice appreciation of its cynical side? Pleased at his own defiance of uneasiness, he handled the parcel affectionately. This affair had been hastily decided, but not, he flattered himself, with any of the carelessness brought about by nerves, and which usually causes such undertakings to fail. There in his hand he had securities for two hundred thousand dollars, confided to his keeping—stock for the surplus amount upon which a man going abroad might, or more likely might not, call during a short visit to Europe. William Thurston, who was

one of his best customers, and who did not owe him a cent, had left the certificates in Walton's keeping on the eve of his departure for England. Walton was about to play a delicate game. He remembered some man in the Street giving this definition to a similar enterprise: "If you succeed, you're a great financier; if you fail, you're simply a thief."

What Walton intended to do was this: take Thurston's securities with him to Chicago, and make a loan on them which would at last enable him to take that longed-for plunge into the market, whereby an "everlasting fortune" would be realized. He had certain "tips" which rendered speculating at this moment a "sure thing." Thurston would be absent several weeks, and long before his return Walton would have realized his profits, paid off his loan, and restored Thurston's securities to the strong box where they belonged, in his Wall Street office. Nobody would be a whit wiser or sadder, and Walton would have to the good a neat little pile.

At another moment it might perhaps have been reckless to attempt so deliberately fraudulent a proceeding, but Walton was sure of the market. Such an occasion might never again present itself in all his career, during which thus far, with a broker's characteristic thriftlessness, he had spent all of his generous earnings, setting nothing aside. One danger, to be sure, he must be prepared to face, not because of any trick which his proposed investments might play upon him, but from the fact that Thurston *might* call upon his reserve. This was possible at any moment, though Walton believed it highly improbable. Thurston had taken with him a letter of credit abundant for all the ordinary needs and luxuries of the restless American man abroad. On a former trip, under similar conditions, Walton remembered, the superfluous securities had lain idle in his office two whole months, and when Thurston had returned from that, his first trip abroad, his chief comment upon Europe was that he could "find nothing upon which to spend his money."

Under such circumstances, would it not be foolish to let these securities also lie idle for three weeks, their earning capacity turned to no one's account?

Walton scrutinized the stock as it lay in his hand. How strange a coincidence it was, his presence at Rosedale on that particular afternoon! To be sure, he had accepted this invitation of Mrs. Thurston's some weeks before; but, in a sentimental way, it was unsettling that at this very juncture he should thus find himself under the roof of Thurston, William Thurston, his trustful, absent host.

No doubt it was the close air of the lighted closet which had set all this jumble going in Walton's brain. He must get hold of himself, but first of all he must hide the certificates.

All sorts of conventional places suggested themselves to his fevered mind: under the mattress, between the bolster and the slip, up the chimney. Rot, all this. But where?

As he fumbled about the lining of his valise, to see if there were not a rip somewhere, he thought he heard a noise, a sound as if some one were turning a key stealthily in a lock. Bowed over the precious parcel, he listened. Then he examined the walls about him. A door at the back of the closet communicated with another room, but with the key from his own door he secured the lock. Then he listened again. Nothing broke the stifling stillness but his own quick, heavy breathing. Like a flash he lifted the inside cover of his valise and glided the papers in between the leather and the linen, smoothing them down and hiding with his clothes the slightly ruffled edge under which the stolen things had vanished.

A vision of the *Lusitania* flashed across his retina—Thurston's outward-bound boat—and with it came again the intervening letters, bobbing about like so many tipsy soldiers, lining themselves up into a mechanical kind of order—*Thief, Thief, Thief*. At the same moment Walton could hear Miss Boyd's plaintive note as she had alluded to Margaret Blair's unhappiness and to the meanness of her lover's creditors.

Ah, the game was not worth the candle! Honesty at any sacrifice was better than this nightmare of promised riches. The mere impulse which had led him into seeing the plausible side of such an act as this "borrowing" of Thurston's securities seemed now like some horrible poison circulating in his veins, and of which he longed to rid his system. He had not dared to meet the clear gaze of Helena Boyd's blue eyes as she lifted them to him. The decision to reflect came, impelling. Walton felt a great load lifted from his mind as he resolved upon his course of action. The papers were safe now. He would take them no further. As soon as he reached town, he would restore them to the place in his office where they belonged.

### III.

WHEN, half an hour later, in the hall below, Walton joined Mrs. Thurston, who was alone, his usual composure had been regained.

"I don't like a bit being a grass-widow," she whimpered. Her short, thick little figure with its spangled gown of black looked the picture of comfort.

"Thurston's not to be gone very long," Walton consoled.

"I know." She folded her stout little hands, covered with turquoises and diamonds (Walton wondered why it was that fat women always love turquoises), and pouted. "He'll be back in a month,

but I did n't want him to go at all. I had a sort of presentiment about it. The market's been playing such strange tricks lately."

Walton's eyes narrowed. He hastened to reassure her, covering his own discomfort with:

"But there's no such thing as real absence nowadays. Space has been annihilated by the wireless and all the other 'lesses."

"Any way," Mrs. Thurston cooed, settling the strap of jet which lay black and brilliant against her white arm, "it's a comfort to have you here, and I'm so glad to have you meet my friend Miss Boyd. She's a tremendously interesting girl."

"She's a tremendously good-looking girl," Walton threw in.

"That's all men think about!" Mrs. Thurston shook her blonde head reprovingly. "Helena Boyd has much more to boast of than mere beauty. She comes of an exceedingly good family, and, though she has had good reason to be spoilt by the world, she is as determined to do something with her life as her ancestors were before her. And two of them were governors!"

"I am sure," Walton smiled, "it would be most easy to submit to Miss Boyd's government."

"You're not serious," Mrs. Thurston pouted. "But really, you ought to get Helena to tell you some of her experiences."

The announcement of dinner brought in the rest of Mrs. Thurston's guests from the porch where they had been watching the sunset.

Walton was somewhat embarrassed to find himself directly opposite Mrs. Blair at table. He could not but wonder at the skill with which she concealed her inward feelings. On her frail visage there was not a trace of tears. That very day he had seen her agonized, supplicating, almost disfigured by hatred, yet now she sat opposite to him, calm, smiling, as if he had signed for her the release of the man she loved and whose debts to Walton so weighed him down that he could never, as it now remained, recover himself.

Walton thought of Cecil Rhodes's remark, "Half the world is governed by their sentiments, the other half by their interests." This was true of men, he knew, but women, plague take them! seemed to have some magic way of mingling their love and their needs, driving them single, as a pair, or even tandem, as the case might demand.

He wondered how Miss Boyd drove hers.

She seemed to have neither a cause to defend nor a heart to lose. She was ethereal and illusive, and Walton found her even more attractive than when he had seen her first at the station. She had replaced the scarlet ribbon for one of blue so pale that its shining surface seemed to reflect the gold in her lovely hair. She was lithe as a willow, and while there was something demure in the perfect repose with which she sat at table, she suggested graceful activity.

Now, as he compared them, it seemed to him that Margaret Blair looked old and scarred beside Miss Boyd. If they cared to keep their looks, women made an awful mistake to go in for heavy tragedy. He was formulating these bromidic prescriptions when Mrs. Thurston's fat little voice rang out in a tone of incredulous astonishment:

"Margaret Blair! It's the strangest coincidence I have ever heard of in my life!"

With the popular love of the unexpected and inexplicable, particularly in the coincidence form, Mrs. Thurston's guests leaned forward expectantly.

Mrs. Blair had grown a shade paler, but she was exceedingly calm. Her hostess fluttered on:

"It's the queerest thing I've ever imagined. I thought I was the only woman in the world with a ring like that!" She pointed to an elaborate design in diamonds which covered the little finger of Mrs. Blair's right hand, and went on excitedly, "My husband had that ring made for me when we were in Paris."

"Not this one, I think," put in Mrs. Blair gently.

"Well, of course, you can't trust jewellers, I suppose, not to repeat things they've made for you, and you alone. But this was Will's own design."

"Have you your ring on?" Mrs. Blair asked, somewhat maliciously. "It would be amusing to see them together."

"I can't show you mine to-night, but I thought you'd seen it often." Mrs. Thurston looked at her fat fingers. "I'm wearing my turquoise to comfort me while my Cartier ring is being cleaned. Will took it up with him to leave at Tiffany's."

Mrs. Blair had slipped the glittering jewel from her slender hand, and it was passed along the table. Every one commented on its beauty and oddness, and when it at last reached the hostess's eager grasp, she gave a little grunt of satisfaction.

"It's the exact replica of mine." She turned it back and forth, put it on. "It must be miles too big for you," she ventured. "Look."

It was obvious as she held up the little digit that the ring fitted her to perfection. Taking it off and starting it on its backward way to Margaret Blair, she could not resist the feminine explosion of curiosity.

"Oh, Margaret," she said, "excuse me, but *would* you mind telling me where you got that ring?"

Mrs. Blair had grown quite pale. She lifted her eyes to the man opposite her, fixed them on Walton a moment, and then, turning to Mrs. Thurston, she said:

"It was given to me by a friend, if you must know."

The directness of the rebuff made more embarrassing the pause which followed.

Walton believed his own heart had stopped beating, but his hand, he saw, was steady as he lifted his glass to his lips and took a long draught, looking down while he drank, into the clear water, where again he saw dancing the letters: *Th..f.*

After a time that seemed interminable, Mrs. Thurston recovered herself, and with an hysterical laugh she said:

"My dear, you must excuse me for being so horribly indiscreet!"

The conversation again presently resumed its strain of commonplaces regarding the strangeness of coincidence.

As the party regained the hall and stood in little groups, Mrs. Thurston whimpered to Walton:

"I do hate having Will away. It gives me such horrid presentiments."

Walton looked forward to the evening as offering the dreariness of a long wait in a railroad station, and he ground his teeth as he lived over the awkwardness with which he must have handled Thurston's papers in order, as he lifted them from the safe, to have let fall the ring unperceived on the office floor. Why had he not followed what was his first impulse when Thurston spoke of leaving the ring with him: put it in his pocket to carry up to Rosedale? Then none of these odious complications could have arisen. He recalled how Margaret Blair's manner had changed suddenly as she went out of his office. As a bird snaps up its prey, she had snapped up the jewel. Was it for the value of it, the intrinsic value? This he could not believe. Yet his doubt as to her motive in taking it left him powerless. To denounce her openly, to declare before them all, as it was his temptation to do, that she had taken the ring from his keeping, seemed to him, in his own tormented state of mind, a dastardly act. Even in self-defense, he could not bring himself to accuse a woman.

Miss Boyd interrupted his desperate meditations.

"How fierce you look!" she said. "I suppose the true business man has to look fierce most of the time, though, does n't he?"

She had seated herself beside him near the window at the end of the room, whither he had withdrawn, and now, gathering her white muslin skirts about her and smoothing out her blue sash, she said very archly:

"Perhaps it was n't business, after all. Perhaps it was the one other absorbing alternative."

"What is that?" Walton asked.

"Why, love, of course."

"Do I look like a sentimentalist?" Walton shrugged his shoulders.

"Looks are not everything," she answered. Her eyes showed a clear circle of blue, fresh as the sky after rain. Instinctively, as if she too felt some of the sympathy which she had awakened in him,

Helena Boyd's conversation had taken a personal tone. "Sometimes," she was saying, "even our most intimate friends leave us quite indifferent. And then again the merest stranger, whom we meet simply in passing, seems to rouse in us a certain desire to"—she paused a moment—"I was going to say, to control their sentiments."

"Mrs. Thurston told me," Walton responded, "that your grandfather and his father before him had been rulers in this free land of ours. That may perhaps account for the temptation you feel to control others."

"Did Mrs. Thurston say that I was horribly tyrannical?" Miss Boyd put the question eagerly.

"Not in the least," was Walton's answer. "She said you were that rarest of all products: a society girl who is making something of her life."

"Oh, I'm afraid that isn't true, either," Miss Boyd protested. "But all I meant just now about influencing other people's feelings was that when I interrupted you, and you looked so serious, I should rather have had you thinking about some business combination than about some——" Walton watched a little flush creep into her face as she lowered her eyes before finishing: "Well, some sentimental memory."

These words rang in Walton's ears during the long vigils of the night. At last, toward three, he fell into a profound sleep.

#### IV.

WHEN Walton awakened, the sun was streaming into his room at a very nine-o'clock angle, and it seemed to him that he would be too late for any sort of breakfast.

Having this bit of holiday might have been so delicious! The office knew his telephone number, but he had given them especial instructions not to call up unless it was a matter of life or death.

A long morning on the golf-links with Miss Boyd kept Walton's thoughts off the unpleasant incident of the night before, and its probable, still more unpleasant results. Nothing, he felt as he gazed at the pretty Miss Boyd, could have taken his mind so successfully from the turmoil into which he saw no way of bringing order.

"Do you know," Miss Boyd said as they swung along homeward across the links, "I have a sort of feeling that something has happened."

Walton was glad of any excuse to keep his eyes fixed on her.

"I don't know what it may be," she hastened to add, "but just something exciting. Haven't you ever noticed that when one queer thing happens in a house where you're staying, there are always at least three more to follow?"

"The greatest excitement for me," he answered, "has been this walk by your side. I wish it could go on forever."

As if in response to her young guest's prophecy, Mrs. Thurston was indeed in a state of great agitation when they reached home. Excusing herself to Miss Boyd, she drew Walton into the little morning-room off the hall.

"It's always this way," she said. "As soon as Will leaves home, I get into trouble at once. One of the maids has been arrested without the slightest warning. And I had perfectly splendid references. People are so horribly unconscientious. Imagine giving a recommendation to a girl who is an outright thief!"

Jarred by this brusque denunciation, Walton put a few questions: "Has the girl stolen things at Rosedale?"

"Oh, no, no!" Mrs. Thurston exclaimed. "She was under suspicion, it seems, when I took her. The police were on her track, and *this* was where it led. Charming for me! Did you ever *hear* of anything so annoying?"

She was on the verge of tears, but the announcement of lunch shook her back into her conventional good humor. She wished the subject barred out from general conversation, she whispered to Walton; there was no use in alarming her visitors.

Not hostile to the idea of food after his long morning in the open air, and with something like the cynical relish of the condemned man for his last meal, Walton was enjoying to the full a bit of tenderloin steak, cooked to a turn, when the butler announced:

"A call for Mr. Walton on the telephone."

Tossing his napkin into his chair and with a nod to his hostess, he went to take the message.

It was Judson's voice, saying, "Shall we expect you down at the office this afternoon?"

"At the office?" Walton echoed, and the worst summons which had come to him from mortal experience sounded out from the little receiver he held pressed against his ear.

"What?" he murmured under his breath. "Say that again."

And Judson's whining voice reiterated:

"We've received a second wireless this morning from Mr. Thurston, instructing us to deposit the securities at the Sixth National Bank before noon on Monday. We've been searching the office. The papers aren't in the safe. What time will you be down?"

The answer went back in a low tone.

With appetite somewhat arrested, Walton returned to the table.

"Just a call from Judson, my partner," he said in an offhand manner; "nothing very important, but I am afraid, Mrs. Thurston, that I shall have to take the first train I can back to town."



"I thought you were bound for Chicago," Margaret Blair remarked, and Mrs. Thurston shrugged her stout little shoulders, whimpering:

"How annoying! Do you really think you must go? The Potters and the Marshalls are coming over this afternoon, and I have promised you for a second table at bridge. You're a perfect fraud, Mr. Walton. We counted on you for over Sunday, at least. Do wait until to-morrow."

"Yes, do!" It was Miss Boyd who threw in this additional entreaty. "You know to-morrow is Saturday, a half-holiday, and Monday is Labor Day, so you can't pretext business."

"Monday is Labor Day?" Walton echoed faintly.

"You seem to take the news very hard." Mrs. Thurston laughed.

"Labor Day for most of us means a day of labor, and I assure you"—he was looking with much feeling at the pretty Miss Boyd—"I should much prefer stopping here to play. But I must be a stoic."

"At least"—it was Margaret Blair who spoke very deliberately, and Walton thought he detected a note of malice in her voice—"at least, you can have one rubber of bridge with us while your things are being packed."

"Delighted!" He was pleased with his own presence of mind as he listened to the firm sound of his voice. "I'll just run up a moment and get my cigarette-case, if you'll let me, Mrs. Thurston."

Walton was thinking with electric rapidity.

The securities were somewhat bulky, but he could place them in either of his breast-pockets, and, by leaving his coat open, not look unduly clumsy.

Up the stairs, three steps at a time, one final bound brought him to the closet door, which he threw open, sinking down on his knees by the precious suit-case, lifting the clothes from within, pushing the cover aside, diving his hand in between linen and leather.

But he dived it in again and again, drawing it out each time empty. He plunged it so far in that it came out with the back scratched scarlet; but always empty.

The certificates were not there!

They had been taken from Walton's suit-case. He had been robbed, robbed of his own plunder!

From below he could hear Thurston's wife's voice calling to him:

"Come, Mr. Walton, we're waiting for you to deal!"

## V.

WHEN Walton reached New York it was only four o'clock, a hot, August, parching four-o'clock. Instinctively he turned toward the down-town subway entrance. By flinging himself into the speeding underground he could yet reach the office before Judson had set out

for his suburban home. Judson, in fact, was waiting for him, he knew. Judson would question him at once concerning the "mislaidd certificates." No doubt he could put up a bluff about "secret letters" or a "rush of business" which could account for his saying nothing about the securities Thurston had left with him on the day of his departure, merely placing the whole packet momentarily beyond reach. But after this preliminary explanation further questions would follow, and Walton did not feel up to continued duplicity. He had been foiled and dumfounded in his first attempt at treachery. There was scarcely a hair's-breadth chance for him to escape. Any further conversation on the subject could only make matters a thousand times worse. He would keep away from the office.

This decision formulated itself firmly in his mind as he crossed Forty-Second Street and went into the Belmont Hotel café. At four on an August afternoon the place was fairly empty. He ran no risk of being seen. The customers were chiefly ladies from the suburbs, who dropped in to have a cup of tea, or an ice, before taking the train.

At a neighboring table, however, Walton caught sight of a young couple, evidently lovers, like himself avoiding the public eye, though for reasons very different. Their heads were bowed quite close together as they leaned toward each other across the table, on which was spread an untouched feast of *café parfait* and *éclairs*. The girl's pretty blonde hair, which showed beneath her close-fitting cap of black tulle, made him think irresistibly of another blonde head, which he had left so short a time before nodding good-by to him from the veranda at Rosedale.

What a mystery Helena Boyd was to him!

She seemed at one and the same time so intense and so restless. Walton would have supposed that she had found her object in life, and yet she had spoken to him in the most ardent manner of her longing "really to do something."

Certainly she was unconventional enough: her driving over to the station without knowing him had been only one example among many that had slightly surprised him during his short twenty-four hours' visit under the same roof with Miss Boyd. And yet—for he admitted to himself that he was somewhat old-fashioned—he had observed to his satisfaction that his new friend was not a Bohemian. She had not smoked a cigarette after dinner, as Mrs. Thurston always did, and she never played bridge, so his hostess had told him.

No, Walton reflected, Helena Boyd was an unconventional unconventionality. It was more the assurance of the perfectly well-bred person who feels safe to trust her impulses. She had roused his curiosity without shocking him in the least, and she was adorably pretty.

Who was she, and why had he never heard of her before? He felt at the same time a distrust and a confidence in her. She seemed capable of anything; as some one had said, "even of good."

In an endeavor to bring Walton back to the grim fact that it is not customary to occupy a place at a café table without "ordering," the waiter placed a menu before him.

Walton "ordered," and as he smoked and sipped, his mind wandered from Helena Boyd to his present predicament.

What was he to do? What, in Heaven's name?

The slightest move he made to recover his lost certificates would be self-denunciation. This paralyzed him in all effort toward detection of the thief who had taken the papers from the valise at Mrs. Thurston's. If Walton had never prayed before, he came very near it now. He contemplated everything: confessing to a lawyer, who would keep his professional secret; consulting a mind-reader to discover the robber; the "treating" of his "case" by Christian Science. With melancholy, he concluded that there was no honest way out of dishonesty.

Yet—and it was natural the question should put itself with tormenting assiduity to his mind—was it *really* dishonest, what he had done? Did not the certainty he felt of his success in speculating exonerate him? He believed so. Thousands of other brokers must have done—in fact, did do every day—the very same thing which put him now in the position of a—— He could no longer formulate the little five-lettered word.

Evidently it was a delicate line to be drawn by conscience, that between right and wrong. Just wherein did wrong for him consist?

In the intention that had prompted his act?

In its being found out and discussed?

Brokers, financiers, too often, he concluded, entrusted their virtue to the chance of secrecy.

But what was he to do?

The hot, dusty air blew in from the street, the insistent clang of the electric cars as they crowded by, groaning on their rails, reached him, adding to the dismal impression of New York on this sultry August afternoon. The city, he believed, must be given up to those whose souls, like his own, were in torment. Surely no one in peace of mind would remain willingly in summer New York.

As his mind ran over the possibilities open to him, the thought of forgery flashed an instant across his brain. It might be possible to substitute other certificates for those which had been stolen.

As this idea occurred to him, Walton brusquely knocked the ashes from the cigar which had long since been left to die out. He shook a match loose from the case before him, got another light, and, gnawing the weed's end, he reflected.

No. No. It could never be done. Admitted that he might procure from the clerk or the secretary of the company a number of certificates, he would then have to forge the signatures of two officers, and that of the registrar of transfers as well.

Why dally with impossible things? Why concentrate on idle sentiment, on bitter, agonizing regret?

Action, action alone, could save him.

He called to the waiter and asked for a pen and paper. Hastily he wrote a short note to Margaret Blair, telling her it was urgent that they should meet within the next twenty-four hours. He made his letter insistent, imperative.

He smiled in spite of himself as he recalled the cool, outrageous impudence with which Margaret Blair had gazed at him as she answered her inquisitive hostess when Mrs. Thurston had questioned her about the ring. This taking of the jewel was, no doubt, her first move toward vengeance. The second had not been slow to follow.

"By Jove!" he thought. "A woman's mind works swiftly when she's on vindication bent!"

There was not a detective in the force, he concluded, clever enough to have found out on so slight a clue—with no clue, in fact—that the wretched papers were in his hands.

Dusk was beginning to cast its gray shadows upon the outside world.

Walton settled with the waiter, left the café, strolled up to his apartment in East Fifty-Fifth Street, and enlisted the services of the janitor to help him to dress for dinner. His own servant he had given a fortnight's holiday, not expecting so soon to return.

## VI.

TOWARD eight o'clock Walton took his place at a table in the window of Delmonico's. He ordered a good dinner, a bottle of good wine. The "well-fed" point of view was often salutary, he had found. No light, however, broke on his bewildered mind as he ate his way through cold consommé, sole Colbert, pigeon *en compôte*. Reaching at last the dessert, he turned his helpless gaze from the hot, dingy avenue with its meagre stream of vehicles, to the brilliantly lighted restaurant, humming to the sound of electric fans.

There, over by the window in the corner, sat Judson. As he caught sight of Walton, he got up and with one stride was across the room.

"Hello, old man!" he said. "I began to think something had happened to you—tunnel accident or something of that sort."

"How drearily old-fashioned!" Walton replied, affecting sang-froid.

"Well, you can't be here by chance?" Judson queried.

"I'm here to eat my dinner," was the somewhat surly response.

"Did n't you get my telephone message at the Thurstons'? But of course you did."

"You're wandering in your mind, Judson."

"I telephoned you twice."

"Twice?"

"Yes," Judson said. "A third wireless came from Thurston this afternoon."

Walton interrupted, affecting good-humor:

"Look here, old man, it strikes me you're a trifle over-zealous. Monday is Labor Day. There's a long sweep from Friday to Tuesday on the Wall Street calendar. One would positively think, to look at you, that you were uneasy about Thurston's securities. Might I, in polite language, suggest that, without exaggerated modesty, you retain your nearest undergarment? In other words——"

Judson, squelched, attempted a few remarks about the heat, and went back to his dinner, ruminating.

Having finished his dessert, Walton lighted a cigar and walked out toward Fifth Avenue. Hailing a taxi-cab, he got into it and, without giving any address, nodded in the direction of Washington Square. The chauffeur, understanding that his "fare" wished merely to reflect while taking the air, drove at a deliberate rate down the avenue. Having reached Eighth Street, he crossed over, and, following the car-tracks, turned into Sixth Avenue. The din of the elevated, roaring overhead, had a soothing effect on Walton's tired nerves. He was in a mood to think of anything but himself, or preferably not to think at all.

Presently he was jerked forward by the sudden stopping of the vehicle. The taxi-cab had come to a standstill.

A considerable crowd gathered about the door of a dusky building caught his wandering attention. He looked more sharply, and, seeing that he had unwittingly arrived before Jefferson Market Court, he signalled his chauffeur to wait.

Courts, prisons, and their proceedings had a strange alluring attraction for Walton at the present moment.

He descended, and, pushing his way through the agglomeration of individuals stationed before the court door, he entered.

A woman had been arrested—arrested for stealing. This much he gathered from the throng of curious idlers. Simulating an official interest in the culprit, Walton obtained entrance to the court-room. For a moment he sat on one of the long benches, gazing through the iron grille which separated the spectators from the judge, the court officers, and the prisoner. The thought struck him that this screen stood as a boundary between those who were simply good in this world

and those who had yielded to temptation. Was not his own place, he asked himself, on the court side of this iron grille? Did he not by right belong among the guilty? A shiver ran across his shoulders. It was gruesome enough to feel remorse, but how much more dreadful to be accused, judged, condemned!

In vain he looked for a woman in the group before him.

Signalling at last to the young attaché whose vigilance keeps peace and order among the spectators, Walton made inquiries.

"Where is the woman who has been arrested for stealing?" he whispered.

The young attaché, nodding toward the vestibule, responded:

"Why, you might find her there."

This postponement had served to whet Walton's curiosity, and as he entered the outer hall his mind was quite made up to one thing: be she what she might, this woman, he would bail her out that very night. The thought that a girl, tempted beyond her powers of resistance, should yield, and then be punished for her weakness, had become unendurable to him.

With a determination which was manifest in his entire attitude, Walton stepped up to the bailiff and declared his intention. The bailiff referred him to the other officials, and in a moment Walton was confiding to them his decision.

"I wish," he said, "to give bail for this woman who has been arrested for stealing."

His statement did not produce the sensation he had anticipated. Evidently the court officials were stupefied by bad air and wire-pulling. For some moments he waited while the leaves of a register rustled under authoritative fingers, then a voice said:

"Marion Hemsley, aged twenty-five years, arrested while in the service of Mrs. Thurston at Rosedale, New York, for stealing while in the service of her former employer."

"Arrested at Mrs. Thurston's!" Walton cried. "What an extraordinary coincidence!"

"She's not the one?" the clerk queried, looking wearily over his spectacles.

"The very one," Walton answered, and to himself he murmured, "Great heavens, how small the world is! That very girl I saw this morning at Rosedale."

There was another premonitory rustling of register pages, and again the voice spoke:

"Marion Hemsley, the servant girl arrested at Mrs. Thurston's, has already been released on bail."

"Already been released?" cried Walton. "May I know by whom?"

A moment's consultation ensued, then a heavy hand pushed toward

Walton the record. With some difficulty he made out the signature affixed to the pledge of the three hundred dollars' bail.

"Boyd," he murmured. "Helena Boyd. Well, I——"

His exclamation was interrupted. Laughing gaily, Miss Helena Boyd came out of one of the cells. She was followed by Marion Hemsley.

Walton took off his hat.

"Good evening, Miss Boyd," he smiled. "I hardly expected to find you in such a place."

"I am perhaps more human than you thought," she returned, glancing toward the poor creature beside her, whose eyes were downcast.

"Can't I be of any use to you?" Walton's tone was eager.

"I don't believe so," Miss Boyd responded.

"I've a taxi-cab here. It's not easy to find one in this quarter. Let me drive you wherever you are going. It's late, you know."

Miss Boyd hesitated. Walton watched the exquisite curves of her mouth as "yes" and "no" struggled for expression on its crimson surface.

"Come, I have decided for you," he said, leading the way, and when he had placed Miss Boyd on the back seat and Marion Hemsley opposite her, he asked:

"What address?"

"Home." Miss Boyd smiled.

"You forget," Walton returned.

"Oh, of course, you don't know where I live: 37 West Eighty-Ninth. How stupid of me!"

The long drive uptown was awkward. There were a thousand things Walton wanted to say to the mysterious and charming person by his side, but the presence of her protégée, whose scarlet cheeks attested to her shame and gratitude, made it impossible to speak on any but conventional subjects.

He was surprised, however, somewhat embarrassed even, by his own ignorance regarding Miss Boyd. He had spent only twenty-four hours with her, to be sure, under Mrs. Thurston's hospitable roof, but in that time a peculiar sympathy seemed to have sprung up between them, an understanding which gave him the feeling of being an old friend. Yet, except for what Mrs. Thurston had told him, he was ignorant of the slightest practical detail concerning Miss Boyd's existence.

When they reached their destination she turned to him gracefully:

"You'll come in, won't you?"

"It's not too late?"

The door was opened by a man-servant. Leading the way, Miss Boyd said sweetly to Walton:

"I want to give an order. It will take me only a moment. Then I'll join you in the library."

Walton waited.

The library was a delightful room. There was an agreeable mixture of the classic and the personal in the stately mahogany bookshelves, the deep armchairs, the corner table with its collection of photographs in odd frames, the comfortable lamp, whose generous rays embraced in their light an Indian basket overflowing with fancy-work. It was so evidently a woman's room, this library where Miss Boyd had asked Walton to wait. He could not bear the thought that perhaps she shared it with some other person. He wanted it to be hers alone, entirely hers, this sanctum into which, because of her trust in him, she had let him penetrate.

The soft sound of her approach presently reached him. She appeared at the door. In her white muslin gown, her flower-laden hat, she seemed so fresh, so cool, Walton found her adorable.

"Was it very long?" she asked. "A true, woman's minute?"

"It seemed long without you," Walton answered, a touch of gallantry in his musical voice. "And yet I did n't mind waiting. I like to be here among your books, your pictures."

"You're too kind," she laughed, dropping into a low chair beside him.

"They are yours, are n't they?" he asked intently.

"What, these?" She lifted her hand with a little waving gesture, which left her arm bare to the elbow. What a graceful, slender, perfect arm it was!

"You really do live here alone, do you?" Walton pursued.

The incredulity of his tone provoked Miss Boyd to mirth.

"Of course I do," she cried. "Entirely alone. I've been an orphan ever since I was ten. My guardian died six years ago, so, you see, there is no one with whom I could very well live."

"Of course not. I understand. How fortunate—I mean, how very sad! And so you spend your time just going about making people happy and doing good. You've got a lot of pluck."

"I confess"—Miss Boyd smiled—"that this is the first time I have ever bailed out a thief from prison."

"It's splendid," Walton affirmed. "It's tremendously noble and unselfish. Only, to be perfectly frank, do you think it's quite safe?"

"What?" asked Miss Boyd. "You don't think we're going to jump the bail?"

"Oh, no, not that. But it does n't seem to me prudent, living alone here as you do, to take under your roof this girl. To say the least, she is rather a suspicious character."



"I like suspicious characters," Miss Boyd answered. "They are the only kind that interest me."

She tilted back the low seat where she had placed herself. Her exquisite figure, in its light gown, was outlined with amazing beauty against the sombre wood of the chair. She had thrown her arms gracefully above her head. For a moment she contemplated Walton with an expression of mirthfulness and coquetry, and a little air of provocation which troubled him. Then she said:

"I'm not a bit conventional, you know. It would frighten me to death, for example, to make a fourth at bridge with three good players; but to shelter a thief— Don't worry, my reasons are good. I know what I'm doing."

Walton was not to be discouraged. The expression in Miss Boyd's eyes held him in its magnetic current. He could not desist; he wanted to know more, to hear more, to talk on indefinitely with this frail little beauty who was so fearless and at the same time so timid. Impulsively, seeing how weary she looked, he put into words a sudden longing:

"Let's go and have supper somewhere together. We certainly deserve it."

The very sound of his voice making such a proposition at such an hour—the clock had struck eleven—startled him. What would she say? He waited for her clamor of feminine opposition. But no. Not at all. Very deliberately Miss Boyd responded:

"Supper? How awfully nice! It's just what I need. I was so busy following up this affair at the police station first and then at the court that I did n't have time for dinner. Where shall we go?"

Walton knew an uptown place where the music was good, and where they could dine on the roof in comparative peace. There was a foreign air, too, to this aerial café where Walton took Miss Boyd for supper.

## VII.

"It seems," Helena said, looking about them when they had arrived, "as if we were starting on a journey together into some unknown country."

"The land of Bohemia," Walton replied. "Very much looked down upon by the smart people of New York."

"I'm so glad I'm not smart," she said. "Fashion is like a coat of mail which protects you to such an extent that you end by feeling nothing at all."

"Most people don't want to feel nowadays," Walton rejoined. "Hearts are very old style. I'm sure that even in Cupid's world the antiquity dealer must look upon a heart as a rare old curio."

The waiter leaned forward, thrusting toward Walton the bill of fare, as much as to affirm that hearts indeed were not the only things.

Walton consulted his new friend.

Did she like lobster? Broiled? Would she have some scrambled eggs to begin with? *Oeufs brouillés à la tomate*? Champagne? Not too dry? Then, after, a nice cheese to top off with?

Walton sighed an astonished sigh as she nodded her assent to each of his suggestions.

"What?" she asked. She had spread out her napkin, and now she lifted with both hands her veil and pushed back her hair as a woman does when she has had her hat on since morning. "What?" she repeated. "Why do you say 'oh' as though you were surprised?"

"I was going to make a selfish remark," Walton answered. "I can't help feeling astonished. Since I have had the pleasure of being old enough to order a supper—I won't say how many years that is—this is the first time I have found a woman friend willing to eat what I proposed. They generally take the bill of fare in their own hands, ordering what they like—for both."

Miss Boyd laughed with a touch of coquetry.

"Perhaps I'm so hungry, I would eat anything."

"Even what a man suggests? I see."

"It looks awfully good, any way," she added, lifting on her fork the first mouthful. Then for a moment they both ate in silence. A light breeze had sprung up, cooling with delicious gusts the parched air of the August night. They sat by the balustrade of the roof garden, on one side the glaring lights of the roof café, on the other the soft black stretch of sky, which seemed to have flung out its starry mantle at this very spot so that it might serve for background to Miss Boyd's delicate profile as she took supper with Walton in this uptown New York café.

"There"—she gave a little sigh as she laid down her fork on the empty plate, and sipped the sparkling wine—"I'm like a child who's been fed. I feel better now."

"You've had a long day of it," Walton responded sympathetically.

"And a long night, too."

Walton watched her closely as she made this remark. Once or twice a shadow of a suspicion had crept across his mind—the merest shadow.

He could not believe that Miss Boyd was capable of complicity with Marion Hemsley, the dishonest servant girl, and yet he found it hard to justify, on merely philanthropic grounds, her impulse in giving bail for this commonplace thief. To be sure, though, he reflected, his own intention had been identical. Then, with a desire to be very honest, he began:

"You know, if you had n't bailed that girl out, I was going to."

"You? But what reason had you?" she asked, leaning eagerly forward under the candelabra's light, so that Walton could see the transparent fairness of her lovely brow.

"Why, I—I—why, I don't know. I was lonely, I suppose. You're more easily touched by others when you're sorry for yourself. New York is such an empty place in August."

Miss Boyd laughed. Her teeth showed a flash of pearls in their case of crimson velvet.

"Would you," she asked, "give bail for all prisoners indiscriminately at this season, just because New York is so dull in August?"

"Yes," Walton nodded emphatically; "and I'd get them all released in January, because it's so gay. Prison must be ghastly, don't you think so?"

"Any place must be ghastly where you're sure to take with you a guilty conscience."

She paused a moment. Walton scrutinized her. There was something appealing in his glance. Then she continued, not looking at him:

"I'm convinced this girl, Marion Hemsley, is guilty."

"How can you be sure?"

She did not reply at once. Walton waited some time for an answer. At last it came.

"Did you miss nothing?" Miss Boyd asked very deliberately.

"No—yes—or, rather, no," he stammered. "The truth is, I slept so soundly that all my belongings could have been taken one by one without my perceiving it. Men never keep strict track of their things. I had very little with me at the Thurstons'. Only the most limited amount a bachelor could allow himself for a two days' visit." Then, very slowly, he added, "And so you suspect this poor girl of really being a thief?"

"The way I argued was simply this: It might help her in the long run if I bailed her out. It could n't possibly do her any harm, and to have her under my own roof was the easiest way of keeping an eye on her. I shall find out now whether she has in her possession the diamond bracelet I believe she stole from me."

"You think she stole from you too?"

"Yes," Miss Boyd nodded.

"How did you discover your loss?" Walton asked eagerly. "So much has happened in such a short time."

"The bracelet was one I wear very often. I missed it at once. Moreover," Miss Boyd continued, "my suspicions had been aroused in a curious way. There was a storm during the night at Rosedale. The wind came up very suddenly toward four o'clock. One of the

shutters downstairs shook loose from its hook, and the noise of the banging woke me."

"I heard nothing," Walton murmured.

"I got up, put on my dressing-gown, went down to the landing, and made fast the swaying blind. As I came up the stairs again, I passed in the hall on your floor first one female figure and then another. I had no light except a little electric battery lamp, and it was impossible to see either woman's face. I could distinguish their outlines only as they hurried up the stairway in front of me; disappearing into the darkness on the floor above, one somewhat behind the other, so that they did not see each other, I think, and neither saw me."

"Two women," Walton repeated. "What two women were there in the house besides Mrs. Thurston and Mrs. Blair?"

"Mrs. Thurston sleeps on the ground floor, so it could not have been she. I listened for a long time—in fact, until long after daylight. No one stirred again to go downstairs."

"Then it must have been——" Walton's tone was so emphatic that Miss Boyd checked him, laughing.

"How intense you are!" she cried.

"I confess you've quite made my blood creep," he answered. "Surely your female figures were n't ghosts?" He was trying to speak lightly.

"You don't believe in ghosts, do you?" Miss Boyd pursed her mouth up into a rosy circle.

"No," he answered; "I don't believe in ghosts at all. But this is most extraordinary—more so than you can imagine." Then with an accent sincere, almost tender, he added, "If I were superstitious, I should not wonder so much that some accident had brought together these two women in the hall last night at Rosedale—that was a mere passing incident, an accident. What seems quite out of the ordinary, is that you and I should have been thus brought together again to-night."

"It was a remarkable coincidence."

"How I wish I'd known you before!" Walton said. "I feel as if all my life had been wasted until now."

She smiled, pleased evidently with what Walton was saying.

"Yes," he went on very earnestly; "you're the sort of girl who changes a man's whole point of view about women—about life. There are some things I've done which I will never do again now, just because I have, even for so short a time, known you."

"I warned you that I was not conventional, you remember," Miss Boyd responded, becoming more serious than she had been at any time before. "With conventional people, you always know just where you stand. With a person like me"—she threw out her little hands and raised her shoulders in a graceful shrug—"you are either lifted high up into the clouds or else dropped down into the dregs."

"I'm not afraid of being dropped into the dregs," Walton affirmed. "I'll take my chances of that."

"But you know nothing about me," she protested, shaking her pretty head.

"I'm sure I should like to know more," said Walton. "I should like to know all, everything."

"I might be a dreadful disappointment to you." Miss Boyd's tone was sad as she made this remark, but before Walton could answer she continued: "In the first place, aren't you astonished at what I have done this evening? Here I am taking supper alone with you, and I scarcely know you at all. When we part in a moment, I shall go home to the house in which, momentarily, I am sheltering a criminal. You'll confess you don't approve of that."

"I told you," Walton responded, "that I don't consider such generosity prudent."

"Let me explain," she said, leaning forward with a charming gesture. "In the first place, there are two kinds of women, the happy and the unhappy. Happy women are all more or less alike. You can easily say in advance just how they are going to act. They are always equal to the occasion, and capable at critical moments of sacrifice really sublime. When you have an unhappy woman before you, you never can tell what she is going to do."

"Are you unhappy?" Walton asked, searching her eyes.

"I have been," Miss Boyd responded.

"I am so sorry," Walton murmured tenderly. How he longed to beg for permission to shield her from whatever outward circumstances had contributed to make her wretched! How he wished that he might have the right to console her! He merely said, "I suppose it's because of your own suffering that you try to help others, that you take into your arms, as it were, people like Marion Hemsley."

"No"—Miss Boyd shook her head. "My taking her into my arms, as you call it, has nothing to do with whatever charitable spirit there may be in me. A moment ago I warned you that you might be disappointed in me—gravely disappointed. I am now going to tell you the worst. I am not what you think me."

"I don't understand." Walton gazed, trying to meet her eyes, which evaded his. He did not know whether he longed most to have her tell him everything or to have her hide from him whatever there might be which would break in upon the spell cast about him by the impression she had made that night.

Miss Boyd continued:

"You think me merely a society girl living up on the west side of New York, in a comfortable house, with plenty of money."

"Yes," Walton nodded.

"I'm all of that, but I'm not only that."

"What else?" he asked quickly. He must hear it all, whatever it be.

"I told you that I was an orphan, alone in the world."

"Yes."

"And with money enough to remain quite idle. There's a great deal of truth, Mr. Walton, in the legend about idle hands and mischief."

"But you seem to me one of the busiest women I have ever known."

"That's because," Miss Boyd answered deliberately—"really because I have a profession."

"A profession?" Walton echoed, looking at her slender little figure in its muslin gown, so graceful under its broad-brimmed hat; her pretty wrists, the delicacy of her tapering fingers. "What profession can you possibly exercise?"

Miss Boyd held out her hand. Walton took it.

"You promise not to be shocked at me?"

"I promise," he said.

For a moment her hand clung to his. Then she confessed:

"I am a detective."

A thousand conflicting thoughts flashed through Walton's brain as she made this statement. At first he thought she was joking. But he felt still the warm grasp of her hand, he believed her to be true.

A detective!

It seemed as if suddenly she were divining his innermost secret, as if she must know the miserable burden of guilt that weighed upon his conscience, as if, by some strange professional instinct, she must have discovered it; that she would make it known, that she would denounce him as a—why, as a thief, before he could atone for the foolish, dissolute weakness of which he had been capable.

He looked at her with dread.

"There!" she said. "I knew you would be disappointed in me. It's shocking, you think, for a woman of the world to exercise a profession which brings her into contact with low, vicious people?"

"Oh, no, no!" Walton just managed to get out this feeble exclamation. "I think that women have the right nowadays to take up any occupation for which they feel themselves fitted. That's all right. Disappointed? Not a bit of it."

He even made a pitiful attempt to laugh.

The waiters, having cleared most of the tables, began turning out the lights on the balustrade which formed the other angle of the roof café.

"We must go," Miss Boyd said, slowly putting on her long gloves.

Walton called a *garçon*, paid his bill, and in a strange state of mind walked away with Miss Boyd—the detective—by his side.

When he had again left her at Eighty-Ninth Street, he took his way home down by the Park as far as Fifty-Ninth, and then across-town. Over and over, as he walked in the warm August night, he thought of all that had happened during the last twenty-four hours, and out of the sea of uncertainty, remorse, and astonishment, which his mind had become, with its tumultuous thoughts; out of all the questions which were clamoring for an answer—what he was to do about finding the certificates, why he ever took them, how he could possibly explain things to Thurston, why Margaret Blair had stolen the ring—the thing he most often repeated to himself was: how much did Miss Boyd know?

### VIII.

THE following morning Helena Boyd opened her eyes very late. The sun was streaming through the shutters across her room. She looked at the alternate bars of light and shade.

"Like prison stripes," she thought, and a little shiver ran across her shoulders. She rang for the maid, asked for her breakfast and the mail. Presently, with a tray daintily set, the servant returned.

"What time is it?" Helena said.

"Nine o'clock, miss," the maid responded. Then she ventured: "There's a box come downstairs. Shall I bring it up?"

"What sort of box?" Helena questioned, pouring from its Dresden china pot the morning coffee.

"Looks like flowers, miss," the servant answered.

"Flowers? Bring them up at once, of course."

They were indeed flowers, a box of splendid color, a whole garden of old-fashioned larkspur, sweet-williams, gilly-flower, marigold, and even zinnia.

Immediately she thought of her strange adventure of the night before, her supper on the roof garden with Walton, their curious meeting, her talk with him, her final confession, his look of amazement, almost horror, when she told him what her occupation was. She could hear his voice now as he echoed with a melancholy note:

*"Detective!"*

That was only the brutal fact regarding her case; and there was so much more! But from the moment she had spoken this much of the truth, it seemed that a wall had risen between them. Had not these flowers been sent to break through the wall, forcing their gentle, perfumed way into her presence? Was it not Walton whose thoughts, the first thing in the morning, had turned to her, as hers now turned to him? She like to believe that he was thinking of her.

But in vain she looked for a card. There was none to tell her from whom the flowers came.

Opening the telephone-book which lay on the table, she looked up Walton's address. She had forgotten to ask it the night before. Only the office number in Wall Street was given. Detaching the receiver, she called up 3424 John.

"Is this Mr. Walton's address? . . . May I speak to him? . . . Not in? . . . Don't know when he will return? . . . Will you give me his house address, please? . . . Fifty-three East Fifty-Five. Thank you."

Then she put down the receiver and reflected. While she took her bath and dressed, she continued to reflect.

She must see Walton again. It was absolutely imperative. How could she find out where he was? Descending slowly to the library, she decided upon a plan. The butler, coming out of the parlor, crossed her in the hall.

"One of the men from the Bureau is there, miss," said the servant.

"In the parlor?"

"Yes, miss."

Helena Boyd paused a moment, then hastily she instructed the servant:

"Call up Rosedale, Mrs. Thurston's country place. Ask for Mr. Walton's telephone number, his residence number—Mr. Henry Walton. Then see if you can get him at his house."

"Yes, miss."

She closed the door behind her and stood before the man from the bureau.

"Mr. Silverton!" she cried. "What a surprise! This is the first time my chief has honored me with a call. Do sit down, and may I ask to what I owe this unusual visit?"

Silverton took a chair. He placed it with its back to the window, so that he could watch closely the expression of his young aid, who sat opposite to him in the full light of the morning sunshine.

"I've got a delicate little matter for you to follow up," Mr. Silverton began.

Helena Boyd leaned forward, all eagerness.

"You're new to the business," her chief continued, "but you've got a woman's delicate touch in matters of intuition, and this is a society job."

"Ah," Helena breathed, intent upon what Mr. Silverton was saying.

"Yes, it's one of those gentleman-thief affairs." He grinned ironically. "I've noticed down at the Bureau that the prison set seems to be moving up, as it were; getting, not more swollen, but sweller, every day. You know, Miss Boyd, there's an old saying, 'It takes a thief to catch a thief'? Well, we've modernized that time-worn adage. We say, 'It takes a society thief to catch a society thief.'"



"But I'm not a society thief," Helena protested violently. Silverton chuckled.

"My, but we're on the defensive, my little lady! We don't want any nerves in our business. We want the blood to dominate, but it must be cold blood."

"Oh, what an unpleasant image!" Helena shuddered.

"It might be worse if the thermometer were n't up in the eighties. By the way"—Silverton shifted his hat from one knee to the other—"speaking of heat, it's lovely weather for supping on roof gardens, eh?"

"Oh, Mr. Silverton, you know everything! Do you mean to say you really——"

"Yes, ma'am, that's what brings me here this morning. When you came down to the Bureau a few weeks ago and told me you were looking for a job, not because you needed bread-and-butter money, but because, like hundreds of other women, who have not your wisdom, you found time to hang heavy on your hands and consequently you wanted some occupation, do you remember my advice to you? I said, 'Miss Boyd, you'd better keep out of this business. It's not exactly what you might call clean.' But you would hear none of my objections. You declared that fancy-work and cooking-schools for the poor could not absorb you, and that you must be absorbed. I did n't really have much faith in you, to tell the truth."

"I know you did n't, Mr. Silverton, and I thank you all the more."

"But I thought I'd give you a try, anyhow."

"It was most kind of you. I appreciate it, I assure you."

Silverton grinned.

"You have n't done much for us so far."

"Why, no, that's true"—Helena spoke quickly—"but just give me a chance, a real chance, and you'll see that you were not mistaken in trusting me."

"Well"—Silverton held his hat imprisoned between both hands—"we've got a chance for you. It's a very delicate matter; just needs a woman's intuition."

"I ought to have that!" she cried.

"Yes, ma'am," Silverton continued. "For a long time we've been trying to lay our hands on one of these fashionable fellows. There's nothing so picturesque as a real gentleman in stripes. It adds to the tone of prison life, and certainly it can't diminish our credit in the public eye if we pinch a few of the elegant sort who are playing in the market, so to speak."

"Do you mean Wall Street?" Miss Boyd asked.

Silverton barely nodded as he drew out a big handkerchief, passing it over his brow, damp from the heat.

"The job which I want you to take up has just been given us. It's up to us to find out the intentions of a certain well-known broker. We have been informed that he is travelling about the country houses and such, in the possession of bonds amounting to about two hundred thousand dollars. They were placed in his keeping by one of his customers, and if what our client tells us is true, and he is actually going about with these certificates which don't belong to him, why, it's"—Silverton brought out the word deliberately—"it's larceny!"

"Oh!" Helena Boyd breathed this mute exclamation almost inaudibly.

"Yes, ma'am. The only reason a broker could have for carrying about what does n't belong to him is a dishonest reason, whatever it is, and I presume that this man's idea simply was that, as his customer had gone abroad, he might take a little dip into the market without any one being the worse for his using a security that belongs to another fellow."

"His customer has gone abroad, you say?" Helena asked.

"Yes, ma'am. His customer's a personal friend of yours—that's why I came up here this morning. It's Mr. William Thurston."

"And the broker is——?"

"Henry Walton."

"But first of all," Miss Boyd flashed out at him, "who gave you this information?"

Silverton shook his head.

"It's not part of your job to find out that."

"But you are n't going to take any offhand testimony on such a vital matter, and especially against such a man as Mr. Walton?"

"You take your orders from us, Miss Boyd, and we take ours from whom we please. Otherwise we might as well drop right out of the business. You know Mr. Walton. Nothing can be easier for you than to ferret out the truth in this matter."

"Oh, but that's just it. He is a friend of mine. How can I spy on him? Don't ask me to do this, *please*. Anything else but this. You know how eager I am to take up a really absorbing case, but I've been staying under the same roof with Mr. Walton. It does n't seem fair, really, Mr. Silverton."

"All is fair in love and the detective business. And look here, Miss Boyd"—Silverton lifted his forefinger. "Don't suppose, because you refuse, that the matter's going to be dropped. It's going to be pushed right straight through, and just think what a feather it would be in your cap to face Mr. Walton with his crime! It's a nice little job, and we are n't going to leave a stone unturned. I guess we'll have the public sympathy in our favor, and we're not going to miss a trick. Understand?"

"Oh, yes, yes," Helena muttered hurriedly. "Of course, as you say, it's a splendid opportunity to show one's ability, only——"

She was thinking rapidly. Silverton was as good as his word. He had said that if she refused the matter would not be dropped, that it would be pushed straight through. She knew that he meant it. If, indeed, by refusing him now she forced him into employing some one else on the case, the whole truth would be revealed. Her silence and her acceptance were her only chance of saving Walton. By seeming to take the "job" which Silverton now offered, and in this way alone, could she delay matters until Walton was clear again.

"Well?" Silverton asked.

The door opened, and the butler appeared, announcing to Helena: "I've got that gentleman on the wire, miss."

"Very good. Say I'm coming at once."

"What's my answer?" Silverton reiterated as the door closed on the servant's retreating footsteps.

Helena responded feebly:

"I'll undertake the job." She tried to smile. "You can count on me."

Silverton clasped her trembling fingers in his broad palm.

"A *bona fide* go?" he asked contentedly.

"Yes, yes," she repeated. "To-morrow's Sunday. I'll see you on Monday or Tuesday, as soon as I have anything to report. Now good-by."

"Tuesday at the latest," Silverton specified.

"As early as you like. Good-by, Mr. Silverton."

As he started down the front steps, Helena ran to the telephone.

"Hello! Yes? . . . Are you there? . . . Oh, Mr. Walton, how nice of you to send those lovely flowers! . . . Yes; I guessed that it was you. I want so much to see you. . . . To-day? . . . Yes, but not here. Could you meet me in Central Park, near the lake; where the swans are? . . . Yes. . . . Not far from the Fifty-Ninth Street entrance. . . . In half an hour? . . . Yes, a long half-hour. . . . All right. I'll be delighted to see you again."

She hung up the receiver, leaning heavily against the wall, one arm uplifted, her head resting on it.

But quick! There was no time for reflection; she must act, and act at once.

With a step as light as the wind, she climbed the three flights of stairs to the top of these house, where the servants slept, and there, standing, out of breath, she called:

"Marion Hemsley!"

The door at the end of the hall opened. Marion Hemsley, appearing, answered:

"Yes, Miss Boyd."

"Come down with me to my room at once."

Helena led the way, and when inside of her boudoir she shut the door and locked it. Then, going to a high Louis XVI chiffonier, she opened with a secret spring the top drawer, which yielded to her touch, gliding forward so that she could slip her hand into it and draw out a package of papers. Turning to Marion Hemsley, she said determinedly:

"You must answer whatever I ask. There is no use in your lying to me. I know too much about you—exactly the sort of petty thief you are!"

"Oh, Miss Boyd," the girl murmured, "I'll promise never to begin again. I was foolish. You've been so good to me."

"Yes," Helena answered resolutely; "I've done what I could. I expect you to do what I ask in return."

"Indeed, miss, I'll do anything for you. You've only to tell me what it is."

"Of course you don't suppose for one moment"—Miss Boyd's voice was gentler than it had been—"that I have any doubts as to who stole my diamond bracelet?"

Marion Hemsley threw herself at Helena's feet.

"Oh, for God's sake, have pity on me!" she sobbed.

"Supplications are as void as promises," Miss Boyd said, helping the servant to her feet, and waiting until she was more quiet. Then she continued: "I want you to answer several questions."

"Yes, miss." Marion Hemsley brushed the back of her hand across her eyes, where the tears trembled on her lashes.

"In the first place," Miss Boyd began, "you were in the hall at Rosedale the night before the last, toward four o'clock."

"I was." The answer came very low.

"I want to know who the other woman in the hall was that night."

Marion Hemsley was silent.

"Was it one of the servants?"

"No, miss."

"It will be best for you to tell me at once who it was, if you know."

Marion Hemsley lifted her head, her voice came clearly:

"I don't know, miss, who it was."

"Was it Mrs. Blair?"

"I don't know, miss. I had only been two days at Mrs. Thurston's, myself. I had n't seen the ladies that was staying in the house."

"But you did see that there was a woman in the hall that night?"

"Yes, miss."

"What room did she come out of?"

"I did n't see her come out of any room. I only saw her go up the stairs, after I saw you, miss."

"Ah!"—Helena's voice had a peculiar ring to it—"then you did see me?"

"Yes, miss."

"I was behind you, though."

"I did n't see you coming up the stairs, miss."

"You saw me when I went down?"

"Yes, miss."

"Very good." Helena, hesitating, glanced at the documents in her hand, then she said, "That is enough for the moment. You can go back to your room again, but don't forget," she added, as Marion Hemsley stood on the threshold—"don't forget that I'm going to do all I can for you, but that you are fortunate, to say the least, and that you are quite in my power."

"You'll give me my chance again?" the girl pleaded. "Give it to me as God has given you yours!"

Helena started at these words, then, as Marion Hemsley went out, she shut and bolted the door of her boudoir. She waited until she could no longer hear the sound of footsteps moving in the hall. Going back to the little mahogany chiffonier, she touched again the secret spring and watched the drawer glide forward.

For a moment she paused, as if hesitating, then, lifting the certificates which, all through her interview with Marion Hemsley, she had held tightly clasped in one hand, glancing at them from time to time, she slipped them into the drawer, pushed it back until she heard the spring click. Glancing at the clock on the mantelpiece, she swiftly caught up her gloves, fastened on her hat with two long pins, unlocked the door, sped down the stairs, out of the house, down Eighth Avenue in the direction of the lake—the lake where the swans are, and where she would see Walton again.

She was nervous, agitated, her cheeks were crimson. Silverton's words kept ringing in her ears, hounding her on: if she did not like the case, he would employ some one else.

Near the Fifty-Ninth Street entrance, over by the lake on whose sunny surface the swans were floating about gently, she saw Walton waiting.

## IX.

THE figure of Helena Boyd, in its light linen gown, had not long vanished down Eighth Avenue, when the bell of 37 West Eighty-Ninth Street was rung by a lady who, as the butler opened the door, asked for Marion Hemsley.

The butler's expression was stolid.

"You have her here, I know," the lady said. "A housemaid to whom, momentarily, Miss Boyd has given her protection."

Still the butler was implacable, and the lady, using a more persuasive tone, continued:

"Miss Boyd is a friend of mine, but I myself have come directly from the Salvation Army to see this poor girl."

The butler was a Swede. At the words "Salvation Army" his expression of severity relaxed.

"Very good, ma'am," he said. "Come in, will you? I'll call Marion Hemsley."

The lady went into the parlor, and she did not wait long before Miss Boyd's protégée appeared on the threshold.

"Please come in," the lady said. "I have something to say to you, quite secretly."

Marion Hemsley, closing the door behind her, advanced timidly.

"I know all the circumstances of your arrest and rescue," said the lady, "but be reassured: I come here only because I am sorry for you."

"Thank you, madam," the girl said gratefully.

"Sit down, won't you?"

Encouraged by this almost intimate request, Marion Hemsley slipped into a chair, feeling already for this lady an attraction which Miss Boyd, with her somewhat haughty manner, had never inspired.

"Now," the lady began, "in a case like yours, the great thing is to get away from former surroundings, to shake free from all influences which may have weighed upon you, inducing you to do wrong when your real inward desire is an impulse toward what is good and right."

"Yes, madam," the girl responded; "that's just it. If only I could shake free from the old crowd!"

"I will help you," the lady said.

"God bless you, ma'am! I don't mean to be ungrateful to Miss Boyd here, who's done so much for me, I realize that. Only, it seems like she somehow had me in her power."

"I see."

There was a silence, then the lady continued:

"I am interested in a society for delinquent girls. I shall see that you are received into it. You do not need to give your name or any address of your former whereabouts. We believe that the greatest thing in life is faith. If only people had more faith, the world would be regenerated. On a small scale, we have found that confidence has been equivalent to reform. Each time we have really shown trust in a girl, she has completely responded and mended her ways."

"Yes, ma'am," Marion Hemsley answered. "It's what I've been asking Miss Boyd here: just to give me my chance, as God gave her hers."

The lady drew from her glove a little folded slip of paper on which was printed an address.

"There," she said, "at any time that you wish to start for this Home, you will find here the instructions for reaching your destination, and before you leave I will give you the money you need. Now," she added, "there is something I want you to do for me."

"God!" the girl cried, "I'd do anything for you. You're giving me my chance!"

"By a curious coincidence," said the lady, "Miss Boyd happens to have in her possession some documents which rightly should be in my keeping. They are of no importance to her, but upon them depends a really tremendous affair for me."

"Documents?" the girl repeated.

"Yes, printed papers. It's just possible you may happen to know where Miss Boyd keeps them."

"This ain't a trick, is it?" Marion Hemsley asked, narrowing her eyelids.

"I have told you the exact truth, how I intend to save you."

"You know I am grateful."

"Yes, but you must show your gratitude. These papers are of the greatest importance to me."

"It seems like a mean thing to do," the maid responded.

"Do you know where the documents have been placed?"

"I think I do."

"Then," said the lady, "you must tell me. You want an opportunity to show your gratitude to me. This is it. I will say even more: I can do nothing until you have told me where I shall find what I am looking for."

Marion Hemsley drew nearer to the lady and whispered:

"I saw her put them in her secretary drawer. It has a secret spring. She did n't know I was looking, but she treated me hard. She kept saying, 'You are in my power, you understand.' When she shut the door and bolted it, I pretended to go upstairs. I did n't, though; I just hid in the next room and looked through the keyhole. All the time she had been talking to me, she held those things in her hand, sort of hesitating, like she wanted me to take them. She said nothing, but I guess them's the ones I saw her put back in the secretary drawer. I saw where the secret spring was, too."

"Well?" the lady urged.

Marion Hemsley opened the door stealthily. She listened a moment in the hall, then she whispered, "Come!"

Together they sped up the stairs into the boudoir where Helena Boyd a few moments before had talked with Marion Hemsley.

"I will stand watch at the window," the lady assured. "You open the secretary."

For a time the girl tried, running her fingers along the smooth sur-

face of the Louis XVI chiffonier. At last there was the click of a spring. The top drawer glided forward. She turned, and in a low voice called to the lady, who was waiting in the window:

"See, they are here. You had better come and take 'em!"

The lady slipped her hand in the drawer, and, lifting out the securities, studied them for an instant. The color flashed brilliant into her cheeks.

"You are a good girl!" she said to Marion Hemsley.

"You'll give me my chance?"

"You shall leave now with me, if you wish. Come quickly and take whatever things you may have here. I have a motor at the door. You can go in it with me to the station. Make haste, though; there's no time to lose. Go put on your hat. I shall wait for you downstairs in the taxi. Here!" she added, slipping something from her pocketbook.

Marion Hemsley gazed at it in astonishment.

"For me?" she whispered.

It was a fifty-dollar bill. The lady nodded, and then took her way downstairs, stepping softly. As she sat in the taxi, waiting for Marion Hemsley, she turned over in her slender fingers the papers which she had taken from Helena Boyd's secretary drawer.

They were Walton's stolen certificates, the securities which Thurston had placed in his keeping when he left for Europe, and of which Walton had been robbed at Rosedale. The lady folded them away securely in the bag she carried with her.

When Marion Hemsley had taken her place in the taxi, the lady directed the chauffeur:

"Drive down Eighth Avenue to Forty-Second Street."

"Ain't I going to get out of New York?" Marion Hemsley asked.

"At Forty-Second Street," the lady responded, consulting a watch which hung in the lace folds of her blouse, "we can turn east and reach the New York Central depot by eleven forty-five. At twelve there is the express for Smithville, where the Home will open its doors to you. I will put you on the train myself."

"My!" the girl cried, "but I'm glad I met you. Only, what'll happen to Miss Boyd? I'm jumping my bail."

"You're taking your chance to begin again, to make a new life for yourself, honest, free."

"The bail was three hundred dollars." Marion Hemsley spoke with honest regret.

## X.

It was after three o'clock when Helena Boyd returned home. As she reached the door, there was an expression of radiant happiness on her pretty face, as though some very sweet memories were drifting still



across her mind, drifting like the pure white swans on the sunny surface of the Central Park lake.

She went directly to her room, threw herself down on her divan. To the maid who came presently, bringing some letters, she said:

"It's so dreadfully hot, Jenny, please make me a glass of lemonade, iced, and then let down the awnings."

She fell to musing on her long stroll in the Park. How delicious had been their visit to the silent deserted paths, where only the twittering sparrows, the little gray squirrels, or an occasional sleepy tramp recalled them from the dreamy romance of their conversation together on every subject that embraced the deep sentiments of life and the strange, elusive spell of love!

Instinctively, her eyes turned toward the mahogany chiffonier. Ah, what would she give now if she had not at Rosedale, under the spur of her professional ambition, taken those miserable papers, stolen them that night from Walton. It was an insane thing to do, but she presaged Silverton's delight when, with the papers in her hand, she would force Walton to a confession.

Force him to a confession!

Ah, it seemed that the only confession she longed now to hear from Walton's lips was one of love. Her perplexity was very great.

Lifting her arms behind her head, she sighed:

"What *shall* I do? What *shall* I do? Whatever happens, *he* must be saved."

The maid had returned with a glass of lemonade, in which the ice tinkled its little song. She drew up a small table, set down her tray by the *chaise longue*, before lowering the awnings.

"That's all," Miss Boyd said to her. "You need not wait. What time is it?"

"It's just past three, miss."

As the maid left, Miss Boyd's eyes again wandered toward the chiffonier, as if lured there by some hypnotic power. She finished the iced lemonade, settled herself on the lounge, and began to think seriously.

During her conversation with Walton, as they had strolled through the Park and as they had sat together lunching in a little down-town restaurant, she had not dared confess to him that it was she who at Rosedale in the depths of the night had stolen from him the precious papers. She could not bring herself to tell him.

As one might gaze at the iridescence of a soap bubble, her memory clung to the moments of happiness passed in Walton's presence, which must come so soon to an end. She herself must, of course, restore the bonds. But to-morrow was Sunday, and Monday was Labor Day. There was plenty of time before Tuesday at twelve o'clock, in which

she might continue to see Walton without his suspecting her perfidy. What touched her more than anything was that he, desperately anxious as she knew he must be, had showed nothing of his distress. If, as he supposed, the certificates were irrevocably gone, then his last vestige of honor had departed with them. This was a fairly strong pitch of emotion for a man to be living under, and Walton had been as calm, as indifferent to his professional fate, as he seemed ardent in the pursuing of his sentimental destiny. At first the knowledge that Miss Boyd was a detective had made him appear a trifle distrustful. Little by little, though, she had won his confidence by giving him hers.

They had passed an ideal morning together, and as Helena Boyd thought it all over she admitted to herself that Walton seemed to be happy, and that she was more than a little interested. This was as much as she would allow to herself, but there was all the rest that she did not put into words; for inwardly she knew that Walton was in love with her and that she had begun to care for him.

As she lay, her slender figure stretched out on the couch, an idea occurred to her. Since sooner or later she must confess that it was she who had the bonds, it was a lack of moral courage on her part not to tell Walton now. It would mean hastening her own humiliation, it would mean perhaps losing at once the unutterable comfort of Walton's tender esteem, but by revealing the truth she could spare him at least two days of suffering. It was clearly right that she should do this—should take the certificates immediately to Walton and explain everything to him.

Not once in Helena's meditations had the thought occurred to her that she might care less for Walton because of what he had done. Like a true woman, she was appealed to by his audacity and by his weakness. She admired in him the apparent contempt with which he awaited his fate. He attracted her as the outlaw who scorns the world's opinion, and he touched her as the reckless culprit who awakens in every woman's heart the passion of motherly tenderness. She felt vaguely, and yet with an instinct that was impelling, that he had need of her, that she, in some measure, represented for him a hope. Inevitably, this tacit dependence of Walton upon her called forth that distinctly feminine indulgence which ceases to judge, whatever the case, when appealed to by the sense that, to a man in trouble, protection can be of use. Moreover, there was a thought which haunted her: her part of responsibility in what Walton had done. How many had been the financiers, the very women indeed of one's acquaintance, whose temptations, if revealed, would have made sinners of them at once, but who, given the chance to reflect, had not put into action the methods for satisfying their reckless greed! Walton—she felt as sure of it as of her trust in the innocence of her own motives when she had taken

the documents—Walton, on better thoughts, would have restored Thurston's bonds, with no further transactions made than the mere transferring of them from his valise back to the strong-box in his office. It was she who, indirectly, had kept him from this better course of his own highest instincts.

She got up from the *chaise longue* slowly. Going to the chiffonier, she repeated Margaret Blair's gestures of a few hours before. But her hand, travelling on its journey of inquiry, made no encounter with the familiar pile of crisp engraved certificates. Pulling the drawer full out, she ransacked it, shook it until its frame rattled, tapped helplessly on the panels of wood, as if they might hold something hidden from her. It was all useless. She continued her search feverishly, frantically. The bonds were not in the chiffonier, the drawer was empty. Like a flash came the thought of Marion Hemsley.

Helena Boyd rang, but without waiting for the servant to answer, she called. Climbing to the top floor, her voice rang out clearly through the empty halls. There was no answer. Pushing open the door, she found Marion Hemsley's room empty.

"What has become of the girl I brought here last night?" she asked the butler, meeting him, breathless, at the top of the stairs.

"Have n't seen her, miss."

"Call the other servants. Ask them."

They were questioned. No one had seen Marion Hemsley.

"Has any one been here from the office?"

The butler replied.

"Not from the office, miss. There was a lady here about eleven o'clock. She said she came from the Salvation Army to see Marion Hemsley, so I let her in."

"Salvation Army!" Helena cried. "Oh, this is too much! The girl has gone, escaped, jumped her bail, and, what is worse, has taken with her documents which I value more than anything in the world."

"Shall I call up Mr. Silverton?" suggested the butler.

"Yes, call him up at once. No, no, don't call him up! It's too awful. I don't know what I can do."

What indeed could she do? To call up Silverton would be to expose everything. To tell Walton would be adding to his already too great agony. She threw herself down upon the lounge, sobbing in despair.

## XI.

WALTON meanwhile had gone back to his rooms in East Fifty-Fifth Street. The sweet memories of his walk with Miss Boyd in the Park, their lunch together in this new romantic intimacy which seemed to make of them desperate friends at once, softened the cruel anguish to

which his present situation made him a prey. Two days more of grace: the Sunday and the Monday, in which he hoped to see Miss Boyd without her having found him out! For, evidently, even in her capacity as detective, she had not discovered what had taken place at Rosedale. Beyond those two red-letter intervals, all was black as night: the discovery by Thurston of his misplaced confidence, the denunciation of his broken trust, the damp, dank odor of the prison cell.

"Ah!" Walton pressed his hands across his brow. "How lenient guilt makes a man! Virtue seems to have an inevitable touch of cruelty."

His mind could not free itself of a certain haunting image: he saw with vivid intensity the delicate face of Margaret Blair as she had sat before him in his office two days before, pleading for the man she loved.

How hard he had been! How he had scorned her appeal and mocked at her threat of vengeance! Yet his punishment had come fast enough! And in his misery he took pity on others. Dudley Kendal's financial difficulties had seemed to merit no special indulgence as Margaret Blair had pleaded for him. Walton's own despair now, at the situation in which he found himself, the new, absorbing sentiment which during the hours spent with Helena Boyd had made him, for the first time in his life, happy, softened him strangely toward Mrs. Blair's lover. A sickening disgust at the impotence of money to produce any real joy, at its power to accomplish evil, to work destruction and sin, detached him momentarily from all interest in the battle of business which had claimed his forces hitherto. The world now seemed to him not a place in which to get rich merely, but one wherein contentment was to be found through the cherishing of an ideal, given form by some impelling sentiment. To have forgiven Dudley Kendal his debts on that afternoon of the previous week, when Mrs. Blair had been in Walton's office, would have seemed a sacrifice beyond what should be asked of any human. The sum was important, to be sure, if reckoned in mere dollars and cents, but had it been twice the amount, he would have given it now without a sensation of parting with something truly dear. No, his own peace of mind was something not to anticipate, but there was for him a satisfaction in feeling that, miserable as he himself was, he still had it in his power that two people who loved each other should through him be able, with a joy that was complete, to start life together as man and wife. The certainty that his given word of honor, cancelling the weight of heavy indebtedness, would—while it was perhaps the last thing he could do for any one—make for Kendal and Mrs. Blair a paradise on earth, led him to action. Sitting down at his desk, he wrote and signed the release for which Margaret Blair had begged. With a note explaining that he excused her friend entirely, he sent her this token of his own indifference to all that was material,

his suddenly awakened interest in the welfare of those who suffer and who love.

Had he known in advance what loneliness was staring him in the face, Walton could never have got through that Sunday and that Monday.

Consulting for the hundredth time, on Tuesday morning, the little clock which stood on his desk, he asked himself how it was possible that time should go always at the same rate. There must be, he thought, minutes of various sizes, just as there were drops of different dimensions. A tear was surely heavier than a mere drop of dew, and the twice twenty-four hours which he had just traversed in solitude must, he knew, be longer than any conventional two days.

It seemed a hundred years back, his parting on Saturday with Helena Boyd.

Why had she telephoned to him Sunday morning that she was leaving town? Was it true?

"No doubt," Walton concluded with melancholy, "we are the makers of our own disappointments. For each ever so slight uncertainty on our own part, we pay the penalty of a deception on the part of others."

He had in a measure, he admitted to himself, deceived Helena Boyd. Preoccupied as he was that Tuesday morning, by all the hour threatened, it was not of the misappropriated securities that he was thinking. His mind got no further than Helena Boyd. It rested before the vivid image of her frail, intense little figure. Yes, he had deceived her, he had let her think that he was an honest man, that there was no reason why he should not show her all the attention that she was willing to accept. He had indeed avoided the slightest avowal which could make her suspect his present predicament.

They were to have spent Sunday together. This had been her promise as she left him on Saturday. Why, then, at the moment in all his life when he most needed her, had she thus failed him? Was it that, from some outside source, from Mrs. Thurston perhaps, whose husband was in constant communication with her, she had learned the ugly news? Would this have kept her absent, without explanation of any sort?

Walton looked at the clock again. It was eleven. Eleven on the morning of Tuesday. At twelve, if Thurston's securities had not been handed in at the Sixth National Bank, Walton would be a doomed man. He smiled bitterly.

Life indeed for the last two days had been suggestive of prison. The janitor's wife had cooked his meals, serving them in his rooms, where he had remained alone, not going down for a breath of air. As he had successively reviewed the various projects for escape which

presented themselves as a possible solution for his present situation, each had seemed more impossible than the last. Patience was the only alternative at this moment, when nothing was so hard as to wait.

As he sat dejected, gazing at the little clock, there was a light rap. Before he had time to answer, the door was opened and closed again. With a swift movement that brought her like some sudden apparition of life before him, Helena Boyd stood there, leaning toward him, so beautiful, so pale.

"Helena!" he cried, not knowing what he said. "Oh, forgive me!"

She let her hand lie in his.

"Hush!" she said. "You must not ask my forgiveness."

"You came!" he murmured. "I could not have hoped such a thing."

"Of course I came," she answered. Glancing toward the door, she asked, "How sure are we of being alone here?"

"No one ever comes," said Walton. "But *you* came."

"I mean," she insisted, "what danger is there of my being overheard?"

"None whatever. This floor and the one below belong to me. The other rooms are locked, and I have the keys here." He touched his pocket, and then again, gazing at her with passionate gratitude, he said, "You came!"

Helena Boyd drew up a chair near the one in which she had found Walton on her arrival. She begged him to sit down by her. It seemed as if, in her presence, reality sank shamefaced into some shadowy corner.

"There's so much to be said"—her tone was very earnest—"I scarcely know where to begin."

"Begin anywhere," he urged, "repeat as often as you will. Oh, why did n't you come yesterday? Why did n't you come Sunday? I've almost lost my mind!"

"I could n't come," she said. "I was working, working for us both, for you and me."

"For us both," Walton echoed, soothed by this little pronoun which found place to include him with her.

"Yes, but first," she said, "I have a confession to make to you."

"You a confession! You mean, rather, don't you, that you want me to confess?"

"No, no! You must listen to me!"

She had moved her chair so that she sat facing him. Her delicate figure, like the live stem of a living plant, was held in its little green frock, from which emerged, like a flower, her sweet face. She was pale, like a lily, Walton thought, as pure, as perfect.

"I am listening," he said, resisting the temptation to stretch out his arms and clasp her to him, to cry out his defiance of all else in the world but love, his love, his passionate love for her.

"Let me tell you," she said, troubled by his ardent gaze. "You'll never believe me—it's extraordinary. I can hardly realize it myself—so much has happened in so short a time."

"Begin at the beginning, the very beginning," Walton pleaded, like a child who is listening to a fairy story.

"The beginning?" she echoed.

"Yes," said Walton. "The day I arrived at Rosedale station. Before I saw you, I heard your voice saying, 'Is this Mr. Walton?' It seemed as if I had found then and there the very person whom I had come to meet."

She laughed.

"It was I who had come to meet you."

"God bless you, it was! But that was the beginning. Everything for me began at that moment of encounter when I turned and saw you standing there on the platform in the wind, your beautiful hair imprisoned like so much sunlight by the ribbon which encircled your little head. You had on a blue dress, a pale blue linen dress——"

"Oh!" Helena Boyd laughed. "You remember even that detail!"

"Everything, everything, from that moment on, is graven on my memory. Oh, God!"—his voice sounded like a sob—"why did n't I know you sooner?"

"Ah," she said, growing suddenly very serious again, "that's just it. Mr. Walton, I——"

"Yes?" he urged, leaning toward her, eager. How he hoped that she would speak to him of the frightful burden that lay like lead upon his shoulders, the burden of sin! It seemed that if she only guessed his guilt, all would be easier for him. He agonized at the thought that perhaps she still trusted him—*him!*

Helena Boyd repeated his name very softly, almost in a whisper.

"Mr. Walton," she said, "I know all about it, everything."

"You know?"

"Yes, and it concerns me more than you can have any idea. I have had my share in all that has happened."

"Your share? How can that be explained?"

"The certificates. You understand—Mr. Thurston's securities."

Ah, Heaven! Then she did know all!

A moment ago he had longed to make her his confidante; now he dreaded the condemnation to which her discovery would inevitably lead.

"You know?" he repeated, and the melancholy note of his melodious voice sounded like a dirge.

"I don't wonder you're amazed," she said. "I have no business to know. It's dreadful, it's wrong, but you'll forgive me, won't you?"

Forgive her? It was she who asked forgiveness!

Both of her hands lay an instant in his as he caught them to him. They were trembling, and he longed with all his soul to put his arms about her, to enfold her.

"Forgive you?" he asked, a world of tender emotion in his eyes as they met hers. "Forgive you?"

"You know," she went on slowly, "I told you that I was a detective. I see now all the stupid vanity of such a thing. No doubt I was lonely in my life. No doubt I needed occupation. If I had been intellectual, I should have studied Greek or mathematics, I suppose; if I had been truly benevolent, I might have devoted myself to the poor; but I was none of these things. I was just a modern girl longing for excitement, and it seemed to me that detective work would be the most thrilling kind of sport." She laughed pitifully. "Little did I think then of the human side of such an occupation."

## XII.

HELENA'S voice had sunk very low. She waited a moment and then continued, looking straight into Walton's eyes:

"If you are in such a dreadful plight to-day, it's not your fault."

"Not my fault?" he echoed.

"No, it's mine," she said.

"Yours?"

"Yes, yes," she hurried on, lifting her hand as if to keep Walton from protesting. "You would have put back the certificates. I know it. I am sure of it. You had already more than half decided to do so when you took them. I know it, I tell you, I feel it."

"How can this be?" asked Walton, as if he would bless her.

"I am a judge of men," she responded to his thoughts. "Moreover, you know, women have an instinct which is surer as a guide than mere knowledge. Everybody has in him two selves, the one which the world knows from its outward appearance, its worldly position, its social status. This side the world estimates from the purely conventional point of view which all these things imply. But then, there is the other, the true, real self which has nothing to herald it, so to speak, and which makes itself known only to those who have a sort of invisible contact with its most secret being, an understanding without explanation. The sudden sympathy with which I was drawn to you that afternoon on the platform at Rosedale, as if for years we had been friends, has made me thus sure of my feeling that you were incapable of any lasting wrong about those wretched certificates."



"Yes?" Another question was on Walton's tongue, which Miss Boyd anticipated.

"Patience," she answered. "You want to find out where your certificates are?"

Walton's glance sought the little clock on the mantelpiece: twenty minutes past eleven. She had said, "Patience." In forty minutes it would be too late. At twelve o'clock the truth would be known.

"Patience?" Walton's tone was ironical.

"I want to tell you my story," Miss Boyd answered, clasping her hands and looking down at them as if, between the shell-like palms, lay hidden some secret she longed not to divulge. "I had been some time in the service of the Silverton Bureau."

"Oh!" Walton shuddered at the name.

"But I had done nothing for them. Mr. Silverton really took me on the force somewhat against his will. He did not quite see what I *could* do for them, but I was sure I might be of use, and his very scepticism fired me with a longing to prove that he was wrong. Only, I did not realize that if Mr. Silverton finally consented to employ me, it was because he believed I could 'do a nice job,' to use his expression, in society, among my own friends." She paused a moment, and then added, with a hopeless little gesture: "You see how worthless, how utterly good-for-nothing, I am. My vanity was paramount. I wanted a feather in my cap. The price I might pay for it mattered little, I longed to do something that no one thought a woman could do, to show my keenness of intelligence in some unusual way. How foolish I was then! But then," she added very sadly—"then I did not know you!"

"Ah!" Walton answered. "Then we did not know each other."

"No doubt," she continued, "you must wonder how I found out that the securities were in your possession?"

Walton shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

"Only one person could have told you: Flossie Thurston. She knows all her husband's business affairs. Or," he added, his eyes narrowing as he reflected, "it may have been Mrs. Blair—Margaret Blair?"

"I don't mean," Helena Boyd pursued, "how I knew Thurston's business with you, not that. What I mean is, you must wonder how I, a stranger, could have found out that you, a stranger, had in your possession at Rosdale securities to the amount of two hundred thousand dollars, and to which you had no more right than if—if——"

Walton finished the sentence deliberately:

"Than if I had stolen them."

There was an instant's silence. The little clock on the mantelpiece struck the half-hour—half past eleven.

"How calm you are!" Helena Boyd observed.

"What use to beat about the prison bars?"

"But," she said, "you show no surprise at my finding out that the papers were in your valise. No one told me," she went on, "and I was the only person to know it at Rosedale."

"No one told you?"

"Oh," she breathed very low, "don't you realize that I am trying to tell you, without telling you? Don't you understand, Mr. Walton, that it was I, I, who stole the certificates from you?"

"Good God!"

"Yes, it was I who took them out of your valise, while you were sleeping that night at Rosedale. I who am a——"

She bowed her head on her hands.

"But how could you?" Walton asked. For one instant his glance again caught sight of the hour as it advanced with a slow, sure stroke toward twelve. If Helena Boyd had indeed taken Thurston's certificates and had them now in her keeping, why, then there was still some hope. . . .

"You came to Rosedale in the afternoon," she continued, speaking very rapidly, "at about five o'clock. A certain restlessness had tormented me ever since I had taken up this work with Silverton. You can understand: the feeling that I had promised to be of use and that I was simply so much dead wood. The night of your arrival I had the do-or-die sort of feeling. I dressed expressly early. Before any meal in a big country house, there is always half an hour or more when you find the house downstairs absolutely empty. The servants are in the kitchen, the masters in their rooms; there may be some one in the pantry, but you have the lower floor practically to yourself. That evening, while every one was getting ready for dinner, the telephone rang. I went to it at once. No one else had heard the bell, no one came. I don't know why, but I had a presentiment that I was going to learn something of importance. Silverton says that 'all is fair in love and the detective service.' I can't now understand how I could have yielded, even under the impulse of professional honor, to such a temptation as eavesdropping through the telephone, but, at all events, that was what I did. Wait until you have heard all before you judge me."

"Judge you!"

"As I lifted the receiver, I heard a man's voice say, 'Is that you, Walton?' Imitating your voice as best I could, I answered, 'Yes; who is this?' 'Judson,' the voice replied. I had heard Thurston say that your partner's name was Judson, so I listened. The connection was poor. Owing to the crossing of the long-distance wires, Mr. Judson did not hear me enough to know it was not you."

"But," Walton said, looking at her with astonishment, "what did Judson say?"

"It seems too horrible," she answered, "to be retailing this information which I took without any right whatever to Mr. Judson's confidence. I seemed that night to have been keyed up to a false sense of the obligations imposed upon me by what I was trying to do, and which made me forget everything else. Oh, if I could only live over that moment!"

"Don't regret in this way," Walton urged. "It's so clear that you were doing only what you considered at the time to be your duty. What was it that Judson said?"

"He told you that Thurston had cabled to have the securities placed at the Sixth National Bank before noon on Monday. 'But the worst of it is,' he explained, 'I can't find the securities anywhere. I've made a thorough search. As you're expecting to be out of town, I thought it better to let you know at once. The wireless message came in about half an hour after you left the office.' I could hear Judson chuckling as he said, 'I reckon Mr. Thurston must have met on the steamer some foreigner who has inveigled him into buying, without seeing it, his old family estate. He is in sudden need of money.' Then he said, 'Where are the securities, Walton, old man?' I almost dropped the receiver, but, making my voice no more distinct than necessary, I got up courage to respond, 'Can't hear you.' Judson kept calling, 'Be down in the morning? All right, old man. Sorry to interrupt your little outing. Good-by.'"

Helena Boyd sank back as if exhausted. She had mimicked Judson's voice in a wonderful way, and the whole scene at the telephone was vivid.

"By Jove!" Walton cried. "What an actress you are!"

"I am worse than that," she whispered. Laying both her hands against her brow, she went on nervously, "When everybody had gone to bed, I sat up waiting in my room. Toward four o'clock I crept downstairs. It was all true what I told you about being in the hall."

"But how could you get into my room without my hearing you? I had locked my door. How could you suppose that I had the papers with me?"

"When you arrived that afternoon, Mrs. Thurston said to you that a servant would take your valise upstairs and unpack it for you. Impulsively you cried out, 'Oh, no, thank you!' I watched you. You made an effort not to seem disturbed, but there was sincerity in the tone of your '*Oh, no!*' Politely but very firmly, you insisted that you would not trouble the servant. I knew at once that you were hiding some secret in your valise. I supposed, of course, it was love-letters. When Judson's message came I put two and two together."

"How did you get into my room?"

"I did n't. I came only into the closet. I supposed your valise was there. That closet opens also into the next room, which is a spare room. There was no one sleeping there, and I had made sure of the key before dinner."

"But I locked that door myself," Walton said.

"You locked it with the key of the door on your side of the closet. I heard you. I had already taken the duplicate key of the door on the other side. Once I had crept into the closet under the shelves, it did not take me long. I often hide things in the lining of my own suit-case."

"Then it was actually you?"

Helena Boyd nodded.

"I stole them, yes."

"Heaven be praised!" Walton cried.

"You're not *glad!*"

"You're the only person about whose opinion I really care now, and perhaps you're the only one who would n't despise me."

### XIII.

"Ah," Helena said, appealing to him with all the tenderness of her beautiful eyes, "we have both made a terrible mistake, to take what did not belong to us. But in doing so we were willing, like adventurers, to suffer the consequences of the law, just the ordinary consequences. You were blinded by the easiness whereby it was possible to alter your fortune with only an ever so slight risk of being found out. I was tempted by the feminine longing to 'find out.' How could I imagine that what I was doing would prove such a fiasco to my own hopes? How could I have dreamed," she cried, growing more excited as she spoke, "that what I did would mean the betrayal of the man I love!"

The words had come out. She could not take them back.

Walton put his arm about her and drew her to him.

"Helena! Say it again! Say that you love me! It's worth all the condemnation of the world and the law just to hear you give that little cry, 'The man I love!'"

She hid her face against his breast, clung to him.

"How can it be repaired, what I have done?"

He drew back, his hands on her shoulders, smiling radiantly down at her.

"But," he said, "if you took the papers, you have them still. We can reach the bank before twelve. It's only a quarter to now."

"You don't know the worst," she answered slowly: "the securities were taken from me. I got out on bail that girl Marion Hemsley,

because I thought she saw me that night in the corridor. I was afraid of her and of what she might say. While I was out with you on Saturday, some one came to the house. I don't know who—a lady—she said she came from the Salvation Army. Marion Hemsley escaped with her, and they took with them the certificates. When I got back, everything was gone. All day Sunday and Monday I worked, worked, trying to get track of them. I could not give the alarm for your sake, for mine. It would have been to avow at once what I hoped to hide until the end, but now—now——”

“Now,” Walton said slowly, “we might as well give up all hope. But who could the woman have been?”

“I don't know. I can't imagine.”

“Margaret Blair's vengeance,” he murmured to himself. “She has done her work well.”

Helena was weeping. The sight of her tears drove from Walton's mind all other thoughts.

“Dearest,” he whispered, “there's such a short time to spend together. Let us forget everything except the joy you have given me in coming thus, in telling me all.”

“Oh,” she sobbed, “it is I who have done this!”

“Be happy!” He held her close to him. “In a few moments they will come to arrest me.”

She shuddered.

“No, no, you must escape!”

“Impossible!” His tone was firm.

“But there is time. They don't know at the bank that you are here.”

“Yes,” Walton said; “I telephoned them this morning. I had a lingering hope that Thurston might have sent another message. I told them where I was. I'd rather have them know. Why prolong the agony? I shall not attempt to escape. But you must not be found here.”

“You're going to send me away?” Helena pleaded. “I'll dry my tears, I promise you. I'll live these last instants with you so that we may both remember them in the terrible hours of separation.”

She drew close, resting her delicate weight against him, so close that she could feel his heart beat. Lifting her arms to place them about his neck, she caressed him, kissing his eyes, his hair, his brow, giving him her lips to kiss.

Walton breathed a new life into his soul with this embrace. It seemed that, when all this frightful trial was past, he would have strength to begin again with such a love to sustain him.

“Afterward,” he whispered, “will you go with me?”

“Yes.”

"No matter how disgraced I am?"

"I love you."

"Will you wait for me?"

"Until you come, no matter how long it may be."

"God bless you!"

"I only ask," Helena said, "that when at last we are together again, I shall be able to compensate for all you have suffered—for all that I have made you suffer."

"You!"

"Yes," she answered firmly. "It was I who made you live up to your worst impulse. No doubt we have all been traversed with wicked temptations, we have all been angry enough to kill, envious enough to steal, jealous enough to hate, but these dreadful thoughts come only like dashes of shadow across the light. Think how many of us would be criminals if some one were always there to make possible the accomplishment of our bad desires! Yet this is what I have done for you. You never would have gone to the end of your impulse to use dishonestly what was not yours by right. It is I who have cast in the irrevocable mould of sin what was only a passing weakness."

"To you I can explain," Walton said tenderly, "that my own true self, as you call it, had got the better of me that very afternoon when I went to my room at Mrs. Thurston's. There is no doubt, to my mind, that I should have replaced Thurston's collateral where it belonged, with no further harm done than the anguish of a few hours face to face with the full consciousness of what I had done, had you not——"

"Oh, you see!" Helena moaned. "It is all my fault."

Walton's eyes were full of love as he looked at her.

"If you had not been at Rosedale, I should never have met you. That thought is more unbearable than any reality."

"Ah!"—she gave a little cry of gratitude.

"Yes," he answered; "I was an honorable man in despair. Now I am a—a thief—full of hope, because you love me."

"Beloved!"

A moment she rested in his embrace, and then suddenly, as though some electric shock had traversed them, they sprang apart.

The telephone had rung by Walton's side.

He picked up the receiver, listened for a moment, a look of amazement in his eyes, then in a hoarse voice he said:

"Repeat that, please."

Helena watched him as he listened. Was it good news or bad, that so suddenly intensified his expression, brought the moisture to his brow, made his voice sound faint?

Dropping the receiver back on its hook, he let his head fall forward on his hands; a sob escaped from him.

Helena knelt by his side, both arms about him. She dared not speak. He let his hands wander, touching her brow, her hair, her shoulders, as one in a dream touches unreal things.

"Tell me again that you love me," he whispered.

"Better than life."

"It's not out of pity that you say that?" he urged.

"No, no, can't you see? Tell me, are they coming to take you from me?"

He looked at her with a long gaze, as if he would draw her with him out of the shadow into the light again. Then he said:

"The certificates are at the bank."

"Ah, God is good!" she cried.

"I could ask no questions. I could not show my surprise. They simply announced the receipt of Thurston's securities."

"Who can have brought them back?" She drew herself up, sitting close beside him, leaning her face against his.

"Some merciful Providence," he said. "I've got something to offer you now, a name that is still honorable."

"It's you I love," she murmured.

"True for us both," he said.

She smiled, her face close against his.

"I won't be a detective any more," she affirmed.

"One capture is enough?" he asked.

"Won't Silverton be surprised?" she cried, very serious. "But we've learned a dreadful lesson. Oh, good God!" she cried as the telephone rang again.

This time Walton's expression reassured her. He took the message and smilingly repeated to her.

"They forgot to tell me that the certificates were not the only things left at the bank. There was also a box containing a diamond ring. You remember at Rosedale that evening when Margaret Blair showed us a wonderful ring?"

"Yes, of course," assented Helena.

"She had taken it from my office, where she found it, through my stupid carelessness, lying on the floor."

"Then it was she?" Helena asked.

Walton nodded.

"She is the lady from the Salvation Army," Helena repeated.

"Evidently," Walton argued. "You see, this ring is the proof. But how could she know that you had the papers in your keeping?"

"She saw me that night in the hall," said Helena. "Silverton perhaps questioned her, as he did me."

"Silverton questioned you about this miserable affair?"

With a gesture of despair, Walton bowed his head in his hands.

"Only in an unprofessional way," Helena said humbly. "He thought I could use my worldly influence to help him ferret out the matter."

"Oh!" Walton shuddered. "It seems unbearable that Silverton, that low creature, should have discussed this with you."

"Yes, but he must have been employed by some one to take up this affair, and I cannot understand who that person was. Could it have been——" Helena hesitated.

"Margaret Blair?" Walton finished for her.

"Margaret was desperate."

"That does n't seem reason enough, and, any way, how could she have known?" Walton said.

"Could it have been Judson who told her?"

Walton looked at her for a moment.

"This is the first time you have shown your real aptitude as a detective," he smiled. "I believe it was Judson."

"You don't suppose he actually *told* her?" said Helena, woman-like, horrified at her own suggestion being taken seriously.

"I don't mean in any malicious way," Walton explained. "But Margaret has known Judson all her life. I had been away from the office, the certificates were missing, Judson knew of Thurston's cable to place the bonds at the bank before noon on Tuesday. It was a horrible predicament for him in case I did not turn up. He may have told her—with a little urging on her part—all that she needed to know to take Silverton into her employ."

"How perfectly horrible!" cried Helena.

"Well, you know," Walton said suggestively, "detectives go into the business with the hope of being employed."

"But," Helena argued, "this was spying on an old friend."

"One whom she thought had failed her," Walton said. "And I believe she was right. She has, in fact, been far more generous than I. When I signed that release, there was no merit in it for me. In my state of mind at that moment, it was about the only thing that could have given me any comfort. Yet Margaret forgave at once."

"But think," Helena said wisely, "what a vengeance she had been contemplating!"

"Poor Margaret!" Walton murmured. Then there was a long silence.

Taking her place at last by Walton on the deep sofa near the window, Helena put a little kiss on his cheek, and said:

"You know when a woman hates as much as Mrs. Blair seemed to hate you, it means only one thing."

"What does it mean, darling?"

"That she's been dreadfully in love with you."



"Not in this case."

"Honestly?"

"Honestly."

"Well, then," Helena sighed, "if she did n't love you and you never loved her, why did you give her the ring?"

"I did n't give it to her. She took it. I explained that to you, dearest."

"Is it true?"

"Absolutely."

"Cross your heart?"

Walton stooped and kissed his little fiancée, laughing.

"You're a true woman," he said, "and I adore you. When you thought I was a *bona fide* thief, and had taken what did n't belong to me, you trusted me absolutely. But when it's a question of my having given something to another woman, you have your doubts about me."

"Well"—Helena lowered her eyes—"how could I know?" A pause and then: "Did n't you really give it to her?"

Walton slipped from his hand a circle of gold and fitted it over Helena's fourth finger.

"There!" he said, drawing her to his arms. "My little wife!"

"We're not married yet," she smiled, blushing.

"Let's be, though, as soon as I can get a minister. What do you say?"



## WHAT HE WAS

*By Frederick Moxon*

THREE students of Philosophy sat on top of a high hill. One was a Pessimist, one an Optimist, and the third had not declared himself.

While the first two were warmly discussing their opposing theories of life, a sudden gust of wind simultaneously lifted off three hats and sent them bowling down the hill. The Pessimist and the Optimist gave chase, but their companion remained calmly sitting on top of the hill and watched the others running after the hats. Presently each secured his own hat, and the Optimist picked up also that of the third man. Then they panted back up the hill.

"Whew!" gasped the Optimist, as he handed over the hat to him who still sat on top of the hill. "I guess you're an Optimist, too. You did n't seem to worry any."

"Why should I?" was the dispassionate reply. "I knew that 'mine own shall come to me.' You see, I'm a Fatalist."

# THE ECONOMICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE CRUSADE AGAINST TUBERCULOSIS

*By Lawrence F. Flick, M.D.*

THE world-movement to stamp out tuberculosis has been called a crusade, in imitation of a world-movement of a former age, into which religious zeal entered, and upon which civilization looked as a fight for its existence. The plague which it aims to extinguish has been the most prevalent, the most universal, and the most damaging of all diseases.

Since the crusade began, much educational work has been done. Meetings and congresses have been held, and literature has been produced and distributed. Unfortunately, much has been taught which is not true, not from a desire to spread error, but from overzeal to do good. People with a smattering of knowledge have said and done things which in the interest of humanity might better have been left unsaid and undone.

Little thought has been given to the economical administration of the crusade. Everything has met with approval on account of the good object which lies ahead, without inquiry whether the purpose would be accomplished, or whether the work might be done more expeditiously or less expensively in another way.

Such skirmishing warfare, good enough for arousing enthusiasm, is not good enough for a great crusade. Civilization has too much at stake in the fight against tuberculosis to use loose methods when accurate methods are available. Every step should be taken with forethought.

Broadly speaking, in this warfare we have two resources: (1) to cure those who have tuberculosis, and (2) to prevent others from getting it. Underlying the crusade is the well-established fact that the disease is due to a living entity called the tubercle bacillus, without which it cannot arise and which does not propagate itself outside of the body of a human being or an animal, but which may remain alive and capable

of growing and reproducing itself for a long time outside of such a body, in a dark, badly ventilated enclosure.

Subsidiary to this fact are other facts: (1) Every new case of tuberculosis must come from an old case, directly or indirectly. (2) Tuberculosis is not always contagious; it is only contagious when broken down tissue is given off. (3) For implantation, enough living entities must be taken in to overcome the resistance of the individual receiving them. (4) Ordinarily, human beings have a strong resistance, and can withstand implantation for a considerable time under the usual conditions of life. (5) Tuberculosis is a house disease, inasmuch as it is usually implanted in a house; and the house gives the most congenial condition for its development. (6) The house is the natural granary for the preservation of the tubercle bacillus during the time when it is outside of a living body. (7) The accumulation of tuberculous matter in a room or in a workshop gradually makes out of such a place an infected place, or a competent contagious environment, capable of giving the disease to another who inhabits it. (8) Tuberculosis is a long-drawn-out disease, and usually has a terminal period of at least three months. During this period, when it is an open ulcerative case, it is exceedingly contagious, as the victim, being confined to his room and possibly to his bed, makes of that room a competent contagious environment, *unless prevented from doing so by scientific supervision and control*. (9) Every case of tuberculosis has a longer non-contagious period than a contagious period, and is only mildly contagious while the patient is in fair health. (10) Even the most intensely contagious environment may fail to give an implantation.



The cure of tuberculosis has a preventive value in itself and with regard to others only when the afflicted individual is really cured, that is, freed from all living tubercle bacilli, because only then is he secure against ultimately becoming a contagious agent through relapse. Unfortunately, a perfect cure does not often take place when once the ulcerative stage has been reached; not that cure is impossible, but, the disease being local, when the living entity which produces it is thrown out—as it is when the tissue breaks down—it again enters in to grow in another part of the body, either contiguous or some distance away. Consequently, the whole body cannot develop resistance quickly enough and early enough to protect itself against further encroachment, until finally, when resistance has been set up, so much tissue has been destroyed that the person may fall a victim even to micro-organisms which can produce death only when the organs of the body have been already badly damaged.

To obtain a cure of such a case means a long fight, without losing a point. Few people have either the temperament or the financial ability

to follow the treatment carefully enough and long enough for final recovery. The melancholy result is that people who have open ulcerative tuberculosis, the stage in which most cases come under treatment, only recover physically, and remain well only so long as they lead a careful, conservative, prudent, easy life. They relapse sooner or later, and finally pass through the extremely contagious stage to death. The cure of tuberculosis, therefore, has practically only the preventive value which comes from isolation of patients while under treatment.

Of course, it goes without saying that the cure of tuberculosis has a value of its own, outside of prevention, in the saving of those who make complete recoveries. This value should not be underestimated, but it should be placed in a category by itself. It should not be counted as an asset in the movement to stamp out tuberculosis, nor be permitted to mislead us for sentimental reasons into false steps in the crusade.



For the purpose of stamping out tuberculosis, we must place our chief reliance upon keeping those who have not got tuberculosis from getting it. With no new implantations, the disease will become extinct when all existing cases have recovered or finally succumbed. This can be accomplished by scientific supervision and control of every contagious case, for the purpose of preventing it from giving implantation to a new case; but each case must be kept innocuous from the first moment that it is contagious until the very last.

In every case of ulcerative tuberculosis there is a rather long period in which the contagion is intermittent and mild; a somewhat shorter period in which it is continuous and mild; and a still shorter period, usually about three months before death, during which it is intensely contagious. Protection is of value—and therefore important—in proportion to the danger; and the best protection is of no value when there is no danger.

The great danger incident to the last period, when the patient is confined to the house and usually to bed, is due to the fact that he is in an enclosure. "Walking" cases do not often give new implantations. The resistance of human beings is too great. Most people can even resist tubercle bacilli day and night for some time until there has been an accumulation capable of breaking down the resistance. This breaking-down occurs most frequently in those who are caring for an advanced case in the bosom of the family, worn-out with vigils, overworked, oppressed with sorrow, and sometimes emaciated with want; or in those who have taken up quarters which have become contagious environments by reason of the profuse throwing out of tubercle bacilli by former occupants. Ordinarily, one does not contract tuberculosis on the street,

in the street-cars, in church, by casual contact with tuberculous subjects, or by sleeping for a night or two in a room which has been occupied by a consumptive. But during the last few months of life, the tuberculous subject gives off tubercle bacilli in such great profusion that few people can live in the environment thus created without getting an implantation, *unless the tuberculous individual is or has been kept under scientific supervision and control.*

Such supervision *can* make even such a patient harmless, but only when it induces the consumptive to deposit all broken-down tissue in a vessel which can be held close to the mouth, cleanse his lips after each expectoration, hold a paper napkin before his mouth when he coughs, dispose of the utensils and material used for these purposes in a way to contaminate nothing, and immediately change and sterilize bed and body linens when sputum gets on them. And all of these things must be done exactly right, and done always, or else the purpose of the supervision is defeated.

Only the well-to-do can afford such supervision and control, since it has to be kept up for a long time. The efficient poor, that is, the working poor, and the dependent poor, or paupers, can get it only through money contributed by private charity or taken out of public taxes.



There is ample warrant for such supervision and control out of public money, in man's natural right of self-preservation. In civilized communities, this right has been delegated to the government, because if the individual should exercise it, there would be constant turmoil and warfare. Protection against preventable diseases is included in the natural right of self-preservation, and this too has been delegated to the government, since it would lead to disorder if the individual himself attempted to protect himself according to his own ideas.

This protection should be efficient and economical, and it should not interfere with other rights more than is necessary. There are two interests: that of the people who are suffering from tuberculosis, and that of the people who are free from it. Those who have tuberculosis are compelled to undergo privations for the benefit of others, and, since they are already seriously inconvenienced, these privations should not be made greater than is necessary. Those who are free from the disease are entitled to protection, and they have a right to insist upon methods which give that protection, but they should not exact more than is necessary. Besides, the interests and sentiments of the relatives of those who are afflicted should be respected, and no unnecessary harshness be practised in separating them from their afflicted ones.

Let us illustrate what has been said, by a concrete example. There

are in Pennsylvania ten thousand deaths a year from tuberculosis. Nearly two thousand of them are from closed tuberculosis, which is not contagious, and about eight thousand from open, ulcerative tuberculosis, or consumption. For the accomplishment of the purpose of the crusade, it is necessary to bring under scientific supervision and control the eight thousand open ulcerative cases which go down to death every year, and if we wish to do it economically we should begin at that end which is most contagious rather than at the end which is least contagious. Every fatal case, if not supervised and controlled, will almost certainly give rise to a new case; supervision and control will almost certainly prevent a new implantation, and thus save a life and much suffering. Here is something definite—a definite action with a definite result. Supervision and control of earlier cases, those still walking about in fair health, is problematical in its results. It should be done if means are at hand; but it should be done last, not first.

Fully six thousand of the eight thousand open ulcerative cases which go down to death every year in Pennsylvania cannot afford scientific supervision and control in their own homes during the most intensely contagious period, and will have to receive it in hospitals near their homes at public expense, if they are to get it at all. Why near their own homes? Because the poor, whether efficient or inefficient, have the right to be near their loved ones during this last trying tragedy of life, without undergoing the burden of travelling expenses and loss of work as the price of their love; and when this burden is inflicted, it usually defeats the object of the aid extended, inasmuch as at the last moment, when the danger is the greatest, the family takes the stricken one home.



But how could the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania take care of six thousand people for three months a year in hospital beds near the homes of those who are afflicted? In Pennsylvania, it would be quite easy. It so happens that there are in the Commonwealth enough vacant beds located in the right places to take care of the entire six thousand consumptives, and if these were available, all that would be needed in addition would be the maintenance. According to the official report of the Board of Public Charities for 1910, there were in Pennsylvania, during that year, an average of four thousand vacant beds in the hospitals of the commonwealth on every day of the year. Four thousand beds would give hospital treatment to six thousand consumptive patients for eight months a year.

Why are these beds vacant, and why are consumptives not admitted into them? Because there are more hospital-beds in Pennsylvania than are necessary for the diseases which hospitals treat, and because the

managers and medical staffs of general hospitals are ignorant of the fundamental principles underlying the spread of tuberculosis, and are insanely afraid of the disease. To say that tuberculosis cannot be treated in a general hospital without danger to other inmates, or even to admit the possibility of such a thing in the light of our present knowledge of the subject, is a confession of ignorance and incompetency. The layman may be excused, but even he can no longer conscientiously evade the duty of investigating for himself whether or not tuberculosis can be treated in a consumptive ward of a general hospital without danger to others. The hospital stands for a definite idea, and not for a fancy or a whim. To exclude sick people who are in need of help because they have consumption, on so fanciful a ground as that there is danger to other inmates, when science has long since proven that the thing can be done without the slightest danger to any one, can no longer be justified.

What is Pennsylvania doing for dying consumptives? She is isolating about one thousand cases a year, of which about six hundred and fifty are cared for in the Philadelphia General Hospital, about ninety in the Rush Hospital, about fifty in the White Haven Sanatorium, about thirty-five in the Henry Phipps Institute, about twenty in the Chestnut Hill Home for Consumptives, about twenty in the Lucien Moss Home of the Jewish Hospital, and a few in each of the other institutions which treat tuberculosis. The Commonwealth itself took care of forty-three cases during the seven months ending December 31, 1909, according to its latest official report.



Where would the money come from for maintaining six thousand last-stage cases for at least three months during each year? It costs about ten dollars a week to care for such a case. Six thousand cases at ten dollars a week, for at least twelve weeks in the year, would cost \$720,000 a year for maintenance. The Commonwealth itself is at present spending a million dollars a year in the crusade against tuberculosis, and the cities and private corporations are spending about a quarter of a million more. There is enough expended to isolate every last-stage case for even more than three months, and do all that it is necessary to do for the walking cases.

Unfortunately, in most of the work done in Pennsylvania, the logical order of things has been reversed. Of public money used, that used by the city of Philadelphia alone is used to the best advantage for the prevention of tuberculosis. The State spends nearly all its money on walking cases in dispensaries and sanatoria.

Dispensaries and sanatoria are necessary in the crusade against tuberculosis, but they should constitute the lesser part of the machinery and

not the greater. They are chiefly of value for educational purposes and as distributing centres. They looked much better in theory at the beginning of the crusade than they have turned out to be in practice. Experience has brought out their weak points, and it is now generally recognized that they have little preventive value. Even the education and training which can be given in them is evanescent. It does not endure long after the patient quits the dispensary or returns home from the sanatorium. When the patient succumbs, he generally implants a new case during the final period of his disease. What has been expended upon him has been mostly lost from the point of view of prevention of the disease.

Dispensaries have their greatest value as clearing-houses, so to speak, for hospitals and sanatoria. In an economical administration of the crusade, they should be used for this purpose only. Free distribution of milk and eggs should be kept at the minimum. It does very little good for prevention, and it does some harm to the social welfare of the community. Preventive-measure supplies, such as sputum-cups, paper napkins, and paper bags, on the contrary, should be distributed freely.



Sanatoria have their chief value in the treatment of tuberculosis. They should not be maintained entirely at public expense. Tuberculous subjects who can contribute something towards recovery, either out of their savings or out of the savings of friends and relatives, may possibly remain well after leaving the sanatorium, because, not having lost their places in the social fabric, they can take up their work where they left it off. Those who cannot contribute something, either out of their own savings or out of the savings of relatives and friends, are doomed, unless pensioned after leaving the sanatorium. This is a hard fact, but it may as well be recognized.

To get well from tuberculosis takes years, and patients generally remain in the sanatoria only long enough to recover physical well-being, and then go home to try to earn a living. If they have an occupation in which they can immediately begin to earn enough to maintain themselves comfortably without undue fatigue, they may remain in physical health, and, as time goes on, even fully recover; but if they have no occupation to go to at once, or if the occupation which they have is too fatiguing and does not return them enough to maintain nutrition at the high standard which was given them in the sanatorium, want and hardship will bring on a relapse in a very short time. Even among the well-to-do, sanatorium treatment often fails of its ultimate purpose because patients cannot be kept under treatment long enough for complete recovery.



The inefficient poor with tuberculosis cannot be saved in sanatoria. They have been run over by the Juggernaut of human greed, and their injuries are too great to be helped by such mild surgery. If society really wants to save them, it will have to go much further than treating them in sanatoria—it will have to colonize them in health resorts, after they have been treated, where it will provide them with opportunities for open-air occupation at farming or forestry, or at light occupations in sanitary workshops; it will have to supervise and control their mode of life; and it will have to make good the deficit which will accrue in their maintenance above what they can earn. Manifestly, this is not now practicable. The alternative is to abandon the sanatorium treatment for them altogether, and to admit them into hospitals when they have become a menace to those in their environments. In this way, their relatives and friends at least can be saved.



For the purpose of further illustrating what has been said and emphasizing the most important points in an economical administration of the crusade against tuberculosis, let us take a somewhat wider field than Pennsylvania. In the United States there are about seventy thousand deaths a year from open ulcerative tuberculosis. To isolate for three months before death the seventy thousand people who die would cost at the rate of one hundred and twenty dollars each, or about \$8,410,000 a year. The isolation of these seventy thousand people for three months would almost certainly prevent seventy thousand new implantations. Whatever might be spent upon the seventy thousand cases prior to the terminal, intensely contagious stage of their disease would in itself mean very little for the prevention of tuberculosis. According to published compilations of money spent in the crusade against tuberculosis, about fifteen million dollars was expended in the United States in the year 1911. With this amount all of the last-stage cases could have been cared for in the final three months, and there would have been over six million dollars left for other work. What will be the net results of the fifteen million dollars expended in prevention cannot be determined at present, but we have reason to think that it will not be very great. Most of the money was spent on walking cases, which are not very contagious, and through which new implantations probably seldom take place.

It has been estimated by some that it will cost one hundred million dollars a year to carry on the crusade against tuberculosis in the United States. This is undoubtedly a high estimate, and yet it is probably not too high if the work is to be done along the lines which have been followed. By devoting our resources first to the isolation of all last-stage

cases, and then with what money is left over doing what we can for the walking cases, I believe that the entire crusade might be successfully carried out at an outlay not exceeding one hundred and fifty million dollars all told.

On an average, about ten years elapse between the implantation of tuberculosis and its termination in death. If all the last-stage cases were isolated every year for the next ten years, very few new implantations would take place during that time, and the disease would be practically exterminated at the end of the ten years. The cost of maintenance for the ten years would be less than one hundred million dollars, and possibly less than fifty million dollars, inasmuch as the number to be cared for would grow less every year. The cost of equipment, if all existing hospital beds which are now empty were used, would be relatively small; but even if present hospital beds could not be procured for any patients, and beds would have to be provided for, all the outlay would not exceed seventy million dollars for this purpose. Fifty million dollars ought to provide all the beds necessary to care for every last-stage consumptive who cannot be scientifically cared for in his own home. A total outlay of one hundred and fifty million dollars over a period of ten years, if done on the lines laid down by science and common sense, would in my opinion wipe out tuberculosis in the United States. If the crusade is conducted on the lines now generally followed, it will cost billions of dollars and will take decades.



It behooves all thoughtful men to do what they can to direct this crusade in practical, sane ways, and keep it out of sentimental and political byways. Caring for walking cases is so much more attractive than caring for last-stage cases—it appeals so much more to sentiment and vanity—that it is difficult to get either public officials or private philanthropists to do what should be done for the latter cases. This is as one would expect, however; for a dead man has no influence, and the average person cannot grasp the abstract idea of good which comes to society at large from the prevention of tuberculosis in those whose identity is unknown and unknowable. Well people cannot feel gratitude for not having become sick; they cannot even know the benefactor who by wise legislation or generous bounty has kept them from getting sick. They will place no laurels on the brows of their benefactors, nor will they help them along in their careers. For the true crusader, there can be no reward except that which comes with a sense of duty well done.



# THE CHAIN SUCCESSION

*By Stanley Olmsted*

**I**F at the morning hour of 10:45 a tap should sound upon your door; and if the door in question should happen to be of the fourth-floor chamber, windowless but skylighted, in some lodging-house down a side street from the Times Tower; and if the thing is additionally clenched by arrears for your rent—then you might as well surrender. Ten-forty-five A.M. is the actor's witching hour. Commensurately with his luck, or his lack of it, he may roll on his side into yet sweeter Elysiums, or vainly try to, against the bombardment of a carpet sweeper. And sometimes it is even more definite than all that. . . .

"It's me—it's Mrs. Russ!" came the voice of Mr. Everett Melbourne's landlady. "The help left yesterday, and I'm doin' the rooms myself. Would you please get up? I want to get it over."

Perhaps an hour later, Mr. Everett Melbourne had partaken of his combined breakfast and luncheon at a café on Eighth Avenue, and was looking in on Mrs. Russ in her private apartment, which was antipodal to his own, being on the basement floor, underground. He asked her how she was "comin'," since the resignation of Cathy, colored maid-of-all-work.

Mrs. Russ gave a deprecating shrug. "Don't look at me," she said (which, being exactly what she never failed to say, might safely be overlooked). "I'm that dirty and untidy! I was just sayin' this mornin': when you work you clean forget what it is to feel clean!" She drew the folds of her kimona together, as if to hide herself.

She did herself not quite unconscious injustice. Her thin face, with very clear outlines of chin and cheek-bones, was already neatly touched in with powder and rouge. Her purplish hair was massed over a rat, in a very large pompadour, and drawn girlishly in a low coil on the neck. One recognized her instantly as the slightly faded original of innumerable photographs adorning her walls, her mantel, and her dresser; photographs to be classed as "stunning" by Professional opinion, and belonging to that period of taste when the Christy-girl was at her zenith.

As a matter of fact, Mrs. Russ was in her most faultless get-up

of visage. Her familiar embarrassment referred merely to the kimona, worn always for housework. This kimona meant well. It was of cream-colored satin, with large and very non-Japanese red flowers, and called aloud for gasoline cleaning. Also, like most of its family, it bore its name by courtesy. No Japanese maiden would have recognized it.

Decency demanded the offer of a seat to Mr. Melbourne. He chose the rocker. Mrs. Russ perched herself on the piano stool, the while she clung vaguely to her dusting rag.

"Any news?" she inquired.

Her tone was polite, yet oddly personal. There was a quality she could get into her manner more effective than any written bill ever presented.

"Good news," reassured the lodger. "In fact, I don't mind telling *you*, Mrs. Russ—excellent news! At last we have arranged with the Circuit and are to have our try-out in Hoboken next week. The try-out may cost us a little something, of course. But if it's a go—and it's perfectly sure to be a go—we'll soak it to the Circuit. There's the great advantage that I wrote the sketch myself. We don't have to pay no royalties to nobody."

Mrs. Russ lacked enthusiasm.

"By the way," supplemented Mr. Melbourne, "I never told you the plot, did I? You see, it's three people—two men, one woman. The woman we've got does n't suit us particularly. She's over-emotional, and she's flat and hard as a Bent's cracker and has always got a cold. Moreover, she has a hook nose. What we need is a *looker!* I say"—the idea struck him suddenly—"you don't want to go back on the stage, do you?"

The landlady was twirling the duster. "No more for muh! I've had all that's comin' to me of the stage. This thing of keeping roomers may not be so excitin', but it's a cinch on gettin' tied up in North Dakota in a blizzard, with no trunk and ten cents. No, sir-ee! When I swore off, *I swore off.*"

Mr. Melbourne was musing thoughtfully. "Because," he ruminated, "if you cared to join us for a while, you'd be running your own first-class hotel in no time, I feel sure. . . . By the way, Mrs. Russ, that skylight which ventilates and makes habitable my room is leakin'. The large drops fell directly on my nose in the storm last night, thereby disturbing my slumbers considerable."

He moved to go. Mrs. Russ warmed up ever so slightly, being indeed slightly weakened through the leaky skylight. She reminded Mr. Melbourne that he had not yet told her of the plot. "What does the woman have to do?" she asked him.

"Oh, she has to look lovely as a dream and do very little. You

would suit ideally"—Mr. Melbourne appeared to be thinking out loud. "You see, it's this way: First the other fellow comes in whistlin' to his dog—like this——"

From now on, Mr. Melbourne acted out his sketch, line for line. He took everybody's part.

"And so," he concluded, "there's a little music, light and soft, and she's looking into his eyes, and he's holding her hand, and by comes the old sport again, still whistlin' for his poodle. And she says: 'Dear me! Will that man *never* find his dog?' and the curtain falls. It gives her the curtain laugh, you see."

A twinge of unacknowledged temptation moved Mrs. Russ to change the subject. She must hurry and finish her dusting, she said, as she had to dress and go down-town. Mr. Melbourne took the hint. He sauntered from the premises with that debonair ease which was perhaps his strongest asset.

On the following day he had yet more news. He had found a backer, one Tom Ledson, automobile agent, who was interested in putting a wedge into theatricals! Tom had agreed to advance the small amount necessary to expenses for trial performances in Hoboken, in return for which he wished to be the business representative of the sketch. But Tom was autocratically demanding a new lady in the trio, and at once.

Now, they had already deposed the old one—she with the flat chest and the beak nose, beside whom Mrs. Russ was assured she was a beauty incarnate. Or, at least, if they had n't quite deposed her, they meant to. Would Mrs. Russ, then, submit to an introduction to Tom—Mr. Melbourne begged her pardon!—to Mr. Thomas J. Ledson, automobile agent and gentleman of distinction and ability, not to say cold cash?

Mr. Thomas J. Ledson, as it appeared, awaited the issue on the sidewalk outside, even as they talked. With Mrs. Russ's consent, he was brought in for presentation. He proved a stocky gentleman of few words. He looked Mrs. Russ over.

"Might be younger," he said. "Guess make up all right, though. From front, anyhow."

"But I assure you I don't care to go," protested Mrs. Russ.

"She's merely talking," explained Mr. Melbourne. "She'll stand by us—the Hoboken try-out anyhow—why, sure!"

"She must understand—there'll be no guarantee," observed Mr. Ledson.

"But I have this house on my hands," deplored Mrs. Russ.

"Find a deputy—just for that week. Get that woman in your third-floor front. Ain't she talked of going partners on the house, anyhow?" Melbourne knew the topography.

"She won't do it, I'm sure," protested Mrs. Russ. "I simply can't—I'll be upset something awful!"

"Oh, forget it," advised Mr. Melbourne.

And thus and more, accounts to the contrary notwithstanding, the lure of the stage is permanently strong, once its virus has been well inoculated. Assuring them she would ne'er consent, Mrs. Russ was yet finally induced to accept the "sides" for the lady role of the sketch; the role which required the looker.

For purposes of rehearsal, the commodious ballroom of Kolb's Hall had been secured. At this locality Mrs. Russ therefore presented herself promptly at 11:30 on the following morning. Wilting flags of unrecognizable calibre drooped from lonely rafters. Peanut shells, wrapping papers, and petals of artificial flowers littered the floor. There had been a dance the night before, and the place had not yet been swept.

"I must be early," surmised Mrs. Russ. "Nobody ain't thought of comin' but me." She reasoned, with some acumen, that Mr. Melbourne was doubtless still in bed. Moved by decent professional politeness, she had, this morning, left him to his own conscience. She regretted her delicacy.

But she was not alone. Her eye swept the hall to make the discovery. In a far and shadowy corner was another woman. And this woman was cloaked and veiled, and sat very quietly and patiently. Whoever she might be, she appeared to belong there.

Mrs. Russ felt she must determine the facts in the case. Casually she made the distance between herself and the intruder, her trailing skirts swishing as she walked. Mrs. Russ was at her best when her skirts trailed most.

"Beautiful weather," she said.

The silent, veiled figure nodded.

"Rather smelly in here, though."

No response for this.

"They don't ventilate these halls enough." Mrs. Russ carefully selected a chair, dusted it off with her muff, and elevated her nostrils. "It really reminds one of a menagerie, don't it?"

By way of reply, there was another and a well-nigh imperceptible bend of the head. Mrs. Russ realized she need have no further doubt. The thing was plain. This was the other woman: the over-emotional lady who had been dropped from the sketch, whose place Mrs. Russ was usurping. And she was palpably sore. Without doubt, she had returned to make a scene.

A black cloak, long and rusty, hid her figure. There were but impressionistic hints of hook nose, through thicknesses of veiling.

But Mrs. Russ was given to rapid and accurate estimates. Something in the woman's lines, as she sat there, draped, spare, and obtrusive, was an unerring indication of her status.

Mrs. Russ summarized it mentally: "She may be a down-and-outer now. She may be no good even for a one-horse vaudeville act like this. But you can't fool me. That pose has come in handy for a dozen parts, from 'East Lynne' to 'Camille.' She's been a stock-company leadin'-lady in her day, or I've never lodged ham-fatters! Pore old thing! This stage life's a bad business."

Yet it was difficult to evolve conversation. Mrs. Russ cast about for a new opening, and decided on the veiled lady's reticule: a rather marvellous affair, of gleaming silvery scales lapping one over another. Mrs. Russ had recognized it as one of a large number offered at a recent bargain sale for ninety-eight cents apiece.

"Why, what a lovely hand-bag you carry!" she exclaimed. "Do excuse me—but where *could* I get one like it?"

"It was inexpensive," replied a hoarse contralto—the regulation stock-company leading-lady voice and no mistaking. "I'm afraid there are none left."

There may have been enough of frigid languor in this reply to account for the fit of coughing that ensued. The woman threw open her cloak at the chest, as if for more breathing space. Mrs. Russ perceived the flatness to which Mr. Melbourne had referred in his delineation of yesterday. It looked like a tubercular flatness to the usurper. Her conscience rumbled. Her sympathies stirred and wandered out, gropingly.

"Why, what a cold you've let yourself get!" she cried. "Here—try my smellin'-salts. Smellin'-salts clears out the head something wonderful, you know. But you really ought to tuck yourself away in bed—with any such cold as that."

"It's nothing," said the other. "I'm quite used to it long ago! I have never let it interfere with my work."

The tendency was now toward thawing. Mrs. Russ perceived it. "Ah, yes," she encouraged. "A little energy, when you really ain't got none, does wonders sometimes."

"And, besides," further melted the deposed incumbent, "it was particularly important that I come out this morning."

"Rehearsin' something?"—Mrs. Russ deemed it the psychological moment.

"For five weeks past, yes. I agreed to play a part in a vaudeville sketch. We were to go out in ten days. I had never done any vaudeville before, but—the season being so terrible——"

"I understand," sympathized Mrs. Russ. "We all come to it sooner or later."

The crust had been broken. The other woman was now fairly launched. Confidences flowed. An occasional fit of coughing was no interruption.

"But now," the deposed one went on, "it looks as though even that would fall through. We must have rehearsed at least twenty versions of his playlet—Mr. Melbourne's, I mean. He had never written one before, and we were so anxious to have it a sure success. And now, after our work, a letter reaches me this morning with the news that he has lost courage—that he thinks he must abandon the idea. I cannot let him do that. I have written him to meet me here and see if we could n't do something. Think of it! All those weeks lost—and at mid-season—and prices for lodging ever higher, and the kind of woman who rents rooms to you—oh, you know the kind! Without breeding, without pity——"

Mrs. Russ lifted her eyes heavenward. "I know the kind, yes. Landladies in New York!"

The former incumbent jabbed her handkerchief suspiciously beneath her veiling. "Enough of my troubles," she said. "Mr. Melbourne ought to have gotten here long ago. I feel sure he'll be able to fix it up, somehow. He really must! He must! . . . You're with that new musical comedy, no doubt. But are n't you a little early? *They* don't usually get down to their rehearsals here until one."

Mrs. Russ hesitated. "The fact is," she began, "I'm not, strictly speakin', in the profession at all—though I did once give a good imitation of being in one show. That was twelve years ago. The show was named 'Winnie, the Pore Chorus Girl; or, Innocence Before the World.' I played *Winnie*—and I must say it was a great cinch for a young thing like I was then. All the hard actin', you see, was in the part of *Rhodora*, the wicked Prima Donna; and they had a cracker-jack woman, a real actress, in fact, with the nastiest disposition I ever saw, hired to play her, for seventy-five a week. That made me pretty sore; but I got all the applause even if my salary was thirty-five less, and even if I did get my lines crooked. That other woman was just paid to get hissed!"

The veiled person had listened as one who struggles toward some decision.

"Adèle Lydair," she said at last, "we might as well forget old grudges. I recognized you the moment you came in. Don't you know me—child?"

The thick mask was lifted. The tense aquiline contours were as a gimlet boring into the Tenderloin landlady's bitterest reminiscences of her ingénue past. "Etelka Larrange!" she gasped. "You—of all people! I thought you was dead!"

It was a moment too deep for foolish sham. Both of them had



lived. Both of them had been both softened and hardened by the impact of pitiless, pitying years. They clasped hands like two brothers.

"We lost each other," ruminated Mrs. Russ, "in that North Dakota blizzard. Where in the world have you been hiding since?"

"For many years I headed a stock company in Ledville, Missouri, every summer; winters I was out on the road. My name is now Violet Harmon." The former rival sighed. "I had to take something more youthful, you see, as I grew older."

"And mine's Mrs. Russ," supplemented Adèle. "I had to take a husband or I'd never got back to Broadway from North Dakota."

"I've had three of them," recalled the other sadly. "The last one was all right, and I went into retirement. But he died, three years ago."

"I've only had one," said Adèle. "But I divorced him eight years back. Was n't it an awful blizzard!"

"Was n't it!"

At the very remembrance the older woman had another fit of coughing. The younger withdrew her rich fur cape and threw it about her shoulders.

"Miss Larrange," she said almost tenderly, "we did n't get along well them days, but I always did admire you, and look up to you, even if I envied you. You had something I never could have, you see. You had emotional genius, and nobody knew that better than me. Somehow, I'd like to make up now for the hard things I used to feel then. Come and live with me! From what you've said, I'm so afraid you're not comfortable; I'm so afraid, maybe you ain't as prosperous as a woman of your great gifts ought to be."

Very positively this was more than *Rhodora*, the Wicked Prima Donna of yore, had expected. For the staunching of tears she would fain have hidden, she must resort openly to the borrowed fur cape, into which she bowed her head. Innocence-Before-the-World (of days ago) or *Winnie*, the Poor Chorus Girl, would have done the same but for the fact that her new-discovered friend now struggled with the worst seizure she had yet had during their conversation. Mrs. Russ therefore gave herself over to the more practical business of applied smelling-salts, and accompanying blows on the back.

"With that letter," admitted the elder woman, when her breath returned—"with Mr. Melbourne's letter calling off the sketch, this morning, came a notice from my landlady that I must leave to-day. There is absolutely no shelter left in the world to which I feel I have any right to turn. The world has no use for us—once it is through with us——"

"Never mind, never mind, dearie," reasoned Mrs. Russ, with red-rimmed eyes. "Come and live with me. You can have my back

parlor. It's comfortable. I could get eight a week for it if I chose to rent it. But I'd rather keep it for myself—with you in it. You can pay me back teachin' me how to act. Do you know, since them days when I discovered I could n't, I've always longed to know how to act, even if I did n't never let on. You can teach me how to use my voice, you can teach me how to talk nice and grammatical—if it ain't too late—and when you feel just like it, and maybe I want to take a little trip away somewhere, you can kind of look out for the house and for me, in my absence. You see, we can sort of go partners on it. We can——”

At exactly this point Mrs. Russ glanced up, quite by accident, from the sobbing woman she comforted. Gazing stolidly in upon her from the doorway, she beheld Mr. Thomas J. Ledson, automobile agent of few words, managerial aspirations, and cold cash. By his side, with proprietary confidence, stood a florid and pot-hatted young lady of the type uncompromisingly ingénue. Mrs. Russ recognized her as a professional soubrette occupying a third-floor front in the house opposite her own. She furthermore divined her as hypothetically but undoubtedly a personal selection of Mr. Ledson, for a solitary female role in a sketch by Mr. Melbourne which required a looker. An instant later and Mr. Everett Melbourne himself had joined the two. Appropriately his appearance was of just one instant's duration. Mrs. Russ saw him glance in. She saw his startled tug at his soubrette's elbow. She saw his terrified pull at his backer's coat-tail. Then the three of them vanished in limbo of outer darkness; silently, as they had come.

Mrs. Russ drew her first free breath, perceiving that her companion had seen nothing. “Short-change artists!” she murmured to herself. “Muckers, maggots, and parasites! Let 'em keep their cold-feet, and keep off!”

She turned to her friend. “I was waitin' here to see a plumber, you understand,” she said. “I wanted him to fix a skylight that leaks at the top of my house. But I don't believe he's comin' this late—and you've got your movin' to do, and there's one or two dishonest and good-for-nothing roomers as have n't paid me in weeks and I've simply got to eject. Let's get busy, then. Let's beat it.”



## THE SMALLER VOICE

BY RICHARD KIRK

WHEN March winds blustered, I believed  
The Snow-drop's truer prophecy;  
And lo, to-day the world's in flower for me!

# PASETSK THE SECOND-HANDER

*By Mary Imlay Taylor*

PASETSK, the Russian Jew, kept the little second-hand shop below Olive Street. He stood at his door, peering out, with the absorbed air of one who dwells apart, except in the matter of a bargain. In that, his neighbors on Grand Avenue admitted his superiority.

"Pasetsk," they said, in their broken English, "Pasetsk, he ees a hard one, he would skin an eel."

Pasetsk had skinned many eels in his lifetime. There were three gold balls over his door, and many strange things in his show-cases, besides the stuffed lizard that hung suspended on a wire, and fascinated all the little Italians in the neighborhood.

Pasetsk himself, brown and wrinkled, might well have been strung on a wire like the lizard. Instead, he peered down the busy, smoky street. There were many passers-by, and a babel of strange tongues, but still Pasetsk was disappointed. He went back and dusted his cases, he dusted the landscape done in worsted-work, the lizard, and, at last, an old clock made in Novgorod.

"Thou dost well, my little pigeon," he said to it, in Russ. "Thou hast lost but two minutes. But she is late," he added thoughtfully, "that little girl is late, and it is cold."

Twice a day for three weeks Pasetsk had watched in vain for one little Russian girl. He did not know her name, but, like the second-hander himself, she was a stranger in this strange land of America, and she had always spoken to him as she passed. Then he had missed her, but that morning she had reappeared on her way to the shop, where she worked as a little check-girl.

At noon, therefore, Pasetsk watched for her again. The biting wind struck in his face as he opened the door, but he looked out anxiously. This time his eyes brightened as a child's figure emerged from the crowd.

"You are vaire late this noon," said Pasetsk gently, in his difficult English. "Id ees cold."

The girl, a slim child in her teens, turned a pale face toward him. "Id ees vaire cold on the rivaire," she answered, and, for the first time, she came timidly into the shop, a little ghost of herself, her beautiful thick braids cut off close to her head.

"You haf been seeck?" Pasetsk said gently.

"I haf had the fevaire," she replied, "and my mothaire, she ees blind."

The second-hander leaned his elbows on the show-case. "Did she take care of you, when she ees blind?" he asked hoarsely.

"I was ad the hospital," said the child. "The woman in the cellar of the house where we live, she care for my mothaire. I"—she drew out her handkerchief and began to untie the knots in it—"I haf got to sell this ring."

He took it, his eyes on the child. "What does your mothaire, then, for her living?" he asked.

"She makes loffy baskets. They sell so well until I am seeck. While I am seeck my mothaire could nod sell. The people, they feared the fevaire was in the baskets. Id ees so thad we haf now no money ad all."

Pasetsk opened his hand and looked at the ring. It was an old Russian ring, and the pawnbroker stood staring at it. In the silence the Novgorod clock struck the hour. The child shivered, holding out her thin hands to the stove.

"Where dost thou get thy ring?" Pasetsk asked her, in Russ.

"Id ees mine," she replied, understanding, but speaking her English. "My mothaire hung id round my neck when I was a baby."

The Jew's hand closed over the ring; he stood looking at her strangely.

"Will you buy id?" she asked timidly.

He roused himself and went back to the counter for his little scales. Mechanically he weighed it, touching the scales with his pencil. The child watched eagerly; she loved the ring, and there was a lump in her throat.

"Id ees heavy," said Pasetsk. "I will pay three dollars for this ring."

Her delicate mouth trembled. She must let the ring go, for that was almost a week's wages.

The second-hander counted out three soiled dollar-bills, then he put on his coat. "I would lig to buy a basket," he said. "Will you take me to your mothaire?"

Her face brightened. "She will lig to sell a basket," she replied eagerly.

They walked along the street together. In many doorways sat maternal Latins, with their arms full of dark-eyed bambini. Lithuanians and Greeks and Sicilians played together in the snow.

It was a long way.

They ascended the hill and descended to the river-bank. The house stood with its feet in the water; ice hung from the tide level on its rough foundation. The little girl ascended the outside staircase and opened a door. Pasetsk followed, stooping his head to enter. It was dark to his

dazzled eyes, but he heard a woman singing, and he stopped to listen. She was singing a song of that far country that had cast out her people and his; for Semilétka Vronsky was a Russian Jewess.

Pasetak silenced the child with a gesture. In this strange land the woman was singing in Russ:

“ If the frost nipped the flowerets no more,  
 If in winter the flowerets would bloom,  
 If the woes of my spirit were o'er,  
 My spirit would cast off its gloom,—  
 I would sit with my sorrow no longer  
 O'erwatching the dew-covered field.”

Silently Pasetak followed the little girl into the garret. The blind woman sat there, weaving a basket. As her deft, thin fingers worked she sang again:

“ I would sit with my sorrow no longer ! ”

Her head was bowed over her work, but they saw her pale, delicate profile.

“ Mothaire,” said the child, “ here ees the nize gentleman to buy a basket.”

The blind woman turned her face toward them, trying to see. “ Whad didst thou say, Alenka ? ” she asked, her hands falling helplessly in her lap.

“ I would buy a basket,” said Pasetak gently.

Semilétka drew a sharp breath. “ I cannod see,” she said softly. “ I did nod know any one was here. This basket, id ees fifty cents.”

Pasetak took it up, pretending to look at it, but he saw the child go to her mother and stroke her thin hand.

“ I will buy the basket,” he said.

“ I will finish id,” replied the woman, stretching out her hand for it. As Pasetak gave it back, their fingers touched. She started, shivering, and raised her hand, with an involuntary gesture, shading her eyes.

“ How long haf you been blind ? ” asked the Jew.

“ Id ees three year,” she answered, bending her head to listen to his voice. “ I was vaire seeek, an' when I get up from the fevaire I cannod see.”

Pasetak drew nearer. “ Turn your face to the window,” he commanded. “ In thad far land I was once a doctaire to the eye.”

She lifted her face obediently, and he took her chin in his hand and turned it upward, looking at her long and attentively.

“ Do you nod see thad ? ” he asked, passing his hand swiftly across her eyes.

She winced. "Yaes, I see thad. I see lately the red horseman come up ad the dawn," she added plaintively, using the quaint Russian simile for the sun.

"Id ees well," said Pasetsk gravely. "I can cure this eye. I will go for a bandage."

He paid for the basket and went. Alenka danced, closing the door.

"Mothaire," she cried, "we haf ofer three dollars, we ees again vaire rich. This nize gentleman always spoke to me when I pass, id ees he who cometh here."

Semilétka was trembling. "Whad does he look lig, Alenka?" she asked.

"He ees old, one thousand year old," the child laughed. "He ees brown, he ees leedle."

Semilétka laughed a little, reassured. "Eef I could bud see," she murmured, and took up her straw braid.

"He ees come back now with a good eye for thee!" cried Alenka, looking down the stairs.

Her mother stopped work again and listened to his step.

"I theenk id ees nod he," she murmured to herself.

Pasetsk had been to the chemist's and returned with a roll of bandage. "You will turn your face to me," he said quietly.

He was skilful; swiftly and perfectly he doctored and bandaged the eyes, Alenka watching him in awe. As he finished, he rolled up what was left of the bandage.

"I will come again," he said. "Thad eye will be bettaire. Maybe both will yet see."

Semilétka half rose, her lips quivering. "We cannot pay for the doctaire for my eye," she said softly, "you know thad?"

"I know," replied the second-hander. "Where ees now your husband?"

She shrank back to her seat. "He ees dead," she said. "He ees dead twelve year."

Pasetsk's keen eyes searched her. "Id ees a long time," he remarked, as he went to the door.

Alenka ran after him. "You haf forgot your basket."

He took it without a word, and went out.

"Alenka," said her mother, "he ees vaire old, you say?"

"A thousand year," said the child. "There ees a lizard in his shop, he look lig thad lizard."

"Id ees nod he," Semilétka said to herself; "id ees nod he who can look lig thad in thirteen year;" and she began to weave again.

"We will eat!" Alenka cried gleefully. "Here we had bud this *chelpan*, and now I will haf some gruel and some milk!" She danced, nibbling the *chelpan*, a Russian cake of hard dough.

"Id ees the fevaire thad make you so hungry," Semilétka said, sighing as Alenka went out.

The child returned, presently, with some bread and a penny's worth of milk. She sang, heating the milk over the fire.

"Little Cock, little Cock,  
*Pietushók, pietushók,*  
 With the buttered crest,  
*Zalatoi grebeshók,*  
 With the buttered head,  
*Másiannaja galovka,*  
 With the forehead of curdled milk,  
*Smiatanij lobók!*  
 Show yourself at the window  
*Vighiani voshko;*  
 I will give you some gruel  
*Dam tibie kashki,*  
 In a red spoon.  
*Na Krasnoi losskie."*

The milk began to smoke in the tin cup, and the child took it, holding it up to the blind woman's lips.

"Leedle pigeon," she cooed, "here ees some milk."

Semilétka drank; she could not see how little the child had. Tomorrow was rent day, and Alenka remembered it.

Pasetsk, the second-hander, went back to his shop.

"Her husband is dead twelve years," he said to himself bitterly. "Where, then, is thad bad man?"

His face darkened with fury, his clenched hands twitched on his knees, as he huddled over his stove. The wind outside whistled, he did not hear Alenka's childish voice singing to the little cock.

"In Moscow this night, thirteen years ago, I could have killed him," he said. "If I will, I can make her blind. It is right that I punish her!"

In the morning he went out again and bandaged Semilétka's eyes. Twice a week for three weeks the devil in the man fought for his soul, and twice a week he went, patient, silent, strangely grim. Alenka was back at her work again, and Semilétka made many baskets. Hope kindled. The third week he found the little girl home for a half-holiday, and she watched him while he bathed her mother's eyes. When he went out into the hall, Alenka followed him.

"Will she see again with one eye," she asked timidly, "lig she did?"

He nodded. "She will see," he said bluntly.

Alenka, with a pretty, childish gesture, lifted his hand to her lips. "Little father!" she said, in *Russ*.

Pasetsk dragged his hand away and went down the long stair in blind haste; in the street he covered his face with his hands. The child thought she had made him angry; she ran to her mother and hid her face in her lap.

"I haf made the nize gentleman haf a mad," she said, weeping. "He will nod gif back your eye now!"

"Id ees nod any man who will gif back my eye," said Semilétka simply; "id ees God."

But Alenka hid when the Jew came again, and the blind woman was alone. Pasetsk did not look at her eyes.

"In a week," he said, "you will see with both eyes. Now you will see with the one."

She clasped her hands. "You are a good man!" she murmured.

"Where ees your husband?" he demanded abruptly.

Semilétka shuddered. "You are a good man," she replied softly. "I am nod scairt to tell you. I am afraid thad my husband find me. Thirteen years ago I ran away from him, I ran away with a man who tells me thad he lofe me with a grad lofe."

"And your husband?" said Pasetsk. "Did he nod lofe you?"

"He was a mos' good man," replied Semilétka sadly, "now I know thad, but I theenk then he did nod lofe me." Her voice trailed; she looked pitifully worn and aged for her years. "Thad bad man, he tell me how much he lofe me. I was young, I was wicked, I went with him, and I took Alenka. I could nod leave Alenka! Id was thad thad parted us. He would nod let me keep Alenka, my husband's child. He brought us ovaire the grad sea—and then he left us."

Pasetsk rose and walked to and fro in the attic. "How long," he said—"how long ees id since he left you?"

"Twelve year," replied Semilétka, "twelve year haf I worked for the leedle pigeon. I was in a grad beeg wash-house, then I was seeck, and when I am well I cannod see. Then Alenka, she work. Alenka ees a good child, she ees nod lig me, for I"—Semilétka clasped her thin hands on her breast—"I was bad to go with a bad man. God has punished me for my sin."

"Yaes," said Pasetsk sternly; "you were bad. Bud your husband—how ees id with him?"

Semilétka's head sank lower. "I do nod know. I am afraid thad some time he come and take Alenka. God, He will forgif me, bud my husband, he will nod forgif me."

Pasetsk came and stood beside her.

"Semilétka," he said, for the first time speaking in Russ, "I am from Moscow, I came here from there, in that great trouble with the Jews. It was my home, but now I dwell in a strange land, a land where they eat swine and the flesh of young pigs. In Moscow once I had a wife.



She was young and she was beautiful, and there was a girl child born to us. I loved her—I am a silent man, but I loved her. When the child was a year old the wife left me. She took my child, the daughter of my heart, to the bosom of a strange man, a man who stole his friend's wife. I am alone."

At the sound of his voice, speaking in a familiar tongue, Semilétka had half risen, and as he finished speaking she fell on her knees at his feet.

"Laurinius," she moaned, "my husband, is it thou?"

Pasetsk stooped and took the bandage from her eyes. She saw through a mist, yet she knew him.

"Behold me!" he said bitterly. "I am thy work, Semilétka!"

She sank lower, her hands clasping his feet. "The child!" she sobbed, in agony.

"I swore that I would kill that man," said Pasetsk. "I swore that I would kill thee. An adulteress should be stoned!"

Semilétka shuddered at his feet.

"Kill me," she wept, "kill me, if thou wilt, my husband, but take not the child from me."

He stood looking down at her. For thirteen years he had waited to be avenged; now she lay at his feet. He stretched out his thin hands over the woman's bowed head with a poignant gesture. Through the little attic window the sun of this strange land touched the hem of their garments.

The door opened and Alenka stood there. She gave a little cry at the sight of her mother on the floor. Pasetsk's heart yearned.

"Alenka," he said, "I am thy father."

The child, stunned, looked from one to the other. "Mothaire," she cried, "ees id true?"

"Id ees true," Semilétka said, in a low voice. "In thees strange land God hath nod forgot thee, leedle pigeon, God hath given to thee thy fathaire. Thy fathaire, who ees a good man. As for me, thy mothaire, I am a vaire wicked woman. I——"

"Semilétka!" said Pasetsk.

She lifted her tear-drenched, shamed eyes to his face. It was no longer old and worn and brown, the face of the Jewish second-hander; there was a glory and a dignity about it, the divine touch of that love which has suffered much, and is about to forgive much.

"Laurinius," she murmured, holding out her hands as if she had gone blind again.

"Leedle one," said Pasetsk to his daughter, "this ees thy mothaire." He took Semilétka's shaking hands and drew them to his breast, "thy mothaire—who ees my wife."

# ANDERSON OF THE VOLUNTEERS

*By Charles Harvey Raymond*

“ You don't belong to the regulars,  
You're only a volunte-e-ar;  
You don't belong to the rank and file,  
Tho' many a heart holds you de-e-ar.”

THE words came to me in nasal, high-pitched tones, with a note of mingled protest and assertion. Somewhere near the rear of the moving column, above the creaking of axles and the cracking of whips, through the choking dust-cloud incident to the passage of two battalions of the line, a man was singing.

I waited for the four companies of volunteers to burst with him into song; but they, who most obviously shared his sentiments, maintained a wearied silence. Five hours of hiking across uncertain ground, in the full, blasting heat of a Philippine afternoon, had left them without desire for further exertion. As for the four companies of regulars who made up the balance of the column, I doubt whether, in the clank of arms and the scuffle of heavy ammunition boots, they were even able to distinguish the words.

Major Benton, U. S. A.—his gray head powdered thick with dust, his red, round face parboiled by the sun's rays—stepped from the head of the column, jumped a rice foss, and joined me on the soggy ridge of the paddie whence I had been making my observations. The column swung painfully past us, and the singer's voice rose more distinctly above the turmoil of it all.

“ . . . within the coming ye-e-ar,  
Uncle Sam will take off his hat  
To you, Mister Volunte-e-ar! ”

he ended triumphantly. He had apparently sung the chorus through several times since I first heard him.

“ U-um huh,” commented the Major, stroking a mustache that turned up at the ends like Satan's fork. “ Well, I 'll be ——! ”

He broke off suddenly and pointed, for the singer himself had come

into view. At the head of the first volunteer company, marching with buoyant step, his head thrown back as he trolled, he passed within a few feet of us. "Don't belong to the regulars——" He made of it a sort of battle-cry, chanting the words like an affirmation of faith. His shoulders were broad and ample; his hips large and strong. As he swung along with no regard for the military proprieties, he carried his sword in his hand much as a country boy might carry a club; and I noticed that his ponderous feet "toed in." Somehow I had a vision of Western wheat-fields, golden in the sunlight, and of this man swinging a scythe with easy strength. Major Benton must have visualized much the same thing.

"Confound 'em!" he blurted. "They make good farmer boys back home, but they 're out of place in this, man's army. Since I 've been in command of this batch, I 've felt more like a nurse-maid than an officer. Why, blast my eyes if I don't have to tuck 'em into their blanket-rolls at night!" And the worthy Major gave vent to a series of well-rounded expletives calculated to convince me that his lot in life was not an easy one.

There came a sudden grinding of brakes; loud, teamsters' imprecations; a plunk of gun-butts in the thick dust; and as the dust-cloud cleared away we could see the two battalions resting on their arms along the road before us.

"I told McAndray to halt 'em here," said the Major, looking about him. "It 's as good a place to camp as any, and I guess that all hands have had enough hiking for one day. Now stand by and laugh while I get four companies of volunteers into their tents."

On the far side of the road a plain of solid ground, not too thick with cogon grass, terminated in the gentle slopes of a hill. There was room and to spare for the dog-tents of several regiments. Already the regulars had eased their shoulders of haversack and kit, and shaken the dust from their broad marching shoes. Officers hurried about, indicating to perspiring non-coms the limits of company streets; and foot-sore, weary privates ripped the canvas tops from the equipment train. As for the volunteers, it was even as Benton had said: they leaned awkwardly against their gun-barrels and waited to be told.

He who has not seen both volunteers and regulars go into camp knows little of the difference between amateur and professional in the game of war. Fifteen minutes after a line of regulars has struck arms, the dog-tents are down in the company streets; the surgeon has made an examination of the nearest water supply, and in nine cases out of ten ordered the water boiled; the commissariat has proportioned the evening ration, and kettles are boiling on the fires. Not so with the volunteers. Their dog-tents have probably become so enmeshed from the last night's packing as to be practically inaccessible; tent-pegs are missing

and cordage is tied in inextricable knots. Unless providence or the regular army interferes, a rush is made toward the nearest spring for water, and foraging parties hurry to the nearest barrio in search of chickens, eggs, and rice; for the company cooks are bewildered, and confusion reigns supreme in the commissariat. You have probably seen the same thing at a picnic back home. With this difference: back home, as a rule, dysentery does not lurk in the water supply, nor do cholera germs abide in the fresh country provisions.

All this and much more Major Benton explained to me that night, as we smoked on the ground before his shelter tent. The Major was hot and tired; his responsibilities hung heavily upon him; and perhaps he, in his gruff way, stated the case more vehemently than justice would have dictated. "They 're a joke, these volunteers who don't know the difference between a mess-kit and a first-aid package," he ended explosively. "I tell you they 're the biggest joke in the world. Everybody is laughing at 'em, and they don't know it. They 're——"

Some one was standing in the shadows at our back, and a slow, drawling voice interrupted: "I don't think that you ought to talk that way about the volunteers. It does n't seem right."

The owner of the voice came forward into the moonlight. We had little difficulty in recognizing the singer of that afternoon. He spoke quietly, and his round, placid face showed no signs of anger or resentment.

"I don't think that you ought to talk that way about the volunteers," he repeated. "It does n't seem right."

Major Benton turned slowly, one hand stroking his bristling red mustache. For an instant I thought that his anger would kindle; then his features relaxed, and he smiled sardonically.

"Go on back to bed, little boy," he said, "and I 'll be along to tuck you in. You 're a joke yourself, just like the rest of them—if you only had the sense to see it."

The volunteer whistled softly to himself, as if in deep thought.

"Maybe so, Major," he answered at length. "I 'm not saying that it is n't so. I guess that all of us are jokes at one time or another, regulars and volunteers, too."

As he walked away we heard sentry number one in the volunteer camp challenge him.

"You ought to bring your gun to 'present arms' and salute an officer when he goes past your line," we heard him say in response to the challenge.

And the sentry's reply: "Ah, go 'long, Bill. I ain't going to salute you. Why, I 've known you ever since we were kids. You ain't any better than I am. What have I got to salute you for?"

Major Benton stretched out his hands helplessly.

"There you have it," he said. And then he smiled grimly. "Joke, that 's what they are; the biggest joke in the world." And coming at last to see the proposition from its humorous side, he laughed long and loud.

He laughed the next morning, too, when reveillé brought us out of our blanket-rolls. The sun had barely risen above the copse of palm trees on the hill; a herd of carabao came slowly down the road to the patient prodding of some half a dozen natives; and in the camp the men were crawling Eskimo-like through the V-shaped doors of the dog-tents. An early morning silence, interrupted only by occasional grunts in the form of questions, and sleepy monosyllables by way of reply, made it apparent that the regulars had not as yet fully awakened to the responsibilities of the day. But in the volunteer camp, above the clinking of tin wash-basins and the splashing of water, a man's voice could be heard singing with noonday vigor:

". . . within the coming ye-e-ar,  
Uncle Sam will take off his hat  
To you, Mister Volunte-e-ar!"

"Well, I 'll be ——!" ejaculated the Major, between guffaws of laughter. "And the sentry would n't salute him because they had known each other ever since they were kids. Well, I 'll be ——!"

And he thought so much of the joke that he told it, in the course of breakfast, to a dozen officers.

Thereupon a second lieutenant of volunteers—Anderson was his name, as we found out by inquiry—came into more prominence than his mere rank would have entitled him. Before night the soldiers in the regular camp had taken up the slogan: "Ah, go 'long, Bill, I ain't going to salute you. Why, I 've known you ever since we were kids." No one enjoyed the joke more thoroughly than did Major Benton.

Anderson endured the persiflage with stoical good-will. His broad, freckled smile was never-failing, his patience was infinite. "He has n't got the sensibility of a sheep," said the senior subaltern scornfully. "You can't get a rise out of him."

All of which might have been true. And yet at the end of a week I began to have my doubts. We had kept the same camp, for we were awaiting two ammunition wagons and a squadron of cavalry from Alzoas, fifty miles further south. The senior subaltern and I sat on improvised camp-stools at the end of the officers' row. "Even sheep have been known to revolt," I suggested; "and there is an end to human patience, as there is to all things."

The senior subaltern laughed complacently. "No danger of a revolt on the part of this sheep," he answered. "You watch him to-night. Alderdice"—Alderdice was the junior subaltern—"is going to get him

to come over to sing for us. You know he sings right well." And the senior subaltern laughed at the obvious joke.

Anderson obligingly came over after dinner and sang for us. Likewise, he brought real life and music out of a harmonica with a double keyboard. In the intervals of silence we could hear the endless whirring of crickets in the neighboring rice-paddies, and the dry crunching of carabao in the withered cogon grass on the hill above us. A thick, ragged blanket of clouds shut us out from all light of stars or moon; the air was heavy and close; it was one of those nights at the end of the dry season, when the parched earth cries aloud for rain, and black darkness descends. Silence was oppressive, so Major Benton, with an attempt at facetiousness, began.

"By the way, Anderson," he said, "what was it that the sentry on post number one said to you the other night? Something, I believe, about not being obliged to salute."

We all waited expectantly, glad of even such threadbare diversion. I could see Anderson's placid, unblinking face by the light of the camp-fire.

"I was just listening," he said slowly, and as if oblivious alike to question and questioner, "to those carabao up there on the hill. They're big and heavy like, but I suppose you might liken them to the cattle of our Western plains. Kind of reminded me of that, any way. I was thinking of how on a summer's night, with the moon as yellow as a pumpkin and twice as big, I used to hear the cattle come galloping and lowing across the flat, making the greatest racket. But somehow, we were always glad to hear them."

He stopped abruptly, and there followed a pause. Only an old and hardened sinner like Major Benton would have cared to go on.

"That's true enough," he said; "but tell us about the sentry. What was it, now, that he answered you?"

Anderson blew wheezingly through the keys of his harmonica, slipped it into his pocket, and stood up.

"You fellows have been trying to make a fool out of me," he said, without venom, "because I'm new at this business, and pretty much of a greenhorn. Major Benton assured me the other night that volunteers are a joke, and maybe they are. I am not denying it. But as far as I can see, there is n't anybody—not even a regular—above making a fool of himself as the occasion demands."

Before we could find a reply, he was gone. We watched him striding away—six feet tall and three feet broad—in the direction of his own camp.

"I wonder what he's going to do," said the senior subaltern suddenly.

And as the thought was put into words, it occurred to me that we all expected him to do something.

"You fellows sit around like a crowd on the bleachers during the ninth inning," complained Major Benton. "Waiting for something to happen?"

"No, of course not," answered the senior subaltern. "But it's a spooky night; gives a person the creeps." He shrugged his shoulders and laughed, and conversation began again.

There is no accounting for the noises of the night; especially a night at the end of the hot season in the Philippines, when all the insect life of the torrid zone stays awake to protest and to fill the air with strange, unfamiliar sounds. I could hear the great lizard that is grandfather to all lizards, croaking with a throaty voice like the bass notes of a flute. I could separate the chirp of the small lizards, singing in legion, from the sharper whirr of the crickets. Where the four companies of regulars were encamped, some distance up the hill, a fire crackled and sent up a smithyful of bright, glancing sparks. I could hear the voices of the men, and the scuffle of feet as they moved about. Of the volunteers, I could hear nothing; their camp had been moved to the far side of the hill the day before.

Perhaps half an hour had gone by when there came to my ears one sound for which I could not account: it was a whimpering, rasping sound, very much the kind of sound a rope might make if dragged rapidly across sand. At times it increased in volume, and then it was more like the crackle of dry, burning grass.

The senior subaltern heard it, too, and paused in his conversation to listen. From where we sat, the crest of the hill was lost in darkness; it was from there that the sound came.

It shaped itself more clearly even as we listened. We were brought to our feet with a sudden start. It was as if, up there on the top of the hill, in the thicket of dwarf palm-trees, a regiment of men was breaking a way.

What followed was instantaneous and precluded all idea of action on our part. There came a thunder of feet that shook the very ground on which we stood, a concerted rush like the passing of a train.

In the next instant disorganized squads went yelling and cursing past me in the darkness; and I realized dumbly that four companies of as brave regular soldiers as ever wore uniform were scattering to the four winds. I am not able to this day to state what became of the officers with whom I had been pleasantly conversing five minutes before. They, doubtless, true to their profession, tried to rally the scattering companies.

It was all over in a moment. The commotion passed to the right, and died away like a cavalry charge in the distance. I listened in vain for a regurgitation; the silence of night had descended; the lizards and the crickets were chirping to one another across the humid flats of rice-

paddies. I experienced, I suppose, the sensations of the sole survivor of a railroad wreck. What great nocturnal force had swooped down to destroy us, I was unable to imagine. This much I know: no hostile army that ever charged through a camp could have created such a racket.

The senior subaltern came up, his puttees caked with mud, his face white with despair; the soldiers, shamefaced and silent, were straggling back into camp. What Major Benton said to them in his indignation, to what heights of irony and to what depths of invective he had recourse, concerns only himself and them. His anger is no wise abated when several hundred soldiers from the volunteer camp strolled over to look on and to smile. Perhaps Corporal Kelly, of many years' bibulous service, summed it all up when he said, "I've heard the old man swear from Alcatraz to Governor's Island these twenty years, and I never suspicioned that he had in his vocabulary such words as them."

It was only after order had been restored that we came upon the second lieutenant of volunteers. He was sitting upon an upturned mess-chest, breathing a quiet melody through the keys of a battered harmonica with a double key-board. The expression on his placid, freckled face did not change at the sight of Major Benton.

"I forgot to tell you, Major," he said, "when I was talking about the cattle of the Western plains, that the reason they came galloping over the flats was that they smelt the smoke of a prairie fire, kindled somewheres behind them. And that was why those carabao, feeding peaceful enough up there on the hill, sort of put me in mind of 'em."

He got up, carefully brushing the dust from his service uniform.

"They can make a lot of noise, half a hundred of those carabao," he went on; "but they could n't hurt anybody. There's a double row of palms up there as thick as fence-pickets, and a cliff as steep as a barn door, that kept them from getting into camp. And you would n't think, now, would you, that they'd scare the life out of a battalion of regulars just by passing on the road within fifty yards of them?"

There was an awkward pause.

"Which all goes to show," said the volunteer, "that a regular soldier—just like a volunteer—is n't above making a fool of himself as the occasion demands. And now, as we're all Americans, fighting side by side in the same cause, suppose we call it square." And he held out his hand.

There was an instant's hesitation, and then Major Benton rose to the occasion.

"I guess you're right, Anderson," he said, "and we've learned our lesson." He smiled grimly. "But the next time we go into action," he added, "I'll show you what four companies of regulars can do."

And now you know why, two weeks later, during the attack on Cal-



bidos, four companies of the -th regular infantry charged without support across five hundred acres of rice-paddies, in the face of a hostile fire. "A piece of reckless daring," said the Brigadier in command, "entirely uncalled for."

The officers of that same regiment will still tell you the story of the carabao, and point the moral. The regiment has a long and honorable war record; and they are no longer ashamed of the one time four of their companies were driven out of camp (as the K. O. genially remarks) by the powers of darkness.

One officer there is in the regiment, however, who is as silent as a Sphinx upon the subject. Doubtless, in this regard, he shows his good sense and magnanimity, for no officer is more deservedly popular. As for the rest, you need only know that he was given his commission for bravery at the battle of San Carlos, and that he was assigned to the regiment by request. His name is Anderson; he used to be second lieutenant of volunteers.



## A NEW FRIEND, AN OLD FRIEND

BY MADISON CAWEIN

**A** NEW friend, an old friend,  
 A friend that understands,  
 Who cheers the day and helps the way  
 With heart as well as hands.

May Heaven send us each a friend,  
 To rise with us or fall,  
 When, wrong or right, we wage the fight  
 With backs against the wall.

An old friend, a new friend,  
 God send us both that day  
 When Luck turns back and looks are black  
 Along Life's weary way.

For, side by side, on roads untried  
 Two souls may better speed  
 Than one who goes the road he knows  
 With none to help or heed.

# THE ESCAPE

*By Annie Steger Winston*

THE substantial form of Mrs. Mike disappeared through the door of the small dining-room, and the master of the house looked at his wife, facing him at the table.

"As the countryman said when he saw the giraffe," he remarked with impressive slowness, "there ain't no sich critter!"

Yet Mrs. Mike, reappearing with a plate of irreproachable griddle-cakes, was, to outward view, ordinary enough; a rather more than middle-aged woman, with flat bands of hair about a face carven with honest wrinkles, and a broad wedding ring upon one large, serviceable hand. Only, perhaps, the way she paused—palms comfortably planted upon her hips—and watched with benevolent patronage their enjoyment of the fruits of her skill, was not strictly the way of a first-class servant.

But first-class servants—"servants" of any sort, in fact—were not to be found in Steel City, except, of course, in "Millionaire Row." There was only help—so-called. Until now, the undeniable wistfulness with which young Mrs. White would look toward the magnificent region around the corner from their own modest street was not alone because of her husband's so far futile hope of finding scope there for his art, but because there was no "help" there—no naïve blonde casually requesting, in broken English, the loan of her employer's tooth-brush; no breezy, red-armed young compatriot whom one must address as "Miss," and admit to a share in the conversation, as she waits around the table.

"I hate the very name of 'help'!" she confessed once to her husband, in a moment of unwonted irritation.

"Blind Southern prejudice!" he assured her, with his unflinching cheerfulness. It was in Norfolk, Virginia, that they had married, the winter before, upon the strength of his prospects. Had he not studied mural painting, with conspicuous success, under the best masters at home and abroad. And what mattered a little poverty—together?

"'Help,'" he went on, "is a beautiful word for a beautiful idea—service without servility, community of effort and interest upon the part of employer and employee——"

"It is," she agreed—"a beautiful idea!"

She was more than half ashamed of the cynicism of her own tone. But how could he know the effort required to have things tolerably com-

fortable? Dear as it was of him, if he only would not be so absurdly obstinate in not letting her do her own work!

That was before Mrs. Mike came.

He pushed his chair back from the table.

"There's simply no end to the poetry of American life, if you have eyes to see it. Take the careers of half the magnates around the corner there——"

"Or supposed to be," she said. "They seem to be true birds of paradise in keeping continually on the wing. Have you heard when Thomas M. Kennedy will be back?"

Nobody ever gave that great man less than the full name which was so mighty a power in the business world.

"No," he answered, and swept on:

"Take him, for example. It has n't been a dozen years, all told, since he was in the 'poor but honest' class; and now——! Take the titanic youth of this place, itself. Look at that street of palaces, risen in a night, as it were—'like an exhalation,' as old Milton says." He smiled a little ruefully. "Painting and all complete, I suppose, from the hands of the genii."

"Places like those," she said, with the practicality she was learning at Steel City, "never are complete, to people who don't know what to do with their money. And Thomas M. Kennedy's certainly is n't, stupendously splendid as it is. I saw in the paper yesterday that his object in going abroad was to buy old tapestry and pictures and cathedral glass and fifteenth-century Venetian furniture and staircases. But one thing he can't buy and bring home with him, and that is the painting of his walls to harmonize with it all. And so it is with the rest of them. If there was just any way in the world of getting in with those people enough to show what you can do!"

But how was that possible? One palace was divided from another palace by a great gulf of strangeness, and how much more from the little jig-saw cottages around the corner? The cottages might echo the boast current in Steel City that Elm Avenue was the most magnificent avenue in America, but how could the palaces be expected to do more than to forgive—and forget—the propinquity of the cottages?

Not that they were not nice cottages enough, in a modest way. Mrs. Mike, when she applied for the place of help, in answer to their advertisement, fairly gloated with approval as she scanned the premises.

"T was just such a snug little place I went to housekeeping in when I was married," she said—"out in Ioway. You could n't swing a cat around in a room in the house, no more than this. And as for furniture—how much of it was made of packing-boxes, at first, you would n't believe!" Her frankly scrutinizing glance passed to Mrs. White—who could well stand scrutiny.

"Why don't you do your own work?" she said.

"My husband won't let me," the mistress of the house replied with meekness. There was small fear now that she would not be as propitiatory as the haughtiest help could demand, if there was any sign of competence. And competence, with Mrs. Mike, was stamped upon every lineament.

"Work never hurt anybody yet!" said Mrs. Mike stoutly. "But I know husbands!"

A profundity of problematical meaning was in her tone.

"You are slender built, but you don't look sickly," she resumed. "Still, I don't suppose you was brought up to work, and that may make a difference. But, lor' me! If I had a nice little cottage like this to fuss over——"

It was not until she had gone, with the understanding that she would return in the morning, with her box, that it occurred to Mrs. White that she herself had asked no questions whatever, except, rather tremulously, what wages would be expected.

"I guess I can be satisfied with what you have been paying," Mrs. Mike responded. And so it proved.

"She actually seems to like us!" Mrs. White joyously confided to her husband.

About a perfect treasure, it behooves one to step carefully. What if she still knew nothing whatever of Mrs. Mike, except through her own singularly fragmentary bursts of confidence?

"Save your soap-wrappers," she adjured Mrs. White. "You can get lots of tins and things for them. Once I got a chiny tea-set, with gold bands and moss roses. I've got a piece or two put away now at the house."

"At the house?" Mrs. White interrogated.

Mrs. Mike took up her broom.

"Where I was before I came here," she said, in a tone which invited no further question.

"I wonder where she could have come from?" Mrs. White mused afterwards.

"It don't matter in the least," stoutly affirmed her husband, "so long as she is here!"

She came, she stayed, and was to all appearance satisfied. Nay, even unmistakably pleased and eager to please.

"It's been hard for her to get a place—or to keep it," Mrs. White shrewdly divined. "But whatever the objection to her is, I don't want to know it!"

Yet the inevitable happened. She could not help watching Mrs. Mike with more or less—not of suspicion ("I know she's good!" she would say), but of uncertainty.

"Does n't she strike you sometimes as a little curious?" she asked her husband.

"Tolerably curious about us, in a friendly way, if you mean that," he admitted. "She stands over me, broom in hand, when I'm at work, and catechises me about myself and my plans."

"She's made me tell her every secret of my soul!" Mrs. White exclaimed. "But I don't mean that. Is n't there something about her just a little—singular? I suppose, out here, it's nothing for her to speak of us as her 'young people,' and join in conversation at the table. I'm past caring for anything like that; but——"

"She is singular only in her perfections, so far as I can see," he maintained. "In fact, I think she is remarkably commonplace—if the commonplace can be remarkable. She is normal to the point of abnormality—a walking type——"

"But the way she gloats!"

"Gloats?" he questioned.

"And over the strangest things! Over the pots and pans of the kitchen—a dish towel, a gingham apron, a feather duster! But the really touching thing is the way she admires our living-room furniture. Of course, dear, you *know* I'm not complaining. Anything will do now, when we are just starting out. It won't make a particle of difference, after we get our old mahogany, that we had to put up first with cheap, shiny things, reeking with newness. Only, it is funny and pathetic to see her stand before them, lost in wistful admiration. 'They look so nice and new!' she was saying this morning. 'I can't abide old things. Out in Iowya——' and then she stopped and sighed. It's perfectly evident that she's seen better days."

No enlightenment as to her past came from Mrs. Mike. But her present, at any rate, was all that could be desired; unless perhaps——

"She does n't do the smallest thing in a perfunctory way," Mrs. White said to her husband.

He replied to a note in her voice:

"You don't want her to be perfunctory, do you?"

"No," she said; "but still——"

"Out with it!" he commanded.

"When it comes to kissing a broom——"

He looked at her stupidly, though he was not a stupid man.

"Kissing a——?"

"Broom. The handle of the one she sweeps with every day. I saw her do it, though she did n't know I did. Now, what do you think of that?"

"I think," he said dryly, "that it was an act wholly consonant with decency and morality."

Yet he too was plainly puzzled—to say the least of it.

"I can't help wondering if she's exactly safe," she said, another day.

He lowered his newspaper, which he was reading by the lighted lamp, and looked across the shiny centre table so admired by Mrs. Mike.

"Don't borrow trouble, little woman," he said, more sombrely than was his wont. "We'll have some, without borrowing, if things keep on this way. And I don't see what's going to change them."

She dropped her sewing into her lap.

"George," she said, "there's no use talking. I'm going to do my own work!"

"And right you are!" approved Mrs. Mike from the doorway, so unexpectedly that they started. "Right you are—if you are able. That's not for me to say. All I know is that when you take me and coop me up with nothing to do, it's next door to killing me. If I had n't taken my chance, and escaped when I did"—

("You see!" said Mrs. White's eyes.)

—"I don't know what would have become of me! But I've had a real good rest this month and a half, and now I'm ready to go back. Any way, I've got to—and 't was that I was coming to tell you. But you need n't think you've seen the last of me."

"We don't want to lose sight of you," Mrs. White hastened to assure her. "You've been so good, and such a comfort! And if there's ever anything we can do for you——"

A vague intention was forming in her mind of gladdening the simple heart of Mrs. Mike with the furniture she admired, when they should be able to discard it. Though, of course, in an—institution——

"Whatever I can do for you and him," responded Mrs. Mike heartily, "you can count on, sure. And I have n't got any idea in the world of letting you lose sight of me. I have n't got too many friends. Seemed like I'd die of loneliness, almost, after my husband left me!"

Poor Mrs. Mike!

"Your husband left you?" said Mrs. White gently. "Was it that that preyed on your mind?"

"I made him do it," replied Mrs. Mike, with disappointing coolness. "What preyed on my mind, if you choose to put it that way, was that house, with everything going on in it like clockwork, and me sitting there with my hands folded in my lap, and pins and needles in my very soul! Many's the day I've felt that nothing would save my reason but a broom and a dust-pan. I was like something hanging up with all its roots out of the ground, just fainting and famishing. Let them have waiting on that likes it. Give me a chance to get my blood up with good honest work, and I ask no better! But there's Mike," she said, and sighed.

Then she smiled a little.

"Think of anybody's trying to please me by building a palace fit

for a queen, and expecting me to live in it like a wax dummy, not lifting a finger! And I'll do it, too—for Mike. When he gets back, next week, he's got to find me there."

"Is he——?" said they together, recovering voice.

But Mrs. Mike was absorbed in her own reflections.

"I'll stay there, if it kills me—with a French maid to button my shoes for me! I won't say a word against it if he buys Egyptian mummies to put in it! A better man don't walk this earth than Thomas Michael Kennedy!"



## THE OAK THAT FELL THIS MORNING

BY JANE BELFIELD

**T**HE little wood across the way  
 Is hushed to mourn a death to-day:  
 The ancient oak is down.  
 A quiver shook its mighty trunk,  
 And trembling to the earth it sunk.  
 With broken limbs, it now lies prone—  
 A giant overthrown.

And as I gaze I hear one say,  
 "Come, let us plant a tree to-day!"  
 A hundred years ago!  
 Where are the fingers that let fall  
 The acorn? And the lips that call?  
 Whose eyes behold from sunken mound  
 An oak-tree on the ground?

What hope for you? What hope for me?  
 An insect dies—and thus, a tree!  
 To start is but to end.  
 An hour, a day, or chance a year!  
 Can this be all—one phase of Here?  
 Through endless morrows' ebb and flow,  
 The answer quickens, "No!"

# THE WEAKLING

*By Percy Shaw*

THE man stood alone outside the log cabin on the edge of Jackass Flats. The month was October, and the light was so gray that the top of Mount Valdez, to the south, looked like a ghostly nightcap.

The man blinked about. He was hemmed in by plains and hills of black-brown and white. The arctic night was preparing to settle down into its months of wakeless sleep. He read the signs, and clapped his hands against his breast to keep them warm. Then he started to go in; but something kept him back. Instead, he turned again, and his face had the look of a soul ready for some desperate thing.

The man's eyes were filled with loathing; his lips, visible through the slit in his coonskin cap, moved spasmodically.

"I can't go in," he said, and the sound of his voice startled a ptarmigan from a bank as white as itself.

Out of the chimney of the cabin smoke was pouring, evidence of activity within. The smoke blew down and caught the man on the doorstep with the force of an iron hand: he choked. The door opened, and a second man thrust his head out.

"Hey, you, come inside." His voice was cheery, he looked the picture of contentment. His red hair hung long over his ears. The first man stumbled in and stood against the door.

"Look here," he said, "I'm going back."

"Eh?" cried the other. "Back? Where to?"

"I'm going back to Valdez," said the first man fiercely. The other had begun drumming with a burnt wooden poker on the portable stove. His taps sounded like the notes of a funeral march. The man shivered as he waited.

"Got cold feet?" the red-headed man asked slowly.

"No, by God!" the other almost screamed, "but I can't stand this kind of thing. I've got to get away. If I don't, I'll kill some one before the winter's over." His face flamed as he spoke, and its tense expression was not lost on his companion.

"I'm not good enough for you, that's it, ain't it?" the red-haired man said finally, looking the dissatisfied one straight in the eye. "I've seen it coming for some time."



"It was a mistake," answered the other man more calmly. "It's not your fault, and it's not mine. It's this cursed silence. I can't stand it. I'm going back."

"All right," was the reply. "But the trail's gone, they's snow and ice and gale on t' other side of the glacier now, an', like as not, the last boat's left."

"I'm going back," repeated the other doggedly, as if all objections were answered by that one assertion. "I don't care how nor where."

"All right." The red-headed man laid down the poker and went straight to the point. "When you calculate to start?"

"Now," said the first man. "Give me enough bread and bacon to last me over, that's all I ask."

Buoyed by his sudden decision, he stood by while the other packed the necessary things. He might have been the master, and the red-haired man his valet, the latter worked with such care. "One blanket'll do you," the packer remarked, kneeling. "You'll want to go light." His eyes fell on his companion's thick leather boots. "Better wear gums," he said. "Them there'll cut."

The other shrugged his shoulders. "Never you mind my feet," he said. "They'll get me out of here fast enough." He strapped on his blanket with hands that trembled with haste, and with evident effort mumbled, "Good-by."

The man in possession faced him as he turned to leave. "Why did n't you tell me at first you could n't stand it? You knew I was n't nothing but a gold-hunter, did n't you? I never pretended to be your kind, did I? I never went to no college, like you did. I did n't want you, did I? Did n't I take you with me because *she* asked me to, after you got into that gambling mess?" He paused to regain control of a shaking voice. "Did n't I wait for you when you was sick? Say"—he thrust his face close to the other's—"when you go back, you tell her I'm pluggin' away."

The man nodded, and a look of disgust crept over his eyes. He turned and headed for Valdez. The other watched him go, watched him until he was almost lost to sight. "He ain't no good," he said slowly, "but I told her I'd look out for him; I sure did, and she's his sister."

He went inside, and soon emerged equipped in much the same manner as the black speck that was now bobbing up and down in the distance on the white and black wilderness. The man in possession cast a stoical look at the cabin, work of his own hands. He paused in the almost tangible stillness, and spoke to it as if it had been a human being. "I'll be back," he said, with a supreme faith in his strength, "after I follow him over. A word's a word, and he'll never make it alone." He shook his pack into position and started off.

Night came down over Valdez Glacier with the cold of the north and the silence of eternity. The great white way above looked on the great white way below. The rays of the stars seemed like scintillating ice-beams that would crack into splinters at the touch. The man who had left first plodded on. He had come from Valdez Inlet, over Valdez Glacier; therefore he thought he knew the path; but in the north a trail is the trail of a day, of an hour. The gale covers it, the sun melts it, the water washes it away.

On the stretch from Jackass Flats in the sheltered bend of the Tezlina, to the beginning of the eight-mile climb to the Peak of Valdez, there are tangled wooded ways; fields crisscrossed with fallen trunks, worn smooth by ice and weather. Over these the man stumbled; among these the man sank. His leather shoes cut his heel tendons. He could feel the blood flowing, but he looked straight ahead. Perhaps some one might be going over. If so, he would meet them at the glacier's foot. He thought of all things save one—that one was the red-haired gold-seeker, who even now had him in sight and was warily watching his progress with straining eyes.

Seven miles is not ordinarily a long way. It is short for a ride through the park; short for a walk through pleasant places. But in the north, where every step seems a weight, it is a long way—an elusive, an unending way. So thought the man nearing, one foot at a time, the looming white mass that cut the sky so evenly as almost to seem a part of it.

The man was lucky. Not one, but a dozen, were camping for the night at the foot of Valdez. Their guide, an Indian half-breed, was singing, loud with liquor, from his sleeping bag. The man, too weary to eat, sank down on a little clearing of shale by the side of a one-eyed letter-carrier.

"Going over?" asked the latter.

The man grunted.

"We're starting at four," the other volunteered. "Good-night."

The man was roused by the noise about him. He started to rise, and groaned. His tendons seemed frozen into disuse; every time he put his foot down he suffered. The half-breed gazed at the top of the glacier, like a mariner surveying the sea, strapping on his pack as he did so. "Oh ho!" he cried, and strode toward the mountain. The others followed; steadily, inexorably plodding up. It was Valdez Port by six that night, or perhaps never. The man gritted his teeth as he stumbled into line. When was flight from horrible silence, from unendurable companion, made so hard as this? He felt himself slipping behind, and the voice of self-preservation clamored loud within him.

For the line would not wait. Storm broke over the top of the

glacier; wind howled along the summit and swept icy particles like spears through the air. The man felt his strength slipping away, but the line went marching on. No one turned to see whether he was following. He shouted: the gale twisted his words into mumbled syllables, and cast them meaningless into space. In a fit of desperation, he threw off his pack, and, thus lightened, tottered ahead. Too often a step lost in the blizzard is a step regained at tremendous sacrifice. The effort sent strange things dancing before the man's eyes. The line vanished in the swirl. Like a wax figure under heat, the man wilted into a huddled heap in the snow.

Once more he raised his voice in a wild and despairing scream. Distorted by the mocking spirits of the wind, it reached in fragments the ears of the red-haired gold-seeker, toiling a quarter of a mile behind. If the man had turned his own gaze back, he would have seen nothing. He resigned himself. With eyes that saw not, he felt himself going; the rifts in the snow eddies through which the gray black plain below raised itself in miniature sank away into home scenes. The fatal drowsy warmth, so pleasant, that follows the teeth of the frost in the flesh, conjured up a panorama of town-folk and town doings. The man almost had his hand on the latch of the last earthly gate—it was just a step to the end of the last earthly mile, and he did not find it hard.

A girl, plainly his sister, was pushing him on. There was a ring of certainty in her voice. "He'll pull you through," she said. In fancy, he beheld himself facing her—explaining that he could n't stand the great white silence, and the other man, with the smiling face, the dull brain, and the homely words. He heard himself giving his message; he saw the faith in the girl's face as she listened: "He's plugging away."

His fingers were on the latch: strange lights were on the other side; strange voices were in the air; the snow that beat in his face, that hung from his eyelids, was perfumed dew, soft, soothing.

"Get up!" shouted a voice in the man's ears. Rough hands shook him; other hands slapped him.

"Here!" said the one-eyed mail-carrier, pulling a bottle of whiskey from an inner pocket. "Give him this." The red-haired prospector tilted back the man's head, and together they forced him to drink. Then they raised him, and, one on each side, urged him on.

"Fool!" shouted the mail-carrier. "Lucky I came back."

The snow covered the red beard of the prospector, but he made no reply to the unspoken question of the letter-carrier as to why *he* had happened so opportunely at the perishing man's side. Instead, he called: \

"We can't catch 'em, can we?"

The mail-carrier tried to peer through the fog. "Wait till we reach the top," he said.

The half-frozen man was rushed on ruthlessly. Returning life hurt him; his surprised blood first protested, then leaped to its work. He suffered, then he began to realize the situation. "God, I was nearly over!" he muttered, and shuddered as he glanced at the figure of his former cabin-mate.

"Do the best you can," said the mail-carrier. "Lucky we found you."

They dragged him on till they reached the top of the glacier, then they paused. The god of wind and snow, erratic in his northern wildness, swept over the sky in his majesty, brushed off the clouds, and left clean air and friendly sun.

The mail-carrier pointed down: like a string of ants, zigzagging this way and that, the miners bound for Valdez were barely within eye-shot.

"I ought to know the way," said the mail-carrier. "I've been over it often enough. But it changes every day."

"We can't catch 'em, then?" asked the red-haired man.

The other shook his head. Without a word, the two caught the man between them and started on the twenty-two mile shift over ice rent with crevasses, over pools set in iridescent crystal. The man's eyes glanced mechanically about. Where was the trail of six months ago? He saw moraines and gurgling hollows. His bleared vision looked into canyons of shimmering death. His covered ears heard dimly, as of voices calling to rest, the cry of rushing waters thousands of feet below.

His feet bled, but they dragged him on. The mail-carrier gave him bread to eat out of the mail-sack, empty of mail; the other made a cup of his hands that he might drink; but when he begged to rest, they looked at each other and prodded him on.

The sun fell behind an ice hill, and night came.

"Wrap him in my blanket," said the red-haired man grimly. "He'll lie between us, and that'll keep him warm."

"Lucky I came back," said the mail-carrier; "but I got a family near Chicago, and I promised 'em I'd never leave any one in distress." He jerked his head toward the recumbent man. "Know him?" he asked.

The other nodded, and pulled the speaker aside.

"Lost the trail, ain't you?" he asked.

The mail-carrier looked full at him. "Yes," he said calmly. "I knew it three hours ago. I told you it changed every day."

Into the eyes of the red-haired man came a light of inexorable

purpose. "We've got to get him to Valdez," he said, and he seized the mail-carrier by the arm.

The other looked up. "My friend," he answered simply, "I ain't never made any money—that's why I'm here—but I've never lost my faith in God."

The prospector's hand dropped with its heavy glove. "So be it," he said, with a sweep of his arm. "This is all His."

In the shadow of a moraine, the three men slept. Death was all about them, and their own silence fitted into the great quiet of eternal rest that wrapped them round.

The man awoke aching in body, stunned in soul. They pushed on, crossing a great crack at its narrowest part, simply to face an impassable crevasse at its widest. All morning they pulled and urged the man along, and when he cried in the weariness of lost spirit, "I can't go any further," they still drove him on.

The mail-carrier found the trail. The man between did not know it. Only the light in the finder's one eye revealed it to the prospector. They floundered down, perspiring, starving, faint. A little cross stood ahead, propped up by stones. They reached it, and below the man beheld the flats that stretch six miles, like a carpet, to Valdez Harbor.

Down—down to the sight of smoke; to the smell of food!

The mail-carrier and the prospector took away their arms, and the man fell flat on his face at the door of a cooking shanty. The red-haired gold-seeker touched him contemptuously with his foot. "There's a steamer in the bay," he said. "He'll get out."

"How about you?" asked the mail-carrier.

"Me?" the other answered: he jerked his arm toward the ice mountain behind them.

"Me, too," said the mail-carrier.



## BESTOWAL

BY J. B. E.

THE heart's high hour hath belled its tone  
 Not when Desire hath won her own,  
 But noon doth smile through frowning rift  
 When perfect love gives perfect gift.

# THE PASSION FOR PASSES

*By W. Dayton Wegefarth*

COINCIDENT with the establishment of places of amusement charging an admission fee, there seems to have been born in the human breast an ardent desire to enter therein without paying. "A pass! A pass! My kingdom for a pass!" has ever been the slogan of theatre-goers the world over.

The man who schemes to secure a pass, or who openly asks for it "on his nerve," would n't for a moment expect his butcher to make him a present of ten pounds of meat, or his tailor, a fancy waistcoat. "But that is altogether a different matter," he argues. "The butcher sells meat, and the tailor sells clothes—necessities of life; but a pass—why, that is merely a bit of scribbled paper, negotiable only for a couple of hours' entertainment!" He overlooks the fact that the seats sold at a box-office are the theatre's stock in trade, and that the pass he asks for is really a charity order equivalent to three or four dollars.

If the pass-hunter only realized it, he might be richer in the long run were he to buy his seats at the box-office; for in many instances he will squander twice their value in a dinner or some other effort to curry favor with his managerial acquaintance.

It would be a simple matter for the man who is empowered to write passes virtually to live on his pass-pad. He can convert it into his "meal ticket" or his check-book, if he so desires; for the liberality of the butcher, the baker, and the candle-stick-maker may be deeply sounded when theatre passes form the persuasive basis of argument.

It is customary in many theatres to extend the courtesy of a matinée to visiting players. During these performances the chronic pass-hunter can always be found. He flits from theatre to theatre, well stocked with neat cards setting forth an imaginary engagement with this or that travelling company. Many times "the man on the door" discovers the deception, but often the card is O-K'd, and the fraud slips blithely into a seat, chuckling over the success of his ruse. Afterwards he will probably "roast" the production, for it is a tradition in theatricals that the man who witnesses a play on a pass seldom has anything good to say of it.

Requests from newspaper men are numerous, but they are always welcome. Cognizant of the kindly feeling between the theatrical and

the journalistic fraternities, the pass-fiend often tries to take advantage of it. He will have cards printed, or even engraved, setting forth his connection with some local or remote publication which devotes space to theatricals. Presenting his card to the company manager, he announces brazenly that he has been sent to "write up" the production. Always on the alert to procure publicity, the manager generally admits the faker. Sometimes he is referred to the house manager, who is better acquainted with the local writers. As such a meeting would spell failure to the pass-hunter, he usually deems it best to lose himself in the crowd and disappear.

Policemen and plain-clothes men of the district in which a theatre is located are often admitted free, it being usually necessary for them merely to display their badges. If the pass-fiend cannot think of a better way to gain entrance, he will perhaps buy an ancient badge, or a new one marked "special officer." Attaching this to his vest, he "flashes" it importantly as he passes the ticket-taker, at the same time making some jocular remark about the lieutenant of the district, or the political situation. This, however, is too old a trick to be often effective.

It is an interesting fact that in Texas, where the edict against carrying concealed weapons is strictly enforced, the police officers who desire admittance do not depend on their badges. They carry revolvers in cases suspended from cartridge-belts, and as it is generally known that none but they are privileged to carry such weapons, they merely pull back their coats and display their shooting-irons. A man with a six-shooter could probably gain admittance to a Broadway playhouse, if he displayed his passport persuasively; but he might not be permitted to remain during the entire performance.

The telephone offers still another medium to the pass-hunter. He must first learn the names of the managers and treasurers of several theatres. Equipped with this information, the rest is easy.

Having decided on the production he desires to witness, he calls the theatre on the telephone.

"I should like to speak with Mr. Filbert, your treasurer," he begins.

"At the 'phone," comes the reply.

"How do you do, Mr. Filbert?" the suave fellow pursues. "I am speaking for Mr. Murray, the treasurer at the Grand. He would like to know whether you can spare two seats for to-night."

"Certainly," is the reply. "I'll leave them at the box-office."

"Thank you very much. I suppose he'll either send for them this afternoon, or his people will call for them before the performance. Any message for him?"

"Tell him I'll send my lady-love to the Wednesday matinée next week, and ask him to hold two seats. Perhaps I can come up myself before the finale. Good-by."

That evening the schemer falls into the line of prospective purchasers, and when he arrives at the box-office window he asks for the seats that are being held for Mr. Murray. They are given to him without a murmur. Until the two treasurers meet and compare notes, the pass-hunting Raffles is safe.

These are not the only tricks to which the theatre treasurer is subjected. Perhaps the pass-hunter will saunter up to the box-office and make himself agreeable for a while with some choice stories and a few expensive cigars. Then he will confide to the ticket-seller that he has an appointment in a few minutes, but that he would like to step inside to wait for his friend. Of course the treasurer is "on," but he may compassionately pass the man in, knowing full well that he could n't be dragged out with a flock of locomotives before the final fall of the curtain.

Then there is the woman who does not believe in paying for children. She struggles to the box-office with a boy in her arms big enough to move pianos, and asks for one ticket. The treasurer courteously explains that all children must be paid for; but the lady objects to buying two tickets, pleading that she has only brought her son so that he may escort her home after the performance. Another fond mother will promise the box-office man that if he will permit her and her child to enter the theatre on one ticket, the child will not look. The box-office is not without its humorous side.

The pass mania is evident everywhere. The manager's barber, his café waiter, the lad who polishes his shoes, the messenger who delivers his telegrams, the newsboy who sells him his evening paper, the old gentleman who was a friend of his father, and the parched antique who claims the distinction of having once seen the great Booth—all are eager to prostrate themselves before the man who is great enough to issue a pass. He is the one and only man who in their eyes is worthy of cultivating.

Pass-hunting with many men is pathologic. A man who expends his nervous energy formulating schemes to procure passes deserves as much sympathy as does the fashionable kleptomaniac who appropriates her hostess's bric-à-brac at an afternoon bridge party. One is not more responsible for the cupidity than the other.

It is not the two or three hours' free entertainment the pass offers that carries the thrill of joy to the pass-hunter's heart. It is because he is getting something for nothing—something to which he is not entitled. This it is that urges the persistent pass-hunter to lie awake nights trying to think up new plans that will effectually hoodwink the harassed manager.



# I HEARD A VOICE

*By Florence Earle Coates*

I HEARD a voice say: "You,  
Who worship, should pursue:  
The good you dream of—do.

"Arise!—Perfection seek,  
Surmounting what is weak,  
Toil on from peak to peak!"

"Henceforth, through sun and shade,"  
I answered, "unafraid,  
I follow the shy maid:

"Yea, beauty to create,  
Accept with heart elate  
Whate'er may be my fate."

Then, in youth's ardor, strong,  
I toiled my way along,  
Upon my lips a song;

But as I climbed on high,  
Toward the forbidding sky  
Perfection seemed to fly;

And though I strove the more,  
Still through some viewless door  
She ever passed before.

Heart-wearied and forespent,  
With body earthward bent,  
I ceased from the ascent;

Then, when hope seemed too late,  
Despairing,—at Death's gate  
I heard a voice say: "Wait!"

# THE SMILE'S SUGGESTION

By *Elizabeth Whitford*

I STOLE the Mona Lisa. What did I hope to gain by the theft? Not money, surely, for none would dare attempt to sell the picture as the original Da Vinci, while as a copy it would bring only a few francs.

Did I so love the masterpiece that I wished to hide it away in some secret place, and there worship it? Ah, no, no! The passion I felt for the picture was hate, wild, abhorrent hate.

I forget how many years ago it was (for my life slips along with such horrible uneventfulness, weeks and months have no meaning,) that a young girl set up her easel in the Louvre Gallery and began to lay in the colors for a copy of the Mona Lisa.

Leonardo claimed his portrait to be that of the most beautiful woman of Italy, and after four years' effort her smile still made him despair; yet the glances of the visitors to the Louvre that day gladly strayed to Marion. Where La Gioconda showed a smooth, placid, self-satisfied rotundity, the girl was all verve, all fire. Hers was a beauty of wandering dimple, of wayward curl, of bright, vivacious spirit.

And she had need of all her vivacity, all the enthusiasm which had brought her from America two years before; for her money was gone, and success came not. She could sell no pictures, could get no orders, and for six months she had been imperfectly nourished. More than one young artist had besought her to share his apartment, his food, and what he called his heart; but the banalities and immoralities of the *Quartier* were repulsive to her. Her instinctive purity shuddered away from the lightness of Paris—Paris, which seemed to her one leer, one smirk, a smirk of sinister suggestiveness.

But Eugene was different, she thought. He loved her honorably, he understood and respected her scruples. Still, even when she walked out with Eugene those unspeakable *cocottes* grinned maliciously.

Now she was painting the Mona Lisa, scrupulously, painstakingly; for if she could make a good copy she might sell it for a few francs, and perhaps get an order for more.

Marion was intently studying the smile that for centuries has been

called enigmatical when Eugene came, seeking her, and grasped her hand.

"We want you back at the studio, Marion. Every one misses you, but none so much as your *pauvre Eugène*."

"*Pauvre Eugène* will have to get used to it," joked the girl, carefully filling in background as she talked, "for I'm going to make such a good copy that I'll get orders for a dozen more."

"But it fills me with horror that you should be working here in this icy place at pot-boilers—you who have the talent, the force, the enthusiasm, of a master. Besides, beautiful one," he added, pressing her hand passionately, "I have sold a picture, so I have sufficient for us both for many months. Come with me, darling. A little nest for us two, I shall take, and there we shall know complete happiness, perfect bliss. Will you come, *ma mie*?"

"Dear Eugene, I like you. I like you more than any man I——"

"Then, you will come! Darling, the joy you give me!"

"No, no," trembled the girl; "you must n't hurry me. I must have time to think. I do not know that I love you enough, and I will not marry you until I am sure."

The man's eyes narrowed:

"Marry! But is that necessary? It is so much easier not, delicious one. While we love we can be very happy, *n'est-ce pas*? But if you should tire of your poor Eugene, you would be free to go, to follow your career. Marriage is *bourgeois*, and only the American girls are always speaking of it." Then, with more feeling: "But come to me, darling. You shall never regret it, and I want you so. *I want—you—so!*"

So Eugene was not different, after all! Marion was grieved and perplexed, but she was not startled. Such proposals seemed to be part of the art students' life. Of course, she had no intention of yielding, but she found the strong feeling of horrified revolt, with which she had first met an illicit suggestion, was somewhat blurred.

"Eugene, you hurt me so! How can you think I am that kind of girl?" she mourned, and, to hide her tears, turned resolutely to her work. Then, for the first time, she seemed to comprehend the Mona Lisa's smile. The smile! Why, the smile was the smile of Paris, that insinuated and insulted. It was saying to her:

"Oh, I know! You think you are dreadfully shocked, you think you are good and your virtue is secure, but *I know*. Bit by bit that virtue and that goodness will be filched away. I know how you will end. Fool, there is no virtue. I have had four centuries of men and women to judge, and I know the wickedness, the frailty, of humanity. Be assured, there is no such thing as virtue. I know how you will end in Paris. Yield—yield to Eugene, who loves you. He is, at least, an honest boy, decent, as Frenchmen go. You will yield some time; why not now?"

Marion's hands covered her burning face as she sprang up with a protesting "Go, go! I don't want you here. Go, go, I say!"

How ardently Marion wished herself back in Burlington! With what appreciation and affection she recalled the boys with whom she had romped at "black man" and baseball—the boys who never misunderstood, who treated her as an equal and a comrade.

Especially she recalled Herman, and the promise she had made him when she left, in response to his hearty "Well, chum, I'm sorry you can't see your way to staying here with me in the old village, but I suppose that *talent* of yours must be served; but, old pard"—with a sob that tried to masquerade as a laugh—"I'll be right here all the time, and if you should be in trouble, just cable me—*any kind* of trouble, remember. Do you promise me you will, Marion?"

And here was trouble surely. She was ill-fed, she was poorly clad, she was cold, she was hurt, belittled, and insulted; but how could she cable?

The next day and the days following Marion painted the *Mona Lisa*, painted carefully and industriously, unmindful of the tourists and their remarks. She was making a good copy, even though the smile continued to taunt her.

"Why struggle uselessly?" it insinuated over and over. "Women like you in a strange city are bound for one end. Seize what pleasure you may, seize it *now*. You must surely go down at last. Your so-called virtue will not protect you, for virtue is but a name. Take the goods your beauty may provide. Yield while there is grace in yielding."

When Marion took her copy to the art-dealer, he examined it minutely for faults. He had found some one who would furnish him cheaper copies, and was seeking an excuse for not purchasing what had been practically ordered.

"The picture it has the expression not quite correct, Mademoiselle—the smile, you comprehend."

"The smile," defended Marion, "is exactly reproduced."

Shrugging, the dealer objected:

"But I like it little. It is cruel, too cruel! I am sorry, Mademoiselle, but this picture with the so cruel smile, I could not sell."

In her cheerless attic, Marion braced the picture on the one chair, and studied its cruel smile while she sat on the bed, eating the rolls she had bought at the baker's, literally with her last *sou*.

Cruel? Yes, the most beautifully cruel thing in the world, she believed.

"I hope you like dry bread," the hateful, knowing smile was saying to her. "To-morrow, when you face a day without food, you will send for Eugene, or the next day at the latest. Little fool, have n't I seen scores like you in my four hundred years?"

Two days of hunger, with the picture's constant sarcastic suggestion—and Marion sent for Eugene.

Again I am standing before the Mona Lisa in the Louvre Gallery and looking upon its cruel smile.

I am old—if not in years, in the effects that years bring; but I still hate, even more intensely, that taunting smile, for now it is saying to me:

“ Ah, was I not right? Did I not know? You see what you are now—a hag, a drab, a *scrub-woman*, where once, not so long ago, you were admired by the sight-seers who came to look at me but turned gladly to your living beauty. I told you how you would end! *I knew*. I could see you despised by your former lover, living for a time on his unwilling dole, then sinking lower, lower, until you became the wreck you are!”

It is true, it is true! I am all she says—a scrub-woman and a hag. My beauty gone, my talent a thing of the past, I that was once Marion Giles, now scrub the floors of the Louvre for a meagre sustenance.

Can a thing hypnotize? Can a pictured smile exert an evil suggestion, a malicious magnetism? Impossible, say you? But, alas, I know it is true!

The day I again encountered that smile, so infernally beautiful, I began to plan. I watched the guards, the custodians; I studied the methods and the precautions against theft. I found that the guard made a round through the gallery in which the Da Vinci hung a full half-hour before I finished my scrubbing. I timed him for days, and it was always the same. In that last half-hour I was alone in the gallery; and I saw I could easily pass the perfunctory examination we were subjected to on leaving.

Night after night in my squalid cellar room, I ground and sharpened a knife with patient skill, first on the stone floor and then on my shoe, until its edge was exquisite. Around my waist, under my skirts, I arranged a number of hooks.

When all was in readiness, I went to my work at the usual hour, with the knife and a plenitude of string concealed in my blouse.

Apparently absorbed in my scrubbing, I watched the guard pass on his last round, then, with eager haste, attacked the picture. To cut the canvas from the frame, divide it into pieces, pierce each with a hole, and suspend them all with strings from the hooks about my waist, took only a few minutes, and my voluminous, ragged skirts showed no more grotesque angles than before.

I passed out of the Louvre as stolidly as ever, but with what eagerness I hurried home! There I lit my charcoal brazier, and when it was radiantly glowing I placed the hated picture on the coals, rearranged

so that I could see the self-satisfied, depreciating smile. Gloatingly, on my knees, I watched it shrivel, writhe in apparent pain, and disappear into nothingness.

As the last feather of smoke curled upward, something snapped in my brain, a weight lifted—an obsession was gone.

I seemed to awaken and to remember.

“Why, the years are not so many! I am still Marion Giles. I am not naturally a wanton, I was never depraved. Beauty, talent, friends, were once mine! Why—why, I am only *thirty*. Let me get back to America, and I can yet redeem my life.”

Before my little cracked piece of mirror, I took off my hideous rags, I combed and brushed my hair until the crude roughness left it and even a little wave, a fitful glint, began to show. Bathing myself scrupulously, I put on the one dress I still owned, shabby, yet decent, and was once more a self-respecting woman.

The long, long letter I have written home tells *everything*, but I am sure there is one there that will still say, “Come.”

How I hate to don again my loathsome rags and go back to my work, as I must to elude suspicion; but how I rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, that that insidious picture can never again disturb the faith of girlhood, that guileful smile seduce the guileless!



## I WONDER IS THERE LAUGHTER?

BY ETHEL M. COLSON

I WONDER up in heaven is there laughter  
 For her who loved it so?  
 If, parting past, the joy that followed after  
 Made her less loth to go?  
 I wonder if, above the stars' strange singing,  
 The high angelic praise,  
 She hears those notes of vagrant laughter ringing  
 That gladdened earthly days?

I wonder if, this little life behind her,  
 Eternity before,  
 Some tender thought of love and mirth might find her  
 From one who laughs no more?  
 It matters not, my loneliness, my sorrow,  
 So she be glad and gay—  
 But if I thought she would not laugh to-morrow,  
 My heart would break to-day!

# SHORT-STORY MASTERPIECES

SECOND SERIES—RUSSIAN

## VII. FOUR DAYS

*By Wsewolod Michailovich Garshin*

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY JOHN COURNOS, AND WITH  
INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

### GARSHIN THE MELANCHOLIAC

“**T**HERE is still something around us and within that baffles and surprises us. Events happen which are as mysterious after our glib explanations as they were before. Changes for good or ill take place in the heart of man for which his intellect gives no reason.”

These words of Dr. Henry Van Dyke, written among others to preface his latest collected short fictions, apply right well to our attempts at literary criticism. Mathematics differ from life in this—after a proposition in number or in form-theory is demonstrated the last word has been said; the height of finality is reached; for any one to argue the point might amaze, though it would not interest us. But with life, who can name a fixed and infallible answer to its problems? Here is ever the unknown quantity, irreducible to precise terms, and varying in all sorts of perplexing ratios.

Is it not exactly because literature is the literate expression of life that we approach its subtler problems with the same sense of futility as the issues of life arouse in us? Yet the eternal challenge to discover the *why*, born, as it is, with our own babyhood, dies not with our manhood's strength, but still calls us to try our “literary discernment” once more, and yet once more, to see if we may not by some magic of penetration find the true causes which move back among the shadows.

So, with some degree of assurance we lay our fingers upon the causes in a given literary career which seem to us to be calculable—parentage, birth, early environment, education, chosen occupation, and all the rest. Yet a considerable proportion of the results must remain unaccountable, because the actuating forces are, after all, imponderable. We find motives and standards of conduct, or ideals, clearly expressed in the man's own words; but did he understand himself? Here we find one acknowledged

fact, here a second, and here a third. But by what law of causation may we say that three-times-one is three and not six, or sixty, or even six myriads?

No, in seeking to estimate the weight of the inner things we are calculating the incalculable; it is like trying to clothe in cumbersome workaday garb a being that is too subtle for material restrictions.

Especially, then, in seeking to enter the penetralia of a man of Garshin's varying moods and tenses, let us confess anew to ourselves how tentative must be our guesses at truth. His mind—like that of not a few other literary artists—fluttered between normality and abnormality. However, only the literal, prosaic, practical, uninventive mind is sane, and that is but a shorter way of spelling uninteresting. There is still a strong argument to be made for the essential seer-quality—perhaps the "second sight," perhaps the inner light—of many a one whom the sober world has adjudged as of unsound mind. But this again brings us up facing another great and tantalizing *x* of life.

Wsewolod Michailovich Garshin was born in February, 1855, of good family. His south-of-Russia parentage marked his physique. He was good-looking, almost dark, fiery of eye, and in temperament sweet, impressionable, and sympathetic—a combination rare enough in a man to make it noteworthy.

Like Pushkin, he spent his very early life on the family estates, his father having retired from the army when the boy was three years old. At nine, however, the child was placed at school in the inevitable St. Petersburg, with the object of his preparing for the study of medicine. But the parental ambitions were not realized, for the lad was so abnormally nervous that he became subject to vagaries and hallucinations, so that while yet but seventeen years of age, and already writing remarkable bits of realistic self-revelation, it was found best to place him under restraint. The effects of this clouded period are to be traced in much of his later work.

Happily, in about a year he recovered his balance, took up study anew, and finished his preparatory course with credit, entering the Institute of Mining Engineers in 1874, at the age of nineteen—for in everything Garshin was precocious.

From this point on, Garshin's career may plainly be read in his writings. He wrote only about twenty-five stories in all, and practically without exception they are autobiographical. The two great dominant motifs grew out of his two great life-experiences: war—but war from a special view-point—and what I may call the border consciousness, experiences of the mind when its poise is either uncertain or completely upset.

I have said that Garshin viewed war in an unusual way. This is true



not alone of his fiction but of his life. In 1876 the Russo-Turkish war broke out, and Garshin considered it his sacred duty to go. The horrors of war had always deeply affected his sensitive nature. The intoxicating blare, the thrill of glory, the call of the spectacle, all meant nothing to him, except revulsion. But duty was a word of serious meaning, and it won from him a serious response. This pupil of Tolstoi could detest and denounce an institution to whose claims he felt bound to bow in time of national need.

It is always interesting to observe how two artists, especially contemporary artists, interpret the same theme. Guy de Maupassant, incomparably the greater literator, but destined to the same sad end as met Garshin, has worked out a motive in "A Coward" similar to the Russian author's "Coward," though the stories themselves could not be more dissimilar.

Maupassant simply unclothes a human soul face to face with the idea of suicide. Relentlessly he strips shred after shred of illusion from the introspective thinker who is meditating upon his own cowardice. But when the end does come the reader is half in doubt as to how to judge the wretch.

Garshin's impressionistic sketch is tremendously cumulative. In soliloquy the person of the story weighs the war, its appeals, its repulsions, the motives that lead men to go, the awful casualties, and finally tells how that he is considered a coward for his inaction.

Am I a coward or not?

To-day I was told that I am a coward. Certainly it was a very shallow-minded person who said so when I declared in her presence my unwillingness to go to the war, and expressed a fear that they will call me up to serve. Her opinion did not distress me, but raised the question, Am I really a coward? Perhaps all my aversion against what every one else considers a great matter only arises from fear of my skin! Is it really worth while to worry about any one unimportant life in view of a great matter? And am I capable of subjecting my life to danger generally for the sake of any matter?

At length—just as it was with Garshin, who joined a regiment at Kishinev of terrible memory—the "coward" goes to war, and after a story-within-a-story is told, his act of heroism closes the picture.

Ever since I was old enough to attempt just thinking, I have always had much sympathy for a coward—I suppose because I have been afraid so often myself at moments when heroes are said to feel no trepidation. And do we not all feel keenly with Garshin?—for a man of his temperament, and one finding nothing admirable in war, it must have required genuine courage to go, even while he was repelled and afraid. But this

was only one more phase of a contradictory character—as all characters are in whom the inner life and the outer do not coördinate.

In "The Signal," we have a perfectly-wrought short-story with as dramatic a surprise as ever capped a climax.

While serving in the army, as servant to an officer, the health of Simon Ivanoff had broken down, and all that was left to him was a minor post as linesman on the railway. One day, while walking the tracks, he met for the first time his neighboring linesman, whom he found to be quite repellent in his manner. The simple-minded Simon, however, eventually pressed an acquaintance upon both the linesman, Vassili Stepanich Spiridoff, and his young wife, and found that Vassili had been much embittered by reflecting upon the inequalities of life, and especially those of his own hard position.

One day, the Traffic Inspector came along and forced Vassili to tear up his little garden, merely because he had planted it without permission; and, besides, he reported him for his technical irregularity. Shortly after this, the District Chief arrived and showed animosity, evidently founded upon the report against Vassili, and when the man protested, the Chief struck him brutally.

The next day Simon met Vassili, stick and bundle over his shoulder, and his cheek bound up in a handkerchief.

"Where are you off to, Neighbor?" cried Simon.

Vassili came close, but was quite pale, white as chalk, and his eyes had a wild look.

Almost choking, he muttered, "To the town—to Moscow—to the Head Office."

"Head Office? Ah, you are going, I suppose, to complain. Give it up, Vassili Stepanich. Forget it."

"No, Mate, I will not forget. It is too late. See! He struck me in the face—drew blood. So long as I live, I will not forget."

Simon vainly attempted to dissuade him, and the man at length passed on.

On the day following, Simon left his wife at home to meet the six o'clock train, and, taking his knife, started off to the forest to get some reeds out of which to make flutes, which he used to sell for two kopecks apiece. As he walked along, he fancied that he heard the clang of iron striking iron. Since there were no repairs going on, he wondered, but as he came out on the fringe of the wood he saw a man squatting on the road-bed, busily engaged in loosening a rail.

A mist came before Simon's eyes; he wanted to cry out, but he could not. It was Vassili! . . . Simon scrambled up the bank as Vassili, with crowbar and wrench, slid headlong down the other side.

"Vassili Stepanich! For the love . . . Old friend! Come back! Give me the crowbar. We will put the rail back; no one will know. Come back! Save your soul from this sin!"

Vassili did not look back, but disappeared into the wood.

Simon stood before the rail which had been torn up. He threw down his bundle of sticks. A train was due; not a goods train, but a passenger train. And he had nothing with which to stop it, no flag. He could not replace the rail, and could not drive in the spikes with his bare hands. It was necessary to run to the hut for some tools. "God help me," he murmured.

He ran toward his hut, faltering every now and then in his eagerness, but he soon realized that he would be too late. What should he do! In desperation, he turned back to the spot where the rail threatened disaster to the on-coming train. As he reached it, he heard the even tremor of the rails.

Then an idea came into his head, literally like a ray of light. Pulling off his cap, he took out of it a cotton scarf, drew his knife out of the upper part of his boot, and crossed himself, muttering, "God bless me!"

He buried the knife into his left arm above the elbow; the blood spurted out, flowing in a hot stream. In this he soaked his scarf, smoothed it out, tied it to the stick, and hung out his red flag.

He stood waving his flag. The train was already in sight. The driver will not see him—will come close up, and a heavy train cannot be pulled up in a hundred sajenes.

And the blood kept on flowing. Simon kept pressing the sides of the wound together, wanting to close it, but the blood did not diminish. Evidently he had cut his arm very deeply. His head commenced to swim, black spots began to dance before his eyes, and then it became dark. There was a ringing in his ears. He could not see the train or hear the noise. Only one thought possessed him: "I shall not be able to keep standing up. I shall fall and drop the flag; the train will pass over me. . . . Help me, O Lord! . . ."

All became quite black before him, his mind became a blank, and he dropped the flag; but the blood-stained banner did not fall to the ground. A hand seized it and held it high to meet the approaching train. The engine-driver saw it, shut the regulator, and reversed steam. The train came to a standstill.

People jumped out of the carriages and collected in a crowd. Looking, they saw a man lying senseless on the footway, drenched in blood, and another man standing beside him with a blood-stained rag on a stick.

Vassili looked around at all; then, lowering his head, said, "Bind me; I have pulled up a rail!"

In "Four Days," which follows in an original translation for this series, we have another autobiographical story of singular penetration. It must be remembered that Garshin's convictions of duty led him to unusual length—he enlisted as a private, when his family connections would have warranted something better. So he writes from close to the people—in this respect differing from Tolstoi, with whose memorable Sevastopol sketches Garshin's "Four Days" has been seriously compared

by critics. It was at the engagement of Aislar that Garshin received his incapacitating bullet-wound, after real gallantry in action, and this is the battle of the story.

After recovering from his wound, our author became desperately absorbed in trying to save one of his friends from execution for having attempted the life of Loris Melikov, but Garshin failed, and soon afterward it again became necessary to confine him in an asylum.

From this seizure he recovered, and married a young lady who devoted her life to a beautiful service—that of healing his mind and preventing a recurrence of his malady; but, sadly enough, without success. He never shook off the boding pall of the mad-house. One needs only to read his "Red Flower" to feel the haunting presence of that pathetic colony of abnormal minds and spirits coming to sit with him in hours when he sought happiness in forgetfulness. Half-memories of days of half-self-possession are indeed shapes that haunt the dusk! To quote Waliszewski's vivid summary: "The story describes a demented person, half-conscious of his condition, who wears himself out in superhuman efforts to gain possession of a red-poppay—reddened, as he imagines, by the blood of all the martyrdoms of the human race. If the flower were only destroyed, he thinks, humanity would be saved."

In 1887, in physical and mental suffering too combinedly torturing to be borne, Garshin eluded the watchers by his bedside and flung himself down a stone staircase and sustained injuries from which he never recovered. The consciousness of his act caused him to brood still more painfully over his state, and he died in a hospital the next year, 1888, at the age of only thirty-three.

If one may venture to be analytical, there are three kinds of stories: those told of life as it exists apart from the narrator; those dealing with events intimately associated with the narrator; and those that are purely evoked from the inner life of the story-teller himself.

These last-named—spun of gossamer thread, intangible as the dawn, airy, floating, subtle—are the highest type. To this height Garshin did not perfectly attain. His stories were rather of the second sort, drawn from his own experiences. That they were touched with mysterious moods and vague, unnamable potencies must have been due to the author's pitiful journeys into that shadowy, distraught land which we so confidently call the Insane.

Garshin's realism grew out of his need for writing his own experiences. Though some of his descriptions of the dead Turk, in the following sketch, "Four Days," are so revoltingly real as to justify the excisions indicated in the text, Garshin's realism, as a rule, lacks disgusting detail. But it is as faithful to fact as a canvas by Verest-

chagin, whose paintings, indeed, might be said to exhibit the same method which Garshin applied to literature.

Garshin is a pessimist—of course, one is almost forced to add. His heroes are not idealized, even in the hour of their victory. But there is nobility—that priceless tone in literature!—in much of his work, and the body takes its true place in life, as an expression of spirit, and not as the master of the house.

All in all, Garshin was a great writer, doing pitifully wonderful things under such stress as makes us love him for his brave, losing fight against black foes within and without.

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#### FOUR DAYS

**I** REMEMBER how we ran through the wood, how the bullets whizzed past us, how the twigs that were hit by them snapped and fell, how we scrambled through the bushes. The firing grew heavier. Looking through to the outer edge, I could see little flashes of red here and there. Sidorov, a young private of Company I—"How did he come to fall into our line?" was the thought that flashed through my head—suddenly sat down on the ground and silently looked at me with open, terrified eyes. A stream of blood trickled from his mouth. Yes, that too I remember well. I also remember how when almost on the edge of the wood I first saw . . . *him* in the thick bushes. He was an enormous, corpulent Turk, but I ran straight at him, although I am weak and small. Something burst, something huge seemed to fly past me; there was a ringing in my ears. "He has shot me," was my thought. But he, with a cry of terror, pressed his back against the dense foliage. He could have gone around it without difficulty, but in his fright he lost his presence of mind completely, and he tried to crawl through the prickly bushes.

With a blow, I knocked the gun out of his hand; I followed this by a thrust with my bayonet. There was an outcry: a roar that died into a moan. I ran on farther. Our soldiers cried, "Hurrah!" fell low, and discharged their guns. I remember that I too fired several times after we had left the wood and were in the field. Suddenly the cry of "Hurrah!" grew louder, and we all in a body moved forward. That is, not we, but my comrades; I remained behind. That seemed strange to me. Still stranger was the fact that suddenly everything vanished; all the cries and firing died away. I could hear nothing, but saw only something blue, which I concluded was the sky. Afterwards, that too passed out of my senses.

Never before have I found myself in such a strange situation. I am

lying, it seems, on my stomach, and I see before me only a small clod of earth. A few blades of grass, an ant climbing down one of these head downwards, bits of litter from last year's grass—that is my whole world. And I can see with only one eye, because the other is obstructed by some hard substance, perhaps a twig upon which my head rests. I feel terribly uncomfortable, and I wish to stir; it is incomprehensible to me why I cannot. So the time passes. I hear the noise of the grasshoppers and the humming of bees. Nothing more. At last I make an effort, and, extracting my right arm from under me, I press both my hands against the earth and try to rise to my knees.

Something sharp and rapid like lightning shoots across my entire body from the knees to my chest and head, and I collapse to the ground. Again darkness, again nothingness.

I am awake once more. Why do I see stars, which shine so brightly in the dark-blue Bulgarian sky? Am I in my tent? Why have I crawled out of it? I make a movement, and feel an agonizing pain in my legs.

Yes, I have been wounded in battle. Dangerously or not? I catch hold of my legs, there where the pain is. And both the right and the left legs are covered with clotted blood. When I touch them with my hands, the pain becomes even more intense. It is like a protracted toothache, gnawing at the very soul. There is a ringing in the ears, an oppressiveness in the head. I vaguely understand that I have been wounded in both legs. But it is all incomprehensible. Why have I not been picked up? Have the Turks really beaten us? I try to recall what has happened to me; at the beginning things seem a bit confused, but they gradually become clearer, and I come to the conclusion that we have not been beaten. And simply because I fell on the little field on top of the slope. In any case, how it all happened is difficult for me to remember; but I do recall how they all rushed forward, and that I alone could not run; and that only something blue remained before my eyes. Somewhat earlier our captain pointed towards this hillock. "Boys, we will get there!" he cried in his sonorous voice. And we got there; it is clear we have not been beaten. . . . Why, then, was I not picked up? This is such an open spot, and everything is visible. There must be others lying here. The shots came so thick. I must turn my head to look. It is easier to do this now, because when I first came to consciousness and I saw the grass, and the ant crawling head downwards, I tried to rise, and I fell back, not into my former position, but turned over on my spine. That explains why I see the stars.

I try to rise to a sitting position. This is very difficult, when both legs are wounded. After several attempts I begin to despair; at last, however, with tears in my eyes, forced out by the pain, I manage it.

Overhead I see a spot of dark-blue sky, in which is visible a large star and a number of small ones; and around me something dark and tall—the bushes. I am in the bushes—that is why I have not been found!

I feel a stirring at the roots of my hair.

How, then, did I get into the bushes, if I were shot in the open field? It is likely that I crawled here when I was wounded and the pain obliterated the memory of it. It is singular, however, that I should not be able to move now, and that I had been able to drag myself then towards these bushes. It is possible that I got my second wound while lying here, which may explain the matter.

I now see pale-rose stains around me. The large star has lost its brilliancy; some of the small ones have disappeared. It is because the moon has begun to rise. How good it must be at home! . . .

I hear strange sounds somewhere. . . . As if some one were moaning. Yes, it is a moan. Is it another unfortunate lying near me, forgotten like myself, with broken legs—or with a bullet in his stomach? No, the moans sound so near, and yet it seems there is no one here. . . . Oh, God, but it is—myself! Low, piteous moans; am I actually in such agony? I must be. Only, I don't understand this pain; because there is a fog in my head that weighs me down like lead. It is better that I should lie down again and go to sleep—and sleep and sleep. . . . Shall I ever wake again? It does not really matter.

At the instant that I am gathering strength to lie down, a broad, pale strip of moonlight strikes the spot where I am sitting, revealing something dark and large lying only a few feet away. Here and there upon it little gleams are visible in the moonlight. Is it buttons or bullets? Is it a corpse, or is it some one wounded?

Well, I will lie down. . . .

No, it is impossible. Our soldiers have not departed. They are here, they have beaten the Turks and have remained here. Why do I not hear voices and the crackle of bonfires? I must be too weak to hear. They are surely here.

“Help! Help!”

Wild, incoherent, and hoarse cries burst from my bosom, and they receive no answer. Loudly they scatter in the nocturnal air. Everything else is silent. Only the crickets chirrup on ceaselessly as before. The round moon looks compassionately down on me.

If *he* were only wounded, my cries surely would have roused him. It is a corpse. Is it one of us or a Turk? Oh, God! as if it really mattered. . . . And I feel sleep descending upon my inflamed eyes.

I am lying with closed eyes, though I have been awake for some time. I do not wish to open my eyes, because I feel through the shut eyelids

the blaze of the sun; if I open them, they will begin to smart. Perhaps I had better not even stir. . . . It was yesterday—yes, it must have been yesterday—that I was wounded; a day has now passed, and other days will pass, and I shall die. It does not matter. It is better not to stir. I will keep my body motionless. If I could only stop the working of the brain! Nothing will stop that. Thoughts, memories, crowd upon me. In any case, it will not be for long; the end must come soon. The newspapers will publish just a few lines to say that our losses have been insignificant: so many have been wounded; among those killed is Ivanov, a private in the volunteers' ranks. No, even my name will not be mentioned; they will simply say, "One killed." One soldier in the ranks—like some little dog.

The entire picture now comes to mind. It happened long ago; in fact, everything, all my life, *that* life, before I lay here with wounded legs, seems to have been such a long time ago. . . . I remember strolling along the street. Seeing a crowd of people, I stopped. The crowd stood and silently looked upon something white, bloody, piteously whining. It was a handsome little dog which had been run over by a tram-car. It was dying, as I am now. A house porter made his way through the crowd, picked the dog up by the collar, and carried it away. The crowd dispersed.

Will some one carry me away? No, you lie here and die. But how good it is to live! . . . Upon that particular day—when the little dog met misfortune—I was happy. I was walking along in a kind of intoxication; and there was good cause. Oh, my memories, don't torture me, leave me! My past was happiness; my present is agony. . . . If only my sufferings alone remained, and my memories ceased to torture me—for they compel comparisons. Ah, longings, longings! You are wounded worse.

It is becoming hot. The sun is scorching me. I open my eyes, see the same bushes, the same sky—only, in the light of day. And here, too, is my neighbor. Yes, it is the Turk—his body. What a huge fellow! I recognize him—it is the very same one.

Before my eyes lies a man I have killed. Why have I killed him?

He lies here dead, blood-stained. What fate brought him here? Who is he? Perhaps, like myself, he has an old mother. Long will she sit evenings at the door of her wretched hut, looking ever towards the north: is he coming home, he, her beloved son, her protector and provider? . . .

And I? Yes, I also. . . . I would even change places with him. How happy he is! He hears nothing; neither does he feel pain from wounds, nor terrible longing, nor thirst. . . . The bayonet entered his very heart. . . . There is a large black hole in his uniform, and blood all around it. *That is my work.*



I did not wish to do it. I did not wish to harm any one when I volunteered. The thought that I too should have to kill somehow escaped me. I only imagined how I would expose *my own* breast to bullets. And I did expose it.

Well, and what has it come to? Fool, fool! This unfortunate *fellah*, in Egyptian uniform, he is even less to blame than you are. Before he and others were packed, like herrings in a barrel, into a steamer and brought to Constantinople, he had not even heard of Russia or of Bulgaria. He was commanded to go, and he went. Had he refused to go, he would have been beaten with sticks, and perhaps some Pasha or other would have fired a bullet into him. It was a long, difficult march for him from Stamboul to Rustchuk. We attacked, he defended himself. Seeing, however, that we were a fearless people, and that, unafraid of his English carbine, we rushed forward and still moved forward, he was seized with terror. Just as he was trying to get away, some sort of little man, whom he could have killed with one blow of his dark fist, ran forward and plunged a bayonet into his heart.

Of what had he been guilty?

And of what am I guilty, even though I have killed him? Of what am I guilty? Why am I tortured by thirst? Thirst! Who knows the meaning of this word? Even during the days when we marched through Roumania, fifty versts at a stretch through unbearable heat, I did not feel what I feel now. If only some one came along this way!

Oh, God! But there must be water in that big flask of his! Only to reach it! Come what may, I will get it.

I begin to crawl. I drag my legs slowly; my exhausted arms barely stir the passive body from its place. The spot is hardly more than fifteen feet away, but it seems like ten versts. Nevertheless, I must crawl on. My throat is aflame with a terrible fire. To be sure, without water, I could die the more quickly. All the same, perhaps . . .

And so I crawl. My legs drag on the ground, and every movement calls forth most excruciating pain. I cry out again and again, with tears in my eyes, and still I crawl on. At last! The flask is in my hand. . . . There's water in it—and quite a deal! It seems more than half full. Ah, it will last me some time . . . until I die!

It is you, my victim, who will save me! I begin to undo the flask, propping myself up on one elbow; and suddenly, losing my balance, I fall downward across the breast of my deliverer. . . .

I have slaked my thirst. The water is warm, but not spoilt; and there is a great deal of it. I can live a few more days. I remember having read somewhere that one could exist without food for ever a week, provided one had water. Yes, and I recall also the story of the

man who committed suicide by starvation, but who lived a long time because he drank water.

Well, and what's to be the end of it? And if I do live five or six days longer, what of that? Our troops have gone, the Bulgarians have dispersed. I am far from a road. Death—there is no way out of it. I have but prolonged my three-day agony with a seven-day one. Perhaps I had better end it all? At my neighbor's side lies his gun, an excellent English mechanism. I have only to stretch out my hand; then—one little moment, and an end. There is quite a lot of cartridges here, too. He had n't had time to dispose of them all.

Shall I end it all—or wait? Wait for what? Deliverance? Death? Or shall I wait until the Turks come here and tear the skin from my wounded legs? Far better that I should put an end to it myself.

No; there is no need to lose courage. I will struggle to the end, to my last resource. There is still hope of being found. It is possible my bones are not affected; and I may return to health. I shall again see my native land, my mother, and Masha. . . .

Oh, Lord, save them from knowing the whole truth! Let them think I was killed outright. What if they should learn that I had suffered slow torture for two, three, or four days!

I am lying now in complete exhaustion. The sun is scorching my face and hands. There is nothing to cover oneself with. If only night would come! I think this will be the second night.

My thoughts wander, and I am losing consciousness.

I must have slept a long time, because when I awoke it was already night. As before, the wounds ache, and my neighbor lies beside me—the same huge, motionless figure.

I cannot help thinking of him. Have I really left behind me all that is pleasant and dear to me, and marched here at the speed of four versts an hour, hungered, froze, suffered from the heat, only to undergo this final torture—for no other reason than that this unfortunate should cease to live? And have I really accomplished anything useful for my country except this murder?

This is murder—and I am a murderer.

When I first got the idea into my head to go and fight, Mother and Masha did not try to dissuade me, although they both wept much. Blinded by my idea, I did not understand those tears. Only now I understand what I have done to those so near to me.

Why recall all this? There is no returning the past.

And what a singular attitude my acquaintances assumed towards my action! "What a madman! He is meddling without knowing why!" How could they say that? How could they reconcile their

words with *their* ideas of heroism, love of mother country, and other such things? Surely I earned their admiration for living up to these virtues. Yet I am a "madman."

Presently I am on my way to Kishinev; I am supplied with a knapsack and all the other military accoutrements. I go with thousands of others; among them a few, like myself, are volunteers. The rest would have preferred to remain at home, if they were permitted. Nevertheless, they go along just like we "conscious ones," march thousands of versta, and fight as well as ourselves, or even better. They fulfil their obligations notwithstanding the fact that they would on the instant drop everything and go home if permission were given them.

A fresh early morning breeze has begun to blow. There is a stirring among the bushes; I can hear the flutter of a bird's wings. The stars are no longer visible. The dark blue sky has turned gray, and stretching across it are gentle, fleecy cloudlets; a gray mist is rising from the earth. It is the beginning of the third day of my . . . what can I call it? Life? Agony?

The third day. . . . How many more are left to me? At any rate, only a few. I have grown terribly weak, and I fear that I am unable to move away from the corpse. Only a little while longer, and I will stretch out by his side, and we shall not be unpleasant to each other.

I must have a drink. I will drink three times a day—in the morning, at noon, and in the evening.

The sun has risen. Its enormous disk, broken and intersected by the dark branches of the bushes, is red like blood. It looks as if it will be a hot day. My neighbor—what will become of you? Even now you are quite terrible.

It is unendurable to be so near him. I must get away, at all costs. Can I do it? I am still able to lift my hand, open the flask, and drink; but to move my passive, cumbersome body is quite another matter. Still, I will make an effort, even if it should take me an hour to move a few inches.

The entire morning passes in this attempt to shift. The pain is intense, but what does it matter? I no longer remember; I cannot imagine to myself the perception of a normal man. I have gotten used to the pain. I have managed to shift about fifteen feet, and am now in my old place.

Broken in body and spirit and half insane, I was beginning to lose consciousness. Suddenly . . . or is it only a delusion of a distressed imagination. Yes, I think I hear voices. The clatter of horses'

hoofs—and human voices. I almost came near shouting, but restrained myself. Suppose they should be Turks? They, of course—as if I already had n't suffered enough—will subject me to terrible torture, such as makes your hair stand on end just to read about in the newspapers. They'll peel my skin off, and they'll apply a fire to my wounded legs . . . or they might invent some new torture. Is it not better to end my life at their hands than die here? Who can tell—they may be my countrymen? Oh, accursed bushes! Why have you fenced yourselves so thickly around me? There is no opening except one aperture in the foliage, that opens like a window upon a hollow visible in the distance. There, I think, is a brook from which we drank before the battle. I can see, too, the huge flat stone across the stream, put there to serve as a bridge. They will surely cross it. The voices are dying away. I cannot make out the language they speak; my hearing too has grown weak. Oh, Lord! what if they are my countrymen! . . . I will shout. They will hear me even from the brook. That is better than falling into the hands of the Bashi-Bazouks. What has become of them? I don't see them. I am being consumed with impatience; I no longer even notice the smell of the corpse, although it has not grown any less.

Suddenly, a body of horsemen make their appearance crossing the bridge. Cossacks! Blue uniforms, red stripes, lances! About fifty of them! At the fore, upon a handsome horse, is an officer with a black beard. No sooner do the fifty horsemen cross the brook than he turns full face in his saddle and shouts:

“Tro-t, march!”

“Stop, stop, for God's sake! Help, help, brothers!” But the stamping of sturdy horses, the clanging of many sabres, and the lusty shouting of Cossack throats are too much for my weak outcry—and I am not heard.

Oh, curses! In complete exhaustion, I fall face to the ground and begin to weep. In my falling, I fail to notice that I have upset the flask and out of its mouth the water—my life, my deliverance, my respite from death—is oozing. I only notice it when there is no more than a half-cupful left; the rest has been absorbed by the dry, thirsty earth.

It is simply agony to recall the stupor which seized me after this terrible accident. I lay motionless, with half-closed eyes.

The sun is burning and scorching me as before. My hands and face have been smarting for some time. I drank up the remaining water. The thirst tortured me so intensely that in trying to take a single swallow I gulped down all. Fool that I was not to have called to the Cossacks when they were so near! Even if they had been Turks, it would have been better than this. They would have tortured me an hour or two;

but now there's no saying how long I am to lie here and suffer. My dear, dearest mother! If you only knew! You would tear your gray hair out, you would knock your head against the wall, you would curse the day of my birth, you would curse the world which invented war and its sorrows!

It is well that you and Masha will not hear of my sufferings. Farewell, Mother; farewell, my sweetheart, my love! But how sad and bitter I feel! And there is something gnawing at the heart . . .

Again I am thinking of that little white dog! The porter did not pity it, but knocked its head against the wall and threw it into a garbage heap. And still it was alive; and suffered a whole day. I am more unfortunate, because I have suffered already three days. To-morrow will be the fourth day, then the fifth, the sixth. . . . Death, where art thou? Come, come! Take me!

But Death does not come. And I am lying in the blaze of this terrible sun; and there is not a drop of water to refreshen my inflamed throat.

. . . . .  
The day passes, and the night passes. No change. Again morning. No change. Another day will pass. . . . .

The bushes are stirring and rustling, as if they were talking among themselves. "You will die, you will die, you will die!" they whisper. "You will not see, you will not see, you will not see!" answer the bushes on the other side.

"No, you will not see them here!" I hear a loud voice quite near.

I tremble and at once come to myself. I look up, to find the good blue eyes of our corporal Yakovlev looking at me.

"Spades!" he cries out. "There are two more of them here—and one of them is theirs!"

"There is no need for spades, no need to bury me; I'm alive!" I wish to cry out; but only a feeble groan issues from my parched lips.

"Lord! But he is alive! *Barin* \* Ivanov! Children, come this way! Our *Barin* is alive! And bring the doctor, quick!"

Presently I feel the pleasant contact in my mouth of water, whiskey, and of something else. Then everything disappears.

The stretcher sways with a measured motion. This motion is soothing. Now I recall myself, now everything lapses from my memory. The bandaged wounds no longer hurt. An inexpressible feeling of comfort has diffused itself through my entire body. . . . .

"Hal-t! L-lo-wei! Fresh hands to the stretchers! Now get hold—lift—march!"

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\* A term of deference usually employed by peasants and servants in addressing their master, or in speaking of him.

The command is issued by Peter Ivanich, our sanitary officer, a tall, lean, and very kindly man. He is so tall that as I turn my eyes in his direction I can see his head, his peculiar long beard, and his shoulders, although the stretcher is being carried on the shoulders of four big men.

"Peter Ivanich!" I whisper.

"What is it, dear fellow?"

Peter Ivanich leans toward me.

"Peter Ivanich, what did the doctor tell you? Will I die soon?"

"What are you saying, Ivanov? Of course you will live. Your bones are whole. What a lucky fellow you are! Your bones are all right, and so are your arteries! But tell me, how did you manage to pull through these three and a half days? What did you eat?"

"Nothing."

"And had you anything to drink?"

"I took the Turk's flask. Peter Ivanich, I cannot speak now. Later . . ."

"Well, God be with you, dear fellow, and have your nap."

Again sleep, forgetfulness. . . .

When I awake again, I am in the division hospital, surrounded by nurses and doctors. At my feet stands a man whom I recognize as a celebrated St. Petersburg professor. His hands are blood-stained. He is attending to me, and presently he turns to speak to me:

"Well, the Lord has been good to you, young man. You will remain alive. We've deprived you of one leg; but that is a mere trifle. Can you talk?"

Yes, I can talk, and I am telling him all that I have written here.



## THE OLD HOUSE

BY MAZIE V. CARUTHERS

**A**N empty shell of what was once a home—  
 Like vacant eyes its broken windows stare—  
 Frail play-house of the winds, that pry and roam  
 Around its tottering timbers everywhere.

Deserted. But when night comes—misty, still—  
 Back to their ancient homestead, cobweb-hung,  
 They come who long ago, through good and ill,  
 Lived 'neath its gables when this house was young!



# WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND  
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC



## THE EPOCH-MAKING AUTO

**C**ERTAIN great epochs stand out preëminent in the life of man. The first pair of long trousers marks one such. Never can memory lose the awful blend of pride and fear, the self-conscious affectation of indifference, the truly poignant emotions coincident with one's first walk down Main Street, in long trousers. The gibes of all the "fellers"—"Daddy Longlegs! Hey! Georgie Longlegs!"—still revert to memory, no matter how long the lapse of time. An epoch.

Another is one's first walk home with one's sweetheart, the first stammerings of love, the first kiss. Still a third, one's graduation from college—the brief poise on the fountain-spray of fame, becaped and begowned and with a sheepskin in hand, just before plunging into the cold, unfeeling, singularly unappreciative workaday world.

Marriage is a true epoch, with a thousand readjustments, realignments, and new points of view. An epoch, the coming of the first-born. When the father feels the little, warm, downy head of his Son lying against his heart, he knows the meaning of the word "epochal."

Now, what has all this to do with automobiles?

Just this: that the purchase of one's first machine, be it tiny run-about or colossal "60" touring-car, is just as much an epoch in a man's life as any of the above-tabulated crises of existence.

Every man who owns or ever has owned a car will bear me out in saying that the negotiations for a machine, its purchase, and the subsequent adoring worship thereof, which makes one stand out in a cold garage for hours, tinkering with its inwards and admiring its "lines"—

also making all and sundry share that admiration under pain of high displeasure—every car-owner, I say, will back me up in calling this an epoch!

The first time you run your own car down High Street, with everybody "rubbering," even unto the president of the Produce Exchange Bank, there thrills through you just the same sort of emotion that once was caused by the first long pants, the first sweetheart, the (first) wife, the first baby. Don't deny it! You know it's so; and I do, too, because all these experiences have been mine, every one!

That's why I call the auto an epoch-maker; and if you don't agree, that's merely because you've never had any true epochs, or epics either, in your life!

The purr of the motor strikes your car as sweetly as once did Her voice. The admiration of the populace is no less pungent than the one-time clapping of hands in Sanders Theatre when you declaimed "At midnight in his guarded tent . . ."

But there's another and a more serious side to this epochal business, too. There's a profoundly educational, cultural, and civilizing side. Every new bit of machinery in this old world of ours hastens the millennium "when thrones have perished and when kings are dust, and when the aristocracy of idleness has perished from the earth." The hum of a million or two million motors along our roads means better roads and more of them; a breaking-down of local and sectional prejudice; more uniform laws governing traffic; a vast and growing industry that takes its stand with all the others in the social evolution working toward collectivism; the dissemination of a perfectly incalculable amount of practical, common-sense mechanical skill and knowledge among millions upon millions of our people.

Has it ever occurred to you that the science and practice of mechanics, once "the mystery of a class," has now become the common property of practically all mankind? And that the motor, whether in car or boat, has been the main, driving factor in this vast efflorescence of knowledge?

Twenty years ago the average man knew little or nothing of mechanics. To-day there are literally millions of men who have—though not professionally—a sound, practical, working knowledge of the principles of an engine, its care, and its operation; millions who can run one, repair one, and handle one intelligently. The auto, in my opinion, has done more to spread a general knowledge of mechanics throughout the population, in a shorter time, than all the technical schools working full blast could possibly have done.

And look at the coming generation, will you! Look at the millions of boys now being nurtured on pistons, cams, differentials, and carburetors! All the vast army of auto-owners form also an army of instructors for the next batch of Americans. Boys love machinery, by nature,



## Ways of the Hour

as bees love clover-tops; and each auto has its little group of devotees. Every garage is a fascinating hang-out for boys. Proud and glad, indeed, are they, when some man says: "Hey, sonny, hold this here spark-plug while I prime the cylinder!" You can expand this *motif* yourself, indefinitely. Have I not struck a flowing well of truth?

It all verifies the philosophical concept that machinery is to-day, after all, the dominating force in modern life; that civilization is at basis a matter of superior mechanical skill; and that the materialistic interpretation of history is correct.

The auto is making a wiser, a happier, and a better world. *Vive l'auto!*

GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND

## WHEN NOT TO TIP

**T**IPPING, everybody says and reaffirms, is an evil that should be abolished—soon and for all time. The world vigorously and frequently condemns the tip, yet virtually everybody keeps on tipping. You and I, who have asserted time and again that tips are bribes, extortion, robbery, blackmail, and what-not, continue giving the waiter our fifty cents, the Pullman porter our quarter, the barber our dime, and the shoe-shine boy our extra nickel. While this failure to suit the action to the word shows either child-like inconsistency or timidity, it also indicates that tipping is not altogether and thoroughly an evil!

A friend of mine summed up the problem in a concise sentence. We went into a restaurant. As we passed through the doors, an alert individual fairly jerked our hats out of our hands and gave us brass checks in return. When we departed I forked over a dime for my hat. My friend failed to produce, and ignored the scowl. Going out, he turned to me with the remark, "I never tip for voluntary service."

I questioned him further, and he continued after this fashion:

"When I demand service, such as the attention of a waiter, I am appreciative of what I receive. If the waiter does his best with the order and makes me enjoy my meal, he has earned a little extra money, and I tip him cheerfully. When I ask for service, I tip judiciously if the service is satisfactory. If it is not satisfactory, I fail to come across."

"For voluntary service nobody should tip. When I am washing my hands in the wash-room of a station and somebody hands me a towel I am reaching for already, I don't think that I am obligated to shell out ten cents. If somebody persists in brushing me off without my suggesting it, he can expect nothing from me for his impertinence. When I enter a restaurant and a man grabs my hat as if I could not carry it to my chair, he gets nothing for his rudeness."

"If everybody followed this simple rule, people would not be sub-

jected to this 'voluntary' service, which is more often an annoyance. Tipping would be what it should be—a stimulant to excellent service."

LITTELL McCLUNG

## CAPITALS

ONE of the New York *Sun's* many letter-writing contributors has made a suggestion which is certainly original, and meets with the approval of several thoughtful persons to whom we have mentioned it. This contributor contends that capital letters are superfluous, and should be consigned to the scrap-heap. Why use fifty-two characters when twenty-six would suffice? Consider the waste of time, effort, money, in constructing and operating typewriting machines in which the letters of the alphabet are uselessly duplicated.

There are grains of truth in this suggestion. Capitals were well enough in the Middle Ages, before the art of printing was discovered. They lent a certain embellishment to illuminated manuscripts, and the extra time spent in their construction kept the monks out of mischief. Nowadays no man in his senses would illuminate a manuscript. There is even a prejudice against the pretty feminine practice of securing the pages with pink ribbons. To type it, to punctuate it in places, and to enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope, is all that the most exacting editor requires. Illuminate your ideas, and let it go at that.

We agree that, in commerce and the newspaper press, capitals could be retired. For business purposes, the fewer flourishes the better. Signs point to the deletion of the superfluous "Mr." and the trailing "Yours truly." Abbreviate whenever possible. Spell as simply as you dare. An occasional comma will do. Only a few elegant triflers cling to the semicolon. Cut out the capitals, by all means. Cut out anything that may reduce the high cost of living. At first when you come to write "theodore roosevelt," you will be appalled by your own audacity. As for "i, theodore roosevelt"—yes, it does jolt the imagination. And the worst of it is that he will have to stop to dot it. A dotless "i" will doubtless be in order.

But the lower case in literature? That is another matter. Why, the very names of some distinguished authors would evaporate. Consider the deliquescence of a. lang, of g. b. s., of job. What readers would recognize the decapitalized philosophy of one geo. ade? Would our prosy age have poesy perish utterly? Set up Omar in lower case, and you could n't keep the moths away with Persian insect-powder. It would n't be fair to our magazine readers. How could they tell a poem if the lines did n't begin with capitals? By labelling it "A Poem," do you say? Bless your innocent heart, they do that already, and even now it does n't help matters one bit. Unless, of course, it acts as a warning.

W. T. LARNED

## ARE THEATRE PRICES TOO HIGH?

**T**HE reduction of prices for seats by a leading New York theatre-manager has aroused many playgoers in the different cities, and it is now felt that no more serious problem confronts the men who still tempt fate in the production of plays than that of finding some way of attracting the public as of old—for it is no secret that the theatre in this second decade of the twentieth century has found a competitor so vigorous and compelling, that it is a question whether another year will not witness a complete readjustment of things.

This competitor, however, can yet be utilized by our play-producers as their salvation. Among the more important interests in theatredom, the theory is held that only by a substantial price-concession at the box-office can the theatres which now charge two dollars for seats invite the millions of new amusement-seekers created by the amazing vogue of the moving picture and the little theatres where popular vaudeville holds forth.

Every large city in this country has from one hundred to four hundred of these theatres, of various sizes and capacities. In these the scale of prices varies from five cents to twenty-five cents, and a man is able to provide entertainment for his entire family for what it costs to purchase one seat in the regular playhouses.

In New York City one man conducts a chain of twenty-four theatres, in not one of which is there a seat that costs more than twenty-five cents, while in the majority of them ten cents is the highest price. These theatres are all equal in size and beauty to the more expensive regular ones, but as they are open from eight to ten hours daily, the manager in question is able to present an entertainment of good quality, depending upon the multiplicity of nickels and dimes. And, mark you, this man in the short space of six years has become a multi-millionaire.

The same manager—Marcus Loew by name—six years ago was operating a penny arcade in New York's upper residence district. He saw that a new craze had come on the people, and that the moving picture was greatly reducing his receipts at the penny arcade; so he just shifted to the newer field, and his career has had no parallel in amusement history.

Twenty-five years ago there were twice as many producers of plays as there are to-day, and yet the day may not be so far off when the millions of new playgoers will want something more substantial than the pantomimic portrayals on the screen.

Will the inactive play-producers grasp this opportunity to come back to their own? Will they realize that bargains in theatre-tickets are as practical as bargains in more necessary requirements of life?

Who shall say?

ROBERT GRAU

# LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

MAY, 1913



## ANYBODY BUT ANNE

BY  
CAROLYN WELLS

*Author of "The White Alley," "A Chain of Evidence," "The Gold Bag," etc.*

### CHAPTER I.

#### BUTTONWOOD TERRACE

I HAD known Anne Mansfield before her marriage to David Van Wyck, but I had never seen her since she became the wife of that well-known capitalist. Wherefore, when I received an invitation to one of her house-parties, I accepted it with a pleased sense of curiosity-about-to-be-gratified.

For though I had not been a suitor of Anne's, I had admired her as a girl, and I was greatly surprised when I heard she had married a man well on in years and possessed of much wealth.

As my train swayed swiftly through New England, toward the little village of Crescent Falls, where the Van Wycks had their summer residence, I tried to picture to myself the pretty little Anne Mansfield that I had known, as the chatelaine of a great estate, with an elderly husband and two grown-up step-children. The picture was so incongruous that I gave it up, and awaited first impressions with unbiased opinions.

And I may well have done so, for, though I knew of his wealth, I knew nothing of the taste and judgment that had led David Van Wyck to select for his summer home a most beautiful country estate, whose century-old mansion was surrounded by equally old buttonwood trees, a species rapidly growing extinct in New England.

Although I knew the Van Wycks called their house Buttonwood

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Terrace, when I saw it I felt a whimsical impulse to call it All Gaul—for it was so definitely divided into three parts. The enormous rectangle that had originally formed the main dwelling had later received the addition of two also rectangular wings. But these were not attached in the usual fashion; they were jauntily caught by their corners to the two rear corners of the main house. These lapping walls impinged but a few feet, or just enough for communicating doors. Thus, the wings, with the back or southern side of the house, formed three sides of a delightful terrace, from which marble steps and grassy paths led to formal gardens beyond, where one could wander among fountains, statues, and rare and beautiful plants.

The west wing held the many kitchens and other servants' quarters, but the east wing was one grand, spacious apartment without partition.

I think I have never seen a more impressive room than this study at Buttonwood Terrace. Its domed ceiling of leaded glass was perhaps thirty feet high, but so large was the room and so graceful its lines that the architecture gave the effect of perfect proportion.

The walls were panelled between the stained-glass windows, and at one end of the room was a small balcony, like a musicians' gallery, reached by a spiral staircase. At the same end of the room, under the balcony and opening on the terrace, were large double doors; and there was no other entrance save the single door that connected with the main house through the lapped corners.

I was interested in this especial room, and was very much pleased when, soon after my arrival, the house-party congregated there for tea.

The scene was a picturesque one. The contrast of the modern-garbed society people, their light laughter and gay chatter, with the dignity and grandeur of the old room and its antique furnishings, made an interesting picture. Everywhere the eye rested on carvings and tapestries worthy of a baronial hall, and yet the gay occupation of afternoon tea seemed not amiss in this setting. It was late in May, and though the great doors stood open to the terrace, the blaze of an open fire was not ungrateful.

My hostess did not herself preside at the tea-table, but left that to her step-daughter Barbara, while she graciously invited me to sit beside her and talk over old times.

"Remembering our schoolmate days, may I call you Anne?" I asked, taking my place by her on the davenport.

"I suppose I really ought n't to allow it, but it is pleasant to feel you are an old friend," she smiled.

"It is—though a bit hard to realize that the little school-girl I used to know is now mistress of all this grandeur."

"It is a fine old place, is n't it?" she returned, evading the personal equation. "And, perhaps because of its picturesque possibilities, I

pride myself on my house-parties. I adore having guests, and I invite them with an eye to their fitting into this environment."

"Thank you for the implied compliment," I murmured, but I brought back my gaze from my surroundings, to look more attentively at Anne's face.

It seemed to me I had caught a plaintive note in her voice, and I looked for a corresponding expression in her eyes. But she dropped her long lashes, after a swift glance that was a little roguish, a little wistful, and entirely fascinating. Suddenly I wondered if she were happy. My first impression of her husband had been that he was tyrannical and possibly cruel; I felt intuitively that Anne's light-heartedness was assumed, and covered a disappointed life.

But meantime she was chatting on, gaily. "Yes," she declared; "I select my house-parties with the utmost care. I have an exactly proper admixture of married people and unmarried, of serious-minded and frivolous, of geniuses and feather-heads."

"In which class am I?" I asked, more for the sake of making her look at me than for a desire for information.

"It's so long since we last met, that I shall have to study you a bit before I can classify you. But please be as frivolous as you can, for I want you to offset a very serious guest."

"I know; the long girl in pale green."

"Yes—is n't she Burne-Jonesey? That's Beth Fordyce, and she's the dearest thing in the world, but she has a sort of æsthetic pose, and goes in a little for the occult and such ridiculous things. But you'll like her, for she's a dear when she forgets her fad. The frizzy blonde lady next her is Mrs. Stelton. She's a young widow who's terribly in love with Morland, my stepson. To tell the truth, I invited her because I want him to find out that he really does n't care for her, after all. Then Barbara, at the tea-table, you know; she's exactly like her father, and when I married him Barbara was determined not to like me. But I am determined she shall; and of course I shall win out—though I have n't made any startling success as yet."

"So much for the women," I said. "Now tell me of your men."

"Well, you know my husband. He's distinguished-looking, is n't he? And though he's nearly sixty, that little alert air of his makes him seem younger. Morland looks like him, but they are not at all alike otherwise. Morland is handsome, but he is puffy-minded, and any woman can lead him by a string. For the moment, he thinks Mrs. Stelton is his ideal, but I intend that Beth Fordyce shall dethrone her. That tall man talking to Beth now is Connie Archer. He's a dear thing, but a little difficult. Mr. Van Wyck does n't like him; but, then, my husband likes so few people."

"Do you like Connie Archer?" I asked, looking directly at her.

She flashed me a glance of surprise, and then answered coolly, "I like him, but not as much as he likes me."

"Anne Mansfield Van Wyck," I said, looking at her sternly, "don't tell me you've developed into a coquette!"

"Nonsense!" she returned laughingly. "I'm not allowed to be anything of that sort. I'm a perfect Griselda of a wife, and my husband rules me with a rod of iron."

"Indeed I do," said Van Wyck himself, as he came toward us, and, really, Anne's speech had been made at him rather than to me.

"That's right, young man, give me your place," he said, as I rose; "and do you go and make yourself charming to the other ladies."

"Presently," I returned; "but first let me congratulate you on the find of this delightful old place. This room itself is a marvel. It might have been brought over from some English castle."

David Van Wyck looked around appreciatively; "It is a fine room," he agreed. "It was built later than the main house, and was originally intended, I imagine, for a ballroom. It has a specially fine floor, and that musicians' gallery at the end seems to indicate festivities on a big scale. To be sure, the whole scheme of decoration is too massive and over-ornate for these days, but it is all in harmony, and the gorgeousness of coloring has been toned down by time."

This was true. The lofty walls were topped by a wide and heavy cornice, with an enormous cartouche in each corner, massive enough for a cathedral. But the coloring was dimmed by the years, and the gilding was tarnished to a soft bronze. Most of the furniture consisted of choice old pieces collected by Van Wyck for this especial use, and it was plain to be seen that he took great pride in these, and in his rare and valuable pictures and curios.

"It is my room," he was saying, as he smiled benignly on his wife, "but I let Anne have her fal-lal teas here, because she thinks it's picturesque. But except at the tea-hour, this is my exclusive domain."

"You call it your study?" I inquired casually.

"I call it my study, yes; although I'm not a studious man, by any means. It is really my office, I suppose; but such a name would never fit this eighteenth-century atmosphere. I have my desk here, and my secretaries and lawyers come when I call them, and I have even profaned the place with a telephone, so that I'm always in touch with what the poets call the busy mart. Moreover, I confess I'm subject to short-lived fads and fancies, and this good-sized room gives me space to indulge my interest of the moment."

"He is, indeed," said Anne, laughing. "Last summer he was a naturalist, and this room was full of stuffed birds and dried beetles and all sorts of awful things. But that's all over now, and this year—what are you this year, David?"

To my surprise, Van Wyck's face hardened. A steely look came into his eyes, and his square jaw set itself more firmly, as he replied, in a dry, curt tone, "I'm a philanthropist."

The words seemed simple enough, and yet Anne's face also became suddenly serious, and, unless I was mistaken, a flash of anger shot from her dark eyes to her husband's grim face. But just then Archer and Miss Fordyce joined us, and Anne's smiles returned instantly.

"What mood, Beth?" she cried gaily. "You see, Honey, I've been telling Mr. Sturgis that you're æsthetic and lanky-minded and all the rest of it, and you must live up to your reputation."

"If I can," murmured Miss Fordyce, rolling a pair of soulful blue eyes at me; "but I'm only a beginner—a disciple of the wonderful mysticism of the——"

"There, there, Beth, cut it short," broke in Archer. "We know! The mysticism of the theosophical value of the occult as applied to the hyper-æstheticism of the soul by whichever Great High Muck-a-Muck you've been reading last."

The others laughed, but Miss Fordyce gave the speaker a reproachful glance, which, however, utterly failed to wither him.

"You'd be a real nice girl, Beth," he went on, "if you'd chuck mysticism and go in for athletics."

"You don't understand, Mr. Archer," began Miss Fordyce, in her soft, melodious voice; but Archer interrupted her: "There, there, now, don't come the misunderstood racket on me! I won't stand for it. Practise your wiles on Mr. Sturgis. Take him over there, and show him Mr. Van Wyck's Buddha, and tell him what you know about Buddhaing as a fine art."

I walked away with the pale-haired Miss Fordyce, but instead of talking about Buddha, we naturally fell into conversation about our fellow-guests.

"I can well understand," I said slowly, "that the occult would scarcely appeal to such a practical specimen of manhood as Archer. Who is he and what is he?"

"To begin with, he's a supreme egotist."

"Oh, I don't mean his character; but what does he do?"

"I don't know, exactly. I believe he's a mining engineer or something. But he's terribly in love with Anne, and he's clever enough not to let Mr. Van Wyck know it."

"But Anne knows it?"

"Of course, yes; and she does n't care two cents for him. But she's a born coquette, and she leads him on, for nothing but an idle amusement. I don't think a woman ought to do that."

"Doubtless you are right, Miss Fordyce; but is it your experience that women always do what they ought to do?"



"Very rarely," returned Miss Fordyce, laughing, and I began to realize that when the girl dropped her silly pose she was really charming.

I had n't yet had opportunity to converse with Barbara Van Wyck, and under pretense of a quest of fresh tea, I led Miss Fordyce toward the tea-table.

But just then a motor-car arrived, and a group of callers came in through the great portals of the study. The general confusion of introductions and greetings followed, and when it was over I somehow found myself standing beside Mrs. Stelton, the pretty young widow from whose toils Anne hoped to rescue Morland Van Wyck.

She was attractive in her way, but commonplace compared to Beth Fordyce or Anne. She chatted pleasantly, but her conversation was of the sort that makes a man's mind wander.

"Who is that striking-looking man standing by the window?" I asked. "We were introduced as he came in, but I did n't catch his name."

"Stone," she replied, "Fleming Stone. They say he is a detective."

"Stone!" I exclaimed. "Is it really? Detective! I should think he was! Why, he's probably the greatest real detective who ever lived! What is he doing here?"

"His home is in Crescent Falls," Mrs. Stelton informed me; "that is, his mother has recently come here to live in the village, and he, naturally, visits her. He is staying with her now."

"Is he a friend of Van Wyck's?"

"No, he has never been here before. He came with Mr. and Mrs. Davidson, Crescent Falls Village people, and I think he came principally to see the house. This room, you know, is famous."

"Not as famous as he is," I said, gazing at the man I so much admired, but had never before seen.

Fleming Stone was a man who would have compelled notice anywhere, and yet his appearance was entirely quiet and unostentatious. He was slightly above average height, of a strong, well-set up figure and a forceful expression of face. His hair was slightly gray at the temples, and his dark, deep-set eyes gave a strangely blended effect of unerring vision and kindly judgment. His manner was marked by a gentle courtesy, and his personal magnetism was apparent in every tone and gesture.

I longed to get away from the uninteresting widow and talk or at least listen to Mr. Stone. As this was not possible, I suggested that we both stroll across the room and join the group that surrounded him.

Though apparently not over-anxious, Mrs. Stelton agreed to this, and we became a part of the small circle that had formed around the great detective.

Great detective I knew him to be, for his fame was world-wide, and yet as he stood there drinking his tea with a careless grace, he gave only the impression of a cultured society man, ready to lend himself to the polite idle chatter of the moment.

He was looking at Anne Van Wyck, and, though not staring, not even gazing intently, I could see that his interest centred in her.

But this was not at all astonishing. I think few men were ever in Anne Van Wyck's presence without centring their interest upon her.

Her slender figure was exquisitely proportioned, and her small head, with its masses of soft dark hair, was set upon her shoulders with a marvellous grace. Her deep gray eyes, with long, curling, dark lashes, were full of fascination, and her small, pale face was capable of expressing such receptiveness and such responsiveness that one's eyes were drawn to it irresistibly. Anne's face was mysterious—purposely so, maybe, for she was intensely clever; but mysterious with the weird fascination of the Sphinx.

And as Fleming Stone's own deep eyes met those of Anne Van Wyck, in a glance that caught and held, it seemed as if two similar natures experienced a mutual recognition.

I may have been over-fanciful, but I looked upon Fleming Stone as almost superhuman; and though, before my arrival at Buttonwood Terrace, I had felt no special personal interest in Mrs. David Van Wyck, I was now conscious of a dawning realization that the Anne Mansfield I used to know had grown to a wonderful woman.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE TALE THE FAN TOLD

BUT though Fleming Stone's interest seemed to me to be concentrated on his beautiful hostess, he was courteously listening to Miss Fordyce's eager questions.

"Please tell us all about yourself, Mr. Stone," she was saying. "I never saw a real detective before, and they're awfully different from what I imagined! I thought they were more—more——"

"Unwashed," put in Connie Archer bluntly. "I am not myself acquainted with many of them, but those I have met are not in Mr. Stone's class socially, by any means."

"They're not in his class professionally, either," I declared, anxious to have Fleming Stone aware of my appreciation of his genius. "Mr. Stone is in a class by himself. His work is art, that's what it is."

"Thank you," said Fleming Stone, but in the smile he gave me there was a slight tinge of that boredom that masters always feel at compliments from tyros. "My art, as you call it, is my life," he went on, simply. "I do not study it, I simply practise it as it comes along.

And, after all, any success I may have had is merely the rational outcome of logical observation."

"Oh, don't depreciate yourself, Mr. Stone," said Mrs. Stelton, shaking a silly finger at him. "You know you are the greatest detective ever—Mr. Sturgis told me so. And now you must, you simply *must*, tell us just how you do it, and give us an example. Here, take my fan, and deduce my whole mental calibre from it!"

Although Fleming Stone looked at the speaker pleasantly, I was convinced that he felt, as I did, that it would be perfectly easy to deduce the lady's mental calibre without the assistance of her lace fan.

"Yes, do! What fun!" exclaimed Morland Van Wyck, who was standing at the elbow of the fair widow who had enslaved him.

But before Fleming Stone could reply, Anne spoke.

"That would n't be a fair test," she said, flashing a smile at Stone; and then her eyes curiously deepened with earnestness as she went on: "But I do wish, Mr. Stone, that you would do something like that for us. I have heard that you can tell all about any one, just from seeing some article that they have used."

"That is not a difficult thing to do, Mrs. Van Wyck," said Stone. "You yourself could probably gather a great deal of information from any personal belonging of a stranger."

"Oh, yes," returned Anne gaily; "if I saw a thimble, I might deduce a sewing-woman; or a pipe, a man who smoked. But I don't mean that—I mean the sort of thing you do. Please give us an example."

I fairly cringed at the thought of Fleming Stone being stood up to do parlor tricks, like a society circus; and so incensed was I that the line, "Butchered to make a Roman holiday," vaguely passed through my mind. But as I saw Anne's vivid, glowing face and her entreating eyes, I felt sure that no man on earth could deny her anything.

Stone appeared to take it casually. "Certainly, Mrs. Van Wyck," he said, "if it will please you. I have never done such a thing, except in the interests of my work, but if you will give me a personal belonging of some one unknown to me, I will repeat to you whatever it may tell me concerning its owner."

Though Beth Fordyce had said nothing during this conversation, I think she had never once moved her eyes from Stone's face. Her large and light blue eyes looked at him with an absorbed gaze, and she now spoke, tranquilly, but with a positive air.

"I will provide the article," she said. "I have with me just the very thing. Excuse me, and I will get it."

She glided away—for no other verb of motion expresses her peculiar walk—and disappeared through the door that led into the main part of the house.

"How lovely!" cried Mrs. Stelton, clasping her hands in delight. "And then, Mr. Stone, will you tell us how you catch robbers by their foot-prints?"

"Alas, madam," said Stone, "robbers are rarely considerate enough to leave their foot-prints for my benefit. I know they have the reputation of doing so, but they are sadly remiss in the matter, and show a surprising negligence of their duty to me."

"A sort of criminal negligence," murmured Archer, and Stone grinned appreciatively.

Miss Fordyce returned, and as she crossed the room, her pale green gown trailing, she came towards Stone with a rapt expression.

"I can help you," she said, "because I can evolve a mental picture of my friend, and project it to your mind by will-power."

"Pray don't trouble to do that, Miss Fordyce," said Stone, unable to keep a quizzical smile entirely suppressed. "You force me to confess that I have no knowledge of the occult, and depend entirely upon my own very practical common-sense and logic. What have you brought me?"

"A fan," answered Miss Fordyce, handing him one. "When I came up in the train this afternoon, a friend was with me during part of the journey. She lent me this fan, and I carelessly forgot to return it. As I know my friend very well, and you do not know her at all, it is a fair test."

"Fine!" said Anne Van Wyck, her intense eyes darkening with interest. "Beth, that is just the thing. Now, Mr. Stone, tell us of the fan's owner."

In her interest, Anne had moved nearer to Stone, and was breathlessly awaiting his words. The magnetic fascination of the woman is indescribable. I am positive that nothing on earth would have induced Fleming Stone to such an exhibition of his special powers of deduction, except Anne's compelling desire that he should.

I saw, too, though it was almost imperceptible, the effort Stone was obliged to make to detach his attention from her and concentrate it on the fan he was holding.

"To approach this matter in my usual way," he said quietly, "I shall have to ask permission to examine this fan under a magnifying glass. Have you one at hand?"

"Here is one," said Morland, bringing a fine one from his father's desk, at which action I fancied I saw a shade of annoyance pass over David Van Wyck's face.

For a few moments, Fleming Stone examined the fan through the glass.

In idle curiosity I looked at the faces of those grouped about. Mr. Van Wyck was clearly annoyed at the whole performance; though

Morland, under the influence of Mrs. Stelton, waited in delighted anticipation. Condron Archer looked supercilious and even murmured to me that he doubted the detective's powers in such a test. Miss Fordyce wore the exalted air usual to people who affect the mystic. But Anne, the centre of the group, was surely enough to inspire Stone's latent powers to the utmost. She waited with a suppressed eagerness that seemed to show implicit faith in the result, and she even touched the fan as she too scanned it for any enlightening details.

Fleming Stone returned the glass to Morland and the fan to Miss Fordyce. But it was Anne whom he addressed.

"The fan," he said, in a quiet, narrative way, "belongs to a lady with dark hair and eyes and rosy cheeks, and a very perfect set of small, white teeth. She is healthy and rather robust, of a vigorous but not an athletic type. She is strong of muscle, but of rather a nervous temperament. She is thrifty and economical by nature, but proud and fastidious. Usually of decorous habits, but likes occasionally a gayer experience. She is refined in her personal tastes and artistic in dressing, though fond of bright colors. She is kind and generous-hearted, unmarried, and past her first youth. She lives in or near the West Eighties in New York City, and her telephone number has recently been changed to 9863 Schuyler. She is fond of embroidering with colored silks, she possesses a gown decorated with black spangled trimming, and she wears a very heavy ring on the little finger of her right hand."

Stone finished as quietly as he had begun, but his listeners were more excited.

"I don't believe a word of it!" Mrs. Stelton was saying, and of course Morland agreed with her.

But Beth Fordyce was speaking, almost as if in a trance. "It is every word true," she said, with a far-away look in her eyes. "If you had known Leila, you could not have described her more perfectly! Don't try to make me believe you are not occult! You are positively clairvoyant!"

"Nonsense, Beth," said Anne impatiently. "Don't talk such rubbish."

"No," said I; "occultism is n't in it with this kind of work. Mr. Stone, that is the real thing. Are you going to tell us your processes of reasoning?"

"Of course he is!" cried Anne. "That will be the delightful part of it. David, did you ever hear anything like it?"

But though Anne turned her lovely flushed face toward her husband, she received no answering smile.

"It does n't interest me," he said coldly, and it is a tribute to Anne's tact and cleverness that she quickly covered this awkward speech

by turning back to Stone, and saying with utmost charm of manner, "Tell me all about it at once. I can't wait another minute."

"My dear Mrs. Van Wyck," said Stone, seeming to address her only, "I am very glad to explain, if it interests you. You see, it's very simple, for this fan has been used a good deal and naturally bears the impress of the lady who has used it. To begin with, it is a souvenir fan that was given to the lady when she dined in the restaurant of one of the large hotels in New York. It is of the inexpensive paper sort that is used for that purpose. But the name of the restaurant has been carefully scratched out, showing that the lady desired to keep and use it, but did not care to have her friends know where she obtained it. This shows that the lady is not amply provided with fans, and shows too that she does not often frequent the gay restaurants. The fan is bright scarlet and gold, and, since she liked it well enough to keep it, I assume that it suited her brunette coloring, and also that she is fond of bright hues. She is nervous, because the fan shows that she has often picked at it—both its edge and its tassel—and has even frequently bitten it with her small, sharp teeth. You see, these lacquered sticks show clearly all marks and scratches, and this bar of metal that holds the tassel is much bent, showing a vigorous and healthy type. The fact that the fan has been used a great deal shows a robust and rosy-cheeked young woman, though not athletic, for athletic girls never use a fan. She is refined and fastidious in her tastes, for I notice a faint perfume of orris and violet. She is generous, for she gave away a fan that she found useful. And I think neither a very young girl nor a married lady would so long preserve a fan of this sort."

"But how did you know where she lives?" demanded Miss Fordyce.

"That argues a lack of observation on your part," said Stone, smiling. "On this light corner of the fan is written, though faintly, 'New No. 9863 Schuyler.' The people living in the vicinity of West Eighty-Third Street have recently had a change in their telephone-numbers; and when she noted a new number on her fan, I assumed it to be her own."

"It is," said Miss Fordyce. "But how did you know about her spangled dress and that curious ring she wears?"

"The ring left a decided impression on the outer sticks of the fan near the end, in such a position that it could come only from the abrasion of a heavy ring worn on the little finger. Then, you see, this tassel, as is usual on this sort of a fan, is of fine silk floss. It is much fluffed and tangled, and has a tendency to catch anything it may. In it I find a portion of a small black spangle, and also two or three threads of fine embroidery floss, pink and green. Surely it is easy to infer that the lady uses embroidery silks frequently, and that the spangle is from one of her gowns."

"Don't take it so casually!" cried Anne, with an imperious nod at him. "You shall not so belittle your wonderful powers. Supposing it is only logic and careful observation, no one else could do it! That fan could not have spoken to one of us, because our logic cannot understand its language. Mr. Stone, I thank you for doing that for me. I know you did n't want to."

"It is n't my custom to deduce for social entertainments," said Stone, smiling at her; "but it is my custom to accede to the wishes of my hostess."

"Thank you for that, then;" and Anne smiled back at him. "Now, as a small return favor, may I show you over the house? Mrs. Davidson tells me you want to see it."

"Yes, I'm interested. I understand it is very old and was built by an eccentric."

"Yes, it was; though we bought it from its second owner. Mr. Sturgis, will you go with us?"

I was glad to accept the invitation, and as we started we were joined by Miss Fordyce and Archer, and also by Mrs. Stelton and Morland Van Wyck.

So it was quite a party which followed Anne through the doorway in the corner.

We found ourselves in a corridor that ran along the south side of the house. We passed a branch corridor bearing to the right, but Anne laughingly remarked that those were the apartments of herself and her husband, and we might not enter. So we went on into a beautiful music-room, through stately reception-rooms and drawing-rooms, and into a delightful library. There were billiard and smoking rooms near by, and then through the dining-room and sunny breakfast-room we passed out to the terrace and down into the gardens. I thought Stone seemed a bit disappointed that, though the house was old, it gave no hint of secret passages or dark staircases. No dungeons or anything that savored of mystery or crime. I chanced to be walking by his side, and I rallied him on this.

"It is so," he confessed. "From what I had heard of the house, I had fancied it more complicated in structure. It is very four-square."

"Yes, it is," said I, as we looked at it from across the wide expanse of lawn and garden.

"Curious construction, though," mused Stone, "and yet perfectly simple: one large rectangle, with smaller rectangles attached at its two back corners."

"Usually wings are built entirely across the ends," I observed.

"Oh, of course it was done to get the advantage of light. Wings at the ends would have darkened many of the rooms; but attached so, at the corners, there are windows all round each part of the house."

This was true, and, as I now recollected, every room was flooded with daylight.

"I must join my hostess now," said Stone, "and make my adieux. I am leaving to-night for Kansas City, where I'm about to investigate a most important case."

I longed to ask him about it, but I did n't feel privileged to do so. I did, however, express my pleasure in knowing him, and hoped that we might meet again. He very courteously gave me his card, bearing an address that he said would always reach him; an attention that I prized highly, though it might never fulfil its purpose.

We all returned to the study, and after the departure of the Davidsons and their distinguished friend, the talk naturally turned to Fleming Stone and his work.

"It's uncanny, that's what it is," declared Mr. Van Wyck, "and it gives me the fidgets to have the man around."

"I feel that way, too," said Connie Archer. "Why, I'm perfectly sure that he could see straight through my coat into my pocket and read a letter there that I would n't have anybody know about—not *anybody!*"

"Is it one I wrote you?" asked Anne, so roguishly that it was most apparent fooling, but her husband looked up and scowled.

"Yes," returned Archer, with a most obvious intent of teasing his host; "that last delightful missive of yours!"

At this, David Van Wyck frowned angrily, and Anne said, "Nonsense, Connie, such jokes are n't funny. What is the letter about, really?"

"It's a tailor's dun," said Archer, taking his cue; "but I would n't have Stone know it for anything. I expect he pays his bills before they're due."

"Of course he does," said Morland: "deduces the exact amount they're going to be, and sends off a check without seeing 'em."

"Well, don't ask him here again, Anne," said her husband. "I don't like him."

"He won't come again very soon," I volunteered. "He's off to-night for Kansas City."

"Good thing, too," growled Mr. Van Wyck. "And now you people may seek some other pasture. I expect some callers to-night, and I want to get this place into some semblance of a gentleman's study, instead of a picnic ground."

"Oh, David," said his wife, "are they coming to-night?"

"Yes, they are. My mind is made up, Anne, and I'd rather you would n't refer to the subject."

"It's an outrage!" said Morland, under his breath. He spoke to Anne, but his father heard it, and said, "None of that, boy! I suppose



I have a right to do as I choose with my own! And if you know when you're well off, you'll accept the situation gracefully. It'll be better for you in the long run."

Morland turned away, looking obstinate and sullen. I had no idea what it was all about, but when I looked at Anne her face was so tragic in its utter despair that I was startled. Surely I had been right in thinking her light-hearted manner was a cloak for some desperate, heart-breaking trouble. But in obedience to Mr. Van Wyck's command, we all left the study. It was not quite time to dress for dinner, so we strolled out through the great doors onto the terrace; and even as we left, the footmen were already clearing away the tea-things.

### CHAPTER III.

"YOU'LL BE SORRY IF YOU DO!"

FROM a certain terrace-landing which Anne called her "Sunset View," we watched the last glowing clouds dull and darken in the west.

A sort of depression had fallen on the party, because—as was perfectly evident—of Anne's mood. She was distraught and preoccupied; though now and then her dark eyes flashed with what was unmistakably anger.

"What's it all about, Anne dear?" said Archer, who let himself go a little when Mr. Van Wyck was n't present.

Instead of evading or parrying his question, Anne spoke out frankly.

"It's just this," she said: "David is going to give away all his fortune. He's going to build and endow a magnificent library for Crescent Falls Village—a library out of all proportion to a tiny little place like this."

"All his fortune!" I exclaimed, astounded. "You can't mean that, Anne!"

"But I do mean just that! He calls it philanthropy—that's his fad this year. If he were really philanthropic, it would be different; but he has become deeply absorbed in this ridiculous hobby for no reason at all except that he's always dashing into some new and crazy scheme. And he's so determined; he'll give away all his money, and then afterward he'll be sorry, but he can't get it back. He has had fads and foibles before, but though sometimes they were trying, they never involved such an amount of money as this."

"But, Anne," I went on, "you can't mean that he's going to give away all his money! How will he provide for you and his two children?"

"He says I've got to strike out for myself," growled Morland, who had been listening moodily, as with his hands in his pockets he leaned against the terrace-rail.

"Well, he's going to give half a million to the library," said Anne despondently; "and that's just about all he possesses. He says it's right to practise philanthropy and give away one's fortune while one's alive."

"Other good and great men have pursued that same plan," said Beth Fordyce, with one of her exalted looks.

"Yes," spoke up Barbara Van Wyck angrily; "but the other good and great men had many millions to start with. Father's going to give away all he has, except just enough for us to live on in a very small way. It is n't fair to us, and he has no right to do it, but he is simply immovable in the matter."

"I feel as Anne does," said Archer seriously. "If it were real, true philanthropy, it would be a noble deed; but I know Mr. Van Wyck, and he is always rushing suddenly and madly into some new project, which he as quickly abandons and regrets."

"Ah, Connie," said Anne, "if there were only a hope of his abandoning this! But when he regrets it, it will be too late."

"Yes, the committee-men are coming to-night, for the final acceptance of the deed of gift, or whatever you call it," said Barbara, in a tone of blended rage and despair.

I had thought Barbara Van Wyck was colorless, but in the intensity of her feelings her eyes flashed and the red rose to her pale cheeks until she looked like a veritable avenging angel. I had n't known she possessed so much energy, and I turned to her, saying hopefully, "Can't you persuade your father, at least, to delay it?"

"No; I've tried every argument I know of, and so have Morland and Anne. If Anne can't persuade him, nobody can."

Though this praise was grudgingly given, it was unmistakably earnest; and it was clear to be seen that, though Anne and her step-children were not congenial, and not even friendly, they had common cause in this impending catastrophe.

And I could not blame them. Such ill-advised and misplaced generosity was absurd, and seemed to me to argue Mr. Van Wyck's mind somewhat unbalanced. But as a comparative stranger, I did n't like to offer suggestions, or even comment very emphatically.

Mrs. Stelton, however, felt no such restraint. "It's outrageous!" she cried. "It's contemptible! I never heard of such a performance! If I were you, Morland, I should have my father adjudged insane."

"He is insane on that subject," muttered Morland; "but what can I do about it? If you knew my father as I do, you'd know that, insane or not, he will have his own way."

"Yes, he will," said Anne, sighing, and looking so adorably pathetic that it did n't seem possible any one could disappoint her as Van Wyck proposed to do.

"Won't he listen to you, Anne?" I asked. "Does n't he care for your comfort and happiness?"

"No," said Anne, and though she looked the picture of utter hopelessness, she showed also a cool reserve that warned me not to intrude too far upon her personal affairs.

"Of course he cares for Anne," broke in Archer; "but I tell you, he's out of his head! He does n't know what he's doing."

"He is n't out of his head, Connie," returned Anne gently, "and he does know what he's doing. I'm going to try once more, before the committee comes, to make him change his mind, but I have n't much hope. Come, people, we must go and dress for dinner."

Con Archer threw discretion to the winds and gazed frankly at Anne, as he said, "How can he refuse you anything? No man could, I know!"

Anne, though her color rose a little, did n't even glance at Archer, but, turning to me, walked by my side toward the house, chatting lightly on trivial subjects.

Later, as we gathered around the dinner-table, one could scarcely believe there was such an undercurrent of trouble among the Van Wycks. Our host was unusually bland and affable, Barbara was placid, and Morland was the debonair man of the world that society requires.

As to Anne, she was a marvel. In a dinner gown of pale yellow satin, which suited especially well her exquisite coloring, her wonderful hair coiled low, and her great eyes shining, she seemed animated by some unusual energy. She was roguish and dictatorial by turns. She was dignified one moment and softly pathetic the next. I could n't make her out. Either she had persuaded her husband to abandon his plan, or the matter was still undecided. At any rate, she could not have tried and failed, and still have shown this vivacity.

But I did not yet know my Anne. I sat next her, and dinner was not half over before she confided to me the news of her total failure.

"Not only did David refuse to listen to me," she said, "but he forbade me to speak to him again on the subject; and he spoke to me in such a way and in such language that I can never forgive him."

"Anne!" I exclaimed, for, though smiling, her smile was assumed for the others' benefit; and her low tones, heard only by me, were full of bitterness and desperate grief.

"Anne," I murmured involuntarily, "let me help you. What can I do?"

"Nothing," she replied. "No one can help me."

Perhaps it was the pathos of the situation, perhaps it was her marvellous beauty, enhanced by the dramatic moment, or perhaps it was inevitable, but I fell in love with Anne Van Wyck then and there.

Or, rather, it was an awakening to the fact that I had always loved her, even when we were school-time friends. Naturally, I had sufficient self-control not to disclose this secret even by a glance, but repeated in carefully modulated tones my desire and willingness to help her, if possible; and then, with an effort, I turned to talk to my neighbor on the other side. It proved to be Beth Fordyce, and her pale blue eyes lighted as she began to talk eagerly to me.

"Let us make a pact, Mr. Sturgis," she said. "I, too, want to help Anne, and surely together we can do something."

It was quite evident that she had overheard my words, and this annoyed me; and I answered that, with all the willingness in the world, I failed to see how Mrs. Van Wyck's guests could do anything in this matter. She took the hint, and changed the subject, but almost immediately after Mrs. Stelton's shrill voice was heard addressing the table at large.

"Well, I think you're perfectly horrid, Mr. Van Wyck!" she exclaimed, shaking a beringed hand at him. "To give away all that lovely money that ought to belong to Anne and Barbie and Mr. Morland!" The last name was accompanied by a coquettish glance in Morland's direction, but she went on, addressing her host: "Why, if a husband of mine did that, I'd—I'd shut him up on bread and water for a week!"

"Perhaps he would enjoy the rest, Mrs. Stelton," said Van Wyck, gazing at her blandly. The man had a way of saying these things, which, though rude, was rather enjoyable to disinterested hearers.

Good-natured Mrs. Stelton laughed. "Oh, what waggery!" she cried. "But if it brought him to his senses, I should n't mind. I've a notion to shut you up for a week, Mr. Van Wyck, and let you think this matter over!"

"Though I always enjoy your witty chat, my dear Mrs. Stelton, I must beg of you to drop this subject;" and this time Mr. Van Wyck's air of finality brought us a respite from Mrs. Stelton's silly observations. But Morland gave one parting shaft.

"If you do this thing, Dad," he growled, "you'll be mighty sorry!"

A silence fell. It was not so much what Morland said, but the quiet intensity of his tone, which seemed to convey a definite threat. Indeed, his father must have felt it, for he looked up quickly at his son; but he only said sarcastically, "I thank you for your warning," and then the subject really was dropped.

Anne resumed her gayety, though I now knew for a certainty it was all a pretense. Con Archer nobly helped her out, and chatted lightly and gracefully. Barbara continued to sulk in silence, but all the rest rose to the occasion, and only appropriate dinner-table talk was heard.

Coffee was served in the drawing-room for the ladies, while the men remained at table.

Perhaps from a sense of duty, Archer made one more effort.

"I say, Van Wyck," he began, "I know it's none of my business, but mayn't I suggest, as man to man, that you think this matter over a bit longer before making your decision? You know, to a disinterested observer, the gift you propose to make seems out of all proportion to its object; and I can't help thinking that on second thoughts you would agree to this yourself."

"Mr. Archer," said Van Wyck coldly, "the only one of your remarks to which I agree is your first one: that it is none of your business."

Condron Archer flushed, but as David Van Wyck's guests were not unused to his scathing speeches, this one was not openly resented; and Archer said nothing further.

And then, seemingly unable to control himself, Morland blurted out, "I say, Dad, you just *can't* do it!"

"Can't?" and the elder Van Wyck raised his eyebrows at his son.

"No, *can't!*" Morland went on, blindly angry now. "It's heathenish! It's a crime against your wife and daughter, to say nothing of me. I tell you, you can't!"

David Van Wyck's clear, cutting tones fell like icicles: "If you will be present, Morland, at the meeting this evening, I shall take pleasure in showing you that I can."

"You bet I'll be there!" and Morland looked almost like a belligerent boy as he met the cold stare of his father's eyes.

"I'm glad you accept my invitation; and now shall we join the ladies?" Rising from the table, we crossed the hall to the drawing-room; and perhaps four angrier men never wore the smiling mask of politeness.

Anne, seated in a carved, high-backed chair, made an exquisite picture, and she turned her beautiful, appealing eyes to her husband as he entered. David Van Wyck crossed the room straight to her. Placing his hands on the two carved griffins' heads that formed the arms of the chair, he leaned over the beautiful face upturned to his, and whispered a few words in Anne's ear. Then he lightly kissed her on the cheek, and, without a word to any one else, strolled out of the room toward the study.

What he said to her nobody knew, but Anne turned deathly white, and grasped the carved chair-arms as if in extremest agony.

I was uncertain whether to notice this and go to her assistance, or whether to keep up the farce of gay conversation in an endeavor to cover her agitation.

Morland gave his step-mother one glance, clenched his teeth, and, muttering, "Brute!" strode off after his father.

Without hesitation, Archer drew a chair to Anne's side, and, sitting down, took her hand in his.

But he erred, for Anne drew away her hand with a freezing dignity, and, rising, came over and sat by Mrs. Stelton.

And then I was surprised by another of Anne's absolutely inexplicable changes of mood. "What a heavenly brooch!" she said, smiling at Mrs. Stelton. "Florentine work, is n't it? I perfectly adore those things! I have one something like it, but a more conventional design. Don't you just *love* to buy things in Florence, or in Naples, or indeed any part of Italy? Italy is *lovely*, is n't it?"

Mrs. Stelton stared at this flow of inane talk, and I suddenly wondered if Anne were hysterical. I saw Archer move as if to approach her and then turn on his heel again, doubtless fearing rebuff. So I dared to venture, myself. "Mrs. Van Wyck," I said, "won't you come with me for a little walk on the terrace? I'm sure the cool air will be refreshing."

"Thank you," said Anne simply, and she went with me at once, draping the long train of her gown over her arm as we passed through the hall.

"You are very good," she said, a little wearily, as we stepped out onto the terrace. "How did you know I wanted to get away?"

I stifled an impulse to tell her that love helped me to read her thoughts, and said quietly, "I know you're troubled about that plan of your husband's, but let us hope for the best."

"There is no longer room for hope," she said dully. "Come, let us look in at the window."

Of course I followed her along the terrace to the windows of the great study. We could easily look in, and the deep colors of the stained glass prevented our being seen by those inside. And, any way, there was surely no harm in it. We saw Mr. Van Wyck and Morland, and three other men, who doubtless represented the committee.

"Yes," murmured Anne musingly; "there they are. Mr. Millar, Mr. Brandt, and Mr. Garson. I do not blame them. Of course, if David offers them this money, they'd be foolish not to take it. Mr. Brandt is the only one who has really over-urged in the matter. In fact, he suggested it to David first. Oh, Raymond, is n't it too bad!"

It was the first time she had called me by my first name, and I felt a thrill that blotted out all thought of Van Wyck or his money.

"And you must n't think," she went on, "that I'm selfish or ungenerous. If David were honestly a philanthropist, or if I were n't so sure that he'd regret this later, as he does all his erratic impulses, I'd feel different about it. But you see how it is, don't you, Raymond?"

"Yes, Anne, I see how it is." And though I spoke quietly, my heart was in a tumult.

"Oh, look!" she cried. "Morland is getting angry! He is quarrelling with his father!"

"Don't be alarmed," I said. "Morland can never get the better of that man. His father will not mind anything he says."

But it was evident that Morland had said something that his father did mind, for the elder man's temper was roused, and the two were certainly in deadly earnest. We could hear no word that was spoken, but the three visitors looked appalled, and were evidently trying to pacify the combatants.

"Come away, Anne," I said, sick at heart over the whole matter. "You can do nothing—why torture yourself by looking on? Let me tell you what I brought you for a gift."

"What?" she asked, but without interest.

I led her back across the terrace, as I told her of a beautiful piece of Venetian glass that I had brought for her. It was a gem, rare and valuable, but I would not have lauded it as I did except in an endeavor to distract her mind from the sight she had just seen.

"Where is it?" she asked, at last, faintly interested.

"I gave it to a footman when I came," I replied.

"Then he will have given it to my maid, and it will be in my room," she said; then, hesitatingly, "Don't think it strange, will you, if—if I don't tell David that you gave it to me? He is—he is peculiar, you know."

"Jealous, you mean," I said, laughing. "That does n't surprise me, and, truly, I'm glad of the fact that I can make him jealous!"

But I'm not sure that Anne heard this, so preoccupied was she with her own thoughts. We returned to the drawing-room, but it was not long before we all went to our rooms.

Anne bade me good-night on the stair-landing. "David and Morland are still shut up with that committee," she said; "and I am going at once in search of the gift you brought me. I know I shall love it——"

"For the sake of the giver," I interrupted, with a gay foolery that sounded as if I did n't mean it; but I did.

"Not at all," said Anne saucily. "I shall love it only for its beauty and intrinsic worth. And if it's Venetian glass, it must have both. I hope to goodness it is n't smashed!"

"I think not; I had it packed carefully. Good-night, Anne."

"Good-night," she said, her long lashes sweeping her cheeks; and then added, as an afterthought, "Raymond."

And as she disappeared, I wondered whether she had spoken my name from pure coquetry, or—what?

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE CRIME IN THE STUDY

WHEN I entered the breakfast-room the next morning, Archer and Morland Van Wyck were already at the table. The ladies, Morland informed me, breakfasted in their own rooms.

"And your father?" I asked, as I seated myself.

"Oh, Dad's usually the earliest bird about. His interview with that precious committee last night must have worn him out, and he's sleeping late."

"Then, the committee succeeded in their fell design?" asked Archer.

"Yes, they succeeded, but you mustn't say fell design. Dad was in no way coerced by those men. In fact, he——"

"Morland," said a low voice from the hall, and I looked up to see Anne standing in the doorway. She wore a rose-colored boudoir gown and a lacy cap. She was pale, and her small white hand grasped nervously at the portière.

"What is it, Anne?" said Morland, as we all rose.

"Your father—he—he has n't been in his room all night. He's locked in the study, and Carstairs can't get in."

Carstairs, Van Wyck's English valet, was behind Anne, and, though his expression was the conventional blank, his face was white and his eyes showed a vague fear.

"Whew!" exclaimed Morland. "Stayed in there all night! Must have fallen asleep after his committee meeting."

"But Carstairs has pounded on the door, and I've called and called," said Anne nervously. "Won't you come?"

Morland went at once, and Archer and I hesitatingly followed.

We paused as we passed through the drawing-room, but then, hearing Morland's loud calls, with apparently no response, we went on through the corridor that led to the study.

"Nothing doing," said Morland, as we approached; and though his tone was light, I saw that he was seriously alarmed.

"Can't we get in the other door?" I suggested; and Archer added, "Or a window?"

"Not through the windows, sir," said Carstairs. "They're all fastened inside."

"The outside door, then," said I, and Archer followed me as we went back through the corridor, out on the terrace, and tried to open the massive doors of the study. But we might as well have attempted to enter a locked cathedral. We tried to peer in at the windows, but the inner blinds were drawn, and we could see nothing. We returned to the house, where Anne and Morland were still endeavoring to get a response to their repeated calls.



"Looks queer," said Morland, shaking his head. "I'm afraid old Dad has had a stroke or something."

His tone seemed to me altogether too careless for the possibility he was suggesting, but my interest and attention were centred on Anne. She was trembling violently, her face was white and drawn, and her eyes had a haunted look, as of a terrible fear.

"We must get in," she whispered. "Something must have happened."

"Shall we break down the door?" I asked.

"Impossible," said Archer. "I doubt if six men could break in that door."

"That's right," said Morland. "These old doors are not the flimsy sort they make nowadays. We must pick the lock. Carstairs, go for Ranney, the garage mechanic. He can manage it. Tell him to bring tools."

"I wish you would go to your room, Anne," said Archer gently. "I'm sure it would be better."

"Yes, do," said Morland. "Where's your maid? . . . Here, Jeannette!"

And as the frightened maid appeared, Morland said, "Take care of Mrs. Van Wyck. Take her to her room and stay with her, and don't chatter to her."

The suite of rooms occupied by Anne and her husband were close at hand, and as maid and mistress disappeared, Ranney came.

"Get to work and open that door," ordered Morland. "Pick the lock or cut it out, whichever is necessary, but get us in."

Ranney picked the lock skilfully and rapidly, but still the door refused to open. "It's bolted," he said.

"Cut out the bolt," said Morland, on whom the suspense was beginning to tell.

Ranney obeyed, and, though marring and spoiling the beautiful door, he succeeded at last in throwing it back on its hinges, and we went in.

David Van Wyck sat in his desk chair, motionless, with a stain of blood on his shirt-front and waistcoat.

"Murdered!" exclaimed Morland, springing forward. "By some of that blamed committee! I'll be revenged for this!" As he spoke, he was feeling for his father's heart and pulse, though there was no possible doubt that the man was dead.

As we all stood in horror-stricken silence, my mind worked rapidly. "Hold on, Morland," I said. "It can't be murder, with this room locked up as it was. Your father did this himself."

Morland turned from his father and stared at me. "Suicide!" he exclaimed. "Absurd! Why should Dad want to kill himself?"

"As to that," put in Archer, "why should those men of the committee want to kill him? He was about to give them his money. And, as Sturgis says, no one could have murdered him and got away, leaving this room entirely locked on the inside. But something ought to be done. You ought to send for a—a doctor or something."

"What good could a doctor do now!" said Morland, looking a little dazed. "But I suppose it is the right thing to do. Carstairs, telephone for Doctor Mason and tell him to come at once. Don't tell him what for—there's no use of this getting all over until we know something more about it ourselves. Use this telephone here on the desk."

With difficulty, Carstairs controlled himself sufficiently to obey orders. Morland strode about the room. "It's so," he declared. "Every window is fastened with these enormous bolts, that are more than burglar-proof. And this outside door, as you see, is bolted like a barricade. There is no other possible entrance except the door at which we came in, and you all know how secure that was. Consequently, it must be that my father killed himself. But why should he?"

"And how did he do it?" said I, suddenly realizing that there was no weapon lying about.

"I don't know—don't ask me!" and with a groan Morland flung himself into a chair and buried his face in his hands. He seemed like a man who had utterly collapsed after passing through a terrible ordeal, and I said to Archer, "Let's leave him alone, and do what we can ourselves."

"What can we do?" said Archer. "We must n't touch anything, you know, until the coroner comes."

"Coroner!" I exclaimed. "Good gracious, does he have to come?"

"Is n't he always called, in case of a mysterious death?"

"Well, this is certainly a mysterious death, if ever there was one," I declared; and I could n't help looking curiously about, though Archer had warned me against touching anything. "At any rate, I know what killed him."

"What?" and Archer looked amazed.

"He was shot," I said, trying to hide my pride in my own discovery.

"How do you know?"

"Look on the floor. There, near his chair, are five or six small shot. See them?"

Archer stared at the floor and saw the shot almost at Van Wyck's very feet.

"But how on earth——" he began, when Doctor Mason came into the room.

His professional calm a little upset by this tragedy, the doctor's hand trembled as he examined the body of David Van Wyck.

"Suicide?" he inquired, as he completed his task.

"Must have been," said Archer, "as he was locked in here alone. How was he killed? What is the wound?"

"I don't know," said Doctor Mason, looking puzzled. "He may have been shot by a very small calibre pistol, or he may have been stabbed by some sharp instrument. You see, this small hole in his shirt-bosom is perfectly round; but there are no powder-marks."

I called the doctor's attention to the shot on the floor, and he looked more puzzled still.

"But he was n't shot with a shotgun," he said. "In fact, I incline to the opinion that he was stabbed with some sharp, round instrument."

"A hat-pin," I suggested.

"No," said the doctor impatiently; "there is n't one hat-pin out of a hundred made that could go through a stiff shirt-bosom without bending. But something like that, only rather thicker. You see the size of the hole."

"But may n't it be a bullet-hole?" said Archer.

"It may be. At any rate, we must send for the coroner. Wake up, Morland." The doctor had crossed the room and laid his hand not unkindly on Morland Van Wyck's shoulder. He shook him slightly, and Morland raised his white, drawn face.

"Must we have the coroner?" he asked. "Can't we call it a stroke or something, and not have any publicity? It's going to be awful hard on—on Anne."

Something in his tone made me realize Morland's feeling for his father's beautiful young wife. Doubtless he had concealed and even tried to overcome it, but now in his hour of trial his first thoughts flew to her. This explained to my mind his sudden collapse after his earlier attitude of bravado.

And then Anne came into the room. She had seen Doctor Mason arrive, and had considered it her right to know what had happened to her husband. She wore a simple white morning-gown, and her maid Jeannette hovered behind her with a vinaigrette of smelling-salts.

"What has happened?" said Anne, advancing steadily into the room. And then, as she saw the still figure of David Van Wyck, she looked at each of us in turn. Seeming to make a choice, she went to Doctor Mason, and, putting her hands on his arm, said simply, "Tell me."

"Mrs. Van Wyck," said the old doctor straightforwardly, "your husband is dead. We do not know exactly the means of his death, and I am afraid it will be necessary to put the matter into the hands of the coroner."

Anne's slender figure swayed a little, but she did not faint, and Doctor Mason gently steadied her, as he went on talking: "There is nothing you can do, Mrs. Van Wyck, and as your physician, I advise

you to go to your room and lie down. I assume that Morland will take charge of his father's affairs; and I think that Miss Barbara should be told at once what has happened."

I could n't help admiring the poise and practical good sense of Doctor Mason, nor could I help noticing that every one present showed self-restraint and composure. Though shaken, Anne was not hysterical, and she went away with her maid, in obedience to the doctor's orders. She said as she left the room that she would send for Barbara and tell her herself.

Doctor Mason telephoned for the coroner, and before he arrived a young man came in, who was a stranger to me.

"Is that you, Lasseter?" said Morland, looking up. "A tragedy has occurred, and my father has been killed, by himself or another, we don't know." Morland spoke mechanically, almost as if he felt it incumbent upon him to explain the situation.

I soon discovered that Barclay Lasseter was Mr. Van Wyck's secretary. He did not live in the house, but came every morning to the study. He was the tallest man I had ever seen; of slight build, with a dark, somewhat sinister face. I could n't help wondering if he were in any way implicated in the tragedy. Like the rest of us, he was self-possessed, and, though shocked, seemed anxious, principally, to do anything he might to help.

"Could it have been the work of burglars?" he said. "Has anything been stolen?"

"I don't know," I replied, as no one else spoke. "Do you miss anything?"

Lasseter glanced over the desk, and, taking some keys from his pocket, opened one or two drawers.

"Check-book and petty cash all right," he said briefly. "Have n't you looked in the safe?"

"No," said Morland; but he made no move to follow up Lasseter's suggestion.

Then the coroner came, and at the same time Barbara entered the room. The girl went straight to her brother, and sat by his side while they conversed in low tones. The coroner, whose name was Mellen, was a brisk and somewhat aggressive man. He went at once to the body of the dead man and began his examination. He agreed with the doctor that it was difficult to tell what had caused his death, except by an autopsy, but he at once began a search for the weapon. Archer and I joined him, but in the whole great room we could find no pistol nor any instrument of the nature of a stiletto.

"Then, it must be the work of an intruder," declared the coroner, "who took the weapon away with him."

"But that's impossible," I said; "for, to my knowledge, this room

was absolutely secure in its locks and bolts against any intruder. Nobody could possibly have gotten in."

"But it is equally impossible that a man could have killed himself and left no trace of the weapon," said Mr. Mellen doggedly.

"Could he have stabbed or shot himself and then thrown the weapon far from him?" asked Archer, looking deeply thoughtful.

"Death was almost instantaneous," said Doctor Mason; "but I suppose that by a spasmodic muscular effort he could have done that. However, the relaxed position of his hands and arms does not make it seem probable."

"But it is the only explanation," said I eagerly. "Come on, Archer, let us make a thorough search. Perhaps Mr. Lasseter will help us."

We began to look about the room, but Coroner Mellen seemed only slightly interested in our doing so.

"I don't think it's suicide," he declared; "and, though I'm not prepared to say how the murderer got in or out of this room, I believe that he did do so, and that David Van Wyck did not die by his own hands. Has anything been stolen?"

Lasseter opened the safe door, and I expressed surprise that it was unlocked.

"Often is," returned the secretary carelessly. "Most of the valuable things are in inner compartments, with complicated locks of their own. And, too, there never are burglaries in this peaceful village, and a man grows careless. But I can't see that any securities are missing. All these papers seem undisturbed."

"The pearls!" cried Morland, starting up suddenly. "Are they there?"

"Here is the box," said Lasseter, handing a jewel-case to Morland. "Open it yourself."

Morland opened it and gave a cry of despair, for the satin-lined case was empty.

"The pearls gone!" said Barbara, with an awe-stricken look. "Then, it was a burglar, after all."

"But it could n't be," I began, when the coroner cut me short.

"If pearls have been stolen, of course it was a burglar," he said; "and a professional cracksman, if he could get into this room and out again."

"But he could n't!" I declared emphatically, glancing at the windows and doors.

Still the coroner refused to heed me, and said abruptly, "What were they worth?"

"They were practically priceless," Morland stated. "My father had been collecting and matching them for years. It was a triple necklace

composed of three strands of the finest and largest pearls he could possibly procure. One hundred thousand dollars would be a conservative estimate of their value."

"And a man kept such jewels as that in an unlocked safe?" said the coroner incredulously.

"They must have been there temporarily," said Morland, as if puzzling the matter out himself. "And, too, I've no doubt my father intended to lock the safe before he left the study. But he was murdered first."

"Have you any theory, Mr. Van Wyck, how a murder could have been effected?"

"No," said Morland; "I haven't. I know, even better than the rest of you, how absolutely this room is protected against forcible entrance. And that is one reason why my father was sometimes careless about locking the safe. He knew no one could get into this room from outside. Of course, upon leaving it at night, he always locked the door that communicates with the house, and kept the key himself."

"There is no duplicate key?" asked Mr. Mellen.

"None," said Morland positively. Then Barbara Van Wyck made a suggestion. "If Father did—did kill himself," she said hesitatingly, "possibly he himself had taken the pearls from the case and hidden them."

I realized at once what she meant. If for any reason David Van Wyck had taken his own life, it would have been quite in keeping with his cruel nature to hide the pearls where his family might not easily find them.

Suddenly Lasseter made an announcement. He had been looking over the papers that lay on the desk, and he said abruptly, "The deed of gift is gone."

"What do you mean?" asked Coroner Mellen, alert for further information.

"Last night," said Lasseter, "I was here during a conference of some gentlemen from the village and Mr. Van Wyck. He made out to them a deed of gift of a large sum of money. However, he retained this paper after his visitors had left. He may have put it away after I left, myself, but so far I cannot find it."

"At what time did you leave?" asked the coroner.

"Almost exactly at midnight," returned the secretary.

"And where was the deed you speak of then?"

"Lying on this desk, in front of Mr. Van Wyck."

"Who was here when you left, besides Mr. Van Wyck?"

"Only his son, Morland."

"That's a lie!" exclaimed Morland, springing up. "When I left this room at midnight, you were here alone with my father!"

## CHAPTER V.

## THE INQUEST

To my surprise, the coroner abruptly cut short this conversation, and somewhat officiously cleared the room. He ordered us all out, and soon after he directed that the body of Mr. Van Wyck be conveyed to a bedroom, and then he locked up the study. He appointed the inquest, for that same afternoon at two o'clock, and went away to obtain his jurymen.

But just as he was leaving the house, Barbara Van Wyck detained him a moment.

"I think," said she, "that we ought to have a detective. It seems to me that it is all so mysterious and beyond our comprehension, that only a trained mind can get at the truth of the matter."

"Yes, indeed," exclaimed Mrs. Stelton, who was fluttering about. "Of course we ought to have a detective. Let us get the very best that money can procure!"

The coroner gave her a surprised glance, and I did not wonder, for the volatile little widow had assumed an air of responsibility and importance, quite as if she already belonged to the family. And Morland backed her up in her opinion.

"Yes, by all means let us get a detective," he said. "This is not going to be an easily solved mystery. For my part, I can't understand it at all. Do you know of a good detective, Mr. Mellen?"

There were no experienced detectives in Crescent Falls Village, but Coroner Mellen agreed to send for one to the nearest large town.

And so quick was the response that by noon we were taking into our confidence one Mr. Markham, who, I decided for myself, was clear-headed and logical in his methods, if not a genius.

Mr. Markham was somewhat self-assured and self-sufficient; he was perhaps even a trifle conceited; but he was quick and alert, and went about his work in a systematic and methodical manner.

The household was divided as to the necessity for his presence. Anne, from her own room, sent word that she wished neither to see nor to speak to him. Archer (and I knew it was because of Anne's attitude) also refused to confer with the detective. Lasseter, the secretary, abruptly took his hat and went home when Mr. Markham arrived, saying he would return for the inquest.

But the rest of us listened eagerly to the detective's opinions. Of course he was allowed access to the study, and of course he made a careful examination of the whole room. But nothing was found that would cast any light on the mystery, and, a little disappointed at Markham's non-committal attitude, we drifted away to other parts of the house.

The whole place was in a turmoil. Neighbors and village people were coming and going, everybody was making suggestions, and nobody in particular seemed to be in charge of affairs. Barbara and Morland quarrelled openly; Anne refused to see anybody; Archer stood around, moody and taciturn; the languid figure of Beth Fordyce could be seen strolling about the gardens, wringing her hands in picturesque despair; while Mrs. Stelton fluttered about everywhere, asking absurd questions and making herself a general nuisance.

I longed for a little talk with Anne, but decided not to bother her, so I employed myself answering the questions of the curious visitors who came and went.

The whole village was up in arms. And yet nobody seemed to care very much that David Van Wyck was dead. Their all-absorbing interest was the mystery of the thing. They positively gloated over the seemingly contradictory facts that a man had met his death in an inaccessible room and yet apparently not by his own hand.

Dozens of explanations were offered, some ingenious, some ridiculous; but I listened to them all, hoping that perhaps a chance shot might hit the truth. For I too was deeply interested in solving the mystery. Quite apart from my personal connection with the matter, I felt a stirring of the detective instinct to solve the problem. And not the least curious phase of it was that apparently nobody accused or even suspected any individual. The whole argument seemed to be that it must have been the work of an expert burglar, and yet that the entrance of such an intruder was impossible!

At two o'clock the inquest was held. The great drawing-room had been given over to this purpose, and the audience of interested villagers filled it to overflowing.

Coroner Mellen was short and sharp in his speech, and wasted little time in preliminaries. His jury was sworn, and his first witness on the stand, almost before I realized that the inquest had begun.

The valet, Carstairs, was the first one questioned. He answered the coroner in a nervous and agitated manner, and it was clear to be seen that he was exceedingly ill at ease. To me, however, this was only a natural result of finding himself implicated in such a tragedy.

"Tell the story in your own way," said Coroner Mellen, speaking a little more kindly, as he observed the man's demeanor.

"I went to the master's room this morning, sir, as I always do, and he was n't there, and his bed had n't been slept in. So as I could n't think of any place he might be, except in his study, I went there, sir, and it was locked, and I could n't get in. I knocked several times, but nobody answered; so I went and told Jeannette, and she told Mrs. Van Wyck."



"Who is Jeannette?" asked Mr. Mellen.

"She's Mrs. Van Wyck's maid, sir. And then the gentlemen came from the dining-room, and they ordered the door broken in, sir. We called Ranney for that."

"Never mind about that now; tell us of last evening. When did you see Mr. Van Wyck last?"

"When he was dressing for dinner, sir. And he told me then that I need n't attend him when he retired. He said he expected some visitors in the evening, and as he should be up late I need n't wait up for him."

"And did n't you?"

"N-no, sir."

"Why did you hesitate at that reply?"

"I—I did n't, sir."

"You did. What time did you go to bed yourself last night?"

"At—at about midnight, sir."

"And where were you all the evening?"

"I was down in the village. I went to a ball there."

"And returned home about midnight?"

"Why—yes, sir."

The valet did seem disingenuous, and I felt sure that the coroner doubted his truthfulness. But to my mind the man was merely confused by the questions shot at him.

"Did you see any of the members of the household on your return?"

"None but the servants, sir."

"You did n't see Mr. Van Wyck in his room or in his study?"

"No, sir; I did not."

This answer, at least, was given without hesitation, and, apparently satisfied, the coroner dismissed the witness.

Ranney, the garage mechanic, was next called. His testimony was straightforward, and he was entirely unembarrassed, and indeed seemed almost uninterested.

"Mr. Morland called me," he said, "and ordered me to pick the lock of the study door. Of course, with my knowledge of mechanics. I could do this; and as it was then bolted, he ordered me to saw out the piece of wood containing the bolt. This I did, and we opened the door."

Further questioning showed that Ranney, who lived in a cottage on the grounds, had retired early, and knew nothing of the tragedy until the door was forced open.

Next came the evidence of the doctor.

"I frankly admit," said Doctor Mason, "that I am puzzled as to the instrument which caused Mr. Van Wyck's death. I have made

an examination of the body, and I find no bullet or shot. I conclude, therefore, that he was stabbed with some sharp, pointed instrument which has left a small circular hole in the clothing and the flesh."

"Could it have been a hat-pin?" asked the coroner.

"No, it could not," declared the doctor, a little shortly. "I don't know why people are so ready to assume a hat-pin. As a matter of fact, a hat-pin is a most impracticable weapon. It would either bend double or break off if used for such a purpose. Nor was it a dagger—of any usual description. A dagger or a knife would leave a slit-like incision, and the mark in question is absolutely circular. I can only say that the weapon must have been sharp-pointed and round. Further than that, I do not know."

"Could the wound have been self-inflicted?" asked the coroner.

"So far as its position is concerned, yes; but it is improbable that a man could have sufficient force of nerve to stab himself in that manner, for it meant a sure, strong drive of the weapon. Also, it is improbable that after that thrust the victim could live long enough to draw out the weapon and hide or dispose of it. And I understand it has not been found."

"No," returned Mr. Mellen; "it has not yet been found, but it may be eventually discovered. It is your opinion, then, Doctor Mason, that David Van Wyck was not a suicide?"

"That is my opinion," returned Doctor Mason positively.

Next came Lasseter, the secretary. He told of the committee that visited Mr. Van Wyck the evening before. He explained that it was Mr. Van Wyck's intention to make a gift of half a million dollars for a village library, and that three prominent men of the village were a committee to accept this gift and superintend its disposal as directed.

This evidence caused a decided sensation in the audience. The library plan had been a secret until now, and the village people were astounded at the news. The coroner, however, did not pursue the subject, but turned his queries in other directions.

"When did you last see Mr. Van Wyck alive?" he inquired of the witness.

"I was present at his conference with the committee. Those gentlemen stayed until well after eleven. I then remained with Mr. Van Wyck until very nearly twelve, leaving for home, I should say, at about ten minutes before midnight."

"You left Mr. Van Wyck's study, and went directly to your home?"

"I did," returned Lasseter, and, though the answer was prompt, there was something about the man's voice that made me doubt his integrity. I had no reason to question the truth of his statement, but his wandering eye, a certain nervous working of his features, and his restless clasping and unclasping of his hands made me wonder whether

or not he had anything to conceal. But I also realized that the curt, almost aggressive manner of Coroner Mellen was enough to disturb the poise of the most innocent witness.

"You left Mr. Van Wyck alone in his study?"

"Not so. His son, Morland, was with him."

"I was not!" declared Morland, starting up from his seat not far from me.

Lasseter paid no attention to this interruption, and the coroner said, "Why does Mr. Morland Van Wyck contradict you, Mr. Lasseter?"

"I don't know," replied the secretary. "I repeat that when I left the study, I left Mr. Van Wyck and his son there, and I said good-night to both as I went out of the door."

"Did they respond to your good-night?"

"The elder Mr. Van Wyck said, 'Good-night, Lasseter,' in his offhand way, and immediately followed it with a remark to his son."

"What was the remark?"

"He said, 'You see, Morland, I have proved that I could carry out my intention, after all.'"

"And did Mr. Morland Van Wyck reply to this?"

"That I cannot say, as I was by that time outside the door and had closed it behind me."

"And you know nothing more of this matter?"

"The next time I saw Mr. Van Wyck was when I arrived here this morning and found him dead."

"You are positive that when you left last night Mr. Morland Van Wyck was in the study with his father?"

"I am positive."

There was a breathless silence. It was quite evident from the expressions on the faces of the audience that they had leaped to the conclusion that Morland Van Wyck had killed his father because of the plan for endowing a library. The villagers had become aware of the situation so suddenly, and had been so astonished at the munificence of the gift, that it seemed to them but natural that the Van Wyck family should resent this disposal of a fortune. But the thought of Morland committing a crime because of it appalled them, and looks of horror could be seen on every face. Morland Van Wyck was next called as a witness.

The sight of his livid, angry face seemed to render the coroner incapable of definite questions. "What have you to say for yourself?" he said.

"I have this to say," thundered Morland: "Barclay Lasseter lies when he says he left me with my father! The truth is, I left the study before Lasseter did. I left him there with my father, and if he states the contrary, he has his own reason for doing so!"

"You are implying——" began the coroner.

"I'm implying nothing!" Morland stormed on. "I am stating that I left my father and his secretary alone in the study. And I am stating nothing but that." He threw a defiant look at the secretary, who returned it in kind. Coroner Mellen was decidedly nonplussed. He seemed to fear an outbreak of personal hostilities between these two, and he said hastily, "Let us not pursue this further. One of you gentlemen must be mistaken. Mr. Van Wyck, have you any opinion or theory as to the cause of your father's death?"

I thought this rather clever of the coroner, for it would bring forth either an accusation of the secretary or a tacit implication of freedom from suspicion.

"My opinion is the only one possible to hold. My father was murdered by some evil-minded intruder. Presumably an expert burglar, because valuable jewels and valuable papers have been stolen."

"But how, in your opinion, could this intruder commit his crimes and get away, leaving the room securely locked and bolted on the inside, with no possible means of ingress or egress?"

"I'm not prepared to say *how* he did it; the fact remains that he *did* do it."

At this point a juryman made a remark. He was a shrewd-faced young fellow, and seemed imbued with a sense of his own importance.

"I wish to say," he began, "that we should like at least a suggestion as to how the murderer could have escaped from a room which we may call hermetically sealed."

Morland turned on him with an impatient gesture. "I hate that term 'hermetically sealed'! It is absurd, to begin with. That my father's murderer did get out of the room is proved by the fact that the instrument of death cannot be found. Therefore, since the murderer did get out, the room cannot be hermetically sealed, however much it may appear so."

"Can there be any secret or concealed entrance?" asked the alert juryman.

"No," replied Morland; "there is nothing of that sort in the house. And the study is really a separate building, only attached at one corner. Moreover, a burglar, however enterprising, could hardly know of a secret entrance of which we did not know ourselves! I tell you, Mr. Coroner, the murderer got away after the clever fashion of a cracksman who knows his business. How he did it, I cannot tell you; but he killed my father, stole the Van Wyck pearls, stole also the deed of gift which had been drawn up for the village library, and then escaped. Escaped, Mr. Coroner, and is therefore still at large! But he must be found, and no effort must be spared to find him!"

I looked at Morland in astonishment. He had assumed a rather

pompous attitude and seemed to be giving orders instead of giving evidence.

Coroner Mellen looked greatly disturbed. I felt sure that he was beginning to realize that the case was more than he could cope with. His limited intelligence could not grapple with the mysteries and contradictions that confronted him. But he must proceed, and so, with a baffled air, he dismissed Morland and called Barbara Van Wyck.

The girl took the stand with no apparent trepidation, and calmly awaited questioning.

"What can you tell us of this affair?" asked the coroner briefly.

"I can tell you no facts that you do not already know," returned Barbara, in even tones and with perfect poise of manner. "But I wish to advance a theory totally different from my brother's. To repeat the phrase already used, my father's study was 'hermetically sealed.' It was *impossible* for an intruder to get in and out again, leaving the room as we found it this morning. I myself examined the windows and doors, and I assure you that not only are the locks and bolts especially strong, but they are so complicated as to make it impossible to manipulate them from the outside. I hold, therefore, that my father was not murdered, but that he took his own life."

"And the robberies?" suggested the coroner.

"There were no robberies. The pearls have disappeared, but I am positive that my father hid them, and that they will yet be discovered. The deed of gift he doubtless destroyed himself, and then took his own life. My father was a very eccentric man, and it is my opinion that at the last his brain gave way, and for what he did he was not mentally or morally responsible."

There was something in the girl's words and manner that carried conviction. Her quiet, dignified composure was so different from Morland's belligerent insistence that the sympathy of all present seemed to go out to her. All over the room heads were nodding approval of her theory, and it seemed quite in keeping with the erratic career of David Van Wyck.

"But, Miss Van Wyck," said the coroner, and he seemed to speak with a certain diffidence, "if your theory is right, what became of the weapon used by your father?"

"I do not know, nor do I know what that weapon could have been. But I hold that that may yet be discovered, and I hold too that the absence of that weapon is not so inexplicable a mystery as is the question of how a burglar could escape from that room."

This was true so far as it went. We were confronted by two seeming impossibilities: if a suicide, the weapon could not have disappeared; if a murder, the murderer could not have made his exit from that sealed room. As theories, one might take one's choice!

"You think, then," Mr. Mellen was saying, "the missing pearls will yet be found?"

"I do not know," replied Barbara. "I think that my father hid them with the unnatural cunning of a diseased mind. For I am perfectly certain that my father was not sane when he took his own life. And if the same ingenuity which marked the manner of his death prompted his hiding of the pearls, it may well be possible that we shall never find them."

I looked at Miss Van Wyck in amazement. The girl I had thought so colorless and inane was proving possessed of an unsuspected strength of character. Her simple, logical statements carried great weight, and, though she left unsolved a principal point, many of her listeners showed a decided willingness to subscribe to her theories.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FURTHER EVIDENCE

MRS. VAN WYCK was next called to testify. If Barbara had appeared calm and composed, the same could not be said of Anne. She was white and trembling to the very lips; she tottered as she walked, and with an audible sigh she sank into the chair placed for her. But all this, at least to my mind, in no way impaired her strange, eerie beauty. Her large gray eyes looked almost black against the whiteness of her pallor, and as she swept a mournful, unseeing glance round the room, I endeavored to intercept her gaze and give her a nod of sympathy and help. But she did not look at me, and, clasping her hands in her lap, prepared to meet the ordeal of the coroner's questions.

Mr. Mellen looked at her for a moment before he spoke, and his hard face took on a slightly softer expression at the sight of her evident distress.

In what he doubtless meant to be a gentle voice, he said, "When did you last see your husband alive, Mrs. Van Wyck?"

To my surprise, Anne showed a decided agitation. She clasped her hands tightly to her breast, and in a choked, almost inaudible voice she replied, "When he left me after dinner, to go to his study."

"He was then in good health and spirits?" asked Mr. Mellen, and a more inane question I never heard. It seemed perfunctory, as if the man scarcely knew how to broach the subject.

For a moment Anne simply stared at her questioner, as if trying to control her voice. Then she said, "My husband was in perfect health, and—yes, I think I may say he was in good spirits."

"What were his last words to you as he left you?"

If this were a random shot, it was certainly a peculiar coincidence. For we all remembered how, as he left the room, David Van Wyck had whispered to his wife something that had caused her the deepest emotion.

Anne's great eyes looked at each of us in turn. After the briefest glance at the others, she gazed longer at Archer. It may have been my imagination, but I thought he gave to her an almost imperceptible negative shake of his head. She looked frightened, and then her glance met mine. I so feared that any appearance of secrecy on her part would be prejudicial to her, that I nodded my head affirmatively, meaning for her to answer the question.

"Must I tell that?" she asked in a pained voice.

"Yes," said Mr. Mellen; "especially if it has any bearing on Mr. Van Wyck's death."

But Anne did not hear the coroner's words. She was nerving herself for her reply, and she said in a low voice, but distinctly, "As he left me, my husband whispered to me that he should give the Van Wyck pearls as well as his gift of money to the library committee."

A wave of indignation swept over the audience. Anxious as the villagers were for the gift of the library, not one of them would have wished Anne Van Wyck's jewels sacrificed in its cause.

Elated by the sensational answer, the coroner continued. "Did he say anything more?" he inquired.

"Must I tell that?" Anne scarcely breathed, her face as white as the handkerchief she held.

And the coroner said inexorably, "Yes."

Had Anne looked toward me then, I should have shaken my head, for I feared from her expression that the revelation would be a startling one. She looked dazed, she spoke almost as one in a trance, but she said clearly, "He said, 'Now don't you wish I was dead?'"

Doubtless it was unconscious and involuntary, but Anne had reproduced almost exactly the jeering tones of David Van Wyck's sarcastic voice, and not one of us doubted that those were the very words and the very inflection that had sounded in her ear as he had whispered to her just before leaving the drawing-room. I well remembered the agonized expression on her face as he turned away from her, and I knew that at this moment she was vividly seeing a picture of the scene.

The audience fairly rustled with this new sensation. The coroner seemed spurred, and with great enthusiasm continued his catechising.

"Why did he say that?" he said bluntly. "Had you wished him dead?"

A murmur of indignation was heard from the audience, and both Archer and Morland started as if about to protest.

But Anne raised her clear eyes to the coroner's face, and said coldly, "No, I had never wished such a thing."

"Why, then, did he speak that way?"

"Mr. Van Wyck was quick-tempered and very sarcastic of speech," she replied. "I can only explain his remark by assuming that it was prompted by anger and sarcasm."

"Mr. Van Wyck was angry, then?"

"Yes, he was angry."

"At what?"

"He was angry because the members of his family were opposed to his plan of giving away practically all his fortune to a public institution."

"And then Mr. Van Wyck left you, and you never saw him again alive?"

"That—that is so."

Except for a slight hesitation, the statement was direct, but it was manifestly untrue. Anne's eyes fell, the color came and went in her cheeks, her foot tapped nervously on the floor, and she was rapidly tying her handkerchief into knots. A more agonized, indeed a more guilty, demeanor could not have been manifested.

At that moment my eyes met hers, and it flashed across me that she and I had looked in at the window of the study and had seen Mr. Van Wyck in colloquy with the committee. Perhaps it was telepathy that carried the same thought to her, for she said suddenly, and I know she spoke truly, "Oh, yes, I did see him again after that! I was walking on the terrace later, and I saw him through the study window, talking with his visitors."

"At what hour was this?" inquired the coroner, as if the exact time of the incident were the turning-point of the whole case.

"I don't know," returned Anne carelessly. "Perhaps about half-past nine or quarter of ten, I should say."

Mr. Mellen looked a little crestfallen, as if an important bit of evidence had gone wrong. To my mind, he certainly was a block-head, but, after all, he was merely there to ask questions, and, if the jurymen desired, they could supplement his inquiries. I glanced at the detective, Markham, to see how he took it. He was exceedingly attentive to what was going on, and sat with his head slightly forward and his eyes alert, apparently gleaning more information than was offered by the mere spoken words.

"And then," pursued the coroner, "after that glimpse through the window, you never saw your husband again alive?"

Anne answered this in the negative, but so low and uncertain was her voice that she was obliged to repeat it twice before the coroner was satisfied with her reply. I felt a vague alarm. If Anne were



speaking the truth, why should she act so strangely about it? And if, by any chance, she was not veracious, she must know that her manner was unconvincing. I had no interest in any one else who might be implicated in the tragedy, but my heart cried out, "Anybody but Anne!"

"At what time did you retire, Mrs. Van Wyck?" went on the questioner.

"I went to my room about half-past ten o'clock."

"And you retired then?"

"I did not. I read for a time, and wrote some letters, and went to bed about midnight. Or perhaps it was later—I dare say it was one o'clock."

"Are you not sure?"

"No, I didn't notice the time. Perhaps my maid can tell you. She was with me."

So casual was Anne's manner now that the coroner seemed to realize his questions were not of particular importance, and he tried a new tack.

"Was your husband kind to you, Mrs. Van Wyck?"

Anne stared at him coldly for a few seconds, and then spoke with great deliberation: "I decline to answer such a question, and I'm sure you are overstepping your rights in asking it."

Her manner even more than her words abashed the coroner, but to cover his chagrin he became insistent. "It is necessary that I should know if there was harmony between you," he declared. "I regret that the circumstances make it necessary for me to press the question."

Anne's eyes flashed. Her agitation was gone now, and her poise and calmness seemed to disconcert her inquisitor even more than her embarrassment had.

"There was perfect harmony between us," she said, holding her head proudly and looking straight at the coroner, "with the exception of this matter of the library. I tried to dissuade my husband from his intent, for his own sake quite as much as for my own, for I felt sure he would regret such quixotic generosity. But he was determined to proceed in his plan, in spite of my protests."

"And at the last moment he decided to add the valuable jewels to his gift?"

"Yes; his words to me last evening were the first intimation I had had that he meant to give away the Van Wyck pearls."

"Had you any reason to doubt your husband's sanity?"

"None, except in this matter of the library gift. Nor do I call that insanity; but rather a monomania which possessed him temporarily."

"Do you think your late husband hid the pearls, or do you think they have been stolen?"

"I can form no opinion, as my husband's death is so wrapped in mystery. He may have secreted the pearls or they may have been stolen by an expert burglar. Personally, I have no theories on the subject. It is all utterly mysterious to me."

Anne passed her hand wearily across her brow with a gesture of exhaustion. I think this roused the coroner's sympathy, and he excused her from further questioning.

She was succeeded by the three men of the committee, who had been with David Van Wyck the night before.

Their testimony was just what might have been expected. They had met with Mr. Van Wyck for the purpose of accepting his gift. The necessary papers had been drawn but not signed. For technical reasons, they had been left overnight in the possession of Mr. Van Wyck, who had said he would put them in his safe. They declared that no mention had been made of pearls or jewels. The gift had been only money. The men of the committee testified that they had left at about quarter past eleven, and that the Van Wycks, father and son, and the secretary, Mr. Lasseter, had bidden them hearty and pleasant good-nights. These gentlemen of the committee were extremely regretful that the deed of gift was missing, and, indeed, they seemed to allow that regret to occupy their minds almost to the entire exclusion of the more tragic happening. But, I reasoned, they were only slightly acquainted with David Van Wyck, and even that acquaintance was not of a friendly character. Perhaps, then, it was not to be wondered at that they felt more keenly the loss of the projected gift than the loss of its giver.

Next to give evidence were the guests of the house. Mrs. Stelton seemed almost to enjoy the importance of being questioned as a witness, and answered volubly and with an evident intention of making a good impression on the audience. She spoke to them rather than to the coroner, and showed a certain personal interest that was clearly meant to imply that she was or would some time be a permanent member of the Van Wyck household. And yet, though she cast frequent glances at Morland, they were not always responded to, nor did he seem absorbedly interested in what she was saying. Then, too, her testimony was of no importance whatever. She could tell nothing that was not already known, and her opinions were absolutely valueless.

She was soon dismissed, and Beth Fordyce took her place. But the girl also was an unimportant witness, and, save for one thing, said nothing worth listening to.

But, whether inadvertently or not, she repeated a remark which Morland had made to his father at dinner the night before. This

speech was to the effect that Mr. Van Wyck would be sorry if he carried out his plan. I could n't believe that Beth intended even to cast a shadow of suspicion in Morland's direction, but, to the eager crowd waiting for a straw to show which way the wind blew, this speech was indicative. And yet, quite unconscious, apparently, of having said anything by way of suggestion, Beth took her seat, placid and unruffled.

But to Morland, evidently the shaft had struck home. He remembered he had said that to his father, he realized that it might react against him. I thought of this, too, and then I remembered that Lasseter had sworn that he had left Morland alone with his father, and Morland had given him the lie!

But already Archer was testifying. The gist of his evidence was practically the same as the others, but he related it in a concise, straightforward way that held the attention of his hearers. He said that he had said good-night to the ladies at about half-past ten the night before, and that then, in company with me, he had gone to the smoking-room, where we stayed for perhaps half an hour, both going to our rooms at about eleven o'clock. He then told of our meeting again at the breakfast-table, and of Anne's coming to the dining-room to tell us of Mr. Van Wyck's non-appearance. Of course the rest of his story was practically a repetition of the others.

"Have you any theory regarding the crime?" asked Mr. Mellen, and the oft-repeated question took on a new interest as Archer said thoughtfully:

"It's hardly a theory, but I should like to suggest an idea that may or may not be plausible."

"What is it?" asked the coroner, with interest.

"I'm afraid it will sound absurd," said Archer slowly and seriously; "but it is the only explanation I can think of, which would be even a possible solution of the mystery. Though I'm not a detective, nor can I deduce facts from circumstantial evidence or clues, yet this possibility I speak of is merely an adaptation of a story I once read. In this story, a well-known work of fiction, a young woman was found murdered; and the weapon could not be discovered, although it had left a small, round hole."

Intense interest was manifest all over the room. Necks were craned to get a better view of the speaker. The listeners fairly hung on his words, and many felt that the mystery was about to be solved.

"In a word," went on Archer, "the weapon used was a sharp, slender icicle. As you may readily understand, it performed its fatal deed and then melted, leaving no trace. As you can see, this is not only possible, but both credible and plausible. At this season there are no icicles, but I offer, merely as a suggestion, that if Mr. Van Wyck's

death is a suicide, may it not be that the weapon was an icicle, shaped, let us say, by his own hand, from a piece of ice taken from the water pitcher."

"By Jove!" The whispered exclamation came from Lasseter, the secretary. He was staring at Archer, and muttering beneath his breath. "He's struck it!" he declared. "That's the only solution, and it must be the right one! Clever fellow!"

"He did n't deduce it," I whispered back to the secretary, for, to tell the truth, I was a little jealous that I had n't thought of it myself; for I, too, had read the book in question. "He merely remembered having read of such a thing."

"All the same, he's right," returned Lasseter; "and I wish I'd thought of it!"

The coroner was greatly impressed with this new idea. He turned to Doctor Mason and asked his opinion.

The old doctor looked thoughtful. "I would n't say it was impossible; but you must remember, gentlemen, the hole left by the weapon in this case is small and perfectly round. Would it not be difficult to make, artificially, a smooth, round icicle, strong enough to pierce clothing and flesh, and strike the heart with a fatal blow?"

"It would be difficult," said the coroner, "but I must admit it seems to me the only solution. By the process of elimination, we *must* conclude that this is the truth."

"Rubbish!" exclaimed the detective, Markham, who had scant patience with the coroner's pompous manner. "Consider the facts. Let us suppose a pitcher of ice water had been brought into the room. Was it?" he looked round inquiringly.

"Yes," said Morland; "Father rang for it, and the butler brought it in."

"At what time?"

"About ten o'clock, I should say."

"Well," triumphantly went on the detective, "then I hold that after twelve o'clock there would not be sufficient ice left in the pitcher from which to make this deadly icicle!"

Doctor Mason nodded his head, and, indeed, we all felt that the icicle theory was rather untenable.

"Well," said Archer, "it is merely a suggestion toward the explanation of the mystery. It may or may not be the correct solution. But what seems to me more important is to learn who was the last person to see Mr. Van Wyck alive. The absence of that deed of gift seems to me a very peculiar feature. A burglar would take pearls or money, but he would have no reason for taking that deed."

The coroner looked thoughtful. "If Mr. Van Wyck was murdered," he said, "there must have been a motive for the deed. It is true that

a burglar would desire only money or valuables. We must conceive, then, the deed being done, that the murderer—if it is a murder—must have been some one interested in keeping Mr. Van Wyck's fortune away from the library."

## CHAPTER VII.

## ONE OF OURSELVES!

THE coroner had only put into words what everybody present had been uneasily thinking. The missing deed seemed to prove that the murderer was one of the household. For who, except the members of the family, would care whether Mr. Van Wyck gave away his money or not.

Of course my glance flew straight to Anne, to see how she took this blow. She sat very still, and her face was white even to the lips. I could see it was only by a brave exercise of will-power that she kept herself from collapse. Morland looked angry and belligerent. He glared at Lasseter, and the secretary responded with a stare equally unfriendly. Barbara looked horror-stricken. She seemed about to speak, and then shut her lips tightly, as if determined to say nothing at this crisis. Again my heart cried, "Anybody but Anne!"

I was unable to keep still. "Nonsense!" I exclaimed. "You are theorizing without data. Your implication is unwarranted and false."

The coroner looked at me, not reprovingly, but as if deeply interested. Then he dismissed Archer from the stand, and called on me for my evidence.

"I can tell you nothing in the way of facts that you do not already know," I said, "but I wish to say that I entirely coincide with Miss Van Wyck's opinion that her father ended his own life. It is not incredible that his very erratic mind gave way at the last. Nor is it surprising that he should destroy the deed and hide the pearls under stress of sudden insanity."

"And what is your theory regarding the manner of his death?"

"I have no definite theory; but I wish to call attention to the fact that I found several shot on the floor at Mr. Van Wyck's feet."

My statement produced quite a sensation in the audience; for the suggestion of shot seemed to imply at least a possible method of the crime.

But the detective, Mr. Markham, interrupted me and said quietly: "It is not worth while, Mr. Coroner, to waste time in consideration of the shot. There is a small receptacle on Mr. Van Wyck's desk, filled with that same shot, used as a pen-cleaner. I observed that the shot found on the floor was the same, and I have no doubt it was spilled by accident."

The Coroner turned to Doctor Mason and inquired if Mr. Van Wyck's death could have been brought about by shot.

"No," replied the doctor positively. "I probed the wound and found no bullet or shot. David Van Wyck was stabbed, and the weapon was afterward withdrawn. I cannot subscribe to the icicle theory, though I do not say it would be impossible. But the deceased was most assuredly not shot."

I felt crestfallen and a little ashamed. For, having picked up the shot, I should have noticed the same among the furnishings of the desk. The coroner asked me only a few more questions, of relative unimportance, and was about to dismiss me when he added, as an afterthought, "When did you last see Mr. Van Wyck alive?"

It was the query I had been dreading. But there was nothing for it except to tell the truth. Involuntarily, I glanced at Anne, but her eyes were cast down, and she paid no heed to me.

"Of course I was with him at dinner," I said, "and after dinner he left us to go to the study. After that I saw him a moment when from the terrace I glanced in at the study window."

"You glanced in? For what purpose?"

"For no particular purpose. Mrs. Van Wyck and I were strolling by, and merely chanced to look in."

"What was Mr. Van Wyck doing?"

"Conferring with the committee from the village, I assumed. We could not hear his words, of course, nor did we try to."

"What was Mr. Van Wyck's apparent attitude?"

"He seemed to be angry," I felt myself obliged to say.

"Angry at the gentlemen of the committee?"

I was indeed sorry to give this evidence, but I was forced to do it. To decline to answer would be absurd, and, after all, everybody knew that Morland and his father were at odds in the matter. So I said, "No, he was addressing his son."

"Ah! And he seemed to be angry?"

"He did."

"Then, they were quarrelling?"

"As to that, I cannot say. I merely tell you what I saw: that Mr. Van Wyck was addressing his son, and that he had the appearance of being angry."

The coroner excused me then, and, turning to Morland, said directly, "Did you quarrel with your father last evening?"

"I told him what I thought of his procedure," replied Morland. "I make no secret of the fact that I tried my best to persuade my father not to give away his fortune."

"And do you persist in your assertion that when you left your father at midnight his secretary was still with him?"

"I do," said Morland firmly.

"And you deny this, Mr. Lasseter?"

"I do," replied the secretary, quite as positively.

This deadlock was a peculiar feature of the situation. Both men could not be telling the truth, and, considering Morland's greater reason for desiring that the great gift should not be made, perhaps it was not strange that many of the audience began to turn upon him the eye of suspicion.

Everybody now had testified, and the coroner began summing up.

"I have had no direct evidence," he said, "that would tend to cast suspicion on any person. I think we must all admit that since the room was locked and barred on the outside, Mr. Van Wyck's death was not a murder. I think the erratic mind of the deceased gives us reason to assume a sudden attack of insanity. I think we must agree that if it was suicide, there was no possible means or method, unless we accept the really clever suggestion of the icicle."

At this point Mr. Markham interrupted the coroner.

"I think we may discard the icicle theory," he said, "as I have found the weapon with which the crime was committed. Here it is."

Stepping forward, he laid on the table in front of the coroner a small, sharp implement partly covered with brownish stains.

The coroner looked at it as if he could scarcely believe his eyes. "What is it?" he said, picking it up gingerly.

"It is an implement used in embroidering," said Mr. Markham. "It is called a stiletto, and it forms part of every lady's sewing equipment."

The audience were fairly breathless with suspense. Swayed by the slightest hint, they were quite ready to drop suspicion of Morland and turn it toward the women of the family.

"Where did you find this?" said the coroner.

"In Mrs. Van Wyck's dressing-room," returned the detective.

"Is it your property?" asked the coroner of Anne.

"Yes," she replied, after a glance at the stiletto. "It belongs in my work-basket."

"Can you account for these stains upon it?" pursued the coroner, and he showed far more agitation than did the woman he addressed.

"I cannot," she replied coldly. "I have never used it except for embroidery purposes."

Now, of course if Anne Van Wyck had used this implement for the purpose of killing her husband, she could scarcely be expected to say so. And so her flat denial carried little weight.

"Where in the dressing-room was it found?" asked the coroner.

"Hidden beneath a pile of towels in a cupboard," replied Mr. Markham.

Whereupon the coroner inquired of Doctor Mason if the stiletto would have been a possible instrument of death.

"Mr. Van Wyck was stabbed with some weapon about that size," replied the doctor gravely.

"And are these brownish stains upon it stains of blood?"

"That I cannot tell without subjecting them to analysis," returned the doctor, but his hearers were impressed with the thought that he was endeavoring by delay to give Anne the benefit of the doubt.

"I think," went on the coroner, in a hesitating manner, "that this piece of evidence must change the trend of our inquiries. Mrs. Van Wyck, did you or did you not put this stiletto in the place where it was found?"

"I did not," replied Anne quietly.

"Do you know who did place it there?"

"I do not."

"Of course," said the coroner, "the discovery of this instrument in this condition does not necessarily implicate its owner. Other hands might have used it and secreted it where it was found, perhaps with the intent of diverting suspicion. Who has the care of your dressing-room, Mrs. Van Wyck?"

"My maid, Jeannette."

"Let her be summoned," the coroner ordered.

But Jeannette was nowhere to be found. She had disappeared, no one knew when or where. To the minds of most present, this looked suspicious. It was easily to be seen that the villagers were quite ready to denounce Anne Van Wyck as the slayer of her own husband. Anne had never been popular with the village people. Clever and highly strung as she was, she had found little in common with their ordinary and, to her, stupid pursuits. And now they were quite ready to believe the worst of her.

Anne herself looked supercilious and scornful. "I have no notion where my maid has gone," she stated, "but I am positive that she is in no way implicated in this tragedy. She may have gone on some errand, and will doubtless return soon. I am entirely sure she can give you no information or enlightenment as to the crime that has been committed in this house, any more than I can."

"And you can tell us nothing, Mrs. Van Wyck, more than we know already?" the coroner said, floundering a little in the complexity of his emotions.

"No," replied Anne quietly.

The coroner fidgeted uneasily, and then said, "It is impossible to carry matters further without the testimony of the maid, Jeannette. I therefore declare this inquest adjourned for one week, by which time I trust we may have further and more definite evidence."



The jury, to a man, looked decidedly relieved, but it was a rather disappointed audience that filed slowly out of the house. To my mind, the coroner's reason for adjourning the inquest was a pretext. I think he felt sure that if the jury had had to decide then and there, they must have accused Anne of the murder. And the evidence was certainly incriminating. While I felt, with every fibre of my being, the wish and desire to hold Anne innocent, yet there was something terribly convincing of guilt in the fact of that hidden stiletto. But again, the absurdity of it! How was it humanly possible, even granting that Anne had used the fatal instrument, for her to leave the study so securely locked and bolted on the inside? But that was the old question, and the one to which no one had an answer. But how I hoped the answer might incriminate anybody but Anne!

The days went by slowly. The funeral was held, and with appropriate obsequies the body of David Van Wyck was buried. The house guests had all chosen to remain at Buttonwood Terrace, in response to Anne's urgent invitation that we should do so. She seemed to have a dread of being left alone with her step-children, and it became more and more evident that matters were far from harmonious between her and David Van Wyck's son and daughter.

The day after the funeral I had a long talk with Mr. Markham.

"There is no doubt in my mind," he declared, "that Mrs. Van Wyck is the guilty party. We never can fasten the crime upon her, for it cannot be explained how she left the room locked up. But it must be that she did do so in some clever way."

"But there is n't any such way," I objected. "If it were the mere turning of a key, it might be done from the other side, but heavy bolts cannot be shot into their sockets except by a person on the inside of the room. And again, waiving the mystery of the locked room, we are as well justified in suspecting Morland or Barbara as Anne."

"That is true," agreed Markham. "But the stiletto was found in her room, and her maid is missing."

"Strange about Jeannette," I observed. "Suppose we set out to trace her. That would be at least a step in the right direction."

"There have been very few steps taken in any direction," said the detective moodily. "My own movements are hampered by orders from the family. Of course there's no one to say what I shall do, except Mrs. Van Wyck and her two step-children. And every direction in which I wish to investigate is forbidden by one or another of those three. Sometimes I think they are all in connivance, and their inharmonious attitude toward one another is a mere bluff."

This was a new idea to me, and I pondered it. But I could n't think it a true theory, and said so.

"Maybe not, maybe not," said Markham; "but they do act mighty queer. Miss Barbara, for instance, begged me if I found any clues which might incriminate her brother, to suppress them and tell nobody."

"Did she really suppose that you would do that?" I asked.

"Yes, she was very much in earnest. But I have n't found anything that points to Morland definitely. If I did, I'd show it up fast enough."

"I should hope so," I returned emphatically. "I'd far rather suspect Morland of his father's death than Mrs. Van Wyck."

"Yes, so should I. But it's a mystery, whichever way one turns. I can't seem to make any start. But, as you say, Mr. Sturgis, it would be a good idea to hunt for that maid."

It proved not to be a difficult matter to find Jeannette, for we soon discovered that she had gone to stay with her sister in a neighboring village. I could n't help thinking that Anne had known all along where the girl was, for she seemed rather annoyed than otherwise that we had made the discovery.

At any rate, Jeannette was brought home, and closely questioned by Mr. Markham and myself.

And the result of the questioning was to eliminate entirely the stiletto as incriminating evidence. Jeannette explained that she had used that stiletto to dig a refractory cork out of a bottle of bronze shoe-dressing. The bronze had given the metal a reddish stain, which she could not remove, and she had hidden it, lest she be scolded for having used the dainty implement for such a purpose. Markham was frankly disappointed. I can't think he wanted to prove Anne guilty, but his pride was hurt at having his cleverness in finding the stiletto of no avail.

"But," I said to Jeannette, "why did you run away?"

"I did n't run away," she said. "I merely went to visit my sister."

"But you took a strange time to do that, when your mistress was in such trouble and sorrow."

"I thought I'd better go," responded Jeannette; and Markham jumped at this admission.

"Why did you think it better to go?" he demanded.

But Jeannette turned pale and looked very much frightened. "I did n't have any reason," she said, beginning to cry. "I just—I just thought I'd go."

We tried every possible way to learn more from her, but without success. She became hysterical and stupid by turns, and finally refused to answer our questions. Markham declared afterward that this attitude on Jeannette's part was strongly against Anne, but this I would not believe.

As a matter of fact, I was the only one who aided Markham in his

investigations, or who even seemed interested in their results. Sometimes Anne would talk with us, but she was so contradictory and made such untenable suggestions, that I could scarcely find out what her desires or intentions were.

Barbara had taken the stand that she wished investigation stopped. I could not learn her reasons for this, but I began to think it was because she feared what might be learned from them. Morland, I had reason to think, knew more about the matter than he was willing to tell. Whether he was guilty himself, or whether he knew the guilty person, I could not decide, but I was sure one or the other must be the case.

I talked it all over with Condron Archer. He seemed to me to look at the matter very sensibly. "On the face of things," he said, "you must admit, Sturgis, that it looks as if one of the three Van Wycks must be implicated. So it appears to me that if we can throw suspicion elsewhere, it would save the Van Wyck family."

"And you would advise that?" I said in surprise. "You would willingly cast suspicion on an innocent person in order to shield one of the Van Wycks?"

He looked straight at me. "Would n't you," he asked, "if it were Anne who was in danger?"

"I don't know," I said slowly.

"You ought to know," he declared. "Look here, Sturgis, what is the use of denying the truth to each other? You are in love with Anne Van Wyck, and so am I. I don't for a moment believe that she killed her husband, but if she did, I'd rather not know it. Now, should we not do anything in our power to divert suspicion from her? I would n't accuse or convict an innocent man, but if by directing suspicion away from Anne we can save her, let us do so. And then afterward, let the better man win her."

I had little doubt from Archer's assured air that he felt certain he himself would prove the better man, but I was not so sure of this. However, for the moment I must consider his proposition. I told him that I would certainly do all in my power to shield Anne, but it was because I believed her innocent, and not because I feared she was guilty.

But he merely shrugged his shoulders at this, and gave me the impression, without saying so, that he thought me insincere.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE SEARCH FOR THE PEARLS

It was a strange sort of gloom that hung over us all at Buttonwood Terrace. It was not exactly sorrow; indeed, there was little evidence of real grief for David Van Wyck. His children, if they mourned for

him, did not do so openly; while his wife seemed stunned rather than saddened. I could not understand Anne. She seemed to pass rapidly from one strange mood to another. Now she would be most anxious to discover the murderer and avenge the crime, and again she would beg of us to discontinue all investigation.

Archer watched her closely. It seemed to me he suspected her, and wanted to make sure, but he wanted no one else to suspect her.

David Van Wyck had died on Friday night, and the funeral had occurred on Monday. It was now Wednesday, and the inquest would be resumed in a few days. But to my way of thinking, we had little if any more evidence to go on. Jeannette had explained the stiletto, but who knew if she had told the truth? Doubtless she would lie to shield Anne, for she was devoted to her mistress, and the reasons she had given for going away seemed to me far from plausible. Moreover, Anne had expressed no surprise or annoyance at the girl's absence, which I was forced to admit looked as if the mistress had thoroughly understood it.

It was on Wednesday morning that I was strolling along the terraces, thinking deeply, when I became aware of voices below me. I glanced down a winding, rustic stairway and saw Anne and Condron Archer. He seemed to be pleading with her, and she looked disturbed and a trifle defiant. I turned away, having no desire to be an eaves-dropper, but as I turned, Archer's voice rose in emphatic declaration, and I could n't help hearing his words.

He said, "Anne, I know you took the pearls. Now, promise you will marry me some day, and so give me the right to shield and protect you in this trial."

The shock of his speech was so great that I involuntarily paused for an instant, and I heard Anne say, "I deny that I took the pearls. If you think I did, you may search for them. I defy you to find them!"

I hurried away from the spot, suddenly realizing that I was listening; and I am quite willing to confess to a strong desire to listen longer. But this I would not do, partly because my sense of honor forbade it, and also because Anne was the woman I loved, and I would not listen to a word of hers that was not meant for my ears.

A moment later I met Barbara and Morland, and they too were talking of the missing pearls.

"Don't you think, Mr. Sturgis," said Barbara, "that we ought to make a thorough and systematic search of the house for those pearls before we consider putting the matter in the hands of the police. They represent a fortune in themselves, and I am sure that my father hid them after he had lost control of his mind. It seems to me, then, that they must be somewhere in the study, and we ought to be able to find them."

"It can certainly do no harm to search," I responded, non-committally, "but I supposed you had already done so."

"We have, in a general way," said Morland; "but Barb means to try to find some secret cupboard or sliding panel hitherto unknown."

"I'm with you," I said. "Let's begin at once. Anything is better than doing nothing; and I do think, Morland, that you're making very little effort to solve the whole mystery. If I were you, I should call in Fleming Stone."

"No!" cried Barbara, so sharply that I was surprised. "There is no occasion for such a thing," she went on. "Father killed himself. His mind gave way at the last, and he was not responsible. Also, he hid the pearls, and we can find them. Come on and let us begin the search. Here are Anne and Mr. Archer—they will help, I'm sure."

After listening to Barbara's request, both Anne and Archer heartily agreed to help in a thorough search. We went at once to the study. Markham and Lasseter were already there, and we all went to work with a will. I think I'm safe in saying that no room was ever searched more carefully than the Van Wyck study was that day. We divided it into sections, and each of us searched every section. Mrs. Stelton and Beth Fordyce joined us later, and every possible hiding-place was ransacked. Nor was it an easy task. There were many cupboards and desks and odd pieces of furniture with secret drawers. And besides, there were many possible hiding-places in the massive and intricate ornamentations. The enormous carved fireplace seemed to mock at us with its possibilities. The carved wainscot and stuccoed wall-panels all showed interstices which, though in some cases thick with the dust of time, were large enough to hold a pearl necklace.

Anne was perhaps the most energetic of all the searchers. She ran up the spiral staircase to the musicians' gallery and called for some one to come and help her. "For," said she, "this carved railing is simply *full* of places where anything could be hidden!"

As I looked up and saw Anne leaning forward with both hands on the balcony rail, I thought I had never seen a more beautiful picture. Whether it was the mere exertion of the search, or the result of some secret knowledge of her own, her cheeks were flushed and her eyes were bright with an unnatural excitement.

I ran up the iron staircase, myself, in response to her invitation, and as no one followed us, I drew her back into the shadow of the curtain draperies, and, clasping both her hands in mine, I said earnestly, "Anne, you don't know where the pearls are, do you?"

Her hands turned cold in mine, and the color died from her cheeks. "How dare you!" she whispered. "What do you mean? What are you implying?"

"Nothing." And, unable to control myself, I clasped her in my

arms. But only for a moment, and then, my senses returning, I released her, and said calmly, "I mean nothing, Anne. Forgive me, I lost my head for a moment. But you must know what I shall some day tell you, that I love you, and I shall yet win you. Hush, don't answer me now! But just remember that I have utter faith in you, and because of that faith I shall probe this whole mystery to its farthest depths. I shall learn the truth, the whole truth, and then, Anne, when it is the proper time, I shall claim you, and you will give yourself to me!"

I have wondered since how I had the courage to make these statements, for Anne gave me no encouragement. She merely stared at me, her dark eyes seeming to burn like coals of fire in her white face. But as I finished she gave a little despairing sob, and said pitifully, "Oh, Raymond, you don't know, you *don't know!*"

And then Beth Fordyce came up to the gallery, and both Anne and I controlled ourselves sufficiently to speak casually, as we all continued our search. The gallery was six feet wide and extended across the whole end of the room, except for a space of about four feet from either side-wall. It rested on six enormously heavy brackets, and its railing, about three feet high, was also heavy and elaborate. Miss Fordyce looked over the railing in despair. "We never can look into every cranny of those brackets," she said.

"We can do it by ladders from below," I returned; "but I will say that I never saw any room so marvellously well provided with hiding-places."

Anne stood at the end of the gallery, but not the staircase end, and looked at the great cartouche that formed the corner of the cornice, but which was so massive that its lower end was on a level with the gallery.

"I can't reach it," she said, stretching out her hand toward its plaster scroll-work; "but the pearls *could* be in any of those gilded crevices."

"And there are four of those great ornaments in the room," said I, looking hopelessly around at the cornice. "But if Mr. Van Wyck secreted his jewels in one of them, he must have had a long ladder; and where is the ladder?"

"He might have had a rope-ladder," suggested Mrs. Stelton, looking self-conscious, as if she had voiced a brilliant idea.

"But, even so, it must be somewhere, and we have found nothing of the sort," I said.

Well, the search lasted all the morning, without the least result. And, to my surprise, after luncheon Mr. Markham proposed that we should search the other rooms of the house. "I have my own reasons for this," he declared, and as this was the first time I had known him to assume the mysterious air which is part of the stock in trade of every

self-respecting detective, I began to hope his reasons might be sound ones.

No one was enthusiastic about a further search, but all agreed to it, except Anne. She declared that the privacy of her own rooms should not be invaded, and she refused to allow search to be made in them.

At this, I saw Archer look at her intently; I saw Anne flush with anger and dismay; and I saw Mr. Markham alertly observing both.

"It is a mere matter of form, Mrs. Van Wyck," he said; "but I must insist upon it. And of course you must see that to close your rooms to our search would look——" He hesitated; even he could not voice the implication he was about to make, in the face of Anne's scorn.

"That will do," she said coldly, and at once led the way to her own apartments.

Her bedroom, dressing-room, and bath-room were subjected to a search, but, on the part of most of us, it was perfunctory and superficial. Except the detective, not one of us was willing to open the cupboards, boxes, or bureau-drawers. But Mr. Markham darted here and there, opening drawers, boxes, and baskets, one after another. I chanced to be sitting by a table on which was a gilded Florentine chest, which was locked. Markham demanded the key, and Anne gave it to him. But the chest was entirely empty, save for several old photographs carelessly flung in.

Disappointed, the detective stared thoughtfully about the room.

"You must understand, Mrs. Van Wyck," he said smoothly, "that we have no suspicion, but at the same time we must make this search a thorough one. And I think we have examined everything except the book-shelves. I must ask now that the books be taken down."

The book-shelves, which were built against the wall, covered nearly all one side of the room. At Mr. Markham's orders, the books were taken down, three or four at a time, and returned to their places; but, although there was plenty of space behind them, no pearls were discovered.

"Shall we open each book?" inquired Mr. Archer sarcastically.

"No," said the detective shortly. "Pearls could not be placed in a book, but they could easily be hidden behind them, and I must do my duty."

The others had helped with the book-shelf performance, but I had stayed near Anne. She was trembling like a leaf. If she had hidden the pearls behind the books, and feared their discovery, she could not have been more nervously agitated. I noticed, too, that Archer was watching her closely, even while he was busily engaged in taking down and putting back the volumes.

In an effort to distract Anne's attention, and perhaps to calm her unrest, I said, "How did you like the vase I brought you?" and I glanced at it where it stood on a small side table.

"It is beautiful!" she said, and she thanked me with her eyes. "I have never seen a more exquisite piece of Venetian glass. But so very fragile! I would not let any one but myself touch it to unpack it; and even then I was afraid it would break while I was disengaging it from its wrappings. I was frightened, Raymond, lest Mr. Van Wyck should see it. He was so absurdly jealous that it would have made him very angry. But now it does n't matter." Her lip quivered, and a strange look came into her eyes, but I was positive it was not regret that she no longer had to endure her husband's jealousy.

At last Markham declared himself satisfied that the pearls were not in Anne's apartments, and, followed by his assistants, he went to search David Van Wyck's rooms. And from there the search continued all over the rest of the rooms; and it was well on toward sundown before he was ready to declare himself satisfied that the pearls were not hidden in any part of the house.

"And so," said Mr. Markham, with an air of finality, "we may be sure that Mr. Van Wyck did not hide the pearls, nor are they in the possession of any member of this household. This, I think, proves that the robbery was committed by an intruder, who also killed Mr. Van Wyck. The mystery of how the burglar entered, and what weapon he used, will, I fear, never be solved."

"And the missing deed?" asked Archer.

"That is another mystery that seems inexplicable. Of course the fortune now remains in possession of the family, and will be disposed of according to the terms of Mr. Van Wyck's will."

The will, as everybody knew, left David Van Wyck's three heirs each in possession of one-third of his fortune. The pearls were not mentioned in the will, although Anne claimed he had verbally given them to her. Both Barbara and Morland disputed her ownership of them, but as the pearls were gone, it made little difference whose they were.

"I can't help thinking, Mr. Markham," I said, "that we have all reached the end of our ingenuity. But I also think that the problem ought not to be given up, and that it is now time to call in a more expert investigator. I propose, therefore, that we send for Fleming Stone, and put the matter in his hands."

"Oh, that wonderful Mr. Stone!" exclaimed Mrs. Stalton, clapping her hands in her foolish way. "Send for him, do! He can tell us everything!"

"I, for one, do not wish him sent for," said Anne, in a most positive manner.



"Nor I," said Barbara, for once agreeing with her step-mother.

"I don't think we need him," said Morland thoughtfully. "What could he find out more than we have?"

"We haven't found out anything," I retorted. "And he would explain everything in a short time."

"Is he, then, omniscient?" said Mr. Markham, with a decided sneer.

"He is very nearly so in matters of detective work," I returned gravely. "If Mrs. Van Wyck does not wish to employ him, I will do so myself; as I am quite willing to admit that I have a strong desire to solve the mysteries of David Van Wyck's death and of the stolen jewels and missing deed."

We discussed at some length the question of sending for Fleming Stone, but so strong was the opposition of the Van Wycks, of the detective, and of Condron Archer, that I forbore to insist, and the matter was left unsettled.

But later I discussed it alone with Archer. "Don't do it," he said to me earnestly. "Don't you see that to get Stone here might implicate Anne?"

"Why," said I, in surprise, "my motive in getting him would be to prove Anne's innocence!"

"Then, if you want to prove Anne Van Wyck innocent, or even to continue to think her so, don't send for Stone;" and with these words, Archer turned on his heel and left me.

I went to the study, hoping to find Morland there, and to persuade him to agree to my views. But there was no one in the study except the secretary.

"Mr. Lasseter," I said, "as man to man, won't you explain to me why you and Morland persist in those conflicting stories?"

"My story is the true one," said Lasseter, looking me squarely in the eye. "When I left the room that night, Morland sat here"—indicating a large carved seat near the fireplace—"and Mr. Van Wyck was at his desk. It all occurred as I related at the inquest. And, Mr. Sturgis, I will tell you what I have not told any one else. After going out of the door, I went around the study and half way down the front path to the road. Then, on an impulse which I cannot explain, I turned back and went and looked in at the study window—not the door, but the window at the farther end. And I distinctly saw Morland bending over his father's desk. Of course at that time I had no thought of tragedy, and I hoped that father and son would make up their quarrel then and there. I merely glanced in, and, turning away again, went straight home."

"Why did n't you tell of this at the inquest?"

"Because, though it would, in a way, prove my story, in the

face of the tragedy I feared it might make things look black for Morland."

"You don't suspect him of—of any wrong-doing!"

"No, I can't. But it is all mysterious, and I agree with you in wishing that we could have the great Fleming Stone look into it."

"Why, I thought you did n't want him!"

"Personally I do; but since Miss Van Wyck is so opposed to the idea, I should rather defer to her wishes than to insist upon my own."

"Oh, I see; I did n't understand before."

"Yes," said Lasseter frankly; "although we're not formally engaged, I hope to make Barbara Van Wyck my wife; and so, you see, I cannot endorse a course of action to which she is so definitely opposed."

This was true enough, and I told him so. I could n't help liking Lasseter, and some things about him which I had thought strange were explained by what he had just told me.

From him I went straight to Morland. "Tell me," I said to him, in a confidential way, "why did you and Lasseter contradict each other at the inquest?"

"I wondered you did n't ask me that long ago," he said, seeming not at all offended. "You see, it is this way. I was sitting on that old bench by the fireplace. But it is in a dark corner, and I was in a shadow; for after the committee left we had turned off some of the lights, and the shaded desk-light and the firelight made pretty much all the illumination there was. I was tired and discouraged with the whole matter, and I left the room quietly, just before twelve, without even saying good-night. Father and Lasseter were talking, and I don't believe they heard me go. So when Lasseter said good-night to me, as he says he did, he really thought I was there; and if Father spoke to me, why, he must have thought so, too."

This was all plausible enough, and the young man's frank manner convinced me of its truth. But there was another point to be cleared up.

"All right, Morland," I said. "That does explain things. You left the room just before midnight, and a moment or two later Lasseter went home, and said good-night to you, thinking you were there. But, a little later still, you returned."

"What!" cried Morland, and he turned fairly livid with rage. "What do you mean, Sturgis?"

"What do *you* mean by getting so excited over it? You *did* return, and you were seen."

"By whom?"

"Never mind that now."

Morland looked straight at me. There was fear in his eyes, but there was also a strong ring of truth in his voice as he said, "Sturgis, if I returned to the study, and if I was seen there, then the one who

saw me is the murderer! Send for your Fleming Stone and discover who it may be!"

Without another word, Morland strode away, leaving me completely bewildered by his words.

## CHAPTER IX.

### FLEMING STONE ARRIVES

WHEN I went to my room to dress for dinner, I thought the matter over very definitely, before deciding to send for Stone. It was a somewhat radical move on my part, and I was not sure that I was entirely justified; but I felt that I must clear Anne of any possible breath of suspicion. And as I was unable to do this by myself, I wanted the best possible assistance I could find. And yet everybody was opposed to the coming of the great detective. I felt sure that Barbara did not want him to come, because she suspected the guilt of either her brother or the secretary. I could see this from the way in which she looked at both men, and from some slight hints she had inadvertently dropped in conversation. And since it seemed to be fairly well proven that Morland Van Wyck and Barclay Lasseter were the last two people known to be with David Van Wyck, then one was, in a way, justified in suspecting one or both of these men. And Barbara, fearful that Fleming Stone's coming would mean disaster to her brother or her lover, naturally protested against it.

Condron Archer had said frankly that he did not want Stone to come, lest he might implicate Anne; and when I remembered Anne's various inexplicable actions, and especially her agitation during the search in her room, I too trembled to think what Fleming Stone's investigations might disclose.

Markham, the detective, I knew, did not want Stone, but that I ascribed to a petty professional jealousy. Of course the two detectives were not to be mentioned on the same day of the week, but Markham, in his ignorance, considered himself quite the peer of Stone.

But, on the other hand, Lasseter, I knew, really wanted Stone, and only refrained from saying so out of consideration for Barbara. This to me was a fair proof of Lasseter's own innocence. And, indeed, no breath of real suspicion had fallen on the secretary, except the general fact that he had had opportunity to steal the pearls, had he been inclined to do so.

But what had brought my inclinations to a positive decision was the fact that Morland had said to send for Fleming Stone. He said it in the heat of passion and under the influence of anger; but he had said it, and I decided to consider that as authority. So I concluded to write at once, before Morland could retract that tacit permission.

I made a rapid toilet, and found I had time enough left before dinner to write my letter.

It was not an easy matter, for I was not one of the principals in the case, and I did n't wish to tell Stone of my hopes regarding Anne. But I wrote a straightforward account of everything, and I begged him to come at once. I told him frankly that most of the household were opposed to his coming, but that Morland had sanctioned it, and that if there were ever any question of authority, I would assume all responsibility of having asked him, and would also be responsible for the financial settlement. As I wrote, my mind became more firmly made up that I was doing right. I could never marry Anne while she was under this cloud, and, even should she refuse to marry me, I must free her from any taint of suspicion regarding her husband's death. Of Archer's hint that Stone's coming might convict Anne of the crime, I resolutely took no notice. If I could believe such a thing of the woman I loved, I should be utterly unworthy of her.

But I wrote nothing of all this to Stone. I told him the simple facts of the case as I knew them; I told him the indications and evidences as I knew them; and I must admit that it did seem a tangle. I felt that we had been either stupid or inefficient in our endeavors to unravel the mystery; for they certainly had led nowhere. All suspicion of any person fell to the ground before the undeniable fact of that sealed room. And all suspicion of suicide fell to the ground in the absence of any weapon. Truly it was a case worthy of Fleming Stone's attention, and I hoped with all my heart he would take it up.

With the thought of helping him to understand it all, I wrote him everything we had done. I told of Jeannette's disappearance, of the hidden stiletto, and of her subsequent explanation. I told him of our exhaustive search for the pearls, and I told him, too, though I hated to, how nervous and agitated Anne was when we searched her bookshelves. And then I told him, though I fully realized that all these things pointed in one direction, of the last words David Van Wyck said to his wife as he left the drawing-room. How he had told her he was going to give away the pearls she looked upon as her own, and how he had said, "Now don't you wish I was dead?" I admitted to him that Anne was very strongly opposed to the munificent gift her husband had intended making, but stated also that the disappearance of the deed was quite as favorable to the wishes of the two step-children as to those of the wife.

I told Fleming Stone all this, and I told him, too, that I believed Anne Van Wyck innocent; but for this belief I could give no reason.

That letter went off Wednesday night. I sent it to the permanent address in New York which Stone had given me, though of course I had no means of knowing whether he was there or not.

But by good fortune he was in New York, and he replied to my letter at once, so that late Thursday afternoon I received his reply.

To my satisfaction, he declared himself willing to undertake the case, and incidentally complimented me on the clearness of my account and the definiteness of my written details. He said he would arrive Friday morning, and he begged me to keep the room from being disturbed any further. "Though, I dare say," he wrote, "that by this time all possible clues are removed or destroyed through ignorance or carelessness. However, lock up the room at once, and let no one enter it until I get there."

This instruction was scarcely necessary, for the study had had few occupants since the tragedy. Everybody avoided the place, and the servants could scarcely be induced to enter it. I knew it had not been swept or dusted since the fatal night, and I hoped that Stone's marvelous powers could find clues where we had seen none. To be sure, we had searched it thoroughly for the pearls, and no one of us had then found anything in the way of evidence. But we were not trained observers, and I had great hopes of Stone's wizardry.

After dinner, I walked on the terrace with Anne. I had announced at the dinner-table that I had written for Fleming Stone, and that I had done this with Morland's consent.

I glanced at Morland as I said this, but he made no response beyond a slight affirmative nod. There was a silence after my announcement, and then Mrs. Stelton began to babble, and Beth Fordyce began a rapturous eulogy of Fleming Stone and his work. But the others said nothing, either for or against the coming of the detective.

As we walked on the terrace, I tried to draw Anne out on the subject. But she only said wearily, "It does n't matter. It would have to come out some time, I suppose. Shall you mind, Raymond, when your friend Stone proves me a criminal?"

"I don't think he will do that, Anne," I said very gently, for I could n't think it; and yet her despairing tone alarmed me more than if she had been angry or deeply disturbed.

And then the others joined us, and the conversation became general. But, seemingly by tacit consent, the subject of the crime or the coming of the new detective was not touched upon. Even Mrs. Stelton seemed to feel the restraint that was upon us all, and for once refrained from making her usual flippant and ill-timed observations. The party broke up early, and we all went to our rooms. The men did not congregate in the smoking-room as usual, but parted on the landing with brief good-nights.

I, for one, felt heavy of heart. Anne's definite speech had frightened me, and I wondered if in sending for Stone I had precipitated the very

calamity I wished to avert. But it was too late now for regret. I had put the matter in other hands, and I must abide by the consequences. And yet, though I could still hope for Anne's innocence, though my heart still whispered, "Anybody but Anne!" I was far from having the same confidence that I had felt earlier in the day.

The next morning Fleming Stone came. The moment I saw him, I was glad I had summoned him. He looked so strong, so capable, and so resourceful, that I knew instinctively he would reach the truth. And, after all, it was the truth we wanted—or ought to want.

We congregated in the drawing-room to meet him, and his reception was more like that of an honored guest than an official detective. He greeted each one individually and with the utmost cordiality and kindness. But after a few polite commonplaces of conversation, he rose alertly and declared himself ready to begin the business in hand.

"I assume I have the freedom of the house," he said, turning to Anne, who responded merely by a bow.

She was frightened, I could see that, and yet there was nothing in Fleming Stone's manner to inspire alarm. Indeed, he looked at her with an intent admiration, as he had done on his former visit, and I realized that he would give her every possible benefit of doubt.

"I shall go to the study first," he said, "and I should like to be accompanied only by Mr. Sturgis. After my investigations there, I may want to ask some questions of the rest of you."

I wanted to feel that Stone was taking me with him because I might be of some assistance, but this vain hope was quickly shattered.

"I want you with me, Mr. Sturgis," he said, as we entered the study and he closed the door, "first, because you are my employer; and also because you are the only one of this household who cannot possibly be implicated in this crime."

I suppose I looked my amazement, for he went on, "That does not mean that all the rest are implicated, but you are the only one who I know is not."

"How do you know that, Mr. Stone?"

"First, from the letter you wrote me, which leaves you free of suspicion, while it leaves every one else open to the possibility of it. Second, because you had no motive for the deed."

"But I——"

"You need n't finish; I know you are deeply attracted to Mrs. Van Wyck, but you would not murder her husband in order to win her, and then send for me to come out here to discover the criminal!"

"No, I would n't," I replied, almost smiling at the way he put it. "And now, Mr. Stone, if I can help you in any way, I shall be only too glad."

"I think I shall not require help, thank you; I ask only freedom from interruption, and, possibly, answers to occasional questions."

If the words were a trifle curt, the tone was not at all so, and I willingly sat down, content to watch the great man at his work.

As I had surmised he would do, he scrutinized every part of the room; at first with sweeping glances, and then focussing his attention on various details. I had told him in my letter of the security with which the room was locked and bolted on the inside, and he examined all the fastenings of doors and windows with utmost care and interest.

"I think I can safely say," he remarked, "that I have never seen a room so absolutely impossible of ingress. And yet some one entered and left while it was thus bolted and barred."

"It was not a suicide, then?"

"Certainly not. It was a case of wilful murder."

"Committed by an intruder?"

"Yes; by an intruder of exceeding cleverness, of marvellously cool nerve, and——"

"And of great physical strength?" I prompted.

"Not necessarily," said Stone, looking sharply at me. "I don't deduce especial strength."

I felt ashamed, for I realized in a sudden flash that I had said that hoping to learn that his thoughts were not directed toward Anne.

"What—what did this intruder do with the weapon he used?" I stammered, partly to hide my confusion.

"He left it behind him, in plain view of every one. I fear, Mr. Sturgis, you are unobservant."

"Wait a moment," I cried, stung by his evident scorn of what we had done, or, rather, what we had failed to do. "Do you mean to tell me that the weapon is even now in this room?"

"It is; and in plain sight."

"Don't tell me where; let me find it for myself," I cried, gazing wildly around.

"Find it if you can, but as you have overlooked it all these days, how can you expect to see it now?"

"I'm completely mystified," I said. "We searched this room so carefully for the pearls, that I would have sworn we must have found a weapon, had there been any to find. Show it to me, Mr. Stone."

"There it is;" and Fleming Stone pointed quietly to a bill-file which stood on the desk. It was of the ordinary type, with a heavy bronze standard and a long, sharp, upright spike. The bills and papers on it reached nearly to the top, but as soon as my attention was drawn to it, I realized that with the bills removed it would indeed be a deadly weapon, and would correspond in every way to the weapon which the doctor declared must have been used.

"I can only suppose," I said, "that it escaped our attention because of its very obviousness."

"Not only that," said Stone, "but it was inconspicuous, being nearly covered with the bills; and, moreover, you looked only for a definite weapon, and not for an ordinary implement used as one."

"How did you come to notice it so quickly?"

"Because you had told me no weapon could be found, with the exception of the possible stiletto. And that did not greatly impress me, for no one would leave evidence of a crime in so simple a hiding-place. Even now I believe that bill-file to be the criminal's weapon, only because I can discover no other. But let us look at it. If we find a particle of blood-stain on the papers, I think we may have no further doubt."

Fleming Stone carefully lifted the bills from the metal rod that pierced them. Drawing a lens from his pocket, he examined the bill-file and several of the papers. "It was used to kill Mr. Van Wyck," he declared. "It was carefully wiped off and the bills returned to it. The particles of blood remaining on it are scarcely perceptible to the naked eye, but may clearly be seen through the magnifying-glass. You may perceive, also, some faint stains around the holes in the papers where they slid down the spike. As this is vital evidence, I will put it safely away."

Fleming Stone put the file with its papers in a small cupboard of the desk, which he locked and then took out the key.

After that, for a long time, I sat silently watching him as he proceeded with his scrutiny of the room. Occasionally he examined something through his glass, occasionally he picked up a scrap of something from the floor and put it in his notebook or pocket. At last I could contain myself no longer, and I burst out with, "Mr. Stone, do you know how the murderer got in and out?"

"I do not," he replied. "I have n't the faintest idea. But since a human being did do so, another human being may discover how."

I felt that he was avoiding the masculine pronoun on purpose, and again my heart sank, as I feared for Anne.

After an hour or so, though it seemed ages, Fleming Stone declared his investigation of the room completed, and announced his desire to see next some of the servants. I took him across the house to the kitchen quarters, and in the butler's pantry we found a footman and two maids.

After a quick glance at the faces of the trio, Mr. Stone interrogated the more intelligent-looking of the maids. "When express packages arrive," he said to her, in his pleasant way, "who attends to them?"

"A footman, sir," said the girl, with an air of proud importance at being questioned.

"What footman? This one?"



"Yes, sir. That's Jackson, sir. He 'most always takes the express parcels."

"Ah, then you can speak for yourself, Jackson. On the day of your master's death, did any express parcels arrive?"

"Yes, sir," replied Jackson. "I remember there were three came that morning."

"What was in them?"

"Supplies for the pantry, sir. Mostly bottles and jars, sir."

"And what were they packed in—excelsior?"

"Yes, sir; excelsior and straw."

"And was there no other parcel, containing china or glass?"

"There was another, sir, but not by express. Mr. Sturgis brought it. That was glass, and it was taken to Mrs. Van Wyck's room."

Fleming Stone turned to me. "What was the packing, Mr. Sturgis?" he said.

"I don't know," I replied, greatly mystified at this turn of affairs. "I brought a glass vase as a gift to Mrs. Van Wyck, but she opened the box when I was not present."

"I emptied the box, sir," volunteered Jackson, "and it was full of tissue paper cut into little scraps."

"Yes, of course," agreed Stone. "That is what a fine piece of glass would naturally be packed in. That is all. Thank you, Jackson."

Slowly and thoughtfully, Stone walked back through the house. He detained me a moment as we passed through the dining-room. "You want me to go on with the case, Mr. Sturgis," he said, "wherever the results may lead?"

I shuddered at this question, coming right on top of his discovery of Anne's glass vase. I could see no possible connection between my innocent gift and the Van Wyck tragedy, but there must have been one in Stone's mind.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE MYSTERY SOLVED

WE went on to the drawing-room, and found Anne there alone with Archer. They were in close conversation, and I had no doubt he was urging her again to give him the right to protect her. I knew Archer felt, as I did, that all usual conventions were to be ignored in such circumstances as these we were experiencing.

Fleming Stone spoke directly to Anne, and his calm, pleasant manner seemed to imbue her with an equal quietness of demeanor. She even almost smiled when Stone said, "Please don't think me over-intrusive, Mrs. Van Wyck, but will you tell me what gown you wore at dinner last Friday evening?"

"Certainly," said Anne, rising. "If you will come to my room, I will show it to you."

Although uninvited, Archer and I followed. On reaching Anne's dressing-room, she took from a wardrobe the beautiful yellow satin gown, which I well remembered, and which now seemed to mock at the sombre black robe she wore.

Stone looked at the gown admiringly, and seemed to show a special interest in the frills and jabots of the bodice. Truly, this man's ways were past understanding! What clue could he expect to find in this way?

"And when you came to your room that night, did you keep on this gown until you prepared to retire?"

"No," said Anne, looking at him wonderingly; but even as she looked, her eyes fell before his and she continued in a hesitating way, "No, I changed into a negligée gown."

"May I see that?" asked Stone pleasantly.

This time, it seemed to me, with reluctance, Anne took from the wardrobe a charming boudoir robe of chiffon and lace. It was decorated with innumerable frills and rosettes, and again Stone seemed eagerly interested in the trimmings. He even picked daintily at some of the bows and ruches, saying lightly, "I am not a connoisseur in ladies' apparel, but this seems to me an exquisite confection."

"It is," replied Anne. "It is Parisian." But she spoke with a preoccupied air, and I knew she was deeply anxious as to the meaning of all this. She hung the gown back in its place, and then Stone seated himself, after having courteously placed a chair for her.

"I warned you I should ask a few questions, Mrs. Van Wyck," he began; "so please tell me, first, how you occupied the time before you retired that evening?"

Anne's embarrassment had vanished, and she looked straight at her questioner as she replied in even tones, "I'm afraid I did nothing worth-while. I wrote one or two notes to friends, glanced through a magazine, tried on a new hat, and then unpacked a glass vase which Mr. Sturgis brought me, because I preferred not to trust that task to a servant."

"And your maid was here when you finally retired?"

"No, I had dismissed Jeannette earlier, and told her she need not return."

"And did you leave your rooms late that night?"

"No."

"Not at all?"

"No."

But Anne was fast losing control of herself. Her voice trembled, and her large eyes were fixed on Stone's face. His expression was one

of infinite pity, and he said gently, "Please think carefully, and be sure of what you are saying."

"I am sure," murmured Anne, and then Archer leaned over and whispered to her. What he said I do not know, but it must have been an accusation of some sort, for Anne turned scarlet and stared at Archer with angry eyes. She glanced at her book-shelves, and then back at Archer and then at Stone, and finally, with a look of pathetic appeal, directly at me.

I knew she was asking my help, but what could I do? In a sudden desperate attempt to relieve her, for at least a moment, I turned the subject, and, touching the beautiful Florentine chest on the table beside me, I drew Stone's attention to it as a work of art.

"Yes," he agreed; "it is a fine piece. Worthy of holding the family heirlooms."

"Instead of which," I said lightly, "Mrs. Van Wyck uses it merely as a receptacle for old photographs." Anne's agitation seemed to be increasing, and, determined to keep Stone from addressing her for a few moments longer, I opened the chest to prove my words. Stone glanced carelessly at the old pictures, faded except round their edges, and then, suddenly rising, he picked up two or three and looked at them intently. A sudden light flashed into his eyes, and, turning to Anne, he said in tones of genuine admiration, "Wonderful, Mrs. Van Wyck! Positively splendid! I congratulate you."

I looked at him in amazement. There was no portrait of Anne among the old photographs he held, and what he meant I could not imagine.

But Anne knew. Sinking back in her chair, she covered her face with her hands and gave a low moan.

Just then Barbara and Morland came into the room. "What's the matter, Anne?" Morland asked. "Who's bothering you? I won't have it!" He went to her and put his arm round her, and, seemingly encouraged by his strength and sympathy, Anne looked up and with an effort regained her poise.

"They're mine!" she exclaimed, addressing herself to Stone, while her dark eyes flashed defiance at him.

"I don't doubt it," he replied, and then he looked at her in a perplexed way. For a moment these two exchanged glances, and it seemed as if they had superhuman powers of reading each other's thoughts. Then Stone gave a little nod, straightened himself up, and said, "We must go on, whatever the outcome."

Then, speaking to us all, generally, he said, "I have found the missing pearls—I can lay my hand upon them at any moment. Before I do so, does the one who took them from the study wish to say so?"

Archer looked at Anne, but I looked at Morland. I had a feeling

that Morland had taken those pearls; but, if so, he showed no evidence of guilt at this moment.

Fleming Stone looked at no one in particular, and after a moment's pause he said, "Then I will simply hand them to their owner."

He went to the book-shelves, and without hesitation took down a thick volume. It was an old-fashioned photograph album, fastened with two ornate gilt clasps. Slowly snapping these open, he opened the book. The photographs from several of the leaves had been removed, and in the cavity thus made, wrapped in blue cotton, was the Van Wyck pearl necklace!

Amid the exclamations of surprise, I was silent, for I realized instantly that those photographs in the gilt chest were the ones taken from the album to make room for the pearls; and that I—I had deliberately shown these photographs to Stone, and thereby offered his quick intellect a clue to the hiding-place!

"They are mine!" cried Anne. "It was no theft! My husband gave them to me, and I had a perfect right to take them when I chose, and hide them where I chose. But because I took them from the safe in the study, you need not think that I killed my husband! I took them—the day before!"

"Anne," exclaimed Archer in a warning voice, "tell the truth, dear—it will be better."

"But you did go into the study late that night, Mrs. Van Wyck," said Stone quietly.

"How do you know?" flashed Anne.

"Because I found in there, on the fur rug in front of the safe, two small scraps of the shredded tissue-paper from the box which you unpacked. I found also two bits in the rosettes of the negligée gown that you wore, and I'm sure that the bits on the rug fell from your gown as you took the pearls from the safe. I do not deny your right to take them; nor your right to hide them in the exceedingly clever place you selected. But I must ask you to admit if this is true."

"It is true," said Anne, as if at the end of her endurance, and then she fainted.

We went away from the room, leaving her with Barbara and the maid; and as none of us felt inclined to talk, we drifted apart.

Fleming Stone seemed more than ever thoughtful and preoccupied. I would have talked with him, but he asked to be left to himself, and went directly to the study.

Soon after this, luncheon was announced, and we gathered round the table in a desperate effort to throw off the gloomy fear that overhung us.

At first the conversation was on general subjects, Stone leading the way with his kindly and courteous remarks.

But all at once Anne lifted her great eyes, and, looking straight

at Stone, said, "I know you think I killed my husband, Mr. Stone, but I did not. And why should I do so, to get those pearls, since they were my own, any way?"

I thought perhaps Fleming Stone would answer this question directly, but instead he said, "Were you not anxious to prevent his gift to the library?"

Then Morland spoke in a terse, hard voice: "You mean by that, Mr. Stone, that Anne took the deed of gift from my father's desk. That is not true, for I took it myself."

"You did?" said Stone, looking at him sharply.

"Yes, I did. I told the truth when I said I left the study before Lasseter did. But I don't think Lasseter knew this, and he thought I was there when he went away. But a little later I returned. My father was not there; the outside door was open, and I think he had stepped out on the terrace. However, I took the deed, and I have it in my possession still; but as it is unsigned, it is of no value to anybody. But I did not kill my father, and I'm telling about the deed to exonerate Anne from any suspicion of having taken it."

Anne cast a grateful look at Morland, and then continued to look at him, but with a changed expression. I could follow her thoughts, or at least I thought I could, and I thought she was wondering if, after all, Morland had killed his father. Perhaps they had quarrelled over the deed, and Morland was misrepresenting the scene.

At any rate, the net of suspicion was drawing close round the two, Morland and Anne. My heart sickened as I realized that it must have been one or the other of these, and that Fleming Stone's unerring skill would yet discover which.

"It is unnecessary to assert innocence until guilt is suspected," said Stone, in a calm voice; "and until we learn how a murderer could get in and out of that locked room, we can accuse no one; nor can we assert that it was not a case of suicide." And then he determinedly changed the subject; nor would he allow it to be brought up again during the meal.

But as we left the table, Stone spoke low to me. "Lead the whole crowd out on the terrace," he said, "and keep them there for an hour or so. On no account let them come into the house, or at least not into the study. I must be uninterrupted for an hour, at least, and then the mystery will be solved."

He had not set me a difficult task. For some reason, the members of the little group seemed quite willing to stay out of doors. We strolled down to a large arbor on the lawn, and sat there talking, sometimes all together, and sometimes in twos and threes. After a while Markham joined us, and inquired how far Mr. Stone had progressed in his investigations. Anne told him frankly enough that she herself

had taken the pearls from the safe, and Morland repeated his admission of having taken the deed. Mr. Markham was excited over these revelations, but the strange apathy that had settled down on our people was not greatly stirred by his comments. Presently Archer and Beth Fordyce went off for a walk around the garden. Mrs. Stelton asked me to go, too, but I declined, as I had my work of keeping the people out of the house.

It was just about an hour before Stone rejoined us. He greeted Mr. Markham pleasantly enough, and then turned to me. "As my employer," he said, "shall I make my final report to you?"

"To all of us," I replied. "I asked you to come here, but Mrs. Van Wyck and David Van Wyck's children are quite as much entitled to hear your report as I."

"Let us all go to the study, then," said Stone. "Where is Mr. Archer?"

"He went down through the lower gardens with Miss Fordyce," I replied.

"Mr. Markham," said Stone, "suppose you go after him." He added a few words to Markham which I did not hear, and then we all went to the study.

"I can tell you all in a few words," said Mr. Stone. "We know that Mrs. Van Wyck took the pearls from the safe, and that Mr. Morland Van Wyck took the paper from his father's desk. But neither of these had any hand in Mr. Van Wyck's death. Mr. Van Wyck was murdered later that same night. He was stabbed with this bill-file;" and Stone produced the file in evidence. "After killing Mr. Van Wyck, the murderer himself carefully fastened all the doors and windows, and left the room by a secret exit. This is the explanation of the sealed room, and I will now show you where the secret passage is. I did not know myself until during the last hour. I came in here positive that there was some such way of egress, and after a careful search I found it. As you see, the study is joined to the main house only by one corner, which laps the corner of the house for a space of about four feet. This four feet on the ground floor gives space for the connecting doorway which is usually used. The study is the height of two full stories of the house, but the study has only one story, and therefore an unusually high ceiling. The deep cornice has an immense cartouche ornamenting each corner. It seemed to me that behind this cartouche in the corner that touches the house was the only possibility of a secret exit from this room."

All eyes turned at once to the great shield-shaped affair of which he spoke. It was quite large enough to conceal a secret door, but at a height of twenty-five feet or more from the floor, it was entirely inaccessible.

"It seems inaccessible," said Stone, following our thoughts, "and there is no ladder or possibility of one anywhere about. But I was so sure that my theory was the true one that I examined the floor in that corner and found several tiny flakes of plaster that had fallen. Then I was certain that the secret exit had been used recently. I went in the house, and upstairs to the room in which the secret passage—if there was one—must necessarily open. I found in that room a carved panel, and by dint of search I found a spring which caused the panel to open. I then discovered that I was directly back of the great cartouche, but could not open it. In a word, the passage—at least, so far as I have discovered—is an exit from this room, but not an entrance. I will now show you the means of using it."

We watched with breathless attention while Fleming Stone mounted the spiral staircase and walked the length of the little gallery. At the end he stood with his hand on the end rail, quite four feet from the cartouche.

"Note the beautiful simplicity of it," he said. Merely loosening a bolt on the under side of the end railing caused the whole end of the balcony to fall outward. As it did so, the great end bracket beneath swung the other way, acting as a counterweight, and what had been the end railing of the gallery was now a horizontal bridge straight across to the cartouche. Moreover, mechanism in the wall had at the same time raised the outer shell of the cartouche, which was hinged at the top, and disclosed a small doorway.

"That is all," said Mr. Stone, speaking to us from the gallery. "As I said, it is beautifully simple. Once unbolted, a person's weight serves to throw down the railing as a bridge, and open the cartouche. Now you will see that, as I step off and through this doorway, the removal of my weight causes the railing to swing back to place, and the cartouche to close."

Stepping off the railing upon a ledge and through the door, Stone disappeared, and the mechanism worked exactly as he had said. A moment later he reappeared through the lower door into the study.

"You see," he resumed, "that is the way David Van Wyck's murderer left this room, after securely locking it with the intent to involve the affair in deepest mystery. You all know, I suppose, who occupies the room into which the secret passage opens on the second floor of the house."

"I know," said Anne. "It is Condron Archer."

"And Mr. Archer has gone away," said Fleming Stone significantly. "I have sent Mr. Markham after him, but, as I understand it, I was employed here to solve a mystery, and not to arrest a criminal. In fact, I have not proved that Mr. Archer is the criminal. But I think no one doubts it."

It was at this point that Beth Fordyce returned to us. "Oh, Anne," she said, "Mr. Archer said that he had to go away very suddenly. He had had a telegram, or something, and he asked me to tell you good-bye for him, and to give you this letter."

"It is his confession," said Anne, in a low voice, as she took the letter from Beth. "I felt sure of it all the time. Raymond, will you read it aloud?"

I was touched at the confidence she showed in me, and, taking the letter, I opened it. It bore no address, and began abruptly thus:

This is not a confession, but an explanation of why I killed David Van Wyck. I know now that Fleming Stone's penetration will discover the secret passage, which Mr. Van Wyck himself explained to me a few days before his death. And so I am going away—not fleeing from justice, but because I do not look upon myself as a criminal. I killed Mr. Van Wyck, not in self-defense, but in defense of one far dearer to me than myself. Last Friday night, after having gone to my room at eleven o'clock, I came downstairs again about midnight, with no intent other than a stroll on the terrace. I had been there but a few moments when Mr. Van Wyck joined me. I do not wish to repeat his conversation, but I realized what a vicious, cruel, and even diabolical husband he was to the woman I adored. I speak frankly of this adoration, for it is no secret. David Van Wyck talked of his wife in a way that made my blood boil, and I was about to tell him so when, his attention attracted by a sound in the study, he beckoned to me, and we looked in at the window. Mrs. Van Wyck was taking the pearls from the safe. As we watched, she carried them from the room, closing the door behind her. David Van Wyck drew me into the study with him, and exclaimed in fiendish glee, "Now I have her where I want her! I shall denounce her as a thief, and see if she will then be so high and mighty toward me!" I begged him not to do this, whereupon he accused me of being in love with his wife, and made other wicked assertions that I could not stand. He repeated his intention to give away all his money, to get back the pearls, and to denounce Anne as a thief; and he became, I really think, momentarily insane in his rage. Possibly I too lost my mind, but I snatched up the bill-file, tore off the papers, and stabbed him in a moment of white-hot anger. I do not regret it. I have saved Mrs. Van Wyck from the cruelties of a monster, and I am glad of it. But I refuse to pay the penalty for this, and so I shall disappear forever from the country. I could not do this if I thought I could ever win my heart's desire. But I know, Anne, that in the after years you will find joy and peace with a man who is worthy of your regard, though it pierces my heart to admit it. But though through crime, Anne, I have saved you from the further despotism and insults of a brute; and the knowledge of that is my reward.

CONDON ARCHER.

I finished reading, and there was a death-like silence. I think not one in the room wished to prosecute Archer; I think each heart was praying that Markham might not find him.



"I told Mr. Markham to detain Mr. Archer if he found him," said Fleming Stone slowly. "I fear that I regret doing so."

"He won't find him," said Anne, and as if in proof of her words, Mr. Markham came in.

"Mr. Archer has disappeared," he said. "I thought he might go by train, and I waited at the station, but he did n't. Do you want him very much?"

"No," said Anne. "We don't want him at all. Don't look for him any more, Mr. Markham." And then, as the tears flooded her eyes, she turned to me, and, putting her trembling hand through my arm, she let me lead her out into the sunlight.



## THE SEASONS OF THE HEART

BY EDWARD WILBUR MASON

**W**HEN meads are fair with green of spring,  
 When April's moon is bright,  
 Then hope is like a bluebird's wing—  
 It wakes the heart's delight!

When hills are crowned with rosy bloom,  
 When fragrant odors cloy,  
 Then love, like angel from the tomb,  
 Awakes the heart to joy!

When fields are ripe with tawny grain,  
 When songs of summer cease,  
 Then gratitude like golden gain  
 Awakes the heart to peace!

When winter silvers every pond,  
 When frost is on the streams,  
 'T is then that memory's magic wand  
 Awakes the heart to dreams!

# A CRISIS FOR OUR CONSULAR SERVICE

*By Dudley Harmon*

WHAT will be the attitude of the Democratic administration toward the United States consular service? To American manufacturers and exporters, this is one of the most vital questions involved in the change of government on March 4. The fact that since the Democratic party was last in power the consular service has been completely reorganized and removed from the influence of party politics by its operation along civil-service lines, has raised the question as to whether the new administration will continue it in its present form.

The desires of the business interests of the nation with respect to the consular service were plainly indicated last month at the Washington convention of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. Members of this national organization, representing all the diversified trade interests of the country, urged that the present non-partisan character of the consular service be preserved.

This attitude furnishes the most convincing evidence of what the United States consul is doing for the advancement of our foreign trade. The American manufacturer has little time for politics and less for sentiment. When he asks that the consular service be kept free from the control of the patronage-seeker, his request is proof positive that he believes the present American consul to be a man worth keeping on the job.

It was not always so. In fact, it was only fifteen years ago that President McKinley was induced to give a consular appointment to a man whose sole qualification was that he had proved himself an able ward leader. Though of foreign birth, and unable even to speak English correctly, this man was sent to one of the great capitals of the world. There, in shirt-sleeves and suspenders, he misrepresented his country for eight years, while business men gave him up in utter disgust. It is a return to the days of which this man was an exponent that the American manufacturer now fears.

This government has had consuls for more than one hundred years, but it has had a consular service for exactly six years. Since the

metamorphosis of the consular system into a highly trained, specialized, and efficient *service*, absolutely non-partisan, the exports of the United States have increased by \$476,000,000, or at the rate of nearly eighty million dollars a year. The American exporter has outstripped the Britisher, and the United States is to-day the greatest exporting nation on earth.

The spurt which in six years has achieved for us as a nation supremacy in exports was coincidental in its beginning with the divorce of politics from the consular system in 1906. The American manufacturers who have been producing this tremendous volume of goods for the foreign trade are the first to recognize the connection between the two events, and to give to the United States consul a share in the credit for the results achieved. The American engaged in foreign trade now feels that in the United States consuls, stationed in all the remote corners of the earth, as well as in the foreign trade centres, he has the services of a body almost equivalent to a corps of personal representatives. But the value of the American consul is even more keenly appreciated abroad than at home. Only a few months ago a British journal published a complaint from an English manufacturer that American consuls were putting British exporters at a great disadvantage in the competition for foreign trade.

Twenty years ago a Republican President who appointed forty-five Democrats to offices, the total salaries of which amounted to more than one hundred thousand dollars a year, would have been looked upon as politically insane, not to say ungrateful. We all remember the advertisement in an English paper for "a Protestant woman to take a King Charles Spaniel dog out to walk." Yet, since the reorganization of the consular service into a non-partisan body, President Taft alone has appointed forty-five Democrats to consular posts. All that was required of them was to prove American citizenship, with age between twenty-one and fifty, and then to pass the competitive examinations—examinations almost as rigorous as non-partisan. Yet, on the eve of the inauguration of a Democratic President, we find the Senators of his party refusing to permit the confirmation of a group of consular promotions and appointments, despite the fact that half the names on the list are those of young men from the Democratic States of the South.

Elihu Root, formerly Secretary of State, and now Senator from New York, was the father of the reorganized consular system. One day, when he was in the midst of his fight to get Congressional approval of certain features of the scheme, he was asked by a member of Congress: "Suppose some eminent citizen—say, a former member of Congress—comes along—could you afford to refuse him a place?" The questioner never got any further, for Mr. Root interrupted him with:

"Yes, if he's under fifty years of age, he can take the examinations

like everybody else. But that kind of man is just whom we don't want. The consular service is to be no longer the refuge of 'has-beens.' We must catch them young, and train them up in the service. That is the way they do in the army and the navy, and it is the only way we can ever get a consular service worthy of the name, a service which shall stand for something."

And another day a Senator burst into Secretary Root's office, soon after the reorganization had become effective.

"What's this man Asterisk?" he sputtered. "Why are you giving him a \$4,500 consulate in China, when you know that I've got to find a place for Billy Bones? Why, I could n't have been reëlected if it had n't been for Billy Bones, and that consulate is just the job he ought to have. These places ought to go to the men who do the work for the party."

Only those who know Mr. Root can imagine the chill that entered the air in the dead silence that followed. Then he said: "All right. Bring Billy Bones here, and I will have Asterisk here. We'll have the Chinese Minister examine them both in written and colloquial Chinese. If Billy Bones knows more Chinese than Asterisk, he can have the place."

Asterisk is still in the service, and when he reports on the markets for American goods in his district, the State Department and interested American business men know that they can accept what he says. He is a type of the new consul, the non-partisan, whose work is his chief interest and his sole career, and who is always on the alert for opportunities for advancing American trade interests. It was a colleague of the same type who was recently responsible for the sale in Europe of a five million dollar order of American coal. Another consul of the same kind has just enabled an American coal exporter to place a fifty thousand dollar order in Uruguay, a republic of which the American who took the profit on the deal had never heard until attracted by the consular reports pointing the way to trade opportunities abroad.

The State Department has on file documentary proof of the part played by the consuls in effecting these sales. It also has a great number of letters, received without solicitation, from Americans who found their business interests greatly advanced by the consular service. One manufacturing firm in Michigan wrote that through a consul it had sold twenty carloads of its product abroad in a single order, and that by using the daily consular reports it had trebled its foreign trade within a year. Another manufacturer reported that he had placed a single order for agricultural implements to the value of six thousand dollars through a consul in a South American country, and stated further that he had never dreamed of trying to make sales in this market until attracted by the consul's reports. Sixteen carloads of agricultural machinery were sold in Siberia by another American firm, which gratuitously gave all

the credit for the sale to a consul in that country. Agricultural machinery to the value of one hundred thousand dollars was sold to Turkey by another American firm through the assistance of a consul. Another manufacturer sold abroad in a single order one hundred miles of barbed-wire fencing with the aid of a consul. Still another United States consul brought to American mills an order for a steel bridge costing five hundred thousand dollars. One consul, in a Latin-American country, has to his credit the promotion of sales to the value of one million five hundred thousand dollars in the last twelve months. Practically all of these orders, and hundreds like them, represented new business. No account is taken of innumerable follow-up sales.

Yet it was not so very many years ago that one of the political plum pickers drawing a consul's salary in a Latin-American city was receiving invoices requiring his signature through the bars of a prison cell. Though the representative of the United States Government in that city, and a splendid vote-getter among the "boys" at home, his title as consul did not save him from serving a term in jail for things which would have made even his political sponsors blush. This man's successor, by the way, is typical of the new consular service. He is not only a gentleman, but cultured, dresses well, talks well, and looks the clean, healthy, brainy American that he is. Incidentally, he was the first United States consul to be elected to a decent Latin-American club. A business man is judged by his representatives, rather than by the company he keeps, and it is our consuls who give foreigners their ideas about the kind of persons who are directing American industries. A consular service based on merit and efficiency is, therefore, a world-wide guarantee for the character and integrity of the American business man.

There is not left a corner of the world where the United States consul has not secured hard, cold cash for the producer and exporter at home. Conversely, there is not a Congressional district in the United States without its farm, mine, or factory which has profited by the expansion of foreign trade, so largely aided by the consular service. If, in the next four years, the spoils system is reintroduced into the consular service, every section of the United States, and every product, from Oregon with its lumber, to New England with its manufactures, will be the loser by the change. It is the belief that the government will keep the faith with him, and reward efficient and loyal service by promotion, that keeps our new style consul constantly digging for more trade for Americans. Shatter this belief by making the consular service the victim of the dispenser of patronage, and there is not a consul who will not feel that the enthusiasm and the hustle have been knocked out of him.

But the new service brand of United States consul does much more than sell goods. He advises American exporters and manufacturers as to the business usages and methods of salesmanship in foreign lands, and

suggests the most effective means of advertising American products. He gathers new seeds and plants, and sends them home for the American farmer to grow. Crops worth hundreds of thousands of dollars are grown annually in the United States from seeds and plants introduced by American consuls. He also protects the United States customs revenues by detecting frauds and undervaluations in invoices. One man, since promoted to be a Minister in the diplomatic service, saved the government one million dollars in this way. The consul also sees that American life and property receive adequate protection abroad. He preserves the health of our coast cities by reporting on the sanitary conditions of and contagious diseases in foreign ports.

Still another method of making the consular service even more useful to American business men has recently been adopted by Wilbur J. Carr, Director of the Consular Service since its reorganization. He has instructed all consuls to report to the department, for publication in the consular reports, dates of their probable arrival in the United States when coming home on leave, together with addresses at which they may be seen by business men desiring personal consultation with an experienced man on some project for foreign trade. The consuls on leave also spend much of their vacation time in speaking before chambers of commerce and other organizations of business men.

When seventy per cent. of the loyalty of our consuls was to their political sponsors, to the party leaders in Washington who secured their jobs for them, there could be no such thing as proper administrative control of the consular service. Neither were the consuls at all particular about exerting themselves for the government, and an order from Washington was often ignored while the consul wrote a letter of complaint to his political patron. They cared much more for keeping in the good graces of the Senator or Representative who had them appointed than for winning the commendation of their superiors in office. Could a more unbusinesslike policy be imagined in a nation whose people have always demanded value received for money expended?

Under the present system, however, when every consul knows that there is an efficiency record growing under his name in the department at Washington, and that upon the story told therein his future in the service depends, he is ever on the lookout for an opportunity to distinguish himself by superior achievement. In addition, an inspection service has been established, which serves to keep the consular corps from falling into ruts; and an intelligent system of frequent transfers keeps the individual consuls from going stale or vegetating at one post.

In view of the close relationship which has thus grown up between the manufacturers and the new consular service, it is little wonder that those engaged in foreign trade are anxiously awaiting indication of what is to be the policy of the new administration toward what has become

## A Birthday

one of the most useful branches of the government. American business men, who have been so busy making and selling goods abroad that they have had no time for politics, are now keenly alive to their vital interest in the immediate future of the consular service. Thousands of manufacturers are depending on the daily consular reports and correspondence with individual consuls for suggestions and help in expanding their foreign sales. They now demand that they continue to enjoy the benefit of the business sense, thorough and specialized training, and long experience abroad which the new consuls possess. They have awakened to a realization that the consular service offers them valuable and impartial aid in conducting business enterprises abroad. It is not to be expected, then, that they can regard with indifference a change of government which brings potential impairment of the usefulness and efficiency of their new-found ally.

The reorganized consular service rests on a Presidential executive order, by which it was placed on a civil-service basis. Mr. Wilson as President will have the authority to revoke this order, and eliminate the civil-service features from the consular system. Knowing this, those who produced and sold the four billions of dollars' worth of American goods sent abroad last year have indeed great reason to be interested in his attitude toward the new consular service.



## A BIRTHDAY

BY WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

**T**HOU seest the world anew to-day,  
 The sunlight, and familiar things;  
 And all about your thoughts must lay,  
 A wish that sings.

What has not grown familiar yet,  
 Through years of girlhood's bloom,  
 May this day on the future set,  
 Hopes that illumine.

Behind you are the silences;  
 Before you, visions far withdrawn;—  
 To-day we praise the happiness  
 Your star leads on.

# “MAZEPPA”

*By George Hibbard*

**A**T the small way-station the sad-eyed man wearing the overcoat with the worn astrakhan collar sat on the large iron-bound trunk. It was marked in fading letters, “Mammoth Folly and Fancy Aggregation.”

“Speaking of the procession of the equinoxes and the tide in the affairs of men,” he said, “once I was lifted on the crest of the wave of opportunity, hung suspended amid the glittering froth of fortune, and then—— Well, speaking of the way the cat jumps, the town was a one-night stand, though that hardly describes it either, for there was a palpitating doubt, almost amounting to certainty, that it might not stand for us—even for one night. We were giving ‘Mazeppa.’ Now, of course, you’ll understand that we were n’t an outfit carrying any untamed steed of Ukane breed about with us. For the wild courser of the plains we mostly had recourse to the local livery-stable. Mapleton, though, was n’t of a size to boast a livery-stable, and the horse that the hotel proprietor sent out with the buggy had temporarily succumbed under a twenty years’ strain of dragging drummers round to the cross-roads stores. Speaking of ‘my kingdom for a horse,’ Gridley, the manager—he played the Castellan of Laurinski, and the trombone before the show—was ready to go to the perilous extent of ’most a dollar and a half for the hire of one for the evening. A breath of relief was breathed by the entire company when by superhuman efforts and the aid of the Mapleton barber an animal was secured. We hired him out of the wagon of the Mapleton Steam Laundry. They had bought him the day before from a farmer out in the country. His name was Napoleon. You’d have concluded, to look at him, that it was Napoleon at the end of a long, hard, Russian winter. His knees were bigger than his hoofs, with his head hanging down between them, and his ribs like the gratings they have to keep the cows from straying on the railroad tracks. Still, I never liked the look of his eye, which was by way of being red where it ought to be white.”

The narrator at this point took from his pocket the half of a cigar, which he lit and inserted in his mouth.

“Now, speaking of misfortunes never coming otherwise than in mixed sizes,” he went on, “that was n’t all which we was up against on that particular pleasant April evening. Charley Springer—Montagu Delorme,



who was lead *and* Mazeppa—had been stricken with the mumps to a degree that even Mapleton would n't have accepted him for a heroic figure. He might be all right next day, for they were subsiding, but at that moment his face looked more like a punching-bag than anything human. Well, as the subjects come up of what's one man's dope being another man's dinner, I was n't keeping back any hot, burning tears because of Charley's inability to appear. In fact, they were n't pressing forward at all ready to fall. My eyes were as dry as a village the day after it has voted prohibition. The *entente cordiale* between Charley and me was to say the least strained, owing to his riding something of the high horse even when he was n't playing Mazeppa. My chance had come. You know the story: The star out, the understudy called in; the scene of tumultuous applause at the fall of the curtain; the accidental presence of the metropolitan manager; the contract at his own terms waiting for him in his dressing-room; a season on Broadway. Of course there was n't going to be any metropolitan manager in Mapleton, or any Broadway to follow for a demi-tasse. I was bound, though, to show them what I could do, and if Charley Springer got one of those engagements about which he was always boasting, why, I might have the glory of appearing every night before an enraptured audience in 'Flesh legs, arms, and body, short tight trunks, half body of brown cloth' (which is the costume directions for the big scene), to say nothing of drawing increased pay when the ghost walked on Saturday."

Here the speaker paused to rekindle the cigar, the end of which he kept alight with difficulty.

"Since Cardinal Richelieu—I played the part in stock for a week in New Orleans, Louisiana—made use of that bright lexicon of youth in which there was no such word as 'fail,' there's other editions of the dictionary been brought out in which it's to be found fast enough, with several other distressing synonyms. I had made up my mind, though, to make good, for the reason already stated, and likewise, moreover, and according to the party of the second part, because—now, right here comes in that heart interest without which no drama can be complete. Her name was Nettie Mayhew! Being by chance in the drug-store, I beheld her at the soda-water fountain, and I heard her whisper to the second female juvenile who was with her that if she could induce 'popper' to bring her in from the farm that evening she was going to the play. How did I know who she was? No sooner had she passed from my sight than I sought the requisite information. Thereupon, I learned with further satisfaction that she was the daughter of old farmer Mayhew, out on the Millpond Road, whose holding of stock in the Mapleton State Bank amounted to more than half. Within half an hour of our walking up from the station, the village had picked out each one of the 'actors.' I saw she knew who I was, and if I had not misread a look in her eyes,

I had reason to believe that I had something to do with her wishing to be present in the evening.

“I had a temperature. Speaking in the words of an all-star cast of Iago and Monte Cristo, if I got it over, ‘the oyster was mine.’ Do you think I was anxious? As I stood in the balcony before the Mapleton Opera House, where the supers that were Tartar Shepherds were doubling in brass, and saw the youth, beauty, and fashion of the fairest gem of outstrung villages of the Corn Belt crowding to the door, I swore that I’d be worthy of the occasion and of her. When I went down to dress, I noticed that Charley Springer was putting up a talk that he was all right to go on. A sight, though, of his face, which resembled a contour map of the country round Orange, New Jersey, was enough to satisfy anybody; so for that night—‘Only to-night, only to-night,’ as the old song has it—the centre of the stage and the limelight were mine. I dressed with care in Charley’s costume, which fitted well enough, and when I stood in the flies I felt the pleasing sensation permeating my being that there were no flies on me. And just then a kicking and a stamping, mingled with a suppressed murmur as if the mob was a-coming on before its cue, caught my attention. They were leading in Napoleon through the stage entrance, it being on the ground floor, with an opening as big as a barn-door into the alley. This was easy enough, but Napoleon objected. There seemed to be something about the air of the playhouse that did n’t attract him. Now, if ever there was a horse that you’d say offhand could be warranted to stand without hitching, it was Napoleon. Seemed as if that was the job he’d have naturally sought in life, but now——! He fidgeted this way and that, and those cunning old eyes of his with the red whites kept looking here and there. Anyhow, they finally got him in and stationed at the R. U. side off. With a pair of blinders and a nosebag, we strove to impart the impression to his mind that no evil was intended. They say one of those old guys, Ed Keene, used to shake a prop. ladder just before he went on in one part of Shylock, to get himself waked up. The little encounter with Napoleon had the same exhilarating effect on me. From the moment I stepped into sight of the audience, I knew I had ’em. When I spoke these few simple opening words: ‘Olinska! Dear Olinska! Ere yet the envious daylight robs my soul of the sweet privilege of drinking from thine eyes deep draughts of the bright liquid fire which as from twin stars of love stream through my enraptured heart,’ and so forth, you could have heard a roseleaf drop from the corsage of the belle of the village green in the front row. When I came to the utterance, ‘Aim at my heart; it has no defense but courage and this good sword,’ the volume of sound had such a pressure to the square inch that no boiler-inspector would have passed it if it had been steam. And there was an explosion! I took five calls at the end of the fourth scene of the first act. All was going well, gloriously. The only

drawback was that I could not discover Nettie in the audience. However, she might be sitting back in the darkness under the gallery, and I played as if I knew that her eyes were upon me.

"The stage directions of Scene Sixth, Act First, read: 'The Outer Terrace of the Castle, overlooking a tract of desolate country, composed of precipitous mountain ranges, abounding with cataracts; the rocky pathway crosses a stupendous waterfall by a slight rustic bridge, and is finally lost in a chain of lofty eminences stretching into the distance.' Of course in the way of 'stupendous waterfalls' and 'lofty eminences' the most high-browed critic could n't accuse us of any over-elaboration of realism. Later there is 'music,' and the book says, 'The horse is brought forward.' Well, as to the horse, we were all there. We had a horse. At least, Napoleon would have passed with a Professor of Zoölogy, if not with judges of the Horse Show. Also, he allowed himself to be led on. His little playful attempt to land with his off hind-hoof on Rudzloff, which, if it failed to reach that character successfully, put Drolinsko out of action, added verisimilitude to the occasion. Instantly he won the plaudits of the multitude. He was restless while I was being bound to his back. Charley Springer had been obliged to go on among the 'Knights, Officers, Guards, Heralds,' where his face did n't count, and was not feeling kindly about it. He fastened those knots as if he were a committee tying up a clairvoyant. To move in the least was impossible for me—and then——

"I don't blame Charley Springer for what happened. Charley has his little faults, but he'd never play it low down like that: The leader of the orchestra was to blame. He started it—beginning all of a sudden before the time with the bars of the 'Ride of the Walkurie,' that we brought in to set the audience off. Well, it did, and it set Napoleon off. He stood straight up on his old hind-legs. Gridley cried 'Whoa!' which was n't in his lines, and the rest of the *dramatis personæ* began to make remarks for which they'd have been fined in any theatre in the country. No wonder! Napoleon was scattering all over the place. That horse was n't a horse; he was a centipede. He had the stage cleared in a minute. All the actors were looking out from round corners of the scenery, except those which had climbed down into the orchestra for safety. For an instant Napoleon stood still. Then he headed for a group which had ventured forth a little L, consisting of Abder Khan, King of Tartary; Tamar, Zemba, and some Chieftains and Warriors. He went through them like the champion Harvale quarterback through the line of a minor college for 'steen yards. Next he pranced into the space behind the back drop, where the door to the alley was. He ramped out of that into the alley, where I caught for an instant the frenzied tumult in the opera house. He clattered up the alley and round a corner. Round another corner into Main Street. As I dashed past, all the men

and boys on the sidewalk shouted, also the first of the crowd that began pouring from the opera house. A number of them started to follow us, but we soon left 'em behind.

“The cries faded away. I don't know Napoleon's pedigree, but when he got going he had speed. We were out in the open country. The road led into a wood. We tore through that. Once more black fields were on either side. There have been some rides in history—some. Paul Revere took quite a little run for the money. I once heard a reciter put it up about a fellow who rode from a place called Ghent—I wonder if it was in Michigan—to I. None of them, though, ever took their rides dressed in pink tights and little else, tied to the back of a strange horse going they did n't know where or the time he 'd take in getting there. The night was clear and starry—and cold. Napoleon seemed 'most as good in wind as in limb. I began to entertain nervous doubts as to how long he could keep it up. Miles passed. Time went on. So did Napoleon. The lights were out in the houses. We met nobody in the road. The first fine exhilaration of the adventure was wearing down, wearing down to the bone. At least, I was chilled to the bone. At the rate he was going, the night air whistled over me. On, on, raced Napoleon, as if he thought that he was entered in some equine Marathon, and then, just as I was about thinking of having my berth made up for the night, he turned into a lane. He pounded down it and into a farm-yard, and brought up against a barn door with a bang that would have waked any one. I could see the farm-house, which was a big, prosperous-looking place. At once I started to call. Finally lights began to show in the windows, and at last the door opened. An old man with a lantern appeared on the threshold.

“What's the matter?” he growled.

“'Most everything,” I answered. “Come and see.”

“He looked about cautiously, and, concluding there was no one else, he came forward. A girl, who had evidently dressed hurriedly and held a shawl about her and over her head, followed him. It was Nettie.

“What April fool's business is this?” he demanded, and I could tell how easy it was for him by nature to be unpleasant.

“If you think anybody is going to ride a night like this, dressed like this, for a joke——” I began.

“Why,” cried Nettie, looking at the horse, “it's Napoleon!”

“So it is,” said her father, his curiosity overcoming his propensity to make himself disagreeable. “How in thunder——”

“If you 'll unfasten me,” I answered, “and let me get a little warm, I 'll tell you all about it.”

“Of course in common charity he had to take me in and take care of me. They gave me something to eat, and now I ask you, was n't there enough in the manner of my arrival to satisfy a girl who had followed from page to page stories of romances all her happy young life?”

“ ‘You did n’t come to the play,’ I whispered tenderly to Nettie, as she offered me another slice of peach pie.

“ ‘Father would n’t let me,’ she replied, with a laugh which greatly disquieted me. ‘But this is as good as a play.’”

The whistle of the way train sounded faintly beyond the bend as the narrator stood up and looked along the tracks.

“Nettie? No, I did n’t marry Nettie. Charley Springer came out with Gridley the next morning about the horse. He’d got over the mumps. When Charley Springer and Nettie saw each other, there could n’t be any doubt from the first blush that it was a case of two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one. They say that Charley Springer is supervisor out there now, and that father-in-law Mayhew is going to make him president of the bank.”



## THE INN

BY MARY ELEANOR ROBERTS

**L**IFE'S an inn, nor may we stay  
 Where we lord it for a day,  
 Dreaming, as the time slips by,  
 Ours the rooms we occupy.  
 Nay; though we be well-bestowed,  
 Other guests are on the road.

Friend, our moment comes to go!  
 The Postilion waits below!  
 And these halls that we have known,  
 Fondly thought of as our own,  
 Keep of us no further trace  
 Than the mirror of our face.

*Quickly, ere the summons falls,  
 Write thy name upon the walls.*

# THE UNWILLING PHILANTHROPISTS

*By Lowell Hardy*

“PUBLIC spirit!” said the jeweller, as he seated himself beside the stranger on the bench before the door of his little shop. “There ain’t any in this here town any more, as I can see.”

His gaze wandered on down the deserted main street of Four Horse Flat, and then came slowly back to the stranger who had sought the shade of the broad wooden awning in front of his place of business. “It’s enough to take the heart right out of a body, and what’s to be done I don’t know!”

He was silent for some minutes, puffing savagely at the cigar presented to him by the new-comer, and staring straight ahead of him so hard that a man working in a garden on the opposite side of the road finally came to the fence with an armful of weeds to inquire whether he wouldn’t like to have his picture to hang over the bureau by his bed.

“There’s some here as thinks they’re public-spirited,” the jeweller resumed after a short pause, and glancing fiercely after the retreating form of the man across the way—“men as prides themselves on it; and they show it by cleaning up their front yards and throwing the rubbish out into the street for people to fall over!

“The trouble with a good many,” he continued, striving desperately to ignore the actions of the garden-worker, who was wafting kisses toward him, “is that they’re always thinking of theirselves first. I remember a man lived here once, name of William Blow—Windy Bill, he was called for short. He up and spoiled the best plan we ever had for helping out the town, and all on account of his selfishness.

“It was Ed Sparks’s idea. He’d been down to Frisco to his wife’s aunt’s funeral, and when he got back he had it all planned out to build us a real, bang-up, cityfied cemetery that would make them coyotes over at Simpson’s Bar sit up and take notice for once. The idea took like wild-fire. This miserable community just mentioned, which was direckly across the river from Four Horse Flat, had gone to work and built theirselves a new dance-hall and fire-engine house combined, which they was feeling mighty sot up over, and they needed a lesson. Work was started

immediate on the cemetery, everybody being so full of enthusiasm they was no trouble raising the money. When it was 'most finished George Nichols up and thought of something we'd all overlooked. We needed a funeral to dedicate it with, something stylish and first-class, with a band of music and all, and where were we going to get it? Barring accidents, the prospects was terrible poor. Nobody could think of any one that was likely to pass away very soon, although considerable hard feeling was started through several persons proposing names, until all of a sudden Sam Maker thought of Windy Bill, and everybody fell to cheering.

"A committee was appointed, and George Nichols and Sam Maker was selected to go out and interview him.

"'And mind you bring him back with you,' says Gunsight Doolittle, looking at them mighty stern. 'Windy's cabin, I judge, is about half way between us and Simpson's Bar, and if them hellions get hold of what we're up to, they'll try for him theirselves. Them ghouls 'ud do anything to beat us!'

"Windy was sitting right out in the broiling sun in front of his cabin as they drove up, with a big book open on his knees. At first George and Sam thought it was a Bible, and it made them awful hopeful, but when they got right up to him they saw it was a doctor book, with pictures showing how the human body looks with its skin off, and skeletons, and such. Windy never paid any more attention to them than if they was ghosts, only a little yaller cur dog that was alongside his chair growled at them and ruffled up his hair, trying to look bigger than he was, to scare them.

"'Why, hel-lo, Bill, old boy!' says George Nichols, very cheerful and happy-like. 'How are you these days? We have n't seen you in town for ages. How you making it, any way?'

"Windy never moved. He just went on staring straight ahead of him at the side of the mountain, as if they was n't there, and keeping his finger in his place in the book. They waited a while, and then George kinder backed off a little.

"'Try him again,' says Sam in a loud whisper. 'He did n't hear you.'

"'Maybe we'd better not go any further with it to-day,' says George. 'I believe it 'ud be better not to disturb him right now. He looks to me as if he had his mind set on something, and he might not like being bothered. Come on away.'

"'No! Don't you do it,' says Sam. 'You can't tell—he might be gone by to-morrow. Simpson's Bar 'll be after him the minute they hear. You go ahead and start joking with him. Get to laughing and carrying on so yourself that you can't stop! That 'll fetch him!'

"George give him a look that would 'a' killed some people. He turned his back and walked right up to where Windy was sitting.

“Look here,’ he says, ‘what’s worrying you, any way? Have you got so you can’t say “Hello” to a friend when he calls.’

“I ain’t got any friends,’ Windy says, still staring off at the mountain. He waved one hand. ‘Farewell, cruel world!’ he says. ‘Farewell! I won’t be troubling folks much longer. I feel the grave a-calling me;’ and he let loose a awful sound.

“George and Sam felt the cold chills a-creeping up their backs.

“Well, don’t keep it waiting on our account,’ says George, very nasty. ‘Good-by! Have a good time, and write if you get a chance. We’ll be anxious to hear. When are you figgering on passing away?’ he says sourcastic-like.

“Windy looked at him, wounded. ‘Any moment may be my last,’ he says. ‘I kin feel myself slipping, slipping away. My symptims is getting more and worse.’ He opened the book to the place he’d been keeping and pointed to the page. ‘I found two new ones to-day,’ he says, brightening up a little, ‘and they fit me exact. It would n’t surprise me a mite if I was to die this very minute. I may be dying right now.’

“‘If that’s the case,’ says George Nichols, unfeeling-like, ‘you’d better go on inside your cabin and die there. You’ll be scaring people’s horses and causing accidents if you go dying right out here in the road.’

“Windy glared at him. ‘Where’s your heart?’ he says—‘a-talking that way to a man that’s teetering on the brink of the grave! I’d think you’d be ashamed.’

“‘I did n’t mean it,’ says George, remembering, all of a sudden, what he’d come for. ‘See here, Windy,’ he says, like he’d tried but his big, honest heart would n’t let him wait any longer, ‘me and Sam is here on the behalf of the citizens of Four Horse Flat to invite you to come over and live with us. We want to take care of you.’

“Windy looked at them pretty sharp.

“‘Hum-m-m-m,’ he says. ‘What for?’

“‘Well, it’s like this,’ says George: ‘we got to thinking it over, and we decided it was n’t right for you to be living out here all alone, and you not very well. It looks bad for the community. Another thing, we want you nearer to us, so that in case anything was to—er—happen to you, so to speak, we could do the thing up in first-class style. You would n’t have to give it a thought. Why, we’ve made—I mean, we’ll make all the arrangements, and be glad to.’

“Windy shook his head. ‘No, I ain’t wuth it. Tell ’em not to bother about me. It won’t be much longer now, any way, and I might as well stay right here where I am. When I pass away, probably somebody ’ll happen along this way from over to Simpson’s Bar, and ’ll find my few remains and give ’em decent burial. They’ve said as much.’

“George and Sam both gave a start.



“‘You’re a-coming right along with us this minute,’ says George in a hard voice. ‘This is no time to argue.’ He was a very determined man, once he got started, and he grabbed Windy by the arm and never let go till he sat down in the buckboard. Just as they was starting, Windy let loose a screech and began to struggle to get out.

“‘Hi! What you doing?’ says George and Sam both together. ‘Quit it!’

“‘Walter has got to go, too,’ says Windy, ‘or I won’t budge a step!’

“‘Walter?’ says Sam, staring. ‘Which Walter?’

“‘My Walter dog. Don’t hurt him!’

“George caught the cur and after a brief struggle got him into the wagon.

“‘Be careful,’ says Windy. ‘He can’t stand roughness;’ but George never answered him, on account of having two of his fingers in his mouth at the time, that the dog had bit ’most off.

When they’d got to town and located Windy all nice and comfortable in a cabin down near the post-office, George and Sam went over to the New Orleans Saloon, where the committee was waiting to hear them report.

“‘That sure was the reluctantest remains I ever attempted to bring into the fold!’ says George Nichols, dropping down in a chair and motioning to Dan Wilson, who was tending bar. ‘I’m plumb wore-out.’

“‘Why, what’s he kicking at, any way?’ says Gunsight Doolittle, surprised-like. ‘I never see such a man. Ain’t we offering him the finest graveyard in the whole country? Looking at it in some ways, it’s a honor to be selected for the opening, so to speak.’

“‘Did you find out what his ailment really is, and if it’s liable to be sudden or not?’ says Lin Hatch, who was training the band. ‘I got considerable to do yet with the second trombone, and I’d like to know.’

“‘I was talking with him only yesterday,’ spoke up Old Hicks, the stage-driver, ‘out in front of his cabin as I came along, and he ’lows now he’s got the Angelina Pictorialis and Botts, having read in a hoss book lately that Botts causes the hair to stand on end, which his sure does, not being combed for some ’leven years. He’s taking sulphur and bran-mash morning and night, and he’s got so now he ’most whinnies when he sees another hoss.

“‘What he’s really got,’ continued the stage-driver, ‘is this here tuber-coloroses that’s taken holt of so many people nowadays; and living on salt-hoss and flap-jacks like he does, having no one to look out for him, nacherally don’t help to build him up any. His system can’t handle ’em.’

“‘Fellow citizens,’ says George Nichols, very confident, ‘he’s our man! I know the party, and we could n’t ’ve done better. I’m willing to bet he’ll be the proudest corpse in California when he sees what

we're doing for him, and Windy's a man as will do us proud, too. I'll back him against any remains in the whole durn country.'

"Following on this excitement, things was quiet for a week or so, when we all began to notice a change coming over Windy. His spirits was rising, and it was n't long before he give evidence of it. He put in most of his time reading and studying some articles he found in a pile of old magazines that had been brought him, all about diet and health and how to keep well. Next thing we knew, he up and said he had to have two pounds of steak, a half-gallon of fresh milk, and a dozen fresh eggs every day.

"My corndition demands 'em,' he says to George Nichols, who he had sent for to come and see him. 'These magazine fellers all say so. I need more albums in my blood. It's lucky I found out in time!'

"They'll be awful hard to get up in these mountains,' says George, kinder hesitating, but not wanting to refuse him right out.

"Windy give him a look. 'What if they is?' says he, pretty sharp. 'If you ain't going to give me enough to eat, what did you bring me here for? I never asked you. Git out of my sun! Is this the way to treat a dying man—a shetting off Gawd's sunshine from him? Where's your heart?' he says, glaring at George very savage.

"I'll see what can be done about it,' says George, moving sudden-like and speaking sorter soothing.

"You'd better!' says Windy, pretty short. 'There was two friends of mine over from Simpson's Bar yesterday to see me and inquire about my health, and to find out if they was anything they could do for me. They was very polite and agreeable, but they thought I was failing fast; thought probably I had wore out the climate over here.

"Don't you believe a word them horse-thieves tell you!' says George, starting up. 'I'll see to it that you get those things you spoke of right away. I'm glad you mentioned 'em. Anything else you want, speak right up, and don't you let them low-minded bribe-givers corrupt you. They'd do anything to gain their ends!'

"What is their ends?' inquired Windy, interested.

"Never mind what,' says George. 'You just look out for them, that's all. Don't let 'em deceive you.'

"Why,' says Windy, 'they jest seem to want to look after me, same as you fellers do.' He leaned back and puffed comfortably at the long, fat cigar left him by the corruption committee. 'They take a great deal of interest in Walter, too,' he says, patting the mongrel on the head. 'Mr. Scalp Hoskins, one of the leading men over there, says he is a high-bred and valerable dog. Says he's a gen-u-wine Rooshin mouse-hound, and they're terrible hard to find. He could n't see enough of him. He asked me to let him hold him for jest a minute, and 'most cried when I took him away to let Henery Sowden have his turn.'

“ ‘The trouble with people in this town is, they’re so durned iggernerant they don’t appreciate him. It’s a pleasure to be with people as does,’ he says, grunting kinder nasty-like and knocking the ashes off his cigar into George’s lap. ‘What’s more,’ he says, ‘one of you fellows swore at him the other night, and I ain’t going to stand it. Don’t argue! I heard it myself.’

“When George Nichols came back and told what he’d agreed to do, Gunsight Doolittle took on something terrible.

“ ‘You’re crazy!’ he says. ‘Where you going to get ’em? We ain’t running a creamery. All the milk I ever seen around here came out of air-tight cows with a bunch of red flowers painted on the side, that you milked with a can-opener. Same with them steaks and fresh eggs. Where they coming from? He don’t use any reason!’

“ ‘I reckon we’ll have to get Old Hicks to bring ’em in by stage from Chico,’ says George, pretty solemn; ‘and they’ll come high, too.’

“For maybe a week or so, nothing more was heard from the invalid, and we was beginning to think our troubles was over when he up and sent for George Nichols again, to tell him he’d been studying further them diet-lists, and he’d found he was n’t getting enough acids into his system.

“ ‘Fruit acids,’ he says, ‘is required to promote the secretions of the gastric juices. I got to have fresh fruit. Apples in partickeler is good. They don’t say to have ’em in pies,’ he says, ‘but pies is agreeable to me.’

“George never said a word. He’d been noticing Windy’s cough was worse, and every time he’d come near him he was took with sech a fit you’d think he’d bust hisself wide open.

“ ‘He can’t last much longer,’ says George, when he came over to tell us about it. ‘We’d better let him have whatever he wants. They’s no use being mean about it. I say, give him his old pies.’

“ ‘Fresh-apple-pies!’ yells Gunsight, wild-like. ‘He’s going off his head. Why, dad-fetch it, I dreams about ’em sometimes at night! Where’s he going to get ’em?’

“ ‘Mrs. Sudds says she can make ’em, if we’ll furnish the apples,’ says George. ‘They’ll have to be brought up from the valley, and I reckon they’ll foot up about four dollars apiece by the time we got ’em here, but they’s no use in holding back now.’

“That first night they brought Windy in his pie at dinner-time over at the Golden Rule, where we was all eating our meals, it took two men to hold Gunsight to keep him from making a regular scene. Windy never offered any one a taste, but jest went on dipping up the juice while we all chewed away on the dried-apple brand and taking drinks of water. Next morning Gunsight tried to get Mrs. Sudds to make him one of ’em, like Windy’s.

“‘Yes, I think I see myself,’ she says. ‘I got nothing else to do, cooking for a lot of big hulking loafers like you. Fancy pies! The next thing I know, you’ll be wanting ice-cream and Charlot Rusk for breakfast. You’re getting too all-fired finicky, that’s what’s the matter with you!’”

“‘Very well,’ says Gunsight, swallowing hard. ‘All I hope is, I don’t do anything I had n’t oughter. Only last night, after dinner, I seen him a-feeding a piece he had left to his dog, and I don’t know yet how I held in. I jest kept saying over and over to myself, “Don’t ever do anything you would n’t want your mother to hear about!” and I held off. When I came too, I was standing up to the bar in the New Orleans, taking a drink with a sheep-herder from Bear Valley, and I had my arm around his neck!’”

“Three or four times a week, regular now, little bunches of friends of Windy’s from over Simpson’s Bar would come to call on him, inquiring for his health and trying their best to make him dissatisfied.

“‘There’s some more of them loving friends jest leaving now,’ says Sam Maker, watching a party saying good-by in front of Windy’s cabin. ‘You’d better be going over and have a powwow with him, and see how he’s standing the strain,’ he says to George Nichols, who was getting to have a sorter anxious look on his face. ‘They’re after him pretty hard! See if he’s weakening any.’”

“George went over careless-like and sat down on the porch, where Windy was sunning hisself as usual, and started being agreeable.

“‘Well, I reckon you feel pretty bad this morning,’ he says hopeful and interested-like. ‘These here north winds must be awful hard on people that’s as far gone as you. Yep, they must be,’ he says, shaking his head.

“Windy, who had jest been taken with a terrible fit of coughing, stopped short and opened his mouth to say something back, when he happened to look down the road. He give a groan.

“‘Here comes another parcel of them Simpson Bar-ers now,’ he says, glaring at ’em as they came smiling up to the cabin with their hands full of cigars and magazines. ‘I ain’t going to stand this much longer. I’m getting plumb sick of this here arguing back and forth—first you fellers and then them. It’s enough to wear out a iron dog! Stay and have a cigar,’ he says, very hospitable, as George got up to go. ‘They has very fair ones, and I been smoking too much lately.’”

“The committee from Simpson’s Bar stayed extra long that visit, and we could hear them talking till long after dark. Then everything quieted down and they took theirselves off, and we went to sleep.

“Next morning Windy was gone! We could n’t find hide nor hair of him.

“George Nichols and Sam Maker was ’most wild when they first

heard of it. We all nacherally supposed the enemy had got away with him, but we found out different when Old Hicks come in with the mail. It seems Windy left town with 'em, but he'd got so disgusted listening to their talk that when they'd got as far as his old cabin he up and piled off the wagon with his dog and baggage and told 'em to drive on. He was going to stay where he was.

"'Well,' says George Nichols, when he'd calmed down some, 'I'm going over and find out what has happened to rile him. He never left jest because them cusses talked him into it. Somebody here has given him offense.'

"George was back again by noon-time. 'Gunsight did it,' he says, shaking his head mighty solemn.

"'Me!' says Gunsight, surprised. 'Why, what did I do?'

"'You kicked Walter,' says George. 'He says he saw you do it right out in front of his place only last night.'

"'Why, I—— Doggone it! Sure I kicked his pup. It hopped on me and 'most bit my leg off when I was going by. I——'

"'Which leg?' asked Old Man Nanny, very interested.

"Gunsight give him a look and turned his back on him. 'I'll show you the place!' he says to George, starting to pull off his boot.

"'Never mind,' says George. 'We forgive you. The thing has been done; but you oughter have let him.'

"'What? Let him bite my leg?' says Gunsight, kinder choking and his eyes starting out of his head.

"'Certainly,' says George. 'What's a leg! Lots of people would be only too glad to have a chance like that to do something for their town.'

"'Why don't you let him bite your leg, then?' says Gunsight, getting bitter. 'It's longer than mine, any way!'

"'We've said enough about it now,' says George. 'We'll call the incident closed. Windy's got pretty near the end of his rope, and something is liable to happen 'most any minute now. I never saw a man cough the way he did while I was there yesterday. Also, he told me how he's figuring to get well and go back east to his folks. He says he's been saving up for years, and he thinks he can make it before long now. This here hopefulness of his,' says George, 'is one of the worst signs with that trouble he's got. It shows he's near the end.'

"'What'll we do now?' says Sam Maker, sitting with his head on his hands, mighty downcast.

"'I got a idea!' piped up Old Man Nanny, very excited, a-hopping up and down and pounding the floor with his cane. 'It come to me all of a sudden, jest like a flash!'

"'What is it?' says George Nichols.

"'For you to go over and let Walter take a sample bite offen you

now. It ain't too late. Put on your old pants, of course,' he says, going off into a kind of ecstasy, 'and jest let him have one—no more. Don't let him glut hisself!'

"'You're no better than a cannibal!' says George, a-pulling his legs up under him and looking like he could n't believe his ears.

"He and Sam sat up nearly all night, thinking up plans to get Windy back, and then giving them up.

"'It looks like we lost out on him,' says Gunsight, when we got together in the New Orleans next afternoon, pretty discouraged. 'Don't anybody know of another candidate we might get? Let's all try and think.'

"Everybody tried their hardest, when all of a sudden Old Man Nanny, who was sitting over in one corner of the room, spoke up sharp. 'Who you looking at?' he says to Sam Maker, who was staring into his face.

"'That's all right,' says Sam. 'Looks won't hurt you. Don't bother me. Can't you see I'm thinking?'

"'Well, you look at somebody else while you think!' says Old Man Nanny. 'Don't you go looking at me. I'm as well as anybody and I ain't so awful old neither!'

"'I 'most thought we had one here the other night,' says Gunsight, quieting 'em down, 'when Old Man Copps was took so bad. It was one of his spells, but when we was a-carrying him in he overheard Milt Hopper saying what a impressive corp he'd make with all them white whiskers combed out on his chest, and he come to all of a sudden, and up and hit Milt right in the eye, and threatened to send for the constable if we did n't go 'way. Bill Peters, that lives with him, says he would n't go to bed for several nights after that, and Bill says he did n't get much sleep either, on account of him a-sitting up there with a shotgun across his knees all cocked and loaded—and he liable to nightmares, too.'

"'Well,' says George Nichols, who was as hopeful a dispositioned man as ever I saw, 'I reckon we ain't so bad off. "Nearly every corpse has a gold tooth," as the grave-robber said, and if we have n't got Windy with us, it's some satisfaction to know that Simpson's Bar can't claim him either. It's a even break so far. We'll ask Old Hicks to stop and see him every day and keep us posted.'

"'I'm agreeable,' the stage-driver told Sam, when he was spoken to about it, 'but he won't let me talk to him much. I tried it to-day, and he cut me right off short. He said the smell of lickor made him cough! A-trying to be funny ain't in my opinion very good taste, coming from a man in his position—practically a remains! He ought to be thinking of other things.'

"Next day George and Sam sent Nigger Jim out to stay at Windy's

cabin and see that he was n't tampered with; also, he was to tear into town with the news the minute Windy passed away. We wanted to know.

"How about them delicacies we been supplying him with,' says Sam. 'Do we keep on with them now he's gone and left us?'

"Oh, I reckon we might just as well,' says George Nichols, who was a tender-hearted feller by nature. 'We can't very well go throwing off on him now, after getting him used to having 'em regular; and, besides, it won't be for long. Tell Old Hicks to send 'em along as usual. It won't break us.'

"When the stage came in next day, the driver gave his report: 'The watchers is all on duty. Jim's out there, and feeling mighty important. Also, the enemy has a party on guard, too. They say they ain't going to see that old man dragged away from his little home again against his will, and darn the expense! Windy and the two watchers is having a very enjoyable time of it. When I came along they was having a game of Seven Up, and Windy was ahead. Jim and that other party that's sitting up with him each put up nine dollars against Windy's watch and chain, which was to be delivered to the winner when he had no further use for it. It 'ud make your flesh creep!'

"Something was bound to happen pretty soon. George Nichols and Sam Maker had gotten so their friends was worried about them. Gunsight Doolittle was the only cheerful person in town. He was as gay as a houn' pup. 'It's them pies,' he confided to George Nichols one day when George spoke to him about it. 'They was a terrible strain on me, liking them the way I do. Now he's left, and it's all over, I feel like a horse with the collar off. I want to lay down and roll!'

"We'll all of us be feeling that way before long now, I reckon,' says George, a-trying to encourage hisself. 'It's my opinion that Windy's picking at the coverlid right this minute. I was up to see him yesterday, and what do you think? He's even gone so far as to pack up all his things, ready to ship back to his folks when all is over.'

"Did he say so?' asked Gunsight.

"No. I just saw them laid out there. Of course, I never let on I noticed 'em, and he never said anything either, but I tell you it made me feel mighty queer to note them preparations of his.'

"It was the very next afternoon we was all sitting 'round the post-office, waiting for the mail, when somebody looked up, and here came Nigger Jim racing down the road like the devil was after him. Jim's mouth was wide open and his eyes was bulging plumb out of his head. None of us, when we saw him, had to be told what had happened. For a minute not a word was spoke, and it seemed like a air of peace settled down on the scene. Then George Nichols got on his feet and cleared his throat twice, and put his left hand into the front of his coat like in pictures of Congressmen at Washington.

“‘Friends,’ he says, he being one of them fellers as always has a few words ready to say whenever anything happens, if it’s only a dog-fight, ‘the approach of yonder messenger of Death tells us that the Grim Reaper has at last come among us, to separate the sheep from the goats. It is, of course, a sad occasion. But perhaps it will help us to bear our sorrow if we remember that while our friend—and he was our friend!—was still with us we overlooked nothing that would help to make his last days comfortable; and if we had, it’s the opinion of those who knew him best, that he’d be the first to mention it!

“‘But, after all, there was worse people than him in the world. You all noticed how he loved that little yaller dog of his, and how the dog loved him. And I tell you, friends, that’s what shows the kind of a man Old Windy really was!’ At this point Gunsight Doolittle, as was a man easily moved and had forgot about being bit, had to blow his nose twice, and several coughed a little.

“George Nichols waited till they was all through, and was jest clearing his throat to begin again when all of a sudden he give a start and then stared down the road like he saw a ghost. We all looked. Here came the stage, Old Hicks driving as usual, and sitting alongside of him was Windy Bill, straight as a ramrod, all dressed up in a brand new suit of clothes, with a spotted handkerchief sticking out of the pocket and smoking a big black cigar. Old Hicks pulled up at the platform and threw out the mail-sack, nobody saying a word. Windy waved his cigar at us, and smiled happy-like.

“‘Boys, I’m glad you’re all here to say good-by. I was afraid I’d miss some, and ’ud have to leave word. It’s better this way.’

“‘Why—er—where are you going to?’ says Gunsight Doolittle, who was like a man in a trance.

“‘Home!’ says Windy. ‘Back to my folks! I been planning on it for years, and now it’s come, I can hardly believe it’s true—can you?’ he says, turning to George Nichols.

“George give him a look. ‘What’s the meaning of this?’ he says, glaring. ‘We thought you—that cough of yours—’

“‘Oh, that!’ says Windy. ‘Why, I’m as well as anybody now. Them magazine fellers was right. Plenty of steaks, eggs, fresh milk, et cetera, was what did it. Also, living with you all that way helped me to save up faster to go home on.’

“Nobody answered him back.

“‘By the way,’ he says, ‘now that I think of it, I wish some of you ’ud thank them fellers over at Simpson’s Bar for all them cigars they fetched me. I been holding back on my smoking a little lately, and I think I got enough now to last me some time.’ He threw away a almost new ten-center and bit the end off another one, kinder careless-like. ‘Yes, I’m obliged to say, taking it all ’round, you fellers



was mighty thoughtful and generous. I dunno as I got a single complaint to make.'

"'Complaint!' bust out Sam Maker. 'Why, darn your hide, we—we—was n't——'

"'I know,' says Windy, smiling peaceful-like. 'I knowed all the time, and I'm terrible sorry to disappoint you all after what you done for me, but I think I'd better go.'

"The stage started. Windy tightened his hold on Walter, who was sitting on his lap, and turned 'round in his seat.

"'Don't let yourselves lose heart, boys,' he called back, with a last wave of his hand: "'Kind deeds is better than full graveyards," and I ain't ungrateful. If you'd like to try again,' he yelled, his voice getting higher and higher as we was left farther behind, 'the committee can let me know; because I got a friend that's——'

"George Nichols and Sam Maker took a step forward and shook their fists after the stage.

"'You can keep him!' they screamed, both together."



## OF AN ARTIST

BY CHARLES WHARTON STORK

A WOMAN said, "She disappointed me.  
I'd seen her picture, read about her work,  
Looked forward so to meeting her,—and then  
To find her just a frowzy little thing  
With such a bonnet!"

Thus a journalist:

"She was n't worth my time to interview;  
Nothing to see, nothing to say for print."  
A poet mused, "How simple and how pure  
The soul that speaks in every word and look,  
That knows itself the priestess of God's beauty  
And gives for love what others grudge for praise!  
What courage and what patience in her eyes!  
What music of true feeling in her voice!  
How every feature kindles with the light  
That burns upon the altar of her faith!  
How beautiful, how beautiful she is!"

# THE JAVELINO SKIN

*By Elizabeth Maury Coombs*

THE Hammonds' hall bristled—as did Hammond's conversational episodes—with trophies of the chase. Being myself a fireside man, with an absorbing collection of old violins, I respected Hammond much; for, though my imagination could readily depict a bear chasing me through ice-fields in considerable of a hurry, I could never picture myself returning the bear's lead. So it was with some pride in my prowess of even collecting a hunter that I asked for a friend of mine from Texas an invitation to one of Hammond's select little parties.

Hammond was delighted, so my friend and I rubbed our hands before the big log fire of his hall at six, and, before our host came down, watched the reflections of the yellow flames chase one another around the shadowed room. They fell now on the antlered stags' heads, then came down to play at hide-and-seek on the fur of a great mottled tiger's skin that looked like an overgrown tabby kitten. Fond as I am of kindly cats, I was right glad this one could not come bounding out of the jungle of shadows behind him and use me for his playfellow.

Hammond—a small man of perfect finish—descended the padded stairs just as six or eight other fellows came in and began to jolly with me, so I presented my Texan friend, Williams, to our host somewhat hurriedly, and did not notice until we were dining that the Texan was in his shell with the edges shut tight. Hammond himself was smilingly silent instead of noisily jubilant, as at most of his dinners.

Vainly I tried to make Williams talk. He drank his wine and swallowed hard, as is the hunting man's way in society, and I left him to realize himself by the fire later.

The lights were not yet on when we returned to the great living-hall, and the others begged off from the glare of them, "on account of our eyes and our lies—it's always been easy work for men to lie by the fire," Burnside had laughed. So I tiptoed around the black hide of some creature with upreared head, mutton-chop whiskers, and an inadequate tail-piece, and sat quietly in my corner. It was all dim enough for those beasts to come alive. The logs had fallen apart,

leaving two smoking brands and a bed of pink coals like half-buried rose-leaves, and Jamieson, an Englishman, swore as he stumbled over the huge black skin with long tusks and tiny hoggish eyes.

"Oh, I say, now, Hammond, what's the name of this devilish-looking American with the ill-fitting set of teeth?" he asked, when the fire was mended.

"That's a wild porker from out Chicago-way," answered Keegan. "Hog-meat goes crazy out there some days, right on the Stock Exchange, and eats up the equally wild speculator before he can run to cover."

"Aw, now, ye're chaffing me. Quit yer foolin'—that's the idiom you use over here, is it not?" said Jamieson good-humoredly. "What's the title of this brute of a beast, Old Man?"—turning again to Hammond.

Williams stood tall and lanky, looking down into the fire. To him Hammond spoke, and then turned to the other group, who were already smoking.

"This gentleman is from Texas, I believe, and knows those ugly customers better than I, who never shot but that one—though I am a little proud of him. He measures nearly five feet from snout to tail; and for a peccary that's growing some."

"That there peccary," drawled Williams, gently looking down at the hairy skin of the beast, "is what we call a havelino—though they spell it with a *j*—and his temper is some plainer in the face than what he is."

"Have you ever hunted them?" persisted the Englishman.

"Yas, stranger," answered the Texan laconically, "and likewise them me." He seemed inclined to silence, so Jamieson, never defeated, tackled Hammond again.

"Have you forgotten the circumstances of this one's sudden taking-off?" he said to his host.

"Nary a circ, I'll be bound!" came Whitehead's aside to me in my corner.

But Hammond for once seemed disposed to be evasive about his exploits—gun-shy, I believe, is the expression used.

"I happened one winter to be down in San Antonio," he began, "and when I'd recovered from the grip and the trip, a fellow invited me out on his ranch to do some shooting. I went, and he furnished me a guide. The man galloped ahead, and we turned out this fellow from the bunch"—touching the skin with his foot. "My horse balked, and I did n't catch up until the guide had shot off every load in his gun, and the wild hog, which had fallen a moment from exhaustion, was showing some fight. The guide was evidently funk'd, and I drew pretty quick and fired two shots, killing him instantly."

Hammond's story lacked the bloody incidents for which Jamieson's

soul thirsted, and he appealed to Williams, who now sat all doubled down in his chair, as if his huge frame were built in sections that unhinged when off a horse.

"And now, Mr. Williams, suppose we hear of how the javelinos hunted you?"

"Well, young feller, they ain't much to relate from my side. I was a mighty nice runner, so I run clean up a tree from 'em, and made up my little bed for the night until the boys came out and druv away a couple o' dozen pig-ladies that seemed to have took quite a fancy to my personal appearance. But," he went on, after a moment of reflection, "I *did* know of a pig-hunt onct that contained items of interest—in spots." He did not look at any of his hearers, but at the blaze, as if the burning prairies stretched away beyond it. I could see again with his eyes the yellow sun, the cactus flowering red and gold, the bunch-grass springing from the gray-black dirt, and beyond the horizon a haze without a hill.

"It was when I was a cow-puncher down on Grice's ranch. I had been there some time coquettin' on a cayuse 'round them cows. The new boss was from San Antone—a little man he was, with a wife who was mighty fat even for a widder-woman what had kept a hotel before she married the Old Boss, who had died of it. We called the new boss 'The Widder's Mite.' Then when cattle went up they did too—to San Antone, winters; and he had a fine house built on Laurel Heights, outer her money.

"They did n't seem to know us when we'd come in town Saturday nights, and she forgot how to cook frijoles after they had a 'turpentine walk,' as old man Grissom called it, laid up the front path. And they even went to New York a time or two.

"One time when they came home they sent to the bunk-house fer me, and I went on up. 'Bill,' says the boss to me (for my name is Bill all over West Texas—it don't flourish as Mr. Williams along the Brazos Bottoms), 'we've got some sort of a sport here that wants to hunt javelinos.' Here he puts his voice down some and comes to the end of the gallery: 'Don't let anything happen to him, Bill, like tearin' of his clothes and gettin' a cactus thorn in his left-hand thumb. But you drive up a big gentleman-pig, Bill, and make him sit down in the shade until the gent can give him a pill.' I promised and, 'y George, I done it!

"I picked him a lady-cayuse from the corral and led her up to the horse-block like I was a reg'lar lady's man. He mounted and got his hind foot in the stirrup with some difficulty.

"'Don't pay no 'tention to them rude little boys at the bunk-buildin', stranger,' says I—fer they was carryin' on some scandalous 'bout me and my 'lady friend.' 'Jest gallop along by me.'

"I smelt sumpin burnin' when I see him reach by instinct for the pommel as the lady-cayuse shied a little at a black string what she thought to be a unfriendly snake, but we went on easy as eatin' snow, until my old hat blew off. I turnt 'round to catch her before she lit, when I heard somepin' go 'plunk,' like somebody had dropped a watermelon. Time I turned 'round the lady-horse was jumpin' a cactus clump, and the lady-sport was layin' flat on his back with his little shiny boots sticking straight up in the air, and the wheels of his pretty little shiny spurs spinnin' 'round and 'round in the sunlight.

"I caught his horse, and when I come back with her he had h'isted his heels down and was right side up—not a bit hurt except for some cactus thorns in the back of his bosom, where he had lit.

"I got him mounted again and took off through the brush like I had n't seen him actin' bug-on-his-back, and he after me. Soon I sighted a drove of wild pig feedin', and I cut in and rounded out a big old boar. He ran in front of me till he puffed like an old fat lady in a corset, then I hauled 'longside of him and fired.

"All the time I could hear my sportin' lady jest gallinup the trail behind me. I fired again—missed—the old boar gruntin' now—then he faced about and come straight at me. I turned my horse 'longside him, fired, and hit him just behind the ear. He r'ared up, groaned, and gave me one wicked look out of his little pointed pig eyes, and fell over against a bunch of agarita bushes.

"'Shoot him, shoot him!' I yelled to the little sport, who came ridin' up—his horse had brought him. He had both hands locked 'round the high pommel, and his gun still in the scabbord, but still I yelped like I was scared plumb crazy, 'Shoot him, shoot him, man! My last shot is gone, and he's showin' fight. Look at his tushes!' Sure enough, the old boar at that very minute bared 'em to grin at Death.

"The Sport jerked out his gun, when he could leave that friendly pommel go, and shot—missed—then fired again, and the shot went three inches from mine, just in the thick part of the neck. The old boar gave one partin' kick—for which I was mighty thankful, as I was afraid he was too near dead for athletic exercises. We loaded him up in front of the Sport, who would n't have me carry him back to the ranch by no manner of means. And we mighty hunters went home to good grub."

The Texan lapsed gently into silence. And we smoked, and we smoked, waiting for a finish that did not come. Finally Jamieson, always intent on picking up the last crumbs left from the loaf of a story, asked:

"And what then—did he ever know *you* had killed the beast?"

"No, not he—and"—after a pause—"not she."

"Now, who was *she*? Tell us the rest—I did n't know there were any *shes* in Texas on a cattle-ranch."

Williams waited awhile—he shot one glance at Hammond, who nervously toyed with a big ivory-tusk paper-knife, then the Texan went on quietly:

"Yes, there was a *she*—and she belonged to me. Concha was her name, and her eyes were like the deepest water-holes in the Brazos—brown and soft and still. I had gone with her to her old mother—a Spanish woman, though her father had been an English gentleman—after which there ain't no more to be said. I had stood before her mother in that white moonlight on their gallery, and that little Concha's face like a white flower on my breast, and my arm 'round her—but not close, for she seemed such a tender sort of bloom to me—and she was mine, and we were right happy, though not in a say-much way." The man's voice had lowered until he almost seemed talking to himself, but we followed every word.

"The night of the hunt we danced in the loft over the bunk-house. 'T war n't much grand"—he glanced around the sumptuous room—"but we thought the girls and boys had fixed it mighty pretty, with flags and candles and frijolio blooms, and put meal on the floor till 't was slicker 'n grease. Old Ponciano had come with his fiddle and his two sons that played sometimes as far away as San Antone. And they played *La Golondrina*—which the Mexican man thinks is 'Home Sweet Home'—fit to break your heart in your breast. 'Whither so swiftly flies the timid swallow?' it goes, and they played it that night.

"Then *Sobre las Olas*—and that Lady Sport—danced with little Concha, and while he could n't ride worth shucks, he sho could dance. They danced together like little children's paper boats dance on little rain-left pools. I ain't no great dancer myself—never was, always seemed like I had an extra set of legs sprout out to get in my way when I started—and little Concha said she had n't never danced before she danced with the Sport; so I kept out of the way. But when time come to take her home I went back to get my hat, and when I got to the door again she and the Sport had gone on. The boys sorter laughed, and I laughed, too—a little bit—and far away from where old Ponciano and the Mexicans was going to their *jacal* came trailing back the cry of *La Golondrina*:

"Whither so swiftly flies the timid swallow?

What distant bourne seeks her untiring wing?

To reach it safe what needle does she follow,

When darkness wraps the poor wee storm-toased thing?"

The recital seemed to come to an end, and the Texan was again silent, until Jamieson leaned forward tensely and demanded, "What then?"

"What then?" said Williams, looking at him, but beyond him, "Why, there was n't nothin' then, young feller—except that he stayed on three or four weeks at the ranch-house—and I went away on the trail. I did n't see him no more. I went away again and stayed all winter, herdin' out on the border, and I reckon I'd 'a' been there yet, but little Concha's mother writ me to come back. She thought maybe little Concha was wantin' to see me and would n't let on. But she was n't. Seemed like she was 'fraid of me when I come."

We all waited—for what we knew not, yet for something.

"'T was two nights after this a greaser come runnin' from the hacienda to say I was to come—that little Concha had wandered away—trailed off in the dark and wet by her poor little broken-hearted, miserable self"—the Texan choked. "'T was mornin' when we located her—the Brazos runs below, and one place backwaters into a little pool of these here lily flowers. She was right there, washed ashore, and the back waters were lap-lapping at her little feet."

A shutter slammed in the distance, and Hammond started and clenched his hands—so powerful was the Texan's story to us all.

"She was such a little girl-thing, she laid in my arms like a baby herself when I carried her home. Then—well, then I went off 'way up in the Panhandle for two, maybe three years. I don't remember so very well, son"—he put his hand on the young Englishman's shoulder and steadied himself as he rose and stood by the fire. "'T was little Concha's mother wrote me to come back and take charge of her land on the Brazos bottoms, for the greasers wa'n't no good. That land is rich—why, man, the corn stands thick and black as a nigger regiment at Fort Sam Houston. If it did n't, why, how in the name o' goodness could I bring Concha's little sister—my wife that is—up here to stay at the Waldorf Eatin'-House, and let her buy all the pink silk salunies for herself and little Conchita—our baby chile—that she wants to?"

He shook hands with me and with Jamieson only, and, putting his hand on the Englishman's shoulder, said kindly: "Son, if you should feel any call to shoot javelinos next winter, come to me down on the Brazos—Bill Williams is as easy to find as a red dog would be down there. I won't mount you on a lady-cayuse, for you look mighty like a man to me—made in his Maker's image. . . . Gentlemen," he ended abruptly, "I thank you for your hospitality, and I bid you all a right good-night."

After he had gone, we all sat absorbed for a few moments; then a good blaze from the fire lighted up the gray-black bristles of the javelino hide, and, looking closely, I saw one bullet-hole directly behind the wild hog's ear, and another three inches below, that had entered the thick part of the creature's neck.

# THE ROAD TO THE HEART

By *John D. Swain*

**B**EYOND question, my aunt Susan makes the finest doughnuts and gives the worst advice of any one in Berkshire County. I have tried both, especially the doughnuts. The advice is almost always fatal.

Take my cousin Polly—the only pretty cousin I ever had. Left to herself, Polly would have married me long ago, and found her true soul-mate. Her inclinations always pointed my way. Of course I hate to talk about myself, but this is a fact so well known that it would be affectation on my part to ignore it.

At the time Henry Blake and I were courting Polly, it certainly did look as if his future were brighter than mine. He was general agent and a stockholder in the Waurego Woollen Company, with a fine salary and the best of prospects, while I was only teller in the Waurego National Bank, with a line-up of disgustingly healthy men ahead of me. Nothing but a cataclysm of nature, it seemed to me then, could advance me beyond twelve hundred dollars a year for a long period to come. So I was a little diffident about pressing Polly to follow her natural inclinations in the matter, knowing that Henry could give her so many more luxuries than I could, even if she missed the depth of affection which I knew resided in my heart. In the end, Polly consulted Aunt Susan, and of course Aunt Susan advised her to marry Henry. Which she did.

The worst of Aunt Susan's advice always was that people usually took it. It sounded so plausible. Aunt Susan had the habit of stating the obvious with all the air of making a great discovery. To do her justice, Henry had not at that time developed the traits which later caused Polly so much anguish. He was an unimaginative sort of chap, without intellect enough to be really "fast," and when he became dissipated after a year or so of married life, it came as a shock to us all. Henry's dissipation did not especially interfere with his business prospects, although of course it did not help them any; but he attended pretty strictly to business during the daytime, and deferred his prowling about until night, like an ill-conditioned tom-cat.

To begin with, Henry really *did* have to spend an occasional evening in the office, and he worked this fact for all it was worth. Then, there



were always one or two nights a week devoted to poker. Henry thought he could play poker. Some one must have lied to him. But worst of all were his secret orders. Henry was strong for ritual. It always amuses mediocre minds to break away from the flour barrels and the woollen samples and the meat markets and smear themselves in mediævalism.

The worst order Henry belonged to was the Apostles of Light, of which he was Supreme Exalted Patriarch. The chief end of the Apostles of Light was to get well lighted up; the one who did this the most thoroughly was the best Apostle. Hence Henry was Patriarch. They held numerous banquets, and Henry never failed to attend. From such affairs he was fetched home by one or two of the less lighted Apostles.

On one such occasion, the Sentry of the Outer Gate and the Keeper of the Sacred Seal had leaned Henry up against his door, rung the bell, and faded away into the night. When Polly opened the door, Henry fell inside as usual, and in time she wheedled him into bed. After this was accomplished, she sat down, clad in her pretty blue bath-robe, and rocked and meditated in the parlor. She felt that something must be done. Things had come to the point where Henry was home only occasionally of an evening. Sundays he slept all day. It was no use to argue with him in the morning; no self-respecting drunkard will admit any doings of the night before. Henry pooh-poohed everything, told her she wildly exaggerated, or merely became indignant. He insisted that he remembered everything he had said and done, and even related intricate conversations that never took place, thus proving that a drunkard's memory is more tenacious and accurate than a teetotaler's. So, of course, Polly decided to consult Aunt Susan.

Aunt Susan was rolling out the doughnuts for which she is so justly famous, when Polly arrived. She dearly loved to give advice, and could sniff its necessity from afar; so she was pleased to see Polly, and offered her the little low rocker by the sink, looking at her meanwhile over the rims of her spectacles in a sort of cheerful expectancy.

"It's about Henry, Aunt Susan," Polly began.

"What about him?" asked Aunt Susan, rolling her dough into a thin strip.

"He won't spend any of his evenings home!" declared Polly, her eyes beginning to fill.

Aunt Susan pensively sprinkled her dough with flour, and took down her circular tin cutter from its nail overhead.

"The road to a man's heart is through his stomach," she said, uttering one of her obvious oracles.

Polly faintly murmured that she did not quite understand.

Aunt Susan began to cut her dough into circular disks.

"You come of a family of famous cooks on both sides of the house," she finally said. "Your grandmother was celebrated all over the county,

and your mother was almost as good. Of course your father's folks were nowhere near up to them, but they were far better than the average. You were brought up to know how to cook. Well, as to Henry, *feed him.*"

"Why, Aunt Susan! I *do* feed him!" exclaimed Polly, in an injured tone.

"Yes, but you don't feed him right," insisted Aunt Susan, removing, one after another, the centres from her little disks, using for the purpose an old thimble. "If you did, he *would* stay home evenings—at least, some of the time."

"But what is the use? He does n't come home now more than once or twice a week, and he would n't if I cooked three times as much!"

"Polly," said Aunt Susan, beginning to roll up the scraps left over after her cutting, and moulding them together, "Henry is a good provider, is n't he? You can buy the best the market affords, can't you?"

"Yes," Polly admitted. There was nothing she could not have; Henry never questioned the provision bills.

"And Henry is hearty, is n't he?"

Polly admitted that to call Henry merely hearty was to damn him with faint praise. Aunt Susan gathered from her niece that, compared to Henry at his best, a man-eating shark was like a vegetarian on a fast.

"Well, then," cried Aunt Susan triumphantly, "it is as simple as scat! Never mind whether he comes home or not; you get up a real hearty dinner for him every night; not too many kinds, and none of this Christian Science, Domestic Science, predigested stuff; but real, hearty, old-fashioned cookery. If he does n't come home, eat what you can yourself, and send the rest over to the neighbors. There's plenty in Waurego needs it. *Some* night he will happen to come home; and he must find such a dinner waiting for him that he will think about it all next day, and long for dinner-time to come round again. That'll fetch him, or any other man!"

Of course Polly took the advice. As I said, people always take Aunt Susan's advice. And understand me, I'm not kicking!

For three nights Polly got up a rousing dinner only to have Henry return (or be returned) hours after it was cold and the things washed up and put away. On the fourth night, needing a change of collar and shoes, he came home for a hurried bite, expecting to attend a banquet of the Apostles of Light at eight in the lodge rooms. He found waiting for him a baked sugar-cured ham, garnished with bay-leaves and cloves, and with a ravishing sauce made of brown sugar, vinegar, and spices; some grilled sweet potatoes in honey, hot coffee and rolls, and the first native asparagus of the season.

Henry looked surprised, but said nothing. He ate until his eyes bulged, and when Polly softly urged him to have another slice of the

streaky, crisp fat, and to let her pour out his coffee and refill his cup with some that was hot, he was too weak to resist. After dinner he concluded that he would rest in the parlor a few minutes until it was time to dress, and took his evening paper there to read. Soon after Polly heard him snoring, and when she shook him by the shoulder it was after ten o'clock and too late to go to the banquet.

"Why, Henry, I supposed you had gone long ago!" she lied glibly.

Henry looked considerably surprised, but said nothing. It was the first time he had ever missed a banquet of the Apostles of Light.

The next night Polly had an equally attractive dinner, but Henry stayed out till after three, trying to justify the statement of the man who said he could play poker.

The following night, as sometimes happened after such a late session, he came home early and declared that he was going to get a good night's sleep, as business was very wearing these days. He found an enormous and juicy porterhouse smothered in onions, a spring salad, more hot coffee, corn muffins, two or three kinds of jam, and mustard pickle.

Having eaten himself into a stupor, he remarked, "Well, you are sure some cook, Polly!" and promptly went to bed.

The following night he was out again, where, Polly did not know; and a stuffed chicken was wasted, as Polly was too tired to eat. The next night, however, he was on hand in good season, and evidently he had given considerable thought to his dinner, for he asked first thing what they were going to have that night. It proved to be a brace of delicious guinea chicks, stewed mushrooms, sliced cucumbers, currant jell, and a great loaf of chocolate cream-cake, with tea.

Henry ate all his chick, and half of Polly's, most of the mushrooms, and three pieces of cake. By the way he licked his chops, Polly was in a panic lest he might not have had enough; but he seemed satisfied. This night he went out after dinner.

On the day after, he telephoned at noon, asking if he might bring over a couple of friends to dinner. He had always been in the habit of entertaining them at McGuire's. Polly delightedly acquiesced, and got up a turkey dinner, with all the proper fixings, and a great crock of cider, Lyonnaise potatoes, succotash, two kinds of pie, and an assortment of pickles and preserves. The three men left nothing but bones and soiled plates. All were noisy in their praise of the dinner. Also, although the invited guests tucked their napkins under their chins and were more or less adept sword-swallowers, they were good-hearted chaps, and each during the coming week invited Polly and her husband out to the theatre; so she spent two successive evenings in his company, which was nearly a record.

The ensuing week he invited four more friends to his home for dinner, and to play poker later. Polly gave them a roast sucking pig, a kidney

pie, seven kinds of vegetables, and three kinds of pastry, with all the hot coffee they could swallow. Afterward they played poker in Henry's den; but it is impossible to look upon a man's house exactly as one does upon a club-room or a livery-stable, and as a result the party was rather quieter, and broke up earlier, than usual; and all agreed next day that they felt better than they ever had before on a "morning after."

Thus it became the custom of Henry to hold one regular poker session at home each week; and as this was always on a Wednesday night, Polly at last had something definite to go on. Before retiring, she slipped into the den, smiled at the shirt-sleeved devotees at the shrine of chance, set down a fresh pitcher of ice water and a hearty cold luncheon, and departed noiselessly. In time the weekly meeting was stretched to a bi-weekly one; and Henry was now definitely established at home every Wednesday and Saturday night.

The real triumph of Polly's system (or Aunt Susan's) came when Henry announced one night that he had resigned as Patriarch of the Apostles of Light, and was going to cut out future banquets, because these feeds were getting to be positively fierce.

In fact, Polly set a standard that ruined all other eating-places for Henry. He still wandered from the fold, but only for social purposes; he never willingly dined away from home; and two-thirds of the time he was too stuffed and groggy afterward to work up enough gumption to dress and go out. He fell into the habit of dozing over his paper in the chair, and waking up too late to start for any party. Incidentally, his waist-line expanded to such an extent that he had to have all his clothes let out, and he acquired a dignified waddle in strong contrast to his former brisk walk. People remarked that Henry Blake was beginning to show his years.

Night after night Polly taxed her ingenuity to devise for her husband new dishes which should be at once hearty and palatable; and day after day Henry stepped gingerly on the scales, and noted that he was creeping well past the two hundred mark.

Finally he was called upon to take a three weeks' trip through the Middle West, and returned more or less shot to pieces and with a badly upset stomach. For the first time in his life he was irritable, and descanted bitterly on the fact that American hotels and restaurants were the worst in the world.

For a long while he stayed at home nights, because he was too ill to go out. Gradually he recovered his usual health and tone, and began to enjoy home cooking once more; and with increasing health he resumed to some extent his nocturnal habits. Still, he spent at least half of his evenings home, and Polly and he received numerous invitations from grateful participants of her groaning table.

It is right at this point that I am distressed by the shortcomings of

real life, as viewed from the standpoint of art. Were I composing a neat short-story, I feel that I could manage a clever climax, an artistic dénouement. But, alas, life cares nothing for art. Just as you get a story going nicely, along comes Clotho—or is it Lachesis?—no, Atropos—and with a sharp pair of scissors she cuts the affair off—snip! Just like that. It leaves a most unfinished appearance.

I cannot seem to do better than to quote Polly. We were talking about poor old Henry one night (Polly and I have been married 'most two years now, and tell each other everything; at least, she tells me everything), and she said, "I am *sure* I could have domesticated Henry in time! Everything was going splendidly, thanks to Aunt Susan's advice, and he was staying home more and more, when he came down with that attack of gastritis, followed by apoplexy. Yes, if Henry had lived six months longer, I almost *know* that I could have reformed him!"

She added (and somehow this sent a sort of chill down my spine), "You are going to be home to-night for dinner, are n't you, dearie? I'm going to have spring lamb and mint sauce, and some of the Town Meeting cake Aunt Susan showed me how to make!"



## "THE SECRET OF SUZANNE"

*By Sigmund Spaeth*

**M**R. WOLF-FERRARI, the composite German-Italian musician, played a neat trick on the operatic world when he wrote his one-act farce-comedy, "The Secret of Suzanne." The piece is nothing more nor less than a burlesque of the modern style of opera, yet it is included in the Metropolitan repertoire with the very works which it ridicules. The melodiousness of a large part of the score merely intensifies the humor of the elaborately orchestrated take-offs which are introduced at every opportunity. The agonies of the jealous husband, for example, are really a bit of light persiflage aimed at such composers as Puccini and Leoncavallo. The realistic musical description of the curling smoke from a cigarette is distinctly a joke on Debussy, and when the husband burns his hand on that same cigarette the accompanying discord is worthy of Wagner at his worst.

As a bit of operatic parody, "The Secret of Suzanne" is delicious. Considered as music or drama, however, it is of the same class as the crockery-smashing horse-play of the vaudeville stage.

# SHORT-STORY MASTERPIECES

SECOND SERIES—RUSSIAN

## VIII. THE OLD BELL-RINGER

By *Vladimir Korolénko*

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY JOHN CURNOS, AND WITH  
INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

### KOROLÉNKO THE EXILE

NO intelligent outlander, I suppose, but marvels at the patience with which the Russian people endure the exile system which has so long brewed hell-broth for the nation to drink. When some violent offense is answered by such punishment, we do not demur, but when trivialities are magnified, and the police stupidly blunder, our blood boils with protest.

So many times has Vladimir Korolénko been banished, that exile must seem to him almost a normal condition, and freedom from police surveillance a happy freak of fortune. And yet, more than any other distinguished Russian writer, he is free from pessimism—his writings are filled with passages of lyric sweetness.

Sixty years ago—in July, 1853—Vladimir was born at Jitómir, in the government of Volynia. His father, of Cossack blood, was a district judge in the cities of Dúbno and Róvno, having previously served as district attorney, and also as a minor judge. He was an honest man, since he forbore to enrich himself with bribes, but made his modest salary suffice. This course—eccentric in those days—left his wife in straitened circumstances when he died. Vladimir was about fifteen at the time, and still in the Gymnasium at Róvno, but his mother, the daughter of a Polish landed proprietor, was enabled to keep him in school and also maintain her other children, three boys and two girls.

The future author entered the Institute of Technology at St. Petersburg in due course, and for two years fought off the extremes of nakedness and hunger by coloring maps in the intervals of study, for he had come to the great capital with only seventeen rubles in his purse. The third year found him in Moscow, in the Petróvsk (St. Peter's) Agricultural Academy, and here, in the third year of his new course (1875), he got his first taste of exile. His unforgivable crime was to par-

ticipate in a joint address of the students to the Faculty! For this he was banished to the government of Vólogda, but the sentence was not completely carried out, for some one relented and before he reached the place he was bidden to return to his home at Krónstadt. Here for one year he was kept under police surveillance.

At the end of the year he was allowed to remove with his family to St. Petersburg, where he worked in peace as a proof-reader, until February, 1879. But he was soon to learn that Government never forgets, for twice during that month was his home officially searched, and at length he, together with his brother, his brother-in-law, and his cousin, was banished to Glázof, in the government of Vyátka, and presently still further north, to Vyshne Volótsk, where he was confined in a political prison—and all without a trial, the reading of charges, or any semblance of human justice.

The whole term of his exile was spent without a single gleam of light to make clear his offense. But *after* his release in 1880, he learned that his exile was due to his having attempted to break prison—an offense which was alleged against him before he had ever been in prison!

The circumstances of his release were fortunate. Prince Iméritínsky had been deputized to investigate the condition of the political prisons and to report on the causes of incarceration. Among other prisons, he visited that at Vyshne Volótsk, and Korolénko was already on the way to Yakútsk, Siberia, when the message came ordering his release—probably as a result of the investigation.

Even then entire freedom was not granted him, for he was “allowed” to settle at Perm; and here he began his active work as a writer, though he had written successfully as early as 1879.

In 1881 Alexander III became Emperor of Russia, and all his subjects were required to take oath of allegiance. But Korolénko refused, because in addition the government officers demanded that he betray his friends by giving details of any revolutionary enterprises in which he knew them to be engaged. Rather than become a party to such villainy, the young man chose further exile, and for the succeeding three years lived miserably in Yakútsk, in East Siberia. At length he returned to the ancient Tartar city of Nizhni Novgorod, on the Volga, where he now lives with his family.

All this period of maddening oppression was aggravated by the fact that his mother needed his help. When in 1879 Korolénko began to contribute literary sketches to such Russian periodicals as *Russian Thought*, *The Northern Messenger*, and *Annals of the Fatherland*, the meagre honorariums were indeed a blessing to his loved ones.

The thing that “goes without saying” often needs to be said just the same. That a writer is likely to reproduce his life-experiences in his

writings is one of these truisms, yet it will always remain an interesting occupation to trace connection between life and literary product in the work of an author of individuality.

Korolénko came from "Little Russia," and began to find his subjects in the towns and villages of the west country in which he was born, but naturally he turned at length to depicting the life of the extreme Siberian east.

That Korolénko has been formed in opinion and moulded to iron fortitude of heart by his severe experiences in exile is shown by his remarkable story, "The Wondrous Maid," in which the Nihilist is depicted as a simple gendarme, whose manhood transfigures his Nihilism and his work as an officer. Again, our author proved his independence in a letter to the St. Petersburg Academy, in which, as did Chekhov before him, he courteously declined membership because the Academy had struck the name of Gorky from its list of members.

It was in 1885, while in exile in Yakútsk, that he wrote his famous "Makár's Dream." It is an odd fantasy, this story of the Yakut who, having gotten half frozen in the wood, dreams that he is dragged before the tribunal of the great Lord Toyon—a nondescript judge who is neither of heaven nor of earth. Before a great scale, whose one end is a small golden platter and whose other a huge wooden bowl, the peasant is summoned to explain the acts of his life. At length, when his cheatings and stealings are found to have outweighed all of the deeds of service and faithfulness in his life, he suddenly breaks into an unwonted eloquence of protest. He is unwilling to bear the penalty of being turned into a beast of burden by becoming the horse of a church official, not because the horse is badly treated, for it is well fed—better fed, indeed, than he, the peasant, has ever been—but he protests because the penalty is unjust. This appeal to justice seems to move the great Toyon, and he ends by saying to the dejected Makár: "Have patience, poor soul, thou art no longer on earth: here will be found justice, even for thee!" And as he speaks the scales begin to tremble, and the wooden bowl, filled with his evil deeds, rises higher and higher, as though weighed down by his good acts.

Surely, the great meed of injustice suffered by The Exile himself gave inspiration for the message of mercy at the end of this fantastic tale.

What may be called Korolénko's Siberian era is further illustrated in his sketches of a Siberian tourist, nine of which cover about one hundred pages of ordinary size. All the sketches are remarkable for local color and fine understanding of character. The one unfortunate tendency is toward unfinished situation, for the sense of coming to an adequate close is inseparable from good story-telling. It is but fair to observe, however, that this trait of incompleteness is characteristic of the sketch as a fictional form.



Throughout this series I have frequently asserted the obvious fact that Russian themes have largely reflected the Russian temperament, as is shown by the realistically direct and often terrible pictures which fill the pages of their literature. Altogether apart from our interest in the literate expressions of a great and alien people, we must feel a sort of gruesome fascination as we are thrilled to the point of horror in reading these simple yet titanic records of gloom.

All this raises the question of what is the difference between fascination and charm—for charm, from the Anglo-American viewpoint, is almost an unknown element in Russian literature. Fascination they all possess; but charm is fascination plus charm. In Korolénko we do have a writer of charm; and, besides, a charm that is not the reflex of literatures other than his own—it evidently springs from the sweetness of a spirit which all of the bitterness of banishment could not defile. Here is a high and final test of native fineness.

As compared with the stories of Garshin, with their "terrible, incoherent cries of woe," Korolénko's tales are idyllic. A rhythmical, lyrical measure beats enchantingly in his nature passages, whose intimacy with the life of the woods inevitably recalls the French Theuriet. "The Forest Whispers," one of his longer short-stories, is simply redolent of tree-fragrance. We feel the wandering airs of the glades; we hear the never-ceasing swish of majestic boughs; we stand rapt in the cathedral silences of the green-shadowy aisles. The peasant tale is the thread on which these pearls are strung, but the pearls hide the string.

Listen to this passage; what Loti has evoked from the inscrutable sea Korolénko has charmed from the forest with his enchanter's wand.

In the forest there was always a murmur, regular, continuous, like the faint echo of a distant peal of bells; soft and indistinct, like a song without words, or like the confused recollection of bygone days. The murmur never ceased by day or night, for it was an old dense forest of pines that had never been touched by woodman's saw or axe. Lofty pines, a hundred years old, with their red, sturdy trunks, stood in close array, waving, in response to each breath of wind, their high-tufted tops. Below, all was quiet; the air was filled with an odor of tar; through the thick layer of pine-cones, with which the ground was strewn, pushed gay ferns, in all the luxury of their rich fringes, and standing motionless, their leaves unstirred by the breeze. In damp nooks green grasses rose up on their high stalks; and the white clover bent its heavy head, overcome, as it were, with dreamy lassitude. And above flowed the murmur of the forest, the mingling sighs of the old pine-wood.

Besides "The Forest Whispers," two stories belong especially to Korolénko's Little-Russian group—"Iom-Kipour" (the Jewish Day of Expiation) and "The Blind Musician." The former relates how a

Little-Russian miller, good Christian though he is, narrowly escapes being carried away by the Devil, in the place of the Jewish tavern-keeper Iankiel, because, like him, he has tried to make money out of the poor peasants—the same tendency to penetrate to the inner life which we discover in other of Korolénko's work, for he rose above the realistic school, with its pathological records.

"The Blind Musician" is a remarkable psychological story—about forty thousand words in length—in which all the sensations of the blind are portrayed with sympathy and intelligence. The author has not attempted to build up a meretricious interest by surrounding his blind characters with the usual accompaniments to be found in fiction—poverty and physical distress. Disallowing all such devices, he wonderfully pictures the life of a child born blind in the home of a wealthy family, his advance to boyhood, his love-life, and finally his manhood's experiences as a brilliant musician, "who attempts to reproduce the sensations of sight by means of sounds."

The following passage is typical:

The boy imaged to himself depth in the form of the soft murmur of the stream as it flowed at the foot of the precipice, or of the frightened splash of pebbles thrown from its top. Distance sounded in his ears like the confused notes of a dying song. At times, in the sultry noonday, when over the whole of nature there reigns a quiet so profound that we can only divine the uninterrupted noiseless course of life, the face of the blind boy would light up with a strange expression. It seemed as if, under the influence of the silence that prevailed around, there rose from the depth of his soul sounds audible only to himself, to which he was listening with rapt attention. It was easy to believe that at such moments a vague but productive train of thought was awakening in his soul, like to the imperfectly caught melody of an unknown song.

Two prose poems, of harmonious diction and fine human feeling, I have space only to mention—"Easter Night," and "The Old Bell-Ringer," which Korolénko calls "A Spring Idyl." The latter is reproduced herewith in a new translation for this series, and from it the tone of the former may well be inferred.

Though not a great novelist—if he can be classed as a novelist at all—Korolénko is the exponent of normality. He is more like Turgenev than is any other living writer, though comparison with the Greatest must be taken to imply equality. The anarchistic, anti-Christian Artsybashev, whose big-fisted novel, "Sanin," forms an iconoclastic type of its own, cannot approach Korolénko in lucid attractiveness. Tolstoi, Korolénko followed, but at a distance, for he was of the romantic school

and little inclined to Tolstoi's ultra-idealism, particularly that of the last period.

One more refreshing characteristic of our author I venture to name—human sympathy. True, he does not always temper his pity for the "unfortunates" with the sound judgment of the moralist. Whether they suffer deservedly or not he does not deeply inquire—it is enough for him that they suffer.

Well, I love him for that very trait of all-embracing sympathy. When a man lets his heart go unleashed by the eternal judgment as to whether the victim has sinned and may be suffering a righteous punishment, he rises to utmost humanity—which is to say, the divine spirit of the Great Master whose heart was Pity.

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### THE OLD BELL-RINGER

**I**T had grown dark.

The tiny village, resting on the edge of a remote stream, in a pine forest, had become enveloped in that twilight which is peculiar to starry spring nights, when the thin mist, rising from the earth, deepens the shadows of the woods and fills the open spaces with a silvery blue vapor. . . . How still was everything, and pensive and sad!

The village was quietly dreaming.

The dark outlines of the wretched huts were but vaguely visible; here and there lights were aglimmer; now and then you could hear a gate creak; a dog's bark would start suddenly and die away; occasionally out of the dark woods the figure of a pedestrian would emerge, or that of a horseman; or a cart would pass by with a jolting noise. These were the inhabitants of lone forest settlements, gathering to their church to greet the great spring holiday.

The church stood on a little hill, in the very middle of the village. Its windows were all alight. Its belfry—an old, tall, and dark structure—pierced the blue sky.

The steps of the staircase creaked as the old bell-ringer ascended the belfry, and soon his little lantern looked like a star suddenly sprung into space.

It was hard for the old man to mount the steep staircase. His old legs had already served their time, and his eyesight had grown dim. . . . It was time an old man had rest, but God seemed slow in sending deliverance. The old bell-ringer had buried sons and grandsons; he had escorted both young and old to their final resting-place; but he himself was still alive. It was hard! . . . So many times had he greeted Easter that he had lost count—he could not even remember how

many times he had awaited here his last hour. And now once more God had willed that he should be here.

Having reached the top, he leaned his elbow on the railing.

Below, around the church, he could discern the wretchedly kept graves of the village burial-place; as if to protect, old crosses stood over them with outstretched arms. Here and there a young birch-tree inclined over them its branches, as yet leafless. . . . The aromatic odor of young buds ascended from below towards Mikheyich, and with it came a feeling of the sad tranquillity of eternal sleep.

And what would he be doing a year hence? Would he once more climb this height, under this bronze bell, to arouse with a resounding peal the lightly-slumbering night, or would he be resting . . . down there, in some dark corner of the graveyard, under a cross? God knows! . . . He was ready, but in the meantime the Lord called him once more to greet the holiday.

"All glory be to God!" whispered his lips, accustomed to the old formula. Mikheyich raised his eyes towards the sky, dense with millions of stars, and crossed himself.

"Mikheyich, Mikheyich!" a trembling voice, also that of an old man, suddenly called him from below. The aged sexton looked up towards the belfry, even fixed his palm over his blinking, tear-wet eyes, and still could not see Mikheyich.

"What do you want? I am here," answered the bell-ringer, leaning out from the belfry. "Can't you see me?"

"No, I can't see. Isn't it time to strike? What do you think?"

Both of them glanced at the stars. Thousands of God's lights twinkled on high. The fiery "Wagoner" was already far above the horizon. Mikheyich pondered.

"No, not yet; wait just a little longer. . . . I know when to . . ."

He knew. He had no need of a timepiece. God's stars always told him when the time came. The earth and the sky, the white cloud floating silently across the expanse of blue, the indistinct murmur of dark pines below, and the rippling of the stream concealed by the dark—all were familiar to him, near to him. . . . Not in vain had he spent his life here.

For the moment his entire long past unrolled before him. . . . He recalled how he ascended the belfry with his father for the first time. . . . Good Lord! how long ago it was!—and what a short time it seemed! . . . He saw himself once more a fair-haired lad; his eyes were kindled; the wind—not the sort that raises the dust of the street, but rather a more rare wind, flapping, as it were, its noiseless wings high above the earth—played with his hair. . . . There below, so far, so far away, he saw some sort of little people; and the houses of the

village also seemed small, and the forest receded into the distance, and the round-shaped meadow, upon which stood the village, seemed immense, almost boundless.

"Well, here it is, all here!" smiled the old man, glancing at the small spot of earth.

"So life, too, is like that," he reflected. "When one is young, one sees neither its end nor its edge." . . . And yet here it was, as if in the palm of one's hand, from the very beginning to the very grave he had just been contemplating in the corner of the burial-ground. . . . What of that? Glory be to the Lord!—It was time for rest. It was a hard road, and he had traversed it an honest man; and the damp earth was his mother. . . . Soon—if only soon! . . .

Well, the time had come. Mikheyich glanced once more at the stars, removed his cap, crossed himself, and began to gather up the ropes of the bells. . . . A few more moments, and the nocturnal air trembled from the resounding stroke. . . . Another, a third, a fourth . . . one after the other, filling the lightly-slumbering pre-festal night with an outpouring of powerful, lingering, resonant, singing tones.

The bell grew silent. The service in church had begun. It was the habit of Mikheyich in former years to go down and to stop in a corner near the door in order to pray and listen to the chanting. This time, however, he remained in the tower. It was difficult for him; aside from that, he felt intensely fatigued. He sat down on a little bench, and as he listened to the dying tones of the agitated bronze he grew deeply pensive. What were his thoughts? He himself could hardly have answered the question. . . . The bell-tower was but dimly lighted by his lantern. The still vibrating bells were lost in the darkness; faint murmurs of the chant reached him occasionally from below, and the nocturnal wind stirred the ropes fastened to the iron hearts of the bells.

The old fellow let fall his gray head upon his breast. His mind was in a state of delirious fancy. "Now they are singing a hymn," he thought, and he imagined himself among the others in church. He heard an outpouring of children's voices in a choir; he saw the figure of the long-since-departed priest Nahum exhorting the congregation to prayer; he saw hundreds of peasants' heads, like ripe corn before the wind, bend low and stand erect again. . . . The peasants were crossing themselves. . . . Familiar faces, all of them, and all faces of the dead. Here was the stern face of his father; here, beside his father, his older brother, crossing himself and sighing. And he himself stood here, in the bloom of health and strength and full of the unconscious yearning for happiness and the joy of life. . . . Where, oh, where, was this happiness? . . . The old man's mind flared up for a moment, like a

dying flame, flashing with a bright, quick movement and illuminating for the moment all the passages of his past life. . . . Hard work, sorrow, care. . . . Oh, where was this happiness? A hard fate can bring furrows to a young face, give a stoop to a strong back, and cause one to sigh like an older man.

There, on the left, among the women of the village, humbly inclining her head, stood his sweetheart. A good woman, hers be the Kingdom of God! How much had she not suffered, that fine soul! . . . Constant need and labor and the inevitable womanly sorrow will cause a handsome woman to wither; her eyes will lose their sparkle; and the expression of perpetual, dull-like fright before each unawaited blow of life will change the most superbly beautiful creature. . . . Yes, and where was her happiness? . . . One son remained to them, their one hope and joy, and he fell a victim to human weakness.

And he too was here, his rich enemy, bending low time and again, seeking to pray away the bitter tears of orphans he had wronged; repeatedly he was performing upon himself the sign of the cross, falling on his knees and touching the ground with his forehead. . . . And Mikheyich's heart boiled over within him, while the dark faces of the ikons looked down severely from their walls upon human sorrow and human iniquity.

All that was past, all that behind him. . . . Now the entire world seemed to him like a dark bell-tower, where the wind blew in the dusk, stirring the bell ropes. . . . "Let the Lord judge you!" whispered the old man, shaking his gray head, while tears silently ran down his cheeks.

"Mikheyich! Mikheyich! . . . You have n't fallen asleep?" some one shouted up to him from below.

"Eh?" returned the old man, and quickly jumped to his feet. "Lord! Have I in truth fallen asleep? That never happened before!"

With an accustomed hand, Mikheyich quickly caught the ropes. Below him moved the peasant throng, a veritable ant-hill; the holy banners aglitter with gold brocade fluttered in the wind. . . . The procession made a circuit of the church, and presently Mikheyich heard the joyous cry, "Christ has risen from the dead!"

Coming like a mighty wave, the cry whelmed the old man's heart. . . . And it seemed to Mikheyich that brighter flared the lights of the waxen candles, and that stronger grew the agitation of the people; the holy banners seemed to become more alive; and the suddenly awakened wind caught up the waves of sound and with broad sweeps lifted them high, where they became one with the loud triumphant music of the bell.

Never before had old Mikheyich rung so well!

It was as if the old man's brimming-over heart had passed into the

inanimate bronze; and it seemed as if the reverberations at the same time sang and throbbed, laughed and wept, and, uniting in a rare harmony, rose higher and higher unto the starry sky. The stars themselves seemed to him to take on a new sparkle, to burst into flame, while the sounds trembled and flowed, and again came down to earth with a loving embrace.

A powerful bass loudly proclaimed: "Christ has risen!"

While two tenor voices, constantly atremble from the repeated blows of the iron hearts, mingled with the bass joyously and resonantly: "Christ has risen!"

And, again, two most slender soprano voices, seemingly in haste not to be left behind, stole in among the more powerful ones, little children, as it were, and sang in emulation: "Christ has risen!"

The entire belfry seemed to tremble and to shake; and the wind blowing in the face of the bell-ringer appeared to flap its mighty wings and to repeat: "Christ has risen!"

The old heart forgot about life, full of cares and wrongs. The old bell-ringer forgot that life for him had become a thing shut up in a melancholy and crowded tower; he forgot that he was alone in the world—like an old stump, weather-beaten and broken. . . . He intercepted these singing and weeping sounds, fleeting higher towards the skies and falling again to the poor earth, and it seemed to him that he was surrounded by his sons and his grandsons; that these joyous voices, of old and young, had flowed together into one great chorus, and that they sang to him of happiness and joyousness, which he had not tasted in his life. . . . And the old man continued to tug at the ropes, while tears ran down his face, and his heart beat tremulously with the illusion of happiness.

And below the people were listening and saying to each other that never had old Mikheyich rung so marvellously.

Then all of a sudden the large bell trembled violently and grew silent. . . . The smaller ones, as if confused, rang an unfinished tone; and then too stopped, as if to drink in the prolonged, sadly droning note, which trembled and flowed and wept, gradually dying away in the air. . . .

The old bell-ringer fell back exhausted on the bench, and his two last tears trickled silently down his pale face.

"Quick! Send a substitute! The old bell-ringer has rung his last stroke."



# ROMANCE

*By Carl H. Grabo*

THE moonlight prompted it. "Playing the fool is a pleasant pastime," reflected the young man in the boat, "particularly when no one knows the fool."

He laid the guitar on the seat, took up the oars, and rowed slowly to the dark shore-line. The silver water spilled from the blades that left dainty maelstroms of light in the track of the boat. The prow slid softly up the wet sand of the beach. He jumped out, and, seizing his guitar, ran up the grassed terrace. The house in front, dark amid the trees, would serve as well as any. The upper balcony, to which climbed the yellow roses, was the very place for Juliet. He considered his repertoire. "'Meet Me by Moonlight Alone' is appropriate," he reflected.

He thrummed his instrument with indifferent skill, and sang the two verses. "Wonder if I can get the *F* in the serenade," he said aloud. "Juliet does n't seem to be critical, luckily."

"Loveliest maiden of Sevilla,  
Show those tiny feet of thine,"

he sang, and ended with a flourish.

A rose fell beside him.

"Ah, Juliet!" he exclaimed. "'On the viewless wings of poesy!' I knew you would come to my singing. In music, you see, it is the soul of the singer, not the mere mechanical execution, that creates the spell."

"You sing very well, Romeo," said Juliet.

He tried to catch a glimpse of her, but could not.

"How did you know I was here?" she asked quizzically.

"The realm of poetry is your abiding place," he answered, "and on a moonlight night one balcony serves as well as another. Dreams, you know, are no respecters of places."

"That is so," said Juliet. "Do you often evoke spirits in this romantic fashion?" she added softly.

"Not as a general thing," he admitted. "I'm a practical person for the most part. Still, one must have his bit of romance at times, and on a moonlight night I try to find compensation for the crude



realities of the waking world. I have to go out by myself to do it. You know, Juliet, that a sympathetic companion is the rarest of luxuries."

"Yes," said Juliet; "I have found it so."

"Now, you, Juliet, are a companionable person. You do the right thing in the right way and at the right time. And one sees you so rarely that you don't cloy, so to speak. You will pardon my frankness."

He seated himself on the garden bench, laid the guitar beside him, and clasped his hands over his knees.

"I have wanted to talk with you for some time," he said when he had disposed himself comfortably. "You are an expert in these matters since our affair in Verona. Why is it that romance cannot endure? You'll admit that it was fortunate, on the whole, that our episode went to smash when it did. I'm afraid I could n't have kept up the glamour. Other ladies on other balconies would have lured me to other serenades."

"So you were inconstant at heart!" said Juliet. "I always feared it. That matter of Rosaline made me suspicious."

"I know I'm a beast, and not worthy of you. That's why I ask," he answered humbly. "Tell me why realization is commonplace, and the unattained or unattainable the theme of poets."

"It was not so with me," returned Juliet. "I was satisfied."

"The male animal is inferior," he admitted. "He is anti-domestic, a sad butterfly. The flowers are so many and all so beautiful, you see, that a single blossom does not suffice."

"I think," said Juliet firmly, "that, given sufficient opportunity, I should have kept you very decently at home, despite your Rosalines."

"No, Juliet, no," he protested. "And make me a fat householder merely, dull and contented! I believe I was described as 'a portly gentleman,' even in youth."

"You would have had your compensations," reassured Juliet. "Really, I should have contrived to satisfy you with captivity."

"Commonplace!" he cried. "Mere commonplace! All of us are poets as children, but after we have been knocked around a bit by the world and married domesticity, we become like every one else. I wonder, though, if there is n't a spark of the old fire hidden in these middle-aged, respectable people who come home to supper on the same car every evening. Don't you suppose they all cherish some unattained romance? Really, life must be a bore without some such consolation."

"They would not change," said she. "They are content. I said that I should have tamed you had I had the time."

"I have always read that women were romantic, but I have ceased to believe it," he replied sadly. "Women are satisfied with attainment, men only with the unattained. That is my profound conclusion. Now, you are doubtless planning to secure a satisfactory place in the world, and when you have it will be content."

"I think I shall marry a broker," replied Juliet. "One with a nice income and prospects. I shall live in some attractive suburb, join a woman's club, and play bridge whist. There are many accessible men who will meet my not exacting requirements. And you—what will you do?"

"That is the riddle," said he dreamily. "I shall knock about the world and carry the same mind under many skies; and I shall never find what I seek. To-morrow I go to the mountains of California, to a ranch, in fact, though the word is prosaic. It is beside the sea, near San Luis Obispo—is n't that a nice name? I took the chance because of it. It sounded romantic. Then, every day I shall look over the blue Pacific and think of the sunny islands with their froned palms, far beyond the horizon's rim. And some time, when I can't resist, I'll seek them out—and still be discontented, I suppose. Or perhaps I'll be foolish and marry some Spanish girl with dark, mysterious eyes, and think I've found romance. I won't find it, of course, and then I'll become unhappy and commonplace, or, worse, happy and commonplace, like the rest of the world, and raise sheep, and gaze indifferently upon the sea."

"You will always have me to think of," she said, and, though he could not see, she looked down at him and smiled.

"That is so," he said gravely, "and I thank you for it."

He stood up and studied the rose in his hand.

"I shall keep this as a memento, Juliet. We made a great mistake last time. We should only have talked poetry to each other, you unattainable, I always seeking. This time we will make no mistake. Good-by, Juliet."

"Au revoir, let us say, Romeo," she mocked. "You may meet me some time without knowing. I shall know you and never tell. And then I shall have my amusement, too."

"That is a possibility, to be sure," he admitted gaily. "I had n't thought of it. But the world runs not that way, I fear."

He took his guitar and walked leisurely down the slope, without once looking back.

"Well, Juliet, alone on the balcony awaiting Romeo, have you decided to go with us to the seashore? We'll try to make it gayer for you there than here, poor girl."

"I think, Auntie," said Juliet, "I'll have to go back to California. I'm afraid Father wants me."

"We'll miss you terribly," declared the elder woman. "But you are a dutiful girl, and if you think you must, of course——"

Juliet smiled inscrutably upon the moonlit lake.

"You know I should n't go if I did n't feel that I must," she said.



# WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND  
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

## THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR

FOR the prospective foreign traveller, an interesting point lies in the fact that the pedestrian in Paris is denied the right of way. This is granted without let or hindrance to anything that goes on wheels, from the electric tram and the automobile down to the push-cart and the omnipresent bicycle, all of which, as if inflated by an excess of liberty, ring their bells or toot their horns, if it so please them, when they are right upon one.

Ordinary streets are difficult enough to cross, with unrestricted traffic going in both directions, and without so much as a protective glance from a policeman placed there for quite another purpose; but the wide, irregular openings at the junction of half a dozen crooked streets prove almost impossible. This market-place crossing is common to all old European towns. In Holland it is a *plein*, in Germany a *platz*, in Italy a *piazza* or a *campo*, and in Paris it is a *place*. London has Piccadilly Circus, and the busiest *place* in Paris is somewhat of a circus, too, when every type of public and private conveyance zigzags across it, hit or miss, oblivious of the rules of the road, while the pedestrian, grown expert at dodging, plays his little game with consummate skill until some fatal moment when—"tag!"—and he is "it."

Now, sad to say, any one being run down in the Paris streets is "run in" for being in the way. If the victim be a Frenchman, although there is no redress for his injuries, he may be released to the accompaniment of a sputtered reprimand; but if an American culprit be brought to

justice on the charge of being run over, hurt, half-killed, his case is carefully considered, and it is highly probable that he will be fined at least twenty francs for being unknown. This last surprising, bitter touch is accounted for by one more French intricacy.

The law in Paris demands that all strangers register before the *Préfecture de Police*, and failure to comply involves a fine and some fury on the part of the officials. The hotels and larger *pensions* usually fill and pass in a blank bearing the name and residence of each individual guest; but many a foreign resident in Paris has never even heard of registering until some grave accident or a slight unpleasantness occurs, when, verily, the way of the transgressor is hard.

An appalling number of street accidents and fatalities has been reported during the present year, and it is encouraging to note a school for *cochers* and chauffeurs. Reading and writing are, however, the principal branches taught. It is, no doubt, recognized that mathematics are intuitional with the Parisian cocher, but horse-sense might well be added to the curriculum.

SELINA YORKE

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## THE AUTOMOBILE

**M**ANY persons who set no great store by the automobile—possibly because they do not happen to own one—are prone to minimize its many obvious merits, and to dwell dolorously on its minor incidental evils, which may be alliteratively summed up as din, dust, and death.

We beg leave to remind all such persons that this attitude is far from being philosophical. When we remember that automobilists kill a much greater number of themselves than of others, we readily see how an argument based on the charge of inconsiderate slaughter may be called intolerant; at least, it lacks a nice sense of proportion. Again, if the objector be a New Yorker, his objections to dust and din, when produced by a motor-car, must be considered in relation to the equanimity with which he endures—if he does not actually abet, or even cause—din and dust from other sources. In such a case, his attitude is open to the suspicion of discrimination, and may fairly be characterized as irrelevant and impertinent.

But it is in the larger, philosophical view that we would consider the automobile. Its usefulness as a source of inspiration to novelists such as Kipling and to poets such as the late William Ernest Henley is a matter of little moment compared with its significance in the development of a type. This type is no other than the machinist—"mechanician" is a better word: the Coming Man heralded by Mr. H. G. Wells; the god of, not from, the Machine; the master mechanic who in war as

in peace will control the lever, and set in motion the springs of our material progress. Even the intellectual colossus—the Superman Shaw—sees in the mechanician the superior of the mere man of letters. His cockney chauffeur, in “Man and Superman,” tolerant of his employer’s ignorance of machinery, and no less able to set him aright in the matter of a literary quotation, is a symbol of him who is to hold the reins of power.

The automobile is a leveller; from its bowels there shall emerge a triumphant democracy—a democracy already superficially apparent in the similarity of attire of driver and owner, and which will presently go deeper as the ignorant millionaire acquires the trained intelligence and practical, indispensable knowledge of his chauffeur. In the light of Mr. Wells’s prophetic science, we foresee a further lopping of dead languages from the collegiate tree of learning, and the substitution of that living knowledge without which no man may hope to know the soul of the Machine.

But already the American youth is anticipating the time to come; the anatomy of the automobile yields to his inquiring hand the secrets which American boys now grown older once wrested from the gun and the watch. Until it invaded our highways and our homes, no piece of machinery had held forth such invitations to the study and experiment of all. The day is at hand when civilized mankind will be resolved into two races—those who know all about automobiles, and those who do not. Against its coming we venture to submit a paraphrase of a famous epitaph (written for himself by Piron, a French author who failed to be elected Academician), which we hold to be suitable for the tombstone of one of the inferior race run over and killed by an automobile:

*Ci-git Jenkins, qui ne fut rien—  
Pas-même un mécanicien.*

W. T. LARNED

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## HATS OFF OR HATS ON?

**S**TRANGELY variable and contradictory are the customs that govern the hat while it is on duty! In comparing the French with the Germans, would not one say that the former have more of that surface politeness which goes to make good manners? In the reading-room of the National Library at Paris men wear their hats freely if they choose. In the Royal Library at Berlin (Josiah Flynt tells us) a cripple was once sharply rebuked by an official for coming to the desk with his hat on, though the heavy load of books he was bringing made it almost impossible for him to carry it in his hand.

The visitor to New York's public library meets natives who tiptoe along the outer corridors with bared heads, wearing an awed, impressed, oppressed air rather amusing to the citizen of a city that has always had a real public library. Probably after awhile familiarity will cause New Yorkers to feel less ill at ease within the portals of the Bryant Park reservoir of literature and learning.

We occasionally see in a public library some such notice as: "Gentlemen will please remove their hats on entering this room," leaving us to infer that the man who keeps his hat on may not necessarily lack gentle breeding, else the wording might be: "Gentlemen will and others *must*, etc." Most students who use public libraries habitually know that when the hands are burdened with books (perhaps also with umbrella, bag, and other impedimenta) it would be convenient to wear the hat on the head; is there one single sound reason why not? To take off one's hat in an art gallery may afford somebody else a better view of the pictures, but to doff one's hat to a collection of books, most of which are invisible, seems not of vital importance.

Men take off their hats in an elevator car if it contains ladies. When it is crowded the hats must be held at arm's length, high in air, or risk being crushed; though nowhere else would they take up less room or be less in the way than on their owners' heads. And if men pay this homage to the gentle sex in the elevator, why not in the steam or trolley car?

The custom of taking off the hat in church prevails widely, but do not the Friends keep theirs on during divine service? And would not a devout Jew consider it highly irreverent not to wear his hat in the synagogue? There comes to us from England a story of a certain vicar who denounced as being in the last degree sacrilegious the conduct of a party of ladies who came to inspect the interior of his church *bare-headed*. O Inconsistency, thou art a jewel, a paste diamond!

Apart from the dictates of convention, would not the wearing of the hat in church seem more in accord with that abasement which prompts the repentant sinner to cast himself upon the ground and try to hide his face? Why not hide it under his hat and save trouble?

As with one extremity, so with the other. Try to enter an eastern mosque or temple with your shoes on, and see how far you will get; try to enter Grace or Trinity Church with your shoes off, and see how far you will get! So, after all, one is tempted to think there is about as much or as little reason in some of our strictest unwritten laws as there is in the mandates of Simon when he says: "Thumbs up! Thumbs down! Wig-wag!"

FRANK M. BICKNELL



# THE CORPORATION DEED OF TRUST

*By Edward Sherwood Mead, Ph.D.*

THE comments on industrial preferred stocks in the April number have suggested the desirability of a brief explanation of the nature and advantages of the mortgage bond, by way of sharp contrast with those inferior forms of investment. Most people who have saved money are, at least casually, familiar with the nature of a mortgage. They understand it to be a lien upon property for the security of a debt. The conditions of the lien are that in case the debt is not paid at maturity, the lender who holds the lien can force a sale of the property by judicial process, having his own debt paid out of the proceeds and returning any balance to the borrower, who is the owner of the property.

While the operation and effect of the real-estate mortgage is familiar to every one, the nature of the lien conferred by the mortgage is not equally well understood. A mortgage is, in effect, a conveyance of property by the owner to the lender. It is, in form and in effect, a deed similar to the ordinary instrument by which property is conveyed from one person to another, but with this condition, that the creditor holds the title to the property, as trustee for the owner, the conditions of the trust being that if the debt to secure which the conveyance is made is not paid at maturity, or if any other covenant in the mortgage is broken by the lender, the trust, which up to that time has been a "passive" trust, becomes active, and the lender, known as the mortgagee, asserts his title to the property and forces its sale. The agreement between the parties binds the borrower, or owner of the property, not only to the payment of interest and principal, but also by certain other covenants of great importance to the security of the debt. For example, the owner must insure the property and make the policies payable to the lender; he must also pay the taxes and produce the tax receipts to the holder of the mortgage, since a failure to pay taxes might result in a sale of the property by the State, which would deprive the lender of his security. The borrower also agrees to keep the property in good repair, and not to sell any portion of it without the consent of the lender, who will, of course, not allow such a sale to be made unless the proceeds are applied either to the liquidation of the debt, or to the purchase of new

property of equal value to that sold. This mortgage or conditional deed conveying the title to real property to the lender is given to secure a debt in the form of a bond. This bond is a simple promise to pay a definite sum of money, with interest, at a certain date in the future, and is signed by the owner of the property.

The form, therefore, known as the real-estate mortgage comprises two contracts: first, a contract to pay money, and, second, a conveyance of real estate to secure the fulfilment of a contract to pay money. When these conveyances, otherwise known as the mortgage, are copied into a book of record, kept in a public office for the inspection of all those who may be interested, it fixes the title of the mortgage-holder as against all the world. The owner of the property, who is left in possession so long as he carries out his agreements with the lender, is free to sell the property, but he must sell it subject to the right of the lender to enforce the provisions of his contract. It is impossible, in any other way than by a tax sale, to separate the interests of the lender from the property to which that interest attaches.

We have these principles carried out in the corporation mortgage bond, the universal form of safe investment. There is, first, a promise to pay \$1,000,000, \$5,000,000, or \$100,000,000, in ten, twenty, or fifty years from date. This promise to pay, executed by the officers of the corporation, is not expressed in the form of a single note, but is divided into 1,000, 10,000, or 100,000 notes, numbered serially from one to the total number, and all identical in form, with the single difference in the numbers. This division of the corporate debt into "pieces" is for purposes of convenience in marketing. It is unusual for one investor to take more than a small portion of a large loan. By dividing a large debt into a number of identical notes, each of small denomination, it is possible for the company to make a wide distribution of its bonds and gather funds from a great number of private investors and institutions.

Just as the corporation bond differs but slightly from the bonds executed in connection with the real-estate mortgage, so the corporation mortgage is practically identical with the more familiar real-estate mortgage. Because the number of creditors of the corporation are numerous, it is impossible to make the conveyance to the lender—there are too many lenders. It is necessary, therefore, that a trustee should be appointed to act for the lenders, and to hold the property in trust for the securing of these various obligations. Sometimes an individual trustee is named for this purpose, but the usual practice is to designate a trust company, which, because of its large capital, and its administrative organization, experienced in the conduct of matters of this kind, makes a more satisfactory trustee than an individual. A corporation mortgage is therefore usually known as a deed of trust, or sometimes called the mortgage deed of trust. The form follows the usual outline



of real-estate mortgages. There is a description of the bond to secure which the mortgage is executed. Then comes the detailed description of the property. This property is next conveyed to the trustee in a form of which the following is a type:

*Now, therefore, this indenture witnesseth that, for and in consideration of the premises and of the acceptance of the refunding bonds by the holders thereof, and of the sum of one hundred dollars, lawful money of the United States of America, to it duly paid by the Trustee at or before the ensembling and delivery of these presents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, and for other good and valuable considerations, Rogers-Brown Iron Company has granted, bargained, sold, aliened, remised, released, conveyed, confirmed, assigned, transferred and set over, and by these presents does grant, bargain, sell, alien, remise, release, convey, confirm, assign, transfer and set over unto the Trustee, its successors in the trust and its and their assigns, forever, all and singular the following described or mentioned property, rights and franchises, which collectively are hereinafter generally called the trust estate, to wit:*

Follows a detailed description of the property, the same description that is contained in the original deed.

The nature of the conveyance is, however, not absolute but conditional. This appears in the following clause, respectively called the habendum clause and the Grant and Trust:

*To have and to hold all and singular the said property, rights and franchises unto the Trustee, its successors in the trust and its and their assigns, forever;*

*In trust, nevertheless, for the equal and proportionate benefit and security of all holders and registered owners of refunding bonds and coupons and, . . . for the enforcement of the payment of the principal . . . and interest of all such bonds when payable, according to the tenor, purport and effect of such bonds and coupons, and to secure the performance and observance of and compliance with the covenants and conditions of this indenture, without preference, priority or distinction as to lien or otherwise of one bond over any other bond by reason of priority of the issue, sale or negotiation thereof, . . . and so that the principal, premium, and interest of every such bond shall, subject to the terms hereof, be equally and proportionately secured hereby as if all had been duly issued, secured and negotiated simultaneously with the execution and delivery hereof.*

There is no substantial difference between the wording of the real-estate mortgage and the wording of the corporate mortgage; the only point of variance in the corporation mortgage is its greater complexity, and the fact that the conveyance is not to the lender direct, but to the lender's representative.

From this point on, however, the corporate mortgage contains a great

variety of covenants entered into by the company which owns the property, with the trustee who holds the property in trust for the security of the debt, all of which are calculated to maintain the value of the security. In addition, to a repetition of the agreements contained in the bond to pay principal and interest, the company which owns the property agrees with the trustee that it will pay the taxes; that it will pay all claims for labor and materials out of which mechanic's liens might arise, which might precede the claim of the trustee to the property; that the company will maintain the property in good condition and repair, and will continue to operate the property in the conduct of the business to which it is specifically devoted, as, for example, the production of pig iron or the carrying on of the business of transportation; that any property which they may thereafter acquire they will by a supplementary deed convey to the trustee as additional security to that already conveyed; that they will not, without the consent of the trustee, sell any portion of the property, and that this consent will be given only on condition that the proceeds of the sale represent a fair price for the property disposed of, and that these proceeds are invested in new property to take the place of that withdrawn; that the company will keep all property, subject to the danger of fire damage, fully insured, and that, if the trustee desires it, the policies of insurance shall be made payable to the order of the trustee, so that the money will come into his hands, in order that he may superintend its disbursement; that in so far as the company operates any franchises granted by municipalities, the obligations of these franchises will be faithfully observed, in so far as it holds any property under lease it will faithfully carry out the covenants of these leases, and, in general, that the company executing the mortgage and owning the property will carefully observe and protect the physical condition and the value of the business as a going concern, so that the bondholders may have at all times adequate security for their debt.

The mortgage also prescribed the method of enforcing the rights of the bondholders in case of default in premium or interest, or the breach of any other covenant in the mortgage. In such an event, the trustee is sometimes authorized to seize the property and operate it for the benefit of the bondholders, or, failing in this, to proceed in the manner prescribed by law to have the property sold and the proceeds of the sale applied to the liquidation of the debt. This mortgage is, then, recorded in the county seat of every county in which any property covered by the mortgage may be located, from which time, until every covenant in the mortgage has been faithfully discharged, the bonds of the company are protected by a lien upon the property, from which this property can in no way be released.

It has been noted that the lien of the mortgage has been treated as a lien upon property. In the case of a business corporation, security is,

however, far more than the physical property. This physical property has been operated as a business organization, which oftentimes represents the result of many years' careful work on the part of the owners, and which has reached a high degree of efficiency. Connected with the property is also a certain amount of prestige and good-will, a certain established business reputation which brings trade and increases profits. All of these assets—the physical property, the business organization, the good-will—together represent the earning power of the company, its ability to produce a profit, and to these profits, not only because the company has promised to pay, but because that promise to pay is backed up by a conveyance of all the physical property of the company, the bondholder, after the claim of the State for taxes, has a first right to share.

The mortgage bondholder, let it be carefully remarked, is more than a creditor of the company. His rights do not depend merely upon his ability to sue the company, in case of default in principal or interest on its obligations, and collect from it by the ordinary process of law. This right to sue and collect is a valuable one, but the mortgage bondholder can go much further than this. He is also an owner, through his trusteeship in the property of the company; he has an interest in that property, and although that interest is held in trust for him, yet should need arise the powers of the trust can be asserted and the property can be seized and sold for his benefit. It is this feature which so sharply distinguishes the position of the stockholder from that of the mortgage bondholder. The stockholder has merely an interest in the company, the stockholder owns no property. He and his fellow stockholders, it is true, own the company, and the company owns the property, but this is a very different thing from the direct ownership of the property, which is enjoyed by the bondholder. With him the case is radically different. He, through his trustee, actually owns the property. The claim of the stockholder for dividends is contingent not merely upon these dividends being earned, but upon the decision of the directors to distribute the earnings to the owners of the company. With the bondholder's rights, however, the directors can take no liberties. He bears a more direct relation to the trust estate than they do; they are continued in possession only so long as they live up to the covenants of the mortgage. The bondholder is the owner of the property, and he will assert his title through his trustee if they do not faithfully and regularly pay him his interest.

I have, in the foregoing, stated in the simplest possible terms the position of the mortgage bondholder. It is also of great interest to understand how that position has been strengthened in recent years by radical improvements which have been made in the protective provisions of the mortgage, and also to understand how the large measure of protection which is to-day given the creditors of American corporations can be strengthened by further modifications of their mortgage deeds of trust.

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## LADY LAUGHTER

BY

RALPH HENRY BARBOUR

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### CHAPTER I.

THE house faced a country road which ambled along the slope of a shallow valley in the Berkshires, and which, in the course of time, reached the village of Stockton, two miles away. A hedge of privet, head-high and symmetrically rounded on top, hid the house until, discovering a white trellised gateway, one outwitted it. Beyond was a wide space of untroubled lawn from which arose the long, low, ivy-splayed front of the house. It was of creamy-white stucco, unbroken by beams; two stories in height, wide of eave, suggesting in the dignity of its simplicity a New England farm-house of a hundred years ago.

The ground plan resembled a broad and squatty letter H. The central portion, one room in depth, contained a wide hall, opening front and rear upon the grassy lawn, flanked on the right by a drawing-room and on the left by a library. These rooms were square, spacious, and casemented east and west. Beyond the drawing-room, forming one upright of the H, were a dining-room and service-quarters. The letter was completed on the other side, beyond the library, by a study.

This room, fairly representative of the rest of the house, was forty feet in length and something more than half as wide. Light and space seemed the key-note of the study, for, in spite of the green and white striped awnings stirring languidly outside the windows, the

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room was filled from end to end with soft, clear light, while the furniture, of which there were so few pieces that at first impression the room seemed too empty, was so disposed that one might have used the big soft-piled rug for a training track without once colliding with anything. Save for a large portrait above the fireplace, the walls were bare of pictures. Even the big, broad-topped table-desk at the front end of the study bore none of the devices approved of writers. A solid glass ink-well, a pen-tray, a small desk-clock, a shallow green-glazed ash-tray, a blotter, a glass cube holding down an orderly pile of paper—these alone mitigated the smooth monotony of the oak surface. Beside the desk-chair, a rack held many books, from whose tops protruded slips of paper, as though, having for awhile valiantly resisted the sack of their treasured wisdom, they had at last been forced to yield, and so were flying white signals in token of capitulation.

The victor sat at the desk, pen in hand. If it is true, as has been said, that a man may be known by the house he lives in, then, judging Richard Hollidge by his study, we may conclude, and more or less correctly, that he was methodical, orderly, slightly ascetic, impatient of frippery, honest, and a bit utilitarian. Taking no cognizance of his surroundings, judging him merely as we see him in the chair, we should likely describe him as a very good-looking, well set-up, carefully-dressed chap who is possibly a year or two younger than he appears, and who takes himself and things in general a trifle too seriously.

## CHAPTER II.

RICHARD paused in his occupation of running lines of small and ridiculously legible writing across a sheet of white paper and allowed a flicker of annoyance to ruffle the surface of his brow. Through the open windows beside him came the crisp sibilation of carriage-wheels on gravel, the creaking of springs, the susurration of voices, followed again by a sound of wheels on the drive, that faded at last into the murmurous silence of the June morning, leaving Richard with his thoughts once more at sea.

For days he had been peculiarly, unwontedly susceptible to disturbing sounds. Possibly, could he have closed all the windows, these sounds would not have reached him; but, although it was still the first week in June, the weather was extremely warm. Richard wondered if it could be possible that he was losing interest in his work. The thought had occurred to him ere this, but he had thrust it aside as being too impossible for credence. Why, only a month ago he had started out with the utmost enthusiasm, with an eager impatience that had sent his pen flying! Fearing that social demands might interfere with the progress of his work, willing, too, to get away from the noise of the city, he had

dragged Aunt Letitia out here to The Hermitage a whole fortnight earlier than usual. And with what result? He had wasted a week in settling down, and then, having become settled, had struggled for a second week against a most inexplicable mental supineness.

Opening a drawer at his right, he lifted out a pile of manuscript and laid it before him. So much, written in the library of the old brick house at Beacon Hill. Here was the title-page: "The Principles of Good English, for the Use of Schools and Colleges, by Richard Greenough Hollidge, 3rd, A.M., formerly instructor in English in Harvard University." And here was the Preface, seven closely written sheets of it; the Introduction, fifty-odd sheets of that; and here was the First Book of Part I; and here—he rearranged the sheets almost affectionately—here were the first six chapters of Book Two. So far, so good; but there still remained to be written almost two-thirds of the work, and he had agreed—rashly, as it seemed now—to deliver the complete copy to the publishers by the first of September. Ordinarily, that would have given him time and to spare, but when one lags through less than three thousand words in a fortnight, ten weeks loom startlingly short. He shook his head as he replaced the manuscript in its drawer.

In Boston he had been able to work with the rattle of carts, the whirring of automobiles, the screeching of noon whistles, and all the babble of city noises beating against his windows; yet here in the hushed solitude of the country the least sound annoyed him, broke the current of his thought, and—yes—absolutely irritated him! It was absurd, perplexing! Had he ever been troubled with nerves, he would have blamed them now, but he never had been. Twenty-eight years of age, he had always taken good care of his body, knew nothing of dyspepsia save its name, and held himself superior to all physical or mental twinges. But to-day—why, hang it, he felt as he imagined Aunt Letitia must feel at the approach of a thunder storm; just as though—just as though something was about to be struck!

He arose, and, applying a match to the pipe which hung idly from his mouth, puffed irritably as he crossed the old-blue and rose field of the big Gorovan carpet and stationed himself with his back to the fireplace. The portrait above the mantel was of Richard's mother, who had died when he was still at St. Mark's. She had been a sensationally beautiful woman, and it was not difficult to trace the resemblance between the face on the canvas and the face beneath. The principal points of likeness were extreme width between the eyes and sensitiveness of nose. Beyond that, Richard was more like the Hollidges than the Dallens. His mouth, unhidden by a short-clipped mustache, resembled his father's, and so, to a lesser degree, did his chin. His eyes and hair were brown, the former very clear and direct, and the latter commencing a retreat from the forehead.

While there was more of the scholar than the man of action in his appearance, yet most of the favorite indications were lacking. For instance, there was no hint of the stoop popularly supposed to belong to the man of books. On the contrary, the back was very straight, and the shoulders square enough and broad enough to suggest that they had done other things than lean over a desk. As a matter of fact, their owner played a rattling good game of tennis, rode fairly, could handle a gun at a pinch—but seldom did—and was an enthusiastic and mediocre golfer, whose brilliant work with a putter could not make up for poor drives and approaches. After these confessions, it is hardly necessary for me to state that his face was not unhealthily pallid, nor that he did not exhibit either that negligence of attire or lack of attention to the person usually ascribed to the artistic or scholarly.

Meanwhile the subject of this gossip, finding the inclination to return to work still wanting, puffed away on an empty pipe and stared through the doorway to the vine-shadowed porch. He was recalling a conversation with Aunt Letitia held at the dinner-table the evening before. He had casually bewailed his inability to concentrate on his work, and to his surprise Aunt Letitia had seized upon the subject with avidity.

“My dear,” she had declared convincingly, “you are trying to do too much. I’ve seen it ever since we came. You need a change of scene. Why not ask some one here to—to amuse you, Richard? There’s that Mr. Craigie——”

“Tom Craigie! Good Lord!”

“I thought you liked him, Richard. He seems very good company—so amusing and full of spirits——”

“Amusing, yes, if you want to be amused. I don’t. Tom Craigie *would* settle it! Or anybody else, for that matter. As it is, it is hard enough; with anybody in the house, visitors, I’d—well, I’d simply have to give up. If you love me, Aunt Letitia, don’t ask any one out here. At least, not yet. Perhaps later—— I realize it must be dull for you, though, and perhaps by August——”

“Don’t trouble about me, my dear. I’m quite contented to get away from folks for awhile. I was only thinking of you; thinking that perhaps if there was some one here to take your mind away from your work now and then——”

“That’s just what I don’t want. There are enough distractions without importing any. I shall be all right in a day or two. I dare say it’s partly the weather; it *is* hot for the time of year. And possibly I have n’t been getting enough exercise.”

Richard, recalling the conversation, smiled. In all the years Aunt Letitia and he had been together—which was ever since his mother’s death—he had never succeeded in convincing her that seclusion and

quiet were essential to the literary worker. Aunt Letitia was firmly convinced that her nephew labored too hard, and, could she have had her way, would have filled the numerous empty rooms upstairs with guests for the sole purpose of affording him relaxation and amusement. He smiled again. Aunt Letitia was a dear, and he feared she was finding her journey to Boston this hot day decidedly uncomfortable. He glanced at his watch. Well, she would soon be there; it was nearly half-past eleven. Then he frowned, observing guiltily and almost distastefully the desk at the end of the room. The morning almost gone and nothing to show! Moved by a sudden impulse, he strode across the floor, pushed aside the screen door, and emerged on to the porch.

This porch was wide and ran the length of the study. Floored with rough brick tiles, and set along the edge with round pillars supporting beams, it was unroofed save by the clustering foliage of vines, through which the June sunlight dripped to form quivering pools and traceries on the tiles beneath. Before him spread the flower garden, hedge-enclosed on all sides, with grassed paths that wound and wandered through an orderly tangle of color and greenery. At the far end of the garden a wall of tall shrubs, syringas, spiræas, and others, showered white petals over the grass. Beneath the happy treble of many birds sounded the ceaseless boom of the bees, while over all hung the warm, spicy fragrance of flowers and sun-bathed soil. White and cool against the shaded green of the farther shrubbery, gleamed a circular seat, roofed, guarded on either side by a column bearing the laughing head of a faun. One step took Richard from the porch to the turf, and in a moment he was following a curving path between beds of shrubs and old-fashioned flowers, dimly conscious of a sense of relief and of truancy. As he came on between the glorious tangles of blossoms and leaves, ever nearer the garden seat, the fauns guarding their shallow temple watched and leered. And then the shadow cast by the tall hedge enveloped him gratefully, the goal toward which all paths led was but a half-dozen paces before him, and he raised his eyes toward it. And then, since it is but natural that one walking in a garden of which he believes himself to be the only inhabitant should be surprised at suddenly coming face to face with another, Richard stopped short and stared.

### CHAPTER III.

SHE was seated on the marble bench in an attitude that proclaimed ease and content. Leaning back slightly against the cool stone, her hands were clasped loosely in her lap, and a pair of slender ankles, clad in tan of silk and leather, were crossed in front of her, beyond the edge of the dark blue gown. The gown, of foulard silk, quite plain, followed closely the lines of a small, slim figure, and ended well below the neck



in a white lace collar which revealed a V of warm ivory. She was bare of head, and the red-brown mass of her hair—and there seemed a great deal of it—was pushed away from her forehead in a soft wave, below which the oval of her face gleamed creamily against the bluer white of the marble. A pair of violet eyes under high-arched brows and long dark lashes looked forth in quiet amusement, while below a small, straight nose two red lips were set in a demure smile. Beside her on the stone bench writhed a long white glove. Its fellow lay crumpled on the tiles below.

All this, you may be certain, Richard did not see, or, seeing, did not comprehend. Nor, you may be equally certain, did he continue to stand and stare for any such length of time as it has taken me to picture very baldly the vision confronting him. No, he recovered with commendable celerity, and, as the young lady on the garden seat continued to regard him with smiling equanimity, silent and inquiring, for all the world, he thought later, as though he and not she were the trespasser, he addressed her.

“Good-morning,” he said politely. “Were you—are you—that is, can I do anything for you?”

Whoever she was, and in spite of the fact that she was most evidently a lady and eminently attractive, it was necessary for her to understand that she had no right to make herself at home in his garden in this unconcerned manner, and he managed to convey as much by his tones. Undoubtedly the young lady was properly impressed with the fact of her misdemeanor, for—she laughed! It was a bubbling, golden, contagious little laugh that seemed to spring as naturally from her lips as water from a spring, and Richard felt the contagion and smiled before he thought. And, having laughed, the young lady sat up briskly and nodded her red-brown head until the wealth of tresses swayed happily.

“Oh, yes,” she answered, and her voice seemed somehow to belong there with the flowers and the sunlight, “yes, you can do a great deal for me.” And with that she arose to her absurd height of five feet and a few inches and held out a slim hand to him. “You ’re Dick, are n’t you?”

Hesitantly Richard took the hand, but, “Dick?” he echoed startledly. “I am Richard Hollidge. You wished to see me?”

Again came the laugh, and as she laughed she closed her eyes just a little, a trick that added piquancy to a face already well supplied with that quality. “You have n’t changed a mite, have you?” she asked. “But very well, then, Richard—Cousin Richard.”

“I—I beg your pardon?” he stammered. “May I ask who—er——”

“You don’t mean that you don’t know me?” The laughter died suddenly out of her face, and the red mouth drooped disappointedly.

"I—I——" He felt himself a brute, a scoundrel, something far too low and mean for naming, and, realizing it, he resented it. What right had this absurd girl with her silly laughter to intrude on the privacy of his garden and make him feel like—like——

"And so you've forgotten me!" She shook her head sadly. He could almost have sworn that the violet eyes grew misty. There was something disturbingly plaintive in the manner in which she slowly drew her hand from his. Then, tremulously, with tears in her young voice, she added simply, "I'm Betty."

"Oh!" he said blankly. He waited for her to continue, but evidently she considered that she had told him sufficient, for she was regarding him now expectantly, hopefully, watching for recollection to burst upon him. A smile hovered at the corners of her mouth, ready to take instant possession. And yet all he could say was, "Betty? Betty who? Betty—er—what?"

And then, instead of lapsing into tears, which was what he was fearfully afraid she would do, she burst into laughter! And just when, puzzled and a little bit annoyed, he felt a frown gathering on his forehead, the laughter died away as suddenly as an April shower and only a smile remained, a demure, provoking, mocking smile, and,

"I guess," she replied demurely, "it's Betty Uninvited!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

"I'm afraid," Richard said again, with chill politeness, "that I don't understand."

"Of course you don't," replied the girl cheerfully. "Come and sit down, and I'll tell you the whole story." She perched herself again on the garden seat, folded her hands in her lap, crossed her absurdly slim ankles, and smiled invitingly. Richard seated himself a safe yard away, and observed her expectantly and a trifle distrustfully. She shook her head.

"That will never do," she sighed.

"I beg your pardon?"

"How can you expect me to lay bare the innermost secrets of my heart if you look at me in that way?"

He smiled slightly. "Is that necessary?"

"Yes, I'm afraid so. I must begin at the beginning and tell you all." She sank her voice to a thrilling whisper. "You have a cousin!"

Richard shook his head. "I think not," he replied calmly.

"Oh, don't be so fussy! A second cousin, then."

"I believe so; several, I think."

"But one particular one!"

"Really? Then, I am to understand that you—er——"

She nodded. "Yes, I am it—her—she! My name is Elizabeth Carolyn Lee—Carolyn with a y, if you please!—of New York City."

"Oh, then, you're Betty Lee? I beg your pardon, I'm sure. Of course I should have known. I—er—I'm very glad to see you, Miss Lee."

Betty made a face. "Well, there's no good reason why you should have remembered me, I guess, because when we last met I was a wee tot in short dresses." Richard unconsciously glanced at her present gown. "I mean real short," she explained, intercepting the glance, "somewhere around my knees. And you were a very important young gentleman in prep school. And that must have been nearly fifteen years ago. And of course I've changed since then."

He smiled. "Undoubtedly. I fancy we both have."

She regarded him appraisingly and shook her head. "I don't think you have—much. Of course you're older, and you have a funny little bristly mustache, and you wear glasses, but I think I'd have known you in a crowd, Cousin Richard. Now, don't you want to know what I'm doing here?"

"If—er—it is not impertinent."

"There! Thank Heaven you have a sense of humor, after all! I was afraid you had n't. You know you used not to have."

"Really? I must have been—well, rather a bore, eh?"

"You were, to be frank." She laughed and nodded. "And you had no use for girls. But, somehow, I liked you, just the same, and I was quite broken-hearted when you went back to school."

"That was kind of you," he laughed. "From what you say, it would appear that I was not especially deserving of—liking."

"I don't think you were," she replied candidly. "And that's one reason I came."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, I wanted to see whether you were—well, whether you had grown any more human!"

"Oh! And—er—have I?"

"Oh, lots! And I'm so glad, because, you see, it—it justifies my former—shall we say affection?"

"Pray do," he responded gravely.

"Well—and now what were we talking about? Oh, yes, you were about to demand what I am doing here in your garden without a ticket!"

"On the contrary, Miss Lee, I was about to express my pleasure. And we don't take up tickets until you go out."

"Thank you. That will help a lot. But—are n't you going to be curious? Aren't you just dying to know why I'm here and everything?"

"I am."

"You'll be awfully surprised when I tell you," she warned. "Surprised and—and maybe a little shocked."

"I shall strive to conceal the surprise, and hope to survive the shock."

"Well, then——" She swung her shoes out and regarded them gravely for a moment. Then she turned a laughing face to him. "I've run away!"

"Run away! From what?"

"Everything! My devoted parents, my palatial home, Europe—everything." She viewed him in sparkling triumph. "And here I am!"

"So I see," he responded dryly. "And the—er—motive?"

"The motive? A taxi from the dock, then trains, more taxis, and, finally, a funny tumble-down carriage to your hospitable door."

Richard brought forth his pipe and slowly filled it. Then, "Don't you think you'd better tell me all about it?" he asked. "Then we can see what's best to be done."

"Oh, there's nothing to be done, Cousin Richard. You need n't worry about that. But I guess I'd better explain a little more—what's the word?—lucidly. You see"—she turned and faced him, hands clasped about one slim knee—"you see, here's how it happened. You know Papa—I mean, you know how determined he is. Of course you do, though; every one does. Well, he was determined that I should go abroad this summer. I was determined I should n't. Mama—well, Mama did n't exactly take sides, but she sort of sneakily favored Papa. And I think that was downright treacherous, don't you?"

"Not knowing the exact status——"

"Well, it was. I told her I did n't want any more Europe. Think, Cousin Richard, I've Europed every summer except one since I can remember! And I don't know what this country looks like west of Philadelphia! I—I just said I did n't want to go, and—and I would n't. It was n't as though they needed me; and there were two or three places I might have stayed at home. The Parkinsons asked me to Canada with them, for one thing. But Papa thinks that nobody nice ever remains on this side of the ocean after the middle of June, and would n't hear of my staying behind. So—so just before the boat sailed I calmly walked down the gangplank, stepped into a taxi, and lit out!"

"But, my dear young lady!" exclaimed Richard, dropping ashes on his knees in his agitation. "Your parents will be frantic with anxiety!"

"Oh, no, they won't, because I sent a wireless just as soon as I was sure the *Campania* was out of the harbor. So that's all right. And I wrote a letter and sent it by the next boat. The letter explains everything beautifully."

"I see. And the wireless message? Was that—er—explanatory?"

"Yes, I said, 'No Europe for me. Look for letter at hotel. Staying with Bradfords. Love. Betty.'"

"And did you get a reply?"

Betty nodded cheerfully. "From Papa. 'Conduct most reprehensible. Follow next sailing without fail. Wire departure.'"

"And the next sailing?"

"Has sailed."

"But—but surely you don't mean to disobey——"

"Cousin Richard," she replied gravely, "I am twenty years of age. I am *not* a child. I shall *not* go to Europe."

Richard considered, frowning at his pipe. Betty watched him in apparent breathless suspense; only her eyes suggested that possibly anxiety was not uppermost in her mind.

"Then you intend," asked Richard after a moment, "to visit the—er—Bradleys?"

"Bradfords. I did intend to, but when I reached their house yesterday noon I found it closed up tight. Was n't that horrid?"

"Then you are on your way to them now?" Richard knew she was not. Away down deep inside of him somewhere an awful premonition was taking shape. Betty shook her head cheerfully.

"No. You see, I have n't the faintest idea where they've gone. Of course I can find out, but it will take time; perhaps a week, perhaps two."

"Oh! Then—may I ask—er—what your plan is?"

Betty's eyes opened wide in surprise. "Why, I thought of course you understood, Cousin Richard! I've come to visit you!"

## CHAPTER V.

It was all explained. He knew now why he had felt restless all the morning, unable to work, shadowed by a consciousness of impending misfortune. It had arrived. The blow had fallen. After this, he would never scoff, at premonitions.

Nevertheless, he met the shock like a hero. There was not even a quiver. He removed his pipe, glanced at it interestedly, and said calmly:

"I see."

"Of course there's nothing else to do," said Betty, a bit hurriedly. "I simply could n't stay at a hotel, could I? Not for days and days? I did last night, but it was terribly stupid and lonesome. I might go to the Parkinsons' after a while; I'd have to find out first if it was convenient, and I don't know just what part of Canada they're in. I think, though, it's somewhere on the St. Lawrence River. And I suppose there are other people who would take me if I knew where they

were, but I don't. Every one seems to be out of town. I never knew folks to leave so early. I think it's perfectly absurd, don't you? Well, when I saw what I was up against—I mean, when I saw what a fix I was in, I of course thought of you and Aunt—Aunt——”

“Letitia,” offered Richard.

“Aunt Letitia. I knew you'd be glad to have me with you until I could arrange things. And it's such a comfort being with one's relatives in time of—of trouble, is n't it?”

“H'm.”

Betty's face fell, and there was a suggestion of a sob in her voice. “Cousin Richard, I don't believe you *are* glad!” she charged. “I—I don't believe you want me here!”

“Not at all! I mean—er—I'm most delighted,” he assured her hurriedly. “I was only thinking——”

“What, please?”

“Well, you see, it's a little awkward—just at this time——”

“Awkward? You mean you are expecting guests?”

“Good Lord, no! I mean that—that—well, as a matter of fact, Aunt Letitia has gone to Boston to remain overnight.”

“Yes,” Betty nodded. “So the maid told me. But that won't matter, will it? Sophie—is n't that her name?—will look after me, Richard. You need n't put yourself out a mite, really.”

“I had n't intended—I mean, you don't understand, Miss Lee. There are—h'm—such things as—er—conventions.”

“Conventions? You mean, Aunt Letitia has gone to a convention? Don't tell me she's a suffragette!”

“I mean nothing of the sort,” responded Richard shortly. “I am trying to point out the very evident fact that it would scarcely do for you to remain at The Hermitage——”

“Is that what you call it? It's a very pretty name, I think. And appropriate, too; sort of out of the way and all shut in by hedges, you know.”

“As I was saying, it would scarcely do for you to stay here in the absence of Aunt Letitia.”

“Oh!” Betty observed her shoes thoughtfully. “You think—it would n't be proper. But—but we're cousins, and——”

“We are not cousins, and even if we were——”

“We're second cousins, and that's the same thing—almost.”

“I'm afraid that has n't much to do with it,” replied Richard gently. “The fact remains that it—er—would hardly do.”

“Oh, bother! Don't you ever consider anything but facts? They're such horrid, uninteresting things!”

“At any rate, they're necessary things, Miss Lee. I'm awfully sorry, really. At any other time——”

"You're not sorry, and you're ticked to death that you can get rid of me!"

"Now, really, that's hardly fair!"

"Yes, you are! And just for that I shan't go! I don't care if Aunt—Aunt What's-her-name is away. You simply can't turn me out into the road to—to starve and—and sleep under hedges!"

"Great Scott, I have no intention of seeing you starve! Please be sensible. Can't you see——"

"That I'm not wanted? Oh, yes, I can see that." Betty rescued her glove from the ground and smoothed its length across her knees. "And I do think that when folks are cousins—any way, relatives—they might be a little kinder to each other."

Her face was very doleful, and Richard's heart smote him.

"At least," he announced brightly, "we can have some luncheon together, and then settle on what is best to be done afterwards. Perhaps you could—er—find some of your friends by telegraphing. You must be tired after that ride from New York. Suppose we go to the house, and I'll have Sophie show you a room. Would n't you like to lie down awhile before luncheon?"

"I'm not a bit tired," she answered listlessly. "Only disappointed—terribly disappointed."

"I—I'm very sorry," he murmured. "But, of course, you see——"

"I suppose so," she responded sadly. The violet eyes seemed misty as she shot a pathetic glance at Richard. That perturbed gentleman lowered his gaze and blinked. After all, was n't there some way out of it? Hang it, you can't turn a young girl, and a sort of relative at that, away from your house like—like a book-agent or a peddler! If only Aunt Letitia——"

His thoughts were cut short by an exclamation from the girl. "That's it!" she announced in triumph, kicking her feet most undignifiedly and waving the glove. "Were n't we two sillies not to think of it?"

"Of—what?" he asked startledly.

"Why," she beamed, "it's the simplest thing in the world! All we have to do, Richard, is telegraph Aunt What's-her-name to come home at once!"

"Telegraph Aunt Letitia!" he ejaculated.

"Of course! Why do you suppose we did n't think of it before?"

"But—but she intends to remain in Boston overnight!"

"And I intend to remain here overnight," laughed Betty. "So you see, my dear cousin, it's up to you! Now, don't be a horrid, *please!* You know you want me to stay and visit you. Think of all the way I've come! And I have n't a dress to my back!"

"No dress!"

"Just this and a silk negligee," she responded cheerfully. "You see, I could n't get away with anything more than a bag. I *had* to leave my trunks on board. Richard, you have n't the heart to turn me out of doors with just one gown and a negligee! Think what I'd look like after a week, sleeping in ditches and under hedges!"

"But, my dear young lady——"

"Don't you think you might call me Betty?"

"Er—I can't ask Aunt Letitia to turn about and come back the minute she reaches town! It—it would be absurd!"

"Very well. Just as you like. For my part, I can do without Aunt Letitia very nicely."

Richard eyed her askance. She swung her feet, hummed a tune, and smiled blissfully at the sunlit garden. After a moment, with a sigh,

"Well," he temporized, "we—we will discuss it later. Allow me to suggest that we go to the house. Sophie shall show you to a room——"

"Don't trouble, please. I know the way about. You see, I had nothing much to do, and so I snooped. Besides, it is n't nearly time for luncheon, is it? Don't you think that maybe we'd better get that telegram off to Aunt Letitia right away?"

## CHAPTER VI.

AN hour later they were seated at opposite sides of the luncheon table. Betty had preëmpted Aunt Letitia's place.

"I'll pour the tea," she announced. "May I ask the cook to make me some coffee, Richard?"

"Of course. I beg your pardon. Please ask for anything you want. Perhaps I should have told them to prepare something extra for you. You see, I don't eat very heartily at noon; it's so soon after work."

"Work? Oh, you mean your writing. There's plenty of luncheon for me, Cousin. I *am* hungry, though. You see, I did n't have any money left after I'd bought my ticket, and so I could n't indulge in the luxury of breakfast this morning. That reminds me, Richard: Sophie paid the driver of the carriage. Will you give her the money, please? I think it was two dollars."

"Do you really mean that you've had no breakfast?" he exclaimed in amazement and horror.

"Not a bite. I'm having it now. Hence the coffee."

"And you ran away from the boat without any money?"

"Oh, no, I had a little—about fifty dollars. I knew you would let me have some until I hear from Papa. You will, won't you?"

"Naturally. But surely fifty dollars was enough to last you twenty-four hours?"



"Um—not quite. It takes such a lot for taxis and tips; and then there was the hotel bill and my railway ticket and a stateroom to pay for. Besides, I had to buy—one or two little things in New York yesterday. Really, when I come to think of it, Richard, I don't believe I ever made fifty dollars go so far! I—I'm a little bit extravagant. Papa says so—when he's grumpy."

"Suppose that when you arrived here you had found the house closed up. What would you have done then?"

"But I knew it was n't closed up. I telephoned to Boston and found you were here. And that's another thing that cost. I think it was something like two dollars for that."

"Whom, pray, did you telephone to?"

"To Mr. Craigie. He knows you very well."

"Tom Craigie? Then, he has n't gone across yet?"

"To Europe? No, and"—Betty smiled demurely—"I don't think he is going—now."

"Not going? He told me not more than three weeks ago that he was most assuredly going. I fancied from what he said that he had some important business to attend to. He was to have sailed to-day or——"

"Yesterday, Richard. You see, I told him beforehand."

"Told him? Told him what?"

"That I was n't really going."

"Oh!" Richard viewed her blankly. "So that's it?"

Betty nodded gently. "I—I think so. You like him, don't you?"

"You've stayed behind so as to—that is——"

"No, truly, I did n't! He did, but I did n't. Don't you think he's terribly nice and awfully handsome, Richard?"

"How long have you known him? He has never spoken to me of you."

"Not long. We met first last month in New York at the Applethorpes'. He dances divinely. Have you ever seen him dance?"

"I never have, to my knowledge," answered Richard, without enthusiasm. "Tom is my friend, but I can't say I approve of this sort of thing."

"There is n't any 'sort of thing,'" responded Betty, with a laugh. "He's been very nice to me on several occasions, and—and quite attentive, and when I just had to find out whether you were in Boston or here I just naturally telephoned to him."

"I don't think that was—er—very nice. It looks as though you had arranged to remain in this country to—er—be near him. First thing you know, he will be out here after you."

"Yes, he said he'd probably get you to ask him out for a while," replied Betty calmly.

"Oh, he did?" Richard's lips set grimly. "I think there's a disappointment due Mr. Thomas Craigie."

Betty smiled untroubledly, and buttered a triangle of curly toast. Betty's method was novel to her companion. Balancing a large piece of butter on the edge of the toast, she bit off the butter in such a way as to leave the toast practically unscathed. He estimated that one slice of bread would serve Betty for something like a quarter of a pound of butter!

"When," asked Betty presently, "do you think Aunt Letitia will get that telegram?"

Richard, looking concerned, helped himself to a second glass of milk—an unusual indulgence. "It is hard to say. In fact, it has occurred to me since sending it that it may not reach her at all. I sent it to the house. Aunt Letitia was going there as soon as she got to town, and it is quite possible that she left there before the telegram arrived. In which case it is extremely doubtful that it will find her."

"Then, had n't you better send another one to—to some other place?" asked Betty.

"Unfortunately, I don't know where to send it. She spoke of taking luncheon at The Touraine, after which she was to do some shopping. I believe she intended spending the night with some friends, probably the Prescotts. Not anticipating the necessity of—er—communicating with her, I was, I fear, inattentive. It is most annoying."

"Well, any way, we've done our duty, have n't we?" said Betty consolingly.

"Possibly, but that does n't relieve us of the—er—embarrassment," returned Richard dryly. "I think I had better try the long-distance telephone, and see if I can get word to her at the hotel or the Prescotts'? I'd better call up the house too. Will you excuse me a moment? It takes some time to get a Boston call."

At two-thirty Aunt Letitia was being paged at The Touraine and without success. At three Richard's caretaker informed him that Miss Dallen had been and gone and was not expected again. At about four Mrs. Prescott's voice assured him faintly over the wire that while she would have been delighted to have Aunt Letitia spend the night with her, she did n't expect her and knew nothing of her visit to town. If, however, Aunt Letitia arrived, she would tell her to call Richard up immediately. Richard hung up the receiver with a gesture of despair, and reported the result to Betty, who was curled up in a corner of the big divan in the library. Betty expressed sympathy, but seemed only mildly interested.

"So now the question is, what are we to do?" stated Richard.

"I don't see that there's anything we *can* do," replied Betty. "You would n't care to telephone the police, I suppose?"

"I should not," answered Richard shortly. "Besides, as—well, as you will, of course, be going before long——"

Betty sat up very straight on the divan and shook her head energetically. "My dear Cousin Richard, please disabuse your mind of any such notion. I am *not* going to be thrust forth into the cold world to satisfy your old-fogyish ideas! It—it's perfectly absurd! Why should n't I remain here to-night, for goodness' sake? Is n't the house full of servants? I never heard anything so ridiculous! You're wretchedly inhospitable, to say the least."

"It is n't a question of hospitality," replied Richard exasperatedly. "It—it's a matter of common decency. Besides, as you have voluntarily placed yourself in my—er—care, I am responsible for you to your parents."

"That's nonsense! I am quite capable of looking after myself."

"I regret to have to say, Miss Lee, that your conduct during the last twenty-four hours prohibits me from agreeing with you."

"I think you're very disagreeable. You're not a bit nicer than you used to be."

"I am sorry to have to appear inhospitable, Miss Lee, but you must certainly understand that it is impossible for an unmarried girl to remain overnight unchaperoned——"

"Would it be all right if I were married, Richard?"

"At least," he responded dryly, "I should feel the responsibility less."

"Then, let's be married! That's such a simple way out of it!"

"The word 'simple' is well chosen. If that is the best solution you can suggest——"

"It is n't; merely the easiest," laughed Betty. "I have a perfectly good solution, Richard."

"I am relieved to hear it. It is——?"

"Why, since we must n't remain here together—although, my dear Richard, I'd promise to be quite well-behaved—it occurs to me that it would be an easy matter for you to spend the night somewhere else."

"I!" he gasped.

"Certainly;" and Betty smiled sweetly across at him.

"But—where the deuce can I go?"

"Where the deuce can *I* go?"

He turned to the window and observed for some moments the well-kept lawn that spread away to the hedge and the tree-lined country road beyond. Finally,

"Very well," he said, with chill politeness. "We will arrange it so. I can doubtless find accommodation for the night in Stockton. I believe there are rooms at the small hotel there, such as they are. Of course you realize, however, that your solution is not entirely satisfactory,

since any one not conversant with the real facts of the case will presume that—er—I spent the night at home.”

“Any one knowing you well, Richard,” responded Betty sweetly, “would never suspect such a thing.”

“Possibly. But I warn you now that the whole thing is—is annoyingly—er—irregular. If it is ever learned of, it may occasion a great deal of unpleasantness, Miss Lee.”

“Rest assured, Mr. Hollidge, that I shall do all in my power in such a case to protect your fair name.”

Richard bit his lip and tugged at his mustache. Then he bowed. “Now, if you will pardon me, I have some work to attend to. Please make yourself comfortable, and ring for anything you want.”

“What I want,” said Betty sadly, “can’t be had by ringing, I fear.”

“Er—and what is it?” asked Richard suspiciously.

“A kind word,” faltered Betty, her eyes hinting of tears.

Richard passed into the study, closing the door firmly behind him. Then came the sound of a key turning in a lock. Betty arose from the couch with a little quiet laugh and walked to a window.

“He’d have sworn in just another minute!” she murmured.

An hour later Richard opened the study-door cautiously, and sighed with relief at finding the library deserted. In the telephone-booth he rattled the hook impatiently and indulged in many gruff “hellos.” Finally: “Give me the hotel in Stockton. I don’t know the name of it. . . . Hello! who is this? . . . McClintok’s Hotel, eh? Well, this is Mr. Richard Hollidge. . . . No, not College, *Hollidge*. H-o-l— . . . All right. I want a room to-night—hello! . . . I say, I want a room to-night at— . . . No, room—a *room!* . . . Yes, a room overnight, with a bath. . . . Well, without a bath, then. . . . Hello! Do you get that? A room for Mr. Hollidge to-night. . . . Yes. . . . Yes. . . . Naturally, a single room. Do you think I’m twins?”

Then a bell buzzed in the servants’ hall, and a maid hurried in.

“Maggie, tell Curran to have the runabout at the door at eight to take me to Stockton.”

“Oh, sir, there ain’t anything happened, is there?”

“Happened? No, what should happen? I—er—I’m spending the night in the village, that’s all.”

“And,” he assured himself bitterly as he climbed the stairs to dress for dinner, “it’s enough!”

## CHAPTER VII.

DINNER at The Hermitage that evening was a quiet affair. Richard was studiously polite, but uncommunicative. Betty, quite willing to let

bygones be bygones, attempted for a while to maintain a one-sided conversation, but found the task too difficult, and subsided into silence with the arrival of the roast. Nevertheless, she ate a good dinner, with apparent enjoyment. At the conclusion of the meal, they adjourned ceremoniously to the porch outside, and Betty presided over the coffee-machine. Richard, after asking and receiving permission, lighted a cigar. There was a little breeze from the south that flickered the blue flame of the lamp and brought an enjoyable relief from the heat of the day. Tree-toads were piping, and once Betty thought she heard the shrill note of a katydid. Afar off a whip-poor-will was sounding his plaintive song. Betty sighed contentedly.

"I think it's perfectly lovely here," she said. "And I just know that I shall sleep like a top to-night. How does a top sleep, Richard?"

"I have n't the faintest idea," he replied.

"If you were flippant, you might have said tip-top. Do you take sugar?"

"Thanks, no."

"Don't get up! I'll hand it to you. There! Is it strong enough?"

"Quite, thank you."

Betty piled three cubes of sugar in a diminutive cup and trickled a few spoonfuls of coffee over them. Then, settling herself comfortably again and sipping at the concoction, "Richard," she asked, "do you just *hate* me?"

"Certainly not, Miss Lee."

"We-ell, you dislike me awfully, though, don't you?"

"I'm afraid I have n't—er——"

"Please don't say it! I know it's going to be something very disagreeable. When you say 'er' like that, I know what to expect. You *do* dislike me. And I'm sorry. I wanted you to like me heaps. You see, you're the only man cousin I have."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. And a man cousin is so sort of—of satisfactory. He's just unrelated enough to be nice to you—if he likes you, of course—and just related enough not to be—silly. You see what I mean, don't you?"

"Dimly, I think."

"Yes. Now, you and I could be awfully good friends—that is, if you wanted to—and there would n't be any nonsense, would there?"

"Would n't there?" asked Richard politely.

"No. I mean—well, you could n't fall in love with me, could you?"

Richard smiled for the first time in hours. It was the faintest sort of a smile, but Betty found it encouraging.

"You could n't, could you, Richard?" she insisted.

"My dear young lady——"

"Betty," she pleaded.

"Very well—my dear Miss Betty, your charms are undeniable, but, as you wisely observe, the—er—consanguinity——"

"Oh, Richard, I never did!"

—"Between us happily precludes the possibility of the consequence you mention."

"Oh, dear, is it as bad as that?" she lamented. "Still, we're only second cousins, and perhaps that might make a difference. On the whole, I'm sort of glad we're seconds instead of firsts! Aren't you?"

"I can't truthfully say," replied Richard, with a slight laugh, "that being termed a 'second' brings me any great amount of pleasure. It's—er—scarcely complimentary, is it?"

"Depends on what kind of a 'second' you are. Mrs. Martin refers to her present husband as her 'second,' and declares that second husbands, like second thoughts, are best. I should think it would be awfully funny to have a second husband while your first one was alive, should n't you?"

"Funny? H'm! Rather indecent, I'd say."

"At least, awkward? But Mrs. Martin does n't seem to mind. She's great fun. You'd like her, Richard."

"I can hardly imagine it."

"You would, though. Will you have some more coffee?"

"No, thank you. I never take more than one cup."

"Oh, do! See how much there is left. Go on; take a chance!"

"If it is n't impertinent, Miss Betty, I'd really like to know where you pick up the—er—somewhat unconventional expressions you use."

"Oh! 'Take a chance,' you mean?"

"And others."

"Are they awful? I suppose I—I hear them. They would n't do in Boston, would they? If you don't like the slang, Richard, I'll try to cut it out—I mean, not use it. What's that?"

"Curran bringing the trap around." He looked at his watch and scowled slightly. Then he glanced at his half-consumed cigar and settled back in his chair. After a moment, Betty said:

"Richard, I wish you'd do something for me."

"If it is anything I may——"

"Don't go traipsing off there to-night. You'll be terribly uncomfortable in that hotel. I asked Sophie about it, and she said it was an awful place. You won't sleep, I'm sure."

"I don't expect to be extremely comfortable," he replied grimly.

"Then, don't go," she pleaded. "You know it's silly. And I'll—I'll apologize for being mean this afternoon, Richard. I'm sorry I said anything nasty. I am, really! You won't go, will you?"

"Please rest assured that I should n't if it were not necessary."

"Oh!" Betty subsided, studying him from the corners of her

eyes. It was really too bad, she reflected, that he took things so hard. He was quite good-looking. She could be very proud of him as a cousin if he was not so—so prim and—and serious.

“I—I shall be a little bit frightened at being left here alone in a strange house,” she ventured presently.

“You should have considered that before,” he replied calmly.

“I did, only I thought you’d—you’d change your mind about going.”

“I am not likely to change my mind when it is once made up.”

“No, I suppose not.” Betty sighed. “Men are like that. They hate to change their minds, no matter how wrong they may be. I think women are much more sensible that way. A woman does n’t care how often she changes her mind—the more the merrier. Why, I’ve changed my mind two or three times to-day already!”

“Indeed!”

“Yes.” Betty nodded soberly. “I decided once, this afternoon in the garden, that I would n’t stay to-night. Then afterwards I decided I would.”

“May I ask what caused you to alter your decision?”

“I don’t think I’d better tell you—now.” She laughed softly. “Some time I will. You don’t mind?”

“Not in the least.” He laid aside his cigar and pulled himself from his chair.

“Is it late? Must you go now? Could n’t you stay just a little longer? It’s going to be so—so gruesome all alone here.”

“The servants——”

“But I don’t want to talk to the servants. And I must talk to some one. Could n’t you stay until—oh, just until half-past nine or ten? I’ll be sleepy by that time. And it won’t make a bit of difference to you.”

He looked irresolutely at his watch, frowned, and pushed a button by the glass door. “Maggie, tell Curran, please, to take the trap back to the stable. I shan’t want it for awhile. I’ll let him know when I’m ready.”

“Now, that was nice of you,” said Betty gratefully. “Is n’t it funny that when people can be nice they’re not always nice?”

“Perhaps they’d be a little monotonous,” replied Richard, with a smile.

“Is that your reason?” she asked slyly.

He was silent a moment. Then, “I suppose I have seemed somewhat ungracious at times to-day, Miss Lee,” he said apologetically. “I hope you will pardon it. The fact is, I—well, perhaps, as we used to say when I was a youngster, I got out of bed wrong this morning.”

“Oh, but it was quite my fault,” said Betty eagerly. “I’ve been

horridly trying. I did n't mean to be, but—but I was disappointed. I thought it was such a fine idea, popping in on you like this. I had it all arranged: just how I'd arrive, and what I'd say, and what you'd say, and—it was n't a bit like it!"

"I'm sorry, really. How—er—how had you arranged it?"

"I'm afraid it sounds silly now," she answered hesitatingly. "I was going to get here just when you were finishing breakfast—breakfast with lots of strawberries and nice, thick, yellow country cream. Don't you have strawberries, Richard?" she asked wistfully.

"I believe there are plenty of them in the garden," he replied, "but I seldom eat them."

"I love them! And you were going to get up from the table with your napkin in hand and say, 'Why, if it is n't Betty! Where the dev—where under the sun did you come from?' And then you were going to kiss me—no, I suppose you could n't have done that, on account of being a 'second.' But you were going to be, oh, just awfully glad to see me, and Aunt Letitia was going to say, 'Now, sit right down, child, and have some breakfast. You must be starving!' And I was going to eat two dishes of strawberries and a great big cup of nice hot coffee and—and it was all going to be so jolly!"

"H'm; I see. Unfortunately, we have breakfast at eight in the summer. And there were no strawberries. And Aunt Letitia was n't here. I'm sorry it happened so badly, Miss Betty."

"Oh, but I don't care now, Richard, when you're nice to me. I suppose—I suppose you never ran away from your folks?"

"I think not. I seem to have been a most unadventurous chap in my youth."

"Then, you don't know the feeling I had yesterday when I found the Bradfords' house all closed and shuttered. It—it was a funny sensation. There I was without any one to go to. Our own house was closed, too, you know; servants off for the summer, and not even a caretaker. We used to have a caretaker, but he set beer-bottles on the library table and left their stains, and entertained his friends on week-end parties. So now there's just the burglar-alarm, and a sort of private watchman at night. Then I thought of you, Richard, and cheered up. You see, you are a relative, and relatives looked pretty good to me about that time. I don't mind confessing that for awhile I wished myself back on the boat!"

"You were in rather a difficult predicament," said Richard sympathetically. "And I'm very glad you did think of me—us. And to-morrow, when dear Aunt Letitia returns, we can—er—settle just what's to be done."

"Yes," said Betty cheerfully. "And you won't go off and leave me all alone here to-night, will you? Now that we're friends again?"



"I'm afraid our being friends again, as you phrase it, does n't remove that necessity."

"O-oh," she murmured disappointedly. "We-all——" She was silent a minute. Then, "Do you like music?" she asked.

"Very much."

"Would you like me to play to you? I can, you know."

"Why, thank you, but—er——"

"Do let me! Come, we'll go to the drawing-room and be cozy."

She held out one small hand, gaily insistent, and Richard, yielding to a sudden mood of frivolity, allowed himself to be pulled from his chair and led through the dining-room to the dimly-lighted apartment beyond.

"Now, you make yourself quite comfortable—oh, no, not in that chair!" Still holding his hand, she looked disapprovingly around the room. "Your chairs are all frightfully up-and-downy, aren't they? Perhaps if you sat in a corner of that be-oo-tiful couch, you could put some pillows behind you—would that do?" She conducted him to the somewhat angular article in question, seated him, thrust pillows behind and around him, deaf to his embarrassed expostulations, and then stood off to view the result. "Now cross your legs. That's better. Sure you're comfy? Well, then, light a cigar."

"Thanks, but I never smoke more than one in the evening."

"Oh, nonsense! You're going to this time. This is a special occasion, the visit of your charming and beautiful cousin. Please!"

Betty took a step toward him, and Richard, fearful that she meant to take matters into her own hands, hastily found his case and selected a cigar. Betty, however, contented herself with arranging a pillow that was trying to escape, and then stood by and waited until the cigar was lighted.

"There!" she said. "You know you needed that. Do you know, Cousin Richard, I'm afraid you don't smoke enough?"

"Well!" he exclaimed.

"I really mean it. Your nerves need soothing. Now, you sit right there and be comfortable. You may talk or not, just as you please. I shall probably talk." She crossed to the piano and seated herself on the bench. "Perhaps you won't like my things, but you must pretend to."

He had doubts himself, but he murmured something polite, and settled back with the comforting thought that it need not last long, that it must be fast approaching the half-hour after nine, at which time he would be free to make his escape. She began with a polonaise of Chopin, and Richard figuratively pricked up his ears. The girl could play! Not merely well, but with feeling and sympathy and a certainty that surprised her audience. From Chopin, after a thoughtful questioning of the keys, she played a minuet of Gahm's, and then, perhaps accept-

ing its suggestion, followed it with a suite of old English dances, dainty and stately and quaint. Now and then, as something pleased her, she half turned to smile across at him. Her face, almost in strict profile as she played, was lighted from beyond by the soft glow of a silk-shaded candelabrum that made strange tones in the coppery tendrils of her hair. The blue gown looked almost black, and the slim, delicately rounded figure within it swayed gracefully as her small hands roamed the key-board. Infrequently, there was a falter as memory failed for an instant. This happened during Chopin's *Fantaisie Impromptu*, and again with the "Contes d'Hoffman" serenade, and finally, with a little disapproving shake of her head, she let her hands fall into her lap.

"Are you frantically bored?" she asked, without turning.

"Far from it. You play excellently well. Please go on."

"I have n't kept it up of late," she said apologetically, "and my memory is awful. What shall I play?" She looked tentatively toward the music cabinet. "Do you know this, Richard?"

Her fingers sought the keys again, and after a gay, brisk prelude her voice joined the piano, so softly, though, that he had to lean forward to catch the words.

When I was one-and-twenty  
 I heard a wise man say,  
 "Give crowns and pounds and guineas  
 But not your heart away:  
 Give pearls away and rubies  
 But keep your fancy free."  
 But I was one-and-twenty—  
 No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty  
 I heard him say again,  
 "The heart out of the bosom  
 Was never giv'n in vain:  
 'Tis paid with sighs a-plenty  
 And sold for endless rue."  
 And I am two-and-twenty,  
 And oh, 't is true, 't is true,  
 And I am two-and-twenty,  
 And oh, 't is true, 't is true.

"No, I had never heard that," he said, when the last note had died away, and she had turned with a questioning smile. "What is it?"

"'When I Was One-and-Twenty,' from Manney's 'Shropshire Lad' cycle. You know the poems, probably—by Housman. I think it is dear, don't you? There are others, but I remember only one, and that is too sad for to-night. Don't you sing, Richard?"

"I used to—after a fashion," he acknowledged, "but not for some time. I doubt that I could now."

"Won't you try something? Do, please. Find something in the cabinet, and I'll see if I can play the accompaniment."

But he begged off, and after a minute she sang again. Her voice made no pretenses, but it was young and fresh and held a mellow quality that suited the simple air she coaxed from the keys.

As she finished, the sound of wheels on the gravel came through the open windows. Richard looked at his watch and uttered an exclamation.

"What?" asked Betty.

"It's after ten—almost twenty minutes past. Curran has evidently tired of waiting for me. If you'll pardon me now for leaving you, I'll run up and change——"

Speaking, he had reached the entrance to the hall. Betty, watching him from the piano-bench, saw him suddenly pause just beyond the portières and stiffen to sudden attention. Then,

"Why, Aunt Letitia!" he exclaimed.

The screen door clicked to behind a tall woman of middle-age, whose thin, well-bred face, still eminently sweet and attractive, spoke eloquently of weariness. Behind her, Curran set down her bag and stood waiting.

"Will you give Curran some money, Richard, and let him pay the driver, please? No, my dear, I am not a ghost. Boston was like a furnace, and I simply could n't bring myself to staying there overnight. So I had an early dinner and—and——"

Miss Dallen's voice faltered as her gaze, passing her nephew, encountered a startling apparition at the drawing-room door. She closed her eyes.

—"And took the seven-fifteen train——"

She opened her eyes again. No, the apparition was still there! It even moved! She raised a hand weakly and pointed.

"Richard," she said distressedly, "is—is there any one there?"

He turned and looked.

"Oh! I—I beg your pardon! This—this is——"

A strange expression overspread Aunt Letitia's face, an expression that mingled swift relief, vast surprise, and dawning suspicion. The apparition, with a merry laugh, moved quickly across the floor.

"I am Betty Lee, Aunt Letitia." Aunt Letitia found herself limply shaking hands. "I'm Richard's cousin, you know." Aunt Letitia found herself nodding and murmuring. "And I've come to visit you." Aunt Letitia heroically summoned her wandering faculties. She bent and kissed the smiling face.

"Of course!" she said kindly. "So stupid of me, my dear, to be away when you arrived. I'm very glad to see you." Her gaze travelled toward the stairway. "And your mother? I presume she was too tired to wait up?"

## CHAPTER VIII.

"COUSIN RICHARD!"

Richard's pen paused, and he raised his gaze from the cream-toned paper to frown inquiringly at the closed door to the library. There was a knock, and,

"Cousin Richard, are you *terribly* busy?" asked a voice from beyond the locked portal.

"Er—I'm afraid I am just now."

"Then, I won't stay but a moment."

After a second of irresolution, Richard laid his pen down with a sigh, crossed the room, and opened the door. Betty, a pencil in one hand and a sheet of paper in the other, entered.

"I'm so sorry to disturb you," she announced, with a radiant smile of apology, "but Aunt Letitia thinks—— Oh, what a nice big room!" She stopped just inside the door and gazed about her. "But—is n't it awfully *bare*?"

Richard closed the door. "Possibly," he replied briefly.

Betty shot a look at his countenance. "I suppose I interrupted you just when Pegasus was soaring at his highest," she said contritely. "But I won't stay, Richard. You see, Aunt Letitia and I have been having a nice long talk. Is n't she a perfect dear!"

"Er—quite so."

"Oh, she is! She says she's just tickled to death to have me here!"

"Indeed? You—er—you're certain she used just those words?"

"N-no, but that's what she meant. May I sit down?"

"Of course; I beg your pardon!"

Betty ensconced herself in a severe and angular armchair with a grimace of distaste. "Don't you ever have any *cuddly* chairs?" she asked. "Well, let me see." She swung her feet out and looked at them. Apparently Betty's feet had inspirational virtues. "Oh, we were talking about Aunt Letitia. Well, Aunt Letitia says she thinks I ought to write to Papa and Mama immediately and tell them just where I am."

"I quite agree with her."

"Yes, of course. And I shall cable them, too. But there's no hurry about that, for they won't get to England for four days yet at the earliest. When I do cable, I shall ask them to send my trunks right back. How long do you think it ought to take, Richard?"

"I really can't say. Possibly a fortnight after they get your cablegram."

"But that's awful! Well, I'll simply have to buy new things. And now about the letter. Aunt Letitia and I looked up the sailings, and the *Mauretania* leaves to-morrow noon. Aunt Letitia says that if I get a letter posted at Stockton by two o'clock, it ought to reach New

York in time. So I've been trying to write it, but it's awfully hard work, and I thought perhaps you'd help me. Will you?"

"Help you write your letter?"

"Yes." Betty nodded, smiling her sweetest. "It will take but a few minutes. I never write very long letters. I—I just try to express what I have to say briefly and succinctly."

"An excellent plan," said Richard, with a slight smile. "Still, it seems to me that you should be able to express yourself 'briefly and succinctly' without my assistance."

"But I just can't! I've been trying for half an hour. And it's almost eleven o'clock already." She jumped up and crossed quickly to the big desk. "Bring another chair," she commanded. She seated herself in Richard's place, calmly pushed aside his manuscript, and tried the nib of the pen on her thumb-nail. "Now, you dictate, and I'll write," she announced, dipping the pen in ink.

"But—er—look here," began Richard blankly, seating himself beside her, "I don't know what you want to say! I have n't run away from my parents!"

Betty tapped the end of the pen between two very small, very white rows of teeth, and observed him reflectively. "Then, I'll dictate and you write," she said finally. "But you must help me." She passed the pen to him. "Would you rather have a pencil?"

"Of course," he said, "you understand that you'll have to copy it out in your own writing?"

"I suppose so," she sighed. "But never mind. The principal thing is to get it composed. Now, then—let—me—see. Begin 'Dearest Papa and Mama.' Have you got that down? . . . Let me see. What funny, printy little writing! I wish you could see my writing! It's perfectly terrible. Papa pretends he can't read it. 'Dearest Papa and Mama'—come to think of it, Richard, I guess we'd better write this to Papa. Start again and write 'Dear old Dadums.'

"'Dear old'—I beg your pardon?"

"Dadums; D, a, d, u, m, s. I always call him that when I want to make a hit. Of course, he will know right away that it's a touch, but it does n't matter. 'I hope you and Mama had a pleasant trip across. I am quite well and miss you a great deal. But I realize that you will both have a more enjoyable trip——' I used 'trip,' did n't I? 'A more enjoyable visit without me to bother you. I shall be quite all right here at home. As you will see by this paper, I am visiting Cousin Richard Hollidge and his aunt, Miss Dallen, at 'The Hermitage, Stockton, Massachusetts. It is a most charming place, and everybody is very kind to me, and so glad to have me with them.'"

Betty shot a sly glance at Richard, but that gentleman's face remained non-committal, and if his pen faltered, Betty did not see it.

"'I was going to the Bradfords', but found they had left town. So I came here, and like it very much. For the present, you may address me here. My plans are not yet—not yet—perfected. Perhaps I shall join the Parkinsons in Canada, if I can find out where they are.' Now, what else, Richard?"

"Possibly something in the way of—er—contrition would be allowable under the circumstances," he replied dryly.

"Contrition? Oh, you mean about running away? N-no, you see, I went into that thoroughly in the letter I wrote the night before last. There's no use recalling unpleasant things, is there? Shall I say that you wish to be remembered to them?"

"Certainly; my kindest regards to them."

"Oh, wait a minute! 'I hope by the time this reaches you, you will have sent my trunks back, because I have n't a thing to put on. If you like, you can send Higgins back with them, although I shan't need her.'"

"Who, pray, is Higgins?" asked Richard.

"My maid. You see, I could n't run away with her too, because I was afraid if I took her into the secret she would tell Mama. And she would have, too, the deceitful thing! I hope they don't send her. Write: 'I think it would be a nice plan to let Higgins visit her folks in England while you and Mama are on the Continent. She is always talking about going home to see her people, and maybe it would be a good plan to let her have a jolly big dose of it.' There, that ought to settle Higgins! Now write: 'Please cable the office to send me some money right away, because I'm flat'—no, 'because I'm quite out of funds. I hope you and Mama will have a dandy time, and come home feeling fine and fit. Cousin Richard says I am to present his very warmest regards and—and'—Betty hesitated and cast an anxious look at the scribe—"and tell you how delighted he is to have me with him—and Aunt Letitia.' I think we'd better get Aunt Letitia in there, too."

"I think it would be advisable," murmured Richard.

"Now write: 'Much love from your affectionate daughter, Betty.' Oh dear, what a lot I've written! Do you really think it's necessary for me to copy it, Richard? Papa could read it so much easier as it is, your writing it so very neat and plain."

"Considering that it is your letter, I think you'd better copy it."

"We-ell, all right. Is there anything else you can think of to say? You would n't try to make it more emphatic about Higgins, would you? I guess I'd better not, for Papa might take it into his head that I did n't want her. And if he did, it would be horribly like him to send her. So I guess that's all. And thank you very much. I don't know how I'd ever have got it written without your help, Richard."

Richard grunted.

"Oh, but you did help, really! Now I'll copy this, and then Aunt Letitia and I are going to drive over to Stockton to post it. Will you come, too?"

"Thanks, but I think not. I—er—had some dim notion of doing a little writing this morning."

"But the morning's as good as gone. Do come!"

"My dear young lady," he replied sarcastically, "the announcement may come as a surprise to you, but nevertheless it is a fact that I am supposed to be engaged in the labor of—er—writing a book."

"Oh! Then, you won't come." Betty picked up the sheet of manuscript upon which he had been writing. "'Having before his mind the precise object of inquiry,'" she read with a puzzled brow, "'and having also stated——' What's it about, Richard? Is it a novel?"

"It is a work on English Composition."

"Oh, how nice! I should love to read it. When will it be printed in a book?"

"At the present rate of progress," replied Richard glumly, "about next Christmas."

"You mean, because I interrupted you?" asked Betty untroubledly. "Oh, but of course I'll never do it again. You see, Aunt Letitia has been telling me about it. She says you must have everything very quiet from nine until one, and that no one must go near your study. She advised me not to come."

"And so you came?"

"Yes." She laughed softly as he held the door open for her. "Poor Aunt Letitia! She's dreadfully afraid of you, isn't she?"

"I was not aware that I inspired her with fear."

Betty smiled wickedly. "It does sound absurd, does n't it? Good-by. If you change your mind about coming with us——"

"Thank you, but——"

Betty, half-way across the library, clapped her hands to her ears. "I know! You never change your mind; so careless of me to forget!"

Just as he closed the door she called. He opened it again and regarded her inquiringly across the width of the library.

"Richard."

"Yes?"

"If you *should* change your mind——"

The door closed with dignity, and the key turned.

## CHAPTER IX.

THAT afternoon, Betty having disappeared gardenwards with a book, Aunt Letitia sought Richard and found him in the library, arranging and cataloguing a package of books just received from Libbie's.

"You must have been very much surprised, Richard," she said.

He glanced about the room.

"She's in the garden," Aunt Letitia reassured him.

"I was," he replied wryly, settling a book in its place. "Having had no suspicion of her presence, it was somewhat startling to come across her reposing complacently on the garden seat. Complacency, by the way, seems to be a strong point of hers."

"Y-yes. I'm afraid I don't quite understand the relationship. I did n't like to ask her. She seemed to think that I knew all about her. She can't really be a cousin, Richard?"

"She's not. My father and her mother were cousins. Once when I was a youngster Mother and I visited them in New York. I've never seen her since. Some five or six years ago her father was in town, and I had him at the club to lunch. Miss Lee—to use a metaphor not inappropriate—was a bolt from a clear sky."

"She seems—a nice girl, although perhaps a little—a little—impulsive, Richard."

"I think," he agreed dryly, "one might call her that. She informed me this morning that you were 'tickled to death' to have her here; and she apparently intends to remain indefinitely."

"I suppose I did say so, Richard. Of course I was only speaking for myself. She may be disturbing to you—that's what I am worrying about."

"She may. But why worry? She has made up her mind to favor us with her presence for, as nearly as I can make out, at least a fortnight, and worrying won't accomplish a thing. I dare say I can stand it. I can't see but that I shall have to."

"N-no, we can scarcely ask her to go away, can we?" Aunt Letitia's countenance expressed relief. "Besides, she has no place to go—"

"Thanks to herself. Of all idiotic performances! The idea of her running away from the steamer like that!"

"She explains that very nicely, though. Of course, it was not right, but—"

"Ha! She's got you already, has she?"

"Got me?" faltered Aunt Letitia.

"Certainly. I expected it. In a week she will have the entire household under her thumb. She has the—er—the determination of—of—I don't know what. I suppose I could get along, after a fashion, with her here, but"—he sighed gloomily—"it's going to be the deuce when Tom Craigie comes."

"Mr. Craigie! Why, I did n't know you'd asked him!"

"I have n't—yet. But I shall have to. He's in love with her—or thinks he is—I've never seen him get any further yet—and he's



determined to come here, and she's determined to have him. She has n't said much yet, but I can see it coming. This will be a nice quiet retreat when those two are running over the place."

"Mr. Craigie in love with Betty! Why, she has n't mentioned his name, Richard, to me."

"She will when it's time," he said grimly. "Oh, we'll be quite gay and merry here soon. Should n't be surprised if we gave house-parties, with turkey-trots on the lawn and bridge at all hours. Had we better have the ices and salads from New York or Boston? Doubtless, however, Miss Betty will decide that question."

"Richard! I really think you do her an injustice. I'm sure she would n't expect you to ask Mr. Craigie here if you did n't want him."

"N-no, possibly not. She'll convince me, however, that I do want him. Has she—er—suggested any changes in our household arrangements yet?"

Aunt Letitia faltered. "Why, no, dear. That is—well, she did say something about having breakfast on the porch, now that the weather is so warm. It was only a suggestion, Richard, and if you'd rather not——"

Richard shrugged his shoulders. "By all means, let us have it there. By the way, she appears to be very fond of strawberries. You might mention the fact to Curran. We have plenty of them, I believe."

"I will." Aunt Letitia sighed. "I'm so sorry, dear."

"H'm." Richard lifted a book from the box and examined the title-page. "You remarked the other day, Aunt Letitia, that you thought I needed—I believe the word was 'distraction.' Providence seems to have agreed with you. I think I may safely say that the—er—distraction has been provided." He glanced at the clock on the mantel and straightened up, flicking the dust from his hands. "Almost four o'clock! You will pardon me, Aunt? I have just time to change into flannels. Our guest has expressed a desire to play tennis at four."

## CHAPTER X.

IN the big hall upstairs it was almost always cool, since, with wide windows opening front and back, even the tiniest vagrant breeze could find its way in. The second morning of Betty's visit she sat with Aunt Letitia by the west windows. The green and white awnings fluttered lazily outside, and on the topmost branches of the pear and apple and plum trees beyond the vegetable garden the leaves were a-quiver. Under the windows lay a quadrangle of close-cropped turf, cool-green in the shadow of the house. But in the sun the heat-waves were shimmering, and in a corner of the flower garden, visible over the hedge with its white arched gate, the blossoms were bending their heads under its ardor.

Aunt Letitia, gowned in a fresh summer muslin, leaned back comfortably in a willow chair and plied a needle dexterously over the polished surface of a darning ball reposing in the toe of a gray silk stocking. Betty, at the opposite window, curled with one foot under her in a *chaise-longue*, watched in idleness.

"I suppose you know a great many people in New York," said Aunt Letitia inquiringly, after a pause.

Betty nodded. "Heaps. Some of them are very nice. One gets sort of tired of them, though, Aunt Letitia; they're so much alike in what they do and say. Now, you're different. So is Richard."

"We're very quiet and somewhat uninteresting folks, my dear."

"I don't think you're uninteresting a bit. And I like the quiet part of it. Of course, Richard——"

"What about Richard?" prompted the elder woman, as Betty paused.

"We-ell—has he always been like he is now, Aunt Letitia?"

"Like he is now? Suppose you tell me how he is now."

"Why, sort of serious and—and chilly, you know. Seems to float about on a higher plane and talk down at you. Does n't he ever get really interested in things—little things, I mean, like what he has for dessert, or—or folks?"

"I don't think he cares much for desserts," responded Aunt Letitia, somewhat puzzled. "As for folks, he is really very kind-hearted and generous and thoughtful."

Betty shook her head. "You've been living with him so long you don't understand what I mean. Did he ever get excited about anything? Did you ever hear him swear?"

"Excited? Swear? Bless me, no! I don't think so! Why should he?"

"I suppose he should n't," sighed Betty, "but he would be so much nicer if he only would! Has he ever been in love, Aunt Letitia?"

"N-no, I don't believe he has. Some years ago—there was a sort of an affair——"

Betty clapped her hands delightedly. "Oh, do tell me about it!"

"Well, perhaps he would n't like me to mention it," hedged the other.

"Oh, fiddlesticks! Go on and tell me. Was she—pretty?"

"M'm, not precisely. At least, I never thought so."

"Then, I don't think so either. What was her name?"

"Honor Ferris. She was one of the old South End Ferrises, you know—very good family, my dear. Richard seemed quite smitten with her just after he left college, and for a while it was generally thought that they'd make a match of it. She was a very cultured girl, very well bred, very *nice*, you know."

"And what happened? Were they actually engaged?"

"I never quite knew whether they were or not. Richard was most attentive all one summer; went to Nahant to be near her. Then in the fall the Ferrises went abroad for the winter—to Capri, I think—and Richard never even wrote to her. So I suppose there must have been a quarrel."

"Maybe she refused him," suggested Betty slyly.

"Refused him!" Aunt Letitia's brows lifted. "More likely he thought better of it, my dear."

"Well, that was n't much of a romance, was it? And since then, Aunt Letitia? Nothing doing at all? Not even a flirtation?"

"Not that I have ever heard of. Sometimes I think——"

"So do I," said Betty, when it became apparent that the thought was not to be divulged.

"What?" asked Aunt Letitia.

"That he ought to marry. It would do him a lot of good. Anyhow, Aunt Letitia, he needs something to stop him in his awful career."

"Awful career? What career, my dear?"

"I mean, the way he's going on. If something does n't happen right away, Aunt Letitia, it will be 'Good-by, Dicky'!"

"Why, what *de* you mean?"

"Don't you see what's happening? He's floating away from you, Aunt Letitia, from this wicked, tiresome, flippant world! Up and up he will go, from one plane to another, until finally, with a last glance of kind and pitying contempt, and his book on English Composition under his arm, he will just fade from sight!"

"I suppose, my dear," sighed Aunt Letitia, "you know what you are talking about."

Betty laughed enjoyably. "Never mind, Aunt Letitia, we'll save him," she said finally. "We'll find him a wife, that's what we'll do. Or——" She paused and considered. "Or maybe what he really needs is a hopeless passion. Do you know any one, Aunt Letitia, he could have a hopeless passion for? I suppose she ought to be married; they usually are, don't you think?"

"Betty, you're positively dreadful!"

Betty reached forward and patted her hand reassuringly.

"I'm not really, Aunt Letitia; but I do like to see you look shocked." She subsided and studied her shoes a minute. "Do you think he minds my being here terribly?" she asked finally.

"Richard? Of course not, my dear. I'm sure he enjoys having you."

"Um; maybe. You'd hardly guess it, though, Aunt Letitia. I should n't want to be a real bother to him, of course, but it seems to me that what he most needs is some one to stick a pin in him now and then. And that's why I think that perhaps I ought to stay. That is, if *you* want me."

"I do indeed," replied Aunt Letitia sincerely. "And I'm certain that Richard, back of his manner, is really as pleased as I am. He—he is n't one to say very much, Betty——"

"But what he says he says perfectly correctly. I know. Now I'm going to find a book and be lazy. Watching you work, Aunt Letitia, has quite tired me out."

Aunt Letitia smiled vaguely as Betty went lightly downstairs, humming an air. Then she shook her head in a puzzled way.

"And at times she seems real sensible," she murmured.

## CHAPTER XI.

"ANY way, I made you work," said Betty in triumph, dropping her racket and subsiding on the bench at the side of the court. After yielding to defeat in the first two sets, she had managed to carry the third to deuce games, being finally beaten 7-5. "And if I had something to play in besides this"—indicating the white serge skirt borrowed from Aunt Letitia—"and these"—holding up for inspection one brown canvas "sneaker" purchased in the village—"I could do better."

"You play a very good game," acknowledged Richard, mopping his face with his handkerchief.

"I won a be-oo-tiful silver cup at school once. If it was n't for that beastly slice of yours, Richard, I think I'd stand some show. Could n't you teach me that?"

"That would be revealing trade secrets," laughed Richard. "Besides, you might beat me then."

"Well, I should think you'd be willing to let me win once," she replied dolefully.

"I've offered to give you a handicap."

"I won't have a handicap. That's silly. It's just—just an excuse. If I had something sensible to play in——" She smoothed the white serge skirt over her slim knees. Presently, "Richard," she said.

"Yes?"

"Would you be—oh, just simply heart-broken if I went away?"

"Devastated," he replied cheerfully.

Betty made a face. "Be serious. I mean it. Would you?"

He looked at her suspiciously. "Why do you ask?"

"Because," she answered gravely, "I'm going."

"Going away! What for?" he asked startledly.

"Reasons, Richards; lots of them. For one, I don't think you care to have me here very much. I bother you."

"My dear Betty——"

"Yes, I do. I can see it. I interfere with your work. And I do

things you don't approve of. I use slang, and—and I don't construct my sentences properly."

"Nonsense!"

"And yesterday when I put that bowl of flowers on your desk you took them off."

"I—er—appreciated them, really," he stammered guiltily, "but I'm not used to having flowers around——"

"I only put them there because I thought they'd look pretty and maybe lend you—what do you call it?—inspiration, Richard. And you threw them away."

"Nothing of the sort! I merely moved them to the mantel."

"Did you really? I did n't look there. I thought you'd thrown them away. They were pretty, were n't they? And I love flowers in the house, don't you? I'm glad you did n't throw them away, Richard."

"Well—and what else? What other sins do you perform?"

"I make you play tennis when you don't want to, and I come down late to breakfast, and—and sort of disrupt things. I do, don't I?"

"I don't think you have heard me complain of any—er—disruption."

"No, you've been very nice and patient. But I know that you'd be able to work better if I went away. Besides, I've been here four days now."

"But—er—where are you going if you leave here? Have you heard from your friends, the—the——"

"Bradforas? No, not yet. You see, Richard, I have n't written yet."

"Then, I certainly think you'd better stay here, Betty. As you have—er—placed yourself in my—in our care, I feel more or less—er—responsible for you. Of course, if you have a place to go to and are tired of The Hermitage——"

"But I have n't! I'm not! If I thought you wanted me to stay—if I was certain I was n't bothering you——"

"My dear Betty, you are bothering no one. Both Aunt Letitia and I are—er—very pleased to have you with us, and until you can make proper arrangements to visit friends or—er—join your parents——"

"I won't, Richard! I won't if I have to stay right here all summer!"

"H'm."

"There, I knew it! I knew you did n't really want me! Well, I'm going to-morrow, and you need n't 'h'm' about it any more!"

"Don't be absurd. If you can put up with us all summer, you're quite welcome to stay. In fact, Aunt Letitia is—er—very fond of you, and——"

"Are you, Richard?"

"Am I——"

"Very fond of me, too?" Betty regarded him gravely and anxiously. Richard blinked.

"Why, naturally."

"And you don't want me to go away?"

"Not unless you wish to."

"And if I did wish to, and went, would you be sorry?"

"I—er—would naturally miss you," he replied vaguely.

"Then, I won't go," she said radiantly. "I was n't, any way."

"I beg your pardon?"

"I mean, I was n't going to stay. Just to Boston to buy some clothes."

"Oh!" Richard smiled. "Then, this—er—shock to my emotions——"

"I just wanted to see if you'd care," said Betty laughingly. "And, Richard——"

"Proceed."

"Aunt Letitia is going with me; to-morrow; and we're going to have a perfectly gorgeous time shopping. I've simply got to have clothes! Lots of clothes," she added dreamily.

"Well?"

"Well, you see"—she studied her feet distastefully—"I—I have n't any money, Richard."

"Oh, yes, I see. I shall be very glad to supply that deficiency. How much does a lot of clothes cost?"

"Well, could you let me have—five hundred dollars?"

"What! Great Scott, Betty, are you going to buy out Boston?"

"No, but I need so many things, Cousin Richard! Just think, I have n't anything at all. Imagine yourself without anything at all!"

"H'm; I'd rather not. However, if you must have five hundred, I'll see what can be done. I'm afraid I have n't that much on hand, but I can give you a check, and you can get it cashed in town."

"Thanks. You're a dear. And, Richard——"

"Go on; tell me the worst."

"It's just about dinner."

"What about dinner? Do you mean that you want another five hundred for that?"

"Silly! Of course not! But Aunt Letitia and I will be all alone, and I thought perhaps it would be nice to have Mr. Craigie meet us. Do you think it's quite proper for women to dine alone at a hotel?"

"If they behave themselves. I think I can answer for Aunt Letitia."

Betty laughed softly. "But it would be nicer to have a man, would n't it? You—you don't think you'd like to go with us, do you?"

"I do not," he answered promptly.

"I was afraid you would n't. So I thought of Mr. Craigie."

"Only, of course," he said slyly, "as an after-thought."

Betty smiled. "I'm glad you approve, Richard. I'll telephone him

when we get to town. And in case anything should come up about—about his coming here, Richard?”

“Eh? Oh, I see. You’d like to have me ask him up?”

“Well, he might expect it, might n’t he? And it would be so awkward if Aunt Letitia and I could n’t say anything—if we had to. Of course, Richard, if you’d rather not have him—— Still, maybe you could get more work done if you had some one to take me off your hands. Don’t you think so?”

“My dear young lady, if you want that idiot up here, pray invite him; but don’t, please don’t, try to make me believe that my happiness and future prosperity depend upon it!”

“Then, you don’t want him?” asked Betty dolefully.

“Want him? Why—er—confound him, no!—that is, if you want him——”

“I don’t unless you do,” she answered disappointedly.

“Tell him,” said Richard dryly, “that I shall esteem it a great favor if he will honor us with his presence for—how long?”

“We-ell,” said Betty weightily, “you can’t very well ask him for less than three days, can you? Suppose you invite him from Friday to Monday.”

“Very well.”

“And then if you wanted him to stay longer you could ask him, could n’t you?”

“I might. You don’t think he’d be insulted?”

“I think you’re getting to be a good deal of a goose,” laughed Betty, jumping up from the bench. “That’s settled, then, is n’t it?”

“That I’m a—er—an anatoid web-footed person?”

“What? Oh, a goose? No, I mean about Mr. Craigie. The other must have been settled—how old are you, Richard?”

“I’m a mere child of twenty-eight, Betty.”

Betty turned and surveyed him questioningly, a little puzzled frown on her white forehead. “What is the matter with you to-day?” she asked. “You—you’re downright flippant!”

“Why not? Is n’t to-morrow a holiday?” he asked, with a sober countenance. Betty frowned.

“If you talk like that, I won’t go at all! You’re supposed to miss me horribly; you said you would.”

“I did n’t say horribly; I said naturally.”

“And you’re not to take a holiday to-morrow, Richard; you’re to work hard all day long, so you can drive to Stockton and get us the next day, when we return.”

“You’re not going to stay overnight!”

“Of course, silly! How much shopping do you suppose I can do in one afternoon? Why, there’ll be fittings! Of course we’ll have to

stay overnight; and go to the theatre and have supper afterwards. You—you don't think you want to change your mind and come, Richard?"

"Thanks, but I think I'll be more comfortable here."

"Richard, did you say twenty-eight or fifty-eight?" she asked sweetly.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Don't you ever let yourself go?"

"Let myself go?"

"Yes, have a good time; just be foolish and—and not care. Have n't you ever done anything you were sorry for afterwards?"

"Lots of things, naturally."

"Oh, I don't mean make a grammatical error! I mean, have you never done anything—reckless, foolish, wicked?"

"My dear Betty——"

"I know!" She sighed. "You never have. You need n't tell me. Well, don't you think it would be absolutely silly for you to go to Boston with us to-morrow?"

"It would be a waste of two days of work——"

"Then, why not do it? Why not waste two days, Richard? Think how nice and guilty you'd feel, how ashamed! Will you?"

"I don't think I care to feel guilty and ashamed," he answered, with a smile. "Perhaps the sensation might prove as delightful as you infer, but unfortunately I am engaged on a piece of work that must be completed by the first of September; and as it is now the middle of June——"

"Oh, bother your book! Richard, what would happen if it was n't done on time?"

"Why—er—I suppose the earth would spin around much the same as usual, only——"

"Only, you're afraid to risk it. I know. Now come and take me to walk."

"Walk! Good Lord, Betty! After three sets of tennis?"

"Please! You ought to be very nice to me to-day, Richard. Just think how you'll miss me to-morrow. You *will* miss me, won't you?"

"I shall be inconsolable, Betty."

"Well, I shall miss you," she replied sadly, as they moved across the lawn. "I—I wish you'd come along."

"Oh, you won't need me," he laughed. "You'll have Tom Craigie, you know."

"What of it? Don't you suppose a girl can put up with more than one man at a time, Richard? Besides, you're heaps better looking than Mr. Craigie."

"I thank you," replied Richard gravely.



"You really are, you know. You have such a be-oo-tiful romantic nose, and your eyes are—are nice, and you have such a lovely strong chin. The only thing I don't—quite—like—is your mustache."

"I shall shave it off to-morrow," he laughed.

"N-no, I should n't do that. Maybe you would n't look so well without any at all. But—but could n't you let it grow a little longer, Richard, and sort of twist it up at the ends—like this?" And she twirled her fingers above a corner of her laughing mouth and frowned ferociously.

"I'll see what can be done with it," he answered meekly. "But I fear it has been kept short for so long that it is discouraged by this time, has lost ambition." He swung open the gate in the hedge and they emerged on the dusty road. "Has—er—Tom that sort of a mustache?"

"I don't remember. Richard, there's no use in your trying to tease me about Mr. Craigie." After a moment she added, "At least, not yet."

"Oh!" Richard frowned at the dusty bushes beside the way for a minute. Then, "Look here, Betty, I hope you won't—er—let anything occur between you and Tom Craigie while your folks are away."

"What sort of anything?" asked Betty, her eyes dancing.

"Why, I mean—an engagement. It would n't be quite the thing, you know."

"Would n't it?" she asked demurely.

"It certainly would not," he replied shortly. "Besides, as you are under my charge——"

"Richard, you're not jealous, are you? You—you don't want to marry me yourself, do you?"

"Good Lord, no!" he ejaculated.

Betty's laugh rang delightedly. "But—but you need n't bite my head off," she gasped. "Besides, it would n't be such a bad thing, you know, Richard. I'll have a—well, a good deal of money."

"Which Tom needs a good deal more than I do," he returned dryly.

"That is distinctly unkind! You infer that he wants me for my money, and that I have no other charms. You insult us both."

"And you inferred that I might consider your wealth in marrying you."

"Did I? Well, then, honors are even. Let's sit down. I'm tired."

"Sit down? Where?" asked Richard, viewing the empty road.

"On the stone wall, of course," she replied, suiting action to word. "I love a stone wall; it's so uncomfortable. There, is n't this nice? Now we can talk. I ought to be frightfully cast-down, ought n't I?"

"Should you?"

"Of course! Have you forgotten that you just refused me? I have never been refused before, Richard."

"Perhaps you never proposed before," he replied smilingly.

"N-no, I never did. I knew you were safe, Richard."

"H'm! You 'd have been much surprised if I 'd accepted you."

"Y-yes, but"—she turned and examined him with frank curiosity—"I should n't have been bluffed! Do you know, Richard, I dare say that, with proper training, you 'd make a very nice husband?"

"Really?" he asked amusedly. "And what sort of training would you suggest?"

"Well, first I 'd have to teach you to laugh."

"Is that a necessary accomplishment in a husband?"

"It would be in mine," responded Betty, nodding vigorously. "You see, Richard, I 'd be so—so trying at times, that if you did n't laugh easily you 'd swear; and laughing is so much nicer. There is n't really anything that can't be laughed at if you know how."

Betty was silent a moment. Then,

"Richard," she asked dreamily, "were you ever in love?"

"I believe not."

"Really? Or are you just fibbing? I have."

Richard smiled. "Are you referring to your present infatuation?" he asked.

She made a face at him. "I am not. I 've had lots and lots of love affairs—perfectly desperate, some of them! Why, once, when I was about twelve, I almost eloped!"

"Really? And what—er—prevented?"

"The boy's parents heard of it and spanked him." Betty sighed. "I was heart-broken for a while. Then I fell in love with another boy who was lots older than I. That was an unrequited passion. He never knew of it. And then—oh, then there were lots of affairs, Richard!"

"What the dickens were your parents doing all this time?" he inquired frowningly.

"I don't think they knew about it," said Betty. "Now tell me about you, Richard."

"I 'm afraid I have nothing to tell. I have a dim recollection of once sending a valentine to a young lady. She thought it sent by another boy, and so nothing came of it."

"Is that all?" Betty protested. "Why, Richard, what *have* you been doing all these years?"

"Just waiting for you, I fancy," he chaffed.

"Waiting for me!" she said indignantly. "Why, you 've just refused me!"

"It was so sudden," he laughed. "Give me time to think it over. Possibly during your absence——"

Betty slid down from the wall. "No." She shook her head firmly. "You 've had your chance. I must find some one else, I suppose."

"When you consider that I was never proposed to before," he complained, "you ought, I think, to excuse a natural—er—hesitancy."

"Hesitancy!" laughed Betty. "There was n't any! You—you absolutely exploded a refusal! It—was n't flattering. I wish to go home now, please, and hide my diminished head."

"I hope," he said presently, as they strolled back, "you won't marry Tom Craigie to-morrow out of pique."

Betty tossed her head. "I shall promise nothing," she declared.

## CHAPTER XII.

"I'M so glad," said Aunt Letitia the next morning, when, with the carriage at the door, she waited for Betty to come down, "that you've invited Mr. Craigie, Richard."

"That I have!"

"Why, yes; you have, have n't you? I mean, you are going to. Betty said——"

"I suppose," replied Richard thoughtfully, "I could claim undue coercion, or whatever the legal phrase is, but I fancy it is hardly worth while."

"What *are* you talking about, my dear? I was speaking of Mr. Craigie. Betty says you want me to ask him out here for a week-end."

"It is the dearest wish of my life," he responded gravely.

The carriage rolled away at a little after eight, Betty waving farewell all the length of the drive. Later, when Richard retired to the study and seated himself at his desk, a great and marvellous silence was settled over the house. Assuring himself that to-day, at least, he would be able to make progress, he lighted his pipe, drew his manuscript to him, and ran through his notes. Presently he selected a soberly-bound volume from the rack beside him and opened it where a marker lay. Then he relighted his pipe. Finally he pushed his notes away and leaned back in his chair, his hands behind his head, and puffed big clouds of gray smoke toward the ceiling. Time passed. He aroused himself suddenly with a scowl and leaned over the book once more. In the act of turning a page, his eyes wandered to a window, and he saw that the weather had grown cloudy. He hoped it would n't rain. Of course they could take a carriage and do their shopping, but he fancied it would be rather unpleasant. He glanced at the desk clock. Why, they were half-way there by now! Good Lord! Where had the time gone? Nearly eleven, and he had n't touched pen to paper! Resolutely he laid aside his pipe, and frowned absorbedly at the virgin sheet of paper. At last he wrote half a dozen lines.

After all, even should it rain here, the weather might be quite fair in Boston—he found his mind once more astray—and doubtless Betty

would display enough sense to purchase a pair of practical shoes, and not go running around over wet sidewalks in those absurd, paper-soled pumps. And in any case it was not his place to worry!

He relighted his pipe. What was the matter with the place to-day? The silence was uncanny! It—it got on his nerves! He tossed down his pen and walked to the hearth, and there, his back to the fireplace, frowned at the gray world while the desk clock ticked off the precious minutes.

Later he returned to work, and, having read what he had written, scrunched the sheet up disgustedly and tossed it away. What absolute drivel! And then, while he was still striving for a fresh start, a far-off chiming announced that it was luncheon-time!

The rain came just as he had seated himself at the table—a slow, soft, persistent drizzle that blotted out the world beyond the garden hedge. With some thought of making up for another wasted forenoon, he returned to the study after his solitary luncheon, and dipped his pen again. But after staring at an empty sheet of paper for a quarter of an hour he pushed back his chair and strode to the porch door. The garden looked forlorn. The flowers, drenched with moisture, hung their heads abjectly, sprawling across the sodden paths. The porch held pools of water. There was no temptation in that direction. For an hour he mooned about the library, rearranging some books, trying to read. But the light, save at the windows, was dim, and the books failed to hold him. At four, donning a rain-coat and a woollen cap, and seizing his heaviest stick, he splashed off down the driveway and spent an hour tramping over the wet, soppy countryside.

Dinner was a dreary meal, and the copy of the review which he tried to prop open beside him had the very devil in it and flopped its pages shut every time he took his eyes off it. After coffee he went to the piano and tried to pick out the tune of a song Betty had sung the night of her arrival. Failing in that, he strove to recall some of the songs he had sung at college. In the middle of one of them Maggie appeared on the scene, looking vastly concerned, to ask if he had called her, and he stopped in disgust. Having finished his one cigar, he deliberately lighted a second. That lasted him until he could with decency ascend to his room, and with the soft patter of the rain in his ears he at last fell asleep.

### CHAPTER XIII.

“CURRAN, I want you to drive over and meet the eleven-forty train from Boston,” directed Richard the next morning. “Miss Dallen and Miss Lee will be on it.”

This was at nine o'clock.

“She should n't expect me to sacrifice a whole morning's work in

order to meet her at Stockton. Curran will do quite as well. Besides, she's capable of bringing Tom back with her to-day, and I'm blessed if I'll drive away over there to welcome that idiot!"

This was at ten o'clock.

And then, at two and a half minutes past eleven, he hurried to the push-button in a panic and summoned a maid. "Has Curran gone yet, Maggie?" he demanded.

"No, sir; he's harnessing."

"Tell him—tell him I have decided to drive to the station myself."

The train was nearly twenty minutes late, and Richard, alternately soothing the chestnut cob and puffing at his pipe, scorned himself for his weakness and wished himself at home. When at last the long train drew wearily into the station, he almost hoped that Betty and Aunt Letitia were not on it. But they were; at least, Aunt Letitia had arrived, but Betty was not visible. It was only when she was laughing at him across the wheel that he awoke to the fact that the radiant young person in a suit of white ratine and a braided straw turban with a pert cockade of Natier blue in front was Betty.

"Richard, we've got dozens of bags and bundles! Do you think we can get them all in?" She was already handing them to him, and while he was piling the floor in front with them Aunt Letitia arrived with more.

"Why, Richard!" she exclaimed. "How nice of you to meet us! Is anything the matter with Curran?"

"Nothing aside from his usual laziness," he replied. "I'd be glad to get out and assist you, but if I did this animal would bolt. I can take a few more bundles in front here. I hope you had a successful trip."

"We had the time of our lives!" declared Betty. "Did n't we, Aunt Letitia? And just wait, Richard, until you see the gowns I've bought!"

"I fancy I'm seeing one of them now," he answered, searching the platform apprehensively for Tom Craigie.

"Oh, this! Do you like it? It was ridiculously cheap, was n't it, Aunt Letitia? But *do* you like my hat? Don't you think it's *sweet*? He *will* like my big one, won't he, Aunt Letitia?"

Richard condescendingly approved of the turban, and the cob waltzed his way out of the village. Betty was voluble all the way home, but as the horse demanded a good deal of attention much of her narrative was lost to Richard. In the hall, while Curran was transferring bags and parcels to the maids, Betty held out a pair of white-gloved hands to Richard.

"You have n't once said you were glad to have us back," she challenged.

Richard took the hands gingerly. "Is it necessary to say it?" he asked.

Betty nodded emphatically, swinging their clasped hands back and forth happily. "Very, when you don't even look it! And, Richard, I have n't told you!"

"What?" he asked, conscious of Aunt Letitia's interested regard as she directed the disposal of the luggage.

"He's coming!" Betty swung the hands wide. "On Friday!" The hands swung back again. "To stay until Monday! Is n't that dandy?" Betty gave his fingers an ecstatic squeeze.

"Very nice," he replied, really trying to reflect some of her pleasure as he rescued his hands. "I suppose you mean Tom Craigie?"

"Of course. And I am to telephone him whether it is all right about the stable, Richard."

"The stable? I *had* thought of putting him up in the house."

"Silly! The car, of course! I told him I thought there would be plenty of room for it. There is, is n't there?"

"Good Lord! Is he bringing that thing here?"

"Don't you want him to? I thought it would be jolly to go around and see some of the places, Richard. Why, we could go over to Lenox for luncheon and—and see everything! Don't you *really* want him to bring his car?"

"I don't care what he does; only, I don't see where he's going to keep it."

"Is n't there room in the stable? Would it hurt if one of the carriages stood outside, Richard, just for two or three days? Of course, if it would——"

"Not at all. Tell him to bring it along, and we'll do the best we can for him."

"You're a duck!" declared Betty. "Now I'm going up to primp. Don't go away; I've got lots to say yet. Why, it seems as though I had n't seen you for weeks, Richard!"

At luncheon Betty was again transformed. A cream-white serge skirt with a tiny black stripe, a waist of white voile, hand-embroidered and tucked, white stocking and shoes, a white leather belt. She laughed enjoyably at Richard's look of bewilderment, and dropped him a courtesy at the doorway.

"Well?" she asked.

"It's rather breath-taking," he acknowledged. "When—er—when do you change again? I want to be prepared."

"Not until dinner-time. Still, if any one should drop in for afternoon tea, I have a perfect dream of a gown I could get into. I wish you could have seen me trying on yesterday evening, Richard——"

"My dear!" murmured Aunt Letitia.

"Oh, well, you know what I mean. I wish you could have been in the next room and seen the perfect procession of errand girls and fitters! There were dozens! Did n't we have a perfectly gorgeous time, Aunt Letitia?"

"It was quite exciting, dear."

"Exciting! It was just like a wedding! We did n't have time to go downstairs for dinner, Richard; we ate it in our parlor between fits."

"Between——"

"I mean fittings. The stores were very accommodating. And, oh, Richard, before I forget it, I owe Aunt Letitia forty-two dollars."

"You mean that you spent the five hundred?"

"Like that—pouf! It did n't last any time, my dear man. Things are frightfully high at this season. Why, what do you suppose I paid for this waist, Richard? And you can see it's the simplest sort of a thing."

"I have n't the least idea, Betty."

"Oh, well, give a guess! You must know *something* about the prices of things."

"Ah—ten—no, twelve dollars?"

"Richard!" she exclaimed reproachfully. "Why, look at all these dear, tiny little tucks! Eighteen dollars, Richard! Is n't that perfectly absurd? I really needed half a dozen, but at that price I simply could n't afford more than three. One of the others is real sweet—it cost twenty-two, I think. I've got the dreamiest evening gown, Richard! It's a model, and I think it was absurdly cheap at a hundred and forty, don't you, Aunt Letitia?"

"I'm sure it was, my dear. But do eat luncheon now. Richard would much rather see your things than hear about them, I'm sure."

"Oh, but Richard is just frightfully interested, are n't you? He's interested in anything and everything that concerns his dear, darling, bestest cousin, Aunt Letitia. He's a ducky-Dick, that's what he is!" She paused and there was a ripple of laughter. "That's it!" she exclaimed. "After this I shall call you Dick!"

Aunt Letitia looked fairly horrified. Richard smiled.

"If you do, I'll call you Bett!"

"I'd love it! Betty is so—so *infantile*, is n't it?"

"But Bett!" expostulated Aunt Letitia distastefully.

"I like it, Aunt Letitia. Richard—I mean Dick—I shall be your one best Bett! Now, please, may I have another croquette?"

So much dissipation proved too much for Aunt Letitia, and Richard and Betty ate dinner without her. Afterwards there was coffee on the porch, since, although yesterday's rain had cooled the morning air, the evening had brought heat and sultriness. There was a lopsided moon

above the hills across the valley, and when Richard had set down his cup Betty was on her feet.

"Let's go outdoors," she said imperatively. "Don't you love moonlight?"

"H'm; is n't it a bit risky in that dress?"

Betty viewed the light-blue dinner-gown she wore and shook her head. "It's quite warm; besides, I'll get a scarf. You must put your cap on, though. I'll bring it to you."

When she returned they stepped on to the lawn and passed around the front of the house.

"Where are we going?" Richard asked.

"To the garden. A garden is the only place to be on a night like this—unless it's on the water."

"I never heard of a garden on the water," he remarked.

"I did n't say—— Well, perhaps I did. But what can you expect, Richard—no, Dick—when I have n't had a chance yet to read your new book?"

They went along the curving path, every step bringing a new vista of black shadows and silvery radiance. The flowers, under the moonlight, had a new beauty. Not a breath stirred through the garden. A group of white iris blooms stood out against a background of dark bronze-green like flower ghosts. And over all in the still, humid air a hundred perfumes floated, mingling and separating like incense from a thousand thuribles. The fauns leered eerily from their tall shafts, the moonlight throwing their features into sharp relief against the gloom of the shrubbery beyond.

"They're laughing at us," whispered Betty, pausing at the end of the path and laying a light hand on Richard's sleeve.

"They've caught it from you," he answered. "They never laughed before you came."

"Did you?" she asked, leading the way to the gleaming white seat. He settled himself beside her before he answered. Then,

"Have you changed me too?" he asked.

She nodded, her hands clasped about one knee and her eyes staring straight up at the big white moon. "Yes," she said; "a little. I mean to more. You're better already, but you have n't learned to really laugh yet; you chuckle."

"And when I've learned to laugh, is my education over?"

"Just beginning," she replied, still staring the moon out of countenance. "When you have learned to laugh you will learn to be happy, but that comes quite easily."

"But I am happy now," he answered amusedly, his eyes on the soft profile of her upturned face. "Quite happy," he added with a sigh.

"But that," she said, "is because I am here."



“ Oh! ”

She laughed very softly, and, leaning back against the seat, regarded him smilingly. “ It is true, though. I make you laugh, and when you laugh you open your mouth and the joys pop inside and suddenly you’re feeling quite happy and light-hearted.”

“ Or light-headed,” he suggested.

She took no notice of that. “ The trouble is now, Richard, that you don’t really laugh well, and when you don’t laugh well you don’t open your mouth wide enough for the great big joys to get in. It’s only the little, thin, wispy joys that can enter, you see.”

“ I think I have met some folks who were happy, Betty, and yet did n’t laugh much.”

“ There are people like that,” she acknowledged. “ Do you know why they’re happy? Because they sleep with their mouths open, Richard, and the joys get in at night! ”

“ You absurd girl! ” he laughed.

“ I am a silly, ain’t I? ” she agreed. Then, with a deep sigh, “ Do you suppose I’ll ever get any sense, Cousin? ” she asked seriously.

“ I hope not, if it is going to make you different, Betty.”

“ Richard, you’re positively splendid to-night! I think it’s the moon. Would n’t you like me better, though, if I—oh, if I were more clever and dignified and—and serious? ”

“ Then, you would n’t be—Betty,” he laughed.

“ Who should I be? ”

“ Perhaps Elizabeth. Surely not Bett.”

“ I should n’t want to be Elizabeth,” she mused. “ It sounds too grand and haughty. I’d never be able to live up to it. Fancy having a real good laugh at something and hearing some one ask, ‘ Who is that laughing? ’ and some one else say, ‘ That’s Elizabeth Lee! ’ Would n’t you just want to sink through the floor for shame? When I was a wee tot I used rather to like Elizabeth. Then I played that I was a duchess or a countess or something, and that my name was Lady Elizabeth—Lady Elizabeth Lee. It sounds rather swell, does n’t it? ”

“ Very, but I think I know a better title than that; surely one which fits you better.”

“ Really? Is it nice? What is it? ”

“ Lady Laughter,” he answered.

“ Oh, but that sounds as if laughing were the only thing I did! ”

“ Well, it’s one of the things you do best.”

“ Now you’re being horrid,” she mourned. “ I’ll never laugh again! ”

“ I hope you will. Shall I tell you something? Yesterday I made the remarkable discovery that I could n’t write because—why, do you suppose? ”

"You had no ink?"

"Because I missed your laughter, Betty!"

"Richard!" She sprang to her feet and faced him in consternation. "Come into the house immediately! The moon's doing perfectly awful things to you! The first thing you know you'll be making love to me!"

He produced his case and deliberately chose a second cigar.

"I might even do that," he replied with a suggestion of swagger as he arose.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

DURING the next few days Curran made periodical trips to Stockton and brought back oblong pasteboard boxes of various sizes, and Betty and Aunt Letitia, assisted by Sophie, spent much time in secret session above-stairs. And every so often Richard was called upon to view and admire, and in the course of time became able to distinguish chiffon broadcloth from charmeuse, and a revers from a guimpe.

About this time a cable message reached Betty from London. She showed it to Richard directly she had read it.

Trunks shipped express to-day. Both well. Writing. Love. FATHER.

"H'm," Richard commented. "It's difficult to discern from this whether your father is still angry or has become reconciled."

"Oh, reconciled," said Betty. "Why, that's quite an affectionate message from Papa! It's all right now. You'll see. I do wish, though, I knew whether they've sent Higgins to visit the Higginses!"

After dinner that evening, Betty, who was reading the *New York Times* and sipping a cup of sugar melted in coffee, suddenly exclaimed, "So that's where they are!"

"And who might they be?" asked Aunt Letitia.

"The Bradfords. They're at Magnolia. They've taken a cottage. I remember that Nancy said last year they thought of trying Magnolia next. You see, they've tried almost every other place. Well, the things I've bought will do very well until my trunks come, won't they? Is Magnolia very dressy?"

"Then, you think of visiting these friends of yours?" asked Aunt Letitia.

"Oh, of course. I can't stay here all summer, you dear thing. I only invited myself for a fortnight, and that will soon be up. I must write Nancy to-morrow. Please, somebody, help me to remember."

Aunt Letitia shot an inquiring glance at Richard. He was thoughtfully watching a cloud of smoke writhe through the window. The weather had turned cooler, and they had had their coffee in the drawing-room.

"I'm sure, Betty," said Aunt Letitia finally, receiving no assistance from her nephew—"I'm sure we'd be very glad to have you stay here as long as you can stand us. Certainly, we can't equal the North Shore for gaiety, but if you don't mind our humdrum ways, dear——"

"Of course Betty's tiring of them, Aunt," said Richard stiffly. "I, for one, don't blame her."

"That's a mean, horrid thing to say, Richard! I just love it here, and you know it, but I don't intend to sponge all summer on you!"

"Not when you can have the gaiety of Magnolia, evidently," he replied.

Betty flushed, opened her mouth to speak, caught back the first word on the tip of her tongue, and finished her sugar and coffee. Then she arose quietly and passed into the hall.

"You should n't have hurt her feelings so, Richard," said Aunt Letitia troubledly. "After all, it's not to be wondered at that she should prefer a—gayer place, my dear."

"That is only what I observed," replied Richard coldly. "So why should she take offense?"

"But—the way you said it, Richard, was n't——" She paused. The screen door at the front of the house slammed gently. "I wonder if she has put anything on."

Richard made no answer. But, after a minute or two,

"Tom Craigie comes to-morrow, does n't he?" he asked indifferently.

"Yes, some time in the afternoon. He said it would depend on the road."

"I wish he'd lose it!" muttered Richard.

"It's only for three days," replied his aunt soothingly.

"Three days! Do you suppose he intends to remain but three days, my dear Aunt? If we get rid of him by August, we'll be doing well!"

"But if he is not invited to remain, Richard, why, surely——"

"But he will be! That's just it! I'll invite him or you'll invite him, and neither of us will ever know how nor why we did it! I have half a mind to pack a bag and go away for a week."

"And leave your work?"

"No, I'd take it with me. That's the point. I'd like to go somewhere where I could write in peace."

"Has n't it been going well?" ventured Aunt Letitia sympathetically.

"It has scarcely been going at all," he replied. "And with Tom Craigie honking his automobile around the place and telling his silly stories——"

"I'm sure, dear, he will keep away from your study during your working hours."

"He'd better! But that is n't it. It—it's the—the consciousness of having strangers around me that disturbs me, Aunt Letitia."

"I'm sorry, Richard. I suppose you did n't realize that when you invited him."

"If you care to put it that way," he replied dryly, "I did n't."

Ten minutes later he finished his cigar, arose, frowned over some music on the top of the piano, and presently strode from the room. Aunt Letitia listened. A screen door closed with a vicious *bang*. Aunt Letitia nodded and went on with her embroidering.

## CHAPTER XV.

THERE was a chill in the air to-night, and only once or twice had the moon peered out from behind the clouds. It was in hiding when Richard stepped out on the path which led along the front of the house. He had swung a coat over his arm and donned a cap. He felt certain that he would find Betty in the garden, and so he passed through the white gate and looked about through the half-darkness. He was on the point of calling to her when a blur of lighter tone took shape against the shadows of the study porch. She was seated on the edge of the porch, leaning against a column. He walked across to her in silence.

"Aunt Letitia is afraid you will catch cold," he announced as he stood over her and held out the coat. "You had better put this on."

"I am quite warm, thank you," she replied in tones matching his in chilly politeness. Nevertheless, she accepted the coat, and slipped it over her shoulders. Having performed his ostensible errand, there seemed no reason for lingering. On the other hand, to retreat gracefully seemed even more difficult. He thought of dropping some caution against remaining out too long, and then stepping across the porch and into the dimly lighted study. Fortunately, however, he remembered in time that the porch door was locked from the inside. To go back the way he had come, leaving her alone out there in the darkness, seemed indefensible. Besides, he really wanted to render an apology for his churlishness. The silence lengthened. Richard remained standing in the path, awkward and dumb. Once he thought she turned her head and looked up at him, but it was too dark to be certain of that. A dozen remarks suggested themselves and were repulsed as inane. Of course, it was perfectly feasible to ask her pardon in so many words and retire with dignity, but some demon of perversity ruled him to-night. At last,

"Won't you sit down?" she asked, sweetly polite.

"No, thank you. I'm going right back," he replied stiffly.

Silence settled down again. The moon crept out from under a pile of purple-black clouds, bathed the world in silver light for a moment,

and was again obscured. Suddenly little stifled sounds came to him from the figure on the porch, sounds which Richard, with a quick, dismayed softening of his mood, told himself were sobs. She was crying! What a brute had been! Impulsively he reached down and laid a hand on her shoulder. He could feel it shake under the rough surface of the coat. The sounds, as though defying restraint, became louder.

"Betty!" he said softly. "Please!"

Then his hand fell from the shoulder, and he stepped back, surprised, suspicious. Was it possible that—that——

It was! Richard turned on his heel, and walked down the path and through the gate. And as he passed the corner of the house the sound of laughter, bubbling, merry, and unrestrained, fell upon his outraged ears!

The next morning you would have thought, from Betty's attitude, that nothing at all had happened. Such a well-behaved Betty! Prompt to the minute at breakfast! So attentive to Aunt Letitia's wants! So concerned about Richard's appetite, which was not of the best this morning! In short, so angelic that Aunt Letitia openly beamed upon her and secretly wondered, while Richard, nursing his wounded dignity, repelled all her advances with polite hauteur.

"Mr. Craigie will have a splendid day for his trip," observed Aunt Letitia.

"Won't he!" agreed Betty. "It's a perfectly wonderful morning! The air's like—like—what is it you liken air to, Richard, when you want to say something nice about it?"

"I really can't say."

"Well, whatever it is, it's just like it," continued Betty, undeterred. "I've been in the garden with Curran. Curran says we are going to have a very warm summer. He told me how he knew, but I forget; something about snails or slugs, I think. And I picked the darlinest bunch of flowers for your study, Richard."

"Thank you, but you should n't have bothered."

"Oh, but I love to pick flowers. Curran says I should cut them, but I did n't have anything to cut them with, you see. He tried very hard to be cross, but I would n't let him. Curran's a funny old dear, is n't he?"

After breakfast, when Richard, having glanced through a paper, started toward the study, Betty intervened.

"You're not going to work yet, are you?" she asked. "Why, it's only a little after nine."

"It will be half-past before I get started," he answered.

"Well—but—could n't you come out just a minute? Curran is going to mark the tennis-court. Let's go and see him do it."

"He will do it very well without my assistance."

"Please! Just a minute, just ten minutes!"

"Really, Betty, I thought you understood by this time that the morning is my time to work. Now, please, don't ask again."

"You're still angry, aren't you?" she asked, studying his face with anxious eyes. "Richard, I'm sorry I laughed."

"It's of no consequence," he replied indifferently.

"I—I did n't mean to hurt your feelings, really! But—but it was so funny, you standing there and not saying anything, and I sitting there and not saying anything——"

"It was undoubtedly a very humorous situation," he returned dryly. "Unfortunately, my sense of humor is—er—apparently deficient."

A smile stole into her eyes as he turned away. "I should n't say *apparently*, Richard," she answered.

His first act when the door closed behind him was resolutely to seize upon a vase of pink roses which adorned his desk and transfer it to the distant mantel. After that he stood for quite five minutes and glowered at the offending blossoms. Then he seated himself at the desk, arranged his work before him, dipped his pen in ink, and addressed the clock sternly:

"She's in such good spirits because he is coming this afternoon," he muttered.

For some unaccountable reason, he performed an excellent morning's work.

Tom Craigie rolled up the drive at four o'clock in a big gray touring-car, with a nerve-racking shriek of an electric horn. As Richard shook hands with him, he wondered at the difficulty he experienced in making his "Hello, Tom! Glad to see you!" sound sincere. They had been friends ever since their second year in preparatory school, and Richard had always been genuinely fond of Tom, even though he disapproved of the other's frivolity and lack of earnestness. But now he realized that he was dimly resenting Tom's advent; resenting, too, the fervor of the welcome accorded him by the others. It was as though a thin film of ice had coated the old friendliness. As Curran saw to Tom's kit-bag and the new-comer responded gaily to the ladies' questions, Richard found himself viewing his friend with a new interest, an interest at once critical and slightly hostile. Good-looking Tom certainly was. Not quite as tall as Richard, a little broader, a little "better-fed," to use a convenient phrase, he looked also less hard and well-conditioned. Clean-shaven, boyish, merry, with laughing gray eyes and a flexible mouth, Tom induced smiles without an effort. He wore a suit of gray flannel, a soft, pleated shirt of lavender, and a tie of a darker shade of the same color. In spite of a long and, doubtless, dusty journey, he looked as spick and span as a drum-major, and not a fleck of dirt marred the clear sunburned face.

"He stopped somewhere, probably in Stockton," mused Richard, "and cleaned up. He always has the ladies in mind."

The two men, followed by Curran with the kit-bag, went up to Tom's room. Tom tossed a dust-coat and a pair of goggles on to the bed and turned enthusiastically to his host as Curran closed the door behind him.

"Richard, you lucky dog, she's a stunner!" he exclaimed. "Good heavens, man, why did you never tell me you had a cousin like that? Think of the years I've been wasting, eh!"

"Not wasting, Tom," replied Richard. "Or, at least, you've not been quite idle."

"The things you allude to, Richard, are gone, forgotten; they never were! And I stick to wasted. Honest, old man, she's the nicest girl I ever met. And dance—good Lord! Well, how are you, any way? Looking a bit ragged, are n't you? By Jove, I'm glad to be here, old Sobersides!"

"Did you have a good run?"

"Fair. Had a flat tire near Springfield and lost twenty-five minutes. Made up for it, though, afterwards. That new State Road is a wonder. I did fifty right along between towns. Awful lot of towns, though. Ought to be a law against having 'em so thick."

"Mention it to Jim Stokes," Richard laughed. "Jim's always looking for bills to introduce."

"I believe I will. It would n't be half as funny as some of the freak things he's fathered. Throw me a clean shirt, will you? Any one will do; let's have the green and yellow; that's sort of classy—what? Want to take a ride after a while? It's a bully old day."

"Not for me, thanks. Perhaps the ladies would like to go. I've got some letters to write before dinner."

"Oh, to the deuce with your old letters, Richard! Let me tell you something, feller: while I'm here, no letters, no work, no—no nothing! Get me?"

"I can't promise all that, Tom," answered Richard, with a smile. "You go ahead and enjoy yourself, and I'll cut in when I can. I'm away behind on my work, and I'll have to beg off now and then."

"Eh?" Tom viewed his friend with a look of appraisal. "What's the trouble, old man?"

"None that I'm aware of, Tom."

"M'm; you look sort of—sort of grumpy. Look here, I have n't butted in, have I?"

"Of course not."

"Well, all right. If I have, you know, if I'm trespassing, why, tip me the wink, and I'll beat it. Now let's go down and start something."

Richard saw the others off in the car a half-hour later, and then roamed into the library, feeling strangely out of sorts. He selected a book from a shelf, examined it inside and out absent-mindedly, and jammed it back into place. In Heaven's name, he asked himself, why had he elected to remain at home? Why should n't he have joined the party? Of course, there were letters to write—there always were; but none demanded immediate attention. He suddenly realized that ever since yesterday evening he had been behaving like a sulky child. There was nothing decidedly wrong with him. Perhaps Aunt Letitia was right, and he did need a change. If he did n't feel more—er—rational tomorrow, he would run away for a week. Having reached that conclusion, he shut himself in the study and wrote two notes of small importance, subsequently perching them ostentatiously on top of the mail-box in the hall instead of in it, that the others might see that his excuse had been valid.

Betty appeared for dinner that evening in a new gown, a turquoise creation of velveteen and chiffon that was eminently becoming. Richard had never seen her look quite as she did to-night. She had swathed the mass of her red-brown hair about her small head in smooth swirls that added a new piquancy to the adorable face beneath, and, it seemed, a new sparkle to the violet eyes. Her voice too, her laugh that was like the throaty gurgle of a silver stream over golden pebbles, held, to Richard's ears at least, a little note of triumph that was strange to him. Tom Craigie paid his court openly, honestly, assiduously. The repast went merrily. Richard, dimly conscious of a novel excitement within him, an excitement not fairly attributable to the one glass of wine he consumed, forgot to be sulky or pedantic. Tom had a budget of new stories which he told well and without dragging them in, Aunt Letitia, looking absurdly young, laughed and bantered frivolously, and Betty—well, Betty was more Betty than ever!

After coffee they played rum until Aunt Letitia had lost her fortune of red, white, and blue chips. Then Betty went to the piano, and Tom, never more than a yard away, hung over her. Richard, recalling that Tom had been on the Glee Club in college, demanded a song, and Betty pulled over the music until she found something they could agree on. After that Tom was the star until, satiated, Betty induced Aunt Letitia to play dance music. Then the rugs were kicked helter-skelter aside, and Tom and Betty, and subsequently Richard and Betty, waltzed and two-stepped and one-stepped until, flushed and breathless, they were forced to seek the coolness of the porch.

The next day, Richard virtuously refusing to be beguiled from duty, the others went off in the forenoon in the car, "to see the world and grab a bite of luncheon at Lenox," as Tom put it. Richard had difficulty in getting settled down to work, but when the morning was half gone



made a good start, and really accomplished a satisfactory stint by the time he was summoned to his solitary repast. The travellers came back, dusty, fagged, and happy, just in time to dress for dinner. Richard, from the conscious rectitude of the stay-at-home who has the knowledge of duty performed to support him, viewed them tolerantly as they descended from the car, and expressed the hope that they had enjoyed themselves.

"Oh, we had a perfectly dandy time!" declared Betty. "But I do wish you had gone along, Richard."

"Really?" he asked, a note of eagerness mingling with his assumed carelessness.

"Yes, I hate to sit in the back. And if you had been with us, I could have sat with Mr. Craigie in front."

"I see. I'm sorry I did n't think of that," he replied dryly. "Of course, you had gone along, Aunt Letitia out if you had thought of it——"

Betty reached up and pulled Richard's head down until she could whisper. Then, "Do you know, I believe Mr. Craigie did think of that?" she confided. "But he did n't do it. Was n't that considerate of him?"

"And of Aunt Letitia," he laughed. "If you're going to dress for dinner," he continued as the others entered, "you'd better start along."

"We're not," said Betty. "Nobody's going to. Aunt Letitia said we need n't. And after dinner we're going over to Great Barrington to the circus."

"To the circus! What—what for?"

"To see the elephants and the camels and the clowns, and to eat peanuts," responded Betty promptly. "We're all going." She added this with decision, noting Richard's lack of enthusiasm.

"Well," answered Richard meanly, "I'll go if I don't have to sit on the back seat. I can't stand that. It makes me—er—car-sick."

"Why—ah—I don't believe you'd mind the back of my car," began Tom rather blankly. But Betty interrupted.

"He's only teasing, Tom. He *hates* front seats—don't you, Richard?"

And Betty looked so imploring that, in spite of the fact that he disapproved of the sudden intimacy exemplified by the use of Tom's first name by Betty, he yielded and declared that while sitting in the tonneau made him car-sick, sitting in front made him dizzy, and he preferred the former sensation to the latter.

"Besides," said Betty approvingly, "you can go to sleep coming home if you want. Now I'm going to get the dust off. We'll have to have dinner early, won't we, Aunt Letitia? I don't want to miss a bit of it!"

There was no doubt that Betty enjoyed the entertainment. There was no doubt that Tom enjoyed being with Betty. As for Aunt Letitia and Richard, the former, after unsuccessfully trying to back out of the expedition at the last moment, bore it philosophically, while the latter also bore up as bravely as possible. They stopped afterwards for supper at a hotel, and went back to The Hermitage under the glare of a decrepit moon and through the fragrant sweetness of the summer night. On the front seat Betty and Tom chattered gaily. In the tonneau Aunt Letitia napped discreetly, and Richard stared moodily at the moon.

## CHAPTER XVI.

TOM remained until the following Wednesday. Then he reluctantly tore himself away and disappeared in a cloud of dust and to a farewell symphony on the horn. That afternoon's mail brought Betty two letters, one from her father and one from Nancy Bradford. Mr. Lee wrote that he hoped Betty was n't making a nuisance of herself where she was, that he would have something to say to her when he returned (Betty merely laughed at that and murmured, "Dear old Dadums!"), that her trunks were on the way, Higgins was visiting relatives, the office would honor her demands for money up to a thousand dollars, her mother was well, he had had a touch of rheumatism, they were crossing to Paris the last of the week, and that the usual address there would reach them.

The other letter was less concise and rather more italicised. The gist of it was that Betty was an old darling *duck*, and that she was to come to Magnolia right away—immediately—*at once*—and stay just as *long* as she *could*.

"So you see," said Betty, folding the epistle up and tucking it with the first one into her belt, "your troubles are about over, Cousin Richard. I think I shall go Friday."

"Suppose," he said between jest and earnest, "we don't want you to go, Betty?"

"I'd like that," she approved smilingly, "but, of course, I'd have to just the same."

"I don't see why," he objected.

"Because I don't want to wear out my welcome, my dear Richard. And also because—well, what would Mama say if she heard I'd spent weeks and weeks as your guest?"

"Say? Why should she say anything—except that you were a wise girl? Besides, although I have no desire to hurt your feelings, Miss Elizabeth Carolyn Lee, I might point out that this sudden regard for your excellent parents' wishes is—er—unprecedented."

"Oh, Richard, what words!" she sighed. "But you mean about my

running away from the boat? Well, that, you see, had to be; but there is n't any has-to-be about this, is there? There's no reason why I should stay here and bother you two nice people any longer, when Nancy Bradford is awaiting me with outstretched arms." She was silent a moment, thoughtfully regarding the tips of her white shoes. Then, "I—I don't think I want to go, either," she murmured wistfully.

"Then, why go?" he asked, with an assumed cheerfulness.

"You know. I've told you. But I've had such a good time, Richard. It's all been as nice and jolly as—as anything could be."

"I'm afraid it's been dull—some of it," he amended, recalling the last five days.

"It's been lovely." She nodded her head at the nearest faun. "Ask him. He knows. I've told him so often. I've told him lots of things, Richard. Once"—she paused and cast a side glance up at him, and laughed under her breath—"once I whispered a secret in his ear, and he promised never to tell it to a soul."

"He will tell me," said Richard. "He tells me all his secrets."

Betty's eyes narrowed, and the bubbling laugh rang out. She swung her feet gaily. "Not this one, Richard! If—if he did tell you, you'd be—oh, but you'd be surprised! Shocked, too, I suppose. And—I wonder—" The laughter died away, and an oddly speculative expression crept into her face. "I wonder—if you'd—care!"

"Yes, I know I should."

She studied his face musingly. "Oh, well," she said finally, with half a sigh, "he will never blab."

"I'm never to know this secret, then?" he asked.

"Never—I think. Perhaps, though. Who knows? Oh, what nonsense I'm talking! Richard, when you said you did n't want me to go, did you mean it?"

"Thoroughly," he answered.

"Really, truly? Black-and-bluely?" She reached over and laid her fingers with a momentary pressure on the hand, clasping an empty pipe, that rested on the edge of the seat. "I'm glad," she said softly. "It—it was a big risk, my coming here as I did, was n't it? You might n't have liked me, you see." She considered that a moment, then shrugged her slim shoulders and smiled whimsically. "Poor little Lady Laughter," she said.

"Is she to be pitied?" asked Richard, with a smile which, to his surprise, felt twisted.

"A little, I guess," she replied sadly. "You see—sometimes she—does n't want to—laugh."

"And must she?"

"Yes, because, you see, if she—cried, folks would n't believe her, would they?"

As though to atone for her momentary dejection in the afternoon, Betty was very Betty in the evening. She went to the piano while Aunt Letitia and Richard were still sipping their coffee, and banged out all the rag-time she could remember, sometimes singing, sometimes whistling the song. (Betty had difficulty with her whistling, and the result was more amusing than musical.) Richard asked her to sing "When I Was One-and-Twenty," but Betty shook her head emphatically and plunged into more syncopation. Finally, with a last grand crash, she let her hands fall into her lap and swung herself slowly around on the bench.

"I'm going to bed," she announced firmly.

"To bed!" exclaimed Aunt Letitia in alarm. "Are you ill, dear?"

"I have a headache," replied Betty. "Good-night, Aunt Letitia. Good-night—*Dick!*"

Her laugh came back to them from the hall, but somehow it sounded not quite convincing. Richard, beginning to understand his trouble, smothered a sigh.

"She misses him," he told himself.

## CHAPTER XVII.

BUT the next morning it was the old Betty again, Betty of smiles and of laughter. After breakfast, she took Richard's paper away from him and dragged him out of doors and across the damp lawn, "to smell the morning." Richard, who had passed none too restful a night, was inclined to be silent. His companion, her cheeks like pale roses and her violet eyes aglint with laughter and sunlight, had no such inclination.

"Richard, you're not going to work to-day—my last day with you!"

"I'm afraid I must," he smiled.

"I shan't let you. Think of all the perfectly good days you'll have to write your stupid old book after I'm gone. Let's go for a nice long walk. What is beyond that hill there, Richard?"

"Lee and Lenox and some other places, Betty."

"Oh, is that all?" she asked disappointedly. "Let's make believe we don't know what's beyond, Richard."

"Very well; we'll consider it *terra incognita*."

"Yes, and we'll go and explore." She went through the gate and held it invitingly open. Richard smiled and shook his head.

"If we explored, we could n't make-believe any longer, Betty. Where ignorance is bliss—"

"'T is folly to be wise! So let's not be—to-day. *Please* come!"

But Richard, wanting to go, found pleasure in perversely refusing, and in the end they walked back across the lawn to the house, Betty

declaring that if he tried to work she would stand outside his window and howl!

In the hall: "If you'll come into the drawing-room, I'll play for you, Richard. I'll even try to sing! You know you think I have a perfectly delicious voice. I'll play 'When I Was One-and-Twenty,' Richard."

In the library: "I think it would be awfully nice if you'd find an interesting book and read to me, Richard. I'd be just as quiet and good!"

At the study door: "May I come in a moment, please? I—I want to have another look at it, Richard. When I am far away, I'd like to be able to—to picture you at your desk, you know." Betty's voice sank pathetically, but the violet eyes danced with mischief. Richard tried to laugh as he slowly closed the door against her importunities, but the laugh had a break in it.

"Go away, little girl," he said.

"Richard."

"Well?"

"*Please* be nice to me *to-day!*"

A small foot in a white buckskin shoe, and a slender ankle in a white silken stocking, intercepted the closing door.

"I shall be remarkably nice this afternoon, Betty. Please take your foot away."

"Shan't, Richard."

"Then, it will get hurt," he said shortly.

"I'd rather have my foot hurt than my—my heart," replied Betty dolefully.

"Betty!"

"What?" she murmured from behind the narrow interstice.

"Please take your foot away."

"Now you're cross with me," she grieved. The foot disappeared slowly. The door closed, and the key turned in the lock.

"Richard."

After a moment, "Well?" he asked.

"I'm going out in the garden and eat worms!"

Frowning, Richard crossed to his desk. Four white roses that shaded at the base of the opening petals to a pale sulphur yellow nodded from a slender vase on the desk. They occasioned no surprise, for flowers of some sort he found there every morning. And every morning he conveyed them resolutely across to the mantel. But now, his hand closing on the slender stem of the vase, he hesitated. At last, compromising, he set the vase at a corner of the desk. Then, in the act of filling his pipe, he heard soft footsteps on the porch. He swung around. Betty was already pushing open the screen door. He darted across.

"Betty!" he warned.

The door was wide, and she was on the threshold. There was a wicked sparkle in her eyes, and a vivid disk of color in each smooth cheek. Richard sprang to the middle of the doorway and held his arms across it, facing her.

"You're behaving like a child," he muttered impatiently.

"Richard, I want to come in just a minute, please. I want to ask you something."

"You can ask it where you are," he answered grimly.

"I can't, Richard; it—it's something particular." Her eyes were dark and big and held a challenge. "Please be nice to me!"

"Betty, I've told you——" he began.

"I know, but just think, Richard, this is my last day here——"

"Betty, you shan't come in!"

She raised her hands and laid them on the lapels of his coat, twisting the cloth between her fingers. His own hands closed over them to drag them away. Their eyes clashed, hers wide, dark, and defiant, his smouldering with anger. His hands pulled at hers, crushing them roughly.

"You're hurting me," she whispered, her eyes still on his.

"Then, go," he said hoarsely.

"No!"

There was an age-long silence. Into it, as though from another world, came the song of a thrush. Something in his eyes warned her then, and he heard her little startled gasp as she dropped her gaze and released her grasp on his coat. His hands fell away with hers, still clasping them tightly, and then——

How it happened he never knew, but his arms went around her, and he saw the wonder in her eyes as he bent his head and crushed his lips against her mouth.

Then he was standing away from her, dismayed, dizzy, bewildered.

"I told you—to go!" he muttered.

She stood where he had left her, paper-white, her wide eyes filled with wonder. Then a swift flood of color encrimsoned her face, a queer little crooked smile played for an instant about her mouth, and she turned away and with lowered head passed slowly across the porch and down the path and so around the house.

Standing there, he listened to her footsteps die away. For minutes after, he remained without movement. At last he crossed to the desk, dropped into the chair, and took up his pen mechanically. An hour later he still sat there, the pen, dry and forgotten, still between his fingers, an empty pipe in his mouth, and his gaze fixed unseeingly on the white roses. At last he understood.

THEY did not meet again until dinner. Betty, said Aunt Letitia, had a headache. Perhaps, had his aunt been less wise, she might have believed Richard to be afflicted with a similar malady, for he dallied with his luncheon like a man in a dream, and spoke only when she addressed him. He disappeared in the afternoon, dragging a stick in one hand, and appeared again only when the shadows were lying long and deep across the lawn.

He timed himself so well that when he descended the stairs the dinner chimes were still echoing in the hall. If he expected embarrassment on Betty's part, or signs of resentment or displeasure, he was speedily undeceived. Nor was there aught about her to indicate suffering. She had arrayed herself in a gown of Liberty satin, a thing of clinging white folds that sparkled with silver, and a fillet of silver bound her hair. Why the fact that she looked lovely and delectable should have displeased Richard, he could not have explained, I think, but the fact was there. And he was further chagrined by her untroubled countenance and light-hearted ease.

"I suppose," he reflected bitterly, as he took his place at table, "it meant nothing to her; merely an act of brutality on my part, that she has decided to forgive—and forget!" But even as he told himself that, a memory of the look in her face as he had released her obtruded and shook his conclusion. Once in the middle of dinner he glanced across and found an echo of that same expression levelled upon him, but her eyes dropped swiftly before his, and he found his fork wandering erratically about his plate.

They had coffee in the drawing-room. Betty finished her saccharine concoction quickly. For some minutes she moved restlessly about the room, finally seating herself at the piano. "Them as don't want to listen is requested to move out," she announced.

"I don't think any one will leave, my dear," said Aunt Letitia smilingly. "I shall miss your playing so much when you're gone."

"Only my playing, Aunt Letitia?" asked Betty, searching among the notes.

"You much more, Betty," was the response. "I'm hoping, dear, that when you've worn yourself out with social gaieties at the shore, you'll come back to us for a rest."

"Would you really like me to?" asked Betty, playing softly.

"Very much indeed."

"Both of you, Aunt Letitia?"

"Why, of course, my dear."

"I'm not hearing much from the other," said Betty, after a moment.

"The other heartily endorses the—er—invitation," said Richard, very politely. Without seeing it, he knew that the sheet of music on the rack had had a face made at it.

"I shall sing you something very sweet and sad, and you're both expected to weep," said Betty lightly. "All ready? Got your hanky handy, Aunt Letitia?" And Betty began to sing slowly and softly.

Into my heart an air that kills  
From yon far country blows:  
What are those blue remembered hills,  
What spires, what farms, are those?

That is the land of lost content;  
I see it shining plain;  
The happy highways where I went  
And cannot come again,  
And cannot come again.

The notes died away, and Betty's hands rested in her lap. There was a long moment of silence in the softly-lighted room. Then,

"It is very sweet," said Aunt Letitia troubledly. "But——"

"But sad? Very well, then. Perhaps you'll like this better. I don't know all the words, but that won't matter."

"Divvy, me mon, come home," says she.  
"Ye ken the fair be owër.  
The cow an' bairns be waitin' we,  
An' hap 'tis like to shower."  
"Molly, me lass," says I, "me dear,  
What tho' the fair be owër?  
Me head be clear, I've a shillin' here,  
And I'll ha' a wee mug moër!"

A second verse followed the first, and a third verse the second, Betty piping merrily to the rollicking tune. Richard, frowning, arose and sought the dining-room porch. Behind him the absurd song went on to its triumphant ending:

"Me legs be bent an' me coin's all spent,  
Thanks be, I can gi' owër!"

Steps crossed the room behind him. The porch was unlighted, and from the doorway she searched the shadows, the light behind her throwing her slender, rounded form into uncertain relief.

"Richard?" she said doubtfully.

"Yes?"

She went to him across the rush matting. "I did n't mean—I'm sorry I was nasty," she said gently. For a moment there was no reply. Then,



"You were not," he said. "But—while apologies are in order, I wish to—to beg your pardon for—what happened this morning. It was a horrid thing to do. I don't know what got into me. I don't know why I did it. I—I'm sorry."

"You don't know why you did it?" asked Betty in tones that sounded perplexed.

"Well, I was angry; I lost my temper; I——"

"But"—Betty's perplexity seemed to have deepened—"it seems such a funny thing to do, Richard, does n't it? To—to kiss a person because you are angry with them."

"Possibly; I suppose so," he granted. "At all events, I've felt like a cur ever since."

"I don't think you ought to blame yourself—much," said she thoughtfully. "I guess it was my fault, Richard. I made you—angry. And, anyhow, it is n't as bad as it would be if—if we were n't cousins."

"Cousins!" he said impatiently. "We're not cousins, and you know it!"

"Then, that explains it," mused Betty.

"Explains what?" he asked, after a moment's silence.

"Explains why it did n't seem—like—like being cousins," she replied reflectively. "Somehow, Richard, it did n't."

"It was n't meant to!" he exclaimed, turning to her for the first time. "I don't feel like a cousin to you! I feel like—like——"

"A 'second'?" she asked helpfully.

He turned away again. There was a long silence. Finally,

"You have n't told me what you feel like," she reminded him.

"Like the devil!" he replied exasperatedly. Then, quickly, "I beg your pardon," he said stiffly. But Betty was laughing softly.

"Oh, Richard, you're funny," she gasped.

"I'm glad that I amuse you."

"Now, please don't be angry again! You know what—happens—when you're angry, Richard!"

"What occurred is evidently only a joke to you," he said, "and I see that I might as well have spared myself the trouble of an apology."

"A joke?" said Betty softly. She shook her head in the darkness. "No, it was n't a joke, Richard. Would it make you any more—more contented if I were to be angry and not speak to you?"

"I'd deserve it," he muttered unhappily. "I—I forgot myself."

"I really—believe—you did!" exclaimed Betty incredulously. "And to think that I did it! That it was I who—who made you so angry that you forgot *yourself*! Why, you don't know how proud I feel, Richard!"

He turned abruptly and strode into the house. When Betty, repentant, overtook him, he was bidding Aunt Letitia good-night. Then, seeing her there, he bowed stiffly.

"No, I won't be said good-night to like that," she declared. "Aunt Letitia, don't let him go off to bed angry with me."

"I'm sure he won't," replied Aunt Letitia gently. But Richard, grim of mouth, had passed into the hall. He was on the landing at the turn of the broad flight when Betty called up to him.

"Richard, Aunt Letitia says you're not to go to bed angry with me."

Richard's steps ceased, and after an instant,

"I am not angry with you, Betty," he answered. "Good-night."

"We-ell, that's better, but it is n't very—very *friendly*, Richard. Could you say 'Good-night, Betty dear'?"

"Good-night, Betty dear," he responded listlessly.

She stamped her foot on the lower stair. "I won't be 'deared' in such a tone, Richard! And I think the least you might do is come back here and shake hands with me. You—you won't have me to say good-night to to-morrow night, you know."

Slowly Richard retraced his steps, his set mouth and tired frown showing that he was about at the end of his endurance. He held out his hand.

"Good-night, Cousin Betty," he said firmly. "I'm sorry you are leaving us. You had better have a good long sleep to-night. Your journey will be tiring to-morrow."

"Good-night, Richard," she answered gravely, as they clasped hands for an instant. "I'm glad you don't want me to go. And I'm sorry I've been mean."

"Good-night," he said again. She watched him go back up the stairs, a little pucker of perplexity above her small nose. Then, just as he reached the top of the flight, "Richard," she called softly.

"Yes, Betty?"

"You said you were sorry for—for something, did n't you?"

"Yes."

"*Very* sorry?"

"Very sorry, Betty."

"And you want me to forgive you, Richard?"

"Yes."

"Then, I shan't!" she whispered piercingly. "Do you hear? I *shan't!*"

"I'm sorry," came a tired voice from above. Footsteps sounded along the hall, and a door closed quietly. Betty stood there a moment at the foot of the stairway, twisting a ring slowly about her finger and staring frowningly at the newel. Then she went slowly back to the drawing-room and seated herself on the piano-bench, facing Aunt Letitia. The latter looked up once from her work, smiled, and bent her head again.

"Has he gone up?" she asked.

"Yes."

"I hope," smiled Aunt Letitia, "you made up your quarrel."

"I suppose so," sighed Betty. After a moment she added: "Only—only, I don't think it's very nice of him to be so darned sorry!"

#### CHAPTER XIX.

BETTY took her departure in the morning. Breakfast was a hurried meal, interrupted by suddenly remembered omissions and consequent scurries upstairs. At the last moment Betty had made the disconcerting discovery that it was a physical impossibility to put some five hundred dollars' worth of attire into a hand-bag, and Curran had been sent to the attic for a trunk, and Sophie summoned to pack it.

Aunt Letitia sat on the back seat with Betty on the way to Stockton, while Richard drove. Curran followed with the trunk in the democrat wagon. The train for once was prompt, and there was only time to check the baggage before it rumbled up to the platform. Then Betty and Aunt Letitia hugged and kissed, both a little tearful, and Richard hurried Betty up the steps of the parlor car. From the platform, she clung to his hand a moment.

"Good-by, Richard. I've had such a good time. And I'm going to write to you, and you've just got to answer it. Will you?"

"Of course, Betty. Good-by."

The train moved, and with a last little squeeze Betty released his hand and blew a kiss to Aunt Letitia. Then her eyes met Richard's and held them until the vestibule curtain came between.

There was a letter two days later, to Aunt Letitia. She read it aloud at the luncheon table. Betty wrote that she had made her journey safely. Mr. Craigie had met her in Boston, taken her to luncheon, and put her on her train later. Magnolia seemed a very jolly place, and the Bradfords were awfully nice to her, but she was homesick for The Hermitage. She thanked them for being so kind to her and ended up with:

P. S. Ask Richard if he is still sorry.

"What does she mean by that?" asked Aunt Letitia.

"Just some of her nonsense," replied Richard.

A few days later there came a letter to Richard. There was not a great deal of it, even though it covered four pages, for Betty's writing was tall and angular, and she often made four words fill a line. She was having a splendid time, she said, and wished Richard could come and enjoy the sailing and bathing. She told of a dance the Bradfords had given in her honor. "And," she wrote, "because I have been mean so often to you, and you were n't there, Richard, I put your name down

for a dance and would n't give it to any one, but just sat it out with Tom Craigie." Richard smiled glumly there. She hoped he would finish his work soon and come to Magnolia for a nice long rest. And she concluded with:

Please write to me immediately.

With cousinly affection,

BETTY.

Richard tried to answer her letter lightly, but succeeded only in producing a very stiff and formal epistle. After he had mailed it, he wished it back. There were no more letters to him, although Aunt Letitia received a short note occasionally.

Meanwhile, July came in with a spell of torrid weather that parched up the lawns and fields, and then gave way to a week of rain. Richard worked on doggedly through the hottest weather and the dreariest, and when August was a week old wrote the last word on his manuscript. A day or two later he took it to New York, spent twenty-four hours there in consultation with his publishers, and then went out to the Jersey hills and stayed a fortnight with some distant relatives on his father's side, playing a good deal of mediocre golf, sleeping eight solid hours every night, and eating like a wood-chopper.

He had feared that with the completion of his work the dull ache and empty longing which had taken possession of him at Betty's departure would become more difficult to bear. But physical exhaustion proved an effective narcotic, and the ache, while still there, was considerably deadened during that fortnight. He returned to Boston at twilight one Sunday toward the last of the month, and, leaving the train at Back Bay, walked the five blocks to his club through a golden afterglow that mellowed and softened the buildings and spires until the scene was like a Turner painting. The club dining-room was almost empty. Richard ordered dinner, and then, after five minutes of indecision, went to the telephone and got the apartment hotel in which Tom Craigie roomed. Mr. Craigie, he was informed, was out of town.

"When is he expected back?" Richard asked.

There was evidently a moment's conference at the other end of the line, and then: "I can't say exactly, sir. Probably about the middle of September. He's in Europe, sir."

"In Europe! Are you certain?"

"Yes, sir. He sailed about two weeks ago. If you'll call up his office, I think you can get his address."

Richard emerged from the booth and returned to his lukewarm soup, wondering. He had firmly expected to hear, after the return of Betty's parents from abroad, of her engagement to Tom. He had even suspected a tacit engagement already. But Tom's sudden departure

to Europe scarcely fitted with his theory. Unless—unless Betty, relenting, had elected to join her parents on the other side, and Tom had followed her over. But that seemed hardly plausible. He might, he told himself, call up the Bradfords' house at Magnolia on the telephone and soon find out whether Betty had left, but, after all, it could concern him but little. Even if he had mistaken her feeling for Tom, and that seemed far from possible, the mere fact of Tom's retreat made his own case no better. And having spent two months trying to accustom himself, though not very successfully, to the prospect of getting along without Betty, it would not be wise to listen to her voice again, even from thirty miles away!

Business affairs kept him in town until afternoon of the next day, and he reached Stockton long after dark.

## CHAPTER XX.

HE had not announced the time of his return, and consequently Curran was not on hand to meet him. A carriage from the livery stable conveyed him and his luggage to The Hermitage through a star-bright night that already held a hint of fall. Richard felt a dread of home-coming, and apprehension lest a return to the scenes in which Betty had moved might bring it all back again at its worst. His thoughts were very full of her as the horse jogged along the country road, and there was a tight ache at his heart when the carriage turned in at the gate and creaked over the gravel. It was not until they had stopped and he had stepped to the ground, his golf-bag rattling against his legs, that the sound of music came to him through the open windows. It was not like Aunt Letitia to stay up so late when he was away from home. Besides, the air! He stood still and listened, his heart suddenly beating with sledge-hammer blows.

“Which way shall I take the trunk?” asked the driver.

“Keep still!” whispered Richard sharply. The driver, balancing the steamer trunk on his shoulder, froze to amazed attention. From the house floated softly out the notes of the piano and a girl's voice singing.

When I was one-and-twenty  
 I heard a wise man say,  
 “Give crowns and pounds and guineas  
 But not your heart away:  
 Give pearls away and rubies  
 But keep your fancy free.”  
 But I was one-and-twenty—  
 No use to talk to me.

“What's wrong, sir?” whispered the driver hoarsely.

Richard made no answer. The voice took up the song again, and he stood silent through the second verse.

The song died away softly. Richard came to his senses with a start. "Take the trunk around to the back," he said in a queer voice. Then, golf-bag in hand, he walked along the path, swung open the screen-door, and entered the hall.

He had not tried to be quiet. His thoughts were in too great a tumult to formulate any plan. He only wanted to see with his eyes and be certain. But he reached the hall without the occupants of the drawing-room suspecting his presence. From where he paused he could see them both: Aunt Letitia by the small table with the low light, bending over her embroidery; Betty on the bench before the piano, her head held a little forward, as though listening, her fingers motionless on the tips of the keys. He stood there for a moment, his heart beating so loudly that it seemed they must hear it beyond the doorway. Then Betty's head turned slowly in his direction, and he saw her hands fly from the keys to her breast as their eyes met. She made no sound, nor did Richard consciously move, but Aunt Letitia seemed to sense something happening and glanced at Betty. Then she was on her feet, coming to meet him.

"Why, Richard, we had no idea you were coming to-night! We were wishing at dinner that you might come, dear, but your letter spoke of Tuesday. Have you had anything to eat?"

"I came through New York without stopping, Aunt. Yes, I've had my dinner." He kissed her and his gaze went past to the drawing-room. Betty was on her feet, smiling. She met him at the doorway with two small hands outstretched to his.

"Here's your bad penny, Richard," she said, "come home to roost. No, no, it's chickens I'm thinking of! Anyhow, here I am again. Please say quickly that you're glad to see me."

"I am," he answered. He tried to match the lightness of her tone, but failed dismally. "Awfully glad, Betty." Then he found that he was still holding her hands, and released them, and followed her into the drawing-room as though in a dream, his coat still on, his golf-bag rattling from one hand and his hat in the other. Aunt Letitia came to the rescue and bore away hat, coat, and bag, and Richard found himself seated in a chair, observing Betty bewilderedly.

"How—how long have you been here?" he asked.

"Since Saturday. I was going to-day, but Aunt Letitia wanted me to wait and see you——" She paused and laughed at herself. "That's a bit of a fib, Richard. Of course she wanted me to stay, but not as much as I wanted to. You see, it did seem a shame to come all this way and not even have a glimpse of you, did n't it?"

"But—er—why——"

"Did I come? Do you think that's a polite question, Mr. Dick? Well, things sort of happened at once. The Bradfords went to the mountains Saturday, and Papa wrote that he and Mama would be back in New York Wednesday. So, as I was homeless, I came here. I did n't even wire; I just came—like I did the other time, you know. But I did n't find any fierce ogre of a man to ask what I meant by trespassing in his garden."

"I did n't," denied Richard, with a smile.

"Not in words, exactly. Well, so that's why I'm here, Richard. And Aunt Letitia was just terribly glad to see me, if you are n't——"

"Betty!"

"And I was terribly glad to see her. And—and I'm a little bit glad to see the ogre again."

"And the ogre," answered Richard unsteadily, "is so glad to see you that—he can't quite believe his senses."

Her eyes dropped away from his, and a little pause followed, during which Aunt Letitia came rustling back from the dining-room and announced that there would be a party in a few minutes. Betty told of the summer's happenings. She mentioned Tom's name again and again, with no trace of hesitation or self-consciousness.

"Mr. Craigie has gone abroad, Richard," said Aunt Letitia.

"Yes, I tried to find him, and they told me that. I was—er—surprised."

"He went rather unexpectedly, I think," said Betty, elaborately careless. "Something about business, he said."

Presently they went into the dining-room, where Maggie had spread cold meats and a salad, and where Richard, protesting that he was not hungry, ate of everything in a sort of daze, and made no effort to keep his eyes from Betty, who was in high spirits. Aunt Letitia was yawning frankly when they left the table. Betty said good-night at the foot of the stairs. Richard watched her until the turn of the flight hid her from view; then, a sudden spirit of daring possessing him, he called up to her.

"Yes?" asked Betty from the hall above.

"I've changed my mind," he said.

"About what, pray?"

"About—about being sorry. I'm not, Betty. I'm *glad!*"

There was no sound from above for a moment. Then a subdued ripple of laughter floated down to him. That was all, that and the soft closing of a door.

## CHAPTER XXI.

"I *wish* you were not going away again so soon," he rebelled.

They were back on the marble seat at the far end of the garden the

next morning. A few monthly roses still showed blooms, but most of them had had their day. Still, there were plenty of blossoms—dahlias, phlox, tritomas, scarlet sage, hydrangeas, and a score of other late-summer flowers. And the bees still buzzed and boomed above the beds, and the fragrance had not lessened, only changed. The fauns smirked on their white columns, and a little breeze swayed the tall shrubs behind them.

“I’d like to stay,” she replied, “but of course I should be at the dock to-morrow. As it is, my dear sir, I’m suffering the terrors and discomforts of a night in a sleepless-car for the sake of your society.”

“Which I appreciate,” he answered rather ceremoniously.

“With wild enthusiasm,” she laughed. “Richard, do you remember that first day?” she asked, after a pause.

His face cleared, and he smiled reminiscently.

“I’m not likely to forget it,” he replied. “I’m afraid your welcome was not—er—very cordial, Betty.”

“And do you remember how you wanted to send me away to placate Mrs. Grundy, Richard?”

“I still maintain that I was right,” he answered, smiling.

“Oh, I acknowledge that. Only—well, you were n’t flattering. If you had said, ‘I hate to have you go, but I see no other way,’ I’d have trotted off like a trained puppy. But you did n’t; you looked worried and bored and——”

“Please don’t go on,” he begged. “I acknowledge it all.”

“You’d better. But I forgave you long ago, so that’s all right, is n’t it? There’s one thing, though, I have a good mind not to forgive you for, Richard, and that is that nasty, horrid, *miserable* letter.”

“Was it so bad?” he asked guiltily.

“It was frightful! Why did you do it?”

“I—perhaps I could n’t help myself, Betty. It was horrid, and I realized it afterwards. And I did n’t blame you for not replying to it.”

“I did, though, twice. But I did n’t send them. The first was too mean, and the other was too nice—nicer than you deserved. But never mind all that now. Here I am, and there you are, and we’re back in this dear, wonderful garden again, and—Richard, did he ever tell you?” She nodded at one of the fauns.

“No, he never did, Betty.”

“Of course he did n’t. He’s a perfect gentleman of a faun. He promised faithfully that he would n’t.”

“Well, it was n’t so much that, I fancy,” said Richard carelessly. “You see, I never asked him. It seemed underhand, Betty. I preferred to rely on you to tell me. I knew you would—some time.”

“Really?” she laughed. “Do you want to know? We-ell, perhaps some day I’ll tell you.”



"Some day? But you're going in a few hours. There'll never be a better time, Betty."

She was silent a moment, studying a pair of slender brown shoes. Finally, "There's one thing, though, I meant to tell you when I came, Richard."

"And what is that?" he asked.

She was silent for another little space. Then, "It—it is something that may surprise you."

"I like surprises—if they're pleasant."

She shot a queer little look of amusement at him, turned her gaze back to her feet, and said doubtfully, "Well, I don't know whether you'll call this pleasant or not, Richard. But—but I'm going to be married."

After a long, long time he said quietly, "I suppose I ought to be very glad, Betty, for your sake."

She nodded without looking toward him. There seemed a deeper flush in her smooth cheeks.

"I suppose I know the fortunate man," he went on presently, trying to speak steadily.

She nodded again.

"It's Tom, of course?"

"No."

"Oh!" he said in surprise. "But I thought——"

"I—I don't believe I can quite tell you—just now—who he is," said Betty hurriedly. "I—I thought I could, but—but I guess I can't."

"As you like," he responded gravely. He sat silent for a while, gazing rather miserably across the sunlit garden, resentfully aware that the old ache was back, much worse than before. "Shall we—go in now?" he asked, rousing himself presently.

"But—don't you want to know about him?" she faltered in dismay.

"Whatever you care to tell me," he replied.

"Well, maybe——" She paused and looked at him anxiously. "Oh, can't you guess, Richard?" she exclaimed breathlessly.

"I? No." He shook his head. "If it is n't Tom——"

"Is—is Tom the only man you know who—who would care to marry me?" she asked, eying her feet again.

"Yes, I think so," he responded slowly, trying to recall any other of her male acquaintances.

"Oh!" It sounded hurt. "Then—then perhaps I'm not—going to be married, after all, Richard."

"I'm afraid I don't—er—understand you," he said puzzledly, wondering if his misery was making him dense. "Is it some one I know?"

"Oh, yes, you know him," answered Betty, with a tiny laugh. "He—he's been here."

"Been here! And it's not Tom, you say? When was he here?"

She swung her feet exasperatedly. "I shan't tell you any more," she cried. "I—I've told you too much already. Come, please, I'm going in."

"I think you've told me too little, Betty," he said in a low voice, "or else——" He stopped. She turned her head and shot a glance at him. There was a strange look in his face, a look of mingled wonder and incredulity. Betty turned her eyes swiftly away again, while the color crept into her face as it had that day in the study, flooding over neck and cheeks and brow. Neither spoke, and the boom of the bees and the chirping of birds sounded, as then, as from another world.

"I—I'm afraid to say what I'm going to, Betty," Richard announced, after an age of silence. His voice was low and unsteady. "I'm simply frightened to death. Because—if I am wrong, I'm so terribly wrong that you'll want to laugh at me, and I shan't blame you. But you asked if—if there was no one else who—who cared for you, Betty, who wanted to marry you. You did, did n't you?"

Betty nodded, her face turned away from him, her small hands gripping the edge of the seat so that the knuckles showed almost as white as the marble.

"And you said he had been here." Richard stopped, trying for courage to go on. "There's only one other I know of, Betty, and he——" His voice trailed away. "It's absurd," he muttered.

After a moment, without movement, "Lots—of things—are absurd," murmured Betty.

"Then—this man you are going to marry, Betty," asked Richard desperately, "does he—know it—yet?"

It was an absurd question on the face of it, a question which Betty might well have resented. But she did n't. She only laughed a ghost of a little laugh, a half-frightened, rather sobby little laugh, as she answered in what was scarcely more than a whisper:

"Not yet, but—he's—beginning—to find it out!"

"Betty!" His voice was hoarse and stern. "*Who is he?*"

For an instant she made neither movement nor answer. Then she swung toward him with crimson face.

"Oh, you stupid!" she cried indignantly. "It's you, you, *you!* And you had to make me tell you, and I'll never be able to look at you again, and you're so horribly stupid that I won't now, and——"

But the rest was smothered against his shoulder, for, once sure of his ground, Richard was no laggard.

Some minutes later Betty raised her head a little.

"You—you have n't said yet whether you want to, Richard!" she whispered.

His answer, barely audible, seemed nevertheless satisfactory, for the head went down again. But a moment later, as though new doubts had assailed her,

"If you don't—really, you know, Richard—it is n't too late," she said, "because no one knows about—about it, except just we three."

"We three?" he asked bewilderedly.

The brown head nodded as well as its confined position would allow. "Yes, you—and I—and the faun," whispered Betty.

"So that was the secret?" he marvelled.

"Yes. You see, Richard, I just had to tell some one. And he seemed sort of—sort of discreet!"

Richard laughed happily. Then he sighed.

"What?" asked Betty.

"I don't understand it a bit," he replied helplessly. "I thought it was Tom, and I've been so miserable, dear!"

"Tom! Why, Tom's a perfect dear," replied Betty slowly, "but—but I never meant to marry him! He—he thought I did, though. But he was quite nice and reasonable about it. What do you suppose he said, Richard? He said, 'Well, you'll be sort of in the family, Betty, and that's something!'"

"What did he mean, dear?"

"Why, I suppose he meant—I suppose he kind of guessed—about you, sir!"

"Good Lord! And I never suspected it!"

"You! I should say not! How could you with your beautifully classic nose against your old manuscript all the time? Don't you see that I simply *had* to tell you finally? You'd never have found it out by yourself, and I don't suppose you'd ever have asked. Would you, Richard?"

"I think so—after awhile," he responded, laughing.

"After awhile! I'd been an old maid by that time, silly! It's time I was married, too. Why, I'm almost twenty-one, Richard!"

"Then, we'd better hurry," he exclaimed. "Before the gray hairs come, sweetheart. Don't you think so?"

She sat up and squirmed away from him to a distance of a whole yard. "I think," she said gravely, "I—I'd feel more comfortable, Richard, if you asked me."

"Betty," he said softly, "I love you, dear." The hand in his fluttered. "Will you marry me, Betty?"

Betty gravely regarded her shoes for a moment. Then,

"We-ell," she replied doubtfully, "it—it is very sudden, and I'm awfully surprised, but——" Then she turned, smiled adorably, and nodded her head emphatically. And Richard, exterminating the distance between them, took her into his arms again.

Behind them in the tall hedge a thrush burst into golden melody. A breeze crept across the garden, and the flower heads nid-nodded at the news he whispered, as much as to say, "Run along with you! We knew it months ago!" A big, purple-black bumble-bee circled around them inquiringly, and then went booming off again. "At last!" he seemed to say. "Of all silly folks——"

Presently, "Betty."

"Yes?" asked Betty, with a contented little sigh.

"When you told the faun, sweetheart, did you know then? Was it as long ago as that, Betty?"

"Longer," replied Betty, with a soft gurgle of laughter. "Much longer! Why, you poor, innocent old duck of a Richard, you were a goner the minute I saw you!"



## OPPORTUNITY AND THE WOLF

BY WILLIAM J. BURTSCHER

**O**PPORTUNITY and the Wolf  
Met at the door  
Of an humble cottage.

The one knocked,  
And the other howled.  
Behind the door  
Lived an optimist,  
Full of hope.  
He was expecting Opportunity,  
And heard the knock,  
But not the howl.

And then the two,  
The Wolf and Opportunity,  
Went to another door.  
The one howled,  
And the other knocked.  
Behind the door  
Lived a pessimist,  
Full of despair.  
He was expecting the Wolf,  
And heard the howl,  
But not the knock.

# THE BIG RIVER

By *Ellis Parker Butler*

Author of "Pigs is Pigs," "Mike Flannery," etc.

I SAW the first steamer that came up the Mississippi with an electric search-light; I stood on the levee at Muscatine and saw, far down the river, the weird, unearthly glow of white on the clouds at the top of the wedge-shaped ray, and saw it dart here and there uncannily, like nothing any one in Muscatine had ever seen before. Think of that! I tell you that was something for a boy to see! No boy born since then can ever see *that*—the first steamer to come up the river with an electric search-light! No, indeed! I thought that thought the very night I saw it.

I think it must have been the *Centennial*, because I was not often down-town after dark in those days, and I *know* I was down when the *Centennial* came in. That was the greatest event in my life. Why, that packet—— Well, I shan't attempt to tell you what she meant to the boys of Muscatine. We talked about her for weeks before she came up the river, and the more we talked the bigger and more wonderful she grew. By the time the day of her arrival came she was as long as the *Mauretania*, and as fast as the Twentieth Century Limited. She was due at six, and we went down to greet her as soon as school was out. Five minutes after we reached the levee we began asking the boat agent when she was expected to arrive, and we asked him regularly every five minutes until midnight. As first he said, "Six o'clock." By six o'clock he was saying nothing at all, and after that he said, "Get away from here! Get away from here, now!" We were very much afraid of him, for he always carried a club. Steamboat men always did in those days. At any minute they might have to argue a point with a "nigger" roustabout. So after that we waited until some town magnate walked up to the window to ask, and then we crowded under his elbows, and listened, and went back to our fellows whooping, "She 'll be in in an hour!"

The arrival of the *Centennial* was a great event for the whole town. Before six the levee was well crowded, and after dinner it was packed—men, and women, too, and every boy able to be out of bed. About nine o'clock agent Block began to look worried, like a stage manager with a

full house and the star actor off on a spree. There were great piles of freight in the warehouse, accumulated especially for the *Centennial*, and basket after basket of fresh vegetables and meat, and piles of water-melons, for the *Centennial*, and a few lucky passengers.

“Aw! I bet she ’s stuck on a sand-bar!”

“Aw! No, she ain’t! She can’t stick on no sand-bar!”

“Aw! I bet she can!”

“Aw! No, she can’t. She ’s made so she can’t!”

Some of us had inside information, received from others of us, that the *Centennial* had some mysterious apparatus under her hull that could hump her over any sand-bar that ever clogged the Mississippi. I imagine it was something like a set of iron turtle-legs, that fitted up snugly in good water, and that could be let down and would walk her over the sand-bar on occasion. If a full-grown man had told us the *Centennial* could climb trees, we should have believed it. We could believe anything of a steambot that had electric lights.

To pass the time, we had a battle with a dozen boys who had waded out to a coal barge. They threw the better part of a ton of coal at us, but we threw most of it back, so not much was lost. Billy Mac, on the barge, got a piece of coal in the mouth and lost half a front tooth. I did n’t do that; some other fellow did it. I said so then, and I say so now.

Eight o’clock came—bedtime—and we lingered on. I had wood to bring in at home, but that was no matter—not on the night the *Centennial* was due. Nine o’clock, and the good little boys began to dribble away toward their homes, with a last “Aw! Come on home, can’t you? She ain’t comin’ to-night.”

Ten o’clock! My, but it was dark in the shadows behind the lumber piles. Most of the men began to go home; a few went to the Front Street saloons; the women were all gone. The rows of men and boys on top of the freight-cars thinned out, and Skinny Deever, thin, wicked, and cruel, came down to annoy us. Our dozen of small boys kept close together, with rocks in our hands, in case Skinny should attack us. He did grab Fritz when Fritz ran to the warehouse landing to hear the latest news. He caught Fritz by the arm and twisted the arm backward until Fritz whimpered with pain, and some real gentleman raised his cane and struck Skinny across the shoulders. We let Skinny have a volley of stones. Two of them hit Fritz, and he came back to us limping.

“Aw! He did n’t hurt me none. I ain’t afraid of him. Wait till I get him alone, and he ain’t lookin’? I ’ll hit him with a rock.”

Eleven o’clock! Half a dozen men sat sleepily on the landing platform. Two or three lay asleep on the lumber piles. The ripples of the river slapped against the side of the coal barge. We talked. It was the only way we could keep awake, and we were careful to keep where the

light from the warehouse window made a yellow patch on the sand. Half past eleven!

"And I doubled up my fist like this," said Fritz, "and I said to him, I said, 'Who's a sooner?' He says, 'You're a sooner.' You bet I don't take that word from nobody, so I just——"

"Thud! Thud! Thud!" Silence. "Thud! Thud! Thud!" Silence.

There is not a boy on the shores of the Mississippi from St. Louis to St. Paul that does not know the pounding of the wheels of the big packets as they can be heard while yet the boat is far down the river. There was one boat that came up the river with a patent paddle-wheel. Some smart-aleck invented it, with movable blades that slipped down into the water and pushed and slipped out again noiselessly. Dickens of a boat, that was! What is a packet for if she does n't throw a great cataract of water with her wheel? That boat never amounted to anything from the first. She could n't. The boys did n't like her.

"I hear her! I hear her!" I screamed.

"Put your ear in the sand and you can hear her louder," said Fritz, and all of us put our ears in the sand. We could hear her quite plainly that way.

"Thud! Thud! Thud!" Silence. "Thud! Thud! Thud!" Silence.

"Yeow! She's comin'! She's comin'!" I yelled, and the sleepy men on the landing platform stood up and peered down the river. Even Mr. Block came out of his office and looked and listened. He hurried in and lighted another lantern and hung it on his arm, and took his clip of manifests in his hand. *He* was ready.

There were whole intervals when we lost the sound of the paddle-wheel entirely, but the next minute we would hear it clearer than before, and then, suddenly and unexpectedly, we saw the glare of the search-light on the clouds, and the long funnel of hazy light that led up to it. We saw it flash here and there, and dart out of sight as the tender turned it on the river-bank or ahead, and then, suddenly, like a moving city aglow with lights, the boat appeared.

She was like a cluster of sparkling diamonds, twinkling in the darkness down the river. No need to listen to the thud of her paddles now! We could see the search-light illuminate the river-banks and cut across the clouds like a comet, and at moments it glowed like a brilliant at the head of the lesser diamonds. You may be sure we did not miss much. We were there for sensations, and we tried to catch them all. One of us was the first—lucky boy!—to catch the glimmer of her red and green lights, one on either smoke-stack. The search-light cut across from shore to shore, making a huge circle across the sky in its passage, and then, suddenly——

You don't know what it means to hear for the very first time the deep, full-throated, melodious whistle of a new packet! You don't know how the heart and the lungs and the liver lift to that sound, or how every boy's every fibre quivers and vibrates to it, until it soaks in and he can never in his life mistake that whistle, or confuse it with any other whistle from Canton to Spokane. The meanest thing a man can do is to buy the whistle of a wrecked packet and put it on some insignificant little local steamer, yet men have been found mean enough to do that. Imagine the feelings of a boy who has loved the deep note of the *War Eagle* or the *Mary Morton* or the *St. Paul*, when he hears its mellow voice speaking from a little one-funnelled sand-barge tow-boat! Rank sacrilege!

Why, any boy that was worth being called a boy, in my day, could sit in school and tell you the name of any boat on the river by the sound of her whistle—towboat, rafter, or packet. And if a strange boat whistled, forty-two hands would go up, asking Teacher for permission to get a drink of water. There was a hall window from which we could see the river.

Suddenly the *Centennial* spoke. Her voice pealed out, echoing against the hills and filling the whole river-bottom with sound—two long, long blasts that hung on and hung on as if she was never going to let go of them, and then three short, saucy, snappy puffs of sound, and at the same instant—

We did not know what had happened at first. Three of us stepped backward and fell over a loose board, and the rest of us put our hands over our eyes and backed away. In an instant the darkest night had turned into the brightest day. You could see every splinter on every rough board in every lumber pile on the levee. You could see—that is, if you looked away from the *Centennial*. If you looked toward her you could not see at all. It was the search-light!

Steady and glaring, making us squint and wrinkle our noses, the great, superb, world-upsetting light held on us. On *us*, mind you! Right spang, bang, on us boys! Oh, I say, life *is* worth living!

Not one of us saw the *Centennial* land. We could n't; we could n't see anything but a glare of light that grew stronger and stronger until we had to look away and see men running toward the levee from every direction—just whooping it up, too. Talk of tocsins and alarm bells! I know now how the scum of Paris came running at the sound of the tocsin (Lesson XLV., Page 345), and how the patriots gathered at the call of Paul Revere (Lesson XXVI., Page 242). You don't have to be killed as an innocent bystander to understand these things if you have seen a *Centennial* land at a Muscatine for the first time. There was cheering like the Fourth of July, and some of the men from the Front



Street saloons had sandwiches in their hands, like Fair Week. You could see your father in that glare of light—and keep out of his way, too.

Well, that was enough for one night, but do you think that was all? With a suddenness that was like the snapping of the fingers the search-light went out, and two great arc-lights over the bow of the packet began to sputter and fizz. They spit and sizzled and grew red at the point, and then burst into clear blue light. Blue? Talk about blue light, and sputtering! There was some excitement to those arc-lights, the first we had ever seen.

That was some improvement over the old tar-stick flares, I guess, that a “nigger” roustabout used to keep burning in two huge iron baskets on either side of the gang-plank while the loading and unloading was going on. They were pretty good, too, burning a devilish red, with great clouds of black smoke pouring upward like a tar-barrel afire, and the mate in his glory on the cabin deck, swearing like a trooper—only ten times worse—and the sweaty niggers shuffle-stepping up and down the gang-plank in a long row, and Block, with his clip of manifests, checking off the goods by the light of a lantern held above his head. It was some sight, too, to see one big nigger standing on the very tip of the great gang-plank as the packets came in, with a noose of cable in his hand, ready to jump ashore and cast it over the end of the big pile twenty feet back from the water’s edge. Usually there was a boy atop of that pile, and the way he scrambled down as the nigger came at him with the cable was as good as a schoolhouse afire. And once or twice I have seen the nigger actually miss the pile when he threw the cable noose. That is n’t much to see, but it is a great deal to hear. The remarks of the mate, I mean. They say the mates do not swear nowadays. The old river is going to the dogs, I guess.

But when the search-light went out, and the arcs went on, there was no nigger ready with his cable-noose to warp the *Centennial* to the warehouse dock. She did not back and fill to the jingling of those fascinating engine-room bells, trying for half an hour to get snugly alongside the warehouse. There was no cable put ashore at all. The long packet ran her nose gently as near the shore as she could, and the gang-plank (stage-plank, some fellows called it) swung down as if by magic, and the mate stepped ashore and shook hands with Block. I don’t think Block kissed him or hugged him. I should have done both if I had been in his place, but it was pretty good as it was, to stand there in the light of the big arcs and shake hands with the mate of a packet like the *Centennial*, just as if the mate was the mate of an ordinary boat. And right in full sight of all the crowd, and more coming from all directions every minute! There’s glory for you. And Billy Block did n’t swell up and burst with pride after that, either. He was willing to shake hands with quite

ordinary people, even after that night. He shook hands with me—but that was ten years later.

And talk about luck! The *Centennial* did not land at the warehouse at all, but at the levee alongside, right immediately in front of where I was standing, and when the crowd pushed down to go aboard they pushed me aboard. You can guess what I did, can't you? I went up on the hurricane deck and touched the search-light with my own hand! I showed that very hand to every boy I knew the next day. Some of them believed me, and some did not.

Well, there she was, the *Centennial*! She had arrived, and I was there to see her arrive.

I hurried off the packet when the warning bell sounded. I had had enough. I was full to the brim. I had been in her long, brilliant saloon, and had stared into the glowing coals of her furnaces, and had walked around her glistening engines. She was mine.

The bells in her engine-room tinkled, the last loping nigger ran aboard, the gang-plank raised itself and swung around, the exhaust raged its steam into the river, and—on the deck I saw a girl!

She was a yellow-haired little girl in a light blue silk dress, and Heaven only knows how she happened to be up at that hour of the night; but I waved my hat and cried, "Hello!" and she smiled bashfully and waved her hand and called back, "Hello!"

Then the arcs went out. They gave a last sputter, and their tips burned red, and the flash-light burst forth with its glare, blinding my eyes; and when I could see again the *Centennial* was backing into the stream and the flash-light was pointing steadily up-river. I never saw that girl again. I hope to goodness her parents put her right to bed!

We waited until the *Centennial* dwindled to a sparkling diamond brooch far up-river, and then Fritz started for home on a dead run. So did I. What happened when I reached home was merely incidental, but sad. I shan't mention it. I have forgotten it entirely by this time.



## JUNE

BY CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

**G**OD made the earth, and the immortal flowers;  
 He roused the grass, and set the stars in tune;  
 Then as we gather blooms He gathered hours,  
 And dropped them in a bowl one afternoon.

# THE MIDDLEMAN

*By E. F. Benson*

THE doors of Burlington house on this day of the Private View of the Royal Academy had not been open for more than a couple of hours, but already there was no doubt as to which of those polychromatic acres of canvases was destined to be known as the picture of the year. The hanging committee had clearly been in no doubt about it either, and though the picture was a large one and was signed with a name that hardly more than one person out of all those crowds that kept forming and melting and forming again in front of it had ever heard, they had put it on the line in the middle of the long wall in the third room, among the various fantasies of the exhibiting Academicians. On one side of it hung a slightly sentimental composition of a youth and a maiden and a widow and an organ and a stained-glass window, called "Angelic Songs Are Welling"; just above it was a sleek portrait of a railway-director in a fur-coat, with the hand-book of the London and North-Western Railway lying on a table, and on the other side was a small picture of a quantity of young ladies by a marble fountain, neither doing nor wearing anything whatever, and another of heather and some Highland cattle carefully brushed and combed. But the picture that hung in the middle of this rich and assorted company killed all the others quite quickly and painlessly, so to speak, by its own breadth and serenity. It represented a plain middle-aged woman with her hand on the arm of her chair as if about to get up. It was very subdued in tone, but the figure in its black silk dress stood vividly out against the gray background of undecorated wall. She faced the spectator full, and it was hard to say if her mouth had begun to smile. But the tired gray eyes certainly had: they were lit from within by love and tender welcome. It seemed impossible that any one except her son could have painted it; it seemed impossible that a woman could smile so except when she looked on him. The catalogue confirmed this: it was the portrait of the artist's mother, and was by Charles Lathom.

Among the constant but changing crowd that chattered and wondered in front of it was the only man who really knew anything about Charles Lathom, but he knew a good deal. This individual was evidently well-known to many of the crowd, for he was continually in conversation with its component members, and they listened to him with considerable

respect, for his knowledge of art was quite unrivalled. In person, he was conspicuously tall and stout and clay-colored, and his pale, bulging eyes had heavy bags of loose skin below them. His hair was rather thin and almost suspiciously black, and he had a habit as he talked of caressing one side of his face with his plump beringed hand, as if to make sure that a whisker had not grown there since he shaved last. When he moved, a faint suggestion of wall-flower scent stirred in the air. He did not, it may be remarked, let slip the fact that he knew the artist. For so large a person he had a singularly soft and low voice.

"It is a marvellous creation, my dear lady," he was saying. "I tell you without exaggeration that there has appeared no portrait of more magical insight and technique since Velasquez painted Philip the Fourth. I can't get away from it: I must go and see the other rooms, but I am riveted here. Yes, Charles Lathom. Ah, how do you do, dear Lady Urquahart? You are the very person we want. You know everybody, so give us a *précis* about Charles Lathom."

Lady Urquahart screwed up her mouth sideways when she talked.

"Charles Lathom has consecrated the profaned walls of the Academy anew," she said. "I was going to ask you for information. They tell me he had a small picture in the show last year."

Arthur Craddock caressed his face. He remembered that picture perfectly well: at the present moment it hung discreetly and privately in his own bedroom.

"You don't say so!" he said. "Tell me about it. Did it show any of the promise of this? I am ashamed not to remember it."

Lady Urquahart turned a slightly suspicious eye on him.

"I am told you mentioned it in your review of the Academy last year," she said.

He smoothed his face more strenuously.

"Worse and worse," he said. "I thought I had only missed it, but now it seems that I have forgotten I did not miss it."

This particular group ebbed away again, rather to Arthur Craddock's relief, for he had a slight distrust of Lady Urquahart, and he was glad to see a tide of fresh friends to whom he could rhapsodize afresh about the portrait, being quite clever enough not to compare it to Philip the Fourth too often. Occasionally he rested his hand in the pocket of his light summer overcoat, and felt with intense and secret satisfaction that a small strip of folded paper reposed there. On it was written Charles Lathom's receipt for the purchase-money of his mother's portrait.

He had already written a first notice of the exhibition for one of the leading papers, in which he had done justice, so he considered, to this masterpiece; but he had bought several water-colors this year, and in-

tended to devote half a column to this rather neglected but charming branch of art. For this it was necessary to spend an hour or two in the room where they hung. But he found time to stroll into the Ritz hotel when he felt inclined for lunch, knowing that there would be any number of "Academy" lunches going on, and that many artists would have asked their friends there, and be only too glad to bid him to their tables, in view of the undoubted influence he had in the press. But he engaged himself instead to an American who was by way of being a purchaser of paintings, and really only required to be told what to buy. Craddock loved the atmosphere of opulence, and he had the nose of a truffle-hound for wealth. He had a good deal of money himself, and the smell was familiar to him. And having lunched very cosily, he went back to the water-color room.

Arthur Craddock had a very sumptuous flat in Berkeley Square, where no windows were ever opened, but the air of it was revived by the burning of pastilles or sprigs of lavender, and about six o'clock that evening he was wafted thither in a red-plush lift, and rested for a while after his strenuous day. Two or three people of some importance to him were going to dine with him, and he had asked them all at different hours, since he wished to confer with each of them privately. Thus the first of them, who was intimately connected with pictures, and might, for short, be called a dealer, was, after the conference, deposited in a small chamber known as the library, while Craddock went to dress. The second guest was a notable publisher, who, being intimate, had the felicity of seeing him change his clothes. The third was a theatrical manager who could not act, but always did. They held an exceedingly important interview on Craddock's return from his bedroom.

Craddock was both *gourmand* and *gourmet*: he ate largely, with intense appreciation, and, having made a particularly good dinner that night, he let his guests go away rather early, for he had a few affairs that needed his sole supervision. But in his interviews he had made several good strokes of business, and it was in the best of spirits that he unlocked a red-leather despatch box, whistling to himself the Spring-song out of the "Valkyrie," with the expression of a replete seraph. He also deposited in the same box Charles Lathom's receipt for a check of one hundred pounds. Considering that for that sum he had purchased a portrait that might stand next the masterpiece of Velasquez, this did not seem an unreasonable price to pay. There were other receipts in this box: one showed that Frank Armstrong acknowledged the receipt of five hundred pounds as payment in full for all rights connected with his play "The Dilemma." Craddock and the actor-manager had talked about this. Five hundred pounds seemed a good deal of money, but, on the other hand, "The Dilemma" was a very good play indeed.

Though Craddock himself created neither pictures nor plays nor novels nor music, he had a unique gift of artistic appreciation, and, with admirable industry, had worked hard all his life to cultivate this and bring it to full flower. Like most first-rate talents, it was worth a great deal of money to him, and not less marketable was his *flair* for seeing what the public would appreciate. Often he bought work which he himself believed to be bad art, if he felt that the public would admire it. And the most of his money he made by a very simple plan: he financed (on terms) young men whose work he believed would make a name for them and a bank-balance for himself.

Charles Lathom was one of these. In last year's Academy Craddock had seen a small picture of a boy just in the act of taking a header into a pool below a weir. In many respects the work was crude and immature, but there was a vitality, an energy as of a coiled spring, about the leaping figure that struck at the root of the matter, and Craddock purchased it on terms that to this young and absolutely unknown artist seemed royally generous. For Craddock not only paid him fifty pounds down for it, but agreed to pay him four hundred a year for the next four years for the option of purchasing any two pictures of his each year at one hundred pounds apiece. Thus for the next four years young Lathom had the certainty of an income of four hundred pounds, and, if his work pleased his patron, of six hundred pounds a year. It seemed to him an offer of almost dream-like splendor. But Craddock did not feel he had made any mistake about this: he saw at once that the young man had the true fire, that he could no more help painting than he could help breathing, while his extreme youth—he was only just twenty-one—would make him eager and vivid. And now even in his first year he had turned out a masterpiece that should repay Craddock for at least half his past and future outlay.

Affairs did not always turn out so happily. Not so long ago Craddock had made a similar bargain with a novelist, giving him a small annual income, and claiming half that he made by his pen. On which the ungrateful wretch had written nothing whatever for three years, which was the period of the bargain, but spent them in planning and thinking over a romance that he wrote as soon as he was free again, which went into twenty-seven editions. But then he was a calculating, middle-aged brute, and Craddock had learned wisdom from that atrocious transaction, and now did business only with eager young men in whom the lust and need of production blazed irresistibly.

He felt very comfortable about the purchase of "The Dilemma," and his option to take from Frank Armstrong his next three plays on rising terms. He himself was dramatic critic to a leading paper, and his perceptive power with regard to plays was not less acute than with regard to pictures. His critique, already half-written, upon the pro-

duction that was to take place to-morrow night, would certainly convince the public that a masterpiece had been presented. It would induce them to go, and the play, he felt certain, would make them glad they had gone. Being a professional critic, he did not overrate the power of criticism in insuring a success, but the critic, at any rate, was possessed of the sweet uses of advertisement. He could rouse curiosity, and if the advertised article was good, it would do the rest.

But this jolly remunerative life had, as has been said, its drawbacks. Sometimes, as in the case of the abominable novelist, his generosity would be treated ungenerously, sometimes, though not often, he backed the wrong horse, and in consequence he was still not fond of the word "post-impressionism." When first that maniac school exhibited in the Grafton Gallery, he had given vent in the press to a series of Lobgegangs, after quietly purchasing a good many of the pictures. Personally, he detested the extravagance and impertinence of these nightmares, but he thought that the public might easily be taken in, and would see genius (if instructed to do so) in incompetence. But at present his purchases were still on his hands, and, though he did not despair of ultimately coming out on the right side, he did not yet feel secure of shooting his rubbish profitably. But he had hopes of some golden and totally uneducated Americans whom he had arranged to take to the gallery of the dealer who had been his guest to-night. There they would see these treasures, and have their wonders pointed out. An impecunious Duchess was going to give tone to the proceedings.

Though he felt very comfortable about "The Dilemma," he was not quite at ease about the author of it. This was a high-spirited young man in great want of money, who had, unlike most artists, a keen business head, and had swiftly calculated, when their bargain was being struck, how much his patron would clear if the play ran with full houses for a hundred nights.

"You will be comfortably situated," he said. "Really, I think you might give me six hundred pounds."

Craddock was wise enough not to take the attitude of a munificent art-lover whose soul was above money. Armstrong would certainly have said, "Rot!"

"I am not prepared to risk more than five hundred pounds," he said. "If your play is a failure, which it easily may be, I lose it all. You must remember also that it has been rejected by three managers."

This was true: he had sent it to the wrong ones.

"Oh, well, I'll sign," said young Armstrong. "And it would be immensely convenient if you would let me have the money without any delay whatever. Thanks: I suppose your check is good. Now, mind you write me up. Ta-ta."

Craddock looked hastily round.

"Our transaction is a private one," he said.

"Oh, rather! Ta-ta."

It was not a nice spirit somehow . . . also Craddock wished that Armstrong had not by mischance met Charles Lathom shortly after this, at Craddock's flat. The two fiery young fellows had clearly liked each other, and would perhaps become friends. As a rule, Craddock preferred the recipients of his bounty not to meet. But he would have found it difficult to give definite reason for this, since he treated them all with equal liberality. Yet, somehow, he did not want his liberality to be talked about. All his transactions were supposed to be private, but two young men might easily blurt out something to each other. But even then it was hard to see how they could annoy him. Signed contracts were not annulled by chatter.

Regardless, however, of their patron's wishes on the subject, these two young men had struck up a great friendship, and a few months later were spending September together on the coast of Norfolk, bathing and playing golf, and, when the rage for production became imperative, sketching and scribbling ardently. During the last week or two Lathom had made half a dozen admirable impressions of his friend's strong and irregular face, and Armstrong had filled half a notebook with plots and half-written scenes and snatches of dialogue. "The Dilemma" had long ago achieved its century of performances; indeed, this morning, as they lay half-dressed on the sands after their bath, Lathom announced on the authority of the newspaper he had brought down with him that the hundred and fiftieth performance would take place in a week's time.

"And it is believed that the young and gifted author has just bought the freehold of entire Piccadilly," he fatuously added.

Frank Armstrong gave a little exclamation of impatience and disgust. Hitherto the subject of Mr. Craddock had been studiously avoided by both of them, for both disliked the man at whose house they had first met; both felt also that he had "done" them. In addition, their several transactions were supposed to be private.

"I might have," said Frank. "But I was an ass."

"Really? Did you make a bad bargain over your rights? By Jove, here's a funny thing!"

"What's that?" asked Frank.

"Here are you and I side by side on the sand, and side by side with the paragraph about you there's one about me. Good Lord! The portrait of my mother was bought yesterday for eight hundred guineas. Blast it all!"

Frank Armstrong began to laugh.

"I suppose you made a bad bargain, too," he said.



"Yes; quite bad."

He looked up, and comprehension came to him in a flash.

"I believe we're both in the same boat," he said. "I sold my pictures, you sold your play. I sold to Craddock. I did worse, too——"

"Same dealer," said Armstrong; "and I did worse."

Lathom was getting the sand from between his toes, preparatory to putting his socks on.

"What?" he shouted. "Do you mean that old oil-and-color-man goes in for the drama, too? Is it really so?"

Explanations followed, and both these amiable young men got very quiet and angry.

"And he has got an option on two more of my plays," said Armstrong at length. "Hi! I think I've got hold of the tail of an idea. Let me catch firm hold of it. Yes, by Jove, I've got it! Listen, Charlie."

Five minutes later Frank had pulled out his notebook, and with gesticulations and occasional pauses and readings was scribbling furiously. Sometimes Lathom rolled with laughter on the sand, sometimes he got angry again and swore. And had Craddock, who was staying in a rich house up in Sutherland, where he dressed as a sportsman, but only sat in the garden, had any inkling of what made these two efficient young brains so busy, he would have had his comfort seriously impaired.

It was October, and midway through that delectable month. Craddock always delighted in the autumnal resuscitation of London life and the opening of sale-rooms, and, established again in his sumptuous flat, he was delighted to receive a note from Frank Armstrong, saying that he would like to have a talk about his next play. He felt sure, it appeared, that his subject was solid, and he was satisfied with a scene or two that he had sketched. Oddly enough, by the same post there came a note from Lathom, which rather elusively spoke about a portrait he wanted to paint. Craddock knew already that the two were great friends, and he had a certain curiosity to see whether they had spoken to each other about their patron. Even if they had, they were as helpless as butterflies on pins. So he asked them both to dine with him next night. Probably they had dress-clothes, since, owing to his bounty, they were both possessed of a small but settled income, but it would be kinder to tell them not to dress.

They appeared together, brown from their east-coast holidays, and brisk and smart. With his artistic eye, Craddock saw how admirable a subject would his young playwright be for his young artist, and he felt he had guessed the proposed subject of Lathom's portrait. It would suit both patron and artist admirably.

"I see, I see," he said to Lathom, laying a rather moist hand on his shoulder. "Paint him when he is at work on his new play."

"Paint whom?" asked Lathom.

"Your friend and mine. Come, let us go in to dinner. I want to hear all about the portrait and the play. You both made sketches?"

Craddock saw Lathom's steady level eyes look across to the other, and, turning, saw the ghost of a smile on Armstrong's crooked mouth, which had such character.

"I've brought the outline of the play with me," he said. "I propose to call it 'The Middleman.' Good title, do you think?"

Craddock glanced from one to the other, and back again. He began to regret that he had asked them together, but hoped that dinner would blow away the slightly hostile atmosphere of which he was conscious. He himself always felt more friendly after dinner.

"Capital title," he said. "We will have a good talk about it afterwards."

This time a more distinct signal passed between the two.

"I think we may as well talk first," said Armstrong. "We came rather early on purpose. Well, the title is 'The Middleman,' and there's no hero in it. There's a beast instead. He gets hold of young artists, and induces them to sign contracts for their future output. Then he puffs them in the papers. He's a big sort of chap, rather oily and encouraging. That's all the first act—not much action except contract-signing. We get action presently."

Not the stupidest of Craddock's enemies ever accused him of being stupid. He grasped the situation completely, and turned to Charlie Lathom, who had taken up a sheet of scented note-paper and was swiftly sketching on it.

"And your share in this conspiracy?" he asked.

Lathom made two more touches, a dot and a line.

"I don't know what you mean by conspiracy," he said. "It's a funny word. What I want to do is to paint, not Frank's portrait, but yours. It will be something like this."

He handed his host an unmistakable loathsome parody of himself.

Armstrong leaned forward, again crookedly smiling.

"About the play, Mr. Craddock," he said. "You've got an option on my next play, and on one after that. Well, my next play is 'The Middleman.' To go on with the plot, he gets bust up, exposed, blown upon. He begins, you see, as a fashionable sort of gent, who dines out. The last act will be rather pathetic. The Middleman dies in a garret, with gray hair. He has grown quite thin. He has been blown upon, and nobody gives him options any more, or asks him out to dinner. Perhaps you may not care to exercise your option on——"

"I shall be delighted to exercise an option for libel," said Craddock, off his guard.

"Libel?" asked Armstrong, in the voice of a misunderstood child.

"Oh, do you really see a remote resemblance between the man in my play and—and yourself? If you do, can you really imagine yourself bringing an action for libel against me?"

"There's not a decent manager in London who would put on such a farrago of nonsense," said Craddock, switching off the subject of libel.

"I dare say we can find an indecent one," said Armstrong.

Charlie Lathom was getting impatient.

"About my portrait," he said. "I shan't libel you. I shan't say it is you at all. I shall just call it 'The Middleman.' I shall send it to some spring exhibition just about the time when Frank's play appears. Of course you can exercise your option and buy it and suppress it. Then I shall do another one, not so kind."

Craddock got up, and began walking to and fro in his scented room. Think how he might, he saw no way out of this very awkward position. He knew quite well that after the success of Lathom's last portrait, any gallery would welcome a work by him; he knew that after the success of Armstrong's play any manager would gladly produce another by the same pen. There was nothing to be done except surrender and discuss terms.

"You young devils——" he began.

"No abuse, now," said Armstrong. "Of course, I know it's irritating."

"What do you propose?" asked Craddock, after a pause.

"That's more polite. You see, we are like those Johnnies on strike: we have drawn up our irreducible minimum. That's your show, Charlie: spout away!"

"We're not going to be hard on you," said Charlie. "We're only proposing to do what is obviously fair. What we ask is that you furnish us with a complete account—something we can test, you know—of all the money you have at present made out of us. You have been our agent, and a jolly good one, and so out of that we shall pay you a liberal fee—say, ten per cent. We shall be delighted to employ you on the same terms in the future, and you will continue to do your best for us. If you accept that, we shall say nothing about what has already occurred. You needn't say we are Shakespeare and Velasquez any more, because that is rot. But for any orders you get for us, any commissions, you understand, we will employ you. You shall arrange the price, and make it as stiff as possible, because you will get your percentage. Of course we shall both return to you the money you have given us, and you will pay us what you have earned from us, deducting ten per cent. Finally, we shall have to see you tear up the agreements we made with you."

"Loud applause," said Armstrong.

Again Craddock took time for consideration.

“And if I absolutely refuse your terms?” he asked.

“We shall set to work. Very hard!” said Armstrong. “I can read you some bits of scenes. Especially the one in the garret. Charlie and I come to see you—”

Craddock among his other gifts had a certain sense of humor.

“You young devils!” he said again, but in a different voice. “Let’s have dinner. We will do business afterwards. I wish I had never set eyes on either of you.”

Armstrong got up.

“You accept?” he said.

“I can’t help it.”

“Right oh. I’m awfully hungry.”



## RICH MAN, POOR MAN—

BY FRANCIS HILL

**O**H, joy that burns in Denver tavern!  
 The lights, the drink, the ceaseless play!  
 A kingdom, dull within a cavern,  
 Across the boards he flings away.

Then night that falls on either mountain  
 (Ah, bitter black it falls between);  
 But he, like water to its fountain,  
 Is come again where life runs clean.

So Death shall find him, delving, peering.  
 Still silver rock, still golden sand.  
 He weeps to hear the magpies’ jeering.  
 But he is back in his own land.

# A WHITE PRECIPITATE

*By Rex T. Stout*

“EVANS!”

“Yes, sir.”

“Take these papers out of the room.”

Without a sign of surprise at the unusual order, the servant gathered up the four morning newspapers and started to leave. As he reached the door he was again halted by his master's voice:

“And, Evans!”

“Yes, sir.”

“If Mrs. Reynolds asks for them, tell her they have n't come.”

“Yes, sir.”

Left alone, Bernard Reynolds crossed to a chair by the open fire and seated himself thoughtfully. Even such a catastrophe as this of which he had just read failed to move him from his accustomed calm. Of course, the news must be told to his wife; how, was the difficulty. For himself, he was almost glad; materially inconvenient though it was, it meant the removal of a barrier which he had already found an impediment in his search for happiness. Further, he knew that Paula herself would find the immediate loss an ultimate benefit; but he also knew that, coming thus suddenly, the blow would be a hard one. It was with such methodical reflection that he met a shock which to most men would have meant keen disappointment, and to some despair.

As he extended his hand to lower the flame in the coffee-lamp, Evans reëntered the room, bearing a loaded tray. Soon after, Paula came in. Bernard crossed the room to greet her, and escorted her to her chair at the table.

In the six months since the Reynoldses' wedding, the ceremony of breakfast had undergone a gradual but complete change. At the first dozen or so there had been very little eaten, and a great deal of foolishness. It had assumed the character of a morning worship, and Evans, who was orthodox, had been much disturbed by the order to place both chairs at one end of the table. At the present time, it was solely a matter of mastication and digestion. And yet Bernard declared—to himself—that the first had been by far the better, which seems to be a pretty good refutation of that disagreeable saying about men's stomachs.

On this particular morning the silence was oppressive. Even Evans

seemed cast down by something unusual in the air, and was moved out of his habitual solemnity and dignity to an unheard-of sprightliness. When he served the jelly fifty seconds too soon, in a valiant attempt to start something, and received no notice whatever for his effort, he gave up in despair, and received his nod of dismissal with gratitude. When he had gone Paula raised her eyes from her plate for the first time and looked at Bernard. Her eyes were red, and her lips were set in a firm, straight line.

"I suppose," she said, "that last night settles it."

Bernard returned her gaze calmly. "What do you mean?"

"For six months we've been trying to decide whether we've made a mistake. There is no longer any doubt about it."

Bernard hesitated a moment before replying. "Paula, you've said something like this twice before. You know how I've tried—but it's useless. It's purely your imagination. You've discovered somehow that it's bad form to have your dreams come true, and all I can do is to wait till you get over it."

"And last night—was that only my imagination?"

Bernard sighed hopelessly. "Will you never understand? Have n't I told you what my future demands?" Then, in a softer tone, "You know very well it's all for you. In order to succeed in my profession, a man must have friends. I'm trying to make them—that's all."

"And, I suppose, in order to be useful, they must be agreeable and—  
attractive."

"I've told you before that that's nonsense. It's pure rot. If you knew how silly——" He checked himself. "But I don't wish to be rude. There is a particular reason why I can't be. Only, for God's sake, have a little sense!"

For a full minute Paula was silent. The line of her mouth trembled, then tightened, and her hands, resting before her on the table, were clenched. Then, as though with an effort, she spoke slowly and calmly:

"Are n't you just a little tired of being a hypocrite, of living a lie?"

Bernard rose to his feet, astonished. "Paula!"

"That's what it amounts to. You may as well sit down and talk it over calmly. Ever since we were married, you've done nothing but lie and pretend."

"Paula! For God's sake——"

"Please *listen*. I'm not going to descend to heroics, and I don't care to listen to any. We may as well face the truth. We made a bad bargain, but we may as well admit it *was* a bargain. You pretended to love me, and I"—she caught her breath, and then went on calmly—"I pretended to love you. I don't know why I did it, but I know why you did. Of course, you wanted my money. As for me, I suppose it was your talent, your career."

Bernard, still sitting opposite her, controlled his voice with an effort. "You seem to have analyzed us thoroughly," he said drily. "And you—you are sure it was only pretense?"

"Have I not said so?" Paula laughed harshly. "Of course, it hurts your vanity. But you'll soon get over it. Besides, it will restore your peace of mind. You will no longer be under the necessity of attempting to deceive me. Our marriage becomes purely a business partnership, to which you furnish the brains and I the money. There will be no more nonsense about an affection that does n't exist."

"Paula, I don't believe you." The voice was strained, appealing. "Whatever you may think of me, I can't believe you to be—as you say you are. I *won't!*"

"I have said——" Paula began coldly.

"I know." There was a sudden change in Bernard's voice. "And it would hardly be a compliment to suppose you are lying *now*. Very well; I accept your terms. It is strictly a business partnership. You admit I have the brains?"

"Of course."

"And you the money?"

"That is what I said."

"And the one, I believe, balances the other?"

"What is the use of repeating it all?" Paula's voice held both weariness and despair.

"I just want to get it straight. I want to know exactly where I stand. You are sure I am furnishing my full share?"

"What do you mean?" cried Paula, startled by his tone.

Bernard, ignoring her question, struck the bell on the table sharply, and when Evans appeared, almost immediately, turned to him.

"Bring me the *Morning News*."

Evans disappeared, and a minute later returned with one of the newspapers which he had previously been told to remove. Bernard, his hand slightly trembling, handed it across the table to Paula, indicating with his finger a double-column head on the first page. His voice was tense with feeling as he said:

"That is what I mean."

As her eyes caught the head-line Paula gave a little involuntary cry, and the paper fell from her hands. Then, as she read the first two or three paragraphs, and realized the full meaning of them, her face grew pale and her eyes sought Bernard's in a sort of dumb protest.

"It is n't true!" she cried.

Bernard was silent.

"It *can't* be true! It means—everything is gone! It can't be true!"

Then, while Bernard sat silently regarding her, she bent over the

paper and read the article through to the end. When she spoke her voice was dry and hard. "If—but there are no ifs. It is all gone. I have nothing. I am a pauper."

"Worse than that." Bernard spoke grimly. "You are in debt. I spoke to Grimshaw an hour ago over the telephone. Dudley has disappeared—which means that his liabilities must be met by you. Grimshaw says there is absolutely no hope."

Paula stared at him as though fascinated, unable to speak.

"Well?" she said finally.

Bernard arose and, passing around the table, stood by her chair. "It is well," he said, looking down at her. "Our partnership is dissolved."

Paula recoiled as though he had struck her. "You mean——"

"What I say. And I thank God for it! Do you think I have n't known what you've been thinking all these months? A thousand times I have read in your eyes all—and more—that you have said this morning. It has made my life unbearable. That is why I'm glad it's all over—that the weary farce is ended."

"Then—you are through?"

"With the partnership, yes. Your share of the capital has disappeared; therefore the firm belongs to me. My first care will be to keep it intact." He stood silent for a moment, regarding her gravely.

"It is n't what you said that hurts. Your every action and thought has been a silent accusation which it was impossible for me to answer. I have been dumb, but not blind. You have condemned me without a hearing. You need n't have told me that you have never loved me; if you had, you could never have believed me to be—what you have said."

Paula lifted her eyes slowly, and tried in vain to meet his. Then, suddenly, the strength of her lie failed her; she buried her face in her hands and sobbed brokenly. "I can't give you up! I *can't!*" she moaned.

Then, as though by magic, Bernard's face cleared, and was filled with light. "Good God! Of course not!" he exclaimed fiercely. "I won't let you! Did n't I say the firm belongs to me?"

When Evans answered the bell, ten minutes later, he stopped short in the doorway and viewed the scene before him with unconcealed dismay. Both chairs—occupied—were placed squarely together at the farther end of the table.

"Evans," said Bernard, "I want to ask you a question. I suppose you have read the papers?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, you know of our—good fortune. Thank God, we have to economize! Your—er—pickings will probably be reduced. The question is, do you want to stay?"



"No, sir," said Evans promptly. "Not if I have to serve breakfast. I can stand the rest."

"Evans!"

"How can I help it, sir? Look at that!" He pointed at the chairs indignantly. "You know, sir, I've always tried to keep my self-respect, which I can't do going into rooms *backwards*. And even for the sake of your father——"

"Very well." Bernard grinned happily. "We'll have Maggie serve breakfast after to-day."

Evans turned to go.

"But," Bernard continued, "this morning you'll have to suffer. Bring back the fruit-tray and make another pot of coffee. We're going to celebrate."



## THE CRY OF MAN-HEART

BY J. B. E.

I WANT my Mother!  
 Home to her arms I would come running  
 To tell the failure I have made—  
 Failure that men have called success.  
 I want Mother to wrap her arms around me,  
 Hiding my hot eyes on her neck,  
 So blotting out all searing sights  
 Of mad racing after Sodom's fruits,  
 Unholy struggle for preferment,  
 Mean conniving for gold—all! all!

On her breast I would weep out my long confession,  
 While Mother answers my unuttered heart-questions  
 Just as when I was a lad.  
 I want once more to hear her voice  
 Whisper the love-name I bore long ago,  
 Telling me that 'nothing—nothing—nothing  
 Could ever make me less her boy.  
 I want to hush every other sound while she speaks—  
 Commending what she may, chiding gently, too;  
 Showing me what things really mean.

I want my Mother!  
Only her shoulder can pillow my head—now;  
She will know how wealth and place,  
Follies and honors, studies and friends,  
The occupations of a busied life,  
Have all proved pillows of stone—  
Mother will know,  
And she will gentle me to rest once more,  
Nor fear that my stain can smirch her whiteness.

So when her white and slender fingers  
Smooth back my graying locks,  
And she lays cool lips upon my tired forehead,  
Maybe it will all be as it used to be  
When I sobbed out upon her heart  
The tragic woes of childhood:  
Maybe I can remember the things I've guiltily forgot;  
Maybe I shall find cleansing in her tears,  
And healing in her understanding love.

And if, beyond, the light still shines,  
Her unfaltering faith will make it out;  
Her loving lips may even kiss  
My heavy eyes to sight again,  
And so restore to me the hope  
And the will  
To look ahead with purpose  
To serve my Day until the day closes—  
And then too  
I shall want my Mother.



# WITHOUT RESERVATION

By Jane Belfield

“SUPPOSE we drop the mask, Walter, and say to each other just what we really think. Aunt Maria won't be back for an hour, at least. Let's be absolutely honest and peep into each other's mind. It will be great sport.”

“I should n't dare.” The man turned from his survey of the frost-covered lawn and quizzically regarded the girl by the fire. “It might n't add to my happiness to peer into your thoughts; and at present I do not know that it is safe to show you mine.”

Catherine's small foot moved restlessly over the fur of the brown bearskin rug. “You might humor me, Walter. You have n't humored me for an age.”

“Ah!” He came over and drew a chair close beside hers. “If you put it that way—you must be aware that to please you is my sole *raison d'être*. But, my dear girl, the last man I heard of who started out in the morning to speak nothing but the truth landed in jail before night. It's a dangerous business—speaking one's mind; and first you must be sure of your audience.”

“But surely nothing can happen to either of us here and in one short hour. I only ask you to indulge in plain speaking for a single hour.”

“Of sixty minutes. Why, Kate, you could n't stand the—er—revelation for ten!”

“As bad as that!” She regarded him with coquettish brows aslant. “Just try me!”

“Very well.” Her companion leaned back and took out his watch. “Begin. I'll time you. Ten minutes, now, for unveiled truth.”

“Oh, no; that will never do! You must give yourself away first. How do I know that you are going to speak what you really think after you know what is in my mind?”

“And how do I know that you will not fashion your post-mortem remarks according to what I say?”

The girl dimpled and shook her flossy head. “You are supposed to be clever, Walter. Think of a way—do.”

The young fellow crossed to her desk and lifted a writing-pad.

"You are a rapid writer, Kate—as I happen to know from the various octavos with which you have favored me. Do you use a stub?"

"No; one of those large pens."

"Now make yourself comfortable at your desk, and for ten minutes we both will write exactly what comes into our minds, without reservation. Is it a bargain?"

"Without reservation!" She dimpled again, excitedly.

"When I say, 'Time!' we trade pads. Promise to play fair, Kate?"

"Oh, I'll promise fast enough." The girl swept to her desk. "I'll scribble just as I think, if *you* will."

"I will—as they say in the marriage ceremony." The young man rested the pad on his knee and took a fountain-pen from his pocket. "It is now one minute of twelve. When the mantel clock strikes, begin!"

A sudden silence, broken by the chime of the little silver clock and the sharp snapping of freshly piled logs.

If I am going to tell her what is in my mind [he traced in bold rapid hieroglyphics], I'd best begin by saying that *she* is. She is always in my mind, even when, owing to the pressure of circumstance, I am only conscious of her as a background. That sunny hair of hers—only, I wish Kate would n't wear it done up in about forty-seven puffs. I always catch myself wondering how many are hers and how many are acquired for the occasion. Once when she wore her hair in a soft, low knot, she looked exquisitely natural. Why are n't women content with looking natural? They can't beat Eve. I suppose it is because they want to look as though they had every charm that's going.

I like the way her blue eyes flash up at me—always so unexpectedly. They give a fellow a sort of electric shock—the kind he likes to get. Kate's nose is too small for character; but I like it. She has an adorable little, Kate way of pulling her tiny pug down when she lectures me.

I wonder whether she knows that I am now admiring her back. I know she is laughing, for I can see her shoulders shake; and when Kate laughs I am done for—I always want to kiss the dimples, and she knows it. Then, why does she laugh so often, when I am not privileged to kiss them? Miss Sanders has a pretty mouth; but *she* has an ugly birthmark on her upper lip. I never could see any beauty in a blemish, though all the boys think Miss Sanders is a beauty. Kate does n't like her—and she can't endure Kate. They say the season's belles never do like each other!

Kate is wondering at this moment what I am writing—whether it is one of what she calls my barbarous criticisms of her charming self, or, perhaps, whether it is the long-delayed proposal. Kate's too clever not to know how it's been with me this long time. Why don't I take courage and risk it instead of waiting for that silver mine to turn out a success? But then, Kate is n't used to hardship,

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and I'm not able to gauge her altogether—yet. I don't know how far she'd go for the real thing. Even after three years of comradeship, a fellow can't be sure of Kate's next move.

However, she is going to the cotillion to-night; and then, if I can give her Aunt Maria a sleeping potion, or if I can lure Kate into a corner of the conservatory where that confounded, omnipresent Morris fellow won't hunt her up— Oh! I forgot Miss Sanders will be there and I am supposed to dance the cotillion with her; but I'll ask Kate to let me bring her home and—

Walter's eye roved to his watch.

"Time!" He rose and replaced it in his pocket. "Ten minutes, Kate!" He stepped to the desk, the paper in his hand. "You said it was an age since I had humored you. Now, here is my mind, written out to order. I scarcely dare hope you'll like it. Where's yours?"

The girl lifted her slowly crimsoning face as he bent to slip the page from beneath her fingers.

"Why, Kate! The sheet is blank!"

"Yes," she stammered, struggling to hide her confusion; "yes. I could n't write what I was thinking of for you to read; and I promised to play fair, and so"—she held out the page he had offered—"here is yours back again. I have n't earned the right to read it, and we're just back where we were before. You see, you were right, Walter. I could n't stand ten minutes of it."

The man bent nearer. "Do you care to see what I have written, Kate?"

"Yes."

"Then, read. Your one word of admission may be worth my whole sheet." He watched the wave of scarlet flooding her temples as the girl hurriedly scanned the written page. A carriage stopped beneath the archway.

"Aunt Maria!" she whispered.

"Kate, will you let me bring you home from the cotillion to-night?"

The blue eyes flashed up at him with the old, unexpected light. The short, uptilted nose pulled down in the approved Kate fashion as she hesitated a moment; then dimpling to meet his imploring gaze: "I wanted you to ask me," she said. "I was going to begin my confessions with that. Will one word make up, if the word is 'Yes'? And, Walter, don't keep me in the background—I don't want to be a background. I—"

The little silver clock on the mantel peacefully ticked the seconds, and long leaping tongues of flame flickered upon two quiet figures on either side of the fire as Aunt Maria came briskly up the stair.

# THE BURDEN OF THE TULKKI

*By E. Young Wead*

TO the townsmen of Abo, that picturesque seaport of Finland, the Tulkki—recently come as care-taker of the venerated old cathedral—was more priest than janitor, or guide. At all hours of day and night the poor and the unhappy, the rich and the penitent, flocked to his cell, back of the large audience room, asking aid and comfort—and none, it was said, ever left his presence without renewed hope. Yet mystery claimed him. Who he was, where he came from, what his purpose in accepting this almost menial position, none knew. It was a time of stress in Finland, when men for love of country did strange things. It was wise to know little, hence the Tulkki, Finnish to his heart's core, came and went on errands of mercy, or of unknown import, and none cared to question him.

To-night he sat alone, reading his Bible. His day's work was done, his frugal meal over, and he was free to ponder the words of the Blessed Book.

Hearing a knock, he rose to admit his visitor. It was some poor soul in need of help, he must open the door quickly.

The guttering tallow dip in the candlestick he held threw a faint light on the steps outside, disclosing a short, rather handsome man with shrewd gray eyes and threadbare clothes, standing half-uncertainly, awaiting an invitation to enter. At sight of him the Tulkki's eyes glittered, hard lines gathered about his mouth, the hand which held the candlestick closed convulsively, until the brass ring cut into his finger. He hesitated only a moment, but it seemed ages before he could control his voice sufficiently to say, "Come in."

The religious was glad the room was but dimly lighted. He set the candlestick on the table and moved back into the shadows, while his hand involuntarily smoothed his white hair and settled his green goggles.

"I am Pekka Lallukka," volunteered the stranger, glancing around the walls with insolent curiosity. "No doubt you have heard of me. I am very well known."

"Sit, Pekka Lallukka," replied the Tulkki. But he himself did not sit. He strode up and down the narrow room with clenched hands and labored breath.

In a tone of disappointment, Pekka began: "I have lost my position

with the Russian government. I am hard pressed to support my wife and child."

Almost smiling, the Tulkki paused in his restless pacing. "When did this happen?"

"Soon after you became care-taker here." He crossed his knees and looked up with a patronizing air. "My friends advised me to come to you."

Finnish silence was his reply.

"They say you find work for everybody. When one is sick or in trouble, you help him." Pekka's tone became petulant, as if he grudged the praise he felt was necessary.

At last the Tulkki spoke. His voice was low and flute-like, his accents slow and measured. "I fear I can give you no assistance."

Pekka looked up, startled. His face grew white and tense, lines of pain gathered about his mouth. "Don't say that! Don't leave me without help! Have mercy! My poor wife will starve, my little Yrjo will die. For the love of Heaven, assist me! You aid the meanest; why not me?"

"The meanest? Yes." The Tulkki spoke hesitatingly. "No one is beneath my aid. But others have been repentant, while you—are proud of your shrewdness, you glory in deceit, you have sold your soul to the devil and triumph in your own disgrace. How can I offer help to—you?"

The young man rose in consternation. Drops of sweat stood on his forehead. Like a hunted animal, he looked for a means of escape. Seeing the door, he slunk guiltily toward it, and with his hand on the knob, called out, "You are a wizard, or the devil himself," and ran out.

The inscrutable man left behind smiled and went back to his Bible; but he could not read. His jaw set in an ugly way, and his frame grew stiff. For several moments he sat thus, then a flood of color swept over his face. His hand dropped on the open book, and he bent his head in an agony of supplication.

"Not on me, O Father—I am not fit. Lay not on my soul the burden of this man's redemption."

The next night Pekka came again, his head bowed in shame. "I was wrong; I come to acknowledge my fault. Give me the shirt of haircloth, the girdle of thongs; give me the wooden shoes with nails under my feet; for all these things have I seen on your wall. When I have done penance, I may hope to escape starvation." He glanced stealthily toward his mentor.

The Tulkki eyed him sternly and his lip curled. "Penance without repentance is a balky horse that will not carry you far. For what sins will you suffer?" He drew himself up till his tall form overshadowed his visitor and compelled an honest reply.

"I—I deceived my wife, but"—Pekka wavered—"other men do that."

The Tulkki set his face like flint. "How?" His piercing eyes held the young man's glance.

Pekka's face filled with dread. He turned his head from side to side, as if this digging in the grave of memory was hateful. Dropping his eyes, he whispered: "I revealed secret political meetings. They were forbidden by the Russian government. Could I help it if her father was killed and her brother exiled? They defied the law, and deserved what they got. It was n't my fault." His tone was defensive rather than defiant, and he restlessly moved his foot over the floor.

The Tulkki groaned, and his spare figure crouched as if to spring at the man's throat; but his eyes fell on the Bible lying open on the table, and he stood erect, though his fingers unconsciously pressed together, as if something yielding lay within.

"They trusted you, Judas, and you sold them for a piece of gold. What else?" His eyes burned like coals.

"It was a long time ago—four years or more." Pekka spoke resentfully. "It was before we were married. Helmi had another lover—a Finnish patriot." His tone was derisive.

"Ah-h!" ejaculated the Tulkki.

"It was the night of the peasant ball at Abo. The Czar's manifesto revoking Finland's freedom had just come, and every one mourned. No one could dance, and he—Einor Pilvi—called a great meeting of the people. He had a silver tongue." Pekka shut his mouth stubbornly.

"And then," the Tulkki took up the tale, "a hundred men pledged themselves to go through cold and darkness, over ice-lakes and snow, through almost impenetrable forests, to get signatures from every man in the kingdom for an appeal to the Czar. The five least accessible provinces—those on the arctic circle—Pilvi kept for himself. This is history. Go on." The Tulkki's tone was commanding.

"The fool! On his way back, he—disappeared." Pekka surveyed his finger-nails shudderingly.

The Tulkki leaned toward him. "You did it!" he hissed. "You—you murderer!"

Pekka looked up suddenly. "I loved Helmi." A gleam of triumph crept into his eyes. "I won her." He raised his head and straightened his back. "I have a way. She thought the petition mine."

The Tulkki turned on his heel. "Come."

Pekka followed into the great room of the cathedral. The Tulkki took from the wall the historic flail of Finland—used until recent years to drive the devil from the church.

"Take off your coat!"

The young man obeyed.



"You punished others, punish now yourself." The Tulkki handed the flail to his visitor. Pekka received it in silence, his head bent toward the floor.

"Now strike!" On the Tulkki's face was no shadow of doubt or relenting.

Lightly Pekka threw the flail over his own shoulder, wincing when the swingle struck his back.

"Harder!" The self-constituted priest stood stern and erect, like an avenging minister of Heaven.

The guilty man struck harder.

With eyes that fastened guilt on Pekka's soul, the Tulkki watched his victim; saw him stumble over the floor, shrink at each blow, groan with pain, and at last shriek as the bruised back showed blood; then he said quietly:

"It is enough. The holy instrument of torture will better your fortunes. I have a friend who to-morrow will give you work. Beware that you sin not again."

He helped the suffering man to put on his coat and sent him out into the starry night. Then he locked the door, and, kneeling on the bare floor, wrestled long in prayer. When he rose his face glowed with the martyr's triumph. He removed his coat and shirt, took down the flail, and struck his own back. He wielded his weapon with a fierce joy; he laughed at the rain of blows, and only when the blood flowed freely did he desist. He returned to his room, put on the hair-cloth shirt, and opened his Bible.

A month passed. The Tulkki's face grew thinner from fasting, and he hobbled painfully in the wooden shoes. Then one night there came again a knock, and he bowed his head in supplication.

When he opened the door, it was Pekka who entered. The young man's habitual air of importance had given place to one of dread. He spoke in a loud tone, as if to bolster courage.

"I lost my position to-day and came back to you. Your medicine's bitter, but effective. Give me more, and send me again to the sunny valley of Success."

The Tulkki eyed him sharply. "I gave you opportunity to work for Finland and truth. Could not my pain keep you faithful? What have you done now?"

"Nothing—much." Pekka became sullen.

The Tulkki pointed a long forefinger. "Go!"

Pekka began to entreat. "It was really not much," but he spoke in a shaking voice. "Debts pressed. The Russians wanted Hakli. I found him. It's only one more man in the mines."

The Tulkki tightened his girdle of thongs. "Come!"

In the centre of the great cathedral floor he raised a trap-door of iron. Slowly by the dim light of the candle he descended the ladder-like steps, followed by his companion. They entered a long, low vault which rumor said possessed the remarkable power of preserving bodies. Rows of dead lay on either side.

Pekka shuddered.

The Tulkki stopped and held up the candle. "You must sleep in this box beside Eric. People say it was occupied by Sigismund of Sweden, but the devil stole him away in the night."

Pekka shrank away. "They look as if they might walk—or speak." His face was pale, his eyes roamed through the vault.

"Some say they do, though I never saw them. Get in!"

With shaking legs, Pekka climbed to his place in the empty coffin. He tried to lie down, but his teeth began to chatter. "I can't! I can't! Some of them might touch me. They have fingers of ice, I know. I heard a groan from the corner"—he pointed to a spot where the shadows were thickest. "Something's coming. I see it—let me out—let me out!" He sprang from the box, brushed past the Tulkki, and fled toward the stairs. Darkness caught him, and he ran back, shrieking. Throwing himself on his knees before the Tulkki, he implored mercy.

"Take me away! Take me out! Give me any punishment but this. I'll die if I stay here! I'll die, I'll die—I'll—die!" He covered his eyes with his fingers and leaned against his tormentor's knees.

The Tulkki shook him off, and swiftly brushed his garment where the man's head had touched. Then he raised his candle. The faces that he saw were pale, not ghastly. With their plump cheeks, their unshrunk eyes, they might almost have been alive.

"Cheer up, man," he said contemptuously. "They're only asleep. A light always burns in the mummies' vault; they'll waken soon." His voice grew solemn. "There's no other way. This is the Siberian mine of your soul. Through fear, you may win salvation."

The finality of his manner, the fatality in his quiet tones, stilled the shaken man. He crept back and lay down.

The Tulkki closed and locked the vault door and dropped the trap with a bang. A moment he stood listening, a smile on his face, then reached for the flail.

In the morning, the Tulkki, gaunt, haggard, and sleepless, smiling when the hair-cloth shirt rubbed his bleeding back, released the half-crazed Pekka. He led the trembling creature to his own bath, refreshed him with *ragbrod* and *tkalje*, the simplest food and drink of the people, then sent him forth to a good position. "Go! And remember that Finland is a strawberry, all other lands are bilberries."

Months passed and again Pekka came. He was illy clad and stag-

gered weakly. The Tulkki was wearing the long robes of a monk, his face was pale and emaciated.

"Why did you come? Could you not wait till to-morrow? Then I should have been gone. Why do you torment me?"

Pekka's eyes sought the floor. "Men bring it on themselves," he muttered. "They are traitors to conspire against the government. Russia is generous; she paid a large sum for my news. I meant to take Helmi and go to the States, but somehow the money is all gone. Nothing is left." He raised his eyes desperately and faced his judge.

The Tulkki gave him a look of contempt and turned away.

Pekka followed and seized his hand. "Once more, just once more! Put me to sleep with the dead," he shook in remembered terror; "or give me the flail for my back. When I have wept blood, my hands will be clean."

The Tulkki smiled a bitter, hopeless smile. "It is not sufficient. You have been tried and found wanting."

He took from the rafter a loaf of *halkaka*, the hard black bread of the people, and led the way out of the ascetic gloom of the cathedral chamber into the darkness of the night. Down a long avenue of sombre pines they passed to the shore of the river. The vastness of the wide canopy of heaven, unbroken by mountain or hill, increased the loneliness of the two weird men.

From a covered shed on the margin of the river, the Tulkki drew forth a boat. "Enter!"

The fierce gleam in his eyes fell on the already terrorized wretch, who shrank back.

"Get in! It is too late now for either to withdraw. I have done what I could. When I might have saved you, you would not. The hand of the Lord is on us both. Get in!"

Propelled by the monk's strong oar, they glided swiftly to the island where stood the ruined castle in which, centuries before, Eric the Fourteenth had been poisoned. The one window of Eric's cell was heavily barred, the floor was of earth, the walls were twelve feet thick. A rickety bed stood in one corner and near it a harness of chains.

The Tulkki lifted the harness and handed it to Pekka. "Put it on. Lock the handcuffs, the collar, the belt, the anklets, and give the keys to me."

Obediently Pekka turned the keys in the little locks and handed them one by one to his jailer. Silently, almost mournfully, the Tulkki received them. Placing the loaf and some *tkalje*, the black wine of the country, on the floor beside the bed, he turned to leave. Something in the act struck suspicion to the heart of the shivering wretch. His eyes grew wide, his face white. He moistened his lips with his tongue.

"Don't go!" he begged. "Don't make me stay here alone!"

The mournful look on the Tulkki's face deepened, but he made no reply.

Pekka began to tear at his bonds. "You're going to leave me here to die!" he shrieked. "I know it—I feel it! I'll never see Helmi again—or little Yrjo! I will not stay!"

He threw the weight of his body against the chains, but they rattled derisively. Beads of sweat stood on his forehead. He tried to slip off the hand-cuffs. "Give me the keys! Unlock this harness! Oh, you villain—coward—murderer!"

The Tulkki crossed himself. "The Lord has given to you the portion you have meted to others. His will be done."

"But not this—not this—not death—here—alone—starving—where no one will find me. Oh, I repent, I repent!" His nostrils dilated, and he convulsively opened and closed his mouth; his protruding eyeballs were fixed on his captor, then suddenly he fell back unconscious.

The Tulkki glided from the room and locked the door. Hardly knowing what he did, he drew a crucifix from his breast and kissed it.

The following morning, hardly able to stand, he completed his arrangements for leaving the cathedral. He said to his followers, "I have made a fault. I must go to the monastery."

As he turned for a last look at the room which had been his home for a year—his Gethsemane—a woman tapped gently on the door. Unwillingly the monk admitted her. Throwing back the coif which shaded her brow, she disclosed a thin, anxious face, dominated by bright blue eyes, intelligent and pleading. She looked like a frail spirit from the other world, made human by those wonderful eyes.

The monk started. Involuntarily he cried out, "Helmi Lallukka, what do you here?"

At the sound of his voice the woman gazed at him. Her steady glance pierced his disguise and reached to his very soul.

"Einor Pilvi! You here—you the Tulkki!" She moved near and looked up into his face. "You cruel? You a tormentor?" Then indignation came. "You brute! This is revenge!" She raised her head and, clasping one long, slender hand in the other, she burst out, "Where is my husband? I have come for him."

"Helmi," he spoke softly, and the yearning in his eyes made her turn away, "do you reproach me? After all these years, can you give me nothing but the word that is like a blow?" His caressing voice followed her, and she bent her head.

"It is not revenge, little Poulukka." He put his hand over his eyes to shut out her beautiful face. He must think how to spare her the knowledge of Pekka's guilt and at the same time make clear his inevitable punishment.

"It is not revenge. It is not my wish. It is the will of God. Do

you think I like it? Do you think I do not suffer?" He brought her the wooden shoes. "See, with these nails I have trod on my heart. With this girdle"—he showed the leathern thongs—"I have strangled hate. I have prayed that this deed might not be mine. Now I go to Valamo—to atone." He drew forth the crucifix and held it before her.

"Is Pekka—dead?" she breathed, her eyes dilating. "Have you killed him—the father of my boy?" She stood so close that he could hear the tumultuous beating of her heart.

"I have obeyed the will of the Highest. You will see him no more." He replaced the crucifix, and his full sleeve brushed her face. He heard her catch her breath, then felt her hand on his arm.

"Where is my husband? Tell me!"

"I cannot."

She staggered to a chair.

He followed. "Helmi"—in his eyes gleamed fanaticism fostered by solitude; he struggled for the fitting phrase—"Pekka's soul was black. He confessed it. He did penance. He fell. God is not mocked, we must bow to His will." He laid a gentle hand on her head, but she shook it off and rose.

"Einor"—she raised eyes of entreaty—"you loved me once. If then I had done you a wrong, would you have slain me? When we stood that night under the birch, while the stars twinkled and the cuckoo sang and you kissed me good-by for the last time, would you have killed me then?" The blood leaped to his cheeks, and he leaned toward her. "You would n't, you would n't! I see it in your face." She clasped her hands and raised them before him.

"Is the heart of the Lord less kind than yours?"

Her voice sank to a whisper and her eyes dropped. "Pekka has been good to me, and—I love him. If he has done ill, it was for me. I forgive him. Will not our God forgive?" She dropped her hands on her breast, but her face, holy with the effort of love, was upturned to heaven.

The Monk's cheeks caught the glow. He seized her hands and for a moment held them tenderly.

"You are right, O Dream of my Life! You have learned the wisdom of the angels. Here are the keys. You shall go to yonder old castle yourself and deliver him."

She smiled gratefully. "And you?"

"I go to Valamo. I will do penance for two."



# EVERY MILLIONAIRE HIS OWN EXPERT

*By Edgar Saltus*

CONTEMPORARY—more or less esteemed—complains that American artists prefer to live abroad, and that in purchasing their wares our millionaires are obliged to rely on expert assistance. After all, why not? Besides, though the complaint is entered, no explanation is made and no remedy offered. These omissions it is but a duty to supply. Here they are.

Local society is composed of two classes: the superselect and the rest of the world. The artist here is one of the rest of them. In France he is somebody. He has his crosses, of course, but they are those of the Legion of Honor.

These honorifics, of which the badge is a ribbon worn in the buttonhole, are very useful to those who have not got them. The last time I was in a Paris theatre I lost the check for my overcoat. I was asked what sort of coat it was. I said there was no ribbon in the buttonhole. It was produced instanter. It was the only one of the kind in the place. How I thanked God then that I was not an artist! Shortly I was even more grateful. I went to the Salon.

The Salon is the nursery of such art as Paris has and incidentally of the sin of it. You find there mile after mile of improbable nymphs, smeared with vaseline, pictured by pastry-cooks and punctuated, at leisurely intervals, by something not entirely worth turning your back on. A promenade before these delicacies is eminently hygienic. Two hours of it succeeded by massage is excellent for obesity. No doubt a bicycle is better, but that is no longer modish. Even otherwise, there should be something for every taste, however unfastidious. There should be something for millionaires.

And there is. Only, to get it, hired aid appears to be requisite. That is all wrong. Every millionaire should be his own expert. Nothing is easier. But two things are needful. One is ears; the other, eyes.

Ears first. Should a millionaire hear that an artist is regarded by his colleagues as an idiot and a brute, he may be sure that the man has

great talent. Should he hear him described as a chap of much promise, he may be equally sure that his wares cause no envy and never will.

To these ratings, an ability to differentiate between skies and grasses should be added, and, that accomplished, at a glance any millionaire can tell what's what.

If, for example, he sees a painting in which the sky is gray and the grass ditto, offhand he may decide that it is the work of an old master. If the sky is blue and the grass is green, then the artist is a young amateur. If the sky is green and the grass is blue, he is a realist. If the sky is yellow and the grass purple, he is a colorist. If the sky is black and the grass is red, he is an impressionist. If the grass is rectangular and the sky octagonal, he is a cubist. But if the grass is problematic and the sky such as never was seen before—or behind—he is a futurist and a genius.

These signs are infallible. Millionaires who memorize them may go abroad, they cannot go astray.



## THE CHERISHED

BY ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

**H**ER home was quaint and quiet,  
 Some distance from the street,  
 And o'er it vines ran riot,  
 Around were flowers sweet.

The older people called her  
 "A spinster" in a way  
 That made it seem a sad thing  
 To be alone and gray.

But one wee lad who loved her  
 (Her sugar cookies, too)  
 Thought God had made his spinsters  
 In number all too few!

# MR. WINKLER'S SIGNS

*By Hattie C. Vaughan*

“**N**OW, children,” said their father, as they gathered around the breakfast-table, “be careful to take up your knife first. Tommy!” All eyes turned, with varying expressions, to the little ten-year-old on whom the accusing gaze of the father rested. “There you go ag’in, right while I’m talkin’. Have I got to tell you every mornin’ ’bout that ’ere sign, ‘Fork first, day wasted’?”

“I did n’t mean to,” faltered the little fellow, shrinking under the reproof of the stern gray eye.

“It’s because he’s left-handed,” ventured Sadie.

“Well, that don’t mend matters none. See how the day was wasted yisterday. Everything he done did n’t ’mount to nothin’: let the hawks git two of the chickens he was watchin’, only got one sack of potatoes dug, and forgot to feed the pigs till he’d gone to bed, and I had to rout him out to do it. Now he’ll have another day like yisterday.”

The children knew that Tommy’s yesterday had contained many kinds of work other than those enumerated, but they were wise enough to keep their thoughts to themselves. Their father—“Bob” Winkler—was well informed on but two subjects: signs and money-getting. Superstition was his predominating trait, and he regulated his conduct by a code of signs from the time when, before putting his feet out of bed in the morning, he counted twelve to insure good luck that day, till the evening, when he allowed no one to sweep the floor, for fear “the devil might come in.” If he saw the new moon for the first time over his left shoulder, he believed that misfortune would attend him that month, and could be averted only by his turning around three times immediately after the unfortunate sight. Spilling salt was another unlucky omen, and signified a quarrel with some friend. Old Betsy, the woman who for a meagre sum ministered to this peculiar household, was never surprised to be called upon to “throw some salt on the fire” as a preventive. Indeed, after living so long a time with the family, she was nearly as well versed in signs as her master himself, and if she ignored any of them, it was without his knowledge.

Eight years before, Betsy had come to help through the fatal illness of Mrs. Winkler—that is, she was informed by the husband that it was fatal, and, indeed, so it proved, though old Betsy believed it would



have ended otherwise with more attention to remedies and less to superstitious observances. That occasion was the first and only time she ever openly combated the decision of her employer, and he then harshly informed her that he had heard a dog howl the first night of his wife's sickness, and that was a sure sign of death, so it was no use getting a doctor.

In person, Bob Winkler was tall and angular, with retreating forehead, long, pointed nose, and small, quick, searching eyes; in spirit, he had the obstinacy and assurance that usually accompany ignorance and superstition.

Breakfast over, and the children dispatched to their several duties, Winkler prepared to take up the task he liked best—planning how to add to his already large store of worldly possessions. Standing in the front yard, he had just struck his heel to the ground three times—counting as he did so—when his neighbor from down the valley came walking up the path. A stranger would probably have shown evidence of amazement at Bob's strange conduct, which would in no wise have been diminished by an explanation. Not so Mr. Quigley; with a comprehensive glance, he genially advanced.

"Hello, Bob!" he smiled. "Been hearing a turtle-dove coo, have you? Well, you *are* a great one! You always know how to ward off the evil, any way."

"Oh, no; not nigh always," declared Mr. Winkler. Then impressively, "Some signs can't be nothin' done with."

"I suppose that's true," acquiesced Mr. Quigley, and diplomatically added, "I'm beginning to believe some in signs myself. Now, yesterday at dinner I dropped my fork, and, as sure as anything, I had a gentleman visitor that same evening."

"Sure, sure," beamed Mr. Winkler, delighted at the apparent conversion of his neighbor. "It always comes true unless something happens."

"By the way, Winkler," returned Quigley, without a smile, "my visitor of whom I told you was Bainbridge—you know—the owner of 'The Pines.' He ran up your bid on my horse by considerable—offered me fifty dollars more. Says she may not be worth two hundred to any one else, but he likes that peculiar dun color, and insists on having her."

"But"—explosively—"you sold her to me!"

"Certainly, certainly," agreed Quigley; "that's what I told him; but I said you might change your mind and not come at the time set, and, if so, he could have her. Nothing wrong about that, is there?"

"No, that'll do, but," declared Winkler positively, "I'll be there with the money at nine o'clock, just as I said I would. 'Course, I could get the cash and take her now, but I 'lowed to make what I get for my colts to-day pay for the horse, and the feller that bought 'em don't come till night."

"Oh, that's all right, Winkler," blandly declared his neighbor, apparently not in the least displeased at the arrangement. "I just wanted to make sure that if you did n't come by nine I could let him have her."

"Well, if I'm not there, he *can* have her; but, as I said afore, I'll be there all right."

Mr. Quigley bowed a smiling assent and briskly walked away.

That evening old Betsy—small, alert, quick-stepping—passed down the street on her accustomed trip to the little village. Half way there she met Mr. Quigley. His habitual smile widened into still broader lines as he solicitously asked after her health, and deftly continued the conversation. Betsy was not loath to be entertained by so affable a gentleman.

Their talk finally became confidential, with the result that she promised to perform a service for him, thereby adding a small sum to her meagre income. They seemed to get considerable amusement out of the plan, whatever it was, and went their ways in smiling anticipation.

In the meantime Mr. Winkler sold his colts, received the money, and went to bed, in satisfied contemplation of the morrow's purchase, first being careful to place his shoes with the toes to the south, that no burglar might enter his room that night. Mr. Quigley, in his home, and old Betsy, in her small corner of the Winkler domicile, each also sought repose. Sleep—the "sleep of innocence," as it is called—does it come with its beneficence to none but the honorable, the fair-dealing? If so, future punishment is not necessary; the penalty would be exacted daily. When the X-ray is perfected to the extent of revealing thought, what a scrambling for fig-leaves there will be!

The next morning the Winkler household was astir early, although this was not unusual. All were busy with their morning duties—all but the father; he could afford to loiter, with all the others working. Old Betsy seemed especially active, hurrying here and there, yet apparently alert for any unusual sound.

She must have had a "premonition," for soon her expectancy was rewarded. Something unusual *was* going on upstairs: doors slammed, and heavy, quick steps passed back and forth through the corridors, finally coming down the stairs and back to the kitchen. Suddenly Mr. Winkler came rushing in, in a manner quite foreign to his usual methodical stride. The boys, who were out washing at the sink preparatory to eating breakfast, came hurrying in to see what was wrong; Sadie looked wonderingly out of the pantry, where she had been cutting bread; and old Betsy glanced quickly up, but continued to stir the mush—it was no affair of hers, any way.

"Now, this is a pretty mix-up!" exploded the master of the house, tramping round the room excitedly, white-faced and wild-eyed, his thin, wiry hair standing out in disorder. "This is the mornin' to go for that 'ere horse, and there on the carpet in front of my bedroom door was

## Mr. Winkler's Signs

a pair of scissors!" Here Winkler looked up at Betsy, as if she were the more comprehending. "You know that sign:

"A sharp-pointed instrument before your door,  
Don't venture out till after four,  
Or in the strife  
You'll lose your life.

"Now, what am I goin' to do about that 'ere horse, I'd like to know! I don't dast to go ag'in that sign—I've seen that tried too many times. Afore old man Hubbard got killed on the corn-sheller, they said he found a nail one mornin', and, in place of staying in the house all day, he just picked up the nail and went on to his work, and, sure enough, he got killed."

"But, Papa," timidly questioned Sadie, "he did n't die for a month after that, did he?"

"What does that matter?" demanded her father. "Who wants to die in a month, I'd like to know? I suppose that's what you learn to school. Then"—impressively—"I can tell you about your own mother. Afore she got sick, one day, we found a knife 'most to the pantry door. It must 'a' been meant for her, for she worked in there more than any one else. She would n't take warnin', and you see how it was."

"Papa, maybe some one dropped the scissors there by your door," ventured John.

"What's the difference how they got there? They got there for a warnin', did n't they? The thing to do now is to see what's to be done about that 'ere horse. I don't want to lose that, for it's a bargain at two hundred, let alone one-fifty, as I'm to pay, and Bainbridge'll not miss a chance like that. I told Quigley he could let it go at nine o'clock if I was n't there with the money."

"Breakfast's ready," announced Betsy bluntly, and it was a silent group that gathered around the table. Mr. Winkler had subsided into pondering silence, heedless, for once, of his children's conduct.

Suddenly pushing back his chair, he ordered:

"John, saddle Dick quick as you can. I want you to go over to Quigley's and take him the money for that 'ere horse. Now, move!"

"Yes, sir," assented John, mightily pleased to be sent on such an important errand and perhaps escape school.

Soon he returned, leaving Dick tied at the gate.

The money carefully counted and wrapped, his father himself put it into the lad's pocket, tempering his son's ardor by insisting on Betsy's sewing it in.

"Now," dictated he, "you say to Mr. Quigley that I don't dast to come out of the house to-day, but I've sent the money by you, and you are to lead the horse back with you. Now, hurry!"

After John was gone, his father walked the floor in a fever of impatience, looking first out of one window and then another. He even opened the door and peered out, and if all the dangers lurked there that his imagination conjured up, his long, pointed nose would have invited attack, for certainly it protruded into the tabooed territory.

As the minutes passed, Mr. Winkler grew more and more anxious. Why did not John come? What was keeping him so long? He looked at the clock again—only three minutes since he had looked before? It must surely have stopped. Then he hurried to the window again. Yes, there was a cloud of dust—that must be John; but was that another horse with him? He could not really tell.

Winkler only realized now how very much he wanted that horse. The thought of Mr. Bainbridge as possible owner was torture, and it was a genuine groan he uttered as he grasped the fact that John had failed. But possibly—the inspiring thought came—the horse was to be kept for him till to-morrow. He met his son at the door, and anxiously demanded:

“Well, what did he say? Where is the horse?”

“He says,” answered John, “that he’s very sorry, but he had promised Mr. Bainbridge that if you did n’t come by nine o’clock, the horse was his, and he asked if you were sick, and said that nothing but sickness was a reasonable excuse; and say, Pa, while I was out in the hall—he thought I’d gone home, but I was buttoning my coat up tight over the money—I saw him through the crack in the door—he winked at Mr. Bainbridge, and I heard him say, ‘I was sure the scissors would do the work.’”

The flush of anger that overspread Mr. Winkler’s face during the first part of his son’s speech gave way to a look of astonishment, then incredulity, and finally one of comprehension. Without a word, he turned and went to his room.

After four hours, in which not a sound was heard, he came out and went about his work as usual, but it was supposed that during that time of quiet thought he bade good-by to his lifelong delusions, for often after that he would say, with that pompous, assertive air habitual to him, “There’s nothin’ in signs; they can all be explained away somehow.”



# A LION WITH A FORKED TAIL

*By Edith Robinson*

“ I WISH to apply for membership in the Society of the Dames of the Arbela. My ancestor came from England in that ship, the first sent by the Massachusetts Bay Colony, landing in what was to be Boston, in the year 1630.” So stated Mrs. David Cameron, as her card had announced her to the President of the august society of Colonial antecedents.

“ May I ask your ancestor’s name ? ” queried Mrs. Fielding, with an air of reserve.

“ Smoothers,” answered the visitor promptly.

There was a moment’s pause, significant enough for an uncomfortable flush to rise to Mrs. Cameron’s face. She was a pretty little woman, dressed quietly and tastefully in a brown tailor-made suit.

“ I do not recall the name on our ancestral list of membership,” answered Mrs. Fielding smoothly. “ The Society of the Arbela Dames,” she went on, with icy distinctness—“ possibly you have not been informed as to the requirements for membership—is composed, not merely of ladies whose ancestors may, it is true, have come over in the *Arbela*; but of those only whose forebears were of illustrious birth. ‘ Dame,’ as you doubtless know, is a word significant in itself of quality, in distinction from ‘ goodwife,’ a term applied to women of the laboring classes.” As she spoke, her glance strayed to a small framed parchment occupying the central space in the wall over the mantel-shelf. “ My coat-of-arms,” she explained urbanely, as her guest’s eyes followed her own.

“ I have n’t my glasses; I’m quite near-sighted,” returned Mrs. Cameron, peering, with much interest, at the elaborate blazonry.

“ James Smethherst,” returned Mrs. Fielding, the value of each syllable rendered by her most distinct enunciation. “ He was the scion of a proud and ancient family. We have had his lineage traced far back in the annals of English history. No expense was spared in the search. You perceive the device ? ”

“ A lion with a curly tail, dancing on his hind legs,” assented Mrs. Cameron.

"Lion rampant, with a forked tail," corrected Mrs. Fielding, her voice taking an edge.

"I did n't know the difference," answered Mrs. Cameron, in a humble tone. "If I should meet a lion with a forked tail going home, I should n't know how to speak to him any differently from just a common, every-day lion!"

Mrs. Fielding looked at her guest sharply, but was unable to decide whether or not there was ridicule of the Smethherst lion in Mrs. Cameron's tones. The latter went on:

"My grandfather emigrated from New England to Western Pennsylvania; before that, our family had lived in New England clear back to the time of the first settlement. We used to talk so much about New England in Paradise! As soon as we had money enough, I persuaded Mr. Cameron to come home, as we always called it. We are going to build, but I thought I would not wait to get acquainted till I had a big house. My landlady—we're boarding at Mrs. Jessup's—said that nobody was anybody in Millbank unless she belonged to the Arbela Dames. I don't know that I was so anxious to belong to an exclusive social organization," continued Mrs. Cameron frankly, "but I felt that as I was deeply rooted in New England, it would be beautiful to meet others who loved her as I did. It would be like one big family—feeling that her soil and institutions were part of our rightful inheritance, won by our own great-grandfathers from the savage and the wilderness; to be handed down to our children and our children's children, intact, perhaps with increase;" the little woman's voice trembled a little with the last words. "New England has always seemed to me the centre and source of the power of this great country," she added, "the storage battery for the rest of the nation. How much more strongly must you feel it, who have always lived here!"

"I have acquainted you with the conditions of membership in the Arbela Dames," said the President icily, as her guest took leave.

"Fancy any one with a name like Smoothers applying for admission," said Mrs. Fielding at the next meeting of the "Dames."

"I understand from my cousin, Maria Hastings—she boards at Mrs. Jessup's, you know—that Mrs. Cameron's father, although himself a mere 'puddler,' whatever that may be, had her carefully educated," hazarded Mrs. Morley, the secretary. "Mr. Cameron came from Scotland, and is a graduate of St. Andrew's University. He began life as a common miner, but soon acquired a competence. They seem rather desirable people," she added tentatively.

"It takes more than one generation to make a lady," returned Mrs. Fielding, in her loftiest tones. "We, approved of gentle blood, must see to it that the standard of true gentility is maintained, or society would sink to the level of the Smootherses!"

"It is all very well for Susan Fielding to have a leading voice in the society's affairs—I know she's up in Parliamentary laws and has a 'presence' that enables her to preside well," said Mrs. Morley afterwards, to one or two other members of the "Dames" less affected than others by the President's lofty lineage. "It's all right for her to use her coat-of-arms on her china, her stationery, and her automobile; but when she tries to run all Millbank on the strength of that lion with a forked tail, I think it's time some one reminded her that in a country like America such distinctions are out of place and in bad taste." No one, however, seemed ready to take upon herself the proposed task, and the lion, unrebuked, continued to prance and curl his tail—occasionally to show his teeth—in the little social world of Millbank.

For a day or two after her call at "Herst Hall," Mrs. Cameron preserved an unwonted silence. Then, one evening, when she and her husband were alone in their own room, she broached the subject with which her mind was evidently filled. David Cameron had never refused a request of the little woman who had married him, he was wont to declare, "with a pick on his shoulder."

"Everybody speaks so reverentially of Mrs. Fielding's coat-of-arms," she began. "You heard Miss Hastings say, at dinner, that it was the only one in town? We never heard that sort of thing mentioned in Paradise; but I suppose, in an older society, like Millbank, things are different. David, I should so like to have the Smoothers coat-of-arms carved over the drawing-room mantel-shelf in our new house! To be sure, we have n't it at present. But Miss Hastings said there were people in England who would look up your family, and it nearly always turned out that you had an ancestor in the nobility; if you could afford it," she added, rather ambiguously.

"If you want a bigger house, a new automobile, a diamond tiara, or an aeroplane, you shall have it," returned David. "But as for a coat-of-arms, we left all that on the other side of the Atlantic. Your ancestor of the *Arbela* came to this country, like many another good man of his day and our own, to better his condition. But as to 'family'—in the sense we use the word in the old country—there were few of the early immigrants who had the right to a coat-of-arms that a College of Heraldry would admit. It's a bit ridiculous to hear all this stuff and nonsense about one's family 'going back' three hundred years, when there are those in Scotland who can count three thousand," said the Scotchman, scorn in his usual even tones.

"It seems to be only a matter of money," murmured Mrs. Cameron, loth to give up the pleasing idea.

"Quite so," answered her husband dryly. "The number of Americans descended from the English nobility is increasing yearly. Those

rough early days brought out splendid sterling qualities in our grand-sires and granddames," he went on in a different tone, "that it is a good thing to recall and honor, as all these 'Revolutionary' and patriotic societies doubtless aim to do; but an enormous amount of snobbery has got mixed up in the business, and it strikes me that the good ladies of Millbank are on the wrong tack in their glorification of their Colonial sires," concluded the Scotsman.

"But one can't be in society here unless she is an 'Arbela Dame,'" urged Mrs. Cameron, faintly impressed by the sterling good sense of her husband's words, but loth to surrender her social aspirations.

"Then we'll stay outside," answered David composedly. "The Jim Smoothers I knew—your father," he went on—"was a brave, honest man, who never took his hand from the plough nor looked back once he had set it to the furrow. I've no doubt that that first Jim Smoothers, who landed hereabouts in the year 1630, was of the same stuff—else he could scarce have sustained himself in a new country; nor his family prospered and multiplied. He was the sort of man this nation was built up upon, not the run-out scions of nobility. I'm proud to have married into the stock!"

"That's a prouder thing for me to hear than to own a whole menagerie of lions with forked tails," answered his wife firmly.

A few afternoons later, she called upon Mr. Bates. Mrs. Bates had just been taken to the hospital for an emergency operation. The threatened danger was over, but it would be some time before she would be at home again. Margery Bates, who was about to graduate from the Grammar School, would have to forego the muslin frock she was to have worn on that occasion. The child was evidently struggling with the greatest disappointment of her life, to which a tender conscience forbade expression. Mr. Bates, still dazed from the late crisis, was evidently helpless before this minor emergency. Mrs. Cameron would attend to the purchase of the little frock; and—she was boarding and had much leisure time on her hands—it would afford her real pleasure if she were allowed to make Margery's dress herself. She left behind a happy little face—and the knowledge that the doctor's bill would press less heavily.

A little later she said:

"There's no need of that child's being a cripple!"—although Johnny Mason, the grocer's son, had hobbled from birth. And only waiting his mother's consent, she whisked the boy to the city in her automobile in time to have the new operation performed by the wonderful foreign surgeon in his brief Eastern visit. And now Johnny was looking forward to joining, some time, the school Eleven!

"There is something so startling, so suggestive of the log cabin and the schooner-wagon, in her methods," said Mrs. Fielding languidly.



"Why, I know to a certainty that she did'n't even wait for Mrs. Bates or Mrs. Mason to call first!"

The minister and his wife, and Dr. and Mrs. Drummond, as in duty bound, had promptly called upon the new-comers; but for a time, the majority of people in Millbank held aloof. The President of the "Arbela Dames" had distinctly pronounced against them, and Mrs. Fielding's example had, for a time, many followers among those of "gentle blood." Nor was it without influence beyond that charmed circle. Time had been when "social distinctions" was an unknown phrase in Millbank. It was an old-fashioned town, where everybody knew everybody else, attended the same church, and shared one another's troubles and rejoicings in a neighborly, whole-hearted way. Now Mrs. Fielding and Mrs. Morley bowed distantly to Mrs. Jessup and Mrs. Mason; and referred to them and others as "tradespeople"—another term of recent introduction in Millbank.

It had been an unusually busy season with the Dames. Several important "papers" dealing with "Kitchen Utensils of Colonial Times" and "Head-dresses of Our Foremothers" had been prepared with great care and laborious research; and the restoration of certain tombstones in the old burying-ground had borne heavily upon the Society's funds. It was therefore perfectly natural and excusable that the "Dames" could not help in the doctor's scheme of ridding a certain poor district within the precincts of the town of mosquitoes by scientific methods of sanitation and drainage; or that the contribution sent by them to the Chelsea sufferers should be of the meagrest. It was said that Mr. Cameron's check to Dr. Drummond covered the entire expense of the "mosquito campaign"; while Mrs. Cameron, not content with her generous response to the minister's appeal, devoted herself personally to discovering and relieving the wants of the worthy and needy among those made homeless or destitute by the great fire.

The Camerons' house was finished at last, irreproachable in the finest Colonial architecture. Invitations for the housewarming had been issued, and the generous hospitality of host and hostess had not stayed within the charmed limits of "society."

"Mrs. Cameron seems to be a person impervious to gentle hints," said the President of the Arbela Dames thoughtfully. "So many parvenus have worked their way into good society by the mere possession of money that it behooves us of gentle blood to guard the inheritance of our forebears." Several Dames had come to afternoon tea at "Herst Hall" to discuss a situation that was generally felt to be a social crisis.

"Some of the ladies speak as though they would like to see the inside of the new house. They say it's magnificent," said Mrs. Morley.

"There is something that cannot be bought or sold," returned

Mrs. Fielding solemnly, raising her eyes to the blazonry over the mantel-piece. "Whatever may be the course of the other Dames, my decision is made. I shall send my 'regrets.'"

Notwithstanding this example, a goodly company had come together in the great house, and though at first there were surprised or inquiring looks, as one Dame greeted another, it became apparent, ere long, that the President was the only member of the Society who was absent! An atmosphere of cordial good-will pervaded the rooms, "social distinctions" were apparently forgotten, and everybody seemed to be having an unaffected "good time," just as in the old simple days of neighborliness and good will.

"Mrs. Cameron was so kind with her new books and magazines when Mary was ill!" "After Harry's accident, she sent fruit nearly every day!" "No one had ever thought before that the factory steam-whistle disturbed Mother when she had nervous prostration," said the little dressmaker. "Mrs. Cameron had it stopped, and Mother said it was like being transported to a new beautiful world of rest and peace!" "I don't know what I should have done last winter when I was suffering so from insomnia," said Miss Stone, the school-teacher, "if Mrs. Cameron had not come to the rescue. 'Just moving across the street is a help sometimes,' she said, 'when one cannot have a more radical change.' I did n't feel that I could afford a real vacation, but I'm sure those weeks in that beautiful room at Mrs. Jessup's, and the rides in Mrs. Cameron's automobile, did me just as much good."

By and by, whence starting none could say, the words were heard with growing frequency: "Have you seen——" and the speaker's eyes directed to one end of the room, where—the sole ornament of the wall over the mantel-shelf—was a small, modestly framed script, bearing the superscription:

List of the passengers of the *Arbela*, of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, landing at Shawmut, afterwards Boston, May 16, 1630.

A name on the appended list was outlined in red. As one after another of the company looked at the record, an expression of blank amazement was followed by one of incredulity, of questioning, not unmixed, in certain cases, with amusement.

It was Mrs. Drummond who asked, at last, the question that was hovering on the lips of all.

"My dear Mrs. Cameron," said she, "may I ask if the name in red on the passenger list is that of your ancestor on the *Arbela*?"

"Yes; James Smothers, Servant," answered the hostess.

"Smeth-herst?" repeated Mrs. Drummond, enunciating the syllables with sharp distinctness.

"Is that the way you pronounce it in the East?" queried Mrs.

Cameron innocently. "We called it 'Smoothers' in Paradise. "S-m-e-t-h-h-e-r-s-t,' Smoothers," she spelt. "Oh!"

Her amazed comprehension was repeated in the expression of the faces about her. It did not take long for the astounding situation to be patent to everybody in the room. There it was, in black and white, an incontrovertible fact, needing no genealogical expert to confirm. The despised and plebeian "Smoothers," the exalted "Smethherst," "Servant" and the "scion of an ancient and noble family," were one and the same person!

"Why did n't somebody ever think to look up the passenger-list of the *Arbela*, and see who was who?" queried the Secretary of the "Dames," addressing the company, gentle and simple, impartially. "We've written all sorts of papers about things that might or might not have happened—most probably did n't," she interpolated, with damaging frankness—"but no one ever thought of condescending to take an interest in the plain facts." Somehow, honesty was in the air in the Camerons' big house.

"At any rate, my spinning-wheel"—it was in her "drawing-room," formerly "parlor"—"is the real thing, if it did n't come over in the *Arbela*," murmured Mrs. Mason, holding her head a little higher.

"And so is my sampler," added Mrs. Jessup, who had also been denied admission into the ranks of the "Dames." She always referred to the sampler as the work of her "ancestress." Everybody in town remembered Aunt Mirandy Jessup, but in the prevailing mania for the Colonial, even one's great-aunt took brevet rank.

Of course the incident was not long in reaching the ears of Mrs. Fielding. A day or two after the Camerons' reception, the big red automobile with the emblazoned panels was seen before the newcomers' door.

"I was so interested to hear of the pleasant little discovery of the other evening," said the President of the "Arbela Dames" in her most dulcet tones. "Of course, in the levelling conditions of a new country, it is not difficult to understand how the descendants of a common ancestor should become of all sorts and conditions of men. A noble name is easily corrupted; and in the vernacular of a Western town, Smethherst readily became Smoothers! As your distant kinswoman"—she paused impressively—"I wish to ask the privilege of seconding your petition for membership in the 'Arbela Dames,' as one approved of gentle blood."

"I withdraw the application," returned Mrs. Cameron composedly. "I thank you for your offer," she added, with gentle dignity, "but I prefer to approve myself of gentle blood by other evidence than partnership in a lion with a forked tail."



# WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND  
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

## STATE LIFE INSURANCE

**T**HE State of Wisconsin has embarked in the business of selling life insurance, and the Legislatures of a few other States are considering a similar move.

There is, perhaps, no public service which a State government is less calculated to render effectively, nor one for which there is less need of State activity. In the past twenty years the number of Legal Reserve or Regular Companies has more than doubled. The fact that keen and unrestricted competition is maintained among them may be accepted as a guarantee of efficiency and economy in their management.

The advocacy of State life insurance is based on several fallacies, the chief of which is that an organization controlled by the government can adequately furnish the people with this almost universal necessity at less cost than can a private company. The assumption is that by employing State officials to write the business without remuneration, enough will be saved to make the rates attractive to the general public. The experiences of the governments of Great Britain and New Zealand in this field of endeavor indicate the futility of any such expectation.

What may be predicted of Wisconsin's experiment is that little business will be done by the State, and that what is done will be unsatisfactory to the insured. This because the history of life insurance proves conclusively that no considerable amount of it can be written without solicitation, and because it is a highly technical business which may not be intrusted to unpaid and untrained mail-carriers and factory-inspectors without certainty of mistakes and misunderstandings. For

this reason the business is likely to lapse at a wasteful rate, especially as no one will have a personal interest in keeping it in force.

But, even though the State avoids the payment of commissions, it must incur the expense of management, of medical examinations and distribution. Two obviously unfair measures—general taxation, or a levy upon the policy-holders of ordinary companies—may be employed to relieve the State's patrons of the burden.

Three other undesirable features attach to State life insurance. The risks are likely to be largely confined to one locality, a distinctly disadvantageous condition. The State does not guarantee its own policies, a serious defect in the protection. The management is liable to change on account of political influence, as the recent dismissal of Commissioner Eckern, after a few months' service, showed.

FORBES LINDSAY

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## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PLAY-GROUNDS.

THE pursuit of happiness—set forth in the great Declaration as one of the three reasons for instituting a new government—found slight official recognition in this country before the inception of the play-ground movement, about a decade ago.

It was the hard lot of city children, "with no place to play," that first drew attention to the significance between misdirected amusements and juvenile crime. Analysis of the court records made clear that the stifling of the child's normal instincts led directly to vice and mental delinquency. The next step was obvious, and within the past few years provision for public recreation has become as distinctly a municipal function as the supply of water or policing the streets.

So rapid, in fact, has been the progress of the play-ground movement that it seems not unfair to compare it to a beneficent conflagration, spreading from city to city. The annual survey for 1912, taken by the Play-Ground and Recreation Association of America, showed 533 cities having well-developed programmes of municipal recreation. This is the growth of about five years, as in 1907 less than a score of the principal cities had organized play-centres.

A new profession has developed along with the play-centres—that of the play-expert. In the 533 cities reported upon, there were 2,094 regularly supervised play-grounds, requiring the service of 5,320 expert play-leaders. Courses of training for this work have been established in various institutions, and the new profession has appealed to many college graduates, especially women. Social, no less than athletic, efficiency tells for success, as story-telling and folk-dances are as important as the physical competitions. A peculiar skill is required to direct the large groups of children under conditions quite reversed from those of

the school-room. Where play-centres were opened without this expert supervision, they seem to have accomplished little, and in some instances became a public nuisance.

Men and women of leisure, in various communities, have volunteered and given much time to the direction of the children in their play. But it is the skilled worker who must be relied upon here, as elsewhere, to secure permanent results. The Recreation Secretary is now, in most cities, the virtual creator of a new department. He devises the comprehensive plan for the entire city, supervises those in charge of the different play-centres, and carries the work forward. The time is not distant when the Director of Public Recreation will be as important a figure as the Director of Public Safety.

At the beginning of the play-ground movement, the financial support came chiefly from private sources. In recent years both municipal and State authorities have approved bond-issues or specific forms of taxation, taking over most of the burden. Chicago has spent about \$11,000,000 most judiciously, equipping small parks and recreation centres with elaborate gymnasias, social and lecture halls, as well as industrial gardens and summer camps. New York is credited with having spent \$15,000,000 within ten years upon small parks and play-ground sites, not all, perhaps, as effectively.

The annual budget of Boston for all forms of public recreation is said now to exceed \$1,000,000; Philadelphia and St. Louis, including their expenditures for parks, swimming pools, and public music, are virtually as generous. Among the cities that have authorized bond-issues of \$1,000,000 or more for recreation purposes are Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Seattle, and Portland, Oregon. Even cities of the size of Grand Rapids, Michigan, are expending two to three hundred thousand dollars annually for this purpose.

A conservative estimate of the local expenditures throughout the country for play-grounds and official recreation since 1907 is said to be \$100,000,000. Those who remember that in the early stage of the movement "Tag Days" seemed essential to raise a few thousand dollars for play-grounds can well judge how great a conflagration a "little fire" has kindled.

WILLIAM HALE BECKFORD



## SOLITUDE

BY J. J. O'CONNELL

**B**Y day and night I walk the crowded ways.  
Upon the surging throng I cast my gaze,  
The human stream flows on—I feel alone.  
And not one face lights up to meet my own.

# THE AMERICAN RAILWAY INDUSTRY

*By Edward Sherward Mead, Ph.D.*

## ARTICLE I.

**G**REATEST of all sources of investment is the American Railway. For forty years the transportation companies of the United States have poured into the world's investment market a flood of securities. The savings of Europe and America have found their largest single outlet in railway stocks and bonds. The volume of railway securities now outstanding presents a vast total. Of railway stocks there were outstanding at the close of 1911 \$8,582,000,000; of railway bonds, \$10,091,000,000. It is the largest single contribution to the world's savings. If we except the value of land, it exceeds, in size and value, all other forms of investment in the United States combined.

Of recent years railway investments have declined in favor. Other bonds and stocks have entered the competition; public hostility has been aroused against the railways. They have been subjected to severe regulation, denied the right to advance their rates, in many cases forced to reduce them. Long enjoying a monopoly of the investment market, railway directors have hesitated to meet the demand for high-interest bonds. They have halted and hesitated, postponing the inevitable surrender to the demand for securities paying more than four per cent.

We have here an explanation of the decreasing output of railway securities in recent years, and this, in turn, explains the slow progress of railway construction during the same period. Observe the figures. From 1880 to 1890 our railway mileage increased from 93,262 to 166,703; from 1890 to 1900, although this was a period of panic and depression, drouth and scanty harvests, the growth in mileage was 166,703 to 194,262; from 1900 to 1910, however, a period of enormous growth in the lines, the railway system increased 48,845 miles. In 1911 only 3,465 miles were constructed.

This small growth in mileage does not mean that American railroads are standing still. During the last decade they have spent, measured by the increase in their liabilities, \$6,719,000,000 upon their properties. The

expenditure has, however, been rather devoted to improving facilities than to building new lines. Immense tunnels, the Pennsylvania and New York Central in New York, the Northwestern at Chicago, costly projects of electrification, such as that carried through by the New Haven and Hartford, replacement of wooden by steel equipment, and large additions to equipment have absorbed available railway capital.

In recent years, from 1903 to 1907, 14,424 locomotives were put into service, and 536,942 freight and passenger cars. Each year's additions, moreover, are of larger locomotives and cars of greater cost and capacity. Vast sums have also been spent on the purchase of costly city real estate required for larger terminal yards. Track elevation, installation of block signals, reduction of grades, and elimination of curves have all taken substantial shares of railway funds.

The American railway industry, for its size, and considering the large number of companies operating it, is the soundest and strongest business in the world. Observe first the size of the plant and personnel: mileage, 359,000; cars, 2,408,589; locomotives, 65,310; employees, 1,699,420. Over 10,000,000 Americans draw their living from the railroads; and the business which is conducted by this great organization is worthy of it. In 1912 American railroads transported 1,817,562,049 tons of freight and 1,019,658,605 passengers. Expressed on a mileage basis, these figures are even more striking. Over every mile of American railroad in 1910 were carried 1,071,086 tons of freight and 138,169 passengers. This immense business was done, moreover, at a very moderate cost to the shipper and passenger, a fact proven by an average freight rate of .748 cent, and a passenger rate of 2.22 cents. No other industry, moreover, performs its service or furnishes its goods at so small a margin of profit. The passenger business, in the opinion of the best informed railway men, is operated without profits, and out of the three-fourths of a cent received for each ton carried one mile, it is a safe estimate that not more than one-fourth cent represents profit.

In spite of these small profits on each unit of business handled, the railway industry is highly profitable, owing to the great volume of the traffic. For the year ending December 31, 1911, the total profits of 246,655 miles of railroad operated were \$1,085,951,595, or, deducting taxes, \$972,237,934. The railway industry, on a gross business of about three billion dollars (\$2,848,468,965), makes a profit of nearly one billion dollars. A business which can show one dollar in three as profit over the cost of operation is properly characterized as the most profitable business in the United States. Even the United States Steel Corporation, generally recognized to be the most profitable of the large industrials, now that the Standard Oil and American Tobacco Companies have been dissolved, in its best year, 1907, on a gross business of \$757,014,767 showed \$177,201,561 of profits.



And this introduces us to the second characteristic of the railway industry, which especially commends railway securities to the investor. Not only is the railway business profitable, but its prosperity is continuous and its profits are therefore subject to very moderate fluctuations. In 1908, the year following one of the severest panics in our history, railway profits declined only 6.2 per cent., and in 1909 they more than regained the loss. In good times and in bad, railway profits not only hold their own, but tend strongly to advance. The reason for this movement of profits it is important to understand. The profits of a business depend primarily upon the demand for its products. If that demand is sporadic and intermittent, the business will be, as Andrew Carnegie said of steel, either "a prince or a pauper." If the demand is continuous, however, fluctuating within narrow limits, and always tending upward, and if the business shows a large margin over the cost of operation, we have what is from the investor's standpoint an ideal situation. Such a condition prevails in the railway industry.

There is a wide difference between the profits of railway transportation companies and manufacturing companies, the instability of whose profits we have just been considering. The demand for the products of a single industry is limited to a small portion of the total number of commodities produced. The demand for railway transportation, on the other hand, is represented by every commodity of commerce. The demand for transportation corresponds to the supply of commodities. The broader is the demand for the products or service of an industry, the more stable are its earnings. A large and diversified demand is but slightly affected by any influence, but if this influence is left to operate by itself upon the price of a commodity or service, it produces wide fluctuations. The withdrawal of ten thousand gallons from a standpipe appreciably affects the level of water in the pipe. Withdraw the same amount from the reservoir, and the water level is scarcely affected. This analogy may be applied to explain the stability of the demand—for railway transportation as compared with the demand for coal, sugar, or iron. The railroad company is patronized by the producers of every commodity. What it loses in freight earnings from a decline in price or supply of one group of products, is often more than regained by advances in others. The manufacturing company, on the other hand, by producing, at the most, only a small number of products, has usually less compensation for a decrease in demand. Its earnings usually, therefore, show a larger effect from a fall in prices.

The classified freight traffic of the Pennsylvania Railroad, for example, includes thirty-six general classes of freight, some of which comprise thousands of individual articles, and each one of which contributes to the \$153,564,528 of gross earnings which the company earned in 1909. Each one of these commodities is acted on by a variety of influences

which affect its demand or supply, and which, through these factors, influence the profits of its producers. The production of anthracite coal is reduced by a strike. As a result, the demand for bituminous coal is increased. A failure of the corn crop reduces the profits of the farmer and rancher. A cut in duties decreases the profits of the manufacturer, and a change in internal revenue duties affects the profits of the grower and distiller. Prices and profits are in a state of constant change. No manufacturing industry can be certain of its earnings a year hence.

From these disturbing influences, however, the railway company is, to a large extent, protected. The great variety of its traffic prevents rapid changes in the gross amount. What is lost on one commodity is often regained on another, and the total tonnage is not reduced. This is well illustrated by a comparison of the gross earnings of the Pennsylvania Railroad with those of the United States Steel Corporation. The one is the largest railroad system in the United States and one of the best managed, and the other is the largest and one of the best managed and best organized industrials. The steel corporation, moreover, manufactures a great variety of products, so that its demand would naturally be more stable than those of steel manufacturing companies whose profits are more narrowly specialized. It has also been able to maintain for long periods stable prices for most of its products, and its supremacy in the steel trade since its organization has only recently been challenged. Competition, until the winter of 1909, has very slightly disturbed it, and yet the fluctuation of its gross earnings, compared with the Pennsylvania Railroad, which appears in the following table, where the figures are stated in millions of dollars, is extreme. The figures for the Pennsylvania Railroad are as follows, stated in millions of dollars:

1902 .....	112
1903 .....	122
1904 .....	118
1905 .....	133
1906 .....	148
1907 .....	164
1908 .....	136

and for the United States Steel Corporation as follows:

1902 .....	500
1903 .....	536
1904 .....	444
1905 .....	585
1906 .....	696
1907 .....	757
1908 .....	482

The percentages of fluctuations from one year to another in the two companies are as follows:

	Pennsylvania Railroad	United States Steel Corporation
1902 .....	15.15	....
1903 .....	8.93	7.20
1904 .....	3.28	17.16
1905 .....	12.71	31.76
1906 .....	11.28	18.97
1907 .....	10.81	8.76
1908 .....	17.08	36.33

Broadly speaking, the distinction which has been indicated between railway and manufacturing industries holds good wherever it is applied. The demand for the transportation services offered by some railways, especially those which depend exclusively upon iron and steel or kindred industries, is more irregular than those of some manufacturing companies—for example, gas or electric lighting companies or companies supplying certain food products which are regarded as necessaries of life. But as between the two classes of corporations, railroads and industrials, the comparison of stability of demand favors the railroad, primarily because of the breadth of the demand for its products.

The railway industry is also distinguished by its comparative freedom from competition. What manufacturing industry has vainly tried to accomplish by unlawful combination, the railroads have achieved without conscious effort, solely by virtue of their economic position. This advantage will be the subject of the next article in the series.



## KNOCKS AND ANSWERS

IT is hard lines to hear a witty fellow say the very thing you have been trying to.

Masculine: to tease.

Feminine: to teas.

THE thoughtful are amazed at the preponderance of good in the World.

GOOD resolutions are useful. They teach us how difficult it is to remould ourselves.

MANY dream of Happiness whilst the starry-eyed visitor knocks unheard at their doors.

*Minna Thomas Antrim*





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