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And Other Stories

By Adeline Adams

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THE AMOURETTA LANDSCAPE

I

IF you search from Greenwich Village to Lawrence Park, and then from Turtle Bay to Chelsea, you will not find in all New York a painter less spoiled by fame than Maurice Price. It was in his nature to know from the very first that the luckier you are, the kinder you can be. I do not regard it as a limitation that in what he does and in what he wears he scarcely satisfies the romantic ideal about artists and their ways. There is nothing wild in his attire, and he does not live more dangerously than other citizens must. Still, there is something about his type of good looks that sets him apart and gives him away. Those who see him for the first time, in profile, whether at the Follies or at a funeral of an Academician, sometimes think that if they knew the man, they would esteem him more than they would love him. That is because they have not yet met him in front view, and discovered the eager friendliness in his gray eyes, the

sensitive, listening expression of his whole face; the look that says, "Tell me your joke in life, and I'll tell mine." His merry young wife had once declared that there were only two things that saved his head from an intolerable Greek goddishness. Maurice's curiosity was roused, but the girl had kept him guessing until the end of the week, when she explained that one of the things was his right ear, the other, his left; both of them stuck out more than the classic law allowed; just as well, too; since, for her part, she had preferred to marry a man, not an archangel or a Greek coin. The man smiled, and kept on painting.

A time came when Maurice Price, suddenly finding himself in a new environment, remembered that in ten years he had not once painted a landscape from nature. As he stood in the wide doorway of his friend's country studio, and gazed with delight at the springtime beauty of the New Hampshire hills flung down at his feet, the fact that during a whole decade his painting had been done within doors and under glass struck him as an absurdity, even a reproach. Ah, well, those who go about calling ten years a whole decade must expect reproach, he reasoned. They bring it on themselves.

Besides, the situation was explicable enough. Ever since he and his wife had said good-bye to their cottage near Fontainebleau, exchanging the joys of study in France for the responsibilities of family life in their own land, his work had been chiefly portraits, with an occasional welcome mural decoration to break the monotony of rosy lips, shimmering pearls, crisp satins; of academic robes, frock coats, tennis trousers, and whatever else a modern portrait-painter must cope valiantly with, on canvas. Not that Maurice was weary of his good fortune in having portraits to do. He often said, with that frank yet pensive smile of his, that every sitter on earth has some personal quality which, if seen aright, can alleviate if not actually elevate our art. Hence, after every excursion into the field of mural decoration, he returned with new zest to his girls with pearls, his dowagers, his bankers; while after every surfeit of our common humanity as shown up in a north light, he seized with ardor the chance to depict on the walls of some library or court-house those various fables of antiquity which seem to shed the most pleasing light on the fables of our modern civilization. But never a landscape!

Naturally, his decorations and even his portraits often had landscape backgrounds. Fancy our Agriculture without her wheatfields, or our Mining Industry without her tumbled hills, or a Bridal at Glen Cove without blue skies, lovely leafage, a beauty-haunted marble vase, a teasing vista where Pan might lurk unseen! But very properly, such backgrounds as these were merely arrangements, or, as one might say, apt quotations from nature; they did not pretend to report passionate personal interviews with her. Maurice Price loved to paint such backgrounds. Whether in a tranquil or a stormy mood, he always kept the hope of distilling beauty for the ages. And he knew that the backgrounds had their part in that enterprise of his.

In his golden twenties, he had been a singularly diligent lover and student of landscape. Many an elder painter might have envied him his portfolios stuffed with first-hand information and first-hand illusion concerning rocks and seas, skies and fields, trees and hills, and all the rainbow hues and lights and darks that visited them in their repose, their shifting moods, their crises. Maurice in the late thirties often stood in awe of that far-off Maurice of the early twenties, who

seemed to know so much even then of the painter's magic book of all outdoors. To-day, he wondered whether he could beat his younger self in the game that is played on canvas with brushes, under the sky, with everything more or less astir, and nothing at all ever quite the same as it was a moment before, least of all in its colors and values.

After that devastating influenza of March, his seldom-needed doctor had ordered a few weeks' complete rest. "Complete piffle," Price had growled. Nevertheless, when his friend James Anthony, a painter given to unexpected withdrawals and fresh beginnings in art, had offered him an opportunity for an entire change of scene, he had accepted. Anthony, always as keen as any Vibert or Abendroth in his pursuit of the secrets of the old masters, had suddenly decided to go abroad to study certain gums and resins that might eventually preserve our American painting from destruction. Anthony was like that. He was successful enough and wealthy enough to be as whimsically conscientious as he pleased about pigments and surfaces. He could afford to keep a bee in his hat, and call it altruism. And now, the bee having stung him afresh, that

wonderful hill studio of his was at Maurice's disposal.

"You will be doing me a favor," wrote Jimmy Anthony, "if you'll take it, even for this one summer. There are two sculptors hounding me to rent it to them, a man and a woman. The man I can beat off, but the woman will work her will and get the place and wreck it for me, if you don't come to the rescue. I can stand a painter's rubbish, but sculptors! No, no, not for Jimmy. And please use up whatever you find in the line of materials. There's nothing there of any further interest to me. You might like all that garance rose doré, and that pomegranate cadmium I used to swear by. And those mahogany panels that I had especially made. Do use them. Good on both sides, and bully for landscapes."

When Price, after a look of delight at the spring magic framed by the doorway, had turned to examine his new quarters, he was not surprised that Anthony had shunned sculptors as tenants. He could not imagine the litter of clay and plaster, wet rags and greasy plastiline, defiling that spacious immaculate hall and its dependencies, all contrived by his friend out of a hay-barn and stable used by the roadhouse

gentry of a hundred years ago. Boxstalls made excellent dressing-rooms for models. Harness-closets gave ample space for easels and canvases, frames and colors. The north light was vast, but could be curtained at any point. The great door of the former hayloft was a proscenium arch through which one could look east, south, and west, upon various enchanted worlds. Again and again, that southern picture called aloud to Price to be painted. He found himself saying, "I will!" with the exultation of a man about to be married for the first time.

His own materials had not yet arrived; his wife, a doctor-abiding person, had seen to that; she too had picked up that annoying slogan, a complete rest! Perhaps Anthony's closets would give first aid. Yes, there were plenty of brushes and colors, all in good condition; easels great and small; and such a panoply of varnishes and mediums as Price himself had never dreamed of needing. No wonder Anthony's painting ran rather hectic, at times; he had too much stuff to paint with, yes, too much by far. His canvases were overdressed, by Jove! Pluming himself a bit on his own very simple palette, which he naturally regarded as an evidence of a higher

culture than Anthony's (just as the Doric lay in literature is finer than the Corinthian ode, he told himself), Maurice picked out from a bewildering variety the ten colors of his heart's desire, including the garance rose. He looked indulgently, but not self-indulgently, on the pomegranate cadmium, as on a pretty lady he had no wish to flirt with.

Still searching, he laughed outright to find on an upper shelf the selfsame palette that Anthony had so often bragged about, at the Club, and (to judge from its pristine appearance) had so seldom used, in the studio. It was a rather large palette, acquired at no small cost by Anthony, during his period of trying out dear Shorty Lasar's theory, namely: that when seen on the dull brownish wood of the ordinary palette, any color, no matter how muddy, looks bright and pure, luring the painter to his ruin; whereas, when shown on a brilliant, untarnished surface, say that of pearl or of ivory, the same color is revealed at once in all its foulness. "Nothing like mother-of-pearl," Jimmy would say, "for exposing the true soul of a gob of paint!" And Anthony's Club-famous palette, which Maurice now held in his hand, had been inlaid with pearl

from stem to stern, a splendor which had added somewhat to its weight. Price balanced it between thumb and fingers, a little patronizingly, perhaps, as may well happen when a man takes up another's palette, especially a palette more famed in theory than in practice. Not that he wanted to quarrel with the tools he was lucky enough to find; anything in reason would do.

As for the mahogany panels, he would gratefully use one of those, at a pinch. It had not the kind of surface he preferred, his way being to use a rather absorbent canvas, preparing the surface to suit the needs of the work in hand. But here again, Maurice was not hide-bound. Surface was n't the only thing; it would be a poor painter who would let a marvel-landscape like that go unpainted, merely because he had n't a fine new roll of canvas to slash into. He was glad to find, in that inexhaustible closet, half a dozen of those panels; baywood or cherry, perhaps, though his friend always called them mahogany. Running eager fingers over them, he found that the one he liked best for size and solidity, for shape and texture, had already been used, on one side; but that mattered not at all. He knew Anthony's three-layered panels; both sides were good.

On bringing the panel of his choice out into the full light, he was first dazzled and then puzzled by the painting on it. Was this really Anthony's work? Theory-ridden as he was, Anthony had certainly painted queer stuff, at times. But Maurice could not insult his friend's hospitality by taking this weird performance in earnest. Its style out-Jimmied Jimmy. Yet it seemed brilliantly familiar; it had Anthony mannerisms.

Then memory suddenly turned her flashlight on the thing, and told him why it seemed familiar. Three years before, on the eve of sailing for the Front, he had visited Anthony, and the two had inspired the boys and girls of the artist colony to organize a "Faker Show" for the benefit of the French wounded; children, models, and even the artists themselves had vied with each other in producing caricatured art. The most wildly acclaimed piece had been this very panel, painted in a joyous hour by Anthony's studio-boy, Pietro, from Anthony's model, Amouretta McGowan; to save time, he had used one of his master's discarded portrait-studies, and he had kept the characteristic Anthony composition throughout.

It was meant for a portrait, one saw, — the portrait of a woman, a hussy, if you like, with

dusky flesh-tints after Gauguin, and with an impudent gown patterned and colored like that in Matisse's once celebrated "Madras Rouge." But the pearls with which the minx was crowned and girdled, draped and festooned, — ah, the pearls were surely a fling at Maurice Price himself, "the Price-of-Great-Pearls," as the League students called him, just as in other days they had called Kenyon Cox, "Bunion Socks," George de Forest Brush, "Young-Man-Afraid-of-his-Brushes," and Augustus Saint-Gaudens, "Gaudy Saint August"; youthful pleasantries which harmed no one, least of all the artists themselves.

Once again Maurice laughed aloud as he recalled how earnestly he had explained to his students his method in painting pearls, telling them of the many slow and careful studies he had made of pearls before he had really mastered the mystery of pearls, and much else, after the manner of enthusiastic and self-giving teachers the world over. In general, the youngsters had listened and profited; otherwise, they would have been donkeys. Also, they had jeered and jested; otherwise, Maurice thought, they would have been prigs. And that nickname, "the Price-of-Great-Pearls," had clung to him, in a heart-warming

way. He felt that if his students had given him no title at all, he would have suffered some vague loneliness of spirit when among them.

Astonishing how Pietro, in one piece of brilliant painting, had succeeded in poking fun at two Frenchmen and two Americans! Certainly, Anthony's well-studied devil-may-care composition showed doubly riotous after that boy had wreaked his genius on it; and the pearls, as Maurice saw with a twinge of gratification, were exquisitely painted, if you considered them as giant opalescent lamps filched from some moonlit fairyland, and not as gems discreetly adorning a woman. And then the Gauguin coloring, the Matisse arabesques! As a final flourish, like the "I thank you" after a four-minute speech, Pietro had signed the work "the Price-of-Great-Pearls." Maurice found, on looking for that signature, that some later jester had obliterated from it all but the one word, "Price." Price, indeed!

Maurice's smile faded away into mere pensiveness as he recalled both Pietro and Amouretta. The boy, in all his vivid brightness of youth, had died suddenly from the epidemic in which Maurice himself had suffered, while Amouretta —

Her real name was not Amouretta. No one's

is. She was just Anna McGowan, golden and rosy, with hair and complexion that would have been beyond belief if she had not insisted on showing every artist (and more especially his wife) just how far her hair fell below her knees and just how it grew around her temples; because, as she said, it was where the hair started and where it left off that all that nasty peroxide business gave those others away, poor things! Also, she would press her finger on her cheek and lips, so that their roses would vanish and return, as if an electric button had been touched. She loved to have the wives see that, too. There was nothing false about Amouretta. From her golden topknot to her pink toes, she was as good a girl, all in all, as ever hopped high-heeled from a painter's studio to a picture-studio (two quite different arenas), in the effort to make both ends meet, and then cross over. "It's the cross-over that counts," Amouretta used to say; "there's where the joy in life appears." The name Amouretta was a business concession to the picture industry and to the small vaudeville shows in which she worked when posing was slack.

A singularly vivid personality, that child; her adventures, like her hair and her complexion,

sometimes seemed fabulous, at first glance, but always gained new lustre after investigation. For instance, there was on her shoulder a tiny red mark, which she said was due to a bite she had received at the Kilkenny Ball, from a mad and anonymous devotee of beauty. Could any one altogether believe that? Nevertheless, young Cavendish (whom she had never known or even seen), on coming to himself the day after, had confessed himself publicly, in an agony of shame. He had taken a bite of a peach in passing; he did n't know why, Lord help him; and from that hour he was nevermore the strayed reveller we once had known, but settled down into blameless and uninteresting eclipse. Then again, there came a morning when Amouretta, posing in a green satin bodice as an understudy for an overworked "bud," whose portrait Maurice Price was painting, had yielded to that self-revealing mood to which all models are at times given; she confided to our painter that she was engaged to be married to a middle-aged admirer, a man of great wealth, whose name she would not tell until the engagement was publicly announced. Could not Mr. Price guess? She meant to give up both stage and model-stand, of course; why, she had

given up cigarettes already for that man, because he had said that the men of his family did n't like them for ladies. "And he was so dear, when he said it."

Amouretta's brilliant blush came and went so often during her story, and finally stayed so long, that it played the very deuce with Maurice's entire morning; you know how difficult it is to paint emerald satin when the wearer is blushing; the green and the red come to blows. And Maurice, who had two daughters of his own, howbeit small, was really worried, until one afternoon at the Century, Mr. William Saltonstall, long of limb, lineage, and purse, — a man of undoubted probity, and a collector, too! — had touched him on the shoulder, and poured out the whole story of his love for Amouretta. The wedding was to be at Saint Barnaby's, in June. There could be no doubt as to Mr. Saltonstall's self-surrender; love at first sight it was, that day in the studio when Maurice had introduced a patron of beauty to beauty herself. Naturally the painter was delighted with this idyl — its delicate fragrance, its perfect flowering; all unconsciously, he himself had sown the seed, his wife and Amouretta smiling wisely thereafter

at his blindness. He had always liked William Saltonstall, and none the less because that gentleman was not one whom every one called Bill.

After the engagement, Amouretta continued to work, because, valiant little soul, she meant to earn her own trousseau. No man not a relative should be able to say he had done that for her; and I'm thinking it would be a long day before either her father or her brother, in their good-natured shiftlessness, could provide the outfit she had in mind! But there was no June wedding at Saint Barnaby's, after all; for Amouretta caught a fatal chill one raw night at the Revelries, while posing as Innocence, insufficiently clad in white paint and a scrap of georgette, in one of those pure-white sculpture groups which occasionally reappear in refined vaudeville.

And there was nothing more that could ever happen now to Pietro and Amouretta, thought Maurice. For one as for the other, their story of bright youth was ended. For Pietro, no daring assault upon the Roman Prize; for Amouretta, no adventure of any color at all, not even that climax of white satin train and flower-girls at Saint Barnaby's. Maurice sighed as he took

up a large flat brush and charged it with gray paint to obliterate the caricature. A few vigorous strokes would suffice. But he could not bring himself to do what he intended. He started back as if he had hurt himself. Or had young hands pushed him back? Surely there was something in that quaint, brilliant, impudent creature smiling on him — some hint or vestige of that which was once Amouretta — Amouretta who threw a kiss to the world, and was gone. And what was he, successful Maurice Price, that he should go about with brutal paint to hush up forever young Pietro's jest? No, no, he could not do that. It was not fair, not sportsmanlike. Live and let live!

He examined all the other panels, but their shapes and sizes were not right. "Oh, well, *I* don't give a damn," lied Maurice to himself. He lit a cigarette, but the landscape came between him and his smoke. He picked up a frayed copy of "La Reine Margot," but the landscape shut out Saint Bartholomew. He sat a moment in Anthony's Venetian chair, and covered his eyes with his hands, but between his eyes and his hands he saw only the miracle landscape. So he rose resolutely, took up the panel

of his choice, the Amouretta panel, and began to paint on its untouched side. A beautifully primed surface lent itself at once to the artist's will.

II

"In the midst of death we are in life," he murmured. Below, in the orchard, his wife was carolling old French songs with the children. "*On y danse, on y danse!*" Even Maury junior, a boy to the backbone, and little given to self-expression in song, especially foreign-language song, boomed out a mighty "*Tout en rondel*" Half an hour before, Maurice senior had stood hand-in-hand with his wife, looking up into the flowery dome of a magnificent pear tree, all aglow with golden-white blossoms, all perfumed with their incense, and musical with legions of bees. He knew just where to find those magic boughs in his landscape; he recognized their golden-veiled whiteness, their garance rose. Left and right the spendthrift river was pouring out its silver in a royal progress, mile after mile in the May sunlight. Ascutney, the great mountain that all the people thereabouts knew as their tutelary deity, had chosen from his myriad mantles the one he might wear for an hour or so,

of an entrancing blue to mock the heavens themselves. Smilingly yet warningly he confronted Maurice, singling him out from other persons, to tell him in a secret, consoling way, of the generations of men, those who had gone and those who were yet to come; yes, Ascutney spoke very seriously with Maurice, reminding him of everything, whatever it might be, that he, Maurice Price, in his great good fortune in art and life, owed to those generations, and must joyfully repay, by painting as best he might that lyric scene.

"Generation after generation," thought Maurice, "but no longer Pietro or little Amouretta." Quivering with emotion as he was, he saw that the passion and skill of that far-away Maurice of the twenties had not vanished. Now, as then, he had in large measure the artist's gift of multiplying his personality when he was at work; his consciousness as an artist rose many-mansioned toward the skies. With heart and mind swelling from the scene he conned and created, he was at once the Maurice who did not need a pearl palette to capture the glory of that violet-edged puff of golden cloud over the meadow, who could hear the bees in the orchard, who could see a

jewelled indigo bird flaming out from the locust bush; a Maurice whose whole being overflowed with returning health, with rapture in painting, with pride in Maury junior, with love for the wife of his delight, with affection for good old Jimmy Anthony, and yet a Maurice with sharp remembrance of those vanished children of joy, Pietro and Amouretta.

As he painted, he smiled often, because many persons, both living and dead, came and ranged themselves beside him, and it was pleasant to be talking with them, on that flowery hillside. Oh, Lionardo, of course, and Père Corot; Monet and Pissarro; his own namesake, Maurice Denis, dear Thayer of Monadnock, and John Sargent, since he too could do landscapes and portraits and murals! And Whistler, certainly, though at times he talked too much, interrupting quite scornfully while Maurice was explaining to Lionardo how our American goldfinch beats his wings as he sings; or else breaking in with a prickly jest when Maurice was giving M. Monet his reasons why (with due respect, Monsieur!) he meant to paint all day on that one landscape, instead of beginning another as soon as the light should change.

Some of his younger friends came also. One would have said that half the American Camouflage trooped in; little Robert, so strangely saved that black night at Beaumetz-les-Cambrai; young Harry, born at the foot of Ascutney — smiling Harry the sculptor, beside whom he himself had stood unharmed, in the field by Reims, when a shell came, striking Harry to nothingness; and Anthony's nephew too, that portrait-painter whom the papers had called brilliant-futured — debonair Charlie Anthony whom he himself, merely Captain Price, under orders, had unknowingly despatched to his doom. Maurice was used to that boy's presence by now; the harsh realities of dreams had often brought them together. Such things could not be, and men remain dumb. All this and much more must be told in the miracle landscape he was creating; it would be dishonest, otherwise. In spirit, smiling Harry and his mates belonged to that scene. Even M. Monet admitted that without doubt there is also this point of view. Not one of those companions failed to understand why our painter had not blotted out Pietro's Amouretta. Not one of them was surprised when all of a sudden he looked up from his own painting, to make sure

that Pietro's was right side up, and uninjured by contact with the easel; Maurice laughing to himself the while, and saying aloud, "I should worry!"

The critics declared later that this canvas was Price's masterpiece. They wrote of the monumental purple dignity of his mountain, the self-contained inwardness of his middle distance, the happy audacity of his flowery foreground. They might have found out, to be sure, just by looking, that the painting was on wood, not canvas! But they could not know how much of Reims and Beaumetz-les-Cambrai were playing hide-and-seek among the shadows of Maurice's mind when he set down Ascutney in the mantle of the hour. They would have been startled out of a day's omniscience had they been aware of everything that Pietro and Amouretta had contributed of their brave young substance to that smiling foreground. So excuse them, please, for whatever was wrong in their writings; they could not know, exactly, about Maurice; and after all, they made a very good guess.

III

THAT summer, Maurice painted many other landscapes. There were falls, brooks, and rocks

in that glamorous country, and these he showed in their beauty as he saw it. There was also an enchanted road under enchanted pines, where he once beheld Paolo and Francesca walking at twilight; this too became matter of record, to be taken up later and played with for heart's delight. Rumors of his latest work reached the art galleries. New Yorkers know those galleries, dotting the Avenue from the Library to the Plaza, and even blossoming out into side streets of lower rental. And the merry war between artist and dealer, as eternal and various (and perhaps as little reasonable) as the war between the sexes, would be taken up with renewed vigor in the autumn. Price had received letters from the Abingdon, the Buckminster, the Clarendon; from As You Like It, even, as well as from Farintosh and from MacDuff. The letters were similar in content; their writers had heard of his landscapes — a new line for him, was it not? The buying public would be interested, of course, and would he care to exhibit in their well-appointed galleries? They would be glad to hear from him at his early convenience. Price smiled, and answered, declining.

In fact, he was interested, not financially but

sympathetically, in a gallery from which he had received no letters; — an out-of-the-way little gallery, a modest ground-floor-and-mezzanine affair slowly becoming better known and liked as the Court of New Departures. He was interested because this fantastically named refuge for originality in art was a business venture (a venture that must be *made* to succeed!) undertaken by Hal Wrayne, a madcap young cousin. Hal Wrayne's father had always kept this only son of his well-supplied with means for cutting up harmless capers, at school and in college; and Hal himself, both by nature and by training the perfect comedian in life, had hardly stopped to ask where he was going, all so joyous, until, on his father's sudden death, he found himself almost penniless, with a wife and baby daughter to support, and with a mother and sister who needed his help.

But Hal did not wholly forswear the Comic Spirit even when he surveyed the clouds on his horizon. The War had cut short his last year at law school, but he knew enough to know that in his young hands the law would be but a sorry staff of life for five persons, four of them in petticoats. He had studied art, too, having been very

fond of Cousin Maurice, who had let him play about in the studio, one summer; indeed, being clever and versatile, Hal had painted, under Maurice's criticism, a series of gay-garlanded borders to temper the austerity of certain court-house decorations, and so had once really earned money as a painter's assistant. But a month among murals does not constitute a career, Hal Wrayne saw. Art was even less likely than law to provide, all at once, for his "little quartette of skirts," as he cheerily called his dependents, who varied in age from five months to fifty-five years. What to do? It suddenly occurred to Hal that he might strike a happy medium by running an art gallery.

"Art galleries nowadays," said young Hal, "have got to have a punch to 'em. At least, the new ones have. You know — element of surprise, variety the spice of life, the *dernier cri* sort of thing. What little I know about law will show me how far I can go, without being arrested for speeding; and what little I know about art, if I spread it out thin enough, ought to carry me along quite a ways."

Maurice Price shook his head. Frankly, he saw nothing in it at all, for Hal and his quartette.

Nevertheless, Hal looked about manfully, head up, early and late. He found an old stable with a loft, in the East Fifties, and vigorously remodelled the building into a court with tiny upstairs galleries, decorating court, staircase, and rooms in a somewhat slapdash style, with results that were reminiscent both of his own room at college and his cousin's studio. As a nucleus for his first show, he had several enigmatic Lithuanian sketches, painted with that fierce peasant coloring which attracts jaded civilizations. There were also some rather unusual unpublished posters by a needy French friend of Hal's; and by great good luck, he had obtained a whole sequence of Harriet Higsbee's famous landscape compositions in cut-up linoleum. (You remember Harriet in Paris? How she never washed a paint-brush, or anything?) Between the posters, the Lithuanian things and the linoleum, the Court of New Departures was modestly beginning to keep its promises, even before Hal, in a burst of inspiration, had arranged upon the staircase his own private collection of humorous sculptures in the baser metals, among them a certain ironic green elephant warranted to make the saddest mortal smile again.

"You see," he explained to the bewildered Maurice, "I want the tone of this dive to be at once romantic, realistic, humorous, and ironic. I guess I've captured it all, now," Maurice sighed as he helped his cousin to hang a pair of fine tapestries, begged from Hal's trusting mother. "To draw the dowagers," Hal said.

Odd as it seemed to the elder man, the dowagers were really drawn. After all, you never can tell; dowagers are not exempt. Through a judicious one-by-one exposition (a Japanese idea, borrowed by Hal from The Book of Tea), many valuable objects salvaged from the wreck of the Wrayne fortunes were disposed of at excellent prices; and before the year was out, the boy had succeeded in selling to his college friends, and their friends, a goodly number of little pictures, studies and sketches, mostly in the new manner, whatever that happened to be. His "quartette of skirts," far from being an encumbrance, were, so he stoutly declared, "a high-class asset." His sister Dodo was a wonder in throwing a bit of bargain-counter drapery over a mission stool, so as to make you think of a Doge's palace. She and his wife organized those charming teas, which, when presided over by his lady-mother, with her

authentic air of *belle Marquise*, made everything look thoroughly salable and artistic, from those queer Lithuanian sketches to Hal's own models for stage sets. Prosperity was just around the corner; and the only singular circumstance was, Hal began to have ideals. "No junk, girlie," he would warn the enterprising Dodo. "No Greenwich Village in mine! I mean to run a gallery fit for a refined limousine trade, and I don't want my clients to think they're slumming, just because I keep 'em in touch with the grand new movements in art."

Maurice Price looked on, fascinated by the spectacle of his young relative's start in a career that was neither law nor art, yet had been suggested to Hal by his slender knowledge of both.

"Why don't you send me up some of *your* things?" the boy boldly asked Maurice. "They would sell like hot cakes, mixed in with my regular stuff."

And Maurice, full of good-will, had replied, "Perhaps I may, if I can look up some inexpensive little bits your customers might like."

"Not on your tintype!" retorted Hal. "Can't you see, old Price-of-Great-Pearls, my quartette and I have to *live* on my thirty per cent? *I* don't

want your inexpensive little bits! I want your masterpieces, the costlier the better. Bet I can sell 'em for you, too, as easy as Farintosh, or MacDuff. Your being an Academician does n't stand in *my* way!"

Maurice flushed, not so much on account of being an Academician, as because he suddenly saw himself self-convicted of a lack of imagination in regard to his cousin.

"Say, Maury, think it over! What do you take me for, anyway? Do you suppose I want to carry on a queer joint like this, always? It is n't merely my commission I'm thinking of when I'm asking you for your best stuff! My littlest skirt will be growing up, and there'll be others, perhaps. Pants, too, — who knows? I would n't like to have him, and them, see me spend my days in a frisky, risky side-show like this!" His gesture included the emerald-green elephant, as yet unbought, and beginning to flake off a little at the tip of the trunk. "I like this art business — I like it fine. But I want to carry it on in a way a fellow like you would approve of, and respect, and be enthusiastic about!"

"Do you know," answered Maurice, reflectively, "I begin to think that's just what you

are doing, as fast as you can!" He spilled some cigar-ash on the rug, and ground it in carefully with his foot, always a sign of emotion in Price-of-Great-Pearls. And the two had parted, well pleased with each other and with themselves.

Hence it was that Maurice, in reviewing the work of that good summer, had decided, Academician though he was, to send to the Court of New Departures his best-loved landscape. Farintosh was to have the rest. They were all of them good stuff, too; he knew that. But not one of them, either for his artist friends or for himself, surpassed in charm and amplitude that southern picture of Ascutney, painted with Anthony's materials, too. At first blush, it seemed a high-keyed, ecstatic picture, but a second glance revealed a multitude of lovely, lively grays; dew-spangled or tear-touched, who could say? Maurice knew that he had never before put so much of himself into any picture. It was dyed-in-the-wool Price, by Jove it was! He told himself so, in a passion of certainty. He knew, he knew, that beyond anything he had ever before painted, it showed him at his best, intellectually and emotionally; it revealed the man, and whatever mastery he had over his life and times; and

incidentally, his technique, too, a thing not to be despised in the midst of larger considerations. Yes, the pearl among his pictures! He smiled, remembering his nickname.

And the jewel had a suitable setting. To his joy, he had discovered among the hills an old Frenchman, cultivating his garden — a frame-maker who had long been with Chartier. Think of it, a man who not only could carve to perfection the delicately reserved mouldings Maurice Price desired, but who also really knew how to gild, in the reliable old manner! Such finds as these make life worth living. The Frenchman's frame was a masterpiece, Maurice declared. He sent it, in advance, to the Court of New Departures; he felt that it might have an elevating influence there. But he kept the landscape by him, for pure joy in its presence, until the last moment. Sometimes, when he put it away at night, out of the reach of thieves and other insects, he looked at Amouretta, on the back of the panel, and wondered. But he had no wish to blot out that strange likeness. It was part and parcel — there was something about it, too — He left it there, just as Pietro of the merry heart had left it, until a later jester had wreaked himself

upon the signature, sparing only the name Price.

In the Court of New Departures, Hal Wrayne was expecting that picture. Maurice had laconically written of his fresh adventures in painting, that summer; he had added that what he was about to send was "the gem of the whole outfit." All of his new pictures were new departures, according to Maurice. However, he honestly believed that this one, the gem! had in its inspiration something at once deeper and fresher than the others could boast. No need to mention that fact to Farintosh, of course; for he had decided to let Farintosh exhibit all but the gem. Thus Maurice, half in jest and all in earnest. Hal was jubilant. He did not know whether the gem was a portrait, or a fragment of a decoration. What did that matter? A gem is a gem. When the frame arrived, he recognized its beauty, and danced for joy. He commissioned Dodo to keep her weather eye out for a harmonizing remnant.

At that time, he had in his employ a long lean German, straight as a die, body and soul; a man whose services were really worth more than Hal could afford to pay, but who nevertheless had begged to remain, because he was happy in the Court of New Departures, and had been un-

happy elsewhere. He called himself the famulus, and had made himself well liked as such. Hal decided that when the pearl among pictures should at last arrive, the famulus, who was perfect in such duties, should unpack it, set it into its frame, and hang it in the place of honor, so that he himself might view it unexpectedly, from across the room. He carefully explained to the famulus that this picture, coming down from the mountains, was a new departure by a very great artist, and that he himself wanted to see it just as a buyer might see it; with a fresh eye, don't you know? Just for the big impression, so to speak, and to avoid letting his mind get confused by a lot of little impressions, as would surely happen if he took it out of the box himself, and fussed around with the hanging. There was something of the boy and the comedian still left in Hal, you observe. The famulus, who had seen and heard strange things in art and from men, both here and abroad, nodded sagely. He understood.

Even so, after he had unpacked the panel, he scarcely knew which of the two sides it were best to show, in that frame whose workmanship he had already lovingly examined. In his honest

conceit, he did not wish to seek counsel from his employer. To him, the landscape looked more beautiful than the lady! On the other hand, Mr. Wrayne had spoken of the great artist's work as a new departure; surely the lady, rather than the landscape, fitted that specification! Ach, it was a turvy-tipsy world, these days. No one knew what was beauty, any more. Turning the lady's bright image this way and that, he noted a signature, Price. Yes, that settled it; Price was the name Mr. Wrayne had spoken, many times already. With a sigh for the passing of the old régime in art as in life, the German famulus fitted the Italian boy's "fake" study of the Irish girl within the Frenchman's faultless frame, and set the picture in the place of honor, for rich Americans to see.

Not even to his "quartette of skirts" has Hal Wrayne ever disclosed his real feelings on seating himself in the buyer's seat, to take in suddenly, "in one big impression," the effect of Maurice's new departure. He himself did not know what his real feelings were. He had once had some little taste, he told himself, some little training; but these had been set at naught by certain of his recent exploits in salesmanship. More than

once, of late, he had experienced the acute distress of a frank soul that does not know whether it is lying or not.

"That's what a joint like this brings a man to," mused Hal. "First, intellectual dishonesty, in other words, blinking; and next, total blindness of the mind's eye." Amouretta's lively blue glance dismayed him. Was that girl with pearls really a Price — a Price of deeper and fresher inspiration than was to be discerned in those Prices the great Farintosh was soon to show, on the Avenue? He could not believe his eyes. Yet there was the signature. It did not look like Maurice's usual signature; but then, there was nothing like Maurice, in the whole thing. A new departure indeed! Hal's spirit quailed.

"They always said Maurice Price could paint anything, in any way; but this stumps me. And it sure does give me a pain all over when I try to like it. Perhaps there's something in one of those eyes that gets me, somehow. Is there, or is n't there? If there is, hanged if I know whether it's the near eye or the off eye!" Still playing the part of a buyer, Hal writhed in the buyer's seat, a spurious Renaissance antique discarded by Maurice.

Hal was always immaculately dressed. Through thick and thin, he had kept his air of purple and fine linen about him. Never a morning without a white flower in his buttonhole; and day after day, his eternally crumpled bright blond hair was all that saved him from the dandiacal. But now! You would have been sorry for him had you found him humped in his counterfeit throne, his cigarette awry on his lip, and his carnation lying all forlorn on the parquet. Had fate allowed him but ten seconds more, he would have set himself right. Too late! Mr. William Saltonstall had just entered the gallery. The ruler of the Court of New Departures had hard work to pull himself together, and recapture his pleasant alertness. It must be done, however; Mr. Saltonstall was too good a client to lose. Hal sprang to his feet, kicked the carnation under the throne, and with it cast aside for the moment his problem of the true and the false in art, as if it were an entangling garment that would burden him in a race. . . .

IV

THE next day, Maurice Price, packing up his belongings to return to the city in time for the

November elections, was puzzled by a telegram from his helter-skelter cousin. Just what could it mean? In telegrams, if in no other form of composition, the youth resorted to punctuation; he felt that periods gave clearness, an idea he had picked up while doing war work for the Government.

> Can sell picture period
> Top price cash down period
> On condition immediate withdrawal
> from gallery period
> Buyer buyer waits your wire period
>
> WRAYNE

As Maurice motored down to the station, the maple and beech leaves spurned by his tires rose up in their passing glory and sang Hal's message, over and over, with variations; and on the night train, the wheels took up the refrain, with grinding insistence. "Buyer buyer waits your wire," though probably due in part to a mistake at the office, sounded a little like the new poetry; Maurice hoped there might be truth as well as poetry in it. "Top price cash down" had its own music, of course; but "immediate withdrawal from gallery" was less pleasing to the ear. It had implications. That part of the message, reverberated in the too sonorous breathing of lower nine,

just opposite, really annoyed our painter. As he afterward told Hal, adapting his language to his hearer, "it got his goat." "Immediate withdrawal," indeed! Such words were not to be addressed to a Price.

Emerging from the sordid practicalities of the Pullman, he sought his Club for breakfast; he felt that the morning air on his face, even in the few steps from the Grand Central to the Century, might supplement the sketchy passes he had made before the shiny Pullman basin, while lower nine, perspiring in purple pajamas, awaited his turn; lower nine, in waking as in sleeping hours, still suggesting "immediate withdrawal." The offending phrase followed Maurice into the breakfast-room. He had eaten it in his grapefruit and was thoughtfully stirring it into his coffee, when Mr. William Saltonstall, that early bird among collectors, sauntered in, and after a moment's hesitation, hastened to grasp his hand.

Maurice in his absorption did not associate his enigmatic "buyer buyer" with Mr. Saltonstall. Indeed, that gentleman was known everywhere as a connoisseur in figure-pieces; he never bought landscapes. Yet there was something unusual

in his manner; his dark melancholy eyes, usually very gentle, were smouldering with a kind of suppressed excitement, in which both joy and pain were suggested.

"Surely I have the right explanation, have n't I?" he began, with anxious courtesy.

"If you have," replied Maurice, "I wish you'd share it with me, along with breakfast."

Acting on a fantastic impulse to match another man's perplexities with his own, he pushed the crumpled telegram across the table.

Mr. Saltonstall smiled. "Oh, yes, I asked Wrayne to wire you."

A glimmer of light broke over Maurice. "Are *you* — by any chance — this 'buyer buyer'?"

His friend nodded nervously. "Still waiting your wire! But I don't ask immediate withdrawal, now. That is, if the truth is what I think it is."

"But what *is* the truth?" cried the bewildered painter.

"You should know," returned the other. "I have my belief, my strong belief! — but you, you have the knowledge! For God's sake, man, was it a landscape or — a lady — that you sent down to that cousin of yours?"

Maurice could see that Saltonstall was trembling with emotion. In a flash, he remembered Amouretta. "Oh," he cried out, in a shocked voice, "a landscape, a thousand times a landscape! Did you think I *could* have meant the other, the one on the back? *Amouretta?*"

Mr. Saltonstall looked relieved, triumphant, ashamed. "Yes, I did, at first! And why not, when it was just that ribald portrait, and nothing else, that Wrayne showed me there, in an exquisite frame, in his confounded Court of New Departures? I tell you, Maurice Price, I was wild when I saw it. In my heart I vowed vengeance on you and all your tribe. I could n't believe it of you — you, of all men; yet there it was before my eyes. I could n't let that thing stay there! No man, who felt as I did about Amouretta, could let it stay, to be gaped at by the multitude looking for new sensations in art, and to be written up in the art column of the Sunday papers! Oh, I admit, of course, there was something captivating about it, too; captivating as well as desecrating, yes. Well, I made Wrayne take an oath to put it away, away, out of the world's sight, and send you a wire."

Maurice of the compassionate eyes saw the

drops of sweat gather on Saltonstall's lean temples.

"You must know," said the artist gently, "it was never I who painted that portrait of Amouretta. It was Anthony's studio assistant; you remember, the lad that died just before our Roman Prize was awarded. If you've looked at the painting, you know, of course, there's diabolically clever work in it. Those pearls — *I* could n't surpass them! But if you saw only that portrait (and right there, if you please, there's something that Master Hal will have to explain off the map!) how on earth did you happen to find my landscape?"

Saltonstall smiled in his sad way. "Well, I wanted to be sure Wrayne had kept his word about hiding the picture, so I dropped in on him unexpectedly, yesterday afternoon. Wrayne was all right! The thing was swathed and roped and even sealed. In fact, he had insisted on calling in that famulus of his the day before, when I was there, and having him do all that in my very presence, while he and I sat back and watched."

"Perfectly good gesture," laughed Maurice.

"Oh, yes, and in the grand style, I assure you! Queer chap, Wrayne, but he'll succeed, even

though he does n't yet know the rudiments of his trade. Can you believe it, he had not observed that the painting was on wood instead of canvas! I was wild to see it again; I made him uncover it and show it to me. My wrath had n't gone down with the sun, I can tell you, but I had sense enough left to see that the frame was quite out of the common; good as the Stanford White frames, but different. So I stepped behind to find the maker's name, if I could; and behold, a landscape of great Price! Wrayne never even knew it was there. Mistake of that famulus, I believe."

"You liked it?" Maurice put the question almost timidly. The landscape he loved seemed to him suddenly to lose importance, in the presence of his friend's deep feeling.

"You've surpassed your best self in it! I can't tell why, but there's something in it that assuages for me the grief of things; something of yourself that you've put into it, I suppose, — some beauty or solemnity that was not there, really, until you yourself brought it there, with your own two hands. Perhaps I never knew, till now, why men buy landscapes — " Saltonstall spoke dreamily. His recollective eyes, looking far beyond his

listener, seemed to peer into some Paradise not wholly lost.

Both men were moved. They had more to say to each other, things not to be told over egg-shells and coffee-stains.

"I suppose," hesitated Maurice, as they took their hats, "you wonder why I never painted out that figure on the back, at any rate, before I sent off the landscape?"

"Oh, no," answered the other, simply. "I know how you felt, I do, indeed! You could n't quite bring yourself to do it, could you, even though you tried? Neither could I, I am sure. Something keeps me from wanting to destroy it; I don't yet know whether it's the person or the painting! Though, of course, I never saw any picture of Amouretta that was really right, except that one little thing of yours you showed last winter in the Vanderbilt Gallery; and what's-his-name, the man at the desk, said very emphatically it was n't for sale —"

"No," interrupted Maurice, "it was n't for sale, and never will be. It is one of the few things I could n't take money for! My wife and I intended to give it as a wedding-present to Amouretta. We both of us loved that child; we felt her

roseleaf exquisiteness! Helen was so happy, tying up that little portrait in white paper. And afterwards, — well, I boxed it up and addressed it to you, with a note explaining it and begging you to keep it. But it was overlooked and forgotten, during my illness; and when I got up, I found I had lost my nerve about sending it to you. I feared you might not like it, or worse yet, might think I was trying to sell you something —"

"Oh, Maurice Price," sighed the collector, "then even *you* did n't know how much I *needed* Amouretta, and anything that would recall her truly, just as she was, and not as those who did n't know her imagined her to be? We Saltonstalls —" But the rest was lost in the roar of the traffic, as the men crossed the avenue, and walked rapidly together toward the Court of New Departures. It was not too late in the day to read the morning lesson to young Hal; it would do him good. After all, though, he was a plucky chap; the sooner he had whatever per cent was coming to him, the better. An amicable three-cornered arrangement could be made, about that. Certainly, where there's a quartette of skirts, somebody must pay the piper!

BITS OF CLAY

WHAT a curious thing is a piece of clay, and, dear Lord, how willing it is, under our fingers! Look now, here is a bit of clay, no larger than a pullet's egg, and no one knows what may come of it. Shall I mould you a few petals, with my thumb and forefinger, like this, and then shape up a closed golden heart, like that, and next fuss and fuse them all together, thus? You see, it is a rose! It has all the form a clay rose need ask, for the moment; if it had but color and perfume, it might be the rose of the world! However, I set no great store by it; I shall tear my rose in twain, to please you; and if you like, I will pinch up the lesser part into a bishop's mitre, and the greater part into a churchly face, no feature lacking. Indeed, I will put in as many features as you suggest, though, of course, from the modern point of view, too few are better than too many.

Will you have Stephen Langton, or Thomas à Becket, or Saint Francis himself, God reward him, or would you prefer my dear old neighbor there across the street, Father Geronimo of the

Carmelites? One is as easy as the other, when the clay is obedient. Or if by mischance you do not "love a priest and love a cowl and love a prophet of the soul," I can easily transform my monk into — You would like to go back to that rose-of-the-world idea? Very well, we shall make the hood into a mantilla, thus, and the good priestly face into the flowerlike countenance of a girl. The flower must have a stem, too, a well-rounded, slender stem; and the petal of her lower lip needs caressing. Surely you see that it is a girl; a señorita, signora, fräulein, mademoiselle, miss. A lady of any country; yes, perhaps even the gracious Madonna of all lands! What a curious thing is a piece of clay, and how willing it is under the fingers!

The boy Raymond Brooke had often seen and heard his father the sculptor do and say such things, while resting.

But — but — it was nevertheless a mistake of the boy Raymond, when, on finding a bit of clay in his hands, he looked about him with starry eyes, seeking something to adorn, with whatever he and his accomplice clay should create. And I hold it very strange, too, that on this bright June morning, with all the beautiful shapes still un-

summoned from the deep, he could think of nothing better to mould into a fine symmetry than a pair of fierce moustaches and a goatee; and further, that he could discover no better use for these vain ornaments than to affix them neatly upon the countenance of the clay lady in his father's studio, that noble new-made portrait of the venerable mistress of Highcourt.

Raymond was seven. Surely at this age, if ever, a child should show himself "*un enfant déjà raisonnable.*" The new governess had said so; she had added, in gentle despair, that without doubt it was different with the children of artists and the criminal classes. She was a puzzle-headed young creature from the devastated regions, and not yet hardened to life's surprises. Her career among us had early been darkened by the discovery that the children of American artists have no real feeling for the relative pronoun, in French. And what, she passionately demanded of the elder Brooke girl, what would our noble French literature be, without its relative pronouns? She was in earnest, and looked very pretty and bright-eyed as she asked it. Raymond, poor Nordic, was fascinated by that slender dark streak above her upper lip. It seemed very firm and permanent,

yet fragile and downy, too; he wondered whether, if you touched it, it would vanish. But Mademoiselle chose that moment to inquire of him, the youngest infant of the Brooke trio, whether he had the very smallest idea what a relative pronoun was, or even an ordinary pronoun, for example! Raymond was either unable or unwilling to throw light on the situation, and had fled toward the studio to escape his responsibilities. From Scylla to Charybdis, from French literature to American art! He was not thinking of his pronouns, either; he was thinking of that downy shadow. But this, I admit, scarcely excuses his grotesque conduct.

His father was not in the studio; the clay lady reigned supreme; a fine challenging old lady she was, drawing her breath with that superb kindliness the clay allows. The portrait was still, according to its creator, in the chrysalis stage. Later, it would be transformed into white plaster, and later yet, if luck held, it would issue, gleaming and triumphant, in spotless Carrara. The sculptor was by no means dissatisfied with that clay portrait; the world called it a speaking likeness. He himself found it a trace too masculine, perhaps; but that was inevitable, with a type

so full of high character. He was glad it was so, because he knew well enough that the marble would only too easily soften and spiritualize his interpretation of the old lady of Highcourt, with her white hair nobly tossed up from her candid brow.

She was a very beautiful old lady, truly; no one denied that; straight as an arrow and graceful as a palm, for all her seventy years; not fat, not lean; greatly given to charming clothes, too, and not particularly scandalized by our shocking modern custom of short skirts for all, especially grandmothers. You see her own feet were very shapely. And her profile was that of Cato's daughter, softened by centuries. All the little wrinkles around her eyes were kind and smiling ones. No wonder those college girls had voted that the old lady of Highcourt should be immortalized in fair Carrara, at a fair price, and shrined in a niche in their stately new Library, her gift.

But Raymond, you remember, was only seven years high in his sandal shoon. His nose hardly reached to the top of the modelling-stand. He was forced to mount a box to carry out his decorative intentions. The little typewriter box would do. Now! A slender sausage of clay moustache on the

left of the lady's mouth, another on the right; for the chin, a rather stouter lump. No compromises anywhere; swift work, and sure. Raymond stepped down from his box, and walked slowly backward, quite in his father's manner, to study the effect. Alas, how brief is the delirium of design! Raymond's flight of genius was over, and the result appalled him.

Indeed, it was rather remarkable, that transformation; and very curious is the power of a bit of clay, in willing fingers! That beautifully modelled countenance no longer suggested Madam Randolph of Highcourt; it had become the face of some Light-Horse Harry, some devil-may-care D'Arcy of the Guards. If that portrait had been scarce feminine enough before, what was it now, with those singular additions bristling from lips and chin? A warrior, no less. A moment ago, a lady; at present, a grenadier! An uninstructed observer, suddenly encountering that piece of family sculpture, might well ask, in his bewilderment, "But why does the noble Confederate officer wear a lace kerchief over his epaulets?"

Raymond himself could no longer endure the power of his own performance. He darted back toward his box, to annul his handiwork. Too

late! In his terror he heard a voice in the garden, near at hand; his father was talking with the old lady of Highcourt.

Having finished their excellent morning sitting (indeed, it was the last sitting that would be needed until marble-time should come), artist and model had strayed into the garden to see the Antonin Mercié phlox in all its glory; Raymond's father made a specialty of that, in honor of M. Mercié, his old master in sculpture. The two had touched lightly on many topics, — phlox, M. Mercié, old masters, sculpture, — *que sais-je?* And now the old lady of Highcourt, with a new thrill in her voice, was speaking very earnestly about a projected portrait in bronze, a work the sculptor seemed unwilling to undertake. He said, with force, that he much preferred to work from life. In working from photographs, he could n't do justice to himself, or his subject, or his client. And the old lady was ruthlessly chaffing him because, in his Northern way, he was putting himself, the artist, first, and herself, the client, last. Her face beamed with mischief as she spoke. Beware of that old lady, she has her designs on the sculptor; she means, by hook or by crook, to make him do her bidding! She has managed many men,

in her time; and always in her own way, so that they shall not perceive what is happening to them, until at last they have become the willing clay in her fingers.

However, Mr. Brooke was holding out bravely; I'll say that for him. He had had previous experience in making bronze portraits of dear women's dead fathers. He well knew that the odds were bitterly against any artist who should pledge himself to show forth Father, in his era of prosperity, just by imagining all things from a dim, lean profile of Father in his salad days. In short, according to Mr. Brooke, we were now in the nineteen-twenties; and back in the nineteen-tens, he had taken an oath, had Mr. Brooke, never again to interpret for the world, by means of the willing clay, just how a great man who died in the eighteen-eighties really looked in the eighteen-seventies, when all there was to go by was a wraithlike, looking-glassy daguerreotype of the eighteen-sixties. Yes, Madam, no matter how elegant the crimson velvet brocade that lined the little leather case! The old lady of Highcourt had plenty to say in answer to that; but long before she had begun to say it, the culprit Raymond, stricken by the lightning of his own genius, had

fled away, away on sandalled feet, to hide behind the tomato plants and the tall corn.

A great persuader, Madam Randolph! She refused to see herself as beaten. "I don't ask you to promise me anything to-day. I only ask you to give this matter your prayerful consideration. And would n't it be rather criminal on your part if you, a strong man, should allow me, a weak old lady, to degrade our American art by giving this commission to some one else, who would no doubt make a bigger mess of it than you will? Mr. Brooke, you don't know how much I want to leave behind me, for those grandsons of mine, at least some inkling of what my honored father looked like in Civil War days!"

They were stepping into the studio. It was a high step, but the old lady was a high-stepper, and Mr. Brooke chuckled over her disdain of his helping hand. Suddenly his smile vanished. A look of incredulous horror engulfed it utterly. His precious handiwork had been profaned, Southern womanhood insulted!

"Good God, what devil has been here?" He himself groaned aloud the shameful answer, "That devil Raymond!"

It is hard to find a really neat thing to say at

such moments; luckily actions speak louder than words. In wrathful haste, the sculptor strode forward to kick away Raymond's box, and to tear off those bits of clay foully misplaced on the portrait of a lady.

But the dame of Highcourt, though in her seventies, had a longer and quicker sight than even Mr. Brooke himself; she had a larger experience in the misdeeds of the young; it was she, not the sculptor, who had spied those sandalled feet winging toward the tomato plants. And indeed she was a valiant little old person, whom life had trained to all sorts of ready readjustments. Long before Mr. Brooke had worked himself up to anywhere near the height of passion he fully intended to reach, Madam Randolph had viewed the situation by and large, and had resolved it into its elements. With a singular phrase, borrowed no doubt from her grandchildren, she pulled our sculptor down on his haunches, so to speak; she stayed his hand in midair.

"Cut it out, old dear," she said soothingly, as if she were reining in her favorite thoroughbred. "And oh, won't you please, *please*, stop, look, listen? Mr. Brooke, Mr. Brooke, can't you see what it looks like? Dear sculptor-in-wrath, it's

my father, Dad to the life; it is, indeed, Captain Carteret! Ask any one who ever saw him. All it needs is the uniform!" And she brandished in triumph before Mr. Brooke the dim daguerreotype he had just refused to consider.

Well, what can we all do when events literally leap out of our hands, and shape themselves firmly, in defiance of our ethics and ultimatums? An old lady and a piece of clay are matters to be considered; they are curiously frail things under our fingers; we shall not shatter them unnecessarily. Mr. Brooke saw that Madam Randolph was right, in the main; and when she said, in a voice trembling between laughter and tears, "You will add years to my life if you do what I ask," what could he do but yield? There were to be two portraits, then; that was settled. The lady's would be in marble, the officer's in bronze; Raymond's genius for clay had arranged it. But Mr. Brooke, for all Madam Randolph's challenging eyes, refused to model those moustaches in her presence.

"No doubt my boy Raymond might do it," he said, with a slight acerbity. "He appears to have the soul of a barber." He was still smarting a little from the profanation of his own sacred

handiwork; one did not expect a woman to understand how one felt about such things.

Who shall measure man's ingratitude? Was Raymond ever congratulated upon his own small part in that day's playlet? Not at all. Behind the tomato plants, in the cool of the evening, could be heard the lamentations of a small boy; and behind the small boy — but I make an end.

In his little white bed, a subdued Raymond sobbed out repentance, in long-drawn gusts. "Oh, mother dear, I did n't mean to spoil father's lovely lady, I did n't, I did n't!" His mother said to herself, in fine disdain of human decisions, "And this poor suffering child must not be told what a lucky thing for him his badness really is; he must not find out that his disgraceful act has put into our family coffers enough to earn him his new pony!" She marvelled at the complexities, nay, the complicities of parenthood. And Raymond, soon to be cast up safely into dreamland on the ebbing tide of remorse, repeated, in a diminuendo of infantine rhythms, "Mademoiselle ast me so very *suddingly* something I could n't know — I only wanted to see how the lady would look, with whiskers — I made 'em just like Mr. Smith's at the grocery-store — The clay felt so curious under my fingers —"

THE YOUNG LADY IN BLUE

AS my wife says, I am by nature unduly sensitive to beauty. You would hardly expect this fault in a sculptor — you who perhaps judge all sculptors from the war memorials you have seen. And with me, the worst of it is, I am even more susceptible to color than to form. My long acquaintance with form has put me on my guard against its wiles, and my joy in beautiful shapes is forever enhanced by the free play of my critical faculty. But in the presence of lovely color, I am unarmed, weak-kneed. All I can do is to take pleasure in it, for I do not know enough about it to be critical, in any satisfying way. This explains why I fell, and fell far, for the young lady in blue. I admit that I would not have done for Senator Bullwinkle just what I did for her.

Yet, when I first saw the young lady, she was not in blue, if you forget for a moment her forget-me-not eyes. She was in deepest black, and, I have reason to believe, the most expensive and fashionable black to be had in New York. Gigi

Arcangelo, my seldom-sinning super-assistant, broke all the rules of the studio when he let her in, that bright May afternoon. Gigi knew perfectly well that after a vexatious sitting from Senator Bullwinkle (who, in order to keep awake while posing, always had his speeches of a decade ago read aloud to him by my wife) I would be in no mood for trifling with mere beauty. Gigi knew that I needed three hours of uninterrupted work on my head of Christ, before I could well show it to an enlightened Bishop; he knew that I was behind with my Iowa figures; he knew that my bust of General Daly ought to have been finished, boxed, and shipped a month before; he knew that my big clay relief of the Spanker-Sampson children had developed a crack across the nose of the middle boy, making him look more cross-eyed than he really was, so that his likeness was wholly unfit for the inspection of a fond and fabulously rich Middle-Western aunt, due to arrive on the Wednesday. In short, Gigi knew that I was counting on this priceless afternoon, of all the afternoons of my life, to justify, yes, to glorify, my career as an artist. And to think that at such a time as this, he could show in that girl, simply because, as he afterward explained, to do other-

wise would have been, for him, *impossibile*, she was *si bella, bella!* Gigi shared my weakness, you observe; he too was pledged to beauty.

At arm's length, he pushed up her card to me as I stood on my high ladder. The name was a long one, beginning with *C* and ending in *en* — Chittenden, of course. I waved away the name and would have had Gigi do likewise by the owner. Too late! She was already inside the door. Grudgingly enough, I climbed down from my head of Christ, well resolved to make short shrift of the girl and all her works. But even before I reached the ground, I was somewhat disarmed, because, clad wholly in black as she was, with the heavenly young radiance of her eyes merging softly into the faint rosy radiance of her uplifted face and the shadowed golden radiance of her hair, while the three radiances together were enclosed within the black-rimmed, transparent circle of her veiled hat, she was beyond any mortal doubt an engaging sight. I caught myself saying, under my breath, "Oh, happy hat!" This struck me at the time as an asinine remark, even when privately made, and I ascribed it to the spring season. Looking back, I see that the observation was quite correct. In reality, the girl was just a com-

plex of radiances, bounded by black; sweet and twenty, and in mourning.

Walking respectfully behind this glorious sad young person was a footman who failed to supply the contrast of usefulness to beauty. He was not even carrying the white oblong box which was evidently one of the properties of this ill-timed visit. I saw with relief that it was too narrow to contain a death-mask. Miss Chittenden held this box between her hands as if it were a very precious thing; a fold of her veil had been laid reverently around its corners. In her unconsciousness of self and in her absorption in the business that occupied her, she seemed to me a figure both sculptural and symbolic. Turned into stone, she would have been a Pandora on an antique vase, or rather a Saint Cunegonde or Saint Scholastica weathering the centuries on some mediæval portal. All her motions had a kind of free and classic largeness mingled with their high-heeled modernness; yet her attitude toward that box was, as I told myself, purest Gothic.

As we undid the box together, Miss Chittenden explained that ever since she had seen my statuette of a Dancer in the new Museum in her home town, more than a year ago, she had longed above

all things to possess a piece of marble from my chisel, my own chisel; "the personal touch, you know!" So (and here the forget-me-not eyes became more misty and the young voice more vibrant) when her mother died, in April, she had had a cast made from her mother's hand, which to her was the most beautiful thing in the world; and she hoped, oh, so much, that I would be willing to copy it for her in marble. Done in the way I would do it, she was good enough to say, it would be something really living — something she could have and love forever and ever.

My dismay was complete. Indeed, copying plaster casts in marble was not at all in my line. Right or wrong, I felt myself capable of higher things. Apparently this Miss Chittenden was not only classic, mediæval, and modern, but also quite Victorian, all in the same breath. For surely it was a preposterous Victorian idea of hers to want a marble hand! As we drew the cast from its wrappings, its fragile beauty moved me, I confess; but I steeled myself, steadfastly considering how on earth, without hurting the girl's feelings, I could make her understand my point of view.

"The hand is perfection itself," said I, in all honesty. "And," I added, glancing at her own

hand, from which she had removed her ugly black glove, the better to handle the cast, "it is very like your own, in construction; I mean — "

"You mean my hand is built like hers, but it's not so pretty —"

"Not so small, certainly!" I wondered whether this might vex her a bit, on her Victorian side. But no, she seemed rather pleased than otherwise.

"I'm three inches taller than mother was," she observed, cheerily. "Her size hand would n't have looked at all well, on me."

Really this girl had some sense. Besides, she was quick to divine that the commission she was offering me was not precisely attractive to me. She seemed to search for the cause.

"You know," she said, eagerly, "I would n't want to hamper you in your imagination! Oh, no, not that! I would n't dream of asking you to copy the cast just as it is. It would be all right if you put in a Bible or something under the hand, and some lace around the wrist, or some knitting-work and knitting-needles sticking out from the book. Mother often left her knitting at a favorite passage, so that when I came to put away her work at night, as I always did, I might guess what

text it was that interested her. We made a regular game of it. And" (here she flushed and hesitated) "I'm perfectly willing and able to pay the going price for any extras you put in. Only, I don't really know much about such things." Her smile was wistful, rather than embarrassed; but in an instant, it had widened into a boyish and wholly fascinating grin. "I don't know whether it shows on me or not, but this is the first time I've ever been East. I suppose I'm not so — sophisticated and so on — as if I'd had a genuine Eastern education, as mother had. Oh, but you don't know what it is to have first a Missouri uncle and then a Fifth Avenue aunt protecting you to death, every step you take! I might have asked Auntie all about this kind of thing, of course. She has lived in New York always, and knows the ropes. You see, I'm staying with her until I go abroad in June. But, I just did n't want to talk with her about it. I'm my own mistress, now! The moment I saw that Dancer of yours, I said to myself, 'When I come into my own money, I shall have that man carve a piece of marble for me, and do something to elevate American art!' And now the time is come."

What I ought to have said then was this: "My

dear young lady, if you really want to advance your country's art (and very laudable it is on your part!) and if you insist that your heart's desire is to be carried out in marble, by my chisel, as you put it, why in the name of all that's young and gay and jubilant don't you ask me to do you a dancer, or a fountain figure, or a nymph, or a faun, or even a mantelpiece, with some joyous caryatids?" But I did n't say anything of the kind. Besides, a horrid thought came to me that perhaps she might not understand caryatid, or might get the word confused with hermaphrodite, as I have observed that tourists returning from Italian galleries sometimes do, even when duly instructed. Indeed, the forget-me-not eyes rested so lovingly on the plaster cast that I had n't the heart to be coldly frank with her, and to tell her that in a few years the marble hand she now wanted might seem an encumbrance; something that for old sake's sake she could n't bear to tuck away in the attic, and yet something that one really could n't, if one kept up with the times, put in a glass case on a library shelf, or on one's own dressing-table. Some of our sculptors might have managed it. I can imagine that brute of a Schneider, for example, telling her that there

was nothing in it for her; that a "marple hant would be too pig for a baber-wade, and too liddle for a lawn-tecoration." He would be able to suggest that the proper move for her to make would be to build a fine large monument to her mother, with the hand "joost as a veature." But since I'm not Schneider, all I could say was, "This cast is beautiful, indeed, but aren't you afraid that when translated into marble, it will no longer seem so lovely and so living to you?"

"Ah, but," persisted the girl, "the marble of it is part of all I want! All I want is mother's hand, done by your hand." She blushed, and so did I.

"It's very kind of you to want my work," I stammered. "Really, it makes me feel awfully grateful, and humble, too! But do you realize that very few of our sculptors carve in marble the things they model in clay? The custom is, to let some carver, generally an Italian, do most if not all of the marble-carving, just as it's the custom to have a bronze foundry cast our bronze statues. You see," I went on, warming to my task of educating this bright being, "things are different now from what they were in Cellini's time, or Michael Angelo's. In Renaissance days,

a sculptor could do the whole job from start to finish, if he wanted to, but to-day, he can't, and does n't want to. He saves himself for what he fondly thinks is the imaginative and intellectual part. He models in clay, of course, but there's a lot besides that. There's building armatures, and making plaster casts, and so on; and he generally lets Gigi do it."

We glanced at Gigi, who, for the second time that afternoon, was sinning. Gigi had not retired to his customary labors behind the burlap curtain, but was standing near us, carving at a bit of plaster medallion, ostensibly turning it this way and that to get a better light on it, but in reality feasting his Latin eyes on Miss Chittenden's beauty. And then Gigi, usually a silent soul, did a strange thing. He began to talk, very eagerly.

"The hand of the Signorina's mother is truly beautiful." (The Signorina giggled, and then was shocked by her own levity. She told me afterward that she could n't help laughing; she had felt as if Gigi were pouring out a page from a foreign-language grammar all over her.) "In marble," continued Gigi, "the marble that grows in my part of the world, how very fine it would be! I myself could well begin it, and the Signor could

finish it. You have seen the art of the Signor! Many sculptors cannot do what the Signor can. It is the *morbidezza!* The others do not attain it."

Miss Chittenden flashed upon Gigi a smile more dazzling than any she had yet given to me. "Now as I understand it," she cried, "he could rough out your design and do the heavy work on it, and then you could take the marble and finish it up, and give it the more — what-do-you-call-it?"

We all three laughed aloud at that, and while I was trying to explain to the girl, as tactfully as possible, that after she had been abroad and seen the works of art in many countries, she might not care for a marble hand on a book, even with lace at the wrist, and with knitting-needles sticking out of the book, Gigi returned to his den, from which one then heard the sound of hard labor. I was finding it rather difficult to convince Miss Chittenden that she was asking for what was obsolete, from the world's point of view, and impossible, from mine. I tried to dissuade her by telling her that it would be only a fragment. With astounding quickness she replied, "Oh, but that would n't matter, would it? Lots of those old part-gods in the Museum are only fragments, and

yet the teachers in the Art Department are always praising them up, just the same!"

Before I could frame an answer to that, Gigi emerged, pushing before him a little stand on which was a block of fine pink marble which I had obtained years before, in peculiar circumstances. It was a piece I had long been guarding for some future master-work of mine — something that was to be absolutely original, yet wholly classic; one has such dreams. And here was Gigi showing it to that girl! His admiration for her had become so boundless that he opened up his heart to her in all the three languages he could use. If the Signorina would deign, he would explain to Mademoiselle that this was a little, little block of marble which his own *cognato* had stolen one night (knowing it to be a good action) from the workshop of the marvellous Duomo which she herself would see when she saw the most beautiful cathedral in all Italy! And his brother-in-law had sold it to a great sculptor who was visiting Italy at that time, but of course did not know it was stolen. (Gigi was lying a little, but his lying blends so agreeably with his candor that I myself cannot always distinguish one from the other.)

I saw that the blue-eyed girl was thoroughly

enjoying Gigi. Though this was before the day of the so-called Greenwich Village, I am sure that Miss Chittenden thought that now at last, freed alike from her Missouri uncle and her Fifth Avenue aunt, she was seeing Bohemia; perfectly respectably too. If only a celebrated model or two had strayed in, her happiness would have been complete. As it was, she garnered up Gigi's sayings with the same single-hearted attention she had given to my own. He explained, in his party-colored way of speech, that this little block was marvellously fine in grain; it was free from dark streaks, too — he would stake the tomb of his fathers on that! — while its crowning exquisiteness lay in its color, a pale surpassing pink as of earliest dawn over Tuscany. There was no other marble in the world quite like it. That was why his *cognato* had been *obliged* to steal it, for the sake of art. If you had any taste at all, any love for the beautiful, you would call it using, not stealing! And again, behold! While it was too small for a head (except a *bambino's* head, and it was a little too long for that, unless you wasted a great deal, and certainly it was more of a sin to waste such marble than to steal it), it was just exactly the right size for the dear hand of the Sig-

norina's mother, lying upon the open book, or even on the closed book, with the knitting-needles protruding; difficult, of course, but where there's a wish, there's a road —

I stared astounded at Gigi. In all the ten years he had worked for me, I had never heard from him so many words at once. I could not dam the flood.

"*Ah, oui,*" he pursued, "*certamente* Mademoiselle could have the lace around the wrist, if she so wished, and —"

"No, Gigi," I interposed firmly. "The lady *cannot* have the lace. Not *with* the knitting-needles. At one or the other I draw the line." Again, we three laughed together. What was there about this dewy-eyed girl that made us so natural and human? Was it the Missouri in her? Old Schneider was from Missouri, but he never made me feel human. Was it her beauty? Very likely, but at the time, I doubted it. One always *does* doubt it, at the time. The result was, as I have already confessed, I fell for the girl in blue, as I was to call her in later days. I weakly told her that if Gigi would rough out the hand and the book, in the pale pink marble, I would be willing to finish it for her; yes, I added cynically, I would

put in all the *morbidezza* the most exacting client could require. I would charge her four hundred dollars for the completed work. It was a high price, I told her. Others might do it for less; not I. And mind, there were to be no knitting-needles and no lace, unless I should greatly change my idea. She drooped visibly, not at the price, which seemed to be of little moment to her, but at the loss of the homely details in the work by which she hoped to elevate our art. To console her, I said that I would probably design a bit of drapery to take the place of the lace, but nothing fussy or obtrusive. I told her that she could have the thing completed, on her return to New York, a year later. Just as she was leaving the studio, to rouse the footman from his colored supplement in the anteroom, where he had remained, doubtless under orders from Auntie, I pulled myself together to contemplate the extent to which I had fallen. Perhaps I could climb up again. Perhaps my high ideals in art were not lost forever.

"Remember, Miss Chittenden," said I, in what I hoped would be an impressive manner, "remember this! If after you have visited galleries and studios abroad, and seen the works of Rodin and Dampt and Donatello and Bourdelle and Prax-

iteles and Maillol and a few others, remember, if one year later, when you've had more observation of art, you should no longer care to have this hand in marble, I for my part will call this contract of ours null and void; and you may do the same." It sounded well, as I said it.

The blue-eyed one flashed back on me her friendly, all-conquering smile. "I shall remember," she said. "But you know, my name is n't Chittenden, at all. Never was, and never will be, I hope! In fact, I have other plans — but no matter! You thought I was a chit, and so you called me Chittenden —"

This bit of girlish reasoning struck me as being so straight from Sigmund Freud that I was disconcerted. But she hastened to cover my confusion.

"It's all right," she laughed. "I did n't want to take up your time by correcting a perfectly reasonable mistake. And if you'd rather call me Chittenden, pray do! But my name is really Clarenden, with Mariellen in front. See!" She offered me another of her cards. Her face took on a look of charming gravity as we shook hands. "Whatever happens," she said, "I know you will be very careful of the plaster cast. I know you understand my feeling about it."

The following April, Mariellen Clarenden wrote to me from Paris, to tell me that I might expect her in my studio about the middle of May. She had visited the Salon, she said, and had seen strange sights in the world of art. Also, she had worked hard on her French; luckily, she added, she had a good Missouri foundation. The closing sentence of her letter went to my head a little. "*Mon Dieu*," she wrote, "*Mon Dieu*, how great you are — you and Auguste Rodin!" "*Mon Dieu*," indeed! Was this girl becoming sophisticated, like the others? Time would tell.

Early in the morning, on May 15th, I had a telephone message to the effect that Miss Clarenden, according to promise, would revisit my studio promptly at ten, if I would permit. As I have always been a collector of coincidences, I noted with zest that May 15th was exactly one year from the date of my absurd one-sided party-of-the-first-part contract concerning the marble hand. I further noted, not without dismay, that Senator Bullwinkle was to have his final sitting that very afternoon. Still adding to my collection, I recalled that it had happened like that the year before; Clarenden day had been Bullwinkle day, a day of mingled sun and cloud.

Now that Bullwinkle bust had always been a vexation to my spirit, partly because old Bullwinkle had so often played truant, instead of giving me the necessary sittings. He was forever travelling about the country for political purposes, or else attending the funerals of near relatives. Sometimes I fancied that he would go to any lengths, no matter how criminal, rather than face me from the sitter's chair. The commission, given to me by a group of Bullwinkle enthusiasts, was to be handsomely paid, but was to be kept a profound secret from the world until the finished bronze bust should be set in place as the crowning ornament of the celebrated five-million-dollar Bullwinkle Building, at that time under way. To me, there was something rather childish about this pseudo-secrecy, openly kept up for nearly two years. But above all, that bust bothered me because I myself had not yet mastered it. As it stood there in the searching May light, I saw in its loose ends, its uninteresting planes, its prosaic light-and-dark, its flabbiness of brow and cheek, its dreary wastes of shirt bosom and lapel, only a monument to my own incapacity to seize and reveal the characteristics of my subject; — to tell in my clay all the news

that was fit to print about him, with just enough more to keep the spectator guessing. Lord, how I had tried, and failed, to penetrate the Bullwinkle personality! At first, I had privately laughed at the Senator as a ridiculous old card, holding on to the present and yearning toward the future, but in reality, living only on the past and its triumphs. Indeed, his middle years had been a pageant of triumphs. Very soon, however, I found I was not getting on with my work. The man worried me. I could not discover what there was within him that had lifted him above the shoulders of the crowd. I could not for the life of me isolate his own private germ of human grandeur, and inoculate my clay with it. Yet I acknowledged grandeur in him. It would be absurd to attribute to anything so blind as chance his astounding command over human votes.

To be baffled by a Bullwinkle was a chastening lesson. I dreaded that afternoon sitting. My wife was away, and there could be no readings from the "Congressional Record." What would that do to him? Would it bring him out, or shut him in? To get a running start, I had pulled the bust out into the fresh morning light, and like a dull child trying to find his place in yesterday's

lesson, I was fumbling about on the pedestal, the shirt-front, and the senatorial dewlaps, when a ring at my door and voices in the anteroom warned me to slip a cover over this work of high secrecy.

What a contrast to the various Bullwinkles of my career was the young lady in blue, who now stood before me! This time, she was followed, not by a mere footman, but by a young man wearing her colors in his tie and his heart on his sleeve. There they were in their victorious springtide, the suitor and the suited; for there could be no earthly doubt that this young man was hers, and that the two were lovers forever. That was evidently what was most of all in their minds, and I, for one, thought they were right. Incredible as it would have seemed to me if I had not been there, Miss Clarenden's former radiancy was enhanced by her new experiences, her bright garments. What an exquisite thrilling azure was that of her veil as it fluttered against the discreet dark blue of her costume! Maxfield Parrish should have been there to immortalize it. Yet I did not regret his absence, at the time. There were all kinds of lovely blue tones about her, and these tones in their very harmony conspired together to make

the blue of her eyes something beyond description matchless and unforgettable. She was one of those girls who, whether they put on a pinafore or a Paquin gown, manage to make mankind believe two things: first, that they are more beautiful than ever, and next, that what they have on does not look too expensive. There are a few such girls left, I am told. The mere sight of her smoothed out my Bullwinkle worries.

She came to the point at once, taking advantage of a moment when her cavalier's manly attention was caught by the workings of an enlarging machine in the corner; her Jack was an engineer, it appeared. She paused an instant, then plunged in, somewhat breathlessly, as if she were not quite sure of her ground.

"Jack and I," she said, — "well, we think now that perhaps you were right in what you told me a year ago. Yes, you were right! I was mistaken when I thought I would be fully satisfied if I could have forever with me the marble copy of mother's hand, carved by your hand. Travel is so broadening, is n't it? And now, since I've seen all Italy and France" (here she smiled widely at her own fatuity), "I've learned better, indeed I have! And if you don't mind, I'll take away the plaster

cast. I shall want to keep it always, of course. But it's nature, not art, that makes me want to."

I stood aghast. The girl was actually taking me at my word, and repudiating the contract of yesteryear. What a change in a twelvemonth, and, O Education, what crimes are committed in thy name! She saw me looking about for her cast, and very gently begged me not to bother, unless it was quite handy. Resisting an ironic impulse to tell her that of course a plaster cast of a hand was always more or less handy, I dusted off her confounded box, and gave it to her with what courtesy I could muster. I remembered Gigi's saying that to do otherwise would have been *impossibile*, she was *si bella, bella.*

It chanced that not six feet away from the lady in blue, and behind a little curtain adroitly arranged by Gigi, the marble hand was enshrined. And strange as it will seem to you after all I have said, there was something interesting about it, something that would compel your pleased attention, even if you were an artist, or only a lover of art. Paul Manship liked parts of it; and a painter friend of mine said — but no matter about that now. Gigi had poured his whole Mediterranean soul into his part of the work, and I

had designed, as best I could, the open book and the drapery. To be candid, I had taken real pleasure in finishing the marble, with the desired *morbidezza*. I had enjoyed every stroke I had given to that most beautiful stone, for Gigi had kept my tools in exquisite condition all the time. He seemed to know just how I wanted every tool to feel in my hand when I was modelling the marble. I longed to show the girl what we had done for her. But how could I do that, after all I had said to her, a year ago, and all she had said to me, to-day? Was there not a certain sprightly finality in her remarks? With decision, she took the box from my hands and entrusted it to her Jack.

"*Au voir*," she sang to me, over her shoulder. "*Au plaisir de vous voir!* But I shall come again, if I may. Very soon, *n'est-ce-pas?*" The good Missouri foundation was quite evident in her farewell address.

Naturally, I was nonplussed. Think of it, I, a rising — yes, you might say, an arrived — young sculptor, in Manhattan, and she, a chit of a Chittenden from Missouri! But my chagrin was as nothing to Gigi's. For of course I had not meant to pocket that money myself, just for a few hours' pleasant work on a bit of pink marble. I was in-

tending it as a sort of well-earned present for Gigi, who has, you must know, a rather large flock of kids to be shepherded up to the highest pastures of our American democracy. There was one little fellow named Mario, the most gifted of all, and he had been hard hit by infantile paralysis; we were planning to use this money for his special education in art. And now the chit had left us planted there, with nothing but a raw *n'est-ce-pas* for our pains. It served me right, I admit. But what of Gigi, and the lad Mario? Why, Mario could model you a better rabbit out of yesterday's chewing-gum than Schneider could ever evolve from the fairest block of marble in Milan Cathedral. That girl had talked of elevating American art; and here she was, actively stifling American genius. I could not meet Gigi's eye. Perhaps, after all, there was no great contrast between the young lady in blue and the Senator, except on the surface. The world was probably full of chits and Bullwinkles.

That afternoon, the dreaded sitting began badly. The Senator missed my wife and her ministrations. He was writing his memoirs, and wanted to refresh his memory about his third tariff speech. His secretary was no good as a

reader, he complained, but my wife had seemed to have some sense about her. He could n't understand why a woman of sense should want to go gallivanting. His manner implied that it was wholly my fault that my wife should prefer Bar Harbor realities to Little Rock recollections. Half-peevishly and half-humorously, he writhed about in his chair, like a bad little boy grown old. He did not like the cigar he had brought, and scorned the best I could offer. He drove me to despair by presenting square front view when I needed to verify dewlaps in profile; he brushed off imaginary flies from his Roman nose, just as if my studying his nose had made it itch. He attempted every grotesque perversity in the sitter's calendar, and even invented some original bedevilments of his own. He turned his attention to my rendering of the details of his attire, telling me that he had always *tried* to tie his tie as tight as he could get it, and that if I did n't mind (indeed, I did mind!) he wanted to have that third button of his waistcoat fastened up, if the dam' thing was to go down to posterity in imperishable bronze. Alas, my sitter was eluding me again. His reality as a human being was hidden from me in a fog of momentary misconduct.

Suddenly the Senator straightened. He was looking toward the corner where a stricken Gigi was still hovering about our rejected collaborative masterpiece, and contemplating the wreck of Mario's future. "Where on God's footstool did you get that hand?" shouted the Senator, the big W-shaped vein on his left temple swelling in his excitement.

"Gigi and I made it," I replied, calmly accepting the fact that either the Senator or I had at last gone crazy under the strain of the Bullwinkle bust. The man had never before shown a spark of any interest whatsoever in my works, whether clay or plaster, bronze or marble. I wondered whether a strait-jacket would have been a good thing to include in my studio equipment, but I was not quite sure which one of us needed it the more, so bewildered was I by the change that had seized on the Senator. He bounded from his chair, snatching the ground, one might say, from under Gigi's feet.

"That hand," bellowed Mr. Bullwinkle, shaking his forefinger at me as if I were his political opponent, "that hand is a fine thing! I tell you, it's a great thing! It's the best thing you've got in your whole shooting-gallery, and don't you

start in to deny it! I'd rather have that one piece of alabaster marble than the whole of Westminster Abbey!"

To my amazement, the Senator stood at bay over the marble, as if it were a prize to be defended against all comers. He fairly flamed with intensity. I never saw a man more alive, more tingling with a sense of being alive. For the first time, I could learn, from my own eyes and not from historic hearsay, something of his power over his fellow-men. His eyes looked large, his jowls turned taut, his upstanding hair, which I had thought almost ridiculous, became sublime. He seemed a creature expressly framed for the applause of listening senates. In a twinkling, and when I least expected it, I saw more of the real man than I had found out in all my passionate searching during those frustrate sittings. No doubt, my searching had helped toward my present illuminated vision; that vision was but the culmination, the happy ending, of my quest. Like Childe Roland, I had been expecting too much, perhaps, from my Dark Tower. What a fool I had been to suppose that the Senator's germ of greatness lay in some noble difference between himself and others! Why, it was plain as

day that his greatness lay, not in his difference from the rest of the world, oh, no, not that; his greatness was mainly in his rich, happy, sympathetic commonness. He was not so much a man above men, as a man among men. My mistake was, I had been trying to win the Senator; I should have let him try to win me, according to his bent and usage. So I sprang back to my modelling, and let him be himself. It did not matter to me, now, that he was striding, gesticulating, quivering; at heart, I have always believed, with George de Forest Brush, that a model on the move, and really alive, is far better to work from than one sitting still as a sod.

And now, as I studied my man anew, I perceived all at once that a dozen good dominating strokes rightly placed on my clay could turn it from a mess to a masterpiece. I became two persons, as every artist at times must. Each was sharply awake. One of these two was modelling for dear life on that portrait, smiting the thing now here, now there; unhasting, unresting; gathering up rich handfuls of all the released individuality of greatness that I now saw radiating from a transfigured Senatorial countenance, and compressing that individuality into clay for

the plaster-moulder's sacrifice and the bronze-founder's furnace. The other man in me was listening amiably to a Bullwinkle speech of self-revelation. I suppose that under my skin there was even a third person, ironically reminding me that it was never *my* hand that had touched the button to switch all this new light on a stale matter. It was another hand, a lady's hand, a marble hand, too; and a hand rejected by a chit. Such reminders drive a man to humility, even while he is winning the game. For I *was* winning; there could be no doubt of that, now.

"You young artist fellers," the Senator was saying, vehemently, "of course you all think of me as a tough old politician. So I am, and so I want to be! But the mistake you make is, thinking I'm nothing else. That young Mather that painted me was just the same. He made a swell portrait of me, of course, red plush curtain and all; — I know enough not to deny that. But he was n't so much interested in me as he was in his way of painting me. And it shows in his work, sticks out all over!"

I took to heart this luminous bit of art-criticism while the Senator ran on. "And I can tell you, young man, that this hand carries me back

in a way you don't dream of. You don't even guess at the sort of feeling I have when I look at it and touch it! You're incapable of knowing! You're not old enough or wise enough or kind enough, perhaps! You're too college-sure in your own way of feeling to care a continental about what *I* feel!"

I could not help seeing that some strong emotion had visited his heart. But I thought he'd like it best if I did n't say much; besides, I had my work to do. The Bullwinkle Building must not lack its crowning touch through any failure of mine to seize the supreme moment. So I calmly swept my big tool alongside of the Senator's clay face, half-erasing a thousand fussy unnecessary markings from its map. My erstwhile sitter was still hovering excitedly over the marble. He had nothing whatever to say about *morbidezza.*

"Look here," he exclaimed, turning upon me with a gesture of real dignity, "you probably don't see, or imagine you see, any resemblance between this great paw of mine and that lovely lady's hand! No, I would n't expect you to!"

Now I had often observed that the Senator's hand was still handsome and energetic. An unusual hand, I had thought, for a politician. It was

uninvaded either by chalky deposit on the knuckles, or fatty increment on the fingers, or even by swollen veins on the back. Hence I was glad to admit the likeness he saw; and weighing my words, while I laid in a good strong dark under a resounding lock of hair he had just tossed up from his forehead, I congratulated him on his artistic discernment. He shook off the compliment with a growl, though I know he liked it.

"But what I want to know is," he went on, "how the deuce did *you* happen to make this lovely thing? Is it for sale? What price, f.o.b., young feller, what price?"

Gigi leaked out from his burlap. I could feel his eyes imploring me, for Mario's sake, to play my part as a man!

The Senator noted my hesitation. "Is n't it for sale?"

"Upon my word," I replied, intent on fixing the Bullwinkle nostril for posterity, "I hardly know whether it's for sale or not." For the moment I did n't care, a happy issue out of the Bullwinkle bust being from every point of view more important to me, just then, than all the marble hands from here to Genoa.

"With the good help of Gigi here, I made the

thing for a lady, who does n't seem to want it, now it's done. She's been to Europe since she ordered it, and she's gotten herself educated, so she thinks, to higher forms of art." Perhaps I spoke a trifle bitterly.

"What's her fool name?" The Senator was still enkindled. I was surprised to see with what tenderness he was passing his fingers over the surface of that marble; — and he shouting the while as if we were all at a caucus!

"Her name?" I hesitated, even then desiring to protect the name of beauty, and to pardon the grotesque shabbiness of that girl's act in taking me at my word. "Let's see. Oh, it was a Miss Chittenden, as I remember it. Just a chit from Missouri."

"Chittenden," returned the Senator, with a puzzled air, "Chittenden?" Then a great light broke upon him. "Chittenden nothing! It's Clarenden, that's what it is. And if she told you anything else, she's sailing under false pretences. Just like her, too!"

"No, indeed," I interposed, warmly, "I'm sure she would n't do that — there must be something she'd draw the line at. Come to think of it, Clarenden *was* the name she gave."

"A long young dame," pursued Bullwinkle, "blue eyes, you know, and a way with her? Mariellen Clarenden?"

I nodded. The Senator leaped in triumph. He turned upon me with the friendliest smile in the world. "What were you charging her?"

"Four hundred dollars. And I don't sell it for a cent less to anybody."

"Give you five hundred! Done!" The Senator snatched a checkbook and a fountain pen from the region of that waistcoat button we had lately wrangled over. I had no idea his motions could be so swift and so majestic. Perhaps I might have stayed his hand, in some effete idea of ethics, or professional etiquette; but Gigi's inexorable eye was on me, dangling Mario before my hesitating soul. I compromised by taking the check, with vague thankfulness, and laying it on the table. I told myself I would think it over. It might be that five hundred dollars was not too much for a masterwork, preferred above all Westminster Abbey.

"You wonder at me," the Senator went on, with a guffaw that was like a sob. "Well, then, sit up and wonder all you like. Sometimes I wonder at myself. This hand — " he stroked the

marble with the same sort of reverence the girl had shown about that plaster cast. "Oh, hang it, boy, we're all human, even if you are studio-bred-and-broke, God help you, and I'm from Missouri! Listen, kid. I had a sister, a twin sister. A smart Aleck like you would probably say it sounds like opera-buff, or a dime novel, but it's just plain fact, right out of my own life. And I was fonder of that girl than of any other human being that ever lived. This necktie you've been fussing over because it's too tight and hard, you said; — well, it's black, for her. And black *is* tight and hard, sometimes. Ah, well!" The Senator resolutely put away sadness, and again stretched out his own fine capable hand.

"My sister had the prettiest little hand in the county. County! Her hand was known all over the State, and many a young newspaper feller touched it — on paper — in the old days. Foot, too!" He meditated a moment on his own very good-looking shoes. "After she married Clarenden, the big railroad man, we saw less of each other, of course, but we were chums to the last. And the instant my eye lit on this lovely work, this masterpiece, though I say it that should n't, I knew there was something in it for me! I did n't

quite know what, of course, until I found out that Mariellen was mixed up in it, and then 't was clear as day. Had you copy a plaster cast, did n't she?" He chuckled with pleasure in his perspicacity. "We Senators know all about plaster casts and death-masks and that sort of thing. Unless we want to miss a trick, we have 'em done to us, as soon as the time comes. But what I don't understand is why Mariellen got cold feet! She's a girl of some sense, I tell you, or was, until she got a hankering for New York, and what she calls the higher things in art!"

The Senator's last words mimicked to perfection both the girl and myself. It was that kind of mimicry which creates good understanding, and leaves a smile, not a sting. Oh, I could see how he, like the girl, captivated mankind!

"Even now," he continued, "she's my favorite of the whole bunch, and they've all of 'em got plenty of the Bullwinkle pep. Some face, that girl, hey? Pretty ain't the word!"

No, it was n't the word. But I could n't give any one word that would really cover the case, I admitted.

"Mariellen gets the better of everybody. She even puts it over on a smart artist like you. I'd

like to take her across my knee! And before I've finished with her, I shall make her feel like thirty cents about this job. Gave the marble heart to my marble hand, did she? She'll be wishing she kept it, the moment she sees I've got it. But mark my words, it'll never be hers, until after I've taken the Big Subway for good and for all. And if she tries to bamboozle me out of what I've bought and paid for, I'll —"

A peal of the bell and voices in the anteroom caused the speaker to suspend sentence, and I slipped out to find, in eager converse with Gigi, the young person from Missouri. Was the sky raining coincidences, that day? With a gesture absurdly like her uncle's, she was drawing from that much-embroidered handbag of hers a checkbook not unlike his own in general effect. Had Shakespeare been there, he would have indited a sonnet to the checkbook of beauty, and its likeness to that of brains and power.

"Of course," said the young lady, giving me at once her charming smile and her signed check, "I knew that *you* knew, from what I said when I went away from here this morning, that I meant to come back just as soon as I could, to deliver the goods, and to get the goods." What I had

seen of her uncle helped me to recognize a genuine emotion hiding behind the flippancy of her words. I freely confess that if my wife or my sister had said or done just what Miss Clarenden did, I would have found it preposterous, alarming, in bad taste. But that girl had some strange power to make one see at once that what she did was simple and natural; the best thing in the circumstances, and therefore not foolish or ill-bred.

"I know you'll understand, the moment I explain: I've always said to myself that the man who carved that Dancer would understand a lot. Well, when I came here this morning, I simply could n't shake Jack. He stuck to my skirts like a burr. You know we're to be married in the autumn." The pink roses in her cheeks flamed into American Beauties for an instant, and then became themselves again, in a way that I've often wished might be managed on the stage.

"Jack has nothing in the world but what he earns. To be sure, he earns a lot, being — no, no, not a plumber, but a very, very civil engineer." Her time-worn jests seemed dewy-fresh as they fell from her lips. Witty as well as beautiful, I thought. Oh, I admit my weakness!

Miss Clarenden continued her explanation.

"Very likely, though, we shall have to economize, at first. And I did n't want Jack to see me spend four hundred dollars right off bang, the very day after we landed, even for something I long for as I do for that marble hand; real art, too. You see, Jack got awfully gloomy over that last dozen pairs of gloves I got at the Bon Marché, the day before we sailed. Said he feared that at first he could n't give me all I'd been accustomed to, and so on. And, honestly, I was afraid that he'd be doing a bit of mental arithmetic right here in your studio, and doing it wrong! Saying to himself that if twenty-four kid gloves cost a hundred francs, why should one marble hand cost so many hundred dollars, or something like that!" I saw that the tears were very near those laughing eyes of hers, but she went bravely on. "Jack does n't know much about art yet, but I'm going to explain it all to him, the *morbidezza* and everything. And I'm just crazy to see what you've done for me."

Her voice with its smiles and tears floated in to Senator Bullwinkle as I led her toward the work of her hope. The marble was fairly heavy, but the Senator was more than fairly strong, and in my absence, he had gathered it up between his

hands, and had sat down to muse upon it. In fact, it lay across his knees, just where he had said he would like to take Mariellen. I don't know how, but he presently succeeded in making a place for both. I think Mariellen helped him.

Of course it was the Senator who kept the masterpiece, the buccaneer in him prizing it all the more when he learned from a grateful Gigi the origin of the raw material. He tells me he does n't care a whoop whether the work elevates American art or not; it elevates him. Mariellen admits it 's better so, since the lad Mario is the gainer by the one hundred dollars with which the Senator had built up the price. To clinch the matter, she wanted, for Mario's sake, to add her own check to her uncle's, her very first glance at that boy's amazing sculpture in various lowly substances having convinced her of the wisdom of such a step. But I prevailed upon her to wait a year, at least; and that part does not come into this tale, at all.

"Ah, well, there are more ways than one to elevate art, or anything else. It's up to Mario, now," blithely remarked the young lady in blue.

"C'EST UNE TAUPE"

I FEEL sure that everybody, at least everybody who *is* anybody, really knows, in the bottom of his heart, just what a *taupe* is. But in case there should be any person with such weighty world affairs on his mind that he could not possibly move them around to discover hidden among them an insignificant matter like a *taupe*, I will say that a *taupe* is a small furry thing that burrows in the ground. By no means an unfashionable creature, I assure you! Its color is always modish. Its skins, when collected by hundreds and thousands, go to make up what I am informed are "among the most authoritative fur garments of the coming season." In short, a *taupe* is a mole, all told.

Also, I am reasonably certain that most of us, if we should stop to consider the subject, would understand perfectly the nature of a *limace*. A slimy, limy *limace!* Its very name tells its story. It is not exactly one of the "slithy toves" of the old song, but they may all have had similar ancestors. And if you have guessed that a *limace* is a

slug, poor thing, — a big slug, no more and no less, — you are entirely right. So there you have the two characters, the mole, the slug; the furry, fashionable *taupe*, the slippery yet sticky *limace*.

In the Bois de Meudon, on the most beautiful summer morning in the world, a *limace* was lying curled up like a thick brown half-moon on a bright green leaf. In its sluggish way, it was coquetting with the sunbeams. The *limace* was in love with life, and at peace with all the earth. So were the little Parisians who had come out from the city to make holiday. At first there were not many of them; only M. Petitpot, the kind, red-eyed mason of the rue Delambre; Mme. Petitpot with the baby, in his straw hat built like a life-preserver; the good grandmother, not ashamed of her white cap; and the boy Pierre Petitpot, in his newest black apron. There were also the two doubly-opening baskets for the luncheon. M. Petitpot himself carried the basket that had the bread and the salad, with the two bottles of red wine slanted in, one at each end. But the grandmother kept fast hold of the smaller basket, because that one contained a truly magnificent roasted chicken, wrapped in a napkin. What an aroma, my friends! A *déjeuner sur l'herbe* was contemplated. Messrs.

Manet and Monet are not the only artists of the *déjeuner sur l'herbe.*

Presently other Parisians came, from various quarters of the city, and from various businesses. All were seeking a little Sunday happiness in the open. They were not really familiar with the secrets of the wood, as you shall see. But they had curiosity and discernment, and these two, keeping together, will go far toward finding knowledge. Unlike English people, these French persons chatted with each other, without mistrust. Also, they revealed the beauties of nature to each other. How dazzling and glorious were the clouds that day! The grocer's lady pointed out to Mme. Petitpot that the good God must surely possess a giant egg-whip, to be able to produce a *méringue* as colossal and light as those masses of cloud over there! And Mme. Petitpot had replied that eggs were better and cheaper, now that it was June, but that her own egg-beater had a kink in it, so that she was about to buy another.

Black-aproned Pierre was a pale bright-eyed child with a bulging forehead, and hands that looked as if they wanted to play the piano or something. Easy to see that he was predestined for the paths of learning. *Per aspera ad astra;* the

latter for Pierre, the former for his parents. Even for this one holiday, they had not been able to separate him from his new "Petit Atlas du Monde"; he hugged it so tightly that the crimson cover had already stained his hands, freshly washed that very morning. His delighted glance skipped like a bird from tree to bush. He nodded his head in smiling ecstasy when the grocer's lady expressed that airy fantasy of hers as to the clouds.

But it was one of the later comers, a pink-sashed little girl from the Montrouge quarter, who first saw the *limace*, and shouted aloud in joyous fright. "What a droll of a beast! I beg of thee, Mamma, regard me that!"

All the world pressed forward to inspect the *limace*. There were some who even had the hardihood to touch the creature with little sticks. "Hold, hold, my infant! *Faut pas la toucher!* Perhaps it is a poisonous one, *hein?* Demand of thy papa whether it is envenomed."

By now, quite a little crowd had gathered. One would say, amateurs in *limaçonnerie!* Papa, not knowing in the least whether it was envenomed or otherwise, preferred not to make any statement before the other Parisians, who, if the truth were discovered, were no better informed than he him-

self as to the nature of the thing there. Strange as it may seem, those Parisians were really less wise about the *limace* than you and I are, to-day! For not one of them really knew that all of them were looking at a *limace.* But they one and all wanted to talk about it, solo, fugue, and chorus; and they did not know how best to mention it. Now it is absurd to keep on calling a thing *la chose.* So at last some one asked aloud, as all had been asking within, "What is it that that is, that that?"

Ah, if only M. J. Henri Fabre had been there, M. Fabre, the "insects' Homer"! But M. Fabre was far away, and no one answered for him. There was a pause. Parisians hate a pause. The day had begun so joyous, and there they all were, pausing. Insupportable! A pretty lady with a primrose-colored parasol said that if it were a serpent, now, she would be able to tell you. She felt herself something of a connoisseur in serpents; there had been a serpent at the last *pique-nique* she had attended. The gentleman on whose arm she was leaning said, with emotion, "Ah, I can well believe that, Mademoiselle!" Then everybody laughed a merry "*Hé, hé!*" But all this graceful *badinage* brought them no nearer to

knowledge. Hence those who really thirsted for knowledge were glad when the white-capped grandmother Petitpot, with proud beady eyes, pushed forward pale little Pierre with his bulging forehead. In fine, our Pierre, a child well instructed, could inform those ladies.

Appalling yet entrancing moment for black-aproned Pierre! He clasped his thin little Atlas of the World against his stomach, and silently prayed for knowledge to descend upon him from on high. Then he looked earnestly down on the *limace*, to put himself *en rapport* with the creature in her underworld life.

A touch of rose pink bloomed a moment on his sallow cheek. "I think," he said, in his eager fluty voice of a born "teacher's favorite," "I think, yes, I believe well! — *c'est une taupe.*" The very utterance of his faith created in him a faith more abundant. He nodded his head sagely, even boldly. "*Ah, oui, Madame, sans doute, c'est une taupe.*"

Swiftly the words of the young scholar penetrated all the little groups of Parisians. *Une taupe!* Lady and gentleman, girl and boy, mason and grocer, one after the other took up that goodly revelation. "*C'est une taupe!*" Some re-

peated it a little sadly, as if it were a mistake, or at least an indelicacy, on the part of the *taupe* not to have been something else. Others repeated it with exquisite gayety, as if a *taupe* were the one object of joy the world had waited for, until then. Still others repeated it without passion and without surprise, as if a *taupe* were no more than should have been expected at such a time. But in one way or another, they all repeated it. *C'est une taupe.* Even those who had never had so much as a cornerwise glance at the *limace* went their ways, saying, with a fine discriminating wave of the hand, "*une taupe.*" Indeed, not having seen the *limace*, they were naturally far more confident than those who had really gone quite near to that brown half-moon on the green leaf, and touched it with twigs. The distribution of knowledge is a moving spectacle, is it not?

My friend who was beside me in that lovely wood, with the blue sky above the waving branches, and with the flower-like children springing up from the grass, and the autumn-leaf grandmothers walking abroad with baskets for the *déjeuner*, suddenly asked me why I was laughing like that, and the tears running down my cheeks.

"You do not know why!" I answered. "Oh,

surely if you know anything at all, you must know! It is because I can see, at this moment, this same spectacle shaping itself everywhere on our planet; yes, from the Arctic to the Antarctic, on Capricornus and on Cancer, and even in the Equatorial belt where the lazy peoples live. Everywhere, everywhere on this round globe of ours, there is a poor *limace* among the green leaves, and no one knows what she is; but everywhere there is a good old grandmother, pushing forward a pale little Pierre with a bay-window brow, to tell the world, '*C'est une taupe.*' And the world listens, and repeats, and so becomes wise."

My friend, a sadly literal person, objected. It could n't be like that, among the Esquimaux, in their igloos. And I had all I could do to prove that among the Esquimaux, in their igloos, it was not only just like that, but more so. On the return boat for Paris, we were still arguing the question. The beady-eyed little grandmother had already helped to remove the life-preserving hat from the Petitpot baby. She continued to guard her basket, which now held only an aroma, and, please God, the *carcasse* for the morrow's soup. Black-aproned Pierre, with an unrelenting grip upon his Atlas of the World, laid his sleepy,

knowledge-burdened head against her shoulder. Mme. Petitpot whispered over that head into the grandmother's ear, and the grandmother nodded and smiled. The two were agreed that it was truly a miracle; in all that fine company, the boy was the only one who knew. Surely there was a future for this child, already so well instructed! And with what agreeable courtesy he had said it, "*Madame, c'est une taupe!*"

The women smiled, yet there was something sad and lofty in their smiling. For they knew that they were guarding between them a very precious vessel, and they prayed for strength equal to the honored task. The evening breeze freshened sweetly; and in case that fabled Gallic monster, a *courant d'air*, might come stalking through the boat, the grandmother spread a fold of her voluminous black skirt over Pierre's bare knees.

THEIR APPOINTED ROUNDS

I

THEY were destined to dislike each other on sight, those two whose appointed rounds, unexpectedly interlacing, had brought them together under the ancient pines keeping watch over the grave of a Revolutionary soldier. The man disliked the boy, because he himself had at that moment a loathing and a horror of himself and his probable fate, and the lad's pliant figure vividly recalled to him what his own had been, in days long past. The boy's reason for disliking the man was far more obscure, but no less potent.

That little pine-clad hill with the graves was pleasantly sheltered by hills higher than itself. The pines were very tall and shapely. They soared skyward like clustering brown masts, decked out at their far tops with tossing banners of holiday green. The summer sunlight paid long visits at their feet. If you should lay down your head under those trees, and then lift your eyes, you would be startled to discover the unbelievable

purple pomp of those woven branches, and the intense blueness beyond. The shadows on the ground were more golden there than elsewhere, the sunbeams more serious-minded. They had all played together there for so many years, seeing the same sights and thinking the same thoughts, that they had at last come to look somewhat like each other. L'Allegro and Il Penseroso had mingled their identities. A scarlet tanager flared down from a far purple bough, to sing the peace that brooded over the place. Both the man and the boy had their reasons for seeking peace. Though unknown to each other, they knew that peace might be found under those pines, but they had no mind for sharing it with each other.

II

THE boy Royal had a poem of his own make in his pocket, and being on his travels, he had climbed up from the east to rest himself, and to re-read his verses yet again in solitude. Perhaps he was about to add to them some touch of immortality, some wistful trace of that philosophy which may not revisit the mind of man after his seventeenth year, but day by day loses itself more deeply in the underbrush of uncharted,

enchanted woodways. The poem was about a maiden called Amaryllis. In the prose of private life, Royal's Amaryllis was a wholly good and pretty girl a little older than himself. Her name was Mary, but even at nineteen she was still signing herself Maimée. However, what is poetry for, unless to quicken and rechristen all worlds into strangeness and beauty? Let Royal keep his Amaryllis a while longer, I beg!

Is there any good and comfortable thing that the heart of youth will not flee from, in its longing for the untrodden way? The boy Royal was a fugitive from the eggs-and-bacon type of breakfast. He was in search of some ambrosial, sit-by-the-brookside food more precious and sustaining to his spirit, so he dreamed, than any of the comestibles, fine or gross, involving his parents in worrisome monthly bills at the grocer's. For him, life and letters were mingled mysteriously in the same sparkling cup, and he wanted to drink of that cup freely. One can do such things better away from home. He had therefore wrung from his mother, his father being absent in the city, working for the wherewithal, her unwilling consent to a solitary three days' walking tour, his entire luggage to consist of a flashlight, the Iliad, and a toothbrush.

Oh, of course, a full tin of provender slung across the back of his Norfolk jacket! You will doubtless understand what his twin brother Peter meant when he said that the difference between Royal's travels and R. L. S.'s was all in one word; a preposition, don't they call it? Stevenson's Travels were With a Donkey, Royal's were Of a Donkey. Peter was sore because he had not been invited to be a donkey too.

The twins loved one another dearly, but now that adolescence was upon them, they often wounded one another sorely. Each boy, recognizing certain superiorities in the other, felt all the more bound to rescue and protect and assert his own individuality. Who knows what dire harm to ourselves may issue from our brother's excellences? And Royal, even more than Peter, longed for a more emphatic identity of his own — something so distinct and compelling that the world would forever cease contrasting and comparing him with another.

Their father was a painter, their mother a writer. Peter took to colors, Royal to ink. But Peter, luckily for the world, was no such born-in-the-blood Romantic as poor Royal then was, and might forever be, unless something could be done

about it! That boy's parents had showered upon him all the benefits of education, dentistry, operations for adenoids. They had even had him psycho-analyzed, since Uncle Tom's business in life was exactly that. My uncle the psychiatrist; the boys often stuck the phrase into their cheeks, for the benefit of their mates. The work on Royal had been done with the utmost secrecy, of course. Uncle Tom had made a mental diagram of Royal's case, as carefully as for a paying patient. In seven closely typewritten pages, bristling with words like prognosis, adolescence, stimuli, adaptability, environment, Royal's young soul-history may still be found among Uncle Tom's files. And Uncle Tom would be the first to tell you that for the unlearned, those seven pages might be summed up in seven words: a poet is growing, let him alone. Royal's parents were cheered by that report. They had always rejoiced in the harmonious understanding that existed between the uncle and nephew. There was a strong family likeness between the two; they turned their heads to the same side when arguing, and waved a good-bye in the same manner. Often Royal at his most poetical made observations that staggered Uncle Tom at his most psychological. Uncle Tom sometimes

found it ludicrous when, simply because "*maxima debetur puero reverentia,*" he had refrained from saying something, and then found that Royal, with immense earnestness, was saying it himself.

Royal was a lean, rangy, bright-haired lad, with a clear skin and a good carriage. He had nobly-set blue eyes whose depths seemed practically bottomless, the young eyes that suggest both heaven and hell. He had also a determined chin that often pushed him into positions in which his undetermined nose was of no use whatever. Oh, quite the ordinary type of boy whose unusualness is chiefly within! Perhaps the most striking thing about him, thus far, was his passion for beauty; beauty to be seen, heard, tasted, clasped, protected, prayed to. There was Scotch blood in him; he had plenty of second sight, but was often found lacking in that vulgar variety of first sight known as common sense.

In planning his travels, he had seen himself, now as a sailor in tarry trousers, jingling strange coins in foreign ports that reeked with incredible oaths and aromas; now as a gifted young scholar, teaching French to some sturdy blacksmith's fair daughters, in exchange for a noggin of milk and a brace of doughnuts, since you can't expect

cakes and ale in this country; and now as a prince-in-disguise mechanic out of work, in smutched overalls, with nothing clean at all about him but his teeth; his toothbrush would tell the world. Royal recognized the weakness of his own fables. He knew well enough that, unlike practical Peter he himself could scarcely tell a bolt from a bit-stock, or a belaying-pin from a bo's'n's whistle; and also (here Peter would be no better off) that he would certainly be unable to explain away the French subjunctive, in case the prettier of the blacksmith's daughters should show an unfortunate curiosity about a topic so repugnant. Yes, Royal was a stern critic of his own castles, and therefore spent much time in rebuilding them.

Royal on his travels soon found that three days were all too brief a term for such adventures as he sought. His mother and he had been reading the "Crock of Gold" together, and he knew that she would understand him when he wrote, on the second day of his faring:

"*Dear Mother*, I am with the leprecauns, and so shall not return as early as we said. Fear not, all is well with me. The world is wide, the weather fine, and the extra $3.75 you gave me is hardly touched as yet. Besides, I can earn what I need,

if I need more than I have. I love the feel of this life in the open, and you know how much I want to spin the wheel of life, in my own philosopher fashion."

Thus wrote Royal, giving neither date nor address, and incontinently planning to reach far cities by means of gondola cars. His mother was hurt, irritated, and anxious, in equal parts; but she understood her boy well enough to know that there was some fabric to his fustian. Uncle Tom jeered openly, saying that people who breakfast with the leprecauns may have to sup with the lepers, if they don't watch out. These psychiatrists have a way of taking the worm's-eye view of high doings.

III

WITHIN a week, the Royal progress had swept through parts of three of our United States, without serious damage either to the lad or to the landscape. The curve of operations was now fast shaping itself into a circle. Day and night, the weather had been magically lovely. Royal had gladly passed the first three nights *à la belle étoile;* with keen relish, he rolled the phrase under his tongue, thinking that now not a boy in Froggy

Beaurivage's French Literature classes understood its charm as well as he. His Norfolk coat, a bore by day, proved a godsend in the chill hours before dawn, and he knew the use of a Sunday paper as a mattress. Before falling asleep, he would gaze with delight into the skies; thrilled with their beauty and immensity, he would say to himself, "After this, I am changed forever; I shall always be something more than I was before I came here." No doubt he was right.

And his days were no less wondrous, for their sun, and shade, and good going. Sometimes, when he was beginning to feel dusty or weary, an unexpected pool would signal to him from beside a shaded road; and when he came up from it, he was a new-made creature. He liked being solitary, yet he liked stopping at sudden inns for frugal meals, and he liked chatting with the wayfarers he met. The latter half of the week had moments less idyllic. His fourth night he spent in a box car, his fifth in a boarding-house for Polish immigrants, and his sixth, in part at least, in the jail-room of a village town-hall, where he had been held in custody on a false charge of having stolen an automobile.

His code was very explicit as to stealing. He

made a point of stealing and begging nothing but rides of various sorts. He had begged and received rides in hay-carts, touring-cars, lumber-trucks: he had also managed to get without cost considerable railroad transportation. It sounds crooked, to me! But of course each type of ride has its good and bad points. He took whatever fruit he saw lying on the ground, on the public side of fences; it was astonishing what excellent pickings were to be had in this way; he felt that an essay on economics might be written on this subject. But he never entered an orchard, never even shook a wayside tree. His head was full of these delicate distinctions. From Kipling he had imbibed the idea that the white man's burden can best be sustained in dark lands by the unfailing practice of wearing a dinner jacket in the evening, no matter how solitary the meal. *Noblesse oblige!* And it keeps you from sinking. The idea had appealed to Royal, and he had invented a variant of it to use in his travels. He would at all times deal with the fruits of the earth exactly as if the owner of them were watching him. No unheroic task! If he should fall once, he told himself, it would be all the easier to fall again, and yet again; and then where are you? As a matter of exact record, he

did not fall once; and I see no reason why this may not be set down to his credit. It is of course regrettable that a principle which worked so well for agriculture could not have been applied to transportation also.

Thus, by being partly prig, partly poet, partly his own stage-manager, and altogether boy, Royal was taking steps toward being a man. There was absolute truth in his protestations before the one-armed justice of the peace (apparently the universal functionary of the village) that he knew nothing of the stolen car, nothing whatever, from fender to tail-light. Unluckily, on being asked his father's name and address, he gave a wholly fantastic reply, his brain being stuffed to capacity with material for such purposes. I believe that he had a laudable idea of protecting the family by "putting one over" on the village Dogberry. But by a lamentable oversight, disclosed to the one-armed man on consulting directories and maps, the county of Chesterfolk, in the adjoining State, acknowledged no township called Four Bridges; and even had there been such a place, it still remains doubtful whether Royal's putative father, Algernon M. Hollingsworth, that splendid crea-

ture born of necessity's invention, would ever have been content to live there. Other questions were put; Royal's *Whither* was found to be fully as obscure as his *Whence.* He was therefore clapped as a "suspicious vagrant" into the jail-room, a high and narrow cubicle left over from the previous century, and unused for years except for the occasional storing of the movie-man's impedimenta on wet evenings.

In lieu of a left hand, the one-armed justice of the peace had a steel hook, which he managed with an address that Royal could but admire. He carefully examined our poet's possessions; his purse, food, poems, matches, wristwatch, toothbrush, Iliad, flashlight. The purse, poems, and food he regarded as negligible. The Iliad received from him both respect and scorn; respect because it was print, scorn because it was print he could n't read.

"Your Koran, ain't it?" He asked the question with the irony he thought due to those who gave false addresses. Royal trembled when hand and hook turned those Homeric pages. His father's bookplate might give the whole show away. But fortunately that telltale emblem escaped the hook-and-eye of justice. And the man's

idea of calling the book a Koran had in it something that appealed strongly to the inventor's own imagination; he played upon the theme with alliterative variations.

"Kid carries Koran," he ejaculated while pulling out a rickety settee for the repose of the accused. Hooking up Royal's flashlight, he discovered a tattered blanket belonging to the movie-man, and this he threw over the settee, still improvising. "Koran concealed on Courteous Kid." Perhaps that fancy of his softened his fibre. He had pocketed Royal's matches, and was about to confiscate his flashlight also, when a humane thought occurred to him. For our humor may at times produce humanity in ourselves, if not in those whom we expose to it.

"Well, kid, I guess I'll leave you your light to read your Koran by. Sorry we can't give you a prayer-rug too, but our finest Orientals are in storage, this season." (He'd show the young fella 't givin' false addresses was a game two could play at!) Royal was relieved when at last the justice really locked the door, and departed. Something to tell old Peter, this.

He wondered what Peter, the practical genius, would do in that ill-smelling hole. Peter, he con-

cluded, would explore things. Royal's flashlight revealed two flimsy packing-cases; the movie-man was his Providence, that night. He waited until midnight, by his watch. He then set one box on the other, and by cautious climbing, managed to reach the tiny barred window, high in the wall. The bars were ancient in their shallow sockets; Royal was lean, even leaner than usual; in a twinkling he had leaped down crashing into some mournful sumac trees, and after that, escape was easy, along the adjoining church and churchyard. Surely the leprecauns were on his side! All of a sudden he realized that his act of self-preservation from so-called justice was one of the most practical bits of work he had ever performed in his life. He had a momentary gleam of shame for his impractical, un-Peter-like past, and even gave a thought to his father, in his hot city studio, working for the wherewithal. But that mood soon passed. The ecstasy of escape from the troubles he had brought on himself gave him wings. Until nearly dawn, he swept straight ahead, under a favoring moon. He was composing a Sonnet to Some Sumacs.

"A prisoner pent, I flew to your fond arms,
And maybe broke a few of them, my dears";—

A wonderful beginning! It would require some fine work with *charms, harms, alarms;* with *fears, cheers, reveres.* But Royal was perfectly happy; and no one can say that his inspiration was not authentic.

Not twenty miles from his own home with its bacon-and-eggs breakfasts, he saw a belated or else be-earlied furniture-van approaching from a wooded road that met the highway. Its driver, so Royal judged as a bearded face emerged out of the morning mist, was one of those how-could-I-help-it persons who are always a little late or a little early, a type toward which he felt drawn. He waited there, at the heart of the crossroads. The man hailed him, and Royal, in his character-part of young man out of work, accepted the proffered lift, and ate heartily of the rude liberal bread and cheese that tasted of the leather seat. They chatted at ease of brakes, tires, clutches, and children, as they rode quietly into the morning. Royal contributed most of the listening; he was quite as much at home among elderly workers for a living as with frivolous persons of his own age.

When they reached Falmouth Junction, a railway centre of note, their ways diverged. At the

station, Royal bought coffee, sandwiches, and fruit, all of which he shared with the man; and the man gave him two black cigars at parting. Royal liked that furniture-fellow. He considered that when compared with the one-armed miscarrier of justice, the man had the makings of an excellent leprecaun in him; his beard sticking out of the mist was just like a leprecaun's. But although the man, in his dreamy behindhand (or else beforehand) way, had confided much to Royal, with a wealth of detail as to his youngest child, "cutest kid of the bunch, and a reg'lar Dannle Webster with his spellin'-book," our traveller did not in return open his heart about his escape from the jail-room. For a long time after that incident, Royal was inclined to suspect both justice and peace in quarters where they were least intended. Falmouth town boasts a traffic policeman; Royal, on spying those bright buttons, took swiftly to the road again.

And now, on the last stretch of his wander-week, he bethought himself of the soldier grave on that little hill, scarcely an hour's walk from the very end of his appointed round. He loved the place; he felt drowsy, in spite of the railway coffee and the fresh morning air, and he wanted to lie

down and sleep for a pleasant hour under those pines, his head pillowed on heroic ashes. He phrased it thus to himself, although he knew that he would probably find a better resting-place on the warm ground somewhat removed from the grave. After a good little snatch of sleep, there would be time for a few last touches on the Amaryllis poem, and then, home. The Sumac Sonnet could wait. After all, a beefsteak luncheon has its merits.

Royal was more tired than he knew. His pleasant hour of sleep multiplied itself by two, by three, by four. He woke with a start to find that the day was no longer young. He would have to step lively if he hoped to reach home by tea-time; scones, fresh from the oven! But he had just had a very marvellous dream, and surely, before the glamour of it should vanish, he owed it to the world to put some breath of it into his poem.

Enthralled by his verses, the poet resented the approach of that other traveller, just puffing up over the western slope of the little hill. The man was forty-five or fifty or even sixty, the boy guessed; oh, ever so old! He was soiled, obese, crumpled, out of breath; he needed a shave. Limp gray hairs straggled behind his plaided cap.

His profile was fattened, yet highly predacious. But his tweeds seemed rather better in quality than Royal's, his shoes no worse. Royal's bookish theory that you can always tell at a glance whether a man is a gentleman or not fell to pieces under that fugitive's weary, wary eye. Certainly no poet, our sumac sonneteer decided. Villon never looked quite like that, nor Poe, nor Vachel Lindsay.

IV

YET any wise observer of our poor dust would have known at once, on seeing the two travellers together, that the hand of art had been laid inevitably on each; lightly and graciously enough on the youth, rudely and ironically and with stripes and lashes on the man. Phœbus Apollo hardly knew, as yet, whether he should ever really need the boy Royal or not. However, he meant to lend the child his lute for a summer morning or two, and hear whatever trailing wisps of song those smooth young fingers could coax goldenly from its strings. Yes, Royal was a true probationer of Apollo. But with the man, the god would plainly have no more to do, except by way of bitter punishment. For the man was too

old, too ill, too evil, even, to be of any further service in the temple of the Muses. Those ladies do not carry a pardoner's wallet. They have no pension system; uncompromising dames, the Nine, when all is told.

Little as he liked the looks of the man in his tumbled tweeds, Royal nevertheless gave him a good-day. Why not? The man enveloped the boy with a strange, hunted-yet-hunting glance, and after returning the salutation in a mannerly enough way, threw himself down heavily on the pleasant pine leaves, rather close to the spot that Royal had chosen for his own perfect seclusion with song. Our poet's second sight instantly declared that there was something wrong. What if this were the wretch who had really stolen the car whose loss had threatened the Royal liberties? Well, if so, that was the one-armed justice's affair, not Royal's. The boy had lately read in a newspaper that our Anglo-Saxon law presupposes the innocence of the accused, until proven guilty. An excellent idea! Fair play for all, then, including the disinherited.

Still, it was but natural that he should try to put a self-protecting distance between himself and the other, tramps though they both were. So he

hid his ode in his pocket, and pulled out his Iliad, that epic which before now had laid heavy conditions upon him, and was likely to do so in the future. Impressive gesture! Royal had several times used it to advantage during his travels. Pulling our your Iliad, no matter how amiably, is a way of drawing the line. This particular Iliad had, it is true, been something of a disappointment to him, at the start. He had meant to carry his school copy, a pocket edition that contained only one book of the poem, with English notes so copious as to constitute a "pony." In the confusion of a brother's departure, mischievous Peter had contrived to dislodge Royal's own Iliad from its place in Royal's pocket, and to substitute for it an Iliad from his father's library. The parental Iliad, though like the other in size and shape, was a poor thing. It had all the books of the poem, to be sure, but in solid Greek; not a word of English from cover to cover. Some German had printed it that way. Annoying! But after his first dismay was over, Royal had managed very well with the volume; to-day, he drew it out as readily as if it had the English notes.

With this man, however, the trick was wasted. When the boy laid his Iliad down casually beside

him, the man picked it up, no less casually. Homer had no terrors for him, it would seem. With a hand whose trembling he could not quite conceal, he turned over the leaves to regain his lost breath. In a leisurely, yet largely gesticulating way, he adjusted his black-ribboned eyeglass, and contemplated both bookplate and title-page. He then made short work of Royal's pretensions to classic learning, merely by turning to Book XXIII, virgin soil as yet untrod by any foot in Royal's form. Book XXIII appeared to interest him. Suddenly he began to read out, in orotund English, the episode of the funeral pyre, with all its meaty details.

As a matter of fact, this was but a gesture of the traveller; a gesture fully as empty as Royal's, a scrap of drama within a drama. The rascal was not translating. He was reciting from memory a fragment from Lord Derby's translation. In palmier days, he had constantly used those twenty lines with telling effect, in his popular dramatic elocution classes. He had even incorporated them, with full directions as to tempo, emphasis, and climax, into his Dramatic Interludes No. 1, a book which, though not precisely a best seller, had often been bought along the border-

line that separates the real stage folk from the stage-struck fringe of the shadowy general public. And now, for an audience of one, that "slow-pac'd ox," those "jars of honey," the "four powerful horses," the "nine dogs," were all presented with an unction that seemed incredible in a stout man so out of breath a moment before. The reciter licked his lips feverishly over his "slaughtered carcasses," and yet was able to reserve some climacteric gusto for the closing lines,

"Last with the sword, by evil counsel swayed,
Twelve noble youths he slew, the sons of Troy."

He appeared to find this an especially appetizing detail, and repeated the couplet, laying his hot fingers on Royal's wrist.

The boy's second sight had been caught napping during that recitation, but at the touch, sprang up, alert.

"Royal child," she whispered, "quick, quick! Whatever are you about? Can't you see that this wretched actor-man is far uncleaner and viler than anything you observed, with fearful curiosity, in the Polish boarding-house?"

And when Royal saw those fat fingers on his wrist, they looked to him like worms, and he wanted to be gone. But he wanted to be a man

of the world, too, if a poet may; one who would needlessly insult no passer-by.

"Hot stuff, eh," he remarked carelessly as he rose from the pine leaves. It seemed to him an appropriate thing to say about a funeral pyre found in the classics. The man had dropped the book; the boy swooped easily down, Discobolus-like, and swept it to safety within his pocket. "Well, I'm off! Date down below. Afraid I'm late, as it is." His eyes were appalled by the ferocious hunger of the eyes they met; the hunger, the anger, the fatigue, the despair. Had he but known in his own young body and soul just what these things meant, and just how horribly they were gnawing that man's vitals, he would have stayed, in common human kindness. But he could not know. Besides, his second sight had him cannily in her grip, and with all her might and main was pushing him straight home. Curiously enough, unaware as he was of "my uncle the psychiatrist's" worm's-eye prophecies, he said to himself, using Uncle Tom's very words, "I started out with the leprecauns, and now perhaps I'm winding up with the lepers!" It gave him a pleased sense of his own individuality, that Fate had arranged it so. It was the sort of thing that

did n't happen to most boys, he thought. Without knowing why, he added to himself, "Just as well, perhaps." Yet he felt sorry for the tweed-clad flesh down there at his feet. "Whatever's the matter with the poor fish? Sure there's something bothering his bean. The Ford, perhaps."

Whatever it was, he knew he could not stop to set it right. But at any rate, he could offer a sandwich. The law of the road's hospitality was in his heart. He opened his tin box, and with his inimitable rippling puppy-dog grace, emptied out its contents beside the stranger. The articles thus disclosed had by now attained a composite flavor through close contact within the sun-warmed tin. Royal suddenly knew this, and was sorry. There were the three thick railway sandwiches, the two black cigars, and several bars of chocolate he had bought the day before at the Charlemont five-and-ten, from a radiant, chiffon-clad girl whom he had secretly christened Lalage; for his next poem, of course, after the Amaryllis one was done, oh, quite, quite done. He kept for himself one bar of the chocolate. Its cover had the color of the girl's warm dark eyes, and so would be a material witness, during his inspiration for the Lalage stanzas.

"Excuse me, but you seem to be a traveller, like myself. I'd be awfully glad if you can use these things." From his jacket pocket he drew out two ripe peaches, oozing, and these he added to the store. "Cheero!" He loped down the hill, with long, uneasy strides, not really happy until he was far away. His thoughts were confused. "What a dreadful old beast! Actor, of course, probably screen. Face seemed familiar, too familiar. Some villain, what? Needed the car to make a getaway from something or other."

All of a sudden the Homeric couplet mouthed by the man returned with terrific force to his mind.

"Last with the sword, by evil counsel swayed,
Twelve noble youths he slew, the sons of Troy."

The poet stopped short in his tracks. "Golly-dieu! I see it all now. I've been talking with a *murderer!* And they always come back to revisit the scene, every one knows that. Of course, he did n't do up as many as twelve. It was remorse made him nutty about the number. I wonder now —"

His wonder lit his eyes and freshened his steps until he reached the garden-gate, with the great apple tree over it, and the carved millstone below

as a tread. Old Peter was probably just coming up from the pool. He himself needed a bath, frightfully! Then he saw his mother, in the white-and-purple iris dress he loved, walking toward the green tea-table under the pergola. Agnes with her tray would soon appear. For the present, Royal's appointed rounds were over. An immense wave of tenderness suffused his whole being. Mother, bath, scones, sanctuary! Those first and last words he called aloud. Mother, sanctuary!

V

LEFT to himself, the elder traveller pounced on the peaches and devoured them, smearing their juice on his dry lips. He then tore the meat from the poor hearts of the sandwiches, and began to eat it greedily. It was his first meat in four days, and he was distinctly of the carnivorous order, and no mere nut-eater. The maid at the Canaan inn had looked suspiciously at him, four days ago, and from that moment, fear had palsied him. Not daring to buy gas under the pitiless publicity of the red pump, he had abandoned his stolen Ford. Like Royal, he was now on a solitary walking tour.

Since the incident at the inn, he had lived on

package food, bought at obscure crossroads grocery stores. All his life, he had kept a fine contempt for package food, the various frugal tinned and cartoned things the *bourgeois* eat. He himself always wanted everything fresh from the vine, he used to say. Everything except the grape; that was different. Just at present, he was more thirsty than hungry. Royal's black cigars were a poor substitute for a living drink.

"Blast the boy with his clean airs! 'A traveller like myself!' Little Lord Bountiful, to be sure!"

His face looked very old in the afternoon light. It was purplish red as to the forehead, and that whitishness around the mouth was not wholly to be explained by a four days' stubble of graying beard. Even while he blasted the boy, he likened himself to him. "Just what I was at his age, a little Lord Bountiful! And, God, look at me now!"

If ever a man needed God's look at that moment, it was this fugitive. Let it be understood clearly, however, he was not at all the murderer Royal's imagination had conjured up. That boy's second sight had been working overtime, and had fallen into error. Except in an indirect way, the man had never been a murderer. He had never desired the death of any human being. Yet he

had undoubtedly turned the feet of at least "twelve noble youths" into the roads that lead to death. Also, he was revisiting a scene. Therefore we may as well admit that Royal's imaginings had strange truths mingled with their errors. Perhaps his visions, like yours and mine, were made up wholly from truths, but truths mysteriously misplaced; truths disordered, and so, unserviceable.

The fugitive's crime, that is to say, the particular crime for which he was at that moment being hunted from hill to hill, was one known to the most ancient civilizations. It takes its title from shameful lost cities engulfed under Divine wrath. Yet to-day there are gentle communities where even its Biblical name, if heard by chance in the pulpit fulminations of some itinerant preacher, would not be understood. And because, deep-rooted in the nature of mankind, there is that which cries out upon this crime as an abomination, the law defines it darkly, and punishes it strictly. "*La nature a de ces bizarreries*"? Only a long-descended Mediterranean intellect, with a planetary point of view, could calmly make that comment on the case!

The outlaw lit one of the black cigars, and

thrust the thin bars of chocolate into his pocket. Loathsome package food, again, but better than nothing, if worse came to the worst. Of late, he had feared even to enter the crossroads grocery stores, with their meagre yet apparently varied supplies, with their horribly unexpected little electric bulbs illuminating a customer whose trembling hope had been to remain unseen!

Royal's cigar sickened him, and he dropped it, still burning, into the brown pine needles. He watched the tiny, red-rimmed hole it was making. The circle grew larger and larger. Curse it, why not let this be the end-all here? But just as the slowly widening red rim really flickered into a faint blaze, the red on his forehead rushed fiercely over the rest of his face. No, by God, no! Not that way! With his woollen cap he stifled the flame. It died down utterly, and with it his own last remnant of vigor.

Stiffly, and with manifest suffering, he rose from the ground. Yet, in a very real sense, he had a far better right to a place under those pines than even the poet Royal himself could claim. In his fevered outlaw imagination, conjuring up terrors where none existed, and courting dangers unaware, that place to him was sanctuary. The one

spot on earth! For his fathers had cleared those hills above, and ploughed the fields beneath. That soldier of the Revolution was his own ancestor. Their names given in baptism and granted by birth were the same, Jeremiah Burton. In the year eighteen-twenty, one Jeremiah Burton had departed this life, full of honors; and now, a century later, this other Jeremiah Burton was still living, and under an exceeding weight of dishonor. A fugitive from justice, he was seeking sanctuary among his own kin. And no person in that State knew him for the Burton that he was.

No less than the boy Royal, he had aspired to the arts. Writing, painting, dancing, acting, he had loved them, every one. Yet never to the extent of drudgery, or self-sacrifice, surely! Art for a good time's sake was his motto. He had always joyously avowed himself a "'*carpe diem*' fellow, don't you know." Perhaps his Burton ancestors, in their passion for honest toil and meritorious self-immolation, had drawn too heavily on springs of energy, both physical and spiritual, that should have been reserved for their descendants. So young Jeremiah Burton wrote skits, painted landscapes, acted in vaudeville; seldom very well, never at great pains. Of all his various arenas for

the exhibition of his personality, he had concluded that the stage offered the most glamorous possibilities. Still, Jeremiah is no name to be pasted gayly up on the billboards, is it? And even Burton itself has a melancholy look when printed. Very early in life, therefore, the Jeremiah Burton of the flushed forehead and fat predatory nose had Geraldized his Christian name, and given a twist, even more romantic, to his surname. It was as Gerald Bertello that he had hoped, when scarcely older than the boy Royal, to take the world by storm from behind the footlights. It was as Gerald Bertello that he had studied and strutted and caroused through the downward zigzag of his middle years. It was as Gerald Bertello that he was designated in the warrant for his arrest. But it was as Jeremiah Burton that he was making his last stand, there on the hill, among his kinsmen. Sanctuary!

The slate stone that marked the soldier's grave still stood erect. One could read every word carved upon it. Its willow tree wept in a perennial freshness of stem and leaf. The cherub and skull and crossbones had not turned a hair. But the more pretentious marble slab placed over the warrior's relict, Thanksgiving Burton, was al-

together a weaker vessel; at least, its foundations were less sure. It had lately fallen down flat under the hilltop winds, and in falling, had laid low a part of the slender iron fence that enclosed the graves of those early Burtons; Burtons who had wrestled with that soil and conquered it, until the soil, in turn, conquered them.

The fugitive who had lately read to the boy Royal sonorous words of the twelve youths of Troy felt strangely dizzy as he pondered on the carven tribute to his ancestor. It began, as he well remembered, "A soldier of the Revolution and of God." Dizzy as he was, he would like to recite the whole of that inscription, with the proper emphasis, for the youngster's benefit. Where was the kid, that little Lord Bountiful, "a traveller like myself"? Oh, yes, he remembered now, but with immense, overpowering difficulty. The boy had vanished, fled away on the wings of an Iliad. "A soldier of the Revolution," — but the words he was staring at were dizzier than himself. Hell, they must be, whirling so! Blindly throwing out an arm, he stumbled and fell, his hand striking the fallen marble slab in memory of Thanksgiving Burton. Like Royal, he had for the present reached the end of his appointed rounds.

VI

BELOW, just beyond a fork in the dusty stage-road, Remy Mariette, commissioner of highways, was finishing his day's work of filling with gravel the deeper ruts and holes. He was a lithe, brown, ruddy-cheeked young man, known far and wide as a great worker, whether alone or in company. To-day he was alone. It happened that he was not only road commissioner, road laborer, mason, and the best bass of the choir; he was also the village constable. In the inner pocket of his frayed working coat was the secret warrant for the taking of Gerald Bertello. That document had been very much on his mind for the past few days, because, as he himself expressed it, "constabling was a new job for him." However, he was not thinking, just then, of the cares of his office. He was thinking that before going home, he had plenty of time to skip up the hill and see whether the old gravestones were as badly off as reported at the last town meeting. If so, it meant another job for him; a good one, too, at mason's wages. He swung briskly up the slope, his crow-bar as staff. He might need it to pry at the fallen stone.

Well, well, a man asleep. Queer place to choose. Drunk, perhaps? Hey, there, you man asleep!

The constable leaned over the sleeper, and then drew back in mingled disgust and amazement. The disgust was for the criminal, the amazement because a criminal so clever should thus easily be caught. He knew his quarry in an instant. He recognized Gerald Bertello, in former years a summer-time figure making himself and his comrades mightily at home among the mountains. Gerald Bertello's name and face had often been shown on the screen at the Monday movies. Looked the kind that might turn desperate, too. Just as well he had brought along the bar, in case. With his foot, yet not unkindly, he prodded the sleeper, once, twice, three times, and yet again. Gerald Bertello did not stir. Suddenly the young constable, who had a fading-flower wife whom he loved, and who was therefore wise beyond his years in the lore of hearts and pulses, knelt down by the man's side.

When he rose, it was with a strange sense of he knew not what complexities. He was not given to self-analysis. But, because of the good French blood in his veins, he took off his cap, and bowed his head, very simply and sincerely, yet almost

mechanically, in the presence of death. He was young for a constable, scarcely seven years older than the boy Royal. Indeed, the two had long been friends in that wide countryside. They were Remy and Royal together. Not without a touch of envy, Royal had last spring congratulated him on his appointment. Ah, this would be something to tell Royal about, when they should meet again; a queer boy, always wanting to know queer things!

Puzzled as to his immediate duty, the young man meditated a moment, then made a swift decision. Best leave everything untouched, and seek help and counsel from his elders, in the village below. He gazed at the sleeper's cap, the cigars, the scattered bread, the little American flag left from last Decoration Day; but he did not alter anything he saw. Some sense of strict procedure in such cases constrained him.

Before descending the slope, he looked up curiously into the sky, to note what birds might be abroad. He remembered the crows he had seen early that morning in his new orchard; some of them were plucking deep bites from his ripest apples. So from his coat he took the warrant, and buttoned it into the pocket of his soldier shirt. Then he spread his coat carefully over the sleep-

er's face, its profile half lost among the brown pine leaves and the sparse vine-wreaths springing up through them. He even succeeded in covering the hand lying against the edge of the fallen stone. He wondered whether the man had cried aloud for help. He noted, partly as a constable's duty and partly as something to tell to the boy Royal, that the hand seemed to be stretched out in a dumb gesture, whether of hope or of despair, toward the stone and the writing on the stone, —

> "*I know that my Redeemer liveth,*
> *And that*"

The last line, in the stiff italic of the eighteen-thirties, was blotted out by lichens and earth-stains, but Remy Mariette knew the words well. They were in a chant the choir often sang. To-day they hurt him; since kneeling by that sleeper with the still heart, he had been thinking incessantly, with a tightening pain in his throat, of the flower-like wife at home. He leaned on his iron bar an instant, and shivered. The sun had gone away from that place. From a far wood a hermit thrush poured out its exquisite, passionless hymn of Paradise. Then it seemed to the young man that all the sadness in the world was brooding over the hill with the graves.

SPEAKING OF ANGELS

I

THE youth's name was Apollos Rivers. We admired him, used him, and for a time, despised him, too. Why we admired and used, I can easily explain. Apollos was every inch his name — blond, athletic, superb; no model in New York posed as faithfully. Why we despised — well, the logic of that is more complicated. Our contempt was doubtless merely a habit, formed on sight unseen and strengthened by hearsay. Apollos, indeed! How absurd a name for the oldest Rivers boy, seeking work in studios! In vain he had politely explained to us that his late father, a bookish Montreal goldsmith, had so greatly admired the senior Paul Revere of colonial history (the Paul Revere whose Huguenot name had originally been Apollos Rivoire) that he himself, British subject though he was, had bestowed the name Apollos on his own firstborn. Later Rivers arrivals, less magnificent in physique, had to content themselves with names less proud — Tom, Chuck, Nipper, and plain Ellen.

Perhaps we would have accepted that explanation, if somebody (that eternally busy somebody) had not seen young Apollos at an Academy reception, his ears tinted rose-pink, with cheeks to match, and his vigorous young eyelashes weighted with whatever it is the chorus ladies use to veil and enhance their already too potent come-hither-of-the-eye. After this, do you wonder that we jumped at the conclusion that Apollos was merely a name the youth had wished on himself, a *nom de pose*, as it were? And why did he polish his nails? Unnatural in a boy of eighteen! Anyhow, we would n't have done it, at that age. And I fear that with some of us, even his honest Canadian accent was against him. Take the word *been*, for instance. Those whose grandfathers had always said *ben*, and whose mothers had said *bin*, were repelled when the Montreal lad called it *bean*.

But the posing of Apollos (one can't forget that!) was absolutely the best I had ever met anywhere. He first came to me when I was doing that big California thing; you know, the one they call Three Angels, two of the angels being winged marble youths in flat relief, kneeling, and the third a retributive sort of shrouded female figure

in bronze, standing, of course, and dominating the other two. Get me? Oh, yes, in the round, she was. I had no trouble in finding her type, no trouble at all. Powerful women abound, these days. But the youths were a more difficult matter. Of course I did n't want them to look Athenian, as if I'd just dislodged them from the Parthenon frieze, and given them a pair of wings apiece; but then, on the other hand, I did n't care to have them suggest that I'd merely picked them up on the beach at Coney Island, the Sunday before. Angels must n't bear too personal a stamp, you know. To my thinking, no artist has ever surpassed Saint-Gaudens in creating the impersonal, other-worldly type. But he always used a lot of wonder-drapery for his angelic hosts; I had merely wings.

I had tried a good many youths from thirteen to thirty, before I finally decided to take with me to my summer studio, for a period of ten weeks, Apollos Rivers and Phineas Stickney. Remembering those tinted ears, I had some doubt about Apollos and his staying powers through a country summer, far from all but the most elementary sort of movies and like attractions; but I had a hope that the influence of Phineas Stickney,

coupled with my own persuasions, would keep the boy on the side of the angels.

In fact, the angels were all that counted with me, that summer. The commission was an important one, and the contract ironclad. If within three years I could n't produce the Three Angels, "complete in place and in the final materials as hereinbefore specified," my name, on the Golden Coast, would be mud instead of Jefferson. And the three years had by now dwindled to one year only! Time pressed. I'd been diligent and forehanded enough, Heaven knows. If anything, I am diligent to a fault. The retributive woman was all done in bronze; but those two youths were n't yet ready for the plaster, let alone the "final materials as hereinbefore specified."

My work in the country studio was cut out for me. I had had an assistant there for some weeks, setting up the full-size work from a half-size study; but when I saw the thing sketched out in the large, I was not at all satisfied with my original idea of those figures. I wanted to make certain very drastic changes; I really needed both Apollos and Phineas, using each lad part of the day. Rough on me, rather; and I suppose fellows in shops and offices would open their eyes if they

saw a mere artist — next door to a do-nothing, you know — beginning work every morning at five and quitting at summer sundown; yes, and perhaps stealing back for more study by twilight. For it's twilight that wipes out all the pettiness that the day reveals; it's twilight that knows all and tells only the good, in sculpture. If it were not for the healing touch of twilight on our work, how many of us sculptors would have abandoned the art, long ago! Well, I've often marvelled at the amount of work I put through that summer. Of course it makes a difference when a man's work is such that he can make a lark out of it, as well as a living. Still, don't run away with the idea that any art is pure ecstasy every minute. Nothing is.

I don't know why I felt so uneasy about Apollos. All sorts of sinister anxieties haunted me. Did I fear that he would burn up my barn of a studio? No, for he smoked neither cigarettes nor a pipe. Would he elope with the cook, leaving us with an empty larder and a desecrated hearth? No, for if his own words were to be trusted, skirts bored him. Would he paint his ears, and so make talk for the village folk? How could I tell? My chief hope was in the influence of

Phineas. The two would naturally be thrown together at the farmhouse where they boarded. Phineas, as I had seen him in the city, was an unusually attractive lad. His posing, to be sure, left something to be desired. But then, very few models in this world, I knew, had both the figure and the posing power that Apollos possessed. A rare combination!

Phineas was a boy with no end of ancestry. His father had been a Mayor, filling out some one's term, in a great New England city; his grandfather had been Governor of a near Western State; and to crown all, his grandfather's great-grandfather had been a Signer. I wondered how he could stoop to pose, after all that! But for some reason, he wanted to study modelling, and so had begged me to take him on as assistant. When I declined the honor, he offered to pose; anything to forward his artistic studies. I engaged him, and naturally thinking that so august a personage deserved more consideration than Apollos, I allotted to the aristocrat the easier, briefer afternoon sessions, and took Apollos with the morning dews.

We had a routine. From five till quarter past, Apollos and I disposed of three buttered health

biscuits and two hot doughnuts apiece, the whole made interesting by the very good coffee which I myself made over an oil stove; in the deep country, wise housekeepers ask no crack-of-dawn exploits from any cook, no matter how greatly underworked. The doughnuts down, we worked easily and steadily until my normal family breakfast, at which I sat down with appetite. No loafing, however! At eight, Apollos and I were in the studio again, working till noon. Thus Apollos posed six hours, and Phineas four.

From the first, I tried to work in a little fatherly counsel for Apollos during the pose. "That knee just a bit to the left, please, and the rear hoof as far back as you can get it. Fine! Well, you know you're in luck, up here in the country air, along with a lad like Phineas! Not that he poses any better than you; no one does. But his manners are certainly good, are n't they?"

"Are they, sir?"

I asked myself whether Apollos was perhaps jealous of his more fortunate co-worker. His face, however, showed only a perfect Apollonian calm, combined with a gratifying attention to business. It was a kneeling pose, you remember; and those who have never knelt much can't know

what grit it takes, when long drawn out. I thought it wiser to defer advice to a more convenient season. Next morning, when I was working on a comparatively easy place, I happened to say to Apollos that Phineas talked remarkably well for a boy of his age. Apollos preserved his pose and made no reply. I pressed the subject.

"Perfectly good talker, sir, just as you say," replied Apollos, squirming ever so slightly with the foot I was not modelling, "but of course you hire us to pose, not talk. I rather fancied you liked the place kept quiet."

"Righto, boy. But sometimes a little conversation helps the slow minutes to skip by."

"That depends, sir."

"On what?"

"Oh, on who does the talking, and what is said."

The reply caught my fancy. I wondered what response Phineas, that excellent conversationalist, would have made; I decided to put the same question to him, in the afternoon. Unfortunately, his posing happened to be less satisfactory than usual that day, and it thrust me out of the mood for easy converse with him. Besides, he himself had so much to say of his ambitions, prospects,

and great-grandfathers, that I did not care to add anything to the welter of talk. A few days later, however, I found occasion to remind him that with his inheritance — I meant blue blood, of course — he was fortunate in being able to help those boys with whom he came in contact.

"I've tried to help Apollos with his manners," he replied, "but, confidentially, it's rather uphill work."

"Oh, I don't know. Apollos does n't appear so badly. Seldom speaks unless spoken to, and then pretty sensibly, I find. Besides" (here I thought a helpful suggestion might be in order), "his posing is so absolutely perfect that anything else he does perhaps seems imperfect in comparison."

"Yes, poor fellow! Pity that just posing should be what a fellow's fitted for, is n't it? For my part —"

"For your part," I interrupted rather testily, "if you will kindly keep that left leg of yours — well, ever so slightly *reminiscent* of what it was when you began to pose it for me, I shall be most appreciative." I had never before spoken like that to the scion of a Signer, but I saw he needed it. It was gradually being revealed to me that long descent is by no means the main desideratum

in a model. Phineas had developed a rather unusual and uncanny gift for slumping in his pose; — making it easier and easier for himself, minute by minute, so that at the end of the half-hour, there was really nothing left that was of the slightest use to me. I had to do my work from knowledge, instead of from Phineas. Of course, most models have this infirmity of self-protection, but Phineas could give all comers cards and spades in the game of slumping.

Still, in the excellent séances I had with Apollos, I would sometimes enlarge upon Phineas's advantages. Once I expressed a hope that Apollos was profiting duly by the companionship.

"It profiteth me nothing," was the unexpected reply. "Phineas talked me over once. Never again, sir!"

"How so?"

"Oh, nothing of any importance, really. A silly fool business. I could n't make any one, an adult, I mean, understand just how it happened."

"Try me! Boy myself once."

A slow color shot up over Apollos's classic torso, and flamed fiercely in his ears. He even became white around the mouth, as if the blood had receded from that part to concentrate in his

listening apparatus. Then his confidence gushed forth, as if long pent up.

"I wanted some money to get my little sister a birthday present. She'd been ill in bed for five weeks, and was peevish as a wasp, driving Aunt Lise distracted asking for a big doll. Much as ever we could pay for the doctor and medicines, let alone a French doll, but I wanted to get it for her. She's the only girl we have. Well, I was walking by Flatto's one day, with Phineas, and I was fool enough to say I'd give my boots if I could get her a beauty doll we saw there in the window. 'Gosh,' says Phin, 'I can tell you how you can earn that doll, on the side, without working.' 'How so?' says I. 'Well,' says Phinny, ever so thoughtful, 'a rich feller and I got talking about the way girls paint up their faces, and I said men sometimes did it too. He said rats, and I bet him ten I could prove it, and he took me up on it. I was thinking about the Academy exhibition,' says Phinny, 'and I knew Mr. Lucas was sending his self-portrait to the show. But now,' says Phinny, 'I've found out that portrait was n't accepted; and maybe my friend would n't ante, just for a painted *portrait*, not a real *person*. But,' says Phinny, very earnestly, 'if I could get a reg-

ular feller, like you, to make up with paint, I'd give him half what I make; and that would net you the five plunks for the doll.'"

Apollos paused as if ashamed of "telling." But his recollections were too much for him, and upon my encouragement, he went on.

"Well, I fell for it. I did n't stop to think how it would look; I only knew the money would look good to me. And I knew Phinny was a little brother to the rich; some of his fool-friends just wallow in coin. So on the spur of the moment, we went round to Phin's house for him to do me. He's in with the set that do private theatricals, and he has all the stuff from a rabbit's-foot down. *I* thought it would be funny if he would do my nose good and red; but, no, he just did my cheeks and ears, and blackened up my eyelashes, and we went right over to the Academy exhibition then and there, and met his fool-friend. One of the artists had given Phinny tickets on account of his ancestors. I had no idea what I looked like. People stared, of course, but I thought that was part of the programme."

Evidently a very painful thought still lurked in Apollos's mind.

"You got the money," I remarked, casually.

"Oh, no." Apollos rapidly wiggled all his ten toes. "I threw it back at him and told him to go to Hell with it."

"For Heaven's sake, why?"

Again a bright red suffused the boy's face.

"When I got up to the L station and looked in the mirror, I saw for the first time that he'd made me up to look like a *girl!*" Clearly the horror of that realization had not yet departed from Apollos. "It was a low-down trick, and I beat him up for it."

With a new respect for the kneeling boy, I watched the blush die away from his countenance; it lingered last of all in his ears. How often I myself had repeated that stupid tattle about Apollos and his ears at the Academy! I dare say I may have turned red myself, when I recognized how small the talk was, and what a small thing had started it. Perhaps Apollos observed this, for he continued, "You know what it is to have a habit of blushing, don't you? The more you try not to, the more it happens. Well, Phineas noticed it on me, my Canadian ears, you know, that first day we met in your New York studio. So he thought he could put one over on me. And I'll say he did."

"So I suppose you two down there at the boarding-house never speak as you pass pie?"

"Sure we do! What's the use of holding a grudge? We've got on fine since we fought." A big generous smile swept the shadows from his eyes. "And the best of it was, Ellie got her doll, after all. Who from? From Phinny, to be sure. Said he could n't feel right about it, any other way, so I let him." Having been a boy myself, I saw the point; and I marvelled once more at the intricacies of boy nature.

At that moment, I was modelling a hand, one of the important details, as it happened. Apollos had superb hands, strong and sinewy, with those noble bones we sculptors are always looking for. To my surprise, I found that I was actually copying the youth's hand, every bit of it. And that's something one can't often do; one generally has to juggle with Nature, in the interest of Art. It's part of the game, especially if you are doing angels.

"Say, 'Pollos, what's the idea, manicuring your nails? Thank Heaven you do, as far as I'm concerned; all I have to do is to copy that left hand of yours."

Not a trace of embarrassment appeared in the

lad's reply. "I'm very pleased if it's right, sir. You see, I studied it all out, from the hands on Michael Angelo's David. I saw that most of you sculptors use that type of hand, nails all trued up, and so on; and I concluded I'd better dress the part, as long as I was on the job."

So then, the manicuring was but a part of the amazing Apollonian thoroughness! — the same thoroughness that I had remarked in him when he went out one afternoon with an old gun of mine, and brought me back three pairs of wings — a sapsucker's, a crow's, and a goose's. The goose's wings, in particular, he told me in his serious, smiling way, might perhaps give me some suggestion for the other angel, "the Phineas feller." He was right, too. In making an angel's wing, one does not *copy* a goose's, but one gets light from on high.

"I suppose you mean to go on with this work, don't you? Posing, studio jobs, and so on?"

Apollos opened wide eyes. "Not I, sir! For me, it's only a *pis-aller*, if you'll excuse my saying so. *Faute de mieux*, you know."

I was astonished, for I had no idea that Apollos knew a word of French, even the tags he had just used. I thought I would be jocose.

"What are you going to do, then? Teach languages?"

"I've tried that," replied the best model I ever saw, "but I found it unsatisfactory. You see my mother was French, born in Strasbourg. So while she lived, we always spoke the three languages at home, meal-times; English for breakfast, German for dinner, and French for supper. Father liked it so, and we boys could n't look back on a time when it was n't so. I had the French conversation classes for two terms at the Elmdale High School, and I got on fine until one of the trustees wanted the job for his wife's sister. So he went ahead and found out that I was a minor, and had me fired."

"What a shame!"

"Why, no, it did n't matter much. If I might rest this elbow just a moment, it seems a bit dead — I meant to quit, anyway. There was nothing in it for me, it was n't leading to anything I wanted."

"Well, what was it you wanted?"

Apollos made no answer other than that slow blush of his, swarming all over his face and finally demobilizing in his ears. For a moment, his whole figure had an expression that would have

been wistful in a smaller lad; even as it was, there was something very touching about it. I could only hope that his ambition, however humble, was at least honorable. I reminded myself that I must not expect, in a Canadian boy, the same lofty impulses that would quicken the blood of a Signer's descendant.

Meanwhile, my work with Phineas was going rather badly. I could not teach his aristocratic spirit to get down to brass tacks. His posing became worse instead of better. Before long, I found myself doing over again, every morning, from Apollos, all that I had bungled in doing, every afternoon, from Phineas. It occurred to me that perhaps I was too tired, in the afternoon, to do justice to Phineas, and that possibly Phineas's pose was the more difficult one. However, when I changed about, things were still worse. I realized at last that my sprig of nobility was a hindrance rather than a help. What to do? I had promised him work through the summer. If I should pay him handsomely and discharge him, with his part of the bargain unfulfilled, I should write myself down an easy mark for models — a reputation no serious artist seeks. It would be complicity after the crime. Besides, Apollos might

well become discontented, on beholding the rewards of the ungodly.

Toward the middle of the summer, the tension became too great. Precious as time was, with that ironclad contract haunting my dreams, I saw that perhaps I should gain, in the end, if I should leave my studio, for a double-size week-end, and go a-fishing from Friday to the following Tuesday. I was working in plastiline instead of clay, and I could safely leave my angels, without fear of their drying up on me as soon as my back was turned. The holiday might not hurt the boys, either. Apollos had stuck valiantly to his "*pis-aller*" job; perhaps Phineas would do better after a few days' change; at any rate, I told myself, he could n't do worse. In that, however, I was mistaken.

II

By Thursday midnight, my motor had already borne me north two hundred miles from my studio and all its works. Some men sit by a brookside to think, but I go fishing to forget. I wanted an oblivious antidote against art and angels in art. But my respite was brief. Sunday night, on returning to the mountain inn at the

head of the lake, carrying with me a gorgeous string of trout that I knew would win me the plaudits of all guests at Monday's breakfast, I was confronted with a telegram.

Studio destroyed. Come as soon as you can.
PHINEAS STICKNEY

For a second, I had an hallucination; I saw also the words, "Angels in ashes. Contract ironclad." But I waved that aside; and, I hardly know why, my utter dismay was soon followed by a sort of exhilaration, the exhilaration a fellow feels when he suddenly has to make a fresh start, and knows he has strength for it. No Sunday trains served those remote God-fearing parts; I must return as I came. A few years before, my hill and home had been struck by lightning, but no damage had been done, except to a drinking-glass and the cook's Thursday afternoon corsets. Turning my motor's nose homeward, I wondered whether the lightning had returned to finish a work thus timidly begun. More likely fire, though! Did Apollos smoke, after all? Or Phineas? My curiosity was almost equal to my consternation.

All night long, my runabout raced up hill and down dale, sometimes beside a moonlit brook, sometimes through clean, sweet forests, and

again along dusty country roads with straggling farmhouses fast asleep, not even giving a dream to *my* troubles! Grateful guests at the inn had pressed upon me loaves in exchange for my fishes, and by way of a solitary breakfast among the morning mists, I disposed of an incredible number of sandwiches as well as all the hot coffee in my own miracle-bottle. I propitiated my engine for the last lap.

The day had not lost its freshness when I reached the foot of my hill, and strained my eyes for a glimpse of the disaster. To my surprise, the big barn studio, as far as I could judge from the road, was still intact. But it was in the back part that my angels were! And when I had at last finished rounding that interminable uphill bend over the roots of the elm trees, I saw that there was no longer any back part. There was only a pile of charred timbers.

At a little distance stood a metal garage, one of those ugly, useful structures that invite scoffing from all persons of taste. It was untouched by the fire. The door was open. I could see Phineas just within. Beyond Phineas, stretched out flat on those trestles I had been grumbling about for years because the carpenters never took them

away, were my angels, uncovered, and looking, to the casual eye, as good as new. I was glad, then, that I knew how to thank God. And before long, I was glad, according to the custom of my tribe, to get a new light on my angels. Sculptors are like that. They would go through fire and water to get a new light, it seems.

"Your work?" I asked the question of Phineas, and pleasantly enough.

The boy's eyes filled. "Yes, sir."

"Where's Apollos?"

"In bed, burned arm, broken leg — Oh, dear, oh, dear!" With this childlike exclamation, the son of a hundred Stickneys broke down utterly.

Between sobs, Phineas made his foolish city boy's confession. He had merely made a fire to roast some corn in the ear, and meaning to be extremely careful, had kindled his sticks close up against an old stone wall a few feet away from the studio with the angels. Yes, he had spoken about it to Apollos the day before, and Apollos had warned him. But, such is the stubbornness of the sons of the Revolution, he had felt perfectly sure it would be safe. His distress was so evident that I refrained, at that time, from pointing out what a consummate jackass he was.

"Before I knew it," he went on, "the wind veered clean around, and the fire burst through the wall quicker'n chain lightning, and began climbing the dry grass on the bank up toward the studio. And all those last year's leaves! You would never believe it!"

"Oh, yes, I would," I retorted, a little bitterly. "I am still in my right mind."

"Apollos was in the garage, tinkering on a bust he brought in there when you went away, and I was planning to surprise him with the roast corn. So I hollered to Apollos, and Apollos hollered to Henry, and Henry telephoned to the town-hall to ring the bell like blazes. And in ten minutes half the men in the village were here with brooms and shovels."

"But who got out the angels? Or did they soar out, under their own steam?"

"Well," said Phineas, "they never could have come through if it had n't been for Apollos! 'Those angels have just *got* to be saved, if any of us are,' says Apollos. So he grabbed up a saw and a screw-driver, and what the saw could n't do, the screw-driver could. He worked like lightning, Apollos did. 'Easy, boys, easy,' he kept saying, calm as if he was down at the boarding-house,

eating griddle cakes. 'It'll be quite a disappointment for the boss, anyhow, the best we can do,' says Apollos. So while the rest of the fellers were fighting the fire outside with brooms and spades and inside with whatever water they could get, and, gosh, it was n't much, Apollos got Prince Eugene Gage, the town drunkard, you know, and One-Eye Sims that's supposed to keep the toll-house, and that hulkingest one of the two big Beecher boys, and the three of them, along with him and me, we got those angels out somehow, safe enough, and not much jarred, really, sir. And we carried them into the garage here, and stuck 'em on the horses, as you see."

"Good work, my lad, but how about Apollos?"

"Well, you know how thorough Apollos is. He suddenly remembered that the half-size study was in back there, right in the midst of the fire; and he'd heard you say you wanted to keep it and send it down to New York. We could n't stop him. He got away from us, went in there, slid the thing quick down onto the little green truck, and pushed it out over the sill just in time. Only not quite in time. That's how he got his broken leg. And his shirt had just begun burning on him when he fell over himself. The doctor says the

arm will be all right inside a week, but the leg 's a longer job."

I had rather lost interest in Phineas, before I went away, but now I found myself changing. I was glad to see that boy's complete loyalty to Apollos; recognition of valor had apparently left no room for the customary Stickney complacency. I had noted, too, that the aristocratic Stickney countenance was somewhat disfigured by a red wound across the upper lip, but I forbore to ask the boy if he got it eating roast corn. Within the garage, I took careful account of my angels. Their celestial composure was scarcely shaken, it would seem. If only I could get them upright again, as successfully as Apollos and his band of ne'er-do-weels had laid them flat, all would yet be well, and the name of Jefferson unmuddied.

By the end-window of the garage, in what chanced to be a good north light, I saw a bust; the bust that Apollos, of all persons in the world, had been modelling from memory in the dark privacy of his farmhouse attic room, and immediately on my departure, had brought to the garage for an orgy of peaceful study. Even from the distance at which I stood, I perceived that the thing was a startlingly good likeness of myself;

myself in a somewhat heroic aspect, to be sure, but still unmistakably me, almost life-size, in clay. My me-ness stuck out all over it. It really gave me a start, offered me an ideal to live up to. I don't say it was finer than anything of Houdon's or Rodin's. I merely say it was amazing for a boy who had had no instruction save the crumbs he had picked up while posing. The lad's secret ambition was quite evident to me now. But for my own rather heartless absorption in my Three Angels, I might have guessed it before. I felt ashamed.

"Phineas," I remarked very seriously, and I suited the action to the word, "I take off my hat to Apollos!"

Phineas answered, with a sincerity not to be doubted in a Stickney, "So do I, and I always shall. That is, if he keeps on like this!"

The fire gave me a new light on my models. I learned to my surprise that my aristocrat was something of a carpenter. He was full of plans for rebuilding the destroyed wing of my studio, and even drew everything out carefully on paper in scale, and very creditably too. I saw that if I could get a few men at once, it would take but a short time to rig up a temporary refuge for finish-

ing my angels. Late haying being over, the thing was somehow accomplished; Phineas worked like a boy possessed; and, as Apollos was soon hobbling about very capably on crutches, we had a studio-warming, during which the two lads superintended the replacing of the angels, by the efforts of their former crew, Prince Eugene Gage, the town drunkard, One-Eye Sims that's supposed to keep the toll-house, and the hulkingest Beecher boy. Those three were the scum of the village. Hence I often say, In an emergency, don't scorn the scum.

But the oddest part of the adventure was this. And I've not yet finished marvelling at it. After the two angels were really up again, and Phineas and Apollos and I stood staring at them, Apollos, with that little air of authority that nobly earned crutches sometimes confer, suddenly said out, quite loud, "But there's nothing to do to them, really, Mr. Jefferson! They're *done!*" And after one good glance, my inward eye told me that he was absolutely right. I might never have known that they *were* done, however, if I had kept on working at them, and if I had not, in despair, gone a-fishing! That very night, I telegraphed for my plaster-moulder.

Did both boys become sculptors? Oh, no, nothing so tragic as that. Apollos is the sculptor, but Phineas went into architecture; he knows more about stone walls than he did before the fire. Since the fire, the two are fast friends, and work together when they can. They are the two young fellows who lately captured the commission for that big Unknown Heroism monument the papers have been printing pictures of. I think they'll make good, too. But you never would have guessed it would end that way, if you had seen them together at the Academy. The rosy-eared Apollos!

THE MARQUIS GOES DONKEY-RIDING

I

MY great-grandmother was by no means an accomplished French scholar. Was yours? And even in English, my great-grandmother's spelling was far from faultless. In those well-thumbed receipt-books of hers, written by her own hand, and still beautifully legible, you will note that she sometimes doubles the *t* in butter, and sometimes not; she generally gives an *h* to sugar, and seldom allows an egg more than one *g* to stand on. But the far-flung fame of her cooking did not suffer in consequence. And had her prowess in languages and in orthography been equal to her skill in the household arts of her day (spinning, weaving, brewing, and the like), my cousin Felix might never have known the joyous adventures of a collector of Lafayette silver. For frankly, it was my great-grandmother, who, owing to a slip in her French, first sent the marquis on his donkey-riding. Lafayette in Egypt! Cousin Felix never rested until he got to the bottom of the matter.

Felix Bradford, you must know, is one of the great color manufacturers of the age. Tube colors, of course. There's more in the business, and perhaps less in the tubes, than one would expect. But Felix is a thoroughly good sport; and twenty years ago, finding that he was making a comfortable income from the art of painting (other men's painting), he decided to become a collector of something besides money. Colonial silver, for example; and he hoped to include among his treasures the lost Lafayette porringer, from which as a child he had often been spiritually fed.

He had never seen that porringer, though our grandmother Bradford had frequently described its glories, and had told us just how, at the age of eight, she had lost the better part of it forever. It had been bought in Paris, by her seafaring father, a petty officer under Paul Jones. Very likely the museums would not call it a porringer, for it was larger and finer than most vessels in that class; besides, it had a cover. Grandmother Bradford, sinful little child though she once was, had not lost the cover. Felix as a boy had often seen it and even handled it, delightedly running his fingers over its fluted silver dome, topped by a flaming torch wrought in silver, with touches of

gold inlaid among the flames. He had an exquisite joy in caressing that silver-gilt finial. Sometimes, to vary his beautiful imaginary pain in being burned by it, he would wet a thumb and forefinger before touching it, though he knew Grandmother Bradford did not approve the gesture. Evidently Cousin Felix was early marked for some important contact with the fine arts.

Felix was a little boy of six when that great American awakening, the Philadelphia Centennial, showed the world as by a lightning-flash just how backward we were in matters of art. It was annoying, but it had to be admitted, that all those peoples across the water (who, we strongly suspected, did not keep the Ten Commandments nearly so well as we did) were our superiors in the creation of beauty. From that time onward, Felix felt the influence of our shamed national gropings in art, and groped with the best. I say nothing for his early pencil copy of a work called Pharaoh's Horses, a copy finally completed after prodigious efforts on the part of an anæmic Saturday morning drawing-teacher to keep him at the job for many weeks. Nor can I endorse the lady's method, the first important step of which was completely to cover a steel engraving of

Pharaoh's Horses with tissue paper, a small square portion of this being torn off at the beginning of each session, to disclose the exact amount of horseflesh that must be completed within the two hours. Somehow the square inch that Felix happened to be producing at any given moment never seemed in itself to be far wrong; yet the more inches he completed, the less right his copy looked. This vaguely troubled both teacher and pupil, but neither of them knew what to do about it, except to press on. Houdon's celebrated maxim, "*Copiez, copiez, copiez toujours*," has never I hope, had a more literal and ruthless application. For years thereafter, Felix could not look upon a 4-H pencil without active loathing.

But even Pharaoh's Horses, for all their fiery eyes and swelling neck veins, could not quite trample the life out of Felix's love of the beautiful. On rainy holidays, with a plate of ginger cookies at hand, he still liked to peer inside grandmother's corner cabinet, where she kept the "bug china," the Mandarin teacups, the thin silver teaspoons, the curiously elaborate sugar-tongs, and the sugar-bowl with a castle on it. If there were no other boys about, he would gladly listen to the old lady's story of the Lafayette porringer, with

its engraving of the marquis on donkey-back. Lafayette in Egypt! It was a tale to invite dreams.

Grandma Bradford had two quite different ways of talking. When she spoke of modern things, or read a paper at the Ladies' Circle, she used her modern manner; but when she talked of old-time things, she generally dropped into a style to correspond.

"There I set on the front porch," she would say, "eatin' my cold porridge out of the porringer. I was the only girl, and they allus called it I was some indulged. But I guess folks would n't call it that, nowadays! 'T was a hot evenin', and Aunt Car'line hed company, and they wanted to talk by theirselves, so she let me set out on the porch with my supper. And when I got it et, I put the porringer up onto the porch jest as car'ful as I could, and begun playin' with Rover. He was a real young dog, Rover was; a puppy, you might say, but a big dog, too. I dunno how 't is, but dogs don't seem to *come* as big now as they did then! And fust thing I knew, he lep' up onto the porch, and got that porringer into his maouth, and rushed off downhill, me racin' after him. And that was the last our family ever saw of it. And

Rover never stopped till he got to the brook; it was roarin' turrible, the brook was, 'cos it had be'n a rainy summer; and the more I called, the more he did n't hear, but kep' a-runnin'. And he run and he run, all along the brookside, till he got to the path that led square up to the Ellicksenders' house, and then he turned up sharp — "

Grandma paused for breath, and let Felix take up the familiar tale.

"And the Ellicksenders' house," recited Felix, with gusto, "was no better than a den of thieves."

"Yes, and jest then I heard Aunt Car'line callin', and back I flew to the haouse. And when she said, 'Why, Lydia Fairlee, where is the rest of the porringer?' — oh, my, wa'n't I scairt? I hope it will be a lesson to *you*, Felix, the way I was too scairt to tell the hull truth. I was scairt o' bein' punished, so I told a part-truth, which is a near-lie, same as some boys I know of."

Felix reddened, and deemed it wise to advance the story as hurriedly as possible. "You told her you put it up onto the porch, careful as anything — "

"Yes, but I did n't dass tell her Rover hed snatched the porringer, and was carryin' it straight as a streak o' lightnin' to the Ellicksender

boys. No, sir, as long as I was in my right mind, I never owned up a syllable of it to anybody!" A note of sinful triumph rang in the old lady's voice. "'T wa'n't till two years later it all came out. I hed scarlet fever, and was dretful deleerious, and raved a lot about Rover and the porringer and the Ellicksender haouse; so Aunt Car'line knew at last jest what happened. That sickness spared me the rod, I guess!" Grandma chuckled at the thought of this immunity, but at once recollected herself. "No, Felix, 't ain't any use. Be sure your sin will find you out."

Again Felix squirmed away from any impending moral, mentally making a note to the effect that he must study ways to avoid scarlet fever, if not actual sin.

"But of course 't was too late then to accuse the Ellicksenders. And one o' them, the wust one, hed died in jail, anyhow; so you see, Felix, if he *did* take that porringer, his sin found *him* out, too. The youngest boy turned out real good, it seems. Grew up to be a minister, real celebrated, too. Some younger 'n me, he was."

But the career of the boy who "turned out real good" had no vital interest for Felix. His thoughts wandered toward the "wust one," the

one who died in jail. Not that he himself wanted to die in jail; far from it. But he certainly did not want to grow up to be a minister, either; and he hoped in his secret heart that there might be some middle course. A most determined little fellow was Felix. That day, while listening to one half of the porringer story, and repeating the other, he made up his mind that when he should reach man's estate, he would get to the bottom of this Lafayette business.

Very delicately, he twirled the silver cover over his palm, as if it were a kind of sacred top too fine for human nature's daily play. He flicked it lightly, connoisseur-fashion, with his handkerchief. For a second, he was almost sorry that the handkerchief, from its nature and uses, had to be so grimy. Then he heaved a sigh for beauty vanished. I have often thought that if Cousin Felix had gone into poetry instead of paint, he would have made good in that, too.

"Too bad there's no bottom when there's such a beautiful top! Say, Grammer, show us the drawing you made when you were little."

Nothing loath, Grammer unlocked one of the small drawers of her cabinet, and took from it a packet of ancient letters. In the heart of the

packet was a square of brownish paper, on which was traced a circle about six inches in diameter, with two projecting lacelike ears. One might call it a plan view of the bowl of the porringer. Little Lydia Fairlee had drawn it by the simple expedient of laying the object upside down on the paper, and pencilling around the outline. Evidently the pierced handles had attracted the child, for these had been drawn with great care. In the space beneath, she had done her own hand, by the same process. Many a time Felix had fitted his own five fingers over that symbol. Once his hand had been a rather good fit, but of late, it had been growing steadily beyond bounds.

"Yes, sir," Madam Bradford was saying, "that's the drawin', and I can assure you I was well cuffed by Aunt Car'line for usin' up her paper. Those days, folks did n't throw paper araound, the way they do to-day. I suppose, ef I'd be'n a child these times, I'd 'a' had Sattidy drawin' lessons, and I hope I could 'a' profited by 'em. But nobody ever gave me a chance at Pharaoh's hosses."

Felix grinned, guiltily.

"Anyways, your great-grandfather saved up that drawin', pretty car'ful! We found it among

his papers. And when I'm through, I shall leave it to you, along with the silver cover. You're the one that loves lovely things."

Felix was too well used to that reference, "when I'm through," to feel it very deeply other than as a part of the porringer story. But he was an affectionate child, and there being no spectators, he gave his grandmother the kiss she wanted. Then he fitted the cover over the drawing, as he had often done before.

"And there was a picture of Lafayette on the side of the bottom part?"

Madam Bradford suddenly switched to her most modern style of speech. She often took a sly pleasure in disconcerting her hearers by making these lightning changes.

"An engraving is the correct term, I believe." There was a world of prunes and prisms in her tone. "An engraving upon silver, executed in Paris. And underneath it was engraved, all in the French language, 'Lafayette in Egypt.' Your great-grandmother, who was quite a French scholar for those days, used to translate it for me. Very Frenchy writing it was, too; very Frenchy and flourishy. And in the picture, I mean the engraving, there was Lafayette on donkey-back,

plain as anything, all wrapped up in a big cloak, and right alongside was a man, his body-servant, I expect, urging the donkey on. I can see it in my mind to this day. If I was a drawer, I could draw it for you."

Felix sighed again, a sigh of yearning and disillusion. Somehow donkey-riding, even in Egypt, and with a body-servant, seemed to him rather tame work for Lafayette. He himself would have preferred for his hero something in more heroic vein. He knew from a picture in his geography that donkeys went with the Pyramids and the mouths of the Nile. Of course donkey-riding is well enough, in an everyday sort of way; but was Lafayette an everyday sort of man? In his heart Felix felt it a pity that the marquis had n't had a go at Pharaoh's horses, or their descendants. Once in church the minister had read out in a great voice something about a Bible horse, whose neck was "clothed in thunder." That Bible horse, Felix reasoned, would have been just the mount for Lafayette! For a moment, the little boy's mind even harbored a doubt as to his great-grandmother's French scholarship.

"Grammer, are you sure it *was* a donkey? Do you remember the ears?"

Madam Bradford replied with a majesty that withered all doubt, "I do. If I was a drawer, I could draw those ears for you. Lafayette in Egypt."

II

To-day, Cousin Felix himself hardly knows at what age he began to fit various facts together, with an accuracy damaging to the Lafayette myth. If, as family tradition had it, the porringer had been ordered in Paris by our seafaring ancestor, in the year 1779, was it really likely that at that date Lafayette's exploits, either warlike or otherwise, either in Egypt or elsewhere, were already so noised abroad as to be stock subjects for the silversmith's skill? Absurd! "Any sophomore would know better," reasoned the youth Felix; "even a Harvard man." But by the time Felix had taken his degree at Yale, and was beginning at the bottom round of the paint business, his interest in the vanished porringer had become dormant; for many years thereafter, his business career, his new home and growing family occupied his mind to the exclusion of childish trifles.

Nevertheless, at the destined hour, his collec-

tor's passion overtook him, and was thenceforth to remain with him. He began to haunt auction rooms, private collections, museums. Pictures, books, furniture — he loved them all; but Colonial silver was his chief desire. He read much, studied much, and even wrote a little, now and then, upon this subject paramount. And though he scarcely owned it, even to himself, the missing part of the Fairlee porringer was the central object of his quest. As the years rushed on with gathering speed, the by-products of this pursuit became very considerable; his collection vied with that of Lockwood or of Halsey or of Clearwater. Silver tankards and platters were his; also silver braziers and caudle cups and chocolate pots, silver ladles and buckles and patchboxes. But porringers were really his long suit, he said. Of these, he possessed enough to lend a score to various museums, and yet to keep in his own cabinet a more than sufficient number (all of the middle period) to serve as soup-bowls for his famous dinners of twelve.

Naturally his delight in what he had merely whetted his longing for what he had not. Whenever his birthdays impended, as they continued to do with annoying annual precision, his wife and

the elder children (especially young Felicia) would once more set out hunting for "the Lafayette bottom," and failing always in their search, would in despair purchase some costly and inadequate substitute for the thing they sought. Indeed, "Father's feeling for antique silver, you know!" had made him no niggard with modern gold, and his offspring, even in their early youth, had their many-leaved, rigorously inspected check-books. Nor could I ever see that they were in any way the worse for this indulgence.

Felix smiled happily enough when, on the morning of his fifty-first birthday, young Felicia bounded into his study, and plumped down upon his table an ill-favored bulbous tankard of somewhat baroque design; a piece which she jubilantly declared was "a genuine John Cony," but which was really, as our wise expert whispered to himself in the midst of his outspoken praise and thanksgiving, "no more a Cony than I am a king."

"No use, dad," said young Felicia, shaking a wise blonde head, in her funny little perpetual morning-glory way. "Mother and I have given up the Lafayette bottom for keeps. We've searched high and low for the old thing, from Salem, Massachusetts, to Baltimore, Maryland, and so have

you. Nothing doing. *I* don't believe there ever *was* a Lafayette bottom, anyway!" This last with the air of uttering a superb and daring heresy, possibly epoch-making in the annals of silver-collecting in America.

"As for that," replied Felix, whose self-imposed rôle it was never to turn a hair at the opinions of youth, "I have n't believed it myself, this long time."

Felicia started indignantly. "Why, Payrent, Payrent! What do you mean by such — recalcitrating? I thought you staked your life on that Lafayette business!"

"I'm afraid you have n't been keeping up with the times," retorted the parent. "For the past ten years, at least, I've discounted the tale. I've been putting two and two together, and I really don't see the sense in trying to make a baker's dozen out of it, do you?"

"Oh, well, if you're bringing it down to cold mathematics, father, I rather think you're going to miss some of the joys of your job!"

"On the contrary, my dear Flickey, the joys will be all the keener."

"Well, I wish you'd explain your change of base."

"I have n't made any change of base. And have n't I told you a hundred times that the true collector should never venture out of doors without being armored in doubt? Why, from the time of dear Grammer Bradford's maunderings about Lafayette in Egypt, when I was a little boy in a wine-colored plaid shirt, I had my misgivings about the tale. It 's the doubt that makes the chase interesting. Of course, all of us Bradfords know that our Fairlee ancestor was with Paul Jones on the ship Ranger in the harbor of Quiberon in 1779 when that ship received the first national salute ever given to the American flag in Europe."

Flickey stifled a yawn behind her preposterous dinner-ring.

"So far, so good. Next, we have reason to believe that our seafaring grandsire got up to Paris that same year, and there ordered the Fairlee porringer, the cover of which I now possess, the bowl being mysteriously dog-lost."

"Yes, dog-gone lost, forever and a day."

Felix fingered the scrolled thumb-piece of the supposed John Cony. "But did n't you ever stop to think, my dear, just what Lafayette was up to, those days? He was only twenty when he came

over to us, in 1777. Is it at all likely that he'd ever been in Egypt before that time? Not enough to notice, I'll be bound! No, I can't think he was celebrated enough in 1779 to warrant having his exploits, real or imaginary, engraved on the side of a porringer, to make a household word of himself."

"Another illusion overboard," cried Felicia hopefully, as if pleased with a parent's progress. But she departed, thoughtful.

"Do you know," she announced to her mother, afterwards, "dad does n't really swallow that Lafayette stuff, any more than you and I do?"

"Of course not, dearie!"

"Well, of all the gay parental deceivers, you two are the limit! You'll be saying there's no Santa Claus, next!" Flickey flounced off in a dudgeon not wholly pretended. She was thoughtful, too. As her parents' interest in the quest waned, her own waxed stronger.

"The old dears got a rise out of *me*, all right," she confided to Jimmy Alexander, a Princeton boy who had succeeded in wresting forever from Yale Felicia's sworn allegiance, originally granted to Harvard, and for a brief hour wavering between Amherst and Columbia.

"So much depends upon where you spend your summers," Felicia had once ingenuously remarked; and not without some anxiety, her parents had made a similar observation. However, it was with a certain feeling of relief that Felix and his wife had compared notes upon the subject of Jimmy Alexander. Weighed in the balance with every other collegian in Flickey's career, the young man triumphed conspicuously. Incidentally, he had an interest in old silver, an interest which even the skeptical Felix believed was genuine.

The fount and origin of that interest would have been clear to our cousin the collector could he have overheard Flickey and Jimmy in the arbor, after a game of tennis. "I'll beat you to it," Flickey was saying. "You find me that Lafayette bottom, and your fortune's made, with father. He tells us now, after all these years, that he does n't believe there *is* such a thing. But all the same there's a look of holy faith shining behind those shell rims of his. Say, Jimmy, did you ever notice how blue father's eyes are? They're the eyes of a believer, every time!"

Jimmy was too much engrossed with Felicia's eyes to spare a thought for Felix's. But the girl's

suggestion about the Lafayette bottom caught his fancy. An up-and-coming lawyer, such as he intended eventually to be, ought to be able to hunt down a silver bowl; or rather, what is more to the point with lawyers, to get some one else to do it.

"My Aunt Amanda at Lost River," he mused aloud, "has quite a little collection of such trifles, and I'm sure she'd be glad to advise —"

"Your Aunt Amanda, at Lost River," hooted Felicia, the morning-glory willingly assuming the rôle of owl. "Oh, Jimmy, you innocent, don't you suppose father has been up hill and down dale, from Lost River to Newfoundland Bay, looking for that bowl? Don't you know that half the dealers in New York are out with bloodhounds seeking stuff for father's cabinets to devour? Your Aunt Amanda, indeed! And Lost River! Huh!"

Jimmy was nettled, but not defeated. "All the same," he retorted stubbornly, "my Aunt Amanda is just as good as anybody else's, and in fact a lot better than most; and there's as good fish in Lost River as you can buy in all New York. And furthermore, if you don't mind my mentioning it, my Aunt Amanda is an authority on

Early American silver. You probably are not aware of the fact that it was she who wrote the famous Blakeney monograph! Amanda Alexander Blakeney is her name."

Flickey was taken aback for a fraction of a second. "A. A. Blakeney? Why, we were brought up on her! I thought it was a him, I did, really! Dad swears by his Blakeney."

"Then why should n't we Dodge up to Lost River," urged Jimmy, appeased, "and see auntie about it?"

Felicia's eyes shone, but her words were circumspect. "Of course we could Dodge it in your car, or Ford it in mine; but had n't we better get father and mother to take us up in the family ark, with Priscilla and the children —?"

"Not on your blooming passport! Where do I come in, with a deal like that? If anything results, does little Jimmy draw the prestige? No, no, I want to perform the quest by myself — with you, of course. Can't ask any one else, my runabout won't stand for it. After all, I'm furnishing an aunt; and I think I ought to have something to say."

"I'll see how mother feels about it," vouchsafed Flickey. She added to herself, "I'll wear

my pink-and-white stripe, with the rose blazer. But perhaps not the earrings — you never can tell about earrings —"

III

LATE one July afternoon, Amanda Alexander Blakeney had ensconced herself with Queen Victoria in a shady corner of the terrace, and was looking forward to an hour of tranquil enjoyment with Lehzen's caraway seeds, and Lord M. To her vexation, the very first paragraph was punctuated for her by footsteps on the brick walk; and peering through the pine boughs, she spied a gay young pair who had evidently just descended from a car, left in quite the wrong place in her courtyard.

"I hope," she said to herself, "it is n't another brazen couple come to ask if this is a 'gift-shop-'n'-tea-house,' and can they have something wet. Well, they'll hear from me, and —"

A brisk voice broke in, man-fashion.

"Hello, hello, Aunt Mandy! Anything wet for the weary prodigal nevvy?"

"Well, of all things," replied the great Museum authority on silver, beaming with pleasure upon her favorite Alexander nephew. Lord M. was

readily enough forgotten in the vivid presence of the young people, and the subject of silver readily enough approached with the arrival of a tea-tray laden with various products reflecting credit alike upon the collector and her cook. Mrs. Blakeney was a childless widow, distinctly pretty, with a young face framed by abundant white hair. In her fresh lilac gown with its touches of old lace, and in her daintily buckled slippers, of a Victorian slenderness, she was, as Felicia afterwards declared, a "regular story-book fairy-godmother person." Old silver was her love, her life, her knowledge. Everybody's silver was of interest to her; she was always ready to talk or even to hear others talk concerning caudle cups or apostle spoons or salt-cellars or tankards.

She gave a delicately amused attention to Flickey's chatter of her father's quest for the Lafayette bottom. The young girl naturally felt that her hostess's interest was due, in part, to her own pleasing vivacity in telling the story of the child Lydia, the Fairlee porringer, Rover, and the evil Ellicksenders. At the mention of that name, *Ellicksender*, Mrs. Blakeney started, and even changed color; one would have said that a feeling of indignant protest surged over her when the

"den of thieves" was blithely insisted upon by young Felicia; but the lady did not interrupt.

"And the fun of it is," Felicia continued, stimulated by the fact that Jimmy was admiring her within an inch of his life, while even Mrs. Blakeney was spellbound, "the fun of it is, father still has the drawing his Grandma Bradford made when she was a little girl. You know she made a drawing of the Lafayette bowl just by laying it down on paper and tracing around it, as young things do!" One would have supposed that the speaker was a thousand years removed from such simplicities.

"But that is n't all," added Flickey, taking from her beaded bag a folded paper, and passing it to Mrs. Blakeney. "What must father do but go ahead and have half a dozen copies made of that old drawing, perfect in every detail; and he has given one to each of us children, mother included, so that wherever we are, we can always be prepared to find a porringer bottom that will fit exactly, if there is such a thing. Regular Bradford family identification tag, I call it. Of course father has the top; but we've never had any luck in finding the bottom, though mother and I have hunted and delved and dug. Sometimes the circle

would be right, or almost right, but the handles — oh, dear! We've looked at *gorms* of handles, all of them terribly wrong."

She paused a moment to wonder whether she had been talking too much; she did not wish to appear the raw young feminine ignoramus in the eyes of a person so delightful as Aunt Amanda, who, as Felicia now saw, was studying that drawing, and with a kind of passionate earnestness, too. The expert's face was itself a study; doubt, amazement, and recognition were to be seen struggling there. The polite interest had become acute.

Flickey, jubilantly aware that as usual she was making a success of her conversation, was inspired to further efforts. In imitation of her father's most discriminating manner, she continued, "Of course, from the collector's point of view, we don't attach any undue importance to the Lafayette myth, and —"

"Neither do I," observed Mrs. Blakeney, with unexpected decisiveness. "If you'd both care to come and look at some of my things, perhaps you'll see why not."

The boy and girl followed the lady into her gray-panelled drawing-room, fresh and delicately

fragrant with the spice of July pinks nodding from crystal vases. It seemed to Felicia that she had never before entered a room that was at once so simple and so sophisticated, so withdrawn from the world, yet so inviting to a guest. Mrs. Blakeney, no less than Felicia, carried a beaded handbag; but Mrs. Blakeney's, Felicia subsequently reported to an attentive father, made her own look like thirty cents.

Mrs. Blakeney's bag held a key, with which she opened a highboy, gleaming discreetly from a nook just beyond the fireplace. Its shelves were laden with treasure; and Flickey, although long inured to the surprises that a collector can spring upon his family, exclaimed with joy before those marshalled riches. For Felicia, like her father before her, was fated to pursue beauty; even her girlish mistakes — her collection of athletic collegians, for example, her amethystine earrings, her overwrought, overworking dinner-ring in all its preposterousness — resulted from her thirst after loveliness rather than from her vanity. Jimmy himself was to her largely one last pure product of the beautiful. In Mrs. Blakeney's drawing-room, before the highboy and its spoils, her eyes filled with tears of thankfulness for

beauty. She felt that the ranks of silver vessels beaming and gleaming upon her had in some mysterious way gathered into themselves and greatly multiplied all over their surfaces all possible beauty from all known worlds, only to reflect it back upon those who were fortunate enough to be near. Not only the faded rose of the hangings and the dim gray of the panelling and the dusky orange outline of the spinet were reflected winkingly from those silver shapes; it seemed to her that the very fragrance of the pinks and the breath of summer itself were wafted to her by silver voices. Flickey sometimes passed for flippant; but this was not her flippant day. Indeed, she was startled out of a mood that was partly pleasure and partly prayer by Aunt Amanda's matter-of-fact remark, —

"My French stuff, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I keep it locked because — oh, well, there are just a few trifles — Jimmy, reach me down that top piece, will you, please? The one at the right of the alms basin."

With a certain grave excitement, Mrs. Blakeney had already placed Felicia's drawing upon a little table; she smoothed out the folds of the paper, especially those that crossed the lacelike

handles. Then, with but a casual glance at the delicately wrought bowl that Jimmy put into her hands, she set it, with dramatic exactness, over the outline traced by the child Lydia.

Each one of the trio felt for a moment the touch of a bygone day. There could be no doubt whatever that the lost piece of silver was found. Unless, indeed, as the young lawyer's mind profanely suggested, those old boys made such things by the gross, like the green spectacles that Moses bought! But the surmise was too grotesque for utterance. Even with his slender knowledge of the silversmith's art, he could discern that the Fairlee porringer was no machine-made product. It had been created by many touches, but by few hands; perhaps by only one pair of hands, and that a master's. Felicia's eyes (not wholly untrained, however subject to occasional error) rested admiringly, even reverently, on a master-craftsman's work.

She turned toward Mrs. Blakeney. "I feel just as if you had taken down a receiver, and asked me to listen into it, and that I heard a voice say, oh, ever so long-distance! 'This is little Lydia speaking.'"

Jimmy, too, was thoughtful. "But where does

Lafayette come in, I wonder? Lafayette in Egypt?"

Aunt Amanda smiled, picked up the bowl, and pointed out, just below the rim, a tiny engraving of a long-eared beast, bearing a cloaked figure, while another personage trudged at the side. Palm trees and a pyramid completed the scene. How strange that any one, above all a God-fearing Fairlee, could ever have failed to recognize the Bible story of Mary and Joseph, fleeing with the Child! Many curves and scrolls enclosed this specimen of the graver's art, and among these could be discerned, in the flourishy French writing of which Grandma Bradford had often spoken, the legend —

La Fuite en Egypte

For a collector, Mrs. Blakeney was certainly sportsmanlike, yes, magnanimous. We called it broad-minded when she gave to Jimmy Alexander's bride, as a wedding-gift, her "Flight into Egypt" piece; an object so tenderly cherished by her that she had never even made mention of it in any of her monographs, but had kept it unspotted from the world, in her own collection. She had always, and with reason, considered it an Alexander heirloom to which she was justly entitled,

through the bequest of her grand-uncle, Judge Alexander. She knew, however, that the Alexanders, like most of us, had had ups and downs; she knew that one branch of the family had been prolific in good-for-nothings, some of whom had fallen so low as to misspell the family name for a whole generation, writing it Ellicksender, when they wrote it at all. Though she doubted the justice of calling the humble Ellicksender home a "den of thieves," she nevertheless believed it probable that Judge Alexander's "*La Fuite en Egypte*" porringer had come into his family's possession in some vague, unexplained way, rather than by purchase. For Judge Alexander's father, Dr. Phineas Alexander, that pillar of the Presbyterian faith, had originally been a mere Ellicksender, so-called; he it was who had "turned out real good," and so had failed to win the interest of either Felix or myself, in our childish days. As Mrs. Blakeney said, "The ironies of Time certainly do iron out everything, if you wait long enough"; and it was Dr. Alexander, *alias* Ellicksender, who had lifted up the fallen fortunes of his family to their former lofty place in American history.

Felicia is really a kindly little soul. When I

went to see Cousin Felix after the wedding, I was not surprised to find that on the ground of safety first, she insists that the Lafayette bottom shall remain, during her father's lifetime, remarried to its fluted, flame-topped cover. The *écuelle* is easily the pride of the collector's heart. "Of course I have costlier pieces," quoth Felix, "but none so dear to me as this."

We grinned at each other as he repeated his boyhood's gesture, wetting a thumb and forefinger before he touched the flame.

THE FACE CALLED FORGIVENESS

THE little dinner was a masterpiece. From hail to farewell, there had been no falling-off in quality; the crystal chalices of liquid topaz that heralded the feast (or shall I say plainly, the cocktail-glasses?) were not more graciously cut than the quips of the final speech of congratulation. Guests, viands, vintages, and starry flowers had been chosen by the law of hospitality wedded to the spirit of beauty. The purse they had between them was not unduly large, but it had been joyously and wisely spent.

It was an artist's dinner given by an uncle to a nephew, a dinner in honor of an honor. Twenty years before, Steven Grant had received the coveted Gold Medal for Sculpture; to-day, a like mark of distinction had been awarded to his favorite nephew, Gerald Weldon. Steven was a bachelor, and nephews counted. What more natural than a dinner of reunion and rejoicing?

There were ladies present; and some of them had satisfied alike their decorative and their hero-worshipping instincts by sending in advance to

the house of their host two lengths of wide ribbon of cloth-of-gold, with a command that both host and guest of honor should use them to bind about their necks the beautifully sculptured tokens of their greatness. Very ample and splendid is that famous gold medal. A little weighty for festal wearing, indeed; but to refuse would have been churlish, and uncle and nephew had adjusted their adornments with the air of men who do not mean to dodge any part of the day's work. Having done that, they promptly forgot the big bright plaques on their chests, except when playfully reminded of them by the lady who had conceived the idea, and who basked gladly in the thought of her originality.

It was indeed an evening to remember; but, just like an evening to forget, it had to come to an end. The last and loveliest lady, revealing the exact amount of lacy stocking demanded by fashion, had with Gerald's aid tucked up her slender glittering trail within her glass coach; the last and most uninteresting gentleman had been sped clubward. Uncle and nephew went up the broad stairs to talk it all over in Steven Grant's den, a great orderly panelled room always very dear to young Gerald.

Steven Grant's main studio, being a sculptor's, was naturally doomed to the basement of his house. The second-floor den was not precisely a studio, though works of art had been created there. It was a room not quite like a library, yet with plenty of space for books, and books for the space; a room that was a bit larger than a smoking-room, and rather less elegant than a drawing-room; comfortable chairs abounded and cheerful tones prevailed, evidently in complete amity with a pair of dim, priceless tapestries that seemed to know all and pardon all in both furniture and folk. It was a room in which old memories and new conveniences were happy together; a bachelor had somehow managed it so. As years went by, Steven Grant became increasingly glad that the McKim, Mead and White panelling of the late eighties had piously respected the delicate acanthus cornice of the early forties. He often said that he was the only artist in New York whose career had begun and would end under the same roof.

You would have taken uncle and nephew for a pair of brothers, one silvery and one golden. Evening dress and the bright decorations emphasized the resemblance. Both men were tall,

slender, clean-shaven. Steven Grant carried his sixty years lightly, as artists often do, while Gerald at thirty sometimes showed a seriousness in accord with his honors rather than with his years. His forehead was already higher than his uncle's; both men chuckled over that, but naturally Uncle Steve's chuckle was heartier. Gerald slouched a little, after the custom of his generation; this made him seem more *blasé* than he really was. Steven Grant was straight as a pine tree; this gave him a challenging look that people liked. The ties of blood and their pursuits bound the two together in a harmony that would scarcely have borne out the theories of Shaw, Samuel Butler, and other dispraisers of the Family.

That night, they were like a pair of girls in their wish to live the dinner over again, with the added joy of uncensored comment. "We'll get our golden halters off," said Uncle Steve, "and browse at our ease."

"Was n't Mrs. Storms the limit?" laughed Gerald. "Talk about the immodesty of our maidens! Strikes me, Uncle Steve, your generation is fully as mad as ours."

"Don't judge all dowagers by one," urged the other, turning on the light.

Gerald stopped short in the midst of a jesting answer, forgetting both maidens and dowagers as he suddenly saw over his uncle's familiar hearth something he had never seen there before; the cast of a beautiful head, palely tinted.

"Why, Uncle Steve," he cried, "you have it too, that face called Forgiveness!"

"Is that its name?" asked Steven Grant quietly.

"I don't really know, but it's the only name I've heard given to it. I never saw any cast of it till yesterday, coming home from my trip West. I had an hour before my train left, so I ran in to take a look at the Museum. Say, those Middle-Westerners are alive, all right! Priceless, that Museum! And just as I was leaving, my eyes fell on this wonderful, wonderful thing. Seeing it was the big adventure of my whole trip. Its beauty has haunted me ever since."

"Take down my copy, if you like," said Grant.

"Oh, how exquisitely you've colored it, Steve-dear! No one can beat you in such things. You've brought out every beauty, somehow. And it suggests both dawn and twilight." Gerald passed his fingers with appreciative tenderness

over the broad brow of the face called Forgiveness, and went on, with animation.

"At the Museum, there was a nice old cabinet-maker, German type, fitting a frame for their cast. Recent addition, it seems. He looked intelligent, so I asked him what it was. He said he did n't know exactly; it had n't been 'catalocked' yet. But a poet friend of his had said it ought to be called the Rose of Pardon. Then he told me, musingly, that it made him think of the Virgin at Nuremberg."

"That might well be," observed Uncle Steve, pushing over the matches.

"Well, then, next a little Italian girl came along, with her sketch-book. She saw my interest, and showed me the astonishingly good pencil sketch she had made from the cast. So I asked her what it was, where it was from. She said she did n't know; she understood that it was called Forgiveness. Then she looked me all over to see what manner of man I was, and shyly said that to her it was very beautiful, like the Madonna at Perugia."

"I can see what she meant, of course."

"But that is n't the half, dearie! Just then a French painter, evidently a Friday lecturer or

something of the sort, came in with a class of young boys. Lord, how they burbled, all over the place! One of the kids asked him the question that was trembling on my lips, and he answered that he was n't sure, but that he believed the cast was called Forgiveness. It was rather touching to hear him repeat very reverently, in his pronounced 'Parrhisian' accent, 'Forgive us our trespasses.' The boys felt it, too, and they were very quiet for a moment. Then the Frenchman, with a bright glance at me (guessing no doubt that I too was an artist), added that for him, it was like the Virgin of the Visitation, so miraculously saved out of the destruction at Reims."

"It seems to me more beautiful than that, even," interposed the elder man, "but I can understand his feeling."

"Exactly! And then, last of all, a real live American art student came hustling up, just the kind you see here at the League, only more so. He, too, said the face was called Forgiveness, adding briskly, 'Perfect American type, don't you think? Beats Gibson, what?'"

"They were all more or less right, you thought?" Steven Grant's eyes were fixed curiously on Gerald's face, still bent over the cast.

Gerald looked up. "Yes, they were right, each in his own way. You know, Stevedear, it all reminded me, in a beautifully wrong-side-out fashion, of the different witnesses in Poe's murder story, you remember?"

"You mean the one where men of different nationalities all hear an ape chattering in the dark, and not knowing in the least what it is, each one is sure it's some language not his own?"

"That's right! The Frenchman, who does n't know Spanish, says it's Spanish, the Englishman, who does n't understand German, says it's German, while the Italian, who does n't know English, feels sure it's English, and so on. But those people at the Museum were all so splendidly different from that! Each one wanted to guard and to claim for his own race the heritage of beauty breathing from the mask. The German, the little Italian girl, the French painter, the American art student — they were all alike in this. They found in that cast Nuremberg, Perugia, Reims, Chicago!"

"'Beats Gibson, what?'" mocked Steven Grant.

"Do you think it's a cast from nature?" asked Gerald, still intent on the face. "Perhaps a death-mask?"

The other nodded. "Without doubt, a death-mask."

"But there's nothing of the sharpness of death about it, is there? It seems a face unprofaned by earthly suffering."

Again Steven Grant gazed at his nephew, as if waiting for the eyes of young manhood to see more.

"Strange," pursued Gerald, "that a mere death-mask can mean so much to living men. There's Fraser's Roosevelt, and the Lincoln, and the Dante that used to be in everybody's library, and —"

A silence fell between the two. Surely Mrs. Storms, the lady who was the limit, was far from their thoughts. The dinner, that masterpiece, had faded from the foreground.

"I never told you," said Gerald, abruptly, "how I longed to make a death-mask of father, when he died there in London, away from you all. I wanted to preserve — and to show to you yourself, Stevedear! — the look of peace that came upon him. As a sculptor, I knew how, of course. Every kid studying sculpture has made casts — from life, anyway. But when mother saw what I was about, she trembled so violently I

could n't go on, in the presence of her suffering. And *I* trembled, too. I've never told you about it, because I was ashamed of my weakness, or whatever it was! Well, since then, I've never even *tried* to make a death-mask! People send for me, of course, and I often go, when they seem to need a friendly presence. But it's some moulder who does the work, not I. I can't seem to bring myself —"

He set the cast on the table beside him, still conning its planes and shadows. Again the silence of understanding enveloped uncle and nephew, until Steven Grant said, as if in answer to a question, "Well, yes; it was much the same with me. I never made but one death-mask. Just one. There was no way out."

"How was that?"

"It happened when I was younger than you are, so I could n't be expected to have much sense, could I? You trembled, because it was your father. I trembled, because it was the girl I'd loved, and in a sense, lost."

"Oh, I could understand!" And Gerald, thinking of that most lovely lady with the glittering train, stretched out a sympathetic hand.

"A very beautiful girl she was, Anita Vaughn!

The pride of our young circle. I made the mistake, if it was a mistake, of introducing my best friend to her. After that, I had no show whatever. They fell in love."

"Hard luck, for you, anyway!"

"Yes, and a shock to my conceit, too. In a way, it was one of the sacrifices I made to art. I'd been moving Heaven and Hell to get that Emancipation group of mine well along. I did n't want to ask Anita to marry me until I had proved my earning power, and that group would have settled things. Your gramper, as you know, did n't think much of sculpture, and I was shy about asking him to shell out. So I waited and worked, and in the meantime, — ah, well, it was all simple enough. She preferred my friend to me, as well she might —"

"I don't know about that," bristled Gerald.

"No, you don't, but I do. You see, it was Janvier."

The younger man started. "Not Janvier, the famous Dr. Janvier!"

"Yes, *the* Dr. Janvier. And no finer fellow ever lived. I've been thankful ever since that I did n't let his luck in love stand between us as friends. Oh, of course, I sulked in my studio a few

weeks, and took on a deep cynicism about life and love. But nobody seemed to notice my airs, so I gave 'em up, and picked out the prettiest wedding-present I could find for Anita."

"And of course you had your work —"

"Indeed I had! My career was very much on my mind, those days!" He smiled at young ambition, and dexterously flicked a lengthened cigar ash into the fireplace. "But I suffered, too, don't think I did n't suffer! And strange as you may find it, that pair comforted me. To be sure, it never works out so, in books; but it was so, with us. The Janviers had me with them often, after their marriage. As I look back on it, I see that it was all far more beautiful than I could know, then. They were rare souls, both."

"Did Janvier's fame come early in life?"

"Yes, but he was too busy and quixotic to take much note of it. I first met him when I was making my studies for that confounded Emancipation group, and we became friends at once, because of my subject. He was interested in the welfare of the negroes, and gave up a lot of his time to charitable work among them. He used to bring me different types of colored men as models; I've often told you how I studied thirty-five dif-

ferent darkies for those reliefs on the pedestal. In our leisure, when we had it, Janvier and I would discuss racial traits, and so on."

"New Yorker?"

"Yes, but of Canadian ancestry. His father was one of the early lumber kings, and left him a lot of money; otherwise, he could n't have given so much unpaid service among the negroes. I never knew a human being so frantically possessed with the idea of justice for all the world."

"His wife sympathized?"

"Oh, Lord, yes! Whatever he did was perfect in her sight. Strange, too, because she was a Louisiana girl, whose family had lost their all through the Civil War. And of course her ideas about the negro race were not in the least like his. How could they be? Ah, well, Anita Janvier, my lost Anita Vaughn, was certainly a shining example of that motto there, under your feet!"

Gerald picked up the bellows from the hearth-rug, and studied its carven legend, as he had often done when a child. "'*Amor Omnia Vincit.*' Love conquers all."

"Love surely had his hands full, in her case. Just fancy the prejudices Anita Janvier had to overcome, before she could enter into her hus-

band's work as she did! She told me once, with that wonderful smile of hers, that she was glad she had been brought up on a plantation, because understanding negroes so much better than Dr. Janvier could, she could save him from the sort of mistakes most Northerners made."

"Did she win out?" laughed Gerald.

Steven Grant did not answer directly, but continued in musing recollection.

"Franklin Janvier had a house and office in Tenth Street, just a few doors from my studio here. We saw each other constantly, and kept in touch with each other's work. I was surprised, however, when he took on, as office assistant, a young surgeon just graduated from a foreign school, a man who looked like a Spaniard, but who had a trace, oh, a mere trace, of negro blood. Pleasant fellow, too; very gifted and modest, and with an attachment for Janvier that amounted to idolatry, all told. A doctor born, Janvier said. His grandfather was a noted English surgeon who came out to the West Indies in the old days. Well, Charles Richmond was a fixture in Frank's office before Anita came to live in the big Tenth Street house. She accepted him just as simply as she accepted all the rest of her new life. But she

told her husband, very frankly, that Dr. Richmond's strain of the darker blood, however negligible for us Northerners, was perfectly evident to any one brought up among negroes."

"Southerners often say such things," said Gerald, "but I never know quite all they mean, do you?"

"We tried to make her explain. It was a little of everything; just this and that; hair, lips, nails, palms, of course! And a certain indescribable smooth fullness under the skin, a rounder build of the eyeball, a more springing curve of the lashes, and so on. Janvier was even then getting together the data for that famous book of his on 'Ethnic Details,' and he used to encourage Anita in such observations, and check them up. One could n't help admiring her astonishing acuteness and probity. The three of us would often compare notes about young Richmond, but never with malicious intent, I assure you. And though Anita always treated him with the respect she knew was due him, it sometimes fell short of what he longed for."

"The Moor was haughty, then?"

"Haughty enough, but by no means a Moor, any more than you are. His eyes were blue, and

really lighter than yours, my boy. With a queer shine in them, sometimes! I was sorry for him, and so was Anita. But Janvier, with his obsession about equality and justice, sturdily refused to see that there was anything to be sorry about, except our nasty human point of view. He gave a lot of the care of his colored patients to Richmond, who did nobly by them, too. Only, by some mysterious instinct, they always recognized *him* as one of *them*. And it hurt him, clean through and through. How that boy suffered! He had real genius, we knew. And I suppose this helped Janvier to put up with Richmond's occasional frantic outbursts against his fate. We used to call them his cyclones of the soul, not dreaming that a similar expression was to be invented long afterward. These storms of passion always left him crumpled up into nothingness before Janvier, Anita, even myself! I tell you, Gerald, the man's agonies were atrocious. He had a kind of gallant courage, too, for all his self-abasement; you would be pretty dull, if you could n't see the sublimity of it. After every outbreak, and the subsequent surrender, he would painfully pick up the pieces of himself, and put them together again in a dazed sort of way, and

next day devote himself to his work, more single-mindedly than ever. Janvier was his chosen pattern and example, in that."

"But perhaps the poor chap worked *too* hard," suggested Gerald.

"Exactly! And there's where Janvier and I were wrong, not to have known it. Anita, with a far finer vision than we had, often warned us that the bent bow was strung too tight. But we could n't see it so; men are blind, sometimes, in the heat and burden of the day. Richmond was six feet tall, and broad in proportion. A magnificent physique! That's what we went by. We laughed at Anita's fears — accused her of plantation-coddling. And there was a lot to be done, too, that year after the Janviers were married. It was a horrible winter, disease stalking everywhere, especially among the 'coloreds.' Both Janvier and Richmond were overworked. You would have thought that the sort of office Janvier had, with so many colored patients, would have hurt his practice. Not a bit of it. People felt a trust in him. Children always took to him, and he was very successful, as you know, in children's diseases.

"It happened that in the following spring, Jan-

vier was suddenly called to Toronto to see his mother, who had but a few days to live. He asked me to look after things a little, in his absence. Of course, I said I would, but I told him, half-laughingly, that I hoped to goodness Charles Richmond would n't treat me to a cyclone of the soul; and if he did, I should turn the hose on him. Janvier looked rather troubled, but said he did n't expect anything of the sort. In fact, a storm had occurred only the day before, and another such tempest would n't be due for a long time. It struck me that if I'd been in Frank's place, I would have been worried about leaving Anita. Very likely, Frank *was* worried, for he had tried to persuade her to visit her sister while he was away. But the girl was tremendously interested in some sick little pickaninnies she was helping both doctors to pull out of various croups and itises, and she felt that those children needed her. And, anyway, Frank would be back in a few days."

A new tone had crept into the sculptor's voice, and Gerald guessed that his uncle was about to speak of things hitherto untold. "Poor Stevedear," he thought, with a thrill of loving sympathy, "he's come to the place where the novels always have a row of asterisks, or something."

"And," continued the other steadily, "Franklin Janvier did come back, summoned by a telegram I sent him, telling him that Richmond had committed suicide. He had shot himself at the Tenth Street house. More than that, Anita had seen it all, and was prostrated by the shock. She had often warned us that Richmond's end might be madness. We had laughed at her, and now — Well, no use dwelling on that part now, this evening of your happiness, Gerald! It's enough to tell you that Janvier went through the hell of seeing his young wife's mind give way completely, from the shock. Specialists came, and after a while they held out a distinct hope that a few months might bring a change for the better. She regained something of her former sweetness, but it was evident that most of the time her mind was a blank. Once, in one of her rare outbursts, she cried out that her soul was snared in a web, not of her own weaving. You can imagine what Janvier felt, hearing this truth from her lips.

"The young couple had looked forward happily to the birth of children; but now, in extreme anguish of spirit, Frank Janvier told me that it was not worth the price; nothing could be worth the price his wife was paying. But he did n't give up

hope. The doctors still believed that the coming of the child might end forever the terrible shadow. Anita was naturally an unusually well-balanced person. It was part of her charm, the kind of sweet steadiness she had. I know Janvier counted on it to save her, in the end. So it was with very great eagerness that we all awaited the arrival of the Janvier heir.

"By tacit agreement, I stopped going to the Tenth Street house, but Janvier came often to my studio. He seemed to cling to me in his trouble, and I wanted to help him, of course. He kept himself in hand, pluckily enough; but sometimes, in unguarded moments, the suffering that showed itself in his face was horrible to see. So summer and autumn passed, and winter came.

"One bitter December night as I was reading in this very room, a messenger brought me a note from Janvier, begging me to come to him at once. He had, as I already knew, passed through two days of alternate hope and despair. And now, so the note told me, both wife and child had died. Anita's face had taken on a look of exquisite beauty, the look of her wedding-day. He wanted me to make the mask that would preserve it. You know how I must have felt."

"Oh, Stevedear!"

"I felt I could n't do it! But I had a studio-man who was an expert in casting, and I roused him from his bed to go with me to Janvier's. Poor Giuseppe had been up several nights with his youngest child. It happened that Dr. Janvier, who had a helping hand for every workman in the quarter, had been taking care of Giuseppe's boy, right in the midst of his own troubles; and Giuseppe was glad enough to do anything he could for *il Signor Dottore.*

"Well, I won't tell you about that bedside, and Frank's silent anguish; you know well enough about such scenes — The room was large and lofty, not unlike this. At the far end was an alcove, curtained off; and behind the drapery I could discern a light, and a cradle; but we did not speak of those things. There was no attendant. Anita's old nurse, Loretta, who was a kind of mother to us all, was sleeping in the next chamber, worn out with labor and sorrow. And the others, those terrible, necessary others that you and I can never get used to, were not to appear until the morrow.

"It was like Janvier not to waken Loretta. He himself brought water and towels. Giuseppe was

just about to mix his first plaster when a knock was heard. Janvier stepped out, but soon returned to tell Giuseppe, very gravely, that little Emilio was once more in agony, and that both of them must go at once, in the hope of saving the child's life. You see Janvier had made some important studies in children's lung troubles, and had worked out some successful methods that he did n't yet dare trust to others, without supervision."

"You mean to say he and Giuseppe left you there?"

"It was the only thing to do, was n't it? If Janvier could bear his part, why should n't I bear mine? I knew it might be hours before he would leave Giuseppe's child. And I knew, too, that the exalted loveliness of that dead face might vanish at any moment; such looks do not stay long among us. Janvier's quiet putting aside of his own feelings showed me what to do. I steeled myself and made the mould. I don't mind telling you, a cold sweat broke out all over me; but dreading it was really much harder to bear than doing it. There was something in the still beauty of the girl's face that strengthened me; I seemed to see and feel this loveliness even

while I was veiling it under layers of plaster. And when I had taken the mould away, and the face was revealed again, no less peaceful than before, and quite unprofaned by my work, I felt a kind of consolation. My part of the work had been rightly done, for all my trembling; and Giuseppe could easily make the cast itself, in my studio.

"A long time, as it seemed to me, I sat there by the bed, watching that beloved face. I wondered whether the same radiant peace shone from the face of the dead child. I knew Anita would wish to have me look at her child; I owed it to her memory.

"I parted the alcove curtains, and turning up the light, I lifted the delicate little linen sheet that covered the cradle. What I saw I have never yet spoken of to any one, not even to Janvier; perhaps least of all to Janvier, Janvier with his great dream of justice! I know that what I say is safe with you, Gerald? You promise? The little face, exquisitely fashioned and peaceful, indeed, was unmistakably one of those darker blossoms on the tree of life. The darker strain! And it was far more clearly marked than in Richmond."

Gerald recoiled in horror. "Richmond —"

"Yes! In one hideous, backward-looking

lightning-flash, I saw just what had been Anita's fate. I saw her long months of mental eclipse, following the attack of a madman. I had often noted her not unkindly meant attitude of racial superiority toward the frantically sensitive Richmond; and I understood just how a mere glance or word of hers had whipped to the surface the one black drop in his high-strung, overwrought frame, driving him to an unspeakable betrayal. No wonder he had killed himself. No wonder the proud, blameless girl had cried aloud to her husband, out of the abyss of darkened reason, that she was caught and crushed in a web not of her own weaving!"

"I suppose," hesitated Gerald, "there was never any doubt of Richmond's crime?"

"None whatever. There was even a witness! As a matter of fact, poor faithful Loretta, who worshipped Anita, and followed her like a shadow, had been working in the room next to the office, when she heard Richmond talking to Mrs. Janvier, in a crazy, shrieking way, about a prescription. His tone was so strange and threatening that she was terrified for her mistress, and rushed toward the office. The door was slammed violently in her face, and locked. She beat on

the panels, and screamed, but help came too late."

The level voice faltered a moment, then continued: "My first impulse was to escape from the room, anywhere, anywhere, out of the horror of it. But Anita's face with its majestic calm held me there; that, and the example of Janvier's fortitude. And, well, life must be lived! There might be something I could do for Janvier, or Giuseppe, for that matter, on their return. Once again I went to the alcove, this time carrying a lighted candle, to be doubly sure of a dreadful thing. The tiny bronze face with closed eyes implored only peace — a shadow praying to return to its rest among shadows.

"Until gray morning, I waited in that still house for Janvier. I did not know what I should do or say; I only knew that I knew what were better left unknown, perhaps. But how small my own distresses seemed when he came in, and shed the light of his indomitable spirit over that place of sorrows! He seemed a creature emerging out of the wreck of all his own hopes, supported out of chaos solely by his will to re-create hope in the world.

"'Giuseppe's boy will live, I think,' he said,

simply. 'We've brought him through the crisis. Thank you, Steven, for giving me the chance to save him. I could not have left Anita unless you had stayed. Poor Loretta was tired beyond endurance, and I had sent away the trained nurse. She was worn out, too.'

"I wrung his hand. 'I loved Anita,' I sobbed out, weakly enough.

"'I know, I know,' he said. And then a great light came to me. I saw that it would n't be necessary for me, then or at any other time, to debate passionately with myself whether or not I should speak to him of what I had learned. The largeness of his grief sheltered all my anxieties. His arm around my shoulder, we stood together looking down upon the face of a much loved and deeply wronged woman. In life, it had been a face to delight in; a face with loyal blue eyes under upraised dark lashes, a delicate straight nose, and lips vividly curved like the petals of a rose. In death, with the eyes forever shadowed, the flower-like coloring effaced, its beauty of form was enhanced. But more than this, a spiritual significance, not previously apprehended by us, shone through the pale clay. We both of us felt it. Janvier did well to have such loveliness preserved.

"That was the only mould I have ever made from a human face. Giuseppe made two casts, one for Janvier, one for me. Janvier's was destroyed in that fire you've heard about."

"And is your copy still in existence?" Half involuntarily, Gerald took up the cast called Forgiveness.

"Yes," replied the elder man, "it is in your hands now."

The other laid his lips reverently on the smooth brow of the face which had reminded the German of the Nuremberg Virgin; the face which the Frenchman had thought French, the Italian girl Italian, and the American boy American.

"That cast, which you say is now called Forgiveness, has been enshrined in this room, behind the corner tapestry there, for more than a generation. It is older than you are. After Janvier died, I told myself it was not right to hide so much beauty from the world. But it was n't until after the Armistice that I mustered up courage to have three plaster copies made. And it was only last week that I sent a copy to each of our three largest art schools."

"And you gave the casts the name, Forgiveness?"

"Ah, no, I left them nameless! But I must tell you a strange thing about that, too. At the time when I made the mould, we young artists were very much under the spell of Omar Khayyám's fuzzy, fezzy philosophy; yes, quite entangled in the obscurantist beauty of the Vine! Fitzgerald's verses and our own Vedder's drawings were a cult with us. *I* could n't forgive as greatly as Janvier did. My wrong was less, and my pardoning power was less. And whenever I thought of the whole dreadful business, one of the Fitzgerald quatrains would ring in my ears; the one that ends

"'For all the sin with which the face of man
Is blackened, Man's forgiveness give — and take!'

"We thought it a sublime blasphemy in those days, but in these modern, higher-keyed times, no doubt it sounds tame enough. Anyway, it haunted me horribly; and to get rid of it, I carved it one rainy afternoon, in fine close letters like slanting rain, all around the outer edge of my cast. But times change, and we change. Thirty-five years later, when I looked the cast over, before giving it to the moulder to make the copies from, I knew that those lines no longer expressed what was in my heart. I had outgrown them. I

knew that a better inscription would be, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us.' But I decided to have no inscription whatever, and to let the cast carry its own message of beauty. So, with a file, and very carefully, as I thought, I erased every word of that inscription like the slanting rain. Again and again I passed my fingers over it, until I was sure it was gone. Still, I suppose I must have left some breath of that word, Forgiveness, which the students at the Museum discovered. Though for the life of me, I can't find a trace of it!"

He took up a magnifying-glass, and passed it to Gerald, who peered through it intently, all along the rim of the cast.

"No word here," said Gerald. He passed his fingers around the circling edge, as if, after all, a sculptor's fingers were more to be trusted than a glass. "No, there's nothing, really! The face must have told its own name. But tell me, Stevedear, if you don't mind, — did you yourself really forgive, in the end?"

Steven Grant smiled, and replaced the cast above his hearth-fire. Before answering, he rumpled Gerald's hair, exposing the too high forehead.

"Your question, my boy, makes me think of Mrs. Storms. Because, like that lady, it is not exactly a wrong 'un, but still, it comes very near the danger line."

And Gerald knew it was time to turn from the past to the present, and to talk of the dinner, that masterpiece. Besides, as Steven Grant had guessed, the younger sculptor was longing to speak of his own Anita, that most beautiful lady whose shining train he had hovered over, at the door of the glass coach. The elder man rejoiced with all his heart that there was no Emancipation group to thwart his nephew's happiness. In honor of Gerald's Anita, he was loyally ready to shout with the best, "Long live the Queen!" But he did not say to himself, sorrowfully, of the earlier Anita, "The Queen is dead." He saw in his mind the face called Forgiveness. He listened to the German cabinet-maker, the French painter, the Italian girl, the American student. There were others, too, coming and going in the Museum; and what they said of the face made him think of life, not death.

THE ARTIST'S BIRTHDAY

ONE winter evening, in a snugly built little stone cottage near the northern border of Vermont, a young family of three had gathered beside a glowing hearth and a cheerful lamp to enjoy an hour of that contentment which is most deeply felt when the fire is bright, the curtain closely drawn, and a storm is raging without. It was the birthday of the child Samuel. He was three years old, and as a birthday indulgence, he was to sit up until seven o'clock, and carve things with the jack-knife that his father, himself a carver of renown, had brought him as a birthday gift. This was by no means his first adventure with a knife. For a year or more he had managed a knife, at first feebly, but later with an astonishing ease. His father was proud of the infant Phidias, and even his mother had ceased to be terror-stricken at the conjunction of child and knife. The motions of the boy Samuel were happy and accurate. At the present hour, such gestures as his would be called eurhythmic, or something of that sort; even in those days of preposterous precocity, he was regarded with wonder.

It was the month and the year when for the first time there was a Confederacy, with a President to be prayed for, or else against. Stirring era! No lack of interesting items for the father to read aloud from his Weekly; Nancy, the young wife busy with her sewing, was as deeply interested as he himself in the doings at Fort Sumter. Her comments on Lincoln and Davis were no less keen than his. With eyes now bent on her work, a fine linen handkerchief to be hemmed on four sides, and now returning to the child seated on the braided rug at her feet, she still had time and thought to give to her husband's reading; at twenty-three, she rejoiced to be living in portentous times. And pray do not imagine that because the home was remote from great cities, the mother necessarily comported herself as a poor rustic creature, or as one unfamiliar with the counsels of "Godey's Lady's Book." Her ample gown was of the finest cashmere, triple-dyed of a deep rose-color, and it was well spread out upon a hoop-skirt which she managed with the kind of skill that a rose in full bloom must employ when keeping its petals in order.

The guests at the birthday feast had been a pair of grandparents, a young uncle and aunt, and

a ten-year-old girl from the farmhouse down the road. The little girl, brave in her well-flounced, orange-spotted purple delaine, wore pantalets that had been made much too long for her, in anticipation of some prodigious growth which had not taken place; and these had been starched too stiffly, so that she creaked audibly during locomotion. But she was very happy at the party; and though her costume might appear but ill-suited to the rigors of a Vermont winter, it must be remembered that in those days female attire had no commerce with common sense. Promptly at half-past five her mother came for her, bustling competently into the house, with an accompaniment of impatient sleigh-bells outside; and she glanced with undisguised curiosity at the spread table, not yet cleared away, the birthday cake with its heathenish three candles, and the young heir himself.

"They say he hain't never been punished none?"

Nancy flushed, and held back an angry answer. She was aware that the subject had already been torn to tatters by the village gossips. "Punished? No, not yet."

"I want to know! Wal, I guess he's needed

it, afore now!" The farm-wife was emphatic; but there was motherly love as well as village curiosity in her scrutiny of little Samuel. "Looks jest like a young American flag, don't he? Them blue pants, and red cheeks, and eyes stickin' out so kinda starry. But all childern needs punishments," she chirped. "They're all of 'em limbs of Satan. I've had seven, and I guess I know." She cast an eagle eye on the pantalets of her first "limb." "Them Hamburg points allus ketch up every mite of dust," she lamented, as she tucked her child under a buffalo robe and drove away through the snow.

" Wal, she knows a lot, if she knows all she thinks she doos," was the grandmother's placid comment, as she and the aunt cleared away the feast. "Nancy has no call to mind *her*." It was evident that Nancy was a creature lovingly set apart in that little world. Having borne the brunt of the birthday preparations, she was not allowed to put on her all-enveloping kitchen apron again, but was forced down into her own chair in the bright sitting-room. Rather early, because of the bitter weather, the guests had gone, and the family was left to itself in a loving intimacy precious to each of the three.

The young mother's face, softly banded with dark hair, rose flower-like above a lace collar, fastened at the throat by a large elliptical shell cameo representing Ganymede teasing the eagles of Jupiter. To the wearer that brooch was a pleasing and a precious thing. It had been her mother's, and had been bought in Rome by her father, our first American translator of Tasso. Whether or not as an aid to his own understanding of the Italian poet, the New England scholar had married a gentle Sicilian girl, and Nancy herself had been born in Rome and christened Annunziata, an outlandish name that American relatives, after the scholar's return, had promptly transformed into Nancy. And all her life Nancy had been conscious, not without joy, of her twofold nature as a New Englander and an Italian. Nancy and Annunziata were both of them under her skin. She never knew which one triumphed the oftener. In the kitchen, Nancy, perhaps; in the sitting-room, Annunziata.

That evening, as she sewed her fine seam, the ample roseate sleeves of her gown and the white undersleeves flowing beneath them moved in and out of the lamplight in a kind of stately melody as for a minuet. Watching the child at his carv-

ing, she hoped and dreamed for him the life beautiful, the life of a sculptor. Had Raphael been there, she would have been a Madonna; a Madonna of the hoopskirt, but not of the rocking-chair. No, indeed! The chair she sat in was one that her husband had made and carved for her, after a drawing in an ancient book on Italian furniture; its beauty and strength were a constant delight to her. And even without the chair, and the Ganymede, and the crimson curtains, it would have been evident that this young pair were among the aristocrats of the village; they felt that they belonged to the only aristocracy the place permitted, the aristocracy of mind. They had more books than the minister even. And no doubt Nancy's birth in Rome, that far-off city where the Pope lives, had added a secretly savored pagan touch to the picture the hamlet had made of her.

Still more than the woman with her Madonna vision, the man exulted in the child's rapt industry. With vigilant eye he noted the process of creation. A cat, it seemed; Samuel was carving a cat; no, *the* cat! Once in a while, as if to refresh a memory perhaps somewhat dimmed by his three years' stay among mortals, Samuel would glance toward Pharaoh, the great green-eyed old black

tom; but mostly his head with its long fair curls was bent over his work. Samuel was not copying a cat; he was rather evolving the cat from the deeps of his inner consciousness. Samuel's cat was not the lithe and lordly beast of Barye, nor yet the affable companion that Frémiet has given to the world; it was rather a cat of the Egyptians, the mystery of cathood incarnate. And just as Michelangelo knew that an angel slept in his marble block, so Samuel knew that all cathood crouched within a wooden chip. The father, seeing the child's difficulty in separating the cat-mass from the scrap of board in his tiny hand, would gladly have performed the rude preliminaries. But the boy had drawn back, and clasping the wood to his chest, had said firmly, in his usual way of speaking only the key-words of a situation, "Self do all!" Samuel knew no baby-talk. From his mother and her New England forbears (scholars, theologians, translators, and the like) he had inherited a great fund of words fit to be spoken, and from his father a passion for perfection in all things. He had a natural longing to say things rightly, and so saved his larynx for the essential syllables. The father, well-pleased with that confident "Self do all," returned to his reading. But

Samuel, rather than Fort Sumter, filled his mind that night.

An odd-looking creature, one would say, if Samuel should suddenly appear in our modern circle. Yet his oddity was rather in what had been done to him than in what he was. His yellow hair was arranged in seven tight spirals hanging to his shoulders; an eighth spiral made a sort of shining ridgepole on the roof of his head, from the brow backwards. Beyond question, a pretty child, with the delicately brilliant coloring of the Nordic; and his fine strong hands and feet had a definite character of their own. He wore a low-necked, short-sleeved tunic, very voluminous as to its skirt; it was made of thick blue woollen material woven by his grandmother. Beneath the tunic were ridiculous shapeless breeches of the same stuff; then came a section of bare calf, and after that, white wool socks and stout, copper-toed ankle-ties. As he sat on the braided rug, among his blue homespun billows, his back against his adoring slave, the sheep-dog Ajax, and his heart and soul bound up in his job of carving, he was at once the most absurd and lovable object in all Vermont. Disquieting, too, perhaps, for his next of kin.

Seven o'clock was to be his bed-knell; and now seven o'clock suddenly sounded from the tall shape in the corner. At once the mother rose, smoothed her ample skirt, and held out her hand. "Bedtime, Samuel."

Samuel looked at her beseechingly, but he knew that his look was lost. Already in his short life he had learned that in the realm of prohibitions, woman is of sterner stuff than man. He therefore gazed toward the spot where help was more likely to be found. Still seated firmly, clutching his cat in one hand and his new knife in the other, he stretched out his arms to his father, and cried aloud, "None done, papa!" Invincible argument from creator to creator, "None done!"

The parents exchanged irresolute glances. "Very well, Samuel, just ten minutes more." Samuel, victorious, returned to his art. But what are minutes to him whom the dream has possessed? At the end of ten minutes, when the mother rose again, and delicately flicked her cashmere folds, Samuel was far more unready than before. And now, his clear infantine voice with its uncannily correct enunciation had lost its former coaxing grace. The tone was haughty, argumentative. "None done, papa!"

"It's his birthday, *caro mio.*" The young mother spoke softly, hesitating; the father, in secret delight, relinquished responsibility. "May as well make it half-past seven," he growled. "Perhaps he'll be tired out by then." But when he said that, he must must have forgotten his own elation in carving his violins of an evening. By day he worked on patterns for huge machinery, shaping them with deft mechanical skill. But every night, between nine and eleven, when the evening reading was over and the little house under the pines was very still, he used to bring out one of his violins, and carve and caress and polish its exquisite surfaces. The patterns for machines were his livelihood, but the violins were his love. How could he have forgotten his own raptures of carving! Ah, no, Samuel was by no means "tired out by then!"

When the half-hour sounded, the husband stood up, beckoning to the wife to remain seated. No more woman's foolishness; the boy must to bed. "Come on, young man! Time's up!" Yet his voice did not sound so commanding as he had hoped. Samuel felt its indecision; and indeed he was at the moment too high in the clouds of carving to give any attention whatsoever to things

beneath. "None done, papa!" The voice was no longer coaxing; it was not even argumentative; it was hostile, truculent to a degree. And when his father approached him, to make an end, the boy looked wildly around as if praying to the gods to take his work of art under their protection. But no gods intervened, and Samuel, at bay before his universe, seized his carving in all its cathood, hid it among his back breadths, and sat down strongly upon it, glaring defiance at his progenitors. "None done!"

The mother rose quickly, Nancy trampling on Annunziata. Her face was pale. "This is disobedience," she said in a shaken voice, "and it must have its punishment. It is the third time, within three months, that he has needed punishment. The first time was the eggs. The second time it was the spectacles. And now, it is — insubordination." Her heart contracted with suffering. Insubordination! A large word to use on so small a being!

Ah, yes, the eggs, and the spectacles! The young father remembered the eggs and the spectacles; and even in the midst of a misery scarcely less acute than the mother's, a smile twitched his lips. The eggs!

In brief, little Samuel, at the age of quarter before three, had noted with a curious eye that Matilda, the brown hen, had one egg that differed from others. It was hard, white, shiny; it had nothing of the soft, pale-brown, pleasant egg-color the other eggs had. One day he took it out of the nest to consider it. He put it on the barn floor. There was a hammer near at hand. Samuel liked hammers. With the hammer, he struck the china egg once, twice, thrice. Nothing happened. Curious! He then put one of the pleasant egg-colored eggs on the floor. He struck it but once, and his whole world dissolved into a filthy chaos not to be borne. Overwhelmed with remorse and bad-egg juice, he fled in terror to his mother. He wept so long and earnestly that she considered him punished enough.

As for the spectacles, there was an evil deed for you! His grandmother had set her spectacles on the tall mantel-shelf, just under the picture of sorrowful flowers made from the hair of young and old. Most of the flowers were black, or white, or brownish drab. Samuel did not like the picture, but the spectacles had always interested him. He dragged a chair to the mantel, and by heroic climbing, reached them. He seldom broke

things, his motions being accurate, and he came down to earth with the spectacles unharmed. What to do with them? And there was grandmother's lace cap, too. How about Ajax, the sheep-dog? Not without difficulty, but without mishap, Samuel was forcing the glasses upon Ajax, when help came to the good dog, and in the person of the master of the house. At the sight of the woe-begone spectacled animal, and the lace cap, no longer what it once was, Samuel's father had laughed so loud and long that both parents agreed that punishment would be inconsistency itself.

But now, with little Samuel sitting defiant on his work of art, a picture of insubordination, punishment could no longer be delayed. The mother put her arms around her husband's neck. "Oh, remember how tiny he is, Abel," she wailed. "I shall stay in the kitchen till it's done." She ran into the cold, dark kitchen, where she knelt in anguish, an ear against the keyhole.

The father, alone with his offspring, was agitated too. His hands were so strong! Surely, in a better world than this, a better way could be found. How was he to know how much he ought to hurt his own child? He groaned as he picked

up the boy, slipped down those absurd and shapeless breeches, and with firm hand directed toward the infirm, time-honored spot, administered chastisement. A shriek of surprise and anger, a burst of sobs, then silence. The woman at the keyhole could bear the shriek and the sobs, but not the silence. She bounded into the room, and clasped the insubordinate one to her heart. In truth, even the dog Ajax was disturbed by that homely scene of punishment; the hair on his shoulders stiffened, and he made an evil noise in the back of his throat. Of all those present, the cat Pharaoh alone remained unmoved, detached as the Pyramids themselves, in a stony indifference to human woe. Pharaoh, though in a sense connected with the origin of the trouble, washed his paws of it, and kept his calm.

Silent tears ran down Samuel's cheeks, from which, as the mother saw with terror, the dazzling rosy color had now quite faded. The Nancy in her died; only the Annunziata was left. Oh, what if, what if? — But her alarm was needless. Samuel had the proud blood of survivors in his veins. Not for nothing was he a Vermonter born. Welsh seers and Norman craftsmen and Scottish covenanters had stubbornly watched his cradle; his fair

substance had come all the way to Vermont from old Rome via Bunker Hill. The father brought from the adjoining bedroom the child's woolly nightgown, ugly and comfortable and orange-dyed. He warmed it before the blaze. As the parents undressed the culprit, they noted, with an almost guilty surprise, how much smaller he seemed now that his blue tunic was off. The father held the boy in his arms before the fire, while the mother, kneeling, wiped away the soundless tears welling continually. No word was spoken. At last the father carried the dusky orange cocoon into the bedroom, and set it in its crib, and covered it gently. The mother, worn out by the artist's birthday, crept away to bed, leaving her husband to console himself with his violins, if he could.

That hour with the violins was always very dear to Abel. As he busied his hands with their beautiful bodies, his soul lost itself in happy reveries in which Samuel played no small part. Annunziata also shone, in rich, incredible rainbow robings from foreign looms, and with the wealth of foreign continents on her neck and fingers; from the first moment when he saw her, he had been mad about her touch of foreignness; he had seen

it as a sure amulet against the encroaching hated drabness of New England milltown life. It was Annunziata who had set his spirit free. He always called her Annunziata in those golden visions; never Nancy. And sometimes he thought it odd, indeed, that in his violin hours, when wife and child were away, safe in a dreamland of their own, he felt and cherished their existences even more deeply than when they were at his side.

But to-night he had no joy in craftsmanship; he stared helplessly at the scrolled neck-piece in his hand. "The little shaver!" he muttered. "He took it like a soldier. The little shaver! Damned if I'll do it again, in a hurry." Then he smiled that sudden whimsical smile of his. "But perhaps he'll be damned if I don't! Queer world." He was startled to find that for the first time in his life, his violins had no interest for him; he put away his veneers and glue-pot. He could not wait any longer; he must see for himself whether those silent tears had ceased.

Samuel in his crib lay very quiet, eyes wide open, tears still coursing into the collar of his orange nightgown. The perplexed father decided to meet the situation with jocularity. "Say, laddie, are n't you going to shut those peepers?"

And the child, as before, answered with what was uppermost in his mind, "None done, papa!"

A long time the parents lay in their great square bed, saying nothing, but each guessing at the other's thought. Annunziata was trying to be Nancy, as Vermont expected, and Abel was seeking to be Providence for his all. At last he stretched out a cautious hand toward the crib, to find that the child also was awake. Without more ado, he lifted Samuel into the big bed, and there the parents cherished the child between them, until the small body relaxed in the pleasant warmth. Next morning, when the carver went to his work, Samuel was still sleeping, as rosy and peaceful as if he had never known either insubordination or punishment.

The new day was a marvel of sunshine. During the night, the snow had changed to rain; this in turn had given way to colder weather, and now myriads of jewels hung from enchanted apple trees. A white fairyland! The child clapped his hands with delight as his mother wrapped him warm in his various rabbit-skin garments, and gathered his curls up under a raccoon cap, and led him down the garden path to frolic with old Ajax in the clean snow. When she brought him in, he

was glowing and sparkling with unearthly glee. She thought she had never dreamed of anything so beautiful. She wondered whether Joseph and Mary in the carpenter's shop had ever punished Jesus for playing too long among the shavings, and what the Child had said. Probably something much more moving than "None done, papa." But if so, she wondered how Mary could bear it.

Samuel's elfin merriment quieted down in the warm room. No longer insubordinate, he allowed his mother to take him up on her lap, and to brush the tangled curls over a round stick, until they became orderly spirals once more. He had not yet learned that curls were effeminate; that battle was to be much later. He made no move to take up his carving, or to defend his past, reserving such discussions as these for a meeting with the masculine mind. All the afternoon he seemed a creature both isolate and expectant, darting to the window whenever a vagrom sleigh-bell tinkled in fairyland. Isolate and expectant! His mother wondered whether all artists were doomed to be so. Once she caught him up in her arms, and cried out to him in her childhood's tongue, "*O caro, caro, perchè?*" And Samuel passed his fin-

gers over her forehead, and then over the Ganymede brooch, saying three words that his father had taught him in jest, but which he had learned in earnest, "*Beau, bello, beau-ti-ful!*" He loved those three words, and very often, apropos of nothing, he spoke them in his incredibly distinct way. But to-day his mother felt his aloofness; she knew that he was waiting for something, something not in her power to give.

The young carver was a privileged person in the shop where he worked. That day he could not fix his mind on those wooden models of wheel and shaft. He was unsatisfied about his child, and in the middle of the afternoon abruptly put away his tools and went home. Early as it was, Samuel was already waiting. The child had been listening for that step in the passage. There was something to be explained; the indignity of yesterday's happening had not yet passed into forgetfulness. He took his unfinished cat in hand, and hitched his trousers higher. If last night's encounter was to be repeated, he would not easily be separated from his defensive armor!

The father, coming in glowingly from the freshness of the winter day, was dazed by that militant figure and its immediate challenge, "None done,

papa!" He hardly knew how to answer whatever demand was thereby made upon him. No parent relishes the rôle of Goliath! But love aided him. He warmed his hands at the blaze, and seizing the belligerent, tossed him high in the air many times, knowing that Samuel had never yet had enough of that sport. Then he sat down before the fire, the boy in his arms, and poured out a thousand foolish tendernesses over the seven spirals, and the shining ridgepole. The sensitive child caught the shadow of anxiety, even as it was vanishing from his father's face. What sorrow was this? His own sorrows had been two: a work of art undone, a first whipping. His father was the one who gave, not took whippings; his father's sorrow was therefore about the work of art. Ah, that was something he himself could well understand, and perhaps console; though the cat was unfinished, there was many another work not yet begun. He laid a valiant hand on his blue woollen chest, and declared, "Self make more!" Perhaps he saw a long vista of bright shapes clamoring to be carved for the comfort and delight of the world.

Hastily he slipped down from his father's arms to his own place on the hearthrug, and brought out his little box of clean chips from beneath the sofa.

A great company of living beings was hidden there, waiting, waiting in the wood. Samuel looked up, and announced with jubilation, "Self — make— all!" He pondered a moment on his next subject. The carving of a cat had ended in disaster; let us then attempt the dog, the friend of man, not the heartless watcher by his fire. The child passed a thumb over the knife-edge, as the elders do, then chose a block, and addressed himself to it. "Dog." No more.

The parents looked at each other, understanding profoundly that Samuel was no longer a child of three. Overnight, he had become a boy in the fourth year of his age. In mingled joy and anxiety they perceived also that for a certainty their wish had been granted; there was an artist in the family. And an artist, they supposed, would have his isolations, and tremulous expectancies; his aspirations, too, and perhaps his anguish in high enterprises, "None done." But joy alone radiated from Samuel and his shining spirals. From the sorrow of a dream never to be finished he had passed to the incalculable rapture of a vision newly begun. "Dog," he murmured, "dog." He knew that the creature was lying low there in the chip, just for the express purpose of being

summoned forth by him, Samuel. In his abounding bliss he had time to bestow on his parents three words to describe what he was about to make; and he spoke these words as if they were three priceless jewels, "*Beau — bello — beautifull*"

THE END