

THE
PARLOR
CAR
W.D. HOWELLS

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The Parlor Car

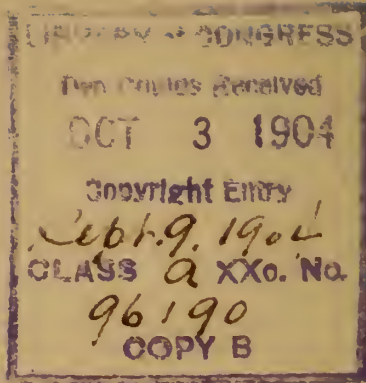
A F A R C E

By W. D. Howells



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THE PARLOR CAR.



FARCE.

SCENE: *A Parlor Car on the New York Central Railroad. It is late afternoon in the early autumn, with a cloudy sunset threatening rain. The car is unoccupied save by a gentleman, who sits fronting one of the windows, with his feet in another chair; a newspaper lies across his lap; his hat is drawn down over his eyes, and he is apparently asleep. The rear door of the car opens, and the conductor enters with a young lady, heavily veiled, the porter coming after with her wraps and travelling-bags. The lady's*

air is of mingled anxiety and desperation, with a certain fierceness of movement. She casts a careless glance over the empty chairs.



CONDUCTOR. "Here's your ticket, madam. You can have any of the places you like here, or," — glancing at the unconscious gentleman, and then at the young lady, — "if you prefer, you can go and take that seat in the forward car."

MISS LUCY GALBRAITH. "O, I can't ride backwards. I'll stay here, please. Thank you." The porter places her things in a chair by a window, across the car from the sleeping gentleman, and she throws herself wea-

rily into the next seat, wheels round in it, and lifting her veil gazes absently out at the landscape. Her face, which is very pretty, with a low forehead shadowed by thick blond hair, shows the traces of tears. She makes search in her pocket for her handkerchief, which she presses to her eyes. The conductor, lingering a moment, goes out.

PORTER. "I'll be right here, at de end of de cah, if you should happen to want anything, miss," — making a feint of arranging the shawls and satchels. "Should you like some dese things hung up? Well, dey 'll be jus' as well in de chair. We 's pretty late dis after-

noon ; more'n four hours behin' time. Ought to been into Albany 'fore dis. Freight train off de track jus' dis side o' Rochester, an' had to wait. Was you goin' to stop at Schenectady, miss ?”

MISS G., absently. “ At Schenectady ?” After a pause, “ Yes.”

PORTER. “ Well, that's de next station, and den de cahs don't stop ag'in till dey git to Albany. Anything else I can do for you now, miss ?”

MISS G. “ No, no, thank you, nothing.” The porter hesitates, takes off his cap, and scratches his head with a murmur of embarrassment. Miss Gal-

braith looks up at him inquiringly, and then suddenly takes out her porte-monnaie and fees him.

PORTER. "Thank you, miss, thank you. If you want anything at all, miss, I'm right dere at de end of de cah." He goes out by the narrow passage-way beside the smaller enclosed parlor. Miss Galbraith looks askance at the sleeping gentleman, and then, rising, goes to the large mirror, to pin her veil, which has become loosened from her hat. She gives a little start at sight of the gentleman in the mirror, but arranges her head-gear, and returning to her place looks out of the window

again. After a little while she moves about uneasily in her chair, then leans forward and tries to raise her window ; she lifts it partly up, when the catch slips from her fingers and the window falls shut again with a crash.

Miss G. “O *dear*, how provoking ! I suppose I must call the porter.” She rises from her seat, but on attempting to move away she finds that the skirt of her polonaise has been caught in the falling window. She pulls at it, and then tries to lift the window again, but the cloth has wedged it in, and she cannot stir it. “Well, I certainly think this is beyond endurance ! Porter !

Ah, — porter ! O, he'll never hear me in the racket that these wheels are making ! I wish they'd stop, — I — ”

The gentleman stirs in his chair, lifts his head, listens, takes his feet down from the other seat, rises abruptly, and comes to Miss Galbraith's side.

MR. ALLEN RICHARDS. “ Will you allow me to open the window for you ? ” Starting back, “ Miss Galbraith ! ”

MISS G. “ Al — Mr. Richards ! ”
There is a silence for some moments, in which they remain looking at each other ; then,

MR. RICHARDS. “ Lucy — ”

MISS G. "I forbid you to address me in that way, Mr. Richards."

MR. R. "Why, you were just going to call me Allen!"

MISS G. "That was an accident, you know very well, — an impulse —"

MR. R. "Well, so is this."

MISS G. "Of which you ought to be ashamed to take advantage. I wonder at your presumption in speaking to me at all. It's quite idle, I can assure you. Everything is at an end between us. It seems that I bore with you too long; but I'm thankful that I had the spirit to act at last, and to act in time. And now that chance has

thrown us together, I trust that you will not force your conversation upon me. No gentleman would, and I have always given you credit for thinking yourself a gentleman. I request that you will not speak to me."

MR. R. "You've spoken ten words to me for every one of mine to you. But I won't annoy you. I can't believe it, Lucy; I can *not* believe it. It seems like some rascally dream, and if I had had any sleep since it happened, I should think I *had* dreamed it."

MISS G. "Oh! You were sleeping soundly enough when I got into the car!"

MR. R. "I own it; I was perfectly used up, and I *had* dropped off."

MISS G., scornfully. "Then perhaps you *have* dreamed it."

MR. R. "I'll think so till you tell me again that our engagement is broken; that the faithful love of years is to go for nothing; that you dismiss me with cruel insult, without one word of explanation, without a word of intelligible accusation, even. It's too much! I've been thinking it all over and over, and I can't make head or tail of it. I meant to see you again as soon as we got to town, and implore you to hear me. Come, it's a mighty

serious matter, Lucy. I'm not a man to put on heroics and that; but *I* believe it'll play the very deuce with me, Lucy, — that is to say, Miss Galbraith, — I do indeed. It'll give me a low opinion of woman."

MISS G., averting her face. "O, a very high opinion of woman you have had!"

MR. R., with sentiment. "Well, there was one woman whom I thought a perfect angel."

MISS G. "Indeed! May I ask her name?"

MR. R., with a forlorn smile. "I shall be obliged to describe her somewhat formally as — Miss Galbraith."

MISS G. "Mr. Richards!"

MR. R. "Why, you've just forbidden me to say *Lucy!* You must tell me, dearest, what I have done to offend you. The worst criminals are not condemned unheard, and I've always thought you were merciful if not just. And now I only ask you to be just."

MISS G., looking out of the window. "You know very well what you've done. You can't expect me to humiliate myself by putting your offence into words."

MR. R. "Upon my soul, I don't know what you mean! I *don't* know what I've done. When you came at

me, last night, with my ring and presents and other little traps, you might have knocked me down with the lightest of the lot. I was perfectly dazed; I could n't say anything before you were off, and all I could do was to hope that you 'd be more like yourself in the morning. And in the morning, when I came round to Mrs. Phillips's, I found you were gone, and I came after you by the next train."

MISS G. "Mr. Richards, your personal history for the last twenty-four hours is a matter of perfect indifference to me, as it shall be for the next twenty-four hundred years. I see that

you are resolved to annoy me, and since *you* will not leave the car, *I* must do so." She rises haughtily from her seat, but the imprisoned skirt of her polonaise twitches her abruptly back into her chair. She bursts into tears. "O, what *shall* I do?"

MR. R., dryly. "You shall do whatever you like, Miss Galbraith, when I've set you free; for I see your dress is caught in the window. When it's once out, I'll shut the window, and you can call the porter to raise it." He leans forward over her chair, and while she shrinks back the length of her tether, he tugs at the window-fast-

ening. "I can't get at it. Would you be so good as to stand up, — all you can?" Miss Galbraith stands up, droopingly, and Mr. Richards makes a movement towards her, and then falls back. "No, that won't do. Please sit down again." He goes round her chair and tries to get at the window from that side. "I can't get any purchase on it. Why don't you cut out that piece?" Miss Galbraith stares at him in dumb amazement. "Well, I don't see what we're to do. I'll go and get the porter." He goes to the end of the car, and returns. "I can't find the porter, — he must be in one of

the other cars. But" — brightening with the fortunate conception — "I've just thought of something. Will it unbutton?"

MISS G. "Unbutton?"

MR. R. "Yes; this garment of yours."

MISS G. "My polonaise?" Inquiringly, "Yes."

MR. R. "Well, then, it's a very simple matter. If you will just take it off I can easily —"

MISS G., faintly. "I can't. A polonaise is n't like an *overcoat* —"

MR. R., with dismay. "Oh! Well, then —" He remains thinking a moment in hopeless perplexity.

MISS G., with polite ceremony.
“The porter will be back soon. Don’t trouble yourself any further about it, please. I shall do very well.”

MR. R., without heeding her. “If you could kneel on that foot-cushion and face the window —”

MISS G., kneeling promptly. “So?”

MR. R. “Yes, and now” — kneeling beside her — “if you’ll allow me to — to get at the window catch,” — he stretches both arms forward; she shrinks from his right into his left, and then back again, — “and pull, while I raise the window —”

MISS G. “Yes, yes; but do hurry,

please. If any one saw us, I don't know what they would think. It's perfectly ridiculous!" — pulling. "It's caught in the corner of the window, between the frame and the sash, and it won't come! Is my hair troubling you? Is it in your eyes?"

MR. R. "It's in my eyes, but it is n't troubling me. Am I inconveniencing you?"

MISS G. "O, not at all."

MR. R. "Well, now then, pull hard!" He lifts the window with a great effort; the polonaise comes free with a start, and she strikes violently against him. In supporting the shock

he cannot forbear catching her for an instant to his heart. She frees herself, and starts indignantly to her feet.

MISS G. "O, what a cowardly — subterfuge!"

MR. R. "Cowardly? You've no idea how much courage it took." Miss Galbraith puts her handkerchief to her face, and sobs. "O, don't cry! Bless my heart, — I'm sorry I did it! But you know how dearly I love you, Lucy, though I do think you've been cruelly unjust. I told you I never should love any one else, and I never shall. I could n't help it, upon my soul I could n't. Nobody could. Don't let it vex you, my —" He approaches her.

MISS G. "Please not touch me, sir! You have no longer any right whatever to do so."

MR. R. "You misinterpret a very inoffensive gesture. I have no idea of touching you, but I hope I may be allowed, as a special favor, to — pick up my hat, which you are in the act of stepping on." Miss Galbraith hastily turns, and strikes the hat with her whirling skirts; it rolls to the other side of the parlor, and Mr. Richards, who goes after it, utters an ironical "Thanks!" He brushes it and puts it on, looking at her where she has again seated herself at the window

with her back to him, and continues,
“As for any further molestation from
me —”

MISS G. “If you *will* talk to
me —”

MR. R. “Excuse me, I am not
talking to you.”

MISS G. “What were you doing?”

MR. R. “I was beginning to think
aloud. I — I was soliloquizing. I
suppose I may be allowed to solilo-
quize?”

MISS G., very coldly. “You can do
what you like.”

MR. R. “Unfortunately that’s just
what I can’t do. If I could do as I

liked, I should ask you a single question.”

MISS G., after a moment. “Well, sir, you may ask your question.” She remains as before, with her chin in her hand, looking tearfully out of the window; her face is turned from Mr. Richards, who hesitates a moment before he speaks.

MR. R. “I wish to ask you just this, Miss Galbraith: if you could n’t ride backwards in the other car, why do you ride backwards in this?”

MISS G., burying her face in her handkerchief, and sobbing. “Oh, oh, oh! This is too bad!”

MR. R. "O, come now, Lucy. It breaks my heart to hear you going on so, and all for nothing. Be a little merciful to both of us, and listen to me. I've no doubt I can explain everything if I once understand it, but it's pretty hard explaining a thing if you don't understand it yourself. Do turn round. I know it makes you sick to ride in that way, and if you don't want to face me — there!" — wheeling in his chair so as to turn his back upon her — "you need n't. Though it's rather trying to a fellow's politeness, not to mention his other feelings. Now, what in the name —"

PORTER, who at this moment enters with his step-ladder, and begins to light the lamps. "Going pretty slow ag'in, sah."

MR. R. "Yes; what's the trouble?"

PORTER. "Well, I don't know exactly, sah. Something de matter with de locomotive. We sha' n't be into Albany much 'fore eight o'clock."

MR. R. "What's the next station?"

PORTER. "Schenectady."

MR. R. "Is the whole train as empty as this car?"

PORTER, laughing. "Well, no, sah. Fact is, *dis* cah don't belong on dis

train. It 's a Pullman that we hitched on when you got in, and we 's taking it along for one of de Eastern roads. We let you in 'cause de Drawing-rooms was all full. Same with de lady,"—looking sympathetically at her, as he takes up his steps to go out. "Can I do anything for you now, miss?"

MISS G., plaintively. "No, thank you; nothing whatever." She has turned while Mr. Richards and the porter have been speaking, and now faces the back of the former, but her veil is drawn closely. The porter goes out.

MR. R., wheeling round so as to

confront her. "I wish you would speak to me half as kindly as you do to that darky, Lucy."

MISS G. "*He* is a gentleman!"

MR. R. "He is an urbane and well-informed nobleman. At any rate, he's a man and a brother. But so am I."

Miss Galbraith does not reply, and after a pause Mr. Richards resumes.

"Talking of gentlemen, I recollect, once, coming up on the day-boat to Poughkeepsie, there was a poor devil of a tipsy man kept following a young fellow about, and annoying him to death,—trying to fight him, as a tipsy man will, and insisting that the young

fellow had insulted him. By and by he lost his balance and went overboard, and the other jumped after him and fished him out." Sensation on the part of Miss Galbraith, who stirs uneasily in her chair, looks out of the window, then looks at Mr. Richards, and drops her head. "There was a young lady on board, who had seen the whole thing, — a very charming young lady indeed, with pale blond hair growing very thick over her forehead, and dark eyelashes to the sweetest blue eyes in the world. Well, this young lady's papa was amongst those who came up to say civil things to

the young fellow when he got aboard again, and to ask the honor — he said the *honor* — of his acquaintance. And when he came out of his state-room in dry clothes, this infatuated old gentleman was waiting for him, and took him and introduced him to his wife and daughter. And the daughter said, with tears in her eyes, and a perfectly intoxicating impulsiveness, that it was the grandest and the most heroic and the noblest thing that she had ever seen, and she should always be a better girl for having seen it. Excuse me, Miss Galbraith, for troubling you with these facts of a personal history which,

as you say, is a matter of perfect indifference to you. The young fellow did n't think at the time he had done anything extraordinary; but I don't suppose he *did* expect to live to have the same girl tell him he was no gentleman."

MISS G., wildly. "O Allen, Allen! You *know* I think you are a gentleman, and I always did!"

MR. R., languidly. "O, I merely had your word for it, just now, that you did n't." Tenderly, "Will you hear me, Lucy?"

MISS G., faintly. "Yes."

MR. R. "Well, what is it I've

done? Will you tell me if I guess right?"

MISS G., with dignity. "I am in no humor for jesting, Allen. And I can assure you that though I consent to hear what you have to say, or ask, *nothing* will change my determination. All is over between us."

MR. R. "Yes, I understand that perfectly. I am now asking merely for general information. I do not expect you to relent, and in fact I should consider it rather frivolous if you did. No. What I have always admired in your character, Lucy, is a firm, logical consistency; a clearness of mental

vision that leaves no side of a subject unsearched ; and an unwavering constancy of purpose. You may say that these traits are characteristic of *all* women ; but they are pre-eminently characteristic of you, Lucy.” Miss Galbraith looks askance at him, to make out whether he is in earnest or not ; he continues, with a perfectly serious air. “ And I know now that if you ’re offended with me, it ’s for no trivial cause.” She stirs uncomfortably in her chair. “ What I have done I can’t imagine, but it must be something monstrous, since it has made life with me appear so impossible that you are

ready to fling away your own happiness — for I know you *did* love me, Lucy — and destroy mine. I will begin with the worst thing I can think of. Was it because I danced so much with Fanny Watervliet?"

MISS G., indignantly. "How can you insult me by supposing that I could be jealous of such a *perfect* little goose as that? No, Allen! Whatever I think of you, I *still* respect you too much for *that*."

MR. R. "I'm glad to hear that there are yet depths to which you think me incapable of descending, and that Miss Watervliet is one of them. I

will now take a little higher ground. Perhaps you think I flirted with Mrs. Dawes. I thought, myself, that the thing might begin to have that appearance, but I give you my word of honor that as soon as the idea occurred to me, I dropped her, — rather rudely, too. The trouble was, don't you know, that I felt so perfectly safe with a *married* friend of yours. I could n't be hanging about you all the time, and I was afraid I might vex you if I went with the other girls; and I did n't know what to do."

MISS G. "I think you behaved rather silly, giggling so much with her. But —"

MR. R. "I own it, I know it was silly. But —"

MISS G. "It was n't that; it was n't that!"

MR. R. "Was it my forgetting to bring you those things from your mother?"

MISS G. "No!"

MR. R. "Was it because I had n't given up smoking yet?"

MISS G. "You *know* I never asked you to give up smoking. It was entirely your own proposition."

MR. R. "That's true. That's what made me so easy about it. I knew I could leave it off *any* time."

Well, I will not disturb you any longer, Miss Galbraith." He throws his overcoat across his arm, and takes up his travelling-bag. "I have failed to guess your fatal—conundrum; and I have no longer any excuse for remaining. I am going into the smoking-car. Shall I send the porter to you for anything?"

MISS G. "No, thanks." She puts up her handkerchief to her face.

MR. R. "Lucy, do you send me away?"

MISS G., behind her handkerchief. "You were going, yourself."

MR. R., over his shoulder. "Shall I come back?"

MISS G. "I have no right to drive you from the car."

MR. R., coming back, and sitting down in the chair nearest her. "Lucy, dearest, tell me what's the matter."

MISS G. "O, Allen, your not *knowing* makes it all the more hopeless and killing. It shows me that we *must* part; that you would go on, breaking my heart, and grinding me into the dust as long as we lived." She sobs. "It shows me that you never understood me, and you never will. I know you're good and kind and all that, but that only makes

your not understanding me so much the worse. I do it quite as much for your sake as my own, Allen."

MR. R. "I'd much rather you would n't put yourself out on my account."

MISS G., without regarding him. "If you could mortify me before a whole roomful of people as you did last night, what could I expect after marriage but continual insult?"

MR. R., in amazement. "*How* did I mortify you? I thought that I treated you with all the tenderness and affection that a decent regard for the feelings of others would allow. I

was ashamed to find I could n't keep away from you."

MISS G. "O, you were *attentive* enough, Allen; nobody denies that. Attentive enough in non-essentials. O yes!"

MR. R. "Well, what vital matters did I fail in? I'm sure I can't remember."

MISS G. "I dare say! I dare say they won't appear vital to you, Allen. Nothing does. And if I had told you, I should have been met with ridicule, I suppose. But I knew *better* than to tell; I respected myself too *much*."

MR. R. "But now you must n't

respect yourself *quite* so much, dearest. And I promise you I won't laugh at the most serious thing. I'm in no humor for it. If it were a matter of life and death, even, I can assure you that it would n't bring a smile to my countenance. No, indeed! If you expect me to laugh, *now*, you must say something particularly funny."

MISS G. "I was not going to say anything *funny*, as you call it, and I will say nothing at all, if you talk in that way."

MR. R. "Well, I won't, then. But do you know what I suspect, Lucy? I would n't mention it to

everybody, but I will tell you — in strict confidence: I suspect that you're rather ashamed of your grievance, if you have any. I suspect it's nothing at all."

Miss G., very sternly at first, with a rising hysterical inflection. "Nothing, Allen! Do you call it *nothing*, to have Mrs. Dawes come out with all that about your accident on your way up the river, and ask me if it didn't frighten me terribly to hear of it, even after it was all over; and I had to say you hadn't told me a word of it? 'Why, Lucy!'" — angrily mimicking Mrs. Dawes, — "'you

must teach him better than that. I make Mr. Dawes tell *me* everything.' Little simpleton! And then to have them all laugh, — O dear, it's too much!"

MR. R. "Why, my dear Lucy —"

MISS G., interrupting him. "I saw just how it was going to be, and I'm thankful, *thankful* that it happened. I saw that you did n't care enough for me to take me into your whole life; that you despised and distrusted me, and that it would get worse and worse to the end of our days; that we should grow further and further apart, and I should be left moping at

home, while you ran about making confidantes of other women whom you considered *worthy* of your confidence. It all *flashed* upon me in an *instant*; and I resolved to break with you, then and there; and I did, just as soon as ever I could go to my room for your things, and I'm glad, — yes, — O hu, hu, hu, hu! — *so* glad I did it!”

MR. R., grimly. “Your joy is obvious. May I ask —”

MISS G. “O, it was n't the *first* proof you had given me how little you really cared for me, but I was determined it should be the last. I dare say you've forgotten them! I dare

say you don't remember telling Mamie Morris that you did n't like crocheted cigar-cases, when you'd just *told* me that you did, and let me be such a fool as to commence one for you; but I'm thankful to say *that* went into the fire, — O yes, *instantly!* And I dare say you've forgotten that you did n't tell me your brother's engagement was to be kept, and let me come out with it that night at the Ridges' and then looked perfectly aghast, so that everybody thought I had been blabbing! Time and again, Allen, you have made me suffer agonies, yes, *agonies*; but your power to do so is at

an end. I am free and happy at last.”
She weeps bitterly.

MR. R., quietly. “Yes, I *had* forgotten those crimes, and I suppose many similar atrocities. I own it, I *am* forgetful and careless. I was wrong about those things. I ought to have told you why I said that to Miss Morris; I was afraid she was going to work me one. As to that accident I told Mrs. Dawes of, it was n’t worth mentioning. Our boat simply walked over a sloop in the night, and nobody was hurt. I should n’t have thought twice about it, if she had n’t happened to brag of their

passing close to an iceberg on their way home from Europe; then I trotted out *my* pretty-near disaster as a match for hers,—confound her! I wish the iceberg had sunk them! Only it would n't have sunk her,—she's so light; she'd have gone bobbing about all over the Atlantic Ocean, like a cork; she's got a perfect life-preserver in that mind of hers." Miss Galbraith gives a little laugh, and then a little moan. "But since you are happy, I will not repine, Miss Galbraith. I don't pretend to be very happy myself, but then, I don't deserve it. Since you are ready to let an absolutely unconscious offence on

my part cancel all the past; since you let my devoted love weigh as nothing against the momentary pique that a malicious little rattle-pate — she was vexed at my leaving her — could make you feel, and choose to gratify a wicked resentment at the cost of any suffering to me, why, *I* can be glad and happy, too.” With rising anger, “Yes, Miss Galbraith. All *is* over between us. You can go! I renounce you!”

Miss G., springing fiercely to her feet. “Go, indeed! Renounce me! Be so good as to remember that you have n’t got me *to* renounce!”

MR. R. “Well, it’s all the same

thing. I'd renounce you if I had. Good evening, Miss Galbraith. I will send back your presents as soon as I get to town; it won't be necessary to acknowledge them. I hope we may never meet again." He goes out of the door towards the front of the car, but returns directly, and glances uneasily at Miss Galbraith, who remains with her handkerchief pressed to her eyes. "Ah — a — that is — I shall be obliged to intrude upon you again. The fact is —"

MISS G., anxiously. "Why, the cars have stopped! Are we at Schenectady?"

MR. R. “Well, no; not *exactly*; not exactly at *Schenectady* —”

MISS G. “Then what station is this? Have they carried me by?” Observing his embarrassment, “Allen, what is the matter? What has happened? Tell me instantly! Are we off the track? Have we run into another train? Have we broken through a bridge? Shall we be burnt alive? Tell me, Allen, tell me,—I can bear it!—are we telescoped?” She wrings her hands in terror.

MR. R., unsympathetically. “Nothing of the kind has happened. This car has simply come uncoupled, and

the rest of the train has gone on ahead, and left us standing on the track, nowhere in particular." He leans back in his chair, and wheels it round from her.

MISS G., mortified, yet anxious.
"Well?"

MR. R. "Well, until they miss us, and run back to pick us up, I shall be obliged to ask your indulgence. I will try not to disturb you; I would go out and stand on the platform, but it's raining."

MISS G., listening to the rain-fall on the roof. "Why, so it is!" Timidly, "Did you notice when the car stopped?"

MR. R. "No." He rises and goes out at the rear door, comes back, and sits down again.

MISS G. rises and goes to the large mirror to wipe away her tears. She glances at Mr. Richards, who does not move. She sits down in a seat nearer him than the chair she has left. After some faint murmurs and hesitations, she asks, "Will you please tell me why you went out just now?"

MR. R., with indifference. "Yes. I went to see if the rear signal was out."

MISS G., after another hesitation. "Why?"

MR. R. "Because, if it was n't out,

some train might run into us from that direction.”

MISS G., tremulously. “Oh! And was it?”

MR. R., dryly. “Yes.”

MISS G. returns to her former place, with a wounded air, and for a moment neither speaks. Finally she asks very meekly, “And there’s no danger from the front?”

MR. R., coldly. “No.”

MISS G., after some little noises and movements meant to catch Mr. R.’s attention. “Of course, I never meant to imply that you were *intentionally* careless or forgetful.”

MR. R., still very coldly. "Thank you."

MISS G. "I always did justice to your good-heartedness, Allen; you're perfectly lovely that way; and I know that you would be sorry if you *knew* you had wounded my feelings, however accidentally." She droops her head so as to catch a sidelong glimpse of his face, and sighs, while she nervously pinches the top of her parasol, resting the point on the floor. Mr. R. makes no answer. "That about the cigar-case might have been a mistake; I saw that myself, and, as you explain it, why, it was certainly very kind and very credit-

able to — to your thoughtfulness. It *was* thoughtful!”

MR. R. “I am grateful for your good opinion.”

MISS G. “But do you think it was exactly — it was quite — nice, not to tell me that your brother’s engagement was to be kept, when you know, Allen, I can’t bear to blunder in such things?” Tenderly, “*Do* you? You *can’t* say it was?”

MR. R. “I never said it was.”

MISS G., plaintively. “No, Allen. That’s what I always admired in your character. You always owned up. Don’t you think it’s easier for men to own up than it is for women?”

MR. R. "I don't know. I never knew any woman to do it."

MISS G. "O yes, Allen! You know I *often* own up."

MR. R. "No, I don't."

MISS G. "O, how can you bear to say so? When I'm rash, or anything of that kind, you know I acknowledge it."

MR. R. "Do you acknowledge it now?"

MISS G. "Why, how can I, when I have n't *been* rash? *What* have I been rash about?"

MR. R. "About the cigar-case, for example."

MISS G. "Oh! *That!* That was a great while ago! I thought you meant something quite recent." A sound as of the approaching train is heard in the distance. She gives a start, and then leaves her chair again for one a little nearer his. "I thought perhaps you meant about — last night."

MR. R. "Well?"

MISS G., very judicially. "I don't think it was *rash*, exactly. No, not *rash*. It might not have been very *kind* not to — to — trust you more, when I knew that you didn't mean anything; but — No, I took the only course I could. *Nobody* could have

done differently under the circumstances. But if I caused you any pain, I'm very sorry; O yes, very sorry indeed. But I was not precipitate, and I know I did right. At least I *tried* to act for the best. Don't you believe I did?"

MR. R. "Why, if you have no doubt upon the subject, my opinion is of no consequence."

MISS G. "Yes. But what do you think? If you think differently, and can make me see it differently, ought n't you to do so?"

MR. R. "I don't see why. As you say, all is over between us."

MISS G. "Yes." After a pause, "I should suppose you would care enough for *yourself* to wish me to look at the matter from the right point of view."

MR. R. "I don't."

MISS G., becoming more and more uneasy as the noise of the approaching train grows louder. "I think *you* have been very quick with *me* at times, quite as quick as I could have been with you last night." The noise is more distinctly heard. "I'm sure that if I could once see it as you do, *no* one would be more willing to do anything in their power to atone for their

rashness. Of course I know that everything is over."

MR. R. "As to that, I have your word ; and, in view of the fact, perhaps this analysis of motive, of character, however interesting on general grounds, is a little — "

MISS G., with sudden violence. "Say it, and take your revenge! I have put myself at your feet, and you do right to trample on me! O, this is what women may expect when they trust to men's generosity! Well, it *is* over now, and I'm thankful, thankful! Cruel, suspicious, vindictive, you're all alike, and I'm glad that I'm no

longer subject to your heartless caprices. And I don't care what happens after this, I shall always — Oh! You're sure it's from the front, Allen? Are you sure the rear signal is out?"

MR. R., relenting. "Yes, but if it will ease your mind, I'll go and look again." He rises and starts towards the rear door.

MISS G., quickly. "O no! Don't go! I can't bear to be left alone!" The sound of the approaching train continually increases in volume. "O, isn't it coming very, very, *very* fast?"

MR. R. "No, no! Don't be frightened."

MISS G., running towards the rear door. "O, I *must* get out! It will kill me, I know it will. Come with me! Do, do!" He runs after her, and her voice is heard at the rear of the car. "O, the outside door is locked, and we are trapped, trapped, trapped! O, quick! Let's try the door at the other end." They re-enter the parlor, and the roar of the train announces that it is upon them. "No, no! It's too late, it's too late! I'm a wicked, wicked girl, and this is all to punish me! O, it's coming, it's coming at

full speed!" He remains bewildered, confronting her. She utters a wild cry, and, as the train strikes the car with a violent concussion, she flings herself into his arms. "There, there! Forgive me, Allen! Let us die together, my own, own love!" She hangs fainting on his breast. Voices are heard without, and after a little delay the porter comes in with a lantern.

PORTER. "Rather more of a jah than we meant to give you, sah! We had to run down pretty quick after we missed you, and the rain made the track a little slippery. Lady much frightened?"

MISS G., disengaging herself. "O, not at all! Not in the least. We thought it was a train coming from behind, and going to run into us, and so — we — I —"

PORTER. "Not quite so bad as that. We'll be into Schenectady in a few minutes, miss. I'll come for your things." He goes out at the other door.

MISS G., in a fearful whisper. "Allen! What will he ever think of us? I'm sure he saw us!"

MR. R. "I don't know what he'll think *now*. He *did* think you were frightened; but you told him you were

not. However, it is n't important what he thinks. Probably he thinks I'm your long-lost brother. It had a kind of familiar look."

MISS G. "Ridiculous!"

MR. R. "Why, he'd never suppose that I was a jilted lover of yours!"

MISS G., ruefully. "No."

MR. R. "Come, Lucy," — taking her hand, — "you wished to die with me, a moment ago. Don't you think you can make one more effort to live with me? I won't take advantage of words spoken in mortal peril, but I suppose you were in earnest when you

called me your own — own —” Her head droops; he folds her in his arms, a moment, then she starts away from him, as if something had suddenly occurred to her.

MISS G. “Allen, where are you going?”

MR. R. “Going? Upon my soul, I haven’t the least idea.”

MISS G. “Where *were* you going?”

MR. R. “O, I *was* going to Albany.”

MISS G. “Well, don’t! Aunt Mary is expecting me here at Schenectady, — I telegraphed her, — and I want you to stop here, too, and we’ll refer the

whole matter to her. She's such a wise old head. I'm not sure —"

MR. R. "What?"

MISS G., demurely. "That I'm good enough for you."

MR. R., starting, in burlesque of her movement, as if a thought had struck *him*. "Lucy! how came you on this train when you left Syracuse on the morning express?"

MISS G., faintly. "I waited over a train at Utica." She sinks into a chair and averts her face.

MR. R. "May I ask why?"

MISS G., more faintly still. "I don't like to tell. I —"

MR. R., coming and standing in front of her, with his hands in his pockets. "Look me in the eye, Lucy!" She drops her veil over her face, and looks up at him. "Did you — did you expect to find *me* on this train?"

MISS G. "I was afraid it never *would* get along, — it was so late!"

MR. R. "Don't — tergiversate."

MISS G. "Don't *what*?"

MR. R. "Fib."

MISS G. "Not for worlds!"

MR. R. "How did you know I was in this car?"

MISS G. "Must I? I thought I

saw you through the window ; and then I made sure it was you when I went to pin my veil on, — I saw you in the mirror.”

MR. R., after a little silence. “Miss Galbraith, do you want to know what *you* are ? ”

MISS G., softly. “ Yes, Allen.”

MR. R. “ You ’re a humbug ! ”

MISS G., springing from her seat, and confronting him. “ So are you ! You pretended to be asleep ! ”

MR. R. “ I — I — I was taken by surprise. I had to take time to think.”

MISS G. “ So did I.”

MR. R. "And you thought it would be a good plan to get your polonaise caught in the window?"

MISS G., hiding her face on his shoulder. "No, no, Allen! That I never *will* admit. *No* woman would!"

MR. R. "O, I dare say!" After a pause: "Well, I am a poor, weak, helpless man, with no one to advise me or counsel me, and I have been cruelly deceived. How could you, Lucy, how could you? I can never get over this." He drops his head upon her shoulder.

MISS G., starting away again and looking about the car. "Allen, I have

an idea ! Do you suppose Mr. Pullman could be induced to *sell* this car ? ”

MR. R. “ Why ? ”

MISS G. “ Why, because I think it ’s perfectly lovely, and I should like to live in it always. It could be fitted up for a sort of summer-house, don’t you know, and we could have it in the garden, and you could smoke in it.”

MR. R. “ Admirable ! It would look just like a travelling photographic saloon. No, Lucy, we won’t buy it ; we will simply keep it as a precious souvenir, a sacred memory, a beautiful dream, — and let it go on fulfilling its destiny all the same.”

PORTER, entering and gathering up Miss Galbraith's things. "Be at Schenectady in half a minute, miss. Won't have much time."

MISS G., rising and adjusting her dress, and then looking about the car, while she passes her hand through her lover's arm. "O, I do *hate* to leave it. Farewell, you dear, kind, good, lovely car! May you never have another accident!" She kisses her hand to the car, upon which they both look back as they slowly leave it.

MR. R., kissing his hand in like manner. "Good by, sweet chariot! May you never carry any but bridal couples!"

MISS G. "Or engaged ones!"

MR. R. "Or husbands going home to their wives!"

MISS G. "Or wives hastening to their husbands."

MR. R. "Or young ladies who have waited one train over, so as to be with the young men they hate."

MISS G. "Or young men who are so indifferent that they pretend to be asleep when the young ladies come in!"

They pause at the door and look back again. "'And must I leave thee, Paradise?'" They both kiss their hands to the car again, and, their faces being very close together, they impulsively

kiss each other. Then Miss Galbraith throws back her head, and solemnly confronts him. "Only think, Allen! If this car had n't broken *its* engagement, we might never have mended ours."



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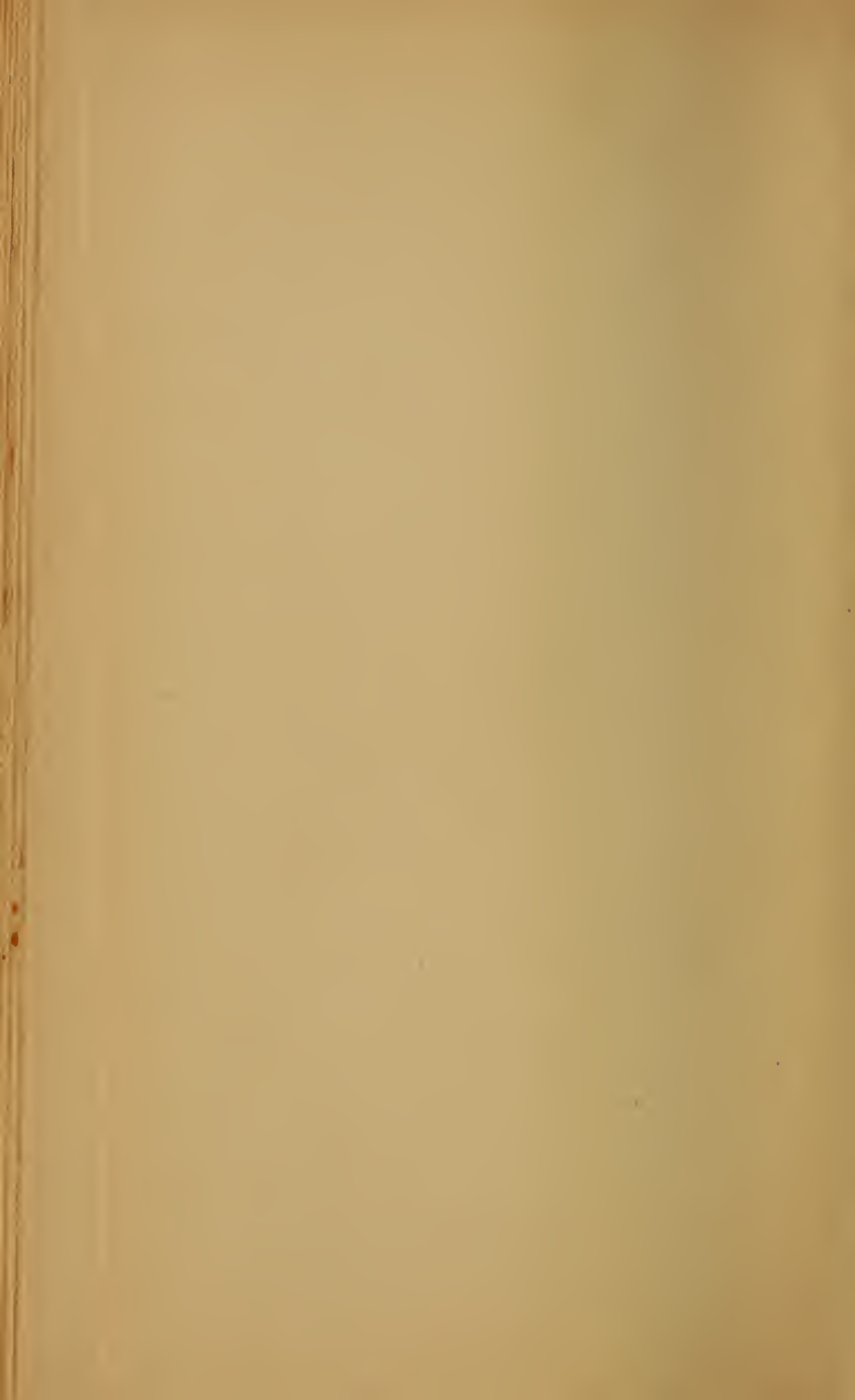
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