

B 488533

CHAGA  
1922

WINDSOR  
MAGAZINE

56

AP

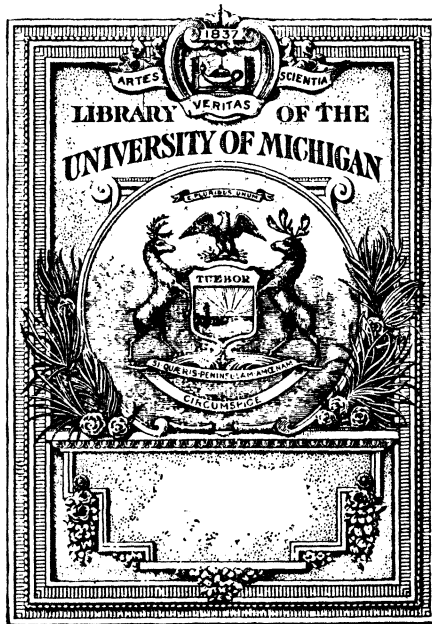
4

W 7

JUNE NOV

1922

UNIV  
OF  
MICH





AP  
4  
.W7







THE  
WINDSOR  
MAGAZINE

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY  
FOR MEN AND WOMEN

VOL. LVI  
JUNE TO NOVEMBER 1922

WARD, LOCK & CO., LIMITED  
LONDON AND MELBOURNE

1922

Steck,  
2-27-1923  
gen.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,  
DUKE STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E. 1, AND GREAT WINDMILL STREET, W. 1

# THE WINDSOR

JUN 6 1922  
DIV. OF MICH.

JUNE

ONE  
SHILLING  
NET



WARD LOCK & CO LIMITED  
LONDON & MELBOURNE



Two Bulwarks of Healthy Childhood—

**OPEN-AIR EXERCISE**

and

**WRIGHT'S  
COAL TAR SOAP**

*Protects from Infection*

*THE Ideal Nursery Soap*

7d. per tablet. Box of 3 tablets 1/9.  
BATH TABLETS DOUBLE SIZE 1/- PER TABLET, BOX OF 3 TABLETS 3/-





# THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE. INDEX.

VOLUME LVI., JUNE TO NOVEMBER, 1922.

	PAGE
AFRICAN TRADER'S DAILY LIFE, AN. Illustrated by Howard K. Elcock . . . . .	A. Loton Ridger 695
ANCIENT HISTORY. Illustrated by Howard K. Elcock . . . . .	K. R. G. Browne 255
AUCTION BRIDGE. Illustrated by John Campbell . . . . .	E. Newton Bungey 500
BABE OF THE TITANS, A. Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds . . . . .	Lieut.-Colonel Gordon Casserly 63
BEATING OF THE MIDDLE-WEIGHT, THE. Illustrated by Henry Coller . . . . .	Edgar Wallace 535
BELL J. J. "The Price of a Dinner" . . . . .	324
BLACK FISHERMAN, THE. Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds . . . . .	Charles G. D. Roberts 318
BOOTH, MARJORIE. "Little Mother" . . . . .	680
BOROTRA, JEAN. "Lawn Tennis Experiences and Opinions" . . . . .	606
BOURKE, HERBERT L. "The New Wimbledon: The Latest Headquarters of the World's Lawn Tennis" . . . . .	126
BREAKING RECORDS. Illustrated by Hutton Mitchell . . . . .	Henry Piejus 218
BRITISH EMIGRATION WITHIN THE EMPIRE. Illustrated from photographs . . . . .	C. de Thierry 173
BROTHERHOOD OF BATTLE, THE. Illustrated by J. R. Skelton . . . . .	Geoffrey Williams 380
BROWN, I. A. "The Poland of To-Day" . . . . .	637
BROWNE, K. R. G. "Ancient History" . . . . .	255
"    "    "Making Use of Oswald" . . . . .	509
BUNGEY, E. NEWTON. "Auction Bridge" . . . . .	500
BURRAGE, A. M. "The Priceless Pair" . . . . .	47
"    "    "The Saturday Walk" . . . . .	288
BURROW, C. KENNETT. "Madame and 'The Marquise'" . . . . .	275
"    "    "Madame and the Mayor" . . . . .	93
"    "    "Madame Blancheffleur, Conspirator" . . . . .	567
CAINE, WILLIAM. "A Cure for Shyness" . . . . .	372
CARFRAE, WILLIAM. "The Lure of the Game" . . . . .	202
CARLTON, GRACE. "Curing Kitty" . . . . .	31
CASSERLY, LIEUT.-COLONEL GORDON. "A Babe of the Titans" . . . . .	63
CHRISTY, MILLER. "A High-Road in the Sea" . . . . .	553
CLARKE, B. A. "In the Luncheon Interval" . . . . .	437
COBINO, RALPH. "The Night of the Fair" . . . . .	40
CORYN, F. S. "A Study in Modelling" . . . . .	649
COURAGE. Illustrated by Henry Coller . . . . .	Edgar Wallace 310
CRAWFORD, M. H. "Wild Flowers for the Garden: Transplanting and Cultivating Our Woodland, Field, and Hedgerow Favourites" . . . . .	516
CURE FOR SHYNESS, A. Illustrated by J. H. Thorpe . . . . .	William Caine 372
CURING KITTIE. Illustrated by P. B. Hickling . . . . .	Grace Carlton 31
DAWSON, MONTAGUE. "Sea Breezes" . . . . .	112
DAY OF ST. MÉRAC, THE. Illustrated by William Hatherell . . . . .	Alan J. Thompson 626
DEAD RECKONING. Illustrated by Steven Spurrier . . . . .	Ralph Stock 184
DELANEY, MARY. "Saving the Situation" . . . . .	653
DOUBLE PLAY IN LAWN TENNIS. Illustrated from photographs . . . . .	Randolph Lycett 358
EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK, THE . . . . .	108, 222, 338, 457, 585, 702
EPISODE OF THE IMP, THE. Illustrated by Steven Spurrier . . . . .	Ralph Stock 530

EXPLORING THE HEAVENS: THE LATEST TELESCOPES WHICH ARE REVEALING SECRETS OF THE SKIES. Illustrated from photographs	<i>Harold J. Shepstone, F.R.G.S.</i>	293
EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES. Illustrated by J. H. Thorpe	<i>Austin Philips</i>	687
FAIRY TALES		
FALSE PRETENCES. Illustrated by Henry Coller	<i>Yeend King</i>	2
FINE LINEN. Illustrated by E. G. Oakdale	<i>Dornford Yates</i>	591
FINISH OF A HIGH BACK-HAND DRIVE BY B. I. C. NORTON, THE	<i>Dornford Yates</i>	463
FRAMPTON, H. F. "The Song of Psyche"		228
" " "Upsetting the Arrangements"		191
FRONTSPIECES. "A Sunset Effect at Sea"	<i>Percy G. Luck</i>	543
" " "Fairy Tales"	<i>Yeend King</i>	344
" " "Jean Borotra, Lawn Tennis Covered Court Champion of France"		2
" " "Rushing Waters"	<i>T. Gordon Stowers</i>	590
" " "Sea Breezes"	<i>Montague Dawson</i>	462
" " "The Finish of a High Back-Hand Drive by B. I. C. Norton"		112
		228
GOBERT, ANDRÉ H. "My Lawn Tennis Life"		475
HERO-WORSHIPPER, THE Illustrated by J. Dewar Mills		
	<i>Philippa Southcombe</i>	€60
HIGH-ROAD IN THE SEA, A. Illustrated from photographs	<i>Miller Christy</i>	553
HOPPER, JAMES. "The Ship in the Bottle"		139
HOW TO TRAIN FOR A LAWN TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP AND REMAIN FIT FOR A WHOLE SEASON. Illustrated from photographs	<i>B. I. C. Norton</i>	242
HUDD, PAULA. "There Was Once . . ."		74
IMPOSTURE OF CONSEQUENCE, AN. Illustrated by William Hatherell		
	<i>H. G. Lewis</i>	443
INGE, CHARLES. "Old Instincts, New Desires"		147
" " "Retribution"		387
IN THE LUNCHEON INTERVAL. Illustrated by J. H. Thorpe	<i>B. A. Clarke</i>	437
IN THE PUBLIC EYE. Illustrated by Henry Coller	<i>Edgar Wallace</i>	156
JOURNEYS END. Illustrated by Norah Schlegel	<i>Dornford Yates</i>	345
KING, YEEND. "Fairy Tales"		2
LANCASTER, G. B. "What Janie Valentine Did"		
		491
LAWN TENNIS EXPERIENCES AND OPINIONS. Illustrated from photographs	<i>Jean Borotra</i>	606
LENGLEN, SUZANNE. "Temperament and Lawn Tennis"		16
LETTING THE HOUSE. Illustrated by Hutton Mitchell	<i>J. E. Wheelwright</i>	104
LEWIS, H. G. "An Imposture of Consequence"		443
LITTLE MOTHER. Illustrated by Norah Schlegel	<i>Marjorie Booth</i>	680
LONELY LADY, THE. Illustrated by Steven Spurrier	<i>Ralph Stock</i>	248
LUCK, PERCY G. "A Sunset Effect at Sea"		344
LURE OF THE GAME, THE. Illustrated by Howard K. Elcock	<i>William Carfrae</i>	202
LYCETT, RANDOLPH. "Double Play in Lawn Tennis"		358
MADAME AND "THE MARQUISE." Illustrated by Emile Verpilloux		
	<i>C. Kennett Burrow</i>	275
MADAME AND THE MAYOR. Illustrated by Emile Verpilloux	<i>C. Kennett Burrow</i>	93
MADAME BLANCHEFLEUR, CONSPIRATOR. Illustrated by Emile Verpilloux	<i>C. Kennett Burrow</i>	567
MAKING USE OF OSWALD. Illustrated by Hutton Mitchell	<i>K. R. G. Browne</i>	509
MALVA. Illustrated by Steven Spurrier	<i>Ralph Stock</i>	419
MAN FROM TOULOUSE, THE. Illustrated by Henry Coller	<i>Edgar Wallace</i>	427
MAN ROMANCE FORGOT, THE. Illustrated by John Campbell	<i>Ashley Milner</i>	263
MCKEON'S GRAFT. Illustrated by Howard K. Elcock	<i>John Russell</i>	303
MILNER, ASHLEY. "The Man Romance Forgot"		263
MOTHERS OF THE NORTH. Illustrated by W. A. Cuthbertson	<i>Alan Sullivan</i>	451
MY EVOLUTION AS A LAWN TENNIS PLAYER. Illustrated from photographs	<i>Elizabeth Ryan</i>	133
MY LAWN TENNIS LIFE. Illustrated from photographs	<i>André H. Gobert</i>	475
NAME, THE. Illustrated by S. Abbey		
	<i>Douglas Newton</i>	165
NEWTON, DOUGLAS. "The Name"		165
" " "The Wood of Seen Dreams"		611
NEW WIMBLEDON, THE: THE LATEST HEADQUARTERS OF THE WORLD'S LAWN TENNIS. Illustrated from drawings and photographs	<i>Herbert L. Bourke</i>	126
NIGHT OF THE FAIR, THE. Illustrated by J. Dewar Mills	<i>Ralph Cobino</i>	40
NORTON, B. I. C. "How to Train for a Lawn Tennis Championship and Remain Fit for a Whole Season"		242
NO THOROUGHFARE. Illustrated by Norah Schlegel	<i>Dornford Yates</i>	113

# INDEX.

	PAGE
OILFIELD, THE. Illustrated by Henry Coller . . . . .	<i>Edgar Wallace</i> 83
OLD INSTINCTS, NEW DESIRES. Illustrated by John Campbell . . . . .	<i>Charles Inge</i> 147
OLIVER, OWEN. "Ragged Comes Home" . . . . .	212
"    "    "Taking Care of Celestine" . . . . .	331
"    "    "The Other Man's Chair" . . . . .	525
OTHER MAN'S CHAIR, THE. Illustrated by E. G. Oakdale . . . . .	<i>Owen Oliver</i> 525
OUT OF THE SHADOWS. Illustrated by A. Bailey . . . . .	<i>Lloyd Williams</i> 365
PHILIPS, AUSTIN. "Extenuating Circumstances" . . . . .	687
PIEJUS, HENRY. "Breaking Records" . . . . .	218
POLAND OF TO-DAY, THE, AND HER PLACE AMONG THE NATIONS OF EUROPE. Illustrated from photographs . . . . .	<i>I. A. Brown</i> 637
POOR MRS. SLUDGE. Illustrated by William Hatherell . . . . .	<i>A. B. Le Sage</i> 23
PRICE OF A DINNER, THE. Illustrated by E. G. Oakdale . . . . .	<i>J. J. Bell</i> 324
PRICELESS PAIR, THE. Illustrated by E. H. Shepard . . . . .	<i>A. M. Burrage</i> 47
RAGGED COMES HOME. Illustrated by E. G. Oakdale . . . . .	<i>Owen Oliver</i> 212
RETRIBUTION. Illustrated by E. G. Oakdale . . . . .	<i>Charles Inge</i> 387
RHODES, HARRISON. "The Style in Hats" . . . . .	481
RIDGE, W. PETT. "The Test" . . . . .	270
RIDGER, A. LOTON. "An African Trader's Daily Life" . . . . .	695
ROBERTS, CHARLES G. D. "The Black Fisherman" . . . . .	318
ROSMAN, ALICE GRANT. "The Unresting Night" . . . . .	414
RULE OF CÆSAR. Illustrated by Howard K. Elcock . . . . .	<i>John Russell</i> 667
RUSHING WATERS . . . . .	<i>T. Gordon Stowers</i> 462
RUSSELL, JOHN. "McKeon's Graft" . . . . .	303
"    "    "The Rule of Cæsar" . . . . .	667
RYAN, ELIZABETH. "My Evolution as a Lawn Tennis Player" . . . . .	133
SAGE, A. B. LE. "Poor Mrs. Sludge" . . . . .	23
SATURDAY WALK, THE. Illustrated by E. G. Oakdale . . . . .	<i>A. M. Burrage</i> 288
SAVING THE SITUATION. Illustrated by P. B. Hickling . . . . .	<i>Mary Delaney</i> 653
SEA BREEZES . . . . .	<i>Montague Dawson</i> 112
SECOND POST, THE. Illustrated by William Hatherell . . . . .	<i>Philippa Southcombe</i> 560
SHEPSTONE, HAROLD J., F.R.G.S. "Exploring the Heavens: The Latest Telescopes Which Are Revealing Secrets of the Skies" . . . . .	293
SHIP IN THE BOTTLE, THE. Illustrated by Edmund Blampied . . . . .	<i>James Hopper</i> 189
SONG OF PSYCHE, THE. Illustrated by J. H. Thorpe . . . . .	<i>H. F. Frampton</i> 191
SOUTHCOMBE, PHILIPPA. "The Hero-Worshipper" . . . . .	660
"    "    "The Second Post" . . . . .	560
"    "    "The Tree" . . . . .	397
SPIRIT OF THE MAN, THE. Illustrated by Warwick Reynolds . . . . .	<i>Alan Sullivan</i> 578
STACPOOLE, H. DE VERE. "The Wonders of Iceland" . . . . .	403
STOCK, RALPH. "Dead Reckoning" . . . . .	184
"    "    "Malua" . . . . .	419
"    "    "The Episode of the Imp" . . . . .	530
"    "    "The Lonely Lady" . . . . .	248
"    "    "The Wet Blanket" . . . . .	620
STOWERS, T. GORDON. "Rushing Waters" . . . . .	462
STUDY IN MODELLING, A. Illustrated by Lilian Hocknell . . . . .	<i>F. S. Coryn</i> 649
STYLE IN HATS, THE. Illustrated by A. Wallis Mills . . . . .	<i>Harrison Rhodes</i> 481
SULLIVAN, ALAN. "Mothers of the North" . . . . .	451
"    "    "The Spirit of the Man" . . . . .	578
"    "    "Travellers' Rest" . . . . .	54
SUNSET EFFECT AT SEA, A . . . . .	<i>Percy G. Luck</i> 344
TAKING CARE OF CELESTINE. Illustrated by J. H. Thorpe . . . . .	<i>Owen Oliver</i> 331
TEMPERAMENT AND LAWN TENNIS. Illustrated from photographs . . . . .	<i>Suzanne Lenglen</i> 16
TEST, THE. Illustrated by Hutton Mitchell . . . . .	<i>W. Pett Ridge</i> 270
"THERE WAS ONCE . . ." Illustrated by G. C. Wilmshurst . . . . .	<i>Paula Hudd</i> 74
THIERRY, C. DE. "British Emigration Within the Empire" . . . . .	173
THOMPSON, ALAN J. "The Day of St. Mèrac" . . . . .	626
TIGHT PLACE, A. Illustrated by Norah Schlegel . . . . .	<i>Dornford Yates</i> 229
TRAVELLERS' REST. Illustrated by Dudley Tennant . . . . .	<i>Alan Sullivan</i> 54
TREE, THE. Illustrated by G. C. Wilmshurst . . . . .	<i>Philippa Southcombe</i> 397
UNRESTING NIGHT, THE. Illustrated by T. Victor Hall . . . . .	<i>Alice Grant Rosman</i> 414
UPSETTING THE ARRANGEMENTS. Illustrated by J. H. Thorpe . . . . .	<i>H. F. Frampton</i> 543
VERSE. "Adventure" . . . . .	<i>Ian Murray</i> 241
"Apple Tree, The" . . . . .	<i>Agnes Grozier Herbertson</i> 73

VERSE.		PAGE
"Autumn"	<i>Everett Hodge</i>	456
"Beautiful Land, The"	<i>Eric Chilman</i>	552
"Bedroom of Dutch William at Hampton Court, The"	<i>Victor Plarr</i>	524
"Beggar, The"	<i>Leopold Spero</i>	164
"Consultant, The"	<i>Fay Inchfawn</i>	587
"Cornish Lane in September, A"	<i>Percy Haselden</i>	396
"Dapple the Wind"	<i>Agnes Grozier Herbertson</i>	584
"Dark Honeycomb, The"	<i>Alice E. Gillington</i>	508
"Day's End"	<i>L. A. Pavey</i>	426
"Dreams"	<i>Leslie M. Oylor</i>	460
"Fountain, The"	<i>Michael Wilson</i>	534
"Greeting"	<i>Everett Hodge</i>	183
"Grey Ghosts of Rye, The"	<i>May Byron</i>	155
"Halcyon Hours"	<i>Jessie Pope</i>	262
"Harvest Eve"	<i>Eric Chilman</i>	357
"Leaves"	<i>Dorothy Rogers</i>	686
"Light"	<i>Michael Wilson</i>	386
"Lord Mayor's Coach, The"	<i>Ada Leonora Harris</i>	708
"Love's Economy"	<i>E. Vine Hall</i>	146
"Miracle, The"	<i>Wallace B. Nichols</i>	309
"My Toys"	<i>Lloyd Roberts</i>	172
"My Window-Panes"	<i>Wilfrid Thorley</i>	274
"Night at Tangier"	<i>Raymond Heywood</i>	92
"Old Tree, The"	<i>Eric Chilman</i>	22
"Orchard Trees"	<i>Agnes Grozier Herbertson</i>	287
"Out of the World"	<i>R. B. Ince</i>	330
"Packing, The"	<i>R. H. Roberts</i>	459
"Perfect Sportsman, The"	<i>Theta</i>	588
"Plaint of the Pensioned Mariner, The"	<i>Wilfrid Thorley</i>	15
"Presence, The"	<i>Eric Chilman</i>	217
"Rainbow, The"	<i>Wilfrid Thorley</i>	605
"Rain in Summer"	<i>B. C. Hardy</i>	317
"Revelation, A"	<i>Sybil Ruegg</i>	619
"Riches"	<i>Wilfrid Thorley</i>	436
"Rings of Gold: A Gipsy Song"	<i>May Byron</i>	648
"Rondeau"	<i>Edith Spender</i>	566
"Rosemary for Remembrance"	<i>L. G. Moberly</i>	337
"Sea-Dreams"	<i>Wilfrid Thorley</i>	474
"Song"	<i>Agnes Grozier Herbertson</i>	221
"Song"	<i>Leslie M. Oylor</i>	226
"Song of Autumn, A"	<i>Geoffrey Fyson</i>	666
"To a Crisis"	<i>Fay Inchfawn</i>	701
"Tramping"	<i>Percy Haselden</i>	138
"Tuner in the Cathedral, The"	<i>Fay Inchfawn</i>	490
"Your Music"	<i>K. M. M. Fordham</i>	30
WALLACE, EDGAR.	"Courage"	310
"	"In the Public Eye"	156
"	"The Beating of the Middle-Weight"	535
"	"The Man From Toulouse"	427
"	"The Oilfield"	83
WET BLANKET, THE.	Illustrated by Steven Spurrier	<i>Ralph Stock</i> 620
WHAT JANIE VALENTINE DID.	Illustrated by J. R. Skelton	<i>G. B. Lancaster</i> 491
WHEELWRIGHT, J. E.	"Letting the House"	104
WILD FLOWERS FOR THE GARDEN: TRANSPLANTING AND CULTIVATING OUR WOODLAND, FIELD, AND HEDGEROW FAVOURITES.	Illustrated from photographs	<i>M. H. Crawford</i> 516
WILLIAMS, GEOFFREY.	"The Brotherhood of Battle"	380
WILLIAMS, LLOYD.	"Out of the Shadows"	365
WIMBLEDON, THE NEW: THE LATEST HEADQUARTERS OF THE WORLD'S LAWN TENNIS.	Illustrated from drawings and photographs	<i>Herbert L. Bourke</i> 126
WONDERS OF ICELAND, THE.	Illustrated from photographs.	<i>H. de Vere Stacoopole</i> 403
WOOD OF SEEN DREAMS, THE.	Illustrated by Charles Crombie	<i>Douglas Newton</i> 611
YATES, DORNFORD.	"A Tight Place"	229
"	"False Pretences"	591
"	"Fine Linen"	463
"	"Journeys End"	345
"	"No Thoroughfare"	113
"	"Zero"	3
ZERO.	Illustrated by Norah Schlegel	<i>Dornford Yates</i> 3





FAIRY TALES. BY YEEND KING.

*Reproduced by permission of the Autotype Fine Art Company, New Oxford Street, W.C., owners of the copyright and publishers of the large plate.*



“‘Fate!’ he shrieked. ‘Fate! I told you my luck was in!’”

# ZERO

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of “*The Brother of Daphne*,” “*Berry and Co.*,” “*Anthony Lyveden*,”  
 “*The Courts of Idleness*.”

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

“MY dear,” said Berry, “be reasonable.”

“With pleasure,” said Daphne.

“But I’m not going to let you off.”

Her husband frowned upon a roll.

“When I say,” he said, “that I have a feeling to-day that my luck is in, I’m not being funny. Only once before have I had that conviction. I was at Cannes at the time—on the point of leaving for Paris. I went to Monte Carlo instead. . . . That night I picked up over six hundred pounds.”

“I know,” said his wife. “You’ve often told me. But I can’t help it. I made you give me your word before we came here, and I’m not going to let you off.”

“I gave it without thinking,” declared her husband. “Besides, I never dreamed I should have this feeling.”

“I did,” said Daphne shortly. “That’s why I made you promise. Have some more coffee?”

Pointedly ignoring the invitation, Berry returned to his roll and, after eyeing it with disgust which the bread in no way deserved, proceeded to disrupt and eviscerate it with every circumstance of barbarity.

Covertly, Jonah and I exchanged smiles. . .

It was the morning of our last day at San Sebastian.

During our short stay the weather had been superb, and we had been out and about

Copyright, 1922, by Dornford Yates, in the United States of America.

the whole day long. Of an evening we had been to the Casino. . . .

For as long as I could remember, Berry had had a weakness for Roulette. For Baccarat, *Petits Chevaux*, and the rest he cared nothing: fifty pounds a year would have covered his racing bets: if he played Bridge, it was by request. My brother-in-law was no gambler. There was something, however, about the shining wheel, sunk in its board of green cloth, which he found irresistible.

Remembering this fascination, my sister had broached the matter so soon as we had decided to visit San Sebastian, with the happy result that, ere we left Pau, her husband had promised her three things. The first was to leave his cheque-books at home; the second, to take with him no more than two hundred pounds; the third, to send for no more money.

And now the inevitable had happened.

The two hundred pounds were gone—every penny; we were not due to leave until the morrow; and—Berry was perfectly satisfied that his luck had changed. As for the promises his wife had extracted, he was repenting his rashness as heartily as she was commending her provision.

"Nothing," said Berry, turning again to the charge, "was said about borrowing, was it?"

"No."

"Very well, then. Boy and Jonah'll have to lend me something. I'm not going to let a chance like this go."

"Sorry, old chap," said Jonah, "but we've got to pay the hotel bill. Thanks to your activities, we're landed with—"

"How much have you got?" demanded Berry.

I cut in and threw the cards on the table.

"Brother," I said, "we love you. For that reason alone we won't lend you a paper franc. But then you knew that before you asked us."

My brother-in-law groaned.

"I tell you," he affirmed, "you're throwing away money. With another two hundred and fifty I could do anything. I can feel it in my bones."

"You'd lose the lot," said Jonah. "Besides, you've eaten your cake. If you'd limited yourself last night and played rationally, instead of buttering the board. . . ."

"I'm sure," said Jill, "you ought to have played on a system. If you'd put a

pound on 'RED' and kept on doubling each time you lost——"

"Yes," said Berry. "That's an exhilarating stunt, that is. Before you know where you are, you've got to put two hundred and fifty-six pounds on an even chance to get one back. With a limit of four hundred and eighty staring you in the face, that takes a shade more nerve than I can produce. I did try it once—at Madeira. Luck was with me. After three hours I'd made four shillings and lost half a stone. . . . Incidentally, when a man starts playing Roulette on a system, it's time to pray for his soul. I admit there are hundreds who do it—hundreds of intelligent, educated, thoughtful men and women. Well, you can pray for the lot. They're trying to read something which isn't written. They're studying a blank page. They're splitting their brains over a matter on which an idiot's advice would be as valuable. I knew a brilliant commercial lawyer who used to sit down at the table and solemnly write down every number that turned up for one hour. For the next sixty minutes he planked still more solemnly on the ones that had turned up least often. Conceive such a frame of mind. That wonderful brain had failed to grasp the one simple glaring point of which his case consisted—that Roulette is lawless. He failed to appreciate that he was up against Fortune herself. He couldn't realise that because '7' had turned up seven times running at a quarter past nine, that was no earthly reason why '7' shouldn't turn up eight times running at a quarter past ten. Heaven knows what fun he got out of it. For me, the whole joy of the thing is that you're flirting with Fate." He closed his eyes suddenly and flung back his head. "Oh," he breathed, "I tell you she's going to smile to-night. I can see the light in her eyes. I have a feeling that she's going to be very kind . . . very kind . . . somehow . . ."

We let him linger over the fond reflection, eyeing one another uneasily. It was, we felt, but the prelude to a more formidable attack.

We were right.

"I demand," barked Berry, "that I be allowed the wherewithal to prosecute my suit."

"Not a farthing," said Daphne. "To think that that two hundred pounds is gone makes me feel ill."

"That's exactly why I want to win it back—and more also." He looked round



desperately. "Anybody want a birth-right? For two hundred and fifty quid—I'd change my name."

"It sounds idiotic, I know," said I, "but supposing—supposing you lost."

"I shan't to-night," said Berry.

"Sure?"

"Positive. I tell you, I feel——"

"And you," said Jonah scornfully, "you have the temerity to talk about praying for others' souls. You sit there and——"

"I tell you," insisted Berry, "that I have a premonition. Look here. If I don't have a dart to-night, I shall never be the same man again. . . . Boy, I implore you——"

I shook my head.

"Nothing doing," I said. "You'll thank us one day."

"You don't understand," wailed Berry. "You've never known the feeling that you were bound to win."

"Yes, I have—often. And it's invariably proved a most expensive sensation."

There was a moment's silence. Then—

"Right," said my brother-in-law. "You're one and all determined to see me go down. You've watched me drop two hundred, and not one of you's going to give me a hand to help me pick it up. It may be high-minded, but it's hardly cordial. Some people might call it churlish. . . . Upon my soul, you are a cold-blooded crowd. Have you ever known a deal I wouldn't come in on? And now, because you are virtuous, I'm to lose my fun. . . . Ugh! What a lovely sonnet that is of Shakespeare's, 'The Cakes and Ale are Over.'"

Struggling with laughter, Adèle left her seat and, coming quickly behind him, set her white hands upon his shoulders.

"Dear old chap," she said, laying her cheek against his, "look at it this way. You're begging and praying us to let you down. Yes, you are. And if we helped you to break your word, neither you nor we would ever, at the bottom of our hearts, think quite so much of us again. And that's not good enough. Even if you won five thousand pounds it wouldn't compensate. Respect and self-respect aren't things you can buy."

"But, sweetheart," objected Berry, "nothing was said about borrowing. Daphne admits it. If I can raise some money without reference to my bankers, I'm at liberty to do so."

"Certainly," said Adèle. "But *we* mustn't help. If that was allowed, it 'ld knock the bottom out of your promise.

You and Daphne and we are all in the same stable: and that—to mix metaphors—puts us out of Court. If you ran into a fellow you knew, and he would lend you some money, or you found a hundred in the street, or a letter for you arrived——"

"—or one of the lift-boys died, leaving me sole legatee. . . . I see. Then I should be within my rights. In fact, if anything which can't happen came to pass, no one would raise any objection to my taking advantage of it. You know, you're getting too generous."

"That's better," said Adèle. "A moment ago we were cold-blooded."

Berry winced.

"I take it back," he said humbly. "Your central heating arrangements, at any rate, are in perfect order. Unless your heart was glowing, your soft little cheek wouldn't be half so warm."

"I don't know about that," said Adèle, straightening her back. "But we try to be sporting. And that's your fault," she added. "You've taught us."

The applause which greeted this remark was interrupted by the entry of a waiter bearing some letters which had been forwarded from Pau.

A registered package, for which Berry was requested to sign, set us all thinking.

"Whatever is it?" said Daphne.

"I can't imagine," replied her husband, scrutinising the postmark. "'Paris'? I've ordered nothing from Paris that I can remember."

"Open it quick," said Jonah. "Perhaps it's some wherewithal."

Berry hacked at the string. . . .

The next instant he leaped to his feet.

"Fate!" he shrieked. "Fate! I told you my luck was in!" He turned to his wife breathlessly. "'Member those Premium Bonds you wanted me to go in for? Over a month ago I applied for twenty-five. I'd forgotten about the trash—and *here they are!*"

\* \* \* \* \*

Two hours and a half had gone by, and we were rounding a tremendous horse-shoe bend on the way to Zarauz, when my wife touched Berry upon the arm.

"Aren't you excited?" she said.

"Just a trifle," he answered. "But I'm trying to tread it under. It's essential that I should keep cool. When you're arm in arm with Fortune, you're apt to lose your head. And then you're done. The jade'll give me my cues—I'm sure of it. But she

won't shout them. I've got to keep my eyes skinned and my ears pricked, if I'm going to pick them up."

"If I," said Adèle, "were in your shoes, I should be just gibbering."

It was, indeed, a queer business.

The dramatic appearance of the funds had startled us all. Had they arrived earlier, had they come in the shape of something less easily negotiable than Bearer Bonds, had they been representing more or less than precisely the very sum which Berry had named in his appeal, we might have labelled the matter "Coincidence," and thought no more of it. Such a label, however, refused to stick. The affair ranked with thunder out of a cloudless sky.

As for my sister, with the wind taken out of her sails, she had hauled down her flag. The thing was too hard for her.

It was Jonah who had sprung a mine in the midst of our amazement.

"Stop!" he had cried. "Where's yesterday's paper? Those things are Premium Bonds, and, unless I'm utterly mistaken, there was a drawing two days ago. One of those little fellows may be worth a thousand pounds."

The paper had confirmed his report. . . .

The thought that, but for his wit, we might have released such substance to clutch at such a shadow, had set us all twittering more than ever.

At once a council had been held.

Finally it had been decided to visit a bank and, before we disposed of the Bonds, to ask for and search the official bulletin in which are published the results of all Government Lottery Draws.

Inquiry, however, had revealed that the day was some sort of a holiday, and that no banks would be open. . . .

At last a financier was unearthed—a changer of money. In execrable French he had put himself at our service.

'Yes, he had the bulletin. It had arrived this morning. . . .'

Feverishly we searched its pages.

Once we had found the column, a glance was enough. Our Bonds bore consecutive numbers, of which the first figure was '0.' The series appeared to be unfortunate. The winning list contained not a single representative.

More reassured than disappointed, we raised the question of a loan.

Our gentleman picked at the Bonds and wrinkled his nose. After a little, he offered one hundred pounds.

This was absurd, and we said so.

The Bonds were worth two hundred and fifty pounds, and were as good as hard cash. The fellow had no office, and, when we wanted him again, as like as not he would have disappeared. His personal appearance was against him.

When we protested, his answer came pat.

'He was no money-lender. In the last ten years he had not advanced ten pesetas. He was a changer of money, a broker, and nothing else.'

Finally he offered one hundred and fifty pounds—at sixty per cent. a year *or part of a year*.

For one so ignorant of usury, this was not bad. We thanked him acidly, offered the Bonds for sale, and, after a little calculation, accepted two hundred and forty-three pounds in Spanish notes.

Half an hour later we had climbed into the cars, anxious to make the most of our last day in Spain. . . .

If the way to Zarauz was handsome, that from Zarauz to Zumaya was fit for a king. Take us a range of mountains—bold, rugged, precipitous, and bring the sea to their foot—no ordinary sea, sirs, but Ocean himself, the terrible Atlantic to wit, in all his glory. And there, upon the boundary itself, where his proud waves are stayed, build us a road, a curling shelf of a road, to follow the line of that most notable indenture, witnessing the covenant 'twixt land and sea, settled when Time was born.

Above us, the ramparts of Spain—below, an echelon of rollers, ceaselessly surging to their doom—before us, a ragged wonder of coast-line, rising and falling and thrusting into the distance, till the snarling leagues shrank into murmuring inches and tumult dwindled into rest—on our right, the might, majesty, dominion and power of Ocean, a limitless laughing mystery of running white and blue, shining and swaying and swelling till the eye faltered before so much magnificence and Ský let fall her curtain to spare the failing sight—for over six miles we hung upon the edge of Europe. . . .

Little wonder that we sailed into Zumaya—all red roofs, white walls and royal-blue timbers—with full hearts, flushed and exulting. The twenty precious minutes which had just gone by were charged with the spirit of the Odyssey.

Arrived at the village, we stopped, to wait for the others. So soon as they came, we passed on slowly along the road to Deva.

Perhaps a mile from Zumaya we ate our lunch. . . .

The comfortable hush which should succeed a hearty meal made in the open air upon a summer's day was well established. Daphne and Adèle were murmuring conversation: in a low voice Jill was addressing Berry and thinking of Piers: pipe in mouth, Jonah was blinking into a pair of field-glasses: and I was lying flat upon my back, neither smoking nor sleeping, but gradually losing consciousness with a cigarette in my hand.

I had come to the point of postponing through sheer lethargy the onerous duty of lifting the cigarette to my lips, when, with an oath that ripped the air, Jonah started to his feet.

Sleep went flying.

I sat up amazedly, propping myself on my hands. . . .

With dropped jaw, my cousin was staring through the glasses as a man who is looking upon sudden death. While I watched, he lowered them, peered into the distance, clapped them again to his eyes, let them fall, glanced swiftly to right and left, shut his mouth with a snap, and made a dash for the cars. . . .

With his hand upon Ping's door, he turned and pointed a trembling forefinger along the valley.

"There's Zed," he cried. "My horse. Haven't seen him since Cambrai. Leading a team, and they're flogging him."

I fancy he knew I should join him, for he never closed Ping's door. As he changed into second, I swung myself inboard. A moment later we were flying along the dusty road. . . .

Zed had been Jonah's charger for over three years. Together, for month after month, the two had endured the rough and revelled in the smooth. They had shared misery, and they had shared ease. Together, many times, they had passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. And, while the animal must have loved Jonah, my cousin was devoted to the horse. At last came Cambrai. . . .

Jonah was shot through the knee and sent to England. And Zed—poor Zed disappeared.

My cousin's efforts to trace him were superhuman. Unhappily his groom had been killed when Jonah was wounded, and, though all manner of authorities, from the Director of Remounts downwards, had lent their official aid, though a most particular

description had been circulated and special instructions issued to all the depots through which the horse might pass, to his lasting grief Jonah had never heard of Zed again.

And now. . . . I found myself praying that he had not been mistaken.

Jonah was driving like a man possessed.

We tore up a rise, whipped round a bend and, coming suddenly upon a road on our right, passed it with locked wheels.

The noise my cousin made, as he changed into reverse, showed that his love for Zed was overwhelming.

We shot backward, stopped, stormed to the right and streaked up a shocking road at forty-five. . . . We flashed into a hamlet, turned at right angles, missed a waggon by an inch and flung up a frightful track towards a farm. . . .

Then, before I knew what had happened, we had stopped dead, and Jonah's door was open and he was limping across the road.

In the jaws of a rude gateway stood a waggon of stones. Harnessed to this were three sorry-looking mules and, leading them, the piteous wreck of what had been a blue roan. The latter was down—and out.

For this the immediate reason was plain.

The teamster, better qualified for the treadmill, had so steered his waggon that the hub of its off fore wheel had met the gatepost. This he had not observed, but, a firm believer in the omnipotency of the lash, had determined to reduce the check, whatever might be its cause, by methods of blood and iron. Either because he was the most convenient or by virtue of his status, the leader had received the brunt of the attack. That is, of course, one way of driving. . . .

The blue roan was down, and his master had just kicked him in the belly when Jonah arrived.

The Spaniard was a big fellow, but my cousin has wrists of steel. . . . He took the whip from its owner as one takes a toy from a baby. Then with the butt he hit him across the mouth. The Spaniard reeled, caught his foot on a stone and fell heavily. Jonah threw down the whip and took off his coat.

"I don't want to kill him," he said quietly.

When the other rose, he looked extremely ugly. This was largely due to the fact that most of his front teeth were missing and that it was difficult, because of the blood, to see exactly where his face ended and his mouth began. The look in his eyes, however, was suggesting the intent to kill.

He had no idea, of course, that he was facing perhaps the one man living who could have thrashed a champion. . . .

It is not often that you will see half a dozen of the most illustrious members of the National Sporting Club attending an Assault-at-Arms held at a public school.

Three years running I had that honour. The gentlemen came to see Jonah. And though no applause was allowed during the boxing, they always broke the rule . . .

In due season my cousin went to Oxford. . . . In his second year, in the Inter-University contest, he knocked his opponent out in seven seconds. The latter remained unconscious for more than six hours, each crawling one of which took a year off Jonah's life. From that day my cousin never put on the gloves again. . . .

All, however, that the Sporniard saw was a tall, lazy-looking man with a game leg, who by his gross interference had taken him by surprise.

He lowered his head and actually ran upon his fate. . . .

I have never seen "punishment" at once so frightful and so punctiliously administered. Jonah worked with the swift precision of the surgeon about the operating table. He confessed afterwards that his chief concern was to keep his opponent too blind with rage to see the wisdom of capitulation. He need not have worried. . . .

When it had become obvious that the

blessed gifts of sight, smell, and hearing had been almost wholly withdrawn from the gentleman, when, in fact, he had practically ceased attempting to defend himself, and merely bellowed with mortification at every stinging blow, Jonah knocked him sprawling on to the midden, and drew off his wash-leather gloves.

The next moment he was down on his knees beside the roan, plucking



"There was a long gasp of wonderment, immediately followed by a buzz of exclamation."

at the rough harness with trembling fingers.

Once the horse sought to rise, but at Jonah's word he stopped and laid down his head.

Between us we got him clear. Then we stood back, and Jonah called him.

With a piteous effort the roan got upon his legs. That there was back trouble and at least one hock was sprung I saw at a glance. The horse had been broken down. He was still blowing badly, and I ran for the flask in the car. When I came back,

Jonah was caressing his charger with tears running down his cheeks. . . .

There is a listlessness, born of harsh treatment, suckled on dying hopes, reared on the bitter memory of happier days, which is more eloquent than tears. There is an air of frozen misery, of a despair so deep that a kind word has come to lose its meaning, which none but horses wear.

Looking upon Zed, I felt ashamed to be a man.

Gaunt, filthy, and tottering, the flies mercilessly busy about three shocking sores, the roan was presenting a terrible indictment to be filed against the Day of Judgment. . . . And

not one of them is forgotten before God. . . .

But there was worse than

had administered the brandy, Jonah was bathing a sore, and I had made a wisp and was rubbing Zed down, when—

“Good day,” said a voice. With his arms folded upon the sill, a little grey-headed man was watching us from a window.

I looked up and nodded.



“The croupiers were smiling. . . . My sister was clinging to Berry, imploring him to ‘stop now.’”

pain of body here. The dull, see-nothing eyes, the heavy-laden head, the awful stricken mien, told of a tragedy to make the angels weep—an English thoroughbred, not dead, but with a broken heart. We

“Good day,” I said.

“Ah like boxing,” said the man. “Ah’ve bin twelve years in the States, an’ Ah’d rather see boxing than a bull-fight. You like baseball?”

I shook my head.

"I've never seen it," I said.

"Haven't missed much," was the reply.

"But Ah like boxing. You visiting Spain?"

"For a few days."

"S a fine country. Bin to Sevilla?"

Entirely ignoring the violence which he had just witnessed, to say nothing of our trespass upon his property and our continued attention to his horse, the farmer proceeded to discuss the merits and shortcomings of Spain with as much detached composure as if we had met him in a tavern.

At length Jonah got up.

"Will you sell me this horse?"

"Yes," said the man, "Ah will."

"What d'you want for him?"

"Five hundred pesetas."

"Right," said Jonah. "Have you got a halter?"

The man disappeared. Presently he emerged from a door halter in hand.

The twenty pounds passed, and Zed was ours.

Tenderly my cousin fitted the halter about the drooping head.

"One more effort, old chap," he said gently, turning towards the gate. . . .

Out of compassion for the mules, I drew the farmer's attention to the hub which was nursing the gatepost.

He just nodded.

"Pedro could never drive," he said.

"I should get a new carter," I said.

He shrugged his shoulders. Then he jerked his head in the direction of the carcass upon the midden.

"He is my step-father. We do not speak," he said simply.

We found the others in the hamlet through which we had passed. There I handed over Ping to Adèle, and thence Jonah and Zed and I walked to Zumaya.

To find a box at the station was more than we had dared hope for, but there it was—empty and waiting to be returned to San Sebastian. Beneath the influence of twenty-five pesetas, the station-master saw no good reason why it should not be returned by the evening train.

We left Jonah to accompany his horse and hurried home by car to seek a stable.

When we sat down to dinner that night at eight o'clock, Jonah called for the wine-list and ordered a magnum of champagne.

When the wine was poured, he raised his glass and looked at me.

"Thank you for helping me," he said. He glanced round with his eyes glowing.

"And all of you for being so glad." He drank and touched Adèle upon the shoulder. "In a loose-box, up to his knees in straw, with an armful of hay to pick over, and no congestion. . . . Have you ever felt you wanted to get up and dance?" He turned to Berry. "Brother, your best. May you spot the winner to-night, as I did this afternoon."

"Thank you," said Berry, "thank you. I must confess I'd been hoping for some sort of intuition as to what to do. But I've not had a hint so far. Perhaps, when I get to the table. . . . It's silly, of course. One mustn't expect too much, but I had the feeling that I was going to be given a tip. You know. Like striking a dud egg, and then putting your shirt on a horse called 'Attar of Roses.' . . . Never mind. Let's talk about something else. Why did you call him 'Zed'?"

"Short for 'Zero,'" said Jonah. "I think my groom started it, and I—"

"Zero," said Berry quietly. "I'm much obliged."

\* \* \* \* \*

It was a quarter to eleven, and Berry had lost one hundred and seventy pounds.

Across her husband's back Daphne threw me a despairing glance. Upon the opposite side of the table, Adèle and Jill, one upon either side of Jonah, stared miserably before them. I lighted my tenth cigarette and wondered what Berry had done. . . .

The table was crowded.

From their points of vantage the eight croupiers alternately did their business and regarded the assembly with a bored air.

A beautifully dressed American, who had been losing, observed the luck of her neighbour, a burly Dutchman, with envious eyes. With a remonstrance in every finger-tip, a debonnaire Frenchman was laughingly upbraiding his fellow for giving him bad advice. From above his horn-rimmed spectacles an old gentleman in a blue suit watched the remorseless rake jerk his five pesetas into 'the Bank' in evident annoyance. Cheek by jowl with a dainty Englishwoman, who reminded me irresistibly of a Dresden shepherdess, a Spanish Jew, who had won, was explosively disputing with a croupier the amount of his stake. Two South Americans were leaning across the table, nonchalantly 'plastering the board.' A little old lady, with an enormous bag, was thanking an elegant Spaniard for disposing her stake as she desired. Finger to lip, a tall Spanish girl in a large black hat was sizing her

remaining counters with a faint frown. A very young couple, patently upon their honeymoon, were conferring excitedly. . .

"*Hagan juego, Señores.*"

The conference between the lovers became more intense.

"*Esta hecho?*"

"Oh, be quick!" cried the girl. "Between '7' and '8,' Bill. Between . . ."

As the money went on—

"*No va mas,*" cried the croupier in charge.

Two pairs of eyes peered at the revolving wheel. They did not notice that the Dutchman, plunging at the last moment upon 'MANQUE' had touched their counter with his cuff and moved it to '9.'

The ball lost its momentum, popped across the ridges, and leaped to rest.

"*Nueve.*"

Two faces fell. I wondered if a new frock had vanished into air. . . .

With the edge of his rake a croupier was tapping their counter and looking round for the claimant.

For a second the Jew peered about him. Then he pointed to himself and stretched out his hand.

I called to the croupier in French.

"No. It belongs to Monsieur and Madame. I saw what happened. That gentleman moved it with his cuff."

"*Merci, Monsieur.*"

With a sickly leer the pretender rallied the croupier, confidentially assured the dainty Englishwoman that he did not care, and, laughing a little too heartily, waved the thirty-five pounds towards their bewildered owners.

"B-but it isn't mine," stammered the boy.

"Yes," I said, smiling. "Your counter was moved. I saw the whole thing." I hesitated. Then, "If you'll take an old hand's advice, you'll stop now. A thing like that's invariably the end of one's luck."

I was not 'an old hand,' and I had no authority for my dictum. My interference was unpardonable. When the two stopped to thank me, as they passed from the room, I felt like a criminal. Still, they looked very charming; and, after all, a frock on the back is worth a score at the dressmaker's.

"I am going," said Berry, "to suspend my courtship and smoke a cigarette. Possibly I'm going too strong. If I give the lady a rest, she may think more of me."

"I suppose," said Daphne, "you're bent on losing it all."

Her husband frowned.

"Fortune favours the bold," he said shortly. "You see, she's just proving me. If I were to falter, she'd turn me down."

It was impossible not to admire such confidence.

I bade my sister take heart.

"Much," I concluded, "may be done with forty pounds."

"Fifty," corrected Berry. "And now let's change the subject. How d'you pronounce Lwow? Or would you rather tell me a fairy tale?"

I shook my head.

"My power," I said, "of concentration is limited."

"Then I must," said Berry. "It's fatal to brood over your fortune." He sat back in his chair and let the smoke make its own way out of his mouth. "There was once a large king. It wasn't his fault. The girth went with the crown. All the Koppabottenburgs were enormous. Besides, it went very well with his subjects. Looking upon him, they felt they were getting their money's worth. A man of simple tastes, his favourite hobby was fowls.

"One day, just as he'd finished cleaning out the fowl-house, he found that he'd run out of maize. So he slipped on his invisible cloak and ran round to the grocer's. He always wore his invisible cloak when shopping. He found it cheaper.

"Well, the grocer was just recovering from the spectacle of two pounds of the best maize shoving themselves into a brown-paper bag and pushing off down the High Street, when a witch came in. The grocer's heart sank into his boots. He hated witches. If you weren't civil, before you knew where you were, you were a three-legged toad or a dew-pond or something. So you had to be civil. As for their custom—well, it wasn't worth having. They wouldn't look at bacon, unless you'd guarantee that the pig had been killed on a moonless Friday with the wind in the North, and as for pulled figs, if you couldn't swear that the box had been crossed by a one-eyed man whose father had committed arson in a pair of brown boots, you could go and bury them under the lilacs.

"This time, however, the grocer was pleasantly surprised.

"'I didn't know,' said the witch, 'that you were under the patronage of Royalty.'

"'Oh, didn't you?' said the grocer. 'Why, the Master of the Horse has got his hoof-oil here for nearly two days now.'

“ ‘Master of the Horse be snookered,’ said the witch. ‘I’m talking about the King.’ ”

“ ‘The K-King?’ stammered the grocer.

“ ‘Oh, cut it out,’ said the witch, to whom an invisible cloak meant nothing. ‘No doubt you’ve been told to keep it quiet, but I don’t count. And I’ll bet you did the old fool over his maize.’ ”

“ ‘The grocer’s brain worked very rapidly. The memory of a tin of mixed biscuits and half a Dutch cheese, which had floated out of his shop only the day before, and numerous other recollections of mysteriously animated provisions, came swarming into his mind. At length—

“ ‘We never charge Royalty,’ he said loftily.

“ ‘Oh, don’t you?’ snapped the witch. ‘Well, supposing you change this broomstick. You swore blue it was cut on a rainless Tuesday from an ash that had supported a murderer with a false nose. The very first time I used it, it broke at six thousand feet. I was over the sea at the time, and had to glide nearly four miles to make a landing. Can you b-beat it?’ ”

“ ‘When the grocer put up his shutters two hectic hours later, he was a weary man. In the interval he had been respectively a toad, a picture post-card, and a tin of baked beans. And somebody had knocked him off the counter during his third metamorphosis, so he felt like death. All the same, before going to bed, he sat down and wrote to the Lord Chamberlain, asking for permission to display the Royal Arms. Just to make it quite clear that he wasn’t relying on hoof-oil, he added that he was shortly expecting a fine consignment of maize and other commodities.

“ ‘The postscript settled it.

“ ‘The permission was granted, the king ‘dealt’ elsewhere in future, and the witch was given three hours to leave the kingdom. So the grocer lost his two worst customers and got the advertisement of his life. Which goes to show, my children, that if only—Hullo! Here’s a new shift.”

It was true.

The eight croupiers were going off duty. As they vacated their seats, eight other gentlemen in black immediately replaced them.

Berry extinguished his cigarette and handed me his last bunch of notes. In exchange for these, with the peculiar delicacy of his kind, the croupier upon my right selected, arrayed and offered me counters of the value of forty English pounds.

He might have been spared his pains.

As I was piling the money by Berry’s side—

“ ‘Zero,” announced a nasal voice.

“ ‘We’re off,” said my brother-in-law.

“ ‘Will you see that they pay me right?’ ”

One hundred and seventy-five pounds.

Ere I had completed my calculation—

“ ‘Zero,” repeated the nasal voice.

“ ‘I said so,” said Berry, raising his eyebrows. “ ‘I had the maximum that time, Will you be so good? Thank you.”

Trembling with excitement, I started to count the equivalent of four hundred and ninety pounds.

Berry was addressing the croupier.

“ ‘No. Don’t touch the stake. She’s not finished yet.”

“ ‘*Esta hecho?*’ ”

“ ‘Don’t leave it all,” begged Daphne.

“ ‘Take——’ ”

“ ‘*No va mas.*’ ”

Desperately I started to check the money again. . . .

“ ‘Zero.”

There was a long gasp of wonderment, immediately followed by a buzz of exclamation. The croupiers were smiling. Jill was jumping up and down in her seat. Adèle was shaking Jonah by the arm. My sister was clinging to Berry, imploring him to “ ‘stop now.” The two Frenchmen were laughing and nodding their congratulations. The little old lady was bowing and beaming good-will. Excepting, perhaps, the croupiers, Berry seemed less concerned than anyone present.

“ ‘No. I’m not going to stop,” he said gently, “ ‘because that would be foolish. But I’ll give it a miss this time, because it’s not coming up. It’s no longer a question of guessing, dear. I tell you, I know.”

The ball went flying.

After a moment’s interval—

“ ‘Ocho (eight),” announced the croupier.

“ ‘You see,” said Berry. “ ‘I should have lost my money. Now, this time my old friend Zero will come along.”

On to the white-edged rectangle went fourteen pounds.

A few seconds later I was receiving four hundred and ninety. . . .

I began to feel dazed. As for counting the money, it was out of the question. Idiotically I began to arrange the counters in little piles. . . .

‘35’ turned up.

“ ‘That’s right,” said Berry quietly.



"And now . . . It's really very monotonous, but . . ."

With a shrug of his shoulders, he set the limit on 'Zero.'

I held my breath. . . .

The ball ceased to rattle—began to fall—ricochetted from stud to stud—tumbled into the wheel—nosed '32'—and . . . fell with a click into '0.'

Berry spread out his hands.

"I tell you," he said, "it's too easy. . . . And now, again."

"Don't!" cried Daphne. "Don't! I beg you—"

"My darling," said Berry, "after to-night—No. Leave the stake, please—I'll never play again. This evening—well, the money's there, and we may as well have it, mayn't we? I mean, it isn't as if I hadn't been given the tip. From the moment I woke this morning— Listen, dear. Don't bother about the wheel—the lady's been hammering away. You must admit, she's done the job thoroughly. First the intuition: then the wherewithal: then what to back. I should be a bottle-nosed mug if I didn't—"

"Zero."

Upon the explosion of excitement which greeted the astounding event, patrons of the Baccarat Table and of the other Roulette Wheel left their seats and came crowding open-mouthed to see what was toward. Complete strangers were chattering like old friends. Gibbering with emotion, the Spanish Jew was dramatically recounting what had occurred. The Dutchman was sitting back, laughing boisterously. The Frenchmen were waving and crying, "*Vive l'Angleterre!*" Jonah was shouting as though he had been in the hunting field. Adèle and Jill were beating upon the table.

Berry bowed his acknowledgments.

As in a dream, I watched them send for more money.

When it arrived, they gave me four hundred and ninety pounds.

"*Hagan juego, Señores.*"

Berry shook his head.

"Not this time," he said quietly.

He was right. After a look at '0' the ball ran with a click into '15.'

A long sigh of relief followed its settlement.

"You see?" said Berry, picking up fourteen pounds. . . .

"Don't," I said weakly. "Don't. I can't bear it. The board's bewitched. If it turns up again, I shall collapse."

"You mean that?" said Berry, putting the money on.

"*No va mas.*"

"I do. My heart—"

"Then say your prayers," said my brother-in-law. "For, as I live, that ball's going to pick out—"

"Zero."

I never remember such a scene.

Everybody in the room seemed to be shouting. I know I was. Respectable Spaniards stamped upon the floor like bulls. The Frenchmen, who with Berry and several others had backed the winner, were clasping one another and singing the Marseillaise. The beautifully dressed American was wringing Adèle's hand. The old gentleman in the blue suit was on his feet and appeared to be making a speech. The Spanish girl was standing upon her chair, waving a handkerchief. . . .

In vain the smiling croupiers appealed for order. . . .

As the tumult subsided—

"Seven times in ten spins," said Berry.

"Well, I think that'll do. We'll just run up the board on the even chances. . . ."

There was no holding him.

Before I knew where I was, he had set twelve thousand pesetas apiece on 'RED,' 'ODD,' and 'UNDER 19.'

Some fourteen hundred pounds on a single spin.

I covered my eyes. . . .

As the ball began to lose way, the hush was awful. . . .

"*Siete (seven),*" announced the spokesman.

With my brain whirling, I sought to garner the harvest. . . .

My brother-in-law rose to his feet.

"One last throw," he said. "*PASSE*' for 'The Poor.'"

He leaned forward and put the maximum on 'OVER 18.'

A moment later, counter by counter, four hundred and seventy pounds went into the poor-box.

As I pushed back my chair, I glanced at my watch.

In exactly sixteen minutes Berry had stung 'the Bank' to the tune of—as near as I could make it—four thousand nine hundred and ninety-five pounds.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some ten hours later we slipped out of San Sebastian and on to the famous road which leads to Biarritz. Berry, Daphne,

and Jill were in one car, and Adèle and I were in the other. Jonah and Zed were to travel together by train. It was improbable that they would leave for Pau before the morrow.

As we climbed out of Béhobie, we took our last look at Spain, that realm of majestic distances and superb backgrounds. . . .

You may peer into the face of France and find it lovely; the more you magnify an English landscape, the richer it will become; but to find the whole beauty of Spain a man must stand back and lift up his eyes.

Now that we had left it behind, the pride and grandeur of the scenery beggared description. It was as though for days we had been looking upon a mighty canvas, and while we had caught something of its splendour, now for the first time had we focussed it aright. The memory we took away was that of a masterpiece.

Anxious to be home in time for luncheon, I laid hold of the wheel. . . .

We whipped through St. Jean de Luz, sang through Bidart, and hobbled over a fearful stretch of metalling into Bayonne. . . .

As we were nearing Bidache—

"How much," said Adèle suddenly, "is Berry actually up?"

"Allowing for everything," said I, "that is, his losses, what he gave to the poor, and the various rates of exchange, about two hundred and forty thousand francs."

"Not so dusty," said Adèle thoughtfully. "All the same—"

A report like that of a gun blew the sentence to blazes.

Heavily I took the car in to the side of the road. . . .

A second tire went upon the outskirts of Pau.

Happily we had two spare wheels. . . .

As I was wearily resuming my seat, Berry, Daphne, and Jill went by with a cheer.

Slowly we followed them into the town. . . .

It was not until we were stealing up our own villa's drive that at length I remembered the question which for over an hour I had been meaning to put to my wife.

As I brought the car to a standstill—

"What was it," I demanded, "that you had begun to say when we had the first burst near Bidache? We were talking about how much Berry was up, and you said—"

The most blood-curdling yell that I have ever heard fell upon our ears.

For a moment we stared at one another.

Then we fell out of the car by opposite doors and flew up the steps. . . .

Extended upon a chair in the hall, Berry was bellowing, clawing at his temples and drumming with his heels upon the floor.

Huddled together, Daphne and Jill were poring over a letter with starting eyes.

*Dear Sir,*

*In case the fact has not already come to your notice, we hasten to inform you that as a result of the drawing, which took place on Monday last, one of the Premium Bonds, which we yesterday dispatched to you per registered post, has won the first prize of fr. 500,000 (five hundred thousand francs).*

*By way of confirmation, we beg to enclose a cutting from the official Bulletin.*

*We should, perhaps, point out that, in all announcements of the results of drawings, the '0' or 'zero,' which for some reason invariably precedes the number of a Premium Bond, is disregarded.*

*Awaiting the pleasure of your instructions,*

*We beg to remain, dear sir,*

*Your obedient servants,*

\* \* \* \* \*

It was perhaps five hours later that my memory again responded, and I turned to Adèle.

"The dam burst," said I, "at the very moment when you were going to tell me what you had been about to say when the first tire went outside Bidache. Sounds like 'The House that Jack built,' doesn't it?"

"Oh, I know," said Adèle, laughing. "But it's no good now. I was going to say—"

The door opened, and Falcon came in with a wire.

I picked up the form and weighed it thoughtfully.

"Wonderfully quick," I said. "It was half-past two when I was at the Bank, and I couldn't have been at the Post Office before a quarter to three. I looked at my watch. Just under four hours."

"The Bank?" said Adèle, staring. "But you said you were going to the Club."

I nodded.

"I know. I was anxious to raise no false

hopes. All the same, I couldn't help feeling that half a million francs were worth a tenpenny wire. Therefore I telegraphed to Jonah. His answer will show whether that tenpenny wire was worth half a million francs."

My wife snatched the form from my hand and tore it open.

It was very short.

*Bonds repurchased Jonah.*

\* \* \* \* \*

But my memory never recovered from the twofold slight.

To this day I cannot remember to ask Adèle what it was that she had been about to say when the first tire burst outside Bidache.

*A further story in this series will appear in the next number.*

## THE PLAINT OF THE PENSIONED MARINER.

**T**HE pulleys in the rigging hang like fruit,  
 And the wind goes singing through their tarry skein,  
 And the deck-hands scramble up like boys for loot,  
 While I must sit here idle and complain;  
 For all day long I hear the syrens calling,  
 Sails a-flapping and the roaring of the main.  
*Again*  
*Hoist the sails and steer the ship across the main.*

The water-shadows ripple on the hull,  
 And I hear the boys a-hauling on the line;  
 Some are bringing up the freight, and all are full  
 Of the truant joy that nevermore is mine;  
 While all that I can do is just to listen,  
 On a hawser like a hank of rotten twine.  
*Oh, fine*  
*Is the seething wave that turns the air to wine!*

A sailing ship has beauty! White or brown,  
 When the sails are full of wind the rigging hums  
 As lively as an orchestra in town  
 A-tuning with their fingers and their thumbs,  
 And the rain will tap most steady on your mains'l,  
 Like a kettle-drummer tapping on his drums.  
*She comes*  
*With her tightened sails sonorous as the drums!*

I'd like to leave the ingle and the thatch,  
 The gossip and the sickly cups of tea,  
 Just to settle under any sort of hatch,  
 With any sort of *men* along of me;  
 I'd be happy with a barrel and two rowlocks,  
 And the landscape slowly fading to the lee.  
*Ah, me!*  
*And the landscape slowly drowning in the sea!*

WILFRID THORLEY.

# TEMPERAMENT AND LAWN TENNIS

By SUZANNE LENGLEN

LADY CHAMPION OF THE WORLD

*Photographs by Topical*

SO much has already been written about lawn tennis that at first sight it seemed to me a difficult task to find anything new to say upon the subject. The great champions, the great critics, and some quite ordinary players who fancy themselves critics, have all written volumes dealing with lawn tennis. For instance, nearly everything that can be, has been said about "grips." The beginner knows the correct grip to use, and even then there are champions with the most awkward grip. All the strokes, chops, lifting drives, and slices have now definite names and have been fully described. Even books have been written entirely on the one subject of tennis tactics.

On second thoughts, however, it seems to me that a great deal has been left unsaid, and it is with such subjects that I propose to deal in this article. For instance, what is the influence of temperament on lawn tennis? What is the difference in temperament between the various nations holding the foremost place in this most international of games?

In my opinion temperament plays a more important part in becoming proficient at the game than is generally admitted. Consequently I will proceed to study the game as it is played in different countries in relation to temperament. I will also endeavour to show how the standard of play in England may be best improved.

The English undoubtedly have an excellent temperament for lawn tennis, yet they are far from being the best nation in the tennis world. The reason for this is that, although the Anglo-Saxon is the possessor of a notoriously cool temperament, he is

apt to carry this coolness too far. His tennis, compared with the modern game, lacks audacity and enterprise. He prefers to be on the defensive rather than the offensive, and is at his best during an uphill fight, which is excellent in its way, but does not make for brilliancy.

To win back her place in the lawn tennis world, England must make up for this deficiency in temperament by learning the game younger, and learning it on hard courts. In the case of a woman, the first of these two factors is especially essential, because the action of the arm, in smashing and serving, as in throwing, is not natural to her. In short, if a woman does not start young, she will never acquire a good volleying game. And by "young" I do not mean seventeen or eighteen years, but at the most fourteen. In my own case, I started tennis at eleven, and was hard-court champion at fourteen, an age when most girls have not yet held a racket.

As to the type of court on which one should learn to play, I would say that if the centre court at Wimbledon were a fair sample of grass courts generally in England, and if the climate were otherwise than it is, there would be no need to look for any other kind of surface on which to play. The centre court at Wimbledon is the most perfect in the world, and will be even better in the new surroundings that have been chosen for it. But it is an honour to play on this historic ground, and an honour reserved to the very few. Others are compelled by circumstance to play—and, what is worse, learn to play—on grass courts which are almost universally bad. I do not think the average English player realises how bad.



SUZANNE LENGLEN.

It is impossible to know on such courts what the ball is going to do, and consequently the beginner gets into the habit

of hitting the ball at the last moment, which breeds a cramped style. In fact, he cannot acquire the free swing and perfect timing which give the tremendous speed of the ground strokes in modern lawn tennis.

I maintain that the beginner should at all costs learn on a hard court, or, still better, on a covered court, which gives an even more perfect surface. To bear out this contention, I would instance the play of Kingscote, whose wonderful fight against Tilden two years ago will live in Wimbledon annals. Kingscote is practically the only English player capable of the modern attacking game, which he learnt on hard courts in Switzerland. He hits the ball at the top of its bound with a free swing, which no player used to the average English grass court is capable of doing.

Perhaps the best illustration of the necessity for hard-court training is the game of Max Woosnam, the splendid all-round athlete. Had he learnt his game on a true surface, he would have undoubtedly acquired the freedom of swing which is all that at the present time stands between him and championship honours.

The final advantage of the hard court, and, better still, the covered court, as a training ground, is that the game is infinitely faster, and consequently obliges the player to be faster also. The whole tendency in modern lawn tennis is towards speed. The waiting game does not pay on hard courts. The player is obliged to take risks, and that is precisely where the English player of to-day fails.

It seems that the qualities lacking in English lawn tennis are best supplied by her Overseas Dominions. Hard-court training in South Africa produced Raymond, the Olympic champion, and last year B. I. C.

Norton, who came within one point of winning championship honours at the age of twenty-one.

As for Australia, I am of the opinion that she produces the best type of game at the present time. Her players have the advantage of the English temperament with none of its deficiencies. They have a wonderful net attack, and combine it with back line play in proper proportion. With Brookes and Wilding, Australasia was for many years the first nation in lawn tennis. Brookes was a perfect genius of the game, and at his best was, in my opinion, the greatest player of all time. His was the ideal temperament in that he had an almost uncanny knack of anticipation, and at every moment of a match was able to decide on the best tactics to bring him victory. If Australia is not the first in international lawn tennis to-day, it is because the period of the War has interfered with her natural development. She has many young and promising players. Gerald Patterson, for instance, possesses the best service and overhead attack, and, being so young, is still a potential champion. Anderson is improving rapidly, and recently defeated Tilden in a tournament in America. Incidentally, it seems probable that Australia will be the first to wrest the Davis Cup from America.

Regarding France, I have no illusions concerning my own country. Pre-War champions have gone down, and the young players have not yet quite arrived. We have the good points of the Latin temperament, which produce a brilliant, artistic game. We have that quickness of mind and muscle which makes us the foremost nation at fencing. Our game is more individual, less stereotyped than any other. We have, perhaps, the best style. But this same Latin temperament has its disadvantages. We are inclined to nerves. We feel things rather too acutely. What we need is a dash of the English temperament added to our own. If we could effect a fair exchange of qualities, it would be the best possible bargain for both of us.

We French excel on covered courts, where we have learnt our game, and play the greater part of the year. What we require is a certain amount of grass play to steady our game, just as the Californian player never reaches his topmost form until he goes East from his hard cement courts and plays tournaments on grass.

To sum up the most promising players of the young French school, I would mention

Brugnon, who is the master of a very individual style, and plays without effort a most audacious and disconcerting game. Also there is Borotra, who, though quite unknown a few months ago, has attained fame by twice defeating Alonso.

He is a player of the McLoughlin type, the distinguishing feature of his game being his extraordinary agility, which allows him to reach the net for almost every return.

With such young players coming on, and the ever-increasing popularity of the game in our country, France should be a dangerous competitor for the Davis Cup within the next few years.

In the matter of temperament, the Spaniard appears to have much the same qualities and defects as ourselves, but, in my opinion, to a greater extent. The average of Spanish play before the War was distinctly bad, but has made tremendous strides forward during the War and since. The best Spanish player, Alonso, is now well known to the British public since his sensational appearance at Wimbledon last year.

Here, again, we have a proof of the benefits of hard-court play, for it is owing to Alonso's proficiency at *pala* that he attained his swiftness of foot and speed of stroke. I must explain that *pala* is much the same game as *pelota*, but is played on covered cement courts with a small wooden bat no larger than the hand.

Alonso is undoubtedly a marvellous player of lawn tennis. In my opinion his strokes are the nearest to perfection, and but for his relative deficiency in service and his too nervous temperament, he would undoubtedly be the greatest living exponent of the game.

The Japanese are now a force to be reckoned with. They have, perhaps, the best temperament of any nation for lawn tennis. They are great fighters, and atone for their disadvantage in lack of height and reach by their wonderful mobility and steadiness.

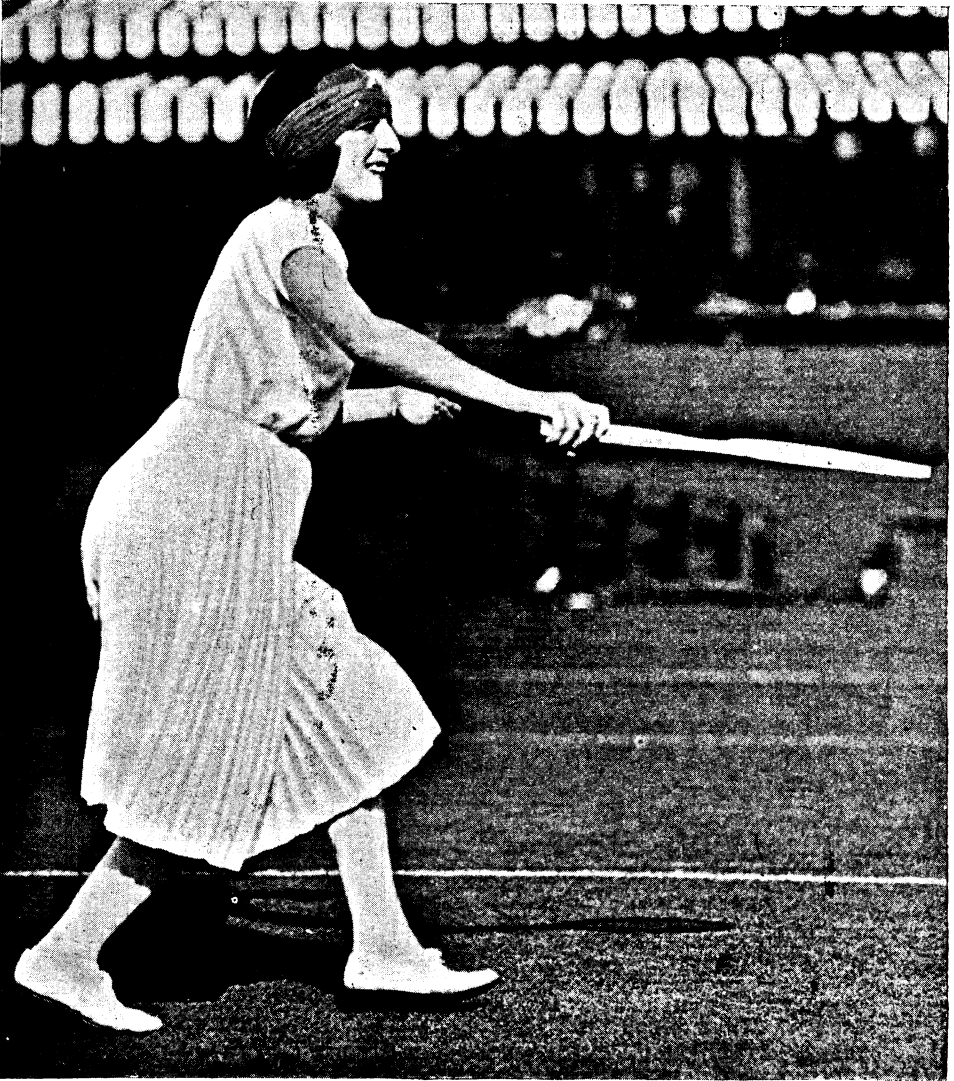
With their remarkable imitative gifts, the Japanese will shortly improve their style, and as soon as this is accomplished, the white man will be in danger of losing his present supremacy.

The native Indian has improved greatly of late, but is not so potentially dangerous as the Japanese. He seems unable to throw off his natural languor of temperament, and he will have to adapt himself earnestly to

the modern attacking game before he can reach first rank.

I have purposely left America to the last in these impressions of international temperament and play, because she is at the present time the leading nation in the game.

Not only has she a greater number of young players to draw upon, but she takes hold of them at school, trains them with professional teachers, and even shows them slow motion pictures of the strokes executed by the best exponents of the game. Having



MILLE. LENGLEN IN PLAY.

One need hardly point out that this is largely due to the fact that her development in lawn tennis has not been retarded by the War. Another factor that has contributed to her success is that no nation takes lawn tennis so seriously, nor comes so near to reducing the game to a business.

picked her budding champion, she gives him unlimited opportunities of playing and developing his game. As an example of her thoroughness in this respect, I cannot help quoting the case of a certain newspaper boy whose play in the public courts attracted attention. He was immediately

given access to one of the best universities, and is now one of the most promising American players.

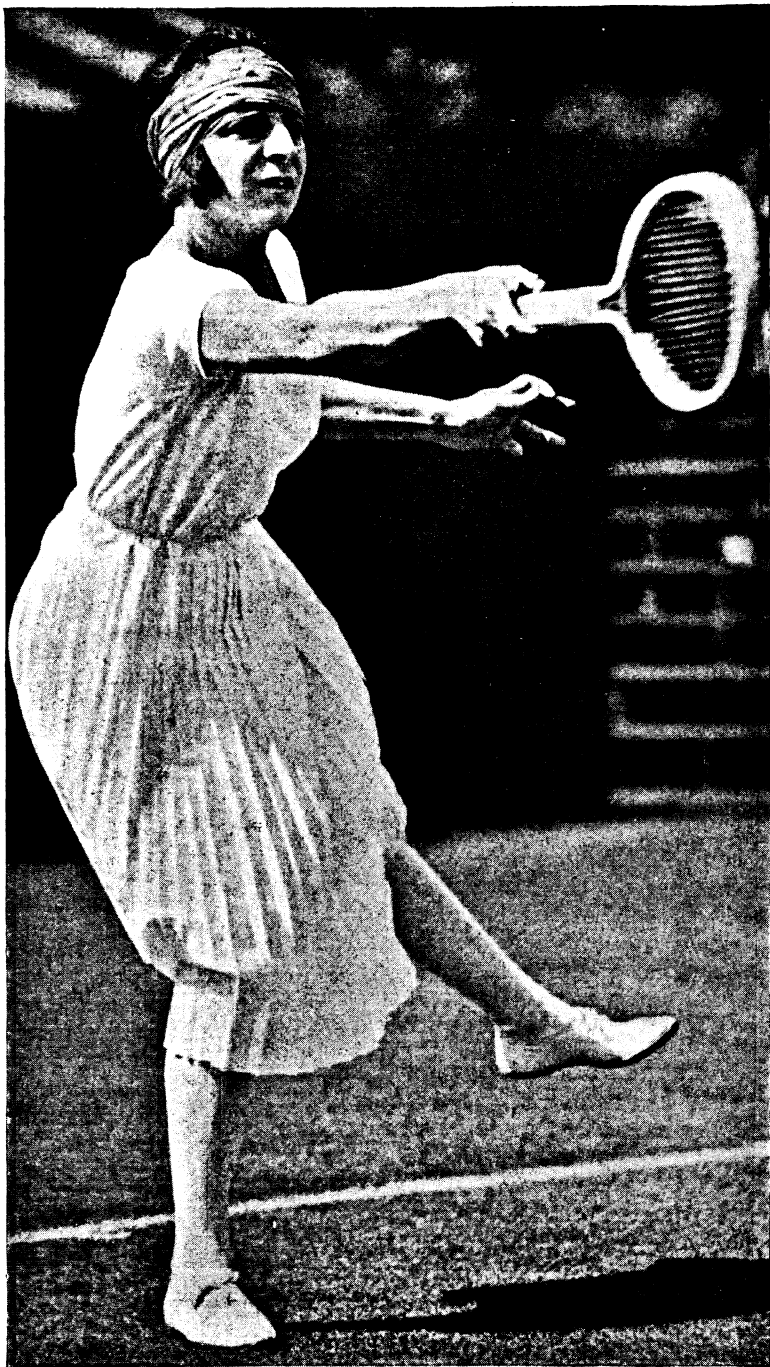
Such a thing could hardly happen in either France or England, where tennis is beyond the reach of the poor, and where public courts — which would do such wonders in the development of the game—have not as yet come into existence.

I am far from decrying this tendency on the part of America to develop her lawn tennis talent by every means in her power, but such methods as she employs in this direction undoubtedly have the effect of rendering her game stereotyped.

With such a cosmopolitan population as hers, it is next to impossible to define her temperament as a whole. To take Tilden, who, during the past two years, has proved himself the best match winner, it seems to me that he owes this ability to his physical advantages rather than his strokes. Great height and reach

are tremendous assets in lawn tennis. Both Wilding and Gobert have demonstrated this, but they were slow and heavy on the court in comparison with Tilden, who, in addition,

has great speed. Yet I am convinced that Tilden's is not the game of the future, for the reason that a man of normal proportions would invite disaster by copying his



MADLLE. LENGLEN: ANOTHER TYPICAL STROKE.



methods, which do not so much rely upon stroke production as upon an excessive rotation of the ball and unexpected shots—impossible to one of normal physique—which have the effect of breaking up his opponent's game. The same tactics, but an entirely different style, are employed by the Russian champion, Count Soumarakhoff.

To my mind, the ideal player of the future will combine Patterson's service and overhead play, Alonso's and Gobert's perfect execution of stroke, together with the former's speed of foot, Brookes's genius, and Decugis' fighting ability. Such a player would be unbeatable, and who shall say that in these days of rapid progress towards efficiency, if not perfection, in almost every branch of sport, he will not duly arrive?

It would be curious, to say the least, to finish this article by a woman player without further reference to women players. The reason that I have so far confined my remarks to men's play is that, in my opinion, their game must be taken as the model for women's. It was in this way, and mainly by studying Wilding's game and methods, that I developed my own.

Having recently seen the standard of women's play in America, it would, perhaps, be as well if I compared it with the English.

With the exception of Mrs. Mallory, who learnt her game in Norway, and has the temperament of her Northern race, the average American woman plays a more attacking game. Yet, in spite of this, the general standard of play is higher in England, and the reason for this is not far to seek. If the American woman player does not attain a higher standard by her more promising methods, it is because to employ them properly she must have the speed of a man. In my opinion she would go down before the steadiness of the English base liners. For instance, she would stand little chance against Mrs. Lambert Chambers in her best form.

Mrs. Mallory won the American championship last year, but it must not be forgotten that her two greatest rivals, Miss Mary Brown and Mrs. May Sutton Bundy, had been long out of tournament play, and are actually better exponents of the game. Miss Mary Brown, for instance, is a better stylist, and is, moreover, the only one of the three who can hold her own at the net. Mrs. Bundy plays a very strong, driving game from the back line, and in her prime was the best woman player America has

produced. She was the only American woman to win championship honours at Wimbledon, which is the severest test of a player's strength.

In general, a woman's temperament does not urge her to play such an audacious game as a man. That is why it is of even greater importance for her to begin young, while mind and muscle are capable of adapting themselves to the volleying game, without which she will never reach high honours in modern lawn tennis.

As a proof of how difficult it is to adapt oneself in later years, I would instance the cases of Mrs. Beamish and Mrs. Satterthwaite, both of whom attempted last winter to develop a volleying game. At the risk of repeating myself, I cannot point out too clearly that if the English woman player wishes to reach front rank in modern lawn tennis, she must learn the attacking game, *and learn it young*. A man can play such a game until he is in the forties, but it is almost certain that the average woman will not retain the necessary fleetness of foot to anything like that age, and will, in the end, have to return to base line methods.

Perhaps it would not be amiss here to quote the precept of H. L. Doherty, who was undoubtedly the greatest champion Great Britain produced: "Learn with a good style, and keep your eye on the ball." And allow me to point out what a good style implies. A great number of players, especially among the young French school, appear to imagine that it means elegance of stroke. It is not so. The best style means simplicity and naturalness of stroke—that which allows you to get a maximum of pace with a minimum of effort. And this can only be accomplished by doing away with the tendency to exaggerate top spin and cut, and cultivating the straight drive, which allows better placing. After all, what is tennis but putting the ball in the right place at the right moment?

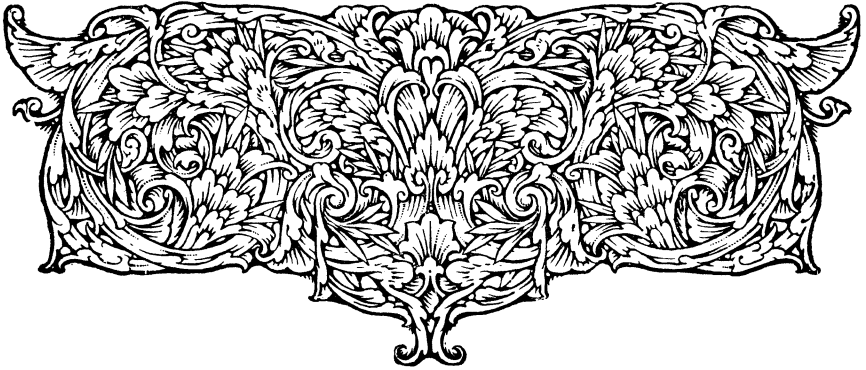
To those desirous of improving their game I would say: "Watch two players with a good style, and as soon as possible go on a court and try to emulate it." You will find your own improve amazingly.

England is the home of a cramped style peculiarly her own, and this can only be eliminated by the younger players learning correct methods from the start. It is mostly caused by faulty footwork. To hit the ball with a free swing at full arm's length, one must stand the proper distance from the ball. The majority of players stand too

close to it, so that when they hit they do so with a bent arm. The difficulty for the beginner at modern footwork is that he must approach near enough to the ball to take it at the top of its bound, and at the same time remain far enough distant to take it at full arm's length. The footwork should

be done on the toes, and the player must practise it as assiduously as a boxer. Skipping is the best training for this department of the game.

It is a great game—perhaps the greatest of individual games, in that it exacts the best qualities that are in us.



## THE OLD TREE.

**A** SULLEN wind invades  
 The gnarled and rhythmic boughs,  
 Within whose mellow shades  
 Unnumbered fledglings house.  
 The branches rock like one  
 Until the wind be done.

A swarm of feeding rooks  
 Forsake the pasture-side,  
 And in a hundred nooks  
 Of leafy coolness hide—  
 So hidden, you would swear  
 No rooks were brooding there.

The skies are black with cloud,  
 And lustral tempest nears  
 That soaring growth, so proud,  
 So listless with the years—  
 So old its branches be—  
 The tall, the royal tree.

ERIC CHILMAN.

# POOR MRS. SLUDGE

By A. B. LE SAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HATHERELL

“YOU were always one for upsets,” Mrs. Mouser said. “Look at yourself, Mrs. Sludge! Your feet don’t move alike. It’s a sure sign.”

Mrs. Sludge tugged at her hat to get it straight, but it was not this hat’s way to lie on an even keel—the trimming brought it to one side again the moment she righted it. She tried to see her feet, but could not bend sufficiently without feeling giddy.

“What have upset ’ee?”

“Losing of my boy Wishcome.” And the small round figure in black quivered.

“A year ago he went. You should be heartening up by now; but there’s trouble in your poor eye like a well as’ll never give out.”

“Of course I lost my husband besides, so you must excuse me, Mrs. Mouser. I been told his headstone is going to one side. I daren’t go up to see; it would—I’m not overstrong.”

“If you’re so milk and waterish, you’ll never keep out of upsets,” Mrs. Mouser remarked. “And you’ll have more of them, or my name isn’t Sarah Mouser, caretaker of Ebenezer Chapel in this uncommon fine town of ours.” For St. Clodgy had a public library, street taps, and drainage of sorts.

“What’s started the headstone tipplin’?” Mrs. Sludge asked in an undertone.

“The mould is working, in course!”

“It’s upset me terrible! Not that I can’t afford a shilling or two, but the feelings it’s give me! I can’t bring myself to open a bottle of ginger-pop. If I’d go worse, I’ll have to give up the business.” And she glanced round her shop—stacks of bottles, and she afraid of them all. “Unless I was to ask—”

“Who’d you ask?”

“—Mr. Foam to ope them for me.”

Mrs. Mouser put her face close and whispered: “Speak of the devil, and you’ll see him!”

It was Mr. Foam, Mrs. Sludge’s gentleman lodger who did for himself, was literary, with a large head accentuated by a small cap—

Algernon Foam, a gregarious man given to introduce himself to everyone. His head appeared in the doorway.

“Can some kind person tell me when the next post comes in?” He raised his cap. “It’s important, very, or I should not ask. Perhaps I’d better see the post-master.”

As neither Mrs. Sludge nor Mrs. Mouser wrote or received letters, they could only tell him the postman was up in his garden, planting potatoes.

“He is an underling,” Mr. Foam remarked. “I will go to headquarters.”

He raised his cap, just halted to smile, and was gone.

“He’s a atheist, isn’t he?” Mrs. Mouser asked of Mrs. Sludge.

She had to admit he was a poet.

“I don’t hold with books,” Mrs. Mouser said. “There’s too many books and too few doormats in St. Clodgy as it is. Doormats is worth their money.”

“The Bible, Mrs. Mouser.”

“That do pay for hisself, keeping.”

“People is always gone before I can think,” Mrs. Sludge said. “I meant to have asked Mr. Foam if all the fishing-boats was safe back this morn.” And she showed signs of oncoming weakness, a little lifting up and being put down invisibly. “Isn’t it a funny thing for the blue sea to drown a boy of twenty, and never guide his body home through the tides! Yes, I got the one, but never my boy’s.”

“Hearten yourself up, dear.”

“What for?”

Mrs. Mouser could not tell her. Mrs. Sludge trembled through some lonely moments, and heard Widow Mouser’s voice coming back from far away, asking for a bar of soap.

“And bricks, dear, for the Chapel—ask your own price. Two for three halfpennies? I’ll take the two, wanting one meself.”

She put them under her green-black shawl—age had nibbled away most of the fringe. “I got a poor head for figures. If

you was to give me back the halfpenny, me taking the two bricks, we'd be straight. Gimme the difference in tea." And she helped tip the canister.

Mr. Foam returned while Mrs. Sludge was trying to stem the flow of tea and get the lid on; and Mrs. Mouser withdrawing her hand, the tin righted itself.

"That's better," she said. "Mrs. Sludge have lost her tack with things." And she returned to the chapel opposite, which she was cleaning.

"The postmaster tells me we may expect a delivery within an hour," Mr. Foam announced. "Meanwhile, may I take one of your beautiful kippers? Might I—*might* I toast it on your fire?"

"I'll put a stick on."

"No, I cannot allow you. If anyone does, I will." And, with his hands resting in his coat-pockets and bracing his figure, he followed Mrs. Sludge into the room behind the shop, kitchen and bedroom in one, lit by a small pane where the aroma of a livery stable concentrated. Happily, the window did not open—the architects of St. Clodgy foresaw these things.

Mrs. Sludge had brought the bellows in with her—she had been using them for blowing the flies off the buns in the window—and now, fanning the sticks which Mr. Foam's long and nervous fingers supplied, she kept time with the bellows, saying—

"Wishcome—you said—he is—my guardian angel."

"Why not? Why should we deny our poetical fancies?"

The bellows stopped.

He patted her shoulder, and then sat on a corner of the table, a fourpost bed, like a grotto, behind him. The scent of the kipper was very persuasive.

"Our souls are hungry, Mrs. Sludge—yours for a sight of the invisible, mine—ah, for? Yes," he answered himself.

"For someone dead?" she asked sympathetically.

"For someone—*living!* These are not our fancies. The rest of us is—merely incident. Nor am I ashamed to observe I am hungry, and though I toast the kipper"—she was toasting it—"my soul demands less visible sustenance. This small room" the bed took up half—"may be a stepping-stone of song more real than it"—which Mr. Foam wrote down in a pocket-book, not wishing to lose the phrase. "And what is song but—" The metre continued in his head, but the words would not resolve.

"Thank you"—slipping off the table—"I like kippers well done. Someone calls you from the shop."

It was Mrs. Mouser. "I've found out my mistake, dear," she said. "Ebenezer got a bit of brick left, so if you was to gimme back the penny for it, we'd be straight. A few matches, if you'd rather; no one can say when they'll need to strike a match. This here is *my* pocket. That's *Ebenezer's*." They were two large patchworks on Mrs. Mouser's skirt. "You see what I does," she said. "I puts the matches into the one I calls Ebenezer."

But though her words were so clear, her hand wavered towards the other, and it was not possible to see which pocket she finally dropped the matches into. "I don't never trust me head since poor Mouser was blowed to bits. The sea's kind to what gunpowder is, Mrs. Sludge."

At the reminder of her loss, Mrs. Sludge lost herself for a moment.

"We don't owe one another nothing, dear. We're money straight," Mrs. Mouser said. And she returned to the chapel, which sidled away up a narrow lane of cobbles.

And Mrs. Sludge went on dusting her shop, and the dust flew before her through the sunlight. Before the loss of her son she used to sit and knit, like the other St. Clodgy women; now she kept on her feet all day—small feet given to roll, for she was a ball of a woman; something of a beard, too, which the expression of her eyes asked customers to overlook; a vague request about the whole of her to be left alone. To be alone, on her feet, in the shop—the world had nothing else to offer her. This is the kind of being to whom miracles occur; the birth of Wishcome had been miracle to her virgin-hearted nature. So was his early call to heaven; a holy feeling encompassed her when she was alone.

She was alone now, sunlit, dust-lit, surrounded by the vegetables of a week ago—pale cabbages disheartened by sun, little towers of eggs, sweets, and flies in boxes—the flies had resettled as if a bag of black currants had been upset in the window—and ginger-beer on the summit of everything, bottles as giddy as Mrs. Sludge got on the height of her sorrow; ginger-beer under the counter, too, and a dais at one end of the shop where people might step up and drink it. And as well as the sight of the shop, it had its smell of sweetness gently undulated by a swartheness of roots.

II.

Two months ago a young man, with a thin brown moustache and pale skin, had disembarked at the Bristol Docks. Before time was given him to look round, Wishcome was hustled into a train—deported from that busy spot as an encumbrance. Set down in the city, he was suddenly dropped into cessation. The activity on board, the landing, the rush of the dirty little train—all had ceased. He was not possessed by individuality; he had been ill, which depleted his small stock. Yet in a sense he had borne shipwreck, rescue, some more of the sea, detention in a sanatorium as a phtisical suspect, borne them far better than a witty person. He had dropped into the routine of the sanatorium as born to it, had had vague ideas of writing a letter to his mother, but could not bring himself to ask for a stamp

And here he was again to be victimised as he sat hour after hour on the platform of the station. There was an air of the sea about him. He was very civil to speak to, but disinterested in himself; he possessed no money, was so transparent that he was believed; and wisdom led him away to Mr. Donor Beard's Home, which was a forcing-bed of nothingness. And there he might have lived and died if they had not discovered an address sewn into his coat.

And such was Wishcome, that they sent him, almost regretting him, back to his mother.

III.

MR. FOAM felt his way down the staircase, which was worse than dark, for the light of the room beneath showed through in places. Mrs. Sludge was moving about quietly, as if her dead lay in the four-poster.

"Mrs. Sludge," he exclaimed, landing in the kitchen, "I've been unable to write this evening. You, who have been through something, may understand a little of what I feel."

"I'm very sorry to hear it, Mr. Foam."

"Yes, I am very sorry," he replied. He was too much upset to sit.

"If I was not assured of my ability, I should often fall into a vulgar despair."

"What is it you got to do, Mr. Foam?"

"To express the poetry inhibited within me."

"Ink? Lamp oil?" she asked quickly.

"I must await the day and the hour."

The nerve storm rolled towards Mrs.

Sludge, her balance was affected, her features twitched.

"Whatever can be done?" she asked.

"Let the public fill its belly with husks!"

"Oh, dear, dear! Is it as bad as that, Mr. Foam?"

"It is worse," he answered. "Allow me, Mrs. Sludge." And he put some coals on her fire.

The sound helped her to pick up the threads of life again. "I got a notion Mrs. Mouser said she was coming to have a dish of tea with me. Would you be so friendly, Mr. Foam?"

"I have lived in the Smart Set," he answered. "Years ago I should have smiled to think of myself in tweeds at this hour. But my wish now is to attract friends like yourself; it is the atmosphere for my art. Say no more. I accept."

He had not time to continue, for Mrs. Mouser arrived.

"Mr. Foam is going to partake with us," Mrs. Sludge said.

But Mrs. Mouser did not express herself more than to remark "So that's that," and pricked Mrs. Sludge with her eyes. And Mrs. Sludge did look as insignificant as a child between the Author and the Ebenezerite; her hat tipped and quivered, and if Mr. Foam had not placed his hand on her shoulder, Mrs. Sludge felt she would have gone all to pieces.

"You asked me to fetch buns from the shop," he said kindly, "and the tartlets."

Mrs. Sludge could not remember if she had or not.

"We can't allow *you* to wait on *us*." And he buttoned up his coat for business.

"There's no coals in the box, dearie."

Mrs. Mouser stirred her umbrella round in it. "I seems always filling of it, too," Mrs. Sludge said. "I got the tea-pot here ready."

"So you have. I'll warm it up for you. You're too full-blooded to stoop over the fire; you're best away from the fire."

So Mrs. Sludge went to haul up coals from beneath the shop floor, for which her visitors reprimanded her. Mr. Foam was engaged to use the bellows under Mrs. Mouser's direction, so that the fire soon leapt and burned on the side she was sitting. She was painted a deep red.

"Monday's a bad day for me," she remarked. "I'm on my feet and legs all the day, cleaning up the leaflets and turning the 'assocks. The crumbs left about by they Sunday-school children is cruel. If it wasn't for me jackdaw——"

Mrs. Sludge sighed; Wishcome had made a pet of the bird.

"If it wasn't for he, I'd break me back. But he'll peck, peck, till his crop's full."

"Wishcome was lost of a Monday," Mrs. Sludge said. "He was born of a Monday, here, and I'll die here—on a Monday, please God."

"And to-day 's Monday, I'm telling 'ee," Mrs. Mouser said testily.

Mr. Foam pulled himself up like a bucket from the well of mortality and said: "The brighter hope, Mrs. Sludge!"

Tears came into her eyes; but Mrs. Mouser was not to be carried away. "What's your hope?" she asked him.

"That is a large subject. Let me put it in a nutshell for you. My hope is manly rather than religious. Now, I've picked and given you fruit which took many years to grow."

"How many years?" she asked.

"Oh, nearly thirty."

At which she sniffed.

"One Monday 'd soon follow another Monday," Mrs. Sludge observed, filling the cups. "Don't notice my tears. I'm happy. Tears come to me whether I'm upsy or downsy. And last night I seemed to hear Wishcome say 'Mother!' so plain."

"And why not?" Mr. Foam sugared his tea. "Why shouldn't his spirit return?



"Mr. Foam was engaged to use the bellows under Mrs. Mouser's direction, so that the fire soon leapt and burned.

You may even see as well as hear." He sipped and added a lump.

"Did you hear what Mr. Foam said?" And Mrs. Sludge caught at the shawl. But a coldness from the form within seemed to strike at her radiancy. "Don't you go and say you don't believe it!" she pleaded.



“If it wasn't for he, I'd break me back. But he'll peck, peck, till his crop's full.”

Mr. Foam handed the tartlets; they both seemed pleading for her good grace.

“No, stop a minute,” she said. “I thought 'twas the buns you was handing.”

She looked round the dish critically and turned them over. “Medium baked. That'll do. Mouser was a medium-coloured man.”

“If your son is a spirit”—and Mr. Foam

helped himself carelessly—“he is gloriously free. Liberty is self-expression. His spirit should return, seeking its loves as a child seeking its lost toys.” Which he made a note of on his tablet; after which the fire of Mr. Foam's soul was abated, and he ate steadily.

“Peacocks will come to moult,” Mrs.

Mouser observed. "I done preening of myself."

"I—the great future—any post—to this door," Mr. Foam remarked, as he ate. "And the spirit—Wishcome Sludge—Sludge," he repeated, as if the name struck him for the first time. "Mouser—*Foam*—unique!"

Mrs. Sludge was so recompensed by his sympathy, and Mrs. Mouser's forbearance, she pressed them to eat and drink till Mrs. Mouser held her shawl up to her mouth, and Mr. Foam put the tartlets out of his sight as something which displeased him.

Neither he nor Mrs. Mouser were disposed to go on talking of Wishcome, but what he had said kept on ringing like pure joy in Mrs. Sludge's heart. Grasping Mrs. Mouser's knee as she pulled herself up from the fire, Mrs. Sludge gave it a squeeze of gratitude—a squeeze tremulous with broken-hearted longing.

The tattered form of Mrs. Mouser disappeared into the night of Saint Clodgy bit by bit, the darkness nibbling at it. And Mr. Foam presently felt his way upstairs with hands and feet.

There was nothing left for Mrs. Sludge but to get into the four-poster bed. And the night was Monday.

#### IV.

AFTER partially sleeping she lay and gazed up into the old red hangings, which were motionless—which were never stirred by air, for the window did not open. The fire was in embers now, and gave out fantastic colours which rode on the blue curls of warmth and cooking which had been done during the day; they rolled upwards or wavered out like ribbons from invisible hands.

Thin rain drove upon the shop window—the door between was open—it seemed like something wishful to get within. Neither the rain nor the night depressed Mrs. Sludge; they were part of life—life that was fitting itself into resurrection.

To think of Wishcome rested her as much as sleep; she looked like a tired baby, waiting for a kindly nurse to come and pick her up—there are others like her.

The rain pattered a little faster; she saw a silver beading on the glass of the shop door. For a second the door seemed to change its position; but Mrs. Sludge had been subject to seeing things on the move when they were really still—sometimes the counter even would rise and dip as if it curtsied. So she looked up again into the

canopy of the bed till her gaze was drawn down as if her head was being turned for her, towards the foot of the bed, where a young man sat, resting his head on his hands and not taking account of her or anything. She raised herself with difficulty.

"Wishcome!" she whispered, and listened for a sound of breathing. "Are 'ee come from Heaven, my son? From Heaven?" she repeated, her sight clinging to the vision. "It's poor here for such as you"—for the form was something dejected. "But love's gold, love as I can't tell to 'ee. But you'd know now, don't 'ee? You'd know all!"

And she prayed and coaxed him as son and god in one; her cheeks were wet, her smile awry.

"Lemme see your angel face! Oh, Wishcome, Wishcome!" For it turned and looked at her.

"Mother," it said, "I've lost me hand-all."

"Aye," she answered soothingly.

"It's been took," he said.

"Nobody's took it, my son. Let it lie in the sea. 'Tis nought to trouble your dear spirit over."

"What had I best do?" he persisted restlessly.

She stretched out her short arms. "Don't 'ee go back yet, my angel!"

"I must go bed, mother. I been a long way."

"A long way!" she echoed. "Heaven's far off, is it, Wishcome?"

She noticed the form stumble as it crossed the room. But what of that, since it had wings now.

"Are they calling of you, my son? I can't hear them! Can you hear mother still?"

"Yes," he answered. "I can hear the old bed creak, and the rain what's wetted me."

"Come again, my handsome! Touch me, Wishcome! Oh, 'tis wunnerful!"

And she sank back, caressing the hand his had rested on in the warmth of her bosom.

The form passed upstairs as if it sought its old room, on the way back to Heaven.

#### V.

MR. FOAM heard a disturbance amongst his papers. Without opening his eyes, he flicked at it with his handkerchief, and the noise subsided. Presently the same mouse-like disturbance began by the grate, then the bread-pan. Mr. Foam decided not to



attend to it, and he succeeded in passing off to sleep.

Someone else slept, too, on the floor, by the side of his bed; their breathing continued in and out of unison. Presently a voice spoke out of sleep. "I'm going back to mother. I'll go quicker without me hand-all," and laughed. And it was the laugh that woke Mr. Foam.

He pulled himself to the edge of the bed and looked over, and the dawn displayed Wishcome, pale and waxy, at full length on the floor, his hand, the colour of freestone, twitching as if it tried to grasp something which was being pulled from it.

Mr. Foam felt sick; he had to change his position immediately and turn on his back. It then became impossible for him to nerve himself to look again for several minutes.

When the laugh was repeated, Mr. Foam stopped his ears. His artistic temperament unfitted him for such as this; he told himself that if he suffered more he would be unfitted for his art. A little anger stimulated him to look more closely. It was evident that Wishcome Sludge was lying there, whether in the body or spirit Mr. Foam could not tell, nor would his heart keep still enough to let him think.

He clambered out of bed, at the foot, avoiding the shape on the floor, thanked God to find his suit nearer the door than the man. His boots he did not stay to lace, but grasping what he could of his papers and belongings, and suppressing the feeling of nausea which threatened to overtake and destroy his powers of locomotion, Mr. Foam packed on the landing and stole away.

No one but Mrs. Mouser saw him leaving by the shop door, bracing himself into a manly carriage, and taking the road out of St. Clodgy, which led him away from the direction he had come into it only a few months ago, the same old leather bag, the same suit—a trifle more stained—and the small cloth cap giving him the air of one who perseveres with life as a conjurer with his devices. And Mrs. Mouser pulled down the sash of her window, which had not been opened since Mouser's body lay in the room, for she knew she would never see the colour of Mr. Foam again.

## VI.

MRS. SLUDGE opened the shop and hitched the shutter back. The rain passed off, the street was festively clean, and the sun shining. The little house, washed sky-grey, had a placid and dove-like effect; Mrs.

Sludge's face was expressive of this, too, in spite of her magenta complexion and tendency to a beard. The vision the night had given her of Wishcome left her with a fuller possession of him than ever before. Nothing could separate them now; their union was immortal, and the years Mrs. Sludge had whimpered to face were smoothed for her into a travelling she no longer dreaded.

Before returning to the house she glanced at the upper window. The sash was let down about an inch, according to Mr. Foam's usual method of ventilation; the sky was reflected on the glass. Inside the house she paused at the bottom of the stairs and sniffed, but the scent of coffee was absent: she imagined Mr. Foam's long and flabby form still in bed.

By the time he should want it she picked a fat kipper out of the box, the best, meaty and glittering; Mr. Foam had sympathised. She grew impatient as a child to give it to him, picking it up at every sound to run with it—unmistakable sounds of stirring had begun overhead.

She hastened to attend to and get rid of a customer. Seeing Mrs. Mouser's door open, Mrs. Sludge avoided showing herself. She could hear the slap of tea-leaves and ashes as Mrs. Mouser tipped them into the street, and then the jackdaw appeared, a glittering black disciple of the morning, a sun-worshipper, cocking his eye at every glint.

The bird had not been out long before laughter and hand-clapping sounded. The bird saw where it came from, for he cocked his head, and his eye fastened on Mrs. Sludge's upper window. And Mrs. Mouser, whose face looked almost sightless in its pallor, gazed, too.

"Mother! Mother!" the voice called.

And Mrs. Sludge ran out of the shop. The upper window was not far from the ground. As Wishcome leant out, his face was so near her upturned face that she saw all the small individual markings she knew so well—the unevenness of his small moustache, his long eyelashes which drooped—had always drooped—over his eyes.

But she could not hear the sound of her own voice; no physical effort would produce it, nor tears either. She knew his body was there. Yet the ghost of Wishcome was nearer her heart now, and both claimed her; for the moment son and guardian angel seemed taken from her.

"Mother," he called, "I'm coming down!"

And as he flew out of the door he passed her—she could hardly turn quick enough to follow him.

"Jack! Jack! Isn't he a devil of a bird, mother? Don't he mock the sun something?"

Mrs. Mouser's door had fastened as if a hurricane blew it to. The street was empty of all except the little round woman in black and the young man who coaxed the jetty bird and laughed when it pecked him. The beautiful vision of the night had passed out of the street as a rider too glorious for its greyness. The shop displayed its trash, and the sunlight, falling into it, was dusted by the breath of ashes.

This was what it looked like to Mrs. Sludge, as she groped her way back into it, her hands and feet cold, her hat over one

ear—as if its mourning was turned into something clownish.

The two years since Wishcome was lost had broken into a thousand pieces. If it had been two months, her love would have remained earthly, complex; separation had made it over-simple for everyday love. She was stunned and confused; she had to begin with Wishcome in the cradle again till she came to Wishcome in the uncertainty of man's estate, instead of in the safety of Heaven.

She would be glad to-morrow, tearfully glad, and anxious and prayerful again over his coming in and going out. But to-day she neither possessed her human boy nor her guardian angel.

Putting on the gridiron, she gave one little sigh—without knowing what it was for—as she placed the fat and gleaming kipper on it.

## YOUR MUSIC.

**W**HEN you play music I can see  
Great fields of corn, green woods  
Full of dark mystery,  
And little streams where water-lilies ride  
And dragon-flies go darting noiselessly.

When you play music I can smell  
The sweetest, darkest roses I have known,  
And primroses who have so much to tell,  
And hedges blue with heads of lavender,  
And hay just newly cut upon the hill.

When you play music I can hear  
The winds go whispering among the trees,  
And big waves beating on a stony shore,  
The tears and laughter of a human world,  
Loud shouts of happiness and sobs of fear.

When you play music, then I know  
How big the world is and how small am I,  
Like one note struck in some great echoing chord,  
And trees and seas, and smells of summer flowers  
Swallow me up and drown me as I go.

K. M. M. FORDHAM.



He roused himself to find an accusing finger pointed at him."

# CURING KITTY

By GRACE CARLTON

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

THE afternoon was warm, and the heat was making itself felt even in the pleasant shade of Mrs. Hartill's garden. Teddy Pierce, fondly imagining that he was listening with rapt attention to the gentle flow of Molly Hartill's conversation, was horrified to hear a snore, slight but unmistakable. Obviously it could not have come from Molly, and no animal or insect of Teddy's acquaintance was capable of reproducing the human snore. He roused himself to find an accusing finger pointed at him.

"I really wasn't asleep," he protested, with an elaborate display of wakefulness. "I heard every word you said."

"Last thing I said was?" demanded Molly, the accusing finger still raised.

"The bridegroom looked perfectly sweet in accordion-pleated chiffon," he replied glibly.

"My dear man, I finished describing Dorothea's wedding ages ago. I'm now talking about Kitty Lennox, and when I said that you didn't thrill at the mention of her name——"

"When have I ever thrilled?"

"Every time and always. Everybody knows you were infatuated with her. You were."

"In a way, perhaps, years ago" he admitted airily. "When I was an irresponsible infant, I believe I did have equal passions for Kitty Lennox and chocolate *éclair*s. No, not equal—the *éclair*s had it. I passed into years of

discretion with an impaired digestion, but an unbroken heart. At least, it was unbroken until——”

“The rivets came out.”

“No profanity, please. You know perfectly well what I was going to say. You know, Molly, it's time you gave me a really definite answer.”

“Which you would receive with your very best snore,” replied Molly tartly. “No, it's Kitty I want to talk about now, and you're not going to side-track me.”

“Not another wedding! Spare me that, for pity's sake!”

“The Caterpillar has spared you that. He's jilted her.”

“The fool!” Teddy exclaimed involuntarily.

Teddy's opinion, expressed in heartfelt tones, was not altogether to his satisfaction. He saw his mistake, and hastily asked: “Who is the Caterpillar, anyway?”

“Obviously the man she was engaged to. I never knew his name. The engagement was on and off so quickly. We'd hardly time to 'phone our congratulations, much less write or wire them, before we had to start pouring out condolences.”

“Didn't she tell you his name when she announced her engagement?”

“Don't you know that nobody ever calls a *fiancé* by its right name nowadays? It isn't done. She called him Bingo, or Fido, or something equally ridiculous. We had reams and raptures about Bingo—or Fido—but no hint of his real name or position or anything sordid like that.”

“When we're engaged——” Teddy broke in reflectively.

Molly looked at him for one flashing moment, undecided whether to challenge the statement or not. She decided not, and went on with her tale.

“I called him the Caterpillar. I saw a particularly odious specimen the other day that reminded me of him. A horrid fat green thing perched on a twig, wagging its head in the air. It looked the picture of imbecile vacillation. It hits the man off to a ‘T.’”

“But you've not seen him?”

“Not even his photo. They'd only known each other a week when they got engaged.”

“And disengaged within a week. Quick work!”

“Not quite so rapid. They met. Within a week they were engaged, but they kept their engagement a profound secret.

They had some gloriously romantic notion—you know how romantic Kitty is—that it would vulgarise the whole affair if any living soul knew of it. So all Kitty's people were blissfully unconscious of the Caterpillar's existence, and her existence was equally unknown to whatever people the Caterpillar may have had.”

“To the entire lepidoptera, in short.”

“I think you're wrong, but you've got the idea. ‘The world forgotten, by the world forgot,’ and all that sort of thing. They had a great, soulful time—by correspondence. He was at one end of England and Kitty at the other. Then came the moment of revelation and the threat of an imminent marriage.”

Teddy groaned involuntarily.

“Followed by the amazing news that it was off. He'd jilted her. Kitty won't let it be given out that it has been broken off by mutual consent. She's got some highfalutin idea about sincerity and utter truthfulness, and all that sort of nonsense. Any decent girl would hide her feelings and lie like a trooper. She goes about like a crushed ghost, and a very damp variety of ghost, I can assure you. Compared with her, Niobe was sunshine, and a crumpled antimacassar is the top note of smartness. I always have a good look at the Chesterfield before I sit down, in case I sit on her by mistake. Ten to one you'll find her there in tears and a dressing-gown.”

Teddy laughed. “I say,” he said, “you are piling it on. I can't imagine Kitty Lennox giving herself away like that. Aren't you rather hard on her?”

“Not really. I'm exasperated, I admit. Really, I am most frightfully sorry for her. But I can't sit beside her and hold her hand for ever. I must pull her out of the Slough of Despond somehow. That's why I sent for you.”

“To help pull?”

“Yes. It will take some pulling, too. Why, she doesn't even dress decently!”

“What does she do? Wear widow's weeds?”

“I wish she would. She has a duck of a dressmaker, who *couldn't* turn her out dowdy. But Kitty hasn't resolution enough to order mourning. She simply wears her heart on last year's sleeve—on last year's dowdiest!”

Teddy unwisely repeated that he could not imagine the brilliant Kitty Lennox as Molly had described her. Molly was, fortunately, too intent to take offence.

"Yes, it's because you knew her as she was that I thought you were the best person to help me," she said.

"What can I do? I can't inspire her with a craze for the latest thing in bonnets."

"Bonnets?" gasped Molly.

"There, you see, I don't even know the technical terms, and I haven't a single text-book on the subject. How do you set about inspiring a female with a craze for millinery? It sounds unnatural—like inspiring cats with a passion for mice. And Kitty Lennox of all people! I always looked upon her as one of the best-dressed women I knew. I remember——"

Molly cut him short.

"You're full of reminiscence," she said coldly. "You might be thirty at least. Well, what are we to do to bring back this dazzling, brilliant Kitty you're always talking about?"

"What's your idea?"

"I haven't one. I always thought you were a person with ideas. Since knowing you, I've left all my thinking to you."

"H'm!" mused Teddy. "You state the problem, and I do the rest. It's flattering, very. Let me see. The long-established rule is, when your partner revokes, flirt with the nearest at hand. Kitty should try that. Now, I——"

Molly gave an emphatic sign of dissent.

"Now, I," Teddy went on tactfully, "should be no good at all. I was going to suggest Jack Woodall."

"The man you asked mother if you could bring down with you, and then left to trail along after you?"

"He'll be here soon. I must be off in a minute to meet him."

Molly remarked primly that, in her opinion, it was not in the very best taste to talk of entering into flirtations in that cold-blooded manner.

"I don't think mother would like it," she concluded severely.

"Well, for the matter of that," replied Teddy, "Jack won't be any good. He's awfully nervous with ladies. Looks on woman as a compound of angel and anarchist. No, I shouldn't cast him for Don Juan."

"And Kitty won't look at a man. Cheerful prospect, isn't it?"

"Still, as they're not to be allowed to flirt——"

"My idea is this: We bring Kitty and Mr. Woodall together under some romantic circumstances, if possible, without a formal

introduction. Naturally, they take an interest in each other. They always do."

Teddy agreed that, according to the rules of the game, they should.

"That romantic glamour will make them go on taking an interest."

"Thought they weren't to flirt?"

Molly remarked loftily that for two people to take a romantic interest in each other was many, many degrees above flirtation.

Teddy gave it as his opinion—he had nearly said experience—that the romantic, soulful species was by far the worst—the worst to get out of, anyway.

"The silly, brainless kind," he said, warming up to his subject, "is all right; you know where you are. But with the other——"

Molly reminded him in icy tones that the time was not opportune for his lecture on "Flirtations I Have Known."

"I am waiting for you to suggest what romantic circumstances we shall arrange for their meeting," she said.

"Oh, that's where I come in, is it?" he replied cheerfully. "H'm! It's difficult to suggest off-hand. All the usual ones seem stale. Let me see. Bicycle accident?"

"Kitty doesn't cycle."

"Motor accident?"

"And hates motors."

"Aeroplane, then?"

"We haven't one in the house, and it's early closing day."

"Cut them off by the tide?"

"They foolishly built this house miles from the sea."

"Careless of them!" Teddy was at the end of his resources. "After all," he said persuasively, "it would be simpler, though less picturesque, I admit, just to push—no, shove—shove them at each other. In some circles, I believe, that is considered a perfectly delightful form of introduction."

"Well, I suppose in a way that was what I had in mind," said Molly.

"Thought you put out all your thinking?"

"I just do the little odds and ends at home. I thought, if you couldn't suggest anything better, we would simply keep them apart, and by judicious praising make them quite keen on seeing each other. Then at the psychological moment we will have a carefully arranged accidental meeting by moonlight. Anticipation, a clear moon, and a decent frock will work wonders."

Teddy groaned. "Oh, that frock! Then

all I have to do is to praise Kitty up to him ? ”

“ That’s easy for you,” snapped Molly.

“ And provide the moon,” Teddy went on imperturbably, “ and if my memory serves me right, that will be a bit difficult. I have a very clear recollection of a full moon a fortnight ago.”

“ Oh, have you ? ” snapped Molly. “ On the river, I suppose ? ”

“ Not exclusively,” he replied. “ I believe it lit half the universe.”

Molly gave a snort of derision.

“ You’ll have to keep out of the way,” he said pleasantly.

“ Why ? ”

“ Can’t expect Jack Woodall or any other fellow to look at anyone else when you’re around.”

Whereupon Molly remarked graciously that Teddy did hit on a sensible thing to say now and again.

“ You always taboo sensible things,” he grumbled.

“ Tabooed things are so much more interesting, don’t you think so ? ” she replied demurely.

Teddy lost no time in taking the hint. He drew his chair quickly up to Molly’s. “ Molly,” he said, “ don’t you think——”

At that juncture Kitty Lennox made her appearance.

In the irritation of the moment he felt that she deserved all that Molly had said about her—“ a crumpled ghost,” “ a damp ghost.” He might even have been tempted to add variations of his own, and when he uttered some pleasant commonplace to the effect that he hardly expected Miss Lennox would remember him, and she replied dolefully that she was unfortunately burdened with too good a memory, it took nothing from his first impression. He suddenly remembered that he must meet Jack Woodall.

## II.

On his way to the station he was surprised by the sudden appearance of Molly, panting, but never for one moment inarticulate.

“ I’ve got an idea,” she said.

“ Hooray ! Let’s know the worst ! ”

“ You remember the play we acted last year ? ”

“ Do I not ? Never shall I forget the filthy thing.”

“ It was not filthy,” she exclaimed indignantly. “ It wasn’t in the least high-brow. It was a nice, harmless pastoral,

so inane it wouldn’t make your great-grandmother blush.”

“ Well, what about it ? ”

“ It’s the very thing. Kitty knows Dorothea’s part better than Dorothea ever did, and she loves acting. She’ll dress up and look topping, she’ll act and look superb. *Voilà !* We’ll have a rehearsal directly after dinner.”

Teddy started. “ I’m afraid I don’t follow,” he said, “ or, at least, I hope I don’t.”

Molly explained patiently.

“ We’ll rehearse it to-night,” she repeated.

“ Kitty shall be the heroine, and Mr. Woodall the prince. Don’t you remember how they come across each other suddenly, and are supposed to stand gazing at each other in rapt amazement ? It’s a perfectly miraculous inspiration. That’s how Dorothea met her fate, anyway.”

“ Then by the law of probabilities——”

“ Oh, don’t be dull ! All you have to do is to persuade Mr. Woodall to play the part of the prince.”

“ He won’t,” Teddy replied decisively.

“ You must bluff him into thinking that we asked him down for that very reason. Persuade him that he has already promised to do it. Tell him it’s for charity. Tell him,” Molly went on desperately, as Teddy continued to shake his head, “ that the Vicar’s depending on us to provide funds for—for—let me see—oh, a new wing for the local cottage hospital.”

“ Is he ? I’ve heard nothing of it.”

“ Nor has he—yet. Mr. Woodall can’t refuse if it’s for charity.”

“ Can’t he ? He’ll write a cheque big enough to provide wings for all the cottage hospitals in creation rather than act.”

“ Oh, you men ! ” Molly exclaimed, exasperated.

“ It is a bit thick to ask a fellow down and spring this on him,” Teddy pleaded. “ You know, Molly, I’d do anything you ask me, but——”

“ But,” Molly supplemented tartly, “ the very thing I do ask you. I know that sort of ‘go through fire and water devotion.’ When it comes to something serious that one really wants done——”

Her voice trailed off into plaintiveness. Teddy yielded promptly and unreservedly.

He did his best, and manfully attacked Jack Woodall on the subject directly they had left the station, but all to no purpose. Woodall not only developed conscientious

objections to raising money for charity by indirect means, but even indeed seemed to derive suddenly, from a Puritan ancestry, a violent antipathy to the drama in any form. Teddy reported progress dolefully to Molly at the earliest opportunity. She, radiant with success on her side, refused to be damped.

"It must be done," she said firmly. "Kitty has taken to the idea, and is like a new creature already. She's quite keen on the rehearsal. Would you believe it, she let ten minutes go by without sighing, and she even lost her hanky and didn't know it!"

"If the trick's done, why worry about the filth—the beastly play?" Teddy suggested.

"It's not a permanent cure," Molly replied, with a professional air, "but it shows we're on the right lines. We must go through with the thing now. Not only rehearse, but actually give it. I'll fly round to the Vicar's as soon as I get a moment, and persuade him that he really does want a new wing."

But Molly was far too busy to call on the Vicar. Not only did Jack Woodall prove intractable, but Kitty, having for one moment put aside her private griefs, showed an inordinate desire to mix with the world again. She even expressed her intention of coming down to dinner.

"How can she take a romantic interest in a man when she first sees him eating roast mutton?" wailed Molly to her colleague.

"When first you saw me," Teddy reminded her, "I was eating cold mutton—mutton, not even lamb—and pickles."

"There's a case in point," Molly replied cruelly.

"You needn't worry about them. They'll meet long before dinner," Teddy consoled her, postponing the personal element to a more convenient season. "Kitty's been buzzing in and out quite a lot since Woodall came. She's making the garlands for the play. I rather fancy myself in a garland. In fact, I think I shall adopt one for everyday wear. People might give me a wide berth, and that won't be altogether a disadvantage on the Bakerloo at six p.m."

Just then Kitty "buzzed in" again. With an imploring glance at Teddy to detain Kitty, Molly rushed out to find Jack Woodall and keep him in safety till the danger was over.

She found him in the garden with her

mother and the Vicar, who had just dropped in to tea.

"Isn't it charming of Mr. Woodall?" were Mrs. Hartill's first words. "He's given Mr. Fane a cheque for a new wing for the cottage hospital. Isn't it a splendid idea?"

In spite of his alleged timidity with ladies, Jack Woodall could not forbear a triumphant glance in Molly's direction, while the mystified Vicar murmured heart-felt but bewildered acknowledgment.

"Such wonderful insight, such forethought!" he murmured. "I'd never even dared to think of such a thing."

"No," Molly put in quickly. "There are so many other things. The—er—the Rectory really wants a new wing, too, doesn't it?"—plunging recklessly.

"Oh, well, my dear—" returned the Vicar complacently. He saw the visitor nervously fingering his cheque-book.

Whether Mr. Jack Woodall's munificence would have stood this further strain will never be known, for at that moment Molly caught sight of Kitty emerging from the house and bearing down upon them, Teddy in fluttering attendance. Jack found himself rushed away for some indeterminate goal, on some incoherent excuse. Molly's incoherence and, incidentally, his bewilderment increased, and their goal became more indeterminate as they proceeded. For, wherever they turned, Molly caught a glimpse of Kitty's last year's dowdiest, or heard the sound of her voice with its sub-current of tearfulness. At last Teddy was able to sound the "All clear," and Molly speedily became herself again.

"So awfully nice of you," she began sweetly, "to take such an interest in our local charities. It's just splendid. You see, we couldn't possibly have raised anything like enough to build a wing, but what we can do now," she gushed, "is to equip the wing. It would have been hardly worth while going on with the play without your magnificent cheque, but now that's just clinched it."

The trapped victim was inclined to applaud her choice of terms. "Clinched" had an unpleasantly final sound about it.

### III.

DINNER was over, and, so far, all had gone well. The protagonists had not met. Kitty had, after all, decided to remain in retirement in order to work up her part. Jack had been prevailed upon to rehearse,

confident that it would require very little rehearsing to prove to Molly how impossible he was. The Vicar had given his blessing to a performance to raise funds to equip the new "Woodall" wing of the cottage hospital. A space had been cleared between two shrubberies, and had, in the lamentable absence of the moon, been hung with Chinese lanterns.

"Haven't you a book of words?" Jack inquired nervously of Teddy, as they stood waiting for the girls, who were dressing. Jack had firmly refused to dress, but Teddy had compromised, and the tennis suit of everyday life assorted oddly with the somewhat cumbrous garland, which from time to time took up many positions on his head, but never by any chance the right one.

"Molly's trying to find one for you, but if we haven't got one, I'll prompt you."

"Look here," said Jack eagerly, "if you know my part, you'd better double."

"Know your part! I never knew my own. I'll whistle whenever you've got to speak."

"Yes, but, man"—in desperation—"what have I got to say? That's the point."

"Any old tosh. You know the lingo. It's a pastoral. That's why we chose you. Your father's on an agricultural commission,

and you're supposed to be a dab at Theocritus, or some other pastoral Johnny."

Jack, realising that the worse his per-



"Jack came in promptly, marching as if on parade, a look of dour resolution on his face. 'That's it,' said Teddy approvingly. 'Head erect, toes out, and every inch a prince.'"

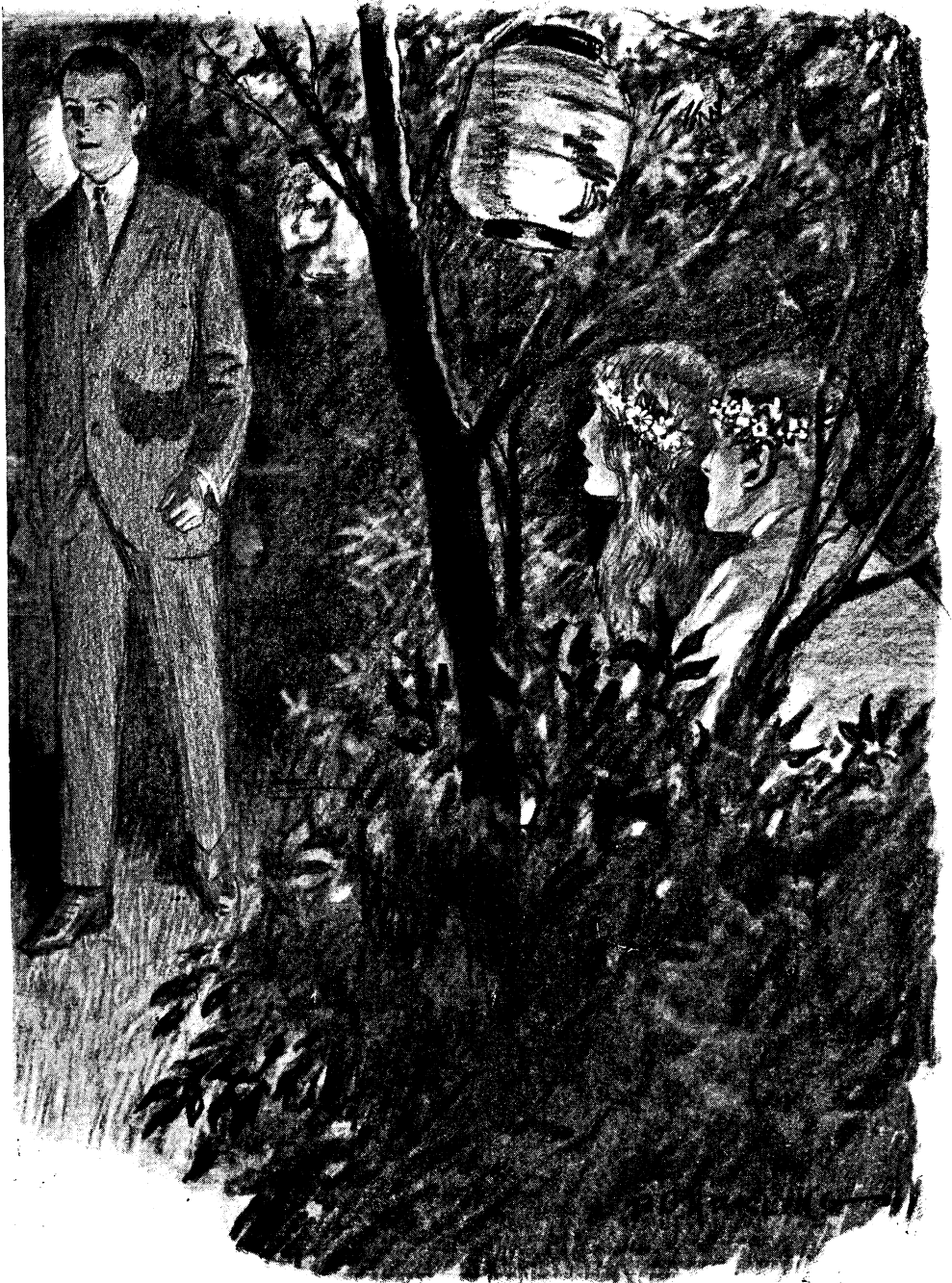
formance was, the less likely his services to be required, said no more. After all, it was less bother than cramming up the words.

"Give me the hang of the thing," he said resignedly.



"We're all shepherds and shepherdesses—  
 dear, sweet, simple souls, with not a care in  
 the world and not a thought beyond dancing

"Pussyfoots to a man," Teddy warned  
 him, "but we'll have a few syphons around  
 just to make it look homely. When the



and drinking." Jack looked round in lively  
 anticipation.

curtain goes up, we're crowning the heroine  
 Queen of the May."

Jack mechanically interpolated that he supposed she was called "early."

"Naturally. Philomela, for short. Then we caper about round her."

"Look here, Pierce, I'm hanged if I'll dance!"

"Steady! You're not there. Anyway, we're cutting that scene to-night, as we haven't the supers. Well, then, Philomela finds a crown in her shrubbery—that's hers on the left, yours is on the right. It's a pukka crown this time, and fits her like a glove. That proves conclusively that she is the long-lost Princess of Somewhere-or-other-ia—some silly idiot lost the cloak-room ticket. Enter the Prince—that's you. Now, your cue is, 'What man is this who comes in stranger's garb?' But you needn't worry about that; I'll whistle. You come in here"—indicating a spot leading from Jack's shrubbery—"walk across to here, and stand gazing at the Princess. She does ditto. In fact, you two can go on gazing *ad infinitum*. It's rather neat."

"Well?" asked Jack, for Teddy had paped as if the matter ended there. Indeed, such was his idea.

"Oh, let's see. Gaze, rapturous *ad infinitum* one. After that you say, 'Fair shepherdess, I've wandered o'er'—not 'over,' mind you, 'o'er'—it's most important. It's little things like that which spoil the atmosphere, and we're awfully particular about atmosphere. Where was I? Oh, yes. 'Fair shepherdess, I've wandered o'er the mountains cold: can you direct me to the nearest Tube station?'"

"And then?" Jack asked dubiously.

"Oh, you'd better get that part word perfect first. Here is Molly; perhaps she's found the book of words."

Molly had not. She was full of apologies to Jack, but both she and Teddy seemed unaccountably complacent about the whole affair.

"Now toddle off while Molly and I discourse on the beauties of Nature, and don't forget to come on prompt at the whistle," Teddy commanded him.

"What are you two?"

"Sample pair of swains. Just a shade dearer and sweeter and simpler than the rest, but, my hat, don't we talk!"

As Jack wandered off into the shrubbery, he remembered that he had not yet seen the lady at whom he was to gaze rapturously while Teddy's stop-watch ticked off the seconds.

"Any old gaze will do in this light," he thought complacently, "and the worse it is, the better for me."

Jack having been stowed away safely, Kitty was allowed to come on. At the first glance Teddy freely admitted that Molly had been right. Kitty was herself again, distinguished, animated, attractive. His look betrayed his thoughts rather more than he knew, and Molly, a little pettishly, hustled Kitty away into her shrubbery, and in business-like tones commanded Teddy to sit down and begin.

"'O Moschus, pleasant is the cool shade and the——'" she began in a tone in which reproach and chagrin were intermingled.

"We needn't talk the patter till Philomela comes out with the crown," responded Moschus. "How are things going? Jack's shaping splendidly."

"I've been having awful trouble with Kitty. Something in her part reminded her of the unhappy past. She developed qualms by the score. It took all my ingenuity and mother's to bring her round. I nearly had to send for the Vicar. However, she's all right now."

"She is, by Jove!" he agreed warmly.

Molly sharply reminded him that it was time for Kitty's cue.

"What on earth is it?"

"Methought——"

"'Methought's' always a safe line. 'Methought I heard a sigh,'" he called out, rather in the manner of a 'bus conductor announcing his stages. A long mournful sigh emerged from the left-hand shrubbery. "By Jove, Kitty can do that all right!"

"'Tis Philomela.' Do you know, I

always get my tongue twisted over Philomela. It's like linoleum. I can't say linoleum to save my life. When I marry and set up housekeeping, I shall have to put up with oil-cloth—unless you buy the linoleum."

"Why should I buy it?" queried Molly.

"You'll be the person most interested."

"You're taking things very much for granted, and keeping Kitty sighing out there an unconscionable time."

"She won't notice. She's used to it. You know very well I shall never marry anyone else if I don't marry you. Considering the many times I've asked you to marry me, and never got a straight answer, don't you think, Molly——"

At this point Kitty, tired of sighing without an audience, came on the scene.

"She looks on that as her permanent

cue," Teddy muttered, exasperated. Then, in his 'bus-conductor voice: "' Surely the winds are envious, and Zephyr weeps at such a rivalry.' "

Kitty took the compliment as an encore. Under cover of her third stanza of sighs, Teddy managed to ask—

"Who is Zephyr? I can't find him in the Directory, and he doesn't seem to have a telephone number?"

"'Methought I heard a voice,'" Kitty's musical voice rang out. "' 'Tis Moschus and his maid.' "

"That line always makes me wild," said Molly. "I told Kitty I won't be called a maid."

"Why not? I expect in those days a really first-class parlourmaid was quite a dinky person."

Kitty was now well on with her speech, and entirely oblivious of the running comments of the sample pair of swains. She certainly had a very attractive appearance, her dark garlanded hair flowing luxuriantly over graceful white draperies, her eyes brilliant, her voice attuned to a musical cadence. The light of the Chinese lanterns had been augmented by a screened lamp thoughtfully sent out by Mrs. Hartill. Jack ought to find his rapturous gazing an easy matter.

"Moschus and his maid," suddenly became aware that Kitty was standing silent, plaintive, almost on the verge of tears.

"I've given you your cue twice, Mr. Pierce," she said mournfully. "' And memories of old!' ' And memories of old!'" she repeated even more dolefully.

"Quick!" Molly urged. "She's getting retrospective. Quick!"

"What man is this who comes in stranger's garb?" yelled Teddy, and ejected an ear-piercing whistle.

Jack came in promptly, marching as if on parade, a look of dour resolution on his face.

"That's it," said Teddy approvingly. "Head erect, toes out, and every inch a prince."

"Don't take any notice of them," said Molly in an undertone. In order to assure the other pair that they were utterly unconscious of their existence, she leaned forward across Teddy and stared hard. Jack, having pulled up in front of Kitty, the two stood gazing at each other in petrified amazement.

"O Moschus, pleasant is the cool shade, the rippling music of the river," Molly rattled off.

"O Molly, pleasant is the proximity of your hair, except when it tickles my face," was Teddy's antistrophe.

"O Moschus . . . I must see how it's going."

"Your line doesn't scan——" began Teddy, but his attention, too, was taken by the other couple. Petrified amazement had given place to a mute delight.

"Isn't Kitty a born actress?" cried Molly.

"What about Woodall? Rapturous gaze one, *ad infinitum*. That's where military discipline comes in." And he gave a prolonged whistle of admiration.

Jack apparently took it as his cue, for he broke the silence.

"Oh, Kitty," he exclaimed passionately, "can you ever forgive me?"

"Bingo," murmured Philomela, "is it really, really you?"

"I say," cried Teddy urgently, "they've got the wrong place!"

Jack waited for no cue this time.

"Tell me, darling, that you forgive me," he pleaded.

"There is nothing to forgive," she replied.

At which point Teddy interposed with a breathless "Molly, will you marry me?"

"Yes. Why?" she replied promptly.

"We can't let them outstrip us in getting engaged, and it looks as if they might. We've won!" he cried, springing up. "Congratulations, please!"

"You absurd people!" exclaimed Kitty. "Bingo and I have been engaged ever so long."

"So you're Bingo?" said Molly, turning to Jack.

"Alias the Caterpillar," said Teddy.

"Call me anything you like," answered Jack remorsefully. "You can't call me anything worse than I've been calling myself."

"It was my absurd fastidiousness," objected Kitty.

"No, it was my vile temper," he replied.

"No, it was all my fault," she insisted pettily.

"You're an angel to say so, but——"

"O Moschus," said Molly, "I don't think we ought to listen to their part, do you?"

"Rather not, O Molly," Teddy agreed. "Methinks, O Molly, I'd jolly well sooner get on with our own!"

# THE NIGHT OF THE FAIR

By RALPH COBINO

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

STEVENS and his *fiancée*, Mildred Linton, had spent the afternoon at an Oriental fair held in aid of a local charity. The park was a medley of colour and noise. The East had been brought to the West, and spilt in a heterogeneous mass upon the greensward. Japanese women, Chinese mandarins, Siamese beggars, jostled one another on the footpaths. It was a day of make-believe, with adults for players.

A *café* near the entrance gate gave Stevens and Mildred Linton a chance of escape from the crowd. A band of Bedouin chiefs discoursed music at the far end of the tent.

"I suppose this sort of thing makes pots of money," Stevens said. "Extraordinary how people like making fools of themselves." He glanced at Mildred, and amended: "I'm grateful to them, though. They've given me the chance of an extra hour of your company."

"That atones for your sufferings?" she laughed.

"Amplly. An hour with you——" Stevens broke off abruptly, realising a sudden silence in the tent.

The persistent blare of the band had ceased. One of the Bedouin chiefs had stepped apart from the others. He plucked at the strings of his instrument, slowly at first, then rapidly. The sound was rhythmic and even, like the beat of a horse's feet on the sand of the desert. Presently he began to sing Bayard Taylor's Bedouin "Love Song"—

"From the desert I come to thee,  
On my Arab shod with fire,  
And the winds are left behind  
In the speed of my desire."

The words were familiar to most of the people. The air was unusual. It was full of a strange cadence that brought the East

close. For the first time during the afternoon Stevens forgot that the fair was a mere matter of make-up. The singer had suggested reaches of desert sand gleaming under the moon, with a solitary horseman galloping to the place of his desire.

The voice fell to the measure of the beating hoofs—

"Till the sun grows cold,  
And the stars are old,  
And the leaves of the Judgment Book  
unfold."

After the voice had ceased, the rhythmic plucking of strings continued, growing faint and fainter, like the sound of a horse's feet heard in the distance. Then silence.

"The man's an artist," Stevens commented. He bent towards his companion. "He expresses what some of us can only feel. I've never been able to find words that were adequate. I've been dumb when I wanted to tell you what that Bedouin fellow would tell his lady when he reached her." Stevens was speaking under cover of the blare of the band, which once more filled the tent. "Just imagine, I've grown eloquent for once. It isn't necessary, though. You know I'm like a grateful dog—always at your beck and call."

"A very gallant lover," she quoted under her breath. Then hurriedly: "You're a brick, Jack. Eloquence doesn't matter, since you are you."

She glanced at her watch and rose to her feet, laughing at his dismayed face.

"You'll come round after dinner. Can't you be patient for an hour or two?"

"No," he told her emphatically.

She was laughing at his emphasis as they moved towards her car. It was not until she was seated, and Stevens was closing the door, that she noticed the sudden gravity of his face. She bent to the window.

"What's the matter, Jack? You were surely only joking just now."

"Surely," he assented. "I'll be round after dinner."

The car jerked and started. Stevens looked after it till it was lost in the crowd of traffic. He was thinking how illusive Time could be. A few minutes ago he and Mildred had laughed together. Now, since he had caught sight of a man's face in the crowd, laughter seemed as remote as the stars. He turned back into the throng. He wanted to assure himself that his eyes had not tricked him.

An avenue of cardboard houses and stalls led him into the heart of the fair. As evening came on the crowd increased. It was not easy to seek for one man in the tumult. Stevens persisted, his face doggedly set. Dusk was heralded by a multitude of paper lanterns, swinging hither and thither in the breeze. Faces came and went in the shifting light, illumined momentarily, then lost in the shadows. One face, appearing for a moment, brought an exclamation to Stevens's lips.

"I wasn't mistaken."

He swerved suddenly.

"Hallo, Rogers! You've altered, but not past recognition."

The man halted. His eyes were momentarily puzzled. They cleared when Stevens tilted his head back, standing full in the light of a swinging lantern.

"Stevens! You were in my thoughts a moment ago."

The throng about them jostled and pushed. They were besieged by an invading tide of humanity.

"Let's get out of this," Stevens said.

The other man assented with a gesture. Like Stevens, his face had become sternly set. Emotion dogged at the heels of both men. Their sentences slipped away into silence till they came to the park gates, and Stevens hailed a taxi.

"We'll go to my rooms," Stevens suggested. "There we'll be sure of privacy." As the taxi began to thread its way in and out the traffic, he touched Rogers on the arm. "You're real, I suppose? Not an apparition?"

"I'm real enough. Did you—did people believe that story of my death out in the wilds?"

"Absolutely."

The word had the effect of a closed door. It shut off the past irrevocably. To-day loomed against an impenetrable background.

"They believed, and Time set the seal on their belief. It's eight years since you were heard of."

The taxi sped to the end of Park Avenue before Rogers said—

"And Mildred—did she believe it?"

"Absolutely."

Once again the word held its irrevocable quality. Because of it both men sat silent till the taxi reached its destination and they gained the privacy of Stevens's room.

"She wiped me out of the picture straight off?" Rogers questioned then.

"No," Stevens said slowly. "It was years before you faded from the canvas."

Rogers lighted a cigarette with an unsteady hand.

"Suffered, did she?"

Stevens nodded. At the moment he was afraid his voice might trick him, showing the stress of his thoughts.

Rogers bent forward in his seat. "Let me tell you things. I drifted with the crowd into the park this afternoon, hardly knowing what I was doing. I wanted to make plans for my next move. You came into my thoughts as a man who would help me get my bearings. Then your voice hailed me. I've been silent so long that now I feel like a flooded river bursting its bounds. I've got to talk."

Stevens nodded, his eyes on the fire.

"I went away because I was an utter failure. I hadn't business genius. I experimented with the money my father left, and lost it, every cent of it. You knew all this before, but you must listen to it again. I've the right to speech after eight years' silence. Silence!" He lifted his hand and let it fall on the arm of his chair. "I tell you silence can hurt like a thong on naked flesh. But for Mildred, I couldn't have stood it."

Stevens's eyes went to the wall behind Rogers. A portrait of Mildred Linton hung there. The shadow of Rogers's head fell across it like a screen.

"If ever two people cared for each other in this world, she and I did. She would have stuck to me through thick and thin. But I wasn't cad enough to tie her down to a failure. When I had paid my creditors I went out of the world pretty near as naked as I came into it."

Stevens made no attempt to break an ensuing pause. And presently Rogers's sentences come again, hurried, almost breathless—

"I went away to make good. I wanted

to come back to Mildred Linton a man who had climbed again to the top of the ladder. How I dreamt of success! The thought of seeing Mildred again was about me like the breath of the wind, like the heat of the sun! Well"—he tossed his cigarette end into the fire—"the dreams were all. The reality never came. A rumour of death filtered over here from the Back of

Beyond. It's easy to concoct plausible rumours over yonder. People don't ask many questions. Four years after I went away I had ceased to exist as far as the folks over here are concerned."

Rogers shifted in his seat. His shadow moved from Mildred's portrait. Stevens involuntarily glanced up at it.

"I drifted into various parts of the world, picking up a job here and a job there. I settled finally on one of the Pacific islands. There I have at least a means of decent living. You couldn't call it success, but it gives the lie to utter failure. I've a house of my own and do a little trading. And life in the tropics has its own charm."



"You know I'm like a grateful dog—always at your beck and call."

Rogers paused for a moment, staring at the ground. When his next sentences came, his voice held a new note.

"All those years I had thought of my own outlook in regard to Mildred. It came on me with a flash one day that there was another point of view—Mildred's. She—she cared once. Was it conceivable that she had gone on caring? My house is down near the shore, and all night long I could hear the thunder of the surf against the coral reefs. I used to fancy the waves kept calling: 'Go to her. It's for her to decide. It's for her to decide.' Week after week the words kept hammering at my ears. Imagination? Folly? Yes

probably. But here I am. It's for Mildred to decide."

Stevens shifted his chair slightly. Infinite pity moved him. He himself held the prize that Rogers had come half over the world to seek. The other man's voice seemed remote, unreal. He called from out a forgotten past.

"She—is unmarried still?" Rogers asked.



"'A very gallant lover,' she quoted under her breath."

"Yes," Stevens assented.

Rogers leant upon the chair-arms, stooping forward so that his eyes pierced Stevens's, demanding truth even though it should stab.

"Is there anyone else in her life now?"

Speech seemed suddenly futile. Truth could travel without the halting vehicle of words. It was inherent in the sudden stillness of the room. Silence took on the semblance of sound, carrying its message.

With a quick jerk of his hand, Stevens pointed to the wall above Rogers's head. From its frame Mildred Linton's face stared down at both men. Shifting firelight gave the picture a semblance of movement, as if the eyelids flickered in sharp stress of feeling.

Stevens's voice broke the intolerable silence.

"Eight years since you left. You must understand that Time can heal. She suffered when you went, and long afterwards. Man, are you selfless enough to rejoice that since one day went down in darkness another has dawned for her?"

Rogers sat hunched up in his chair. The energy that had brought him half across the globe seemed suddenly stripped from him. He was momentarily stunned, inert.

"I'm trying to push myself out of the picture," Stevens said presently. "I'm thinking of Mildred. We've both got to think of her. If it would be for her happiness, I'd step aside for you. God knows I speak truth when I say that."

Rogers's eyes lifted then, probing, questioning. "But you feel her happiness lies in your staying and my going?"

Stevens made a gesture of affirmation. Pity for this other man swept him like a flood. But Mildred's voice, as he had heard it earlier in the afternoon, moved him inexorably. "A very gallant lover," she had quoted. And then afterwards: "Eloquence doesn't matter, since you are *you*." Once she had loved this man who sat opposite. Now the victor's wreath lay upon his own brow.

Stevens took a case from his pocket, opened it, and held it towards Rogers.

"This was done soon after we were engaged. I want you to tell me if it's the face of a happy woman."

Rogers held his hand for the case. His eyes bent upon the miniature. Stevens could not see their expression.

"She was a beautiful girl," Rogers said at last. "Now her womanhood is radiant."

His voice was like the monotonous beating of one note. "Thanks for showing me this. I shall remember it when I'm back on my island." He moved his shoulders as if he adjusted them to the lifting of a weight. "Have you a time-table?" He added quickly, interrupting an exclamation of Stevens's: "I owe it to Mildred to get off the picture at once."

Again Stevens felt the futility of words. They were frothing waves beating about an immutable rock. For Mildred's sake Rogers must slip back into the past. Life was pulsing in his veins, yet he must remain a memory only. The tragedy of it brought Stevens's hand heavily down on the other's shoulder.

"You don't blame me?"

"Not you—only Life and myself. Misfortune has always loved me." He swung round quickly, holding his hand out. "You've run straight, Stevens. I must abide by my own mistake." His lips twisted queerly. "I can't even send Mildred a message. Dead men are dumb."

A clock on the mantelpiece struck the hour. Rogers turned again to his study of the train service. Prosaic sentences about means of transit served as a screen for the stress of the moment.

"My train leaves at ten," Rogers said presently. "With decent connections I ought to be back on board ship this time to-morrow." He held his hand out. "Good-bye, and good luck."

The hours that passed between Stevens's meeting with Mildred at the fair and his meeting with her after dinner had a semblance of days. Circumstance made them momentous. On his way to the Lintons' house he reminded himself that he must guard against preoccupation. He must drag truant thoughts away from visions of a man slipping back into exile and oblivion.

For once he was glad to find a guest with Mildred, a chattering acquaintance who filled every pause with shreds of gossip. He and Mildred were soon swamped by the persistent flow of talk. They fell silent, an audience merely. When they were left alone finally, Stevens pulled himself together with a jerk.

"That show this afternoon was a hit. People enjoyed trying to be someone else. Did you see Mrs. Martin dressed as a Japanese girl? She waddled and smirked adorably. And Jim Long as a Chinese coolie? Those Bedouin chaps, too?"

He realised that she was scarcely listening.



She sat with her chin propped on her hands, staring into the fire.

"They'll make as much money as they want," Stevens went on. "To-night they have the park tricked out with coloured lanterns." His voice ran on persistently.

"Don't, Jack!" she cried suddenly.

He looked at her, amazed.

"Don't talk about the fair. It got on my nerves."

There was a quick change of expression in his face. She bent forward, touching his hand.

"I'm sorry, Jack. I'm on edge to-night."

"Why?" he asked.

His voice was tense on the question. He felt like a man who had come abruptly to the brink of a precipice.

With a gesture she seemed to push his question aside.

"Why?" he persisted. And then quickly: "I must know, Mildred."

There was something electrical in the air of the room. Mildred's quickly-uttered sentence, "I saw a man I had thought dead," seemed to echo from every corner.

They were on their feet now. Their eyes met, questioned, fell away each from the other's, aghast.

"When did you see?" Stevens spoke through dry lips.

"After I left you. The car went slowly because of the traffic. We were moving close to the park railings, and just on the other side I—saw him."

She came close to Stevens. "Why don't you ask me who it was I saw? Why do you—why do you look as if you *knew*? Surely it was an illusion, a trick of my eye-balls."

Stevens's thoughts groped like a man lost in a maze. They refused to be orderly. A few shreds and fragments floated through his brain—Rogers lighting a cigarette with a shaking hand, and his voice, "Suffered, did she?" . . . Mildred's photograph on the wall, and the way the shadow of Rogers's head had half hidden it. . . . the sound of Rogers's retreating footsteps growing fainter along the street. . . .

"It was no illusion," Stevens said suddenly. He felt as though he listened to his own voice as to another man's. The timbre of it was unfamiliar, harsh.

He went on speaking slowly, deliberately. "He came to my rooms. We had a talk together. The rumour of his death was false. He'd had no luck, so he let it stand." Stevens's voice ran on, with its new metallic note.

He repeated Rogers's sentences by rote, parrot-like. He grew to dread the end of his story. Silence would follow, and to-night silence was intolerable.

His recital dragged, halted. His last sentences showed Rogers slipping back into his irrevocable past. He saw Mildred put her hand to her eyes, hiding them, and he added hurriedly: "There's a gleam of light for him. He's no longer down and out. He has made some sort of position for himself out there. He has his own bungalow down near the sea. And the climate's superb." Stevens's voice ran on, offering shreds of comfort. It was like decking a starving man with flowers.

He realised that she was not listening. She was remote from him, caught and held in a mesh of memory. She had moved to the far side of the room, and the width of the floor lay between them. A chasm—the word leapt to his brain. It was like a lamp held aloft, sending a flash of light into every part of his consciousness.

Something of his thought must have spoken from his eyes. He saw her shrink back against the wall.

"Mildred!"

The hoarseness of his voice made it inaudible. With an effort he lifted it.

"Mildred, did you want him to stay?"

He moved a step towards her.

"I didn't realise. I was fool enough to think you would rather he went away."

She suddenly found her voice. It pleaded, was nothing save entreaty.

"Can't you *understand*?" she said.

Illumination—again it half blinded him. Rogers's irrevocable past was transmuted into sudden glory. Irrevocable—the word was dust, negligible. He had but to step back into Mildred's life to capture it, to send all else headlong into oblivion. He held the key of the inmost chamber.

She struggled for words, for some utterance that could show her inevitable choice. They failed her. She was dumbly eloquent. He saw her head bow in a sudden storm of weeping.

The striking of a clock was a challenge. It called to Stevens as the *réveillé* calls a sleeping soldier. He answered it, head high and shoulders rigid.

"It's all right, Mildred. Don't you worry."

From the doorway he looked back at her. She still bowed under the weight of her revelation. He closed the door noiselessly. In a minute he was out in the street, hailing a taxi

The car came in answer to his call.

"Drive to Victoria Station," Stevens said.

Presently he was slipping rapidly through the streets. He glanced at his watch in the glare of an arc lamp. Time and he ran a race, neck by neck.

The car ran presently alongside the illumined fair ground. He saw the avenue of stalls where he and Rogers had met a few hours ago. Hours? They seemed months—years. From the Bedouin tent music still came persistently. The whole thing showed like a picture on a screen, then vanished into darkness.

At the station Stevens fought his way through hurrying crowds. He reached the departing train and went from compartment to compartment until he found the man he sought.

Rogers listened in amazement to Stevens's first hurried sentence.

"Don't play with me," Rogers said. "I'm going away. Let that suffice."

"You're not going away—unless you mean to spoil Mildred Linton's life."

Rogers had stepped from the train to the platform. There were still a few minutes before the time of departure. The crowds had ceased to exist for them both. It was an elemental moment. The trappings of convention fell away, leaving them face to face with their crisis.

"I went to her after you left," Stevens said. "She told me that she'd seen you. Her car slowed down going by the park railings. She saw your face in the crowd."

Stevens's voice halted, came again hoarsely.

"You believe me when I say I thought I was doing the best for her when I sent you away this afternoon?"

"Yes," Rogers told him. "I know an honest man when I see him."

Stevens said quickly: "Then you'll believe me when I say there's only one thing for you to do. You must go back to her." He silenced the other man's voice with a gesture. "I tell you Mildred's need

is the only thing we have to think of, you and I. Remember your own phrase, 'It's for her to decide.' She *has* decided."

Rogers's search for words was futile. This moment came upon him like an enveloping wave, leaving him breathless.

"She suffered when she lost you," Stevens said. "It was only when she believed you dead for years that she would listen to me. She loved me as one may love autumn after summer. I realise now it was never more than that. It hurts—but it's the truth."

The train jerked—started. Rogers saw the carriages slip past him as one might see fantastic movements in a dream. Still as in a dream he walked back along the platform by Stevens's side. His own phrase was hammering at his ears. The roar of the city traffic had its mimicry of the thunder of the surf near his bungalow.

"It's for her to decide!"

Stevens hailed a taxi and motioned to his companion to step inside. In a low voice he said:

"There's just time for you to see her to-night. Don't leave her on the rack."

Rogers leant from the open window. His voice had grown husky.

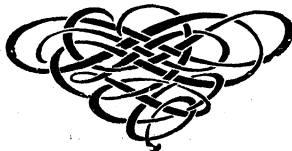
"To-day life has shown me a *man*," he quoted.

The car began to move. Stevens had a last glimpse of Rogers's face then. The first amazement had slipped from it. Realisation was like a swift flash of sunlight through mist. He had achieved. The Past was swallowed up of the Present.

Stevens stood there, looking after the vanishing car. Mentally he followed it on its journey through the streets. He saw Rogers step from it at the end of his journey. He saw him at the door of the room where Mildred sat. He heard their voices in a rising crescendo of happiness—

With a jerk he brought his thoughts back. He saw himself alone and vanquished. Yet on the edges of the clouds some light showed. Rogers's sentence was a clarion call to courage—

"To-day life has shown me a *man*."



# THE PRICELESS PAIR

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY E. H. SHEPARD

THE automatic footballers—goal-keepers both—faced one another across the confined space of the slot machine. In build, features, and bearing they were precisely similar, so that one with imagination—and a penny—might feel additional interest in the contest by considering it a match between twins. Each wore an expression of lofty pathos, of melancholy dignity, which suggested that gentlemanly fortitude with which they bore the indifference of the passing holiday-makers.

Helen took pity on the two sad automatons and found a penny. A small boy, seeking second-hand amusement, came up and stood expectantly behind her. Obeying the printed instructions, she inserted her penny in the slot and pulled a lever, which served the double purpose of releasing the ball and causing one of the dignified automatons to kick. The ball shot up out of a trap-door, bounded across the machine, ran behind one of the goals, and vanished down a hole labelled "Lost." From the interior of the machine came the sound of the irretrievable penny dropping into its maw.

The small boy grunted and made off. Helen waited until he had gone, and then found another penny. Something like stage-fright, she was sure, had been responsible for her previous failure. Once more the ball bounded out of the trap, and once more it made straight for the back of the goal and the hole labelled "Lost."

Then, as she was turning away, a voice addressed her.

"Excuse me, miss," it said, "I think you pull the lever a little too hard. May I show you?"

Before she could answer, the owner of the voice was at her side, and one of his own pennies was in the machine. This time

the ball rolled to the feet of one of the automatons. Another touch of the lever caused a mighty kick from a stiff metal leg. The ball jumped into the net of the opposite goal, fell down a hole labelled "Money Returned," and back came the penny with a cheerful clatter.

"You see?" said the young man. "It's quite easy. Let's try again."

He repeated the performance successfully, and turned to her with a smile.

She liked his face. It was round and sunburnt, and his smile was boyish and charming. He wore a sports coat which looked quite a reasonably good imitation of Harris tweed. A sky-blue ribbon adorned his straw hat, and, in continuation of a disastrous colour scheme, a brown tie stood out vividly against a background of pink shirt. His waistcoat was simply deplorable, being cream-coloured and decorated with a green border. Altogether, he made one of the most joyous splashes of colour to be seen that afternoon on the West Pier at Brighton.

The girl herself was neatly attired, with all the quiet good taste of the best type of young working-woman. A wide-brimmed straw hat plainly trimmed hid most of her pretty hair. Her white cotton blouse and blue serge skirt were both obviously the booty of bargain-counter skirmishes. She looked a nice, quiet little girl enjoying a holiday in her own quiet fashion after fifty weeks of honest work. This much did the young slot-machine expert decide after a brief and unobtrusive summing-up.

"Do you like playing with these machines?" he asked.

"Oh, I love it! But they're such a waste of money, aren't they?"

Feminine economy peeped out there and set him laughing.

"Come round with me," he said; "I've got lots of pennies. Hullo, look here! Ever seen the working model of an execution in an English prison?"

She drew a thrilled breath.

"No. I've never dared see it by myself."

"You'd like to, now I'm with you," he remarked, with the easy protectiveness of the young male.

She did not answer, but permitted him to insert a penny and set the grim mechanism in motion. Prison doors were flung open, revealing a group of dolls, while a clock began to strike the hour of eight. The condemned doll, blindfolded and securely pinioned by thin twine, stood on the trap-door, a noose of string around his neck. The executioner doll grasped a lever strongly reminiscent of the handle of a beer-engine. Two warder dolls and a chaplain doll regarded the business with an indifference which seemed criminally callous. On the last stroke of eight the executioner doll pulled the handle of the beer-engine, the trap-door shot down, the condemned doll vanished, and the prison doors closed upon the tragedy.

"He's a goner," remarked the young man cheerfully. "Shall we see him hanged again?"

"No, don't!"

"The best penn'orth I ever had," the young man continued, as they turned away, "was when I was staying at Southend. Ever been there? No? Well, it's a champion place for a holiday. I put a penny in the slot of a machine like that, to see the fellow hanged—me being partial to executions—and something went wrong with the works. The machine didn't stop after just hanging him once. It hanged him over and over and over again. Up he bobbed every time, the clock went on striking eight, and down he went again. Sixty-six times I saw him hanged, and all for a penny!"

"Oo-h!" exclaimed Helen. "How lovely for you! What happened in the end?"

"Oh, I could have stayed and watched it all day. Only after about an hour and a half a chap in uniform, who looked after the machines, came along with a bag of tools and stopped it." He broke off to laugh. "You're on a holiday, I s'pose, miss?"

"Yes."

"Same here. I come from London. Do you?"

"Er—yes."

"That's funny. Are you in business?"

"Er—yes."

"Well, I'm blest! So am I. That's funny, too. May I ask what business?"

"I'm in a shop," Helen said.

"Well, strike me lucky! So am I. That is funny! We both come from London, we're both in biz, and now we both meet down here. *Don't* tell me you're in the drapery line?"

"Glass and china," said Helen tersely.

"Ah, that's a pity! Shan't be able to come and see you. You see, my name's Bull—Eric Bull. Mustn't have a bull in a china shop. . . . I say, it's no use me making jokes unless you burst into uproarious merriment or at least say 'Tee-hee!' I'm in the drapery myself. Ladies' hosiery department."

Helen hid a smile.

"How romantic!" she remarked.

"Yes, isn't it? I wasn't half shy at first, but, bless you, you can get used to anything. I'm not braggin', but what I don't know about stockings Santa Claus doesn't know, either. But perhaps," he added, "a gentleman oughtn't to talk about stockings to a lady. I didn't mean to offend. You see, it's my business."

He glanced at her anxiously, as if to assure himself that no offence had been taken. Finding none had, he resumed:

"I say, miss, you haven't told me."

"Told you what?"

"Your name."

She hesitated quite an appreciable time.

"Helen Bryant," she said at last.

"That's good; now we know each other," he said, in a tone that hinted that now the proprieties were satisfied. "I say, you haven't got a boy, have you? Not down here, I mean? I haven't got a girl, either—not down here. Shall we—er—shall we meet sometimes? What I mean to say is, a holiday isn't much good unless you've got friends. And if you don't like me, you needn't see me again afterwards."

Helen hesitated. She thought she could read admiration in the honest eyes which looked into hers, and her conscience pricked her. But she drowned the still, small voice before answering him.

"I should like to meet you—sometimes, Mr. Bull," she said shyly.

So, having come to the beginnings of an understanding, they wandered around the pier, set more slot machines in motion, and found their way to the iron gratings underneath, where patient disciples of the late

I. Walton awaited with almost pathetic hopefulness the attentions of problematical fish. He bought her chocolates, at which she protested before and after accepting them, and a paper-back novel by an authoress whose strong silent heroes put garrulous folk—like you and me, dear reader—to shame. Over cups of tea at a green table they arranged to meet at eight-thirty that same evening and listen to one of the three or four dozen bands which, in the summer, make Brighton such an ideal resort for the jaded City worker in quest of rest and quiet.

He saw her off the pier, even to the steps of the Monopole Hotel, where consternation suddenly appeared in his eyes.

"Snakes!" he exclaimed. "You're not stopping here?"

"I'm going in to write a letter," she explained. "There's a lovely big room, and tables and ink and pens and paper, and nobody says anything to you for using the stationery."

"Swank!" said her cavalier. And so they parted.

## II.

I HAVE no patience with the teller of tales who tries to hoodwink his listeners or readers and then to spring a surprise on them. For one reason, the method savours too much of that of the conjurer, who causes us to look elsewhere while he changes our own handkerchief for the one which he presently burns. For another reason, readers are not so simple as they were, and even those who have not looked at the end know just as well as I do that this is not the mere record of a vulgar seaside flirtation. So why try to keep it up?

Helen Orlyon—not Helen Bryant, for Bryant was an inspiration of the moment, derived from the sight of an empty match-box lying on the deck of the pier—made her way straight to the drawing-room of the Monopole, where Lady Orlyon, her aunt and protectress, sat glooming over an empty tea-cup. Lady Orlyon was not exactly an invalid—at least, she had no complaint which she could define. She was wont to tell people, in a sunk voice, that she was "far from strong," and leave it at that. This mysterious condition of weakness prevented her from leaving the hotel, except in a bath-chair wheeled by a favoured old reprobate whose alleged religious views coincided exactly with those of herself.

Lady Orlyon stared dumbly at her niece and made room for her on the settee.

"My dear," she said, "if it amuses you to wear those outrageous clothes, I suppose I am powerless to prevent it. If you must write a book about the people who call themselves the proletariat—and I don't know why you must—I utterly fail to see why you should go out disguised as one of them. Do me a favour, child, by changing at once."

"I shall have to change for dinner in an hour or so," Helen responded. "Oh, Auntie, I've found something too heavenly! I can begin my book at once."

"If that," said Lady Orlyon, "will keep you to the hotel and stop this utterly ridiculous masquerading, I suppose it is something to be thankful for. What have you found that is so—er—celestial?"

Helen leaned towards her aunt and lowered her voice.

"Auntie, I've got off. I've let myself be picked up. Such a nice young man. He's in the drapery and sells stockings. I'm in the glass and china. You wouldn't believe what an interesting experience it was. I've got reams and reams of 'copy' out of him, and I'm going to get some more to-night."

Helen felt, rather than saw, her aunt stiffen.

"Helen, how could you do it?" the invalid cried, with quite a rousing burst of energy. "Stockings, indeed! I am almost glad that your poor mother died when you were a child. Doesn't the thought of her, looking down upon you and grieving, deter you from these follies? Oh, why cannot I find words to express my horror and shame? Why am I tongue-tied when my heart is full of words? Really, dear child, you must try to remember who you are. Why is it necessary for you to know anything about such people? Others write about them without mixing with them. You can tell that by reading their books. Why must you be different from anybody else?"

"There is such a thing," said Helen, "as an artistic conscience. And really, Auntie, the young man I have been with was most awfully nice. Nobody could have been kinder or more chivalrous. I am quite sure he comes from a good family which has sunk, as so many of them have. His voice is quite charming, and at times free from the Cockney accent. Evidently the poor fellow thinks Cockney is the right way to speak, for he seems consciously to put it on. All his instincts were the right ones, except that he had a morbid liking for a model execution. I shall make him my hero."



“Another touch of the lever caused a mighty kick from a stiff

An explosive sound escaped Lady Orlyon’s tightly drawn lips.

“In my book, I mean,” Helen explained hastily.

Lady Orlyon turned loose the springs of wisdom upon her niece.

“If,” she said, “you continue this absurd acquaintanceship, one of two things will happen: either that young man will insult you—for which you will have yourself to blame—or he will fall in love with you, which will not be fair to him.”

“He won’t do either,” Helen retorted. “In the first place, he is—save for certain superficialities which I am studying—what we should call a gentleman. In the second place, he hinted to me, ever so nicely, that these seaside friendships are not expected to extend beyond the period of the holiday. So that’s that, as he would say.”

Lady Orlyon sighed the long sigh of regretful impotence.

“I can only hope, then,” she said,



metal leg. The ball jumped into the net of the opposite goal."

"that you will terminate this eccentric acquaintanceship before the dear archdeacon arrives down here. I am quite at a loss to guess what he would say if he knew."

### III.

WHEN Eric Cloudesley, *alias* Eric Bull, left Helen on the steps of the Monopole, he signalled a taxi and drove in it to the Royal Kent, where, acutely conscious of the spriteness of his attire, he sneaked in through the revolving glass doors and, avoiding as

much as possible the astonished gaze of the staff, he made his way to his room.

A quarter of an hour later he came down again, his multi-coloured raiment exchanged for a more sober-looking garb, and, making his way into the smoking-room, he sat down and concocted the following letter to his uncle, Archdeacon Cloudesley.

MY DEAR UNCLE ODO,—

I have not yet called upon your friends at the Monopole, Lady Orlyon and her



niece, charming as I am sure they are, but I shall leave it to you to introduce me when you come down

If I may say so, I admire your scheme intensely, and I have already begun to study people of the type you propose to benefit. It is quite true. Friendless young people of both sexes of the lower and lower-middle classes, who come to spend their holidays at our seaside resorts, are driven by loneliness to make friendships, many of which are perforce undesirable. Your idea of establishing properly supervised Welfare Centres at our large seaside resorts, where young people of the right sort can be brought together and amused, seems to me admirable in every way.

But, as you truly say, it is no use trying to help these people unless one knows them and understands them. I have therefore disguised myself as a young shop-assistant on his annual holiday, and have made acquaintance with a lonely girl of the class you wish to help.

It is quite likely that I have not selected a very usual type. This young girl is a gentlewoman in all essentials save for a little surface roughness. (I hasten to add, dear uncle, that the last phrase was metaphorical.) I should not be surprised to learn that she comes of quite good stock which has deteriorated during the last two generations. Save for a morbid craving to see the working model of an execution, I found her utterly charming. Don't be afraid that I shall commit the *bêtise* of falling in love with her. Still, it is strange how she lingers in my mind, although I parted from her the best part of an hour ago.

Although she is, perhaps, not altogether typical of her kind, I shall continue our acquaintanceship, as I find the study of her mentality most interesting for its own sake.

Trusting to see you here within a few days, I am, dear Uncle Odo,

Your dutiful and affectionate nephew,  
ERIC CLOUDESLEY.

"I suppose," he reflected, placing a wet stamp upon an envelope and thumping it with his fist, "that might almost pass for a model letter. It ought to be in 'The Model Letter Writer.' 'How to write to an arch-deacon (a) When you want to borrow from him; (b) When you know it's no use trying; and (c) When he's your uncle.'"

He sealed the missive and took it out into the vestibule.

#### IV.

A WEEK had passed, during which time Helen's sordidly realistic novel had grown from the mere infancy of a bare title to a rapidly growing child of five chapters.

Somewhat to Eric's embarrassment, she had kept him talking "shop" at each of their frequent meetings, until the springs of his invention were nearly dry, and every word he uttered was recorded on the tablets of her memory and transferred to manuscript within a few hours.

From him she learned of the iniquitous system of fines prevalent in our large drapery stores. She was horrified to learn that a young girl actually lost her entire week's salary in one day, and owed the firm two pounds ten at the end of the week. Driven to crime, the poor young thing was caught in the act of trying to pawn two partially clad lay figures, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

She heard all about the kleptomaniac duchess, who stole packets of pins—for which the staff had to pay—with which to feed her tame ostriches. The cruel discipline exercised by the floor-walkers, whose erect bearing and military walk were only obtained by Prussian methods, was revealed to her. All the fatigues and dangers of sale week—when, owing to a fracas among bargain hunters at the hat-pin counter, a whole department had to be turned into a casualty clearing station—were minutely explained to her.

Reading between the lines of these exaggerations, Helen was able to find plenty of that sordid quality which she believed to be realism. Somewhat to Eric's disappointment, she declined to talk to him about life in a china shop; but he was not seeking material for immortal literature, and did not press her. It was only Helen Bryant as a holiday-maker that he was interested in, or so he persuaded himself at first.

For a long week he wrestled with what he privately called a folly, until it grew too strong for him and overmastered him, when he called it love. From a gentle idyll the escapade changed to an affair of vital importance. He told himself that he did not care tuppence what his people would say. A little training, and she would be fit mate for a prince. He meant to marry her.

All that deterred him was an almost superstitious fear that such marriages were not successful. We know that the Lord of Burleigh's simple village bride became a "noble lady," but, on the other hand, she



pined away, a process which must have been almost as uncomfortable for her husband as it was for herself. Eric was of a cheerful temperament, and the thought of Helen turned into incarnate misery, fretting for the dear old days among the cheese dishes, acted for a time as a brake upon his impulse.

But love conquered in the end, as, deep down in his heart, he knew it must. He would have done anything for her sake. In more robust and romantic days he could picture himself invading the scene of her slavery, striking her brutal employer over the head with one of his own ewers, and wading with her in his arms through a *débris* of broken crockeryware to freedom.

So on the eve of his uncle's expected arrival, while they sat together on a long seat at the very head of the West Pier, he led up to the all-important subject of love *via* the weather, the latest musical comedy success, and the chances of Caligula in the Leger, so that he might not afterwards be accused of having been too sudden.

"I think Caligula ought to win," murmured Helen. "It's such a lovely name."

"Talking about love," he began, seizing this golden opportunity, "I—"

"Oh, don't!" she murmured.

"Don't what?"

"Talk about love."

"But I must," he protested. "If I don't, how on earth am I to tell you that I— Oh, Helen, haven't you guessed?"

"Yes," she whispered miserably, "I've guessed, and I've been hating myself."

Eric felt suddenly like a cat which had got in the way of a fire hose.

"You mean you—you don't care for me?" he stammered.

"I—I wish I could say I didn't. I'm afraid I do. But—but it can never be. We must forget each other. You must go back to your stockings, and I must go back to the ironmongery."

"I thought it was glass and china," he exclaimed suspiciously.

Helen bit her lip. She had so nearly given herself away.

"So it is. But—but we sell lawn-mowers. It's a side line."

"I don't care what you sell!" he cried fervently. "I love you! You have admitted that you love me. Won't you say—"

She sprang up, her eyes all blind with tears.

"I must think!" she cried wildly. "I must go home and think. Don't follow me. I—I'll meet you here to-morrow at the

usual time, by the try-your-weight machine, the one that returns the penny if you guess your weight."

She flung away from him, and he had to let her go, only following her at a distance. She sped down the pier, unaware of what was going on around her, her mind a battleground of conflicting thoughts. Near the entrance she bumped into a bath-chair wheeled by an elderly dignitary of the Church, and a moment later recognised her aunt's voice.

"Where are you going in such a hurry, Helen? Archdeacon, this is my little niece. The dear Archdeacon came down to-day instead of to-morrow. Finding that his nephew had gone out, he very kindly called to see me, and insisted on wheeling me out. As it is such a delightful evening, I could not resist letting him."

Like a man—or, rather, a girl—in a dream, Helen bowed to the Archdeacon, who would doubtless have said something had Lady Orlyon allowed him.

"Now," she continued, almost without a pause, "perhaps we shall see something of that naughty nephew of yours who has not yet been to call on us."

"I am afraid," said the Archdeacon, "he has been very busy. He has been interesting himself in a scheme of mine for the good of the poorer classes. For the last week, I know, he has been among them, disguised as one of themselves, studying their habits and tastes. For a young man who I once feared was utterly worldly, he— But, dear me, here he is! You must forgive his somewhat hectic attire, Lady Orlyon. He has evidently been at work this evening among our poorer brothers and sisters."

Helen looked round and beheld Eric approaching. In a flash she understood. Without a word of explanation beyond a stifled scream, she turned and fled. The turnstile fairly whizzed behind her.

"My niece," Lady Orlyon explained, "is very temperamental. She has a literary bent."

\* \* \* \* \*

Half an hour later the Archdeacon and Eric found themselves alone in one of the public rooms of the Monopole, while Lady Orlyon went to find her niece. She rejoined them after a little while.

"Helen will be down in a few moments," she said. "She is in her room and seems a little distraite. I noticed that the grate is full of burnt paper. I think she has been destroying one of her manuscripts."



"Every foot of that rugged mile was imprinted on his brain. He traversed it methodically beneath a mountain of other men's goods, the tump line drawn tight over his forehead, his sinews taut like steel."

# TRAVELLERS' REST

By ALAN SULLIVAN

ILLUSTRATED BY DUDLEY TENNANT

HE came up from the coast with the rush that started when gold was found on Ragged Creek, one hundred and eighty miles inland, a whale of a man with a gigantic body and calm, blue eyes. Then, half-way to Eldorado, he stayed on the portage that leads from Black Lake to the Yukon River, and let the rush surge by.

To hundreds of excited men, and to the few hysterical women in that breathless procession, the figure of Big John—for thus he was known—stood out as the strangest thing in all that frost-smitten land. He was within eighty miles of treasure, but let others sweep past and take it. The strongest of them all was the most ineffectual, or, at least, had lost the final spark of ambition. Ragged Creek yielded stuff that ran two ounces to the pan, but that did not move him; and when more gold was found further on, Big John put a new roof on his shack, and stuck tighter than ever.

At the end of the first month he had earned six hundred dollars by packing loads across the portage. Like the Mormons who settled on the overland trail to California, he took tribute from the stream of treasure-seekers, who cared not what it cost to save an hour. Every foot of that rugged mile was imprinted on his brain. He traversed it methodically beneath a mountain of other men's goods, the tump line drawn tight over his forehead, his sinews taut like steel, his vast lungs sending out vaporous exhalations like those of some prehistoric animal. Five dollars for all he could carry was the tariff, and he carried four hundred-weight every trip.

That was for those who were making the journey in to Ragged Creek. It was different for those who came out—if they came empty-handed. Big John could tell at a glance how fortune fared, and took no tribute from the defeated. His back and

shoulders were at their service without price. More than that, no man left the portage hungry, and many there were who passed that way and went on with the bitterness of failure strangely assuaged, and memories of a soft, deep voice and a pair of quiet, blue eyes.

So it came that in six months Big John was known throughout this wind-whipped district as something different from his fellows. Greed had not touched him, nor avarice, nor envy of his kind. The women who crossed the portage stared at him admiringly, wondered what mystery lay behind his calm gaze, then drifted down the Yukon with a feeling that they had left behind something very like a haven of refuge. The original shack disappeared, and was replaced by a workman-like cabin of heavy timber with neatly notched corners, and a big fireplace where the flames leaped at night, and John sat smoking while he pored over a month-old number of *The Seattle Tribune*. Then one day a man and woman came out from Ragged Creek.

He knew, the minute he looked at them, what the story was, but the quiet eyes changed not at all. The woman, he decided, was the finest he had ever seen, tall and straight, with full red lips and hair like night. She moved with an easy strength that curiously resembled the way he went about things himself, and if she was defeated, there was no sign of it in her proud, smooth face.

The man was otherwise, and John had an odd impression that he had seen him before—small, with sloping shoulders, a thin face and evasive eyes that seemed not to look straight at anything. He coughed incessantly with a sharp, dry, barking sound, and staggered a little as he stepped out of the canoe. Then he sat down and stared helplessly at his dunnage. The woman felt in her pocket and looked Big John full in the face.

"You help people over, don't you?"

He nodded.

"What do you ask to move this load to Black Lake?"

"Nothing," he said slowly. Then, with a glance at the man: "But it's too late to start now."

Her eyes travelled over the much-used camping ground, from which all available firewood had been cut long since.

"We can't stay here."

John smiled. The little man had not spoken, nor did his companion seem to expect it.

"You needn't. I've got plenty of room."

She made an uncertain gesture, and he waited with a queer sense of unreality. Of all who had crossed Black Lake portage, there had been no woman like this, and he became suddenly aware that here was the one he had looked for ever since he was a boy. Slowly the thought possessed him. It explained so much he did not understand before. The little man gave vent to a strangling noise.

"Good business. We'll stay."

"We can't afford it," she said, the colour climbing to her cheek. "We've got to push on to outside."

Big John was lashing the contents of the canoe into one huge bundle. He swung this on his back, then, stooping gingerly, picked up the canoe itself as though it were a feather, and balanced it upside down like a gigantic helmet.

"Come on," he said over his shoulder, and strode down the trail.

That was the coming of Mary Eden to Black Lake portage. So far as concerned Henry Eden, it seemed they had reached there just in time, for after he had eaten he lay in the spare bunk and began to talk unintelligibly in a high-pitched, wandering voice. It was during the intervals, when he lay quiet, that Big John learned the story, or part of it. The woman told it while the firelight made a glory in her eyes and face.

"We came up from San Francisco four months ago. My husband had a small business there, but got the prospecting fever and sold it. He had never been in the North before. We went into Ragged Valley with the rush, but it was no use—everything was taken up."

The voice trailed out, and he nodded understandingly. He knew enough of the game to visualise it all, but at the moment there was no picture of the new camp in his mind. He watched the turn of her neck and the masses of dark hair that had fallen loose.

"I wonder you didn't go in," she said presently. "You'd have done well."

He shook his great head. "I've done enough of that to last me out. A man doesn't want more than so much, and I've made that here."

She sent him a brilliant smile. "You've been carrying other people's burdens, but you couldn't have made much at what you asked from me. Did you ever hear of the giant Christopher?"



"It was during the intervals, when he lay quiet, that Big John learned the story, or part of it."

Big John looked puzzled. "Who was that?"

"A man stronger even than you, who carried strangers across a ford. One day a child came to the river bank and asked to be taken over. In the middle of the river the giant felt the burden become almost more than he could support, but made his way across with great effort. Then he asked the child why this could be, and was told

that he had been carrying Christ and the sins of the world. So after that he was called Christopher. Don't you like that story?"

John gave a little nod. Here was something else that explained matters, and he knew now why he had never charged an unsuccessful man for help on Black Lake portage. He would remember that story when his pack was heavy and the trail bad.



"The woman told it while the firelight made a glory in her eyes and face. 'We came up from San Francisco four months ago. My husband had a small business there, but got the prospecting fever and sold it. He had never been in the North before.'"

Then his thoughts were jerked back to the woman herself.

"Where are you heading for now?"

She looked suddenly forlorn and helpless. "I don't know. There's no business now to go back to, and"—she hesitated, glancing uncertainly towards the bunk—"he will never be able to build up another. Friends—I suppose we'll go to friends for a while first."

"Where?" he persisted, with a curious interest.

"Anywhere," she whispered, then put her face between her hands.

Big John did not move. He felt within him the first heat of strange fires, new and deep. He had conquered the bitter North, so far as he cared to conquer it, carved out a home and found peace and plenty. The amazing strength that flowed to his finger-

tips had found its appointed work. He could laugh at fatigue, and smile at everything save distress. Now that this woman had come, there was an end to serenity, and he felt strangely resentful. Then he glanced at the drooping shoulders, and had a vast desire to put his arm around them.

"You've got a friend here on Black Lake portage," he muttered.

Something of his meaning drifted into the dulled ears of the little man in the bunk, and he began to murmur in his weakness of phantom friends and gold on Ragged Creek. Hundreds of friends, thousands of ounces of gold—the voice lifted shrilly, boasting that he had them all. John strode over and looked down at him. Then, with a certain magnificent simplicity, he looked at Mary Eden.

"You'll stay here till he's better. There's no hurry."

"We can't," she protested swiftly; "we haven't money enough."

"There's three thousand dollars under that bunk," he said easily, "and that ought to last for a while."

"Three thousand dollars!" babbled the sick man. "That's a good clean up. Look at it, Mary, look at it—two hundred ounces! I told you we'd strike it, but think of finding it under a bunk!"

She put a cool hand on the hot brow, and sent John an extraordinary glance in which were both gratitude and apprehension.

"I'd like to do as much for you some day," she said under her breath, "but that day will never come."

Thus began a week which Big John spent almost entirely on the trail. When the tide of travellers ebbed, he made work for himself till nightfall, not daring to see too much of Mary Eden. Men came and went, some with lack-lustre eyes, others in which the light of success burned with a quick, bright flame. These latter hastened to the nearest city to squander that for which they had paid so dearly, knowing well that soon the irresistible call would sound again, and they would take to the trail once more in the hunt for gold. John said nothing, helped where he could, and took toll where he might take it with mercy. But always before his eyes was the figure of Mary Eden as she bent over the man who now gathered strength day by day. The inward fire was burning more fiercely, and he knew it would never be extinguished. On the evening of the last day Mary came along the trail like

a spirit of the woods, and he trembled when he saw her.

"I wanted just to say 'Thank you' out here," she said uncertainly, and held out a slim hand.

He stared first at the keen edge of his axe, then raised his eyes. There was that in her face that took his breath away, as though he had been given a glimpse into Paradise as the gates closed. Beyond her the trail stretched its weary, familiar mile, but he saw it not.

"Don't go," he said.

Silence fell in the forest, an encompassing silence that seemed to bring them closer. She made a little gesture of helplessness, and her eyes were like stars seen through summer mist.

"You—you don't want to be thanked?"

He shook his head.

"But I can't thank you any other way," she said faintly

"I know—that's what's the matter."

She swayed a little as he spoke, and Big John's arms turned to rigid steel. Had he put them round her, he knew she would never have left them. Between them was the unwritten law that guards all women in the wilderness.

"You've saved a man's life," she whispered; "that means something."

"Don't go," he said again.

"Can I stay?" She put out a hand and touched his arm like a child in trouble. "You know I must not stay!"

He grappled with that, and his mighty fingers clinched round the axe handle. It was quite true. He knew she could not stay, but he did not know how to let her go. Fixed stars cannot be displaced. He wondered why she ever came this way at all, then reflected mutely that she could not help it, there being no other way. But then he could not help it, either. He probed his brain for the meaning of all this, and found none. It was the beginning and end of the world.

"I'll come, too," he said, after a long pause. "There's nothing to keep me here," he added.

Again that gesture which moved him so much. It meant that she could not prevent it, but what was the use? The dark eyes clouded, as though visioning what his protection would mean. It was strange to think of being actually protected.

"Dear friend," she answered shakily, "the trail divides to-morrow, but I shall never forget."

At that his spirit seemed to burst into flame, fed with the unconsumed fuel of unloving years. He had rather be forgotten than remembered. It hurt too much. His fingers tingled, and the axe leaped into life. The edge of it grazed her shoulder, her head, her arm, circling in swift, invisible curves, playing about her like a thing of incarnate vitality, weaving a hissing shroud of death, enveloped in which she stood motionless, her eyes looking full into his own. And through his vast body flowed a wild Berserker joy that he had found one valiant soul that understood. Then he flung back his shoulders, and the axe soared, whistling, over the tree-tops. Big John came back to himself and stared after it.

"At sunrise," he said.

There was little talk in the cabin that night. Henry Eden, now that he was fit to travel, seemed more possessed with anxiety for the future than with any desire to appear grateful to the man who had saved him. His mind wandered from one possibility to another, suggesting that he had tried many things and succeeded at none. Big John watched Mary's face, putting away the picture in his mind with voiceless determination, while she spoke hardly at all. Presently she went out and walked a little way down the trail. He did not follow, knowing that if he did they would never return. Her eyes thanked him when she came back.

That night he lay awake, listening to the drone of the wind and to a small, reiterant voice in his own breast. The moon was casting a cold light across the rough floor, when the little man put his head out of the top bunk immediately above Big John, and peered cautiously down. Seeing only the giant's closed lids, he swung one leg over the side board and descended like a cat. Then he stood for a moment staring anxiously at the big frame. John felt that stare, and lay still.

Apparently satisfied that he was safe, Eden crept over to the other bunk where his wife slept in utter exhaustion. Here there followed the same minute scrutiny. Presently he stooped, and from beneath the bunk drew noiselessly the packsack in which were three thousand dollars, the price of sweating days on Black Lake portage. Abstracting the packet of money with nervous haste, he thrust it in his pocket, and stood looking again at his wife as though it was for her sake he had done this thing. Big John controlled his twitching muscles,

for the same thought had come to him. If it was for her sake, it was all right. The idea brought with it a curious unction, and when the little man had climbed noiselessly back, the giant lay with an odd smile on his brown face. The trail was good for another three thousand, and he knew now what he must do in the morning to put the thing right for her.

In the morning he did it. Standing beside the canoe at the far end of the portage, he looked straight in Henry Eden's face and thrust a small parcel into his hand, but he dared not look at Eden's wife.

"Take this till you strike something," he said huskily, then pushed them off into deep water.

He went back to the labour of the trail, but in twenty-four hours found it intolerable. Black Lake portage was now haunted. At daybreak he stuck a notice on the rough cabin wall that this was "Travellers' Rest" for those who wanted it, cut a pile of firewood, put fresh meadow hay in the bunks, loaded his own canoe, and, squatting Indian fashion in the middle, struck off down the Yukon. He did not yet know where he was going, but he would know soon.

A week later he decided that Ragged Creek was poor ground, and disappeared up country. The strength of the man, his wisdom in the wilderness, and the driving force that seemed to urge him on, made labour a thing of small account. He traversed the creeks like a grizzly bear, rooting along the shores, scattering sand and gravel, and plucking up trees to see what lay beneath. Always he scanned the surrounding ridges with insatiable hunger to know whither they led.

Now, it is written that the North is like some magnificent and mysterious woman, terrible at times to those who fear her, but lavishing an opulent bounty on others who enter with courage into her baffling moods. A mistress of men, she receives their endless offerings of life and strength brought from the ends of the earth, and, as fancy takes her, repays either with treasure or pain and a long forgetfulness. But, payment or no payment, always that stream of offerings continues.

Thus it was that Big John, who feared nothing, but loved much, found on the banks of a nameless creek a patch of gravel shot through with coarse yellow dust. It was black sand that ran two ounces to the pan. And then the fever took him.

Of the next few weeks he remembered

little, save that he fought frost with fire, and his eyeballs burned from lack of sleep. He became one who moved as in a dream, snatching food at unnoted intervals. It seemed that he had been tilting a gold pan ever since Creation dawned. When he worked through the richest of the top sands, he rigged up a sluice and riffle, dammed the creek a little higher up, and shovelled till he dropped exhausted on his treasure house. Always there hung over him the fear that winter might lay her stiff finger on the stream, and he laboured the more mightily, taking on the aspect of the earth himself, with ragged clothes, tawny skin, long hair and great, hard hands. Then winter came with grey skies, and a drone of north wind, and a few dancing flakes.

He kicked a hole in the dam—which the spring ice would destroy in any case—left the sluice standing, and carved on it an inscription to the effect that there was good stuff still left for anyone who had the sense to look for it, shouldered three hundred pounds of gold dust and a hundredweight of outfit, and struck along the shore of Lost River toward the Yukon. It took six days to reach it, during which he reflected grimly that Christopher never carried a bigger load. He did not want the stuff for himself, but there was something he could do with it, if he found the trail of Mary Eden. This picture of himself, spoiling the sub-Arctics and laying gold at her feet, seemed an attractive thing. Eden did not matter. She could not help that. Probably she was in need at this very moment.

He camped on the banks of the Yukon till there passed a Siwash Indian, in whose canoe he shortly embarked, having bought it on sight. Two days later he took the trail for Skagway, having given back the canoe with a few ounces of dust. On this route there was no need to pack an outfit, so his load lightened by a hundredweight. It was then that he heard of a new strike in an unexpected spot, one in which a man called Eden was part-owner.

Leaving his dust in a safe place, he went to see it, having bought the canoe over again from the Siwash, who cared nothing for the whims of crazy white men so long as they meant profit. At the new diggings his eyes opened wide. He got the story from the other partner.

"Eden—yes, that's the name—a little man with a wife. Blew in here about two months ago with three thousand bucks. Offered him a half interest for twenty-five

hundred, and hanged if he didn't take it, being a tenderfoot. That was two days before I struck this stuff." The man fingered a pinch of black sand and gave a hoarse laugh. "That twenty-five hundred is bringing him a thousand a day now, and next year he'll get more. He's my partner, but he's a skunk, too, and I hate to see him get it. If it wasn't for his wife, he'd never have seen the place."

"How's that?" said Big John curiously.

"She told me herself that some high-minded Samaritan gave them that money when they were all in. Great little story, isn't it, but I'm busted if I don't believe it."

"Where do they live now?"

"'Frisco—where else? Want to go down one of these pits and see what we've got? It will do any man good. When Eden came along, there was only an inch deep of sand showing in one place, and now there's two feet of it—lousy with gold."

Big John looked about. The place was alive with men, working desperately against the advance of winter. Washing had stopped, but piles of the precious stuff were accumulating at the mouths of a dozen pits. There was a whining of windlasses and muffled shouts from invisible diggers. A thousand a day for five months meant a hundred and fifty thousand a year. He had bought this for her with the sweat of the trail, but what was left that he could do now?

"No, I reckon I won't go down."

The other man scanned the massive shoulders and powerful arms. "Want a job? Had any luck yourself?"

"'Frisco?" said John slowly. "Whereabouts in 'Frisco?"

"I guess the name is pretty well known down there by now," the answer came, with a laugh. "I'm thinking of pulling out myself as soon as I can get someone to take hold here." He looked hard into Big John's blue eyes. "Sure you don't fancy a job? The pay is most anything to the right man. Seems, now I think of it, I passed you once near Black Lake portage. There's no others of your size whereabouts. Now I've got it. Ain't you the fellow that packed six hundred for a solid mile?"

"I'd like the job if you hadn't a skunk for a partner. So long!" He moved off, towering above the rest, his lips tight, and there was that in his face which made men look but once, then turn hastily away.

He landed in San Francisco two weeks later, strode through the streets with three hundred pounds of dust on his back, dumped



it on the floor of the nearest bank, and got a receipt. There was nothing he could do for her now, but something he wanted to do for himself, which was to see and be near, but remain invisible. He gave no thought to his appearance, but, though the folk of San Francisco were used to the sight of strange men from the North, there was an opening of eyes and twisting of heads as he passed mountainously along the crowded thoroughfares. Women stared at him, wondered, and perceived the romance that went with him. Men noted the amazing strength of his body, and were conscious of their own slack muscles. The smell of the city was in his nostrils, and he held his head high.

The Eden house was across the bay in Berkeley. On the ferry he heard that Eden had died a fortnight before, just as the stream of wealth was reaching its height. Big John must have crossed the news on his way down from Skagway. In a curious fashion he was not surprised. The skunk had passed on, but the woman of all desire was now beyond touch, barricaded with gold beside which the tribute of Lost River was negligible. His mind pitched back to Black Lake portage and the familiar, sweat-stained mile. It called to him, but he must see her once before he went.

He moved up the ordered streets of Berkeley, and crossed the road ere reaching the house, a large, white, wooden place with great trees and wide verandahs. It took more than three hundred pounds of dust to buy that, and never before had he known anyone who lived in such a mansion. It made him the more timid. Then he leaned against a eucalyptus trunk and gazed till he saw a straight, slim figure come out and walk slowly toward the gates. And at that all strength seemed to leave him.

Suddenly her eyes were drawn toward him, and she stood with her hand on her breast as once she stood in the shadows of a memorable trail. Seeing her approach, he drew back, conscious of raggedness, and that a man like himself had no standing in surroundings like these. Compared to her, he was poor—would always be poor. Birth and breeding—he had never thought of them before, but now— She made the little gesture he could never forget

"You, my friend, and where do you come from?"

He jerked his chin toward the North. "Just passing through. I came round this way because——"

The lie died on his lips, and she smiled wistfully as though she understood.

"Tell me that you would not pass near here without seeing one for whom you did so much. Do you know there's only one now?"

"I just heard that."

"Then you know what it led to?"

"I heard that in the North."

She looked at him strangely. "Come in with me."

He walked beside her, a dishevelled Titan, flouting the quiet perfection of her dress. People stared, but she saw them not. Across the wide lawn she moved toward the shady trees, and every moment she seemed more unattainable. Then, after a pause in which she felt her eyes upon him, he began to talk softly, and every word re-created that familiar trail.

"You never can know what your action meant to us. It was more than manna in the wilderness, and made me believe in God again. I had no chance to tell you anything, but before we came out to Skagway, and after my husband knew that all was well, we sent back to the portage, and found you had gone. When did you go?"

"Soon," he said huskily, "soon."

"The man came back and said the cabin was marked 'Travellers' Rest.' Did you put that up?"

"Why not?"

"It was like you. That's what you were yourself. Tell me, did you do well in the North?"

He shook his head. No, he had not done well, having sighted Paradise—and lost it. Again she noted his toil-stained clothing.

"Presently you will tell me where I can send what you gave my husband, with something for the use of it, though we can never really repay you."

"Don't!" he said, under his breath. "I don't want it."

If she heard him, she gave no sign, but in spite of his appearance she had expected him to say that. How much was there now in those torn pockets?

"I always think about you as one of those—nearly the only one—who put more, far more, into the North than he has taken out. How many hundreds crossed Black Lake portage and went on happier because of you?"

"It was my job," he said dully. "I helped a few, maybe."

"Was it your job to shelter and feed us who were down and out, and send us on

with the price of your labour to find the road to fortune? When you put that money into my husband's hand, he could not even speak of it. I didn't know what it was till that evening, when we camped at the end of the lake."

Big John did not answer. He only knew that he must carry his secret to the grave, lest he cloud the skies in Paradise. She was so far from him, so far from the thought of anything like this. Henry Eden must lie in honoured ground, and the truth die with him. Then Eden's wife would marry one of her own kind, and remain a fixed star.

"I didn't do much," he protested.

"The less you think of it, the more it is. Do you go North again soon?" Her voice took on a subtle change.

"To-morrow, I reckon."

"Prospecting, this time?"

He nodded. "There's plenty of good things left. I never really went after them."

"I know you didn't. Do you want to go?"

"There's something calling me up there," he said slowly.

She turned away for a moment so that he could not see her face. It must seem queer, he thought, for a woman such as he now saw her to be to talk like this with him. In the North he could hold his own with anyone, but here—

"You haven't told me where I can send that money," she resumed unsteadily.

"Don't send it."

"Do you want to hurt me, my friend?"

He twisted his great fingers, and gave

the name of the bank near the landing-stage. "I left a little dust there. They know me."

She smiled involuntarily at the thought of anyone forgetting. He saw the smile, and the knife turned in his breast. But, he reasoned, why shouldn't she smile if she wanted to? He hoped her face would always be like that. He must go now and fight the thing out on the way back to Skagway, or, better still, when he struck the trail. Then he got to his feet and looked down at her. The sun was in his eyes.

"I'm pulling out now. Glad to—to have seen you and know things are all right."

"When does the boat sail?" The whiteness of brow under the dark glory of hair seemed beautiful beyond words. How had Henry Eden dared to take a woman like this to the North? The wonder of it held him silent for a moment. Then her question came again, as though from a long way off.

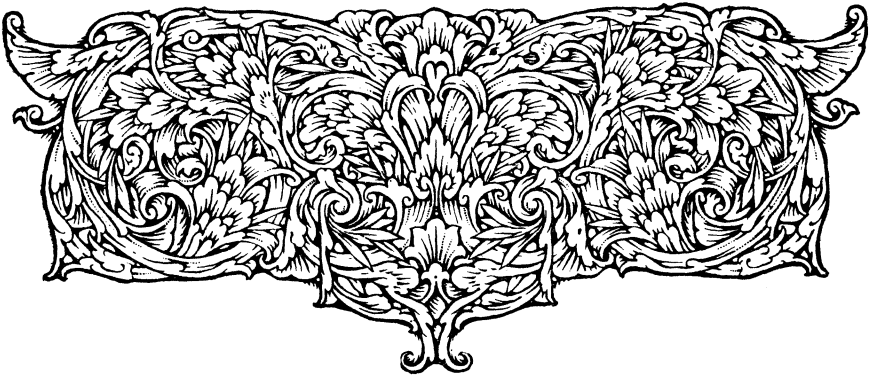
"Mid afternoon." It was the boat on which he arrived. He put out a gigantic hand. "Good-bye—friend."

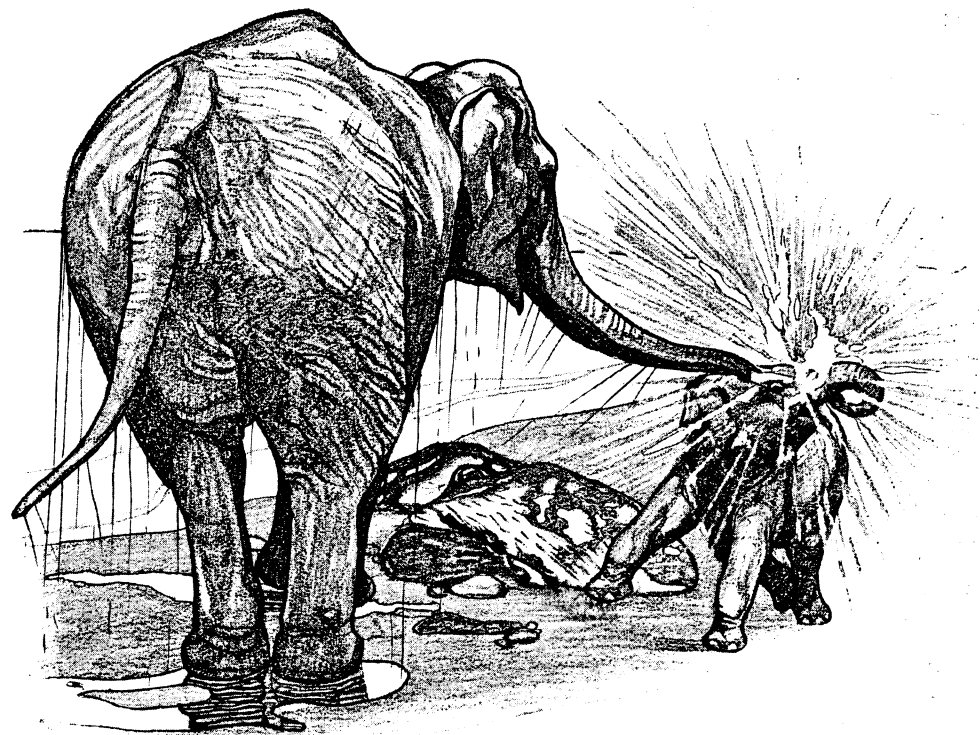
She looked him straight in the face. The colour mounted to her temples in a pulsing flood, and, receding, left them deathly pale. Two small hands crept out and reached up to his huge, ragged shoulders.

"Bearer of other men's burdens, do you know what this house is to be called?"

Came a singing in his ears. "No," he said thickly.

"Travellers' Rest, Christopher," she whispered. "Don't go!"





“In a twinkling his sorrow changed to indignation, as from her trunk she blew a stream of water over him, much to his surprise and alarm.”

# A BABE OF THE TITANS

By LIEUT.-COLONEL GORDON CASSERLY

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

**H**E was only a day old, but there was little of infantile weakness in this sturdy babe, three feet high, standing firmly planted on his stumpy legs, as he sheltered under the body of the big cow-elephant that had given him birth. There was something almost comic in the appearance of the solemn infant with his scarcely flexible little trunk ten inches long, his round body covered with matted, woolly hair, and his wrinkled skin that seemed a bad misfit. He looked hardly more real than a pantomime imitation of a baby elephant. But he was genuine enough and

very much alive as he sucked sustenance from his mother and, young as he was, boldly disputed his right to it with two other calves, his brother and sister. Yet the latter was two and a half years old, and the former five and so big that he had to stoop to reach the maternal breasts. But this new-born Babe of the Titans showed almost from the hour of his birth a courage that marked him through his life. Already he seemed to have no fear of the huge monsters of the herd, fifty strong, feeding around him, though, indeed, of all animals elephants are perhaps the gentlest. Nature has

implanted in them an instinctive avoidance of smaller beings, probably with a view to the preservation of their young, which otherwise might so easily be crushed to death in a crowd of these great beasts.

The herd was scattered about in the jungle, resting and feeding during the hot midday hours. Some lay asleep in the tall bracken. Some tore down and crushed in their mouths long trails of succulent creepers. Others, with sweeping, scythemotions of their trunks, plucked bundles of long grass and crammed them down their gullets. A huge tusker leant his forehead near the base of his trunk against a tree almost two feet in diameter and, using his weight sagaciously, pushed steadily until the roots yielded reluctantly from the earth and the stem crashed to the ground, bringing its leafy crown within reach of the wise old bull's mouth. A smaller tusker near him used his forefoot to push down a thinner sapling. For elephants are careful never to employ their tender and sensitive trunks for such rough purposes. A cow, having knocked down a plantain tree, placed her foot on the soft, fibrous stem to burst and break it up. A younger sister close by stripped the bark off a standing tree with the four-inch-long tushes in her upper jaw which are the female elephant's equivalent to the tusks of the male. Calves of all ages, grave and sober in demeanour and lacking the joyous playfulness of the young of less stately creatures, abounded with the herd. The younger ones kept close to their mothers, whose milk was their only food for the first six months of their existence. The older calves wandered a little further away, plucking and eating grass and tender creepers, yet not altogether neglecting their mother's breasts.

The herd had halted in its wandering for the Babe's birth and the two days following it, at the lapse of which the new arrival would be expected to march with the others. For an elephant-calf's helplessness is of very short duration, and in forty-eight hours it is able to travel long distances. Great animals like these, in the numbers in which they are found in the wild state, soon exhaust the fodder in one spot and so must constantly change their feeding-ground.

The crashing of the trees brought down by individuals of the herd was almost the only sound that disturbed the silent peace of the woodland. The scene was a setting worthy of the quaint beasts, these

huge monsters that seem a strange survival from prehistoric times and have not altered much from their mastodon and mammoth ancestors of Miocene ages. The spot was an open glade in an Indian forest, a little space comparatively free from the almost impenetrable tangle of dense undergrowth and interlaced creepers elsewhere. In it the trees rose clear from the bracken and long grass and thrust their crowns through the leafy canopy overhead, each struggling for its share of the life-giving sunshine above that only filtered to the ground below in a pleasantly subdued green gloom. The trees were not the feathery palms that the untravelled imagine as filling an Indian jungle, but giant growths of sal, teak, and simal, the last-named monster, straight-columned stems with curious projecting buttresses. The great boughs were matted thick with the dark-green glossy leaves of orchids, now not in flower. Here and there were smaller trees, one covered with oval green limes, others with broad, drooping leaves and long stalks, from which the nimble fingers of marauding little brown monkeys had plucked the clusters of bananas. There was the slender, straight-stemmed udal with its grey, mottled bark concealing an inner skin that, stripped off and slit into strips, is almost unbreakable.

Some of the herd had wandered from the open glade into the denser jungle around, where the thick undergrowth and the network of creepers were impenetrable to less powerful animals. Here, between the trunks of the larger trees, rioted a luxuriant vegetation, bushes covered with white, bell-shaped flowers, others every twig of which was studded thick with sharp, curved thorns. An amazing tangle of creepers, lianas of all thicknesses, some slender as fine cords, others as stout as the hawsers of a liner, entwined, interlaced, criss-crossed, interwoven with each other, swinging from bole to bole of the trees, twisting round them, cutting deep into the bark of the larger ones or strangling the growth of the smaller—an inextricable intermingling, a snake-charmer's nightmare of writhing serpents realised in wood. Some of the creepers were good for elephants to eat, and these the curved trunks dragged down to be crunched with gusto; others so poisonous or stupefying that if they fell into a stream its surface would soon be dotted with the floating bodies of lifeless fish—and these the jungle-men know how

to make use of. There was the pani-bel—the water creeper—four-sided, with rough, corrugated bark and white pulpy interior, the wonderful plant that supplies drink in the dry forest, for a length of it chopped off will give forth in swiftly-gathering drops a cool, delicious water, refreshing and palatable.

As the noon-day heat increased, though tempered to the herd by the dense shade, the noise of breaking boughs and crashing trees grew less, then ceased, and the forest was still, save for the throaty call of a calf for its mother. For one by one the great beasts ceased to feed and rested. Some lay on the ground asleep. Others dozed on their feet, never still, swaying restlessly, shifting their weight incessantly from leg to leg, their big ears flapping. Some swung their trunks almost mechanically, slapping their ribs with them. Here and there an animal broke off a small branch and used it to beat its sides or belly to drive off a persistent grey, winged pest, about the size of a small bee, the elephant-fly, the needle-like proboscis of which pierced its huge victim's thick hide and dotted it with large drops of blood. An old tusker scratched a little pile of dust from the ground and, snuffing it up his trunk, curved the latter aloft and blew the dust on to his head and back.

The day wore on, and when the sun, invisible to them above the leafy canopy, sank lower in the sky, the elephants awoke one by one and began to feed again. The various members of the herd scattered and drifted, alone or in little groups, about the forest in search of fodder. But they never wandered far from their focus, the Babe's mother. Their keen sense of smell kept them within touch, for, when the wind is favourable, elephants can sense each other at a distance of two or three miles or more. When night came the herd rested again from a couple of hours before midnight until sunrise. And they were almost the only inhabitants of the forest that slept unafraid. Not even the bird and the monkey in the tree-tops felt safe. For the weird, wailing cry of the Giant Owl threatened the one, while the menace of the climbing snake made the other shiver in his hairy skin whenever he woke up where he huddled among his dozing kindred on the highest branches. For the dark hours were the dreaded ones for the harmless denizens of the jungle. To them night brought no rest. For them every breath of

wind, every snapping twig, was full of warning. Above the tops of the trees great birds of prey wheeled against the stars. On the ground the big felines prowled in search of food, and the lordly sambhur stag, with twitching ears and every muscle tense, gathered his powerful limbs together ready for instant flight. The sharp, clanking note of the barking deer warned all the jungle of the presence of a tiger, and the big striped cat, in a rage, answered with his harsh, braying roar. But heedless of all noises, either of menace or alarm, the elephants rested undisturbed until the sun called them to wander and feed again.

On the third day after the birth of the Babe the herd got ready to move on. The scattered individuals and groups gathered together, the calves of all ages shambled to their maternal parents, and the march to a fresh feeding-ground began. An inexpert tracker might well believe that only one elephant, instead of fifty, had passed; for the herd advanced in single file, as is the habit of their kind, each stepping into the footprints of the one preceding it. The mother of the new-born infant led the way with her offspring, followed by the other cows and calves, the males bringing up the rear. With a herd on the move the pace is always set by the females with young; for the strength and powers of the little ones must be studied, and the speed of the march must not be too fast for them. When they weary or want to be fed, the herd must halt. Were a tusker allowed to lead he would soon tire the little legs of the babies behind, and when they stopped, the mothers would stay by them, and the herd be broken up. So the selfish males are relegated to the rear of the column, a position they only abandon if there is an alarm behind them. On such an occasion they unchivalrously think merely of themselves and seek safety in flight. It is then that the wonderful mother-love shows itself, for the cow-elephants with calves instantly thrust themselves between their offspring and the danger that threatens; and the fiercest tusker is not so much to be dreaded as these mothers ready to give their lives for their young.

As the herd moved on at an easy pace to a fresh tract of forest, the bulls and unencumbered cows often diverged from the line of march and made little excursions in search of succulent food, returning soon to take their places in file again. The

character of the jungle varied as the column proceeded. In some parts the trees were fewer and the undergrowth, more exposed to the quickening action of the sun, was thicker than in the shady forest. Here and there the woodland gave place to a dense growth of the tall elephant grass, eleven or twelve feet high, its feathery plumes six feet higher still. Through such patches the long column passed unseen along narrow paths made on previous marches or by other herds.

When the sun was high in the heavens the leading cow emerged from the breathless heat of a long tract of this air-denying cover on an open space of white sand that lay beside a broad, foam-flecked river, rushing in swift course from the hills. For only a mile or two away the mountains began. From east to west they stretched. At first low, rounded, tree-clad foothills, then a medley of bare, gaunt summits, sheer precipices, appalling cliffs, rocky peaks with scarred sides rising one above the other in giant steps, towering aloft and blotting out the sky to the north—the mighty barrier of India, the Himalayas. From the far-distant white line of the everlasting snows, unseen from here so close under the hills, the water of this swift-rushing river had come. At first trickling over the faces of melting glaciers and running in musical rills down stony, shallow courses from which only the ibex and *ovis ammon* drank, then dropping in waving veils of mist-shrouded falls, hurrying down hundreds of rocky ravines among the mountains, it had gathered to sweep in swift flood through the forest on its way to the thirsty, sun-parched plains far to the south. Rolling rounded boulders and bearing along tree-trunks torn from the caving banks it rushed with resistless force. Cleaving its way through the jungle, it held on its course to the fertile fields of Bengal, to its merging with the sacred waters of the legendary Ganges and on past the walls of Calcutta to the distant sea.

As the herd of elephants came out one by one on to the white, boulder-strewn sand, they broke their formation and each made independently for the river. The three-day-old Babe lay down in momentary exhaustion, only to rise up again in alarm and call plaintively when his mother left him and waded into the swift-running stream. His brother and sister, ignoring him, followed her; and soon the whole herd, with the exception of the youngest calves,

were revelling knee-deep in the river. The curved trunks greedily sucked water to blow it down the dry throats, then, when their owners' thirst was sated, to scatter it over their hot bodies in cooling showers. The elephants delighted in their baths. Some waded into the stream until they were almost submerged. Others lay in the shallows, lazily blowing great jets over themselves. The air was full of sound, the animals expressing their satisfaction audibly, some by a gentle purring in the throat, others by a continued squeaking from the trunk. Mothers, having finished their own toilet, washed their offspring, the youngsters standing up to their knees in water and enjoying their ablutions. The older calves, scorning maternal ministrations, cleansed themselves of the dust, leaves, and dry twigs that had adhered to their skins during the march.

The Babe felt himself abandoned by all his world. He stood on the hot sand, at the very edge of this strange and terrifying new element, and lifted his voice in lamentation and self-pity, until his mother, cooled and refreshed, splashed back to him. Then in a twinkling his sorrow changed to indignation, as from her trunk she blew a stream of water over him, much to his surprise and alarm.

But worse was to come. For the route lay across the river and the herd was preparing to resume its march; so, to his horror, the Babe felt himself gently but irresistibly pushed into the water. In vain he turned and tried to dodge back, in vain he essayed to plant his little legs in the yielding sand. All his terrified endeavours to regain dry land were frustrated by his mother's trunk. The cruel parent propelled her protesting infant forward until his legs were swept from under him by the swift current. Then he suddenly found himself caught up in her trunk and supported so that his head was well above water. He became aware of his brother swimming steadily beside them and found that his sister had scrambled on to their mother's back. And thus, with one calf held up before her by her trunk, another clinging on to her shoulders and clutching her with firm little legs, the cow-elephant headed across the river at an angle to the current. About her the rest of the herd crossed in similar fashion, the older calves swimming alone, the younger ones on their mothers' backs or supported in front of them by the maternal trunks. Elephants

are unequalled among animals for their swimming powers, and this river, half a mile wide, was a trifle to these huge beasts that could keep afloat for a six hours' swim at a stretch.

When the Babe felt the sand under his feet on the far side and his mother's grip relaxed, he waded out of the water and hurried to put as much distance as possible between it and him. But his parent's clutch was on him instantly and gently held him, and it was made clear to his infantile perception that he was not to be returned to the strange element. And he stood with his kindred enjoying the warmth of the blazing sun that dried and delighted his little body. The whole herd dawdled for a time beside the river, basking in the heat; but at last the column formed up as before and the march began again. Once more the jungle closed around the Babe and hid from his view the blue sky, the wall of mountains, and the dark, foam-flecked water with the dancing bubbles gleaming iridescent in the sunshine—tall elephant-grass at first, then matted vegetation and low scrub, then the big trees of the forest again. And a mile or two from the river the march ended for a time, and the herd broke up to feed and rest at midday.

Although he did not know it, the Titan Babe's lot was cast in the great Terai Jungle, the marvellous forest that extends along the foot of the Himalayas and clothes their lower slopes, that stretches through Assam and Eastern Bengal and harbours in its gloomy recesses those giants of the animal world, the elephant, rhinoceros, bison and buffalo. He was born in the shadow of the great mountain barrier of India in the part known as the Duars—that is, near the *duars* or passes through the Himalayas from Tibet and Bhutan. Six thousand feet above him lay the latter little-known country—like Tibet, priest-ruled, governed by an incarnation, a spiritual king, the *Shaptung Rimpoché*. A few miles to the south of the spot where the herd was feeding lay Cooch Behar, and the forest and fields between it and the hills was a No Man's Land into which poured sworded raiders from Bhutan in search of women, slaves, and loot. Only once had British troops traversed it, and that was in the days of Warren Hastings. Then two companies of sepoy, under a captain of the very English name of Jones, had boldly invaded Bhutan to demand back the person of a Rajah of Cooch Behar ravished

from his own State by Bluttia raiders. And the sepoy got him, too.

At the hour of the Babe's birth the British dominion in India that Warren Hastings had done so much to establish seemed tottering to its fall; for it was in the month of October in the year of Our Lord 1857, the Black Year, as the natives of India call it to this day. And the Sepoy Army of Bengal, faithless to its salt, had mutinied and was striving with might and main to pull down the English flag that during a hundred years it had helped to plant throughout the peninsula.

But it is a far cry from Delhi to the Duars; and the Babe recked little of aught but obtaining his fair share of his mother's milk and not being pushed aside by his brother and sister. Young as he was, he saw to it that he did. And so he waxed strong and daily grew in height and girth, if not in beauty. It vexed him that his tiny trunk was stiff and useless; but gradually it lengthened and became more flexible. It annoyed him, too, that his brother had tusks—small ones, but undeniably tusks—and even his sister could show little white tushes in her upper jaw, while he could boast of neither. Yet in his own family circle—for a herd is composed of a number of groups, the members of each of which are, as a rule, related—the tallest bull was a *muckna*—that is, a tuskless male. This fact may have consoled the Babe for his own condition, for he was too young to appreciate how the *muckna* was bullied by every tusker in the herd. The possession of tusks bestows on an elephant an advantage in a fight that no superiority in weight or height can compensate for. Only by giving way on every occasion can the unlucky bull to which an unkind Nature has denied his natural weapon and granted only the tushes of the female, contrive to exist in a herd. Among Indian elephants the *muckna* is a rarity, whereas in Ceylon a tusker is abnormal and seldom found.

However, our Babe was not destined to stand aside in the struggle of life through want of proper equipment. Not long after his birth he had to endure the pains of teething in another sense; and from the bony sockets that run up on either side of the face to the forehead, ending nearly level with the eyes, two small tusks began to push out, solid only for a short distance from the tips. Now was he a complete and proper little elephant in all things, differing only from his elders in that the top of

his ear had not begun to turn over. He had long shed his infantile coat of woolly hair.

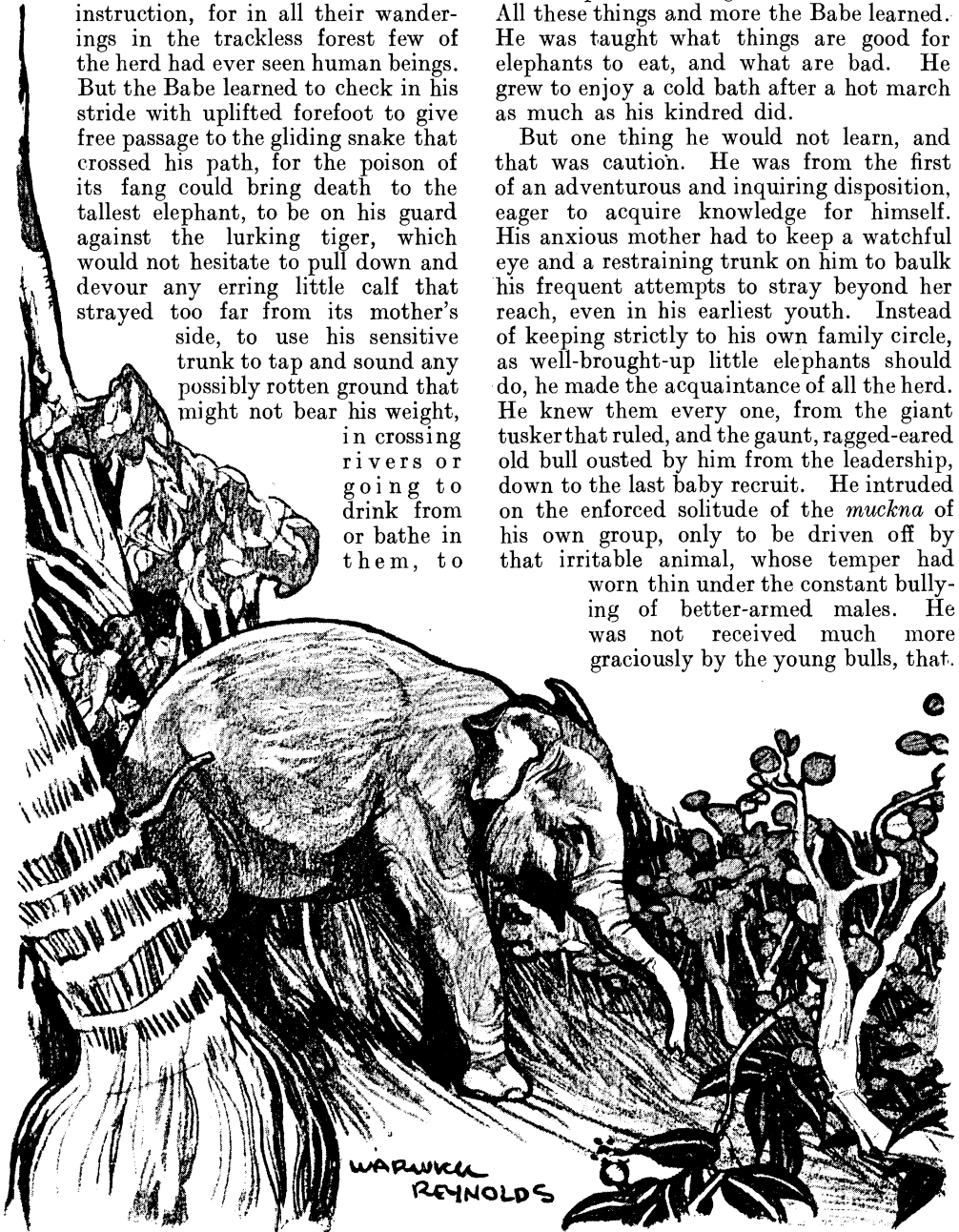
Now was he taught the laws of the jungle. Now did he learn to recognise and to avoid the things that could do him harm. Peril from man was not included in his instruction, for in all their wanderings in the trackless forest few of the herd had ever seen human beings. But the Babe learned to check in his stride with uplifted forefoot to give free passage to the gliding snake that crossed his path, for the poison of its fang could bring death to the tallest elephant, to be on his guard against the lurking tiger, which would not hesitate to pull down and devour any erring little calf that strayed too far from its mother's

side, to use his sensitive trunk to tap and sound any possibly rotten ground that might not bear his weight,

in crossing rivers or going to drink from or bathe in them, to

beware of quicksands which would grip his feet and drag him down to a choking, smothering death, to swerve aside from the seemingly harmless lump of clay hanging from a tree-bough, for it was the home of a multitude of short-tempered, winged insects with unpleasant stings, a wild-bees' hive. All these things and more the Babe learned. He was taught what things are good for elephants to eat, and what are bad. He grew to enjoy a cold bath after a hot march as much as his kindred did.

But one thing he would not learn, and that was caution. He was from the first of an adventurous and inquiring disposition, eager to acquire knowledge for himself. His anxious mother had to keep a watchful eye and a restraining trunk on him to baulk his frequent attempts to stray beyond her reach, even in his earliest youth. Instead of keeping strictly to his own family circle, as well-brought-up little elephants should do, he made the acquaintance of all the herd. He knew them every one, from the giant tusker that ruled, and the gaunt, ragged-eared old bull ousted by him from the leadership, down to the last baby recruit. He intruded on the enforced solitude of the *muckna* of his own group, only to be driven off by that irritable animal, whose temper had worn thin under the constant bullying of better-armed males. He was not received much more graciously by the young bulls, that,

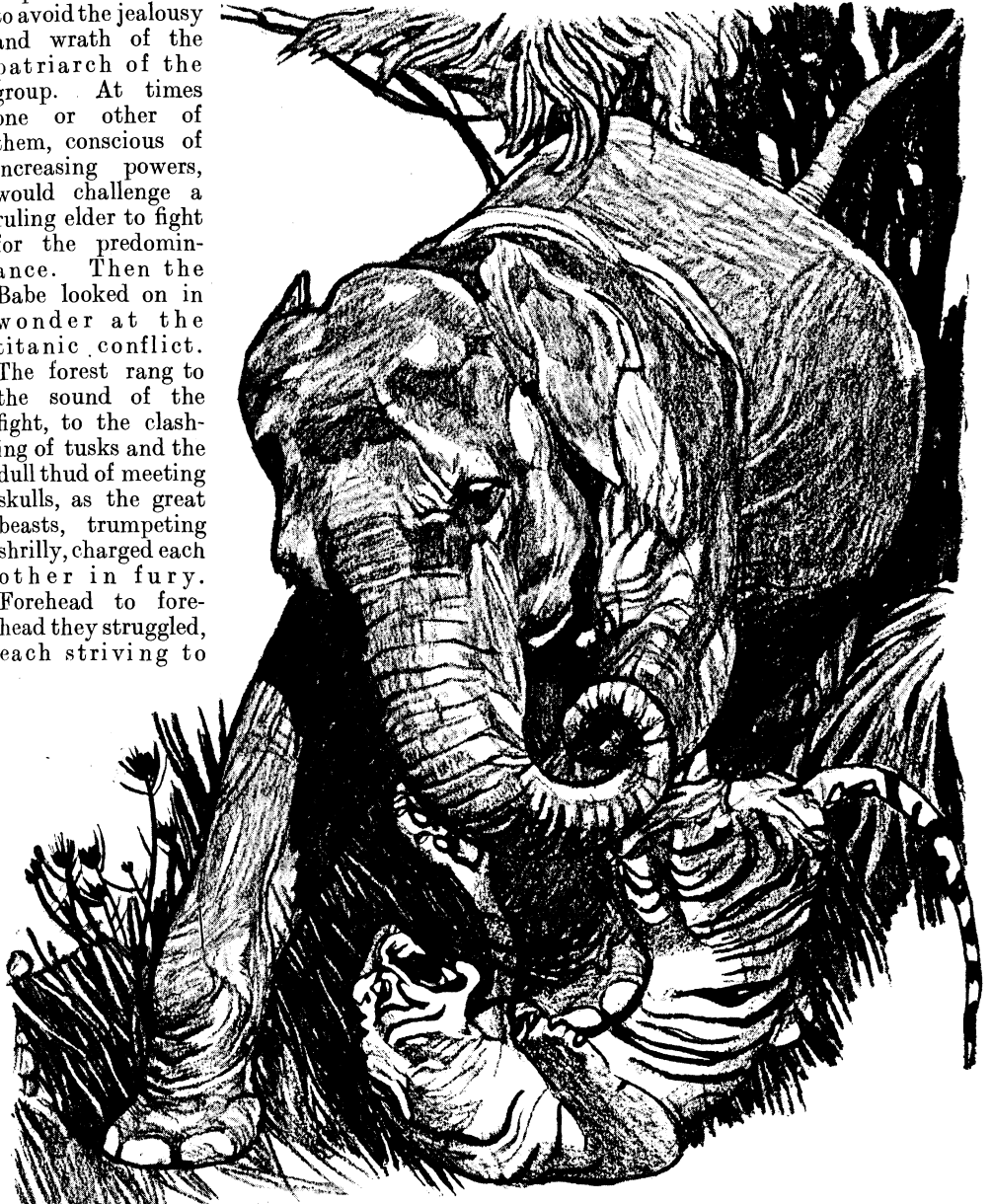


"The Babe, with an agility inconceivable in his clumsy body, hurled himself sideways and backwards, and put the tangled bush by which he was standing between him and the swift-flying peril."



not yet come to their full strength, had to keep at a respectful distance from their respective families to avoid the jealousy and wrath of the patriarch of the group. At times one or other of them, conscious of increasing powers, would challenge a ruling elder to fight for the predominance. Then the Babe looked on in wonder at the titanic conflict. The forest rang to the sound of the fight, to the clashing of tusks and the dull thud of meeting skulls, as the great beasts, trumpeting shrilly, charged each other in fury. Forehead to forehead they struggled, each striving to

lumbered to the attack again, each endeavouring to gore his enemy with his



"A huge mass hurled itself upon him. He was dashed to earth, buffeted, beaten and crushed, as a furious cow-elephant kicked his body backward and forward between her front and hind legs."

force his opponent back and bear him down. Then, drawing off for a score of paces, they

tusks. The fight would continue intermittently for a day or more. One bull, temporarily worsted, would draw off sullenly, followed by his watchful antagonist,

always ready to renew the contest. Sometimes the fight would end in the death of one of the combatants. More often the defeated animal would withdraw altogether, grumbling hoarsely and continuously deep down in his throat, and plaster his bleeding wounds with earth kicked up by his toes and blown on by his trunk. Then at a safe distance he would humbly follow his group, which had shown no interest in the struggle and was equally ready to accept a new lord or welcome back its old one. "To the strong the spoils" is a law of the jungle as of the world of men. Perhaps it sank into the small brain of the Babe even at that early age.

Life went on uneventfully during the changing seasons for the herd. It ranged far in its wanderings, visiting widely-scattered parts of the forest, crossing swift-flowing rivers like the Menass, the Raidak, and the Torsa, and the sandy beds of others that, except in the rains, are dry for miles from the foot of the hills, where they sink into the earth and, lost to sight, flow underground, rising again to the surface about the level of Rajahbhatkawa. During the winter elephants moved freely at all hours in thin jungle and in the hills, sometimes climbing up into Bhutan. In the hot weather they sought refuge during the noon-day hours in the deepest recesses of the evergreen parts of the jungle, avoiding the shadeless portions of the forest, where the big trees shed their leaves in summer. Sometimes they were forced to flee before the devouring fires that swept for long distances in the dry months. During the lengthy rainy season of the Duars they sheltered from the wet and cold in thick bamboo jungle. First-year calves, all born in the months of September, October, and November, were terrified by the awful storms that ushered in the monsoons. Even the oldest bulls, with the experience of a hundred years behind them, were troubled by the terrible lightning and the incessant, world-shaking crashing of the thunder, echoed and re-echoed by the mountains. And the pitiless tropic rain beat down upon their huge bodies and chilled them to the marrow of their bones. But even monsoons pass, and when the sun shone again in an unclouded sky, the elephants basked in its grateful heat and forgot the bygone months of misery.

The birth of another calf, when the Babe was in his third year, gave his mother constant occupation and relieved him from her

continual maternal vigilance. The sturdy youngster, now over four feet in height, was more able to indulge his propensity for roaming. He soon had cause to regret it. Imprudent use of his freedom led up to a tragedy.

One afternoon, when the herd had scattered to feed, the wayward Babe strayed beyond his mother's vision, engrossed as she was with her new calf. In search of food he roamed about, plucking a mouthful of palatable grass here, pulling down a trail of tender creeper there, and, without noticing it, getting farther and farther away from the others of his group. He was too occupied to be aware that a pair of cruel yellow eyes, set in a grotesque, parti-coloured face, was watching his every movement. For, cautiously stalking him from bush to bush and careful to keep down wind, a tiger moved, crouching almost belly to earth. In the part of the jungle where they were the undergrowth was dense but patchy, and the trees small, thorny, and infrequent.

Hungry though he was and plentiful the meal that the Babe's carcass would provide, yet the striped hunter made no rash move. He had good need to be cautious, for at any moment he might blunder upon a more formidable elephant than his quarry. It was necessary to shadow the calf until he was sure that none of the rest of the herd were near. His aim was to contrive, without alarming his prey, to get between it and the others, shepherd it beyond reach of help, and only then, when at a safe distance, pull it down. The tiger had played the game before. It was not the first time that he had hung round a herd and pounced on an incautious calf; and he licked his chops at the thought of the feast that this five or six hundred pounds of young elephant flesh would furnish. But a careless movement might ruin all. At any moment a wandering puff of wind from an unexpected quarter might bring his scent to the still living meal. So cautiously, craftily, he kept pace with the unconscious Babe, now lying absolutely motionless, now crawling noiselessly forward without seeming to stir twig, leaf, or blade of grass. Ears and nose alert to inform him of suspicious sound or smell, the tiger drew imperceptibly nearer to his prey. He was almost crouching for the final swift rush and the death-dealing spring, when the sudden crash of a falling tree brought down by an elephant turned him to a lifeless, immobile mass of dried leaves and

grass in flickering light and shadow. At least, that is all that the eyes of the quarry would have shown their owner, had he chanced to look in the direction of the spot where the tiger flattened himself to the ground under a tangled bush, so well did the barred pattern of his stripes and the variegated colours of his hide assimilate with his surroundings. It was a triumph of Nature's camouflage.

By a lucky chance the Babe turned and wandered slowly in the direction of the sudden sound, happening thus to put a stretch of open ground between him and his unsuspected hunter. This necessitated the tiger's making a long detour through the undergrowth to enable him to approach his quarry again without getting between him and the faint breeze that would have given him warning of danger. And the cautious stalk began again. The Babe now strayed in a circle that promised to bring him back to the herd. The ground favoured him by being more open and giving the tiger less cover to move unseen in.

But with infinite skill and patience the big cat drew near his prey again, crawling belly to earth across open patches and moving more swiftly through the concealing undergrowth. Conscious that the quarry was gradually approaching safety, he became desperate at last and a shade less careful. Suddenly a wandering puff of air brought a faint scent to the little elephant, just as he raised his trunk to tear down a leafy creeper from a thin sapling that rose out of a thick screen of tangled undergrowth. He turned and caught sight of the tiger stealing across an open spot. Instantly the striped beast "froze" to absolute rigidity. Crouching to earth, he knew himself discovered, and tried his race's old ruse of mesmerising a prey. With ears flattened to his skull and ruff bristling behind his slaving jaws, he grinned horribly, lips drawn to bare the glistening fangs, eyes fixed in a compelling, unwinking stare on his quarry. The trick had served him well many a time before and held his fascinated victim paralysed and powerless to move to escape the neck-breaking spring.

But the Babe was of sterner stuff. He swung round to face him, his little tusks directed towards his foe, as he gave the elephants' "alarm." Tapping the point of his trunk rapidly against the ground, he expelled the air through it to give vent to a strange metallic shriek that rang shrill and loud through the silent forest. He

followed this up by trumpeting, and then stood with trunk curled up, ready for action. The hungry tiger, fearing lest his prey should escape him, abandoned caution and, rushing forward, halted for a second and crouched, gathering his powerful limbs under him for the final deadly leap. Then he sprang. At the very instant that he launched himself into the air, the Babe, with an agility inconceivable in his clumsy body, hurled himself sideways and backwards and put the tangled bush by which he was standing between him and the swift-flying peril. The tiger, even in mid-air, swerved and changed the direction of his spring, landing straight in the centre of the same bush; but by a marvellous chance his head, with the momentum of the heavy body behind it in the impetus of the leap, struck fair against the thin tree rising from the tangled undergrowth, and the elastic sapling, reacting, hurled him back baffled and half stunned. A tiger, when his first spring has failed, rarely tries again. This enraged beast, however, although dazed by the blow, tried to gather himself up for a fresh attack.

But suddenly the world seemed to fall on him. A huge mass hurled itself upon him. He was dashed to earth, buffeted, beaten and crushed, as a furious cow-elephant kicked his body backward and forward between her front and hind legs. Then she knelt on him and, despite the razor-like claws that tore her and the savage jaws that sank into her flesh, she slowly crushed the life out of his carcass. Long after the last breath had left him she kicked and pounded his inanimate body, until scarcely a bone was left unbroken in it. It was the Babe's mother come in time to save him. Quitting her victim at last, she hurried to her offspring and felt him all over to assure herself of his safety, paying no heed to her own wounds. The Babe had tried to do his share in the fight, circling round the combatants and making futile little dashes in to get at the struggling tiger, only to be knocked aside by his mother's body. And now his indignation was great; for when she found him unhurt, her maternal anxiety was turned to wrath, and she hustled and buffeted him back to the scattered herd, the nearest members of which were approaching to learn the cause of the alarm signal that the Babe had given.

Shapeless and lifeless lay the battered

carcase of the tiger. High up in the blue sky floated a speck, so tiny that human eye could scarce detect it. North, south, east and west nothing else marred the serenity of the cloudless heavens. The speck was a vulture, poised on motionless wing, scanning the flattened earth beneath with its marvellous vision. Thousands of feet below it the tiger died; but almost before his slayer left him, the speck was in motion, growing larger and larger, as it planed down with incredible speed. And north, south, east and west other specks began to dot the hitherto flawless sky—more vultures hastening to the feast. In swift flight they swept on mighty pinions, and soon the air was filled with the rushing sound of wings. Above the spot where the dead tiger lay they circled. On the low trees around, the branches bending under the weight of the multitude of these loathsome birds, they settled. There was a pause. First one, then another dropped to the ground and hopped and waddled with awkward gait to the carcase; and soon there was to be seen only a struggling mass of feathered bodies, as with angry squawks the foul

scavengers fought over the feast and tore the striped body to shreds with reddened beaks. Then, sated, they sat stupefied on the ground, too gorged to fly, or, hopping a few yards, rose heavily in the air to settle on the trees again. And of the once powerful, beautiful body of the tiger only the bare bones were left for the hyenas and the little wild dogs to gnaw.

But by the miracle of mother-love his intended victim was spared to roam the forest still. Five years later the jungles in which he wandered came under the English flag, for British troops stormed the mountain passes, tore the Duars from the blood-stained and cruel rule of the Bhutanese officials, and brought peace and justice to the frontier lands. Two thousand feet on the hills above the spot where the tiger died arose the little fort of Buxa Duar to close the pass from Bhutan to Bhuttia raiders.

And, without knowing it, the Babe of the Titans became a subject of Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, afterwards to be Kaiser-i-Hind—that is, Empress of India.





## THE APPLE TREE

I'LL be the lover of the apple tree:  
Nothing more fragrant stirs;  
And she shall share her small sweet bower  
with me,  
And everything of hers.



And I shall build a cage of wands of green,  
A small enchanted house,  
Wherein the wind shall sing his song unseen  
Among the apple boughs.



And I shall make a mirror golden-bright,  
Of fair enchanted sheaves,  
And there the sun shall hide from morn till  
night,  
And gild the apple leaves.



And lad and lass shall mate them merrily,  
The world grow fond and kind;  
But I shall dwell within the apple tree,  
With the sun and singing wind.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

# “THERE WAS ONCE . . .”

By PAULA HUDD

ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. WILMSHURST

OF course it was not to be expected that the liftman would rise to the occasion. By moving a lever he could ascend from the Tube level to the level of the street pavements, but there was no such means at hand to assist him in rising to the level of an occasion. Besides, there was no one to tell him that there was an occasion to rise to.

So when the Princess made a rather leisurely exit from his lift, he hustled her none too gently with a gruff: “Mind the step and ’urry off, there!”

Doubtless, had someone pointed out to him that among his passengers there was a real live princess, he would have stopped his lift at just the right moment, so that there would have been no step to mind. He certainly would never have insisted on haste, since a leisurely inspection of his august passenger would have provided him with some interesting gossip for the missus at night.

In any case, there was nothing to indicate that she was anything but an ordinary girl, unless, perhaps, the beautiful Russian sable wrap that covered up the shabbiness of her velvet costume. Her manner lacked the haughtiness that is the traditional prerogative of princesses, and, though her lips looked determined, her eyes were decidedly big with fright in the set whiteness of her small face.

As the lift gates clashed to behind her, she stood forlornly looking this way and that. The wet pavements gleaming under the street lights offered little inducement, for her shoes were thin—richly buckled and very princessy—but her purse did not even contain a taxi fare—an empty purse and very unprincessy.

Her frightened eyes wandered to the bookstall, where a conspicuous poster announced: “Disappearance of the Tragic Princess.” Passers-by brushed her shoulders and trod on her toes, and were generally indifferent to her. They showed mild interest in the poster, made some careless remark

about it to their companions, flipped an umbrella up, and disappeared across wet, lamp-lit pavements. For, like the liftman, they had no one to tell them that this was an occasion, and that they had just trodden on the toes of the princess of the poster.

She took a few tentative steps towards the bookstall. It contained a bewildering and riotously coloured array of fiction; a girl’s face gazed back at her from almost every cover—laughing faces, young faces, most of them pretty, most of them happy-looking. And, as the Princess gazed at them, her own face hardened a little, for not one of them was to be bought for less than a shilling, and she was going to buy an evening paper with her last penny, the change from her Tube ticket, which she still held clutched in her hand.

She moved away from the stall and then opened the paper feverishly. The paragraph she sought stood out under a large-type heading.

## REMARKABLE DISAPPEARANCE OF PRINCESS OLGA LEMINOFF.

Great concern is felt at the strange disappearance of the beautiful Princess Olga Leminoff, known to all London as the Tragic Princess, because of the terrible suffering she has had to endure in her native Russia. It will be remembered that her family all lost their lives at the hands of the Bolsheviks; but the Princess, after enduring unspeakable suffering and horror, escaped to England with her great-aunt, a Russian countess, who was frequently seen at social gatherings in London before the War. Yesterday the Princess was expected to attend a reception and sale of work which was held at the Duchess of Felsham’s house, in aid of Russian refugees in London. Princess Olga, unaccompanied, left the hotel at which she and her great-aunt have a suite, at about three-thirty yesterday afternoon, ostensibly to attend

this function, but, as a matter of fact, she did not put in an appearance there, and has not since been seen or heard of at the hotel. The police have been informed, and a search is being made. It is surmised that the suffering this beautiful kinswoman of the Romanoffs has recently had to endure may have affected her memory.

The Princess screwed the paper up and raised dreary eyes; she wished that forgetting could come so easily.

The whirr of an ascending lift ended in a bump and the clash of opening gates, and a stream of people passed by her again.

She stared at them all a little stupidly, for hunger and fatigue were numbing her senses. Suddenly a man darted from the crowd and rushed to her side. He lifted his hat with one hand, and, grasping her elbow with the other, propelled her gently to the station exit. They were side by side in a taxi almost before her confused mind had grasped the fact of his appearance.

“Well, Princess,” he said, but very gently, “what does it all mean?”

She lifted her chin and gazed levelly at him.

“It is I who ask that,” she retorted, with a broken accent that made her voice sound very childlike. “Who are you?”

“Ah, you have forgotten me! We met at the Embassy last week. May I reintroduce the Earl of Helford? How d’you do?” He lifted her hand and shook it gently. “I don’t want to interfere, and I’ve no intention of letting the Countess or the police know where you are, but neither have I any intention of leaving you to fight your way alone in London. At present we are on our way to the most out-of-the-way and best-managed little restaurant to be found in London.”

And so the Prince comes into the story—not disguised as a beggar, as befits a proper fairy tale, but looking just the rather prepossessing, simple, jolly Englishman that he really was.

Nor did the Princess receive him quite as the princess in a fairy tale should. She had no rose to offer him, nor any dainty lace-edged trifle of a handkerchief to drop at his feet.

Which latter fact quite robbed her of any haughty dignity with which to suppress this impetuous young Prince. For she was hungry, and the word “restaurant” was music to her ears, and music never failed to stir her emotions. The tears trickled

one after another, faster and faster, down her tired little face. She turned away quickly and sniffed very hard.

And, though it may be out of place to record it in a fairy tale, the fact remains that a few seconds later she was drying her eyes on a large white square of linen that smelt faintly of tobacco.

“I’ve got another,” the man said airily, which is only what one would expect of a prince.

\* \* \* \* \*

They stared distantly at each other across the *hors d’œuvres*; their eyes met in speculative glances across the soup; they made tentative remarks with the fish, and chatted a little over the *entrée*. When the coffee came, they were smiling with complete friendliness into each other’s eyes.

“They tried to exploit me,” the Princess confessed, laying stress on her vowels in a childlike way that the Prince was finding extraordinarily attractive. “They were not sorry for me—oh, no—but glad to have something to be charitable about, glad to have a fresh excuse to entertain and meet each other. I come into the room, and they raise their lorgnette so”—she used a fork in dainty mimicry, much to the waiter’s amusement—“and they say ‘Charmed to meet you’ with their voice, but with their eyes they say, ‘How shabby! Dear Harold must not meet her,’ and they forgets me. They forgets that I am there for them to be kind to me, and they eats cakes and talks about ‘those poor dear Russians,’ while they are treading on my foots and leaving no tea for me to eat.”

She clenched her fist on the table. “Oh, if you were not of the English nobles, I could say something of your English Society.”

The man looked penitent.

“I’m awfully sorry,” he said.

She softened at once.

“Oh, but you are not like them. You say not a million rude things with your eyes and one little polite nothings with your mouth. You smile at me, and I forget to be angry with anythings; and you give me food, and you lend me handkerchief, and you put me sane in the head, and all the times your manner is to thank me as though it is I who give!”

It was all said hurriedly, in a broken baby way that had the ring of sincerity, and from that minute the Prince adored her.

“I don’t want to ask you a lot of

questions," he said, "but won't your great-aunt be terribly anxious?"

He was surprised to see the red flame into her cheeks.

"Anxious!" There was no mistaking the scorn in her eyes and voice. "Oh, very anxious! While I am with her, making a—what do you say it?—a good advertisement for her, all is well. So long as the English noble call many times at the hotel, the manager do not worry too much about the bill. We go here for lunch and there for dinner, and always the aunt say to me: 'Make the most of yourself. You must marry a rich Englishman; it is our last hope!'"

The words tumbled out impetuously, but as soon as they were said she realised their significance, and stared at him like a stricken child.

"Oh, I talk foolish," she stammered, "but I have so much in here"—she pressed her head with her slim fingers—"and when I start to speak it, it come out all wrong."

She stared appealingly into his face, frightened at the set look that had come into it.

"And you—you would like to marry a rich Englishman?"

"No, no! I will not!" She clenched her hand again on the table. "I want not to marry anyone with title, or anyone with riches, or anyone with a name that is much known." Her fingers uncurled slowly and her hand lay idly, like a child's, palm uppermost. "I have my dream; though," she confessed.

The man covered her small hand gently. "And the dream is?"

She did not draw her hand away.

"Oh, it is foolish. It is that I will some day marry an English peasant man—a bourgeois, you understand? And nobodies will notice us. He will work to win the bread, and I will work to make the home. . . . And we will eat enough, and sleep enough, and not be afraid that nobodies will want to kill us because that we have riches and high birth. And nobodies will write of us, or talk much of us, or picture us in papers."

Tears had gathered in her eyes, and she brushed them away angrily.

"It is that I am tired," she faltered, "and the dream is so long way away."

The man drew his hand away; there was something like dismay in his eyes.

"Of course you are tired," he said, with

an obvious effort. "What we've got to decide now is where you are going to sleep to-night."

The red flamed into her face again.

"I spend all my money on the hotel last night," she stammered, for a proper princess is proud, if poor.

"Well, that needn't bother us," he answered cheerfully, for a proper prince is rich, if modest.

"Mrs. Hodgson must give you a room," he went on. "She's not all that might be desired, and she isn't the traditional motherly apartment-keeper who welcomes forlorn little ladies with open arms. Only money has the power to move her—money and the recital of all the financial and social advantages she enjoyed when the late Mr. Hodgson was alive. I rent a room in her house that I run away to occasionally. She knows me as Mr. Barnes."

The Princess clapped her hands.

"And I call you Mr. Barnes," she exclaimed, with sparkling eyes, "and you call me Miss—er—"

"Coming!" called a passing waiter.

"Thank you," said the Prince, bowing to the waiter's back. "Shall we go, Miss Cumming?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. Hodgson sniffed and pushed a stray lock of once-gold hair under her fringe-net.

"If the young woman's looking for a job," she remarked, "she won't be able to afford my prices. You know my terms, Mr. Barnes, and little enough, goodness knows. I can't bear to think what the late Mr. Hodgson would say if 'e could only see that Mr. Jenkins 'avin' the use of our beautiful Cherryton suite fer two pounds a week. But there, 'e's at rest. 'E never knew wot it was to want fer anything, and I must say Mr. Jenkins is a very particular kind of gentleman. And as—"

The Prince coughed. "And you can accommodate Miss Cumming?" he put in.

Mrs. Hodgson sniffed again.

"I 'aven't said 'Yes,' and I 'aven't said 'No,'" she remarked. "It's no good being 'asty over these things. I'd better show you the only room I've got."

And so they went up the stairs, Mrs. Hodgson leading, rather in the manner of the Wicked Fairy luring the Princess to the Haunted Tower. She looked the part quite well, with her rusty black dress and the wig-like mass of fair hair surmounting her sharp-featured face.



She ushered them into a diminutive apartment which seemed filled by the portrait of a gentleman that hung over the mantelpiece. The gentleman was attired in evening-dress that scarcely did justice to his somewhat pugilistic-looking proportions. His sleeves were rolled up to his elbows, and in his left hand he held a silk hat from which, with his right hand, he was drawing a life-like and unbroken string of sausages, which already lay in numberless coils about his feet. His eyebrows were raised and his lips were pursed up as though he were whistling an air in a casual manner, as much as to say: “This little lot? Pooh! This is a mere nothing.” One had the impression that nothing could be so surprising as to surprise him.

The portrait seemed to fascinate the Princess. She was quite unable to take in the other appointments of the room. Mrs. Hodgson followed her glance.

“Ah, the late Mr. Hodgson,” she said sadly. “Quite ’is best portrait—and all out of the one ’at.”

The Princess looked interested.

“He was—what do you call it—a prestidigitator?”

Mrs. Hodgson sniffed. “Nothing of the kind,” she said haughtily. “One of the best hillusionists of ’is day, that’s what ’e was. Earned ’is guinea or two guineas, as the case might be, reg’lar every night, and went to some of the best ’ouses to give private shows, ’e did. He always took a cab to them, and always gave the hodd shillings from his fee to the servant afterwards. He was born to do things in style. ’E’d turn in ’is grave to see me ’aving to discuss pounds, shillings, and pence with you.”

The Princess smiled deprecatingly.

“It’s a nice room,” she said, trying to shut her eyes to the nightmare of its dinginess.

“And ’ow long would you want it?” inquired the Wicked Fairy.

The Prince interposed from the doorway.

“About a week, Mrs. Hodgson. Miss Cumming hopes to get a post as lady’s maid to live in. Shall we call it settled at two pounds a week?”

“Well, yes, I suppose so—for the one week. After that I can’t say. It ought to be two-ten. That’s me all over—I always herr on the generous side. Of course I usually expect references, but Mr. Barnes recommending you—I’ll take the risk. Perhaps you’ll come down and sign my book?”

So down they went again to the Wicked Fairy’s private dungeon, with its drabness and its dinginess and its stale atmosphere.

And the Princess wasn’t sure how to spell Cumming, but the Prince saved the situation by suggesting that he put it down, as she wrote so abominably. Then he laid a ten-shilling note on the book, for a deposit in advance, and they were out in the stuffy little hall again, with the Wicked Fairy’s door shut fast behind them, and the stairs to the Haunted Tower gleaming their wicked brass eyelets at them out of the darkness.

“Good night,” whispered the Princess. “You have been so good to me. I cannot say what is in my heart.”

The Prince put his hands on her shoulders and smiled into her eyes. A gas-jet flickered feebly above them, the cracked globe on it tilting drunkenly in its sooty wire cage; the hatstand beside them spread out dusty arms with spiky, pointing fingers that seemed to menace them, but, for all that, they were a Prince and Princess peeping into Fairyland.

“Good night, Princess,” he answered softly. “I can’t say what is in *my* heart—just yet.”

And behind the shut door the Wicked Fairy folded up the ten-shilling note and began to plan to-morrow’s evil deeds. She took out a card headed “Menu,” and she drew forth a dilapidated book of recipes, and she put on her glasses, and she set to work.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Princess was first of all conscious of the sausages. She blinked at them for several seconds, then she smiled, and then she murmured to herself: “And all out of the one ’at.” Which goes to show that she was going to get out of the right side of the bed that morning. Doubtless princesses always do.

The yellow chest of drawers next claimed her attention, but she looked away from them quickly. It occurred to her that she didn’t owe the late Mr. Hodgson an apology for using them.

She pulled a big white handkerchief out from under her pillow and sniffed at it with closed eyes. Her thoughts repeated the Prince’s last words to her: “I can’t say what is in *my* heart—just yet.”

“Nice man,” she murmured softly. Then in a whisper to herself: “The Earl and Countess of Helford.”

She pressed the handkerchief to her face,



"The Countess looked him up and down. 'Who is this man?' she asked."

then, with a beating heart, she slipped out of bed—on the left side, which was undoubtedly the right side.

She met the Prince on the stairs. His heart sang "Darling," and his eyes said "I

love you," but his voice said, "Good morning, Princess," and though he walked beside her down the stairs, he was really kneeling at her feet. Which is all quite possible in a fairy tale, though it looks absurd in print.



“He put an arm across her shoulders and faced the others challengingly.”

“We’ve got to do a lot of planning this morning,” he said happily. Then he sniffed. “You’ll hate the breakfast worse than your room,” he went on. “I’m very much afraid that it’s sausages.”

“All out of the one ’at!” the Princess put in gaily.

The Prince laughed—a great shout of a laugh, quite the biggest laugh that had ever been put to the credit of the late

Mr. Hodgson. And they walked into the dining-room while the noise of that laugh was still in the other boarders' ears, and while the disapproval of that laugh still gleamed in the other boarders' eyes.

They retired to a small table in the darkest corner, and the Prince screened her with his broad back.

"How did you sleep?" he queried, trying to take her attention away from those staring eyes.

"Oh, very well," she answered, "and I dream—oh, lovely dream!"

The Prince grew bold.

"About bourgeois Englishman?" he put in.

The Princess looked down a moment, then she raised her eyes and gave a very straight glance into his.

"No, about the one very good Englishman that I know," she said honestly.

The Prince moved the cracked milk-jug and the purple vase with the dirty scarlet-paper carnations in it.

"Do you mean me?" he queried boyishly. "If so, say it again. I couldn't see you properly before—darling."

So she said it again, and they both went a little further into Fairyland. Meanwhile, down in her dungeon, the Wicked Fairy was even then on the track of their dreams.

She sat in her pink flannel dressing-gown, with iron atrocities guarding the gold treasures of her hair, a cup of tea on the table at her side, and *The Morning Pictorial* clutched in her hand.

By the fireplace a black cat with an evil eye sat washing his face. On the mantelpiece a black gentleman with a red turban raised a threatening fist to the heavens, though in the sound and innocent days of his youth he had been content to bear a torch, and on the wall a black telephone instrument yawned with an indifference that doubtless concealed cunning.

So it is not surprising that, as the Wicked Fairy started up from her chair with an evil chuckle, she was contemplating a scheme that was sheer black magic.

\* \* \* \* \*

They sat long over their breakfast, and for once the overworked waitress did not attempt to hurry them.

"Well, you'd better tell Mrs. Hodgson you won't be back till to-night," the Prince said at last, "and I'll run out and buy you a thick veil."

They parted in the hall.

"I shan't be a minute," the Prince assured her, taking his hat from one of the pointing fingers and quite ignoring its menace. With a hurried glance round, he took her hand and kissed it, then he slipped out of the door, and it shut behind him with a bang.

The Princess went up to her room, and was suddenly very cold and very afraid. She tried to recapture her mood of the early morning; but now that there was no Prince, there seemed to be no Fairyland, and nothing to help her forget all the past horrors and fears.

She gazed up at the late Mr. Hodgson and tried to smile, but his elaborate air of indifference was not encouraging. The room seemed to be closing in on her, bringing back awful memories of that other prison . . .

She caught at the bedpost and tried to pull herself together just as a knock came at the door.

"Mrs. Hodgson would like to see you in 'er room, miss."

And with the numbing sensation of unreality still on her, the Princess went down to the Wicked Fairy's dungeon.

She knocked timidly and pushed the door open. Then she stood with her back against it and with every atom of colour drained out of her face.

Before her stood the Countess and a police inspector and two men with greedy eyes, each holding a notebook in one hand and his hat in the other.

Behind them all the Wicked Fairy grinned evilly, and the black gentleman still raised his fist to the heavens.

The Countess began to speak rapidly in a mixture of French and Russian, while the police inspector rather superfluously inquired of her if this was the Princess.

The Countess merely nodded and went on with her abusive tirade. The Princess put her hand to her throat.

"But how did you find me?" she faltered. "And Mr. Barnes—where is he?"

Everyone looked at the Wicked Fairy.

"There's no accounting fer Mr. Barnes," she said acidly, for she was getting anxious about the hundred pounds reward. "I expect 'e's worked this little affair on the telephone." She winked slyly at the inspector. "These newspaper reporters never loses no time."

"Newspaper reporter!" A black cloud seemed to be descending on her—a black cloud out of which five pairs of eyes

gleamed at her with greedy malice. “But he is the——”

And that was the moment when the Prince chose to burst in. He put an arm across her shoulders and faced the others challengingly.

“What are you doing here?” he demanded.

The Countess looked him up and down.

“Who is this man?” she asked.

The Wicked Fairy decided that this was where she came in.

“’E’s Mr. Barnes, on the staff of *The Morning Pictorial*—the man wot I was tellin’ you about,” she said sharply. “I expect ’e thought ’e was goin’ to work this little matter in ’is own good time and all to ’is own advantage, but I was a bit too fly for ’im. I sees this young la—the Princess’s picture in the paper this morning, and, like a needle, I was at the telephone gettin’ you all ’ere. And I must say it’s the first scandal that’s ’appened in this ’ouse, and no reward—’owever ’igh—could properly make up to me for it.”

The Princess was clutching at the Prince’s arm.

“Don’t let them take me!” she faltered.

The Prince turned to the two gentlemen with notebooks and greedy eyes.

“Look here, you chaps,” he said, with a very charming smile, “you’ll be sports to a pal, won’t you? The Princess and I are getting married to-day. I ask you as pals to keep the affair out of the papers. My—my future wife is tired to death of publicity. And if you’ll meet us afterwards for dinner—a little affair to celebrate the event—we shall be highly honoured. I will telephone you later about the time and place.”

And the two pairs of greedy eyes grew very friendly, and the two notebooks disappeared, and out shot two hands.

The Prince grasped them both in his two hands and wrung them with gratitude. Then he turned to the inspector.

“And you, sir,” he said, “I’m sure you’ve got a heart. Are you married, sir?”

The “sir” was an open sesame.

“Yes, and two youngsters,” said the inspector warmly.

“Then I ask you to accept this”—the Prince pressed a note into his hand—“and to give ’em a real treat, but don’t tell them what they are celebrating. I am sure I can trust you, sir.”

He turned with less confidence to the Countess.

“I must request you, madam, to leave

without your niece. Her future welfare is assured, and I shall from time to time take it upon myself to satisfy you that all is well with her.”

The Countess glared.

“Princess Olga returns with me,” she said, lifting her head as haughtily as three chins would permit.

The Prince altered his tone a little.

“Oh, no, she doesn’t, Countess, if you’ll pardon my contradicting you,” he said, looking very straight at her. “And if you decide to raise any objections, we shall have to go into the question of what became of all the Princess’s jewellery which was safely brought out of Russia. These two gentlemen would be delighted to raise a discussion in the papers. It *might* not have been lost, you know.”

The Countess went a dull purple and drew her wrap a little closer around her.

“I cannot remain to argue with you,” she said. “If my niece chooses to marry beneath her, that is her own affair. I wash my hands of her.”

The Prince bowed and opened the door.

“We may return later—for your blessing,” he said airily, as she departed.

The reporters drifted out after her, and the inspector moved to the door with dignity.

“What about my reward?” screamed the Wicked Fairy.

The inspector put his fingers in his belt.

“Oh, you’ve got *that* all right, ma,” he said, nearly forgetting himself. Then he drew himself up. “I wish you both the best of everything,” he said, and made an exit that did credit to the Force.

What the Wicked Fairy said will never be recorded, for only the black cat and the black gentleman and the black telephone heard it. They were the only fit recipients.

The Prince and Princess were upstairs among the scarlet-paper carnations and the spotted, crumby tables.

“And you *are* the Earl of Helford?” she faltered, with her hands on his lapels. “And you do not report for paper, and you did not bring them here?”

The Prince had lost all his bravado.

“I’m not the Earl of Helford,” he said miserably. “I told you that lie at the beginning because I was afraid that you wouldn’t have anything to do with me if I told you the truth. I’m Barnes of *The Morning Pictorial* right enough.”

The Princess’s hands fell to her sides. She moved across to the window and struggled with the sobs that threatened

to overcome her. For a dear dream was dying hard, and Fairyland was miles away.

"So you are like the rest," she faltered. "You exploit me for your own ends. Oh, I wish I could die!"

The Prince took a step towards her.

"I deserve all you like to say of me," he said, with a scarlet face and gazing at her back with hungry eyes. "But you must just listen. I wrote to *The Morning Pictorial* last night resigning my job. I was sent out to search for you, and given all the particulars of your past history, even to that hint about the jewels, but directly I saw you I knew I couldn't give you away. Mrs. Hodgson saw your photo and gave the whole show away. I know I'm a cad, but, believe me, I meant to stand by you."

The Princess said nothing, and her back was not encouraging. The Prince was not to know that she was watching the lights of Fairyland gleam out again.

"I'm sorry I had to tell that fib to them all just now—about us getting married, I mean," he went on, getting more and more miserable. "It was the only way to get rid of them. If you'll allow me to be your banker for a while—I make most of my income at freelance work—and if you'll manage later on to trust me again, we'll try to fix you up in a comfortable post. I'll get out now for a bit and 'phone

those chaps. I could just tell them you've collapsed, and the wedding is postponed. Perhaps, when I come back, you'll be able to forgive me—Princess."

He waited a minute, but she didn't turn, so he moved to the door.

"Good-bye, dear," he said unhappily, and went out to the hall, and took his hat off the accusing finger and jammed it on his head.

His hand was on the door-knob, when there was a rustle, and a soft voice spoke behind him.

"I want not to marry an earl," the Princess said, twisting her fingers. "The wife of a—a freelance man . . . I think I like that, and—and nobodies would worry about—Mrs. Barnes, and——"

The Prince forgot his hat. He put his arms round her and hid his face in her hair.

"I love you so," he said, almost speechless with his ecstasy.

The Princess put her face against his.

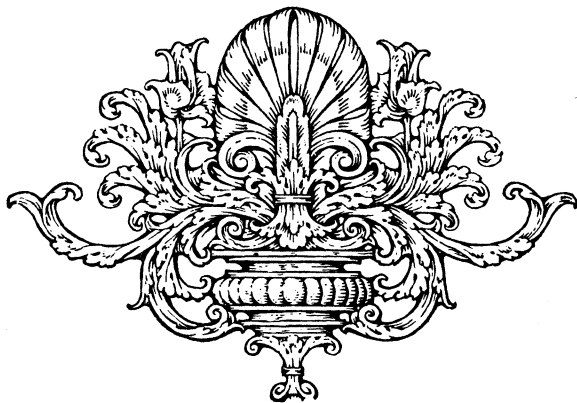
"I love you, too," she answered, without originality, but with great sincerity.

Then she put her arm round his neck and lifted his hat off from behind.

"Mine," she said, with a little chuckle, "and all out of the one 'at."

So they married and lived——

Well, it just ends as every proper fairy tale should.





“He winked again at the other, and was unable to proceed for a moment.”

# THE OILFIELD

By EDGAR WALLACE

*Author of “Sanders of the River,” “The People of the River,” “Bones,” etc.*

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

“NO, thank you, Joicey,” said the Earl of Mansar for the third time, and the stout, good-looking young man who was his companion began rolling up the large plan with a pained expression.

It was an interesting chart, with parallelograms and rhomboids of pink and green, and he had talked himself hoarse in an endeavour to persuade his sometime comrade into agreement.

“I dare say it is all right,” said Mansar, tossing a cigarette into the extended palm

of the Honourable Felix Joicey, “and I know that, so far as you are concerned, it is all right. There is a lot of oil in Roumania—though I’ve never heard that a gusher had gushed in the Doebnitz region—and as likely as not there is a fortune in the proposition.”

“There are a dozen fortunes,” said the enthusiastic Mr. Joicey, and Lord Mansar nodded.

“I’ll take shares, I promise you that,” he said, “but I will not join your board. The

fact is, Joicey, I hate the crowd who are running the company, and that's flat—they couldn't go straight if they were fired out of a gun."

"Meggison isn't bad," suggested Joicey.

"Meggison isn't as bad as Glion, and that isn't saying much. But if you came to me and offered me a seat in the court of the Bank of England, I wouldn't take it if either of those fellows had an account at the Bank."

Mr. Joicey lit his cigarette and his expression was doleful. He had served with Lord Mansar in the Guards, and had given up his profession as a soldier to enter the Stock Exchange, and had been fairly successful.

"I'm pretty heavily interested in this," he said, puffing his cigarette thoughtfully, "and I don't think you'd run much risk. We want a good name on the board—a name that will impress the small investor. We have to put the property on the market, for we need big capital."

Lord Mansar drew in his lips and lifted his eyebrows, a grimace which says, "I'm sorry, but I can't help you," in most languages. Then unexpectedly he smiled.

"By Jove!" he said softly.

"What?"

"Do you know the Marquis of Pelborough?"

Mr. Joicey frowned. He knew most of the marquises and not a few of the dukes, but he did not know the Lord of Pelborough.

"Not the fellow whose uncle claimed an extinct peerage—the insurance clerk?" he asked, suddenly remembering.

Mansar nodded.

"That's the fellow. He has been working at the Foreign Office, but that job is finishing, and I'm sure I could persuade him to go on the board. A thousand a year you said?"

Mr. Joicey rubbed both his chins and looked out of the window.

"At the Foreign Office? He must be a pretty smart fellow. Quite a boy, isn't he?"

"He looks young," admitted his lordship, "but he is no fool. He's the cleverest amateur boxer at his weight in England."

Here he touched an ex-heavy-weight public school champion on a tender spot.

"I wonder if I've seen him?" mused Joicey. "The best of the light-weights is a lad I saw box at the Polytechnic gym. He beat young Herberts, the Eton middle-weight, and gave him ten pounds. 'Chick,' they call him."

Lord Mansar's eyes glistened.

"That's the fellow. Now, be a sportsman, Felix, and shove him on your board. Glion will fall on the neck of a real live marquis."

"I'll think about it," said Joicey.

Late in the evening, when Mansar was dressing for dinner, he learnt by telephone that the promoters had agreed, a piece of information which gave him a double pleasure, since it offered him the opportunity of breaking the news. And he was not thinking of Chick when he sighed.

The Marquis of Pelborough was sitting, in his shirt-sleeves, playing dominoes with his housekeeper, when Lord Mansar's rattle at the street-door sent him in hasty search after his discarded coat. Gwenda was in her room, answering a letter which she had received from her late manager, asking her to return to the part she had dropped. Gwenda had a brother, now happily in Canada and unlikely to return, a blackmailing, weak, and conscienceless man, who had dogged her footsteps through life and had brought to a summary conclusion at least three good engagements. With his passing there had been lifted from her heart a heavy load which she had borne in secret almost as long as she could remember.

A tap at her door, and Mrs. Phibbs came in.

"Lord Mansar?" said Gwenda, in dismay.

The least cause for her embarrassment was her unreadiness to meet a visitor at that hour. Mansar's attentions had been marked, and whilst she did not doubt either his sincerity or his honesty, it was distressing to her to find a man she liked very much developing, against her will and wish, another relationship.

"I was on my way to dinner," apologised his lordship, "and I thought you would not mind my calling in to tell you my news."

"Chick has some news also," smiled the girl ruefully. "His work is ending at the Foreign Office."

Lord Mansar nodded.

"I know," he said; "Sir John told me a few days ago. He's tremendously well satisfied with you, Pelborough."

"I suppose he is, sir," said Chick a little glumly. "I was wondering whether the letter I carried to Madrid—"

"He is perfectly well satisfied with you," said Mansar, "but the man whose place you filled is returning from Egypt. Welson has put your name down for the next vacancy, and I think you could be sure of having a permanent appointment. But I



think we can do better than that." He smiled, and gave the gist of his conversation with Joicey.

"And they have accepted you, Pelborough. I think it will be a good thing for you."

Chick's face did not display any particular enthusiasm.

"I am rather scared of it," he said, shaking his head. "I don't know what directors do, and I know nothing whatever about oil. Besides, it almost seems as though I were becoming a guinea-pig director."

Lord Mansar was startled.

"You're a queer fellow, Pelborough. I should not have thought that you knew what a guinea-pig director was."

Chick smiled in self-depreciation.

"You hear so many things in the City," he said, excusing his own intelligence. "But if you think, Lord Mansar, that I shan't make a fool of myself, and it is a job that I ought to take, I'm most grateful to you for suggesting it."

Mansar was just a little disappointed. Chick disappointed so many people who were misled by his simplicity into believing that he was mentally deficient. He gave them the same shock that the modern child administers to its parents, for Chick was neither dazed nor impressed by the mechanical toys of life, and saw, through the tin and the paint, the curled spring which worked them. There is nothing quite so disconcerting as this, and Lord Mansar might be pardoned his twinge of annoyance when Chick received the news of his excellent appointment with such *sang-froid*.

In truth, Chick was too alarmed to be impressed, and too overwhelmed by the view of this strange land which he must prospect to be enthusiastic. Gwenda went down to the door with their visitor. She was conscious of the chilling effect of Chick's lugubrious face.

"You have been wonderful to Lord Pelborough," she said, "and please don't think that he isn't very grateful. Chick gets so overburdened by these opportunities which you give him that he is not quite——"

"I know—I understand," said Lord Mansar, with a laugh. "I always forget that these jobs which a man like myself, who has never felt the need of a job, would accept so light-heartedly must be almost paralysing to a fellow like Chick. Besides, I am more than rewarded for any service I have given," he said meaningly.

He took her hand and held it a while, so

long that she gently withdrew it. There was an awkward silence as they stood on the doorstep, then Lord Mansar blurted :

"Mrs. Maynard, would you think I was very rude if I asked you a personal question ?"

"I can't imagine you being very rude," she smiled.

"Is your husband dead ?"

She shook her head.

"Are you divorced ?"

Again she shook her head.

"And is there any prospect of your being divorced ?"

"No, Lord Mansar," she said quietly, and he held out his hand again.

"I'm sorry," he said, and Gwenda went upstairs feeling a brute.

Chick received his introduction to Mr. Glion the next morning at ten o'clock. The place of meeting was a large bare-looking room, furnished with a long table and half a dozen mahogany chairs. On the distempered walls were four big charts framed in oak, and these, with a carpet on the floor, constituted the contents of the room—with this reservation, that Mr. Bertram Glion was in himself both a furnishing and a decoration. He was an immensely stout man, who emphasised and underlined his rotundity by his passion for vivid waistcoats. They were invariably of silk, and usually figured fantastically.

Mr. Glion told his intimate friends with pride that he designed them himself, a handsome admission that the responsibility was not to be put elsewhere. His face was very broad and very red. It could on occasions be crimson, and here Nature had emphasised his high colour by endowing him with a small, white moustache and a pair of snowy eyebrows.

He was a very rich man, who had built up his fortune on the faith of a large number of shareholders, who were in consequence very poor.

The relationship between Mr. Glion and his shareholders is best illustrated by an hour-glass. Place the hour-glass in its correct position, and there is only room for sand at one end. In his philosophy there was no place in the world for rich shareholders and rich company promoters. One or the other had to acquire wealth, and it was Mr. Glion's design that he should be the one.

He sat at the farther end of the table, in a large, padded and comfortable chair, and on his right, less comfortably placed, was

his friend and partner, John Meggison. Meggison could be described as a faded gentleman. Almost all the attributes of his gentility had faded just a little. He was a long-faced, taciturn man, who wore pince-nez and spoke with a certain preciousness. His worn and wearied expression may have been due to the fact that he had spent his maturity in a vain endeavour to adapt his sense of honour to the exigencies of Mr. Glion's business.

Mr. Glion pushed back his chair and rose breathlessly to his feet as Chick was shown in.

"Lord Pelborough, eh? Yes." He looked at Chick and said "Yes" again.

Mr. Meggison also looked at Chick and shook his head slightly. It was intended to be a signal to his partner that Chick would not do. It was one of his illusions that Mr. Glion was influenced by his judgment.

"Yes," said Mr. Glion again. "Sit down, Lord Pelborough."

Five minutes later Mr. Glion was waddling round the room with a long pointer, explaining to Chick, by means of the charts, maps and plans which hung on the wall, the potentialities of the Doebnitz oilfields. They were joined a little later by Mr. Joicey, who made up in enthusiasm all that he lacked in experience, and by lunch-time the four directors of Doebnitz Oil were seated about a table at Mr. Glion's flat.

Chick came home to tea a very preoccupied young man, and hung up his tall hat, looking so sad and depressed that Gwenda was alarmed.

"Are you disappointed, Chick?" she said.

Chick rubbed his nose and looked at her blankly.

"Eh?" he said, rousing himself with a start. "I'm awfully sorry, Gwenda. Am I disappointed? No, I'm not disappointed, except with myself. It is such an enormous business, Gwenda. There's a million pounds being invested in the company, and my name is going on the prospectus, and I've nothing to do except to go to the office once a month."

She shook him gently by the shoulder.

"My dear soul, there are lots of people who would give their heads to get that kind of position."

"I suppose they would," said Chick dubiously. "But, Gwenda, do you know anything about oil?"

"Do I know anything about it?" she

said in surprise. "No, of course I don't; but you needn't be an authority on oil to be a director of an oil company."

"I suppose not," said Chick.

He had a subscription to a library, and returned the next day with a number of volumes under his arm. Gwenda, reading their titles and noting that they all dealt with oil and its production, marvelled a little. She was beginning to understand Chick, and to know that behind that appealing helplessness of his was a very definite strength of purpose. The courage which had brought him again and again to the centre of the ring to take punishment from the hands of a man who he knew must surely defeat him, but which nevertheless held him doggedly to the end, was exactly the courage which made him spend three days and nights in the quietness of his bedroom confirming a suspicion which had been born of a quick glance between Glion and his partner.

It was during the luncheon, and Mr. Joicey was speculating upon the dividends which this undeveloped oilfield would pay. It was a glint from eye to eye that Chick saw, but it was enough.

A week passed, and he had exhausted the subject of oil, and had exchanged his books for the only geological survey of Roumania procurable. It was a small book, but it was in German, and for another three days Chick sat hunched up with a German-English dictionary by his side, puzzling over the queer Gothic characters and making elaborate notes in his sprawling hand.

The prospectus had been issued with what seemed to Lord Mansar to be indecent haste, and at the first board meeting which Chick attended Mr. Glion announced that subscriptions were "rolling in." Glion, who had seen the birth and death of innumerable companies, and had a very large experience of guinea-pig directors, drove to his handsome house in Hans Crescent after the meeting, and he was in a boiling rage.

"What is this fellow they've lumbered on to me?" he stormed to the meek Meggison. "The man is an infernal jackass. By Jove, for two pins I'd chuck him off the board!"

"He's young," murmured Mr. Meggison.

"Young be—blowed!" exploded Mr. Glion. "Business which ought to have taken us ten minutes he kept us fooling about with until six o'clock! Did you notice how he insisted upon reading the engineer's report? Did you hear what he said about the

purchase price and who was getting the money?"

"He's very young," murmured Mr. Meggison.

"Young!" spluttered the rotund Mr. Glion. "He's got Joicey dissatisfied, and I'm depending upon Joicey to work the market."

At that moment Mr. Joicey, no longer enthusiastic, was walking with a gloomy Chick along the Thames Embankment. Chick's tall hat was on the back of his head, and his hands were thrust into his trousers pockets.

"You know a devil of a lot about oil!" said Joicey testily, for a man resents the disturbance of his placid optimism. "Where did you learn it all?"

"I read it up," said Chick.

"Oh, in books," said Mr. Joicey contemptuously.

"Yes," said Chick, "in books. Books told you there was such a place as Roumania. You've never been there, have you?"

Mr. Joicey admitted he hadn't.

"You made Glion awfully wild," he said, after they had walked a few minutes in silence.

"Did I?" said Chick indifferently. "That's the fat red man, isn't it?"

"That's him," said the product of a great public school. "You rattled him a bit about the purchase price. Five hundred thousand pounds isn't too much to pay, if the property is anything like what I think it is."

Chick grunted.

"Who gets the money?" he asked, after a while.

"The Southern Oil Syndicate," answered Mr. Joicey uneasily, for he knew that the Southern Oil Syndicate was another name for Mr. Glion and Mr. Meggison.

They parted at the point where the one-decker trams dive into a dark tunnel and climb their way up to Southampton Row, and at parting Chick dropped his bomb-shell.

"I don't think there is any oil in that property," he said. "Good-bye, Mr. Joicey."

He left the young man staring after him.

A fortnight later came another report from the engineer in charge of the boring operations, which Mr. Glion received philosophically.

"Of course he must put down another borehole, gentlemen," he said. "It is very disappointing, very." He passed his hand wearily across his forehead. "Others will

reap the reward of our labours," he said virtuously. "We may not get oil for a month, or two months, or two years, but sooner or later our enterprise will be justified. We will now pass to the next item on the agenda."

"Wait a minute," said Chick. "In the prospectus you said——"

"Any discussion of the prospectus is out of order," said Mr. Glion in his capacity as chairman. "We will now pass to the next business."

The following afternoon Chick received a wire asking him to call at Hans Crescent. Mr. Glion was ill. He was very ill. In proof of which, there he was in his bed, dressed in resplendent pyjamas, which in all probability he had designed in the odd moments when he was not designing waistcoats.

"My doctor has told me to give up work at once," he said. "Sit down, Pelborough. Let them bring you some tea. Or will you have a whisky and soda?"

Chick would take neither.

Mr. Glion had not achieved success without a profound knowledge of human nature, and Chick listened fascinated whilst the white moustache wobbled up and down as Mr. Glion outlined his plan.

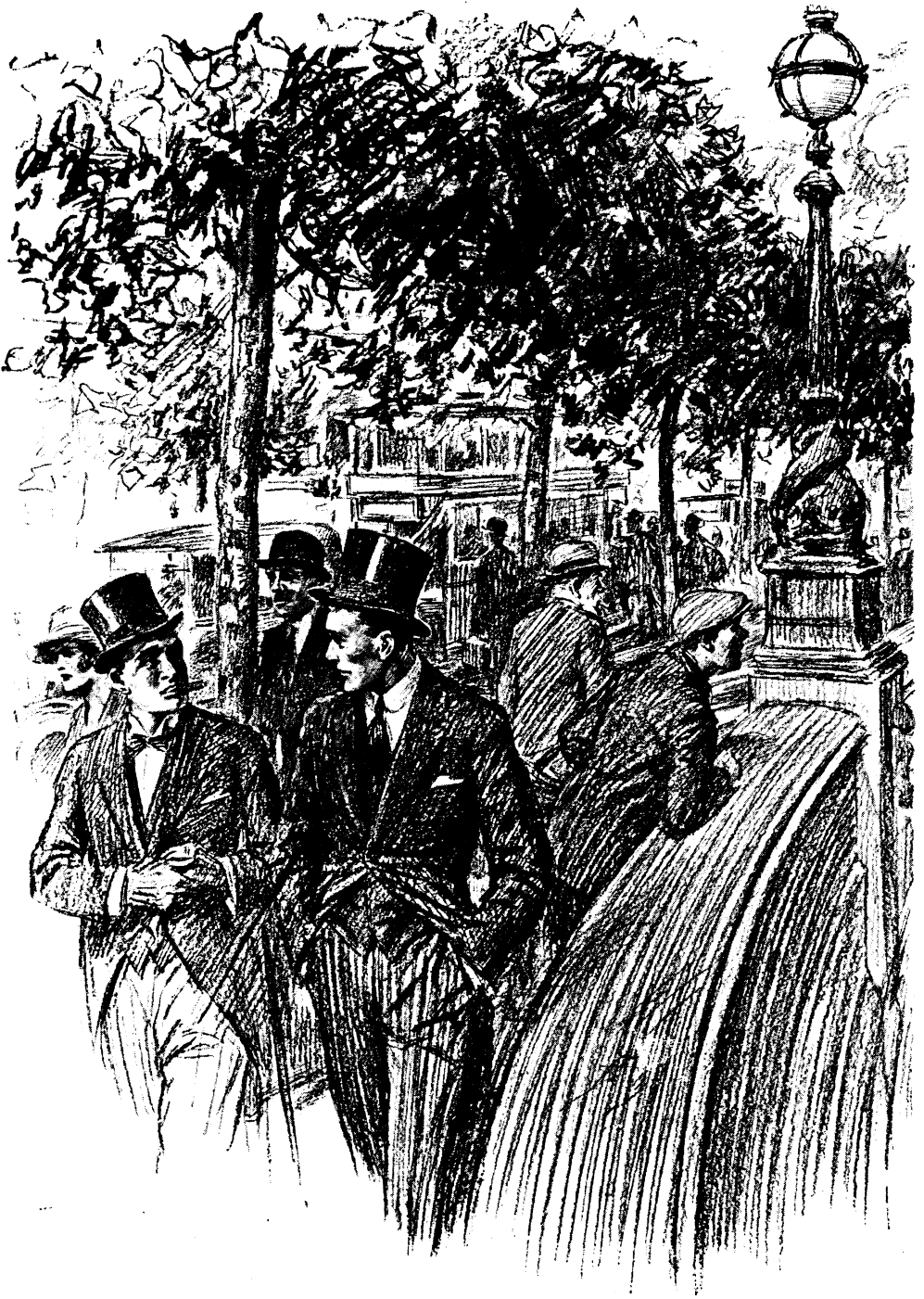
"I am getting a bit too old for this, Pelborough," he said. "Here, at the zenith of my career, I have the most wonderful proposition that any financier has ever handled, and Anno Domini has floored me! This company requires the direction of young men, full of the vigour of youth. You understand me?"

Chick nodded, wondering what was coming next.

"I have been talking it over with Meggison," Mr. Glion went on, "and we have decided to stand on one side and let you boys run the company."

"But—but——" stammered Chick.

"One moment." Mr. Glion raised his hand with a pained expression. "This is not a question of doing you a favour, my friend. I must be justified. People are watching the ravaging effect of—er—Anno Domini, as I said before, and are chuckling up their sleeves. They think I will fail, but they do not know that I have at my right hand and at my left"—he gesticulated picturesquely toward the window and in the direction of a Louis Seize cabinet—"two young geniuses—should that be genii? I am rather hazy on the subject—who will carry the Doebnitz Oilfields to triumphant success."



“Where did you learn it all?” “I read it up,” said Chick. “Oh, in books,” said Mr. Joice contemptuously.”

And then he outlined his scheme, and Chick listened open-mouthed.

Mr. Glion had a hundred thousand shares. Chick had exactly five hundred, which had been presented to him to qualify him for

the directorship. He would hand his shares over to Chick at a nominal figure, “say, a shilling — or even sixpence,” suggested Mr. Glion, watching the young man’s face, and was immediately after-



wards sorry that he hadn't said half-a-crown.

And Joicey should become managing director and Chick chairman of the board. It is doubtful whether Chick would have fallen in with this arrangement if he had read the scathing article in a respectable financial paper that morning. Joicey had read it, and was indignant when he came in answer to Chick's wire urgent. They met in the bare board-room in Queen Victoria Street, and Joicey's enthusiasm carried the day. The next morning they received the transfer of two hundred thousand shares which had been held by Mr. Glion and the philanthropic Mr. Meggison, and, constituting themselves into

a board, they accepted and acknowledged the resignation of the former chairman and managing director.

And then the trouble began. or months afterwards Chick never saw a financial newspaper without shutting his eyes and shivering. He leapt in a night to the eminence of a public character, and a bad character at that. An independent report of the Doebnitz property had reached London,

and it was less flattering than the engineer's. The post-box was filled with the letters of anguished and despairing shareholders who had already paid fifteen shillings on every one pound share, and Chick felt that he would grow grey unless something happened.

There was an informal meeting in the little sitting-room at Doughty Street, and to Gwenda's surprise Lord Mansar attended.

"I've been trying to get you all day, Chick," he said. "You can't imagine how sick I am that I have let you into this swindle."

Mr. Joicey, looking unusually haggard and baggy about the eyes, for he had had no sleep for three nights, put down

the newspaper cuttings he had been reading with a groan.

"Well, you were right, Mansar," he said. "The infernal scoundrels! They have left us to hold the baby."

"I'll come on the board," began Mansar.

"No, you won't," said Chick quietly. "We've got into this trouble through our own stupidity, and we've got to get out as best we can. It doesn't affect me, because—"

"It affects you more than anybody," said Mansar quietly. "You are just making your start, Pelborough, and I thought it was a good start for you. It is going to be very bad for you to be associated with a swindle of this kind, and I hate myself for putting you into it."

"Is there no money in the company?" asked Gwenda, who was the fourth about the little table.

"That's the swindle of it!" said Joicey savagely. "There's over one hundred and fifty thousand pounds in the bank, and Pelborough and I have full control of it. It was the money in the bank that was the lure. The business looked so solvent that we didn't hesitate, did we, Pelborough?"

Chick said nothing. He had done a considerable amount of hesitating, but had been over-persuaded by his volatile companion.

"But I thought the capital was a million," said the girl.

It was Mansar who explained to her the mysteries of high finance—of shares allocated in lieu of purchase price, of money actually paid out to vendors.

"Mr. Glion has his whack," said Chick. "I wonder if we could get it back?"

Joicey laughed.

"Could you get back a lump of sugar that had been standing in a cup of hot tea for ten minutes?" he asked. "Could you extract the ink you dropped on blotting-paper? No, you'll never get anything back from Glion. The beggar isn't even insurable," he said bitterly, "otherwise we could get a policy on his life and kill him!"

"He isn't a good life," said Chick, shaking his head, his mind reverting to the days of his insurance clerkship. "I think he would come under Schedule H."

The discussion ended, as all previous discussions had finished, without any definite plan being evolved. Indeed, there was no other plan than the liquidation of the company.

More satisfactory were the little talks

which Mr. Glion had with his confederate. They occurred in a room panelled in rosewood and illuminated by soft lights that shone through Venetian glass, lights that were fixed in solid silver brackets, for Mr. Glion's study had been arranged by a well-known firm of decorators and furnishers, and he had wisely refrained from putting forward those suggestions as to colour and shape which had made his waistcoats famous throughout the City of London.

"They seem to be in trouble," said Mr. Glion, as he sipped a long glass of Moselle. "Did you see *The Financial Echo* this morning?"

"They weren't exactly nice about us," said Mr. Meggison in his pedantic way.

"The things they say about that boy Pelborough—" Mr. Glion shook with internal laughter. "There is such a thing in this world, my dear fellow," he said, as he poured himself another libation, "as being too clever. It has been my experience that when you have dealings with a fellow who thinks he knows it all, you are on a good soft proposition."

There came a discreet tap at the door, and his butler entered, carrying a salver.

"A telegram?" said Mr. Glion, adjusting his glasses.

He opened the buff envelope and extracted two forms filled with writing.

Mr. Meggison, watching him read, saw first a look of astonishment and then a broad smile dawn slowly on his face.

"There is no answer," he said to the waiting servant, and chuckled, and his chuckle became a laugh so punctured with coughing that his companion was seriously alarmed.

"When you are dealing with a fellow who thinks he is clever," repeated Mr. Glion, when he had recovered his breath, "you are on something for nothing."

He tossed the telegram across to the other, and Mr. Meggison read:

"We have struck oil at 220 metres, a fine gusher. Evidently oil lies very deeply here. The prospects are splendid. All the local authorities are surprised that we have found oil at all."

It was signed "Meritt."

"What the dickens does that mean?" asked Mr. Meggison, surprised, and his friend began to laugh again.

"I will tell you what that means," he began, when again the door opened to admit the butler.

"There's a telephone call through for

you, sir, from the Marquis of Pelborough. Will you speak to him?"

"Switch him through," said Mr. Glion, his face creased with good humour.

He winked at the puzzled Mr. Meggison.

"Lost no time, has he?" he chuckled. "Hand that telephone across to me, will you, Meggison?"

It was Chick's voice that greeted him.

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Glion indulgently. "How do you do, Lord Pelborough? Yes, I've read the papers. . . I'm very sorry. . . . No, I'm out of that business for good. The state of my health makes it imperative that I should rest, and my doctor has forbidden me to interest myself in any company at all. . . . Buy back the shares and take control? Nonsense! . . . You wait, my boy, for a year or two. You'll have wonderful news from Roumania yet."

He winked again at the other, and was unable to proceed for a moment.

"Oh, yes, you bought them all right," he said, answering the anxious inquiry. "The fact that you and Joicey haven't paid for them makes no difference. You owe us exactly five thousand pounds. That's exactly two hundred thousand shares at sixpence. No, we're not going to press you for payment."

He listened, shaking his head, whilst the sound of Chick's urgent voice reached Mr. Meggison at the other side of the table.

"I'm sorry. Good night."

He hung up the receiver.

"That is one of the most transparent tricks in the world," he said.

The 'phone rang again. He hesitated for a moment, then reached for the instrument.

"Oh, is that you, Pelborough? No, I'm sure Mr. Meggison wouldn't come back under any circumstances. He's not well at all. And by the way, Pelborough, where is Joicey now? In Roumania, is he?" He grinned broadly. "Thank you, that is all I wanted to know."

He put the receiver down.

"As I was saying, that is one of the most transparent tricks, and it has been played on me before, but never, I am happy to say, with success. The wire was sent by Joicey, of course."

"Why should he send it here and not to the office? That exposes the fake," said Mr. Meggison.

"Not necessarily," corrected Glion. "Merrit has had orders to send his wires

direct here. No, no"—he held up his glass and admired its amber contents—"they oughtn't to have tried it on an old bird like me."

Mr. Glion came down to breakfast the next morning in his most amiable mood. He might have continued the day in that cheerful frame of mind, but for a paragraph in the stop-press column of the financial paper.

"Valuable finds of oil have been made on the property of the Doebnitz Oil Company."

This puzzled him, and it shook his faith in his own judgment. That faith was entirely dissipated in the afternoon when the figures at his club showed Doebnitz Oil at seventeen shillings a share and rising.

Mr. Glion was a man of resource and ingenuity. Ten minutes after reading the staggering information which the tape machine supplied, he descended from a taxi at the door of the office in Queen Victoria Street and went up to the board-room.

He passed through the outer office, where three clerks were busy opening telegrams from shareholders, cancelling their offers to sell, and discovered Chick sitting in solitary state in that same luxurious chair which had been Mr. Glion's. Chick beamed up at the visitor, and Mr. Glion ordered his face to smile.

"Well, well, my boy," he said, and offered a plump and purple hand, "you see I've come as I promised."

The smile left Chick's face.

"As you promised, sir?" he said.

Mr. Glion nodded and sat down.

"As we agreed over the 'phone," he said. "I have come to buy back the shares you offered me, and very handsome it was of you, my boy. I promise you that you shall not lose on the transaction."

"I've promised myself that, too, sir," said Chick gently.

"Have you the transfers ready?" asked Mr. Glion, searching for his fountain pen.

"No, sir—and I am not selling."

The rotund Mr. Glion quivered with surprise and indignation.

"What, sir! After we had agreed that I should take over your stock?"

Chick walked to the door and opened it wide.

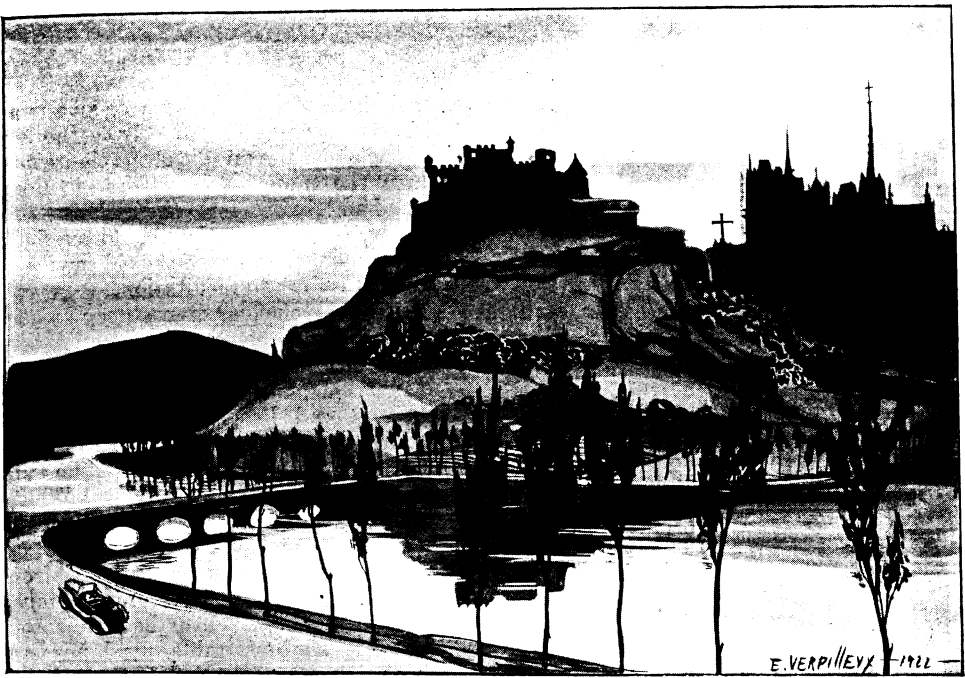
"Good evening, sir," he said politely.

One of Mr. Glion's greatest assets was an ability to recognise defeat.









"The twin hills of Boisbisons, seen obliquely . . . one crowned by the Cathedral, the other by the incomparable Château."

# MADAME AND THE MAYOR

By C. KENNETT BURROW

ILLUSTRATED BY EMILE VERPILLEUX

ALONG the windings of a valley road which followed the course of a little river a blue-and-white motor-car glided slowly. It had three occupants. At the wheel was a young man who might have been many things, but who clearly was not a professional chauffeur; his expression, as he took the curves of the road, was strained. On his left sat a lady who wore a close cap of green silk and a green coat with a sable collar. She was pale and seemed tired, so that her beauty, which was unmistakable, had rather the effect of subdued light. In the back seat was a second lady, a small, slight, vivid person, whose general expression of amused curiosity was occasionally crossed by a shade of boredom.

"This spring sunshine is as heady as wine," said the young man at the wheel.

"Is that why your hand is unsteady, Jacques?"

"It is not unsteady. But if it were, would not the sense of responsibility account for it? What would the world say if—"

"If you precipitated Madame Blanchefleur and her maid into that stream, for example?"

"That fiction of the maid is absurd. . . Sacred Heaven!" This exclamation was due to the sudden appearance of another car approaching at a speed which seemed to Jacques Coriot to be terrific: and the road was narrow. Madame Blanchefleur leant across and took control of the wheel.

"Now the accelerator—no, idiot, not

the brake!" The blue-and-white car sped forward, was adroitly guided to the very edge of the road, and the other car roared past. Jacques wiped his forehead.

"There was no danger," said Madame Blancheffeur.

"Nevertheless, I should like to break that chauffeur's neck."

Madame Blancheffeur smiled.

"His speed was nothing," she said. "When I am in the mood for speed——"

"You drive like one possessed," said the other lady.

"At any rate, Hélène, I can always keep my head. Now we will change places, Jacques. I cannot trust you any longer."

"Ah," cried Coriot, "there is the Loire!"

As the valley widened towards a main road, the long reaches of the Loire, not far distant, swept through the young green of the landscape with a regal flow, as though the river held memories of the ancient glories which are associated with its lovely name. Madame Blancheffeur stopped the car and stood up with a cry of delight.

"For me," said Coriot, "the Loire is not one of the rivers of Paradise. I almost starved in Orléans for a month."

"That was probably good for you," said Hélène.

"You are at liberty to think so," said Coriot, turning round to face her. "But, for myself, I consider that artists should be properly fed."

"At the Café Grenier, for example?"

"You, mademoiselle, are in a position to judge."

"Oh, you children!" cried Madame Blancheffeur. "You have no repose, no contemplation. I almost wish, Jacques, that I had not encouraged your idea of coming here to paint. And as for you, Hélène, you are as pert as a robin."

"I shall not trouble you," Coriot said gloomily. "I will see you installed and then go about my business."

"But you will remain in Boisbisons?" Hélène inquired anxiously.

"I am a man of moods. It is possible that I may return to Paris to-morrow."

"Do," said Hélène. "That would be entirely sensible."

The twin hills of Boisbisons, seen obliquely, now rose before them, one crowned by the Cathedral, the other by the incomparable Château. In a few minutes the car reached the outskirts of the town. At the top of the Rue des Hautes Granges—an inconsiderable street—was a miniature

Place, surrounded by houses of some architectural distinction and suggesting an almost alarming respectability. It was as though, some time about the middle of the eighteenth century, the more select spirits of Boisbisons had built for themselves this sanctuary, from which they could overlook the mean and evil streets of the old town and devote themselves to meditation.

Madame Blancheffeur drew a deep breath.

"This is what M. Dorain described to me," she said.

"Arnaud Dorain is a great artist in words, but did he indicate the intense decorum of the Place Montaigne?"

"Everything—the very air and the sunlight on the stones. And that"—she pointed across the open space—"is the house."

As she spoke a motor-car emerged from a side-street and drew up before the house which Madame Blancheffeur had indicated.

"That is the miserable machine that nearly ran us down!" cried Coriot. "Let us advance upon the enemy!"

As Madame Blancheffeur adroitly stopped her car head on to the other, so that their noses, as it were, almost touched, the late occupant of the other car was turning from the door of the house. He was a tall, lean, swarthy man, with a nose sharply aquiline, and dark and heavy-lidded eyes. For a moment he gazed at Madame Blancheffeur and then swept off his hat.

"Have I the honour to address Madame Blancheffeur?"

"Yes, monsieur. And may I hazard the guess that you are M. Léon Coutance, the distinguished Mayor of Boisbisons, and, for the moment, my landlord?"

"Madame is correct. I had hoped to find you already here and to pay my respects to you in a house which, for a month of last summer, was illuminated, if I may so put it, by the presence of M. Arnaud Dorain."

"M. le Maire," said Coriot, "permit me to say that Madame Blancheffeur would have arrived earlier if she, and the rest of us, had not been almost destroyed by a car which was remarkably like yours."

"It was yours!" said Madame Blancheffeur. "But M. Coriot exaggerates. We were in no danger. To be frank, M. Coriot, who is a learner, lost his nerve."

"Ungrateful!" Coriot murmured. The Mayor of Boisbisons cast upon Jacques a glance of dignified indifference.

"My man," he said, "knows his business."

But, madame, I offer you the most profound apology even for the appearance of incivility." Coriot, who was now helping Madame Blanchefleur to descend, muttered :

"He is a pompous ass!" Hélène jumped lightly from the car and stood a little apart, no doubt in recognition of her rôle of maid.

The Mayor turned to the door and knocked authoritatively. It was opened by a woman—short, stout, red-faced—who had been watching the proceedings from a side-window. M. Coutance stood aside to allow Madame Blanchefleur to pass.

"Enter with me, M. le Maire," she said. M. Coutance bowed and obeyed.

"I myself," he said, "occupied this house until three years ago, when good fortune provided me with larger means and a more ample establishment."

"M. Dorain has told me that you retain the house as a kind of memorial, only letting it occasionally to favoured tenants."

"That is true, madame."

The room into which M. Coutance conducted the little party looked out upon a small garden, now starred with daffodils and jonquils. The furniture was somewhat heavy, but in sufficiently good taste. Madame Blanchefleur sank into a chair and closed her eyes.

"M. le Maire," she said, "I am somewhat weary. An accident, a fall, was followed by a virulent attack of *la grippe*. I am not altogether myself."

"Madame is so little herself," said Hélène anxiously, "that in my opinion she should go to bed at once." Madame Blanchefleur opened her eyes.

"That is absurd," she said. "I am convalescent, and I refuse to be dictated to." All at once she rose and, crossing the room, ran her eye along a line of prints in narrow black frames. She swung round: a faint colour, delicate as the flush of the wild rose, had come into her cheeks.

"You are an admirer of the theatre?" she cried. "You have here an admirable collection of portraits, but they are all of actors and actresses of the past." The Mayor's heavy eyelids blinked at the new radiance in Madame Blanchefleur's gaze.

"I am a profound admirer of the theatre," he said, "or, shall I say, of my ideal of the theatre? In my opinion the French stage is dead."

"Dead?" cried Madame Blanchefleur. Coriot stared at him, Hélène glanced at him and then turned her back.

"This person is insufferable!" Coriot

whispered to her. Before the Mayor had sufficiently collected himself to reply to Madame Blanchefleur's startled question, Marcelle plunged into the room, saying that an urgent message had just arrived from the Mairie; the presence of M. Coutance was desired at once. So the Mayor took a hasty leave and departed, carrying his head high.

"I told you," said Coriot, "that he was a pompous ass, and he also appears to be a fool!"

"Neither ass nor fool," Madame Blanchefleur said. "We have only seen his outside. There is something below worth considering."

"Well, I wish you luck in discovering it. As for me, I am going to find a cheap hotel, and, when I have found it, I shall return for my tools."

"I had forgotten the car!" cried Madame Blanchefleur. "You are a useless person, Jacques."

Marcelle, who appeared to possess super-human strength, had by this time succeeded in getting the luggage into the house, and, happily, there was a garage close at hand.

Two hours later Coriot returned in a venerable cab, which looked as though it had been standing in the dustiest corner of Boisbisons for a week.

"Once again," he said, "I am in touch with common things. I could not live up to your car, but in that thing I am at home. Its rumbling is music to me. And I have discovered an hotel in the old town, the Hôtel des Sept Étoiles, in the Rue des Cailloux. I may be murdered there, but no matter. It is at the bottom of a flight of steps, and the landlord, named Barbisse, has the face of an enraged rat."

"Excellent!" said Madame Blanchefleur.

"You have decided, then, not to return to Paris to-morrow?" Hélène said.

"Paris? When I can have Boisbisons to myself! Besides, what would Paris be without you, Hélène, and the incomparable Madame Blanchefleur?" He bundled his belongings into the cab and departed, singing to himself.

"He will never altogether grow up," said Madame Blanchefleur, with a hand on Hélène's shoulder.

"Dearest Natalie, do you imagine that I want him to?" Madame Blanchefleur kissed the girl's ear.

"You are a little fool," she said, "but very sweet."

## II.

THE days of that memorable April passed quietly for Madame Blancheffeur. Hour by hour her strength returned, but she did not feel at once the imperative call of Paris. In that soft and tranquil air her spirit gained a repose which could only be experienced at rare intervals in the eddies and reactions of the larger life.

One afternoon Coriot, who was working hard, presented himself in the Place Montaigne with an air of mystery.

"I have made a discovery!" he said.

"You are always making discoveries," said Hélène, "but of what use are they?"

Coriot waved his hand.

"I address myself, in particular, to Madame Blancheffeur," he said.

"Well, my friend, what have you discovered?"

"A theatre."

"A theatre in Boisbisons! My poor Jacques, are you ill?"

"A theatre, I repeat," said Coriot. "It is tucked away in an ugly little street that does not assert itself."

"Has anyone else seen this theatre?" Hélène asked pityingly.

"I continue," said Coriot, "to address myself to Madame Blancheffeur, who, thank Heaven, is intelligent. The Théâtre Molière has not been used for a dozen years."

"The place could not support a theatre," said Madame Blancheffeur.

"I understand that offers have been made, and refused."

"To whom, then, does it belong?"

"To M. Léon Coutance, Mayor of Boisbisons."

"Ah!" cried Madame Blancheffeur.

"It only goes to prove my assertion that he is an ass."

"It proves nothing of the kind," Madame Blancheffeur said reflectively. "He may be—doubtless he is—an original, but you, my friend, should be the last person to assume that an original is an ass."

Coriot bowed.

"Attack me, destroy me, do what you will with me! Annihilation at your hands, Madame——"

"Here is M. le Maire's car!" cried Hélène, hurrying to the window. "It stops, M. le Maire descends, he approaches the door! Shall the curtain be rung up, Madame?"

"Child, tell Marcelle to bring M. Coutance here at once."

As Coutance entered the room, Madame

Blancheffeur rose and advanced to meet him with extended hand.

"I do myself the honour, madame, to inquire about your comfort and health."

"I have never been more comfortable, and my health is almost restored. For that, monsieur, I have to thank you and Boisbisons."

He smiled with a kind of benignant pleasure. But the smile faded as he caught the quizzical regard of Coriot, who was placing a chair for him close to Madame Blancheffeur.

"Boisbisons," he said, "has wonderful air."

"And I have just heard, to my surprise and admiration, that it has a theatre."

"That is true," said the Mayor, slowly lowering his heavy eyelids and raising them again as though he were going through a prescribed exercise. Then he squared his shoulders and his eyes brightened.

"I will not disguise from you the fact that the Théâtre Molière belongs to me," he said. "My father, who had a passion for the drama, built it, not as a commercial speculation, but, as he thought, for the benefit of Boisbisons."

"A philanthropist indeed!" said Coriot.

"But, madame," Coutance continued, "the town could not, of course, support a stock company, and the touring companies available were fourth or fifth rate. Moreover, they could provide only the rags and tatters of spurious comedy and farce, and their tragedy—their tragedy, madame, was an orgy of idiocy and fury. My father was an idealist. If he could not have the best (and I admit that he might have known the best was unobtainable), he would have nothing. So the theatre was closed."

"Is it to remain closed for ever?" Madame Blancheffeur asked.

"If it were possible to obtain some supreme artist. . . . But the race of supreme artists is dead. The classics of the stage are neglected. All is frivolous, or sordid, or imbecile."

Madame Blancheffeur regarded the Mayor with an extreme gravity.

"It is indeed terrible!" she said. "I have great sympathy with your point of view."

A curious gurgling sound came from Hélène. She was holding a handkerchief to her mouth and her eyes danced. The Mayor looked perplexed.

"Well," said Coriot, "my sympathy is all the other way. You should go to Paris,

monsieur, and see for yourself. I would even undertake to be your guide."

"You are too good," said Coutance, with a gesture that somehow conveyed irony. Then, turning to Madame Blanchefleur, he continued:

"I confess that I have had to exercise some self-restraint. I feel, indeed, that I might abandon myself to the stage as it is. I might forget Boisbisons and my duty."

Another gurgle from Hélène drew the Mayor's sombre eyes in her direction, but now her back was turned.

"I am convinced, monsieur, that you would never forget your duty," said Madame Blanchefleur.

"When I was last in Paris, a year ago, I was taken to the Racine by friends with whom I had been dining. We had been merry. And there, madame, I saw an actress so supreme that I was in a condition of adoration."

"The Racine? Then the actress was probably Mademoiselle Fadette," Coriot said.

"That was the name. No doubt, madame, you have seen her?"

"Yes, yes, I have seen her," said Madame Blanchefleur, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"And your opinion of her?"

"She might do better. She has received too much praise."

"Ah, that is a woman's opinion of a woman."

"Precisely," said Madame Blanchefleur. At this point Hélène fled from the room, and Coriot, a moment later, followed her. The Mayor rose to take his leave.

"I am always at your service, madame," he said. "You have only to command and I obey."

"I will remember," said Madame Blanchefleur, with a smile that lingered with him to the very door of the Mairie.

"He is, after all, a romantic, but a romantic in a shell," she said to herself.

At about ten o'clock on the following morning, as Madame Blanchefleur was preparing to set out alone for the lower town and the quays, which always gave her a sense of subdued excitement, she saw Arnaud Dorain crossing the Place Montaigne. He walked slowly, and it seemed to her that at last the Master was visibly conscious of the approach, perhaps of the presence, of disintegrating age. She ran out to meet him.

"Dear master," she cried, "why did

you not write?" He took her hands and looked steadily into her eyes with that gaze which had regarded unflatteringly both the baseness and glory of mankind.

"Because I preferred to surprise Madame Blanchefleur—it is Madame Blanchefleur, is it not?—in her retreat." She nodded and turned with him towards the house.

"You will remain in Boisbisons for a time?"

"For a few days at least. I have established myself at the Hôtel du Château."

"Then you will not have the society of Jacques Coriot. He is at the Hôtel des Sept Étoiles."

"I remember the place. It is very well for Coriot, but not for me." He paused and laid a hand on Madame Blanchefleur's shoulder. "Yet I have not forgotten that once I was young."

"You will always be young," she declared. As they entered the house, Hélène came flying down the stairs, and almost precipitated herself into Dorain's arms.

"Mademoiselle Remuet!" he cried.

"Pardon me," said Madame Blanchefleur. "This is merely my maid, Hélène. Boisbisons works transformations."

"As you will," said Dorain.

"I am the worst possible maid," said Hélène, who seemed a little awed. Madame Blanchefleur pinched the girl's cheek.

"Go," she said, "find Jacques, and tell him that the Master is here. Bring him back to lunch."

On the following evening Dorain entertained Madame Blanchefleur at the Hôtel du Château, which is on the hillside that lifts from the Loiré westwards, holding Boisbisons as in protecting arms. After dinner they sat on a narrow terrace which seemed to hang in air. It was one of those nights of late April when summer, like a queen setting forth on some triumphal progress, sends out heralds to announce her approach. Above, the deeps of sky were of an intense purple, shot with stars. Below, the irregular light of Boisbisons showed dimly through a slight mist. The attentive ear was aware of the undulant pulse of the river.

"So you have been happy here?" Dorain asked.

"Perfectly," she said. "It was an inspiration that made you suggest this place to me."

"Merely common-sense," he said, "supported by Dr. Sylvestre Bourdon. My inspirations are all behind me, dead blossoms dropped by the wayside."

"A little, perhaps. And I have recorded a great deal of ugliness."

"What ails you to-night, dear master?"

"I was wondering, only wondering. When a man draws near the end——"

"I forbid you to speak of the end. I will not listen." Dorain laid a hand over one of hers.

"You said the other day that I was always young. Surely, then, the youthful spirit may speak of the passing of its old habitation without offence?"

"It hurts me. I am afraid to think of the end!"

"Yes, civilisation has reduced us to that, to fear of the one absolute beneficence. . . . I grow weary sometimes, my child."

It seemed to Madame Blancheffleur, sitting in that serene atmosphere by the side of this man who represented the penetration, the irony, the tenderness, the pity, the artistic sincerity of modern France—that Boisbisons and the world itself became unreal, that they two alone were actual. The impression lasted only for a moment, but the memory of it was to remain with her always.

"Yes, a little weary," Dorain

"She stood again before the footlights."

"Not dead. They will live for ever in your work."

"I have no such faith. Have I even any desire that my work should live? I have been sincere—yes. I have never been afraid, and I have loved my art as a mistress. But what then?"

"You have created beauty," said Madame Blancheffleur.

repeated. "I can still observe, meditate, enjoy, but the power of creation—the whole justification of life—has shrunk like a failing well."

"The well will be renewed, the water will rise again."

"I do not desire that. I know myself."

Dorain rose and walked to the balustraded edge of the terrace. Madame Blanche-

fleur, a minute later, followed him. He was gazing down on that old part of Boisbisons which is a huddle of narrow streets interrupted, here and there, by flights of worn steps. As they looked, a point of flame shot into the air, subsided, and reappeared. A second flame appeared, straining upward, and a trail of smoke drifted languidly across the valley.

"What does that mean?" asked Madame Blanche fleur. Dorain did not answer until a third spurt of flame wavered into the night.

"It means," he said quietly, "a fire in the old quarter. If it spreads——"

They became aware of vague murmurs, voices, a rising throb of movement below. The sounds rose through the still air with a strange and sinister vibration.

"Jacques Coriot!" cried Madame Blanche fleur, catching at Dorain's arm. "The Hôtel des Sept Étoiles! It is in the heart of the old town!"

"Coriot, you may be sure, is safe enough."

"I must go to Hélène."

"Wait one moment," said Dorain. He



"The demonstration at the conclusion of the performance was extraordinary."

left her, and presently returned with Madame Blanchefleur's cloak. He had already slipped on his overcoat.

"Not you—you must not come!" cried Madame Blanchefleur.

"Did I not tell you that I was never afraid? I never played for safety. Thank God, I am too old now to learn!"

He offered his arm to Madame Blanchefleur, and together they took the downward road. The other guests, few at that season, were already congregating on the terrace. As the pair descended they became part of a hurrying and vociferous stream of people, who flung conjectures at each other in a bewildering chorus. By this time an increasing pall of smoke, whose swirling under-side glowed ominously, hung over the valley.

At the top of the Rue des Cailloux a cordon of police held back the crowd. It was a narrow street, paved with rough cobble-stones and interrupted by a flight of steps. At the bottom of these steps, on the left, was the Hôtel des Sept Étoiles. Half a dozen houses on that side were ablaze, and the grimy little thoroughfare was lit up as by a thousand naphtha flares.

"It is like a Fair of Death!" cried Madame Blanchefleur.

"Be still, be still!" said Dorain.

The town's modern fire-engine, unable to pass into the narrow street, was playing on the lower houses in order to check the progress of the fire. In the street itself an ancient manual, feverishly worked by inexperienced volunteers, threw a feeble spirtle against tottering walls.

"Natalie!" Madame Blanchefleur turned at the cry and caught Hélène in her arms. "My God, if I have ever spoken to Jacques in jest!"

"We have all spoken in jest," Dorain said, "and the supreme jester—is it life?"

The Master stood for a moment as in deep contemplation. Then he slipped through the cordon with the precision and activity of a child, and the two women and the amazed onlookers saw him walk down that flaming avenue, serene, self-controlled.

"He is old, he is not afraid of death," sobbed Hélène. "But why—"

Dorain paused before the Hôtel des Sept Étoiles, and it seemed to the straining watchers that he would presently open the door and enter. He glanced upwards and then turned quickly to the workers of the manual.

"Move your preposterous machine higher up," he said. "The Hôtel des Sept Étoiles

is crumbling." The men obeyed, Dorain following. The outer walls crashed down across the street, piling *débris* against the opposite houses.

Dorain returned quietly to the two women.

"Coriot is not there," he said. "How do I know that? Call it instinct, Mademoiselle Remuet. He will not die by fire . . . Ah, here he comes!"

Hélène saw Coriot at the same moment. She stood spellbound, choking. He came climbing over the wreckage with a child in his arms. His hair was singed, his clothes foul with smoke and water, but his face beamed through its grime. The crowd broke into wild cheering.

"Here," he said, "is my little model. Take her, Hélène; she is not hurt. Phew, what a blaze!" It was Madame Blanchefleur who took the child from his arms. Hélène clung to him.

"You are hurt, you smell of fire!" she cried.

"It is nothing. The child was alone in the house next to that infernal hotel."

"How did it happen?" Dorain asked.

"How? Ask my rat-landlord, Barbisse. He rushed up from his cellar crying 'Fire!' with a look of knowing too much."

Those in the crowd who stood nearest caught this up, and presently the name of Barbisse was tossed about with threatenings and imprecations. But of all this Madame Blanchefleur took no heed. She was soothing the little girl, whose silence of terror had given place to convulsive weeping.

"Whose child is this?" she asked Coriot.

"Nobody's. Her parents, fortunately for her, are dead. They were no credit to Boisbisons. She belongs to the street. I call her Cerisette."

"Then she shall belong to me," said Madame Blanchefleur, with a wonderful light in her eyes.

"You are adorably rash," Dorain said, "but I will help you with the little one. She shall have a chance. Every day we have such opportunities, but we do not take them because the dramatic note is absent. Perhaps we are generous to please ourselves. However, to save a human body, perhaps a soul. . ."

Whether Barbisse, thé rat-faced landlord of the Sept Étoiles, whose business was notoriously in a bad way, had set fire to his house, for the sake of the insurance money, will never be known, for no trace of him was ever discovered. Apparently



he had gone up with the smoke of the doomed street. But the rest of Boisbisons was saved.

At nine o'clock on the following morning Madame Blanchefleur made her way to the Mairie. M. Léon Coutance was in a state of distraction, which now and then burst through the barriers of his solemnity like the flutter of flame in an unlit room. He was pacing the floor with slow strides when Madame Blanchefleur, after some little delay, was shown into the mayoral parlour.

"Madame," he cried, "what a disaster! What have I, what has Boisbisons, done to deserve this?"

"It is useless to inquire," said Madame Blanchefleur.

"I shall have to open a fund for the homeless. Already I have made certain arrangements. But, forgive my preoccupation, to what do I owe the honour of your visit?"

"I wish to be of use," she said. "Boisbisons has restored my health, and I must give it something in return."

"A subscription?"

"That, and something more. I ask you, M. le Maire, to place at my disposal the Théâtre Molière." Coutance paused as though suddenly struck rigid. For the first time his eyes seemed to open completely. He stared at his visitor with an expression of terrified fascination.

"But, madame, as I explained to you, for twelve years that theatre has been closed. Out of respect for my father's memory and my own resolution—"

"Would it not be a tribute to his memory to help the helpless?"

"Yes, yes!" cried Coutance. "But I am bewildered. My brain works slowly, at all times a little slowly, and this tragedy—"

He paused with a despairing gesture.

"Listen," said Madame Blanchefleur. "You spoke with appreciation, even with enthusiasm, of Mademoiselle Fadette. If I could induce her to give a performance in your theatre, would not the well-to-do of your town flock to see her?"

"They would tumble over each other," said Coutance. "With good management the house might hold ten thousand francs. And, madame, the glory of it! You have sufficient influence with Mademoiselle Fadette?"

"I can promise you that. Shall we say, then, in a week? I will give you details later in the day. It will be necessary to print posters and handbills at once. And,

monsieur, let the Théâtre Molière be ventilated and have a little of the dust removed."

"Twice a year that is done. I do not allow my property to go to the devil!"

Madame Blanchefleur laughed. Coutance stood transfixed. That parlour had heard no such music in his time.

"Very good, M. le Maire, very good! For the present I leave you. Under a penalty of ten thousand francs I undertake that Mademoiselle Fadette shall appear in Boisbisons." She had vanished before Coutance could get out another word.

Madame Blanchefleur mounted the steep road to the Hôtel du Château and found Dorain on the terrace.

"I was about to come to you," he said. "Why are your eyes so bright?" She told him what she had arranged.

"Strange," he said, "that I never heard of this theatre. And so Madame Blanchefleur insists on being—herself?"

"Always, dear master."

"All this will give you infinite trouble, and you are not yet strong."

"But consider the cause. . . . Now I must bring all my strength to the task of influencing La Fadette!"

During the days which followed Madame Blanchefleur and Hélène Remuet scarcely stirred from the house in the Place Montaigne save to go to the theatre. Coriot, established in a more reputable hostelry, came and went between the Place and the theatre in the most joyous spirits; Hélène, for the present at least, was tamed. Coutance managed the publicity department to admiration, and the name of Mademoiselle Fadette blazed, in red letters, all over Boisbisons. But the Mayor had fits of acute perturbation, and when the fateful day arrived and he had seen no sign of the great actress, he became almost beside himself. Even an immense basket, bearing her name, which had arrived from Paris, did not reassure him.

Three hours before the doors of the Théâtre Molière were to be opened, Madame Blanchefleur and Dorain, standing at the back of the stalls, were watching Coriot, who, on the stage, was giving the final touches to the drapery which was to serve as background.

"Excellent!" said Madame Blanchefleur, her clear voice seeming to search the empty spaces.

Coutance approached hurriedly from the back. He carried in his hand, which trembled, half a dozen slips of paper.

"Have you prepared your opening speech?" Dorain asked.

"Yes, yes. . . . In Heaven's name—madame, monsieur—has Mademoiselle Fadette arrived?" Dorain glanced at Madame Blanchefleur. She nodded.

"Mademoiselle Fadette is here," he said. The Mayor glanced eagerly about him.

"Where?" he demanded.

"One of Mademoiselle Fadette's favourite parts is that of Madame Blanchefleur." The slips of paper fluttered from Coutance's fingers, his mouth opened, but no sound came forth. Then he dived after his papers and groped for them on his knees. Coriot cried from the stage—

"M. le Maire, when one discovers the truth to be so beautiful, one naturally assumes the attitude of adoration."

"That young man," said Coutance, "is without respect, without reverence. . . . Mademoiselle, I am not ashamed to be on my knees before you. Fool, imbecile that I am, I might have guessed! Such charm, such temperament, so divine a voice!"

"I beg you to rise," said Madame Blanchefleur. "I thought it best to preserve the secret till the last hour. It might, by accident, have escaped you, and I wish to remain merely Madame Blanchefleur to Boisbisons. If I am recognised to-night, it does not matter." Coutance rose, and it must be admitted that he carried off the situation with dignity.

"To have kept your secret," he said, "would have been difficult, but not beyond my power."

"I offer you a thousand apologies," said Madame Blanchefleur, giving him her hand. "I should have trusted you fully. I am to be assisted by Mademoiselle Remuet, whom you know as my maid Hélène. M. Taillant, who has been released by the management of the Racine, will arrive in half an hour." The Mayor bowed profoundly.

"I will now complete my speech," he said.

It is probable that that evening's performance was, and will remain, the one great event in the theatrical history of Boisbisons. Ticket-holders arrived an hour before the curtain rose. The little theatre, as Coriot put it, was packed as tightly as a box of figs. Dorain, on leaving Madame Blanchefleur to go to his stage-box, looked at her anxiously. He knew what an immense strain she had been putting on newly-recovered strength.

"Be careful, child," he said. "Boisbisons must not be permitted to rob the world."

The speech of M. Coutance roused the audience to enthusiasm; one might have supposed that Mademoiselle Fadette had been created for the sole purpose of bringing aid to the town's sufferers. An anonymous benefactor, he said, had promised to double the amount taken for tickets. He retired to a burst of applause and the curtain went up, revealing Madame Blanchefleur alone. The Théâtre Molière shook with tumultuary shouting; handkerchiefs fluttered, and here and there men and women of the sternest reputation wiped their eyes.

She had selected the simplest and most directly human things in her repertoire—character sketches, songs, dialogues that appealed to pity and romance. Hélène and Taillant, both highly impressionable, played up to her faultlessly.

Dorain watched, wondered, and finally became uneasy. He turned to another occupant of the box who sat well back in the shadow.

"Can she keep it up, Dr. Bourdon?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, she will keep it up."

"But I was wise to send for you?"

"I value your message as a sign of a friendship that is full of understanding," Dr. Bourdon said.

"I was perfectly aware that for you she is the one woman, the woman of every man's dream. Yet she approaches the reality. I have myself, Sylvestre, dreamed and made mistakes, but there is no mistake about this Madame Blanchefleur."

"Remember," said Bourdon, "that she and La Fadette are—shall I say different women?"

Dorain laughed softly.

"My dear doctor," he said, "you call yourself a psychologist and yet can say that. Those two women are one."

The demonstration at the conclusion of the performance was extraordinary. Boisbisons appeared to have lost its head. When the curtain rose on the little group for the fourth recall, an immense bouquet was handed up, and a lady in the front row flung a ring upon the stage, crying:

"For the sufferers!"

Immediately a shower of coins and trinkets flashed and tinkled at Madame Blanchefleur's feet. She wavered, drooped for a moment, and then her eyes went to the box in which Dorain and Bourdon sat. She

caught at Hélène's shoulder, still staring at the box. At a signal from Taillant, the curtain was hurriedly rung down. Dr. Bourdon made a flying leap on to the stage and passed behind the curtain.

Madame Blancheffeur had turned suddenly and fallen to her knees. Hélène, also kneeling, had her arms about her. Coriot stood helplessly in the background.

As Bourdon approached noiselessly, Madame Blancheffeur said—

"Hélène—yes, yes, it is you, thank God—I had a vision of death. His eyes seemed to glitter in those gems, all fire and frost. And then I looked towards the Master, and behind him was a shadow, and that, too, I thought was death. And then the shadow became Sylvestre Bourdon. If he is dead, if he came to me!"

Bourdon stepped quietly in front of her, bent down, and laid his hands upon her head.

"He is not dead, Natalie," he said. "He is here."

She did not look up; she raised her arms and drew him to her for a moment with a gasping sob. Then she rose, caught both his hands in hers, and held him away from her, searching his eyes. From her own fear passed slowly. She smiled, shook her head, and became herself.

"This is a plot of Dorain's," she said.

"He sent for me."

"Because he thought I should need you?"

"As a physician, yes."

"And so you rushed to my aid?"

"As I always will."

"Even without reward?"

"I am prepared to wait," said Bourdon, "even unto the end."

"The end? That was Dorain's word. He frightened me."

M. Coutance appeared, accompanied by Dorain.

"The people demand news of you," said

the Mayor. "They will not go until I make an announcement."

"I will see them once more myself," she said.

The curtain was drawn aside and she stood again before the footlights. She kissed her hands to the massed audience and made gesture which seemed at once to embrace and bid farewell to Boisbisons.

Two days later M. Léon Coutance paused on the steps of the Mairie, turned, and looked down at the Loire. What, precisely, he wondered, had gone? That morning he had seen Madame Blancheffeur, Dorain, Hélène and Coriot depart in the blue-and-white car for Paris. Why did he feel so desperately lonely?

The river, which he had seemed to question, provided him with no answer, nor did the mayoral parlour, which he entered a moment later. He sat down at his table and drew towards him the papers concerned with the Boisbisons disaster. To the list of subscriptions he added a thousand francs in the name of "Cerisette." He had willingly accepted the office of guardian to that pretty waif, and Dorain and Madame Blancheffeur had guaranteed ample funds. Should he take the child into his own house? Madame Blancheffeur had promised to visit her often.

He did not know precisely what had happened to him. Something, either in brain or heart, had changed. He had a vision of a beneficent loveliness compared with which his ideals seemed no better than dust and ashes. If he only had youth, and enterprise, and wit!

He roused himself from these imaginings, feeling like a man who wakes from ecstatic dreams to find himself sitting, in the chill of dawn, by a burnt-out fire.

"She has gone!" he said. "Duty and Boisbisons."

Perhaps the Mayor had always been a little foolish.



# LETTING THE HOUSE

By J. E. WHEELWRIGHT

ILLUSTRATED BY HUTTON MITCHELL

"GUY," called Prudence to her husband, "what soil is this house on?"

"Why?" answered Guy from his smoking-room upstairs. (In houses of the later Jerry period, one can converse thus.)

"Never mind," said Prudence, *fortissimo*. "Pretend it is your *viva voce* exam. I repeat—what soil is this house on?"

"If you mean, upon what soil is this house," called Guy, "I haven't a notion. This sample on my boot is just common or garden earth." He continued: "The substance on the mantelpiece is dust, which, I presume, is dried mud. Ahem! Please note—*dust*."

"Well, I told you I wasn't domesticated before I married you. Besides, you don't like things touched. But she wants to know what the soil is."

"Who?"

"The woman who writes about taking this house furnished for a fortnight."

"What soil does she want?" called Guy, his voice muffled by "business with pipe."

"She doesn't say. Too cunning for that."

"What sort of letter is it?"

"Oh, very pleasing. Thick grey paper—the sort all over tiny hairs. Old-fashioned, I am sure. A very thin pen and tall, thin writing. An old lady, I am quite sure."

"Well, an old lady is sure to have rheumatism. I believe they mustn't have chalk or clay."

"What other kinds of soil are there?" said Prudence.

"Gravel and sand and the kind made of tin cans and old boots. That was mostly our kind. It looked like that before the foundations were dry. And after they were dry there was a pond."

"Well, I'll say the soil is very mixed, then, and when she tells me her particular ailment, we can make the soil suit it. Soils arranged to suit tenants, as the advertisements might say."

"Better dwell lightly on the soil, and

mention the fine southern aspect of the back of the house."

"Then," said Prudence, "she will know the front faces north—people are so sharp. And she will discover in a minute that the larder is on the south side and the drawing-room on the north."

"We didn't—not till the butter ran down the walls."

"Oh, but, Guy, tenants are always sharp like that. You don't know them."

## II.

"I've written the letter," said Prudence later. "This is it. I've brought in *re* as often as possible—it looks so business-like—and abbreviations, too. Listen.

"*Re* soil of house as per yrs. of this mring.

"The soil is a mixture.

"*Re* aspect.

"The grdn. has a S. aspect, and is considered very healthy.

"Yrs. truly,

"Prudence Youngusband."

"You might have abbreviated the surname—Prdnce Ynghsbd. would have looked well. All right, get it off."

Two days later the letters were brought in at breakfast-time.

"Pages and pages from the old lady," said Prudence, her brows puckered. "It's a small pamphlet.

"She has a digestion, or hasn't one," she continued, after some moments. "What soil do we produce for that?"

"Now you've got me," said Guy, pulling at his pipe. "Pass soil and let's hear about the plants. Camomile for camomile tea, and so on."

"She wants to know all about the drains and the kitchen range, and if there is a lightning conductor, and a cellar, and rain water and hard water and cold water and hot water and a well."

"Evidently a teetotaler," said Guy. "Send her a rough sketch of the kitchen

range, and say the drains are ancient Roman, and have never been excavated."

"My dear, you *must* be serious," said Prudence; "your holiday depends on it. You know you want that fortnight at

Prudence worked away at the questions and covered herself with ink.

At lunch-time she passed the compositions to Guy.

"Passed with Honours," he said. "I



"As they looked, the bird shrieked again. She shook the cage, but the bird merely walked about the top."

Christmas badly, as you were working all the summer. And a fortnight's let means a fortnight's golf for you."

"I leave it to you, partner," said Guy, kissing her. "Everything you say is and has been and ever shall be right. I must go and win a little bread now. Good-bye."

didn't know we lived in such a bower of perfections."

"She's certain to take it," said Prudence, "and she has to come straight in without 'viewing,' because she comes from Scotland or Southampton or somewhere. She says she is very tidy and domesticated and careful. I feel she is a dear, and wears black kid gloves and elastic boots, and knits. You know, Guy, I am very psychic—is that the word?—and can *feel* from letters what people are like. It is such a useful gift."

"Wonderful little woman!" said Guy.

Next day came a letter. Prudence waved it at Guy.

"Our old lady wants us to meet her at Euston, after all, in the main hall. She says she can come and settle everything. And she wants me to order a huge list of things — from sirloin of beef to two pennyworth of peppermints."

"Wait and see," said Guy. "I don't like those peppermints."

"Oh, I'm sure she's charming!" Prudence cried reproachfully. "And she says we're to meet her at the entrance hall entrance, and she will be carrying a parrot in a cage, so we can't miss her. That just shows."

"Shows what?"

"That she's a kind-hearted old dear; can't bear to leave the parrot behind. She will be round and fat."

"Right O," said Guy. "We'll be there."

"Oh, you're coming, too, are you?"

"Yes, I can't have you hanging about Euston with strange parrots and old ladies in cages eating peppermints. It seems to me rather a sensational affair."

Next day Guy and Prudence sat close together, waiting, on a bench at the large hall, Euston. Suddenly there was a blood-curdling shriek.

All heads turned in that direction. Prudence clutched Guy's arm, a little pale.

"That's her," she said, pointing a shaking finger at a parrot in a cage. The parrot had emitted the shriek. Holding the parrot's cage was an immensely tall woman, nearly six feet high. She did not look young, in spite of the fact that she had amazing red hair. Her lips also were of a surprising tint, likewise her skin. Her skirt was patterned with a huge check. It was very short and displayed lean white stockings with black spots. Her expression at the moment was vinegary.

As they looked, the bird shrieked again. She shook the cage, but the bird merely walked about the top, upside down, screaming.

"Come and get it over," said Guy.

They walked up to the lady and parrot. Guy cleared his throat.

"Mrs. Fenwick, I presume?" he said.

The lady's lips moved, but her reply was drowned by deafening shrieks from the parrot. Both lady and parrot seemed irritable. "We came about the house," Guy began, in a quiet interval, "and the drains, and the soil, and so on."

"Yes, I suppose so," said the lady. "Is there a damp course?" she asked abruptly, with a suspicious look at Prudence.

"Of course——" she began, but caught Guy's eye. He winked and shook his head. "I mean, of course not." She met Guy's eye again. She also caught his meaning. "I suppose that is why we have such rheumatism."

"What is the system of drainage?"

continued the questioner, with a sudden twist of her neck to Guy.

"Modern Jerry," he said confidently. "But we have not had many cases of typhoid. Let me see, how many are there, Prudence?"

"Only nine, I think, in the village," she said, lying eagerly. "Or was it eleven?"

"Aha, how you-eee-o-o up!" said the parrot.

Again the tall lady's lips were moving. She seemed intensely annoyed.

"Hang the bird!" she said angrily, giving the cage a kick with a white suede shoe. "I had to bring the creature, as they won't stand it in the house. The kitchen stove——"

"Oh, I'm afraid it's troublesome," said Prudence. "You know what these new houses are. You can't *cook* much on it, but it looks nice."

"But——" began the red-haired one.

"Oh, I just wanted to explain the diphtheria the maid had. Let me see, Guy, was it this year or last?"

"Oh, last year," he answered earnestly, "and we often get a touch of it ourselves. But we never know if it's drains or the milk. Of course, on clay soil——"

"Clay!" screamed the lady. "You have grossly misled me." She began to be very fierce and have a great flow of language, but her words were happily drowned by the parrot, who yodelled with great freedom and danced on his perch. "Of course, I could not dream——" she was heard to say.

Guy held out his hand.

"In that case, it is no use our taking up your valuable time," he said. He removed his hat with a tremendous flourish. Prudence held out a hand, which was taken limply by a cold, white kid glove. Guy and Prudence beat a rapid retreat.

The interview was over.

"Thank Heaven!" said Guy, when they were safely hidden behind a notice board. "That parrot was a godsend. Gave one time to think."

"You did notice it?" said Prudence, sniffing.

"Notice it?" said Guy. "If you mean the alcoholic aroma, I did. I believe the very parrot was tipsy."

"Oh, Guy, hush!" said Prudence. "But she hasn't by any chance *taken* the house, I suppose, Guy?"

"Not if I know it. We'll have that in writing from her, anyhow. That woman doesn't darken my doormat."

"Poor Guy, I'm afraid your holiday is off. We can't go through that again."

"Well, let's go and tell Aunt Matilda, as we are in Town. We owe her a visit, and it'll amuse her."

They told Aunt Matilda all about it.

Aunt Matilda—the Lady Matilda Uppingham, to give her her full title—received them with pleasure. She was a spinster lady of large income and uncertain but great age, and very uncertain temper.

This was one of her good moments.

She gave them strong tea, and thickly buttered rations, and quantities of cream.

As they rose to go, she went over to her bureau for a moment and got out pen and ink. "Good-bye, dears," she said. "My little Christmas present"—slipping an envelope into Guy's coat-pocket. "Don't open it till Christmas."

They opened it on the doorstep.

There was applause, hastily suppressed.

"Hang it all, let's have a taxi!" Guy said, holding the pink slip in his hand and waving it at a passing cab. "Prudence, this gives us our holiday, tenant-free, and a bit over. I must bust a shilling first on old red-head. I wouldn't have that piece of enamelled bad temper in my house if I had to work twenty-four hours a day for years."

The wire was sent.

"'Hope understood, not letting house.' Best I can do for a shilling," Guy said.

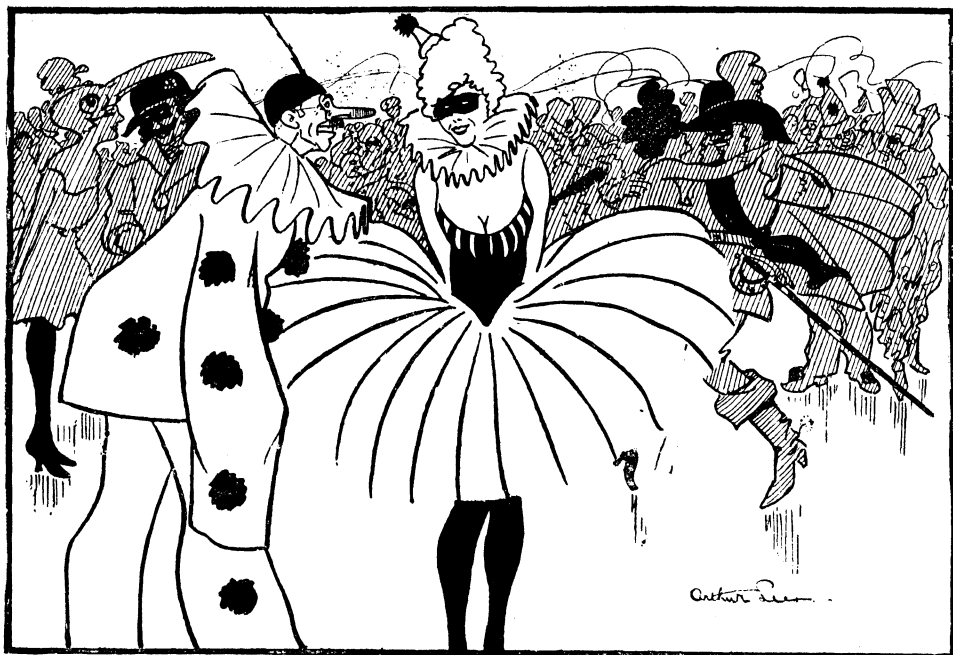
"I wonder what she'll make of it?" said Prudence.

"Don't know and don't care: But we're going to have the holiday of our lives, starting from the twenty-fourth.

"By the way," said Guy, as they got out of the taxi, "what about that psychic sense of yours, little woman?"

"I can't think what you mean," said Prudence coldly.





AFTER THEIR DANCE.

HE: Did you enjoy that? I learnt to dance in Vienna, you know  
 SHE: Well, why don't you learn to dance in London?

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### TRUE PHILANTHROPY.

*By Harold S. Cotter.*

MR. BAKER gazed at what was left of his garden with mournful eyes. What had only that morning been a thing of beauty was now a series of miniature shell-holes and bunkers. Looking at it, one would hardly credit that this plot of ground had been the joy of his heart and the envy of neighbours as far as six doors off in both directions.

He groaned and, turning away in despair, walked up the path into the house, his feelings as an amateur gardener struggling wickedly for expression against several years' training as a churchwarden.

"Mary," he said brokenly to his wife, "once again those confounded chickens of Juniper's have been doing their pecking and scratching exercises in our garden. They seem to have had a field day this time. The garden is ruined." He flung himself into a chair with an abandon which would have delighted a film-play producer.

His wife looked up from her paper with a smile. "Oh, not so bad as that, I hope. After all, they haven't eaten anything, as far as I could see." Mr. Baker made a gurgling noise in his throat and prepared to speak, but she held up her hand and continued: "By a

curious coincidence, I have just read a tale of a man who was pestered to death by his neighbour's chickens."

"You'll hear about a similar case soon if those things aren't kept out of this garden," interrupted her husband grimly.

"Wait, George, and hear how they got rid of them. All protests being in vain, the people bought a few eggs and sent them to the neighbour, with a polite note saying that no doubt his chickens had laid them in their garden. After doing this twice, they were surprised and pleased to find wire-netting put up, and the trouble ceased."

"A splendid idea!" snarled Mr. Baker. "He annoys us with his chickens, and we keep his family in eggs until he puts up wire-netting. Lunacy—sheer lunacy!"

"It is worth trying," replied his wife, bridling. "I shall send them in two eggs to-morrow." Ignoring a suggestion from her husband as to the age of the gifts, she at once wrote the letter. Here enters our villainess—Barbara.

This addition to their household was a juvenile Cockney child, rescued from the slums a short while back in one of Mrs. Baker's waifs and strays quests. She was as cute as most of her class, and could generally be trusted to overcome any tradesman's tendency to put





GOLF HANDICAPS.  
FAIRYLAND gets busy.



A VERY PALPABLE HIT!

SUPPORTER OF VISITING TEAM: Bloomin' rotten ground, anyway. Hardly a blade of grass to be seen.  
HOME TEAM'S GROUNDSMAN: Well, yer ain't come 'ere to *graze*, 'ave yer?

his banking account before that of his customers. Consequently she was dispatched next day with the note and instructed to purchase two eggs to hand in with it, a plain paper bag being given her for the purpose.

A few days afterwards Mr. Baker, going through the post at breakfast, gave way to an expression of anger, followed by an explosion of laughter.

"That's that!" he said hysterically, tossing a letter across to his wife.

With a withering glance at her better half, Mrs. Baker retrieved the paper from the marmalade dish and read:

"Mr. J. H. Juniper presents his compliments

ONE day not long ago there entered the office of a provincial business man a friend who had been much intrigued by an incident he had witnessed some days before in that same office.

"Jones, old top," said he, "that was a queer conference you had with Smith the other day. When I looked in on you, both of you were sprinting round the office like two racers or two prize-fighters."

Jones frowned. "Well, you see," he explained, "I'm very well read in this efficiency stuff, and I know, of course, that in an important conference you must always have your back to the light, so that your thoughts cannot be read. But Smith, too, has been taking an efficiency course, I suppose. He was certainly wise to that dodge. Why, when we finally got down to business we were both sitting on the window-sill!"



G. HORACE -

TO MEET THE CASE.

DEALER: I'm surprised at you selling your horse to that man—you'll never get your money.

PAT: Ah, but don't ye see, Oi charged him five pounds more just to make up for that.

to Mr. Baker and thanks him for the eggs received with covering letter from Mrs. Baker. He is bewildered at their being laid in your garden by his fowls, as an expert to whom they were shown pronounced them to have been laid by ducks. He thinks it really nice of you to stamp them 'New Laid,' and trusts that all future finds will be impounded by you as a recompense for the trouble caused."

Mrs. Baker scorched her husband with a glance—he was still behaving badly—and rang the bell for Barbara.

A MAN was arrested on the charge of robbing another of his watch. It was said that he had thrown a bag over his victim's head, strangled and robbed him. There was so little evidence, however, that the magistrate quickly said:

"Discharged!"

The prisoner stood still in the dock, amazed at being given his freedom so soon.

"You are discharged," repeated the magistrate. "You can go."

There was still no word from the prisoner, who stood staring before him.

"Don't you understand? You have been acquitted. You are free," said his lawyer.

"But," stammered the man, "do I have to give him back his watch?"

GUEST: Look here, how long must I wait for the half-portion of duck I ordered?

WAITER: Till somebody orders the other half. We can't go out and kill half a duck.

"DADDY," said Tommy Jenkins, "this book says that Orpheus was such a fine musician that he made trees and stones move."

"Your sister Dorothy can beat Orpheus any day," grumbled the proud parent. "Her piano-playing has made twenty families move out of these flats in the last two months."

# THE BARONESS ORCZY'S APPEAL

## “Take up Pelmanism”

*“Not a Man or Woman who would not be benefited,” says the Famous Authoress of “The Scarlet Pimpernel.”*

THE Baroness Orczy, the famous authoress of “The Scarlet Pimpernel,” strongly appeals to readers to take up Pelmanism.

She is convinced that it is just what thousands of people need in order to make a success of their lives. “Even the most superficial glance into the ‘Little Grey Books’ of Pelmanism,” she says, “will open up the most dazzling possibilities and reveal the fact that the mind—far more even than the body—can be trained to a high degree of perfection.

“You can attain your heart’s desire with just a very little application, a very little self-discipline, and let the Pelman Institute do the rest for you. Put yourself in their hands, and let them take you by easy stages—every one of them a delight—along that beautiful road which will lead you inevitably to success; let them smooth away for you all those difficulties which have stood in your way hitherto; if your Will has been feeble, they will show you how to strengthen it; if your Memory is uncertain, they will show you how to render it more keen; they will give you Self-Confidence, which is the essence of power, and Determination, which is the foundation of proficiency.

### MENTAL GOLD MINES.

“And once you have started on the Pelman Course, let me assure you that you will not wish to rest till you have gone through to the end. There are 12 ‘Little Grey Books,’ each of which represents one week of simple, easy, exceedingly pleasant mental and bodily exercises. And if you do these and follow the advice given you in the small books, each succeeding week will see you just a little more self-reliant, just a little more confident, a little more certain of ultimate success.

“Believe me, I have studied the little books, each of them a small gold mine which goes to enrich the brain. There is not a man or woman living who would not derive some benefit from them, and there are thousands—nay, millions—to whom they would mean just the difference between a life of mediocrity and disappointment and one of prosperity and of triumph.”

Thousands of readers are following Baroness Orczy’s advice and are increasing their efficiency and earning power by means of Pelmanism. The number of letters which reach the Pelman Institute from men and women who have doubled, trebled and even quadrupled their incomes and gained other valuable benefits as a result of training their minds on Pelman lines is amazing. Thus an Architect states that his income “has gone up 300 per cent.”; a Clerk that he has been promoted three times; a Manageress that owing to Pelmanism she has become more self-reliant and efficient and her salary has been doubled;



[Russell and Sons.]

### THE BARONESS ORCZY.

a Schoolmaster that the Course has given him back the mental concentration he had lost during the War; a Student that Pelmanism has enabled him to pass an examination with flying colours.

Pelmanism quickly and permanently banishes such weaknesses as Forgetfulness, Mind-Wandering, Shyness and Indecision, and develops, on the other hand, such qualities as:—

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| —Concentration    | —Directive Ability |
| —Observation      | —Presence of Mind  |
| —Perception       | —Self-Confidence   |
| —Judgment         | —Driving Power     |
| —Initiative       | —Self-Control      |
| —Will-Power       | —Tact              |
| —Decision         | —Reliability       |
| —Ideation         | —Salesmanship      |
| —Resourcefulness  | and                |
| —Organising Power | —A Reliable Memory |

that are indispensable if you wish to achieve success in any sphere of life.

Pelmanism is simple, easy, and interesting. It only takes up a few minutes daily and can be practised in ‘bus, tram, or train, or in odd moments during the day. Even the busiest man or woman can spare a few minutes daily for Pelmanism, especially when minutes so spent bring in such rich rewards.

If, therefore, you wish to develop any of the qualities mentioned above and to train your mind to the highest possible state of efficiency, you should call or write to-day for a free copy of “Mind and Memory,” which contains a full description of Pelmanism, and shows you how you can greatly increase your efficiency and earning-power by this means. Apply to-day to the Pelman Institute, 40, Pelman House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1., and this book will be sent you by return gratis and post free.

Overseas Addresses:—2575, Broadway, New York, U.S.A.; Temple Building, Toronto, Canada; 396, Flinders Lane, Melbourne, Australia; Natal Bank Chambers, Durban, South Africa; Alice Buildings, Hornby Road, Bombay, India.

**THE NEW HOBBY.**

(Many husbands, it is reported, have taken to do the family laundry, and find it a most fascinating hobby.)

Revelling in soapy bubbles  
At the washing-tub,  
Father now no longer troubles  
To attend the club.

All the time on golf he wasted  
Never did arouse  
Half the joy he since has tasted  
Ironing Mabel's blouse.

Once the thought of growing fatter  
Made him feel quite ill;  
Now he's daily getting flatter  
At the mangle drill.

You must get seven new ones straight off, and label them with the days of the week, and conscientiously observe the rota. Then, in the words of the old song, there will be "a smile waiting for you at home."



"Yes," said the shopkeeper, "I want a good, bright boy to be partly indoors and partly outdoors."

"That's all right," said the applicant, "but what becomes of me when the door slams to?"



A PRETTY PAIR.

"Look, grandpa! Baby's got a tooth, too!"

Friends, to Auction Bridge inviting,  
Get refusals curt;  
Father says it's more exciting  
Starching mother's skirt.

*R. H. Roberts.*



**NECKTIEITIS.**

A WORD to men. You may have noticed that there are occasions when your wife or your best girl becomes unaccountably depressed at the sight of you. A psychology expert has discovered the reason why. It is your tie, man, your tie! According to this theory, she gets absolutely sick and tired of seeing you in the same old necktie day after day.

I know it is hard to part with an old favourite that behaves well, and never rucks up or drops down, but something will have to be done about it.

**THE RUSTIC WORK DISEASE.**

"I LIKE a bit of rustic work in the garden," said Mr. Tompkins, "but I know when to stop. Now, with a neighbour of mine it amounts to a disease. He kept on adding bits to his pergola till it spread all over the garden, and then he roofed it in and erected a grand triumphal arch in the middle of the lawn. It is like living next door to a decayed forest. I thought I knew the worst, as it didn't seem possible for him to put in another stick anywhere. But yesterday a fresh load of ten-foot poles arrived, and I'm blessed if he isn't sticking a second storey on the thing!"



Son: Father, one of the boys said I looked like you.

FATHER: What did you say?

Son: Nothin'. He's a lot bigger than me.

# Revelations as compelling as the most Sensational Memoirs.

“TRUTH” investigates the reason for the world-wide popularity of  
**Ciro Pearls**

and produces some startling facts.

WE reproduce a few Extracts from the exhaustive and convincing article, which filled eight columns of “TRUTH” issue, dated March 1st, 1922, and dealt with



## “The Triumphant Success achieved by **Ciro Pearls Ltd.**”

“Such perfection in **Reproduction has not been attained in a day**—years of patient experiment have been necessary to achieve the result. One has only to examine some of the old imitation pearls and compare them with the **Ciro** product to see how great is the advance that has been made.” . . .

“So close is the resemblance that on many occasions people who would have laughed at the idea that they could not distinguish between a real pearl and the finest imitation, have been utterly unable to decide which was the oyster pearl and which the **Ciro**.”

“One has only to read the remarks of delighted possessors

to be aware that there must be very solid reasons for such popularity. Such testimonials are numbered by thousands—they come from people in all grades of Society.

“The Indian Connoisseur, Pearl Trader in the South Seas, and Russian Bolshevik, equally pay unconscious testimony to the realism of **Ciro Pearls.**”

“The columns of a whole issue of ‘Truth’ could be filled with expressions of opinion, sent quite unsolicited by purchasers of **Ciro Pearls**, but enough have been quoted to prove that the claims made by **Ciro Pearls Ltd.** as to the faithfulness of their reproductions of genuine pearls are justified up to the hilt.”

“Here in a nutshell is the reason for the ever-increasing popularity of **Ciro Pearls.** The article which invariably exceeds the expectations of its purchaser, that is universally recognised to be marvellous value for the money, is indeed a great rarity nowadays.”

“To sum up the evidence, it will be found that the amazing popularity of **Ciro Pearls** and the equally remarkable progress which has been made by the firm of **Ciro Pearls Ltd.**, is due to:—(1) The production of an inimitable article; (2) The placing of that article on the market at prices within reach of all.”

### OUR UNIQUE OFFER.

On receipt of one guinea, we will send you a necklet of **Ciro Pearls** 16 inches long, with clasp and case complete, or a ring, brooch, ear-rings or any other **Ciro Pearl** jewel in hand-made gold settings. If, after comparing them with real or other artificial pearls, they are not found equal to the former or superior to the latter, return them to us within fifteen days and we will refund your money. **Ciro Pearl** necklets may also be obtained in any length required. We have a large staff of expert pearl stringers.

Latest descriptive booklet No. 10 sent post free on application.

Our only Address in Great Britain.

**Ciro Pearls Ltd.**  
 39 Old Bond Street London W.1 Dept. 10.

We have no Agents or Branches.

Our Showrooms are on the First Floor, over Lloyds Bank, near Piccadilly.

KITTY'S LITTLE WAY.

By Amanda Bebbington.

A GHASTLY suspicion is haunting me lately that Kitty— But I'll tell you all about it, and see what you think. If I refuse Kitty anything, she never sulks—just smiles cheerfully and says: "All right, old dear, if you really can't afford it, but—"

When we were married first, our house contained a good-sized room on the first floor that we left unfurnished till later. Kitty suggested a sitting-room; I dreamed of billiards and a good table.

Last year we furnished it, and—well, it isn't a billiard-room.

Kitty wanted a car. I didn't. But the car is in the garage at this moment.

She also wears an elegant little wrist-watch, which I firmly declared more than once was

She acquiesced cheerfully enough, but looked a little pensive. "Of course I can wear my old cream satin with the georgette slip," she debated. "The frills are torn, though. I'll have to rip them off. It will look a bit skimpy, but still"—sweetly—"if you don't mind, Harold—"

I cast my mind back to the last time Kitty wore that dress. It didn't look torn, but—

"What about your pink?" I queried hopefully.

She shook an emphatic head. "I spilt some wine down the front breadth," she deprecated. "The lace needs cleaning, too. But don't trouble, dear. If you really can't manage a new one, I'll see what I can do"—with a bright smile in my direction. I felt rather a mean beast, too.

Well, this morning, after breakfast, while I



A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS.

LANDOWNER: Oh, good morning, Mr. Giles! I'm very sorry about my milk account being so much overdue; if you wouldn't mind paying me your next quarter's rent in advance, I could settle up!

beyond the means of a poor author. And she has quite a lot of other jewellery which I have been hypnotised into presenting her with at odd times.

Then there was the little matter of the conservatory built out at the end of the drawing-room. Better not, I thought. Our dinner-table last night was graced with some particularly fine roses grown in that same conservatory. Need I go on? Just one instance.

Next week we are booked for a rather large dinner-party. Living in the country, and somewhat quietly, elaborate evening-dress is not much use to us. So, as my wife had several fresh and quite pretty toilettes, I refused to take her hint ament a new one.

"Hardly worth while, is it," I commented, "seeing we go out so seldom?"

was having an hour with my morning paper, Kitty, with an "Excelsior" look in her eye, took out a small box from her bureau and proceeded to extract from it four dilapidated purses and two boxes which had previously contained cigarettes.

"Good Heavens, Kitty!" I exclaimed. "What on earth have you got there?"

My wife produced a stumpy pencil and a note-book, and knitted anxious brows. "It's the housekeeping money," she explained. "Harold, you wouldn't mind my having a new dress if I could squeeze it out of this, would you?"

"Good Heavens, no!" I groaned. "What do you take me for?"

"Well, it's the end of the month," she continued, "and I pay these to-day. If there's

# Kodak snapshots of your children

**Y**OUR children are growing up—more quickly than you realize—they will soon lose many of their fascinating little ways. Wouldn't you like to keep pictures of them just as they are? Get a Kodak—the little snapshots will be precious to you now but priceless in years to come. Remember, you can learn to use a Kodak in half-an-hour.



*All Kodaks and Brownies  
have been reduced in price.  
Here are two popular models.*

Vest Pocket Autographic Kodak fitted with Meniscus Achromatic Lens, fits the waistcoat pocket and takes pictures  $2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$ . Price 35/-.

No 1a Autographic Kodak Junior fitted with Meniscus Achromatic Lens and Kodak Ball Bearing Shutter—takes pictures  $4\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ . Price £3 - 15 - 0.

**Ask your nearest Kodak dealer to  
show you his stock of Kodaks.**

**Kodak Ltd., Kingsway, London, W.C. 2.**



SO THAT'S THAT!

THE LADY OF THE HOUSE: Very well, I'll give you something when you have cut me some wood.

TRAMP: Madam, I belong to the Society for the Protection and Preservation of Forests . . . we never cut wood.

anything left— And, oh, Harold, I could do with two more cigarette boxes. There are several items unprovided for."

Fascinated, I watched while she turned a page. "Fish, one pound two-and-six!"

Murmuring thus, she took up a purse labelled "Fishmonger." I extracted a one-pound note. There was nothing left.

"Two-and-six deficit," she ruminated. "If only you were not so fond of fish!"

My conscience gave me a sharp jab as she sighed dolefully.

There were five pounds in the butcher's purse. His bill was five pounds nineteen-and-six.

The tale continued.

"There's still the sundries box." She brightened, pouncing on it. Alas, it was perfectly empty!

"Oh, I remember now—those bulbs!" she deplored. "Well, I must send my old frock to the cleaner's," she reflected, turning an "I-forgive-you-but-it's-hard" smile on me. "I don't mind really, only for your sake, Harold. Mrs. Kay-Brown—you know how horrid she can be?—she asked, last time she met me, if the editors had been turning you down much of late. Beast, isn't she?"

"An insufferable woman!" I burst out indignantly. "I'd sooner—"

A tear splashed down my wife's cheek. She dashed it away and spoke dreamily.

"She's having the loveliest dress ever—a lemon-coloured chiffon, painted with tiny trails of ivy and sprays of flowers. I wonder—" Kitty started

"Well?" I asked encouragingly.

"Oh, it's just struck me!" she cried. "Cook saves up all the rags and old bottles, and every now and then we sell them to the man. I'll go and ask her if she's got any now."

"Kitty," I roared, "come back!"

She came, smiling.

"How much will that frock cost?" I demanded.

She considered a moment, then:

"I'd like to give fifteen pounds, but I could do it for ten"—graciously.

We compromised on twelve pounds.

"And the deficit in the housekeeping books?" I interrogated.

"Well, just another *teeny* one," said Kitty.

She's in Town to-day, buying that dress, and I'm wondering—



It was their first trip to the Metropolis, and they were trying to see all the sights. While they knew little of pictures and cared less, they thought it their duty to visit the British Museum.

Among the treasures they looked at was a mummy, over which hung a placard on which was printed "B.C. 97." This completely mystified them.

"What do you make out of that, Henry?" demanded Maria.

"I hardly know," said Henry, "but I have a suspicion that it was the number of the car that killed him."



SOON PROVED.

JONES: But you don't mean to tell me you gave all that money for *that* suit, do you?

BROWN: If you don't believe me, I can show you the summons I've had for it!



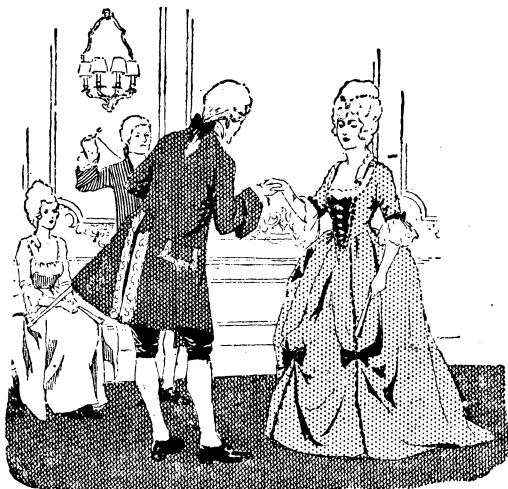
# Belles of Bygone Days

Letter from Miss Phillis Evander,  
of London, to Miss Chloe Pomeroy,  
of King's Hatton, Devon.

June, 1765.

My Dearest Chloe,—

*How long do you continue your rustick pleasure? Positively I languish for your company. I have nothing but ill to say of the Countrie, since I find rustick pleasures but a melancholie distraction, and since*



At Lady Paynting's Rout

*Betty's discoverie of a certain simple, it is no longer necessary for the sallowest Miss to seek a milkmaid's roses farther than a mile from St. James'. The dear child brings me secretly from the Apothecaries some ounces of a magical Wax called Mergolized, which has marvellously improved my complexion. At Lady Paynting's rout last night I had a thousand Beaux and was complimented by Sir Jeremy Jay, who is mighty difficult to please, on the freshness of my appearance. Shall I obtain some of the Wax for you, dearest Chloe? It works on a new Principle, by absorbing the outer cuticle, thus exposing and displaying to full advantage the unblemished skin beneath. Use it, child; 'tis miraculous, but remember 'tis my secret. I vow I will not touch cosmeticks again. Write soon to your devoted*

*Phyllida.*

## WHEN YOU TAKE OFF YOUR HAT.

Summer-time brings out the best and the worst in woman's looks. The warm weather tempts us to throw off our hats and enjoy the sun and breeze on our bare heads. But what a pitiful revelation the removal of a pretty hat can be! Too often the hair beneath is thin and dull, and the pitiless sun searches out every split hair and faded streak. Yet beautiful hair is the right of every woman, young and old, plain and pretty.

We all start with equal chances in the matter of hair, but through ignorance or neglect, numbers of women let the condition of their locks deteriorate in an alarming manner. Most people are dreadfully careless in the choice of a shampoo. Many shampoos dry up the roots of the hair and cause it to become thin and brittle.

A perfect shampoo is pure stallax. It has the unique property of acting as a tonic as well as a cleanser. Instead of drying up the natural oil supply of the hair, it re-charges the cells with all that they have lost by coming into contact with water or other injurious agents.

If you use this simple shampoo, you need have no fear of exposing your hair to the most searching light: the sun will do no more than show up its beauty and lustre.



### NEW HATS for OLD this Springtime.

NEW Hats are expensive—do not discard those you wore last season. Have them cleaned or dyed, and re-modelled to the latest shapes. You will be delighted with the result if you entrust your old Hats to EASTMAN'S to-day.

**Let EASTMAN'S send for them!**

For over 100 years the London Dyers and Cleaners.

*Eastman's  
for Excellence*

WORKS: ACTON VALE, LONDON, W.3.  
Country orders returned carriage paid.

THE TRIAL TRIP.

By J. Roland Fay.

"SEE how it takes this hill on top speed!" I cried.

The remark concluded a whole series of adulatory observations I had made upon our smart, little, new two-seater. I had spoken specially for Constance's benefit—Constance, who occupied the other seat, and regarded the purchase of the car with marked disfavour; she considered one old, lumbering touring car quite sufficient for the family transport.

"How beautiful is the haze upon the distant hills!" mused Constance.

"I want to climb a tree," chanted Peter, who occupied Constance's lap. "I want to climb a tree."

Ruth alone was silent; she had wonderfully bestowed herself, among legs and pedals, upon the floor of the car, and could not have been truly comfortable.

We came to the top of the hill in splendid style, and I was gratified to note that Constance had shifted her gaze from the distant hills to the near one. Suddenly I realised, with a sinking feeling, that all was not well. The car was rapidly losing speed, very rapidly. I think Ruth must have detected consternation upon my face.

"May we stop here, Daddy," she said quickly, "just for a little while?"

There were trees here and a view of distant hills, for both of which I was thankful. "Certainly," I said, with admirable unconcern. At the same moment I steered the car to the side of the road, and it stopped.

Slowly we disentangled ourselves from each other and from the car. Peter made for the trees, closely followed by Constance. Ruth sat down by the roadside, rested her chin upon her hands, and looked solemn. I waited until Constance and Peter had quite disappeared, then I tried to start the engine.

Many, many times I turned the starting-handle, but with no result. I then lifted the engine cover and looked inside. But I am not one to look for trouble; my experience with cars has taught me that one usually finds trouble if one looks for it. I dropped the cover and gloomily sat down beside Ruth.

"It will not start," I said simply.

"I'm stuck!" shouted Peter, within the wood. "Help, Mummie! I'm stuck!"

"So am I, old chap," I murmured, with a deep groan, "but Mummie can't help me."

"Anyway," said Ruth, "we can run down the hill; it will be nearer the station."

I nodded sadly. "But first we must turn the car. I fear we must push."

Together we pushed in silence.

"What are you pushing it about for?" cried the shrill voice of Peter.

I started. Peter was watching us through the branches.

However, the turning movement was completed. I applied the brake, then, as one who grimly toys with circumstances he dreads, I strolled into the wood to join Constance.

I admired the view, I climbed a tree, I



THE RENDEZVOUS.

WANDERING MINSTREL: M-e-e-t-me-once-again-m-e-e-t me-  
once-ag-a-a-in!

lightly chatted with Constance as we returned in the direction of the car. "It is certainly a nice little car," admitted Constance suddenly. I started again.

"It is—ah—yes—er—certainly," I said. But I thought of the inevitable level at the bottom of the hill, and gloom, that I could not surmount, settled upon me. We gained the road. "The car has gone!" I gasped. Ruth was running towards us. She pointed down the hill. There was the car, standing at a hopeless angle, with two wheels in the ditch.

## Drive Eczema Out.

Expel acid from your blood to stop itching Eczema. Best do this and same time nourish your blood and system with

### HOOD'S MEDICINE



For Blood, Stomach, Liver, and Kidneys. 14 Herbal ingredients (named on bottle), Liquid or Tablet. Of Chemists, 2/6, 5/-, 8/6



**SPECIAL OFFER.**—The Proprietors have so much confidence in Hood's Medicine that they offer readers of *The Windsor Magazine* who need an intelligent blood tonic, Six Days' Trial Tablets and a copy of Hood's Home Doctor Book (160 pages) for One Shilling. Address: C. I. HOOD & CO., Ltd. (W.M. 15), Cecil House, Holborn Viaduct, London.

SUIT 50/- O'COAT 40/- LADY'S COSTUME 55/-

# TURNED

and guaranteed "Just like New" by the Original and Leading Tailors. SEND ALONG A TONCE. Carriage Paid One Way. WALTER CURRALL & CO., 6, Broadway, Ludgate Hill. Beware of Imitators. London, E.C.4. Nr. "Times" Offices. Phone: Central 1818. Please mention *Windsor Magazine*.

## BAILEY'S ELASTIC STOCKINGS

For VARICOSE VEINS.

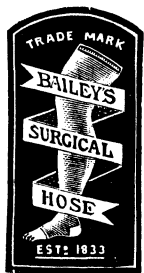
90 years' reputation for BEST QUALITY AND COMFORT

"VARIX," all about Elastic Stockings, how to wear, clean, and repair them, post free.

Special Department for Ladies.

Manufacturers of TRUSSES and ABDOMINAL BELTS. Catalogue post free.

38, OXFORD ST., LONDON, W.1.



ON A LINER, A YACHT, MOTOR BOAT, A CHANNEL STEAMER, A COASTER or A TRADER

### Mothersill's Seasick Remedy

is guaranteed to prevent and cure Sea-Sickness, or money refunded. Equally effective for Train Sickness.



has been tested on the English Channel, Irish and Baltic Seas by representatives of leading London and Continental newspapers, who unreservedly endorse its unflinching power to prevent and cure *mal-de-mer*.

"The London Yachting World" says: A positive cure for sea-sickness. Be sure it's "Mothersill's."

No Bad After Effects.

Of all Chemists throughout the World.

MOTHERSILL'S REMEDY CO., LTD., 19 St. Bride St., London, E.C.

No Heating Required. Absolutely Indelible.

# MELANYL

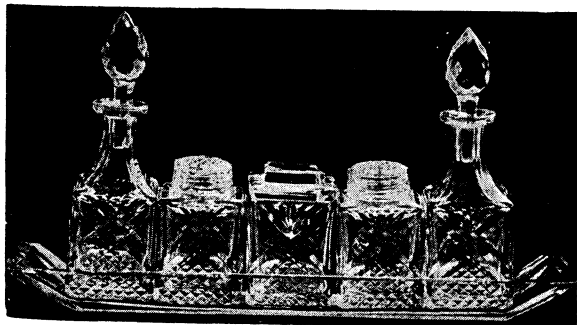
Marking Ink.

Metallic Pen with every Bottle.

Nickel Linen Stretcher with each large size.

COOPER, DENNISON & WALKDEN, LTD.

7 & 9, St. Bride Street, London, E.C.



Price 20/- (postage 1/-).

## GENUINE CUT-GLASS NON-CORROSIVE CRUET SET

This is our speciality, and the accompanying illustration demonstrates the recent advance in hygienic table ware. Not merely a novelty, but a practical development which will eventually displace the cruet with metal fittings. Adding dignity and grace to the home, its beauty and freshness always retained, and water will readily cleanse.

Illustrated Lists on application.

P. REEVES,

12, Edmund Place, Aldersgate Street, E.C.1

We hurried towards it. It appeared to be quite undamaged except for a bent number plate. It was, however, firmly stuck; I noted this with a thrill of sudden joy. I explained the situation, trying hard to conceal my satisfaction. I explained that we should require help, that it might be a very, *very* long job—I repeated this many times.

Constance was grieved, but she is not one to make a fuss over what she deems to be unavoidable. I pointed out the station, and suggested that, as it was getting late, she and Peter should return by train. They departed, Constance advising us to take care of ourselves—and the car.

With grateful tranquillity of mind I watched

HELPING THE DRAMA.

"I SEE, George, the papers are discussing 'What's Wrong with the Drama?'"

"Yes, I know; they have been doing it as long as I can remember."

"Well, the men don't seem to be able to suggest any sensible remedy. I think it is time women had a shot."

"Have you any bright ideas on the subject?"

"Yes, lots. Listen. Every play ought to have at least one out-door scene to give the actresses a chance of wearing hats that we could copy. And then a paper pattern of one of the heroine's frocks should be given away at every performance. That will do to get on with."



A BLACK SHEEP.

A GOLF enthusiast, hurrying home to lunch, meets the congregation coming out of church.

them turn a distant corner. "Ruth," I said, "how did it happen?"

"I—I helped," admitted Ruth guiltily, but quite impudently.

"You started it running down the hill?" I cried.

Ruth nodded. "But I was in it," she explained, "and I—I gently steered it into the ditch. I'm sorry about the number plate."

My surprise was only exceeded by my gratitude.



"Did your watch stop when you dropped it on the floor?"

"Sure; you didn't think it would go on through the floor, did you?"

*Facing Third Cover.*

A CERTAIN newspaper editor had a reputation for always assuming infallibility and superior enterprise. On one occasion the paper announced the death of William Jones, who, it turned out, was not dead. Next day the paper printed the following note:

"Yesterday we were the first newspaper to publish the death of William Jones. Today we are the first to deny the report. *The Morning Star* is always first with the news!"



SHE: Tom, isn't that the same suit you wore last year?

HE: Yes, and it's the same suit you asked me last year if it wasn't the same suit I had the year before.

THE

JUL 3 1922

# WINDSOR

July



ALLISRA,  
3 1922  
F. MICH.

WARD LOCK & CO LIMITED LONDON & MELBOURNE

ONE SHILLING NET



12  
children  
in one  
family  
brought  
up on



Mr. and Mrs. Goodall (of Syderham) and their family of 12 children, all of whom were brought up on ROBINSON'S "Patent" BARLEY.

# ROBINSON'S "Patent" BARLEY

The nearest approach to mother's milk is cow's milk (fresh, dried or condensed) diluted with Barley Water made from ROBINSON'S "Patent" BARLEY. The millions of healthy men and women reared in this way during the last 100 years are its best testimony. It contains less than 1 per cent. starch.

Send 3d. in stamps for booklet "Advice to Mothers." KEEN, ROBINSON & CO., LTD., Denmark Street, LONDON, E. 1. (Incorporated with J. & J. COLMAN, LTD., London and Norwich.)

## Quality Footwear Direct by Post Northampton's Neatest Shoe at Barratts Reduced Factory Price

Reduce your boot bills by insisting on Barratts quality at Barratts factory price. They do not skimp the quality to provide middlemen with profits. With only two in the deal—yourself and Barratts—you get super quality at a factory price, and Barratts are quite content with their one modest factory profit.

### A Smart Model, First-class Leather and High-grade Shoecraft Commend This Fine Brogue Shoe To You—

Nothing lets a man down so badly as poor footwear. Nothing promotes your self-respect so surely as the knowledge that you are wearing the best. Better shoes than these Brogues for Holiday, Sports, or Promenade wear it will be hard to find. Black Box Calf uppers, good substance, very supple and easy, neatly punched and strongly sewn. Won't crack across tread. Perfect-fitting, moulded heel-grip, won't slip or sag at sides. Flexible soles of English butt hide stitched to welt on handsewn principle. Solid leather insoles. Back quarters leather lined. A handsome, serviceable, durable Brogue Shoe of distinctive quality. **Style 1682**



Direct-by-Post

**25/-**

Post Free. Overseas Extra.

Same shoe in Rich Brown Willow Calf, Style 1482, 30/-

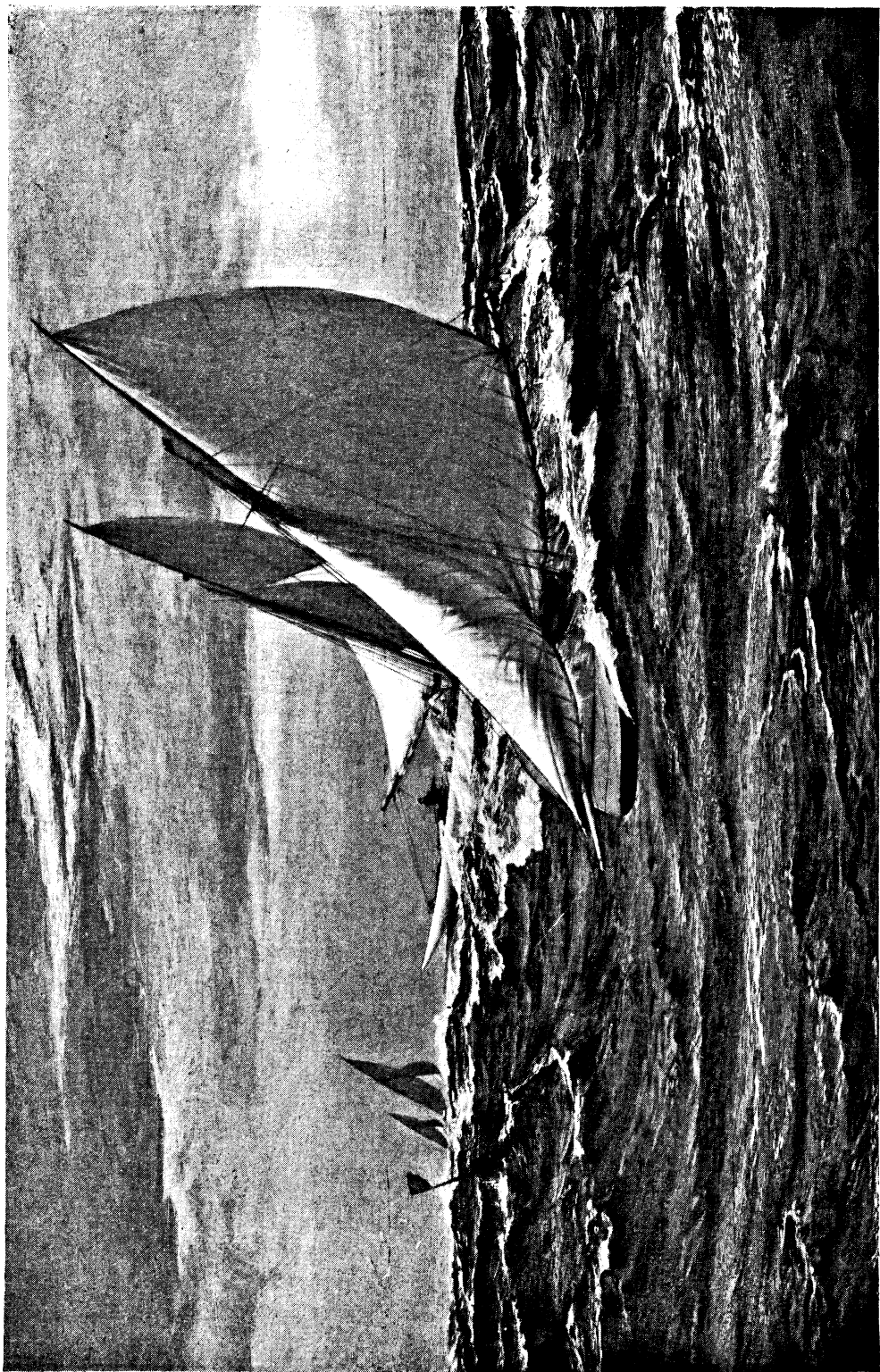
Send Your Order Direct to Factory.

**Home:** Simply mention Style 1682, enclose cheque or money order for 25/- (size 12 1/- extra) and post to Barratts.

**Overseas:** With Cash on Delivery orders send 10/- deposit only. Pay when shoes arrive. Where C.O.D. is not in operation enclose full amount and postage.

**W. BARRATT & CO., LTD., 70, "Footshape" Works, Northampton, Eng.**  
Write for Barratts 115-page Illustrated Catalogue for 1922 (postage 3d.).





SEA BREEZES. BY MONTAGUE DAWSON.

*Reproduced by permission of W. J. Stacey, Great Russell Street, W.C., owner of the copyright and publisher of the large plate.*





"So it happened that half an hour later we were standing curiously before the great iron gates of a broad shuttered mansion."

# NO THOROUGHFARE

By DORNFORD YATES

*Author of "The Brother of Daphne," "Berry and Co.," "Anthony Lyveden,"  
"The Courts of Illness."*

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

"I CONFESS," said Berry, "that the idea of having a few chairs about in which you can sit continuously for ten minutes, not so much in comfort as without fear of contracting a bed-sore or necrosis of the coccyx, appeals to me. Compared with most of the 'sitzplatz' in this here villa, an ordinary church pew is almost voluptuous. The beastly things seem designed to promote myalgia."

"Yet they do know," said I. "The French, I mean. Look at their beds."

"Exactly," replied my brother-in-law. "That's the maddening part of it. Every French bed is an idyll—a poem of repose. The upholsterer puts his soul into its creation. A born genius, he expresses himself in beds. The rest of the junk he turns out . . ." He broke off and glanced about the room. His eye lighted upon a couch,

*Copyright, 1922, by Dornford Yates, in the United States of America.*

lozenge-shaped, hog-backed, featuring the Greek-Key pattern in brown upon a brick-red ground and surrounded on three sides by a white balustrade some three inches high. "Just consider that throne. Does it or does it not suggest collusion between a private-school workshop, a bricklayer's labourer, and the Berlin branch of the Y.W.C.A.?"

"If," said Daphne, "it was only the chairs, I wouldn't mind. But it's everything. The sideboard, for instance—"

"Ah," said her husband, "my favourite piece. The idea of a double cabin-washstand is very beautifully carried out. I'm always expecting Falcon to press something and a couple of basins to appear. Then we can wash directly after the asparagus."

"The truth is," said Adèle, "these villas are furnished to be let. And when you've said that you've said everything."

"I agree," said I. "And if we've liked Pau enough to come back next autumn, the best thing to do is to have a villa of our own, I'm quite ready to face another three winters here, and, if everyone else is, it 'ld be worth while. As for furniture, we can easily pick out enough from Cholmondely Street and White Ladies."

There was a moment's silence.

Then—

"I'm on," said Jonah, who had caught three splendid salmon in the last two days. "This place suits me."

"And me," said Adèle warmly.

My sister turned to her husband.

"What d'you think, old chap?"

Berry smiled beatifically. A far-away look came into his eyes.

"I shall personally superintend," he announced, "the removal and destruction of the geyser."

Amid some excitement the matter was then and there decided.

The more we thought upon it, the sounder seemed the idea. The place suited us all. To have our things about us would be wholly delightful. Provided we meant for the future to winter abroad, we should save money.

Pleasedly we proceeded to lunch.

Throughout the meal we discussed what manner of house ours must be, its situation, dimensions, aspect. We argued amiably about its garden and curtilage. We determined to insist upon two bathrooms. By the time the cheese was served, we had selected most of the furniture and were bickering good-temperedly about the style of the wall-papers.

Then we rang up a house-agent, to learn that he had no unfurnished villa "to let" upon his books. He added gratuitously that, except for a ruined château upon the other side of Tarbes, he had nothing "for sale," either.

So soon as we had recovered, we returned to the charge . . .

The third agent we addressed was not quite certain. There was, he said, a house in the town—*très solide, très sérieuse, dans un quartier chic*. It would, he thought, be to our liking. It had, for instance, *une salle de fête superbe*. He was not sure, however, that it was still available. A French gentleman was much attracted, and had visited it three times.

We were greatly disgusted and said so. We did not want a house in the town. We wanted. . . .

Finally we succumbed to his entreaties and promised to view the villa, if it was still in the market. He was to ring us up in ten minutes' time. . . .

So it happened that half an hour later we were standing curiously before the great iron gates of a broad shuttered mansion in the Rue Mazagran, Pau, while the agent was alternately pealing the bell for the caretaker and making encouraging gestures in our direction.

Viewed from without, the villa was not unpleasing. It looked extremely well-built, it stood back from the pavement, it had plenty of elbow room. The street itself was as silent as the tomb. Perhaps, if we could find nothing else. . . We began to wonder whether you could see the mountains from the second floor.

At last a caretaker appeared, I whistled to Nobby, and we passed up a short well-kept drive.

A moment later we had left the sunlight behind and had entered a huge dim hall.

"Damp," said Berry instantly, snuffing the air. "Damp for a monkey. I can smell the good red earth."

Daphne sniffed thoughtfully.

"I don't think so," she said. "When a house has been shut up like this, it's bound to—"

"It's wonderful," said her husband, "what you can't smell when you don't want to. Never mind. If you want to live over water, I don't care. But don't say I didn't warn you. Besides, it'll save us money. We can grow moss on the floors instead of carpets."

"It does smell damp," said Adèle, "but

there's central heating. See?" She pointed to a huge radiator. "If that works as it should, it'll make your carpets fade."

Berry shrugged his shoulders.

"I see what it is," he said. "You two girls have scented cupboards. I never yet knew a woman who could resist cupboards. In a woman's eyes a superfluity of cupboards can transform the most poisonous habitation into a desirable residence. If you asked a woman what was the use of a staircase, she'd say, 'To put cupboards under.'"

By now the shutters had been opened, and we were able to see about us. As we were glancing round, the caretaker shuffled to a door beneath the stairs.

"*Voici une armoire magnifique,*" she announced. "*Il y en a beaucoup d'autres.*"

As we passed through the house, we proved the truth of her words. I have never seen so many cupboards to the square mile in all my life.

My wife and my sister strove to dissemble their delight. At length Cousin Jill, however, spoke frankly enough.

"They really are beautiful. Think of the room they give. You'll be able to put everything away."

Berry turned to me.

"Isn't it enough to induce a blood-clot? 'Beautiful.' Evil-smelling recesses walled up with painted wood. Birthplaces of mice. Impregnable hot-beds of vermin. And who wants 'to put everything away'?"

"Hush," said I. "They can't help it. Besides—— Hullo! Here's another bathroom."

"Without a bath," observed my brother-in-law. "How very convenient! Of course, you're up much quicker, aren't you? I suppose the idea is not to keep people waiting. Come along." We passed into a bedroom. "Oh, what a dream of a paper! 'Who Won the Boat-race, or The Battle of the Blues.' Fancy waking up here after a heavy night. I suppose the designer was found 'guilty, but insane.' Another two cupboards? Thanks. That's fifty-nine. And yet another? Oh, no. The backstairs, of course. As before, approached by a door which slides to and fro with a gentle rumbling noise, instead of swinging. The same warranted to jam if opened hastily. Can't you hear Falcon on the wrong side with a butler's tray full of glass, wondering why he was born? Oh, and the bijou spiral leads to the box-room, does it? I see. Adèle's American trunks, especially the

five-foot cube, will go up there beautifully. Falcon will like this house, won't he?"

"I wish to goodness you'd be quiet," said Daphne. "I want to think."

"It's not me," said her husband. "It's that Inter-University wall-paper. And now where's the tower? I suppose that's approached by a wire rope with knots in it?"

"What tower?" said Adèle.

"The tower. The feature of the house. Or was it a ballroom?"

"Ah," I cried, "the ballroom! I'd quite forgotten." I turned to the agent. "*Vous n'avez pas dit qu'il y avait une salle de fête?*"

"*Mais oui, Monsieur. Au rez-de-chaussée. Je vous la montrerai tout de suite.*"

We followed him downstairs in single file, and so across the hall to where two tall oak doors were suggesting a picture-gallery. For a moment the fellow fumbled at their lock. Then he pushed the two open.

I did not know that, outside a palace, there was such a chamber in all France. Of superb proportions, the room was panelled from floor to ceiling with oak—richly carved oak—and every handsome panel was outlined with gold. The ceiling was all of oak, fretted with gold. The floor was of polished oak, inlaid with ebony. At the end of the room three lovely pillars upheld a minstrel's gallery, while opposite a stately oriel yawned a tremendous fireplace, with two stone seraphim for jambs.

In answer to our bewildered inquiries, the agent explained excitedly that the villa had been built upon the remains of a much older house, and that, while the other portions of the original mansion had disappeared, this great chamber and the basement were still surviving. But that was all. Beyond that it was once a residence of note, he could tell us nothing.

Rather naturally, we devoted more time to the ballroom than to all the rest of the house. Against our saner judgment, the possession of the apartment attracted us greatly. It was too vast to be used with comfort as a sitting-room. The occasions upon which we should enjoy it as '*une salle de fête*' would be comparatively few. Four ordinary *salons* would require less service and fuel. Yet, in spite of everything, we wanted it very much.

The rest of the house was convenient. The parlours were fine and airy; there were two bathrooms; the bedrooms were good; the offices were admirable. As for the basement, we lost our way there. It was profound. It was also indubitably damp.

There the dank smell upon which Berry had remarked was most compelling. In the garden stood a garage which would take both the cars.

After a final inspection of the ballroom, we tipped the caretaker, promised to let the agent know our decision, and, to the great inconvenience of other pedestrians, strolled talkatively through the streets towards the Boulevard.

"I suppose," said Adèle, "those were the other people."

"Who were what other people?" I demanded.

"The two men standing in the hall as we came downstairs."

"I never saw them," said I. "But if you mean that one of them was the fellow who's after the house, I fancy you're wrong, because the agent told me he'd gone to Bordeaux."

"Well, I don't know who they were, then," replied my wife. "They were talking to the caretaker. I saw them through the banisters. By the time we'd got down, they'd disappeared. Any way, it doesn't matter. Only, if it was them, it looks as if they were thinking pretty seriously about it. You don't go to see a house four times out of curiosity."

"You mean," said Berry, "that if we're fools enough to take it, we'd better get a move on."

"Exactly. Let's go and have tea at Bouzom's, and thrash it out there."

No one of us, I imagine, will ever forget that tea.

Crowded about a table intended to accommodate four, we alternately disputed and insulted one another for the better part of two hours. Not once, but twice of her agitation my sister replenished the teapot with Jill's chocolate, and twice fresh tea had to be brought. Berry burned his mouth and dropped an apricot tartlet on to his shoe. Until my disgust was excited by a nauseous taste, I continued to drink from a cup in which Jonah had extinguished a cigarette.

Finally Berry pushed back his chair and looked at his watch.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "we came here this memorable afternoon to discuss the advisability of taking a certain message—to wit, the Villa Buichi—for the space of three years. As a result of that discussion I have formed certain conclusions. In the first place, I am satisfied that to dwell with you or any of you in the

Villa Buichi or any other habitation for the space of three years presents a prospect so horrifying as to belittle Death itself. Secondly, while my main object in visiting the said message was to insure, if possible, against the future contraction of some complaint or disease of the hams, I have, I fear, already defeated that object by sitting for upwards of ninety minutes upon a chair which is rather harder than the living rock, and whose surface I have reason to believe is studded with barbs. Thirdly, whilst we are all agreed that a rent of fourteen thousand francs is grotesque, I'd rather pay twice that sum out of my own pocket than continue an argument which threatens to affect my mind. Fourthly, the house is not what we want, or where we want it. The prospect of wassailing in your own comic banquetting-hall is alluring, but the French cook believes in oil, and, to us living in the town, every passing breeze will offer indisputable evidence, not only of the lengths to which this belief will go, but of the patriarchal effects which can be obtained by a fearless application of heat to rancid blubber. Fifthly, since we can get nothing else, and the thought of another winter in England is almost as soul-shaking as that of living again amid French furniture, I suppose we'd better take it, always provided they fill up the basement, put on a Mansard roof, add a few cupboards, and reduce the rent. Sixthly, I wish to heaven I'd never seen the blasted place. Lastly, I now propose to repair to the *Cercle Anglais*, or English Club, there in the privacy of the *lavabo* to remove the traces of the preserved apricot recently adhering to my right shoe, and afterwards to ascertain whether a dry Martini, cupped in the mouth, will do something to relieve the agony I am suffering as the direct result of concentrating on this rotten scheme to the exclusion of my bodily needs. But there you are. When the happiness of others is at stake, I forget that I exist."

With that, he picked up his hat and, before we could stop him, walked out of the shop.

With such an avowal ringing in our ears, it was too much to expect that he would remember that he had ordered the tea and had personally consumed seven cakes, not counting the apricot tart.

However . . . .

I followed him to the Club, rang up the agent, and offered to take the house for three years at a rent of twelve thousand

francs. He promised to telephone to our villa within the hour.

He was as good as his word.

He telephoned to say that the French gentleman, who had unexpectedly returned from Bordeaux, had just submitted an offer of fourteen thousand francs. He added that, unless we were prepared to offer a higher rent, it would be his duty to accept that proposal.

After a moment's thought, I told him to do his duty and bade him adieu.

\* \* \* \* \*

That night was so beautiful that we had the cars open.

As we approached the Casino—

"Let's just go up the Boulevard," said Daphne. "This is too lovely to leave."

I slowed up, waited for Jonah to come alongside, and then communicated our intention to continue to take the air.

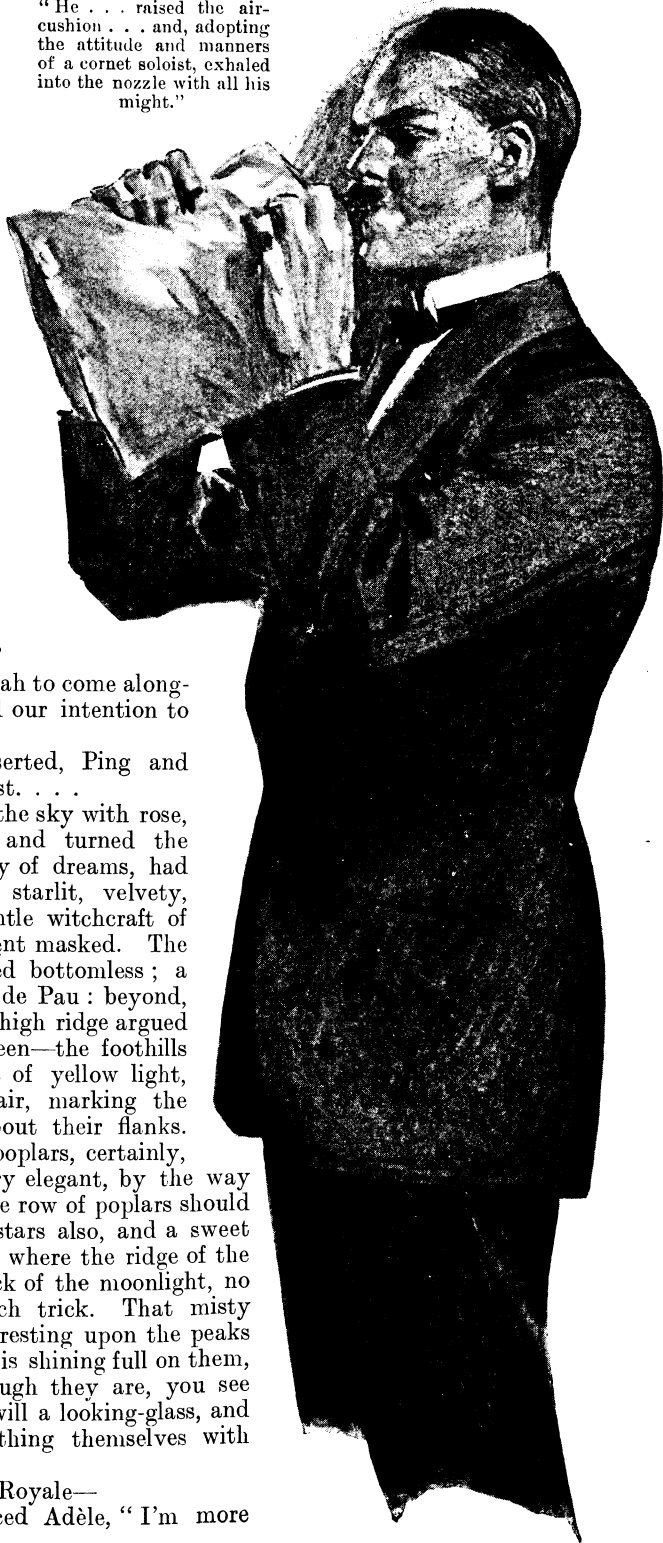
The Boulevard being deserted, Ping and Pong proceeded slowly abreast. . . .

A sunset which had hung the sky with rose, painted the mountain-tops and turned the West into a blazing smeltery of dreams, had slowly yielded to a night starlit, velvety, breathless, big with the gentle witchcraft of an amber moon. Nature went masked. The depths upon our left seemed bottomless; a grey flash spoke of the Gave de Pau: beyond, the random rise and fall of a high ridge argued the summit of a gigantic screen—the foothills to wit, odd twinkling points of yellow light, seemingly pendent in the air, marking the farms and villas planted about their flanks. And that is all. A row of poplars, certainly, very correct, very slight, very elegant, by the way that we take for Lourdes—the row of poplars should be recorded; the luminous stars also, and a sweet white glow in the heaven, just where the ridge of the foothills cuts it across—a trick of the moonlight, no doubt. . . . Sirs, it is no such trick. That misty radiance is the driven snow resting upon the peaks of the Pyrenees. The moon is shining full on them, and, forty miles distant though they are, you see them rendering her light, as will a looking-glass, and by that humble office clothing themselves with unimaginable splendour.

As we stole into the Place Royale—

"Every minute," announced Adèle, "I'm more

"He . . . raised the air-cushion . . . and, adopting the attitude and manners of a cornet soloist, exhaled into the nozzle with all his might."



and more thankful that we're quit of the Villa Buichi. We should have been simply mad to have taken a house in the town."

"There you are," said Berry. "My very words. Over and over again I insisted——"

"If you mean," said Jonah, "that throughout the argument you confined yourself to destructive criticism, deliberate confusion of the issues, and the recommendation of solutions which you knew to be impracticable, I entirely agree."

"The trouble with you," said Berry, "is that you don't appreciate the value of controversy. I don't blame you. Considering the backlash in your spinal cord, I think you talk very well. It's only when——"

"What exactly," said Adèle, bubbling, "is the value of controversy?"

"Its unique ability," said Berry, "to produce the truth. The hotter the furnace of argument, the harder the facts which eventually emerge. That's why I never spare myself. I don't pretend it's easy, but then I'm like that. Somebody offers you a drink. The easiest way is to refuse. But I don't. I always ask myself whether my health demands it."

There was an outraged silence.

Then—

"I have noticed," I observed, "that upon such occasions your brain works very fast. Also that you invariably choose the—er—harder path."

"Nothing is easier," said Berry, "than to deride infirmity." Having compassed the Place Royale, we returned to the Boulevard. "And now, if you've quite finished maundering over the beauties of a landscape which you can't see, supposing we focussed on the object with which we set out. I've thought out a new step I want to show you. It's called 'The Slip Stitch.' Every third beat you stagger and cross your legs above the knee. That shows you've been twice to the Crusades. Then you purl two and cast four off. If you're still together, you get up and repeat to the end of the row knitways, decreasing once at every turn. Then you cast off very loosely."

Happily the speaker was in the other car, so we broke away and fled up the Rue du Lycée. . . .

The dancing-room was crowded. Every English visitor seemed to be there, but they were not all dancing, and the floor was just pleasantly full.

As we came in, I touched Adèle on the arm.

"Will you dance with me, lass?"

I was not one moment too soon.

As I spoke, two gallants arrived to lodge their claims.

"I've accepted my husband," said Adèle, smiling.

She had to promise the next and the one after.

Whilst we were dancing, she promised the fourth and the fifth.

"I can see," said I, "that I'm in for my usual evening. Of course, we're too highly civilised. I feed you, I lodge you, I clothe you"—I held her off and looked at her—"yes, with outstanding success. You've a glorious colour, your eyes are like stars, and your frock is a marvel. In fact, you're almost too good to be true. From your wonderful, sweet-smelling hair to the soles of your little pink feet, you're an exquisite production. Whoever did see such a mouth? I suppose you know I married you for your mouth? And your throat? And—but I digress. As I was saying, all this is due to me. If I fed you exclusively on farinaceous food, you'd look pale. If I locked you out of nights, you'd look tired. If I didn't clothe you, you'd look—well, you wouldn't be here, would you? I mean, I know we move pretty fast nowadays, but certain conventions are still observed. Very well, then. I am responsible for your glory. I bring you here, and everybody in the room dances with you, except myself. To complete the comedy, I have only to remind you that I love dancing, and that you are the best dancer in the room. I ask you."

"That's just what you don't do," said Adèle, with a maddening smile. "If you did. . . ."

"But——"

"Certain conventions," said Adèle, "are still observed. Have I ever refused you?"

"You couldn't. That's why I don't ask you."

"O-o-oh, I don't believe you," said Adèle. "If it was Leap Year——"

"Pretend it is."

"—and I wanted to dance with you——"

"Pretend you do."

The music stopped with a crash, and a moment later a Frenchman was bowing over my wife's hand.

"My I come for a dance later?" he asked.

"Not this evening. I've promised the next four——"

"There will, I trust, be a fifth?"

"—and, after that, I've given my husband the lot. You do understand, don't you?"

You see, I must keep in with him. He feeds me and lodges me and clothes me and——”

The Frenchman bowed.

“If he has clothed you to-night, Madame, I can forgive him anything.”

We passed to a table at which Berry was superintending the icing of some champagne.

“Ah, there you are!” he exclaimed. “Had your evening dance? Good. I ordered this little hopeful *pour passer le temps*. They’ve two more baubles in the offing, and sharp at one-thirty we start on fried eggs and beer. Judging from the contracts into which my wife has entered during the last six minutes, we shall be here till three.” Here he produced and prepared to inflate an air-cushion. “The great wheeze about these shock-absorbers is not to——”

There was a horrified cry from Daphne and a shriek of laughter from Adèle and Jill.

“I implore you,” said my sister, “to put that thing away.”

“What thing?” said her husband, applying the nozzle to his lips.

“That cushion thing. How could you——”

“What! Scrap my blow-me-tight?” said Berry. “Darling, you rave. You’re going to spend the next four hours afloat upon your beautiful toes, with a large spade-shaped hand supporting the small of your back. I’m not. I’m going to maintain a sitting posture, with one of the ‘nests for rest’ provided by a malignant Casino directly intervening between the base of my trunk and the floor. Now, I know that intervention. It’s of the harsh, unyielding type. Hence this air-pocket.”

With that, he stepped on to the floor, raised the air-cushion as if it were an instrument of music, and, adopting the attitude and manners of a cornet soloist, exhaled into the nozzle with all his might.

There was a roar of laughter.

Then, mercifully, the band started, and the embarrassing attention of about sixty pairs of eyes was diverted accordingly.

A moment later my brother-in-law and I had the table to ourselves.

“And now,” said Berry, “forward with that bauble. The Rump Parliament is off.”

Perhaps, because it was a warm evening, the Casino’s furnaces were in full blast. After a while the heat became oppressive. Presently I left Berry to the champagne and went for a stroll in the Palmarium.

As I was completing my second lap—

“Captain Pleydell,” said a dignified voice.

I turned to see Mrs. Waterbrook, leaning upon a stick, accompanied by a remarkably pretty young lady with her hair down her back.

I came to them swiftly.

“Have you met with an accident?” I inquired.

“I have. I’ve ricked my ankle. Susan, this is Captain Pleydell, whose cousin is going to marry Piers. Captain Pleydell, this is Susan—my only niece. Now I’m going to sit down.” I escorted her to a chair. “That’s better. Captain Pleydell, have you seen the Château?”

“Often,” said I. “A large grey building with a red keep, close to the scent-shop.”

“One to you,” said Mrs. Waterbrook. “Now I’ll begin again. Captain Pleydell, have you seen the inside of the Château?”

“I have not.”

“Then you ought,” said Mrs. Waterbrook, “to be ashamed of yourself. You’ve been six months in Pau, and you’ve never taken the trouble to go and look at one of the finest collections of tapestries in the world. What are you doing to-morrow morning?”

“Going to see the inside of the Château,” I said.

“Good. So’s Susan. She’ll meet you at the gate on the Boulevard at half-past ten. She only arrived yesterday, and now her mother wants her, and she’s got to go back. She’s wild to see the Château before she goes, and I can’t take her because of this silly foot.”

“I’m awfully sorry,” said I. “But it’s an ill wind, etc.”

“Susan,” said Mrs. Waterbrook, “that’s a compliment. Is it your first?”

“No,” said Susan. “But it’s the slickest.”

“The what?” cried her aunt.

“I mean, I didn’t see it coming.”

I began to like Susan.

“‘Slickest,’” snorted Mrs. Waterbrook.

“Nasty vulgar slang. If you were going to be here longer, Captain Pleydell’s wife should give you lessons in English. She isn’t a teacher, you know. She’s an American—with a silver tongue. And there’s that wretched bell.” She rose to her feet. “If I’d remembered that *Manon* had more than three acts, I wouldn’t have come.” She turned to me. “Is Jill here to-night?”

“She is.”

“Will you tell her to come and find us in the next interval?”

“I will.”

"Good. Half-past ten to-morrow. Good night."

On the way to the doors of the theatre she stopped to speak with someone, and Susan came running back.

"Captain Pleydell, is your wife here?"

I nodded.

"Well, then, when Jill's with Aunt Eleanor, d'you think I could—I mean, if you wouldn't mind, I'd—I'd love a lesson in English."

I began to like Susan more than ever.

"I'll see if she's got a spare hour to-morrow," I said. "At half-past ten."

Susan knitted her brows.

"No, don't upset that," she said quickly. "It doesn't matter. I want to be able to tell them I had you alone. But if I could say I'd met your wife, too, it'd be simply golden."

As soon as I could speak—

"You wicked, forward child," I said. "You——"

"Toodle-oo," said Susan. "Don't be late."

Somewhat dazedly I turned in the direction of the *salle de danse*—so dazedly, in fact, that I collided with a young Frenchman who was watching the progress of *le jeu de boule*. This was hardly exhilarating. Of the seven beings gathered about the table, six were croupiers and the seventh was reading *Le Temps*.

I collided roughly enough to knock a cigarette out of my victim's hand.

"Toodle-oo—I mean *pardon, Monsieur. Je vous demande pardon.*"

"It's quite all right," he said, smiling. "I shouldn't have been standing so far out."

I drew a case from my pocket.

"At least," I said, "you'll allow me to replace the cigarette"—he took one with a laugh—"and to congratulate you upon your beautiful English."

"Thank you very much. For all that, you knew I was French."

"In another minute," said I, "I shall be uncertain. And I'm sure you'd deceive a Frenchman every time."

"I do frequently. It amuses me to death. Only the other day I had to produce my passport to a merchant at Lyons before he'd believe I was a foreigner."

"A foreigner?" I cried, with bulging eyes. "Then you *are* English."

"I'm a pure-bred Spaniard," was the reply. "I tell you, it's most diverting. Talk about ringing the changes. I had a great time during the War. I was a perfect

mine of information. It wasn't strictly accurate, but Germany didn't know that. As a double-dyed traitor, they found me extremely useful. As a desirable neutral, I cut a great deal of ice. And now I'm loafing. I used to take an interest in the prevention of crime, but I've grown lazy."

For a moment or two we stood talking. Then I asked him to come to our table in the dancing room. He declined gracefully.

"I'm Spanish enough to dislike Jazz music," he said.

We agreed to meet at the Club on the following day, and I rejoined Berry to tell him what he had missed.

I found the fifth dance in full swing and my brother-in-law in high dudgeon.

As I sat down, he exploded.

"This blasted breath-bag is a fraud. If you blow it up tight, it's like trying to sit on a barrel. If you fill it half full, you mustn't move a muscle, or the imprisoned air keeps shifting all over the place till one feels sick of one's stomach. In either case it's as hard as petrified bog-oak. If you only leave an imperial pint in the vessel, it all goes and gathers in one corner, thus conveying to one the impression that one is sitting one's self upon a naked chair with a tennis-ball in one's hip-pocket. If one puts the swine behind one, it shoves one off the seat altogether. It was during the second phase that one dropped or let fall one's cigar into one's champagne. One hadn't thought that anything could have spoiled either, but one was wrong."

I did what I could to soothe him, but without avail.

"I warn you," he continued, "there's worse to come. Misfortunes hunt in threes. First we fool and are fooled over that rotten villa. Now this balloon lets me down. You wait."

I decided that to argue that the failure of the air-cushion could hardly be reckoned a calamity would be almost as provocative as to suggest that the immersion of the cigar should rank as the third disaster, so I moistened the lips and illustrated an indictment of our present system of education by a report of my encounter with Susan.

Berry heard me in silence, and then desired me to try the chairs at the Château, and, if they were favouring repose, to inquire whether the place would be let furnished. Stiffing an inclination to assault him, I laughed pleasantly and related my meeting with the engaging Spaniard. When I had finished—



"How much did you lend him?" inquired my brother-in-law. "Or is a pal of his taking care of your watch?"

The fox-trot came to an end, and I rose to my feet.

"The average weight," I said, "of the spleen is, I believe, six ounces. But spleens have been taken weighing twenty pounds."

"Net or rod?" said Berry.

"Now you see," I continued, "why you're so heavy on the chairs."

With that, I sought my wife and led her away to watch the Baccarat. . . .

Before we had been in the gaming room for twenty seconds, Adèle caught me by the arm.

"D'you see that man over there, Boy? With a bangle on his wrist?"

"And a shirt behind his diamond? I do."

"That's one of the men I saw in the Villa Buichi."

"The devil it is," said I. "Then I take it he's the new lessee. Well, well. He'll go well with the ballroom, won't he?"

It was a gross-looking fellow, well-groomed and oily. His fat hands were manicured and he was overdressed. He gave the impression that money was no longer an object. As if to corroborate this, he had been winning heavily. I decided that he was a bookmaker.

While I was staring, Adèle moved to speak with a friend.

"And who," said a quiet voice, "is attracting such faithful attention?"

It was the Spaniard.

"You see that fat cove?" I whispered. "He did us out of a house to-day. Overbid us, you know."

My companion smiled.

"No worse than that?" he murmured.

"You must count yourselves lucky."

I raised my eyebrows.

"You know him?"

The other nodded.

"Not personally, of course," he said. Then: "I think he's retired now."

"What was he?" said I.

"The biggest receiver in France."

\* \* \* \* \*

Ere we retired to rest, my brother-in-law's prophecy that there was 'worse to come' was distressingly fulfilled.

As the 'evening' advanced, it improved out of all knowledge. The later the hour, the hotter became the fun. Berry's ill humour fell away. Adèle and I danced furiously together. Vain things were imagined and found diverting. Hospitality

was dispensed. The two spare 'baubles' were reinforced. . . .

Not until half-past two was the tambourine of gaiety suffered to tumble in its tracks.

We climbed into the cars flushed and hilarious. . . .

Late though we were, whenever we had been dancing there was one member of the household who always looked for our return and met us upon our threshold.

Nobby.

However silently the cars stole up the drive, by the time the door was opened, always the Sealyham was on parade, his small feet together, his tail up, his rough little head upon one side, waiting to greet us with an explosion of delight. In his bright eyes the rite was never stale, never laborious. It was the way of his heart.

Naturally enough, we came to look for his welcome. Had we looked in vain some night, we should have been concerned. . . .

We were concerned this night.

We opened the door to find the hall empty.

Nobby was not upon parade.

Tired as we were, we searched the whole house. Presently I found a note upon my pyjamas.

SIR,

*Must tell you we cannot find Nobby, the chauffeur and me looking everywhere and Fitch as been out in Pau all evening in quest. Hoping his whereabouts is perhaps known to you,*

*Yours respectfully,*

*J. FALCON.*

\* \* \* \* \*

I was at the Villa Buichi the following morning by a quarter to ten.

It seemed just possible that the terrier was there a captive. That he was with us before we visited the house we well remembered. Whether he had entered with us and, if so, left when we did, we could not be sure. We had had much to think about. . . .

The caretaker took an unconscionable time to answer the bell, and, when I had stated my business, stoutly refused to let me search the villa without an order. My offer of money was offensively refused. I had to content myself with standing within the hall and whistling as loud as I could. No bark replied, but I was not satisfied, and determined to seek the agent and obtain a permit the moment that Susan and I had 'done' the Château.

It was in some irritation that I made my way to the Boulevard. I had no desire to see the inside of the Château then or at any

time ; I particularly wished to prosecute my search for the Sealyham without delay. I had had less than four hours' sleep, and was feeling rotten. . . .

In a smart white coat and skirt and a white felt hat over one eye, Susan looked most attractive. Her fresh, pretty face was glowing, her wonderful golden hair was full of lights,

leaned her small back against the balustrade, was more than dainty. Her little feet and ankles were those of a thoroughbred.

As I descended from the car—

"I say," said Susan, "I've got a stone in my shoe. Where can I get it out?"

I eyed her severely.

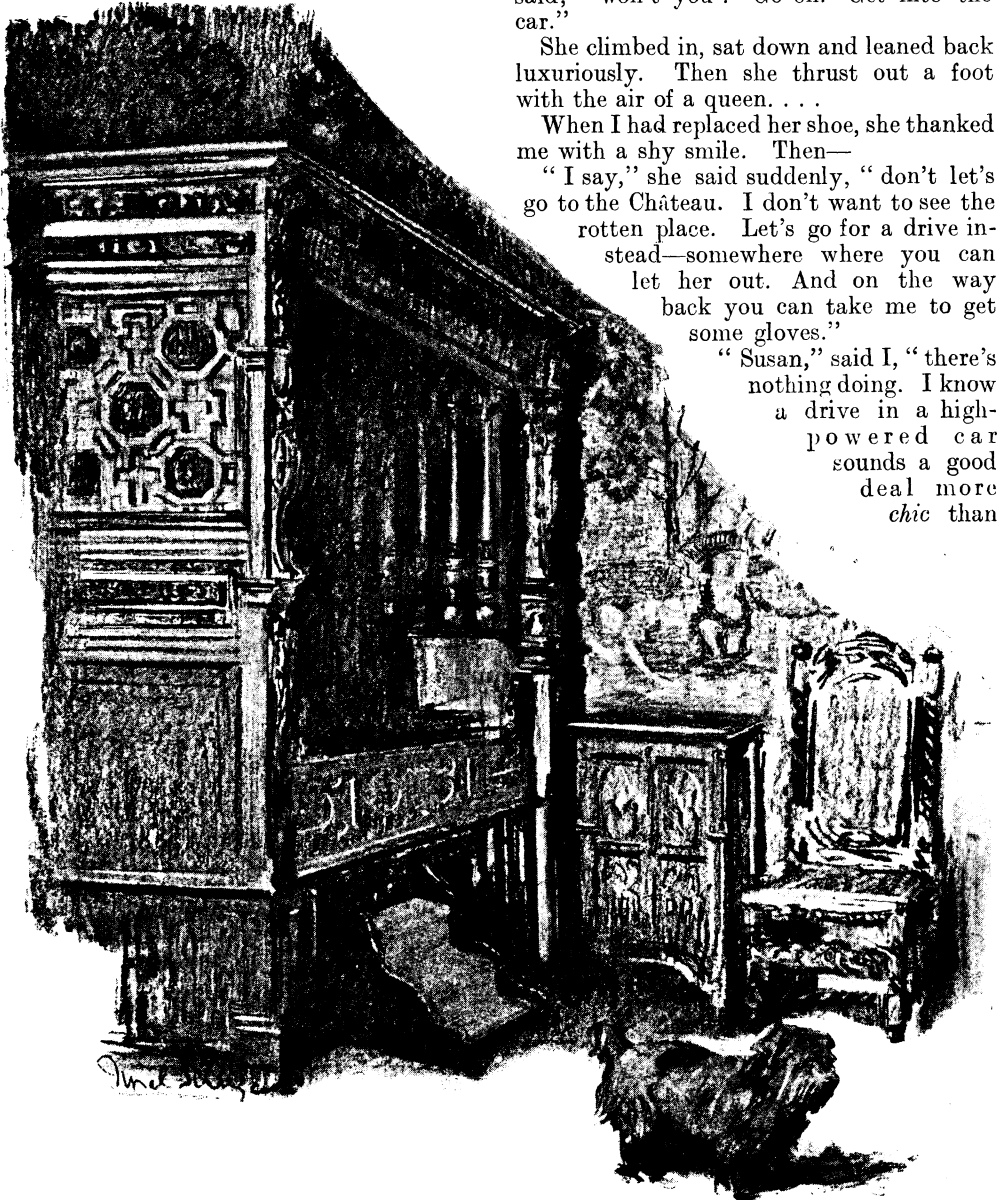
"You will have a lot to tell them," I said, "won't you? Go on. Get into the car."

She climbed in, sat down and leaned back luxuriously. Then she thrust out a foot with the air of a queen. . . .

When I had replaced her shoe, she thanked me with a shy smile. Then—

"I say," she said suddenly, "don't let's go to the Château. I don't want to see the rotten place. Let's go for a drive instead—somewhere where you can let her out. And on the way back you can take me to get some gloves."

"Susan," said I, "there's nothing doing. I know a drive in a high-powered car sounds a good deal more chic than



"Advancing stiffly towards us and wagging his scrap of a tail was a small grey-brown dog."

and the line of her slim figure, as—hands thrust deep into her coat-pockets—she

being shown round a Château, but you can't have everything. Orders is orders. Besides,

I've lost my dog, and I want to get a move on. But for that, you should have done the Château and had your drive into the bargain. As it is. . . ."

Susan is a good girl.

The moment she heard of my trouble, she was out of the car and haling me up to the Château as if there was a mob at our heels. . . .

I was not in the mood for sightseeing, but my annoyance went down before the tapestries as wheat before the storm.

Standing before those aged exquisites—those glorious embodiments of patience infinite, imagination high, and matchless craftsmanship, I forgot everything. The style of them was superb. They had quality. About them was nothing mean. They were so rich, so mellow, so delicate. There was a softness to the lovely tones no brush could ever compass. Miracles of detail, marvels of stately effect, the panels were breathing the spirit of their age. Looking upon them, I stepped into another world. I heard the shouts of the huntsmen and the laughter of the handmaidens, I smelled the sweat of the chargers and the sweet scent of the grapes, I felt the cool touch of the shade upon my cheeks.

Always the shouts were distant, the scent faint, the laughter low. I

wandered up faery glades, loitered in lazy markets, listened to the music of fountains, sat before ample boards, bowed over lily-white hands. . . .

Here, then, was magic. Things other than silk went to the weaving of so potent a spell. The laborious needle put in the dainty threads: the hearts of those that plied it put in most precious memories—treasures of love and laughter . . . the swift brush of lips . . . the echo of a call in the forest . . . a patch of sunlight upon the slope of a hill . . . such stuff, indeed, as dreams are made on. . . .

And there is the bare truth, gentlemen, just as I have stumbled upon it. The tapestries of Pau are dreams—which you may go and share any day except Sundays.

We had almost finished our tour of the



"With one consent, the keeper, Susan, and I swung on our heels."

apartments, and were standing in the Bedroom of Jeanne d'Albret, staring at a beautiful Gobelin, when I heard the "flop" of something alighting upon the floor.

With one consent, the keeper, Susan, and I swung on our heels.

Advancing stiffly towards us and wagging his scrap of a tail was a small grey-brown dog. His coat was plastered with filth, upon one of his ears was a blotch of dried blood, his muzzle and paws might have been steeped in liquid soot. He stank abominably.

I put up a hand to my head.

"Nobby?" I cried, peering. And then again, "Nobby?"

The urchin crept to my feet, put his small dirty head one side, lowered it to the ground, and then rolled over upon his back. With his legs in the air, he regarded me fixedly, tentatively wagging his tail.

Dazedly I stooped and patted the mud upon his stomach. . . .

The bright eyes flashed. Then, with a squirm, the Sealyham was on his feet and leaping to lick my face.

"B-b-but," shrieked Susan, shaking me by the arm, "is this the—the dog you'd lost?"

"Yes," I shouted, "it is!"

Not until then did the custodian of the apartments find his tongue.

"*C'est votre chien, alors!*" he raved. "*Il nous a accompagné tout le temps et je ne l'ai pas vu. Sans laisse dans toutes ces chambres magnifiques. Mon Dieu, ce n'est pas permis aux chiens d'entrer même dans le parc. Et lui—se balader dans le Château, sale comme il est, avec une odeur de vingt boucs.*"

"Listen," said I. "It's my dog all right, but I never brought him. I've been looking all over Pau. What on earth—"

"*Mais vous devez l'avoir amené. C'est clair. C'est vous qui l'avez fait. Moi-même j'ai fermé toutes les chambres. Personne n'a les clefs que moi. C'est impossible.*"

I pointed to the carved bedstead.

"See for yourself," said I. "He's just jumped down."

The keeper ran to the bed and peered behind the gorgeous parapet. Then he let out a scream of agony.

"*Ah, c'est vrai. Dix mille diables! Qu'un chien si dégoûtant ait souillé le lit de Jeanne d'Albret. Voyez la niche qu'il s'est faite dans les couvertures. Mon Dieu, c'est honteux. Monsieur, vous répondrez de ceci.*"

"I shall do nothing of the sort," said I. "But, unless you keep your mouth shut, you will. You shouldn't have let him get in."

I thought the fellow would have choked. "*Mais je ne l'ai— A-a-ah!*" he screamed. "*Voyez il s'approche de l'écran de la reine pour l'abîmer comme il a abîmé son lit.*"

"Nonsense," I said shortly. "He's very struck with the furniture. That's all. Anybody would be. But how the deuce. . . ."

With tears in his eyes the keeper besought me to remove my dog forthwith.

In the circumstances, it seemed best to comply, so, wishing very much that Nobby could speak for himself, I tied my handkerchief to his collar and, with Susan chattering excitedly and clinging to my arm, followed our gibbering guide to the foot of the great staircase.

"He *must* have followed him in," cried Susan. "He simply must. I looked at the chimney, but it's stopped up, and the man says there's no other door. And you know he unlocked each one as we came to it this morning."

"But why's he so filthy?" I said. "And how did he fetch up here? Let's see. He must have come with us as far as Bouzom's. That's only five minutes from here. Then we forgot all about him and left him outside. We were there for ages. I suppose he got fed up with waiting or found a pal or something, and drifted down here. All the same. . . ." I turned to the custodian and took out a fifty-franc note. "He doesn't usually pay so much for a room, but, as this isn't a hotel and he had Jeanne d'Albret's bed. . . ."

The money passed in silence.

I fancy the keeper dared not trust himself to speak.

After all, I was very thankful that Nobby was found.

As we passed out of the gate, a sudden thought came to me, and I turned back.

"I say," I cried, "when last did you visit that room?"

"The Queen's room, Monsieur?"

I nodded.

"Yesterday morning, Monsieur. At nine o'clock."

You could have knocked me down.

I walked towards the car like a man in a dream.

The business smacked of a conjuring trick.

Having lost the terrier in the town, I had been sent to view the Château against my will, there to discover my missing chattel in a locked chamber upon the second floor.

To add to the confusion of my wits, Susan was talking furiously.

“ . . . I've read of such things. You know. In case of a revolution, for the king to escape. They say there's one at Buckingham Palace.”

“ One what ? ” said I abstractedly.

“ Underground passage,” said Susan. “ Leading out into the open. The one from Buckingham Palace goes into a house. I suppose it was country once, and then the ground was built over, or, of course, it might always have led into the house, and they just had loyal people living there or someone from the Court, so that——”

“ Heaven and earth ! ” I roared. “ The Villa Buichi ! ”

Susan recoiled with a cry.

I caught her white arm.

“ Susan,” I yelled, “ you've got it in one ! The last time we saw him was there. It's a house we saw yesterday. We thought of taking it, but, as soon as he saw us coming, another chap got in quick.”

“ What a shame ! ” said Susan. “ If only you'd had it, you'd 've been able to go and look at the tapestries whenever you—— Oh, whatever's the matter ? ”

I suppose my eyes were blazing. I know my brain was.

The murder was out.

“ I must see my friend, the Spaniard,” I said. “ He's made a mistake. *The biggest receiver in France has not retired.*”

Susan stared at me with big eyes.

With a smile, I flung open its door and waved her into the car. . . .

I followed her in.

Then I put my arm round her waist and kissed her pink cheek.

“ Now,” said I, “ you *will* have something to tell them.”

Susan gurgled delightedly.

\* \* \* \* \*

The French are nothing if not artistic. They are also good showmen.

Five days later I had the privilege of sitting for fifty minutes upon an extremely uncomfortable chair in the Oratory of Jeanne d'Albret, listening at intervals, by means of a delicate instrument, to the biggest receiver in France and his confederates stumbling still more uncomfortably along a dank and noisome passage towards penal servitude for life.

Had he known that the Villa Buichi was surrounded, that the caretaker was already in custody, that a file of soldiers was following a quarter of a mile in his rear, and that the van which was to take him to prison was waiting in the Château's courtyard, my gentleman, who had 'lived soft,' could not have been more outspoken about the condition of his path.

Not until he had quite finished and had inquired in a blasphemous whisper if all were present, was the strip of magnesium ignited and the photograph made. . . .

I have a copy before me.

The knaves are not looking their best, but the grouping is superb.

*The Toilet of Venus* makes a most exquisite background.

*A further story in this series will appear in the next number.*



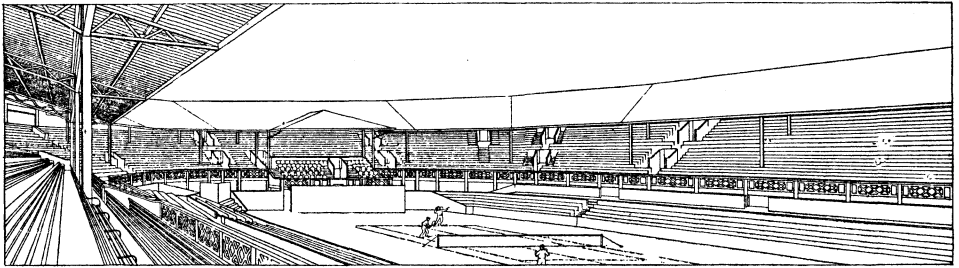
# THE NEW WIMBLEDON

## THE LATEST HEADQUARTERS OF THE WORLD'S LAWN TENNIS

By HERBERT L. BOURKE

**I** QUESTION whether Alice in Wonderland was ever confronted with a more bewildering surprise than will be the lawn tennis enthusiasts who this year will assemble at the spacious new headquarters of lawn tennis developed at Wimbledon Park. Here they will behold, on what was a plot of rough grazing land only last June, magnificent equipment for

will be a lasting memorial, for by their prowess, and their gallant stands for their respective countries in the international struggles, they have made the new Wimbledon not only an ideal, but a realisation, a potent reason being the fact that they have made of lawn tennis—once derided as something for the anæmic—"a man's game," and, in its modern



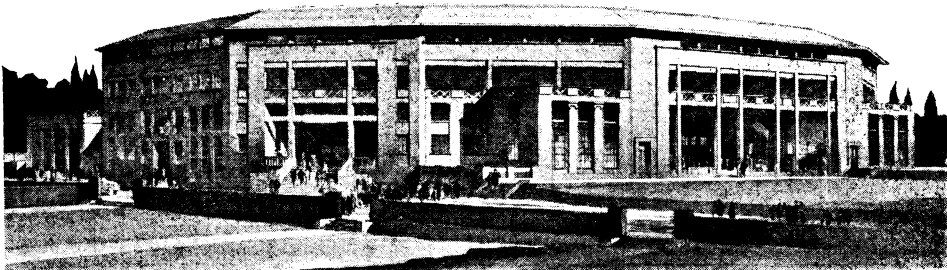
THE ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR THE CENTRE COURT AND AMPHITHEATRE, WITH SEATING ACCOMMODATION FOR TEN THOUSAND ONLOOKERS AND STANDING ROOM FOR ABOUT ANOTHER FOUR THOUSAND.

a game that has caught the public fancy in the past few years to such an extent as to render the old Wimbledon, of cherished memory, which was once all too big in the struggling days of the earlier championships, all too small for modern requirements.

We have been wont to appraise the virtues of the old Wimbledon as something attaining to perfection in championship conditions, but the new Wimbledon—merely an inevitable step in the process of the game's evolution and growth—in the palatial magnitude of its conception, and in its wonderful realisation, leaves us deeply impressed with what might be termed the comparative littleness of the well-remembered Worple Road ground, where giants of the game—fine fellows all—have flitted over the classic centre court, many of whom have since flitted to the Great Beyond. To these the new Wimbledon

development, have emphasised its athletic attributes in addition to revealing its academic possibilities.

One must be pardoned for becoming somewhat reminiscent when it comes to the passing of the historic enclosure in the Worple Road; but it is satisfactory to know that we are passing on to something bigger and better. How it has all been done in so short a time is a thing to marvel at. At various periods three hundred loyal workmen have, by their assiduous energies, backed the brains behind the scheme, and in so doing have beaten time and achieved what most people said would be impossible in these troublous days. It will give a rough idea of the magnitude of the undertaking to say that in the centre court alone there will be seating accommodation for 10,000 people—compared with about 3,500 at the old ground—and standing room for about 4,000 others. This constitutes a world's



THE ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR THE EXTERIOR FRONTAGE OF THE CENTRE COURT AND AMPHITHEATRE.

record for a permanent amphitheatre round a single court, and I do not hesitate to say that, in achieving so much with an economy of space, Captain Stanley Peach, the architect, has set up a new record. It has to be remembered that properly to watch lawn tennis and enjoy its *finesse*, the looker-on needs to be close to the play.

It is vastly different from football, which can be seen from afar off, as, for instance, from the terraces at Stamford Bridge and at the old Cup Final ground of the Crystal Palace. All this has been duly considered at the new Wimbledon, where the fine art of architecture has been so nicely studied that people in the back rows of the stands will practically be as near to the play as they were at the old Wimbledon.

But Wimbledon's centre court is not all. The scheme embraces fifteen other grass courts and ten hard courts, and a feature of the latter is seating accommodation for 3,500 people, the centre court stand, built on the dodecagon principle, being utilised for this purpose, as the space underneath the

rising terraces provides for covered seats for the hard court matches. Thus we have the clever contrivance of what may be termed a double-faced stand. In addition, there will be temporary stands alongside some of the surrounding grass courts, and it is authoritatively stated that 30,000 people will be able to be on the Wimbledon ground at the same time, all able to watch the play without enduring discomfort. As for the grass courts, Commander Hillyard, R.N., the Secretary of the All-England Club, has made these his especial care. It was, of course, all a question of the turf settling down, and a gamble with climatic conditions. At first there was an idea of transferring the grass from the old ground to the new, but Commander Hillyard decided to "import" Cumberland turf from the Solway Firth, and has done this with complete success.

Everything has been done to ensure the complete comfort and convenience of visitors to Wimbledon. On the ground will be telephone and telegraphic facilities, and

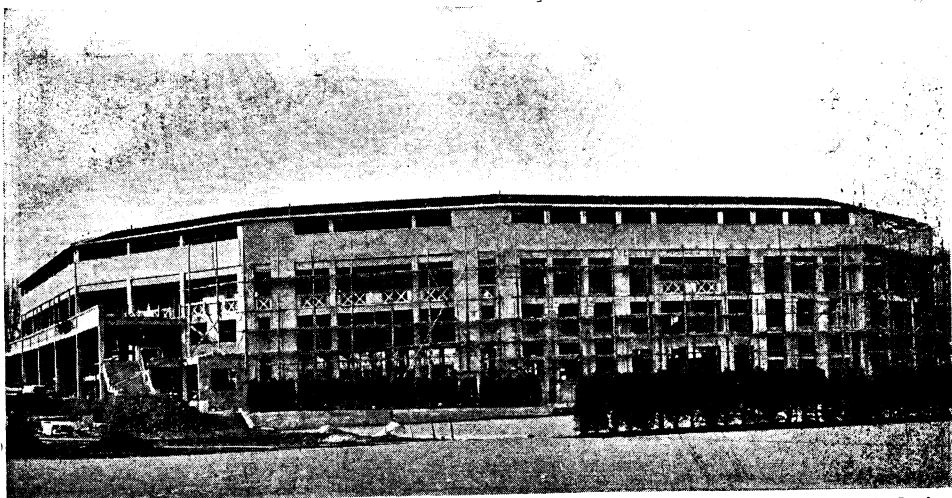
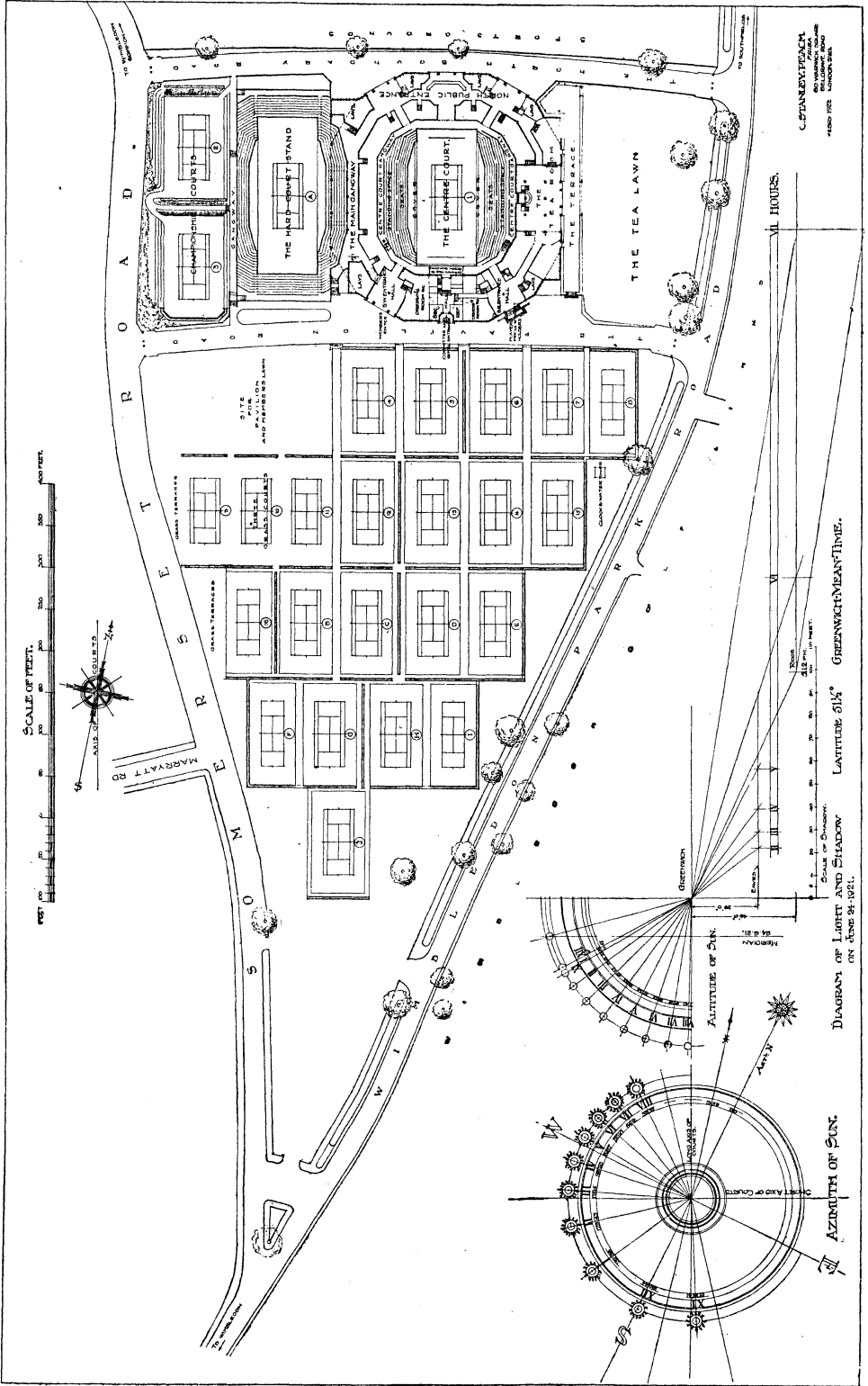


Photo by]

[P. G. Luck.

THE EXTERIOR FRONTAGE OF THE CENTRE COURT AND AMPHITHEATRE PHOTOGRAPHED AS IT APPROACHED COMPLETION.



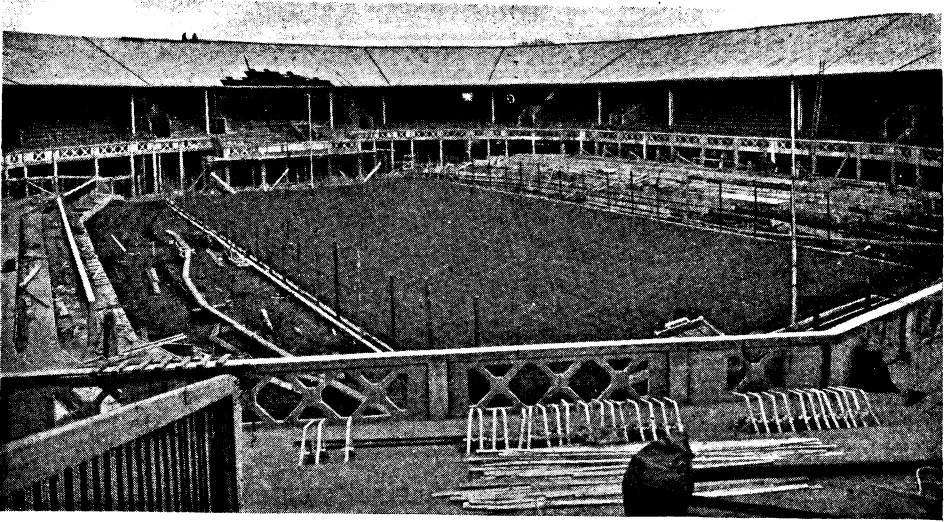
CONSTRUCTION BY  
 THE WIMBLEDON  
 TRUST  
 1920-21

10 M. HOURS.

DIAGRAM OF LIGHT AND SHADOW LATITUDE  $51\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  GREENWICH MEAN TIME.  
 ON JUNE 24 1921.

THE PLAN OF THE NEW WIMBLEDON GROUNDS AND COURTS.



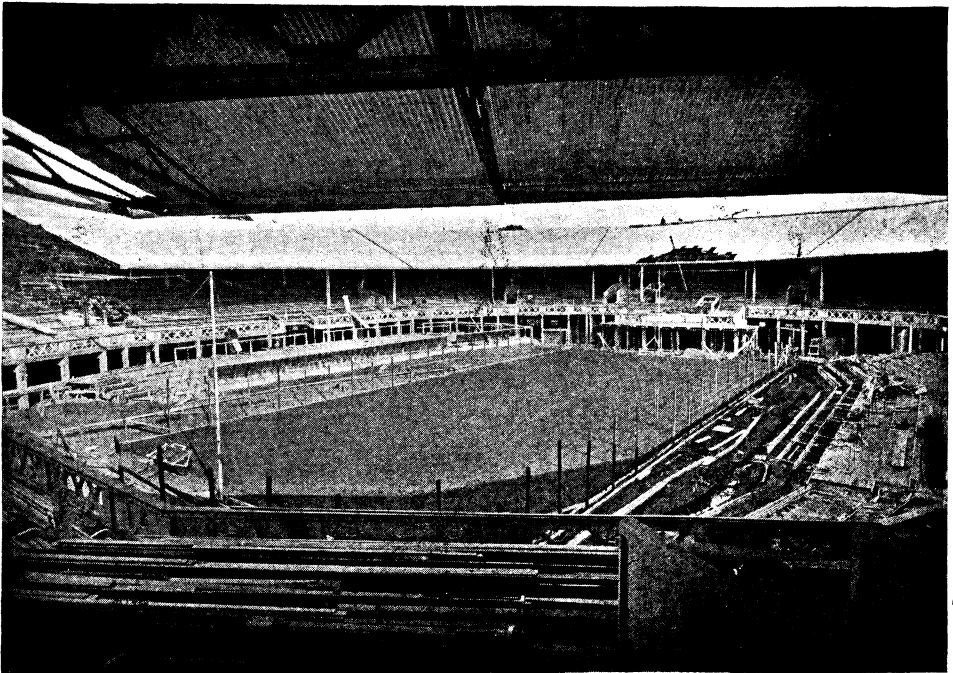


THE CENTRE COURT, WITH VIEW OF THE ROYAL BOX PHOTOGRAPHED AS IT APPROACHED COMPLETION.

the fact that smoking will be permitted in the stands will be much appreciated. They have been built of reinforced concrete on "safety first" lines. As to the commissariat department, there will be no room for complaint. In addition to a tea terrace and tea-lawn, there is luncheon and tea accommodation for 1,500 people. Another Wimbledon feature

will be the commodious cloak-rooms at all the entrances.

When it comes to the requirements of the players, what could be better? The men's dressing-room contains eight baths and five shower baths, whilst the ladies have two dressing-rooms, four baths, and two shower baths. There is also a special competitors' lounge, where doubtless many



Photos by]

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE CENTRE COURT.

[P. G. Luck.

battles will be fought over again, fraught with the customary "ifs" and "buts," and where victor and vanquished will fraternise in the customary sporting manner, the one saying how lucky he was, and the other extending his congratulations—you know the sort of thing I mean. I had almost forgotten the expansive drying rooms. They are there, of course.

And the Committee—lucky fellows!—theirs will be the privilege of occupying the Royal box, which is also the Committee box. To this there is a separate entrance for the *élite*, and Royalty, which so often

foreign tongue is meant for a compliment or otherwise. After the ball boys comes the little matter of the Press. It may seem a mere triviality to the public, but it is interesting to note that our new Press box will contain about seventy seats, and perhaps it will surprise them to know that the Press Committee will be called upon to hold an inquest on about seven hundred applications for these. They will, no doubt, enjoy a greater surprise if the remaining "unconverted" editors wake up and realise that, after all, there is some public interest in the game. What with a galaxy of

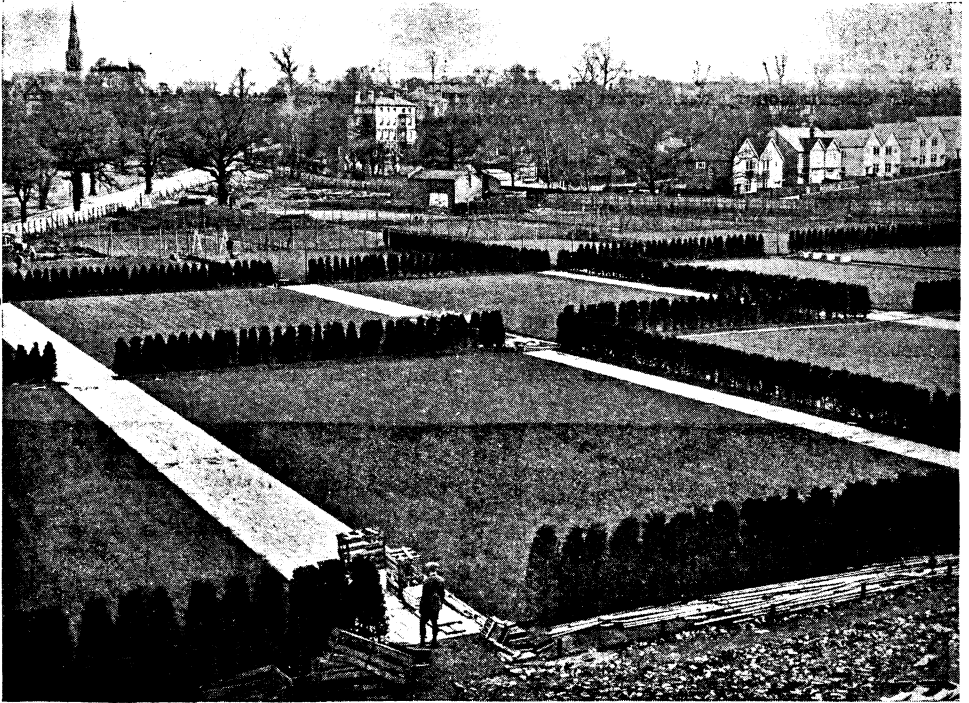


Photo by]

GRASS COURTS IN THE GROUNDS.

[P. G. Luck.

graces Wimbledon with its presence—is not His Majesty our patron?—has two private rooms specially allotted to it, which are known as the Royal rooms.

Nothing seems to have been forgotten, and I am sure the ball boys will much appreciate their special club-room, where I hope the walls are deaf, and nothing will leak through of their caustic comments on the temperaments of the various competitors on whom they dance attendance. After all, it is no small thing to be chastised in all languages, or, not being a linguist, to wonder sometimes whether something in a

telephones and "tapping" machines, and our own retiring rooms, and what not, new Wimbledon is destined to be a veritable picnic for us—except for the writing that so sorely disturbs our siestas.

A Wimbledon feature will be the control of matches by umpires from the newly-formed Lawn Tennis Umpires Association, of which Sir Lionel Alexander, Bart., is the keen and able honorary secretary. The worst feature of all would be—if it could possibly happen—the absence of our dear friend the "champion spectator." I will wager, however, that, as usual, he will be



A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF THE GROUNDS AND COURTS OF NEW WIMBLEDON FROM THE AIR.

*Photographed by the Central Aerophoto Co., Ltd.*

there, and Heaven help the man on the ground staff who rules a court-marking out of the straight.

It is interesting to discern in the New Wimbledon certain characteristics which, as the architect points out, illustrate the great difference between both the sports and architecture of the present and the past.

Both sport and architecture reflect and record the character and customs of a nation. From time to time buildings are erected which are footprints in the sands of time, and show very clearly the changes which have taken place.

The centre court stand at Wimbledon is a building of this kind, and is comparable with the Coliseum at Rome, which was, perhaps, the greatest sports stand of the past.

The Coliseum was an ellipse in shape, and was about 615 feet in its greatest length and 510 feet in width, and covered an area of 246,340 square feet, or nearly six acres. Its arena was 38,842 square feet or nearly one acre. It is said to have accommodated about 87,000 persons, and the sports in which the Romans revelled were those in which the sacrifice of human life and brutality were the most remarkable features.

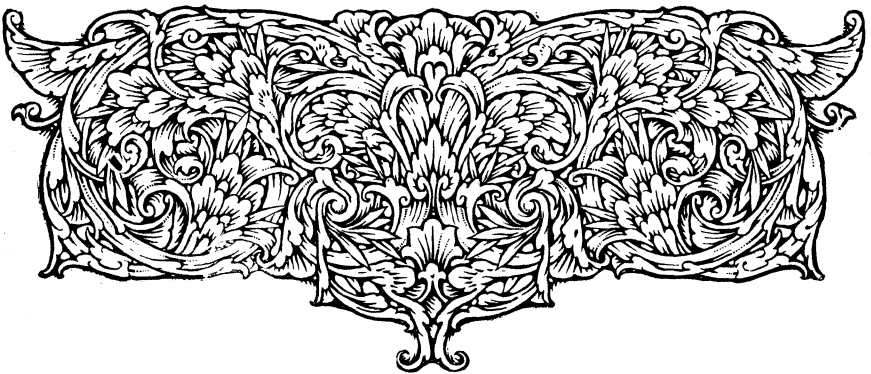
The centre court stand at Wimbledon, being a dodecagon also, is almost an ellipse.

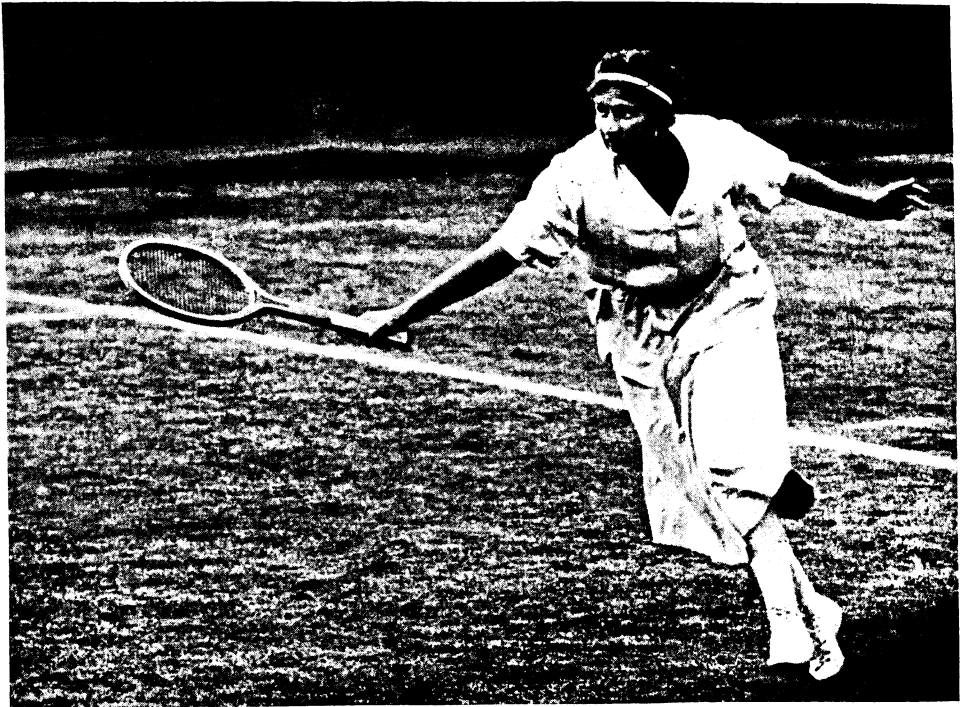
It is rather larger than the arena of the Coliseum, and seats about 10,000 persons, and the friendly rivalry between nations who will assemble and take part in the keen contests in its arena, thereby promoting the good-will and fellowship of the world, is in the strongest possible contrast to the chariot races, the gladiatorial contests, and the martyrdom which were the sports of the Coliseum.

The great difference between the architecture of the past and the present is also shown by the quantity of ground occupied by the proportion of the total area covered by the supports of the building.

The Coliseum was erected without the slightest regard to economy, except so far as it was limited by the number of prisoners of war and slaves who were available, and was a massive building, the supports occupying one-sixth of its total area, whereas the centre court stand at Wimbledon, erected with modern skill and the greatest regard to economy, is a very light building and the supports occupy a hardly appreciable proportion of the site.

An idea of the size of the centre court stand can be gathered from the fact that the Albert Hall, seating 10,000 persons, would easily stand within the enclosing walls of the stand, and leave a considerable space to spare all round.





*Photo by]*

MISS RYAN: A FOREHAND STROKE.

*[Topical.*

# MY EVOLUTION AS A LAWN TENNIS PLAYER

By ELIZABETH RYAN

I HAVE often been asked what made me take up lawn tennis. The answer is that I did not take it up; it took me up.

It is so long since I started with a racquet that I can hardly remember; but my mother, whose memory is much better than mine, tells me that my sister Alice and I somehow got hold of two tiny racquets when we were very small children, and began to play on the pavement with them.

In Santa Monica, California, where we lived, the pavements are marked out in large squares, so our court was ready on a miniature scale, except for a net. I do not believe in those days we could get the ball very high, as we found four or

five dead palm branches made us a very useful one.

When we had finished our early morning play, and had gone into breakfast, our net was kicked into the gutter by the first passers-by, and had to be re-erected by us every time we wanted to play.

This was, of course, only a baby's court, and seemed so to us after a time, so one day we had a most brilliant idea. We had heard from some of the English colonists that in England people played on grass courts. There was a nice piece of green lawn between our two small houses, and this was the very thing we wanted, and, being private ground, our net would be secure from trespassers. Off we ran to the nearest shop to

buy some white tape and long nails, and worked like beavers for two whole days making our court, assisted by some small friends who had hopes of being allowed to join in the game.

This patch of grass became our training ground, until it was no longer grass, but a patch of dust.

After a while we were allowed to play on the tennis courts at the Casino, in what I may call the "dead season," such as meal-times, early dawn, and dusky eve. All the courts in Southern California at that time were made of cement, and were therefore very expensive, so the club considered itself lucky in having three. These courts are now historic as having been the scene of May Sutton's first triumph, when, at the age of thirteen, she beat her three sisters one by one (they being considered much the best tennis players in the country), and won the championship of Southern California, thus proving the local saying which held true for many years: "It takes a Sutton to beat a Sutton."

I remember being taken to see her play when I was a very small child. She always had a style of her own in the way of clothes, but on this occasion she contented herself with a "pinafore," an English garment unknown in our parts.

Immediately on seeing her I was fired with ambition to be such another as she was, and for at least a week I and my small friends worked like dogs trying to copy her strokes. I wish our enthusiasm had not cooled off so quickly, but there were so many other things that had to be done, such as robbing other people's orange groves and loquoting trees, ringing doorbells and running away—especially running away—shadowing honeymoon couples on the beach and dazzling them with sun-glasses, and other absolutely necessary business. All these



Photo by]

MISS RYAN: A BACKHAND STROKE.

[Topical.

distractions rather interfered with my acquiring May Sutton's forehand drive, which I would now give anything to possess.

No child ever had less chance of learning a game than I had as far as practice or teaching went, which is a pity, as I had all the keenness and energy in the world. We used to get up before six in the morning, to play before we went to school, and not many children do that now. If it had not been for the kind interest taken in us children by an Englishwoman, Miss Mary Carter (sister of the famous Professor Carter of Winchester), I do not believe I should ever have been a tennis player. She insisted on having a handicap event (unheard of until then), so that the children might have a chance of playing against the "grown-ups." It was my first tournament, and I was about eleven years old at the time.

One desperate struggle has fixed itself in my memory, in which I was pitted against a terribly steady "retriever dog" of an

Englishwoman, Mrs. Seymour by name. Heaven knows what she was not giving me in the way of points, but she only won 8—6 in the final set. Her husband was perfectly delighted with me for giving his wife such a fright, and picked me up in his arms and carried me off to the club-house, where you can imagine I put down a few lemon squashes at his expense.

If anyone were to ask me what my greatest ambition was in those days, I should answer at once: "To beat Alice." One reason was that I wanted to beat Alice *as Alice*—there being always a deadly rivalry between us—and, secondly, that I wanted to win the family box of balls put up by my uncle every year to be competed for between us. Balls were very precious,

as they cost five dollars a dozen. The sort we always had to use were those that gave an undue advantage to the server, if she had only known it, as she could select one with no cover at all, half off, or "sprouters." This historic match was played four years running, but was never finished. I will tell you why. No one was brave enough to umpire for us. Everyone, knowing well what demons we were, told us to fight our own battles, which we certainly did. Often we started with the best intentions, perhaps a little on the civil side. All went well for a time, each of us being most generous in offering "lets" for anything that seemed doubtful, but suddenly there came a time when my sister and I both felt that it was necessary to take a firm stand. Nothing

would make either of us budge, and we knew the only way to settle the matter was with our fists. This we did, with varying success, after all our four matches, so that box of balls has never been won to this day.

While on the subject, I am quite ready to admit that we behaved like little ruffians, but at the same time I think we displayed a fine fighting spirit, a thing very necessary in lawn tennis or any other game. In our eagerness to win, we learnt to take our knocks without crying, and enjoyed our wins all the more. We had that most estimable quality, keenness—keenness to improve and work ourselves into a frazzle with the worst of implements and under the most unpromising conditions.

One thing I notice is that the young generation will turn out in squadrons to play in tournaments and for prizes, but there is not one of them that I know of who will take a beating in the effort to play the game as it ought to be played. For instance, how often does one see a young player, in the desire to win a match, running round the ball to take it the easiest way, instead of playing a back-hand stroke or a forehand, as the case may be. Now that that famous player Mrs. Larcombe has taken up the teaching of



Photo by] MISS RYAN: ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC STROKE. [Topical.



lawn tennis as a profession, I know things will change very quickly—anyway, in her part of the world—and in another year or two England may produce some budding champions.

I am afraid that the Press, in its anxiety to encourage the youth of the country, perhaps does more to stop their progress than people realise. The experience of my sister and myself in British Columbia, at the ages of fifteen and sixteen, is a very good example of this. Coming from California, where we were a great deal below the Suttons' form, we found ourselves absolutely stars. They wrote about us in all the papers, everyone said what little wonders we were, and, between us, we won every prize in every tournament. This was not the best thing for improving our game, as was quickly pointed out to us, on returning home, by May Sutton, fresh from her great triumph in winning the championship at Wimbledon against Mrs. Lambert Chambers. For the good sitting upon we got on that occasion I shall be for ever grateful. It helped to kindle the fire of my ambition.

After this May Sutton showed a very kindly interest in me, and took me as her partner in all the ladies' doubles. Which reminds me of something rather amusing. I carried my admiration for Miss Sutton so far that I thought I must be dressed exactly as she was, and, our figures being very much alike—both short and fat—our opponents, in the excitement of the game, never knew whether they were playing her or me. Partly to this fact I put down our unbroken success: we never lost a match.

Enough of California and the Far West, with its perfect climate and perfect partner.

It was about this time, when I was twenty years of age, that we thought it was time to see a little of Europe. We came to England, and shortly met Mrs. Hilliard, who was very kind, and put us up to the ropes as to tournaments, etc. Alice and I played in several (1912), but did very little good. Unfortunately, it was a very wet summer, and this, of course, to us, spelt disaster, as we only understood playing on cement courts or the burnt grass courts of British Columbia.

It was terribly disheartening to be beaten time after time by second-class players, but not really astonishing, as we had not the faintest idea how to take a low ball. As a friend of mine said to me the other day, I was the wildest thing that had ever been seen. She said it used to make her roar

with laughter to see me trying the most impossible shots, hitting every ball, high or low, as hard as I had the strength.

However, in my hour of need and depression—for I was just giving up all hope of ever being able to play—I was taken in hand by that splendid English player Miss Morton, who gave me some very badly-wanted advice and encouragement.

Now that I look back on it all, I realise that I had some very good strokes, but that I was heavy as lead on the court, and missed shot after shot because I did not get there in time, or, if I did, I was too blown to hit the ball correctly or with the necessary amount of "kick." Consequently, my double game was up to 1914 infinitely better than my singles. For the latter game, in my opinion, it is absolutely necessary to train if one wants to play in first-class lawn tennis. Some people, of course, find that playing regularly gets them fit without any extra hard work, as long as they go to bed fairly early. Others, like myself, require much more than this.

Until last year (1921) I never did any serious training, but, having done it once, I found what an enormous difference it made to me. I could get about the court and "stay" ever so much better than I could before. Wimbledon last year was, as far as temperature went, the most trying that has ever been known. The heat on the centre court was so intense that many of the onlookers fainted. Added to that, I had an exceptionally difficult draw, having to play Miss Kemmis-Betty, Miss K. McKane, Mrs. Mallory, Mrs. Beamish, Mrs. Peacocke, and Mrs. Satterthwaite before I reached the challenge round. Five of these matches were played on the centre court, a very nerve-racking experience, with the glare of the sun, the terrific heat, and the crowd. I put it down entirely to the three months' hard training I had gone through beforehand that I was successful in all these five matches, more especially in that against Mrs. Mallory, who took the first set off me 6-0 and led 1 love, and 40 love in the second.

There has lately been a great deal of discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of champions playing through at Wimbledon instead of only in the challenge round. Without any doubt, under last year's conditions, it was a tremendous advantage for them to stand out, as *they only* have the privilege of playing as much or as little as they please on the centre



court in the mornings. The challenger, whether man or woman, was bound to be tired out at the end of the fortnight, especially if he or she played in any other events. On the other hand, I can remember an occasion at Wimbledon when A. F. Wilding stood out and watched Norman Brookes

tuned up, and it was very unlucky, though not surprising, that he did not strike his best game on the great day of the challenge round. No one has ever seen him put up such soft lobs when not even in a difficult situation. He seemed quite incapable of producing his old game. Of course there is another explanation of the match. Some people said that Wilding was always nervous when playing against Brookes.

I have thought a good deal on the subject of the champions standing out or not, and I have come to the conclusion that there is no reason why a champion of the previous year should start with either an advantage or a disadvantage, so *surely* the fairest way is for everyone to start equal and play through.

To return to the subject of training as far as I am concerned, I do not bother to train seriously, except for about two months before Wimbledon; but for those two months I go in for pretty hard work in the way of muscular exercises (especially of the legs and back), skipping, and breathing exercises. These latter, I found, did me no end of good in improving my wind, especially during last summer's hot weather. One specially useful one was told me by a doctor who was staying at my hotel in Cannes. Here it is: take a medium-sized bath towel, wind it loosely round your lower ribs, get someone to twist the ends at the back *without tightening the towel*. Now take a long breath, as long and deep as you possibly can, then empty the lungs and stomach of all the breath you have drawn in.

Next the towel must be quickly tightened by twisting the ends round and round. It must be kept taut all the time, while you fill your lungs by taking long, slow breaths. Do this at first about eight or nine times, and increase gradually day by day until you can take twenty breaths with the greatest ease. You can actually feel your lungs expanding much more than in ordinary breathing, the object of the

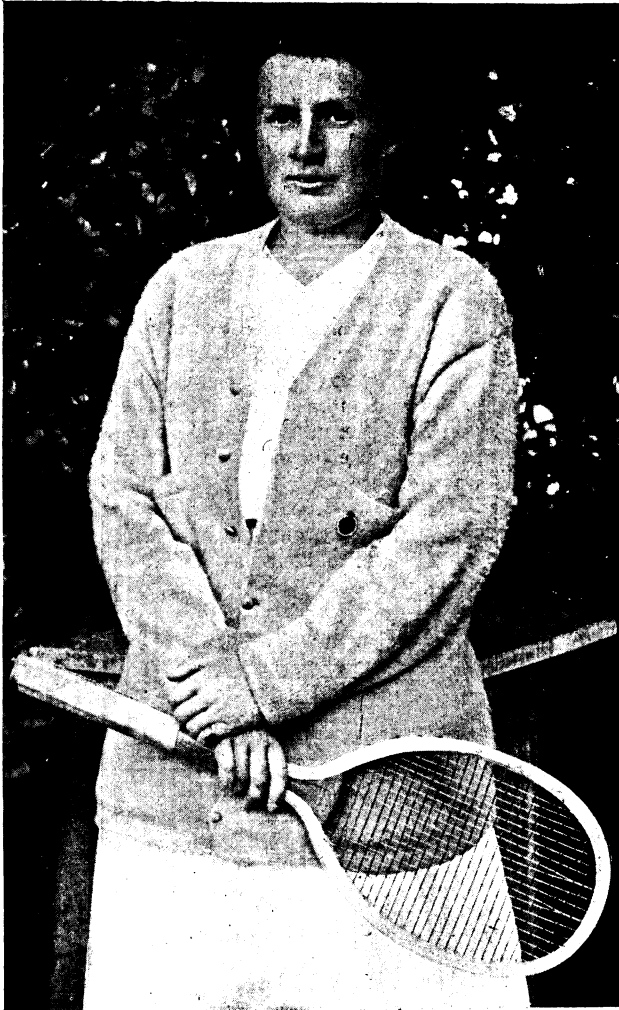


Photo by]

ELIZABETH RYAN.

[Lavis, Eastbourne.

work his way into the challenge round. The latter had some splendid practice on his way through against very strong opponents, and was more fit and confident than when he started by the time he had to meet Wilding. As it happened, he was not over-tired either from the excessive heat or from having had too many severe matches. Wilding, on the contrary, was not properly

tightened towel being to confine the breath to the lungs.

If any of my readers would like to find an improvement in their general condition, let them try some leg exercises before breakfast every morning, lying flat on their backs on the floor and going through some of the contortions recommended by Dr. Muller. Try it for twenty minutes every morning. If you are playing tennis pretty regularly, your arm muscles will take care of themselves. Were I asked to pick out the two fittest players I saw during the season of 1921, one man and one woman, I should without hesitation name Zenzo Shimidzu as the man. To pick out the woman is more difficult. Anyone would have said, from their looks, that Mdle. Suzanne Lenglen, Mrs. Peacocke, and Mrs. Mallory were all in the pink of condition. The first-named has always gone in for severe training, and is abnormally quick about the court; but how she would last, or "stay," in horsey language, in a long, close match, I have had no opportunity of judging, as I have never seen her extended. On the other hand, I have seen Mrs. Peacocke, not at all a strongly-built woman, come off the court, after a punishing match, looking none the worse for her experience. The same can be said of Mrs. Mallory, who has the additional advantage of being very strongly made.

She who has had the most perfect training

in the game itself is undoubtedly Mdle. Lenglen. No other woman has ever had her opportunities, as her father has trained her, from the time she was a very tiny child, in the most scientific manner, making her practise every stroke in tennis until she could play it to perfection and with great ease, and at the same time never allowing her to overtire herself or get stale.

One very important point which I should like to emphasise is the training of one's mind to keep off dwelling on future matches. This thinking too much has the same effect on the mind as over-training has on the body, and is to be avoided at all costs. Go to bed early when you are playing seriously, say, ten-thirty, but do not go at nine because you have some specially hard or exciting match to look forward to on the next day. You will only lie awake and worry yourself into a fever. Much better stay downstairs and lose the grand slam in "No trumps," doubled.

The tendency of modern times is toward speed and more speed, from the aeroplane and the automobile to polo and lawn tennis, so my advice to you is to keep fit and keep up the pace.

I have tried to tell how I was promoted from pavement tennis to the challenge round on the centre court at Wimbledon. Not having lost my fighting spirit, I may add that there is still someone I am working hard to beat, and her name is not *Alice*.

## TRAMPING.

**O**UT from the tyrant town we trod  
To where the fields of freedom lay,  
We saw dawn's lantern rouse the day,  
And heard the lark remember God.

Dawn passed us bravely garlanded,  
Not ragged as she comes to town.  
The kingcups proffered her a crown,  
A linnet praised her queenly head.

And now the bird of evening fills  
This waiting world and heart of mine,  
And night's soft raiment flows like wine,  
In purple glory down the hills.

PERCY HASELDEN.



“The one I love, the dearest one, that’s Ives-Marie. He’s the little apprentice boy.”

# THE SHIP IN THE BOTTLE

By JAMES HOPPER

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND BLAMPIED

**E**ARLY in the afternoon a sudden cold fog from the sea had driven the motherless little girl from the garden where she had been playing all alone. Going into the house, she had found her father in the attic of the old adobe, and they had been rummaging companionably together for the better part of an hour, he with heart a bit dolorous, she twittering gaily, among dust-heavy coffers and pieces of old furniture, when she found the little ship in the bottle.

The bottle was an ordinary bottle, of green glass, of narrow mouth, corked and sealed, and within it, miraculously, rode the little ship, with its tall fine spars, its cabin, capstan, shrouds and tiny pulleys, complete in every detail to the belaying-pins, its top sails bellying to some mysterious imprisoned breeze, while the other sails were furled. “Oh, Daddie,” she cried, “look at the little

ship! Look at the little ship in the bottle! It has sails, it has masts, it has everything! Oh, Daddie, wherever did you get the little ship in the bottle?”

He took the object from her and examined it as she stood poised, eager and a little fearful—fearful that this new, enchanting, and already heart-tugging possession might be taken from her. He peered within the green glass, and could not remember. He knew that sailors, whiling away the hours of long traverses, wrought such toys—carved tall little ships which in some way they managed to introduce within such glass containers, through mouths seemingly ever too narrow to let them enter, or ever let them out—but he could not recall at first how this one had come among the discarded things in the attic. Then a ray pierced the fog of his mind and lit up space of the past. “I remember, Beauty,” he cried, “I remember! It was

given me long, long ago, when I was a boy, when I was just a boy, Beauty!"

"Oh, Dad," she begged, standing on tip-toe, "tell me, tell me!"

"I had a boat all my own that summer," he said, "and all summer I had been sailing the bays and the roads."

As he said these words, he could see himself clearly as he had been when a boy—the supple muscle, the bronzed smooth face, the shining hair—and a sort of desolate regret pinched his heart.

"There was a ship anchored out near the mouth of the bay by which I often went, Beauty. It was a jolly ship; the crew all wore tam-o'-shanters. They'd lean over the side as I'd slide by, and smile at me, from captain to carpenter. But I liked especially the little apprentice boy. He wore a red sash around his waist. When I passed, he took off his cap and waved it, and made me feel I was going—oh, ever so fast and splendidly!"

"It was that little apprentice boy who gave you the bottle?" the child hazarded.

"No, Beauty. It happened this way. One morning I put off in my boat, meaning to board the jolly ship—the *Notre Dame de Nantes*, that was its name. I had never boarded it—merely had slid along its sides as the crew nodded and the apprentice waved his tam. But this day I had a jar of good tobacco, and I was going to climb on deck and give it to the jolly crew.

"But I never did, Beauty. It was a strange day, with great wads of fog floating about the bay. I lost my bearings, and when I came to the spot where I thought the *Notre Dame de Nantes* was anchored, I sailed across and across the place where she should have been, and could not find her. Then a current seized me and took me up against a black ship—a great big brute of a black ship I had never noticed before—and I went up her sides to see if I could get my directions.

"There was only one man on deck, Beauty—on the whole deck just one man. I remember him well: he was all crooked—a crooked nose, crooked teeth, and a crooked smile. And there was something nasty in the way he answered my simple question about the *Notre Dame de Nantes*. 'The *Notre Dame de Nantes*?' he smiled. 'She's not anchored anywhere about here; she's not anchored at all. The *Notre Dame de Nantes*—you'll never see the *Notre Dame de Nantes*!'

"I remember I was nettled at the way he

spoke, and turned toward the head of the ladder. 'I'm sorry she has sailed away,' I said. 'There were nice people on her—courteous people, who answered courteous questions courteously.'

"But he laughed and called me back. 'To show you we also are polite on this boat,' he said, 'I am going to make you a present.'

"He vanished down the companion-way and was up again in a second, Beauty. He smiled his crooked smile up at me and dangled this bottle before me till my hand reached for it. In spite of the gift, I was in a hurry to go, for somehow I couldn't like him, what with his crooked smile. So I was on shore before I looked over my new possession carefully. Then it was I saw that the little ship in the bottle was a miniature of the *Notre Dame de Nantes*. You see, Beauty, the black craft and the *Notre Dame* must have been lying near each other in the roads, though I had never noticed the black one. And it was a small *Notre Dame de Nantes* which that sailor of the crooked smile had whittled out for his bottle."

"Even the name, Daddie," the little girl murmured, as she peered through the bottle's green glass. "See there, Daddie, on the stern, in tiny gold letters—*Notre Dame de Nantes*. And then what happened, Daddie?"

"And then—and then— Oh, yes, Beauty, great trouble. That very night I found trouble at home, great trouble—my father dead. Then afterward came the rush to the goldfields. So that I never saw the *Notre Dame de Nantes* again, Beauty, nor the black ship, nor this little model in the bottle. In that box it must have been ever since my mother put it away, probably soon after I had left home on the gold venture; in that box it must have been all these years!"

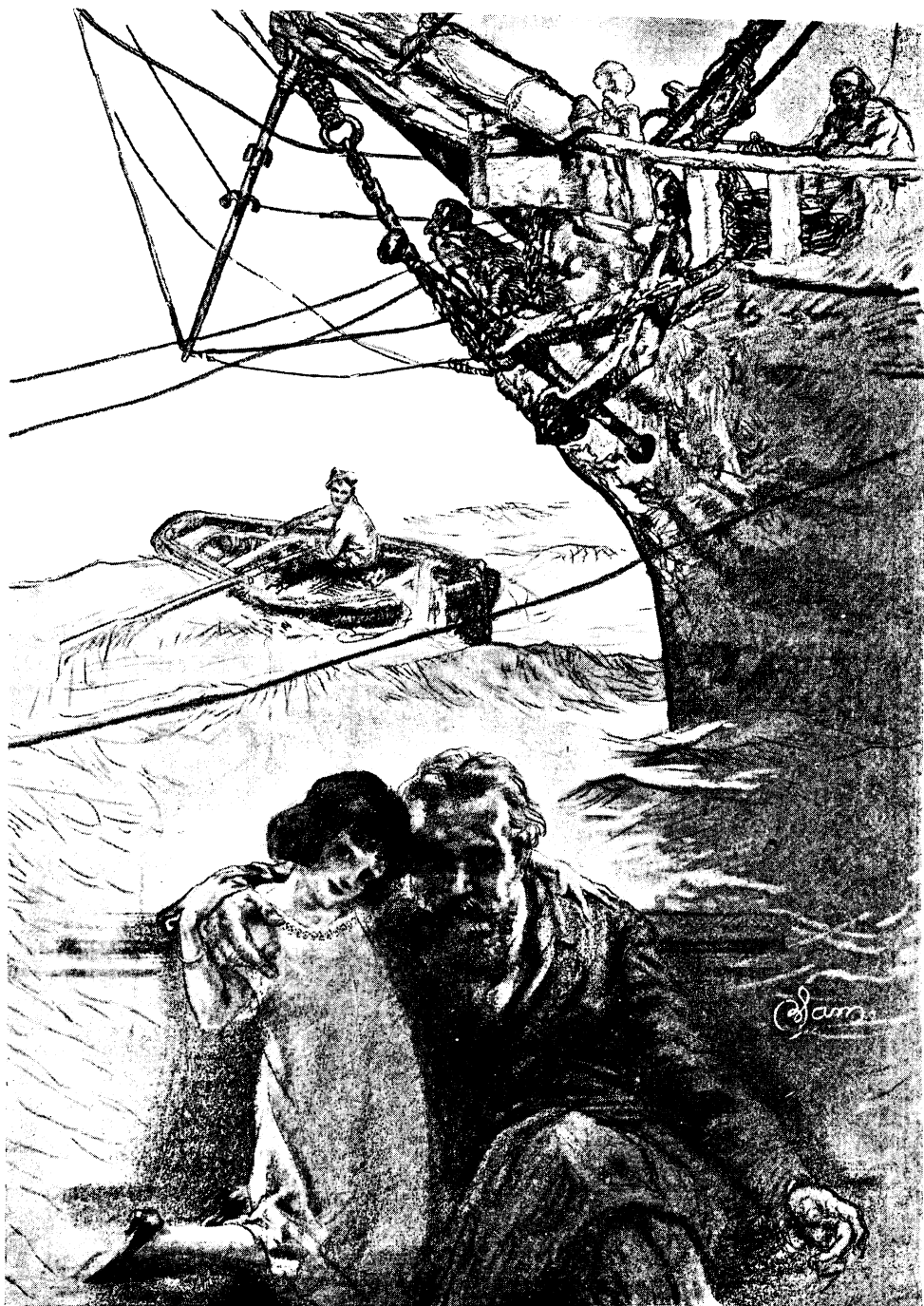
"Oh," the little girl cried, "how lonely! How lonely and dark they must have felt!"

"Why, who, Beauty?"

"The crew—the captain, and the crew, and the carpenter, and the little apprentice boy, Daddie."

The father paused, and then, not knowing just what might be in the small mind, thought it well to explain. "But they're not in the boat, Beauty. You understand that, don't you, Beauty? The sailor with the crooked smile—he carved only the ship and the things on it—the small boats, the capstan, the dead things on it. But he did not make any people. Look carefully. See, there are no people."

"They're down in the cabin, having



“He could see himself clearly as he had been when a boy . . . and a sort of desolate regret pinched his heart.”

dinner," the little girl said, with a shining smile. "And, oh, Daddie, give me the little ship, give me the little ship to be all my own!"

An obscure reluctance was in his heart, but he could find no reason for it. And so, finding no reason, he gave her the little ship in the bottle.

Days followed which found him immersed once more in the sombre abstraction of his bereavement; the existence of the child grew far and dim. Then the insistence of her prattling began to pierce the mournful haze about him and stirred his tenderness.

It was of the little ship that she spoke so constantly.

"Kersedore was very angry last night. He roared and roared with his big voice. He had all the crew on deck in the dark; he made them furl the sails five times——"

"But who is Kersedore, Beauty?"

"Don't you *know*, Dad? Why, he is the captain, of course—captain of the *Notre Dame de Nantes*, Captain Kersedore, with the big whiskers and the big voice. You should have seen the crew, Daddie, scampering about, pretending they were afraid, and winking at each other all the time, knowing he would never hurt them. And Michel played to slip and fall, as if out of his big hurry, and then went about limping. He would limp when the captain was looking, and laugh when the captain wasn't."

"Who is Michel?"

"He's the carpenter. Don't you remember? He has the freckled face, and when he smiles his mouth opens from ear to ear. He tells me stories, Daddie, beautiful stories. One is of a city that sank long ago, and is now deep beneath the sea. Once a year, when the moon is bright, it rises slowly to the top, all its bells ringing and all the people in their finest clothes walking about. They stroll about all night in the moonlight, all the bells ringing; then at dawn the city sinks back slowly through the clear waters, and the bells sound fainter and fainter till finally they cease, and the beautiful city sits once more at the bottom of the sea.

"But, Dad, the one I love, the dearest one, that's Ives-Marie. He's the little apprentice boy. He wears a red sash and a blue tam-o'-shanter. But he never speaks, but just looks at me, so gently and sadly—just looks and looks, as though after a while maybe I'll understand what he means and can't say. Oh, Daddie, he's so cute and gentle and so sad!"

The father little by little grew disturbed.

She seemed so feverishly absorbed in her new toy; her little mind turned and turned about it so restlessly that he grew a little afraid. "Beauty," he said, "I don't want you to play so much with the ship in the bottle. I want you to run and romp. If you play too much with the little ship, I shall have to take it away from you!"

She smiled up at him. "Oh, Daddie, please don't take it away! I'll be good, you just see. I'll play with it only a little bit of a while every day."

But he now awakened every morning with a sense of having been dimly stirred in his sleep. His room opened on the patio of the old adobe, and the child's also opened on this court, with its murmuring fountain. One night he found himself sitting up, wide awake. A great golden band of light passed athwart his bed, and, looking across the patio, along the path of this light, to Beauty's chamber, he saw its casement brilliantly aglow.

Startled, his heart a-pound, he rose and, a little dizzy with sleep and with the cold of the night, went across to her. But halfway he stopped, reassured. He could hear her speaking in her sweet, swift way, and in her voice there was no plaint and no pain. Then, as he listened, a new fear gradually took the place of that which had been quieted. She was babbling so fast, so fast, so feverishly and so earnestly. And not as if in sleep, or to herself; it was as if she were speaking to people, to several in turn. She was as one conversing with fairies thus in the middle of the night.

Striding forward, he pushed open the door and entered to an abrupt ceasing of her birdlike twittering. For a moment his heart hurt him at the sight of her innocent dismay. In her white nightgown, her hair loose about her head, she turned upon him wide, dilated eyes, and her hands, in an unconscious gesture, pressed against her palpitant small heart. But he had seen her throw, with a quick movement as he came in, a scarf across an object over which she had been bending, and he stiffened himself to severity. "Beauty, Beauty, what in the world are you doing, up thus in the middle of the night?"

Her attitude of fear relaxed to one of sweet trust, and she smiled the little smile reserved especially for him. Her hand snatched away the scarf. "I've been playing with my little ship, Dad," she said confidently.

She was now peering through the glass

into the bottle. "Oh," she cried with mock annoyance, "what a rough, noisy father I have! You've scared them all down below, Daddie! And they were all up on deck, and I was having such a good time with them—Captain Kersedore, and Michel, and the crew, and Ives-Marie. They won't come up again to-night. You have frightened them, Daddie."

"Beauty," he said, "I am going to take the little ship away from you."

A premonition of disaster, of one of those sudden and indefeasible disasters which fall upon children from the capricious and stubborn gods with which they must live, trembled through her small being. "Oh, Daddie, please don't take it away from me!"

"I must take it, Beauty. In the daytime I'll let you have it sometimes——"

She was begging so prettily, with an attitude of supplication so eloquent, it was hard to go on. But he braced himself. "You can have it sometimes in the daytime. At night, though, it must be in my room—in my room every night."

She stopped begging abruptly, and it was with a profound gaze from a still little body that she watched him take up her treasure and with it depart—a look that haunted him as he crossed the court and in relentment almost sent him back. He gained his bed and laid the bottle on the table by his pillow. After a moment the light, which still had been flowing across the court, went out. "She'll forget," he said to himself uncomfortably. "Children forget easily; she'll forget."

The following night, asleep with the little ship on the table close by his head, he dreamed.

He dreamed that he had been awakened by a sound of clanging capstan and running chains, of tugged ropes, shouts and bellyings of sails, and that, sitting up on his elbow, looking through the glass of the bottle, he saw the little ship, all sails set, butting and butting to get out.

It was a recurrent dream: the next night he dreamed it again. Propped on his elbow, he was looking within the bottle, and the little ship, all sails set, was butting and butting to get out, recoiling each time from the collision with the bottle's narrow neck only to charge once more in a stubborn effort to escape.

But the third night the dream changed. He heard in his sleep the tumult of the little ship's endeavour. He dreamed that

he woke then and, leaning over, looked into the bottle. But this time, under his eyes, the little ship was no longer striving. Listed to port, sails hanging and aback, small rudder loose, it seemed to have given up; and from it there came to him, somehow, mute speech, a silent passion of supplication which drew down his head and his eyes closer to a more careful scrutiny. And, peering close thus, through the green glass, he saw the apprentice boy, Ives-Marie. The little fellow was kneeling on the hard deck, and his clasped hands and his pale face were raised to the observer, and he was begging, begging from his very heart and entrails.

The pity which now stirred the dreamer as he slept had such a twisting force that it awakened him. He found himself awake, lying on his back, his eyes shut. But in a moment, even with his eyes shut, he knew that he was not in darkness, light was beating against his lids. A sense of a presence completed his alarm; someone was in the room, someone was there, close to him. With an effort he opened his eyes. "Beauty!" he cried, astonished.

The child was standing by the bed. Holding a light above her head, she was looking attentively into the bottle. "Sh-sh-sh!" she hissed gently, and remained peering, her face attentive, tender, and grave.

He would have scolded, had he not been altogether held by the sweet seriousness of her abstraction. Then, before he could seize hold of himself, "Go to sleep, Daddie, go to sleep!" she had said softly, as a mother speaks to her child. "Sh-sh-sh! There, go back to sleep!" and was gone. For a moment her light filtered into the room, became fainter, went out, and the house was once more silent and dark, as he lay wondering if really he had seen, if really he had heard.

But next day she came to him eager with secret enterprise. "Daddie, please walk down to the sea with me. It's a long time since you have walked with me. Please drop your work and walk with me this afternoon!"

So they went out hand in hand across the moors towards the sea. She walked fast, her little skirts billowing to a following wind, and they had reached the cliffs above the sea before he noticed that, under her cape, she had been carrying the little ship in the bottle.

"I'm going to let them go," she answered to his glance. "Oh, Daddie, they are not happy in the bottle! They are not happy; they yearn and grieve. They want to sail

out freely into the wide sea. They beg to get out, they beg me so. Little Ives-Marie kneels to me and begs and begs. Oh, Daddie, I must let them go!"

The fear which already had touched him several times laid again on the father's heart its cold hand. But as he stood pondering upon the mystery of the child's play-life, and on the strange communication which had come between them, wondering whether it was his dream which had gone to her, or her dream which had dwelled within him in the night, she, darting to the edge of the cliff and peering below, was already at her plan. "Look, Daddie, look! Here it is too deep."

His hand seized by hers, looking down at her command, he saw at the foot of the cliff a deep blue pool. It rose slowly to the sigh of the sea, then fell as slowly, and far in its depths, across a green and bubbly duskiness, long weeds waved their arms indistinctly. "See!" she said. "There it is too deep. The ship would be still in the bottle. Oh, how terrible, Daddie, to be upon the sea and still in prison in the bottle!"

"Come, Daddie. Quick! We must hurry; the fog is coming in."

The fog stood out at sea like a wall solid and motionless; but they, familiar with the land, knew that, immobile as it looked, it was rushing toward the coast in a silent muffled charge. Even as she spoke, a faint advance vapour slid over the pool, dimming it. "Come quick, Daddie; let's find another place before the fog comes in!"

She darted to another edge of the cliff, looked down, was off again. Finally she stopped, and when, having reached her, he bent his head down by her curls, he found her content. "This is a good place, Daddie; this is just the place."

Below, as he looked, the sea, drawing in its breath, left to view a red rock, a rock the colour of red brocade, then swirled over it again in a lacy emerald chaos. "See, this is just right!" her small voice called in the tumult.

She rose upright, the bottle pressed against her breast, torn by a last hesitation, then, with a strange, brilliant smile, tossed it out over the cliff.

Looking downward, the father saw that she had timed her moment perfectly. As the bottle fell whirling, the sea uncovered the red rock. Then, just as the bottle, striking, flew into many shivers, the sea, returning, seized and raised the freed little ship and tossed it high on a wide, smooth

surge. The little girl uttered a cry; the father, stirred almost as she, answered it.

The little *Notre Dame de Nantes* gallantly, all sails set, on a slant with the wind, was making for the open. At times, in the swirl of the retreating sea, it slid vertiginously toward its free goal; then again, backed up, it roared with high spirit almost amid the rattling pebbles at the foot of the cliffs; and the cliffs, to its smallness, looked like stupendous cliffs of the moon, and the waves like catastrophic tidal waves. The two, now stretched face down above, looked on breathless. "It's gaining, it's gaining!" the little girl cried. With a vast, silent swoop, the fog now pounced down upon them and enveloped them hermetically.

The father, straining his eyes in the white smother, could see nothing. But to the child—so it seemed as he watched her—glimpses were being given still. She pressed her little heart, she breathed fast. "How piercing her eyes!" he thought. "How piercing are children's eyes!"

Her hands stretched before her as though between them she were guiding the small ship. Then slowly they parted in an encompassing wider and wider. And when they were as wide could be, turning to her father, she flung them about his neck and buried her face upon his breast, and in a whisper of ecstatic marvelling whispered: "Oh, Daddie, Daddie!"

But as they were crossing a flowery field, on their way back, she threw herself down, and there, amid the cowslips and the blue-eyed grass, wept long, as if her heart were breaking. And the next day, thinking over all this, moved with self-reproach at having left her so much alone, the father decided to take her on a diverting trip to the big cities of men.

On their return, which was not long after—for the heart of both, of the saddened grown man and the child, tugged for the home by the sea—they found Maria, the housekeeper, in a fever of news to tell. While they were gone, a ship had come in to the small port three miles to the north, which for so many years had been empty of all craft.

"Oh, señorita mia, and you too, señor, you have returned just too late, or you would have seen yourself the wonderful happenings. It was a strange vessel, everyone agreed, and a strange crew that spoke neither English nor Spanish, so that they might as well have been deaf and dumb in this land. And they must have been through



some great evil in their voyaging, for the first thing they did was to go to the Padre to be shrived. And what the Padre heard from them must have been indeed evil, for the next day they walked in file and bare-footed the whole five miles to the Mission San Juan, and there once more were shrived, to incense smoke and organ music. And then, señorita—if you had been here this morning, you would have seen—they came here.

“I did not know anything about them at the time—nothing about the coming of the ship nor the shriving. And here was the patio full of these strange men, some of them with rings in their ears, standing smiling and smiling, turning their heads this way and that, and I so astonished it was some moments before I started to send them on about their business. But when I did, they did not move nor answer—merely stood smiling and smiling. Then one, bolder, went to the door of the señorita’s room, which was open to the sun, curtains flying, and before I could stop them, they were all there, standing at the door, peering in in turn, and nodding and smiling, letting their eyes travel over every blessed thing in the señorita’s room, then looking at each other, nodding and smiling.

“Never people that seemed so much at home! And even when I had them begone at last, walking away down the road, one came running back. It was the youngest, a mere *muchacho*. And guess what he wanted! To leave a little flower he had plucked. I have it here, señorita, all pressed for you.”

The little girl had been listening with her hands against her heart. She took her small dried flower as it fluttered like a butterfly from the big book, then turned to her father. “Oh, Daddie, come with me to the cliffs, come quickly with me to the cliffs!”

“Beauty!” he chided. “After such a trip! You are tired!”

“Father, please come with me! Please!”

There was in her voice such a pang of desire that he obeyed. Side by side they were soon speeding over the moor. She walked fast, fast, head down, breasting the breeze; he saw that she was making north for the headland of the Wolves, which curved about the small port three miles away. With the breeze, the fog was coming from the sea; dewy pearls formed upon the pale gold of her hair.

The fog, when they had reached the headland and stood poised on its extremity, was like a white night. The father could see nothing of the sea, which he knew stretched ahead, which he knew beat beneath his feet. He watched his small daughter, who, by his side, very still, seemed tensed to some strange vigil. Suddenly, so near as to startle, a desolate blare sounded in the mist. The sound of a bell followed, and a spar creaked. An invisible craft was passing there, close by, in the mist.

The little girl inclined her head. Her eyes, without straining, but rather dreamily, searched the fog. He watched her in strange excitement. “What does she see, what does she see?” he thought. “How piercing are children’s eyes!”

Again the horn sadly sounded, and the unseen bell tolled, this time nearer still. A ship was passing in the white smother, passing fast. A third time the horn sounded, and the bell. And as if she now saw, as if most clearly she saw in this fluid density so impenetrable to his eyes, the child stretched full height, smiling a sweet wild smile, and waved her hand.

The horn sounded once more, this time far, and the vibrance of the bell came once more faintly.

And this was the last time. They stood a moment side by side, immobile in the muffled silence. She turned to him in the way of one owing an explanation. “It was Ives-Marie,” she said simply.

“Beauty!” he chided.

But she seemed not to understand him. “He was waving his hand. I knew he would be there to bid me good-bye. He is coming back to me, Daddie—coming back to me when he is a big ship-captain.”

The father, feeling the realities slipping away from him, and eager to question, yet felt himself held back by something within him—by an invincible scruple, by something like an awe. “A child’s play-life is sacred,” he thought. “It is white and sacred. And the old, such as I, the soiled and ugly and hardened, must enter only on tip-toe, or far rather not enter at all, but stand on the threshold, yearning but afraid.”

And so he asked nothing, and after a little while the two, hand in hand, walked back across the downs toward the light of home.



## LOVE'S ECONOMY

**O**H, still in love more lavish be,  
And preach no crude economy.  
Seek not, in terms of more and less,  
Love's inspiration to assess,  
Nor by statistics to appraise  
The soul's incalculable ways.  
Fear not to spend and to be spent,  
In this is Love most excellent:  
He, the profound arithmetician,  
Here is revealed a true magician,  
For squander as you will his store,  
Subtraction adds but to the score.  
Then let your heart's devotion be  
Dispensed with prodigality;  
Look—oh, look not with eyes askance  
Upon the heart's extravagance;  
Let no clean cuts, no cruel axe  
Touch this fair tree, all false attacks  
Against Love's treasury resist:  
He is the true economist.

E. VINE HALL.

# OLD INSTINCTS, NEW DESIRES

By CHARLES INGE

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

JOHN RAY finished the collect for the day and closed the book, putting it to the edge of the breakfast things. In his own halting words of simple prayer he asked a blessing on his small house, and then, with final earnestness, gave thanks for Gaspard, so miraculously sent, and begged continued guidance for him in his preaching.

"Amen!"

Miss Jane spoke it out, a clear flute note of absolute faith, as her brother bowed upon his hands over the blue-rimmed crockery. Florence, the small maid, mumbled it at the peacock plush of her chair seat. Gaspard intoned it a little late.

The muslin curtains lisped against the bamboo table of ferns by the open window, while the four figures knelt motionless in the attitude of silent prayer.

Three of them prayed. Gaspard Black grimaced through the varnished chair-back at the varnished panel of the varnished sideboard. Not that he objected to the inferior furniture of the Rays' home—he had known homes without any furniture—but those final words of the morning prayers had come to be almost an accusation.

It was but a momentary disclosure. When he rose, a little later than the others, his face—quite blue at the shaven parts and quite white everywhere else—was decently enwrapped. His talk, like his relish of the kippers and the marmalade, was exactly attuned to the crystal simplicity of the Rays.

A night refuge was the immediate topic—had been for weeks, ever since a chance remark of his had inspired these two everyday saints to provide a shelter for street wanderers. They called it Gaspard's idea, making his discovery of an empty house a sort of miracle.

He needed every ounce of manner to live up to it. For he had a face that shouted a contradiction to his professed righteousness, that, uncontrolled, would have been the face of a vagabond. The short side-whiskers he had grown, as a consolation for his shaved moustache, still further disguised him. Not one of his old associates would have recognised the loafer who a year ago had stopped to gratify a lazy amusement at John Ray's preaching in Hyde Park.

It had been a sort of impatience for the dreadful inefficiency of those uninspired sentences that had sent him up at the end as a professed convert—impatience at the little man himself, with his grotesque black clothes, his grey side-whiskers and his painful earnestness; impatience at the sister sitting on a penny chair, her faded face illumined with steadfast faith. It had been the impatient pity of facility for incompetence—plus the promise of easy food. He knew he could do better. For Gaspard Black's voice had always been a possession.

He had not looked like a convert, which was exactly why the Rays had instantly taken him to their heart and their home. It was a commonplace home—No. 87, Omdurman Road, N.W., an interminable row of little bath-stone bay windows—in which they shone, amid the commonplace furniture, like pale gems in a trumpery setting. To Gaspard it was a haven.

He had preached almost daily since that first week of initiation, and from very repetition of a learned part was beginning to wonder whether something of what he said to the groups of idlers was not true. For Gaspard Black had always had a deadly facility to be what for the moment he purported to be.

He was helping Miss Jane to pile the

breakfast things on the tray. He did this every morning; Miss Jane was reproving him as she did every morning, but this morning she eyed her brother anxiously. He was fiddling with the newspaper, in his accustomed chair by the fire, pretending to read it. It was a poor effort; like pellucid water his simple nature reflected every cloud. Miss Jane had known all through breakfast. At last she challenged him with playful insistence:

"What was your letter, John, that it should bother you so?"

He came to instant quiescence, pulled the letter out of his breast pocket, and cleared his throat. "Gaspard, the agents now say they want fifty pounds premium. Mr. Phillips wants to know if I will pay it."

Gaspard stiffened like a pointer, a cup in each hand, and then turned round. "Quite absurd! They should have said so at first. We could have chosen another house. Quite absurd!"

Miss Jane watched her brother, the bread-platter held against her meagre waist. He wanted further support from Gaspard.

"'Tis rather an additional expense to the other outlay. You agree, Gaspard?"

"Quite absurd!" Gaspard was piling the cups one inside the other deftly. He had had experience as a waiter.

"You understand. I would not grudge it. Only——" The little man's simple face showed the struggle. His charity had embraced the idea with exultation. But thrift had enabled him to retire, at sixty-three, from the Beachstone stationery shop.

Miss Jane got the bread-platter on to the tray clumsily for once, touched Gaspard on the arm—"He is thinking of me"—and faced round upon her brother. "John, I say give this money. Let Gaspard secure this home for the waifs of the night. We have got so near. Give it, John! We shall not be allowed to suffer."

The faded eyes gleamed with a very ecstasy of fervour. For once there was no answering beam from her brother. He could not quite forget his trading instincts. She insisted. She drew Gaspard into the discussion. But for once he hung back with his opinion; when pressed, he repeated his complaint against the agents stubbornly. Miss Jane could not understand, but, quite undaunted, she persisted:

"But, Gaspard, you are not going to let such a little thing dishearten you? Why,

it is only an incident! John hands you the money, and you take it to Mr. Phillips."

At that he definitely opposed it, as if she had suggested something dangerous; and when she twitted him he turned on her brother, practising the mannerisms he had acquired in their company. "Too great a sacrifice is not asked of you, Mr. Ray. I say let us find another house."

Such antagonism killed the discussion. But Miss Jane revived it at their simple evening meal, when John and Gaspard returned from their preaching. Now that Gaspard had been sent to them, she did not always go.

"He never spoke better, Jane," announced Mr. Ray to the top of his egg, which he invariably cut with a knife. A certain dexterity in this was his besetting pride.

His sister began again on the night refuge without comment. It was her method of protest—a severe method for her, painfully achieved. But she would not be deprived of the opportunity for self-sacrifice. She repeated her arguments valiantly. Gaspard tried his best on her.

"No, Miss Jane, these things come not by urging, but by conviction. They should have told us. We must find another house."

He bent his contradictory face upon her, gazing right into the pale, fearless eyes as if he would hypnotise her. This matter of fifty pounds had to be squashed. She met him with a child's directness. Quietly, but quite deliberately, she stripped their hesitation from them, making it appear cowardly; then, when she had them both denying this, she accused her brother of wanting to protect her.

"And can't you see, John, I don't want such protection? It puts me outside. What sort of follower am I, if I can take no risk?"

When she saw him bungling his second egg, she attacked Gaspard afresh. But even her calm faith wilted under his sudden gust of disapproval. She might have been suggesting a crime. At the end he had quite forgotten his assumed manner, as a man will in extremity.

"A house-agent's trick! Why should we be the mugs? The thing's a plant."

"Gaspard!"

It was the first time he had suffered rebuke from them. He had got soft to it; in his name, so pronounced, he heard a whole biography. He recovered instantly. He was still hungry, but hunger he knew and understood. He got up from the table.

"Miss Jane, excuse me. The responsibility presses. I know this payment is not demanded of you. I know. Oh, how can I convince you?" He frowned and passed his hand across his eyes—in reality to hide his confusion. Never before had he been so placed. "I am going out. I need loneliness and the open sky to help me to—inspiration."

In turning to go he knocked into little Florence, who was bringing in the hot rice pudding.

It was a strained silence he left behind him.



"For Gaspard Black had always had a deadly facility to be what for the moment he purported to be."

Little Florence, watching them in the glass of the sideboard, made a grimace, half pity, half anger.

Miss Jane achieved a confession. "Oh, John, I hope I am not proud in good doing, but I feel cheated, John, cheated! He seems to me a little unreasonable, almost obstinate. Oh, dear, I don't want to speak ill of him! But I don't understand."

Out in the spaced glimmer of the streets, Gaspard was striding along as one pursued. He was in spirit. The habits of his past life hounded him. An excruciating itch of temptation sent him up the hill as if he could escape it by walking fast. On the

Heath he halted. Standing stock still, looking away down into the far pit of mist and glow and faint illuminations which was London, he doubled and turned from it like a hunted thing. He denied his weakness, argued his present comfort, ridiculed a return to the old misery of his haphazard life. Yet all the time his fingers were rubbing together softly in his pockets.

Those crisp Treasury notes were like the smell of alcohol to a drunkard trying to reform.

Came to him, as the night air against his face, a sense of injustice. He had made for himself a niche, a refuge by exemplary behaviour; almost he was coming to believe something of what he preached. And now this thing had been thrust under his very nose. Miss Jane, in her simple enthusiasm, was pushing him into temptation.

He set off walking again. Quite uselessly. His fingers set to work again as if he were already feeling those imaginary notes. It was the furtive wiping of the mouth which already tastes the forbidden liquor in anticipation. He took his hands out of his pockets and held them up, the fingers spread

wide to the cold night air. He did not intend it for a simile of surrender.

They were sitting up for him when he got back—John with his spectacles on and a big volume on his knees, Miss Jane working amid a billow of white on the blue-and-red check table-cloth. It was her one vanity to work without glasses. Their faces questioned him. He was ready for them.

They had come to lean on him; secretly they loved him. To both of them this pronounced antagonism had in it something unaccountable. John spoke first.

"Do you think you were a little severe? He feels it an imposition. He has knowledge of life. I am inclined to his way of thinking, too."

"John, you must give this money."

He sat down, an elbow on the table, shaking his head.

"Ah!" John Ray closed his book over the bone book-marker.

Gaspard got regret into his deep voice, but also finality, mostly finality. "Knowledge has been vouchsafed to me. You cannot do this thing. It would be unwarranted expenditure. Waste. I feel it in my heart. We must begin again."

It was desperate masquerading. But he was in dire earnest. He felt himself the sport of a malignant Fate. That funny little figure beside him was threatening to topple him into the mire again out of very generosity.

John Ray removed his spectacles. "That is your considered opinion, Gaspard?"

"My considered—my inspired opinion."

Mr. Ray looked at his sister. She went on working. Gaspard glanced furtively, and then returned to a study of his fingers, which he held spread out on the tablecloth in front of him.

"Well, Jane?"

She looked up at that. "Yes, John, I heard. We can never be sufficiently grateful that Gaspard was sent." Then she was packing her work together with a certain brisk precision.

Gaspard relaxed a little and removed his hands. Looking at last, he got the full unction of her smile—the indulgent smile, it might have been, of a mother for her son.

Her brother got the true explanation of that smile, when he, in his nightshirt, admitted the faded mauve figure of his sister to his bedroom. He had never worn pyjamas nor a dressing-gown, and was obliged to get a coat—she stayed so long.

Neither of them spoke again of the matter to Gaspard. He avoided it. His victory had been too easy. But for the next two days he preached with an understanding that was not counterfeit. By the third day he had recovered that comfortable serenity which life with the Rays had put upon him like a new character. On that morning little Florence pushed into this odd peace of mind, more satisfying now since it had been threatened.

He had the nomad's habit of early rising. He generally went for a smoke before breakfast, though he did not advertise this legacy of the past. She called to him from the dining-room as he reached for his cap from the pegs beyond the stairs.

"Mr. Black!"

The sight of his solemn face in the doorway

set her wiping the palms of her hands on her duster. "Mr. Black, I wants to arsk you. Mr. Black, 're you straight?" Her defiance was the defiance of a bird caught in the hand, except that in place of a valiant little beak she had only a small mouth all tremulous and awry. The defiance gradually became fear as he looked. "Oh, I know I'm like to get the sack. But they bin good to me, an' I hear about the money. Mr. Black, don't look at me like that! I arsked, 'cause it seemed strange, like . . ."

Gaspard still stared, his dark eyes wide—terribly wide to little Florence. He could meet this sort of attack quite easily, but the affront of it was percolating through his first surprise. He had been quite a good waiter at the Junior Athenian Club until that Coronation Day when the smoking-room receipts reached the figure of his temptation. To be cross-examined by a small maid! One hand went up, his eyes rolled, his expression settled as an engine pushed into gear.

"Mr. Black, don't curse me!" The little figure cringed. "I 'ad to arsk. I 'ad to! 'It me, if you like, but don't curse me!"

He walked processionally to the window, mouthed at the fern, turned and walked back to the small figure of watching terror. His hand coming down upon her shoulder produced from her the noise of an india-rubber doll when squeezed.

"Florence, I forgive you; but my forgiveness is nothing. Ask for forgiveness from above." Then just once the ex-club waiter spoke as a precaution. "If you value your place, my girl, don't ever harbour such thoughts again. This house won't hold that sort of thing."

He left her whimpering. But the encounter spoilt his smoke. He even eyed the glass doors of "The Saracen's Head," thinking on past joys of rum-and-milk. This unjust suspicion from a small maid had affected him curiously. It was more dangerous than Miss Jane's trust in him. It piqued him to a regret. He had never made such a haul with so little risk, not even when he had taken that happy little example of Sir William Andover's genius as additional payment for the hours he had sat to the Royal Academician. It took him two extra cigarettes to get back to the rock of his good resolve.

On his return the smell of frying bacon strengthened him in this second resistance. These hot breakfasts were so easily come

by. And then from the stomach came inspiration. They might be his indefinitely.

For the first time he considered himself as a possible heir to the Rays. He had never done so before; his was not a calculating temperament. Yet for the mere matter of a little posing and control, or perhaps honestly, if this odd peace of mind developed, he might win permanent affluence. He went inside. With that deadly facility of his he hung up his cap differently. He knew they had no relatives. They had often lamented their loneliness in the world. He noted the wall-paper, as a man might notice his own belongings; it had begun to come away a bit at the top.

Little Florence intruded on his mood. She bent before him in the dining-room doorway, asking pardon as a confessed sinner. He gave her his absolution.

Miss Jane, coming downstairs just then, greeted him with a new emphasis. His mood held. His manner burgeoned after the hot bacon. It was that deadly facility at work. They both appeared more openly affectionate—a sort of concerted affection it was, such as two kindly folk might come to after consultation. After breakfast they gave evidence of it. John Ray, taking support from his sister's happy nods, suggested that he should spend the day at the seaside.

"The air will do you good. You cannot give of yourself so freely without taking recreation of some sort. You agree, Jane?"

"It will freshen you up, Gaspard. Put a little colour into your cheeks. We must not forego the physical needs."

And so on, with infinite pleasure to themselves, these two planned a day for him at Beachstone, and provided funds for it. In affectionate rivalry they prescribed their own fancies.

Said John: "And mind you take the little tram that runs along almost in the surf. That was always a joy to me."

"But only after the Aquarium, Gaspard!" Miss Jane warned him with mock severity. "He must see the Aquarium, John. The wonders of the deep . . ."

It left Gaspard preening himself, expanding towards them on this new evidence of their intentions.

His day at Beachstone was a day of simple pleasure on honest money, the savour of which astonished him. He altered the programme only so far as to spend the Aquarium money on an extra bottle of stout—a legitimate prerogative, since he

was not interested in the wonders of the deep. He returned home really grateful, warmed to them by this promise of rewards to come.

Arrived at the little cast-iron gate, he noticed that the hinges wanted oiling. They squeaked. It was no more than the prospective interest of a man who would one day own the little gate. Within he described his day—including the wonders of the Aquarium—as a son might to fond parents.

It was the very atmosphere that Miss Jane had hoped for. When the narrative was over, when they had asked a dozen affectionate questions about old-remembered spots, she looked towards her brother, nodded at him. But he was still at Beachstone in spirit.

"And the blind man with his Braille Bible? Did you see him, Gaspard?"

Gaspard would have liked to satisfy the inquiry. The little cough from Miss Jane jerked him right out of his desire to please. He looked. The pale cheeks were ever so faintly tinged; every feature was unnaturally composed, just as a child's face will simulate complete unconcern before an important surprise. She coughed again at her brother.

"Eh?"

"I think—now, John."

"Oh, yes. I was just thinking how many years I have watched that man's patient finger passing over the Braille. Oh, yes, certainly, Jane. Gaspard. . ."

He knew at once, even before Mr. Ray began fumbling in his breast-pocket. When he had taken hold again, Miss Jane had made the presentation, and he was holding a wad of Treasury notes, fastened with an elastic band—was holding them awkwardly, as a man will hold a dangerous thing suddenly put into his hand. Mr. Ray was labouring with explanations, beaming love and admiration on his sister, as he recounted her brave persistence.

"Entirely her doing, Gaspard. Well, you know her. And Mr. Phillips will go with you to the agents to-morrow. I have counted them twice."

Gaspard had inserted a finger under the top note and was feeling it between a finger and thumb—gently, without looking. He managed a nod.

"It was me you were thinking of really, Gaspard?" Miss Jane's question was almost an appeal. She was watching him. "I made sure it was. Gaspard?"

"It was on your account partly."

"Ah! What did I tell you, John?"

"You did. You did."

Then at last Miss Jane's pent-up feelings overflowed. It was a very natural inundation of hopes and prophecies and a little, just a little self-satisfaction. She finished on an ecstasy of thanksgiving.

"And it was you, Gaspard, who brought this new chance into our lives. May you receive recompense."

"Amen," said her brother.

Gaspard was pulling out the elastic band and letting it fly back with a snap. As she finished, he achieved a spurious control. "So you have decided to pay this premium, after all." It was not

For a little he played his part, but soon he got up as a man very tired.

"The sea air, I think. I'm not used to it."

Then he thrust the wad of notes at Mr. Ray. "Will you keep these until the morning, anyway?"

Mr. Ray was enjoying his emotion. "You keep them, Gaspard. Sleep on them under your pillow. Something to wake up to, eh? And you won't grudge them to the agent tomorrow?"

They discussed his departure



*John Ray*

"It cut across Miss Jane's despair and switched an aggrieved surprise into John Ray's face."

a question, merely the statement of a man still struggling with some shock. "It came as rather a surprise. That's all. Very good of you."

and his reticence as children pleased with their surprise. They sat up quite late, talking about him. Even so it was not until long after the burble of their voices



had ceased downstairs that Gaspard got off into fitful slumber.

He awoke to that wad of notes, though not quite as Mr. Ray had meant. After the multitude of their suggestions at breakfast he tried once more. He got it out as an after-thought.

"Mr. Ray, won't you come with me? Mr. Phillips might like it."

They both appreciated his motive. "No, Gaspard, we want you to have the whole credit. It is your scheme. Mr. Phillips knows my wishes. That is it, Jane?"

"We feel like that, Gaspard, though it is very natural you should wish him to share with you. Come back and give us the tidings."

Her brother liked that. "Yes, come back and give us the 'All Clear,' Gaspard."

He persisted, almost wistfully. "I'd like you to see it paid, Mr. Ray."

John Ray smiled. "You or I, Gaspard. It makes no difference."

It was his final effort against their impregnable faith. At the front door they made his de-

"Jane, you are not letting yourself get anxious?"

"No, not anxious, John. But the streets are very dangerous these days."

"He's been kept, you may be sure. Better have a little. Without meat, then?"



"Oh, I know! But I ain't afraid, not now! He's took your money, master."

parture quite a little ceremony. He kept his hands hidden in his pockets.

At two o'clock Jane Ray and her brother tried to have their mid-day meal with Gaspard's empty chair between them. But the goodly odour of Irish stew had no attractions. Miss Jane kept sipping a glass of water.

"None for me, John. I couldn't, really!"

She tried a spoonful and cried out in distress: "John, John, could it be that we were too glad—too proud in our gift?"

"I had thought of that, Jane. But he was sent. Some little extra formality, I expect. Or Mr. Phillips was not able to go at once. These lawyers are busy men."

Only John ate the figs and rice.

All that afternoon they sat attempting conversation, yet always listening. Every footstep outside on the pavement was a hope and then a disappointment. Once they both got up. But it was only a man taking round circulars. They got at last to discussing him with wilful optimism.

"His very face is changing. I am sure he is happier?" Miss Jane eyed her brother piteously. She was openly weeping, letting the tears roll down and drop on to her grey alpaca dress. They made little round stains. Her brother pretended not to see.

"He is settling to it. I never did think he had been feeding very regularly when he found us."

"Listen! Oh, John, and he makes us happier, too!"

"He does. He does. A comfort in our declining years. He won't suffer for that, Jane? You agree that?"

"Most decidedly. We have no one to consider. Oh, dear, dear, it's nearly four o'clock!"

"Courage! You had better have some tea."

At five o'clock John went out to telephone round to the hospitals. Miss Jane told little Florence for the comfort of it, when she came to clear away.

"And we fear an accident, Florence."

The girl had listened, gripping hold of the tea-tray on the table, poised, as it were, on her extended arms. At last the sceptical defiance broke out of her:

"A accident! Oh, mistress, never! A accident to 'im! Never!"

"You, too, think—— Florence, who's that?" The scrape of a latch-key in the door had galvanised Miss Jane.

Florence went to look. "Mr. Ray."

"John?"

He came in as he was, shaking his head at her, wilfully ignoring her little wail. "I went to the police station, too; they said it might be a day or so before we heard. Jane, Jane!"

It was then that it came, a flat pronouncement from the small figure, leaning again to lift the tea-tray. "Better go to the police station again, master."

It cut across Miss Jane's despair and switched an aggrieved surprise into John Ray's face. The commotion they saw was curiously at variance to the offending words, so like an accusation. The girl was forcing defiance into her face through the agony of her fear.

"Oh, I know! But I ain't afraid, not

now! He's took your money, master. That's what I say, an' I don't care 'oo 'ears me!"

"Florence!"

Miss Jane got it out first, a veritable indictment. Her brother's protest, in a lower key, was none the less severe.

"Florence!"

The double reproof, the two shocked faces, drove Florence to the tea-tray, stubborn in defence. "I only warned you, 'cause you bin good to me."

"No, Florence. Leave the tray. Sit down."

Mr. Ray's tone completed her defeat. "I got the washin' up to do. It's m'evenin' out!"

"Shall I speak, Jane? Or do you prefer?"

The small figure by the tea-tray was drooping, all defiance gone out of her. The scene was set for judgment on her suspicion. Miss Jane had nodded. But her brother's preparatory cough was broken up by two sharp detonations of the door-knocker. The three of them jerked twice in unison.

"I'll go, master."

John Ray had risen. But Florence got out first, spurred by this sudden respite. Brother and sister listened on wires of suspense. They heard the door open, heard the sharp inquiry of the boy's voice:

"Ray?"

"A telegram! Oh, John!"

Florence was coming back. Miss Jane wiped her mouth with her handkerchief all squeezed up. John Ray took the thick envelope from Florence with a proper show of disapproval. Judgment was only postponed. His sister had drooped again.

"And I thought it must be news. Tracts, I suppose."

Her brother had opened the envelope and was peeping inside. He checked visibly in his explorations of it and looked up.

"All right, Florence; you can get along with your washing-up."

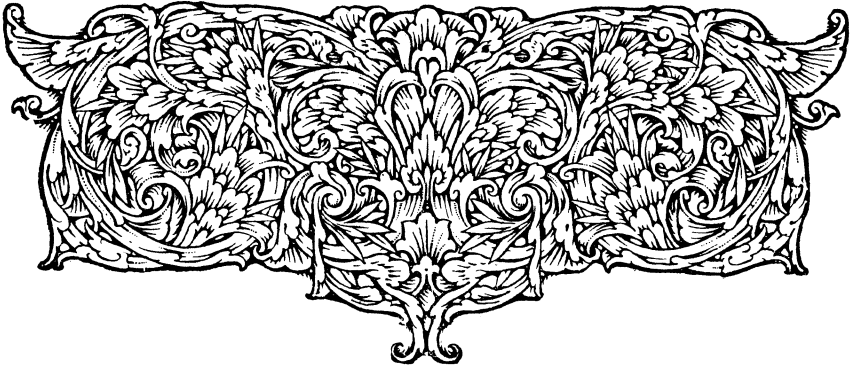
As she went out of the room, the tea-tray clasped to her, he drew out from the envelope a wad of clean Treasury notes, fastened by an elastic band under which was a slip of paper scrawled upon in pencil. This he read, read twice, crossed in silence and gave it to his sister, just laying his hand upon her shoulder very gently. Then he drifted to the table as a man seeking some occupation while she read it.

It was a long time before either of them spoke, before either of them looked at the

other. Miss Jane spoke first, her clear note of faith only a little subdued :

“Do you think we can possibly find him—get him back ?”

John Ray wetted his finger for the last time and finished his counting aloud : “Forty-eight, forty-nine. One short, just as he says. We must try our best, Jane.”



## THE GREY GHOSTS OF RYE.

**U**P the hill in Rye Town, when night and morning meet,  
 Grey ghosts, to and fro, walk in Watchbell Street ;  
 Glimmering, shimmering, all in pearly grey,  
 Hush ! look ! there they go, along the cobbled way.  
 Man and maid, knight and dame, coif and cowl and plume—  
 Oh, I hear their voices, murmuring in the gloom,  
 Oh, I long to follow, where they flicker by,  
 Wandering in the darkness with the Grey Ghosts of Rye !

Up the hill in Rye Town, when night and morning meet,  
 Grey ghosts, hand in hand, talk in Watchbell Street ;  
 Grey ships, phantom ships, pass at ebb and flow,  
 With songs of dead seamen, on the dim dead tide below.  
 Mariners, merchants, captains bold and free,  
 Oh, I hear their laughter, home again from sea,  
 Oh, I long to hail them, as they hover by,  
 Whispering in the darkness with the Grey Ghosts of Rye !

Up the hill in Rye Town, when night and morning meet,  
 Will you walk, will you talk, with me in Watchbell Street ?  
 Let the poor ghosts listen, let them see and smile,  
 Dream themselves alive again just a little while !  
 Hush ! look ! there they go, forms of filmy grey—  
 All of them were lovers once, along this mossy way.  
 Kiss me for their sake, dear ! There's only you and I  
 Dreaming in the darkness with the Grey Ghosts of Rye !



"They walked up one of the deserted paths."

# IN THE PUBLIC EYE

By EDGAR WALLACE

*Author of "Sanders of the River," "The People of the River," "Bones," etc.*

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

**S**UDDEN affluence affects different people in different ways. The Marquis of Pelborough had succeeded, through the death of his uncle, to a title which brought with it nothing more substantial in the shape of estate than one acre of waste garden and a brick cottage badly in need of repair. "Chick" Pelborough was less shocked by his accession to the title than he was by the acquisition of wealth.

He had been a "guinea-pig" director of an oil company, in the flotation of which (he was for a long time in ignorance of this)

the promoters had skated so finely near the edge of fraud that only a sound knowledge of the Companies Act had saved them from utter destruction. Chick, left to carry on, had found a derelict company on his hands, until the drill of an engineer, who had already given up hope, "struck oil" in amazing quantities.

"Your future is settled now, Chick," said Gwenda Maynard, at the conclusion of a family council, in which his housekeeper as by right participated. "You should buy a nice house in the country and take your place in Society."

"But I don't want to go into the country," said Chick, aghast at the prospect. "The country bores me, Gwenda. When I used to go to Pelborough to see the old doctor, I used to pray for the hour when I could leave."

She shook her head.

"Going to the country for a day to see a crotchety old gentleman who bullied you is quite another matter to living in a beautiful house, with horses to ride and a car to drive. No, Chick, you've lifted yourself so far——"

"You have put me where I am, Gwenda," said Chick soberly. "If you hadn't been behind me, joggng my elbow, I should have made a mess of things. You don't want me to leave here, do you?" he asked, with a sudden sinking of heart.

"Here" was a little flat at seventy pounds per annum, no suitable abode for a man who had sold out his holding in a certain oil company for a hundred thousand pounds.

The possession of such an incredible sum terrified Chick. It took him the greater part of a week to get over the feeling that he had been engaged in a successful swindle, and for another week he fought with an inclination to restore the money to a gentleman who, believing they were worthless, had certainly tried to ruin him when he had transferred his shares to Chick's account.

Gwenda did not instantly answer his question. She wanted Chick to stay—she had never realised how much he was to her—but the position was grotesque. She had set out to establish the insurance clerk who had so unexpectedly fallen into the ranks of the peerage, and she had devoted her unselfish energies to his advancement. And now that he was fairly on his feet she shrank from the logical culmination of her plan, and she hated herself for her cowardice.

"I don't want you to go, you know that, Chick," she said slowly, "only it isn't right that you should stay."

"Gwenda is talking sense, Lord Pelborough," said the practical Mrs. Phibbs, nodding her imposing head. "People must work up to the level of their superiors. Why, you're scared to death of these fibbertigibbet Society folk, and that isn't right. If you don't go up, Chick, you go down. My husband surrendered at the first check, and found his way to the saloon bar. He was one of those people who liked to be looked up to, and naturally he had to descend pretty far before he reached the admiring strata."

Mrs. Phibbs very seldom talked about her husband.

"He is dead, isn't he?" asked Chick gently.

"He is," said that brisk woman. "and in Heaven, I hope, though I have my doubts."

"Besides, Chick," said Gwenda, "we shall have very little time together here. The play may run for another year, and now that I've gone back to the east I shall be fully occupied."

Chick said nothing to this. A few days before he was passing down Bond Street on the top of a bus, and saw Gwenda and Lord Mansar coming from a tea-shop, and they had driven away in Mansar's car. And on the very next afternoon he had met them walking in Hyde Park, and Gwenda had seemed embarrassed.

And it hurt him just a little bit—a queer, aching hurt that took the colour from the day and left him forlorn and listless.

"We'll postpone our talk until to-morrow," said Gwenda, rising. "Mrs. Phibbs, I shall be late to-night. Lord Mansar is taking Miss Bellow and me to supper. You wouldn't care to come, would you, Chick?"

Chick shook his head.

"I'm going to the gym. to punch the bag, Gwenda," he said quietly, and she thought it was the prospect of leaving which had saddened him.

Chick did not stay long in the gymnasium. The spirit had been taken out of him, and his instructor watched his puny efforts with dismay.

"You're not losing your punch, m' lord, are you?" he asked anxiously.

"I'm losing something," said Chick, with a sigh. "I don't think I'm in the mood for practice to-night, sergeant."

He dressed and came out into Langham Place, and he was at a loose end. Even the cinema had no appeal for him, and he loafed down Regent Street without having any especial objective.

Nearing the Circus, he turned into a side-street that led to Piccadilly. And it was here that he saw the girl. To be accurate, he heard her first—heard a faint, frightened scream, and the thud of her frail body against the shuttered window of a shop.

It is a peculiarity of men who love ring-craft that they have a horror of quarrels, particularly street quarrels. Chick always went breathless and experienced a tightening of the heart at the sight of a street fight.

But this was not a street fight. The man was a wiry youth, somewhat overdressed; the girl appeared respectable and, on closer inspection, very pretty.

"You'd do it again, would you?" hissed the man; and then, as his hand came back, Chick crossed the narrow road, no longer breathless.

"Excuse me," he said, and the girl's assailant suddenly spun round. He had no intention of spinning round, and he glared at the slim figure that had appeared from nowhere.

Chick backed slowly to the centre of the asphalted road, and Mr. Arthur Blanbury (for that was the name of the girl's companion) entirely misunderstood the significance of the manœuvre. He thought this interfering stranger had repented of his intrusion. In truth, Chick needed exactly three feet of clear space on either flank. This Mr. Blanbury discovered. Without any preliminary remarks, he drove at Chick scientifically. Chick took the blow over his left shoulder, and drove left and right to the body. It was Mr. Blanbury's weak spot, and he drew off, unguarding his jaw. Chick's left found the point, and Mr. Blanbury went down, in the language of the ring, "for the count."

You cannot indulge in any form of fistic combat within a hundred yards of Piccadilly Circus without collecting a crowd or inviting the attention of an active and intelligent constabulary. A big hand fell on Chick's shoulder, and he turned to meet the commanding eye of a policeman.

"Suppose you come along with me, old man," said the constable; and Chick, who had more sense than most people who have found themselves in his painful situation, did not argue, but allowed himself to be taken to Marlborough Street Police Station.

"The Marquis of what?" said the station inspector humorously. "What are you charging him with—drunk?"

But here an unexpected friend arrived in the person of the girl. Until then Chick had not seen her face. It was a very pretty face, despite its inherent weakness.

But if she was a stranger to Chick, she was known to the station inspector, who raised his grey eyebrows at the sight of her.

"Hello, Miss Farland! What do you want?" he demanded.

And Chick heard the story. She was a shop girl at an Oxford Street store, and her assailant had been her *fiancé*. It had been one of those sketchy engagements

which follow chance meetings in the Park. He was very nice and "gentlemanly," and had treated her like a lady until one night he revealed his true character. She "lived in" with a hundred other girls, and it was possible, as he evidently knew, for her to slip down to a door which communicated with the warehouse and the living quarters alike—being an emergency exit for the girls in case of fire—and to open that door to Mr. Blanbury and his associates, to two of whom he introduced her.

Instead she had communicated with her employer, and the police had trapped the robbers, with the exception of Mr. Blanbury, of whom she had not given a very clear description, actuated possibly by sentimental motives. They had met by accident that night, and Chick had been a witness to the sequel.

"Very sorry, indeed, my lord," said the inspector cheerfully. "Go back, Morrison, and pull in that man."

Chick waited in the charge-room until they brought in the somewhat dazed young man, and after he had disappeared through the door leading to the cells, he escorted the girl to her shop.

She was grateful, she was silent, being overawed by the knowledge that her escort was a "lord," but her prettiness was very eloquent, and Chick went back to Doughty Street with his head in the air and a sense that the evening had been less dismal than he had anticipated.

He was so cheerful when Gwenda came in, after a prolonged farewell at the street door—it was not her fault that it lasted more than a second—that she smiled in sympathy, though she did not feel like smiling.

"I've been locked up," said Chick calmly, as he shuffled his patience cards.

"Chick!"

"I was arrested and marched to Marlborough Street," said Chick, enjoying the mild sensation. Then he told her what had happened.

"You splendid dear!" she said, squeezing his hand. "How like you to interfere! Was she pretty, Chick?"

She was not prepared for his reply or his enthusiasm.

"Lovely!" said Chick, in a hushed voice. "Simply lovely! She's got those baby eyes that you like so much, Gwenda, and a sort of mouth that you only see in pictures—like a bud. You wouldn't think she worked in a shop. I was surprised when she told

me. Such a nice young lady, Gwenda—you'd love her."

"Perhaps I should, Chick," said the girl, a thought coldly. "I never knew that you were such a connoisseur of feminine charms. Did you like her, Chick?"

"Rather!" said Chick heartily. "She's not a big girl—she just comes up to my shoulder. Gwenda"—he hesitated—"couldn't I ask her to come up to tea one day? I know her name—Millie Farland."

"Certainly," said Gwenda, slowly removing her wrap. "Ask her to come on Wednesday."

Chick looked surprised.

"But that is your *matinée* day, and you wouldn't be home," he said.

Gwenda eyed him thoughtfully.

"No," she said. "Ask her to come on Sunday. Anyway, she wouldn't be able to come any other day than Saturday or Sunday, if she is in an Oxford Street store, and I want to see her."

Miss Millie Farland was a young lady who enjoyed the fatal experience of publicity, which is a poison that has before now driven inoffensive citizens to commit violent crimes. It is possible to reform a drunkard and cure a dope fiend, but let the unbalanced mentality of unimportant people confront their names in print, and their cases are for ever hopeless. Never again will they be happy until they have once more tasted the fierce thrills of press notices.

Miss Farland had figured in a warehouse robbery. She had given evidence at the Old Bailey. She had seen herself described as a "heroine," and her actions eulogised in a paragraph which was headed "Pretty Girl's Smart Capture of Warehouse Thieves."

She had been photographed entering the court and leaving the court. She had been similarly portrayed at the local cinematograph theatre, and now a marquis had fought for her in the open street! A real lord had got locked up for her and had walked home with her!

There were fifty girls sleeping on her landing at Belham and Sapworth's, and fifty on the landing below. None of them went to bed that night ignorant of the fact that the Most Honourable The Marquis of Pelborough had fought for her in Regent Street.

She went down early in the morning to get the newspaper, never doubting that the amazing adventure would occupy a considerable amount of the space usually given up to such drivelling subjects as meetings of

the Supreme Council and silly and incomprehensible speeches by the Prime Minister. She had in her mind's eye seen such great headlines as "Marquis Rescues Beautiful Shop-Lady from Brutal Attack," for Miss Farland had no illusions about her own charms.

And there was no mention of the matter—not so much as a paragraph!

"I expect he kept it out of the papers," she said at the 8.30 rush breakfast. "Naturally, he wouldn't be mixed up in a scandal, and probably he didn't want my name mentioned. He's awfully genteel! The way he took off his hat to me was a fair treat!"

"You'll be a marchioness one of these days, Millie," said an impertinent apprentice, and Miss Farland, who ranked as a "senior," scorned to answer the lowly girl.

To a buyer, a lady who, by virtue of her high position, occupied a room to herself (apprentices sleep four in a room, "seniors" two), she admitted that she had felt a queer flutter at her heart when his lordship had looked at her.

"I suppose we shall be seeing you in court again," said the buyer—"breach of promise and all that sort of thing."

Miss Farland thought it was unlikely. She and his lordship were just friends. Only that, and no more.

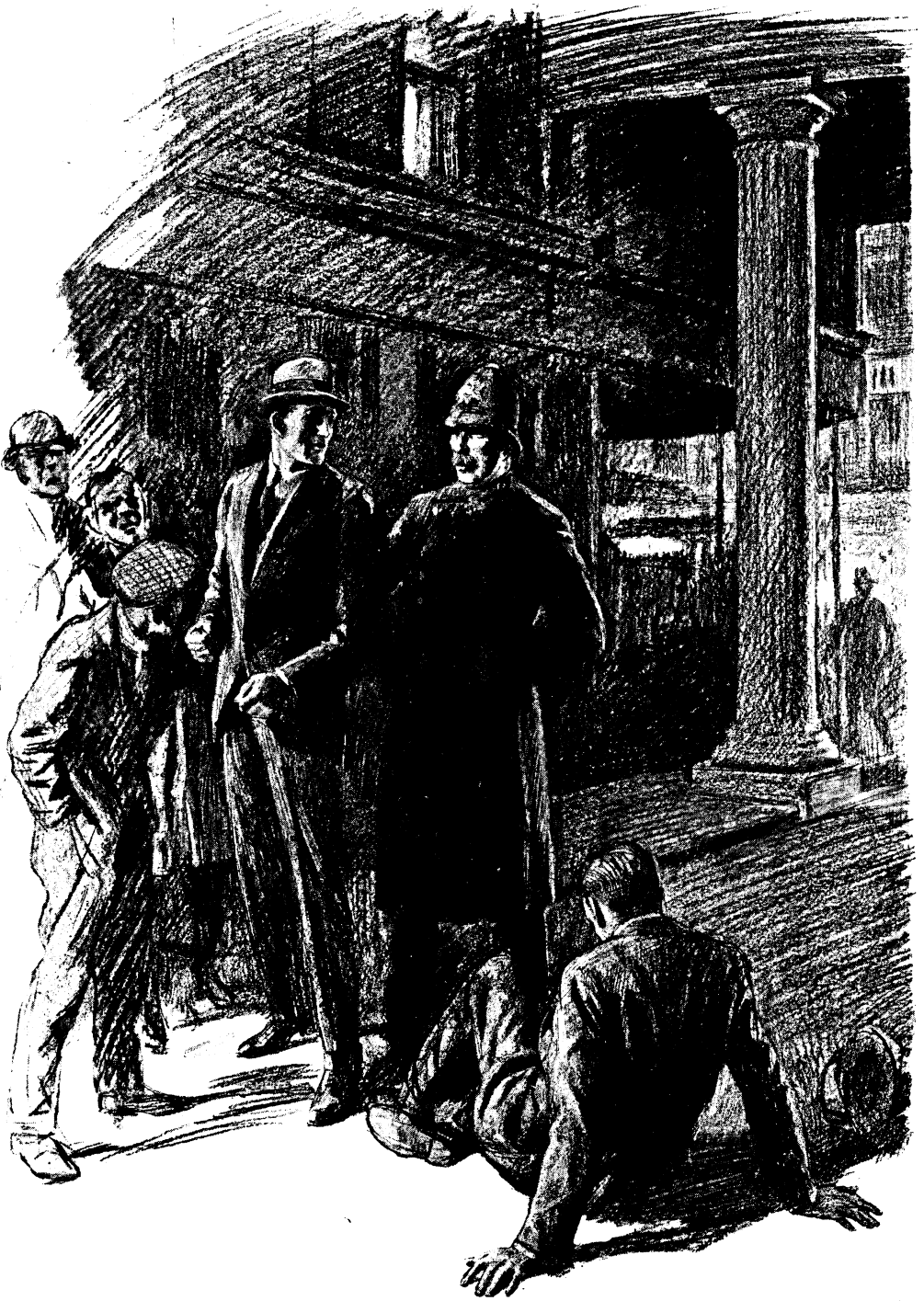
Still, the prospect of standing in a witness-box and having her dress described, and her coming in and going out photographed by a sensation-loving press, did not altogether displease her.

And then she received a letter from Chick. It was signed in his sprawling hand "Pelborough," and she was thrilled.

Before the day was over every member of the staff, from the engaging-manager to the meanest member of the outside staff, knew that she was invited to tea next Sunday, and that Lord Pelborough hoped that she was no worse for her alarming experience, and that he thought the weather was very changeable, and that he was "hers sincerely."

"That's what I liked about him—his sincerity," said Miss Farland to her assembled friends. "A man like that couldn't tell a lie. That's the wonderful thing about real gentlemen—they are always sincere."

So she went to tea, and Gwenda was very nice, but very disconcerting, because Miss Farland's first impression was that Gwenda was his lordship's young lady. As to Chick, he was his simple, friendly self, and discussed



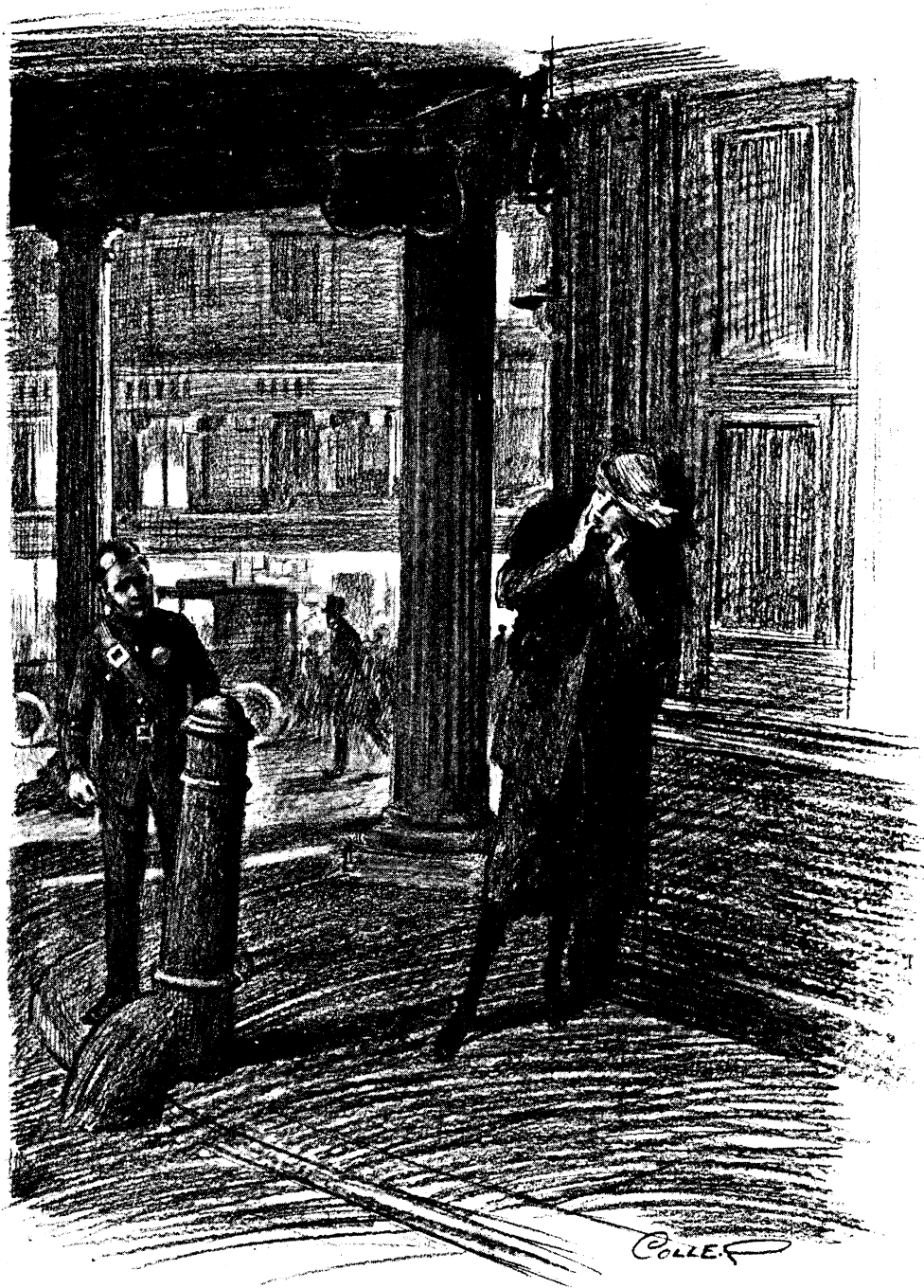
“A big hand fell on Chick’s shoulder, and he turned to meet the commanding

such matters as the weather and the Cup Tie Final (she was interested in neither subject) with the greatest freedom.

Presently she overcame her shyness and dispensed with the irritating little cough

which prefixed her every sentence. She even addressed Chick by that name. Chick went red and choked over his tea, but he liked it. Gwenda neither went red nor choked, but she hated it.





eye of a policeman. 'Suppose you come along with me,' said the constable."

It took away from the sweetness of the word and, on the lips of the girl, turned an endearing nickname into a piece of familiarity.

Chick saw her home.

"You will write to me, won't you, Chick?" Millie Farland had the prettiest pout imaginable. She had tried every one before her mirror, and this she now wore was undoubtedly super-excellent.

"Write?" said the astonished Chick. "Oh—er—yes, of course I'll write—er—yes. What shall I write about?"

"I want to know how you are, of course, Chick," she said, playing with the top button of his coat.

"Is it loose?" asked Chick, interested.

"Of course it isn't, you silly boy," she laughed. "But you will write, won't you? I'm so lonely here, and you've no idea how happy I've been to-day—with you," she added, looking up shyly.

Chick had seen that slow uplift of fringed eyelid in a score of cinema plays, and yet he did not recognise it. She also had seen the movement and many others. The educative value of the cinema is not properly appreciated by outsiders.

"What did you think of her?" he asked, as soon as he got back to the flat.

"A very, very pretty little girl," said Gwenda.

"Isn't she?" echoed Chick. "Poor little soul, she is so lonely, too. She loved being here—she asked me to write to her," he added.

Gwenda walked to the window and looked out.

"It has started to rain," she said.

"I know," said Chick. "It was raining when I came in. What can I write to her about, Gwenda?"

She turned from the window and smiled.

"What a question, Chick!" she said, walking from the room.

"But really——"

"Write to her about oil," said Gwenda at the door, "and about boxing, but don't write to her about yourself or herself, Chick. That's the advice of—an old married woman."

"Gosh!" said Chick. "But suppose she isn't interested in oil?"

But Gwenda had gone.

He tried the next day to write a letter, but discovered the limitations of correspondence with one whose tastes and interests were a mystery to him. Fortunately, Miss Farland saved him a great deal of trouble by writing.

She spelt a trifle erratically, and was prone to underline. Also she had acquired the habit of employing the note of admiration wherever it was possible. She had enjoyed herself immensely! She hoped he hadn't got wet! And wondered if he thought of her last night! She wanted to ask him a favour! She knew it was cheek! But she

felt she must open her heart to him! A gentleman wanted to marry her! But she did not love him! Could marriage be happy without love? And so forth, over eight pages.

Gwenda saw him frowning over the letter, and wondered.

It was a little ominous, she thought, that Chick did not communicate any more of the letter than that it was from "Miss Farland."

The truth was, Chick felt that he was the recipient of a great confidence, and bound by honour to say no more about the girl's dilemma than was necessary. For Chick took these matters very seriously. He had a very great respect for all women, and, being something of an idealist, the thought that this pretty child might be hurried into matrimony with a man she did not love both depressed and horrified him.

Therefore, in the quietness of his room, he wrote, and found writing in these circumstances so easy an exercise that he had written twelve pages before he realised he had begun. And Chick's letter was about love and happiness, and the folly of marrying where love was not. He found he could enlarge upon this subject, and drew from within himself a philosophy of love which amazed him. There was one passage in his letter which ran:

"The social or financial position of a man is immaterial. It does not matter whether I am a marquis or a dustman. It does not matter whether you work for your living or you are a lady moving in the highest social circles: if you love me and I love you, nothing else matters."

He posted the bulky envelope, satisfied in his mind that he had set one pair of feet on the right way. He was staggered the next morning to receive a reply to his letter, although it could have been delivered only the previous night, and this time Miss Farland wrote seventeen pages. Chick's letter had been so helpful! She had never met a man who understood women as well as he did!

On the seventeenth page was a post-script. Would Chick meet her that night, at half-past eight o'clock, near the big statue in the Park?

Chick kept the appointment and found her charmingly fluttered. There was no necessity for him to take her arm as they walked up one of the deserted paths. She saved him the trouble by taking his. Curiously enough, she made not the slightest reference

to the gentleman who desired to lure her into a loveless marriage. She talked mostly about herself and what the other girls at the shop thought of her. She admitted that she was a little superior to the position she held, and spoke of her father, who was an officer in the Army, and her mother, who was the daughter of a rural dean.

"A dean who preaches in the country, you know," she explained.

He escorted her back to Oxford Street. She reached her dwelling up a side-street which was never thickly populated, even in the busiest part of the day, and she stopped midway between two lamp-posts to say "Good night."

"You'll see me again, won't you?" she asked plaintively. "You don't know what a comfort your letters are to me."

And then she put up her red and inviting lips to his, and Chick kissed her. He had not either the intention or the desire, but there was the pretty upturned face with the scarlet lips within a few inches of his, and Chick kissed her.

When Gwenda returned home that night, Chick was waiting up for her—a very solemn-faced Chick, who did not meet her eye.

"Gwenda," he said a little huskily, "I want to speak to you before you go to bed."

Her heart went cold. She knew that Chick had gone to meet the girl. She had seen the voluminous correspondence which had passed, and she was afraid. She was determined, too. Chick should not sacrifice his future, his whole career, through the mad infatuation of a moment.

"What is it, Chick?" she asked, sitting down, her hands folded on the table before her.

"I'm afraid I've behaved rather badly," said Chick, still looking down.

"To whom?" asked Gwenda faintly. There was no need to ask the question at all.

"To Miss Farland," said Chick.

"Look at me, Chick!" Gwenda's voice was imperative. He raised his eyes to hers.

"When you say you have behaved rather badly, what do you mean? Have you promised to—marry her?"

His look of astonishment lifted a heavy weight from her heart.

"To marry her?" he said incredulously. "Of course not. I kissed her, that's all."

She was smiling, but there were tears in her eyes.

"You silly boy," she said softly. "You gave me a fright. Tell me about it, Chick."

He was loth to put the incident into

words, and felt he was being disloyal to one whom he described as "this innocent child," but Gwenda's leading questions brought out the story bit by bit. She was serious when he told her of the letter he had written, though Chick could see nothing in that.

"What was the letter about?"

"Well, it was mostly about love," said Chick calmly. "You see, dear, this poor child——"

Gwenda raised her eyes for a second.

"—has had an offer of marriage from a man who, I think, must be very wealthy, from what she tells me. Unfortunately, she doesn't like him a little bit, and she wrote to ask me what she should do."

"And did you tell her, Chick?" said Gwenda. "I suppose you haven't a copy of your letter?"

He shook his head, and she sighed.

"Well, perhaps there was nothing in it," she said. "What are you going to do, Chick?"

"I think I'd better write to her, when she writes again, and tell her that I can't see her," said Chick. "I don't want to hurt the poor girl's feelings, but at the same time I don't want to give her the impression that I'm fond of her. Of course I am fond of her," he added; "she's such a pretty little thing, and so lonely."

His resolution not to answer any more of her letters was shaken when she wrote, as she did the next day, an epistle which occupied both sides of fourteen sheets of large bank paper.

What had she done to offend him? She had trusted him! What had come between them?

"Don't answer it, Chick," warned the girl. And Chick groaned.

This letter was followed by others—some frantic, some pleading, some bearing pointed hints to the Serpentine and hoping he would never forget the poor girl who had loved him unto death!

"It's worse than the letters from the shareholders," groaned poor Chick. "Really, I think I ought to answer this one and tell her that I'm——"

"Unless I'm greatly mistaken," said Gwenda, "you'll have a letter to answer before the next week is over."

And, sure enough, on the following Saturday morning came a typed epistle from Messrs. Bennett and Reeves, who were, amongst other things, according to the note-head, commissioners of oaths.

They had been instructed by their client, Miss Amelia Farland, to demand from the noble lord whether he intended fulfilling his promise of marriage to their client, and, if he did not so intend, would he supply them with the name of his solicitors?

Poor Chick, a crushed and pallid figure, collapsed into his chair, and Gwenda took the letter from his hand. There were many eminent firms of lawyers who would act for Chick, but she knew a theatrical solicitor, a shrewd man of business, who kept a watchful eye upon the affairs of Mr. Solburg, and to him she carried the letter and gave as near as possible an account of the relationship between Chick and the girl.

"Bennett and Reeves," he mused, as he read the letter. "They take on that kind of work. I'll write them a little note. I don't think your Marquis will be troubled with this action."

Some time after, Miss Millie Farland entered the offices of her solicitors, wearing just that expression of silent suffering which would have photographed so well had there been any photographers waiting in Bedford Row to snap her.

Mr. Bennett received her with every evidence of cordiality.

"About this action, Miss Farland," he said. "They are going to fight the case, and they have briefed Sir John Mason. But do you want this case to go into court? Because, if you do, it is my opinion that you haven't a leg to stand on. I've been making independent inquiries, and it seems that Lord Pelborough did nothing more than rescue you from a former lover of yours."

"You have his letter," said Miss Farland severely.

"Callow essays on love and marriage," said Mr. Bennett contemptuously. "Now let us get down to business. Before we can go any further in this action you must deposit an amount sufficient to cover the costs. That will be, let us say, two thousand pounds."

Miss Farland rose. Afterwards, describing her action, she said that the man quailed under her glance.

"I see," she said bitterly, "there is one law for the rich and another for the poor."

"It is the same law," explained Mr. Bennett. "The only difference is that the poor pay in advance, and the rich pay afterwards."

Miss Farland, addressing a meeting of her sympathisers on Number One landing that night, expressed her determination to go through with the matter to the bitter end. Happily she was spared that ordeal, for an evening or two later, whilst she was strolling with a friend by the side of that very Serpentine in which she had hinted her young life might be blotted out, a small boy bather got into difficulties—and Miss Farland could swim.

The breakfast room at Belham and Sapworth's crowded round her as she read the paper in the morning, and feasted their eyes upon a larger headline than she had ever received: "Pretty Girl's Gallant Rescue in the Serpentine. Modest Heroine Refuses to Give her Name until the Police Compelled Her."

Miss Farland drew a happy sigh.

*A further story in this series will appear in the next number.*

## THE BEGGAR.

**L**ET me not chide thee, sweet, too soon,  
 For loving less than I,  
 Since Love hath giv'n thee all his gifts,  
 And left me but a sigh.

Yet that I'll bring, my only dower,  
 To sue for grace, and plead  
 As suppliant for my beggar's heart  
 That knows so sore a need.

LEOPOLD SPERO.



"She had stared for an inarticulate second. 'Oo arsked you your opinion?' she snapped."

# THE NAME

By DOUGLAS NEWTON

ILLUSTRATED BY S. ABBEY

**R**AMSAY HENNA heard the ship-owner's answer like a man listening to the voice of Fate.

"Oh, her? She goes to Parahyba and Pernambuco, Aracaju, Caravellas, Espirito Santo, Rio, and down to Paranagna," Paige had said, eyeing the rusty old freighter with a sort of jeering affection. "South America, you know."

Ramsay Henna almost said: "Of course—South America." He knew it would be that. He knew it must be that. It was as though all his life he had been expecting—just this.

His long, narrow, and more than spare figure shook with a tremor which was not altogether due to the sharp illness he had just come through. South America—of course it would be South America.

He stared at the freighter, an old scow of a boat, weather-bitten, blunted and uncouth from ceaseless laborious voyages as a sort of nautical goods-truck. An old scow, surely, but jaunty, wearing its lichen of rust with an air, getting even a note of

romance from the hiss of its many leaking steam-pipes over-tried in much travail, surrounding itself with an odour of adventure, compounded somehow and subtly from its multifarious native stinks of machine-oil and tar, deep-sea salt, stray smears left over from rich tropic cargoes, the reek of the galley's cooking and what not else. A bluff, dogged, hearty old ship, full of wisdom and strength and the knowledge of many doings and encounters.

Ramsay Henna's eyes, deep blue eyes, curiously clear, full, and bright as though polished—the eyes "that marked the Hennas," according to his Aunt, as far back as man remembered, and before that, too, maybe—studied the ship greedily. It thrilled him. It seemed to him to have a tremendous meaning, an almost mystical significance. This was the ship that had been waiting for him.

"A longish voyage," Paige was saying, "an' not a bad trip, either. Interesting. No, not half a bad trip. And I say, by jimmy"—he swung on Ramsay—"there

you *are*, that's your voyage. A trip to South America, that's what you must do."

"Yes," said Ramsay Henna, his thin and rather well-formed lips moving automatically. "Yes, that's what I must do."

Of course he had to do it—didn't it all lead up to this, his Aunt's death, her legacy, his ill-health, his doctor's orders, and that lifelong desire to go to South America over all?

Paige was taken by one of his uncontrollable enthusiasms; he rushed on, ignoring Ramsay's words: "The absolute, the very thing. A long round trip; tropic seas, balmy air—the very thing. Interesting sights. Your doctor said a long sea voyage in a warm climate—well, there you are."

"He mentioned the West Indies," said Ramsay limply.

"Same thing, nothing to chose between the two. Well, here you are. Here's the ship. She ain't a liner, but she's comfortable, and you will be left alone. She won't feed you *de luxe*, but the grub's honest and good, and she won't cost you more than your keep. The very thing. An' a very good crowd in the after-guard, let me tell you, not showy, maybe, but *good* chaps. They'll make you homey." He came close to Ramsay Henna, spoke softly and with weight, as though letting him into a priestly secret. "And let me tell you that this is the best way to travel and see the world. Your liner——" He clicked his fingers contemptuously. "Give me an old tramp all the time." He stood back and beamed. "We're in luck. South America, that's the ticket; there's your voyage, Ram, old man."

"Yes, South America," said Ramsay. "Yes—to South America."

He knew it was inevitable. He seemed to feel that something for which he had been born was being fulfilled.

It was curious how this passion, not for South America, but to *go* to South America had held him all his life. He couldn't recall whether it had been a preoccupation of his childhood, but it had certainly been with him in his youth and from his youth on. He remembered how he had once annoyed his Aunt terribly—somewhere about the time he had started as office-boy in a firm of leather factors—by declaring that his highest ambition was to travel to this outlandish and undoubtedly, in the opinion of his Aunt, iniquitous continent.

Standing there on the quay, facing the *Pride* as she lolloped indolently under the push of Southampton's second tide, his

spare figure curiously fine for all his years at the desk, his narrow, pointed face, under the high, broad forehead, curiously distinguished in spite of his commonplace upbringing, he thought of that detonative occasion.

Why had he suddenly blurted out that hope of one day going to South America? As far as he could remember, South America meant nothing to him. They had all been discussing what they would do if an angel from Park Lane left them a million pounds. Most of the people in his Aunt's parlour had voiced ambitions worthy of the doilies that hemmed them in on every side. For most it would mean investments in house property, gilt-edged securities, or public-houses, with motor-cars and high old times at Margate for the dare-devils. He alone had shattered the solid and sensible atmosphere of convention by his outrageous, not to say unhealthy, desire for exotic travel. "I," he had piped, "I'd take the first bally ship for South America. That's what I would do."

His Aunt, that rigid and irresistible apostle of the humdrum, had been morally winded. She had stared for an inarticulate second. "'Oo arsked you your opinion?" she snapped. "'Ooever heard of anything so wicked an' so unnatural? What do you know about South America, anyhow?"

She was right. He knew nothing at all about South America. In his secret soul he could not understand why he had blurted out this crass desire. And yet, somehow, he had felt that he had had to say it. He felt that some force, either within him or dominating from without, had laid this command on him, and that really, if he had had that million, he, reasonlessly, would have gone straight to South America.

He was to know that strange and curiously intense "call" consistently for the rest of his life. It was really a call. It was not the usual glamorous desire for adventure and wide spaces that youths of his kind had. He felt no particular glamour about the business. He did not dream of velvet blue skies stencilled with swaying palms, of hot silver beaches in a golden sun, of jungle mysteries or adventures with strange men in bright barbaric clothes. None of these things wrung him. He simply felt that he wanted to go to South America, *must* go there. It was almost as though someone, a voice in the heart of that vast continent, was calling to him, ordering him to come.

He felt it at intervals with an almost

physical agony. It was all wrong and, as his Aunt had said, unnatural. A little clerk of his condition had no right to be a prey to these extravagant desires. He was a little clerk, and son of a line of little clerks. His father had been the managing clerk to an accountant, and his grandfather—the Henna who had come to London out of Cornwall—had been a clerk of some sort, too. Even before that his forbears had all held some sort of scrivener's job in offices in their small Cornish home town.

Yet as he worked his way steadily from office-boy to the cashier's desk of his Fore Street firm, Ramsay was afflicted again and again by this unprincipled desire to chuck a solid position and go trapesing off across the sea to this enigmatic South America.

Once again it had caused the extreme fury of Aunt Heppie—about the time when he was breaking into his 'twenties. He was never very strong, and close attention to exacting work in the thick-aired, artificially lighted tomb the leather factor called his counting house had brought about some sort of breakdown. The doctor even then had suggested a sea trip to pull him together. Aunt Heppie, meek before doctors as before no other men, had protested vaguely, and indicated that there were relatives and good air at Ramsgate.

Ramsay had been neutral himself, until Paige came into the business.

Paige at that time was a bright and bustling *employé* in the London office of the shipping firm he ultimately commanded. Paige had been a chum in office-boy days. Paige came to see him, heard the doctor's suggestion, and went off like a rocket in his habitual way.

He had the very thing. He could give Ramsay his sea trip. He could get Ramsay a passage on one of his firm's ships. It would be rough, but comfortable, and would cost practically nothing, for Ramsay could sign on as a supercargo. He was enthusiastic. Almost he carried Aunt Heppie away.

"Where does she go to, this ship?" Ramsay had asked eagerly, because he knew in his heart where she went.

"To South America!" Paige had cried.

"Stuff and nonsense!" Aunt Heppie had rapped decisively.

\* \* \* \* \*

He did not go on that trip. He went to Ramsgate. Aunt Heppie prevailed. The mere thought of Ramsay Henna going off to foreign parts had an air of blasphemy.

"The Hennas never have done that sort of thing. They were sober, home-abiding people, careful to have no truck with foreign philanderings. And as long as I have any say in the matter, they never will."

Aunt Heppie, long, upright, holding her head on her neck with a certain fowl-like stiffness, had had her say to good effect. But the Henna tradition had something to do with the matter, too. Yes, he had that as strongly as he had the other thing. Singular how, though their blood and race was of no particular importance, they were all so proud and tenacious of them.

There was even a romantic and melancholy quality about himself because of this. He was the last of them. With him the Hennas might die out. It seemed to Aunt Heppie, even to the Aunt down in Cornwall and his elderly female cousins there, a matter of great importance that the Hennas should not die out.

All this trouble about family and the fear of the dying out of the family was queer. It arose from some fierce and obstinate instinct in their very blood. The Hennas hated the idea that their name and line should vanish, and yet it didn't matter at all to the world if they did. They weren't nobles or any sort of aristocrats even. If their line went back in a way to fill many modern ducal families with envy, it was no more than a yeoman line, a line of countrymen and small farmers, and then of clerks in a small town, when their native obstinacy in the face of modern conditions had made them fail on the land.

They were small people, yes, but their blood was clean and proud. They were all of them so bound up in the family. Aunt Heppie, who was childless, knew all the ramifications of the London Hennas, back to Grandfather Enoch, who had come to Town. It was a misery to her that the fruit of the branches he had left should be so consistently female.

Aunt Heppie and the Cornish cousins could go back easily, accurately, and confidently through generations of Hennas, talking so familiarly of grandfathers that it needed an effort to realise that the subjects of discussion were probably Elizabethans.

And all through the story there was the same powerful truth. "They Hennas" had always kept the name going, they had kept themselves to themselves, remained rooted to their homes, and kept the name going. The dour passion for preserving the name animated them all.

Ramsay Henna had it, too, and he knew

Aunt Heppie had it. That was how he had been able to beat back, how he had allowed her to smother his inexplicable desire to go to South America.

When he felt the call coming to him most intensely, when he felt that it would need all his will to resist this strange demand to take ship and go to this unknown land, he remembered he was the last of the Hennas, that he owed a duty to his name, remembered, too, that he must take warning from that gadabout Sebastian Henna, the only one who had ever disgraced the name by giving way to strange whimsies. Sebastian Henna had been one of your midge-brains. He had got the idea of going off gallivanting in ships, too. And what had happened to him? He had simply been swallowed up by the vast world into which he had so recklessly plunged. His utter disappearance was a lesson to all Hennas. They used him as an admonition, and they spoke of him with a scorn still personal, though he had lived in the time of the second Charles.

Until he was twenty-five Ramsay Henna had gone on like this, hearing the call to South America, and, with Aunt Heppie's help, resisting it, and leading his stoic and humdrum life. He had become head of his firm's counting house; he was, as things went, fairly well-to-do. At home his Aunt spoilt him in her bullying sort of way, and did everything she could to make his life as commonplace as their suburb demanded. Even there were girls in his existence—a string of girls of a singular heavily-stamped sameness, whatever the colour of their hair, their eyes, or their height and figures. Nice girls, undoubtedly, and he would give Aunt Heppie pleasure by marrying any one of them. That was where they seemed to lose their savour—he could have married any one of them, without realising their difference.

And then with each of them, when he had reached the point when he could say, "I could go farther and fare worse," the intolerable South American obsession took hold of him and wiped out her charms by the intensity of its vague and glamorous emotion.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then quite suddenly the whole thing had changed. Aunt Heppie had been found dead in a chair from a stroke. Seedy himself at the time, the shock had bowled him over, and, strangely, his chief emotion was that of release. There would be no opposition to his going to South America now.

With that the desire to go came back with a shocking fervour. He was so wrung by it that one night he tramped for hours through the rain under the worry of the thought. He went down with pneumonia next day, and a month or two after his doctor was insisting on his taking a sea voyage. He protested that he could not afford it, and learnt that Aunt Heppie had left him seven hundred pounds. As if all things were massing for one ordained end, Paige came in on him. Paige, who had become a shipowner, who lived at Southampton, and who was still his best friend, had made a point of calling, and, hearing the doctor's command, had said at once: "Of course the doctor's right. We'll fix that. When you can get about, come down to me at Southampton, and I'll see that you get just the sort of voyage that will do you a world of good. You'll go in one of my own ships."

And so it had come about. Ramsay Henna was standing looking at the *Pride*, and Paige was telling him that this was the ship for him, and that he was going to make a voyage in it to South America.

Of course it had to be South America.

\* \* \* \* \*

In a few weeks he was off the coast of South America, staring from the deck of the *Pride* at lazy quaysides, and houses painted like Noah's arks, and the tangled, vivid, hungry green of the bush that seemed to be crowding into and between the little flat houses with an almost active voracity. He stared and he wondered why he had come.

He had reached South America, and yet somehow that didn't seem enough. It wasn't the end. He must go on. It was the queerest thing to happen to a man. He had come—why he didn't know—but he seemed to know he hadn't finished travelling. He had yet to go on—must go on.

They coasted slowly down the land. Ramsay spent day after day gazing at the staring, greedy greens, the jewel flash of strange flowers, the fierce sunburnt browns of grass plat and mountain-side. He landed sometimes. He was more disgusted at first than thrilled; the casualness, the laziness and the dirt that marked the little towns offended him. But gradually he came under the spell of this rich, hot tropic place. Its laziness seemed poetic and natural, the rest part of its glamour.

Always when he landed he wondered: Is this the place? Do I get off here? He did not say this, of course, in words, but the emotion was none the less real. But



always he went back to the ship instinctively, and continued that rich, lazy crawl along the exotic coast. He had still to go on—go on into South America—but his stepping-off place was not yet.

It came at Rio. Standing confused on the water-front, his mind bewildered by the hectic Latin bustle and the brazen sharpness, vivacity, and brightness of the place, he at once decided that here he must leave the ship. He knew no reason for this, save that it must be so. The captain of the *Pride* expostulated with him, but to no effect. The something that had commanded him to come to South America commanded him here.

Only when the ship had left, and he sat at the window of his hotel half-way up Santa Theresa, and saw before him the amazing panorama of Rio's harbour and hills, did he tell himself he was an ass. Grown men, civilised men, did not act in this idiotic fashion. It was utterly absurd that he should have flung himself at South America like this, and then marooned himself in the heart of it—all for a whim. He tried to analyse that whim. He felt that he was more practical now, for the voyage out had made him stronger and healthier than he had ever been. He could make nothing of the whim save that it was absurd. "I'll sit here and wait until the *Pride* returns from Paranagna," he told himself decisively. "Then I'll go home and act like a rational man." He knew within himself that to act like a rational man would be to settle down.



"They walked across that room to the man and stood before him, Dom Miranda saying nothing, but smiling."

His curious passion for perpetuating his name was stronger. He smiled at the view in satisfaction at his decision. He was certain of himself. He would cure himself, go straight home.

In a week's time he was getting out of a train at a town which he had never heard of in his life, and making his wants known in the faltering but daring Portuguese which he was now steadily acquiring.

Why he had come to this town he did not know. He had just come. He had seemed to get suddenly bored with Rio after a day or two, and at the same time to have become fascinated by the name of this unimaginable town on a notice in his hotel. He must have stared at this poster several times a day since his arrival in Rio, but on this day the name had leapt out at him, and, curiously, it was the one day of the week when a through train ran from Rio to this distant and isolated place. This seemed to clinch the thing in his mind. He had booked a sleeper on the train and come.

And here he was, wondering why the devil he had done it, but all the time, underneath, thrilled by a consciousness that he had done right.

Yes, more and more now he was feeling that he was right. South America, with its indolent fatalism, its deep and brooding mysticism, seemed to have got hold of him. Strange things could happen naturally in this spacious, immense, and enigmatic continent. There was about everything a large, simple air of faith that made wonders seem easy and familiar.

So he landed in the town without rebellion, sat in its little scorched plaza, wandered through its pinched streets, heard the guitars of lovers underneath the barred windows in the moonlight—and he waited. He seemed to wait for something he knew was bound to come.

It came. One day a little old man, in the baggy costume of a dweller on the *campos*, came and sat at his table. Ramsay almost expected him to do this. The little man had sat at a table on the pavement, staring at him during two days. Now, when he came across, he said with exquisite courtesy: "They tell me your name is Yehenna, senhor."

"It is Henna," said Ramsay, smiling, offering him a chair. The little man stared even as he sat.

"It is true," he murmured, as if to himself. "It could not be anything else."

"What could not, senhor?" asked Ramsay, in his stumbling Portuguese.

"The name, Yehenna. But it is strange. You are not of this province at all, not of Brazil, perhaps."

"No," Ramsay laughed. "I am just travelling. I am from England." He told the little man, as best he could, where he had come from and how he had come.

"Why did you come here, of all places, senhor?" asked the little man, whose wonder seemed to have grown. Ramsay, the Englishman, blushed and felt confused.

"I don't really know," he said. "I had nothing to do back in Rio, I just came along—it was something to do."

"I see," said the little man quite simply, as if miracles were every day. "It was ordained." He sat staring at Ramsay. "You will then come with me to-morrow?"

"Eh?" cried Ramsay.

"Well, yes, of course." He seemed to realise that there was something not quite Latin in Ramsay. "It is this, senhor: I will take you riding to see something strange, that is it. You say you are here on holiday—well, it will be something 'to make time,' and it will interest you. Yes, it will do that, senhor."

And so, on the next day, Ramsay Henna rode out with Dom Miranda, who owned a big estate near by, across the rolling *campos*. He rode all morning, and in the early afternoon came upon a great *rocimhar*, which, from its size and shape and its warren of outbuildings, the flock of peons lazing about it, spoke of a rich and almost ducal affluence.

As he walked into that house, Ramsay Henna began to thrill. He knew that it meant something tremendous. He knew that it was the meaning of his coming to South America. He followed Dom Miranda, feeling curiously exalted and disembodied. They went into a long *sala*, where, by a big fire of scented logs, a tall, lean old man sat, and on a golden skin, at his knee, a slim, tall woman.

They walked across that room to the man and stood before him, Dom Miranda saying nothing, but smiling, looking as though he were an impresario satisfied with a play he had just staged.

The old man and the woman—she must have been about Ramsay's age—looked up at them. Then quite suddenly both stood, both made a half-step towards Ramsay, staring in surprise.

He could not wonder at that. Both of them, father and daughter, were remarkably

alike. Both had a long slim spareness, both had narrow, pointed faces under high, broad brows, both had eyes of a curious blueness—eyes that he knew so well, because they were his own, as their features and their figures were his own.

Dom Miranda said with a chuckle, "This is His Excellency Dom Sebastiano Yehenna," and to the pair, "And this is another Dom Yehenna."

The old man smiled and said, "Yes. Welcome, cousin," as though the thing was as simple as an afternoon tea call. And the girl came to him, caught his hand, looked into his eyes, cried: "There *was* another—I felt it! I knew it! The name is not finished!"

Cousins, there was no doubt of it. The old man, splendidly courteous, admirable in his delight, explained it all to him before the fire of sweet-smelling logs.

"You spell it H-E-N-N-A, but so did my great-grandfather."

"He was Sebastian Henna?"

"It is true. You have heard of him?"

"He is the bad example of the family. He went gallivanting across the sea, broke the Henna tradition."

"Ah, yes, I see that; we are a tenacious people," smiled the old man. "Well, he founded our family, too. He came out here, after much wandering. This was a small republic, then, not too well peopled. He settled, and took land and did well. Do you know that he became a President?"

"No," said Ramsay. "I couldn't even have dreamed of that."

"Perhaps it surprises you a little. A Henna a President. But he was a good President—dour, honest, conservative, like all of us."

"Like all of us—yes," agreed Henna.

"He died here and left a big family. He had a curious, strong family feeling. Have the English Hennas that feeling?"

"They have, very much indeed," agreed Ramsay.

"I know," said the old man, with a sigh. "It has plagued me also. I have it strongly. And my girl there, Inez. Those of us who have the looks of the Hennas, they have it. But the others—no. That is how the family dwindled. In a land like this, where thin, hot blood is prone to adventures—well, it is easy to thin out a family. We are all gone, the Yehennas, save us. We are the last of that name here."

"I am the last of the name in Britain," said Ramsay.

Dom Sebastiano sat staring at him in astonishment. "So," he murmured. "Then it is truly wonderful."

But the girl looked up, and she smiled, and Ramsay Henna, somehow, did not seem to think it so wonderful. In fact, he said deliberately, looking at her: "Somehow, I think that is why I had to come."

The girl smiled again, as though she understood entirely.

He stayed on. They did not want him to go—indeed, it seemed as though they recognised that this must be his home. And he was content. It was the place to which he had had to come. It was natural for him to be here.

He took it to his heart, too. It was spacious, fine. There was work worth doing on this great estate, work that he loved doing, work that only a man of his name could justly do. And, above all, there was Inez. He had felt in his heart her beauty from the first moment of seeing her, but he felt that he had known her, loved her before that, long before that.

There came the time when he could speak of this, when he held her tight in his arms.

"You knew I was coming?" he whispered to her.

"I felt it," she answered softly. "And you?"

"I felt something, someone calling. It was you who called?"

"I tried to call; I wanted someone of our name to know that we were here."

"But you seemed to know I would come. When I first saw you, you seemed to be expecting me?"

"Yes. I felt that someone had heard—knew."

"I don't understand it."

"No," she answered, "no, I don't understand it altogether, either. But it has happened. I just wanted one of our name to come, wanted and wanted. I seemed to send my want out—oh, with such ardour!—across the world to that place from which we sprang. Then, after a time, it seemed to me that someone in that place heard me."

"Yes, it must have been you I heard. But 'after a time'—what does that mean?"

"I began calling when I was about fourteen, began hoping, and sending out my desire. But it was six months before I felt that someone heard."

"Yes," said Ramsay slowly. "That is it. That would be the time when I first said I would like to go to South America. It was an unexpected thing to say. My

Aunt was very angry. I was surprised at the desire myself. Now I see. It was you. But it was not me particularly you wanted?"

"Not you particularly—*then*," she whispered, and she crept closer. "Just one of our name."

"Because your name was ending here?"

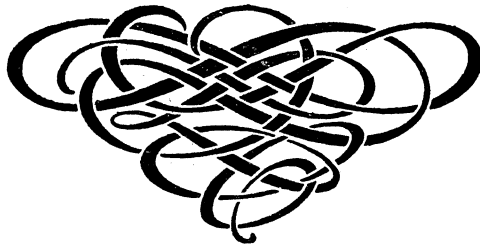
"Yes. You know my father. You know him because what is in his blood is in yours. You know how he would feel about the name going out. His queer, strong, stubborn pride in our name—it is in your blood, too. It was a torment and a sorrow to him that

the last of us should be a girl—with no more Yehennas after her marriage. I saw the pain he felt, I knew what it meant to him. I feel his every feeling with my own pain, so I called and called, girl-like, perhaps——"

"But wonderfully," he smiled. "But I know what he felt. I feel that way, too. And you?"

"It is in me, too." She laughed softly and pulled his head down to her lips. "I, too, am a Yehenna, and my blood called."

"And my blood heard, and I came," said Ramsay. And, smiling, he took all that her lips gave.



## MY TOYS.

(TO PATRICIA.)

**M**Y toys have lost their shiny paint;  
 They're funny things and out of style;  
 Their music rings a little faint;  
 Their costumes cause your toys to smile;  
 They've been so long behind the door,  
 Discarded by the romping years,  
 While business rolled about the floor  
 And banged among the blocks of cares,  
 But now I bring them out to show  
 How Daddy loved them long ago.

You see they are not broken quite,  
 Nor really bent beyond repair;  
 Indeed, their glory, touched with light,  
 Seems just a little bit more fair;  
 For these were gallant toys and bold,  
 God built to last beyond a day,  
 And as for really growing old,  
 'Tis only evil wears away,  
 And Love keeps bright each little toy  
 Once cuddled by a Golden Boy.

LLOYD ROBERTS.



*Photo by]*

TYPES OF EMIGRANTS FROM ENGLAND TO AUSTRALIA.

*[Sport & General.*

# BRITISH EMIGRATION WITHIN THE EMPIRE

By C. DE THIERRY

SINCE the United Kingdom has never been large enough for the energy of its people, eager volunteers amongst them have always been ready for adventures abroad. Before the Cape was doubled and America discovered, they were absorbed in the Crusades and the Hundred Years War. Afterwards the world became the theatre of their activities. But until the nineteenth century emigration was on a small scale. True, all the seafaring nations planted colonies, but these developed slowly, the English settlements excepted. It was not until science and invention brought about social and economic conditions favourable at once to swift and cheap transport, and to the rapid increase of population, that the trickle of emigration across the Atlantic became a tide. Unfortunately, however, it was not the British Empire

which benefited. The following table shows the number of emigrants who went from the United Kingdom during the sixty years ending in 1914 to places abroad, chiefly to the United States.

Period.	Number.
1853-60 . . . . .	823,968
1861-70 . . . . .	1,154,161
1871-76 . . . . .	786,649
1876-80 . . . . .	478,865
1881-85 . . . . .	879,982
1886-90 . . . . .	520,682
1891-95 . . . . .	926,478
1896-00 . . . . .	739,256
1901-05 . . . . .	676,220
1906-13 . . . . .	753,489
Total . . . . .	7,739,750

From 1900 onward to the outbreak of war, however, the stream of emigration from the United Kingdom to the United States fell, and began to set in towards the Dominions. It was due in the main to the sustained efforts of Canada, which created a highly efficient machinery for attracting emigrants in this country, and for establishing them as useful citizens within her own borders. Australia and New Zealand, too, had begun to realise the need for increasing their man-power, but distance and Trade Union exclusiveness hampered their activity. As for South Africa, owing

of an average of 250,000 persons annually, a process which temporarily ceased with the War, and can be but slowly resumed. Nevertheless, there are people who are opposed to any encouragement of overseas settlement. Their contention is that as our wastage in fighting the Germans was so great, we require all our people at home. But while four years of war were represented in round figures by 700,000, besides which the flow of Continental immigration into our island completely dried up, our loss in man-power by emigration during the four years before the War



Photo by]

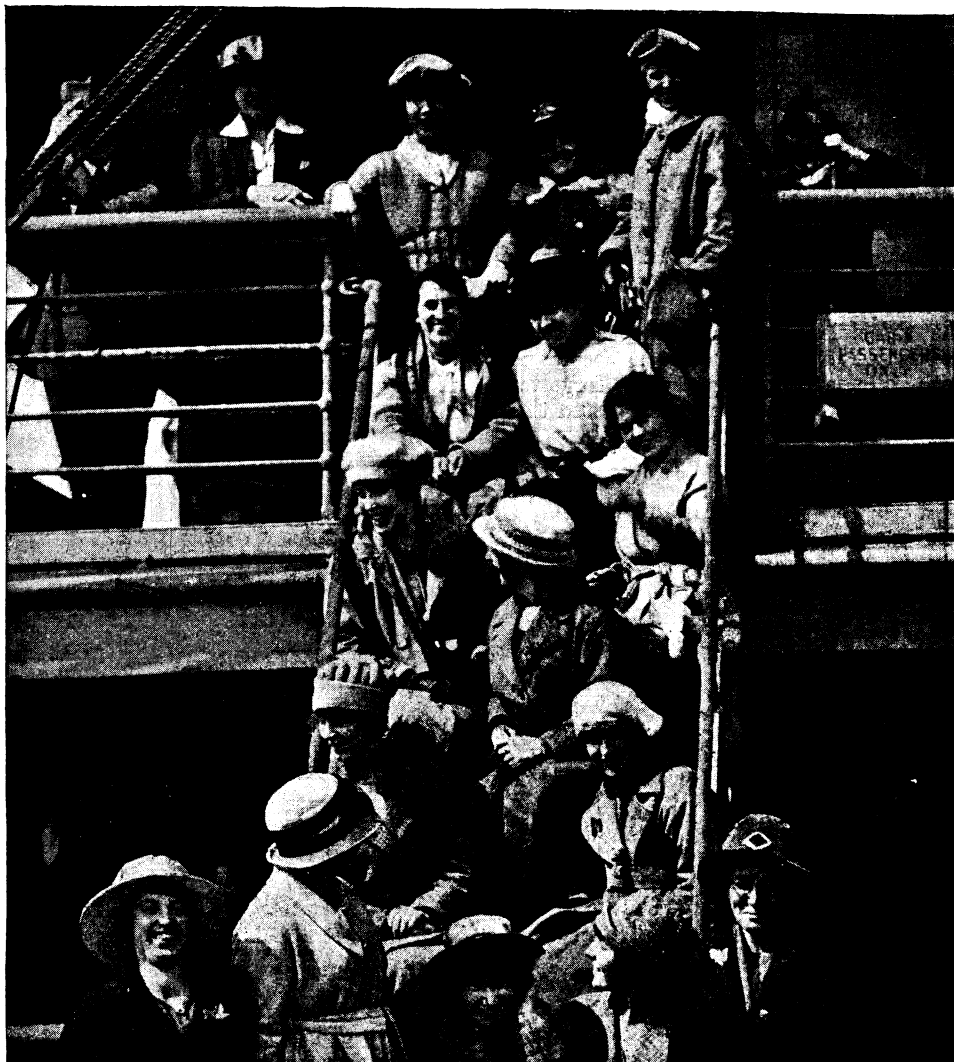
WOMEN EMIGRANTS ON THEIR WAY TO AUSTRALIA.

[Sport & General.

to her cheap and plentiful supply of native labour, and her special agricultural and social conditions, she welcomed only settlers with capital, and will be compelled to maintain this policy for years to come. She is one of the group which includes East Africa, Rhodesia, British Guiana, and other Imperial territories, whose future largely depends upon the practical recognition by Britain that they should be favoured as sources of raw material in preference to foreign sources of supply.

For some time to come, then, Australasia and Canada will be the chief outlets for our overcrowded population. During the decade ended in 1914 it was relieved by the exodus

was represented in figures by 1,006,000. Then, according to the latest official returns, unemployment is as disquieting a feature of our social and economic life as it ever was in the past. The situation is further complicated by a shortage of 500,000 houses, which is practically a new feature in the problem, though, it is to be hoped, but a temporary one. In short, there is not room at the present time in these islands for the expansion of our population, and a large proportion of it is living in conditions which, when they are not an outrage on decency, make for neither health nor comfort. We must hive or appreciably lower the national standard of living.



EX-SERVICE GIRLS ON THEIR WAY TO CANADA.

*Reproduced by permission of the Canadian Pacific Railway Co.*

Men and women of our race will, in these circumstances, seek new homes oversea, whether in so doing they meet with approval or not. Their standpoint is that by emigrating they not only take the first step towards a wider and fuller existence, but make it easier for those who remain behind. This being the situation, it is for State, corporate, and individual effort to see that our strongest stocks are not weakened in the process, and that a system is devised by which our population may be regulated with mutual benefit to Great Britain and the Dominions, in the one case by relieving congestion, in the other by filling up empty spaces. The stream of emigration need not

be larger than it was before the War, but it can be so directed that our surplus manpower finds the promised land under the Union Jack instead of under a foreign flag. The tendency is already in operation, as the following figures show :—

TOTAL EMIGRATION OF BRITISH SUBJECTS  
FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Year.	To British Empire.	To the United States.
1900	25,329	47,978
1904	65,539	66,790
1908	65,164	31,451
1913	285,046	73,943

Up to the War successive British Governments took no interest in the matter. Not that State-aided emigration was a failure. On the contrary, it was highly successful, particularly in Cape Colony, the Eastern Province of which was, a century ago, planted with British emigrants at the nominal cost of £50,000. In Canada and New Zealand colonies of time-expired soldiers proved equally good settlers. Then the principles of reinforcing the sparse population of the Empire in accordance with economic strategy were forgotten. True, in 1870 a Commission suggested their

between 1850 and 1914 had gone to the Dominions instead, there might possibly have been no war, or, at the worst, it would have been appreciably shortened.

In any case, the British Government are compelled, like their predecessors in the remoter past, seriously to consider the question of emigration. For they have incurred heavy responsibilities in connection with demobilised soldiers and their dependents. That is why, for the first time since the Maori Wars, the State is actively promoting oversea settlement, but, unfortunately, without any ideal. Neither the



EMIGRANTS BOUND FOR CANADA.

*Reproduced by permission of the Canadian Pacific Railway Co.*

revival to meet unemployment, but of the small sum set aside for the purpose, £9,700, only £500 was devoted to the settlement of Britons oversea. The rest was swallowed up in official salaries and rent. But the War has entirely altered our attitude towards this question. We have learned by experience that the destination of our surplus population is not of minor, but of major importance. On the day Britain took up the German challenge, the manhood of the Empire stood by her side. But if the bulk of the 7,000,000 emigrants who went from the United Kingdom to the United States

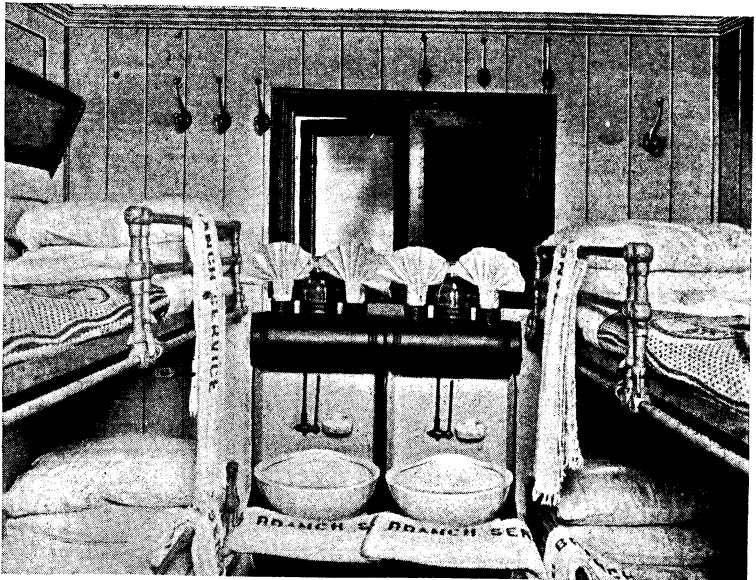
Cabinet nor the Ministry of Reconstruction took the problem seriously until the payment of unemployment insurance frightened the Treasury. Then it was found cheaper to pay the passages of ex-Service men and women to the Dominions. An organisation was formed under the control of the Colonial Office, called the Oversea Settlement Committee, which has already sent forth 70,000 persons, including children. But applications pour in at the rate of 1,000 a week, and originally the operation of the scheme was timed to end on January 1, 1921. But the Dominion Agents-General



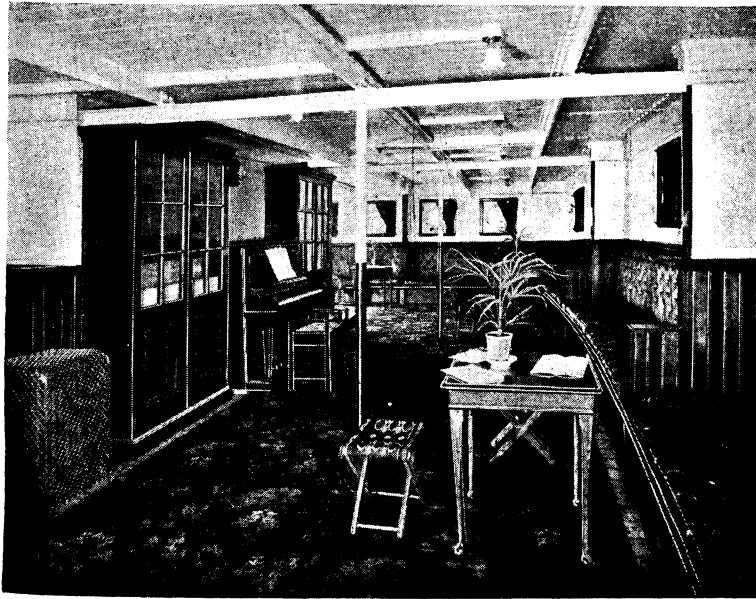
represented to the sympathetic attention of Colonel Amery, then Colonial Secretary, that, owing to limited facilities, if grave injustice were not to be done, the period must be extended. Consequently, all those whose applications were in by the end of 1920 have since been entitled to a free passage whenever it could be arranged.

But it has often happened in our history that a small administrative step, taken to meet an emergency, has led to great developments. So it may be with the establishment of the Oversea Settlement Committee. It may mark the first stage of an intelligent policy in which the

being and security. Up to the Armistice there was no central authority, while effort was further hampered by lack of the stimulus of national interest. In these circumstances overlapping and consequent waste were



A THIRD-CLASS FOUR-BERTH CABIN ON A P. AND O. BRANCH SERVICE STEAMER.



THIRD-CLASS PASSENGERS NOWADAYS TRAVEL IN FAR GREATER COMFORT THAN FORMERLY: A THIRD-CLASS LOUNGE FOR WOMEN PASSENGERS ON A P. AND O. BRANCH SERVICE STEAMER.

*Reproduced by permission of the P. and O. Branch Service.*

inevitable. The Colonial Office provided information, the Board of Trade shipping, and the Local Government Board the means for sending friendless children over-sea; but they worked independently of one another and of the Dominion Agencies, not to speak of the numerous societies and organisations which did their little bit in the cause. To return to such a muddled and ineffective system of imperial duty is

whole Empire will co-operate for the conservation of its man-power, whose movement should be directed so as to increase its well-

dealing with a great impossible. Hence it is to be hoped that the Oversea Settlement Committee will not

come to an untimely end, but will expand, since in it, for the first time, the British and Dominion Governments are linked for the common purpose of promoting emigration within the British Empire. The aim should be to make it, not only as efficient and well-inspired as the machinery created by the Dominions, but to constitute it as a central authority for the co-ordination of all effort in the United Kingdom towards filling up the vast empty spaces in the Empire. The most urgent need at present is the dissemination of information. Possible emigrants

a big minority of the womanhood—of the nation is united by bonds stronger than party or class, with interests of its own which do not run on lines hitherto accepted. At first ex-Service men were divided, which made for weakness and the intrusion of political influences. But, owing to the efforts of Earl Haig and his Generals, the various Associations were, after protracted negotiations, combined in one last summer, under the name of the British Legion. This organisation is in a very strong position. If it lacks funds for the purposes of emigra-



LAND IN SIGHT: WOMEN EMIGRANTS BOUND FOR CANADA.

*Reproduced by permission of the Canadian Pacific Railway Co.*

do not know what the Dominions offer in such full measure, and, if they do, many are ignorant as to how they may avail themselves of it.

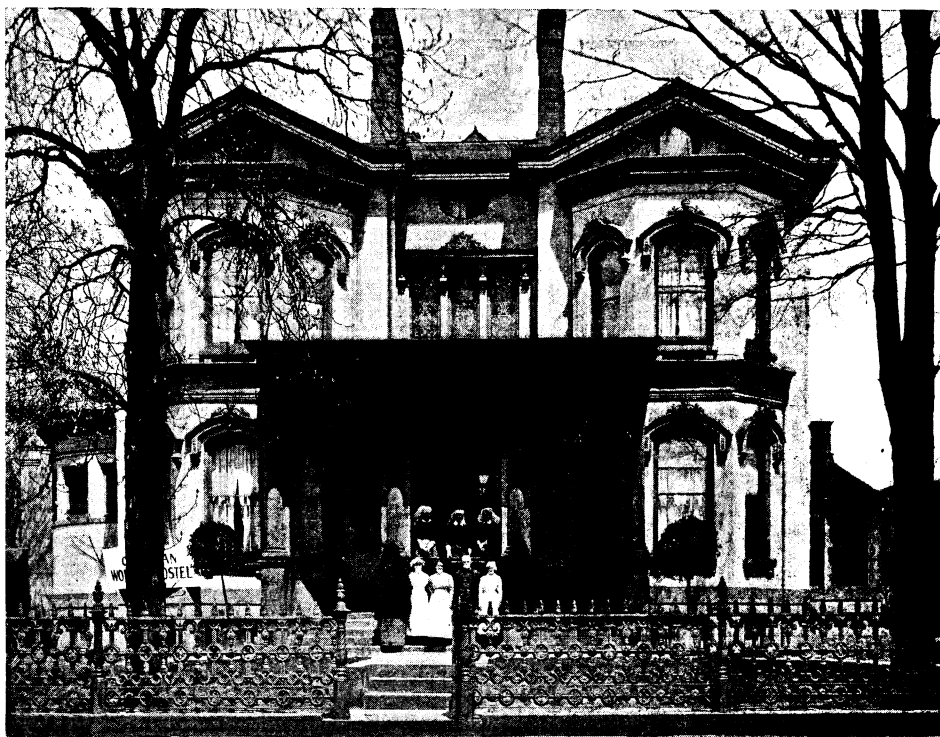
To meet the need, an existing agency is ready and willing to serve. If it does as its leaders hope, the task will probably be performed far better and cheaper than if the Government undertook it. Never had British individualism a finer opportunity to prove that the modern tendency to wait on the doorstep of Downing Street for everything is not only unnecessary, but costly. The great bulk of the manhood—including

tion, it has able, disinterested, and voluntary leaders, a network of branches all over the country, and the power to associate itself with similar bodies all over the Empire. Now, the members of this Legion and their dependents constitute, in the main, the strength of the stream of emigration setting out from our shores for the Dominions. To help and guide it is, therefore, one of the aims of the Legion.

Without any multiplication of paid officials, it can co-operate with the Dominion Agencies, the Colonial Office, the Ministry of Pensions, and the Unemployment Exchanges

so as to bring them into touch with its workless and adventurous members ; it can secure to those who depart a friendly welcome on arriving at their destination ; it can provide facilities for the dissemination of full and trustworthy information. It can thus introduce a human and sympathetic note into emigration, which has hitherto been painfully lacking, and so make our people realise the essential unity of the Empire. Before the War, men, women, and children of our race went forth

for securing British subjects as emigrants, but they offer land to desirable settlers free, or for a nominal sum per acre, besides lending money on easy terms to those without capital. To British ex-Service men special facilities are granted, Queensland treating them as liberally as she does her own. The Premiers of two Australian States are now in England, one seeking the co-operation of the British Government in a big land settlement scheme ; the other has already placed his plan before this country. It is



*Photo by]*

*[British & Colonial Press, Toronto.*

THE CANADIAN WOMEN'S HOSTEL, TORONTO.

as if the nation cared nothing about them or where they went. It will be the business and privilege of the British Legion to bring home to us that Britons who are settling oversea under the Crown are not exiles, but cadets of the House, who are taking up a share in a distant and undeveloped part of the Family Estates. Under Earl Haig the Legion is going to put emigration on a national as well as on an imperial basis.

The Dominions are more than willing to play their part. Not only do they maintain expensive machinery in the United Kingdom

to place 6,000 British lads, between fifteen and eighteen, as apprentices to farmers in South Australia, and so favourable are the conditions offered that already applications double the number specified have been received. There are, too, individual schemes, which, if less striking to the imagination than those launched by State effort, are still of considerable importance. The Canadian Pacific Railway, which, before the War, placed tens of thousands of British civilians on its own lands, is continuing the good work, besides giving generous terms to ex-Service men.

Should the Oversea Settlement Committee cease to be responsible for the emigration of demobilised soldiers, there will be plenty of scope for its activity. There are civilians and friendless children whose future should be on our frontiers. With regard to placing these last in life, the Local Government Board has its methods, while the Barnardo Homes and similar institutions are doing a great work on enlightened lines. There is not even a central authority in the United Kingdom for dealing with these children. Scotland sends none of hers overseas, Ireland many, and England few. The

children, but, if they stay at home, has also that of training them to make a living. How desirous the Dominions are to receive them is evident from the fact that between 1916 and 1919, while child emigration was suspended, no fewer than 10,000 applications for children were received by orphanages in this country from Canada alone. It is she who takes the bulk of them, and has recently opened her gates to the movement again. In any scheme of imperial policy in this connection the youthful emigrant will have an important place. The Dominions want British stock, the United Kingdom must hive. So that an arrangement could be made by which they should take as many children as possible rather than adults, whose upkeep, education, and training are provided by this country.



Photo by]

[Isaac Erb & Son, St. John, N.B.

A DORMITORY IN THE CANADIAN WOMEN'S HOSTEL, ST. JOHN.

following figures for England alone in 1913 show what an opportunity is being missed :—

Division.	Number.	Sent Oversea.
Reformatories . . .	4,731	50
Industrial Schools . .	15,630	176
Poor Law . . . . .	200,000	<i>No recent statistics.</i>
Orphans and Deserted	45,000	568

It is in the interest of the children themselves that they should grow up away from their old environment; it is to the interest of the new land that is prepared to welcome them, since they learn without having to unlearn; and to that of the United Kingdom, which not only bears a heavy burden of expense in maintaining them as

Under the Oversea Settlement scheme the passages of all the ex-Service men and women whose applications have been accepted are paid by the British Government. But unless they have friends in the new land, or are guaranteed employment, the Dominion authorities will make themselves responsible only for domestic and land workers. For servants the demand is continuous all the year round, as they can be placed the day they arrive. The organisation at the Canadian Emigration offices, in Regent Street and at Australia House, for dealing with this type of emigrant, is admirable. No girl's application is granted until she gives proofs, personal and written, of her respectability, qualifications, and physical fitness. If she comes from a distance and has no friends in London, she is met at the station and accompanied to one of the hostels of the Y.W.C.A.

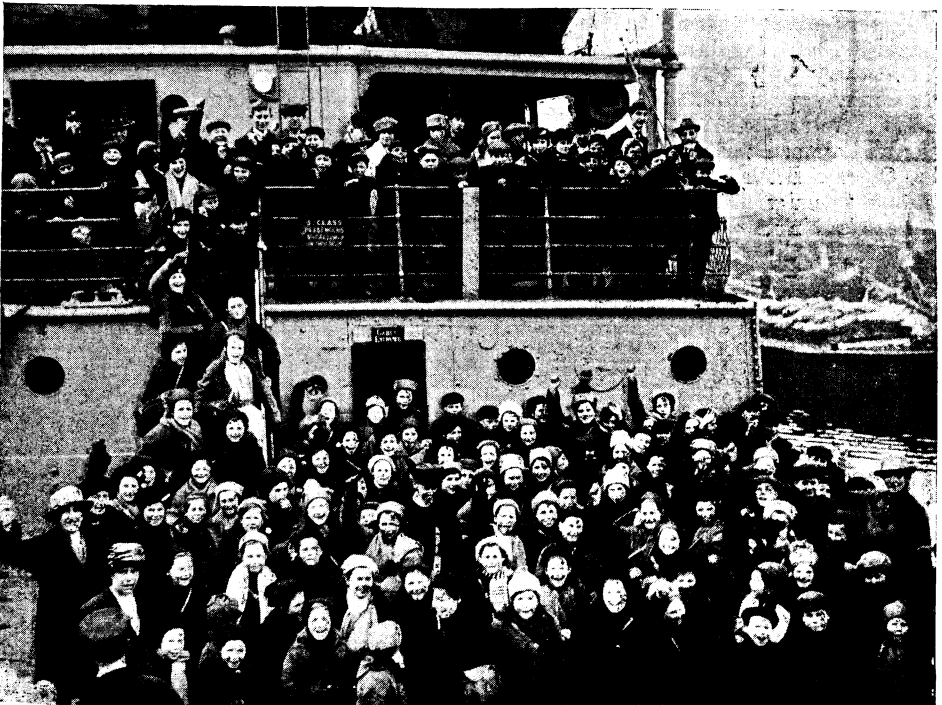
Next morning she forms one of a party who, under the care of the Emigration



*Photo by*

*[The Canadian Pacific Railway Co.]*

A PARTY SENT OUT BY THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND WAIFS AND STRAYS SOCIETY.



*Photo by*

*[Topical.]*

A BARNARDO PARTY LEAVING ENGLAND.

Staff in London of the Dominion that is to receive them, are taken to the station and thence by train to port of embarkation. There they are handed over to the captain of the ship and of the matron who is to have charge of them on the voyage. On the other side official and voluntary organisations combine in a similar way to shepherd these girls, until finally they are placed in the care of their employers. In Canada a chain of hostels has been established from St. John's on the Atlantic coast to Vancouver on the Pacific coast, in which the girls may lodge pleasantly the night they arrive. Nor does the eye of authority lose sight of them even then. It watches over them until they are quite established in their new home.

The conditions at sea for our people setting their faces Dominionwards are yearly improving. They would have been regarded as luxurious by the colonists who laid the foundations of the Empire, and come up to the standard of comfort even in these days. Naturally, as their fare is paid for them, or is about half the lowest passenger rate, emigrants are not given the best part of the ship or unlimited deck accommodation. But food is good and plentiful, and cleanliness is sailor-like in its perfection. The P. & O. Company go further. They have established a branch service to South Africa and Australasia, the fine, modern vessels of which carry only third-class passengers. These may pay their own fare, but the bulk of them are assisted civilians or ex-Service men and women travelling outward under the Oversea Settlement scheme. The advantage to emigrants of this new departure—which is being adopted by other steamship lines—is that the main deck is available for the use of everyone on board, and that the service at meal-time is equally good in the

as they think it may be a kind of slur on them later on. The idea is mistaken. But, like other objections to the steerage passage in this connection, it is met by the third-class liner as run by the P. & O.

It is one of the signs of lack of vision in the Trade Unions, both at home and overseas, that they have not seen the possibilities of close co-operation on the question of emigration within the Empire. In 1889 Lord—then Mr.—Morley at Newcastle said "It is an awful fact . . . that in this country, with all its vast resources . . . 45 per cent.—that is to say, nearly one-half—of the persons who reach the age of sixty-one are or have been paupers." Nothing was done to exploit these resources, and sixteen years later Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman deplored that between twelve and thirteen millions of our population were on "the verge of hunger." Still nothing was done to create an employment exchange on an imperial basis, so that the hungry and workless could find all and more than they ever dreamed under their own flag. A steady flow of immigration means to the frontiers of the Empire a general increase of security, wealth, and prosperity, together with a growing demand for British manufactured goods, while to the heart of the Empire a steady flow of emigration means fewer workers and more for them to do. That it is, for economic reasons, wisdom in this country to take profound interest in the distribution of its fluid man-power may be gathered from the fact that the countries, the bulk of whose immigrants are British, take a far greater proportion of British goods than the United States, in which the British element is being swamped by people from Continental Europe. In this connection the following table is interesting:—

Year.	Country.	Population.	British Exports to.	Per Head of Population.
1905 . .	Australasia . . . . .	5,000,000	£ 26,471,259	£ 5 0 0
	Argentine . . . . .	5,678,197	13,002,611	2 5 0
	Canada . . . . .	6,000,000	13,767,679	2 0 0
	United States . . . . .	80,000,000	23,915,918	0 6 0
1920 . .	Australasia . . . . .	6,525,741	73,443,388	11 4 0
	Argentine . . . . .	8,533,332	42,839,819	5 0 0
	Canada . . . . .	9,000,000	25,253,800	2 16 0
	United States . . . . .	105,683,108	104,804,018*	0 19 0

three dining saloons. It seems a small matter, but many of the better-class emigrants shrink from travelling steerage,

\* This large increase, as compared with 1905, is due partly to the state of the exchange as between Britain and the United States.

Moreover, it has been estimated that in fifty years the Empire has lost financially the stupendous sum of £2,000,000,000 by the stream of Britons to foreign countries. But that is one of the calculations which only serve to reveal the poverty of figures. For how is it possible by means of them to convey any idea of the potent man-power our want of system has forced under a foreign flag? Its value cannot be estimated in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence at all. Take the United States, for instance. Continental countries send them settlers, but not leaders, and the same is equally true of any other country to

which Englishmen go in any considerable number.

The politicians, governing classes, and the Trade Unions have failed in this vital matter to rise to their opportunity. Ex-Service men and women may succeed. Already they have given a new and higher character to emigration, and are on the way to make our people realise, as they have never yet done, "that England is their home, the Empire is their country." They and their comrades who have fallen saved this great heritage of ours in the War. Who but they can better show us how to make the worthiest use of it in time of peace?



## GREETING.

**M**ORNIN', me lad!  
 Why be 'ee sad?  
 Hearn bird in thicket 'ere do sing—  
 Illy-illy! Illy-illy!  
 An' 'ee sad—why, 'tis silly!

T' sky it be blue  
 As ever too,  
 An' th' 'ay be cut—'ow sweet it smells!  
 Willie, will 'ee? Willie, will 'ee?  
 Not be glad? Willie, will 'ee?

Aye long an' far,  
 Ye fought in t' War—  
 Th' Old Country still be wond'rous green—  
 Willie, will 'ee? Willie, will 'ee?  
 Forget it? Willie, will 'ee?

'Ee to delight  
 Maids' eyes be bright—  
 Hearn bird in thicket still do sing:  
 Willie, will 'ee? Willie, will 'ee?  
 Frown at luv—will 'ee, Willie?

EVERETT HODGE.



"There is no drinking water here."

# DEAD RECKONING

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

I HAVE killed a man because he disagreed with me.

Anything more futile it is hard to imagine in cold blood, for by killing him I have proved nothing. He still holds his view. I know it because I have spoken to him *since*, and he still laughs at me, though softly, compassionately, not as he laughed on that night when the absurdity happened.

Perhaps I am mad, but you shall judge. In any case, that is of no great importance, for by the time you read this, my confession—if, indeed, it is ever read—I shall have ceased to encumber the earth.

He was young, and strong, and filled with that terrible self-assurance of youth that sets an older man's teeth on edge. During his short term of tuition in the schools of the South there was nothing that he had not learned to do better (in theory) than a man of fifty years' experience; and obstinate— But I must not let myself go. It is my duty to set down here precisely what happened, without prejudice, without feeling even, if that were possible. Yet as I write my pulse quickens—I will

wait a little. It is unfair to him to continue at present.

Here on this reef off the Queensland coast there are unbelievable quantities of fish. Even I have never seen so many, nor of such brilliant colouring. It is possible to wade into the tepid water and catch them with the hand. I have caught hundreds to-day, for lack of something better to do—and set them free; for I will have no more blood on my hands, even that of a fish. Besides, what is the use? There is no drinking water here, nothing but blinding sunlight, a ridge of discoloured coral cleaving the blue mirror of the sea like a razor edge, and myself—a criminal perched upon it as upon a premature scaffold.

But I have overlooked the pickle bottle. It came to me floating, not quite empty, and corked against the flies, just as he and I had left it after the last meal. When the wreck sank, it must have risen from the fo'castle table and up through the hatch—it is curious that nothing else should rise—and it occurred to me that by its aid, and that of the little notebook with pencil attached



which I always carry, it would be possible to set my case before the world. I must continue, or there may not be time to say all.

I am what they call an old man on Thursday Island, for none but blacks live to any age in the neighbourhood of this sun-baked tile on the roof of Australia. But I come of Old Country stock, and blood will tell.

I have mixed little with others, preferring the society of my only child, a daughter, to the prattlers and drinkers of a small equatorial community. Perhaps I have been too circumscribed, too isolated from my fellow-creatures. I only know that until *he* came I was content. My small weather-board house ashore, the ketch in which I brought sandalwood from the mainland coast, were my twin worlds. In each all things were conducted according to my wishes—according, rather, to the methods I had evolved from long experience, and that their merits were borne out by results none could deny.

The house, with its small, well-tended garden, was the best on Thursday Island. My daughter, dutiful and intelligent, managed it according to my wishes, so that it ran like a well-oiled mechanism. And the ketch—that was my inviolable domain. Above and below decks, although only a twenty-ton cargo-carrier, she would have put many a yacht to shame. There was nothing superfluous, nothing lacking. Everything aboard had its place and its use; that is how I contrived to work her single-handed for nearly ten years.

They called me a curmudgeon and a skinflint, but I could afford to smile. My cargoes were not so large as theirs, and took longer to gather, but while they were eating into their profits by paying wages and shares to lazy crews, mine came solely to myself, and never in all those years did I have a mishap. Trust an owner to look after his craft, say I, and trust none other.

Then, as I have said, *he* came. How he gained entrance I have never known, but he had a way with him, that boy, and when one evening I returned from a trip, he was sitting on the verandah with Doris. She was evidently embarrassed.

"This is Mr. Thorpe, father," she said, and went in to prepare the supper, which was late for the first time that I could remember.

"Indeed?" said I, and remained standing, a fact that Thorpe appeared to overlook, for he reseated himself with all the assurance in life.

"Yes," he said in a manner that I believe is called "breezy," "that is my name, Captain Brent, and I'm pleased to make your acquaintance. Have you had a good trip?"

"Passable," said I. "And now, if you'll excuse me, I must go in and change."

"Oh, don't mind me," returned Thorpe, spreading himself in the cane chair and lighting a cigarette; "I'm quite comfortable."

For a moment I stood speechless, then went into the house.

Doris was preparing the meal, but turned as I entered. Never before had I seen the look that I saw in her face at that moment—fear battling with resolve.

"Who is that boy?" I asked her.

"I have already told you, father," she answered; "he is a young man named Thorpe—Edward Thorpe."

"Ah," said I, momentarily at a loss, "a young man—named Thorpe. And why does he come here?"

"To see me," returned Doris in her quiet, even voice, but I saw that she trembled.

I took her by the arm.

"Girl," said I, "tell me all."

"We love one another," she told me, looking full into my eyes with no hint of timidity; "we are engaged to be married."

I could not speak. I could not even protest when, at no invitation of mine, this youth had the effrontery to come in to supper. The world—my twin worlds—rocked under my feet.

It was a terrible meal: I, speechless, at one end of the table, my daughter, pale but courteous, at the other, and this clown set between us, regaling us, as he no doubt thought, with anecdotes of life down South.

And this was not enough, but he must come into the kitchen afterwards and help to wash up. He said it made him feel more at home. Now, it has been my custom, ever since leaving a civilisation that I abhor and finding comfort in this far corner of the earth, to help wash up when I am at home. The thing is part of the routine of life, and as such demands proper management. A nice adjustment of the water's temperature is necessary, for if too hot it may crack glass and china and ruin knife-handles; and if too cold, in spite of a certain amount of soda, it fails to remove grease. Then, too, it is my invariable habit at the end to turn the wash-bowl upside down to drain, and spread the dish-cloth upon it to dry. It occurs to me that these may appear small matters to

some, but is not life composed of such, and do they not often turn out to be the greater? And our uninvited guest disorganised the entire routine by pathetic efforts at buffoonery such as tying one of Doris's aprons about his waist, making a napkin-ring climb his finger by a circular motion of the hand, and laughing openly at what he evidently regarded as our fads.

The spreading of the dish-cloth on the wash-bowl appeared to amuse him most of all.

"I suppose you always do that," he said.

"It is the custom in this house," said I.

"And when you come to think of it, why not?" he reflected, with his handsome head at an angle.

"There are many things one has to come to think of before one knows anything," said I.

And at that he laughed good-naturedly. He always laughed.

At length he went. From my easy-chair in the living-room I heard the last "Good night" and his assured footfall on the verandah steps. Doris came straight to me. I knew she would. Perching herself on the arm of my chair, as she used to when a child, she encircled my shoulder with her arm.

"Do you hate him, father?" she asked me.

I answered her question with another.

"Do you fear me, Doris?" For the look in her face that evening had shocked me.

"I used to sometimes," she said, "but not now."

"And what has worked the transformation?"

She leaned over and whispered in my ear.

I held her from me and studied her as though for the first time. She was young, beautiful, fragile, yet she was stronger than I. I am no fool. I knew that nothing I could do or say would have one particle of weight with her now. She loved and was loved. So it is with women; and such is this miracle of a day, an hour, a fraction of time, that shatters lifelong fealty like glass.

"Then I have nothing to say," said I.

"Nothing?" she questioned me, and again presently, "Nothing?"

And at last I heard myself muttering the absurd formula of wishes for their happiness.

It was bound to come some time. It had come, that was all, and I made the best of it. Of an evening that boy would sit with us and make suggestions for the betterment

of the business—my business. He pointed out that new blood was needed—his blood. By Heavens, how he talked! And there is an insidious power in words. Utter them often enough, with youthful enthusiasm behind them, and they resolve themselves into deeds.

I cannot explain even to myself how it came about, but this was the plan—to take my ketch to Sydney, where she would apparently realise an enormous sum as a converted yacht, and buy another, installing an auxiliary motor-engine with some of the profits. With an engine, and this new blood, it seemed, we were to make a fortune out of sandalwood in three years.

I wanted neither engine, new blood, nor fortune, yet in the end I gave way.

So it was that, rather late in the season, we let go moorings, he and I, and set sail for the South. For the first time in my life I had a crew. My inviolable domain was invaded. What with the thought of this, and the unworthy mission we were engaged upon, it was all I could do to look my ketch in the face. Those with the love of ships in their bones will understand.

More than once I caught Thorpe smiling at one or another of my own small inventions for the easier handling of the boat, or the saving of labour or space below; but he said nothing beyond calling them "gadgets," a word that was new to me.

"Not a bad little packet," he said, after the first hour of his trick at the tiller.

"I am glad to hear you say so," said I, with an irony entirely lost on one of his calibre.

"But she ought to sail nearer the wind than this," he added, staring up at the quivering topsail. "Six points won't do. Under-canvased, that's what she is. By the way, when we get through the reef pass, what's the course?"

"Sou'-sou'-east," said I.

"And where's your deviation card?"

"Never had to bother with one," I told him.

He seemed thunderstruck.

"Of course, she's wooden," he began, "but surely——"

"The course is sou'-sou'-east," I repeated, and went below.

From then onward he took to reeling me off parrot-like dissertations on devioscopes, new pattern compasses, and what-not, until the sound of his voice sickened me. Amongst his other accomplishments, he had sat for a yachting master's ticket, and passed, though

everyone knew, it appeared, how much stiffer were the examinations nowadays than in the past, when half the men called ship's masters had no right to the title, nor even knew the uses of a chronometer.

"Yet they managed to circumnavigate the globe," I pointed out.

"By running down their latitude!" he scoffed.

"Perhaps," said I, whereat he burst into a gale of laughter, and expressed the devout hope that I would never expect him to employ such methods.

"I expect you to do nothing but what you are told," said I, exasperated beyond endurance. "At the present moment you are not getting the best out of her. Give her another point, and make a note of time and distance in the scrap log hanging on yonder nail."

"Dead reckoning," he muttered contemptuously.

"Just that," said I, and left him.

Why did I "leave him"? Why did I "go below"? At all costs I must be fair. I did both these things because I knew that he could argue me off my feet if I remained, that he knew more of deep-sea navigation than I, that I was one of those he had mentioned who are called ship's masters and have no right to the title, nor even knew the uses of a chronometer.

Such a confession is like drawing a tooth to me, but it is made. And as vindication I would point to my record—ten years, single-handed and by dead reckoning without mishap. Can an extra master show better?

As day succeeded day, the tension grew. Often I would sit on a locker gazing on my familiar and beloved surroundings, and ask myself how long I could suffer them to be sneered at and despised. Trust small craft for discovering one man to another. Before three days and three nights had passed, we stood before each other, he and I, stripped to our souls. His every movement was an aggravation to me, especially when he played with the bespangled sextant and toy chronometer he had brought, and when each day, on plotting out my position on the chart according to dead reckoning, I found his, by observation, already there. I rubbed it out. I prayed that there would come such a fog as would obscure the sun and stars for ever.

And it was as though my prayer were answered, for that night we ran into a gale that necessitated heaving to. Luckily it was off the shore, and for forty-eight hours we rode it out in comparative comfort, until

it died as suddenly as it had been born, and was succeeded by a driving mist that stilled the sea as though with a giant white hand.

"You see," said Thorpe, "dead reckoning is all right up to a point, as a check, but how do you know where you are now?"

"Can you tell me?" said I.

"Not until this mist clears," he admitted.

"Well, then——" said I.

He flung away from me with an impatient movement.

"These are the methods of Methuselah," he muttered.

"Nevertheless," I returned, the blood throbbing at my temples, "I know our position at this moment better than any upstart yachtsman."

He turned and looked at me strangely, then of a sudden his mouth relaxed into a smile. At that moment I could have struck him.

"There is no call for us to quarrel," he said gently, "but how—how can you possibly know where we have drifted to in the last forty-eight hours?"

"I have my senses," said I, "and to prove them we will carry on."

"In this mist?"

"In this mist," I thundered. "The wind is fair, the course is now south-half-east, and you'll oblige me by taking the tiller."

He seemed about to speak, but evidently changed his mind, and turned abruptly on his heel.

In silence we shook out the reef and got under way. In silence we remained until the end of his watch, when the mist was dispersed by a brazen sun. Thorpe at once took a sight, and again at noon, and when I had plotted our position on the chart, he was still poring over volumes of nautical tables.

Towards dusk he came to me at the tiller.

"Are you holding this course after dark?" he asked.

"That is as may be," said I.

"Because if you are," he went on, as though I had not spoken, "you'll be on the Barrier Reef inside of five hours."

"I thank you for the information," said I, and he went below.

He knew ship's discipline; I'll say that for him. He might consider myself and my methods archaic, but he recognised my authority and carried out instructions. I am aware that up to the present my case appears a poor one, but I can convey no idea of the pitch to which I was wrought by these eternal bickerings, by the innovation

of another will than my own, and the constant knowledge that he was laughing at me up his sleeve.

But it was a little thing that brought matters to a climax. It is always the little things.

With a fair wind, and in these unfrequented waters, it has always been my habit to lash the tiller and eat in comfort. We were washing up after supper, or, rather, he was washing and I was drying, for the dryer puts away the utensils, and I knew better the proper place for each. At the end he tossed the dish-cloth in a sodden mass upon the table and turned to go.

"The dish-cloth, if you remember," said I, "is spread on the wash-bowl to dry."

He turned and looked at me, and in his eyes I saw a sudden, unaccustomed flame leap to life.

"It'll do it good to have a change," he said.

"I do not think so," said I.

"Naturally," he returned, "but I do."

"And who is the master of this ship?" I asked him.

"As for that, you are," he admitted, "but a dish-cloth is another matter." Suddenly he dropped on to a locker and laughed, though there was a nervous catch in it. "Heavens," he giggled, "we're arguing over a dish-cloth now!"

"And why not," said I, "if you don't know how to use one? Will you be so good as to put it in its proper place?"

He did not answer, but sat looking down at his naked feet.

"This is impossible," he muttered.

"As you will," said I.

"It can't go on; I can't stand it."

"Do you imagine it is any pleasanter for me?" I asked him.

"And who's fault is it?"

"That is a matter of opinion," said I, "but in the meantime things are to be done as I wish. Kindly put the dish-cloth in its proper place."

Again he did not answer, but when he looked up it was with compressed lips.

"You are a frightful old man," he said. Those were his words. I remember every one, and they came from him in deliberate, staccato sentences. "You are that, though no one has dared to tell you so until this minute. You have lived in a rut of your own making so deep and so long that you don't know you're in it. That is your affair, but when you drag others in with you, it is time to speak. I rescued Doris—bless her!

—just in time. Why, man, can't you see? There's no light down there; you can never take a look at yourself and laugh. You have no more sense of humour than a fish. If you had, this absurd quibble could never have come to a head. We should have been sitting here laughing instead. Think of it—a dish-cloth! You are my senior; I ought not to be talking like this to you, but I am; it's just been dragged out of me, and you can take it or leave it. Why not open up a bit—do something different just because it is different, admit there may be something others know that you don't, fling the dish-cloth in a corner. . . ."

Those were some of the things he said to me, and I stood there listening to them from a—from my future son-in-law on my own ship. It seems incredible to me now, but I was dazed with the unexpectedness of his attack. All that remained clearly before me was the issue of the dish-cloth. In the midst of his endless discourse I repeated my command, whereat he burst into another of his inane fits of laughter.

"You find it amusing," said I in a voice I scarce recognised as my own.

"Amusing!" he chuckled. "Think—try and think—a dish-cloth!"

"And one that you will put in its proper place," I told him.

"What makes you think that?" he said, sobering a little.

"Because I say so."

"And if I refuse?" His face was quite grave now. He leant forward, as though interested in my reply. Somehow the sight of it—this handsome, impertinent face of his—caused a red mist to swim before my eyes.

"You will be made to," I said.

"Ah!" was all he answered at the moment, and resumed the study of his feet. If he had remained so, all might have been well. I cannot tell. I only know that at that moment one word stood for him between life and death, and he chose to utter it.

"How?"

I tried to show him, that was all. I swear that was my sole intention. But he was obstinate, that boy. I had not thought it possible for man to be as obstinate as he.

My weight carried him to the floor; besides, I am strong, and the accumulated fury of days and nights was behind me. He was like a doll in my hands, yet a doll that refused to squeak when pressed. There is a sail-rack in the fo'castle, and we were under it, my back against it, my knee at his

chest; and I asked him, lying there laughing up at me, if he intended to do as I had ordered. He rolled his head in a negative.

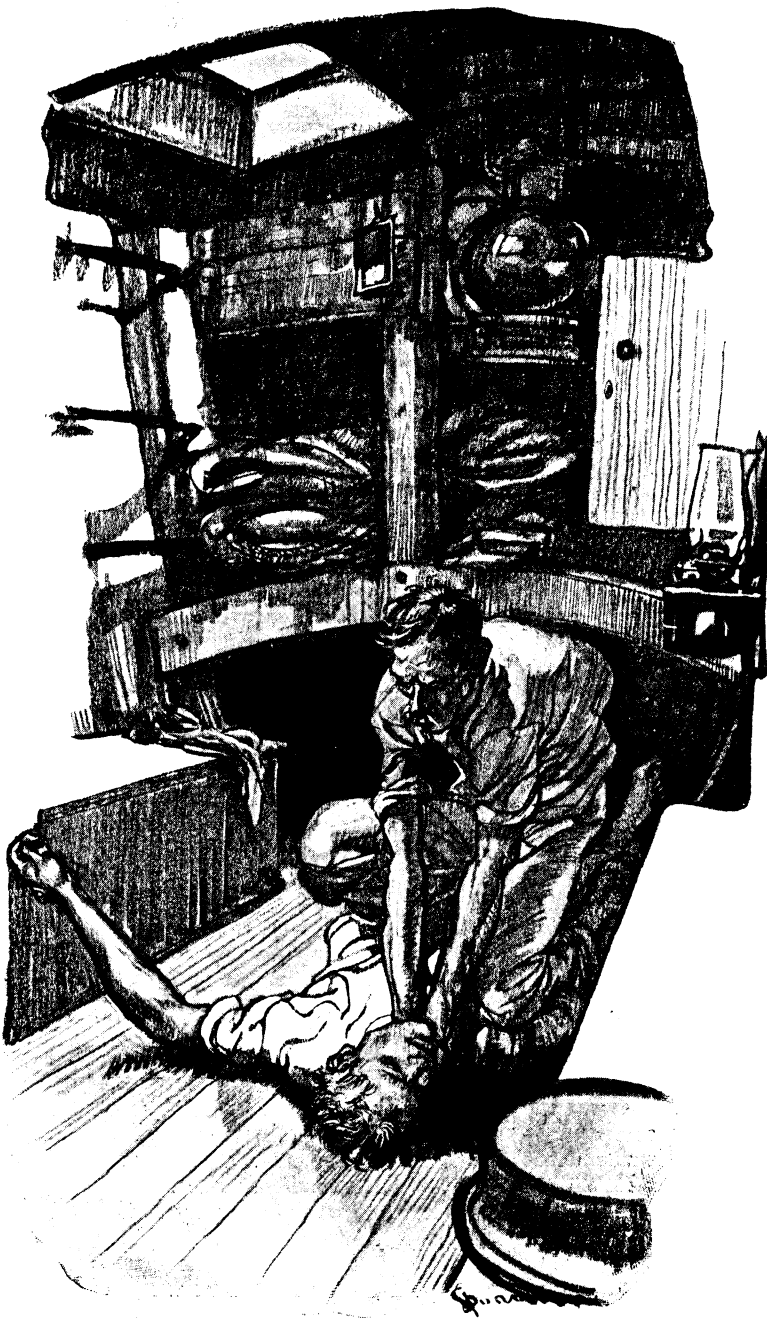
same. At the last something gave beneath my knee, and his jaw dropped, and no movement came from him, even from the heart.

The ripple of water past the ketch's sides brought me back to the present. I rose and stood looking down on him. As I live, it seemed that there was a smile still upon his face!

Of the rest I have no clear recollection. At one moment I was standing there trying—trying to realise what I had done; the next I was flung against the bulkhead as the ketch struck and rose—I can describe it in no other way—struck and rose. Even as I rushed on deck to be caught by a roller and hurled headlong, it seemed to me that a mocking voice called after me: "Dead reckoning!"

It was the Barrier Reef.

And for me it is the Barrier Reef to the end, which is not far off. When I came to, the ketch had sunk, and I tried again to think. I have been trying ever since, and I can get no further than that I have killed him—for a dish-cloth; that if by some miracle I am



"My weight carried him to the floor."

It was all he could do, and the pressure was increased. I must have asked him many times, and the answer was invariably the

rescued, such is the message I shall have for Doris. . . . Is it comedy or tragedy? I am not so sure now. *He* seemed to find

it amusing to the very end, and he was right in some things. Perhaps he is right in this.

I never laugh? Did I not catch myself laughing aloud just now? Perhaps I am developing, somewhat late in life, to be sure, the "sense of humour" he tells me I lack. . . . I have finished. It is for you to read, and judge.

\* \* \* \* \*

The foregoing, with such editing as was necessary to render it intelligible, is the message I found in a pickle bottle firmly wedged amongst the mangrove roots of a creek in the Gulf of Carpentaria. It must have been there for years.

I was duck shooting at the time, but somehow, after happening on to this quaint document besmeared with pickle juice, my interest in the sport flagged. I wanted to know more, and there is only one way to do that on Thursday Island—ask Evans. Consequently that evening found me, not for the first time, on his wide verandah, discussing whisky and soda and the impossible state of the shell market.

"By the way," I ventured presently, "did you ever know a Captain Brent?"

"Still know him, for the matter of that," said Evans. "Why?"

"Then he—I mean he still lives on T. I.," I stammered like a fool.

"Certainly. I used to buy his sandalwood. Buy his son-in-law's now."

"His son-in-law's?"

Evans rolled over in his chair and grinned at me.

"What's the game?" he questioned good-naturedly. "I never saw such a fellow." He rolled back again. "But, come to think of it, there might be something in him for you. The old man's ketch is the first thing I ever heard of to jump the Barrier Reef. I thought that'd make you sit up. But it's the truth. Ask Thorpe—he was aboard when she did it. He and the old man were going South for something—I forget what—and they took the Great Barrier bow on at night. It's been done before, you know, but never quite like that. Must have struck it in a narrow place or something. Anyway, Thorpe says that ketch jumped like a two-year-old, slithered through rotten coral for a bit, and plumped

into deep water beyond, carried by the surf, I expect, and nothing more to show for it than a scored bilge—oh, and a couple of broken ribs—Thorpe's, not the ketch's. He was beaten up pretty considerably when we took him ashore. Is there anything else I can serve you with to-day, sir?"

Evans is a good fellow, but provokingly incomplete.

"Yes," said I. "What happened to the old man?"

"Oh, he rushed on deck at the first shock, it seems, and was promptly bowled over the side by a breaker. But there's no killing him. He just sat on the reef, thinking his ketch sunk and Thorpe dead, until someone came and took him off. Shook him up, though. He's never been quite the same since—which is all to the good, most of us think."

The next evening I took occasion to wander down T. I.'s grass-grown main street, through its herds of cavorting goats, and up the galvanised hillside to where a neat little weatherboard house stood well back from the road.

In the garden, enjoying the cool of the evening, were four people, a white-bearded man seated in a cane chair, a bronzed giant prone and smoking on the grass, and a woman beside him, sitting as only a woman can. Curiously enough, their eyes were all turned in the same direction—to where, in short, the fourth member of the party was engaged in the solemn process of learning to "walk alone." His progress towards his mother's outstretched arms was as erratic as such things usually are—a few ungainly steps, a tottering pause, and an abrupt but apparently painless collapse.

"Seven!" exclaimed the white-bearded man, with an air of personal accomplishment.

"I made it five," grinned the giant.

"I said seven," boomed the other, and I left them at it.

They were Captain Brent and his son-in-law, and somehow I wanted to preserve that picture of them intact.

That, too, was partly why at the summit of the hill I tore my quaint, pickle-stained document into minute fragments and scattered them to the four winds of Torres Straits.



“The veins in the Major’s face became prominent. He rose slowly to his feet, accomplishing the act by the leverage on the arms of his chair of a pair of large red hands.”

# THE SONG OF PSYCHE

By H. F. FRAMPTON

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

MRS. VENTNOR, dressed for travelling, her small, gloved hands supporting her slender form against the edge of a sturdy and highly-polished table, regarded her husband’s back a shade thoughtfully. In an attitude suggestive of dejection, Leonard Ventnor was staring through the window at a shining but sombre panorama of Putney roofs, though his low spirits were not due to the outlook which the flat at Guy’s Cliff Court thus afforded. Indeed, this particular view, with sunlight flashing on the broken background of the river, had furnished the theme for one of the lyrics in his recently-published volume, and in all probability had failed to charm the reviewers

of his volume only because the poetical description lacked points that the view did not.

“You won’t stay longer with your friend than you can help, Violet?” he presently inquired, without altering his position. “From my point of view, it is very unfortunate that you should have been reminded of this promise to go elsewhere just when Laura is so patently anxious for us to stay with her at Foxted. You must join me there as soon as ever you can. I particularly desire it for more than one reason.”

“I know,” anticipated Violet. “Ever since Laura was left a widow she has been embarrassingly active in your interests. You

ought to be grateful and flattered to have an elder sister who is so diligent on your behalf."

Leonard turned and looked into the brown eyes of his wife with suspicion.

"That is a distinct change of sentiment on your part," was his accusation. "Hitherto, in our brief, harmonious experience of wedlock, you have always sided with me on the subject of Laura's meddling. There is something behind this sudden apostasy."

"Of course there is. You reminded me of it when you mentioned Foxted. It's been simmering in my mind half the morning."

Before resuming, she called out a question to someone in another part of the flat.

"It hasn't come yet, ma'am," replied a female voice.

"Never mind the taxi for a minute," requested Leonard. "We shall have ample time to get to Liverpool Street before twelve-five. If it comes, the maid can ask it to wait. I am waiting myself to learn why my wife suddenly champions the individual who—if circumstances hadn't been too much for her—would have forced me into Parliament as the mute and inglorious figurehead of a rural constituency."

"I have not really changed my sentiments, as you call them. What I said was in fun—to rouse you from the dumps. It's hardly likely that Laura will bother herself about your future now that you are off her hands and on mine, is it? And as for forcing you to take part in any more amateur theatricals—you made such a—such an unfortunate début as Romeo in the last that you are hardly likely to be asked to take part again. Mr. Winchester says he was told that Juliet was obliged to rely on the prompter for her cues, and you must know whether that is true or not. He says Juliet became so confused that she delivered most of her lines to the prompter. He says that during the balcony s-s-s-scene——"

"You are in excellent spirits at the prospect of being rid of me for a day or two," commented Leonard, eyeing sternly his wife's silently-shaking figure.

Violet deftly touched the corners of her eyes with the small piece of cambric she had magically produced from nowhere, and lowered the loose veil of peacock-blue which bordered the rim of her hat.

"Seriously, you must be particularly amiable to Laura," she said. Her tone only was serious, for the veil did not reach to the recumbent crescent of her lips. "It is for your own good. She is apt to be a little

impulsive, like most good-hearted people, and if anything puts her out a trifle, she takes it to heart. Therefore, be amiable, or you will not get the writing-desk."

"What writing-desk?"

"I meant to have mentioned it before," explained Violet carelessly, "only I was so surprised at your having lent Freda Winchester the travelling-bag without letting me know, that, in the hurry of having to get another one at short notice, it slipped my memory. It is the writing-desk that has not been used since Mr. Leaming's time—the one in the corner of the library at Foxted. I believe, if you are nice to her in the meantime, that when I join you I could coax Laura into parting with it, so that you could have it for your writing."

"I am always nice to Laura, and I have no desire for a writing-desk."

"But it is so silly to sit by the window with a scribbling-block on your knee when you feel you want to write a little poem," Violet pointed out, joining him at the window and taking his arm. "I'm sure Mr. Kipling and other poets have writing-desks."

"I don't care whether they have or haven't. I don't find one necessary."

Violet released his arm with a little sigh.

"It had occurred to me," she said meditatively, "that at the same time I might manage to get Laura to let us have the Persian rug in the spare room. Before we were married——"

"That's enough!" interrupted her husband autocratically. "I don't want to hear anything more on the subject. I am now perfectly conversant with the fact that we have really been discussing the rug. I thought there was something fishy in your solicitude for my comfort, seeing that you have annexed the only suitable table in the room to write your letters on. The position is quite clear to me: I'm to be extraordinarily polite to Laura, so that you can come along and seize the correct moment to scrounge a Persian rug from her. I refuse. I decline to be a party to any such shady bit of business."

"The taxi, ma'am," announced the maid—also dressed for travelling—from the doorway.

She disappeared.

"Give me a kiss," commanded Violet, raising her veil.

"But I'm coming along with you to the station."

"Never mind."



He yielded, and she encircled his neck with her arms and held him. His gaze she also held.

"You are going to take great care to avoid giving any sort of offence to Laura, aren't you?" she suggested softly.

"Naturally."

"And you want me to have the rug, don't you?"

A faint, reminiscent odour of scent stole into his nostrils.

"You shall have it," he declared with abasement, "though violence is done for it."

## II.

SOME time after lunch, which he had taken in the City, Ventnor proceeded to Trafalgar Square and entered the Beverley Club. In the room to which he repaired a brown-plush settee ran almost unbroken round the walls, framing, as it were, a still-life picture of littered tables. This was the writing-room, and it was in the possession of the bluebottles and flies; but in the spacious antechamber through which he had passed, and to which he now returned, there was a scattering of members, who were for the most part reclining in chairs in those corners where no sunlight descended from the circular glass dome of the roof.

Behind one of the larger popular periodicals, which his smooth fingers quite loosely retained, a gentleman whose veiled eyes assisted in the repose of his features was sitting in a deep armchair half-way down the side of the room opposed to the tall windows. Ventnor approached him, happened to observe that the popular periodical had not even been opened, and retired to the writing-room, where he rang for a steward.

"Mr. Winchester is resting in the great lounge," he told the official who answered the summons. "Please tell him someone is asking for him in the writing-room."

In a few moments the carefully-tailored form of Winchester appeared in the doorway. He greeted Ventnor with the customary informal dissyllable.

"I'll come back," he supplemented, stifling a yawn. "I'm busy looking for somebody."

"Yes, for me," Ventnor enlightened him. "I object to exchanging conversation with a person just out of a doze, so I sent for you in order to give you time to pull yourself together."

Winchester perched himself on the edge of a table and eyed his friend—who had

chosen the much more comfortable brown plush—disagreeably.

"I should think," audibly reflected the older man, as he selected a cigarette from a large leather case, "that you must often, in your time, have been the object of sudden and violent hatred."

"I've been seeing Violet off at Liverpool Street. She has gone to stay with a school-friend, and is going to join me at Foxted as soon as she can. She happened to mention, before the train went out, that as Freda often corresponds with Laura, and as you are presumably alone while Freda is away, perhaps Laura had asked you down, too, in which case we could go together to-morrow morning."

"It ought to have been obvious to you from the first that I should be invited to attend," returned Winchester. "The event is one I would not miss for worlds. The only point that puzzles me is how Mrs. Leaming managed to persuade *you* to attend?"

"Why should that puzzle you?"

Winchester paused in the act of lighting his cigarette, and instead produced his pocket-book, from which he drew a slip of printed matter.

"Mr. Ventnor," he read aloud, "'calls his volume 'The Song of Psyche,' and our quotation is from the piece which gives the collection its title. As may be partly apprehended from the extract, this attempt with *vers libre* to reproduce the outpourings of a soul in high exaltation suffers from want of simplicity in style. A phase of high exaltation is necessarily brief, and to sustain a flight of any length at the altitude to which Mr. Ventnor has aspired calls for the equipment of a stronger pair of wings than those the author of the present offering spreads and preens in the 'Song of Psyche.' As for Psyche herself—'Aren't you going to let me finish?'"

Winchester sprang to bar his friend's progress towards the door.

"I'm sorry," he acknowledged. "It was uncalled for, perhaps, but so was your action in sending the steward or me. Besides, it has begun to dawn on me that you are ignorant of what awaits you at Foxted. Is it possible, I wonder, that you are unaware that, during your stay with her, your sister has arranged that you shall give a reading from your poems to the villagers, at an open-air concert in the Vicarage grounds?"

"Rot!" exclaimed the poet, appalled, nevertheless.

"After all," Winchester went on, "there is no real reason why the prospect should upset you. It is not as though you were earmarked to undertake a strenuous rôle, such as an impression of one of Dickens's characters, or Shakespeare's—Romeo, for example. It is simply a matter of accompanying the recital of a few of your poems with a little appropriate gesture and facial expression."

"By Heaven, I'm half a mind to cut the visit altogether! If it wasn't that Violet . . ."

Ventnor stood for a moment in deliberation, while Winchester slowly tore into shreds the cutting, which had become crumpled in his hand.

"You are quite sure, I suppose—about the reading?"

"Freda happened to mention it before she went," replied Freda's husband.

With no further word, Ventnor left him with the bluebottles.

### III.

"STOUR VIEW," Foxted, was not an ancient and commodious residence in the sense that makes that term applicable to a country seat, but no one living in the village half a mile away remembered when the ground it occupied had been paddock and meadowland. As for its commodiousness, a less socially occupied person than Mrs. Laura Leaming might, in similar circumstances, have found the amount of spare room at her disposal a little depressing. Laura, however, seldom permitted herself to be idle, and thus vulnerable to depression. On those occasions when she was "off duty" she sent for a builder, a plumber, or a decorator, as the case might be, and the next time a visitor came he noticed, or failed to notice, that some of the out-buildings had been repainted, or else, not completely awake, he stood up in the bath and struck his head against the rose of a shower which had not been there the last time *he* was there.

The respect, sometimes awe, commanded by the mistress of "Stour View" was only partly due to her brusque manner and imposing personality, for the locality knew, either from hearsay or experience, that her brusqueness was merely the brittle shield which protected a sensitive and even sentimental disposition, and although she usually obtained her own way by ignoring the other side of an argument, she was sufficiently well favoured in appearance to be able to

accomplish her desires by more appealing methods.

It was during the course of a recent call at "Stour View" that the Vicar of Foxted discovered how badly the church needed funds, and it was therefore decided that the villagers should be admitted to an *al fresco* concert in his grounds for sixpence a head, refreshments free. Other visitors were to be allowed to pay for their refreshments after disbursing five shillings for the privilege. Laura made an immediate and separate donation of ten pounds and an offer, gratefully accepted on the spot, of her brother's services in the capacity of an entertainer.

The programme was roughly forecasted with the material supplied by the Vicar's personal knowledge of the "talent" available in the district, and as Laura's two gifts made it both possible and politic to advertise the concert extensively, it was definitely fixed to take place on the first of July.

On the afternoon of the twenty-ninth of June an elderly lady, who was seated in a deck-chair on the verandah of the summer-house at "Stour View," happened to glance up from the slim volume of poetry in her lap and saw, hurrying towards her across the rear lawn, the unmistakable form of her hostess.

"He's on the way now," announced Laura, as soon as she came within speaking distance of Miss Harrogate. "The telegram has just come. The boy, of course, must have dawdled on the way with it."

"Has my brother actually wired?" marvelled Miss Harrogate. "I thought he was motoring here, and wouldn't arrive until to-morrow."

She was an attenuated lady, some years Laura's senior, and had long since posted Laura with the latest information about her brother, who had been a friend of the late Mr. Leaming, and of whom she was very proud. Major Harrogate was the chairman of the board of a company of tea merchants. He had retired from the Army for family reasons, at the conclusion of his regiment's service in India, and had straightway become a tea-planter. He had, however, refrained from taking an active part in the firm's Eastern affairs as the result of throat trouble contracted on the plantations.

"Not your brother—mine," explained Laura lightly. "He and Mr. Winchester, who is apparently with him, must have caught the luncheon train, but they're sure to want tea. Shall we wait?"

"We must wait for them, of course,"

replied Miss Harrogate, with a brief glance towards the already-prepared tea-table in front of the summer-house. "I hope they won't be long: I am so anxious to make Mr Ventnor's acquaintance, and I think

Where he imagines he will eventually arrive with his retiring, out-of-date ways in these bustling days, only he himself knows. He ought to visit America, like other literary men do—for the advertisement. How can



"You are going to take great care to avoid giving any sort of offence to Laura, aren't you?" she suggested softly. "Naturally."

these poems are *delightful*. Which do you think he will select to read at the Vicar's?"

"I expect he'll want to read one or two of the very short ones," Laura informed her. "You will find Leonard very old-fashioned.

he expect to become known if he persists in hiding himself? And Violet ought to entertain a great deal more; I'm sure Freda Winchester could introduce her to the kind of people Leonard should know. I've done

my best for him as far as the concert goes, at any rate. He'll be surprised, if I'm not mistaken, when he finds out who will be there. For that matter, he'll be surprised to know he's to give a reading at all. I've mentioned it to no one except Freda Winchester, and she's away."

Miss Harrogate tried not to look the surprise she felt.

"I suppose," she tentatively inferred, "that Mr. Ventnor is *used* to being called upon at short notice for lectures and readings and so on?"

Laura pulled one of the garden-chairs from the table and sat down.

"He played a part at short notice in some amateur theatricals we held here once," she slowly responded. For a moment her blue-grey eyes sparkled. "It was not a fortunate *début* for him, as there was no time to study the part, and he was not word-perfect, and he performed more or less under compulsion owing to—owing to circumstances. Since then it has been very difficult to get him to promise anything. I hardly expect you will understand the position, but if Leonard knew what I have arranged, he would in all probability be so blind to his own interests as to attempt an excuse for not coming here at all, although by nature he is the reverse of deceitful."

Miss Harrogate gazed at her hostess from under prominent dark eyebrows with half-contemplated questions in her eyes. Laura stared reminiscently at the wooden steps of the verandah and at the low-heeled shoes which her guest, very sensibly for so tall a carriage, was wearing. It thus came about that the preoccupation of the two ladies and the inaudibility of footsteps on the soft grass of the lawn prevented them from becoming aware of the arrival, both hatless and delivered of the evidences of travel, of Ventnor and Maurice Winchester, until the latter's breezy greeting from a distance of a dozen yards startled hostess and guest alike.

"Please say nothing about the concert for the time being," Laura swiftly cautioned her companion.

"We told Ames not to announce us," Winchester said, as he shook hands with Laura—"at least, I did."

Laura made him known to Miss Harrogate. "How do you do?"

In the meantime Leonard was ignoring the movement made by his sister, who mistakenly anticipated from him something other than a handshake. She was slightly puzzled by his behaviour, but affected to

notice nothing amiss. Miss Harrogate gave him her hand with a welcoming smile, and asked a question concerning the mode of his journey. He answered with a scarcely audible monosyllable.

"Railway travelling has not improved since the War," said Winchester conversationally. "Not, of course, that there is much cause for grumbling, if there is enough change to buy a newspaper after paying for the ticket."

"My brother," Miss Harrogate assured him, "says he was *driven* to purchase a motor-car through the poor quality of the spirits sold in the restaurant cars."

"Have you taken a vow of silence, Leonard?" inquired his sister, as she made a signal to the maid, who was hovering in the vicinity.

Her question was not answered until all four were seated near the table.

"He has a cold," Winchester obligingly explained—"a slight one, I am sure, but one of those colds which make the voice husky and conversation somewhat of a labour."

"How irritating!" Miss Harrogate commented feelingly. "You must be dying for a cup of tea, Mr. Ventnor!"

In a melancholy manner the poet coughed into a large handkerchief, and the local atmosphere at once became charged with the odour of eucalyptus.

#### IV.

WHEN, in the course of the following afternoon, Laura succeeded in causing to be discovered a long, dusty, yellow box containing mallets and balls, the gardener relinquished, for the time being, a long-entertained conviction that the future would reveal to him a horticultural use for a number of iron hoops which he had stored away on that assumption in the past and a separate tool-shed. Within twenty minutes, moreover, of the production of the hoops, Leonard was receiving instruction from Miss Harrogate on the correct way to hold a mallet in order to ensure the greatest ratio of probability that the ball would pass through a hoop and not round it. That he wished very much to learn the game, and that Miss Harrogate urgently desired to teach him, were Laura's conceptions rather than those of the protagonists, but this fact was not found out until some time after Laura had secured the opportunity of devoting herself to the unhampered entertainment of Winchester.

"The persistent desire," Winchester presently brought himself lazily to remark, "to ignore the ball and address my opponent with the mallet has always prevented me from enjoying croquet as I might otherwise have done. In my opinion there is too much scope in the game for bad feeling. The majority of the confirmed enthusiasts whom I have encountered in the course of this athletic pastime owe their lives to the accidental presence of an overwhelming number of potential witnesses for the prosecution."

He was occupying one of the canvas chairs by the verandah of the summer-house, on the steps of which Laura had lowered herself some moments ago. He was smoking and pretending to watch the game, but Laura had not even put herself to the trouble of the pretence.

"Do you think," she said abruptly, "that there is any likelihood of Leonard's cold being better by to-morrow afternoon?"

Winchester examined the tip of his cigarette intently.

"It is said of a cold," he replied judicially, "that it is three days coming, three days on the spot, so to speak, and three days——"

"You are thinking of a cold in the head," Laura interposed, "the kind of cold that is prevalent in the winter. Whatever sort of chill Leonard has contracted has not affected his head: I'm sure of that."

"You are quite right. It appears to have attacked his throat and chest. In a naturally voluble person complications might certainly be feared, but I don't think in Leonard's case you need be in the least alarmed. He'll be all right in a day or two, depend on it."

"I would rather have reason to depend on him being all right to-morrow afternoon."

"Why to-morrow afternoon in particular?" Winchester blandly demanded.

Something of a look of defeat crossed Laura's face.

"Miss Harrogate has been so impressed by Leonard's book, and so eager for the reading which it has been arranged for Leonard to give to-morrow afternoon in the Vicarage grounds, that—that—— Is it possible that she has not spoken of it to you?"

"Miss Harrogate has mentioned nothing to me about any such projected entertainment."

"I wrote to Freda before she went away. Did *she* mention it to you, by any chance?"

Winchester dropped his cigarette on the grass and carefully extinguished it with his foot.

"My wife," he returned, "has unconsciously taught me to become quite resigned to the part of being the last person to whom it is necessary or desirable to impart a piece of news."

"You mustn't be so hard on Freda in this case," Laura urged, "because I asked her not to mention it to—well, I asked her to be very discreet. I find it extremely irritating," she added, with impatience, "to be reduced to such expedients in order to ensure that Leonard shall act in his best interests. Violet merely aids and abets him. Whoever heard of a poet who declined to read his own poems to a sympathetic audience?"

"Leonard, then, has declined?"

"You know, Mr. Winchester, that he *would* do so. The fact is that—as a matter of fact, I am forced to the conclusion that he cannot yet be aware of the arrangements about the—the concert. Please say nothing to him yourself: I will tell him to-morrow. I sincerely hope his cold will have improved sufficiently by then to enable him to read his poems, for there are quite a number of people who will have a journey practically for nothing, if he is no better and cannot speak any better than he does now."

By this time Miss Harrogate had discovered, by means of his manner rather than by the nature of his occasional hoarse remarks, that the indisposition of which Leonard appeared to be in the throes was hindering him from taking much interest in the game. In addition, his recourse to the handkerchief had begun to confirm the lady in a hitherto only vague dislike of the smell of eucalyptus.

"I am so sorry for him," she confided to Laura in due course. "He was trying so hard to be attentive. Are you quite, *quite* sure, dear, that it is essential to say nothing to him about the concert until the last minute? I mean, if he should eventually *dislike* the idea of reading his poems, it seems so hard on him to—to——"

"Your compunction is quite wasted on him," interrupted Laura firmly. "Wait till you know him as well as I do. Let him once learn that he is expected to help in raising funds for the church, and you may depend on it that his cold will become worse instead of better."

"Yes, it is for a good object, isn't it?" hesitated Miss Harrogate, and the reflection

has soothed consciences far more restless than hers. "I wonder if his cold really *will* be better to-morrow? He is quite as *husky*, though he doesn't cough so much. Do you think his wife should be advised? I hope my brother will not find it necessary for us to leave until I have had an opportunity of making her acquaintance."

## V.

HAVING in consideration, as one is unfortunately obliged to have, the limited appeal which is made to the average temperament by serious poetry, the large and kaleidoscopic crowd which congregated on the spacious Vicarage lawn at six o'clock on the first afternoon in July displayed an animation which must be regarded either as a tribute to the known excellence of the local catering or as an earnest of anticipation of the attractive nature of the main portion of the programme of entertainment. In either case, or in both cases, great credit was the due of the organiser, who had been mindful enough of the vagaries of the weather to locate the platform beneath a large elm, which had thus become the point of radiation for a number of extending arcs formed of seats. The caterers were installed beneath a large awning at the bottom of the lawn.

There were present several well-known people of local standing, most of whom were chatting in groups within the inner arc of seats. Here, though not conspicuously so, were Laura and Miss Harrogate; and Laura, whose unusual reserve enhanced rather than impaired the appeal which her presence made to her many admirers, was not comfortable, few though they may have been, perhaps, who detected the circumstance.

"I presume you know," remarked Winchester, who, in Ventnor's company, was standing by a side entrance to the lawn, finishing the most recent cigarette of an almost incredible daily allowance, "that 'The Song of Psyche' is on sale at the stall by the tea-urns?"

"Impossible!"

"Not at all."

The author of "The Song of Psyche" regarded his friend with a countenance which had become pallid and horror-stricken.

"Has Laura," he demanded hoarsely, "grown suddenly blind to what is decent?"

"That enunciation," pointed out Winchester softly, "is the first genuinely hoarse one you have accomplished in the last three

days. I suspected, of course, that your cold was only real in the sense, say, that the wish is real when it acts *in loco parentis* to the thought, but until this moment you have acted the part so uncommonly well that I had begun to think I was doing you an injustice. You have even allayed the suspicions of your sister. Have you anything to say before sentence is passed?"

For the moment Ventnor forgot the humiliating fact that "The Song of Psyche" was, to speak plainly, being hawked within thirty yards of its author. His voice, when he spoke again, had resumed its husky, whispering quality.

"What do you mean?"

"If you insist on preciseness," Winchester explained, "I mean that you uttered the word 'impossible' not two minutes ago in a voice as clear as a bell. I therefore infer, rightly or wrongly, that there is no reason, after all, why you should disappoint the people whom Laura has induced to come here in the expectation of hearing you declaim. I know for a fact that most of her friends are here solely out of curiosity in that regard. If it comes to that, I should like to see you on the platform myself."

"Don't be foolish, Maurice," begged his companion, speaking with his normal intonation and much earnestness. "I have assumed that you knew all along. Your innuendoes coming down in the train seemed to point that way, at all events. Needless to say, I shall continue this—call it imposture, if you like: I don't care a snap of the fingers what you call it—until to-morrow morning, and I rely on you to keep silent about what you have discovered, both now and in the future. You don't realise what a strain on me this has been. I—"

"Ah, Mr. Ventnor," said the Vicar genially, as that little, spectacled gentleman caught sight of the poet at a distance of five paces, "I was extremely sorry to learn from Mrs. Leaming that you are unable, owing to your indisposition, to entertain us all, as we had every one of us hoped. We must, I suppose, content ourselves by looking forward to a more fortunate occasion. I have read 'The Song of'—ahem!—'Psyche,' but my bias, if I may put it that way, is towards the lyric rather than the epic poem, and I have no doubt in my own mind that it was your intention to regale us with some of the delightful shorter impressions which complete your admirable volume."

"Just so," he added, failing to catch the poet's incoherent muttering.

"What do you think of the Chinese lanterns?" he resumed. "We had them erected in case the concert should outlast this glorious sunshine, but, owing to the enforced—er—curtailment of the programme, they will remain ornamental, I think, instead of becoming useful."

The sunshine was at that moment chased from the lawn by a heavy and impetuous cloud, and the Vicar recommenced speaking in time to anticipate a remark from Winchester.

"I am reminded," he concluded, "that we are already late in starting, and rain, of course, is always a possibility. If you will excuse me, I must now hurry away and make my disappointing announcement before we open with the pianoforte recital."

"Maurice," exclaimed Ventnor, as the Vicar hastened away, "I can't stay and listen to the kind of announcement he is going to make—I really can't. I don't expect or desire sympathy from you. What I've done I'll stand by. But if you have any respect for me at all, you will buy up all the copies on the stall by the tea-urns and drop them in the pond for me on your way home. I shall see you later."

He quitted the grounds and walked rapidly away, turning his back on the village in the hollow and making for the open country which lay beyond the scattered copses of the locality. Dust accumulated on his shoes thickly, and in due course his exertions began to show in his face, which, by the way, wore no expression of triumph or even of satisfaction. He scarcely heeded the large drops of rain which some time later spattered loudly on the foliage of tree and hedge, and only when he was obliged to recollect himself in order to reply to the query of the driver of a small grey car, did he realise that his restlessness was causing him to conduct himself irrationally.

The car, which accommodated, in addition to the chauffeur, a man in a cloth cap and overcoat, the collar of which was turned up, had come to a standstill some yards away.

"Keep straight on and then bear to the left for Foxted," Ventnor told the chauffeur.

A heavy downpour set in, and the occupants of the car were out of earshot before it occurred to Ventnor to ask for a lift into the village. Dusk brought a cessation of the rain, but by the time he reached "Stour View" there was hardly a dry garment on him. He was rational enough by this time,

however, to introduce into the tone of his question to one of the maids the strained, whispering tenor to which she had become accustomed.

"Mistress has not returned yet, sir," she replied.

Twenty minutes later he had changed into evening attire. He switched on the lights in the hall. In the library, to which he was attracted by the fact of the door being ajar, he found himself in the presence of a stolidly-built man of advanced middle-age. The stranger possessed a veined, rubicund face with a neat, grey moustache *en croc*. He appeared to have been glancing through the pages of "The Song of Psyche," which Miss Harrogate must have brought indoors from the summer-house.

"Pretty feeble, this modern stuff," he said, nodding a greeting and coming forward to shake hands. "Don't even trouble about making 'em rhyme nowadays, I see. How d'you do?"

He tossed the volume on the table and grasped the poet's hand. His voice was husky and thick, like the voice of many a superannuated sergeant-major. There was, in fact, no difference worth mentioning between the stranger's voice and that to which the poet had committed himself.

"I'm Major Harrogate," announced the gentleman, "Miss Harrogate's brother, y'know," he added, misreading the embarrassment in the poet's face. "I see you have managed to cut the tea and stanzas, like me. No need to mention the matter in other quarters, though—what?"

He relinquished the poet's hand and dropped heavily into a convenient armchair. The silence rapidly became untenable.

"My name is Ventnor," said the poet hurriedly. "How do you do?"

The voice was necessarily the assumed one, and the Major stared at the speaker like one who believes himself suddenly betrayed by his sense of hearing.

"I was unable to appear at the concert to which you refer," continued the poet immediately, "owing to a sore throat. Perhaps you have noticed the effect it has on me?"

Mechanically he had picked up the book which Harrogate had thrown aside, and now appeared to be wondering what to do with it.

The veins in the Major's face became prominent. He rose slowly to his feet, accomplishing the act by the leverage on the arms of his chair of a pair of large red hands.

He wheezed a trifle as he did so, but was otherwise dumb with what seemed to be a mixture of incredulity and helpless anger. His eyebrows, which resembled those of his sister—except that in his case they were grey and much more carelessly luxuriant—had formed like the shape of a distant swallow.

“I hope you don’t imagine,” pursued the poet, with a desperate attempt at ease, “that I’m rehearsing any—er—vulgar witticism?”

This one-sided conversation had so far savoured of a series of conspiratorial asides.

“You’re a roaring cad, sir!” at length exclaimed Harrogate, as nearly explosively as possible. “Nothing was wrong with your voice an hour ago, when you directed my man to the village. Had you said at once that you resented my remarks about the poetry, I should have apologised. Apologised! Er—er—that’s all I desire to have to say to you, sir! But if I were twenty years younger. . .”

A stamping of feet and the sounds of animated voices in the hall caused a very welcome diversion. Breathing audibly through his nose, the Major passed from the library, and presently exclamations from the hall indicated that he had hastened his greetings and apologies, and was being cross-examined on the subject of his manifest perturbation.

In due course the voices dispersed and were lost in various parts of the house. During the next thirty minutes only one individual entered the library. It was Winchester. He was smoking a cigarette.

“I’ve been instructed by Laura,” he stated, fixing his gaze on a spot on the ceiling above the poet’s head, “to inform you that as there is now no need for any further exhibition of your histrionic ability and powers of vocal control, she will be obliged if you will refrain from any such exhibition in future. The whole proceeding is, in fact, taboo. It will not be alluded to during the remainder of your stay at ‘Stour View.’ And, to be frank, I should not choose to-night for your apology—your apology to Laura, that is. You need not, I think, bother to apologise to Major Harrogate. He is infernally sorry—he said ‘infernally’—that he spoilt your game. Between you and me, he is rather upset about it. He confided to me that he has no desire to be unfriendly with a man who declines to read his own poetry. So much for that. Dinner, by the way, will be half an hour later this evening.”

## VI.

THE sun was again master of the situation the following morning. The air was a carnival of perfumes, and the eye was gladdened everywhere by the freshness of green things. For the reason of the sudden and unaccountable act of clemency in the history of the implacable tyrant, search no deeper into the records of the period than the weather report.

The first familiar face that Mrs. Ventnor saw, when the station trap pulled up in front of the portico of “Stour View,” was Winchester’s. It was ten o’clock, and Winchester—it is perhaps unnecessary to explain what Winchester was doing, but it was his first cigarette that morning.

Violet gave an instruction to her maid and accepted the onlooker’s silently proffered assistance in alighting.

“Where is Laura?”

She had expected a flood of Winchester’s customary volubility. She smoothed out a non-existent crease in the raincoat she was wearing. His reticence had set her wondering.

“Laura is with a Major and Miss Harrogate by the summer-house. She has your telegram. I’m glad to be the first to greet you.”

“That is good of you,” said Violet. “I suppose Leonard is also with Laura?”

“When, three minutes ago, I happened to glance into the breakfast-room, Leonard was slowly and painfully disposing of a portion of apparently very hot porridge. He did not appear at the usual time, and has not yet deigned to appear among us.”

“Something is the matter, then?”

“I believe Mrs. Leaming would maintain that something was the matter.”

“You are very secretive. Has Leonard managed to—to—?”

“How did you guess?”

“Tell me all about it,” Violet requested, sighing. “One moment: let us go indoors first.”

The French windows of the library—to which apartment Winchester had conducted the early visitor—were both open, and furnished sight of the summer-house and of the three individuals in its vicinity. Winchester noticed that a maid was making her way towards Laura, and hurried his recital accordingly. When, later, Laura stepped into the room and embraced her sister-in-law, Winchester, whose brevity had not been at the expense of clearness, felt that



the succeeding interview would profit by his absence.

"I've just heard all about Leonard from Mr. Winchester," said Violet, as the door closed. "I don't think he very much wanted to tell me, but I saw there was something wrong from his manner. It is not the least bit of good your being indignant, Laura. I don't blame Leonard in the slightest. I simply blame you for not letting me know all about what you had arranged."

"Listen to me, Violet," returned Laura, with dignity. "Had I written and told you—as I certainly now regret not having done—you would naturally have told Leonard, and the result would have been, not merely that Leonard would have wilfully acted contrary to his own advantage, but also that in all probability neither of you would have come to see me. I've known Leonard a little longer than you have. Needless to say, I had every intention of telling you everything immediately you arrived, if only your engagements had permitted you to come on the same day as Leonard and Mr. Winchester, as I had arranged."

"I am very sorry you considered it advisable to keep me in the dark," rejoined Violet, with sudden firmness. "I see that the only thing to be done is to go away at once and take Leonard with me."

Laura shrugged, seated herself, and, producing a small handkerchief, burst into tears. Violet hesitated for a second, then perched on the arm of Laura's chair and encircled Laura's bowed torso with her arms.

"I didn't mean it, dear," she whispered. "Leonard shall apologise to you, of course. I'll go and find him at once."

She released Laura and rose, but Laura convulsively clasped the skirt of the raincoat.

"It isn't at all necessary, Violet. I am in the wrong, and no one knows it better than I do. I thoroughly deserve your anger, and I'm the most miserable woman on earth! Only . . ."

Laura stationed herself, as she spoke, before a small, bevelled looking-glass which formed one of the panels of the front of a bookcase. With the handkerchief she skilfully essayed to remedy the visible results of her momentary loss of *aplomb*.

"I'm not angry," Violet reassured her. "On the contrary, when I try to imagine Leonard's feelings, I feel more inclined to laugh than anything else."

"It was no laughing matter," said Laura severely, but turned the next instant and folded Violet in a fond embrace, the tableau

thus formed being the picture presented to Ventnor's gaze as the poet at that moment entered the library. He seemed relieved.

"Leonard, I've heard all about it," was his wife's greeting. "You have no idea how much you have upset Laura. The least you can do is to tell her how sorry you are."

"It doesn't matter, Violet—really!" protested Laura. "It was my own fault in the first place. Let us try to forget the whole thing."

Leonard turned away to the writing-table at his right-hand side, seated himself, and tore into two pieces a blank sheet of writing-paper. On each half he hastily indited a message. One he handed to Violet, the other to his sister.

Violet silently deciphered from her document the following intelligence:

"Pen and voice are alike powerless to express the joy my dear wife's return affords me. P.S.—Try not to leave this lying about."

She looked up and observed that Laura had sunk into a chair with her face buried in her hands. That lady had again been mastered by her emotions.

"This is too bad of you, Leonard!" upbraided Violet, with alarm. "What have you done now?"

Laura stood up. Although her lips were unsteady, the tears in her eyes were unshed. In silence she handed Violet the other message, and passed with rapid composure to the doorway.

"I will see what I can find, Leonard," she brusquely remarked before disappearing.

Violet sought enlightenment from the complementary piece of writing-paper:

"My dear Laura, is there such a thing in the house as something to gargle with?"

\* \* \* \* \*

"What about the Persian rug?" inquired Leonard some days later.

Through the railway-carriage window, rows of back-yards, with the inevitable and usually unmentionable bunting which lines the eastern approaches to the Metropolis, made an announcement that the terminus was not far ahead.

Violet's gaze strayed from the periodical she had been reading.

"I decided not to ask Laura for it, dear," she replied. "If you remember, you were against my doing so from the first. Besides, she had known all along that I wanted it, and she had sent it to us on the day you left Town, so that it would be a surprise for us when we got home."



“His patch of meales cultivated by the grateful recipients of his dawa.”

# THE LURE OF THE GAME

By WILLIAM CARFRAE

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

**A**RUMA was a promising rubber place, but the house was a disgrace. So John Starton was told by those of his neighbours who from time to time paid him a call on one of their shooting trips. He used to grin and assure them that it did quite well for a lone bachelor and half a dozen boys.

Starton, frankly, spent all his energies and time on the plantation. There was room for improvement, and for the meantime he felt that his own comfort was but a small matter. The thing that really was urgent was the rubber. He spent most of his

evenings, which were long, in working out the details of various castles in Spain. The foundation of each, he found, was money. Not a lot, for both he and the girl were modest souls, but a certain amount was necessary.

Enid used to write him long letters from home. Her aunt's temper was growing worse, it appeared, and the girl enlarged on it, which was but natural. The aunt's temper was Enid's Old Man of the Sea, and one's own little grievance has undoubtedly that irritating trick of filling the horizon.

Starton used to read the letters, fill his

pipe again, and make another dive for the heap of papers which contained the elevation, plan, and section of every room of those castles in Spain. His bank book came in for another overhaul. Then he would sigh and pour a drink of whisky for himself and another of ink for his pen. He got busy and spent four hours covering pages with the hopeful sort of prophecy that she liked. That caught the mail, what time John Starton risked his skin in blowing a few more stumps out of the unplanted portion of Aruma.

The plantation was a good one, by reason of having only one weak spot—which was water. Sometimes the rain missed the Kuli Valley altogether, and then the Kuli River went dry, and Starton's pet scheme, his dam, was useless. This was the sort of thing that kept the girl at home under the lash of a woman's tongue, which, as Solomon knew, is no mean infliction. It was rough on them both, for Starton never retaliated on Fate by getting drunk in Nairobi, and the girl never answered back. In a way, they were too meek, and the demon of trouble always returns to those who take his japes in a subdued spirit.

Starton lived in a hovel. Not because he did not want anything better, but because the white ant would have eaten a decent place from floor to roof before he had got his bride into it. So that, like many other things, was kept in the portfolio of castles in Spain till the time should be ripe. He had spent ten years where he was, and it still held together.

The rubber was flourishing, all things considered, for the rain had been steady for three seasons. Starton watched it grow, and dreamed dreams on the verandah, when he was too weary to do another stroke of work. That was seldom, for the reminders from Barnstaple kept him pretty well up to the collar, and his hair was getting thin on top. John Starton put it down to the helmet which he wore twelve hours a day. All the same, he had no intention of insulting the girl by making her a present of a bald head with her bridegroom. He stuck to the job and hustled. Nairobi only saw him once a year, when he went up to buy a couple of gifts for her, one for her birthday and the other for Christmas.

At his earnest request she had long given up a habit of knitting him socks and such-like practical tokens of her regard. She confined herself to a case of whisky at the end of every year. The outward

reason was that whisky is fairly good medicine for lots of the odd diseases which hang about Africa. The true explanation is that John Starton had acquired the sundowner habit, and his daily drink was one of the few things that he regarded as worth while. That and the pamphlets on scolding females were his two bulwarks against all the ills that assail a planter of rubber.

Starton had mixed his drink as usual, and was settling down on the verandah to enjoy that short hour which comes between a hard day's work and dinner. His boy, Said, was absent, having betaken himself to the railway, fifteen miles off, to collect the mail. Starton calculated that he would be back presently, and filled his pipe. He cleaned his fountain-pen and replenished the ink. That ritual came as a prelude to the reading of the girl's weekly letter and the inditing of his hopeful reply.

His canvas chair was a little the worse for wear, he decided, and the table very groggy. He would set Said on to furbish them up a little. The lamp smoked abominably, and the clouds of flying ants that buzzed about it were mildly annoying. The planter gazed at them idly, and wished to goodness the boy would show up. He was really a lazy devil, and far too fat. The fact was that Starton had neglected him, as well as the house, in his frantic haste to get the plantation into decent order.

Said turned up in good time, carrying the thin bag which was all too big for its purpose. He dumped it down on the shaky table and went off to open a tin of something or other.

His master, in honour of the occasion, took another peg of whisky and water. He stuffed the battered pipe again and flung the bag of Transvaal tobacco into a far corner. His allowance of tobacco for that day was finished, and Starton was one of the men who cannot trust themselves within reach of temptation.

The letter was there. The man fumbled with it and turned it over in his hand. The envelope was different, which was an irritating change. Starton looked at the back, and saw that it had the imprint of a big London hotel. That, too, was queer. Enid had no earthly business in London, and she hated the place. He scratched his head feebly, wondering what the deuce it all meant. His pipe went out, and he aroused himself to open the letter.

Said came paddling along the verandah. His face was gloomy as he announced that

his assistant had burnt the bread all to cinders in his absence. It was seldom that the woolly-witted Ali contrived to do anything right. He paused in his harangue, and Starton waved the envelope in his face.

"I'm busy, confound you!" he growled. "Go away. Make some more bread tomorrow, and don't bother me."

Said went away, disappointed. His hope of a good hiding for Ali was squelched, and he looked sullen.

Starton looked after the boy as he disappeared. He laid down the letter and relapsed into gloomy thought. In the course of ten years, spent almost entirely alone, he had absorbed native superstition to an alarming extent. For want of a better companion, he had listened to Said's long series of legends. They consisted mainly of horrors. Dawa was the principal ingredient, and dawa covers every form of medicine and magic from Epsom salts to esoteric philosophy. Juju, another of the phenomena, had grown to be real to Starton. He regarded the coming of Said with his bad news as an omen, and was frankly afraid of what he might find in the envelope.

His dinner was a simple affair, and when it came he ate it in a preoccupied manner. The soup was just plain soup, and no cook who ever graduated from the kitchen of Pailard's or the Ritz could say more for it. The fish also was plain *samaki*, fried without sufficient fat, and slightly burnt. The rest of the meal had come from tins, and looked as everything tinned does look—an emaciated ghost of the real thing.

The hurricane lamp smoked on the table, and there was no cloth. These had all worn themselves out long ago, beaten to shreds by the vigour of Said's washing. Starton propped his feet on the chop box nearest and lit a cigar. This was another of his daily luxuries, and it, like himself, showed traces of the climate. He tipped fifteen grains of quinine into the palm of his hand, and swallowed them at a gulp. It was Sunday, and Starton took his quinine German fashion—ten grains on Saturday and fifteen on Sunday. The rest of the week he took none, that being the period in which the next lot of germs waxed fat for the slaughter.

He poured himself some coffee and took up the letter again. Its thinness and the strange device on the back of the envelope annoyed him. He liked to have notice of things, particularly those things which affected his own affairs or habits. Enid had

given him no hint of this trip. He fumbled over it, scowling, pulled himself together, and split it open with his thumb. There was no neatly folded wad of paper. One sheet only, folded across, met his astonished eye. John Starton frowned at it, and hitched his chair closer to the yellow arc of light.

Just before dawn the hurricane lamp gave a final smoky flicker and went out. Starton sat on, with the paper crushed in his hand. Round and round in a maddening circle, his mind sought to grasp and analyse the news which he had just read. Enid, with the cruelty of women and the very young, had broken the engagement in a summary fashion.

With a pair of scissors and a pot of paste, she had carved out of *The Times* the notice of her marriage to one Louis Goldstein, and plastered it on to a sheet of the hotel's notepaper. She had not condended to explanation or excuse, for the wisdom of her sex forbade an attempt to justify an untenable position. She had posted the clipping to Starton, thanking Heaven for the sea, which made a scene impossible. Then she had put on the dove-grey dress that had been one of the castles in Spain, and had departed to a performance of "Madame Butterfly." The troubles of the unfortunate Japanese heroine had made her weep a little, but Louis had consoled her with the news that a flurry in the Kaffir market had provided her with a diamond pendant. Starton did come into her thoughts occasionally. It was a pity, of course, but she did not quite see what she could do.

In the damp cold of the dawn John Starton collected his thoughts with an effort, and snuffed the smouldering lamp. He bellowed for his boy, and Said, who had just rolled off his string bed, came slowly, coughing and grunting below his breath.

"Get me some coffee, and hurry up," said his master. "Then come back here. I want to talk to you."

"Yes, sir," said the boy, looking puzzled. A long acquaintance with the white population of East Africa had only heightened his original impression that they were all mad. He made the coffee and squeezed half a pint of milk from a protesting goat to go with it.

"Sit down!" said Starton shortly, as he took the cup.

Said resigned himself and squatted on the floor. For an hour and a half the planter questioned and cross-examined him. He

got fairly truthful answers, for Said was rather attached to his master. When he had done, John Starton had made up his mind, and Said was in a state of mental paralysis from sheer astonishment. He went back to the kitchen and dug sardines out of a tin for breakfast, debating with Ali the reason for what he had heard. Ali put it down to sunstroke, and Said thought it was fever. As a matter of fact, it was a combination of both, with a dash of pique, acting on a mind that was not meant by nature to stand trouble.

The yarns which Said had retailed with such gusto had done Starton a lot of harm. Fairies, spooks, and omens dominated his life and dictated his actions. Whilst the girl, with her mercenary and ambitious mind, had pushed him ahead, he had done fairly well. When he found her gone, and the reward of his slavery on the rubber place had diminished from heaven on earth to mere banknotes, his superstitious nature had asserted itself. Hitherto it had been impossible to give up his work. Now things were different.

Aruma was an uncomfortable spot. The place was on a site which had been damned and cursed by all the witch-doctors in the country since Didoni the Wicked had burnt the village and cooked the inhabitants in the ashes of their own huts. The natives avoided the plantation. Said and Ali stayed, for they valued a good job above a curse, but all the field labour had to be imported.

The years of drought and the rest of his troubles rose against Starton like a warning from the dead. He went over the list of his misfortunes since he had bought the plantation, and the recital appalled him.

He could eat no breakfast, but sat with his head in his hands. The envelope lay on the table still, and the notice from *The Times* was propped before him. He groaned aloud. He was accursed, he decided. A hopeless feeling of resignation came down on him. The tales of the district had done their work thoroughly, and he shivered.

Said, with Ali at his heels, appeared, and under his directions they began to pack. Starton had endured enough. He had examined his face in his shaving mirror, noticed the network of fine lines round his mouth and the silvery grey of his temples. The skin of his hands was puckered and withered, with the earthy yellow stains of malaria near the knuckles. It was as well, maybe, that the girl had married the Jew. She might have thrown him up, anyway, had

she seen him. So he thought bitterly as he threw her photograph into a tin-lined box of clothes.

Starton chose the things with care. Only the barest necessities went in, and the most enduring of those. He was making his exit from the life of the white man, and he meant to do it thoroughly. The photograph worried him, but he found his will unequal to the task of tearing it up. It could do no harm, he thought wearily.

For the rest, he took clothes and drugs, quinine and chlorodyne, with a few plates and cooking pots. The boys eyed the growing pile of perquisites in the corner, and worked with a will. They would be rich men when all was done. Visions of pretty wives bought with the loot, visions of a life of fatness and leisure, crowded on them. In their small brains the contempt for the white man grew.

By the afternoon they had finished their work. Ali was ready. Starton had gone over the things his boys were taking. There was nothing personal about them. All this kind of thing, books, old letters, and the thousand and one things that a man accumulates, were left in the house.

John Starton walked round the place, saying a silent farewell to his work. The place was in fairly good condition, and, had he wanted to sell it, might have brought a good price. But the money would have been useless to him. He wandered on and at last stood on the dam. That had cost a deal of labour, he reflected bitterly. He turned away and strode back to the house.

The boys were grouped outside it, squatting by the few loads that were to go with Starton. The planter glanced at them and sent Said to the store for a tin of paraffin. Under his directions it was sprinkled over the verandah. In a few moments a column of smoke rose from the house, blackening the baobab tree which stood beside it. As the flames leapt and roared round the dry fabric, Starton turned away, growled a harsh order to his carriers, and strode down a bush path. He paused, then went back. From his pocket he took a bundle of the girl's letters and threw it into the fire. He hurried after the boys and again took the lead.

## II.

NORATI, the headman of the village of Livu, was a small tyrant in his way. In addition, he had plenty of conceit and a strong dash of impudence. His father had now been dead for a week, and before the



“From his pocket he took a bundle of

mourning was decently over, Norati had issued a series of orders which the old men of the village called lunacy and the young women considered a personal insult. Taton, the white man who dwelt in the hut on the hill, was to be deemed an outcast from the tribe, and was to have no more of the meat. Norati, being young and extremely bumptious, had reckoned without the women. All the marriageable females dreamed of the possibility of becoming Taton's wife, which would have been a great honour, even considering his age. So their mothers

drove their fathers to the verge of madness with their excited protests against this calamity

Taton, in the meantime, lived very contentedly. His knowledge of the vagaries of devils and curses made him a valuable man to the Livuni, who were a small tribe, and dependent on their cunning for the undoing of their enemies. He could exorcise a ghost or compound a *dawa* for any ill on earth, or so it seemed to his hosts. For twenty-five years, reckoned European fashion, he had been doing it, and the only people who



the girl's letters and threw it into the fire."

looked forward to his banishment were the evil-doers with ticklish consciences.

His hut was kept clean for him and his patch of mealies cultivated by the grateful recipients of his dawa. They looked on the haggard white man, with his long hair and tangled beard, as incalculably old, and therefore worthy of respect. As a matter of fact, he was just sixty. His frame was tough, though his mind had lost most of whatever strength it had possessed. He had lived a quarter of a century amongst the natives without encountering anything more

serious than fever and an occasional touch of gastritis, due to the diet. Mealies and buck, which were his main food, pall on a white man's tender stomach. He had fixed up a chair at first, but that had broken, and for long he had squatted on the ground.

There were two sides to his mind. One was the mass of superstition which ruled him body and soul, and the other was the legacy left him by his forefathers. Though he had gone native, it was only to a certain point. At times his old life took charge, and then Tatoni sat for hours in his hut,



grieving and mourning for the past and craving for something civilised, something he might but touch for a relief to his pain.

These spasms grew less and almost faded. But the photograph was a link with which he could not part. It lay in the tin lining of the box he had brought with him, wrapped in the tanned skin of a monkey. He would come across it at intervals, and the pain would return. Not for the sake of the girl herself, for to that loss he had long been resigned; but the photograph was something white, as he described it to himself, and it was a reminder.

The Livuni kept his secret well, and the District Commissioner who visited them once in six months did not know of Tatoni's existence. He saw the empty hut, swept and garnished, and his mind jumped to a discovery. To him it seemed that this must be a local custom, probably a dwelling for the souls of the dead. Having a taste for such things, he cast about for a confirmation of his theory, and could not find it. The Livuni told him with perfect truth that it was the hut of a man who was in the hills, and the District Commissioner shrugged his shoulders and changed the subject. That it was the truth never entered his head. The mystery of Africa possessed him to the undoing of his judgment.

The Livuni, for the matter of that, told the truth only because it was the easiest thing to do. They would have told him anything to keep him from discovering Tatoni. For they had been told of what would happen if the secret leaked, and they bit their tongues with determination when they remembered the details. Afterwards they would go out and hunt, and present Tatoni with the tongue of a buffalo or some such delicacy. Thus did they pay homage to the greatest witch-doctor they had known.

So that when Norati, in the fullness of his wisdom, decreed that Tatoni should be banished, there was a fearful commotion amongst the Livuni. They gathered under the baobab in the centre of the village, old men and young, and discussed it for hours. The women looked on from the huts round. Norati, regally drunk on bhang, lay on his bed and dreamed of wild hunting and fine feasting. The old men under the tree smoked and predicted ruin, and the unfortunate who had been appointed the bearer of the message listened to them, grey with fear.

He had been to the hut of Tatoni, who

had received him graciously and complimented him on the beauty of his daughter. That had been all to the good, for it meant that her price would go up when the time came for her to marry. But when the man had stammered forth his master's edict, Tatoni's face had grown dark.

"Tell Norati," he had said slowly and impressively, "that unless he alters his message and pays me one goat for a fine, I shall blast him and his tribe from the earth. Go!"

Norati was too drunk to receive this answer, and the tribe had gathered to discuss it. Their views differed considerably, but on one point there was no argument. If the goat did not come from Norati's flock, then they would draw lots and give of their own. For the wrath of Tatoni was a terrible thing, and assuredly Norati would repent when he became sober.

Tatoni was not so sure of this. He crouched in his hut, out of the sun, and considered. The messenger had said nothing of a tribal meeting, and the question that vexed him was one of unanimity. If the tribe had made this order, then his end was near, for his dawa would fail and they would destroy him.

Death did not so much matter, he thought, but the pain of exile descended on him again. He took out the photograph and looked at it. Tears welled into his eyes and rolled slowly down his lined face. A jingling, merry little tune came into his head, and brought with it the memory of a ball. The smallest details of life, as he had lived it, assumed huge proportions. He craved anew for a warm, scented bath, and his palate grew moist as the desire for a whisky and soda, ice cold and hissing gently, returned to him. The sun went down, and Tatoni ate his evening meal in a trance-like detachment.

Norati's fit of drunkenness did not pass for days. He had suffered long under the iron rule of his father, and his new-found freedom enchanted him. The answer to his order was not delivered to him, and in the meantime the strain of waiting was sapping the nerve of the white man. In his state of indecision and weakness the delay was intolerable. Tatoni wandered from his hut to the river and back again. He talked to the villagers for hours, and the mothers of daughters grew hopeful again.

But Tatoni was not thinking of matrimony, nor was his restlessness the symptom of love-sickness. He was afraid. He, the



greatest witch-doctor of the Livuni, famous in all their country, dreaded the coming of the night. The gleam of a spear or the sight of a club made him feel faint. He could stand it no longer. He must go.

He drifted down to the baobab tree and announced to the old men that he proposed to visit Salimu, the headman of a village on the river. The old men wagged their heads in agreement, and turned to their sons to demand an offering of food for Tatoni. The sons agreed with enthusiasm, for to keep their chief and the witch-doctor apart was a most desirable thing. When Tatoni came back, perhaps the drunken madness might have passed from Norati, and the order might be retracted.

The thought pleased them, and they wished Tatoni a safe journey. The white man turned and went back to his hut. When he reached it he trembled in his limbs and wiped the cold sweat of fear from his brow. They had taken it well, he thought, and the issue was postponed. Perhaps he might think of an effectual threat during his travel. He watched his boy pack his few possessions with a profound sense of relief, and walked down the path which led to Salimu's village at a quick shamble.

Tatoni had never taken to the drugs of the native. Bhang made him deadly ill, and the fermented liquor got from the cocoanut disgusted him. He cursed them all with a fervent loathing as he trudged along the baking bush-path, praying that the District Commissioner might come before his return. That worthy, as he knew, would frown on the orgy that had taken place, and would bring the exuberant chief to what little sense he possessed.

For three days he stayed with Salimu, listening to the tales of a witch-doctor, who harrowed the soul of the white man with tales of the vehemence of his familiar spirit. Tatoni felt that he was expected to make a manifestation of power which would impress this braggart. His simple little tricks of legerdemain, the foundation of his reputation in the tribe of the Livuni, suddenly seemed trivial by comparison. Tatoni did not dare to risk them, for he felt that failure would but hasten an end already too close. His sickness for the green fields and cool streams of his own country increased in the parched yellow plain that swept away from the river. He went to his hut and wept like a child on his bed of skins.

Salimu's villagers left him to his sorrow.

They did not understand it, nor had they more respect than any other black race for expressed grief. But the tale of Tatoni's wonders had preceded him on his journeys, and they took the desire for solitude to mean a preparation for a miracle. Lest the working should be evil, and destruction their reward, they forbore to interfere. Instead, they sent food and drink, so that the magician's gratitude might form a mantle of protection for the village.

Tatoni ate the food. He stayed in the hut for three days, and then announced that he was ready to leave. The truth was that he could endure it no longer. For twenty-five years he had lived in the village that Norati ruled, and he was homeless elsewhere. If he was to be driven from Livu, then he would die. In his fear of Fate and dread of the future, anything seemed better than the suspense he had to endure.

He returned to Livu with a slow step and a sickness at his heart. The old men sat round the baobab tree, talking eternally in their high-pitched, quavering voices. Behind them stood the young men in a ring, but there was no sign of Norati. Tatoni walked up to the group and greeted them.

They answered him, but eyed him with a shifting and irresolute air. He stood to one side, and the conversation droned on, aimlessly and endlessly. He caught the word "European," and stooped forward to pay closer attention. In his limbs was a feeble trembling, his heart beat with an irregular pulse, and he felt ill. Perhaps they had arrived at some decision, and this was their way of breaking it to him? He squatted down in the outer ring of men, and motioned his boys to the hut with the baggage.

But it was not of him that the old men chattered. A party of white men had passed through the village, shooting, and they had asked for porters. Norati's drunkenness had passed, and he had allowed men to go. With the garrulity of age, the old men of the tribe were discussing the affair. In their aimless fashion they dwelt on the power of the white men's weapons, and the chances that the game would desert their country.

Tatoni rose and went on to his house. By the way he met the nephew of Salimu, the brother-in-law of Norati. He stopped, and the two talked of the shooting party. Korini grinned broadly when Tatoni spoke of his relative's order.

"That is finished!" he said. "Norati is a great coward, and he fears your dawa.

The goat has been sent. It is tied to your door-post!"

"Ah," said Tatoni reflectively, "that is good, for I did not wish to call on my magic. Norati has the sense of his father."

"And the heart of a chicken!" said the native, moving away.

The hut had been disturbed by the passing of the white men. They had camped just outside, and the ashes from their fires had blown through the doorway. Tatoni set his boys to work, and subsided on the floor with a sigh of relief.

The trembling of his limbs had stopped, and he felt tired. His dread of death had gone, for the wise counsels of the old men had prevailed. But Tatoni did not feel at ease. The straw which had pointed the wind had passed. Where there had been but a breeze there might be a gale. His head drooped forward on to his chest, and he pondered his future.

"Dawa!" said Ali suddenly. He had come from his sweeping with something in his hand, which he held out to his master.

Tatoni opened his eyes wearily and took the object. He felt it, rubbing it between his fingers and turning it over. It was but a piece of newspaper, torn from a corner of the sheet. The man shuddered and put it down beside him. His superstition returned fourfold. This might be a sign, and on his reading depended much. He looked at it again and picked it up.

It was not helpful, and he could not discern the finger of Fate. A report of the cricket match between Oxford and Cambridge was all he saw. He read it slowly, for he had even grown to think in the Swahili dialect spoken by the Livuni, and the printed English was unfamiliar. He turned the paper over. The column was headed "Deaths," and he threw it down with a moan. His ego of twenty-five years agō assailed him afresh. If there was a sign, then it was a sign of misfortune. He rose and threw himself on the bed, grasping the fragment in one feverish hand.

He went over the account of the match again and again. Long-forgotten phrases crowded his mind, and his trouble with the tribe faded into the background. In its place there came a faint desire to see such a game again. The green smoothness of the ground, the beautiful dresses, and the boys who sold cards of the match, formed the outlines of the picture. He looked out at the parched, hard-beaten earth in front of his hut, and sighed. He remembered his

last visit to Lord's, on a similar occasion. He had just come down from Oxford, and life stretched in front of him a glorious adventure. He remembered his passing bitterness when he had been denied his Blue for the sake of a miserable fresher who had developed a genius for fast bowling. Enid came back to his mind, for she had been there—in his youthful judgment, the prettiest girl at Lord's, or, for that matter, in London.

The tattered fragment dropped to the ground, and Tatoni wept feebly for the days that had gone. The other side of the paper was neglected. To him it brought nothing but the memory of that pasted cutting, the death-warrant of his enthusiasms.

The fit would not pass, and Tatoni envied the chief his *bhang*. At least he had the means of forgetting his troubles. The white man roused himself and went to the tin-lined box that stood in one corner of the hut. The white ants had eaten the wooden shell long ago, but the stout metal still remained. He took out a parcel, paper-covered and stained. His trembling hands found the knotted string difficult, but he persisted with the obstinacy of the weak man doing useless work. In the parcel he found his razors, still unruined and covered with grease. A letter or two from his lawyers and various odds and ends, with a little cash-box of painted tin, made up the bulk of it. Tatoni took the things out one by one and fingered them. His day was done, but a wish sprang up in him—a wish for the things he had neglected so long, and a raging desire for all he had put aside.

For days he thought of the piece of paper, but would not read it again. He found the pain of it too great. But the past haunted him, and the ghosts would not be laid. His weak mind took it for an omen that his end was near. He knew, for the tribe of the Livuni had told him that the dying hunter sees his childhood after all other consciousness has fled.

Tatoni sat on in his hut, and ate the meals offered to him. His magic was in abeyance, and all the life of the village was disregarded. His whole being was steeped in his passionate desire to get home to England and see her green fields for one short day before he died. The rains came, and the earth was moist and steaming. Tatoni took the fever, that shook him as a visitation of God. The prayers of long ago came to his lips, and he addressed Norati in his slow and uncertain English. It was taken for

the formulæ of the witch-doctor, and the tribe was afraid.

Tatoni, unheeding, lay on his string bed and drowsed. Gradually a resolve took shape and grew up within him.

### III.

THE thin, bent old man, whose face was lined and yellow, stepped carefully out of his taxi and passed through the gateway at Lord's, showing his member's ticket with a preoccupied air. He walked round the back of the pavilion. The tarred pavement gave off a sickly odour in the hot sunlight, and he sniffed it nervously. At one of the enclosures he bought a card and seated himself in the corner, well out of the glare.

Oxford were in, and he watched the bowling with a critical eye. On the far side of the ground the huge stands were crowded, for it was the last day of the match. The old man read his card, and decided that Oxford ought to do it nicely, given decent luck. He looked round on the throng about him, and listened to scraps of their talk. Young men discussed technicalities with a profound air, and sisters, their own or other people's, listened, impressed and entranced, John Starton caught a name now and again. The sons of his friends were playing, and he felt very old.

Three seats away sat a middle-aged and handsome woman. She glanced at the thin figure bent over the thick cane, and looked again. Starton, feeling uneasy, turned his head and met her eye. He felt suddenly hot and very helpless. This was too bad. He must go. It would never do to stay there.

While he hesitated, playing nervously with his card, the woman rose and came over. She sat down by his side, smiling.

"I knew the mountain wouldn't come to Mahomet," she remarked, "so—How d'you do, John?"

"Er—how d'you do?" said Starton, feeling very miserable.

"Where have you been?" asked the woman, with a direct look. "In Africa all the time, or where?"

"In the bush, Enid." Starton rose. "I must go. I've a lot to do—lawyers and so forth." He stammered a little and fumbled with his hat.

"Sit down again, and don't tell fibs," said the handsome woman calmly. "I want to talk to you. What's brought you here?"

"I really don't know. I suddenly felt like it."

"Why only now? Why not ages ago?"

"I don't know. I just took it into my head and came. One likes to see these things again." He nodded towards the ground.

"What brought it into your head? I thought you hated all this kind of thing?"

"Not cricket. I hate society—yes. But not games, Enid," protested Starton.

The luncheon bell rang, and the crowd streamed on to the pitch. They were left alone, but Mrs. Goldstein showed no sign of a desire to move. Instead, she settled herself comfortably, and demanded to hear all about Starton and his doings. The man was nervous, and prayed for the intervention of some friend or other. No one came. Enid would not be denied, and in a moment or two he was talking jerkily of his life in the bush. He spoke of the scrap of newspaper, and brought it out of his pocket-book.

Mrs. Goldstein took it. She noticed the date and turned it over. The column of deaths seemed to interest her. She flushed and turned a little white.

"It's queer that this scrap should have travelled for two years, only to get to you at the end," she mused. "You hate me, I suppose, John?"

Starton looked at the handsome face, and the days of his last 'Varsity match returned. Enid was very beautiful, and, after all, a girl may be none the worse for having been dazzled by wealth. Waiting is dull work for the young. Starton coughed.

"Not at all, Enid." He paused and took a deep breath. "Far from it, I assure you. Quite the reverse." He mopped his brow.

"Then you've lost all your enterprise."

"Eh?" John Starton dropped his handkerchief.

"It's true!"

"Dear me!" He mopped his head again.

"Yes, for if you'd read this column, perhaps you would have come sooner." She held it out to him, and he fished for his glasses.

"Bless my soul! Goldstein dead two years ago! I didn't know that."

"Well, you know it now." Mrs. Goldstein smoothed the front of her dress with a slim hand. Starton gazed at her.

"Enid, I believe you're proposing to me!"

"And are you refusing me?"

"Not at all! Very much the reverse, I assure you, very much the reverse."

"Duffer!" remarked Mrs. Goldstein softly. "Let's go and have lunch, John."



"Three tattered men, with all the marks of the tramp upon them."

# RAGGED COMES HOME

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

**T**HREE tattered men, with all the marks of the tramp upon them, and some of the marks of the beast, sat under a hedge for shade from the sun, and looked now and then through it at a cottage across the field. There was something especially furtive about all of them. The Old 'Un was small and white-faced and red-nosed, and scowled furtively. Four Fingers was middling-sized and sallow-faced and red-nosed, and leered furtively. Ragged was big and brown-faced and red-nosed, and laughed furtively.

"You've got more of the gift of the gab than us," the Old 'Un told Ragged. "You go and talk to her, and find out the lie of the land. She's got a long stocking somewhere, but women have artful ways of hiding up things."

"There's more in 'em than you ever think," said Four Fingers. He meant women.

Ragged laid the cigarette ends that he had picked up in a row along his scarred trouser leg, selected one and lit it, pulled his torn cap over his bloodshot eyes, and leaned harder against the hedge.

"And less," he remarked. He meant stockings. "There's never an old gal lives in a lonely cottage but there's a yarn about money. However, from the talk, she must have *something*. She lives, and it won't be on air. I'll go and see if she has a kind heart for a poor man—an honest chap down on his luck—walking from Bareby to Sanstead after work, eh?"

He threw away the first cigarette end, selected another, rose and slouched across the fields to the little cottage with a creeper over the door. It was a very trim little cottage, standing in a very trim little garden. A very trim little woman answered his knock, a terribly clean and neat little person, as spotless as he wasn't, and as

tidy as he was the reverse. She was about forty. She had been passably good-looking once, and was not ill-looking now, only rather worn.

"Begging your pardon, ma'am," Ragged said, "I'm looking for work. Tramped all the way from Bareby, and going on to Sanstead—if my boots last out." He held up a foot to display a sole almost dropping off its leather. "If you've got a feeling heart——"

"You do not look like a man who chases work very hard," the little woman told him, with demure shrewdness. "However—You have seen better days, I think, from your speech?"

"Seen better days," he agreed, "and never thought to come to this."

"I suppose," she suggested, with the same nun-like worldly wisdom, "it was mostly your own fault."

"Don't hit a man when he's down," he begged. "I dare say it was all my own fault; but that doesn't make it any easier, doesn't stop me wanting to eat and drink, doesn't reconcile me—there's a word to convince you of the better days!—to rags upon my back, doesn't stitch the soles upon my shoes. If you've good advice to offer, I'd listen to it better full than empty."

The little woman looked at him with her head on one side. She *had* a feeling heart, and Ragged washed and fairly clad would have been a well-looking man, the sort that female hearts feel for.

"I'll give you something to eat and drink," she offered. "I'm afraid I can't help you over the shoes. Come in."

She led him to the kitchen. He thought he had never seen such a shockingly clean and orderly place. She motioned to a chair, and he dusted himself and sat down, with his elbows on its arms and looked round as if the place belonged to him.

"Somehow," she said, "the way you talk reminds me of someone I used to know."

"That," said Ragged, "may be a compliment to me, but hardly to him."

"No. I wasn't thinking of compliments. You are very unlike him in other respects, except that you are big. . . . It was years ago, when I lived at Altby."

Ragged looked round suddenly and stared at her while she got out the bread and cheese. Altby! He knew her now. Lizzie Franklin! Why, he'd kissed her in the lane behind the church, if he recollected right. But he wasn't quite sure. He had kissed a good many girls in those days, and thought

nothing of it. Certainly he thought nothing special about Lizzie. She was such a solemn little owl. He always felt that he wanted to make her laugh.

"Altby," he said, "eh?"

"You know it?"

"Not to say know. I've been through it. There's a pond, isn't there, just off the green?"

"That is where I lived," she told him, "in the shop facing the pond. It was my father's."

Old gouty Franklin, who kept the general store! He remembered. This was Lizzie all right—primmer than ever.

"Was it, now?" he said. He commenced on the bread and cheese to which she had motioned him. "Lucky you, to have a father with a shop to leave! You don't have to chase work for a living, I suppose."

"No," she said, "I don't. I find it at home." She nodded at the wondrously clean kitchen.

"I suppose," he suggested, "you'll dust out this chair when I've gone?"

"And sweep where you have walked," she assured him. "You could, at any rate, keep yourself clean."

"Talk!" he told her. "Talk! My home is the dusty road, my bed a haystack—if I can find one. My wash-basin is a ditch, and my larder—what comes along, if it *does* come along. At present it's your bread and cheese, and—The jug contains milk, I fear."

He shook his head at it.

The little woman laughed.

"There is a bottle of beer in the cupboard," she said. "I keep it for guests. You shall have that." She fetched the bottle and set it before him. "How did you come to this?"

"As many a better man has come—following the devil, just to see where he went. I drink your health, madam. It is a long time since I tasted bottled beer. As the poet says, 'The Tempter hath his snare for all.' Even for you, madam, though you'd be difficult, of course. Our old friend the Tempter has caught a good many better men than I, some that you knew at Altby in the old days, perhaps. Perhaps some you'd least expect. Perhaps the good gentleman of whom I have the honour to remind you."

The little woman clasped her hands.

"I pray not!" she cried. "Oh, I pray not! He didn't drink, anyhow. I don't mean

anyone in particular, only—I thought of someone because we lost sight of him.”

“A good thing sometimes,” Ragged assured her. “I don’t much pity the people that have lost sight of me. Suppose he’d come to be—like this!”

He waved his ragged arms, touched some slits in his coat, held up the boot with the hanging sole.

“Never,” she denied indignantly. “He wasn’t that sort—your sort, and that’s the lazy sort, I think.”

“And that’s a fact,” Ragged agreed, unabashed. “I thought he might be like me, as I remind you of him.”

“You are not a bit like him, really,” she declared.

“Not like he *was*,” Ragged said. “Nor like *I* was, either.”

“He was full of—of noble ideas,” she asserted—“ideals.”

“Was he?” Ragged chuckled. “Most young people have them, like they have measles. The attack lasts about as long. It’s a good job I’m not like him, or you might worry, eh?”

“Yes. You are a trifle like him in voice and way of speaking. Your features remind me of him sometimes, but——”

“Not the general effect, eh? A particular friend of yours, ma’am?”

“A friend—I felt very friendly to him. I don’t think he. . . . It is twenty years ago—twenty years ago when he went.”

“Got into trouble or something of that kind?” Ragged suggested.

“They said things. I hope they weren’t true. . . . I don’t know what has made me talk about it. I expect it is because your way of talking reminds me of him. . . . You must meet a great many people, travelling about—in search of work.”

Ragged laughed, poured out the last of the beer.

“A great many people,” he agreed. “Perhaps even your esteemed friend. If you cared to tell me his name——”

“It was Harold Hastings,” she said, syllable by syllable.

Ragged drained the beer slowly, looked away from her.

“I have not met anyone of that name,” he lied.

“I am sorry,” she said, “and—and glad. I do not say that unkindly, but. . . . Couldn’t you raise yourself again? If you tried——”

“Couldn’t try,” Ragged said, and rose. “There was a man in prison once. When they opened the doors, he wouldn’t come

out. He’d got used to it—liked it best. If I were you, I should forget this Harold Hastings. He wasn’t anything to you, was he?”

“No. We were not engaged or anything like that. He—he rather—took notice of me.”

“Took notice, did he? Well, a man might.” He looked at her critically, saw the young Lizzie in her still. Lizzie wasn’t specially pretty, he used to think—he remembered now—but “taking,” quaint. Yes, quaint, was his summary of her. “He might,” he repeated. “And so you’ve remembered him—kindly?”

“Kindly. I don’t mean—anything. Only—only I should like to help him, for—for old acquaintance sake, you see?”

“I see. Lucky you, to be in a position to help him; a well-to-do lady, with a long stocking.”

“Lizzie of the long stocking!” he laughed to himself.

“I don’t say that, but father left me all he had. If you should ever meet him, and find that he wanted help, you might mention me—as a friend.”

Ragged bowed and made toward the door.

“Thanking you for your hospitality,” he acknowledged. “I make out that, if he came back, you’d marry him?”

The little woman drew herself up.

“*That*,” she stated, “would depend on how he came, whether I considered him fit to marry, and whether he—whether he very much wanted to. I shouldn’t unless. I should make sure first that it wasn’t for my money, *quite* sure. If he were like—well——”

“Like me, eh?”

“Of course I wouldn’t then. But I would help him.”

“I see,” said Ragged. “I see. Well, thanking you again, madam. Good afternoon.”

He bowed himself and shambled round the lane till he came to where the Old ’Un and Four Fingers dozed behind the hedge

“So far as I can make out,” he told them, “it’s all humbug about the long stocking. A lot of—gossip. Pah, I’d like to have hold of some of their lying throats! I don’t believe there’s a pound in the house. I got a bit of bread and cheese and water! *I’m* not going to run into trouble for the chance of a few shillings. Best move on.”

He swore.

The Old ’Un swore.

Four Fingers swore  
They moved on.

At the next cross-roads Ragged left his companions. He would pick them up again at Sanstead, he said. He was going in to

laid the maimed hand from which he was named on the Old 'Un's shoulder.

"Old 'Un," he snarled, "Old 'Un, he ain't got no uncle at Deedham! A bit of bread and cheese, he said, and water!



"'It is all right,' she said, 'now that you have come to me—come home!' 'Come home!' he echoed. . . .  
God helping me!"

Deedham to see the uncle he had told them of. He'd sworn that he'd help Ragged no more, but "I might touch the old blighter for a quid to get rid of me."

When he was out of sight, Four Fingers

*Mate, I smelt beer! Twig? He found out that the old gal was warm. He's going to do the business on his own—unless we're first!"*

"We — well will be," the Old 'Un

swore. And they turned back to Rixton, where the little cottage was, lounging along with big, slow, noiseless strides, like the steps of the preying wolf and the sore-footed thievish tramp, who dislikes to hear his feet touch the ground.

\* \* \* \* \*

For once Ragged was not lying when he spoke of his uncle at Deedham. He had an uncle there, though the old man would not willingly have owned the relationship, and had refused for years to have anything to do with his wastrel nephew. Ragged waylaid him on his road home from business and stuck to him, in spite of his threats to call a policeman, till he obtained a hearing.

"You don't want to appear in the police court and own I'm your nephew," he said. "You can't deny that, you know. Blood's thicker than water, eh, uncle? Now, look here. I'm not asking for money, only for something to cover my skin. It's the family skin! However, I don't make a great point of decency. The point is that, if you'll rig me out in something approaching the respectable—the shabby respectable—I've a chance to get a job that will keep me without pestering my worthy but hard-hearted and somewhat close-fisted relatives."

"You've no right to say that," the old man growled. "I helped you till I saw that it was no use, and long after. You only drank the money, and that's all you'd do now."

"I'm not asking for money," Ragged retorted. "It's only a matter of a few old clothes—clothes that the portly and important John Hastings, Esq., can't wear. You don't want a relative in the town, do you, a relative in this condition, walking up and saying 'Good morning uncle,' when you come out of church with Aunt on your arm?"

The old man gave him the clothes and a shilling or two, and finally softened a trifle. There was something about Ragged which made it difficult to keep angry with him.

"I don't know what job you're after," he said, "and I suspect there isn't much work in it—"

"There isn't!" owned Ragged—but he looked very different now—with that cunning laugh which his uncle hated.

"Well, if you don't get it, and come back to me, I'll give you a job—for your mother's sake—if you like to work; but when I say work, I mean work, mind."

"That's just the trouble between us,"

Ragged explained. He laughed the cunning laugh again.

"Well," his uncle growled, "you spoke of a job. I don't know of any that hasn't work in it—unless it's marrying for money. I suppose you're not proposing to do that?"

"Oh, no," said Ragged, "only to go where money is."

"You are a blackguard," his uncle told him.

"Yes," he agreed, and laughed his crafty laugh again.

Then he set off to Rixton, tramping through the night, except for a few hours' sleep in an outhouse, which he entered through the unlatched shutter that took the place of a window.

The "job" which he proposed for himself was to wheedle some of the contents out of Lizzie Franklin's long stocking. He intended to reappear to her as Harold Hastings, an unfortunate man who, from ill luck, not ill desert, had failed to make good. Now—he would say—he was in ill-health, and felt that he could continue the uphill struggle no longer. He had come to see her again before he died. He wanted her blessing, and then—the river. "To drown his griefs," he would say poetically. If Lizzie chose to throw out the long stocking as a straw to succour the drowning man—He might even marry her, if she insisted upon that, if the stocking were long enough. He must try to find out how much was in it. But marriage was not part of his main plan. He did not mind Lizzie herself, but "She'd always be brushing up after me," he told himself. "It would be like living in a show-case. . . No, no, I don't want Lizzie, only her long stocking. The old man must have left her a few hundred, anyway."

He arrived at Kane Hill, next Rixton, in the early morning, had some breakfast and a shave and a wash, and went on, looking a rather shabby but very respectable man, a man whom no one would recognise for Ragged. At a quarter past nine he walked up the front path to the cottage door.

"Can I see Miss Franklin?" he asked. "I am Harold Hastings, an old friend of hers."

"I—don't—know," the girl said doubtfully. "I don't expect she'll see anyone this morning, but I'll ask her."

The girl came back and announced that Miss Franklin would see him for a few minutes.



"She has had an accident," she stated—"been hurt."

He found her sitting limply in a big arm-chair. He saw no visible signs of injury, and he was too full of his purpose to notice that the hand which she held out was the left. He did notice that it clung to his. No hand had done that for years, and Ragged was a man who could never be rough to a child or a kitten that clung to him. He wouldn't have everything out of the long stocking, he decided—not very stably!

"Harold," she said feebly, "I am glad to see you. So glad." She smiled at him, wiped her eyes. "I wondered if you remembered me. I—it is a long time—"

"I hadn't the heart to come, Lizzie," he said. "I always meant to, if I prospered, but I didn't." He motioned to his shabby clothes.

"Oh!" she cried. "Oh!"

"I've struggled," he lied. "Kept respectable and all that, but—well, luck's been against me."

"Oh, Harold!"

"Dead against me. Sometimes I feel inclined to curse, but—I wasn't brought up that way, you know."

"I know, I know! My poor Harold!"

"However, I feel I can't struggle on any longer. My health—" He coughed care-

fully. "The doctor says I want rest and nursing. 'A generous diet.'" He laughed bitterly. "I'd like to know how to get it"

"Oh, Harold, if only you had come before! I could have given it to you then, nursed you, nursed you well. I would have! I would have! Now . . . Harold, last night some wicked men broke in. They took nearly all I had. It was foolish to keep it in the house, but father never trusted banks. I haven't hardly anything now. Of course you shall have some of it. Of course! But—there isn't much, and—my right arm is fractured, and my leg. I heard them and went out, and they threw me downstairs, and—I can't even nurse you now—*can't even nurse you now, Harold, my dear!*"

Ragged staggered to his feet, knelt down beside her, with his face on her knees.

"My uncle offered me a job yesterday," he said through his hands. "I didn't take it then because—I thought I wasn't equal to the hard work. Now I think I am. I shall nurse *you* well, *my dear!* It will be all right, Lizzie, all right!"

"It is all right," she said, "now that you have come to me—come home!"

"Come home!" he echoed. "Come home—God helping me!"

## THE PRESENCE.

**WHAT** voices now  
 In hush of midnight float?  
 No reedy river-music, nor soft note  
 Of swaying, sleepy bird.  
 The pine tree slumbers, whose sage bough  
 To murmurous thought at dusk of stars awoke—  
 And all unheard  
 The cedar and the oak.

Now room by room  
 A presence fills the house,  
 And stays the creaking door and questing mouse  
 And all adventurers.  
 One presence only in the gloom—  
 His voice a silence, an unuttered word—  
 Our one heart hears,  
 For Love alone is heard.

ERIC CHILMAN.

# BREAKING RECORDS

By HENRY PIEJUS

ILLUSTRATED BY HUTTON MITCHELL

Alice sighed elaborately, but I paid no attention.

"George!" said my wife rather acidly.

"That's my name," I murmured absently, for I was silently wrestling with an intricate human problem.

"I think I will wire to the farm tomorrow," went on my wife, with an air of weariness, "and tell them I am coming down for a week. I feel quite worn out."

I had recognised the portent of that sigh. It was a yearly event, and followed soon after the spring cleaning. It indicated that Alice intended to desert me for a while to go and stay in the country with an old nurse who had married a farmer. I never consented to this programme without first making a dignified protest.

"I do not like the idea of your running about the country alone," I said. "I should feel easier if you had some suitable companion, such as Mrs. Field."

"One doesn't want one's next-door neighbour when taking a change," remarked Alice rather scornfully.

I saw that I should meet with difficulties and opposition, if I pressed the matter in this way, so I changed my tactics.

"Oh, Mrs. Field would not leave her husband, even if you asked her to go with you," I said lightly, "for you will remember that during eight years of married life she has never left him for a single day."

"Then it is quite time that she did have a little change," said Alice determinedly, "and I will make her come with me."

"She won't go," I said positively. And, to clinch the matter, I added: "I'll bet you a new hat she won't go."

After church that morning, Field and his wife, being servantless, came in to share our Sunday dinner, and I must confess that Alice managed the affair in a very artistic manner. On receiving our neighbours, Alice regarded Helen Field with a kind of compassionate tenderness, then took her arm and led her carefully to our most easy

chair. Then, after collecting the softest cushions and adjusting them with anxious solicitude for Mrs. Field's benefit, my wife sat down in a high-backed chair by her side with very much of the air of a nurse sitting by her patient. Alice maintained her tender air at the dinner table, and I observed that this attitude was having its due effect on Charles Field, for he was evidently becoming uneasy. Mrs. Field was puzzled, and protested mildly at these attentions, but Alice checked her gently.

"We must take care of you, my dear," she said, still speaking in that rather hushed and soothing voice. "I can quite understand how it is you are so run down after the spring cleaning, and having such trouble with servants. My Mary Jane is a jewel, but I feel the strain, and George has insisted that I shall go away for a week to my old nurse in the country. A little rest down there always does me so much good."

"Yes," I said, playing up to this lead with a show of reluctance, "Alice always comes back so much brighter and better—er"—my wife glanced at me sharply, but I continued tactfully—"better able to deal with the trying cares of household management."

Weakened by these subtle flanking methods, Field offered but a very feeble opposition when Alice delivered her frontal attack later on. It was soon settled that Alice and Helen should hie themselves to the country on the morrow, and that Field should bear me company while our respective wives were away.

Charles Field and I were old comrades, and had settled down to married life at about the same time in adjacent suburban villas. But although his business was prosperous, and his domestic felicity was undisturbed, my friend had gradually developed a worried and anxious appearance, which seemed to grow into more settled gloom as the years went by. I wondered for a long time what was troubling him, and at last I discovered his secret.

Since his marriage he had gradually cultivated the habit of making records. He

into habits that enslaved him, for he took some strange and painful pleasure in the perpetuation of these habits, though they were of no value to himself and of no interest to anyone else. It was his occasional mournful boasting of these records that enlightened me as to the cause of his con-



"Look!" said Charles, in a voice that shook with emotion."

did not aim at knocking seconds off the mile: his records were of a peculiarly personal nature. They had their origin in unimportant trifles which, by regular repetition over a certain length of time, had grown

stantly anxious and depressed appearance, which was leading on to a premature old age. When I missed my usual train in the morning, the one which he always caught, he would take the very first opportunity of telling me that he had never—no, never once been late at his office. Punctuality is a praiseworthy virtue, but Field made a hideous ju-ju of it. He compared his watch with the station clock, he checked it with the church chimes, he was also anxious as to the opinion of my own timepiece over the garden fence in the morning, and then I would hear him urging on the preparation of breakfast—all this worry so that he might not break a valueless record.

Then in the first year of his married life he had unfortunately taken first prize with his sweet peas at the local flower show. Out of this grew another of his records, for he won that first prize for sweet peas year after year without a break. The anxiety to maintain this record increased every year, and he not only worried himself over it, but his neighbours also. In the spring he would, after first asking the time, proceed to lecture me on slugs, snails, and other garden pests. He would inform me as to their destructive operations on vegetation in general, and on sweet peas in particular, their habits and customs of life, their modes of travel, and then wind up with instructions for their successful pursuit, capture, and destruction. His favourite hunting time was late at night, especially when it was raining, so that he enjoyed a severe cold all through the spring. On the eve of show day his anxiety was intense, and I have seen him rush out with an umbrella in either hand to protect a certain delicate variety from an untimely shower.

When I urged that he might retire with honour after seven consecutive successes, and give someone else a chance, he regarded me with horror, and reproached me with being a vandal for wishing to break a record so honoured by time. It was then that I fully realised that my friend had become the slave of himself, and determined to save him. At any cost, those records must be broken.

I did not confide my intentions to Alice, for I conceived that she might whisper indiscreetly to Helen, who would consider it her duty to put Charles on his guard. There is nothing more stimulating to a woman than a little judicious opposition and a new hat, so Alice became my unconscious ally, and the record of eight years of undivided connubial companionship was the first success that attended my efforts to free the enslaved Charles. I should not have interfered thus with what was, after all, but a minor record of domestic bliss, but I felt that it was important to get Charles to myself in order to have a fair chance of achieving my worthy and unselfish object.

Indeed, it turned out that the first step led naturally to the second, for though Charles spent a very happy evening at his usual occupation of hunting slugs, he was nevertheless disturbed by the domestic upheaval. For he forgot to wind his watch that night when we were first deserted by our respective wives, and it stopped whilst he was taking his last uneasy snooze in the morning.

"A quarter past eight, did you say?" he called, after I had replied to his agitated query as to the right time.

"A quarter to eight," I replied, with a shake in my voice, for this was too, too easy, and I was almost unnerved by this strange intervention of Providence. Then I carefully put back the dining-room clock before he came down to breakfast.

I did not dare to accompany him to the station that morning and be with him when he discovered that he had broken another record, so, with much presence of mind, I snapped a bootlace at the last moment and wasted much time in searching for a new pair. Charles was mournfully reproachful when he reached home that evening, but it consoled me to note that he seemed to have lost all his old interest in discovering what was really the right time. His hand strayed to his watch several times, but he only sighed and checked himself, and we did not compare watches once. And he lingered so long over his sweet peas the next morning, again missing the nine-fifteen, that I believe he was feeling an unholy joy in his emancipation from the thralldom of time.

But the sweet peas were my chief difficulty: they were so abominably healthy and promising. I dared not ravage them openly, for I feared that I might be detected, and there was a grave risk of losing Charles's friendship if he discovered my duplicity. Twice I caught young and active slugs and tried to persuade them to crawl through an opening in the fence separating my garden from that of Charles, but they flatly refused to proceed, and turned back to their old haunts in my garden. I was disgusted at this example of sheer ingratitude. Where would they have been if I had followed out those instructions for their chase and destruction imparted to me by Charles? The days flew by, and I grew desperate, for I knew that my only chance of breaking that worst record of all was to do it while he was my guest and under my eye.

On Friday evening I was nailing up the Dorothy Perkins on the fence exactly at the point opposite which Charles's sweet peas were flourishing, and I dislodged one of the fence boards, quite by accident. I pulled it back into place. I could not shake off Charles on Saturday morning, even by missing the nine-thirty, for Charles was revelling in his new-found freedom and didn't care a hang which train he caught. By making a special effort, however, I managed to reach home half an hour in advance of Charles,

and when the latter came in, I was reading ostentatiously in the drawing-room. Five minutes later I heard a hoarse voice calling my name from the garden. I sauntered out, and found that Charles had gone round through the back entrance into his own garden.

"Look!" said Charles, in a voice that shook with emotion.

"Nice birds," I said, peering critically over the fence; "just like mine. You never told me you were going to keep fowls."

"They are yours," replied Charles, struggling with suppressed passion. And he pointed a tragic finger at the dislodged fence board and then at the open door of my fowl run. "My sweet peas have been pecked and scratched to pieces and ruined."

I looked in turn at the sweet peas, fowls, fence board and fowl house, and shook my head with uncomprehending amazement. I felt a little nervous, but I do not think that my stealthy operations with a handful of wheat and a makeshift peashooter could have been observed or understood.

"Why couldn't those infernal fowls have stopped in your own garden, and not come into mine?" he wailed miserably. His head glistened redly in the sun as I surveyed his garden critically over the fence. My head did not glisten, but then I do not pile up useless and unnecessary records.

"Well," I said generously, "your garden is really the nicer, you know."

When I had settled Charles on the verandah,

I brought out a tray and filled two glasses with something sparkling.

"My rule—never—until evening," murmured Charles brokenly, still struggling weakly for one of the last links of his chain of enslavement.

"A good rule—for business hours," I replied carelessly.

After Charles had studied the curious effect obtained by viewing a garden through the bottom of a glass tumbler, I felt that the iron was indeed hot, and it was time to strike another blow. Charles often boasted that he never went anywhere without Helen—no, never.

"I wonder what is on at the Palliseum to-night?" I said, watching the smoke curl up from my pipe.

Charles started a little, but his eyes gleamed, and he grew visibly younger.

"We might have a little dinner at Sprengelli's first," he said firmly.

"No," I replied with resolution, "we will go to Pongoli's."

I insisted on this, for Alice and I made it a rule never to go anywhere but to Pongoli's, and, besides, Sprengelli's might have been another of those records of Charles's.

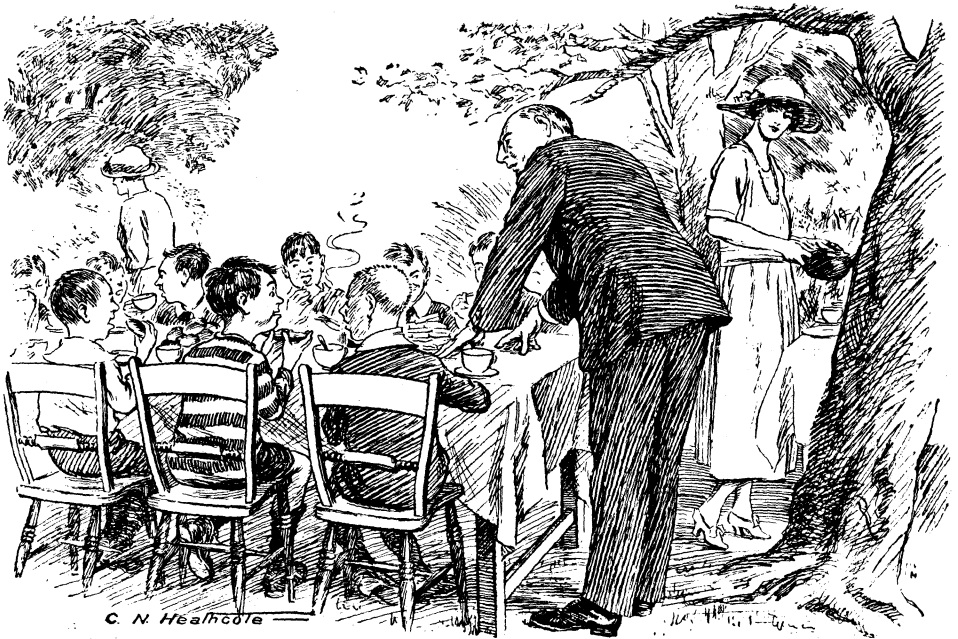
Charles is a changed man now. He missed his shackles at first, but he has grown younger and learned that life is really more joyous when not hampered by an elaborate system of self-imposed penance. I am not sure whether he knows how much he owes me for the cure.

## SONG.

**I SAILED a boat right into the wind,  
The whispering wind, the wind that blew;  
I hardly know what I went to find,  
But I tied to the mast a dream of you;  
And I hailed the night as I sped along  
To the sound of your name in a sailing song.**

**I sailed my boat right into a star,  
A creek of silver, a fairy stream;  
I hardly know why I sailed so far,  
But I followed the bidding of my dream;  
And what I found in that fairy tide  
Was better than all the world beside.**

**AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.**



TAKING NO RISKS.

VICAR (at the Sunday-school treat): Why don't you drink your tea out of the cup?  
 BRIGHT BOY: Ho, yus, and get the bloomin' spoon in yer eye! I don't think.

# THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

CULTURE AND CALICO.  
 By Agnes-Mary Lawrence.

PHYLLIS was in a thoroughly bad temper. Being skilled, through long experience, in reading the weather signs, I refrained from asking tactless questions, knowing that sooner or later the storm would burst.

It did. "I've just been at a sewing meeting," announced Phyllis in ominous tones.

The obvious rejoinder was "Why?" But, instead of giving way to impulse, I endeavoured to throw oil upon the troubled waters.

"I'm very glad to hear it," said I heartily. "Mrs. Watson would be tremendously pleased to see you."

Mrs. Watson is our vicar's wife, who really runs the parish, and who has long been anxious to capture Phyllis for her local charitable ventures.

"Mrs. Watson!" Phyllis's tone of withering scorn would have blistered a veteran salamander. "Don't talk to me of Mrs. Watson!"

"Dear me!" I said mildly. "What has the estimable vicar's wife been doing to you?"

"It's not what she's been doing to me personally. It's the blight she insists on spreading over the whole parish."

"Blight?" I asked.

"Yes, blight," said Phyllis vehemently. "What else could you call red flannel petticoats and natural wool——"

"Spare my blushes," I murmured.

But Phyllis continued her tirade unmoved. "Why should the wives and daughters of the working man be expected to wear such hideous things? Mrs. Watson says it is becoming to their walk of life. Becoming, indeed! Those garments wouldn't become a— a hedge-hog! I don't suggest they should wear crêpe de chine, but it *is* possible to get pretty colours in cheap materials, and dainty patterns are just as easy to make up as those shapeless atrocities. Arn't they?" demanded Phyllis sharply.

Rousing myself from my absorption in an imaginary picture of a hedge-hog garbed in a red flannel petticoat, I said hastily: "Yes, dear, yes, of course they are. What are you going to do about it?"

"Wait and see," said Phyllis darkly.

A few evenings later I ventured to ask what success she was having in her crusade against hideous utility.

"Not very much," she replied despondently. "You remember that chintz I admired so much when we were in Town?"



ON THE SAFE SIDE.

NEW TENANT: And how's my sweet-william this morning?  
 GARDENER BILL: Nicely, thankee, ma'am; but go a bit steady—your old man's just behind these ere shrubs.



THE FORETASTE

UNFORTUNATE effect of road-breaking machine on a sensitive gentleman about to keep an appointment with his dentist.

I nodded. "Yes, the grey ground with pale pink roses."

"Well, I thought it would be just the thing for Mrs. Hutchins. The last time she had a few neighbours in to tea, little Johnny dropped a pot of raspberry jam over one of her big chairs, and I knew she wanted something to cover it with. Then there was that black floating flower bowl I coveted so much. Why, I thought, should *we* have all the pretty things of life when the villagers have to put up with atrocious china dogs and gaudy red and blue vases. So I took it to old Mrs. Percy."

'o' stuff,' but explained that 'Erb fancied somethin' brighter and more cheerful-like, 'e did'!"

"And the bowl?" I prompted, seeing that Phyllis had sunk into a brown study.

"The bowl!" she said bitterly. "I passed Mrs. Percy's, and the bowl was there all right. It was full of cold porridge. There was one chicken inside and another two perched on the rim."

So ended, for the time being at least, Phyllis's attempt to raise the taste of the village.



IT'S THE LAST WORD THAT COUNTS.

JONES (on the last green, with the game all square and a fiver on the match): What are you down in?

BROWN: How many are you?

JONES: Go on, I asked you first.

Phyllis paused and sighed.

"I went in to see Mrs. Hutchins to-day," she continued at length, "and, to my dismay, her chair was covered with an imitation pea-green satin patterned with red and blue flowers. She could hardly restrain her pride, and kept patting and smoothing it while she thanked me effusively for the 'nice bit

AN industrial commission was looking over a mill. While the investigators were busy, the whistle blew. The workmen put up their tools and vanished as if by magic.

"Do all the workmen drop their tools the moment the whistle blows?" asked one of the commission.

"No, not at all," said the workman who was acting as guide; "the more orderly men have their tools all put away before that time."

EXCAVATIONS in Asia Minor have brought to light traces of an ancient postal system. No details are to hand, but it is rumoured that the skeleton of a dog with a piece of prehistoric postman in its mouth has been unearthed.

PROFESSOR (who has been assisting at a juvenile party): A most delightful time! We played at circumnavigating a tree of the *Morus nigra* species.

SMALL NEPHEW: He means, "Here we go round the mulberry bush."

A MACHINE has been invented for measuring the emotions, but when tried on a man who had just received his notice of Income Tax assessment, the wheels jammed.





THAT OVERLOOKED FEELING.

A SAMPLE of milk recently taken in London contained 5,840,000 bacteria per cubic centimetre. Consternation reigned among the microbes when they were lined up and ordered to "Number off by the right!"



THE motorist was on unfamiliar ground, and directly before him was a fork in the road, with no signpost to tell him which way to go.

"Which way to Marstown?" he asked of a dejected-looking man who roosted on a fence near at hand.

The native languidly waved his hand toward the left.

"Thanks," said the motorist. "How far is it?"

"Tain't so very far," was the drawing reply. "When you get there, you'll wish it was a sight farther."



AN expert thinks that the hundred-thousand-year-old skull lately discovered in Rhodesia is that of a lady vocalist. So even in those days they had their troubles.

## SONG.

Summer and sun and roses,  
Poets tune up again,  
Singing of country posies  
Jewelled with pearls of rain.

Yes, at this joyous season  
I think the day sublime,  
But for a different reason—  
Strawberries are in their prime!

*Leslie M. Opler.*

## FILMING BABY.

In the old days, when the proud mother took dear baby to have his photograph taken, it was a trying time for all concerned, especially for baby. Refusing to be taken in by the polite fiction that if he kept still and looked at the gentleman he would see a little dicky bird pop out of the camera, he rolled about and howled, and very properly resented the entire proceedings.

But now that film photographs are fashionable he doesn't have to keep still at all, and does just what he likes, while the camera man stands by and turns the handle.

The result is a living picture of the sweet infant which will ultimately be projected on the drawing-room wall for the benefit of admiring friends and relations. The old album was bad enough, but just fancy having to sit out an eight-reel film drama featuring baby as the one and only performer!

**GEORGE:** I have just become engaged to the dearest girl in the world!

**CHARLES:** Well, cheer up, old man. I hope you won't find her quite as expensive as all that.

**DRAMATIC CRITIC:** You actors usually overestimate your ability.

**ACTOR-MANAGER:** Yes. I know of several who imagine they can play "Hamlet" as well as I can.

**STERN PARENT:** And what provision do you propose for my daughter, if I consent to your marrying her?

**SUITOR:** My dear old bean, don't let that worry you; I have signed the insurance coupon in half a dozen different daily papers.

TRACES of several diseases have been found in mummies five thousand years old. On hearing this, Aunt Jane said: "Poor dears! But those ancient Egyptians never would wrap up enough before going out."

**BUTLER** (to departing guest): I hope you slept well, sir. I didn't mention it before, but you was in the 'aunted chamber.



COLD COMFORT.

**CHARLADY:** Don't it seem very lonely, Mr. Madder, livin' all alone like yer do?

**BROWN MADDER:** Oh, no, Mrs. Jones, I'm used to it. Of course, if I were taken very seriously ill, it might be awkward.

**CHARLADY:** Yes, sir. W'y, th' last gent wot 'ad this stodio we didn't find until three days afterwards!

**GUEST:** Yes, I know. I'm awfully sorry, but I put your tip all ready on the dressing-table last night, and the old ghost appeared and took it with him when he vanished.

**GUSHING LADY** (at a musical party): Don't you think her singing is heavenly?

**CYNIC:** Well, I'll go so far as to say it's unearthly.

# A MESSAGE FROM "SAPPER"

## Take up Pelmanism

*Follow my example and you will never regret it, says Famous Author of "Bull-Dog Drummond."*

EVERYONE who wishes to succeed in life, and to increase his or her efficiency and earning power, will be interested to read the following message from "Sapper" (Major H. C. McNeile), the popular author of "Bull-Dog Drummond," "Sergeant Michael Cassidy," and other well-known books and stories.

Having benefited from Pelmanism himself, "Sapper" recommends it to others. It is, he says:—

**"A simple, infallible method of developing efficiency."**

"I do not propose," writes "Sapper," "to go into the question of how Pelmanism obtains its results. If anybody wants to find that out, let him follow my example and see for himself. *He will never regret it.*

"There is no magic word in the system; no formula which, repeated twice in the bath and once after breakfast, will produce success. There is nothing mystic about it—nothing supernatural.

"It is well-nigh impossible to sum up the Course in a phrase: it is altogether too big a thing. There is no catch in it. It is a system developed along perfectly common-sense lines, which leads to a definite goal. That goal is efficiency.

"The system takes a man's thought-box and proceeds to tell the owner how he can improve it. It gives him concise instructions as to what he is to do, and when he carries out these instructions conscientiously he finds the system is right. He begins to realise that his mind is capable of being drilled and expanded exactly the same as his body.

"And, moreover, he finds that just as the fitter his body becomes the more work it can do, so the fitter his mind is, the more it can accomplish. Things come easier to him; he has no difficulty in taking on more. His brain, in fact, is being drilled, and is developing accordingly.

"Thus baldly—Pelmanism. The mind and brain are subject to laws, just as is the body. The teachers of this system have taken those laws—up to now the property, so to speak, of a few abstruse thinkers and philosophers—and built round them a simple, infallible method of developing a human being's efficiency.



"Sapper" (Major H. C. McNeile). Readers who wish to follow his advice should write for a free copy of "Mind and Memory" to the address printed below.

"That is all. As I say, there is no catch. The work which they ask the student to do, and which the student must do if he wishes to benefit by the Course, is not long and arduous. It does not entail going back to school and poring over books. It can be done on one's way to work, or when one is out for a walk.

"Moreover, there is another point which is worthy of note. The exercises—though only a means to an end—are in themselves interesting.

"There is nothing irksome or tedious in the Course; nothing that the student doesn't see the object of even in the early stages of his struggles.

"The results speak for themselves. A man or woman whose brain is efficient must be worth more in the world market than one whose brain is untrained. And Pelmanism trains the untrained mind."

Some of the "results" mentioned by "Sapper" are printed in a book entitled "Mind and Memory," which contains a full description of the Pelman Course. Readers interested in the subject can obtain a free copy of this book by applying to-day to the Pelman Institute, 40, Pelman House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1. Write to-day, and you will receive your free copy of this book by return, together with particulars enabling you to enrol on the most convenient terms for the Course, so highly recommended by "Sapper," that will enable you to increase your earning power and efficiency and win your way to a higher position. **Call or write for this free book to-day.**

Overseas Addresses:—2575, Broadway, New York, U.S.A.; Temple Building, Toronto, Canada; 396, Flinders Lane, Melbourne, Australia; Natal Bank Chambers, Durban, South Africa; Alice Buildings, Hornby Road, Bombay, India.

HOME-CURED.

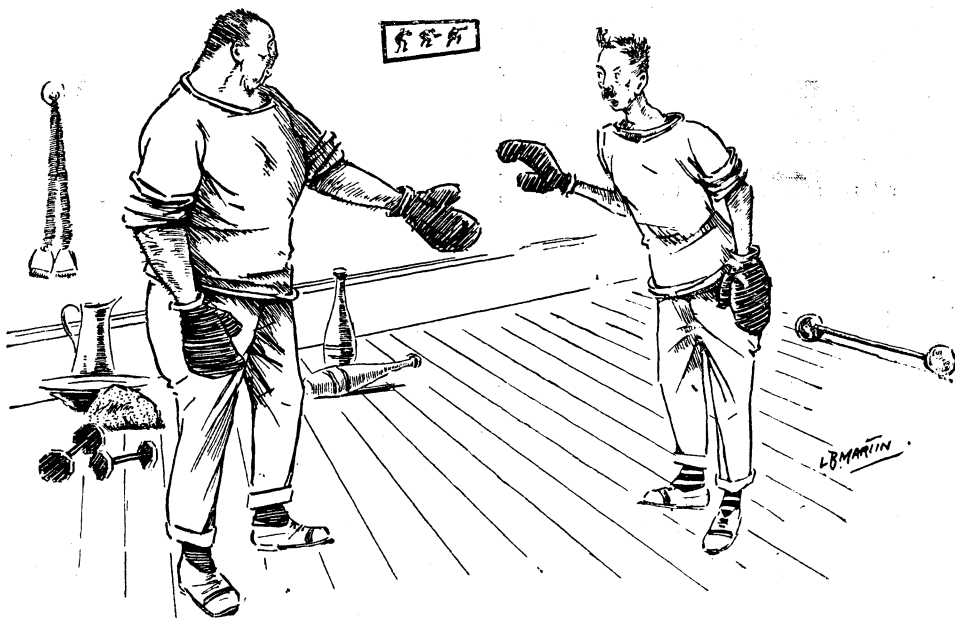
A medical authority, whose mission  
Is the soothing of the liver when it squeals,  
Has discovered that this terrible condition  
May be rectified by rolling after meals.  
You may, of course, have something really chronic,  
Which necessitates your being slightly sawn;  
But if it's just a liver agitating for a tonic,  
Simply go outside and roll upon the lawn!

But in winter—ugh! The prospect sends a shiver  
Down the spine. Stern resolution, on the ebb,  
Cannot contemplate, without a quail and quiver,  
Rolling up and down the lawn in Jan. or Feb.  
No, the vision, you'll admit, is not entrancing.  
If my liver, so to speak, should lose its head,  
You will never see the hailstones from my frozen  
figure glancing—

I shall try a cup of tea and roll in bed!

E. L. Roberts.

This flavour of ambiguity seems to make the system a little unsuitable for the use of land-lubbers. And, as far as I can gather, sailors don't subdivide the half-hours. It isn't the thing to talk of "seven and two-thirds bells," for instance. That must be awkward sometimes, as when the admiral has to wait for his tea till five o'clock—I mean two bells—although really he wants it a quarter of an hour earlier. On the other hand, the refusal to higgie about odd minutes goes well with the bluff heartiness of seafarers. And nobody is going to dispute that at least their way of reckoning time is infinitely more picturesque than ours. When one naval man says to another, "Well, old belaying-pin, you'll be outside Piccadilly Tube at one bell in the second dog?" the appointment takes on a



WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

INSTRUCTOR: 'Ere, come up close, guv'nor, come up close! You ain't got no wife an' family ter worry abaht, 'ave yer?

MARITIME.

By R. D. C. Graham.

IN our village on the coast there stands rather an uncommon sort of clock tower. The clock, to mark the owner's nautical associations, doesn't strike the hours: it strikes so many "bells" instead. For a long time the thing bothered me a little. I'd wake in the night to hear that clock sweetly chiming something or other; and yet I must look at my watch, because the sound conveyed nothing to me. But a day or two ago I buttonholed a sea-dog (no mean feat, if you come to think of it), and he explained the whole business. Now I know that three bells is (or are) either half-past one or half-past five, according to whether it's in the middle or the morning watch. (Or, of course, it might be 9.30, in the first watch, if I'd had a cold and gone to bed very, very early.)

romantic air of adventure which would be to seek if they had merely arranged it for half-past six.

Speaking of the dog-watches, I am told that a battleship's complement always includes a couple of bull-terriers or mastiffs. They wear handsome wristlet watches in their collars, and answer to the names of "first dog" and "second dog." They are expected to be present in the captain's cabin during their two hours of duty. At night they take it in turns to sleep curled round the binnacle. You know, I wonder if that's all true. I shouldn't like to say what a binnacle is, but somehow it doesn't sound quite the sort of thing round which you could persuade a dog to curl himself.

I have seen it alleged somewhere that every Briton is at heart a sailor. I confess that when I ponder my old acquaintance Mr. Hogg-



**For One Guinea you may possess a  
Reproduction of the Real Pearl Necklet  
you have so long wished for**

**Y**OU may be deciding to indulge in a real pearl necklace costing about £400. Why contemplate such a risky investment in these days of bad business, when the famous

**Ciro Pearls**

are available? Not only may you possess for one guinea the absolute facsimile of the £400 necklet of your dreams, but you are £398 19 0 to the good to invest in a safer direction. And even if you did not contemplate spending more than £1 1 0, you profit just the same, for in return for the guinea spent on **Ciro Pearls** you secure a necklet which represents a few hundred pounds' worth in appearance and wear.

**“TRUTH”** of March 1st, 1922, after a most complete investigation into the reason for the world-wide popularity of **Ciro Pearls**, state: “**Ciro Pearls** are frankly reproductions, but they are *perfect* reproductions. In weight, hardness, and lustre, there is no detectable difference to the ordinary eye between the **Ciro Pearl** and the natural pearl. . . . The expert has indeed been again and again misled into thinking that **Ciro Pearls** are the product of the oyster and not of the laboratory.”

**OUR UNIQUE OFFER.**

On receipt of one guinea we will send you a necklet of **Ciro Pearls**, 16 inches long, with clasp and case complete, or a ring, brooch, ear-rings or any other **Ciro Pearl** jewel in hand-made gold settings. If, after comparing them with real or other artificial pearls,

they are not found equal to the former or superior to the latter, return them to us within fifteen days and we will refund your money. **Ciro Pearl** necklets may also be obtained in any length required. We have a large staff of expert pearl stringers.

Latest descriptive booklet No. 10 sent post free on application.

Our only  
address in  
Great Britain

**Ciro Pearls Ltd.**  
39 Old Bond Street London W.1. Dept. 10.

We have  
no Agents  
or Branches

OUR SHOWROOMS ARE ON THE FIRST FLOOR, OVER LLOYDS BANK

Smythe— But no matter. The point is that, if this is so, people ought to take more interest in this nautical chronology. I am thinking of setting an example to my fellow-landsmen. When next anybody asks me the time, say in a crowded 'bus, perhaps, I shall make answer in a loud voice, "Just gone five bells in the forenoon watch," or whatever it is. The only objection is that I'm sure I shall find it very hard to refrain from prefacing this remark with "Avast there!" or "Shiver my timbers!" The conductor might not understand that this was due to simple association of ideas. I dare say he would consider himself justified in placing me under arrest and reporting the matter to the Admiralty. I shouldn't like that.

"Of course you can't; that is a striking illustration of the subtlety of the new art expression. He has gone home to fetch his tools."



A CERTAIN magnate is often invited to say a few words to the students whenever he visits the local schools. As he is an entirely self-made man, every boy who has listened to his stories is made aware that if it is not economy, it is industry that eventually lands one in his position of dignity and power, but a newcomer to town drew his conclusions from the depths of his personal experience.



CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES.

FILM DIRECTOR (to applicant for job): Had any previous experience of comedy work? Ever hung on to the branch of a tree with a lion chewing your trousers?

APPLICANT: I don't remember.

FILM DIRECTOR (incredulously): Don't remember?

APPLICANT: No. When you've been married ten years and got three children, two of 'em boys, you don't remember trifles like that.

THE PROBLEM PICTURE.

"We are getting back," said the artist, "to simple forms of expression in art. The large and crowded canvas has had its day. Impressionism is out of date, and the Cubist is dead and buried. To-day we strive to depict some simple object in a way that shall inspire and uplift and yet leave something to the imagination. Here, for instance, is a picture I have completed for the Academy—just an ordinary cistern, you will observe, with the water spouting from a fracture in the supply pipe. I call it 'The Plumber.'"

"Yes," said the visitor, "but I can't see any plumber."

The great man had been addressing the school on the subject of the bee—its marvellous capacity for labour and accumulation. "And now," he said, in conclusion, "what does the busy, busy bee teach us?"

"To keep away from the hive," said the new boy, simply but feelingly.



"SAY, that horse you sold me is blind, and you never said a word to me about it."

"Well, the man who sold him to me didn't tell me, either, and I thought perhaps he didn't want it known."



# THE WINDSOR

August



LIBRARY  
1922

ONE SHILLING NET

ARD LOCK & CO LIMITED

*Edw. Lindbergh*



Two Bulwarks of Healthy Childhood—

**OPEN-AIR EXERCISE**

and

**WRIGHT'S**

**COAL TAR SOAP**

*Protects from Infection*

*THE Ideal Nursery Soap*

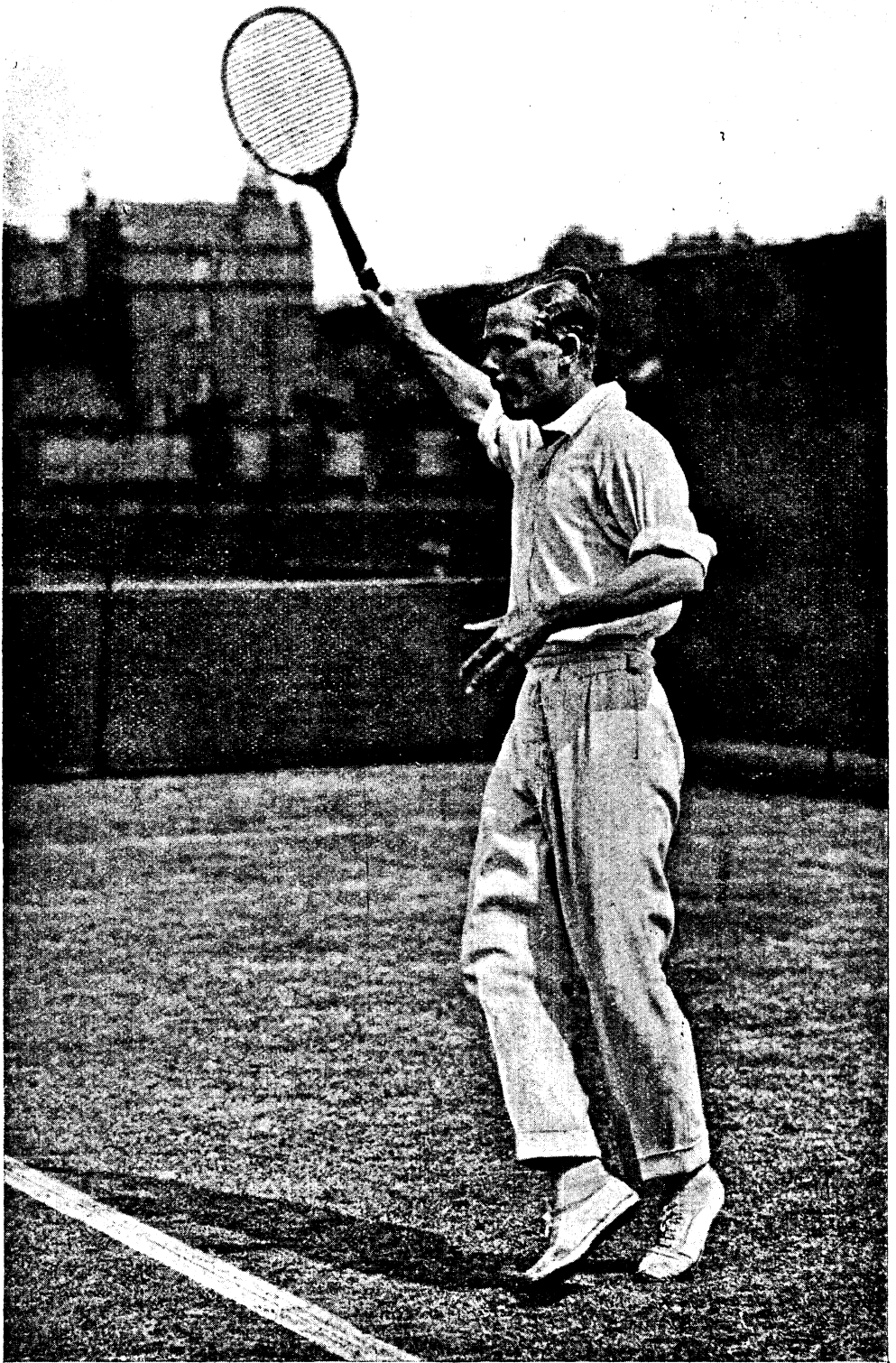
7d. per tablet.

Box of 3 tablets 1/9.

BATH TABLETS DOUBLE SIZE 1/- PER TABLET, BOX OF 3 TABLETS 3/-







THE FINISH OF A HIGH BACK-HAND DRIVE BY B. I. C. NORTON.  
*Photograph by Sport & General. See article by B. I. C. Norton, on page 242.*



"Standing in the white road between the two was a strapping figure in pale pink georgette and a large Leghorn hat, apparently arguing with three blue-covered mechanics."

# A TIGHT PLACE

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne," "Berry and Co.," "Anthony Lyveden,"  
"The Courts of Idleness."

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

**D**ELIBERATELY Berry surveyed himself.

We stood about him with twitching lips, not daring to trust our tones.

At length—

"But what a dream!" said my brother-in-law. "What an exquisite, pluperfect dream!" Jill shut her eyes and began to shake with laughter. "I suppose it was made to be worn, or d'you think someone did it for a bet? 'A Gentleman of the Court of Louis XIV.' Well, I suppose a French firm ought to know. Only, if they're right, I don't wonder there was a revolution. No

self-respecting nation could hold up its head with a lot of wasters shuffling about Versailles with the seats of their breeches beginning under their hocks. That one sleeve is three inches shorter than the other and that the coat would comfortably fit a Boy Scout, I pass over. Those features might be attributed to the dictates of fashion. But I find it hard to believe that even in that fantastic age a waistcoat like a loose cover ever really obtained."

Adèle sank into a chair and covered her eyes.

With an effort I mastered my voice.

Copyright, 1922, by Dornford Yates, in the United States of America.

"I think, perhaps," I ventured, "if you wore them for an hour or two, they might—might shake down. You see," I continued hurriedly, "you're not accustomed—"

"Brother," said Berry gravely, "you've got it in one. I'm not accustomed to wearing garments such as these. I confess I feel strange in them. Most people who are not deformed would. If I hadn't got any thighs, if my stomach measurement was four times that of my chest, and I'd only one arm, they'd be just about right. As it is, short of mutilation—"

"Can't you brace up the breeches a little higher?" said Daphne.

"No, I can't," snapped her husband. "As it is, my feet are nearly off the ground."

Seated upon the bed, Jonah rolled over upon his side and gave himself up to a convulsion of silent mirth.

"The sleeves and the waistcoat," continued my sister, "are nothing. Adèle and I can easily alter them. What worries me is the breeches."

"They'd worry you a darned sight more if you had 'em on," said Berry. "And if you think I'm going to wear this little song-without-words, even as amended by you and Adèle, you're simply unplaced. To say I wouldn't be seen dead in it conveys nothing at all."

"My dear boy," purred Daphne, "be reasonable. It's far too late to get hold of anything else: it's the ball of the season, and fancy dress is *de rigueur*. I'm sure if you would only brace up—"

With an unearthly shriek, Berry collapsed in my arms.

"Take her away!" he roared. "Take her away before I offer her violence. Explain my anatomy. Tell her I've got a trunk. Conceal nothing. Only . . ."

Amid the explosion of pent-up laughter the rest of the sentence was lost.

So soon as we could speak coherently, we endeavoured to smooth him down.

At length—

"It's transparently plain," said Jonah, "that that dress is out of the question." Here he took out his watch. "Let's see. It's now three o'clock. That gives us just seven hours to conceive and execute some other confection. It shouldn't be difficult."

"Now you're talking," said Berry. "I know. I'll go as a mahout. Now, that's easy. Six feet of butter muslin, four penny-worth of woad, and a harpoon. And we

can lock the elephant's switch and park him in the rhododendrons."

"Why," said Jonah, "shouldn't you go as Mr. Sycamore Tight? You're not unlike him, and the excitement would be intense."

After a little discussion we turned the suggestion down.

For all that, it was not without merit.

Mr. Sycamore Tight was wanted—wanted badly. There was a price upon his head. Two days after he had landed in France, a large American bank had discovered good reason to believe that Mr. Tight had personally depleted its funds to the tune of over a million.

Daily, for the last four days, the gentleman's photograph had appeared in every French paper, illustrating a succinct and compelling advertisement, which included a short summary of his characteristics and announced the offer of a reward of fifty thousand francs for such information as should lead to his arrest.

The French know the value of money.

If the interest excited at Pau was any criterion, every French soul in France went about his business with bulging eyes. Indeed, if Mr. Sycamore Tight were yet in the country, there was little doubt in most minds that his days were numbered.

"No," said Berry. "It's very nice to think that I look so much like the brute, but I doubt if a check suit quite so startling as that he seems to have affected could be procured in time. Shall I go as Marat—on his way to the bathroom? With a night-shirt, a flannel, and a leer, I should be practically there. Oh, and a box of matches to light the geyser with."

"I suppose," said Daphne, "you wouldn't go as a clown? Adèle and I could do that easily. The dress is nothing."

"Is it, indeed?" said her husband. "Well, that would be simplicity itself, wouldn't it? A trifle classical, perhaps, but most arresting. What a scene there'd be when I took off my overcoat. 'Melancholy' would be almost as artless. I could wear a worried look, and there you are."

"Could he go as a friar?" said Jill. "You know. Like a monk, only not so gloomy. We ought to be able to get a robe easily. And, if we couldn't get sandals, he could go barefoot."

"That's right," said Berry. "Don't mind me. You just fix everything up, and tell me in time to change. Oh, and you might write down a few crisp blessings. I shall get tired

of saying '*Pax vobiscum*' when anyone kicks my feet."

"I tell you what," said Adèle. "Would you go as 'A Flapper'?"

"A what?" said my brother-in-law.

"A Twentieth-Century Miss," said Adèle. "'The Golf Girl,' if you like. Daphne and I can fit you out, and you can wear your own shoes. As for a wig—any *coiffeur*'ll do. A nice fluffy bobbed one would be best—the same shade as your moustache."

Instinctively none of us spoke.

The idea was so admirable—the result would be so triumphant, that we hardly dared to breathe lest Berry should stamp upon our hopes.

For one full slow-treading minute he fingered his chin. . . .

Then he wrinkled his nose.

"Not 'The Golf Girl,'" he said. "That's much too pert. I couldn't deliver the goods. No. I must go as something more luscious. What about 'The Queen of the May'?"

\* \* \* \* \*

At twenty-five minutes to ten that evening I was writing a note, and wondering, while I did so, whether the original 'Incroyables' ever sat down.

I had just decided that, rather than continually risk dislocation of the knee, they probably either reclined or leaned against pillars when fatigued, when something impelled me to glance over my shoulder.

Framed in the doorway was standing Berry.

A frock of pale pink georgette, with long bell-shaped sleeves and a black velvet girle knotted at one side, fitted him seemingly like a glove. A large Leghorn hat, its black velvet streamers fastened beneath his chin, heavily weighted with a full-blown rose over one eye, threatened to hide his rebellious mop of hair. White silk stockings and a pair of ordinary pumps completed his attire. A miniature apron, bearing the stencilled legend 'AN ENGLISH ROSE' upon its muslin, left no doubt about his identity.

Beneath my gaze he looked down and simpered, swinging his bead bag ridiculously.

I leaned back in my chair and began to laugh like a madman. Then I remembered my kneecaps, and got up and leaned against the wall, whence I could see him better.

As if his appearance alone were not enough, he spoke in an absurd falsetto.

"No, I'm not supposed to be out till after Easter. But don't let that stop you. I mean—you know I do say such dreadful things, and all the time. . . . Father always calls

me a tom-cat—I mean, tom-boy, but I don't care. Haven't you any sisters? What, not even a 'step'? Oh, but what luck—I mean, I think we'll sit this one out, shall I? I know a lovely place—in the inspection pit. I often go and sit there when I want to have a good fruity drink—I mean think. I always think it's so wonderful to look up and see the gear-box, and the differential, and the dear old engine-shield, and feel you're alone with them all—absolutely alone. . . ."

The tempestuous arrival of Adèle, looking sweet as 'Pierrette,' and Jonah in the traditional garb of 'Harlequin,' cut short the soliloquy. . . .

It was ere the two had recovered from their first paroxysm of laughter that Berry minced to the fireplace and, with the coyest of pecks, rang the electric bell.

A moment later Falcon entered the room.

My brother-in-law laughed and looked down, fingering his dress.

"Oh, Falcon," he said archly, "about to-morrow. I don't know whether Mrs. Pleydell's told you, but there'll be four extra to lunch."

I have seen Falcon's eyes twinkle, and I have seen his mouth work—times without number. I have seen him thrust a decanter upon the sideboard and disappear shaking from the apartment. But never before have I seen his self-control crumple as a ripped balloon.

For a second he stared at the speaker.

Then he flung us one desperate, appealing glance, emitted a short wail, and, looking exactly as if he was about to burst into tears, clapped both hands to his mouth and made a rush for the door.

As he reached it, a little Dutch Jill danced into the room, looking adorable.

Use holds.

Falcon straightened his back, stepped to one side, and bowed his apologies. The temporary check, however, was his undoing. As Jill flashed by, he turned his face to the wall and sobbed like a child. . . .

When Daphne made her appearance, amazingly beautiful as 'Jehane Saint-Pol,' we climbed into the cars and slipped down the sober drive into the fragrant dalliance of an April night.

\* \* \* \* \*

The ball was over.

It would have been a success any way, but from the moment that Berry had, upon arrival, been directed to the ladies' cloak-room, its enduring fame had been assured.

When, with my wife and sister, reluctant and protesting, upon either arm, he erupted into the ballroom, giggling excitedly and crying "Votes for Women!" in a shrill treble, even the band broke down, so that the music died an untimely and tuneless

a chair and said a few words about his nursing experiences in Mesopotamia and spoke with emotion of the happy hours he had spent as a Sergeant-Minor of the Women Police—then it became manifest that my brother-in-law's construction of the laws of



death. When he danced a Tango with me, wearing throughout an exalted expression of ineffable bliss and introducing a bewildering variety of unexpected halts, crouchings and saggings of the knees—when, in the midst of an interval, he came flying to Daphne, calling her "Mother," insisting that he had been insulted, demanding to be taken home forthwith, and finally burying his face in her shoulder and bursting into tears—when, during supper, with a becoming diffidence, he took his stand upon

hospitality had set up such a new record of generosity as few, if any, of those present would ever see broken.

" . . . Oh, and the flies, you know. The way they flew. Oh, it was dreadful. And, of course, no lip-stick would stick. My dears, I was simply terrified to look in the biscuit box. And then we had to wash in bits—so embarrassing. Talk about divisional reserve. . . . And they were so strict with it all. Only ten little minutes late on parade, and you got it where auntie wore the gew-gaws. I lost my temper once. To be sworn at like a golf-sphere, just because one day I couldn't find my *Poudre d'Amour*. . . . And, when he'd quite finished, the Colonel asked me what powder was for. I just

looked round and gave him some of his own back. 'To dam your pores with,' I said . . ."

It was past three o'clock before our departure was sped.

Comfortably weary, we reached our own villa's door to make the grisly discovery that no one had remembered the key . . .

There was no knocker: a feeble electric bell signalled our distress to a deserted



"With my wife and sister, reluctant and protesting, upon either arm, he erupted into the ballroom, giggling excitedly and crying 'Votes for Women!' in a shrill treble."

basement: the servants were asleep upon the second floor.

After we had all reviled Berry and, in return, been denounced as 'a gang of mut-jawed smoke-stacks,' accused of 'blasphemy' and compared to 'jackals and vultures about a weary bull,' we began to shout and throw stones at the second-floor windows. Perhaps because their shutters were closed, our labour was lost.

To complete our disgust, for some mysterious reason Nobby refused to bark and so sound the alarm. In the ordinary way the Sealyham was used to give tongue—whatever the hour and no matter what indignation he might excite—upon the slightest provocation. This morning we perambulated the curtilage of the villa, alternately yelling like demoniacs and mewling like cats, without the slightest result.

Eventually it was decided that one of us must effect an entrance by climbing on to the balcony of my sister's room. . . .

Jonah had a game leg: the inflexibility of my pantaloons put any acrobatics out of the question: Berry's action, at any rate, was more than usually unrestricted. Moreover, it was Berry whom we had expected to produce the key.

It became necessary to elaborate these simple facts, and to indicate most definitely the moral which they were pointing, before my brother-in-law was able to grasp the one or to appreciate the other. And when it had been, as they say, borne in upon him that he was for the high jump, another ten minutes were wasted while he made one final, frantic, solitary endeavour to attract the servants' attention. His feminine personality discarded, he raved about the house, barking, screeching and braying to beat the band; he thundered upon the door with his fists; he flung much of the drive in the direction of the second floor. Finally, when we were weak with laughter, he sat down upon the steps, expressed his great satisfaction at the reception of his efforts to amuse, and assured us that his death-agony, which we should shortly witness, would be still more diverting.

By now it was a quarter to four, and, so soon as Jonah and I could control our emotion, we took our deliverer by the arms and showed him 'the best way up.'

He listened attentively.

At length—

"Thanks very much," he said weakly. "Let's just go over it again, shall I? Just to be sure I've got it cold. First, I swarm

up that pillar. Good. I may say I never have swarmed. I never knew anybody did swarm, except bees or people coming out of a football match. Never mind. Then I get hold of the gutter and draw myself up with my hands, while continuing to swarm with my legs. If—if the gutter will stand my weight. . . . Of course, that's easily ascertained. I just try it. . . . If it will, it does. If it won't, I should like a penny-in-the-slot machine erected in my memory outside the English Club. Yes, I've got that. Well, if it will, I work—I think you said 'work'—round until I can reach the down-pipe. The drain—down-pipe will enable me to get my feet into the gutter. Sounds all right, doesn't it? 'The drain-pipe will enable.' A cryptic phrase. Quite the Brigade-Office touch. Where were we? Oh, yes. The drain-pipe having enabled me, etc., I just fall forward on to the tiles, when my hands will encounter and grasp the balustrade. Then I climb over and pat Nobby. Yes, except for the cesspool—I mean the drain-pipe interlude, it's too easy."

We helped him off with his coat. . . .

We watched his reduction of the pillar with trembling lips; we heard his commentary upon gutters and those who make them with shaking shoulders; but it was when, with one foot in the air and the other wedged behind the down-pipe, the English Rose spoke of the uncertainty of life and desired us, in the event of his death, to procure a medium forthwith, as he should have much to say to us which would not wait—when, after an exhausting and finally successful effort to get his left knee into the gutter, he first knelt upon a spare tile to his wounding, and then found that his right foot was inextricably wedged between the down-pipe and the wall—when, as a result of his struggles, a section of the down-pipe came away in his hand, so that he was left clinging to the gutter with one foot in the air and twelve feet of piping swaying in his arms—then our control gave way and we let ourselves run before a tempest of Homeric laughter. We clasped one another; we leaned against walls; we stamped upon the ground; we fought for breath; tears streamed from our eyes. All the time, in a loud militant voice, Berry spoke of building and architects and mountain goats, of France and of the French, of incitement to suicide, of inquests and the Law, of skunks and leprosy, and finally of his descent. . . .

When we told him tearfully to drop, he let out the laugh of a maniac.



"Yes," he said uncertainly. "To tell you hell-hounds the truth, that solution had already occurred to me. It's been occurring to me vividly ever since I began. But I'm against it. It isn't that I'm afraid, but I want something more difficult. Oh, and don't say, 'Work round the gutter,' first, because it's bad English, and, secondly, because no man born of woman could 'work round' this razor-edged conduit with a hundredweight of drain-pipe round his neck. What I want is a definite instruction which is neither murderous nor futile. Burn it, you handed me enough slush when I was rising. Why in thunder can't you slobber out something to help me down?"

By the time his descent was accomplished, it was past four o'clock—summer time—and there was a pale cast about the sweet moonlight that told of the coming of another dawn.

"I say," said Jill suddenly, "don't let's go to bed."

"No, don't let's," said Berry, with a hysterical laugh. "Let's—let's absolutely refuse."

Jill went on breathlessly—

"Let's go for a run towards Lourdes and see the sun rise over the mountains."

Our first impulse was to denounce the idea. Upon examination, however, its hidden value emerged.

We were sick and tired of trying to wake the servants; to effect an entrance was seemingly out of the question; to spend another two hours wandering about the garden or wooing slumber in the cars was not at all to our liking.

Finally, we decided that, since we should be back before the world proper was astir, our appearance, if it was noticed at all, would but afford a few peasants an experience which they could relate with relish for many years, and that, since the sky was cloudless, so convenient an occasion of observing a very famous effect should not be rejected.

Five minutes later Ping and Pong slid silently under the Pont Oscar II. and so down a winding hill, out of the sleeping town and on to the Bizanos road.

Our headlights were powerful, the road was not too bad, and the world was empty. . .

I let Jonah, who was leading, get well away, and then gave the car her head.

Well as we knew it, our way seemed unfamiliar.

We saw the countryside as through a glass darkly. A shadowy file of poplars, a grey promise of meadow-land, a sable thicket,

far in the distance a great blurred mass rearing a sombre head, a chain of silent villages seemingly twined about our road, and once in a long while the broad, brave flash of laughing water—these and their ghostly like made up our changing neighbourhood. Then came a link in the chain that even Wizard Night could not transfigure—sweet, storied Coarraze, fencing our way with its peculiar pride of Church and State; three miles ahead, hoary Bétharram, defender of the faith, lent us its famous bridge—at the toll of a break-neck turn, of which no manner of moonshine can cheat the memory.

We were nearing Lourdes now, but there was no sign of Jonah. I began to wonder whether my cousin was faring farther afield. . . .

It was so.

Lourdes is a gate-house of the Pyrenees; it was clear that my sister and cousins had threaded its echoing porch. Their way was good enough for us. We swung to the right, dived into and out of the sleeping town, and flung up the pale, thin road that heads for Spain. . . .

It was when we had slipped through Argelès, and Jonah was still before us, that we knew that if we would catch him we must climb to Gavarnie.

The daylight was waxing now, and when we came to Pierrefitte I switched off the lights.

There is a gorge in the mountains, some seven miles long. It is, I think, Nature's boudoir. Its tall, steep walls are hung with foliage—a trembling, precious arras, which spring will so emblazon with her spruce heraldry that every blowing rod breathes a refreshing madrigal. Its floor is a busy torrent—fretting its everlasting way by wet, grey rocks, the vivid green of ferns, and now and again a little patch of greensward—a tender lawn for baby elves to play on. Here is a green shelf, ladies, stuck all with cowslips; and there, another—radiant with peering daffodils. In this recess sweet violets grow. Look at that royal gallery; it is fraught with crocuses—laden with purple and gold. Gentians and buttercups, too, have their own nurseries. But one thing more—this gorge is full of fountains. They are its especial glory. All the beauty in the world of falling water is here exhibited. Tremendous falls go thundering: long, slender tresses of water plunge from a dizzy height, lose by the way their symmetry, presently vanish into sparkling smoke;

cascades, with a delicate flourish, leap from ledge to ledge; stout heads of crystal well bubbling out of Earth; elegant springs flash musically into their brimming basins of the living rock. The mistress of this shining court is very beautiful. A bank is overhanging a little bow-shaped dell, as the eaves of an old house lean out to shelter half a pavement. As eaves, too, are thatched, so the brown bank is clad with emerald moss. From the edge of the moss dangles a silver fringe. Each gleaming, twisted cord of it hangs separate and distinct, save when a breath of wind plaits two or three into a transient tassel. The fringe is the waterfall.

Enchanted with such a fairyland, we lingered so long over our passage that we only reached Gavarnie with a handful of moments to spare.

As we had expected, here were the others, a little apart from the car, their eyes lifted to the ethereal terraces of the majestic Cirque.

The East was afire with splendour. All the blue dome of sky was blushing. Only the Earth was dull.

Suddenly the topmost turret of the frozen battlements burst into rosy flame. . . .

One by tremendous one we saw the high places of the world suffer their king's salute. Little wonder that, witnessing so sublime a ceremony, we forgot all Time. . . .

The sudden clack of shutters flung back against a wall brought us to earth with a jar.

We turned in the direction of the noise.

From the window of a cottage some seventy paces away a woman was regarding us steadily. . . .

We re-entered the cars with more precipitation than dignity.

A glance at the clock in the dashboard made my heart sink.

A quarter past six—summer time.

It was clear that Gavarnie was lazy. Argelès, Lourdes, and the rest must be already bustling. Long ere we could reach Pau, the business of town and country would be in full swing. . . .

The same reflection, I imagine, had bitten Jonah, for, as I let in the clutch, Ping swept past us and whipped into the village with a low snarl.

Fast as we went, we never saw him again that memorable morning. Jonah must have gone like the wind.

As for us, we wasted no time.

We leapt through the village, dropped

down the curling pass, snarled through Saint-Sauveur, left Luz staring, and sailed into Argelès as it was striking seven.

From Argelès to Lourdes is over eight miles. It was when we had covered exactly four of these in six minutes that the engine stuttered, sighed, and then just fainted away.

We had run out of petrol.

This was annoying, but not a serious matter, for there was a can on the step. The two gallons it was containing would easily bring us to Pau.

What was much more annoying and of considerable moment was that the can, when examined, proved to be dry as a bone.

After a moment's consideration of the unsavoury prospect, so suddenly unveiled, I straightened my back, pushed my ridiculous hat to the nape of my neck, and took out a cigarette-case.

Adèle and Berry stared.

"That's right," said the latter bitterly. "Take your blinking time. Why don't you sit down on the bank and put your feet up?"

I felt for a match.

Finger to lip, Adèle leaned forward.

"For Heaven's sake," she cried, "don't say there's none in the can!"

"My darling," said I, "you've spoken the naked truth."

There was a long silence. The gush of a neighbouring spring was suggesting a simple peace we could not share.

Suddenly—

"Help!" shrieked the English Rose. "Help! I'm being compromised."

So soon as we could induce him to hold his tongue, a council was held.

Presently it was decided that I must return to Argelès, if possible, procure a car, and bring some petrol back as fast as I could. Already the day was growing extremely hot, and, unless I encountered a driver who would give me a lift, it seemed unlikely that I should be back within an hour and a half.

We had, of course, no hope of salvation. Help that arrived now would be too late. Lourdes would be teeming. The trivial round of Pau would be in full blast. The possible passage of another car would spare us—me particularly—some ignominy, but that was all.

It was arranged that, should a car appear after I had passed out of sight, the driver should be accosted, haply deprived of petrol, and certainly dispatched in my pursuit.

Finally we closed Pong, and, feeling extremely self-conscious and unpleasantly



"The memory of that walk  
will stay with me till I die."

hot, I buttoned my overcoat about me and set out for Argelès.

The memory of that walk will stay with me till I die.

If, a few hours before, I had been satisfied

that 'Incroyables' seldom sat down, I was soon in possession of most convincing evidence that, come what might, they never did more than stroll. The pantaloons, indeed, curtailed every pace I took. It also became painfully obvious that their 'foot-joy' was intended for use only upon tiled pavements or parquet, and since the surface of the road to Argelès was bearing a closer resemblance to the bed of a torrent, I suffered accordingly. What service their headgear in any conceivable circumstances could have rendered, I cannot pretend to say. As a protection from the rays of the sun, it was singularly futile. . . .

Had I been wearing flannels, I should have been sweltering in a quarter of an hour. Dressed as I was, I was streaming with honest sweat in less than five minutes. . . . Before I had covered half a mile I tore off my overcoat and flung it behind a wall.

My reception at the first hamlet I reached was hardly promising.

The honour of appreciating my presence before anyone else fell to a pair of bullocks attached to a wain piled high with wood and proceeding slowly in the direction of Lourdes.

Had they perceived an apparition shaking a bloody goad, they could not have acted with more concerted or devastating rapidity.

In the twinkling of an eye they had made a complete *volte-face*, the waggon was lying on its side across the fairway, and its burden of logs had been distributed

with a dull crash upon about a square perch of cobbles.

Had I announced my coming by tuck of drum, I could not have attracted more instant and faithful attention.

Before the explosion of agony with which the driver—till then walking, as usual, some thirty paces in rear—had greeted the catastrophe, had turned into a roaring torrent of abuse, every man, woman, and child within earshot came clattering upon the scene.

For a moment, standing to one side beneath the shelter of a flight of steps, I escaped notice. It was at least appropriate that the luckless waggoner should have been the first to perceive me. . .

At the actual moment of observation he was at once indicating the disposition of his wood with a gesture charged with the savage despair of a barbaric age and letting out a screech which threatened to curdle the blood.

The gesture collapsed. The screech died on his lips.

With dropped jaw and bulging eyes, the fellow backed to the wall. . . When I stepped forward, he put the waggon between us.

I never remember so poignant a silence.

Beneath the merciless scrutiny of those forty pairs of eyes I seemed to touch the very bottom of abashment.

Then I lifted my ridiculous hat and cleared my throat.

“Good day,” I said cheerfully, speaking in French. “I’m on my way back from a ball—a fancy-dress ball—and my car has run out of petrol. I want to hire a cart to go to Argelès.”

If I had said I wanted to hire a steam-yacht, my simple statement could not have been more apathetically received. . . .

Happily, for some unobvious reason, no one seemed to associate me with the bullocks’ waywardness, but it took me ten minutes’ cajolery to elicit the address of a peasant who might hire me a cart.

At last I was told his lodging and pointed the way.

Such direction proved supererogatory, first, because we all moved off together, and, secondly, because it subsequently transpired that the gentleman whom I was seeking was already present. But that is France.

Upon arrival at his house my friend stepped out of the ruck and, with the utmost composure, asked if it was true that I was desiring to be driven to Argelès. Controlling my indignation, I replied with equal gravity that such was my urgent ambition. Taking a wrist-watch from my pocket, I added that upon reaching a garage at Argelès I would deduct the time we had taken from half an

hour and cheerfully give him a franc for every minute that was left.

I can only suppose that so novel a method of payment aroused his suspicion.

Be that as it may, with an apologetic bow, the fellow requested to see the colour of my money.

Then and then only did I remember that I had not a brass farthing upon my person.

What was worse, I felt pretty sure that Adèle and Berry were equally penniless. . .

My exit from that village I try to forget.

I found that the waters of humiliation were deeper than I could have believed. They seemed, in fact, bottomless.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to say that I returned by the way I had come. I had had enough of the road to Argelès. My one idea was to rejoin Adèle and Berry and to sit down in the car. Mentally and physically I was weary to death. I craved to set my back against the buttress of company in this misfortune, and I was mad to sit down. Compared with standing any longer upon my feet, the contingency of dislocation became positively attractive. . . .

The first thing that met my eyes, as I limped round the last of the bends, was the bonnet of a dilapidated touring car.

I could have thrown up my rotten hat.

A few feet further from Lourdes than Pong himself was an aged grey French car. Standing in the white road between the two was a strapping figure in pale pink georgette and a large Leghorn hat, apparently arguing with three blue-covered mechanics. From Pong’s off-side window the conical hat and extravagant ruff of ‘Pierrette’ were protruding excitedly.

My companions’ relief to see me again was unfeigned.

As I came up, Adèle gave a whimper of delight, and a moment later she was pouring her tale into my ears.

“You hadn’t been gone long when these people came by. We stopped them, of course, and—”

“One moment,” said I. “Have they got any petrol?”

“Listen,” said Berry. “Four *bidons* of what they had are in our tank. It was when they were in that we found we hadn’t a bean. That didn’t matter. The gents were perfectly happy to take my address. A pencil was produced—we had nothing, of course—and I started to write it all down on the edge of yesterday’s *Le Temps*. They all looked over my shoulder. As I was writing, I *felt* their manner change. I

stopped and looked round. *The fools were staring at me as if I were risen from the dead.* That mayn't surprise you, but it did me, because we'd got through that phase. For a moment we looked at one another. Then one picked up the paper and took off his hat. 'It is unnecessary,' he said, 'for *Monsieur* to give us his name. We know it perfectly.' The others nodded agreement. I tell you, I thought they'd gone mad. . . ."

He pushed his hat back from his eyes and sat down on the step.

"But—but what's the trouble?" I gasped.

Berry threw out his hands.

"Haven't you got it?" he said. "*They think I'm Sycamore Tight.*"

\* \* \* \* \*

I soon perceived the vanity of argument.

With my brother-in-law in the hand and fifty thousand francs in the bush, the three mechanics were inexorable.

They accepted my statements; they saw my point of view; they uncovered; they bowed; they laughed when I laughed; they admitted the possibility, nay, likelihood of a mistake; they deplored the inconvenience we were suffering. But, politely and firmly, they insisted that Berry should enter their car and accompany them to Lourdes.

That this their demand should be met was not to be thought of.

Adèle and I could not desert Berry; from the police at Lourdes nothing was to be expected but suspicion, hostility, and maddeningly officious delays; Berry's eventual release would only be obtained at a cost of such publicity as made my head swim.

Any idea of force was out of the question. But for the presence of my wife, we would have done what we could. With Adèle in our care, however, we could not afford to fail, and—they were three to two.

I racked my brain desperately. . . .

Presently one of the trio lugged out a watch. When he showed his fellows the hour, they flung up their arms. A moment later they were clearing for action.

*Le Temps* was carefully folded and stuffed out of sight. Berry was informed, with a bow, that, so soon as their car was turned round, they would be ready to leave. The slightest of the three stepped to the starting-handle. . . .

The next moment, with a deafening roar, their engine was under way.

I was standing with my hand upon our off hind wing, and as the driver ran to his throttle, I felt a steady tremor.

*Under cover of the other car's roar, Adèle had started Pong's engine.*

What was a great deal more, *she had given me my cue.*

I thought like lightning.

There was not a moment to lose. Already the driver was in his seat and fumbling with his gear-lever. . . .

As slowly as I dared, I strolled to the off-side door.

Adèle's and my eyes met.

"When you hear me say 'Look';" I said.

With the faintest smile, 'Pierrette' stared through the wind-screen. . . .

I returned to the rear of the car.

The way we were using was narrow, but fifty paces away, in the direction of Argelès, was a track which left our road to lead to a farm. For this spot the driver was making. There he would be able to turn with the acme of ease.

His two companions were standing close to Berry.

As luck would have it, the latter was standing with his back to our car, perhaps a foot from the tail-lamp.

Not one of the three, I fancy, had any idea that our engine was running.

I addressed the mechanics in French.

"I have been talking with *Madame*, and, tired as she is, she agrees that it will be best if we follow you to Lourdes. Please don't go too fast when you get to the town, or we shall lose our way."

As they assured me of their service, I turned to Berry, as though to translate what I had said.

"There are two steps to the dickey. The lower one is two paces to your right and one to your rear. It is not meant for a seat, but it will do. Throw your arm round the spare wheels and sit tight."

Berry shrugged his shoulders.

A glance up the road showed me the other car being turned into the track.

I crossed to the near side of Pong and stooped as though to examine the exhaust. The two mechanics were watching me. . . .

With the tail of my eye I saw Berry glance behind him, sink down upon the step, drop his head miserably into the crook of his arm, and set that arm upon the spare wheels.

Suddenly I straightened my back, glanced past the two warders, and flung out a pointing arm.

"Look!" I shouted, and stepped on to the running-board.

As I spoke, Adèle let in the clutch. . . .

It was really too easy.

By the time our two friends had decided to turn and inquire what had excited my remark, we were ten paces away and gathering speed. . . .

Of course they ran after us, yelling like men possessed.

That was but human.

Then they recovered their wits and raced for their car.

I cried to Berry to sit tight, and opened the door. . . .

"Is he on?" said Adèle, as I took my seat by her side.

I nodded.

"As soon as we're far enough on, we must take him inside. He ought to be safe enough, but I'll bet he's blessing his petticoats. As for you, sweetheart, I don't know which is the finer—your nerve or your wit."

A cool hand stole into mine.

Then—

"But we're not there yet," said Adèle.

This was unhappily true.

Pong was the faster car, and Adèle was already going the deuce of a pace. But there was traffic to come, and two level crossings lay between us and Lourdes.

I turned and looked out of the glass in the back of the hood. The English Rose had thrust herself inelegantly on to the petrol tank. Her right foot was jammed against a wing, so that her shapely leg acted as a brace: her arms clasped the two spare wheels convulsively: her head was thrown back, and her lips were moving. . . . Of our pursuers there was no sign. That moment we had rounded a bend, but when a moment later we rounded another they were still out of sight.

I began to wonder whether it was safe to stop and take Berry inboard. . . .

Then the Klaxon belched, and a cry from Adèle made me turn.

Two hundred yards ahead was a flock of sheep—all over the road.

We had to slow down to a pace which jabbed at my nerves.

I did not know what to do.

I did not know whether to seize the chance and take Berry inside, or whether to put the obstacle between Pong and the terror behind, and I felt I must look at the sheep.

The speedometer dropped to twenty. . . . to fifteen. . . . to ten. . . .

Then the tires tore at the road, and we practically stopped.

Adèle changed into second speed.

I opened the door instantly, only to see that to collect Berry now was out of the question. The sheep were all round us—like a flood—lapping our sides.

Adèle changed into first.

I was physically afraid to look behind.

The next moment we were through.

We stormed round a curve, to see a level crossing a quarter of a mile ahead.

*The gates were shut.*

Adèle gave a cry of despair.

"Oh, Boy, we're done!"

"Not yet," said I, opening the door again. "Go right up to them, lass. At least, it'll give us a chance to get Berry inside."

We stopped with a jerk three feet from the rails.

As I ran for the gate, I glanced over my shoulder.

"Now's your chance!" I shouted. "Get. . . ."

I never completed the sentence.

*The English Rose was gone.*

I stopped still in my tracks.

Then I rushed back to the car.

"He's gone!" I cried. "We've dropped him! Quick! Reverse up the way we've come, for all you're worth."

Adèle backed the car with the speed and skill of a professional. I stood on the running-board, straining my eyes. . . .

The next moment a dilapidated touring car tore round the bend we were approaching and leapt towards us.

It passed us with locked wheels, rocking to glory.

At a nod from me, Adèle threw out the clutch. . . .

As the mechanics came up—

"I'm sorry, *Messieurs*," I said, "but I fear you've passed him. No, he's not here. Pray look in the car. . . . Quite satisfied? Good. Yes, we dropped him a long way back. We thought it wiser."

With that I wished them "Good day," and climbed into our car.

"But what shall we do?" said Adèle.

"Get home," said I, "as quick as ever we can. So long as we stay hereabouts, those fellows'll stick to us like glue. We must go and get help and come back. Berry'll hide somewhere where he can watch the road."

As we passed over the level crossing, I looked behind.

The dilapidated grey car was being turned round feverishly.

\* \* \* \* \*

Forty-five minutes later we sped up the shadowy drive and stopped by our own front door.

'Pierrette' switched off the engine and sat looking miserably before her.

"I wish," she said slowly, "I wish you'd let me go with you. I did hate leaving him so, and I'd feel——"

With a hand on the door, I touched her pale cheek.

"My darling," said I, "you've done more than your bit—far more, and you're just going straight to bed. As for leaving him—well, you know how much I liked it, but I know when I'm done."

*"'Tis the last rose of summer,  
Left blooming alone . . . ."*

Delivered with obvious emotion in a muffled baritone voice, Moore's famous words seemed to come from beneath us.

Adèle and I stared at one another with starting eyes. . . .

Then I fell out of the car and clawed at the flap of the dickey. . . .

My hands were trembling, but I had it open at last.

Her head pillowed upon a spare tube, the ruin of 'An English Rose' regarded me coyly.

"I think you might have knocked," she said, simpering. "Supposing I'd been *en déshabille!*"

*A further story in this series will appear in the next number.*

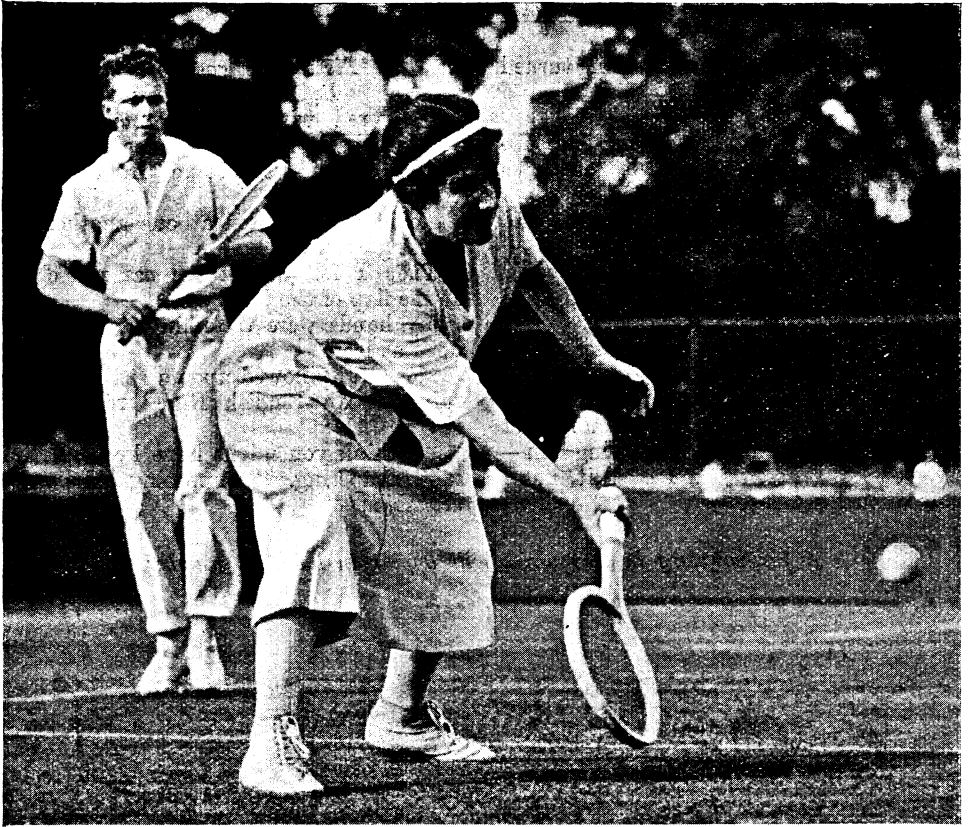


## ADVENTURE.

**F**ETTERED I lay and ever dreaming dully  
That my poor body, ruled by circumstance,  
Was lost to venture, till from that illusion  
My mind awoke and, by a happy chance,  
Found it had wings, so, like a fledgling, tried them,  
Shook out its pinions to a further flight,  
Soaring beyond the earth-bound fields of sorrow.  
Sure in the knowledge of a new-born might.

Often I sank, too wearied to rise higher,  
Yet ever ready to seek fresh the goal.  
Undaunted then, I learnt life's greatest lesson—  
That I could be the captain of my soul.  
Oh, Great Adventure! I, who once was frightened  
To stand alone, may touch the Morning Star.  
For lo! the gift of gods is in my keeping,  
Since in my flight I saw the Gates ajar.

IAN MURRAY.



*Photo by]*

MISS RYAN AND MYSELF IN THE MIXED DOUBLES.

*[Sport & General.*

*This photograph illustrates the necessity of close concentration on one's partner's play in doubles, and for this mental side of the game training is as important as for the physical.*

# HOW TO TRAIN FOR A LAWN TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP AND REMAIN FIT FOR A WHOLE SEASON

By B. I. C. NORTON

**T**HERE are hundreds of lawn tennis players who enter for competitions, but very few produce their best form consistently. You have only to hear the different remarks after an important match, and listen to the excuses made by the different competitors, to know that they never expected to be beaten, and they

wonder why they have lost. A great number of players consider tennis an easy game physically, and the idea of training hard for a big championship, as a boxer or runner does, never enters their head.

It is surprising how few players will even entertain the idea of cutting down their daily number of cigarettes, or giving



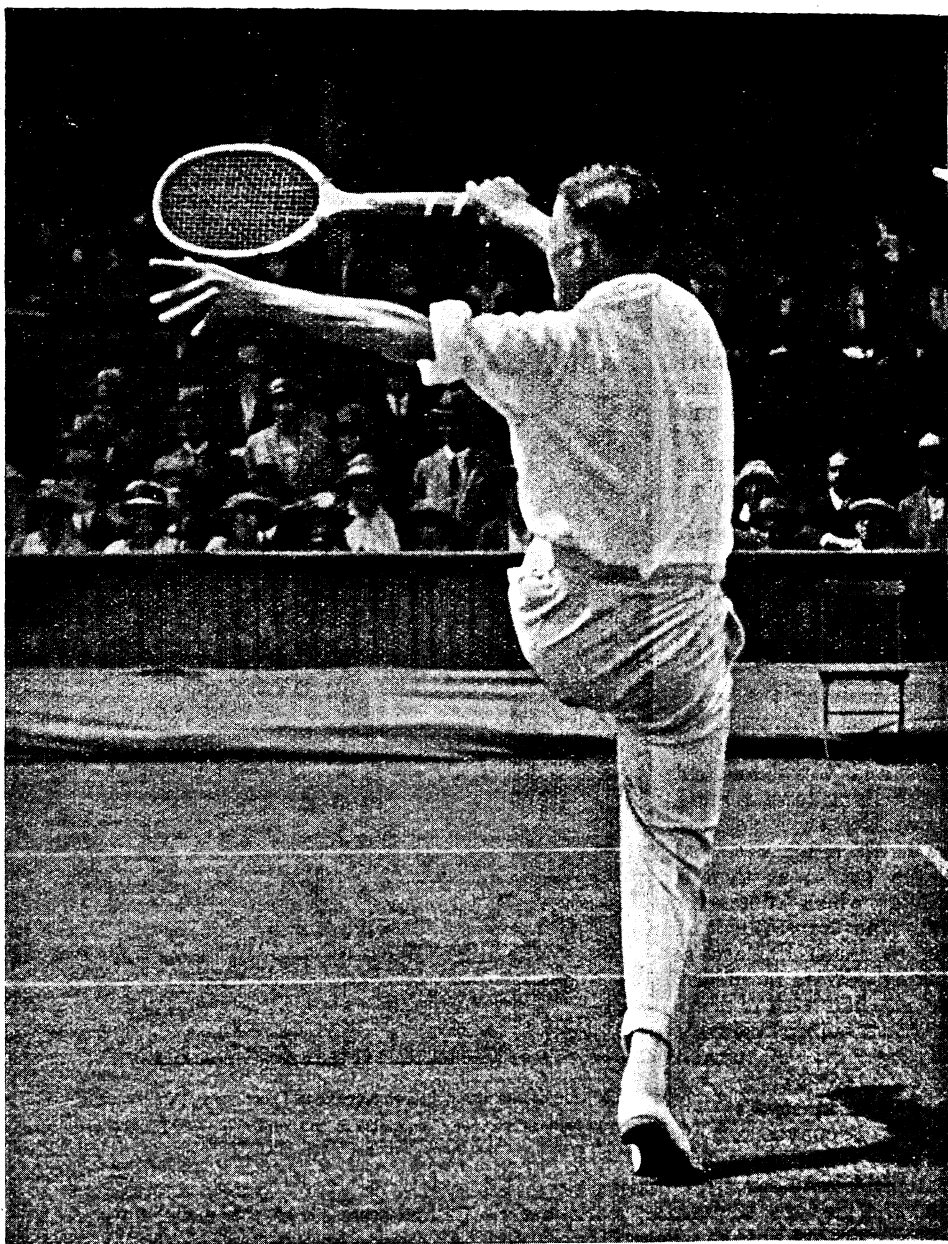


Photo by]

[Topical.

#### A STRENUOUS MOMENT.

*This photograph illustrates the strenuousness of lawn tennis, and shows the comprehensive claim upon the muscles of the body made by the modern game, which only training can meet.*

up spirits or wines before and during a big tournament. I feel quite safe in saying that not more than ten per cent. of lawn tennis competitors have ever given up either of the two harmful habits I have mentioned above, and the number who have really trained seriously is very much smaller—in fact, quite ridiculous. If these players could meet two or three players as good as themselves

in one afternoon, they would then find that it is absolutely necessary to be fit. Most of the good players in tournaments these days have four or five easy matches, and then a hard match which they either win or lose, and on this account they never get their physical ability really tested; but when they come to some big championship, like Wimbledon, where at two sets all the

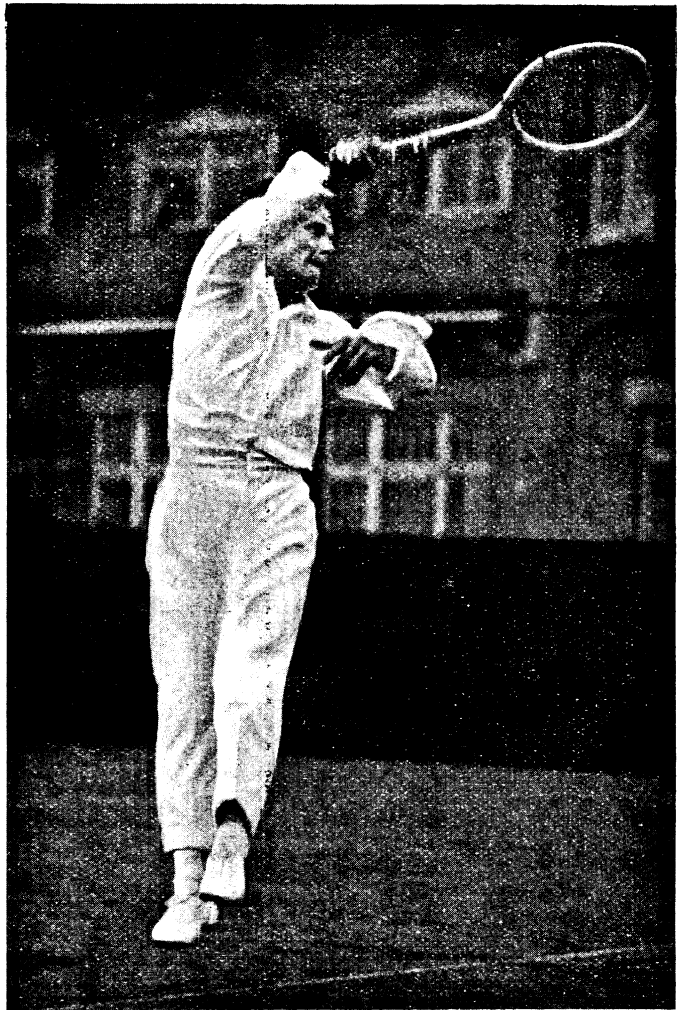
fittest players win, they realise that serious training is absolutely necessary. It is on occasions like these that we all make up our minds to train hard for the next championship, but after some small success we forget all about it, with the result that there are many really good players who would, and could, go much further in the lawn tennis world if only they would take the trouble to get absolutely fit before entering for an important championship.

Many players have asked me at various times how to train for lawn tennis. Well, I shall give below the methods I consider the best.

Start training ten weeks before the championship commences. Give up all spirits and wines, and cut your smoking down as much as possible, or if you can give it up altogether, that is even better, as there is nothing which does the eyes, so much damage as smoking. This, no doubt, you will find very difficult, but give them up gradually.

If there is a suitable piece of ground at your house or near it, this will naturally be convenient. If not, go to your club, or some public park or common, and train there. A man who has to commence work early in the morning should allow himself an hour after work, but before dinner, if possible. All you require is a piece of turf large enough to allow you to swing a skipping-rope.

If you breakfast at 8 a.m., get up at 6.30 a.m. Put on a pair of running shorts and vest, or a bathing costume will do just as well. For the first week do only light training. Skip 300 slowly, but be sure to lift your knees well up in front of you, and kick your heels up as high as possible behind you. Do not swing the rope with your wrists, but get a long rope and use the



*Photo by*

*[Sport & General]*

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE AVOIDANCE OF ANY JAR TO THE BODY.

*It may be noted here how conducive to action of this kind dancing may prove as an enjoyable part of one's training.*

whole of your arms—that is, try to let your arms move a complete circle. After this, do as many exercises as you know, but commence only by doing each one about six times. Then do breathing exercises, and have a good rub down with a rough towel or athletic glove. After a good rub, the next thing is a bath. If you are able to take a cold shower, this is really the best, but a bath with just the chill taken off the water will do. Eat a good breakfast, and it is most important to keep regular sleeping hours. All players should remember that it is far better to go to bed each night at midnight than to retire, say, at 9.30 p.m. on Mondays, 10.30 p.m. on Tuesdays, 10 p.m. on Thurs-

days and 2 a.m. on Saturdays. Regular hours are very important to any athlete.

After about a week at this, increase your exercises and skipping each day. If you are doing everything in the correct way, it should tire you awfully, but keep on with it as long as you can. To be really fit you should be able to skip 3,000 times without a stop, besides your different exercises and

breathing exercises. Do not on any account do any dumb-bell exercises, as they are very bad for tennis, and liable to tire the wrists.

After a month of this training start your tennis practice. If you are able to enter for some of the tournaments, this is the best possible practice you can get, as it not only helps your strokes and play in general, but also improves your temperament. A great many matches are lost and won by players getting upset owing to bad decisions, or to the ball-boys worrying them, or net cord shots.

Always try to keep calm during a match; it will help you greatly. When practising for the championship by entering for some smaller tournament, try and win, but at the same time hit the ball hard and go all out for your shots from the beginning, and take every chance you can of improving your weakest strokes. Continue your early morning training each day; but if you are getting too tired, and your training is becoming a labour, give it a rest for one or two days, but not unless you really feel you have been doing too much.

Five weeks before the event you have been training for commences, enter for your first tournament, and get as much practice as you can. If it can be done, play in three tournaments in three consecutive weeks, still keeping up your morning training. Do not worry about defeat, and if you are playing the correct strokes, and yet getting beaten, on no account alter your strokes. This practice which you are getting will improve them, and next time you meet the same player you will probably reverse that defeat.

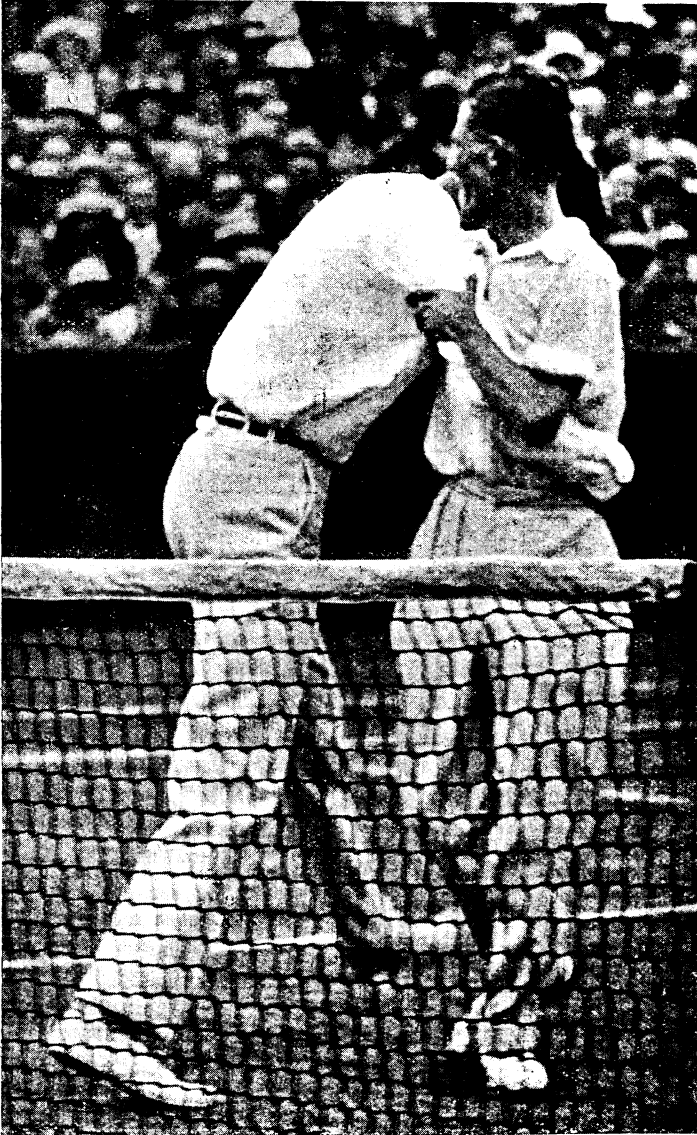


Photo by

[Topical.

TILDEN CONGRATULATING ME AFTER OUR LONG MATCH AT WIMBLEDON LAST YEAR.

*It was simply the fact of my being as fit as I was that enabled me to win the first two sets and get twice within a point of the championship in the fifth set, Tilden being only just convalescent after an illness.*

If you are a business man, and cannot find time to play in these three tournaments, get a friend of yours who is interested in your tennis, or some other competitor who is also training for the championship, and have three or four sets each evening with him. Then have stroke practice for about half an hour. Get him to drive to your forearm and return the ball to his forearm. Take each stroke separately, and make sure you are playing it in the correct way.

Another excellent form of practice is against a wall. If you can find a wall large enough, mark out a line the exact height of the net, and try to drive the ball within a radius of the top of the net and a foot above it. The harder you hit, the more pace the rebound will carry, and here again you can practise each stroke separately.

For volleying practice, all you have to do is to get fairly close to the wall, and by varying the height of your return on the wall, you will get practice for both your high and low volleys. You can also practise serving, but be quite sure you are the correct distance from the net. This is very good practice indeed, but, as I stated previously, the best practice comes from tournament play. A fortnight before the big event commences, give up all tennis, and the only training you must do is the skipping, etc. Do not think about the coming championship at all, and have as much enjoyment as possible, such as dancing, theatres, golf, horse-riding, or anything but tennis.

The best possible thing to do is to go into the country or to some quiet little seaside village, and have as much fresh air as possible. Long walks and bathing are both very good for you. Have three good meals a day, and at least nine hours' sleep a night. I would strongly advise an hour or two's rest of an afternoon, but this ought to be taken in the open, if possible. Do not on any account play either ping-pong or billiards, as they are both generally played by electric or gas light, and this is a terrible strain on the eyes. Dancing is very good exercise, as it helps to make you move smoothly, and stops you moving with jerks. You see many players with bad footwork, and this is a great handicap. They run across the court, stop with a jerk, hit the ball generally with the weight on the wrong foot, and it is this continual jerking that tires the leg and body muscles, and each time you stop running with a jerk you are losing a certain amount of wind which you ought to be saving for a final effort at a

critical moment. Another good and amusing method of improving your footwork is boxing, and it will also help you to keep fit.

Three or four days before the championship commences get the best tennis player you know who is willing to play you a serious match under championship conditions—that is, have five hard sets, trying your hardest to win every point. Have a rub down and shower, eat a good dinner, but drink no spirits. Take a quiet walk after dinner and then retire to bed early.

Do not go through your usual skipping and exercises any more before the championship. The next day—which will be two days before the event for which you have been training commences—play another hard five sets, and do just as you did the previous day. Now you have two more days before the championship starts, and it is very important that you should keep as quiet as possible these two days; but a dance at night won't do you any harm, providing that you get to bed not later than midnight. The day the tournament commences give up taking a bath in the morning, but confine yourself to a hot bath after your tennis is over for that day. Baths are very weakening, and in a big championship you naturally require all the strength you have. Before you go on to play your first match you may feel a little nervous or anxious—that is to be expected, seeing how well-trained you are—and a very sound bit of advice is to have a cup of hot coffee or tea just before taking the court; this you will find will steady your nerves. Have a fairly long knock up, but be quite sure you are making use of all your different strokes. When you have got all your muscles quite loose, go all out for every point. Do not let anything upset you, and concentrate on nothing but what you are doing.

Watch your opponent carefully, and directly you see any signs of fatigue on his part, increase the pace of your strokes and general movements about the court. Go up to the net, if you can, and keep him on the run. If he forces you back, and comes up himself, do not try to pass him, unless you are quite certain it can be done with safety; but the best course to adopt at such a stage is to lob him, even if he wins the points. Don't let it worry you, as there is nothing so tiring as running after lobs when you are already feeling tired.

To play consistently good tennis all through an English tennis season is a very difficult matter, and is a great strain on

anyone. The first thing to fight against is getting stale, the second is straining yourself in some way or other, and the third is not meeting with the success you expect.

All these difficulties can be overcome by one thing, and that is a good rest. This does not require a lot of explaining. All you have

to do is to make up your mind not to play in more than three tournaments in succession, and at the end of the third have a complete rest for a whole week. Do not play tennis of any description, but I would strongly advise a little golf or some other form of sport of which you are fond.



*Photo by]*

*[Sport & General.*

ALONSO AND MYSELF PHOTOGRAPHED BEFORE GOING INTO COURT AT WIMBLEDON.

*The occasion represented by this photograph largely inspired the main points in the present article, because I should never have won but for my training.*



"Felisi stood on tiptoe to peer through one of the portholes."

# THE LONELY LADY

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

**T**HE yacht, a graceful thing of slender spars and glinting white enamel, rounded the headland and dropped anchor a cable's length from shore.

All Luana—comprising sixty souls of respective age, sex, and volubility, a medley of nondescript dogs and chickens, several pigs, and a tethered turtle or two—awoke from its customary torpor to witness the amazing spectacle. Even the broad leaves of the cocoanut palms, falling in green waves to the beach, seemed to quiver in sympathetic excitement. Never had Luana been treated to anything half as thrilling—Luana, that is, with the exception of Felisi.

She stood apart from her flustered and clucking relatives, silent, watchful, apparently unimpressed, though a certain tenseness in her mien gave the lie to her pose of indifference. For it was a pose, or a form of self-control, which you will.

Probably Felisi would have accorded a first glimpse of any of the world's great capitals precisely the same meed of outward appreciation she now bestowed on Strode's yacht.

And why should it be otherwise, even in the fourteen-year-old daughter of an obscure chief in the South Pacific Islands? If you had moved in civilised circles for a space—if, that is, you had dispensed imitation pink coral on the wharves of Suva to every passenger with a heart between San Francisco and Sydney, and observed the ways of the white man as had Felisi of Luana, you would know that the display of vulgar curiosity is detrimental to dignity.

You would know, also, that the correct thing to do is to saunter in leisurely fashion as far as the palm groves, only breaking into a run when they obscure you from the public gaze. Thereafter it is permissible to race beachward with hair and sulu streaming



in the wind, and load a canoe with the first mangoes and mummy apples to hand as a valid excuse for prying into other people's affairs. In any case, that is what Felisi did.

What it must be to have all the money in the world, and therefore all the happiness! That is what she tried to imagine, squatting in the canoe amongst her wares and staring wide-eyed at the beautiful lady who stood alone at the yacht's after-rail, looking out over the water. To own a floating palace of white and gold, and go drifting over the world to every scene of pleasure and excitement! To know nothing of taro patches tended in the heat of the day, and teeming fish-traps, and exacting relatives requiring obedience and support! Felisi sighed.

And, curiously enough, Mrs. Strode chanced to sigh at much the same moment as she leant over the yacht's rail, watching an outrigger canoe and its diminutive bronze occupant rising and falling on the gentle swell. What it must be to have nothing, and therefore happiness! To live in an earthly paradise and a sulu! To know nothing of the fetish of civilisation! To be something more than an automaton to the man you love, even though he be your husband!

Such was the trend of Mrs. Strode's conjectures until interrupted by unmistakable signals from the canoe—two arms upheld, a mango in the hand of each, and a small, clear voice coming over the water: "You want 'em mango, lady?"

"Good gracious," exclaimed Mrs. Strode, "the child speaks English! Yes," she called, "come alongside! Parks, have you any money?"

A steward, who seemed to have appeared noiselessly from nowhere, fumbled in his pocket amongst the sad remains of last night's poker, and with some diffidence produced sixpence.

"If you'll pardon me, madam," he warned on a note of deferential confidence, "the fruit brought horf in the bum-boats is 'igh as to price, and not to be relied on."

"Nonsense!" said Mrs. Strode. "You're not at Port Said or Colombo now, you know, Parks. Besides, I don't want the fruit."

Exactly what it was Mrs. Strode did want was hard to determine, so Parks retired gracefully. For some time she leant over the rail, looking down into an upturned, elfin face, and noting the perfect teeth, the velvety skin, the brown wistful eyes, and, above all, the wealth of blue-black hair;

assimilating, in short, all those qualities in Felisi of Luana that helped so materially in the sale of imitation pink coral or mangoes.

"You dear!" she cried suddenly. "Come aboard at once."

And Felisi came.

Somewhere, and about an hour later, it struck two bells, and the mellow boom of a gong followed soon afterwards, announcing lunch aboard the *Ajax*, but Mrs. Strode was otherwise engaged. To be exact, she was undergoing a course of instruction in making cigarettes of dried banana leaf, and finding it absorbing. Somehow, this quaint little creature out of the world's end had taken hold of Mrs. Strode. Listening to its glib jargon, watching its deft, unconsciously graceful movements, and trying to plumb the admixture of crass ignorance and subtle wisdom that appeared to constitute its mind, gave this lonely woman keener pleasure than she had experienced for many a day.

"... and you must take me out to the reef," she told Felisi, "just us two in the canoe, and show me how to do things—spear fish and stay under water two minutes."

Felisi appeared unimpressed with the possibilities in this direction.

"You no spear fish," she retorted, surveying her luxurious surroundings as though in some manner they might be held responsible for their owner's inability to do anything. "You no stay under water *one* minute."

"Indeed?" Mrs. Strode was piqued. It was not often of late she had been told there were things she could not do. It took her back to the days—not so far distant—when, as the only sister of four unruly brothers, she had seldom been proof against "the dare." "We'll see," she added, with a touch of asperity. "There may be more in me than meets the eye—do you understand?"

Felisi nodded gravely, a method of response she had found effective when not understanding in the least.

"Then that's settled," said the beautiful lady. "You come alongside with the canoe early to-morrow morning, and we'll make a day of it, you and I. Oh, the mangoes," she added, proffering Parks's sixpence.

Felisi refused it bluntly.

"You no want 'em mangoes," she affirmed.

"You seem to know more about me than

I do myself," said Mrs. Strode. "What makes you think I don't want the mangoes?"

"Me hear you."

"Oh, you heard me, did you? I expect you hear a good deal that you're not supposed to."

"Me hear plenty," admitted Felisi non-committally.

"If you're not the quaintest infant!" laughed Mrs. Strode. "But you'll take the money, won't you?"

Felisi shook her head.

"You no want 'em mangoes, me no want 'em money," she explained lucidly.

"I see," mused Mrs. Strode. "Parks," she added, turning to the steward, who had again materialised, "your good money has been spurned. I think I told you we were not at Port Said or Colombo."

"Yes, madam. Luncheon has been served twenty minutes, madam," recited Parks, studiously avoiding Felisi's child-like gaze.

"Is Mr. Strode down yet?"

"Not yet, madam."

"He has been told—as well as the gong?"

"Yes, madam."

Mrs. Strode sighed.

"Very well," she said. "I'll come directly."

But she did not.

"I suppose some day you'll have a husband," she said, turning to her guest.

Felisi nodded with every appearance of delight at the prospect.

"They're not all like that, you know," warned Mrs. Strode, with a whimsical half smile. "But I expect you manage them differently."

"Husband all right," defended Felisi stoutly.

"Sometimes," said Mrs. Strode. A glint of mischief, never very far distant, came into her eyes. "Would you like to see mine?" she suggested suddenly.

There was apparently nothing in life Felisi preferred.

"You come along here," said Mrs. Strode, leading the way over the cocoanut matting of the deck, "and up these funny little stairs, and round here, and across this bridge, and at last you come to the hutch where Bunny lives."

Felisi beheld a white deck-house, replete with highly-varnished doors and glittering brass portholes.

"You see," continued Mrs. Strode, "he is

right away from everyone here, and that is what Bunny likes."

"All the time?"

"Very nearly," said Mrs. Strode cheerfully. "Go and see what you think of him."

Felisi stood on tiptoe to peer through one of the portholes, a proceeding at which she was something of an adept. Within were books, seemingly thousands of them, filling three walls of the room from floor to ceiling. Along the fourth ran a bench littered with stones, lumps of coral, and inexplicable instruments, and under the skylight, at a desk equally littered with papers, sat a large, blond man in a dressing-gown, writing assiduously. He looked kind. Felisi had studied various samples of the genus *turaga*, and this one appeared well up to standard. But . . . She returned to Mrs. Strode for further enlightenment.

"Bunny all right," she announced, by way of encouragement.

"I'm glad you like him," said Mrs. Strode.

"An' you?"

Mrs. Strode pursed her lips and looked out over the sea.

"As much as I see of him," she confessed.

"You see," she went on in explanatory vein, "he is really a great man, and came all this way to find out things about the world—your world. You think it beautiful and pleasant to live in, and that's enough for you—and me; but it isn't enough for him. He likes to find out why it's beautiful and pleasant, what it's made of, and who lived in it before we did; then he goes into the hutch and puts it all into a book."

Felisi listened enthralled. The beautiful lady was surpassing herself; but nothing that she said disguised or clouded for one instant the main issue, which to the philosopher of Luana was as clear as day—the beautiful lady was also a lonely lady.

"Too much 'utch," she commiserated solemnly. Whereat Mrs. Strode was consumed with silent laughter, and hustled her toward the companion.

"You'd better run along now," she warned. "I'm going to fetch Bunny out, and he's rather fierce sometimes."

But Bunny proved unusually tractable that morning. He turned, as his wife entered, with a vaguely apologetic smile.

"Ah, yes, of course," he murmured, and proceeded to change his dressing-gown for a duck jacket. "Of course," he repeated,





"This was life, she told herself exultantly, the rest a pitiable pretence."

with emphasis, though *à propos* of nothing tangible.

Mrs. Strode stood looking out through an open port.

"You needn't hurry," she said; "we're only half an hour late."

"Ah, I'm sorry, my dear"—Mr. Strode crossed to a cabinet washstand—"but I'm just beginning to see daylight—just beginning. We're now in the Lau Group, and if the formations tally, my theory's proved—proved," he repeated, vigorously bespattering the carpet with soapsuds. "There's no end to this thing—no end. . ."

Apparently there was not. Mrs. Strode had suffered it for a considerable period, tried to resign herself to it, and failed. To be ousted by a theory! Yet that was what

it amounted to. To some women it would have meant little more than boredom, but unfortunately Mrs. Strode was not of that type. She had made the mistake of marrying John Strode because she loved him.

This complete, almost fanatical subjugation to an idea was a disease, she had decided during her long self-communings, as much a disease as any other, but less susceptible to treatment in that the patient was unaware of its presence. No one would have been more surprised or distressed than John Strode had he guessed that he was causing his wife one moment's unhappiness; yet she lived in the knowledge that she was no more to this man of her choice than if she had never been.

The following morning, soon after a

blood-red sun had climbed out of the sea, a canoe shot from the *Ajax's* lee and headed for the barrier reef.

To Mrs. Strode, paddling joyfully in the bows, clad in a boy's bathing suit and a kimono, the world was young that morning and full of promise. Why was it ever necessary to do anything else than speed over blue water, with spindrift lashing the face, and the deep-toned roar of surf filling the universe and drowning all care like an opiate? This was life, she told herself exultantly; the rest a pitiable pretence.

Into the very heart of the green-bellied combers it seemed they were heading, until the laughing child of Nature at the steering paddle swerved the canoe as by a miracle into a narrow pass, and through it to the open sea. Here, without pause, it turned in its own length and, lifting to the swell of deep waters, bore down upon the reef. There was a momentary check, a soaring as through space, and the canoe shot to rest on the still waters of the lagoon.

Mrs. Strode had leapt Luana reef. "Again!" she cried.

But best of all she loved the quiet places, unfathomable rock pools immune from the busy surf, and beset with coral islets, archways, and caves. Here it was possible to plunge into an unknown world and, with Felisi's hand tight clasped in hers, explore its mysterious labyrinths as long as breath would last. Then came the respite, prone at the water's edge, looking down into the cool, green depths with their swaying weed and rainbow-tinted fish.

"Why plan and strive and plan again  
While all things earthly pall?  
What goal at last will you attain?  
Come down and end it all!"

chanted Mrs. Strode in a low contralto, and Felisi called for more, but of a sudden the lonely lady had fallen silent.

"I wonder," she mused, still staring downward with a strange fixity, "I wonder what he would do . . ."

And Felisi wondered, too. It was a weakness of hers.

\* \* \* \* \*

About two o'clock that day John Strode became aware of a difference. There is no other way of putting it—a vaguely disturbing element, if you will—in his usually preoccupied existence.

The hutch was hot, but it was not that. He tried to ignore the annoyance, but failed. He thrust it from him, but it returned with maddening persistence. Finally, and after

a supreme effort at concentration, he turned abruptly in the swivel chair, crossed the room, and stood looking in bemused fashion through one of the ports.

A cloud of gannets flecked the intense blue of the sky, dropping now and again like stones upon their prey. The sea, slashed by the white ribbon of the barrier reef, rose and fell as though breathing in its sleep. The eternal sun shone down. Clearly the disturbing influence was not here.

Strode turned from the port with a frown of baffled annoyance. Then, one by one, sluggishly, the small realities of life began to filter into his consciousness. He glanced at his watch. It had stopped, because he had forgotten to wind it. He was hungry. Why? Perhaps he had had nothing to eat. What about breakfast—and lunch? It must be after noon. Curious! He grunted, flung open the door of the hutch, and went on deck.

His train of thought had been derailed by hunger; that was what had happened to John Strode. But he was only aware of the accident's curious effect upon himself. It seemed, as he wandered over the yacht, that he had just returned from a long journey. Everything was familiar, yet strangely new, and something was lacking; he felt it, but his mind refused to supply the deficiency. In the saloon he mixed himself a stiff brandy and soda.

"Befuddled!" he muttered angrily. "Must have been at it longer than I thought."

Suddenly he caught sight of his face in a mirror, and went nearer to examine it more closely. There were shadows under the eyes that emphasised their already unnatural brilliance; the cheeks were hollow, and the beard disgracefully unkempt. Strode stretched his clenched fists above his head until his joints cracked with the unaccustomed tension, and, as he did so, caught reflected in the glass a glimpse of the far corner of the saloon behind him—a standard lamp with a rose shade, a guitar standing propped against it, and an empty armchair.

The little picture conveyed nothing to Strode beyond the same aggravating impression of incompleteness. He turned and crossed the saloon. Lying on the arm of the chair was one of his own socks, a darning needle caught in the wool. He picked it up and examined it mechanically, then dropped it with a short laugh, for it had told him what was lacking aboard the *Ajax*, and to think that it had not occurred

to him before was really rather amusing. He rang the bell.

"Parks," he demanded of the startled individual who appeared in the doorway, slightly dishevelled from a hasty toilet, "where is Mrs. Strode?"

"Mrs. Strode left early, sir."

"Did she leave any message?"

"No, sir."

"But—have you no idea where she has gone?"

"To the reef, I believe, sir, on a picnic."

"Alone?"

"With a young native person, sir."

Strode looked about him with an expression of vague bewilderment.

"And, Parks!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Why have I had no breakfast—*gr lunch*?"

"We have strict instructions that on no account are you to be disturbed, sir."

"Yes, that's so," mused Strode. "Then do you mind telling me," he added, with whimsical pathos, "how I ever chance to get anything to eat at all?"

"Mrs. Strode fetches you, sir."

"Oh!" Strode appeared to ponder the matter. "Well, supposing something's fetched to me this time by way of a change, Parks—cold, with salad."

"Yes, sir."

Parks withdrew, and, on rousing the cook from his habitual and audible siesta to receive instructions, touched his forehead significantly. The cook heartily concurred.

To the accompaniment of cold chicken, Strode communed with himself. So he was "fetched," was he? Somehow the word met with his disapproval. Rather ignominious, wasn't it? How long had it been going on? he wondered. Nice sort of occupation for Stella, too. By the way, what had she been doing with herself for the past few days—or was it weeks? He had no distinct recollection of her presence, yet—yes, he seemed to remember her at meals, the same gracious figure at the end of his table, silent, unobtrusive, yet conveying a subtle air of sympathy for a dreamer's moods and abstractions. Curious that she should go away like that, without a word—aggravating, too, considering that at that particular moment he rather needed her. Someone to talk to about one's work, you know. Necessary sometimes, or one became atrophied. To-day of all days—and for so long—it must be nearly three. Unusually thoughtless! Jove, wouldn't

she be in a stew when she learnt that he had gone without breakfast and lunch?

An hour later Strode was pacing the deck with ill-concealed impatience. He was not used to being balked of anything, and in the present instance he was aware of an inordinate and unaccountable desire to set eyes on his wife.

Afternoon tea, served by the implacable Parks, proved a dreary affair, and by five o'clock impatience had given way to a senseless but none the less acute anxiety. He might go and meet her. It would be a pleasant surprise. He called for the sailing dinghy, and set out for the reef. After all, it was only about half a mile long, and Stella must be somewhere on it.

The dinghy sailed like a witch. There was a sunset to dream of—pearl-grey islands of cloud floating in amethyst. The evening breeze was a cool caress, but there was no sign of Stella. This was absurd! He shouted lustily as he sailed, and presently from afar came a small, answering cry. His heart leapt to it in the most ridiculous fashion. What ailed him? He did not know, he did not care—he had found Stella.

She was lying beside a rock pool with Parks's "young native person," and waved a greeting as he came stumbling over the coral toward them.

"My dear John," she exclaimed, "what has happened? Ship on fire?"

It was hardly the reception he had expected. He sat down rather abruptly, and tried to regain his breath. Somehow he felt out of it, a lamentably gross and mundane figure, puffing there on a rock in the presence of this sylph-like person who was his wife. It was in keeping with all the rest on this day of strange experiences that he seemed to behold her for the first time.

"No, nothing," he defended lamely, "but—do you know the time?"

"Time?" scoffed Mrs. Strode, with dancing eyes. "What have we to do with time?" She took Felisi's hand in hers. "Perhaps you didn't know you had married a mermaid. Behold, O Caliban—we are about to show off!"

The two figures slid beneath the water as silently as seals. The ripples expanded in ever-widening circles, and were still.

At the end of perhaps half a minute, which to Strode seemed more like half an hour, he went to the edge of the pool and looked down. There was nothing—nothing

but a pale green abyss fringed with swaying weed. Stella had always been fearless where water was concerned, he remembered. All the same, he wished she wouldn't do this sort of thing. It was disturbing, and he disliked being disturbed.

A minute *must* have passed, and a minute was a long time, a deuced long time. It could not be good. He must put his foot down. Strode dropped to his knees at the edge of the pool, and found himself watching a minute fish, striped like a zebra, that had darted out from a coral cranny and hovered like a marine butterfly in the translucent water. A squid trailed by. . . But this was preposterous! A prank? How could that be? Stella was down there somewhere—somehow. . . A thought leapt to Strode's mind that caused his unruly heart to stand still. What if—Absurd! She would be the first to laugh at his fears afterwards. . . But what if there were no afterwards—if even now, while he stared down like a fool— On the instant his mind was aflood with ghastly possibilities. He could not support them. . . Three minutes, he would swear! The thing was impossible. . . Ah! . . .

A shadow appeared in the pool, deep down, then shot to the surface like a meteor, resolving itself into a sleek head that turned on Strode its staring, terrified eyes. It was the native girl—*alone*. The fact

smote Strode with the force of a physical blow. For a moment he crouched there, stunned into impotence, then, without word or look, plunged into the pool.

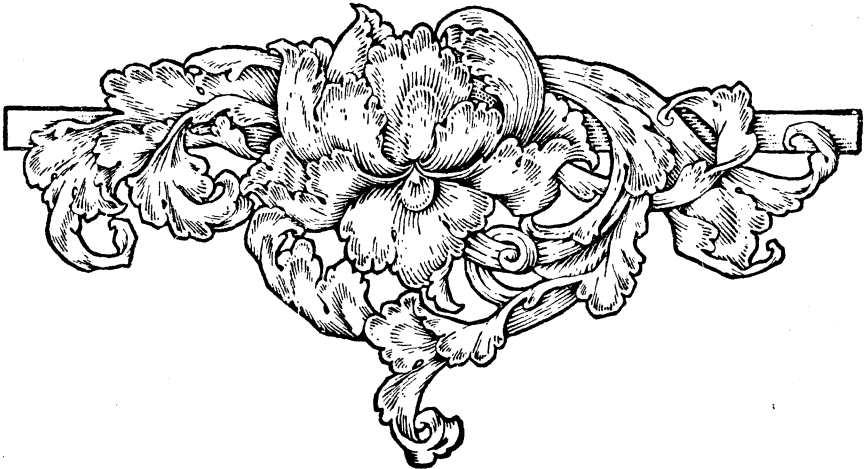
As a dive it was a poor performance, Felisi decided, and it soon became evident that Bunny could not swim, either. For this reason it took them an unconscionable time to get him out; and it seemed still longer before his eyes opened. But the most amazing thing to Felisi was the attitude of the lonely lady. With Bunny's head in her lap, and when it was apparent that he had suffered nothing more than the thorough shaking up that he needed, she turned on Felisi like a tigress.

"Go away, you hateful child!" she stormed.

And Felisi went.

What did it all mean? Paddling home in the canoe, she tried to unravel the mystery. The lonely lady had "wondered what he would do." Very well, she (Felisi) had taken the trouble to show her by the simple expedient of depositing her in safety on the far side of a submarine archway, and returning to note results. Were they not satisfactory? Was there *ever* any understanding the ways of this strange people?

Felisi of Luana was afraid not. And in the case of lonely ladies she resolved never again to try.





“‘You’re always talking about your grandfather,’ said she; ‘who was he?’ ‘A brave man,’ said Henry, ‘and a pioneer. He——’ ‘Yes, I know, but what did he do? How did he make his money?’”

# ANCIENT HISTORY

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

**I**T is doubtful if in the entire suburb of Ridding Hill there could have been found a more respectable young man than Henry Fyshe. Ridding Hill itself is eminently respectable. It is a suburb of spats and dispatch-cases, of tennis rackets and amateur concerts, of good works and perambulators. No crimes are committed and no criminals live in Ridding Hill; the moral atmosphere is too strong.

Among the excellent citizens who gave this tone to the neighbourhood Henry Fyshe held a prominent place. Henry was twenty-seven, slender, and an orphan. He owned a first-class season ticket, the complete confidence of his landlady, and a passable tenor voice. Month in and month out he journeyed to and from an obscure but permanent position in the Civil Service with all the dignity becoming to one engaged in upholding the fair name of the Empire. He was much in demand at local concerts,

and a pillar of the Ridding Hill Lawn Tennis Club. He did not play tennis very well, because he disliked untidy hair and perspiration, but he gave his opinion with great readiness on all subjects, and lent distinction to the annual group photograph. And, finally, he was engaged to Doris Hambleton. The latter was the daughter of a stockbroker, and exactly resembled in speech and deportment the daughters of a thousand other stockbrokers in a hundred other suburbs.

Much of Henry’s influence among the slightly snobbish natives of Ridding Hill was due to his possession of private means, which had descended to him from his paternal grandfather, one Henry Aloysius Fyshe, long since defunct.

Grandfather Fyshe had been, by all accounts, a roving, restless spirit. Finding no suitable outlet for his energies at home, he had in the early ’fifties departed to America with the avowed intention of

amassing a fortune. In this he would appear to have been tolerably successful, inasmuch as from time to time his wife received generous and increasing remittances. The nature of his activities in the New World was apparently never disclosed ; but Grandmother Fyshe, a phlegmatic soul, invested his money with wisdom, and, knowing her husband as she did, was grieved but not entirely surprised when remittances and letters ceased abruptly to arrive. Thenceforward nothing was heard of Henry A., and in the Fyshe family the theory was generally held that he had had the misfortune to perish in a mining accident.

In the fulness of time Grandfather's money, constituting a modest fortune, slid down the family tree until a certain portion lodged in the pocket of our Henry. (It may here be stated that it was this circumstance which was impelling Mr. Hambleton, who had been unlucky of late, to hurry on the wedding.)

In a community such as Ridding Hill a romantic ancestor like Grandfather Fyshe is a distinct asset, and Henry would have been less than human had he failed to use him to the best advantage. He was, of course, handicapped by a lack of knowledge of his subject, but he became an adept at turning the conversation towards America, in order that due attention might be paid to the brave, pioneering spirit of his late relative. Thus throughout the neighbourhood it was vaguely supposed that the United States owed much of their modern greatness to the work and example of Henry Aloysius Fyshe, though exactly what the latter had done Ridding Hill did not know, and was much too polite to ask.

With one exception. Miss Doris Hambleton, taking advantage of her position as a *fiancée*, one day broached the matter to Henry.

"You're always talking about your grandfather," said she ; "who was he ?"

"A brave man," said Henry, "and a pioneer. He——"

"Yes, I know, but what did he do ? How did he make his money ?"

Henry, whose ideas on this point were as nebulous as those of the rest of his family, grew somewhat restive, though he had for some time been more or less expecting such a question.

"Oh, he—er—he was in business, you know. He never told us exactly what."

"You don't seem to know much about him really," observed Doris. "I should have

thought you'd have been interested to find out, seeing what you owe to him." And with that she temporarily abandoned the topic.

But the suggestion had done its work. Henry, foreseeing further questioning, and feeling that perhaps he had been a little apt to take too much for granted, bethought him of a friend who some time since had exchanged the respectability of Ridding Hill for the wider joys of a fruit farm on the west coast of America. To this gentleman, therefore, he wrote, pointing out that Grandfather Fyshe had last been heard of in that quarter of the globe, and asking as a favour that any available information might be forwarded.

\* \* \* \* \*

Six weeks later the level life of Ridding Hill was shaken to the core by the news that Mr. Hambleton had been "hammered" on the Stock Exchange.

Henry took it rather badly. It was characteristic of him that he considered first the effect of the disaster upon himself. It seemed to him nothing less than scandalous that Mr. Hambleton should have incurred this notoriety at a time when he was about to receive Henry into his family. For in the eyes of Ridding Hill the crime of being "hammered" is only one degree less than that of murder.

Henry, calling upon Mr. Hambleton, found the sinner unrepentant and annoyingly cheerful.

"Been expecting it," confessed Mr. Hambleton. "Can't be helped. Thank Heaven, Doris'll be fixed up all right, anyway."

Henry stared at him. He had anticipated remorse, apologies ; had even supposed that he would be asked what he proposed to do under the circumstances. This calm assumption that everything would go on as if nothing had happened seemed to him in the worst of taste. Mr. Hambleton had apparently given no thought to him.

Henry, clearing his throat, said as much, and more. He made it clear that, fond of Henry though he was, he considered that the wedding should be postponed until the scandal had blown over. He touched upon his official position, the exceptional integrity of his own family, and the faint but inevitable stigma attaching to Doris. He even contrived to indicate that, in his opinion, Mr. Hambleton had been guilty of crass carelessness. It must be admitted that Henry did not show to advantage on this

occasion; few of us do when our vanity is concerned.

Mr. Hambleton listened at first in open astonishment and then in a grim silence. As Henry finished, he rose abruptly and held open the door. He seemed curiously to have expanded in stature.

"And now," said Mr. Hambleton, "get to blazes out of here, you little worm! I'm obliged to you for showing me the kind of insect Doris has escaped marrying. When I want you to come here and bleat about disgrace and honesty and your infernal family, I'll let you know. I always thought Doris was too good for you, but I've only just realised how much. Get out!"

Henry got out. Considerably upset and slightly dazed, he made his way home. His intentions had been of the best, and Mr. Hambleton's sudden violence seemed to have bereft him of the faculty of coherent thought. He let himself into his rooms in a mood of profound depression.

On the table in his sitting-room reposed a letter and a square wooden box. Henry, mechanically opening the former, found it to be from his acquaintance in America—

"... have found out that your grandfather once stayed in San Francisco, but beyond that nothing at the moment. Cannot discover where he came from or where he went, and of course there is no one here who can give me any first-hand information. He left behind him a few things, which I send separately. As soon as I hear anything more, will let you know. . ."

Glad of some occupation to distract his mind, Henry put down the letter and ripped the lid from the box. Lifting out a bundle wrapped in newspaper, he rolled its contents forth upon the table and regarded them with some surprise.

They consisted of a rough, belted coat, fashioned apparently from a blanket and dazzlingly striped, a soft beaver hat with an immense brim and a lofty crown, and a wide, much-scarred leather belt. It was this last which held his attention, for it was an unusual belt.

Henry, though affecting to despise the moving picture and all that appertains thereto, was accustomed to escort Doris, who loved it unashamedly, to the cinema once a week. Thus he was able at once to recognise the species to which this belt belonged.

It was a broad belt of peculiar construction, equipped with a huge buckle and studded with a number of little leather

cylinders, some of which still held cartridges. Two battered holsters depended from it, and from each projected the butt of an indubitable revolver.

Somewhat nervously, but with a quickening interest, Henry drew the weapons forth and examined them. They were old-fashioned, long-barrelled Colts, six-chambered and with worn ivory butts; he noted that the latter were marked with little notches.

He replaced the guns, picked up the belt, and stood with it in his hand. It was very heavy; if it had been indeed the property of Grandfather Fyshe, that gentleman must have been built of sturdy clay. Acting upon a sudden childish impulse, Henry slipped the belt about his waist and buckled it. It proved to be far too big for his slender frame, and the gun-holsters hung low against his thighs.

He was about to remove it, when, without warning, a sudden wave of giddiness swept over him. The room seemed abruptly to grow dark and to rock violently about him. Swaying upon his feet, he put out a hand to grasp the table, but could not find it. Almost at once, however, the giddiness passed and the earth steadied upon its axis. But the darkness remained, and to it there was now added a sensation as of a cool wind. In his ears sounded a dull jingling and a steady, unintelligible murmur.

Henry blinked and made an effort to pull himself together. He could not account for these phenomena, but was inclined to debit them to indigestion. Then, as his eyes grew accustomed to the inexplicable twilight, he uttered a startled gasp.

For the room, with the stuffed parrot and the oleograph of Queen Victoria's Coronation, was no longer there. Indeed, the entire house, the complete suburb of Ridding Hill had melted away; it was as if they had never been. In their stead was a dark night-sky, studded with stars, a cool wind upon his face, and the smell of leather. His utterly bewildered mind contrived to grasp the fact that he was now standing beneath a clump of trees beside a rough track that wound away to disappear over a low hill.

As he stared dumbly about him, he perceived two men. They stood a few yards from him, their low-voiced conversation rising and falling in a gentle murmur. They wore wide-brimmed hats, shirts of a check visible even in the gloom, and trousers of an unfamiliar shape. The intermittent jingling sound which he had remarked was

explained by the presence behind the men of three horses, standing sleepily, with drooping heads.

It is not surprising that Henry's brain, numbed by these marvels, refused to register surprise at the discovery that he himself was clad exactly as the two men. Hat, shirt, and strange leather trousers were there; a handkerchief was knotted round his neck and two heavy guns hung from his belt.

Suddenly one of the men turned and came towards him. He was of an immense height, with markedly bent legs, and he walked with a long, rolling stride. In the dim light Henry made out a badly-broken nose and a chin like the toe of a boot.

"Say, English, Curly shore oughta be along by now," observed the newcomer in a thick whisper. "I reckon yore not aimin' to lay around till the moon's up, an' we c'n be seen a mile? Gettin' on toward time, too."

Henry gulped, swallowed convulsively, and at last achieved speech.

"Look here," he said, "I don't understand this. Where am I?"

At least, that is what he intended to say. But as he opened his mouth to speak, it was borne in upon him that the mastery of his vocal chords had been taken from him.

"See here, Joe," he heard himself say fiercely, "who's running this outfit—me or you? You know darned well we can't quit till Curly gives us the word. And if you or Red's looking for trouble any time, you've only got to say so, and I'll oblige."

As he heard his own voice giving vent to these strange sentiments, Henry's mind reeled dizzily. Either he had gone mad, or this was some unusually realistic nightmare. He stared wildly at the tall man as the latter backed a step and held up a deprecatory hand.

"Easy, English," he said. "I ain't kickin'. Red an' I 'lows yu knows best. I'm just aimin' to point out as the stage is nigh due, an' we'll have to go like a streak to get there on time."

At this juncture there came to them down



"Put 'em up, you!" he heard himself shout. From the darkness appeared the forms of Curly and Joe, one on each side of the trail."

the wind a steady drumming of hoofs. Instantly the tall man whirled and melted into the shadows; his companion, urging the horses, followed suit. Henry, who was incapable of lucid thought; found that somehow he had stepped behind a tree, and that his guns had apparently leaped from his belt into his hands.

Over the crest of the hill swept the figure of a horseman, who seemed to hang poised for an instant and then shot down the slope



towards them. Abreast of the clump of trees he reined in abruptly in a cloud of dust; before his horse had stopped, he had dismounted and was running towards them.

"English!" he called. "It's me—Curly. Time yu was up an' doin'."

person unknown. A curious feeling of fatalism came over him as he found his legs carrying him forward to meet the new arrival.

"They was late pullin' out," panted the latter. He stood revealed as a slim youth,



"The driver cursed audibly and hauled upon his reins; the stage jolted to a halt, and the three men upon the box-seat raised their hands above their heads."

By this time Henry was to a certain extent reconciled to his position. It seemed that in this dream or madness, or whatever it might be, his brain remained the brain of Henry Fyshe, while his body and speech, his conduct and character, were those of some

wiry and muscular, shrouded from head to foot in white dust. "I dassen't leave afore them, or mebbe they'd 'a' noticed it. I quit the trail an' passed 'em at Mesquite Springs. They's due any minute, I reckon. They's only two passengers, an' ole Jack's packin'

a Winchester on the seat beside him. The stuff's inside, in a bag."

"Good lad," said the voice of Henry. "Then we'd best get busy."

Three minutes later Henry, perfectly aware that he was about to witness and take part in a crime which he was powerless to prevent, found himself leaning against a giant boulder at the side of the trail. At his side stood Joe, motionless and silent; Curly had vanished into the darkness across the trail; among the trees to the rear lurked Red and the horses. The faces of Henry and his companion were swathed about with large handkerchiefs, so that only their eyes were visible beneath their wide hat-brims.

Faintly down the wind came the thud of hoofs and the steady rumbling of an approaching vehicle. Henry saw Joe's figure stiffen and his hands flash down to his belt, to reappear with a gun in each.

Over the crest of the hill rose the outline of a swaying stage coach, drawn by a team of mules. Three men sat upon the box-seat, and their voices were audible intermittently above the jingle of harness and the rattle of wheels.

As the stage drew abreast of their hiding-place, Henry sprang forward, a gun in each hand. He had had no intention of moving, but some unknown and irresistible power urged him forward.

"Put 'em up, you!" he heard himself shout. From the darkness appeared the forms of Curly and Joe, one on each side of the trail. The driver cursed audibly and hauled upon his reins; the stage jolted to a halt, and the three men upon the box-seat raised their hands above their heads.

"Get their guns, Joe," said Henry. "And you, Curly, fetch it, quick!"

Joe climbed swiftly to the box-seat, threw down a rifle and four revolvers, and sprang lightly to earth again. Curly jerked open the door of the stage, thrust in a hand, and took forth a heavy canvas bag that chinked as he moved. As the door slammed shut, Henry stepped aside from the trail.

"On your way!" he called out, and stood watching while the driver, cursing anew, took up the reins and the unwieldy vehicle rumbled forward. When it had melted into the darkness, he thrust his guns back into their holsters and turned away towards the horses.

"Hurry, boys," he said. "We've got to fix that alibi."

A minute later Henry, who had never previously bestridden anything more dashing

than a donkey, was leaning forward in his saddle as he swept out from the trees and away across the level plain. At his saddle-horn swung the canvas bag; right and left of him rode Curly, Red, and Joe. The night wind beat upon his face, and the thudding of hoofs sounded like a distant cannonade.

All power of steady thought had left Henry. He could only hold his breath, watch, wonder, and perform as this strange power chose to direct. There passed dimly across his mind a vision of Ridding Hill, Doris, Mr. Hambleton; they all seemed incredibly remote.

\* \* \* \* \*

For what seemed like an age, but was in reality a bare half-hour, the four horsemen rode across the plain. Suddenly there came into view a cluster of low buildings; they seemed almost to have risen abruptly from the ground. The riders swept down upon them with no slackening of speed, whirled into what appeared to be a village street, and pulled up, sliding in a cloud of dust, before a long, brightly-lighted building whence came the sound of voices and laughter. Hitching the horses to a rail that ran past the front of the house, they strode up half a dozen steps, thrust open a door and entered, Henry in the lead.

He saw a long, bare room, brilliantly lit with many lamps and furnished with a number of small tables and a long bar across the farther end. Behind the bar, shelves glittered with bottles, and an ornate gilt mirror reflected the newcomers.

About a dozen men were in the room. Some sat round the little tables, others leaned against the bar. All wore sombreros and vivid shirts; all turned their heads quickly as the four entered.

The latter, Henry at their head, crossed the room and approached the bar. The bartender, an evil-faced gentleman with the arms of a prize-fighter, nodded amiably

"'Lo, English! How's things?"

"Hullo, George," said the voice of Henry. "Set 'em up on me"

The men crowded round the bar, and the bar-tender busied himself with bottles and glasses. He served Henry last, and as he pushed the bottle towards him he leaned across the counter and made a quick motion with his head.

"Yu want to watch out, English," he said in a low voice. "Tenspot Rickard's in town, a-lookin' fer yu. An' when he sees yu he'll come a-shootin'."

Henry received this startling information

with outward calm and considerable inward trepidation. He heard his voice making reply.

"I'll watch him, George. And see here, if anyone asks, we four—Curly, Red, Joe and me—have been here since noon, sitting in at a poker game in the back room. Savvy?"

The bar-tender nodded. "Sure, English. I— Hell!" His gaze switched from Henry to the door, and there remained. Henry whirled about, dimly conscious that a tense silence had fallen upon the room.

Framed in the doorway stood an unusually tall man, broad-shouldered and black-bearded. His hat was drawn low over his eyes, and he stood in a peculiar crouching attitude, his great hands hanging low above the two guns swinging at his thighs. Henry heard someone draw a quick breath.

"English," said the bearded man, "I'm lookin' fer yu."

Henry was aware that the company had melted from his side as if he were a carrier of the plague; he stood alone against the bar. And yet, though his knees felt as if they had turned to water and his mouth was very dry, he found himself entirely incapable of movement. He heard his own voice as one who listens to a message from another world.

"Well, Tenspot, unless you've gone blind, I guess you can see me right now."

"I guess so," said the bearded man, without moving. "Last time I saw yu, English, I told yu as yu'd get yours one day. I guess this is the day."

As he finished, his right hand flashed down and leaped out. There was a bright spurt of flame, a crashing report, and from a shelf behind the bar a bottle jerked suddenly into fragments. The bearded man, his gun sagging in his hand, stood for a moment, regarding Henry with a look of pained surprise. Then abruptly his knees gave, he swayed, and crumpled in an untidy heap upon the floor. His gun thudded upon the bare boards.

Henry stared at him in horror. He could not account for what occurred; then he glanced down and started violently. In his right hand was a gun, and from the muzzle a thin wisp of smoke still curled upward.

The head of the bar-tender appeared suddenly behind the bar, followed in due course by the rest of his body.

"All over?" he asked. "English, if there's a gun in this State quicker'n yu on

the draw, I'd be glad to meet him. Tenspot was sure askin' for it."

Henry had thrust his gun into its holster, and was turning dizzily towards the bar again, when there came another interruption. Through the door came a short, powerfully-built man, upon the lapel of whose coat gleamed a silver star, and who held a gun in each hand. Stepping over the body of Tenspot Rickard, he advanced into the room, his eyes fixed upon Henry, who watched his approach with a premonition of impending trouble.

"I want you, Henry Fyshe," said the short man calmly. "Put 'em up. Also Red Simmons, Curly McKendrick, and Joe Turner. All here, I see. Don't try to start anything, boys, because my men are outside, and you're covered through the windows."

Henry, numb with horror, heard a voice which he failed to recognise as his own.

"What's the big idea, Sheriff? What have I done?"

"Nothin' much," answered the Sheriff shortly. "Only stuck up the Santa Fé stage to-night and got away with Bud Ferrers' pay-roll. There's one or two other little things as well, which I don't need to mention here or now. You didn't know old Jack recognised you to-night? Your handkerchief slipped, an' he saw your face. Better come along. Step out here, you other three."

Red, Curly, and Joe emerged from the crowd and stood before him in a sullen row. The Sheriff uttered a shrill whistle, and a man stepped through the doorway.

"All here, Bud," said the Sheriff. "I'll trouble you to get their guns."

The other advanced rapidly to Henry, laid ungentle hands upon his belt and unbuckled it.

\* \* \* \* \*

Suddenly a wave of giddiness swept over Henry. The room darkened and seemed to sway beneath him. Almost at once the sensation passed, the room steadied, and he blinked dazedly in the light. Then he uttered a low cry and his jaw dropped.

The oleograph of Queen Victoria's Coronation gleamed at him from the opposite wall. Under its glass dome the stuffed parrot wore its customary expression of fatuous unreality. All about him was the familiar furniture of his sitting-room at Ridding Hill.

When this fact had had time to penetrate, Henry glanced downward at himself, half fearing to see the vivid shirt, the leather

trousers of a moment ago. He saw instead the tweed suit of a blameless life, and heaved a deep sigh of relief.

At this point he realised that in his hand he held the gun-belt. He made as if to throw it from him, hesitated, and stood for a long moment gazing at it thoughtfully. Then, deliberately and with a sense of reckless bravado, he slipped it again about his waist. Nothing happened. He remained unmistakably Henry Fyshe, Esquire, of Ridding Hill, Surrey. Again he removed the belt, and again fastened it on. There was no result. Plainly the thing had done its work. Henry threw it upon the table, sank into an armchair, and for the first time in his uneventful existence gave himself over to solid and profitable thought.

Fully half an hour had passed when he arose, picked up his hat, and left the house.

Five minutes later he was ushered into the presence of Mr. Hambleton.

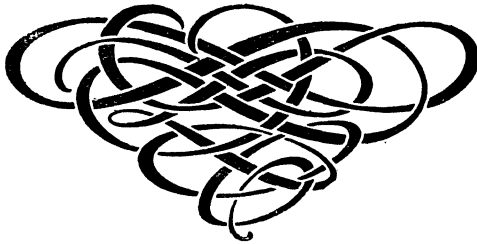
That gentleman bent upon him a gaze in which surprise and dislike struggled for the mastery. It was evident that his opinion of Henry had undergone no change.

"Mr. Hambleton," said Henry, "I've come to apologise, if you'll let me. I behaved like a cad and a vulgar swine just now, and I'm sorry. I've no more right than the man in the moon to criticise anyone else's actions; less right than that, perhaps. If Doris will have me and you will allow it, I'd like to marry her at once."

\* \* \* \* \*

Some days later a respectable citizen of California was somewhat surprised to receive a cable from England—

"Stop inquiries *re* Grandfather. Know all that is necessary.—FYSHE."



## HALCYON HOURS.

**D**ELIGHTFUL task—to sift the sand  
 So fine and clean through idle hand,  
 To watch the ripples foam and glide,  
 To hear the shingle crunch and slide.

No hint of hustle, loss or gain  
 To irritate the idle brain,  
 Merely to mark, with passive eye,  
 A brown-sailed boat go dipping by.

Sun spangles deck the jade-blue seas,  
 A tang of salt is in the breeze,  
 And, to complete this fair estate  
 And crown tranquillity—a mate.

JESSIE POPE.



“Marian was peering into the street, coming slowly across to the singer. Mr. Dill watched them meet.”

# THE MAN ROMANCE FORGOT

By ASHLEY MILNER

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

**M**R. JULIAN DILL had been a bachelor for seven-and-twenty years, and never realised it until the instant when he first saw Marian.

He was owner of a big drapery store, as the great gold letters over his score of shop windows advertised. But the business was one he had inherited from his father; for Mr. Dill himself was a simple soul, who could never have built up any kind of business for himself. Even now he was a shocking misfit for the position to which it had pleased Providence to call him.

Mr. Dill stood stroking his dimpled chin,

his back to a roll of six-foot-wide linoleum which showed six inches of its pattern above his head. Abruptly, as if he suddenly made up his mind, he stepped along the broad corridor which joined one department to another, through the Laces and the Gloves, until he came abreast of the Ribbons. Here he glanced to the right of him. Marian was serving.

He spent five minutes with the shop-walker of the Dresses, and turned back. Marian was talking to another assistant.

He paraded the Gloves and Laces and came back. Marian was alone.

Mr. Dill coughed to clear his throat, then he walked quietly up the floor and stopped before Marian. His heart was playing him tricks; after seeming to stop, it was now thudding and throbbing until he felt a kind of suffocation.

Marian smiled rather distantly. She was delicately pretty, with sea-grey eyes of a peculiar tender depth. Mr. Dill, feeling a fool, made matters worse by looking like one. He coughed again and leaned his elbow on the counter.

"I've something to ask you, Miss Pollard," he began, in a voice so strange that he scarcely recognised it as his own nor knew where it came from. "Will you—will you have dinner with me at the Foreston Hotel to-night?"

Marian started, blushed, stared hard at him, and then drew her dainty lips together. "No, Mr. Dill," she said coolly.

Yet there was a soft gleam of pity in her eyes as the little man turned crimson and, with a stammered apology, drew himself upright and turned away. A moment later he came back.

"You perhaps think I'm an awful bounder to have asked you a thing like that," he blundered. "You do read such awful things in the papers, an' so on. But don't misunderstand me, because I'm your employer, Miss Pollard. I'd like to know you, an' I'd like you to know me. But what chance have I got? In business hours we—we just meet. After business I never see you. And we might go on like that for ever, it seems to me, unless I say something. But I knew I'd be saying the wrong thing. Seems to me there's no right way for a man to go about it, if he happens to be an employer and— and wants to know one of his staff. So I apologise."

"And I'll come, Mr. Dill!" she breathed.

Mr. Dill gasped and smiled. He looked like a man who has suddenly found the pathway by which he can pass hot-foot into Eden.

At dinner that night Mr. Dill and Marian Pollard sat in a shaded corner of the big restaurant. Mr. Dill, in evening-dress, looked his humble best. Marian, in a white summer frock, sat opposite to him, yet thrillingly near. A dozen yards away the orchestra was playing a love ballad.

"Strange that we've known each other two years, and yet never spoken outside business hours," said Mr. Dill. "Over and over again I've wished I could——"

"They're playing the new waltz 'Romance,'" broke in Marian hastily.

But Mr. Dill was brilliant to-night. Instead of being turned from his topic, he snatched at the word she had given him.

"Romance!" he echoed. "I s'pose I'm the man that Romance forgot! Yet even in drapery life Romance finds a way. Don't you remember last year's stock-takin', Miss Pollard—when you were callin' out and I was takin' down, and you laughed because I went up the ladder myself because you were getting your hands so dusty with the old stuff on the top fixture? Since that night I've felt I knew what Romance was, or, anyway, I've felt I wanted to."

A waiter reached the table with a new course, and Mr. Dill privately cursed the man. Why did these idiotic waiters need to run about the place with silly food on plates, interrupting people? He had found his dinner, but had lost his inspiration.

Then a strange thing happened. The orchestra had ended the waltz and struck the opening bars of a tenor song. Marian glanced round, the colour suddenly flowing from her cheeks.

The tenor was singing. Marian's head was still turned, watching and listening. Old words to an old tune:

"Kind, kind and gentle, is she,  
Kind is my Mary;  
The tender blossom on the tree  
Cannot compare with Mary!"

And suddenly Marian lifted her hands to her face. With her elbows poised upon the table, she remained a long moment. She was not crying, yet he saw the movement of her shoulders as if she stifled an emotion too deep to be hidden.

The song closed whilst Mr. Dill watched his companion in honest concern. Marian, lowering her hands, smiled tremulously.

"Did I make a silly of myself? Did people notice me?" she asked him quiveringly. "Hiding my face like that! But you were talking of Romance, Mr. Dill. Shall I tell you my own, and what that song means to me?"

Mr. Dill felt the stab of instant jealousy. Somehow he had never imagined any other man in the case. He nodded, gravely expectant.

"I had a lover when I was just a girl and he—he was not more than an overgrown lad," she said. "He was in the drapery, and I promised to marry him. Then he found he had a singing voice. People flattered him. And that song was his favourite. He sang

it so often that I used to call him 'Mary' in chaff."

"Where is he now?" broke in Mr. Dill.

She left that unanswered. "Once, in a big crowd of people, I was separated from Jim," she went on, "and it was getting dark, too, so that we couldn't have found each other again. So he sang 'Mary.' And, of course, I knew it was he and found him at once. He used to say afterwards that if ever he lost me again, he knew I'd always come to him if only I heard him singing 'Mary.'"

Mr. Dill bowed. He was not quite certain whether he bowed to Marian, or to the story, or to the mystic presence of Romance. But an avalanche of jealousy presently swamped every other emotion beneath it.

"You didn't say where he is now," he reminded her.

"I don't know," she said slowly. "We quarrelled because I tried to keep Jim working in the drapery when everyone else wanted him to try his luck on the concert platform. I changed my place and my lodgings during the quarrel, and when I wrote to him, after a long time, the letter was returned to me. He had gone, too. That was two years ago, and I've never been able to find him."

Mr. Dill began to understand. He remembered the start of recognition which she had given when the first bars of the song were played. He could see again the swift glance, half hopeful, half timid, which had flashed from her eyes to the face of the singer.

He might have been Jim!

Mr. Dill, with a subdued air, compared this delicate Romance with his own memories of the stock-taking episode—his pitiful moment of Romance! How cheap and silly it must have sounded in the ears of this girl whose life itself was golden Romance!

Yet the next day and the next Mr. Dill believed that Marian's sea-grey eyes smiled more intimately to him if he passed the ribbon counter. He plucked up heart again. It was two years since she had seen or heard of Jim, and in two years, surely, even the warmest love must become nothing more real than a memory. Still a page of one's life, but a page which has been turned over.

Things happened rather swiftly. Without doubt Marian liked him. There was a simple, honest humility about him which might have won the heart of any womanly woman.

"I don't feel I can ever love you as I did Jim," Marian answered breathlessly, when at last he declared his own love. "But he

has gone out of my life for ever, and the rest of it I'll give you, if only you tell me you understand."

She might have made herself clearer, but there were tears in her eyes and a sobbing catch in her voice. Mr. Dill could not understand the words, but the tears which he had brought to her eyes were their own explanation. He kissed her almost reverently, and knew how nearly her love was his already when he saw the glory of her upturned face as he drew her into his arms.

Romance had remembered him at last!

## II.

WEEKS later Mr. Dill sat in his office on the second floor of the big building.

The shop had been closed for an hour; he could hear dimly the chatter of the assistants who lived in and were somewhere above him. But Mr. Dill was not heeding them, nor was he at work. He was intently examining the furnishing catalogue of a big London firm, blue-marking any especially charming piece of furniture which might find favour in Marian's eyes.

He had bought their house already. He fancied he could see the place as it would look with this new furniture inside it—and Marian. A long breath of ecstasy sighed from his lips.

Then suddenly he started to his feet. Down in the street a man was singing for coppers—singing in a resonant tenor voice, singing a song which had power to fling the barbed shaft of jealousy into his heart, singing the song called "Mary." Mr. Dill glowered down at the darkening street, just able to distinguish the tall figure of the man who came slowly forward between the high buildings. And punctuating the song came the occasional taps of a stick, as the singer groped his way along.

"Bless my soul, but the man's blind!" cried Mr. Dill aloud, all the jealous suspicion flowing out of him on the instant. "A youngish man, too. Poor beggar!"

He opened the window and threw down a florin. But the road was muddy and the coin dropped without a sound. Mr. Dill pulled down his desk, locked the office door after him, and went down the stairs, pulling on his coat.

In the street, having once recovered the florin, he followed the singer. The blind man had reached the end of the song, but a moment later he had begun it again. That surprised Mr. Dill, who by this time was touching the man's arm.

"I threw this down for you, but you didn't hear it," he said.

The singer, feeling the rim of the coin to discover whether it was silver or

Evidently the man was a stranger in Foreston. Mr. Dill, warming in his own benevolence, led the way to a restaurant.

"Mr. Dill's eyes gleamed and shone. He had scrambled into Eden at last. Romance had remembered."



copper, turned to Mr. Dill with a volley of thanks. He added a request.

"I'm hungry, and I've the price of a meal here," he said. "Would you mind showing me where there's an eating-house?"

"I'm hungry, too," he said. "Put that two-shilling piece in your pocket and have a snack with me. Here, give me your arm. What will you have? Here's the menu— But, dash it all, I'm forgetting! Start with



some soup, eh?" They started the meal. Mr. Dill, at a loss for a topic, asked the only question he could think of—



"Is the young lady able to satisfy your requirements, sir?" he asked suavely. . . . "Is she able. . . . Good Heavens, yes! *Yes!*" boomed Mr. Dill."

"You're a stranger in Foreston?"  
"Yes. I'm here looking for someone."

Mr. Dill sat back and stared at him. Then, rather quaveringly: "Looking for someone, eh? That's odd. How can a poor chap who's lost his sight look for anyone?"

The sightless eyes seemed to search for Mr. Dill.

"You heard me singing 'Mary' in the street just now? Singing it over and over again? I've been singing that same song for a couple of months."

"W-why?"

The blind man's lips smiled. "Because, if one person hears it, she will come to me," he said simply. "That's how a blind man looks, sir. She knows that song. She knows I sing it. She used to call me 'Mary' in jest because I sang it so often. Once before, when we were parted for an hour, I found her by singing it. I never thought then that the day was coming when that song would be my very eyes, seeking her out again!"

The perspiration beaded itself on Mr. Dill's brows. For a single callous instant he was glad the man was blind, otherwise he must have read something of the truth.

"We quarrelled and parted," added Jim. He had already become "Jim" in Mr. Dill's frantic imagination. "Then through illness I lost my sight, and I found how much I needed her when I was blind. So I tramped my way to the places I knew she'd lodged at, but no one knew where she'd gone. Then I sang my song up and down the streets for a month, knowing she would come to me if she once heard. And then—then a man who had known her told me he believed she had come to Foreston. That's why I'm here."

"Any chance of your getting your sight back?" quavered Mr. Dill, fighting back the rising tumult within his bewildered wits.

"Yes, a little. Now my health's better, I've a sporting chance. But I want to find Marian—Marian Pollard. Used to be a drapery hand, sir."

If you're a Foreston man, could you tell me whether you've ever heard of any girl by that name? Or maybe I can pay a man to-morrow, with this two shillings, to take me round to all the drapers."

A fury of wild disappointment had finally crashed into Mr. Dill's mind, driving every other emotion from it. Only himself knew what Marian meant to him. Their house was bought, her love was almost won, they had chosen furniture, she wore his ring, there had been congratulations, hints of the wedding date, unspeakable hopes. . . .

And here was Jim, tapping his blind way through the Foreston streets, singing the song which, if once Marian heard it, would give her back to him!

"See here, my friend," growled Mr. Dill, in a voice that had suddenly become churlish and gruff, "I—I know where that girl lives. She used to work at a drapery place here. But she's gone now. She's somewhere in—in Birmingham now. Fourteen miles farther on. Central Birmingham, but I don't know whereabouts. But you'd find her if you kept on singing. Give me your hand."

The blind man stretched out his hand, blurting out one question after another. Mr. Dill parried the questions, using his wits desperately to convince the lad that he was sure to find his sweetheart in Birmingham, and that no one Mr. Dill knew of could give more definite information. Then he opened his pocket-book and put a couple of five-pound notes into Jim's hand.

"Wish you luck," he said unsteadily. "There, I've paid our bill. Shall I drive you to the station to get a train out to Birmingham? There's a cab here."

"No, I'll tramp it," the lad answered, gasping out his thanks for the money. "I can't manage trains unless there's someone to travel with me. And I can sing as I tramp. One never knows where she'll be living. But you're a gentleman, sir! If the thanks of a blind man mean anything to you—"

"They don't! I mean, I don't want them!" spluttered Mr. Dill, in pitiful horror of what he was doing. "Good night. The road to Birmingham is straight on."

The blind singer tapped for the pavement and turned a smiling face to Mr. Dill. Then gropingly he made for the wall and shuffled his way along.

Mr. Dill stood watching him, unconsciously wiping his brow with his gloved hand. One half of him seemed to be chanting a mad pæan of delight that he had so skilfully

side-tracked his rival; the other half was nausea unspeakable.

Then of a sudden he found himself running desperately after the blind man. There was no danger of losing such a conspicuous traveller, but Mr. Dill raced after him as if the man could have taken wings. He saw him ahead in the darkness, as the brightly-lit thoroughfare became a residential street. Panting, he gripped at his coat.

"I—I find I was wrong," he said. "I've remembered. I've been told something different. Come back with me. I know the girl. I can take you to her."

Jim swung round, incoherent. Then, perhaps surrendering himself to the impossibility of understanding, he walked silently at Mr. Dill's side with Dill's arm linked into his own.

Ten minutes later Dill broke the silence. They were outside Marian's lodgings. There was a light in the window, where the girl must be sitting. Dill pointed upward, as if his companion could see.

"She lodges here—near here, I mean. Sing your song, man, and we shall see if she comes. You're a blind man, remember, and she's a poor girl herself, without any means except what herself or her husband earns. But sing! It's your chance."

The blind man hesitated, breathless. "Your name, sir?" he asked.

"S-Smith!" lied Dill, and snatched himself away.

From the shadows he waited and listened. The blind man walked to the edge of the kerb and held back his head.

"Kind, kind and gentle, is she,  
Kind is my Mary . . ."

Mr. Dill, with sinking heart, heard the rustle of a blind. He saw and heard an open window being pushed higher. Then nothing more for a moment.

The door opened. Marian was peering into the street, coming slowly across to the singer.

Mr. Dill watched them meet. He saw the blind man's arms go round her. With a thrill of white-hot jealousy he saw the passionate meeting of their lips.

"Romance has found me at last," said Mr. Dill, in broken, hysterical mirth. "What a fool I am! Heaven above, did you ever see such a fool?"

### III.

AND once again things happened rapidly. Marian begged leave to speak privately with Mr. Dill in his business office the next

morning. With a strange mingling of joy for herself and of pity for him, she told him how Jim had found her again. A strange man named Smith, who had acted like a generous lunatic, had brought him outside her lodgings last night. She had heard him sing and had come to him. He had found her again by singing, because he was blind!

Marian, with the door closed behind her, came quietly to the desk where Mr. Dill sat motionless. She dropped to one knee, like a child imploring something.

"He's blind," she repeated, with the tears in her eyes. "If he hadn't been blind, Julian, I—I wouldn't have come to ask you this. But he needs me so desperately, and I promised him I'd ask you. You know just what he's been to me, and what he is now. Yet I've promised you. Will you give me up to him, Julian?"

Mr. Dill's commonplace soul had never been taught the wonder of a moment like this. His commonplace eyes had never seen a woman on her knees to him before. Yet he could feel how happiness was slipping out of his heart as sand trickles between the fingers.

"I—I hope you'll be happy," he said huskily, holding out a shaking hand and helping her to her feet. "I'll help you, Marian, for you'll have a hard life before you as a blind man's wife. Good-bye, Marian."

He felt the fierce pressure of her hands upon his shoulders; he heard her sobbing out words which he dared not try to understand; he felt her hot kiss of farewell upon his lips and the moistness of her tears upon his cheek.

Then she was gone.

#### IV.

TRADE was booming, money was cheap, and Mr. Dill's one interest was that fragment of Romance which centred round two lovers whom his own foiled love had reunited.

Therefore it was simple for him to keep his promise to help the blind singer. He put the matter into the hands of a man high up in London musical circles. He told him to push the blind singer forward, have him trained, get him engagements—anything—and Julian Dill would foot the account.

Excepting that he sometimes heard of Jim's name in the concert world, Mr. Dill heard nothing for the next twelve months. He tried not to hear anything, for hearing things was to reopen a torturing wound.

Then, when in London once, he plucked

up courage to find Marian, and, to his surprise, he found her still behind a drapery counter.

"But I thought your—your husband was earning big money now!" cried Mr. Dill, trying to master that unsteadiness of voice which always attacked him when he looked into this pair of sea-grey eyes.

Marian's lips parted to speak, but something kept her silent. She held out her left hand, showing him there was no ring upon it.

"You lifted Jim over my head, Mr. Dill," she said quietly, but with no trace of bitterness nor of regret. "He became a popular concert singer, and his sight is coming back a little. As a fashionable singer he met—other girls. He married one of them a couple of months ago, and is touring the halls with her now."

"He jilted you!"

"No. I didn't try to keep him after I knew he didn't need me any more," she explained simply. "He had sought me out again only because he was blind. I went back to my engagement to him only because he was blind, and I pitied him so, and remembered my old promises to him. And if he had stayed blind, I suppose I should have married him and worked to keep us both. But I—I'd found out where my own heart was, and when he grew prosperous and independent, I was glad to give him up to this other girl."

"And now?"

She looked clear into his eyes with a timid, wistful little smile, bravely honest.

"I'm doing just the same that I was doing when you first knew me," she said gently, almost huskily—"just waiting for the man I love to come back to me. But he can't sing!"

Mr. Dill's eyes gleamed and shone. He had scrambled into Eden at last. Romance had remembered.

"Never sang a note in my life!" he agreed, in boisterous confession, and then became so voluble that a scrupulous shop-walker, noticing a private conversation taking up the time of a valuable assistant, stepped aggressively forward.

"Is the young lady able to satisfy your requirements, sir?" he asked suavely.

Mr. Dill flashed a glance at the shop-walker and then at Marian's crimsoning face.

"Is the young lady able to suit your requirements?" repeated the shop-walker.

"Is she able. . . . Good Heavens, yes! Yes!" boomed Mr. Dill.

# THE TEST

By W PETT RIDGE

ILLUSTRATED BY HUTTON MITCHELL

“AND now,” said Miss Hazlewood, glancing at her reflection in a shop window, as the omnibus went down King’s Road, “suppose we leave off talking nonsense, and take a serious view of matters. Would you care to be introduced to my people?”

“In answer to your esteemed favour,” said young Mr. Manners, “I beg to state that few of the remarks exchanged between us can be correctly described as nonsense. Sentiment, yes. Romance, yes. Love, yes. But nonsense, certainly no. Regarding the second paragraph of your communication, I am willing to take any view proposed by you. As to the third, I have never before heard any allusions to your relatives.”

“There is a reason for that.” She checked a sigh and gazed ahead thoughtfully. “But we have known each other now for over six weeks——”

“Seems more like six minutes.”

“And I think it would be as well for you to brace yourself up to meet them.”

“You talk,” remarked the young man, “as though it were going to be in the nature of a trying ordeal.”

“Some people find them a little difficult,” said Miss Hazlewood. “We’ll get down at the Town Hall.”

“It occurs to me it might be a shrewd and commendable act to give our patronage, instead, to the first house over the way. And if on this occasion you will allow me, my affluent and wage-earning sweetheart, to pay for the two tickets——”

“We have discussed that already,” she interrupted. “I earn very good money in Oxford Street—more than you do Westminster way. There is no reason why I should be an expense to you. Apart from that, we are not going to the Chelsea Palace this evening. We are going to a different sort of entertainment. We shall see whether you find it equally amusing.”

“My warmest thanks,” he said, “for the pains you are taking on my behalf. I have

sometimes read of this sort of experience, but I have not hitherto had to undergo it.”

She looked at him affectionately and, for a moment only, hesitated.

“You’ve got to go through with the job, my lad,” she declared, “sooner or later, and I have decided that it is to be sooner. Come along!”

They walked along the south side of King’s Road, crossed Oakley Street, and presently found themselves in Poulton Street. On the way Miss Hazlewood explained, with something less than her usual business-like self-possession, that her folk were plain folk, and, being plain folk, made no attempt to put on the veneer of courtesy towards strangers. The mind was sound, but, in the general opinion, the deportment scarcely reached perfection. Miss Hazlewood admitted she had, on occasions, taken friends to the house, and they had come away announcing to her a definite intention not to repeat the visit even if offered all the gold held by the Bank of England.

“Didn’t you say they lived in Poulton Street?” he asked suddenly.

“Danvers Street,” she said, “and I have not hitherto mentioned the address. What made you think of Poulton Street?”

Her companion was about to make an urgent plea for exemption, when a hand gave salutation from a window in Danvers Street, and the owner disappeared quickly in order to open the front door. From that moment Mr. Manners offered no protests.

“Well, Gertie,” said the thin woman, in mournful tones, “got another young chap at last, then. Hasn’t been for the want of trying that you ain’t caught one before. Bring him in and let’s have a look.”

“This is Fred, mother,” said the girl. “Fred, this is mother.”

The lady of the house rubbed palm on apron as a preliminary to a hearty and determined shake of the hands. She assured the young man that he was as welcome as the flowers in May, but cautioned him not to

expect too much hospitality, for if he did, then he was bound to know disappointment. Times, she said, leading the way to the front room, were not what times had been. The years when the family kept a good table, and took beer with supper every night of their lives, were now gone, and she saw no prospect that they would ever return. Her husband, she hinted, felt the deprivation less acutely, because he was able to get his drink at licensed premises where, owing to the fact that he had once been prominent in boxing circles, he rarely found himself called on to pay for his own refreshment.

"You'll find my husband very entertaining," she went on, "--set down, both of you, if you can find chairs you can trust—when he comes in, but if I was you, young man, I wouldn't contradict him. Gertie's father can't bear being contradicted. If he's unable to find words to answer you, he doubles his fist, and then everybody has to look out for 'emselves. He don't stop to think, mind you. He jest lets fly."

"I make no doubt," said Mr. Manners pleasantly, "that he and I will get along well enough together. One has to make allowances."

"I'd rather," she urged, "that you didn't give him anything, mister. If you want to make a loan of any kind, hand it over to me. Don't give to him, whatever you do, or else——"

"Mother, mother!" pleaded the girl anxiously.

"Gertie," ordered the elder woman, with solemnity, "be respectful to your parents. Don't you know what the Bible says about honouring your father and mother? Very well, then. Take care I don't have to speak to you twice; otherwise, you'll know it! Go into the kitchen and see if you can't do some washing up."

In the girl's absence the hostess spoke loudly and more freely. She informed the caller that the circumstance of her daughter sharing rooms with a young lady friend, instead of living under the control and superintendence of a good mother, was one of the most regrettable incidents in a life not free from mental anguish. She declared a serpent's tooth was nothing to it. Not, mind you, that Gertie, in herself, could be reckoned as altogether to blame. Oh, no. Any girl who progressed in the world felt naturally eager to mix with her betters, and in this desire the existence of home was forgotten. As a matter of accuracy, Gertie had not called, before the present

moment, for three months—close upon three months ago that she paid a visit.

"Alone?" asked Mr. Manners politely.

The door of the sitting-room was open, and it appeared the door of the kitchen had not been closed. Consequently the young man received nothing more than a wink in reply to his question; the wink conveyed a suggestion that it would be well not to show extravagant inquisitiveness. The lady of the house proceeded to qualify some of the information communicated, and declared that Gertie was a dutiful child, as children went in these days, and perhaps, when she married, the old friendly relations might be taken up afresh. Certainly there would always be a knife and fork for her at Danvers Street, and a knife and fork for her husband; whether in addition there would be anything to eat was a detail in regard to which no guarantee could be made. It depended on office work.

"Are you," asked Mr. Manners, with elaborate surprise, "engaged in an office?"

"I am," she answered.

"Responsible position?"

"If I'm not there to sweep up after the clerks have gone, who else would be likely to do it? As a matter o' fact, I haven't been long back from my work this evening," she went on. "Just at present I'm engaged in a building in Victoria Street."

"Oddly enough, I, too, am engaged in a building in Victoria Street."

"Bless my soul!" she exclaimed, in tones of exaggerated amazement. A thundering single knock came at the front door. "Gertie," she cried, "I'll let your poor father in. Go"—to Mr. Manners—"into the kitchen and have a little 'eart to 'eart talk with her, whilst I have a word with my old lad."

It seemed to Mr. Manners that the girl was not engaged with anything like violent industry on domestic occupations; she welcomed his arrival with a wan smile. The kitchen had two Windsor chairs, and from one he evicted a grey cat. From the other he removed a jug and a thick tumbler.

"And," asked Miss Hazlewood, with an effort at cheerfulness, "what do you think of mother?"

"She strikes me," he answered carefully, "as somewhat—how shall I say it?—somewhat unusual. Perhaps the most unusual person I ever encountered."

"Wait until you see father."

"Is he——"

"He is," she said definitely.

"I suppose," he remarked, "it would not be necessary, when we are married, to see a great deal of them?"

"They would scarcely be daily visitors, but, of course, filial respect has to be thought of. You don't, I hope, ask me to ignore them altogether?"

"We can discuss that later."

"No!" declared Miss Hazlewood, with resolution. "We must discuss it now. I might have kept the two in concealment, but I preferred you should know them, and ascertain for yourself whether or not it affected your proposal to me. It's not too late to back out."

"Gertrude mine," he said, "you are now talking as they talk at Colney Hatch. All the same, I am bound to admit that your maternal parent is not exactly my ideal of a mother-in-law. I can imagine we should not be too well pleased if, when we were entertaining friends, she suddenly barged in."

"Take time to consider it," begged the girl. "I don't want you to do anything you will be sorry for afterwards."

"What I can't quite understand is why, earning the excellent salary you do, you fail to make them adequate grants that would permit——"

The lady of the house apologised for interrupting, and announced that her husband was now ready to give an interview to the young gentleman. "I've told him all about you," she said elatedly, "and you'll find him, sir, as nice as nice can be."

The large man offered to Mr. Manners an enormous hand, saying, "Put it there!" and inflicted a grip which made the visitor wish that less cordiality had been shown. They sat opposite each other, and the large man rested an elbow on an irresponsible round table that leaned over at his pressure. Mr. Manners tendered a cigarette case.

"I've smoked shag all my life," declared the other firmly, "and shag I shall continue to smoke so long as I have the 'ealth and the strength to dror at a pipe. After you with that match, gov'nor." He lighted up. "Now, then"—leaning more heavily on the table—"we don't want no quarrelling, we don't want no disputatingness, we don't want no upset of any description whatsoever. All we want is to know whether you're a-going to act fair and square towards our Gladys."

"Gertrude," corrected the young man.

"If I like to call her Gladys for short"—he spoke with grim deliberation—"do you

fancy you're the chap to stop me? Do you think, for a single moment, I'm going to allow a mere whipper-snapper like you——"

"Keep a civil tongue," ordered young Manners sharply.

"What else am I doing?"

"Being as grossly offensive," he explained, "as you can be."

"You ain't seen me at my best, gov'nor," said the large man, rather taken aback, "or you wouldn't say that. When I make up my mind to be what you call grossly offensive, I'm in the 'abit of using language that turns the air blue for miles. I rec'lect once, when a chap was brought 'ere as you are being brought now——" He stopped abruptly.

"Try to comprehend this," directed Manners. "Arouse your sluggish brain and——"

"Now, who's being grossly offensive?"

"And realise that I am not going to allow you to talk to me as you have talked to others. You will speak respectfully, and you will speak decently."

"But see how you're 'andicapping me!" pleaded the man. "All very well for parties of education like yourself to do without what is termed language, but I've got no other way of expressing myself."

"Then remain silent," ordered Manners.

"Sooner than do that, I'd offer to fight you, 'ere and now."

"I'm ready," said the young man.

He took off his jacket. The large man watched intently as links were undone and a sleeve rolled back.

"There's something about you, gov'nor," he said deferentially, "that I admire. You've got pluck, you have. On the other 'and, I've got the science. That's where I should have you, once we cleared the room for a set-to."

"You are over-fat," said Manners, "and over-flabby. It must be years since you put the gloves on."

"I had to give it up," he said, "owing to a weak 'eart."

"Your heart may be weak, but I'll bet it's sounder than your intelligence."

"Is that," asked the man, puzzled, "intended for a compliment? If so, I accept it, and I assure you, gov'nor, that my one desire is that we may become the best of friends. And now put your jacket on and set down, and let me 'ear all about you and this girl of ours. If I went over the mark in anything I said, you must put it down to a father's anxiety. She's our one ewe lamb,

and if anything amiss occurred to her——” He found a grubby handkerchief, and in rubbing eyes expressed regret that he had no drink to tender either to his guest or to himself.

He amended this defect later by borrowing a shilling. As he went, he conveyed to

“In these times,” continued Manners, “when affectation is discovered almost everywhere, it is refreshing to encounter folk who say what they mean and mean what they say.”

“And you don’t care for me the less because——”

“My love,” he cried, “I can honestly say this—what has happened this evening has not in any way diminished my affection for you!”

\* \* \* \* \*  
At the offices in Victoria Street the



“He don’t stop to think, mind you. He jest lets fly.”

Manners his good wishes, and spoke with relish of the treatment he intended to serve out to any beverages provided at the wedding breakfast.

“I like them,” announced young Manners to his companion, as they waited for the omnibus later opposite the Town Hall. “A trifle crude, perhaps, but I like them.”

“So glad, dear.”

following night, the charwoman looked in at the draughtsmen’s room where Manners was working at a desk. She coughed to obtain his attention.

“Oh, yes!”—detaching himself from the task. “Of course. Settling day. Now, in the course of our previous discussion here, when I noticed that you gave Miss Hazlewood’s name as a reference, you mentioned the sum she paid you for pretending, on occasions, to be her mother.”

“Seven-and-six, sir. But with everything going up in price——”

“You gave me the wrong address. I had the fright of my life when I discovered we had gone through Poulton Street.”

“We moved in a ’urry, sir,” she explained, “owing to circumstances. But I managed to let the young lady know. You see, as I told you, she wanted to be loved, sir, not

for the money she’s earning, but for herself alone, and heretofore the visit has always put the gentleman off. And seeing that, by chance, I ’appened to be able to give you previous information, and seeing that we shan’t get the job again——”

He handed over a Treasury note. “Don’t bother about a receipt!” he said.



## MY WINDOW-PANES.

**T**WELVE panes my tiny window has,  
 And opens lattice-wise to air;  
 Below the horses crop the grass  
 And shake the plaguy flies to air.

And midway on the sloping croft  
 An oak tree stands, a nest of doves,  
 Where all day long one coos aloft  
 And calls his mate the best of doves.

And children seek beneath the boughs  
 For lady-smocks and daisy-chains,  
 Till in the summer dusk they drowse  
 And homeward drag in lazy chains.

Then comes a dark moth like a ghost,  
 Strikes glass and skims the sill without,  
 A hint from the infernal host  
 Of things of evil will without.

Whereon I make my window fast.  
 And then a blind bat flies at it,  
 And in the panes I see, aghast,  
 My own eyes making eyes at it.

Down comes the blind. My fingers move  
 Along the keyboard, fain of light;  
 Again I hear the cooing dove,  
 And all the air’s a rain of light.

My fingers move amid the gloom,  
 And link the notes in lazy chains;  
 And hand in hand across the room  
 The children dance with daisy-chains.

WILFRID THORLEY.





“An old lady was approaching. She leant on the arm of a woman who overshadowed but did not by any means eclipse her.”

# MADAME AND THE MARQUISE”

By C. KENNETT BURROW

ILLUSTRATED BY EMILE VERPILLEUX.

**T**HE clock of the great church of Belleforêt struck the hour of noon. But there was such a hubbub in the Grand Place that the notes floated away unheard by most of the traffickers and merry-makers. Belleforêt was *en fête*.

The Grand Place, usually almost deserted at mid-day, now seethed like a disturbed ant-hill. Long parallel rows of stalls, some uncovered, some protected by bright-coloured awnings, stretched from side to side of the Place, and the lanes between them were thronged with people from the neighbouring countryside as well as by the townsfolk. The din of voices, of moving

feet, of itinerant musicians, and finally of the mechanical organ of a merry-go-round, produced an uproar that became solid, as it were, a palpable mass of discord.

Three people detached themselves from the vortex and drifted together like straws in an eddy. The man of the group seemed more in need of support than the women. He fanned himself with his hat and gasped.

“This,” he said, “is the very devil!”

“My dear Jacques, it is your business to use your eyes, not to protest. All this is adorable.”

Jacques Coriot looked at the speaker.

Always a little provocative, Madame Blanchefleur now seemed to have the coolness and freshness of a flower whose petals remain unwilted in a scorching sun. Even her gown, of the green of daffodil spears that guard the uplifting bud, appeared to be without crease or soilure. She was flushed, eager, and yet, perhaps, to a close observer, somewhat overwrought.

The third member of the little group glanced from Madame Blanchefleur to Coriot and tapped her foot on the cobblestones. Suddenly she said :

"Oh, I see something!" She darted away and vanished.

"Off again!" Coriot said.

"But she always returns, and it will be your business, my poor friend, always to make the return worth while."

"Oh, I am sure of myself and her," Coriot said. "My grumblings are of no account. Give me a whole wall of the Salon to myself, and I should complain!"

He laid a hand on Madame Blanchefleur's arm and drew her back to the edge of the pavement.

"All this," he said, with a gesture towards the packed place, "is picturesque, no doubt. But why come to Belleforêt for a fair? There are better fairs within twenty miles of Paris."

"Did you ever know me to do anything without a reason? And I beg you to remember that you are not here on my invitation. If you choose to follow Héléne Remuet about like a distressed poodle, that is no affair of mine. She should decorate you with bows."

"I might make an admirable poodle," said Coriot. "A performing dog would be more amusing than this noise and dulness. But why are you annoyed?"

"Precisely because I am."

"Then I will leave you for a moment to try and discover Héléne."

Madame Blanchefleur was, in fact, decidedly irritated. For six days she had waited for an opening and no opportunity had presented itself. A blank wall and a closed door may suggest possibilities of romance, but they did not appeal to Madame Blanchefleur. As she stood there, almost oblivious of the crowd, she wished that she had not come to Belleforêt. And yet the master, Arnaud Dorain, had said that in Belleforêt—he was speaking in one of his rarely-expressed reminiscent moods—a part of his past survived. He had added that, though it survived, it held no happy

memories, and a name had slipped from his lips.

Why was she so curious, so foolishly intent on discovering what Dorain had put behind him? No doubt, if he knew that she were in Belleforêt, he would be angry.

She was suddenly aware of a strange hush in her immediate neighbourhood. Madame Blanchefleur turned and looked about her.

An old lady was approaching. She leant on the arm of a woman who overshadowed but did not by any means eclipse her. It was about this old lady that the silence closed like a protecting medium. Could it be a silence of homage? What, she thought, in a gust of irritation, had these staring dolts, that universal stridency of the Grand Place, in common with this strange figure?

The lady was dressed in a dove-coloured silk gown which seemed to be all tucks and flounces, elaborately embroidered; there was no real sense of design, only a suggestion of pretty niggling. It belonged to a generation long passed, a period as remote to Madame Blanchefleur as that of the Grand Monarque. Covering the head and falling over the shoulders was a shawl of exquisite lace.

Madame Blanchefleur, by a purely feminine instinct, took in these details before examining the lady's face. As she looked, a pair of deep-set eyes were raised to hers, eyes as bright as a bird's, yet cold and challenging. The nose and mouth, though somewhat pinched, retained their beauty of modelling, and in the hair there was scarcely a trace of gray; it was dark and glossy, a crown of youth above the brows of age.

Madame Blanchefleur was about to stand aside, when this unexpected figure paused before her and looked her up and down with a close scrutiny that would have been insolent if it had not appeared so detached, so dispassionately appreciative.

"Permit me to congratulate you," the lady said, in a voice singularly clear and strong, "on presenting to Belleforêt, which seems to have gone mad, an example of good taste." Madame Blanchefleur laughed lightly.

"I envy Belleforêt its capacity for madness," she said. "I shall presently, no doubt, be infected with it myself."

The old lady shrugged her shoulders.

"When you have sufficiently fatigued yourself," she said, "to-day or any other day, come to see me. I despise this town,

but I admire beauty. I am, as you see, unconventional in my own way, and I do not wait for introductions. I seldom venture out of doors, but my good Rosalie here"—she nodded towards her large attendant—"brings me all the news. This morning, on an impulse which I profoundly regret, I became a looker-on for an hour. Are you not Madame Blancheffleur?"

"Yes."

"Rosalie's information is usually accurate. I am Madame Meusion. You will find me at the Villa Hernani." With an abrupt little bow she turned to resume her promenade.

"Madame Meusion——" began Madame Blancheffleur.

"At the Villa Hernani," came over the other's shoulder. "I object to so large an audience." They had been the centre of a little crowd which, though not obtrusive, was clearly extremely inquisitive.

"The marquise," said one, "is coming out of her shell all at once."

"The marquise?" said Madame Blancheffleur.

"Oh, we call her that because she rides the high horse."

"She certainly has an air," Madame Blancheffleur said.

This encounter with Madame Meusion had unexpectedly opened that closed door which had troubled Madame Blancheffleur. But the manner of the opening was, perhaps, a little equivocal, and it had deprived her of the initiative. And why had Madame Meusion deliberately chosen her for this mark of favour—if, indeed, it were favour? And what would Dorain say?

Hélène and Coriot rejoined her. He held in his hand an absurd little pipe.

"Hélène has presented me with this," he said. "Observe the ingenious curve of the stem. The wood is briar of the best, the mount gold of Ophir, and the mouth-piece clouded amber. For this masterpiece Hélène paid one franc seventy-five."

He took a tobacco-pouch from his pocket and proceeded to fill the grotesque gift.

"Heavens!" cried Hélène. "You must not smoke the thing in public!"

"That, however, is precisely what I intend to do. I wish to be in tune, or become part of the discord, of this infernal *fête*." He dived into his pockets and brought out a packet of highly-coloured sweets and a bag of sticky honey-cakes.

"Madame Blancheffleur," he said, "these are the delicacies of Belleforêt." She took

a honey-cake and ate it slowly. Then she took another.

"These are wonderful," she said. "At the Café Grenier they would create a sensation." Hélène refused to touch the confections.

"A few minutes ago, Natalie," she said, "we saw an old lady who is certainly the most interesting part of this show. She seemed to walk straight out of the past, dressed in the fashion of forty years ago."

"She is superb," said Coriot. "I must make her acquaintance. Perhaps she has a taste for art."

"Not for modern art, be sure," said Madame Blancheffleur.

"You saw her?"

"Yes." She realised that Coriot might be in the way. Therefore she said nothing of Madame Meusion's invitation.

"Well," said Coriot, "let us now continue our explorations. I am for the merry-go-round."

They followed him, laughing. Madame Blancheffleur threw off the sense of strain, of unaccountable depression, that had troubled her for some days, and became one of the festival-makers, sharing that apparent irresponsibility which, in a French crowd, is usually backed by the idea of getting reasonable value for money and effort. "Gaiety is good," says a proverb, "but to pay too much for it is bad." And Belleforêt-sur-Yonne was business-like.

A cloud of fine dust, which dimmed the intense blue of the sky, hung over the Grand Place, and the cloud was densest over and about the merry-go-round. Children, giggling girls, uneasy-looking young men, and a few solemn individuals of mature years, gyrated to the throaty strains of an organ. They were perched on wooden horses, ostriches, or unnameable beasts of appalling ferocity of aspect, and these strange steeds rose and sank joltily, adding to the delight of dizziness a suggestion as of sea-sickness.

The ponderous structure slowed down. The riders stepped on to a narrow platform and reached the ground by means of little ladders. Other adventurers began to scramble up.

"Hélène," said Coriot, "choose your mount!" Hélène glanced at Madame Blancheffleur.

Madame Blancheffleur hesitated for a moment. Already, she knew, Belleforêt was curious about her. Indeed, she was as little likely to pass unnoticed as Madame Meusion. At that moment many eyes were

turned on a figure so entirely unprovincial, so graceful and well-balanced either in motion or repose.

A spirit of mischief, of gay bravado, took possession of her. She sprang lightly to the platform and seated herself sideways on an ostrich, grasping the iron upright before her. Hélène and Coriot followed, he still with the ridiculous pipe in his mouth. The merry-go-round began to turn slowly. As the speed increased, Coriot sang one of those quaint little ditties of the Quarter which mainly consist in the repetition of half-meaningless words. Then he took off his hat, saluted the watchers, and hung it on the nose of the dragon which he bestrode. Madame Blanchefleur snatched at the hat, overbalanced, and slipped to the platform. A cry of dismay broke from the crowd.

But her right hand still gripped the upright. She regained her footing before being dragged more than a yard or two, ran for a few paces, and leapt to her seat as the lumbering affair slowed down. Madame Blanchefleur descended to a roar of cheers.

"That was a near thing," said Coriot. "You frightened me out of my wits. If Madame Blanchefleur had been hurt——"

"It would have been your fault," said Hélène, who was almost in tears. "When will you learn, Jacques, not to play the imbecile?"

"Who could do anything else with this pipe in his mouth?"

"I am responsible for my own misfortunes," said Madame Blanchefleur.

"But to what good account you turn them! Everyone will hear of this. By tonight you will be the most popular person in Belleforêt."

"Popular as an acrobat? Thank you, Jacques."

As they moved away, the crowd made a passage for them, and a tall countryman, wearing a short blouse and a straw hat with faded poppies stuck in the band, said:

"Bravo! It was well done!" Madame Blanchefleur gave the man a smile which made him retreat a step.

"Have courage, the lady will not eat you!" someone said. Madame Blanchefleur quickened her pace. She was, in fact, somewhat shaken and was already weary of a foolish episode. The brief exhilaration passed and the earlier mood returned. She wanted to get clear of the crowd and the noise and the dust, and to watch the Yonne

as it murmured its caressing music to the reeds.

With a leap of the pulse she saw Madame Meusion close at hand. The "marquise," no doubt, had been a witness of that acrobatic incident. What would she think? Madame Blanchefleur made a slight détour to avoid a second meeting, but she felt that the old lady's eyes followed her; and was it only in fancy that she heard the words repeated, in a tone that suggested irony rather than appreciation, "It was well done!"

Madame Blanchefleur and Hélène occupied rooms in a house the garden of which bordered on the river. It was an old house, a good deal patched up externally and not particularly convenient internally. But it was picturesque and had an extinguisher tower which overlooked the peaceful valley of the Yonne. The proprietor of La Tourelle—Drouet, an ex-butler—was negligible as a personality, but he could cook. As for Coriot, he had taken up his quarters in a riverside inn. He painted a little and fished with conspicuous unsuccess.

It was the afternoon of the day following the fair, and Madame Blanchefleur was alone in the garden of La Tourelle. After the noise of yesterday Belleforêt seemed to have become immersed in a profound peace. Scarcely a sound reached her from the little town. The Promenade de la Yonne, which she could see to the left, with its white house-fronts and more brightly-coloured *cafés*, was almost empty.

Madame Blanchefleur, sitting in a deck-chair close to the river bank, let her eyes wander round the ill-kept garden, which, however, was prodigal of blossom. It was a kind of wilderness of roses, and glowed with colour that seemed to possess an inner light. Then she turned her gaze to the river, to the willow-bordered meadows opposite and the cultivated fields that sloped slowly to a sky-line as level as a table. Everything was serene yet vibrantly alive.

Madame Blanchefleur, however, did not share the serenity of the afternoon and of the scene. She wished once more that she had not come to Belleforêt; she had determined to leave it at once. And yet her curiosity had been newly aroused, and, though it might be indiscreet, it was not ignoble. But how would it appear to others, and particularly to Madame Meusion and Arnaud Dorain, the master whose friendship and good-will she valued supremely? To disappear would suggest flight, and

Madame Meusion had, or so it seemed to her, presented her with a challenge. And Madame Blanchefleur had never refused a challenge.

As she gazed into the moving water—constant in change, never, yet always, the same—her thoughts wandered. They glided with the ripples, twisted and turned upon themselves with the little eddies, swayed like a ribbon of submerged sedge. Pictures came to her of a childhood redeemed from unhappiness by the music of a violin, of rapturous moments of success, of desolate hours when triumph seemed an echo of derision; of seasons when she had been perplexed by the riddle of her own personality. She was perplexed by that now, but the light was breaking. Why had she become restless, subject to quick changes of mood, dissatisfied? And through all this ran a sense of insecurity, as though her hold on life and beauty might fail.

And there she was in Belleforêt, watching the river, thinking vaguely and to little purpose. Almost she could hear Dorain saying: "What, in Heaven's name, are you doing here?"

The soft splash of oars roused her. A boat was coming slowly upstream. Hélène reclined in the stern, the tiller-ropes over her shoulders. Coriot managed the sculls creditably.

"May we come ashore?" Hélène called out. "Or are you in a snappish mood, Natalie? Poor Jacques needs a rest."

"Poor Jacques," said Madame Blanchefleur, "rests too much. He becomes lazy. An artist should work."

"That is true," Jacques said. "I accept the reproof. My reason is lying on those cushions. She steers neither the boat nor me."

"Very well," said Hélène, "I give you up!"

"Good. I shall now accomplish great things."

Madame Blanchefleur smiled and steadied the boat as the girl stepped out. Sometimes she envied these two.

"As I have told you a thousand times," she said, "you are a ridiculous pair. How do you propose to deal with the serious business of life?"

"Certainly not seriously," said Coriot.

"We shall see," said Hélène, with a decisive nod.

"I have news," said Coriot. "The inimitable lady who made her appearance yesterday in the Grand Place—I do not refer to Madame Blanchefleur—is Madame

Meusion, and she lives in the Villa Hernani. The queer thing is that nobody knows much about her. She simply appeared forty or so years ago, and remained. Yet she dominates the town. Belleforêt is afraid of her."

"How?" Madame Blanchefleur demanded. "You are always collecting wild stories."

"I have it on the word of her lawyer, Duclair, who comes to my inn on fine evenings to drink a bottle of wine and to fish. His fishing is contemptible, but he is admirable with the wine. Duclair assures me that Madame Meusion has an amazing personality. She seldom appears in public now. I gather from Duclair that she sits in the Villa Hernani like a spider in its web, and fascinates the poor flies of this weak-willed place."

"But why, even if she could?"

"I can only suggest that it is because she is a woman," said Jacques, "and must be up to something."

"Nonsense!" Madame Blanchefleur said.

"Well, I intend to discover for myself. Duclair, over the second bottle—when I had convinced him that I was the only painter above ground worth a sou—promised, or half promised, to introduce me to Madame Meusion. He imagined, poor man, that she might feel flattered."

"If impudence can win success," Madame Blanchefleur said, "the name of Coriot will some day shine like a star." She moved towards the house. Hélène sank into the chair, and Coriot stretched himself on the grass at her feet.

"What is wrong with our adorable friend?" he asked.

"I think she must be in love," said Hélène.

Madame Blanchefleur had come to a decision: she would make a formal call on Madame Meusion at once and then leave Belleforêt. Accordingly, she dressed with more than usual care and set out for the Villa Hernani.

A walk of five minutes brought her to the end of the Promenade de la Yonne. There she turned to the left and presently stood before a closed door in a high wall. Again she hesitated. She recognised, more clearly than ever, that she had embarked on an adventure of curiosity—innocent, indeed, but savouring of the impertinence which she had attributed to Coriot. There was time to turn back.

Then she saw again Madame Meusion slowly making her way through the crowd,

creating a silence as she passed. Madame Blanchefleur rang the bell of the Villa Hernani.

The summons was answered by Rosalie, Madame Meusion's immense attendant. The woman's face was as impassive as a panel of the door; it was as though she had been drained of surprise like an orange of its juice. When Madame Blanchefleur gave her name she merely nodded, turned ponderously, and preceded her across a paved court to another door. For a couple of minutes Madame Blanchefleur was left alone in a bare little room, whose window narrow and barred, was almost obscured by a syringa in blossom. Then Rosalie returned, and Madame Blanchefleur was conducted to the web in which, according to Coriot, Madame Meusion watched and waited.

The old lady rose, bowed formally, pointed to a chair, and reseated herself.

"So you have come," she said. "I was expecting you. Only half an hour ago I said to Rosalie: 'The lady of the merry-go-round will come this afternoon.'" Madame Blanchefleur laughed uneasily.

"Ah!" she said. "Then you were a witness of that ridiculous episode, madame."

"Ridiculous? It depends on the point of view, does it not?"

"I speak, naturally, from my own point of view."

"But was it not a success—from your point of view?"

Madame Blanchefleur began to feel bewildered. The extraordinarily bright eyes of her interlocutor, which seemed to render the other features insignificant, held her with a chilling fascination. And there was

something eerie, too, about the dark hair that met the white and finely-wrinkled forehead in two balanced and frigid lines.

"I managed to save myself from what might have been a serious accident."

"But did you not know that you could



"The merry-go-round began to turn slowly."

save yourself?" Madame Blanchefleur flushed.

"Do you suggest, madame, that I played a trick in order to win applause?"

"I confess that the idea occurred to me."

"Then the idea was unworthy of you," said Madame Blanchefleur hotly. "Did you invite me to your house to insult me?" The old lady's lips crinkled in a wry smile.

"You may remember," she said, "that my invitation was given before the—accident."

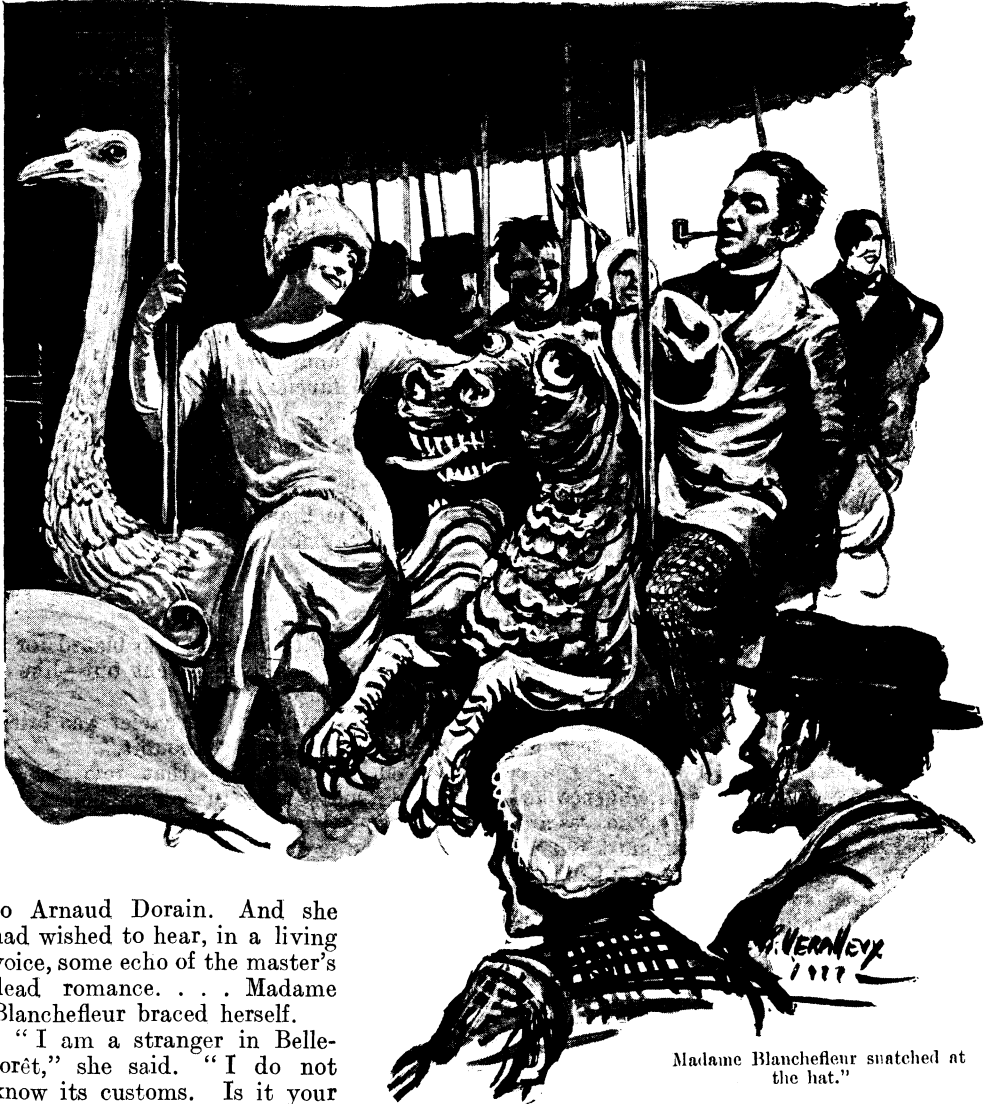
"And it would not have been given after?"

"On the contrary, with greater earnestness."

Madame Blancheffleur became more and more perplexed. She could no longer doubt Madame Meusion's antagonism, and her own rose to oppose it. Yet she had created that disconcerting situation for herself. There was an irony in it which would appeal

indifference and neglect." After a pause she repeated, "To indifference and neglect."

"I can conceive of nothing more terrible than that," said Madame Blancheffleur, "but it does not seem to provide a reason for your desire to humiliate me."



Madame Blancheffleur snatched at the hat."

to Arnaud Dorain. And she had wished to hear, in a living voice, some echo of the master's dead romance. . . . Madame Blancheffleur braced herself.

"I am a stranger in Belle-forêt," she said. "I do not know its customs. Is it your habit, madame, to distinguish casual visitors with invitations to your house, and then to humiliate them?" Madame Meusion leant forward, her elbows on her knees, her chin supported by her hands.

"I also was once a stranger in this place," she said. "I came here to escape from a world whose homage had changed to

Madame Meusion sat back in her chair and regarded her visitor with those compelling and inscrutable eyes. Madame Blancheffleur did not flinch.

"I wish only to warn you. . . . Madame Blancheffleur—that is a curious name, is it not?—why are you here at all?"

"That is a matter which concerns myself."

"Permit me to suggest that it also concerns me." This direct attack changed, for Madame Blanchefleur, the whole atmosphere. To be suddenly thrown on the defensive when she had no defence. . . . It was, at least, exhilarating.

"I admit, madame, that you interest me profoundly."

"That is not surprising, perhaps," said Madame Meusion, with another wry smile. "I have an eye for effect. In that respect, at any rate, we are alike. But I fancy that your interest began before you saw me. Nothing happens in Belleforêt without my knowledge. Rosalie hears everything, and she has the eyes of a cat."

"It is true that I made inquiries. No one can be in Belleforêt for long without hearing of Madame Meusion, and what one hears excites wonder and admiration."

"But you made inquiries of Drouet, your landlord, before you had been in Belleforêt an hour."

"Your admirable Rosalie, then, is a spy?" Madame Blanchefleur asked.

"She keeps me, as I have told you, well informed. Have you any reason to complain? Are you not a spy yourself?" Madame Blanchefleur winced.

"If I wished to learn something about you, to see you, if possible to speak with you, it was not for any base motive."

"Well, what you have heard about me cannot be very intimate," said Madame Meusion. "You have seen me, we have talked together. Are you satisfied?"

"No, because I have not yet seen the real Madame Meusion."

"At any rate you have intelligence and pertinacity! You deserve some reward. But before I go further you must tell me why you, who are young and beautiful and no doubt inspired by success and the joy of life, should trouble yourself about an old woman in an obscure provincial town." Madame Blanchefleur hesitated. The condition was a fair one. She could, of course, refuse to answer, but that would put her in an entirely discreditable position. Why, after all, should she refuse?

Madame Meusion waited.

"The reason is simple," Madame Blanchefleur said at last. "Your name was mentioned, almost inadvertently, by one for whom I have a profound admiration and reverence. I heard, madame, the voice of the past. And a foolish impulse sent me here."

For a moment Madame Meusion closed her

eyes; her lips were compressed. There was no other sign of emotion. But this was enough to quicken Madame Blanchefleur's sympathy; in place of the hard and dominating Madame Meusion, she saw a little, old, tired woman who had, perhaps, suffered agonies of body and spirit.

"And now," Madame Blanchefleur went on, speaking very softly, "I will leave you. I have no right to your confidence, nor do I any longer desire to make discoveries. And, madame, I ask your pardon for my indiscretion." She rose.

"Wait," said Madame Meusion. "I always keep my promises. I was never accused of evasion."

"But if I do not wish to hear——"

"It may do you good," said Madame Meusion drily. Madame Blanchefleur resumed her seat.

"Once—let us say forty years ago—I had popularity and power," Madame Meusion said. "I fancied that I held the world in my hands. But the world is not only fickle, it neither understands itself nor its idols."

"But it is easy to lead, it is good-natured," said Madame Blanchefleur.

"You may find it so. Unfortunately I did not. Is the name of Pélagie Renoir remembered?"

"Yes."

"As that of an actress who blazed for a time, like a comet, and went out—like a snuffed candle."

"I have heard that her career was brief. There was some mystery about it."

"Well, madame, all that remains of Pélagie Renoir and her career are before you now. An old woman, alone, but, I assure you, not altogether subdued."

"You—you are Pélagie Renoir?" cried Madame Blanchefleur.

"I am. But Belleforêt knows me only as Madame Meusion, though I am no Madame at all. I believe also that I am known as 'the marquise.' Belleforêt has never heard of that other, the comet-candle."

"Madame, I did not come to pry into the seclusion of one to whom the world has been unkind."

"Still, one is naturally a little curious, let us say? I do not pretend to be a contented recluse, enjoying a serene old age. I still resent, often fiercely, the exile to which I was compelled. I might, you will say, have remained in Paris, that I might have retained some faithful supporters and even, by a stroke of luck, regained my position."



But it is not my way to tempt fortune a second time by the same methods. I accepted the defeat."

"I would not have accepted it!" cried Madame Meusion. "I would have fought till I dropped!"

"A bird struggling in the net may be a pathetic sight, but it is not dignified. In Belleforêt, then, I became Madame Meusion. I had sufficient means (I never squandered money), and a fortunate annuity made me secure. Since then I have never set foot inside a theatre; I have never returned to Paris."

"What strength of will! I could not have endured it."

"I endured it for a purpose which most people would consider mad. The craving for ascendancy, for power, still burnt in me—it burns still. Perhaps that is why you are listening to me."

"As to that," said Madame Blanchefleur, "I admit your ascendancy, since we are not rivals."

"On the contrary, you became my rival a week ago when you drove your car into Belleforêt." Madame Blanchefleur looked at her in amazement.

"Your rival, madame?"

"You are very slow to understand," said Madame Meusion almost petulantly.

"If you will explain——"

"It is quite simple. For forty years I have been the chief figure in this place. Its only traditions were of shopkeeping and markets and *fêtes*. I created a tradition. I was something new, unexpected, wholly different from the people. What Madame Meusion said or did became of importance. Even in the affairs of the town I had a powerful influence. I have arranged marriages, settled family disputes, been an unofficial banker. And as I grew older my hold strengthened. I never changed the manner of my dress. I was feared as well as respected because I was not understood."

"All this is very strange," said Madame Blanchefleur, "and I should have found it infinitely dull."

"Dullness often goes with power. . . . When you appeared you created something of the sensation that I had created. The reports brought to me by Rosalie determined me to see you. I showed myself at the fair. I felt your influence."

"This is all imagination, madame. I do not care a sou for Belleforêt or for what it thinks."

"Nevertheless, when you enraptured the audience on the merry-go-round——"

"We have had enough of that!"

"I saw," continued Madame Meusion, not heeding the interruption, "that you, if you chose, could conquer Belleforêt more easily than I had done, that I might be deposed." Madame Blanchefleur laughed.

"The idea is grotesque!" she said. "I will give you my promise to leave Belleforêt to-morrow. I will even undertake never to return. Why should I, of all people, wish to impress this stolid little town?"

Madame Meusion showed signs of agitation; the corners of her mouth twitched; she fingered her rings; her intent gaze wavered before Madame Blanchefleur's frank regard.

"Why grotesque? Why should not another attempt what I had attempted? And the similarity went further. Do you suppose that a trained eye like mine can be deceived?"

"I had no wish to deceive."

"Then you will admit that you are no more Madame Blanchefleur than I am Madame Meusion?"

"I do admit it. I am Mademoiselle Fadette, of the Théâtre Racine. When I wish to be quiet, to remain unobserved, I become Madame Blanchefleur." Madame Meusion half rose and then, sinking back, gripped the arms of her chair. The faintest flush rose to her pale cheeks.

"I might have known it," she said in a low voice. "I have read of you. I have seen in your triumph a repetition of my own, and I have wondered when the collapse would come."

"That was ungenerous and unkind."

"Did I receive kindness or generosity? I was sufficient to myself."

"What happiness has that brought you?"

"I never sought for happiness. I demanded only power." There was something terrible to Madame Blanchefleur in this intense and implacable egotism.

"Then, madame, Heaven help you!" she said.

"Oh, I ask for no pity." She paused, and then continued, more hurriedly:

"Now you can see nothing but the glamour, the false light; you can hear nothing but the music and the applause. But how long, at the best, can that last? La Fadette will grow old, like other women. She will find friends, admirers, the inconstant public, falling away from her. And when at last she dares to face

the truth, she will be alone with desolate memories."

Those vague perturbations which had disturbed her as she watched the flow of the river, the sense of insecurity, the desire for a point of rest, returned to Madame Blanchefleur. The voice of Madame Meusion was like the voice of Fate.

"I have faith in my friends," she said at last. "I have faith—yes, I have faith in love. I am, madame, more a woman than an actress. You chose to put the actress before the woman. What has become of the woman?"

"That question was put to me by one who claims to understand women—by a man whom all France calls master."

"Arnaud Dorain?" Madame Blanchefleur asked quietly.

"What do you know of him?"

"This, madame, that he honours me with his friendship, that he loves truth, and that though he mocks at falseness and is merciless to hypocrisy, he has the heart of a child." Madame Meusion's eyes fell; her breath caught with a little click. Then she rose slowly and moved towards Madame Blanchefleur.

"Did Arnaud Dorain send you to Belleforêt? Was he providing you with a lesson?"

"I was not sent here. M. Dorain would be angry if he knew that I had come. It was my own curiosity that brought me."

"He spoke to you of me?"

"Once, when he seemed to be thinking aloud, he let slip a word or two that gave me a glimpse of the past. That was all."

"And now you wish that you had left the past alone?"

"With all my heart. . . . And yet, madame, if you would be less hard, if you would try to believe in generosity and tenderness—"

"Child, child," said Madame Meusion almost fiercely, "do you wish to see me weep? Would it please you to see an old woman play the fool? Tears would kill me! . . . Now go. Shall I confess that I misjudged you? Well, well! But remember that I, also, love the truth." She laid her hands on Madame Blanchefleur's shoulders for a moment.

"We are not of the same world," she said. She rang for Rosalie, and a moment later Madame Blanchefleur stood outside the closed door of the Villa Hernani.

She was nervous and depressed. The tragedy of Madame Meusion clouded her

spirit. Surely there was something more? Surely this armour of egotism had been pierced at some point?

As she walked slowly along the Promenade de la Yonne she felt pitifully alone. The sunlight, the soft air, the moving shadows of the trees, seemed unreal. She was out of tune with them. Certainly she must find security, a deeper satisfaction, a more enduring happiness. Dare she risk a great adventure and so, perhaps, fulfil herself?

At the sound of approaching footsteps she looked up and found herself face to face with Arnaud Dorain.

"Is it Madame Blanchefleur on this occasion?" he asked, taking her hands.

"What does it matter? I shall leave here to-morrow. I am miserable."

"That is what I feared."

"Are you angry with me, dear master?"

"Not angry, no. But I was a little hurt. I had to return to Paris unexpectedly, and Dr. Bourdon, whom I met by chance, told me that you were here."

"Believe me, I did not come to worm out secrets. My admiration and affection for you—" Madame Blanchefleur was on the point of tears.

"Yes, yes, I understand. But I have arrived too late. You have already seen Madame Meusion?"

"Or Pélagie Renoir—yes."

"And now you are miserable."

"I am sorry for her," cried Madame Blanchefleur, "I pity her from my soul!"

"Ah! Then your misery will soon pass. Pity is a divine solvent. I feared that you would hate." Madame Blanchefleur felt Dorain's influence like a soothing charm; he represented a serenity won at last, after many conflicts, many defeats, many victories.

A little later, in the garden of La Tourelle, she told him all that had happened since her arrival in Belleforêt. He put in a word now and then—no more. Dorain was an admirable listener. When she had finished he took a turn or two on the river bank and then resumed his seat.

"I will tell you, my child," he said, "what I have told to no one else, but I cannot explain everything. I cannot explain Pélagie Renoir. If I knew anything of her ancestry—but I do not." He paused, frowning slightly, as though pursuing an elusive thought. Then he continued:

"For a time she conquered Paris. She had beauty, intelligence, art. She appeared at a time when Paris was eager for

experiment, change, freshness, above all for humanity, and that, naturally, easily degenerated into sentimentality. All at once it discovered that Pélagie Renoir had no heart."

"No heart?" said Madame Blanchefleur.

"I repeat, no heart. She could appeal to the eye, to the intellect, but not to the emotions. She could give nothing to a public which wished to abandon itself to passion and to tears. She may be said almost to have emptied the theatre in which she played."

"That would have broken my heart!"

"Doubtless, but Pélagie, apparently, had no heart to break. . . . At that time I was young, enthusiastic, flushed with the dawn of success. I believed that I loved Pélagie—I am still inclined to believe it—and threw myself at her feet. I besought her—yes, with tears—to marry me. She refused, not with scorn, but with a complete detachment and aloofness that gave me a hint of the truth. I began to see why a public that swallowed sentiment like wine turned away from the unintoxicating brilliance of Pélagie Renoir."

"You astonish me, dear master. You, a mere boy, to be so reckless——"

"Absurd, doubtless," said Dorain, smiling, "but I was not always a philosopher. And I was capable of even greater absurdities. When she retired to Belleforêt I imagined that she might be in poverty as well as obscurity. I knew that she had refused gifts and lovers. She was always of an immaculate purity and honour—the purity of ice. She would not pretend to love."

"There she was true woman," said Madame Blanchefleur.

"The thought of poverty for her sickened me. I had a small patrimony, and I settled it on her. She knows nothing of the source of her annuity. I arranged with my lawyers to keep it secret."

"That was noble generosity."

"I should not give it so fine a name. And, after all, for myself, it was wise. I was thrown upon my own resources. I had to work, and work saved me from many follies. I do not claim to have kept free of the mud, but I never plunged into it head first." Dorain paused again, and his eyes wandered from the extinguisher turret to the riotous prodigality of the roses.

"I made another appeal to her," he went on, "and then I knew that she cared only

for power. To dominate and hold an individual meant giving what she could not give, but to dominate a community, however insignificant, appeared to satisfy her. It was an amazing ambition."

"But only to live for that—it is incredible!" cried Madame Blanchefleur.

"For a few hours, every five years or so, I come to Belleforêt. One does not like to lose touch with the incredible. . . . But it was dangerous for you to see her, knowing nothing of all this."

"I am not sorry that I went. If I was hurt—well, I deserved the lash. And I think I have learnt something about myself." Dorain gave her a quick glance.

"Do not be misled by the experiences of those unlike yourself," he said. "Remember that you and Pélagie Renoir are, as she said, of different worlds."

"Dear master, are you sure she has no heart? I thought that she was touched. She seemed to change."

"There are times," he said, "when I am sure of nothing. Even at the end of a long life one may see only a changing mirage, and feel only shifting sand under one's feet."

"Are there no certainties?"

"At any rate let us imagine that there are," he said.

Dorain dined with Madame Blanchefleur and talked to her more freely of his youth than he had ever done before. Perhaps the nearness of Madame Meusion induced this mood of reminiscence; perhaps he was trying to get into complete accord with his hostess. The effect was to draw them together in a sympathy rare between youth and age.

"Why is it," said Madame Blanchefleur, "that when I rest for a little and give myself time to think, I feel life, real life, to be sliding past me and leaving me with empty hands?"

"That is only a mood." Madame Blanchefleur shook her head.

"It is more than that," she said. "It is a conviction. Success, applause, gaiety, folly—I do not despise these, but they leave me unsatisfied."

"Did you not say that you were more of a woman than an actress?"

"Yes. Is that the reason? Three years ago every minute, every hour, was filled to the brim. Now——"

"Three years ago you did not know Dr. Sylvestre Bourdon," said Dorain. "He is an expert physician."

"I have found him so more than once," said Madame Blancheffleur. "So you would recommend him for this new malady?"

"Yes, if you are willing to place yourself entirely in his hands."

Dorain filled Madame Blancheffleur's glass and then his own. "To Sylvestre!" he said. Madame Blancheffleur drank gravely; Dorain with a twinkle.

"Dare I, dare I?" she said. "Of course you knew, because you know everything. . . . Could I give up what has been my life?"

"Would that be necessary?"

"I would myself make it a condition."

"You have immense courage, dear child," said Dorain. "Consider. To retire at the height of your success—"

"I have considered," she said.

"Then you have already made the decision?"

"At a word from you, who are so wise—"

Drouet, the landlord, came into the room with a scared face. He bent towards Madame Blancheffleur and spoke, in a loud whisper, the name of Madame Meusion. Madame Blancheffleur glanced at Dorain. He nodded.

"Bring Madame Meusion to me at once," she said.

As Madame Meusion entered, the others rose. The room, which faced almost west, was full of mellow light, and the old lady stepped into it as though the scene had been set expressly for her. She betrayed no surprise at the presence of Dorain.

"Ah," she said, "I expected to find you together!" She gave one hand to Madame Blancheffleur, the other to Dorain. "The admirable Rosalie brought me the news of your arrival, Arnaud. She happened to be passing along the Promenade de la Yonne, on an errand, soon after Madame Blancheffleur left me."

"You are looking wonderful," Dorain said. "Time passes you by."

"Only for a little, only for a little. . . . Madame Blancheffleur, if I may still call you by that name, I have come to repeat my apology. I was ungenerous and unjust. I suspected without cause."

"I blame myself," said Madame Blancheffleur.

"I have been thinking, thinking. . . . You revived the past, madame, and soon everything for me will be past. . . . I would like to see Paris once more. I would

like to see you, once only, in an hour of triumph. Would that be possible?"

"I can promise no hour of triumph, but in three weeks I appear at the Racine in a new piece which M. Dorain has praised."

"His judgment can be trusted," said Madame Meusion. Dorain watched the scene with amazement. Was it possible that Madame Blancheffleur had suggested to Madame Meusion what she might have been if she had been moulded of different clay? Or was it possible that, by some curious alchemy of age, sympathy was blossoming at last?

"Then," said Madame Meusion, "I will go to Paris."

"Come to-morrow, as my guest," said Madame Blancheffleur impulsively. Madame Meusion reflected. Then she turned to Dorain.

"What do you say?" she asked.

"Accept at once," he said. "Do not give yourself time to reconsider."

"Then, madame, I accept."

"There will be room for you in my car," said Madame Blancheffleur.

"I warn you that I shall dress as I do here. That fashion is part of my equipment and myself."

"You could not do better," said Madame Blancheffleur. The hour for starting being arranged, Madame Meusion, declining Dorain's attendance, took charge of Rosalie, who was waiting in Drouet's tiny parlour, which she almost filled.

When she had gone Dorain sank into his chair and gazed at Madame Blancheffleur. His expression was so helplessly bewildered that she laughed with the old rippling lightness.

"This is the strangest thing in my experience," he said. "Have I been wrong all these years?"

"No," said Madame Blancheffleur. "But is there not something hidden in all of us that a chance touch may reveal?"

"You are a sorceress!" said Dorain. "It is wonderful!"

At noon on the following day Madame Blancheffleur's blue-and-white motor-car drew up before the Villa Hernani. When the door in the high wall opened and Madame Meusion appeared, people began to gather round as by some mysterious impulsion. By the time the luggage was fastened to the carrier a small crowd had gathered. Rosalie stood impassive in the doorway. Dorain waved a farewell.

As the car moved away, guided by the

firm hands of Madame Blancheffleur, Madame Meusion said :

" Belleforêt will be safe with Rosalie till I return."

After that she was silent for a long time, and Madame Blancheffleur did not disturb her. But Coriot, becoming impatient, tried to engage her in talk, and, of course, it was necessary to reveal the fact that he was a painter. He was oblivious of the signs of

irritation manifested by Madame Meusion. At last she said sharply :

" Monsieur, I knew many painters once, and when they are young they are generally foolish. They also smoke ridiculous pipes."

Hélène's shoulders shook and Coriot sank into aggrieved silence. The blue-and-white car, seeming to share Madame Blancheffleur's elation, hummed down the miles towards Paris.



## ORCHARD TREES.

**I**, WHO love the orchard trees,  
**I**, Heard them singing on the breeze.  
 Loveliness they sang, and I  
 Called to all the passers-by :  
 "Come, let your foolish business be,  
 And hear the orchard trees with me."

Milkmaid, ribbons in her hair,  
 Laughed and clattered to the fair ;  
 Herdsman, on some errand bent,  
 Made no answer as he went ;  
 Miller on his big cart crept  
 With nodding head, as if he slept ;  
 And he who answered to my call  
 Was Johnny-with-no-wits-at-all.

I, who love the orchard trees,  
 Lay and listened at my ease ;  
 Johnny, straddled on a bough,  
 Rode to dreams on that green prow,  
 Gave the orchard such surprise,  
 His glowing lips, his happy eyes,  
 That trees grew clamorous, down the dells  
 The music ran like chime o' bells.

Oh, that was singing sweet and wild  
 To pleasure any dreaming child !  
 Oh, that was happiness for me—  
 Fine sound and gentle company.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

# THE SATURDAY WALK

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

IF you are a Lonely Soul, or wear your hair like a Fiji chief, or read Ruskin for pleasure, you are probably also a subscriber to *Literary Bits*. A few women who let their hair grow long, and a few men who have theirs cut short and eat meat, also take it in. It appeals to people of quiet tastes and literary curiosity, and its editor must be one of the most learned men of our day.

Thus, if you write to him and ask who wrote

But the skipper answered never a word,  
A frozen corpse was he,

or inquire whether John Bunyan had the option of a fine before being sent to Bedford Gaol, you will find your answer in the next available issue.

One of the most popular features of *Literary Bits* was a series of articles signed "Footpad" and entitled "Weekly Prowls Around the Modern Babylon," which is a literary way of putting "Weekly Walks Around London." Thus a different walk was described every week, and the places of interest on the way were carefully described. Since Robert Louis Stevenson wrote in praise of the slowest and most tedious means of locomotion known to man, people with literary "leanings" have walked on every possible occasion. Cobblers and leather merchants owe more to him than to any transport strike.

For purposes of classification Migginson must be described as a "bookish" man. He read everything that everybody else was reading as a matter of duty. His acquaintance with the English classics and with translations of the other classics was wide and varied, and he spoke highly of nearly all of them. A quiet man this, with a partiality for a cup of strong cocoa at night, which, with the assistance of two

chapters of some "classic," always sent him early to sleep. Thursday, when *Literary Bits* appeared on the bookstalls, was his favourite day of the week.

Although comfortably off and saving automatically, Migginson was unmarried. It was not that his tastes were too quiet to risk a possible domestic upheaval consequent upon the Great Adventure. He was shyly and theoretically fond of the opposite sex, but somehow no girls of the type required to make him happy came into his life. As the Excise and Customs officer of the suburban area of Chilby Park, he had the *entrée* into local society, and thus met many charming girls. Mezzo-sopranos sang "Because" not only at him but to him at musical evenings, but they left him cold. Mentally none was his mate. One of them had actually thought that Browning was stuff one puts into gravy, and another had lived twenty-two years under the delusion that Omar Khayyam was some expensive article of diet.

One Saturday morning Migginson sat at breakfast re-reading the last issue of *Literary Bits*. He had been conscious for some time past that he was not getting enough exercise. The top button of his dress trousers, when he had last put them on, in order to attend a lecture on "The Habits of the Smaller Crustaceans," had had to be sternly dealt with before it would meet the buttonhole. This was serious. Moreover, he was well aware that every literary-minded person ought to take to walking as naturally as a kangaroo takes to jumping. Thus the suggested "Weekly Prowl" for the week interested him more than a little.

"Standing on the little bridge over the stream leading to the irrigation ground," he read, "we get an excellent view of the

tanneries erected by Smilker and Breeze in the early 'seventies. On crossing the bridge and walking for a quarter of a mile due south, we come to the Wesleyan Church, with its interesting foundation stone laid by Alderman Munce in 1904. Beyond, our way lies through the glorious open country to 'The Bun and Trumpet,' a hostelry made famous by the Clapham parricide, who fortified himself with a glass of stout in the hospitable bar-parlour shortly before putting the prussic acid in the fruit salad. . . ."

Miggison read on greedily. His mind was already made up. By following "Footpad's" directions every week, one would not only derive the physical benefits of a ten miles' walk and the inhalation of good suburban air, but one also came upon several monuments of historical interest, and incidentally lived up to the accepted standard of a bookish man. Besides, what interesting literary people one might meet on such a pilgrimage! He could imagine all the intellectual giants of the day gravely following "Footpad's" directions. He could almost see a cluster of distinguished people standing on the little bridge and gloating over the tanneries which dated back to the early 'seventies.

That morning he bought a pair of the heaviest boots which money could purchase, and on the Saturday he put them on and trod in them the way of Romance.

## II.

THIS particular "Weekly Prowl" was from Bingley to Potters Bush, and "Footpad" thoughtfully appended a list of trains from and to the London termini. Migginson chose one early in the afternoon, in order that he might eat his mid-day dinner in his rooms. Old habits are bad to break, and he never felt the same man throughout the week if he had not eaten a sufficiency of roast beef, baked potatoes, and cabbage on the day appointed for such a feast.

On the way down to Bingley in the train he studied his fellow-passengers in the same compartment, wondering if any of them were "Footpad's" disciples who would be sharing his pilgrimage with him. Two middle-aged men who were smoking stale pipes looked almost shabby enough to be true Bohemians, and Migginson listened eagerly for any words that might pass between them and afford a clue. He was bitterly disappointed when one of them laid aside his early edition of an evening paper

and remarked to the other that, from what he could make of it, Landlady was a "pinch" for the three o'clock at Newmarket.

At Bingley he got out and followed "Footpad's" directions, overtaking a girl in a grass-green costume who was going in the same direction. In passing he glanced covertly at her, and secretly admired the poise of her head, the warm pinkiness of her complexion, and the almost classical straightness of her features. There was almost a wistful look in his eyes as he removed his gaze from her. Physical attractions he had learned to regard as the outward trappings of vacuity. As likely as not she was like all the others. Probably she credited Tennyson with having written "Paradise Lost."

He noticed, when he stopped to admire the Jubilee fountain mentioned by "Footpad" as being worth inspection, that she, too, halted some twenty yards behind him, and was gazing at the same object of interest. He let her pass him once more, but pretended not to notice her.

A hundred yards ahead she halted to admire the Temperance Hall, also mentioned by "Footpad." He halted, too, because it was an object of interest which ought not to be missed. He spent less time in admiring it than she did, and passed her once more.

The little bridge over the stream was his next landmark, and while he stood gazing at the tanneries, the girl appeared on the scene around the corner of the handsome statue erected in honour of Councillor Clutterbuck at his own expense. The tanneries claimed her attention, too.

Migginson began to feel embarrassed. It had not occurred to him that she also might be a pilgrim. His imagination had stopped short of the thought of young and beautiful girls engaged upon the same romantic pedestrianism as himself. If she were going far in the same direction as himself, it was going to be awkward. He began to search in his mind for the thing or things that a gentleman ought to do, placed in his invidious position. If he were not careful, she might think that he was following her. He blushed up to the brim of his hat at the idea.

The difficulty was that if he went on in advance, he would have to walk very rapidly, and he would have no time to stop and examine the places of interest along the way. Moreover, his new, heavy walking

boots handicapped him in the matter of rapid movement.

On the other hand, if he allowed her to keep in advance of himself, and if she continued to stop and look about her, he would have to walk so slowly that it seemed improbable if he would ever complete the distance. Never was a young man of blameless past and blameless intentions placed in a more embarrassing predicament.

Just when he was growing desperate, the girl took a journal from her reticule and unfolded it. He recognised it at once. It was *Literary Bits*. Instantly light dawned upon him and he understood.

Greatly daring, he took his own copy of *Literary Bits* from his pocket and held it open for her to recognise while he pretended to consult it. Presently she looked up. Nervously they both smiled. Their favourite journal was a bond between them. Barriers were swept away, and Mrs. Grundy turned her back on them, appeased.

"Are you a *Literary Bitter*, too?" he asked, lifting his hat.

"I *always* take it in," she answered.

"So do I. I suppose you are doing 'Footpad's Weekly Prowl'?"

"Yes. Are you?"

He could tell already that she was an intelligent conversationalist, and his heart fluttered.

"Yes. Er—do you walk very fast?"

"Not very."

"Nor do I. Er—would you like to go first, or shall I go first?"

"I don't mind."

The look in her eyes gave him courage.

"We are young!" he cried. "Conventions were made to be trampled upon by Youth. Let us be Bohemian! Let us go together."

She seemed to flutter like a bird. Obviously she was alarmed and yet attracted by this dashing proposal. An age seemed to pass before she assented.

"It is only because you take in *Literary Bits*," she said.

The road past the Wesleyan Chapel to the historic "Bun and Trumpet" seemed a fairy road. She was a school teacher, and had to pass an examination in English Literature, comprising the "Faery Queen" and the more reputable tales of Chaucer, before instructing the junior members of the proletariat in their letters. They quoted whole stanzas of Edmund Spenser to each other, and their mutual delight at finding another of similar tastes was beyond bounds.

Ethel Canfield—for it was by this name that she introduced herself—had never before met a man of such erudition as Migginson, except one or two elementary schoolmasters who were elderly and soured, and had got into the way of reading nothing more literary than the newspapers. The walk was, therefore, an intellectual treat to both of them, apart from a mutual attraction which had more to do with the heart than with the mind.

Many times during the walk he longed to ask for her address, so that he might call or at least write to her. Then he thought that, dashing and Bohemian as they were, it was still a little improper to ask a single young woman for her address.

Ethel, on her part, decided that it would be distinctly forward of her if she proffered it without being asked, and thus indirectly the seeds of a future misunderstanding were sown.

Before parting in the evening, tired out but elated after ten miles of walking, they agreed to meet next week and perform the pilgrimage set by "Footpad." Both were to catch the first train after two o'clock from the London terminus. For four successive Saturdays they walked ten or a dozen miles in each other's company, while love between them ripened like a peach in a hothouse

### III.

OF course, if they became engaged and got married without incident, this wouldn't be much of a story. But, as usual, the course of true love went over rocks and up and down mountains.

One Saturday, when he alighted from the train at Surbiton—as suggested by "Footpad"—he did not find her. He waited for an hour and a half, and then, sunk deep in gloom, tramped eleven weary miles in his own company.

His friends, who had seen a recent change in him for the better, noticed one distinctly for the worse on the Monday. Never had they seen a man who looked so worried and downcast.

On Wednesday he could bear it no longer. He sent a message to be inserted in the "Agony" column of *The Morning Visitor*. It ran as follows:—

"ETHEL C.—Why not on Saturday Prowl? Very anxious. Please answer in this column.—JOHN M."

On the Thursday, to his great delight, he read her reply in the same column:—



"JOHN M.—Have been ill with 'flu. Better now. Next Saturday as usual.—ETHEL C."

Next Saturday came round—after an æon

the previous week, he set out by himself. But he was the most miserable man in the world that afternoon. Wandsworth was not Wandsworth without Ethel. Every doubt



"'Are you a *Literary Biter*, too?' he asked, lifting his hat."

of time—and he alighted from the train at Wandsworth, as "Footpad" had directed. But no Ethel appeared. For two miserable hours he lingered in vain, and then, as on

and every anxiety which preys on mankind swooped down upon him and pecked at his soul.

Ethel had had a relapse! She was

dead! Never more would they wander for miles together, comparing Swinburne with Christina Rossetti. Or, scarcely less dreadful a thought, she had tired of him. She had promised to come and failed in her promise. Either she was ill, dead, or she had deliberately fooled him.

For another long week he lived in torment; roaring torrents of despair hurried him along, but he clutched from time to time at straws of hope. Something unavoidable might have detained her. Next Saturday he might see her at the time appointed and at the place selected by "Footpad."

But next Saturday he waited in vain, and he knew that she was either dead or had tired of him.

He began to age during the next six weeks, and his reading was governed entirely by which of two moods he happened to be in. When he thought that she was alive and had tired of him, he read the more cynical of the great writers and revelled in their railings against women. When he believed that she was dead, he read the sad women poets of the Victorian era, and shed manly tears over his fender. The man did not realise that the Fates—who believe that unalloyed happiness in this world is not good for any of us—were toying with him.

Every Saturday, hoping against hope, he made the pilgrimage suggested by "Footpad." He would do it, he told himself, until the end of life. People, he thought, would nudge each other when they saw him, and whisper that there was a romantic story about this white-haired old man. He would live on after death in the minds of men as the incarnation of faithfulness to a memory.

Eight Saturdays after his last recorded walk with Ethel, when he had entirely given himself over to despair, the most wonderful thing in the world happened to him.

The "Prowl" that Saturday was from Brindlesbury to Cheese Lane Station; and,

standing on the corner of the tram terminus at Brindlesbury, he saw Ethel looking about her. It was only the fact of the place being such a public one that kept them for the time being out of each other's arms.

"Ethel!"

"John!"

No word-painter could describe the inflection of their voices.

"My dearest!" he gasped, forgetting that he had never previously dared to say one word of love to her. "My dearest! I have found you at last!"

"Oh, John, John!" she cried. "What must you have thought of me?"

"I thought that you were dead or—that you didn't care."

"I thought the same as you—until yesterday."

"But I did the 'Prowl' every Saturday."

"I know! I know! Oh, John, let me explain!"

He looked about him. He had been reading "Footpad," and he knew that there was a narrow passage at the side of the barracks, where a man had hanged himself.

"We can't talk here," he said. "Let us walk down Haddock Alley."

And in the privacy of Haddock Alley he took her into his arms as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

"Now, dear," he whispered, "tell me all about it."

"Oh, John, you know I was ill!"

"Yes, you poor darling."

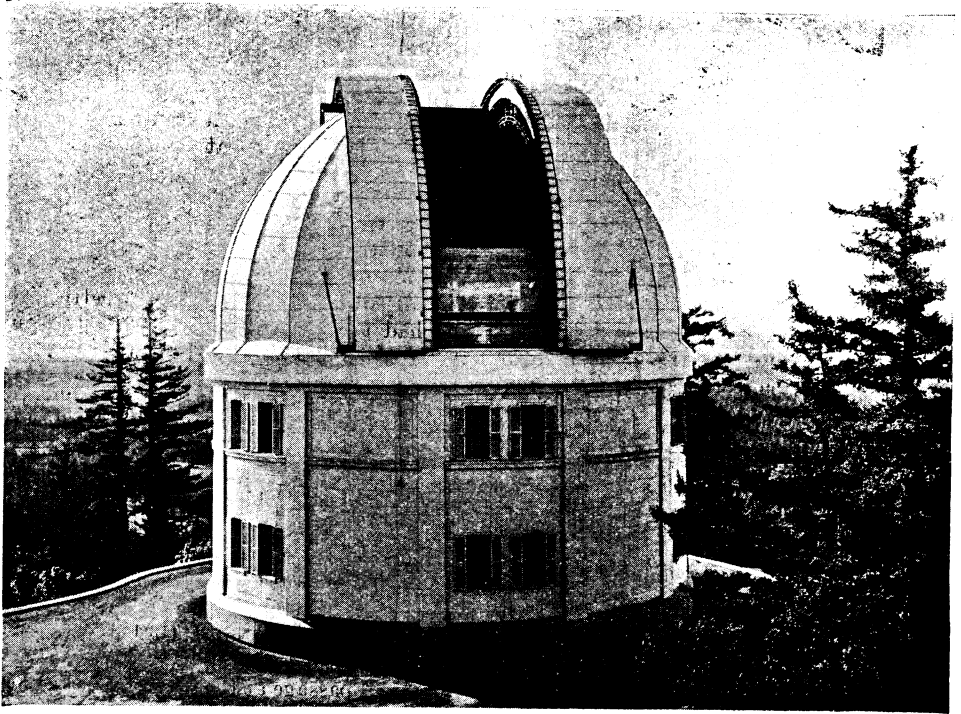
"I missed a week of *Literary Bits*. When I got better I stopped taking it in. My cousin buys it every week, and promised to let me see it after her. I didn't notice until yesterday that she's been passing on to me the number issued in the previous week."

He was still in the dark.

"Well, dear?" he said.

"Oh, John," she said, nestling close to him, "don't you see? *All these weeks I've been doing last week's walk!*"





THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT OBSERVATORY AT VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, BUILT TO HOUSE THE NEW 72-INCH TELESCOPE.

# EXPLORING THE HEAVENS

## THE LATEST TELESCOPES WHICH ARE REVEALING SECRETS OF THE SKIES

By HAROLD J. SHEPSTONE, F.R.G.S.

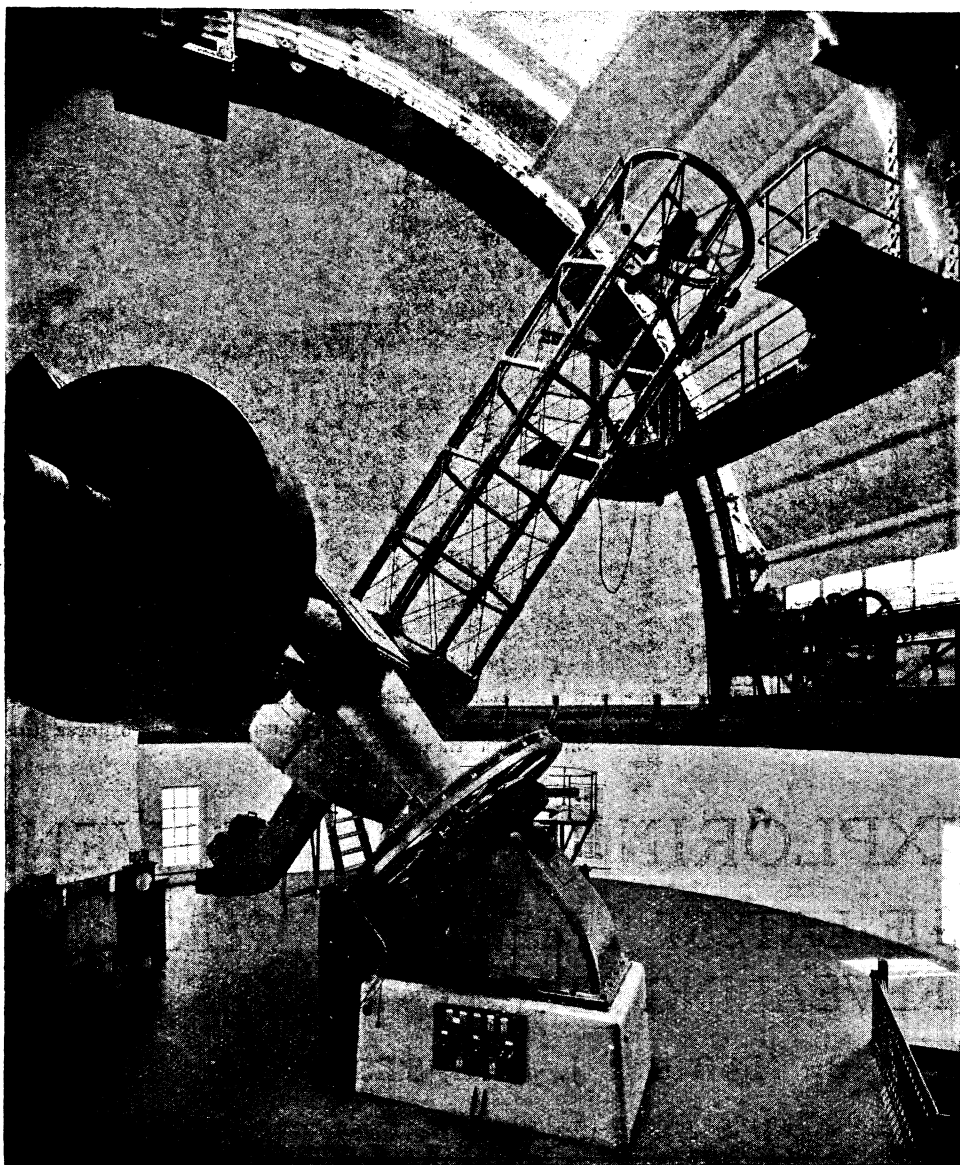
*Photographs supplied by Professor Plaskett, of the Victoria Observatory, and those of the Mount Wilson subjects by John L. von Blon, Los Angeles.*

**T**HE completion of a new 100-inch telescope on a mile-high mountain-top in Southern California has lately called attention to the wonderful strides which have been made in recent years in the invention of mammoth astronomical instruments for exploring the heavens. Indeed, there would appear to be a race going on between the great observatories as to who shall own the most successful of instruments.

For some years the famous Yerkes telescope, on the outskirts of Chicago, held the proud distinction of possessing the largest object glass. It was built through the

generosity of the late Mr. Charles Yerkes, after whom it was named. When he ordered the telescope he declared: "I don't care how big it is, but let it lick the 'Lick'"—referring, of course, to the 36-inch telescope of the Lick Observatory, in Southern California.

The Yerkes telescope has now gone the way of the Lick, having been eclipsed by three powerful instruments, possessing reflectors of 60, 72, and 100 inches in diameter respectively. The first-named was completed early in 1916, after five years of patient toil on the part of mathematicians, opticians,



THE 72-INCH CANADIAN TELESCOPE.

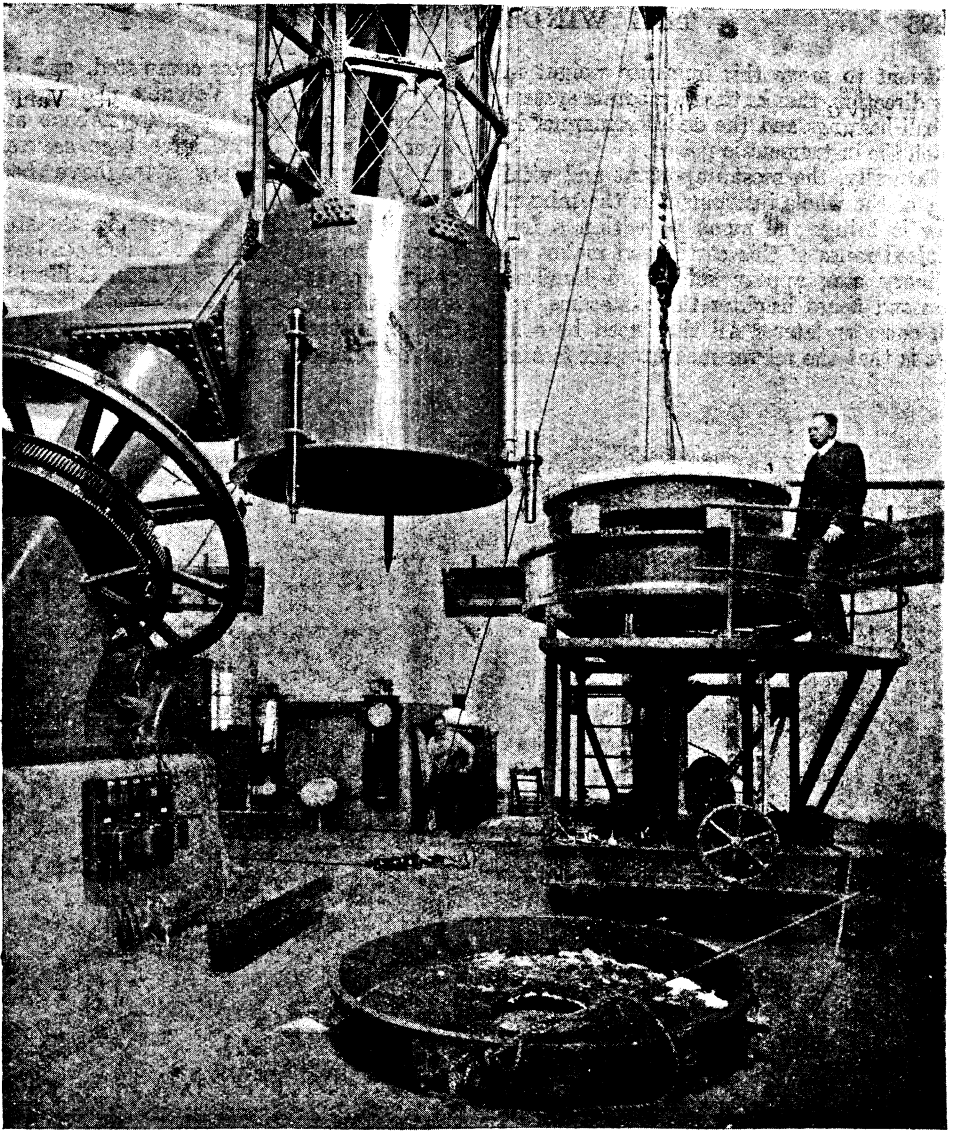
*This is the most powerful instrument of its kind in the British Empire, and the second largest in the world.*

engineers, and builders, on the summit of Mount Wilson, in Southern California.

During its construction the Canadian astronomers, jealous of the big instruments of the American observatories, induced their Government to enter the race for the world's greatest telescope, with the result that an instrument with a 72-inch speculum was planned. In this telescope Canada now possesses the largest sky-searcher in the British Empire and the second largest in the world.

Over six years were spent in its erection,

but hardly had the work been put in hand when the War intervened and considerably delayed the undertaking. Here it must be remembered that when the Canadians planned their 72-inch instrument, the largest completed telescope was the Yerkes one, with its 40-inch glass. The designing and building of a telescope with an aperture nearly double that size was an enterprise of appreciable daring, no matter from what point of view it is considered. Not only did the mirror represent a decided step forward in point of size, but every feature of the



FITTING THE MIRROR TO THE CANADIAN TELESCOPE.

*The mirror, which is seventy-two inches in diameter and weighs nearly two tons, being hoisted into its cell.*

mechanism of its operation represented pioneer work involving prolonged and careful study.

It was some time before the Canadian Government decided where they should erect the new star-hunter, but in the end they selected a hill-top on the outskirts of the city of Victoria, in British Columbia, on account of its bright and clear atmosphere. Here it is contended that the instrument will do twice as much work during the year as it could in any of the eastern cities of the Dominion.

The telescope is built up of massive

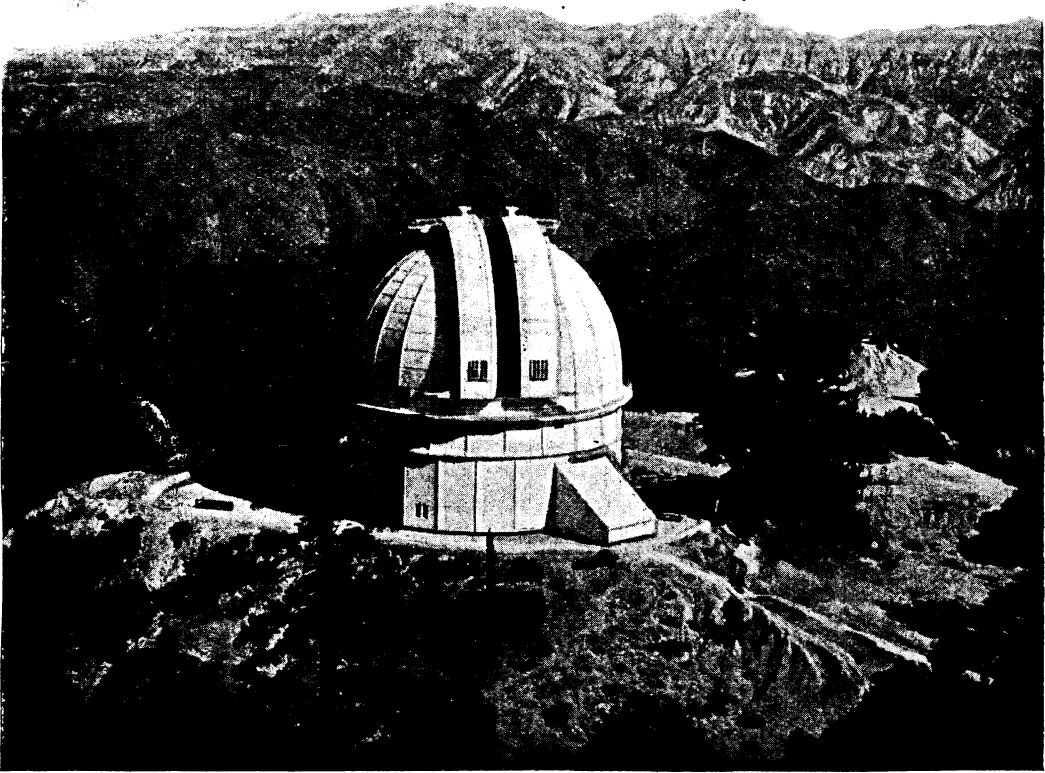
members of the finest forged steel, some of them turning the scale at ten tons and more apiece. Furthermore, they have to be assembled with mathematical accuracy—the least miscalculation, even to the smallest fraction of an inch, being sufficient to spell ruin. It is work that cannot be hurried, and has to be checked constantly with delicate scientific instruments. The telescope tube is built up in three sections, and is so large that an ordinary motor-car could pass through it. The total weight of the instrument is 55 tons, 45 of which are movable. The mere pressing of an electric button is

sufficient to move this immense weight in any direction, thanks to an elaborate system of ball-bearings and the delicate manner in which the instrument is poised.

Naturally, the most important and vital part of the whole instrument is the mirror. How it brings the moon to within a few hundred miles of this earth, and makes an ordinary star appear some two hundred thousand times brighter than it seems, we will consider later. All that need be said here is that the mirror measures six feet in

diameter. This is now completed, and has already made good. Valuable photographs of the moon and of planets, nebulae and other heavenly bodies have been secured, and thousands of new stars have been revealed.

This new telescope reposes in its steel house, perched 6,000 feet above sea-level, on Mount Wilson, in Southern California, almost within a stone's throw of the older 60-inch instrument. The observatory here was originally founded for solar work, but,



THE HOME OF THE 100-INCH TELESCOPE, THE WORLD'S LATEST AND LARGEST ASTRONOMICAL INSTRUMENT, ON MOUNT WILSON, IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

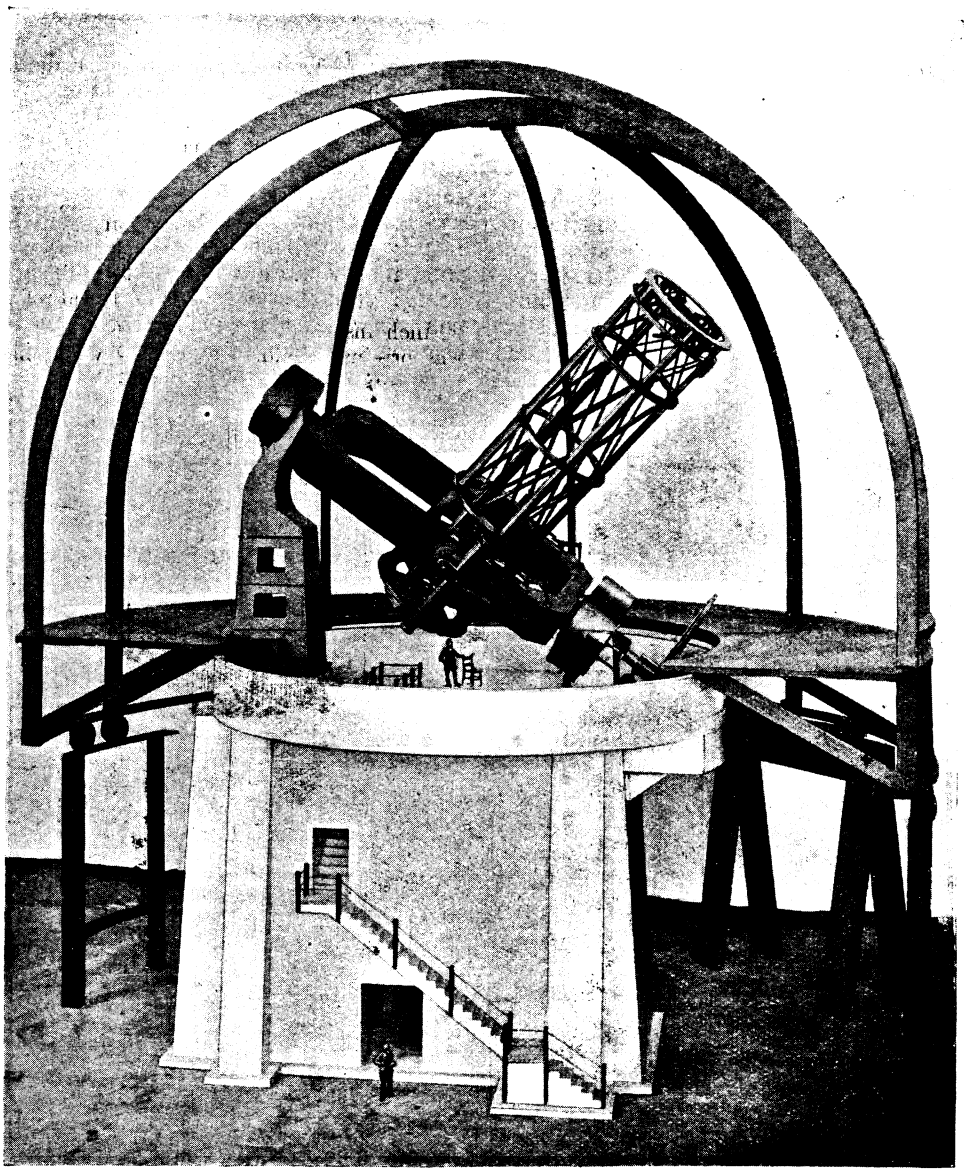
diameter. At the edge it is 12 inches thick, tapering towards the centre, where there is a hole  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. When ready for mounting, this valuable piece of glass—which had taken over two years to fashion—weighed 4,340 lbs., or nearly two tons.

Long before this great Canadian telescope was ready to wrest new secrets from the heavens, the American astronomers, not to be outdone, started upon the erection of a still bigger instrument, one that should possess a reflector measuring 100 inches in

through gifts and the generosity of the Carnegie Institute, it has developed into the largest of observatories, and bids fair to become the Mecca of the astronomical world.

All told, over five years were spent in constructing this latest and most powerful of instruments for searching the skies. Apart from the big advance in the size of the mirror, there was the task of finding a suitable site, and that decided, there came the difficult feat of transporting the steel girders, heavy framework, the massive pieces of machinery,





THE WORLD'S LARGEST TELESCOPE, WITH 100-INCH MIRROR, IN THE OBSERVATORY ON MOUNT WILSON, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

*The tube is eleven feet in diameter and forty-three feet long. It surmounts a pier thirty-three feet high and twenty by forty-five feet at ground level. The dome is one hundred feet in diameter and one hundred feet high. This is a skeleton view, conveying a striking idea of the enormous dimensions of the instrument and its housing.*

and finally the finished mirror, up the steep mountain-side.

Some years previously a road had been cut to the site, but in places it is exceedingly steep, so the roadway was widened, and a specially-designed motor-truck was built for negotiating the steep track, its wheels being of small diameter, but very wide, like those of a roller, and this was geared down to a speed of four miles an hour.

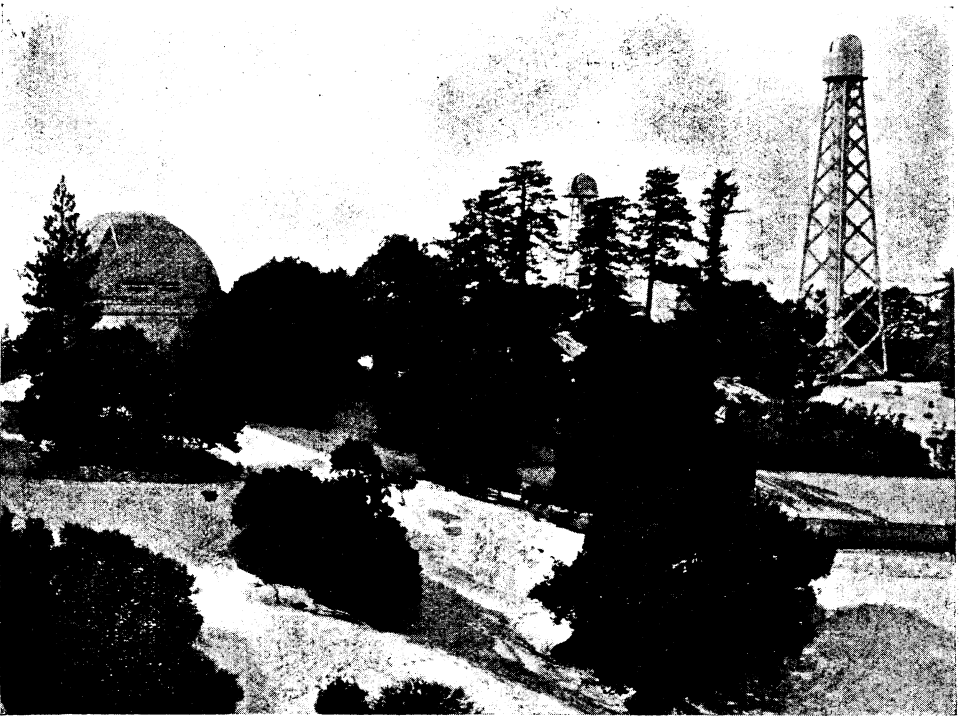
Although the distance from the observatory workshops in Pasadena to the mountain site is only nine miles, a whole day was frequently occupied in hauling a single heavy piece of machinery. It took fourteen hours to haul up the new mirror, and when at last the truck with its precious burden came to a standstill outside the observatory building, the workmen gave the driver a cheer.

Over 600 tons of steel and 200 tons of cement were carried up in all, and with this material a suitable home was built for the big telescope. The building measures 100 feet in diameter, and its circular dome—the largest in existence—is 100 feet high.

Working here on the bleak mountain-top in mid-winter was very trying and even dangerous on account of the sudden storms that arose. Snowstorms were frequent, and in the cramped space available care had to be taken not to miss a foothold, which might have meant being precipitated down the

forty in all—built in the form of a double ring. The object here is a twofold one. By standing 25 feet above the ground on a hollow structure, the telescope is sufficiently removed from the ground to be unaffected by earth radiations, while the forty piers upon which the hollow platform rests provide footings heavy enough to resist the severe wind and snowstorms which are experienced at this bleak altitude.

Another new departure is that no part of the dome or the wall of the observatory is allowed to touch the pier on which the



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF PART OF THE MOUNT WILSON OBSERVATORY BUILDINGS, WITH THE 60-INCH MIRROR'S HOME ON THE LEFT.

mountain-side. One of the carpenters had a very narrow escape. The timber pile was buried in snow, and while searching round for the piece of wood he wanted, he started a snow-slide, and before he realised what had happened, he found himself half buried in snow 600 feet below the summit. He was stopped in his downward flight by striking a large tree. The snow, acting as a cushion, saved him from injury, but it was some hours before he was rescued with ropes.

The gigantic telescope rests on a pier of hollow, reinforced concrete, 35 feet in height. This pier, in turn, rests on other piers—

telescope rests. This precaution serves to prevent vibrations that may be set up by the dome or wall reaching the instrument. For the further avoidance of vibrations affecting the delicate mechanism of the instrument, the outer wall is built entirely of steel, and stands in a bed of sand 6 inches deep. Every precaution, in fact, which science can suggest has been taken to ensure the ideal home for the world's latest astronomical invention.

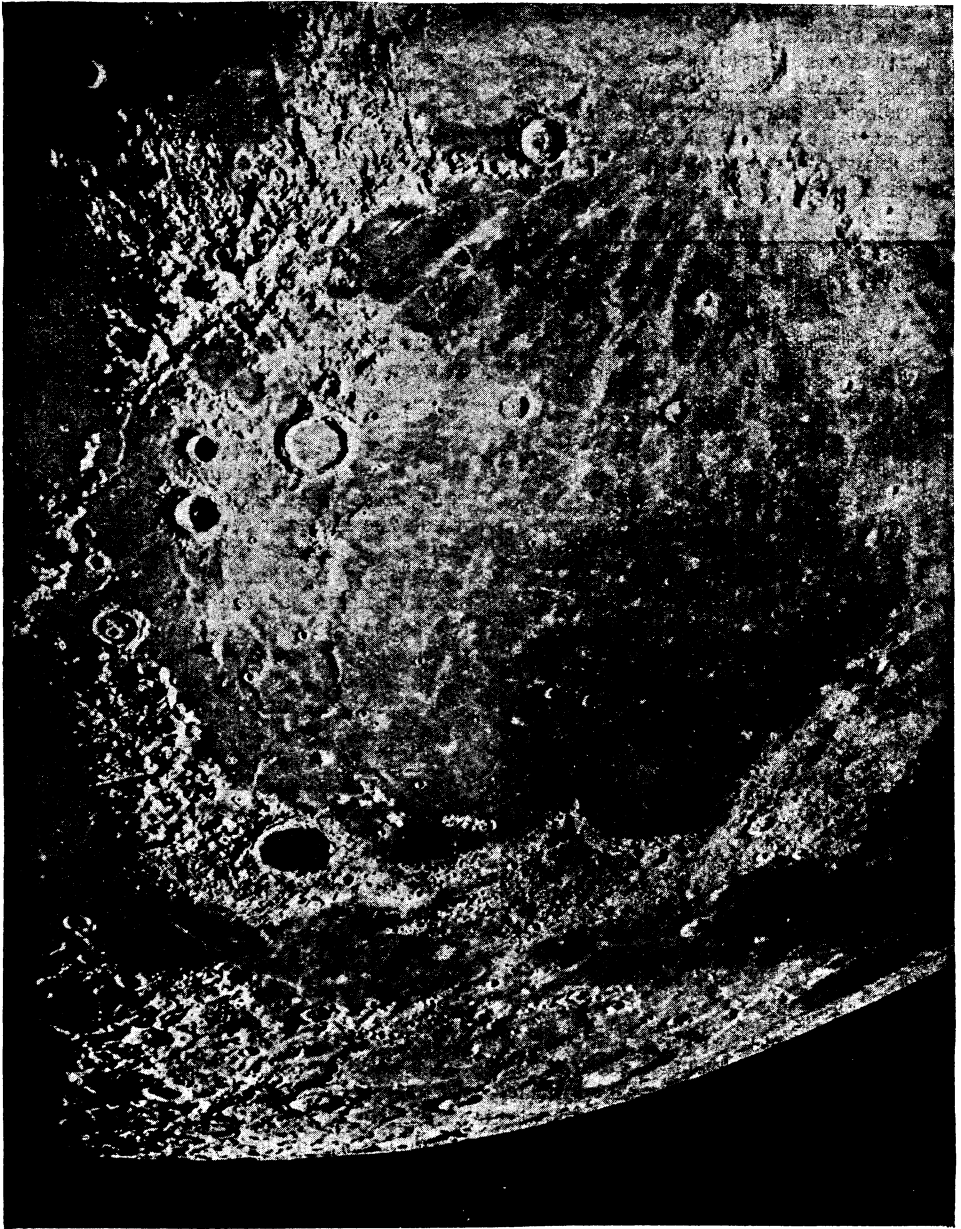
The telescope alone weighs 96 tons, which is nearly double the weight of its Canadian rival. Two years were spent in assembling



the various parts. The mirror, as already stated, has a diameter of 8 feet 4 inches across its surface. There is only one firm in the world—a French firm—that can cast

across, 13 inches thick, and weighed over five tons.

On its arrival at the workshops in Pasadena, the task of grinding and polishing the



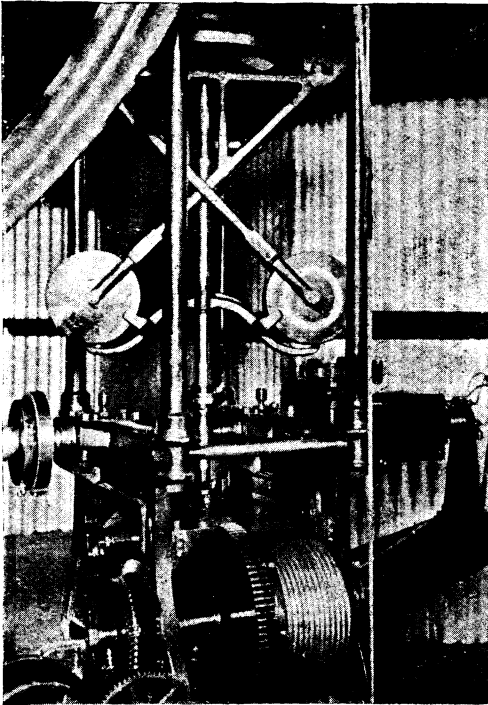
A REMARKABLE PHOTOGRAPH OF A SECTION OF THE MOON TAKEN WITH THE NEW 100-INCH TELESCOPE ON MOUNT WILSON.

glass discs of such a size, and they had eight failures before the 100-inch disc was cast. In the rough state it was 101 inches

glass began. From first to last this work took over four years. By means of very fine emery powder, applied by wooden brushes wrapped

in cheese-cloth, the flat disc was slowly hollowed out into a spherical basin about an inch and a quarter deep in the centre. A second grinding, which took off one-hundredth part of an inch at the deepest part, made the surface slightly parabolic instead of spherical.

Then came a couple of years of more polishing, testing, and repolishing, until the light reflected from every point of the surface came to a focus at the same point, 42 feet away. Altogether a ton of glass was removed in the grinding and polishing.



THIS CLOCK, RUNNING BY SIDEREAL TIME, OPERATES THE 60-INCH TELESCOPE, MOUNT WILSON.

There followed a coating of silver, deposited by chemical means upon the concave surface thus prepared, and the mirror, weighing  $4\frac{1}{4}$  tons, was ready for mounting in the bottom of the great tube.

Mirrors of this size are sensitive to changes in heat and cold, and consequently an elaborate 1-inch cork-board chamber is built around the glass, which, with other apparatus, including pipes and coils and fans, keeps the temperature as desired.

Everyone knows that silver becomes tarnished, and this means that the mirrors must in time be re-silvered. Re-silvering

a  $4\frac{1}{4}$ -ton giant glass, on the top of a mile-high mountain, is not an easy job; but by a most intricate system of wheels and cogs and a giant screw, the entire mirror and its parts, weighing in all 14 tons, can be lowered into the top room of the pier on which the telescope stands, and the mirror can be re-silvered, even in winter, while it is swung there in a huge fork.

Everything in connection with the telescope is controlled by electric power. Over forty electric motors have been installed for the work of moving the instrument, and for opening and closing the dome, also for raising and lowering the platform from which observations are made. To enable the instrument to follow the stars in their apparent motion from east to west, a giant driving clock is employed. This stands 6 feet high and is driven by a massive weight of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tons.

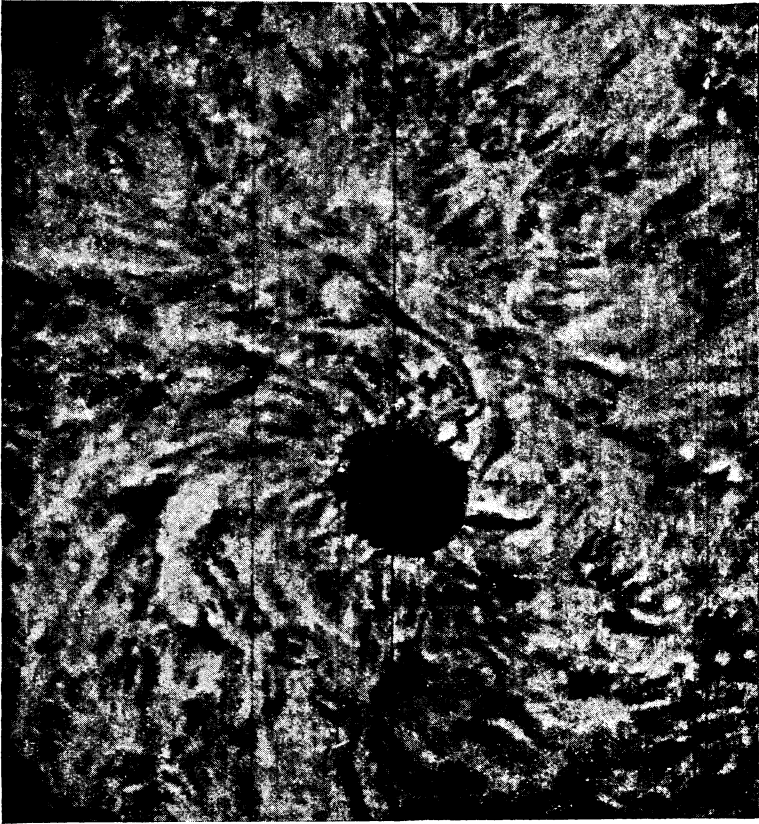
This great telescope, like its Canadian rival, is one of the reflector type—that is to say, it is the reflection of a heavenly body which the observer sees. You do not look through the mirror directly at a star. The star's light rays are caught by the big concave mirror at the bottom end of the telescope tube and reflected back, up the tube, upon a secondary mirror or prism. The big mirror, resting at the bottom end of the tube, the most vital part of the whole instrument, does not actually magnify the rays it reflects, but gathers them together and concentrates them. The secondary mirror, which catches the reflection, slightly enlarges it, and sends the reflection back through the hole in the centre of the big mirror on to the eyepiece behind it, which is really a high-power compound microscope. Thus the reflected image is seen through the eyepiece considerably magnified, and there held until examined or photographed.

By its great power the telescope is enabled to make a star appear 250,000 times as bright as the eye sees it. It is enabled to do this because a mirror with a diameter of 100 inches possesses an area 250,000 times as large as the pupil of the eye. Naturally, a little light is lost in the process of reflection, but virtually nothing to speak of. It brings the moon, which is about 240,000 miles away, within a few hundred miles of the earth. The number of stars seen throughout the entire sphere of the heavens by the naked eye is about 5,000. The latest telescope is expected to reveal at least 300 millions, or 100 million

more stars than can be seen by any other existing telescope.

A striking specimen of the telescope's work is seen in our photograph of the moon. It is the clearest and finest view so far secured of this satellite. The mountains and craters stand out remarkably clear. It has also been the means of settling a long-outstanding dispute among scientists. As everyone knows, the moon's surface is pitted with craters. Astronomers were sharply

Wonderfully clear photographs have also been secured of planets and nebulae, and astronomers have been enabled, through the invention of a special instrument known as the "interferometre," to measure the size of the more distant stars. This is accomplished by measuring the angle of their light. And for the first time the area of the giant star Betelgeuze, in the constellation Orion, has been measured. Whereas our own sun has a diameter of nearly a



A SUNSPOT AS THE 100-INCH TELESCOPE ON MOUNT WILSON SHOWS IT.

divided as to their origin, one camp holding that they were volcano craters, and the other that they were "shell" craters, the "shells" being meteorites that had collided with the moon when she was young and impressionable. We know now that the latter theory is correct. In other words, the moon has been bombed and the craters are the shell-holes. The earth escaped similar meteorite bombing, or does not show their marks, because her atmosphere disintegrated most of the meteors before they reached the ground.

million miles, Betelgeuze has a diameter of over 300 million miles. It is, in fact, the largest of the known stars.

The most distant of stars is that discovered only the other month by the new 72-inch Canadian telescope, which has been appropriately named Plaskett, after Dr. Plaskett, of the Dominion Observatory. It is 52,560 million millions of miles from the earth, and an aeroplane travelling at 200 miles per hour would take 30,000 million years to reach it. So far away in space are the stars that astronomers never refer to the

distance in miles. They will tell you that a heavenly body is so many light years away. Light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles a second, or just over 10,000,000 miles a minute. Thus, if a star is five light years away, and you desire to know the distance in figures, you must calculate it on this basis.

What astronomers are anxious to discover is the size of the universe. How far does space extend? By mapping the heavenly bodies, as the various observatories of the world are now doing, and noting the paths and speeds of those that come and go within our vision, this point may be approximately ascertained. Hence both at Mount Wilson and at Victoria astronomers are devoting attention to what are termed "runaway stars."

In the southern heavens there is one such star, termed No. 243. It is at present travelling at the rate of 170 miles a second—eight times as vast as the speed of the average star. Then we have No. 1830 in the constellation Great Bear, which is estimated to have a velocity of 200 miles a second. At that rate it could fly around the earth in just over two minutes. Astronomers have fathomed something of the mystery of the comets that come and go, and have ascertained with wonderful precision the paths they follow. But not so with these runaway stars. Some believe they travel through

space until they come into touch with some big star that "tames" them.

Another heavenly body to which both the latest of star-gazers are devoting attention is the planet Mars. Curiously enough, the object here is not to ascertain whether Mars is inhabited, and whether the Martians are sending wireless signals to this earth, but how far Mars affects our climate. The new telescopes reveal very distinctly white spots at the poles of this planet that have every appearance of being like our ocean Polar region. They advance towards the Equator in winter and retreat in summer. In the summer of 1916 Professor Pickering, who, with Professor Lowell, has led the school of astronomers who believe that they can see canals on Mars, said that he found the white caps stretching farther down toward the Equator than he had ever seen them before. He said that if there was any connection between the weather of Mars and that of the earth, the winter of 1916-17 would be the coldest we have had for many years. And it was so. By carefully studying the waning and waxing of the ice-cap on the south pole of Mars, astronomers may be able to tell us what kind of winter we may expect. Thus, by means of the world's latest telescopes, are some mysteries of the heavenly bodies being gradually solved, and, what is more, the problem of to what extent they affect man upon this earth.





"A young man stood on the platform between the cars . . . McKeon regarded him with slow interest."

# McKEON'S GRAFT

By JOHN RUSSELL

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

**M**cKEON and the melancholy engineer swung the final shipment in through the door of the combined baggage, freight, and way car.

"E's 'eavy," complained the engineer, in his lugubrious English, looking reproachfully at the clumsy box. "E's wort' extra, to carry of that kind between our 'ands."

"Go on now, Esteban," growled McKeon. "Be satisfied with your graft, can't you? And get steam on that old tea-kettle."

He tossed the lone, lean mail sack in before making all fast.

The few ragged loungers who squatted in the dust, and rolled interminable cigarettes out of that newspaper which every ribald visitor of the West Coast knows as "The

Yell of the People," looked on with languid interest.

It was well known to them that the tossing of the mail sack was the signal for departure. Señor McKeon always performed the ceremony with the mail sack when he was just about to abandon his duties as station agent, shipping clerk, postmaster, and freight handler, and assume those of conductor, brakeman, and express messenger. And there would be no other train for forty-eight hours.

McKeon walked to the forward step and gave the melancholy engineer the signal. A doleful shriek from the whistle responded as the locomotive and two cars, with rattle and clank, staggered out across the plateau. Ticket pad and punch in hand, McKeon

stood in the doorway, looking over his collection of passengers from under bushy brows with calculating eye.

The usual crowd, apparently—small planters from the unhealthy shores of Buenaventura, small tradesmen from the plateau villages, itinerant gold washers, chance workers in the mines, riff-raff of the mountains and the cattle plains—a motley careful, hazed with cigarette smoke and chattering dialects.

McKeon strolled down the aisle, marking the faces, nodding slightly to an acquaintance here and there. Instinctively he graded his fares, from the coffee mixtures of negro and Indian to the lemon-hued mestizos, and as he marked he scowled.

Tints, as racial emblems, had no significance for McKeon. He owned no prejudice between shades of brown, but in one weighty particular he was concerned with the complexion of the patrons of the road. It had a direct bearing upon his profit from the trip. It was a business consideration. And apparently luck was not with him this day. He noted an undue preponderance of lighter skins. That meant, naturally, more passengers who could not be bluffed with safety into paying twice the legal fare, more difficulty in fixing arbitrary freight rates, and less reward for a hard-working functionary like himself.

He was still gauging the possibilities when he came to the rear of the car, and a face showed out of the smoke veil that had no part in the prevailing colour scheme. A young man stood on the platform between the cars—a little man, and white, not only white, but pink, with a clear, blue eye that twinkled.

McKeon regarded him with slow interest, noting the travel-stained riding suit of ducks that somehow managed to fit jauntily to the small frame.

"How're you, con?" he inquired easily. "If it's all the same to you, guess I'll ride outside. I'm not good on mixed flavours, and it's too various in there. Fine bunch of assorted ruffians you carry."

McKeon nodded. "Prospectin'?"

"Silver," returned the other. "Come down through the mountains. Managed to get through without a knife in my back." He shivered and laughed. "Don't see many Americans this way, do you?"

"Not a dozen a year."

"Like the job?"

McKeon twitched his shoulders.

"Gotta like it," was the laconic answer.

McKeon slouched back into the car and began to collect. The stranger, leaning in the doorway, turned to watch him.

It was worth while to watch McKeon in pursuit of his profession. Tall, raw-boned, hard-eyed and bearded, he towered like a giant among the natives. Money he took and money he returned—sometimes. Tickets he punched and distributed, to some, but always without argument, imperturbable, deliberate. Shrill protests fell to silence before that slow glance. Expostulate hands ceased to gesture at the shift of those shoulders.

There were few who grumbled after he had dealt with them. He proceeded by a masterful system of his own, did McKeon, based on his knowledge of the people, and the men who might have made trouble, residents of the valley, had no cause.

Only once was the transaction brisk enough to interrupt the chatter and hum of talk through the car. At the end section, nearest the door, sat four men in rough mountain garb, hardy citizens, who had cumbered the aisle with their knapsacks.

"This is freight, señores," announced McKeon calmly, and proceeded to fix a price on the knapsacks. One of the group, a thick, heavy-jawed individual, built like a rocking beam, objected vigorously, giving McKeon eye for eye, as if testing him.

"Are you, then, sole owner of this road?" he demanded. "Must all give money as you ask? And what if we will not pay?"

McKeon gathered the bell-rope casually in his hand.

"The señores are at liberty to walk down, with their burdens," he answered. "I am told the walking is good."

The señores subsided and paid, murmuring one to the other.

When McKeon returned to the middle platform, the prospector was waiting for him with a gold piece. McKeon took the money and returned him the proper change on his fare, but he did not take the trouble to punch a ticket. The prospector noted with a whimsical smile.

"Pretty good business," he observed.

"So-so," returned McKeon, undisturbed. "I've seen it better."

The train had jolted over the break of the plateau, winding down the natural gorges of the descent towards the coast. The locomotive was plunging and holding like a stubborn little mule with its eyes laid back and its feet braced for bumps. McKeon

whirled the wheel on the primitive hand-brakes to lighten its task, and passed into the rear car.

The stranger followed him uninvited. There, amid the piles of miscellaneous freight, bags of mineral specimens, and stacks of hides, McKeon established himself on the clumsy wooden box and began to charge a black pipe. The prospector, smiling and ingenuous, sat opposite on a fruit crate.

It was hot. At the side they had glimpses of tawny rock wall and boulder-strewn slopes, bare and hideous, quivering in the vivid sun. The car swayed and pounded beneath them. The labouring of the exhaust, thrown back by the sides of the cut, hammered in their ears.

"You got good nerve, handling that outfit," said the prospector, raising his voice against the racket. "Ever had any trouble?"

"What trouble would I have?"

"Oh, I don't know. Look like some pretty tough customers."

McKeon twitched his shoulders and puffed slowly.

"Ain't civilised enough yet for that kind of trouble."

The prospector shivered and smiled.

"Seems to me I'd put it the other way," he commented. "They carry knives. By the way," he added, "who owns the line?"

"Company up at Bogota."

"Profitable?"

"Sure. They handle all the goods that goes into the province, and they got the platinum mines."

"And the passengers?"

McKeon consulted his ticket pad.

"Fifteen fare, this trip."

"That's what you might call a fair division," remarked the prospector quizzically. "Chuck the money up, and all that hangs on the bell-rope belongs to the company."

McKeon only nodded at the atrocious pun and the somewhat daring jest. The prospector gazed his admiration. There was no swagger—on the other hand, no hesitation—about the tall conductor's admission.

"Don't they kick?"

"Who, the company? Why should they? They make it pay. And what else would they expect? A guy's gotta live, and that engineer's got to have his rake-off."

"What's the wages?"

"Ten a week—Mex."

"Well, a good many could manage to live on that down here."

McKeon turned a slow glance on him.

"A good many ain't got a youngster at school, back in the States, they got to plan and save for," he returned.

"Oh!" said the prospector, and fell silent, sobered.

The doorway was darkened. Three of the passengers were balancing across the platform and crowding through into the freight car. They were three of the group who had made the outcry about the knapsacks. Apparently they were not prepared to see the prospector. They stared at him, hesitating. Then one of them, he of the heavy jaw, thrust to the front and addressed McKeon without preamble.

"Concerning the price you charged us for our blankets, señor," he said, "we have decided to discuss it further."

It was a throaty voice, purring and forceful.

McKeon looked the three over slowly. They stood close together, the speaker a little in advance. Squat, solid-built, swarthy customers all, of the mountain type of gold seeker and adventurer. Men of their hands—after the Spanish fashion—not to be despised in any argument, particularly the spokesman. But the glint under McKeon's bushy brows made no concession.

"The señores know what they can do," he drawled, tamping the coal in his pipe. "The other car is for passengers," he added.

His manner and his reply were provocative. There was a grim smile on the spokesman's lips as he flung out an expressive hand.

"Pardon, we came to discuss," he said. "It is permitted to ask how much of that tariff you forced us to pay will be turned in to the company?"

The prospector, watching, had a curious impression that the man's grievance, that the supposed indignation of them all, rang false. The three pairs of eyes had come to rest on McKeon, fixed and bright with expectancy. He had a distinct feeling of suspense, of hidden significance, of suppressed excitement. McKeon's insult had not drawn a spark from them, fired with injustice as they had pretended to be.

McKeon laid his pipe beside him and rested his big hands on his knees. The speaker met his gaze squarely.

"If it is further permitted," he went on rapidly, "we would ask to know how much



"Interlocked, McKeon and the leader caromed across the end of the car through the drifting smoke . . . each straining for the instant advantage."

of the various sums you collect you keep for yourself. We believe, possibly one-fifth. That is a guess, eh? So be it. But we are sure you have taken on this trip some fifty pesos that will remain in your pocket. Fifty pesos. Are we right, señor?"

McKeon's shoulders straightened with a jerk. He got slowly to his feet, his face darkening like a shadowed cliff. Under knotted brows the lights glinted. His long, spare body was stooped forward a little.

"If this is a jest, señor——" he began,

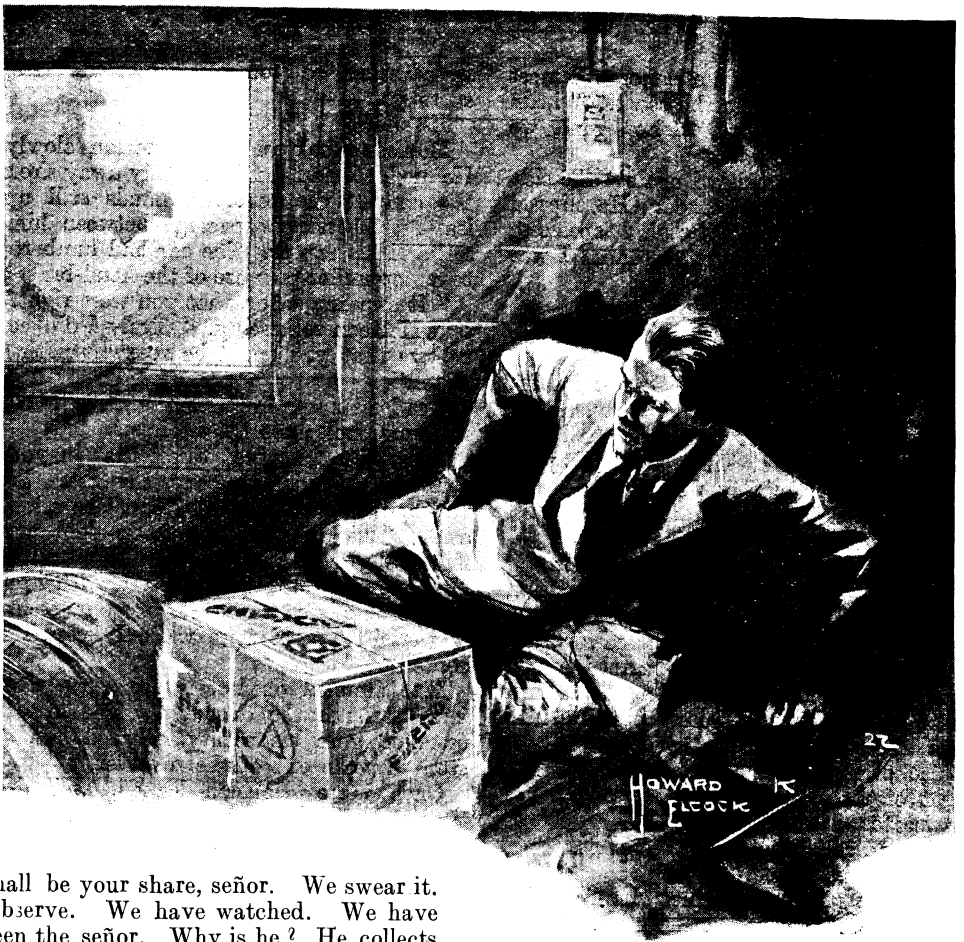
with a rumble. But the spokesman stopped him.

"Your pardon. A moment only. We believe we are right concerning the fifty pesos. And if we are, then we also believe you will be interested in a small matter which will mean not fifty, but fifty thousand pesos—fifty thousand pesos, señor!"

There was a silence in the jolting car. Outside the blatting of the exhaust buffeted noisily among the rocks. The three by the door stood tense, their gaze fixed upon McKeon. The big conductor stared back, swaying a little.

"Fifty thousand!" echoed the heavy-jawed man, purring on the words. "That





shall be your share, señor. We swear it. Observe. We have watched. We have seen the señor. Why is he? He collects fares. Good! Forty, maybe fifty, pesos he keeps for himself. We admire. And we say, here is a man who can collect fifty pesos for himself; let us hope he will help us to collect a fortune. If we are right, he shall have his share!"

McKeon had drawn back a short step, still staring. The heel of his boot came in sharp contact with the clumsy box from which he had risen.

The leader of the group smiled grimly.

"This señor here," he said, indicating the prospector, who sat listening, open-mouthed and wide-eyed, "there is no reason why he should remain. Shall we invite him to the other car while we further discuss that fifty—that fifty thousand pesos?"

McKeon stood dazed, but he shook his head.

"So be it," continued the other. "He can at least do us no harm. Meanwhile—because we have not time to lose—are we right concerning the fifty pesos?"

"And if you are?" queried McKeon slowly.

"Ah, if we are, you will doubtless accept our offer."

"Your offer——"

The leader pointed to the box at McKeon's feet.

"You have the substance of it there," he smiled. "Five hundred pounds of platina. Six months' product of the mines. We know. We have waited. Did they think no one would ever learn of their innocent box and what it held? Did they think wise ones would never reach these places? Truly, it is too simple, señor. And platina sells itself now at seven hundred pesos the pound."

McKeon was breathing slow, deep breaths.

"You want me to join you?"

"Precisely. And the price equals the profits of one thousand journeys like this. Paid into your hand. It is as safe—look you—as easy as to pocket your fifty. The

plan is made. A certain steamer will meet us at a certain point on the coast. Within two hours we are here, we are gone, we are rich!"

McKeon put out a hand against the side of the car to steady himself. He slipped unconsciously into English, speaking thickly: "And y' thought, because I was plugging my little graft——"

"Pardon——"  
"I would say—what do you desire me to do?"

"You can make it much easier for us. Join, and all we must do is to tranship at Buenaventura. Look you, you shall also come on the steamer. This should suit your taste, señor of the fifty pesos."

"Oh, I shall come on the steamer?" repeated McKeon, nodding slowly.

And he sprang like a hungry panther.

He had his long, corded arms cradling for the leader's body when something flashed blue in the light and darted forward. The Spaniard held the long barrel jammed against his middle. McKeon checked in full career, with the muzzle pressing into his flesh, and his hands stayed up.

The other two had drawn knives. At sight of the naked blades the poor little prospector doubled up with a squeal of terror and collapsed among the hides.

The leader smiled.

"It is a pity you are not supplied with arms, señor," he purred throatily. "You are sudden. José," he called, "to your post! Unloose! It is to be that way."

Over the heads of the group McKeon was aware of the fourth bandit at work between the cars. The coupling pin clanked. The fourth man sprang to the passenger coach, a revolver gleaming in his fist. Presently there was a gap, rapidly widening as the two who had shown knives tightened the brake-wheel on the baggage car.

The hubbub of voices rose against the lessening pound of the locomotive. McKeon had a glimpse of the fourth man standing in the doorway of the coach, weapon levelled, and the startled, bobbing faces of the passengers inside.

"That is José," explained the leader, smiling. "He accompanies your engineer down the road some little distance—far enough so that none shall witness what direction we take. Meanwhile, we have our knapsacks outside, and they are empty. See how foolish you were, señor. It would have been easier had you joined. Now, simply, we shall have to reach the coast

by walking, as you recommended. And as to you——"

He smiled.

McKeon took in the situation slowly. He nodded and backed stiffly away from the end of the revolver, hands still up, leaving the narrow passage between himself and his captor. The car had lumbered to a stop under pressure of the hand-brakes.

"It appears, señor, that you were right," said McKeon resignedly. "Truly I did not believe that you could be so swift with a pistol."

The leader was immensely gratified. His smile widened upon his teeth.

"Ah, you must not think that in your country alone is practised the art. We also have the trick of it. Tito," he added aside, "tie me up that little fool who flutters there among the hides—the sainted Mother knows we will be gentle with him. And, Paulo, do the same by our friend of the fifty pesos here while I keep him contented."

Tito stepped obediently from the platform through the doorway. The leader, unthinking in his vanity, allowed him to step past the end of the revolver.

Once more McKeon leaped, and this time he huddled the unfortunate Tito before him like a bag of salt.

The revolver barked twice. Tito screamed, and was trampled underfoot as McKeon snaked a hand through the struggle and gripped the armed wrist. Interlocked, McKeon and the leader caromed across the end of the car through the drifting smoke and the bitter scent of scorched clothing, each straining for the instant advantage.

"Paulo!" gasped the leader. "Paulo!"

McKeon whirled this man off his feet and stumbled backward just in time to escape the ripping stab of Paulo's knife as the bandit crept from behind.

It was madness then in that single car, hung among the foothills of the Andes in the empty quivering sunlight. By matching the agility, the speed of the two, McKeon kept just ahead, battering from side to side of the narrow space like a demon unchained.

The leader crushed his chest with one mighty arm, thrusting his thigh at every foothold for a straight throw. The man had a body and limbs like iron. Once the twisting wrist levered around as McKeon slipped, and he felt the sting of the gunpowder on his cheek when the gun spat again. And it was this opponent who must be hustled

and hurried as a barrier and a guard against the prowling, deadly knife.

"Paulo!" gurgled the leader.

But mostly they fought in silence—silence save for the heave and wheeze of painful breath, and always the whimpering moan of the little prospector, cowering among the hides and watching the glittering knife with eyes of helpless horror.

Again and again that darting blade bit to the blood. But McKeon, squirming and dodging, made no sign. He had striven for the thumb-lock since the start, working his huge, bony hand slowly, slowly around the thick neck. And now, with the thumb half bitten through, he had it.

For the tenth time the three living went down in a tangle with the body on the floor. And this time they did not rise. The leader's face was purple. His lips writhed, but no sound came. McKeon was pressing home.

Paulo half lifted and wiped the sweat from his blinded eyes. Bracing, he took distance.

An upflung foot caught him on the side of the jaw, and with rattling teeth he yelped and folded backward.

McKeon worked around until he had a knee on the broad chest of the leader. The revolver came away from the flaccid grip as he wrenched at it. He struck—once and again.

The prospector crawled out of the hides

and sat staring stupidly at the shambles. Gone were his health pink and his twinkling eyes. He turned a wild glance up at the ghastly red ruin of a man who leaned against the side of the car beside the box of platinum.

"You did it!" he mouthed. "You did it!"

McKeon nodded slowly. He was in rags, scored, and crimson-slashed, but his eyes glinted under the brows with hard lights.

The prospector began to laugh, close to hysteria.

"Man," he cried, "I've got to tell! I'm no prospector. I'm the company—part of it! American firm. Just bought out your Bogota crowd. Reorganisation—extension—and all that. They sent me down to find out who was grafting!"

McKeon only looked at him.

"I've got my report," babbled the little man. "Oh, yes, I have it! Fifty pesos a day and a clean bill for any man who can fight like that!"

He caught at his lip to still it, then burst out—

"But still I don't see," he whimpered. "How could you do it? How? How could you find the nerve, and the strength, and the will? And why? Fifty thousand pesos!"

"The mutt—wanted to rob—the company," answered McKeon heavily.

## THE MIRACLE.

**YOU** are here, and I;  
 Earth is spinning through  
 Space and Time; and I and you,  
 Of the world and in the world,  
 On through Time and Space are hurled,  
 Neither knowing why.

**I** am here, and you;  
 Ask not whence, nor yet  
 Whither our long course is set;  
 Let the miracle seem to us  
 More and more miraculous:  
 We are here, we two!

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

# COURAGE

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of "Sanders of the River," "The People of the River," "Bones," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

THE beauty of Monte Carlo has no exact parallel, unless it be the beauty of the Cape Peninsula in the early spring.

The Marquis of Pelborough had never dreamt of such loveliness as he saw from his bedroom window at the Hôtel de Paris.

The days were sunny, and cool breezes tempered the heat of May. The season was over; many of the villas that dotted the hillside were tenantless, and the more fashionable of the restaurants were shut. Nevertheless, though a few tables had been closed, the Casino was largely patronised, and Chick had been a fascinated spectator of play in which thousands of pounds had changed hands with every turn of the cards.

Gwenda was "resting"; a sore throat and a mild attack of influenza, which had given Chick the first clear understanding of what she meant to him, had compelled her to stop work. The hint which the doctor had thrown out about a more equable climate than that of Doughty Street, Bloomsbury, had been seized upon by Chick.

"Like where, doctor?" he asked.

"Oh—er—the South of France, or Torquay," said the man of medicines, who invariably offered these alternatives and left his patients to choose that which was most convenient to their pockets.

Gwenda was all for Torquay; Mrs. Phibbs, who had never been farther abroad than Brussels, supported her as in duty bound, and prayed that Chick would not assent. He neither agreed nor disagreed. One evening he came into the flat and laid a bulging pocket-case on the table.

"I have arranged the passports and the tickets for Monte Carlo," he said masterfully. "The sleeping berths are reserved from Calais, and we leave on Sunday morning."

Gwenda was too weak to argue.

Illness is a great disturber of sleeping

routine. Gwenda had dozed through the days and had spent many wakeful and thoughtful hours in the night.

She had been weak with Chick, postponing the inevitable parting from sheer selfishness, she thought. Chick could stand alone now. Was there any time when he could not? Her mind went back to the days when they were fellow-sufferers at a Brockley boarding-house, she an out-of-work actress, he an insurance clerk without the faintest idea that his uncle's petitions to Parliament, that the ancient Marquisate of Pelborough should be revived, would be granted. And then suddenly the title had been revived and inherited by Chick, and she had taken in hand the management of his life.

But had he ever been helpless? She shook her aching head. Chick was surprisingly efficient. She was deluding herself when she thought she was necessary to him, and the association must end. She was firm on that point. Chick was a comparatively rich man now, and it was absurd that he should share humble quarters with the two women who loved him.

Gwenda's brows puckered.

Mrs. Phibbs had been housekeeper, friend, and chaperon, and she adored Chick.

Gwenda loved him, too, but not as Mrs. Phibbs loved him. That lady's attitude was maternal; her interest in the young marquis was centred about his socks and underwear and the state of his digestion. But Gwenda loved him in another way. She deceived herself and yet saw through the deception. She accepted Chick's *fait accompli* meekly. It was a further excuse for postponing her decision.

She was enchanted with the glories of the Riviera, although she saw it when the spring sweetness of the coast had matured into the exotic glories with which the early summer endows the gardens and terraces of Monte Carlo.

To walk in the garden that faces the Casino, or to sit beneath the wide-spreading fronds of palms, watching the play of the water as the gardener drenched the thirsty ground with his huge hose, to stroll along the terraces facing the blue Mediterranean, or to sit in the cool of the hotel lounge with its luxurious inviting chairs—these experiences were sheer delight. And Chick had hired a motor-car, and they had climbed the mountain road to La Turbie, and explored the ruins of the great tower which Augustus in his pride had caused to rise on the mountain crest.

Gwenda's health showed a remarkable improvement from the moment she arrived. Before a week had passed she felt better than she had ever felt in her life. And with her return to strength she took a more cheerful view of life, and there seemed no urgent necessity for having that talk with Chick.

"I'm going into the gambling place," said Chick one afternoon.

"You mean the Rooms, Chick," said Gwenda. "You mustn't say 'gambling' at Monte Carlo."

Chick scratched his head.

"There are so many things you mustn't do here, Gwenda," he said. "You mustn't wish a man good luck because it brings him bad luck, and you mustn't enter the gam—the Rooms, I mean, with the left foot, and if you spill wine at the table you must dab a little behind your ears. It sounds like superstition to me."

"It probably is," laughed Gwenda. "And, talking of superstition, I am going to put my money on No. 24, because it is my birthday!"

Chick was incoherent in his apologies.

"How could you know that it was my birthday?" she smiled, putting her cool palm over his mouth. "Don't be silly!"

She had an exciting afternoon, for No. 24 turned up exactly twenty-four times in two hours.

"And I've won twenty-four thousand francs," she said triumphantly. "I'm a rich woman, Chick, and I'm going to pay you back all I have cost you on this trip."

Chick's refusal was almost painful in its frenzied vehemence.

For him it was a happy day. The chef at the Paris, who was surprised at nothing, received and executed an urgent order to manufacture a birthday cake, and the dinner was served in their private sitting-room.

The cake, surrounded by twenty-four

bedroom candles—there were no others procurable at short notice—was a success beyond anticipation, and Chick's heart had been full of happiness and pride, when there had entered to the feast a most undesirable skeleton.

He was a plump, cherubic skeleton, and Chick, after his first feeling of resentment, felt heartily ashamed of himself, for he owed a great deal to the Earl of Mansar.

He was, at any rate, as much of a skeleton to Gwenda, but this Chick did not know. He had only arrived that afternoon, he explained.

"I heard you were dining *en famille*, and as I regard myself as one of you, I knew you wouldn't mind my coming in."

It pained Chick to say he was glad to see his visitor, but he said it.

"No, thank you," said Lord Mansar, in answer to Gwenda's invitation. "I have dined already. What is the occasion of this festivity? Not your birthday, Chick?"

"It is not my birthday," said Chick quietly, "but Mrs. Maynard's."

It was strange, he thought, how a nice man like Mansar could cast a gloom over his friends and rob a festivity of its seemingly inextinguishable gaiety. They had planned to spend the evening together, but the arrival of their guest left them no alternative but to repair to the inevitable Rooms.

Chick hated the way Mansar and the girl paired off, leaving him to entertain Mrs. Phibbs, which meant leaving him alone, for she had developed a passion for gambling in five-franc pieces. He left that imposing lady at the roulette table and wandered aimlessly into the *cercle priv* in the trail of Gwenda and her escort.

The rich interior of the private club has a soothing effect upon disturbed nerves, but it failed signally to inspire Chick. Mansar found a chair for the girl at the *trente et quarante* table, and Chick stood on the outskirts of the crowd, his hands thrust into his pockets, a look of settled gloom upon his face, watching the swift passage of money and counters, and admiring, so far as it was possible for him to admire anything, the amazing dexterity of the black-coated croupier who turned the cards.

He loafed into the refreshment room, ordered a large orangeade (nobody knows the exquisite value of orangeade until he has drunk it at Monte Carlo), and, sitting in an armchair, he allowed himself to brood. Of course he had no right whatever to object to Gwenda's friendship, he told

himself, and least of all to her friendship with a man who had not spared himself in securing Chick's advancement.

What distressed him more than anything else was the fact that Gwenda was married, and it was not like Gwenda to encourage the attention of a third party. Chick had a very keen sense of propriety. He was fundamentally good, not in the cant sense in which the word is so often employed, but in the greater



essentials. His standard of behaviour was a high one, and the blue of Right and the scarlet of Wrong never merged to produce an admirable violet in his mind. The longer he sat, the deeper grew his gloom, and presently, rising with a jerk, he went to the bar.

"Give me a cocktail, please," he said firmly. He had never done more than put his lips to wine in his life, and he had the illusion that the barman knew this.

But his request created no sensation. There was a great shaking of metal bottles, a dribbling of amber fluid into a long-

stemmed glass, the plunge of a cherry, and—

"Five francs," said the bar-keeper.

Chick swallowed something and paid. He held the liquor up to the light, and it seemed good. He smelt it and appreciated its bouquet. He swallowed it down with one gulp and held on to the brass fender before the bar, incapable of speech. For a second he stopped breathing, and then the fire of the unaccustomed potion began to radiate.

"Another," said Chick, when he had got his breath. This time he sipped the

alluring preparation and found it excellent. The sting had gone from the fiery liquor.

"That is a nice cocktail, sir," said the barman.

Chick nodded.

"Personally, I prefer Clover Club," said the friendly man, wiping down the counter mechanically.

"Is there any other kind of cocktail?" asked Chick, in astonishment.



"Chick, I want to speak to you very importantly."

It had a queerly soothing effect which it was difficult to analyse. His ears felt hot. His face seemed to be burning. He could see his reflection in the mirror behind the bar, and outwardly there was no apparent change. He was surprised.

"Good gracious, yes, sir — there are twenty!"

"What was the name of that one you said?"

"Clover Club, sir."

"Gimme one," said Chick breathlessly.

The new cocktail was of a delicate shade of clouded pink, and frothed whitely on the top. Chick decided that he would drink nothing but Clover Club cocktails in the future.

He leant against the bar, because it seemed easier than standing. It was remarkable how genial he felt toward Mansar, how large and generous was his view of his forthcoming marriage to Gwenda. He had decided that they would be married at a very early date, and chuckled at the thought. He knew that Gwenda had to get rid of her husband somehow or other, but he could not be bothered to dispose of that encumbrance in detail. He would just vanish. Puff! Like that. Chick laughed at the smiling bar-tender.

"Something I thought about," he said.

"I don't think I should have any more cocktails, if I were you, sir," said the bar-tender. "The room is rather hot, and our cocktails are pretty strong."

"That's all right," said Chick.

He planked down a five-franc piece with unnecessary violence and walked steadily back to the Rooms, and the bar-keeper, looking after him, shook his head.

"He can carry it like a gentleman," he said admiringly.

Chick could walk so well that when he came up with Gwenda, who had left the table, she saw nothing wrong in his appearance. She was more than a little agitated, but Chick did not notice this. He noticed nothing except the eccentric movements of the tables, which, for some unknown reason, were swaying gently up and down as though they were floating upon a tempestuous ocean.

"Chick, I want to speak to you very importantly," said the girl.

She took his arm, and they walked out of the Casino together. Even when they were back in their sitting-room she noticed nothing.

"If Lord Mansar doesn't leave Monte Carlo to-morrow, can we go away, Chick?" she asked.

"Certainly, Gwenda," said Chick, looking at her solemnly.

"You see, Chick"—she was not looking at him—"Lord Mansar rather likes me and I like him; but I can't marry—you know that. And I wouldn't marry if I could. You know that, don't you, Chick?"

She raised her eyes to Chick, and he nodded.

"What is the matter, Chick?" she asked.

"Nothing," said Chick loudly.

"Chick," she said, aghast, "you've been drinking!"

"Cocktails!" said Chick impressively. "Clover Club. Not really drunk!"

"Why ever did you do it, Chick?" she wailed, tears in her eyes.

"Miserable," said Chick dolefully. "Very miserable, Gwenda. When you and Mansar get married—bless you!"

He rose, and the sure foundation of his legs held him erect.

"A very good fellow, Mansar," he said and walked carefully to the door.

Before he could open it Gwenda had reached him. She dropped her hands upon his shoulders.

"Look at me, Chick," she said. "Do you think I should marry Lord Mansar?"

"Very nice fellow," murmured Chick.

"Look at me, Chick. Hold up your head. Is that why you drank?"

"Cocktails are not drink," corrected Chick gravely.

She drew a long breath.

"Go to bed, Chick," she said gently. "I never thought I should be glad to see you like this, but I am."

The Marquis of Pelborough did not wake in the morning. He emerged from a condition of painful half-consciousness to a state of even more painful half-deadliness, and the half of him which was dead was the happier.

To say that his head ached would be to misdescribe his sensations. There was a tremendous ache where his head had been, and his eyelids seemed to creak when he opened them. Slowly and cautiously he rose to a sitting position. As he moved, his brain seemed to be a flag that was flapping in the breeze. He sat up and looked around. By the side of his bed was a large bottle of mineral water and a glass. There were also two large lemons which had been cut in half. Moreover, he discovered, when he had quenched his raging thirst and the acid bite of the lemon had restored his sense of taste, that his bath was filled with ice-cold water.

Chick dropped into the bath with a splash and a shiver, turned on the shower, and emerged a few minutes later feeling as near to normal as a thumping, thundering heart would allow him to be. He dressed slowly, facing a very unpleasant situation. He had been drunk. There was



no euphemism for his experience. He faced the ghastly fact in the cold light of morning without any illusion whatever.

His first sensation was one of surprise that he had accomplished the feat at the cost of twenty francs. He always thought that drunkenness was most expensive. When he had recovered from his surprise, his mind went with a jerk to Gwenda, and he groaned. He remembered having come back to the hotel with her. Had she cut the lemons for him? He shuddered at the thought. It was six o'clock, and, save for the street cleaners, the serene swish of whose brooms came to him, Monte Carlo was a town of the dead. He stepped out on the balcony and filled his lungs with the fresh morning air.

What would Gwenda think of him? He remembered enough to know that he had not made a fool of himself, but it were better that he were the laughing-stock of Monte Carlo and of all the world than that he should have disappointed Gwenda. "Terrible," murmured Chick, "terrible!"

He shook his head, whence the pain had gone, leaving only a queer sawdust sensation.

A brisk walk toward Cap Martin and back almost completed his cure. Gwenda was at breakfast with Mrs. Phibbs when he went into the sitting-room, and she greeted him with her old smile.

"I'm dreadfully sorry, Gwenda——" he began, but she stopped him.

"It was the heat of the room," said Mrs. Phibbs.

Gwenda turned the conversation in the direction of sea-bathing, and Chick knew that her comments on his behaviour were merely deferred. They proved to be less severe than he had expected.

"I'll never drink again, Gwenda," he said ruefully, and she squeezed the arm that was in hers.

"Chick, this is a very favourable moment for a talk I want with you," she said, as she led the way down the sloping road toward the beach and the bathing huts. "When we get back to London you must set up an establishment of your own. No, no, it has nothing to do with what happened last night," she said, answering his unspoken question. "But, Chick, you can't go on living like this, with Mrs. Phibbs and me. You realise that yourself, don't you?"

"No," said Chick doggedly. "Of course if"——he hesitated——"if you are changing—I mean if you are——" He stopped, at a

loss for the right words. "I mean, Gwenda," he said bluntly, "if you are setting up an establishment of *your own*—why, of course, I understand."

She shook her head.

"I'm not, Chick," she said quietly.

"Then I'm going to stay with you," said Chick, "until——"

"Until when?" she asked, when he paused.

"I don't know," said Chick, shaking his head. "I wish I could ask you lots of questions." He bit his lip, looking thoughtfully at the white road at his feet. "Gwenda, you never talk about your husband."

"No, Chick, I never shall," she answered, avoiding his eye.

"Is he nice, Gwenda?"

She made no reply.

"Do you like him?"

She put her arm in his and urged him forward.

"Wait a moment." Chick disengaged himself gently. "Does Lord Mansar know anything about him?"

"He asked the same questions as you, Chick," she said, "and I gave him the same reply. That is why he has gone home."

"Gosh!" said Chick, awe-stricken. "Did Lord Mansar—has he——"

"Did he want me to marry him, Chick? Yes, he did. And I told him I couldn't and wouldn't."

He gazed at her with his solemn eyes, and then:

"Have you any children, Gwenda?"

This was too much for the girl. Her sense of humour was not proof against a question which had been asked of her twice within twenty-four hours, and she burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

Presently she dried her eyes.

"Have you?" he asked again.

"Six," she said solemnly.

"I don't believe you," said Chick.

He wanted to say something, and for once his will failed him. Twice in the course of their stroll he began with a husky—

"Gwenda, I——" only to be tongue-tied.

They sat on the sands and watched a big white yacht with all its main sheet and spinnaker billowing whitely, a dazzling object in the sunlight, and there was a silence between them which was unusual.

Presently Chick asked:

"Gwenda, will you let me see your wedding ring?"

She hesitated.

"Why do you want to see it, Chick?"

"I just want to see it," said Chick, with an assumption of carelessness.

She slipped the golden circlet from her finger and put it in the palm of his hand.

There was some writing engraved on the inside.

"May I?" he asked, and again she hesitated.

"Yes, Chick," she said.

The inscription was: "From T. L. M. to J. M."

The letters showed faintly, for the ring had been well worn, and Chick gave it back to her.

"What is your full name, Gwenda?" he asked, and thinking she had not heard him he repeated the question.

"Gwenda Dorothy Maynard," she said.

"But, Gwenda, your brother's name was Maynard, too."

She did not reply. Chick was breathing painfully. He found it almost impossible to keep the quiver from his voice when he spoke, and the nervous hands that played with the sand were trembling.

"Gwenda——" he began for the third time, but he could not say it.

He knew her secret. That was the thought that filled him with joy. Gwenda was not

married! The ring was her mother's. And then he remembered that once she had said that a girl on the stage was in a stronger position if people thought she was married and had a man at her call.

He trod on air for the rest of the day, and his heart was singing gaily. And yet, when he tried to speak, his vocal chords seemed to become paralysed. The high confidence which brought him to the edge of confession deserted him basely and left him an abject, stammering fool.

The girl saw and understood. If she had not, she might have made it easier for Chick to loose the flow of his inhibited speech.

They were in the Rooms that night, Gwenda mildly punting in louis, Mrs.

Phibbs, a determined female, flanked by two large columns of five-franc counters.

And then Chick had an inspiration. The course he had elected was a desperate one, but the situation was as desperate.

He drew the girl aside.

"Gwenda, will you go up to the sitting-room in half an hour. There is something I want you to know—it may shock you, Gwenda."

She nodded gravely and went back to the table. Chick waited to see whether she was watching him, and then stole stealthily into the refreshment room.

"Good evening, sir," said the barman.

"A Clover Club,"



"There were still ten minutes before the half-hour expired, and he must content himself with the violets."

hissed Chick, cutting short the pleasantries of the tender—"in fact, two Clover Clubs, please."

He swallowed them hastily, and they seemed to have no effect. He was dumb-founded. Had he so soon acquired the constitution of the seasoned drinker? He was on the point of ordering the third, when he experienced the beginnings of that genial glow and sat down to wait for its full effect. He walked past Gwenda, apparently not noticing her, strode over to the hotel and went up in the lift to his room. He was feeling good and as brave as a lion.

Chick's courage had never been called into question. He was a notorious glutton for punishment, but then Chick had never

had the terrifying experience which now awaited him.

"Gwenda," he said, addressing a great dish of violets which occupied the centre of the table, "there is something I wish to ask you."

He felt so confident that he wished she would come in at that moment; but there were still ten minutes before the half-hour expired, and he must content himself with the violets.

"Gwenda," he said, "there is something I have been trying to tell you. I know you are not married, and I know that I am not the kind of fellow that you ought to marry."

This didn't seem quite right, and he started again.

"Gwenda, I've been trying to say something to you all day, and I'm sorry to say I've been compelled to drink two cocktails in order to work up my courage, so please don't let me kiss you!"

She was a long time coming, and he felt unaccountably tired. He strayed into his dark bedroom and lay on the bed.

"Gwenda," he murmured, "I know I'm a rascal to break my word . . . but, Gwenda . . ."

He woke up when the chambermaid brought the tea. She was so accustomed to meeting, in the course of her professional duties, gentlemen who were such sticklers

for style that they went to bed in evening-dress, that she made no comment.

When Chick had changed and dressed, he went in to breakfast, and Gwenda's attitude was just a little distraught.

Chick drew out his chair and sat down.

"I broke my word to you last night, Gwenda," he said huskily. "I told you—"

"You told me that there was something you wanted me to know, and that it would shock me, Chick," she said, as she poured out his coffee. "Well, I know, and I'm shocked."

"What do you know, Gwenda?" he asked, startled.

"That you snore frightfully," said Gwenda coldly.

The silence that followed was chilling.

"I'm going home to-morrow," said the girl.

Chick wriggled in his chair.

"You broke your word to me about—about the bar," she said, with a catch in her voice.

"Did you see me?" he asked, conscience-stricken.

And she nodded.

"But—but why didn't you stop me?" he stammered.

She shot a glance at him that made Chick wither.

"I didn't dream it would make you sleep, you booby," she said scornfully.

*A further story in this series will appear in the next number.*

## RAIN IN SUMMER.

**O** GRACIOUS veil of heaven-descending dew!  
 Come down, come down!  
 Parched lies the town,  
 The grass grows brown:  
 Come, and make all things fair and green and new!

**O** sibilant hiss soft-piercing through the night!  
 Hot earth leaps up,  
 Wild, made to sup  
 The cloud-poured cup,  
 Arms reached of fragrant mist, up-steaming, white!

**O** splashing cataract of the storm long-pent!  
 At last! At last!  
 Down-streaming fast,  
 Black drought is past,  
 Rain's benediction brings the land content!

B. C. HARDY.



"The cormorant, well pleased with himself, flew up to rejoin his nesting mate on a grassy ledge just below the crest of the cliff."

# THE BLACK FISHERMAN

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

*Author of "Kings in Exile," "Neighbours Unknown," "The Secret Trails," etc.*

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

**A** LONG the grim cliffs that guard, on the north, the gates of tide-vexed Fundy, the green seas foamed and sobbed beneath the surge of the tremendous flood. There was no wind, and out from shore the slow swells, unfretted by rock or shoal, heaved gently, smooth as glass. The sky, of that intensely pure, vibrant blue which seems to hold sparks of sharp light enmeshed in it, carried but two or three small clouds, floating far and high, clean-edged and white as new snow.

Close above the water, and close followed by his shadow, flew slowly a large and sinister-looking black bird, about midway in size between a duck and a goose, but very unlike either in shape and mien. Its head, neck, breast and under-body, and lower part of the back, next the tail, were glossy black,

with a sharp iridescence flashing green and jewelled in the sun. Its short, square, rigid tail was ink black, as were its legs and strong webbed feet. Ink black, too, was its long, straight, hook-tipped beak, even longer than the sharp, savage head, which was strangely adorned by a thin, backward-sweeping black crest on either side. At the base of the beak and on the throat just beneath it was a splash of orange, and the piercing eyes, hard as a hawk's, were surrounded each by a vivid orange patch of naked skin. In sombre contrast to this impressive colouring, the back and wings were brown, the feathers trimly laced with black.

As the dark shape flew, almost skimming the transparent swells, its fierce, flame-circled eyes peered downward, taking note of the fish that swam at varying depths.

*Copyright, 1922, by Charles G. D. Roberts, in the United States of America.*

These fruitful waters of Fundy teemed with fish, of many varieties and sizes, and the great cormorant, for all his insatiable appetite, could afford to pick and choose among them those most convenient to handle. As far as his taste was concerned, there was little to choose, for quantity, rather than quality, was what appealed to him in fish.

Suddenly he made his choice. His tail went up, his head went down, his wings closed tight to his body, and he shot beneath the beryl surface. At first he missed his quarry. But that was nothing to him. More fish than bird himself now, he gave chase to it at a depth of several feet below the water. Propelled by the drive of his powerful thighs and broad webs, by the screwing twist of his stern and his stiff tail, he darted through the alien element at a speed which very few of its natives could pretend to rival. From his wake a few bright bubbles escaped and flew upwards, to break in flashes of sharp light upon the silvery mirror of the under-surface. The quarry, a gleaming and nimble *gaspereau*, doubled frantically this way and that, its round, fixed eyes a-stare as if painted; but it could not shake off its implacable pursuer. In a dozen seconds or so it was overtaken. That long, hook-tipped beak snapped upon it inexorably and paralysed its writhings.

Shooting forth upon the surface, the cormorant sat motionless for a few moments, carrying his prize crosswise in his beak. Then, with a sudden jerk, tossing it in the air, he caught it dexterously head first as it fell, and gulped it down, but not all the way down. The Black Fisherman's stomach was, as it chanced, already full. The present capture, therefore, was lodged in the sac of loose skin below his throat, where its size and shape were clearly revealed.

For a short while—for a very few minutes indeed, since the cormorant's digestion is swift and indefatigable, and has no objection to working overtime—the Black Fisherman sat floating complacently on the swells. Then suddenly, with a convulsive movement that to an onlooker would have seemed agonising, but which to him was a satisfying delight, he swallowed the prize in his gullet, stretching up and straightening his neck till its trim outlines were quite restored. Immediately the hunting light flamed again into his savage eyes. With a heavy, flapping rush along the surface he rose into the air and fell once more to quartering the liquid field for a new prey.

Meanwhile, from far up in the blinding blue where he wheeled slowly on wide, motionless wings, a white-headed eagle, most splendid and most shameless of robbers, had been watching the insatiable fisherman. Now he dropped swiftly to a lower level, where he again hung poised, his gem-bright, arrogant eyes peering downward expectantly. It was not often that he interfered with the cormorants, whom he regarded as obstinate, ill-tempered birds, with an insistent regard for their rights and remarkable precision in the use of their long beaks. But hunting had been bad that day, and he was hungry. The complacent success of the Black Fisherman was galling to watch while his own appetite was so unsatisfied.

The cormorant, absorbed in his quest, and never dreaming of any interference, did not notice the long-winged shape circling high overhead. He marked a fine whiting, rather bigger than he usually troubled with, but too tempting to resist. He dived, pursued it hither and thither for a breathless minute or more, captured it, and shot to the surface again triumphantly, with the captive still squirming between his deadly mandibles. In the same instant, before he had time to dive or dodge, there was a hissing rush, the air above his head was buffeted by tremendous wings, and great talons, closing like a trap on one half of the fish projecting from his beak, strove to snatch it from him. Startled and furious, he hung on like a bull-dog, stiffening his broad tail and backing water with his powerful webs. He was almost lifted clear of the surface, but his weight and his passionate resistance were too much for even those mighty pinions to overcome. The fish was torn in half, and the eagle sprang upwards with his spoil. The cormorant swallowed the remaining fragment in fierce haste, blinking with the effort, and then sat and glared at the kingly marauder beating upwards into the blue.

After a few minutes of sullen meditation and swift digestion, the untiring but still angry fisherman resumed his game. This time, however, he did not rise into the air, but swam slowly onward, searching the crystal tide beneath him till he marked a likely prey. Then once more he dived, once more he chased the quarry through its native element, and captured it. But now, instead of shooting out boldly upon the surface, he rose cautiously and showed only his head above the water. There was his foe, already swooping again to the attack, but still high in air. In a lightning gulp he

swallowed his prey, down into the half-way house of his throat-sac, and dived again, disappearing just as the robber, dropping like a thunderbolt, spread sudden wings and struck angrily at the spot where he had vanished.

As the eagle hovered for a moment, giving vent to his feelings in a sharp yelp of disappointment, the Black Fisherman reappeared some twenty or thirty paces away, and sat there eyeing his enemy with mingled triumph and defiance. He held his vicious-looking head slightly down between the shoulders, ready for a lightning stroke, and his long, efficient beak was half open. His sturdy spirit was not going to be browbeaten even by the king of the air.

The eagle, with snowy head stretched downwards, eyes gleaming bright as glass, and great talons menacingly outstretched, sailed backwards and forwards over him several times at a height of not more than four or five feet, hoping to frighten him into disgorging the prey. Had the royal robber cared to push matters to a conclusion, he would certainly have been more than a match for the cormorant, but he knew well enough that he would not emerge without scars from the encounter, and he was not ready to pay any such price for a mouthful of fish. Presently, realising that the surly fisherman was not to be bluffed, he slanted aloft disdainfully, and went winnowing away over the cliffs to seek less troublesome hunting.

A few minutes later the cormorant, well pleased with himself, flew up to rejoin his nesting mate on a grassy ledge just below the crest of the cliff.

## II.

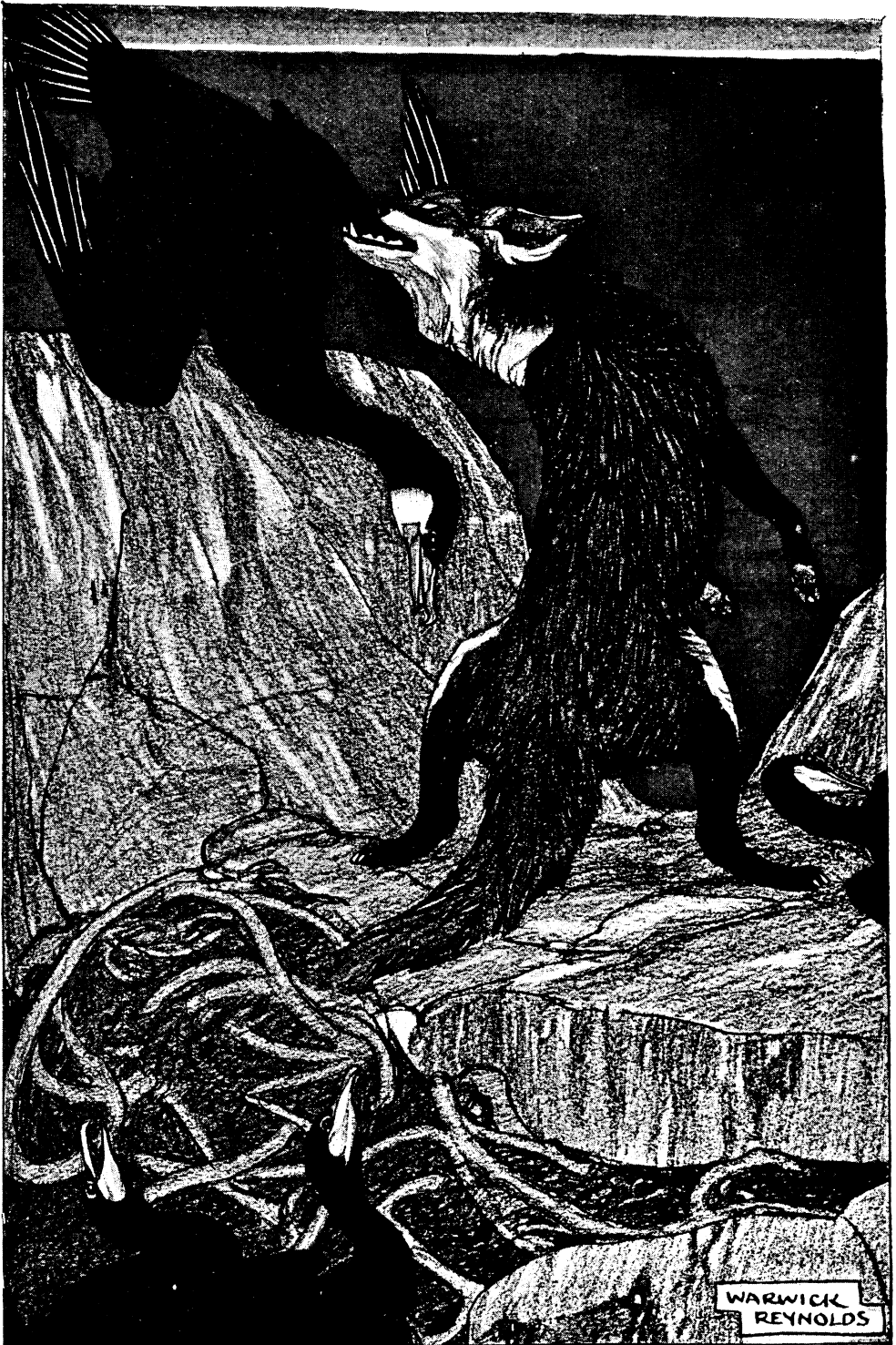
ARRIVING at the nest, he alighted close beside it and immediately sat up, supported by his stiff square tail, as rigidly erect as a penguin. His vigilant gaze scanning rock and sky and sea, the polished black armour of his hard plumage radiant in the sunlight, he looked a formidable sentinel. His dark mate, hungry and weary after long brooding, slipped from the nest and plunged downward to refresh herself in the fruitful gleaming pastures of the tide, leaving the nest and eggs to his guardianship.

It was a crude affair, this nest—a haphazard messy structure of dry black seaweed and last year's grey mullein stalks. Within the nest were four big eggs of a dirty pale green colour, partly covered with a whitish, limy film. These treasures the Black

Fisherman watched proudly, ready to do battle for them against any would-be thief that might approach.

In truth, the nest was in a somewhat exposed position. At this point the ledge was only about four feet wide, and just behind the nest the cliff-face was so crumbled away that any sure-footed marauder might easily make his way down from the cliff top, some thirty feet above. In front of the nest, on the other hand, the cliff-face dropped a sheer three hundred feet to the surges that seethed and crashed along its base. Some twenty paces to the right the ledge widened to a tiny plateau, carpeted with close light-green turf and dotted with half a dozen dark juniper bushes. A most desirable nesting-place, this, but already occupied to the last available inch of space by the earlier arrivals of the cormorant migration. The Black Fisherman and his spouse, tardy in their wooing and their mating, had lingered over-long in the warm waters of the south, and been obliged to content themselves with such accommodation as was left to them. To their courageous and rather unsociable spirits, however, this was a matter of small concern. They had the companionship of their kind, but not too close, not too intimate—just where they wanted it, in fact. They were well fitted to hold the post of danger—to guard the gateway to the cormorant colony. Few other birds there were in that colony who would have had the mettle, bold as they were, to face the eagle as the Black Fisherman had done.

Those dirty-green eggs in the slovenly nest were now near their time of hatching, so the mother hurried back from the sea as soon as possible to cover them with her hot and dripping breast, setting her mate free to pursue his one engrossing pastime. A day or two later, however, when faint cries and the sound of tapping beaks began to be heard within the shells, then the devoted mother would not leave the nest even for a moment, so the Black Fisherman had to fish for her as well as for himself. His pastime now became a heavy task, made doubly hard by the fact that the eagle returned from time to time to harass him. His method of foraging at first was to fill his own stomach, then his neck pouch till it would hold no more, and fly home with a big fish held crosswise in his beak. This was the eagle's opportunity. When the cormorant was in mid-air, half-way between cliff and sea, and flying heavily with his



“With a yelp of rage and anguish, the fox turned upon his assailant and seized her by one wing, high up and close to the body.”

load, the crafty robber would swoop down and catch him at a hopeless disadvantage. Unable either to strike back or to resist, and mindful of his responsibilities, he would relinquish the prize, and fly home to feed his mate on what he could disgorge from his crop. After two experiences of this sort he gave up attempting to carry anything home in his beak, and contented himself with what his pouch would hold. Thereupon the eagle, no longer tempted by the sight of an actually visible prey, and marking the long black beak all in readiness to strike, gave up molesting him. But the rest of the colony, less wary and quick-witted than the Black Fisherman, were continually being forced to pay tribute to the robber king.

When the eggs were hatched, both parents were kept busy, the four youngsters being voracious beyond even the usual voracity of nestlings. At first they were but blind, stark naked, ink-black, sprawling bundles of skin and bone, their great beaks ever wide open in demand for more, more, more. Their tireless parents had not only to catch, but also half to digest their food for them, pumping it into their throats from their own stomachs, which were thus kept working at high pressure.

As the nestlings grew—which they did with great rapidity—their appetites increased in proportion; and when their eyes opened there was an added emphasis to the demand of their ever-open beaks. The father and mother began to grow thin with their exertions. Then one day the fickle Fates of the sea came very near to closing the mother's career and throwing the whole responsibility upon the Black Fisherman's shoulders. The mother was down, far down below the surface, chasing a nimble sprat through the green transparency, when a swift and hungry dog-fish, with jaws like those of his great cousin the shark, came darting in her wake.

Fortunately for her the sprat dodged, and she, in turning to pursue, caught sight of her own terrible pursuer. Straight as an arrow she shot to the surface, and then, with sure instinct, she flashed aside at right angles, thus evading, though only by a hair's breadth, her enemy's upward rush. Flapping desperately along the water for a few feet, she sprang into the air with a frantic effort, and the jaws of the dog-fish snapped just below her vanishing feet. Somewhat shaken, she started homeward. But before she had gone half-way she regained her self-possession. She would not return empty to

her nestlings, confessing defeat. Whirling abruptly, she flew off far to the left, and resumed her fishing in a deep cove where that particular dog-fish, at least, was not likely to pursue her. But the adventure had warned her to keep her eyes open, and on her return to the nest she managed to convey to her mate the news that dog-fish were about. It was information which that wary bird was not likely to forget.

Shortly after this incident the overworked parents were afforded a certain measure of relief, but in a form which was very bitter to them. One morning, when they were both absent from the nest, and the nestlings, full fed for the moment, sprawled comfortably in the sun, a slender, long-tailed, grey-and-buff chicken-hawk came slanting down over the crest of the cliff. Its swift, darting flight carried it low above the crowded nests of the cormorant colony, but, audacious slaughterer though it was, discretion kept it from coming within reach of the menacing beaks uplifted to receive it. The lonely nest of the Black Fisherman, however, left unguarded for the moment, caught its eye. It pounced like lightning, struck its talons into the tender body of one of the nestlings, dispatched it with a single blow, dragged it forth upon the edge of the nest, and fell to tearing it greedily. A moment more and another of the nestlings would have been served in the same fashion; but just in the nick of time the Black Fisherman himself arrived. The hawk saw his ominous form shoot up over the rim of the ledge. With one thrust of its fine pinions it sprang into the air, evading the onslaught by a splendid side-sweep far out over the depths. Then it beat upwards and over the crest of the cliff, its bleeding victim dangling from its talons. With a croak of fury the cormorant gave chase. For half a mile in over the downs he followed, lusting for vengeance. But his heavy flight, though strong and straight, was no match for the speed of that beautiful and graceful slayer. The hawk presently vanished with its prey among the dark tree-tops of an inland valley, and the Black Fisherman flapped back sullenly to his nest.

The three remaining nestlings thrived all the better for the loss of their companion. They were nearly half feathered before any further misadventure befell the nest. Then it came in an unexpected guise.

A wandering fox, far out of his accustomed range, came to the crest of the cliff and stood staring curiously out into the vast



space of air and sea. There was a wind that day, and his bushy red brush of a tail was blown almost over his back. The cormorant colony was just below him. At the sight of it his eyes narrowed cunningly. Sinking flat in the grass, he thrust his sharp face over the edge, in the shelter of an overhanging rose bush, and peered down upon the novel scene. What a lot of nests! What a tempting array of plump younglings! His lean jaws slavered with greed.

The fox knew nothing about cormorants. But he could see that the black, fine-plumaged guardians of the nests were very hefty, self-confident birds, with bold, fierce eyes and extraordinarily efficient-looking beaks. He speedily came to the conclusion that the immediate vicinity of those beaks would be bad for his health. Decidedly those grapes were sour. Being a sagacious beast and not given to wasting effort on the unattainable, he was just about to curb his appetite and turn away, when his glance fell upon the Black Fisherman's nest, lying far apart and solitary. To be sure, both parent birds were beside the nest at the moment. But they were only two, and, after all, they were only birds. This looked more promising. He crept nearer and waited, it being his wise custom to look before he leaped.

Both parents were busy feeding the gaping mouths of their young, and the fox watched with interest the unusual process. It seemed to him absurd and unnecessary, and his respect for the great black birds began to diminish. Presently the larger of the two, the Black Fisherman himself, having disgorged all the food he could spare, plunged downward from the ledge and disappeared.

This was the red watcher's opportunity. With a rushing leap down the steep slope, he sprang upon the nest. Never dreaming that the one lone guardian would dare to face him, and craving the tender flesh of the young rather than the tough adult, he made the mistake of ignoring the mother-bird. He seized one of the nestlings and crushed the life out of it in a single snap of his jaws. But at the same instant the stab of a steel-hard mandible struck him full in one eye, simply obliterating it, and a mighty buffeting of wings forced him off the nest.

With a yelp of rage and anguish, the fox

turned upon his assailant and seized her by one wing, high up and close to the body. As his fangs ground through the bone, the dauntless mother raked his flank with her stabbing beak and threw herself backwards, frantically struggling, toward the lip of the ledge. Her instinctive purpose was twofold—first, to drag the fox from the precious nest; second, to seek escape from this land enemy in either the air or the water, where she would be more at home. The fox, his one remaining eye for the moment veiled by his opponent's feathers, could not see his peril, but resisted instinctively whatever she seemed anxious to do.

From the first moment of the battle the mother-bird had sent out her harsh cries for help. And now, while the unequal combat went on at the very brink of the abyss, the Black Fisherman arrived. With a mighty shock he landed on the fox's back, striking and stabbing madly. Bewildered and half stunned, the fox jerked up his head to seize his new antagonist, but, met by a demoralising thrust fair on the snout, he missed his aim, and caught the throat of the mother-bird instead. The next instant, in a mad confusion of pounding wings and yelping, and black feathers and red fur, the three went over the brink together in an awful plunge.

Immediately the Black Fisherman, who was unhurt, flew clear. He could do nothing but follow the other two downwards, as they fell rolling over each other in the death grip. Half-way down they crashed upon a jutting point of rock, and fell apart as they bounced off. With two tremendous splashes they struck the water. The body of the fox sank from sight, whirled away by an under-current and probably caught in some deep crevice, there to be devoured by the crabs and other sea-scavengers. The dead cormorant, supported by her feathers and her hollow bones, lay floating, belly upward, with sprawled wings, on the surface. Her mate, alighting beside her, swam around her several times, eyeing her with an intense gaze. Then, realising that she was dead, he slowly swam away to take up the double duties thus thrust upon him. After all, as there were now but two mouths left in the nest to feed, there was no doubt but that he would be equal to the task.

# THE PRICE OF A DINNER

By J. J. BELL

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

THE lounge of the Planet Hotel was deserted. The guests, resident and casual, had gone to dine—a listener might have caught the hum of humanity and the sigh of music escaping from the great restaurant—yes, all had gone save a drowsy old gentleman, an elderly couple who talked furtively, uneasy in their rich and palmy surroundings, and, at the other end of the place, a young man in correct evening-dress with a good-looking but haggard countenance.

Alan Moore raised his heavy eyes and took a lingering survey of the lounge. A reader of faces might have found despair, and possibly shame, in Alan's. Well, he was famishing, and he had one sixpence in the pocket of his immaculate vest, which coin—contemptible gratuity in these days—would be required when he wanted his coat and hat from the cloakroom.

Not so long ago, and not so seldom, Alan Moore had entertained friends at the Planet. To-night, an hour past, he had entered the lounge—not a little diffidently—hoping, as he put it brutally to himself, to sponge an invitation from some good-natured acquaintance. Do not judge him too hardly. For six months he had been dining on the husks, and to-night even the husks were not available. Besides, he was already being punished, for, as it happened, not one familiar face had he found in the gay crowd.

Now he reviled himself for a despicable ass. With the sixpence he could have made certain of the husks. Yet what a day it had been, waiting in the chilly, unprovisioned studio since eight o'clock for the cheque promised by the wealthy patron, which cheque the postman had never brought! Until the last delivery was past, he had hoped against hope, figuring to himself

a meal of delicate food, finely cooked, exquisitely served.

A sensation of faintness came upon him; he lay back wearily and closed his eyes till the weakness passed. Very gradually his mind comprehended what his reopened eyes were staring at. On a deep chair not two yards distant was a lady's handbag, a costly thing in the latest fashion; it rested closely against the chair's arm and, being similarly coloured, might easily have escaped casual notice.

The meaning of his interest in the bag dawned on Alan Moore, and he withdrew his gaze, only, however, to let it return. This happened several times.

He made up his mind to go; he got up. . . . There was still no one in the lounge saving the slumberer and elderly couple, and they were almost hidden by palms. Alan's tongue wandered over his dry lips. He would have given much for a cigarette. Then everything about him seemed to slacken.

He sat down again—in the chair containing the bag. Never boy, his hand blindly seeking the touch of his first love, groped more fearfully than did Alan. Then, somehow, the bag was open, and his face was scarlet. And then his face was pale, and his hand was within the bag. His fingers felt a foolish little hanky, and a faint fragrance came up to his nostrils; they encountered the coolness of a bunch of violets, but no purse. They roved round the sides, touched one or two vanities, passed on and stopped, trembling, at the unmistakable feel of Bank of England paper.

With infinite caution he drew it from the pocket and unfolded it, while to his overstrained senses it seemed positively to crackle. There were two notes, and after an age he got them separated. One he refolded and replaced in its pocket; the

other—well, at last it was in his vest, and he was wiping his pale, moist face.

An evening journal lay on the table near his hand. He tore a short strip from its margin, and on it, with an old dance programme pencil, wrote "IOU five pounds," and added his name and address. He folded and dropped in the paper, and closed the bag. He rose, swayed a little, steadied himself, and passed out of the lounge in the direction of the cloakroom.

And then some crazy impulse sent him right about and into the restaurant. He had only borrowed the money! People were beginning to leave for the theatres. The head waiter, recognising him, got him a small table to himself. He was faint, but no longer hungry. From sheer lack of mental energy he ordered the *table d'hôte* and a pint of white wine, the name of which seemed to have drifted into his mind. Still, after the soup, he began to eat with something approaching relish.

A very young man being entertained by his sister, a fair, pretty girl, on the occasion of his birthday, stared across the room.

"Yonder is Alan Moore, the artist—did the green and grey thing you got stuck on in the Savile Galleries to-day."

"Do you know him, Ronnie?" the girl asked, with some interest.

"I know about him," answered the youth, "and I must say I'm surprised to see him in a place like this."

"Why?"

"Everybody knows he was broke to the world a few months ago. Silly ass backed bills for a pal and lost every stiver he had—thousands, I believe."

"Oh, poor man!"

"If a chap plays that sort of mug's game, he deserves to suffer," observed Ronnie, with all the virtuous superiority of youth. "Wonder where he's got the money now?"

"Sold a picture, I should think."

"Alan Moore's pictures don't sell—at least, they didn't. Not a bad-looking chap, all the same."

"He looks as if he had been ill," she remarked, and then her brother directed her attention to a fragile-looking woman, with sturdy ankles, who wrote what he termed "mystic poetry—awful rot."

Alan Moore had eaten his *entrée* and was about to refill his glass, when it came upon him, simply, inexorably, that he could remain in the restaurant no longer. He was a thief, after all! Possibly it was merely

the indirect result of the food and slight stimulant.

In sheer need of tobacco, he ordered cigarettes, lit one at the match proffered by the waiter, and asked for his bill. Presently it lay on a plate in front of him. He took the folded note from his vest and, as though it burned him, dropped it on the bill. The waiter retired a few steps with the plate, turned and came back, setting it down again with the note unfolded. He offered a pencil, saying respectfully—

"Might I trouble m'sieu to write his name and address?"

Alan gave a little start, but took the pencil and made to turn over the note. For the next ten seconds he sat in darkness, the blood buzzing in his ears.

A hundred-pound note in the Planet restaurant is not a daily happening; on the other hand, it is not a startling event.

"How would m'sieu like the change?" the waiter softly inquired, and Alan's wits began to come together again.

"Oh, fives or tens," he managed to reply, and wrote his name and address. It did not occur to him to give false ones.

He poured out wine, and forgot to drink it.

"Ripping dinner! Thousand thanks, Anna, old girl!" Ronnie was saying to his sister.

"Well, you aren't twenty every day, Ronnie," she returned kindly, "and there's where the two of us, you know. Goodness, where's my bag?"

"You must have left it in the lounge. I'll fetch it."

During his absence Miss Anna Delmar looked perturbed, but his speedy return with her property brought a smile of relief as well as of thanks.

"Sit down, Ronnie; you haven't got your present yet." She opened the bag and passed him a little folded paper with the pleasantest feel in the world.

"Oh, I say," he said in a hushed voice, "a cool hundred!"

Anna's grey eyes stared, her mouth opened, her hand went out and came back. It was quite clear to her that Ronnie held but one note. Yet, if she said a word, the excitable boy would make such a fuss—a scene even. Besides, it would spoil his birthday pleasure.

"Well, you *are* a sister!" he went on. "I don't wonder—never did, of course—at old Nunky Peter leaving you all his stuff."

Anna tried to smile, while she surreptitiously felt about in her bag, though she

knew she had folded the two notes together just as she received them at the bank. She took out hanky and bunch of violets, saw a torn scrap of paper on the latter, and flicked it impatiently aside. It fluttered beneath the table, and in due season was swept away by the cleaners.

Ronnie was too much taken up with his prize to be otherwise observant. This gave her time to recover from her blank dismay; she was a young woman who thought quickly. And, fortunately, she could always manage Ronnie.

"Old boy," she said, rising, still a little pale, "I'm going to leave you to pay the bill, and then we'll meet in the lounge and have coffee. By the way, let me have some change—just a little."

"Right O," said Ronnie, who was carrying her purse for the evening. "Wish I'd been staying in Town another night. I'd give you a proper blow-out, not but what this would be hard to beat. Still, something a little more Bohemian, you know—eh?"

Anna laughed and left him. At the door she said to the head waiter: "I want to see the manager, please—in private. Oh, no, it isn't a complaint!"—and slipped something into the ready palm.

Presently she was closeted with the manager and the chief cashier, whom he had summoned.

"Madame can, of course, identify her note—Madame has the number," said the manager with stiff suavity.

Anna's frown was for herself. "No, I haven't," she answered. "I got the note from my bank this afternoon; I expect the banker will be able to tell me the number in the morning."

"Without a doubt."

"I am sorry to have troubled you hastily."

"Madame did perfectly right to report her loss at the earliest moment. We shall keep our eyes open. It might be well to inform the police, even though we have not yet the number. At the same time"—the manager smiled deprecatingly—"one hopes that Madame will be sympathising enough to understand that it is unpleasant for the hotel as well as for—"

"Oh, yes, I see that, and the last thing I want is publicity. I was careless, and perhaps I deserve to lose. Still—"

"Madame may rest assured that we shall do all we can," said the manager less stiffly, and recorded Anna in his mind as the first reasonable woman who had ever lodged a

complaint in that office, and he had been in charge for twenty years.

"Thank you," said Anna. "You shall have the number in the morning. Please say nothing to the police in the meantime."

The manager bowed and laid his hand on the door.

"Oh, one moment," said Anna. "There's one little thing I can tell you about the note. It was not quite new, and in one of the corners—the left, I think—there was a little oblong stamped in green, with U. B. L. inside."

At that the silent cashier gave an involuntary jerk, and the manager looked at him.



"He looks as if he had been ill," she remarked."

Now, had Anna been less "reasonable," it is possible that the manager would have been more discreet. He held out his hand, and the cashier gave him a hundred-pound note.

"It is, of course, impossible," said the manager, whose private business motto was "You never can tell," and paused for a moment, regarding the paper. "This note was paid in a few minutes ago by a customer who is known to us. It can be only a coincidence that it bears a stamp similar to the one Madame has described. The Union Bank is a large concern. Still, Madame is entitled to examine it. After all, all depends on the number."

Anna scarcely heard the last sentence. She had turned the note over. A sense of suffocation was upon her, a sickness of heart. She became conscious that the men were watching her; she knew she was pale. She knew also that she must lie, and lie quickly. She nerved herself.

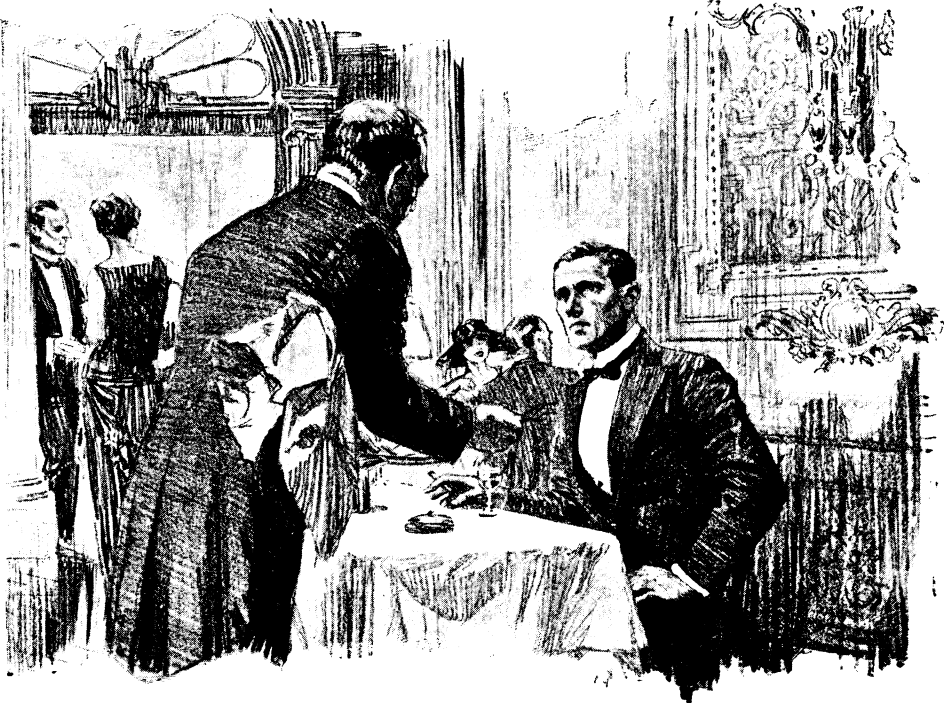
"No," she said, returning the note, and raised her head. "It is just a coincidence, as you say. For a moment the green stamp— But the note I have lost was a little shabbier than this one." She smiled frankly. "Thank you for your courtesy." She bowed and went out.

She passed on to join her brother in the lounge, and the thief went his way.

He reached his studio like a man at the last gasp. On the floor lay a letter which had not come through the post. It contained a cheque for forty guineas, and the writer, among other pleasant things, wrote—

"I want more of your work, and I want my friends to know it. If Saturday afternoon will suit you, I shall bring several people—all potential purchasers—to your studio."

Alan Moore hid his face. "How could I have done it?"



"Might I trouble m'sieu to write his name and address?"

Manager and cashier eyed each other.

As she was making her way to the lounge, Alan Moore came from the restaurant, looking neither to right nor left. At that moment Anna's predominant feelings were those of anger and disgust, but at the sight of the white, set face—a mask of despair it seemed to her—though the anger remained, the disgust was overborne by a sudden pity. "How can he be a mean thief—that nice-looking boy?" Yet she was certain that the note was hers; she had memorised the last three figures of its number, and could not hope that the bank would give her different figures in the morning.

In the morning the manager of the Planet, somewhat to his surprise, received a letter giving a number and requesting that the police should not be brought in. The number had been inspired by a taxi-cab.

In his studio, after a hasty visit to the bank, Alan awaited he knew not what. A detective, a lawyer, an irate gentleman, an hysterical bejewelled woman—he had visions of these and many others. And he did not very much care which came to his door. The long night of shameful reflection had left him apathetic.

The morning passed without a knock. He had no inclination for food. It was late in

the afternoon when, roused from a short doze, he opened his door.

In the dusk stood a girl.

"You are Mr. Moore, I think," she said, and ere he could reply: "I have seen your picture in the Savile Galleries, and should like to buy it, if it is for sale."

He came to himself. "Would you care to come in?" he said doubtfully.

"Thank you—for a moment."

He closed the door, gave her a chair, switched on the light—and recognised the handbag.

For a space he stood there, a stricken man. She saw his agony.

"Oh, please!" she whispered, tears springing.

The power of action, but not of speech, returned. He went to a bureau, came back and, downcast, presented a hundred-pound note.

She took it, checked an exclamation, and said: "I did not come just for—for this. At first I had no thought of coming at all; but afterwards. . . ." With a little helpless gesture she paused. Then: "You see, I saw you last night—"

He winced.

"—in the restaurant," she went on quickly. "My brother, though he does not know you, told me who you were. We had been looking at your picture that very afternoon." Again she halted.

"Ah," he said hoarsely, bitterly, "you did not take me then for a—"

"Nor now," she said quietly, with sudden courage, "or I should not be here."

"You are very merciful. My IOU was an impudence, though it would show you that I had not thought to take more than five pounds."

"Your IOU!" she cried, with a puzzled frown.

"On a scrap of newspaper—there was nothing else at hand."

"Oh, dear! I threw it aside when I was hunting for the note. Your IOU! Why, then, Mr. Moore. . . ." The fair face lightened with relief.

"No, no!" he said wearily. "I stole your money, and nothing can alter that. I simply picked your—"

"Oh, please!"

"And now—" He stopped short. "But—but how did you find me out?"

It was Anna's turn to wince, but she answered in a breath: "I went to the manager—he showed me the note—I said it wasn't mine."

He was holding his hand to his heart as though it hurt him. "But why did you spare me? Had it been anyone but you, what would have been the result for me? Gaol almost for certain—disgrace without question!"

She shivered slightly. "Mr. Moore," she said, after a moment, "I have no one in the world but my brother Ronnie. He is only twenty, and in all but years ages younger than I. All last night I kept thinking how dreadful it would be if some day he lost everything through helping a friend—you see, I know that much—and had to suffer as you must have suffered. Last night, in the restaurant, I thought you looked as if you had been very ill. Forgive me, please, but were you starv—hungry? Never mind! I was once hungry myself and—and pretty desperate, too, in the days before my uncle came home from abroad. Then, in the morning, I wondered if I might not come to see you; but I hadn't the courage. Yet all day the thought stayed, and at last I *had* to come. Of course I know that it's rather unusual," Anna concluded a little primly, without, perhaps, having recognised that it is the rather unusual things that make life tolerable.

Alan said nothing; he no longer dared to glance at her. The girl's simple tenderness made him want to throw himself at her feet.

For a little while silence, and then she resumed, with more awkwardness than before in voice and manner—

"And so I came—oh, please, don't be offended!—to see if I could be of any help. I'm awfully fond of pictures, you know, and I've hardly any in my flat, and—and—"

"Don't, for Heaven's sake!" he said under his breath; and, hoarsely: "Will you read this? I found it when I got back last night, with your ninety-nine pounds in my pocket." He gave her the letter, and moved into the shadow, where he seated himself, in trembling weakness, at the table.

There was stillness till, with a little exclamation of unaffected delight, she cried—

"Oh, how lovely!"

It was too much for Alan. He bowed himself upon the table and gave way.

She was shy concern and compunction. She had seen that the man was worn out, and now she guessed something else.

"Mr. Moore," she said almost sternly, "have you had any lunch? Will you,

please, get something to eat at once? But be sure to eat it slowly."

Possibly the practical nature of her remarks helped Alan to pull himself together. He got up shamefaced, yet with something of the hopelessness fallen from him.

"I can never thank you," he stammered.

And all at once Anna became timid. "I think I must be going," she said.

"May I not know your name?" he ventured.

She told him, moving to the door. There she held out her hand, and the action was shy but quite natural.

"Oh, God bless you," he said thickly



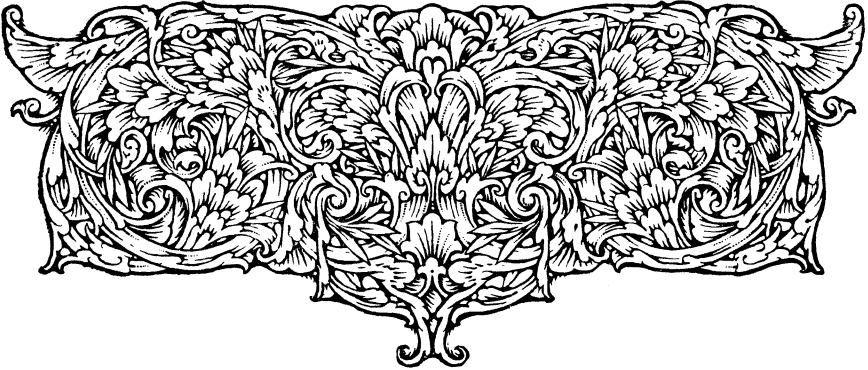
"It was too much for Alan. He bowed himself upon the table and gave way."

"you're perfectly wonderful! And I suppose I shall never see you again."

She did not answer, and, like a man in a trance, he watched her go down the stair,

take the turn, and pass from his sight—  
dissolve into a mist, so it seemed.

Yet it all happened so recently that one may hesitate to call this the end of the story.



## OUT OF THE WORLD.

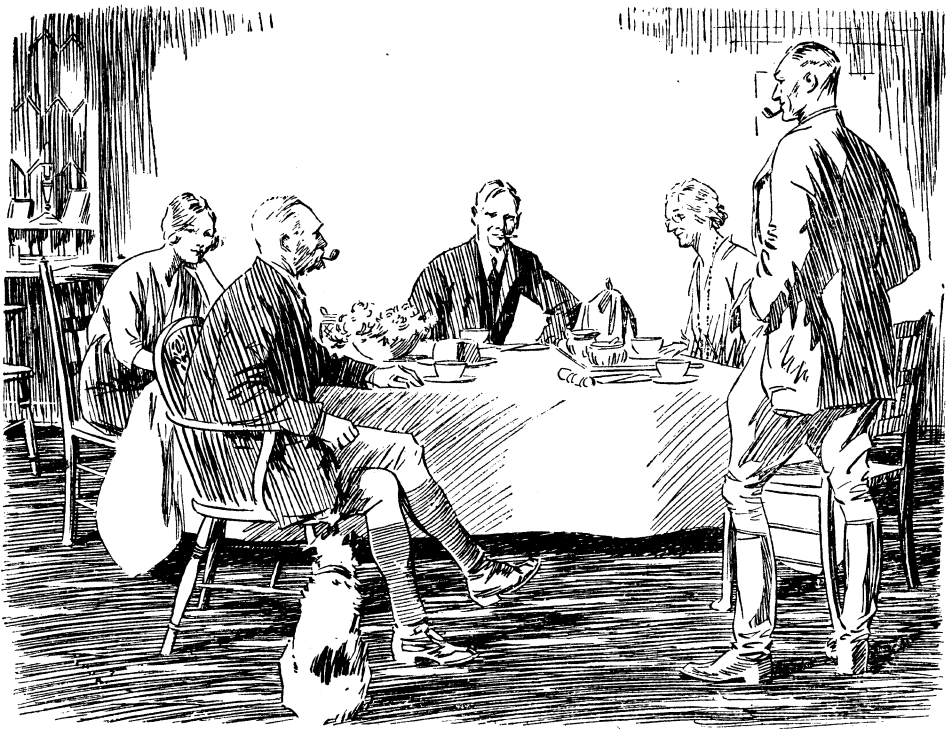
**O**UT of the world I make my nest  
Here on the hill-top's golden crest;  
Far from the fretful life of towns,  
At peace with the woods and the silver downs;  
With fields and streams and little green lanes,  
And clean blue skies o'er the rolling plains;  
A friend or two, and one friend—the best,  
And Sussex north, south, east and west.

Out of the world I make my home,  
And when Spring comes I will roam and roam  
Over the moors that are gay with gorse,  
Shanks' pony my trusty horse;  
And the rain may come and the wind may blow,  
But I through the friendly fields will go  
With a friend or two, and one friend—the best,  
And Sussex north, south, east and west.

Out of the world I will live and die  
Under the clean and wind-swept sky;  
And the birds shall sing for me night and day,  
Nightingale, cuckoo and shrill-voiced jay;  
And the sound of the brooks as they prattle along  
Shall be my matin and evensong,  
With a friend or two, and one friend—the best,  
And Sussex north, south, east and west.

R. B. INCE,





“‘He’s got Celestine,’ said Harry . . . ‘It would be enough for an ordinary man,’ Father thought, ‘but not for a nobleman.’”

# TAKING CARE OF CELESTINE

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

**F**ATHER took his adversity much as he had taken his prosperity. It was all in the day’s work, he said. Only he worried about Celestine.

“You young ’uns,” he told the other children, who were still under the family roof in Canada—a new and smaller roof—“are tough; regular young Canadians. You’ll make your own way, like Mother and I did.” He always put half of his success down to Mother. “Come to that, Mother and I will have a shot at making it again. Eh, missus? We’re all right. What troubles me is Celestine.”

“She has a husband to look after her,” Tom commented. He was just twenty, and six feet one, half an inch taller than Father. “He’s well off to what we are now.”

“We were well off to what he was when he married her,” Father observed. “He’ll think that he hasn’t got what he bargained for.”

“He’s got Celestine,” said Harry. He was nineteen, and just Father’s height. “That’s something.”

“It would be enough for an ordinary man,” Father thought, “but not for a nobleman. That’s a man who marries a girl

for what's coming to her, mark you, my boy." He shrugged his great shoulders.

"Why did you let her do it?" Tom wanted to know. "Anybody could manage Celestine."

"Ah," said Father, "why? . . . You kids were too young to understand her. Mother and I did. You could get Celestine to do anything—any blessed thing—except one. She couldn't stop liking anyone, once she began, except by stopping breathing. And she liked him. So we hoped for the best, and let it go at that, and prayed God he'd look after her. Celestine never could take care of herself, like you young devils can. I say it came from your Mother giving her a name out of a story-book, meaning 'heavenly' or something of that sort."

"That," said Mother, "was why I gave her that name. She was a delicate little thing; and, come to that, I was in those days. It was the care your Father took of us that pulled us both through, and I don't forget it. . . . She used to look like a baby angel, lying in her cot. She always folded her little hands. . . . Little baby hands! . . . She looked just the same when she grew up; and when she was married. I can see her now in her wedding-dress, and see my baby in her. And in her white cap and white furs waving good-bye over the ship's side, and see my baby in them, too. They called her 'The Baby Bride' aboard, she wrote. Everyone always thought of Celestine as a baby who had to be looked after."

Mother sighed.

"Yes," said Hettie—she was a fine young woman of one-and-twenty—"even we kids did, though in lots of ways she looked after us. She *was* rather like a big baby. We always helped her over the streams and through the bush when she took us out."

"She was such a mite," Tom explained. "When I was small I used to wonder if she was a fairy."

"Sometimes," Hettie said, "I wonder now."

"Celestine," said Harry, "was *all right*. She'd get over anybody; but I don't know about noblemen."

"She'll be a baby still," Father declared. "Twenty-four, isn't she, Mother? . . . Twenty-four, and the Countess of Commishall . . . Fancy our 'Angel' in a robe and coronet, or whatever they wear! She'll look all right, though, in them."

"In anything," Hettie cried. "She is the prettiest creature that ever breathed, and the sweetest."

"And I don't suppose," Father said, as if he talked to himself, "that she'd ever have suspected that he married her for her money—Celestine never suspected anyone, and for mere decency he wouldn't let her know—if this hadn't happened. Bound to find out now."

"Surely to goodness," Hettie cried, "he won't be a brute to her because she's lost what was coming to her. And it will yet. You'll be rich again before you're done, old dad. Mark my words. If he lets it make the slightest difference in the way he treats her, he'll be a cad, worse than a cad. After all, a British nobleman should be a gentleman, and take bad luck like a sport."

"He should be," Father agreed. "He should be. . . . No, Het, he won't mean to be brutal to her, and I dare say he'll try to take it sportingly; but it *will* make a difference, and she'll notice it. She'll notice other things—the attitude of the people round her; hear things—principally from the women. They aren't her sort, and she isn't their sort. Thank God! When I went home that time—I always wished that Mother could have come, but she thought you kids too young to leave—and was at the Castle for a week, it seemed to me as if our girl was all alone among them, lost in a desert among strangers. She seemed like a pearl kept in a big trunk instead of a little leather case with velvet to snuggle in. I nearly cried when I told Mother about it—didn't I, Mother?—nearly cried. I always picture her sitting in a chair a couple of sizes too big for her, in one of their great barns of rooms. She had a little dog to cuddle up. Celestine always cuddled up to something. Now she'll hear things, especially from that cat of an Aunt who lives with them, I expect; nearly break her little heart. . . ."

He blew his nose.

"And her mother not there to take care of her," Mother sobbed, and buried her face in her hands. She had not cried when their flocks died in the drought, or their horses went with the pest, or over the bank that broke, or the ships that sank, or the markets that failed or went mad with panic. It was strange to them to see Mother "give way." Father always called her "the best man in the family." Hettie put an arm round her, and Father a hand on her shoulder. The boys fidgeted, and got nearer and touched her dress when they thought that nobody was looking.

"Well," Tom said, "we've got enough

to carry on for a bit. Harry and I could easily clear up what's left to do here. You'd both be better for a holiday before the governor starts a fresh stunt. Why don't you take a trip to England, and have a look at Celestine? See how things are going, you know."

"And if they aren't treating her properly, bring her back with you," Harry suggested. "We'd take care of her."

"You can't take a woman from her husband," Hettie thought; "but you could stay with her for a bit, and—and buck her up."

"We couldn't take her away," Father said, "but we could bring her out here for a visit to her parents. A visit—see, Mother?"

"If he only married her for her money," Tom observed, "he may be glad to get rid of her for a bit."

"They always marry for money," Harry stated scornfully, "those titled bounders; I'd rather marry a girl that hadn't any." They laughed, and he joined in. "I can't marry Nan for her money, anyhow," he claimed, "because she hasn't any."

"Are you sure that he *did*?" Hettie wanted to know. "Did he tell you so?"

"He left my room on his feet," Father said grimly, "so you may take it that he didn't. On the other hand, he didn't say in plain English—I don't think he'd tell a lie; I'll say that for him—that he loved her. I make out that the aristocracy are above owning that, even if they do. I didn't see much signs of loving, the short time that I was among them. They'd only been married five months, and I never caught him giving her a sly squeeze, or when they were courting, which is more than I can say of some people!"

He wagged his head at Hettie.

"He's twice as good to me since we lost our money," the girl stated spiritedly, "and I'm proud for people to see."

"Aye," her Father said. "Thank God that you've got a *man*. God bless him! You and your Arthur will be all right, my girl. . . . Well, Mother? What do you say to Tom's idea? It's been rather in my mind, too, only the young beggar's gone and taken the wind out of my sails. Shall we leave the kids to carry on for a bit, and go and have a look at Celestine? And if she isn't being taken proper care of, bring her back where she will be?"

"I've been wanting to ever since she left," Mother owned. "As to bringing her back, of course she wouldn't leave him, all the

time she thought that he cared for her. But if she's found out, through this, that he only married her for her money, *then* I think she'd come, if we only called it a visit, though she mightn't own why she was doing it. She's never complained; always made out that everyone was very good to her, even that woman with the funny name who usurps her place as mistress of the house."

Mother clenched her hands and shook them.

"Ah!" said Father. "Aunt Ursula. The Hon. Miss Ursula Hightowers! The old hag! She fell into a starch-bag some time! I wouldn't have liked to hear *you*, if I'd proposed having an Aunt Ursula 'to take household cares off your shoulders.' That's how he put it to me."

"He wouldn't have dared to say it to me!" Mother cried. "I'd have told him what I thought!"

"She would," Father assured the children. "You don't know what your mother is in a tantrum! I do!"

Mother laughed. So did Father. So did the children.

"You haven't done so badly, governor," Tom thought.

"That's a fact," Father agreed. "Well, Mother? The next mail, eh? It's no use waiting for the water to get warm."

"I only wish it went to-morrow," Mother declared. "In her last two letters she's owned that she wasn't very well. That means that she's ill. She would make the least of it, not to worry me. I know Celestine. Perhaps England doesn't suit her so well as Canada?"

"That," Father declared, "is the line to take. She needs a change to her native heath. I'll bet three to one we bring her back, for a visit. Just for a visit. Oh, yes! Het's wedding might be another excuse, eh? I dare say Arthur might be persuaded into having it soon for our sakes."

Het laughed heartily at that, and the boys slapped her on the back.

"Poor old Arthur!" Harry said. "He hasn't seen Het in a tantrum. *We* have!"

"He'll be taken care of!" Father chuckled. "A chip of the old she-block, Het is. . . . I don't know what to call Celestine."

"A little angel baby," Mother said softly, "sent down from Heaven to be taken care of. . . . All alone in that great cold castle! Among great cold people who don't *care*! . . . When does the mail go, Charlie?"

It went in five days' time, on the next Wednesday, and Father and Mother went in it. As they neared England they began to appreciate the full difficulty of persuading Celestine to leave her husband. So they laid their plans very carefully during the last few days aboard. They must pretend not to notice anything wrong, and Mother was not to broach the subject even to Celestine until Celestine started it; but unless they were satisfied that she was well taken care of and happy (which they mentioned as a theoretical rather than a practical contingency), they would urge that she came back with them for a visit, on account of her health, or for Het's wedding, or for some other reason.

"We must be careful to say 'visit,'" Father always insisted; "but if she's found out that he only married her for her money, we won't let her go back again. Don't you suppose that I wouldn't like to tell him what I think of him, Mother; but we must put Celestine before our feelings, you see."

"Of course," Mother agreed. "Of course. But I might give him a hint of what I think about his having that old woman interfering in Celestine's house. He wouldn't have done it if he'd married *me!*"

"I'd like to have seen him try!" Father said. "But no hints, Mother—no hints. You're inclined to be a bit broad with them! I know you. You and I have got to be quiet, simple folk, and taken in by their blarney. Taken in!" He rubbed his hands. "What we've got to manage is to carry Celestine off."

"Where she'll be taken proper care of," Mother added.

"Yes, yes; but don't say a word about that. We mustn't make out that *they* don't do it, you see. Especially not if the girl still thinks anything of him. Might get her back up."

"Celestine's!" Mother cried.

"There's not a mule so obstinate as a soft woman," Father declared, "in some things. We mustn't upset her. If she makes out that everything is all right between them, we've got to pretend that we take it in. We'll ask him to spare her—'spare her,' see—for a few months, for the sake of her health, or to see Het also happily married—note the 'also,' Mother?—or because her mother and father have had trouble, and are getting old. Don't you be too brisk, old lady, not too brisk. And, whatever you do, don't mention that I won the prize

at the sports for putting the sandbag! We're a pair of poor old crocks. See?"

"I see," Mother agreed. "The great thing is to get Celestine peacefully, and take care of her."

"Yes," Father said; "but don't you keep saying that. . . . If she'd married an ordinary chap, he'd bring her to meet the boat, but being an earl, the earl and countess will stay at home to 'receive' us! Receive us! And many a time I've walked the room with her! Cried easier than the rest, didn't she? But always stopped crying if you hugged her up."

"Ah!" Mother said. "You did a lot for her, and for me, too. I was in a poor way then. If it hadn't been for the care you took of us, I'd never have reared the child, and never have been the strong woman that I am. You were very unselfish, Charlie."

"Unselfish!" He laughed. "Why, I was the most selfish beggar on earth! I wanted you—both of you—more than I wanted anything else. So I took good care of you. What is there in that?"

"Only everything, dear," Mother said. "Oh, Charlie, if your children would always stay babies!"

"Ah!" he said. "Ah!" He lit his pipe thoughtfully. "In a way they do—in a way. Well, that's that, Mother. The idea is to get baby Celestine back to take care of her."

"Yes," Mother agreed; "but don't *you* keep saying that! If she has any influence at all over him, she'll make him bring her to meet us."

They inspected the boat which brought off welcoming friends, but there was no Celestine upon it.

"That shows," Mother said. "We know how our girl will want to come, and, if he studied her at all, he couldn't refuse to bring her. He's being nasty because we've lost our money, and—"

"Wait a minute, Mother," Father said. "Wait a minute. Let me have the glasses again. That's his noble lordship, the long lean chap in the brown overcoat nearly down to his boots, standing just beside the place where they'll run out the gangway to go ashore. Behind that fat woman with the blue feather in her hat. You look!"

"It is, Charlie! It is! Perhaps he's put her in the saloon, out of the cold? It makes me more hopeful."

"If he's brought her," Father said. "Yes. . . . Don't build on it, Mother. Don't build on it. He may have come to have a



row with me without Celestine knowing, perhaps to warn us off because we're paupers. He'll think we're that, with a few thousand left. If I'd thought he was that sort of man, she shouldn't have married him—better have broken her heart. *He* may break off with us, but if I have to fight my way into the Castle, I'll see my girl. I—”

“S-sh!” Mother entreated. “S-sh! She’s in the saloon. She must be in the saloon. We shall see her in a minute. She’ll come out when the pinnacle is alongside. I wonder what she’ll wear? nice in anything.”

“In anything,” Father agreed. “Yes, yes. She must be there. I ought not to have jumped at it like that. He couldn’t think he could keep us from our own girl. Many a time I walked the room with her, didn’t I? . . . She’ll be in the saloon—in the saloon. Here they are. He’ll go to fetch her now.

“There was Percy—our noble earl—regulating the gas-fire . . . and he “S-sh’d” your mother not to wake her.”

They do things like that, titled people. He’ll fetch her on his arm—on his arm. . . . Time he did it. . . .”

“He’s waiting to bring her up after the crush,” Mother suggested. She gripped the hand-rail and stared at the doorway of the covered place called by courtesy the “saloon.” She thought that, in her impatience to see her mother and father,

Celestine would not wait to be fetched—if she were there!

Celestine's husband walked up the steps alone.

"Curse him!" Father muttered between his teeth.

"Father!" Mother whispered. She clung to his arm.

"Leave it to me, Mother," he said fiercely. "You leave it to me. I'll let him open the business."

He clenched his fists.

Their son-in-law advanced with outstretched hand.

"Welcome," he said. "I needn't say that I'm sorry, but you'll right things yet, sir, right them yet. We are pleased and proud that you have come to us."

Father took the outstretched hand and gripped it as in a vice.

"Thank you," he said. "Thank you."

"Celestine?" Mother asked.

"Not quite well enough to travel," his lordship said. "Put it 'not quite well enough for me to think she's fit to travel'; not worse than that. You see, she's such a delicate little person, and I—perhaps I fuss over her a bit. . . . I've a closed motor, so that we can get to her quickly. She's in a fever of impatience, of course. I hope it won't upset her."

"She's ill!" Mother cried.

"Not ill," he denied. "Not really ill—a bit anæmic and nervy—just that."

"We must have a specialist," Father cried hastily.

"I've had three," he told them. "They all say it's only that, and that she's getting better. In fact, Saunderson—Sir William Saunderson, you know—rather hinted that I was making too much of it; but— Well, *you* know what Celestine is, Mrs. Hardy—a delicate little person that you must take a lot of care of."

Father gasped, looked away for a few moments. Mother put her hand on her son-in-law's arm for a moment.

"I expect," she suggested, "the news of our losses upset her."

"Er—they would have, of course," he said, "but—you see, I haven't told her! I was going to ask you not to. Why should she be worried when there's no need? Celestine really doesn't understand anything about money matters. So long as we have enough for what we generally do—she's not extravagant, not at all extravagant—she won't notice any difference. There's really no reason why she should ever know

at all! She worries so over other people's troubles, more than over her own. *You* know what she is, Mrs. Hardy. She could never look after herself. I have to think for her. Of course, you'll miss the sympathy that she'd give you, but I thought you wouldn't mind that, for her good. So I decided to ask you to leave her in the dark, and not say anything about the losses, or make out that they are trifling. Best plan, eh?"

Father nodded. He did not seem able to speak. The Earl breathed a sigh of relief.

"That's a weight off my mind," he said. "She's a little handful to look after."

"But you don't mind doing it?" Mother suggested gently.

"Er—no!" he said. "I—er—oh, no! I don't mind. . . . Of course I didn't want anything to set her back now she's picking up. She really is, Mrs. Hardy, I assure you. She gets up to lunch now, and to-day I've promised that she shan't go to bed till after dinner. . . . We can get off now. I don't want to hurry you, but she'll fidget and fidget till you arrive."

"And *you*," Mother said gently. She put her hand on his arm again.

"You see," he apologised, "she always looks to me to do things for her. Of course anybody could do them, only. . . . Well, you know her."

"It seems to me," Father said suddenly, "that you do."

His lordship flushed.

"I'm glad," he said, "you think that. I only—only take care of her. It's rather—rather my business, you see!"

Father laughed out loud.

"It's his show, Mother!" he cried. "By Jove, it's his show! We're going to have a lesson in taking care of Celestine!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"And we did," he told the family, when Mother and he returned. "We did! The fuss that they made over her! If she was anybody else, I might say it was ridiculous. It's the whole lot of them, from our noble lord down to the boot-boy. Celestine says herself 'They all spoil me.' When we went in, there was Aunt Ursula catching hold of us and imploring us to remember that we mustn't over-excite 'the child'—that's what she called her—and begging us to remember not to let anything slip out about my losses. She spoke very nicely about them, and said she was sure that such a clever and courageous man would reinstate himself. She's fond of words like that, but

otherwise all right when you know her. Not at all a bad sort. She almost carried Celestine back to her chair after she'd rushed out of it to hug Mother and me. Fusses over her like a hen with one chick. Never had a chick of her own, poor soul. She hasn't altered a bit—Celestine I mean. Just the same happy little person. Happier. . . . Happier. . . . Dash it all! She *ought* to be, the way they look after her! All the servants racing to pick up her handkerchief, and the butler keeping an eye on what she had to eat. Wouldn't let her have a second ice. 'You know last time, my lady,' he whispers, 'you weren't so well after it,' and she laughs and says, 'Please, Smithers! I'm better now.' And he runs round to Percy and whispers, 'Do you think her ladyship might venture on half a second ice, my lord?' . . . And when she went to bed, they had an invalid chair to carry her up in. *And she could have walked nearly as well as you or I!* Ha, ha, ha! I was going to take one end, but the butler touches me on the shoulder. 'That's his lordship's end, sir,' he whispers in my ear. And to get the other end I had to make it a favour from the footman whose turn it was! Oh, she's looked after all right!

"Mother went in to peep at her after she was asleep, and there was Aunt Ursula seeing that the windows were open just the right amount. 'Celestine is such a hot-house plant,' she explained. 'You can't be too careful with her.' Mother went in again and found the housekeeper arranging her dressing-jacket, and books, and fruit and

all sorts of things for her, in case she woke in the night. 'It's such a pleasure,' she said, 'to see her ladyship getting well and lively again. It was a dull house with her ill, ma'am. His lordship would break his heart if anything happened to her, and Lady Ursula very nearly. Worship her they do, and some of us are nearly as bad. She always seems to *trust* to you. That's what we like about her.'

"Well, Mother wasn't going to be put off having a look at her girl alone. So she went in a third time; and, bless my soul, there was Percy—our noble earl—looking to the windows, in case Aunt Ursula hadn't got them right, and regulating the gas fire, and rearranging the rest of the things, *including* a bell-push to summon him if she woke and wanted anything. . . . And he 'S-sh'd' your mother not to wake her, and whispered to her to kiss her very softly, because she roused easily. And Mother obeyed him like a lamb, and kissed Celestine like a feather, and told him that she and I had come carrying coals to Newcastle!"

"I didn't say that," Mother denied. "I kissed *him* hard! And I told him that Celestine was the best-cared-for girl in Christendom!"

"She's that all right," Father agreed. "I was almost inclined to give him a hint not to overdo it, but it's his show, taking care of Celestine, and I'm not going to claim that we are as good at the business as he is. . . . A lovely colour she had, hadn't she, Mother, by the time we left?"

## ROSEMARY FOR REMEMBRANCE.

**I SEND** a sprig of rosemary,  
Of rosemary all fresh and sweet,  
To carry tender thoughts to you,  
And lay dear memories at your feet.

I send a sprig of rosemary  
That you may see the garden walk  
Where presently the misty flowers  
Will blossom on each grey-green stalk;

That you may see delphinium flowers,  
Remember where the lily grows,  
And see along the fragrant hedge  
The pale, pink sweetness of the rose.

I send a sprig of rosemary  
To tell you I am very near,  
The rosemary's my messenger,  
Just "for remembrance," dear, my dear!

L. G. MOBERLY.



MISUNDERSTOOD.

SMALL BOY (as vicar just catches train and enters carriage puffing and panting): Dad, I thought I heard you say on Sunday that Mr. Potts was long-winded.

# THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

JOHN PACKS.

By B. Ross.

I MET John on the stairs, staggering under a load of cuffs, waistcoats, and mauve-striped pyjamas.

"Can I help?" I asked—perfunctorily, I must confess.

"I can manage," he replied airily. "I am working on an entirely new system."

I groaned inwardly. John's systems were an ever-present menace to the harmony of our home. His theory of cooking had caused me to lose two valuable cooks within a week, and I had not yet recovered from my interview with the housemaid, to whom he had been delivering directions on dusting.

I followed John into the dining-room.

"I am packing in here," he said; "it entirely obviates the necessity of getting a heavy trunk down a narrow staircase."

The dining-room table stood on end, to make more floor-space; its legs were being used as temporary coat-hangers. Miscellaneous kit overflowed from chairs, and the multi-coloured ties suspended from the chandelier gave it the appearance of a maypole.

I fell over a tennis racquet and sat down on

the fender, which seemed the only available seat. John loosened his collar and explained.

"Everything goes into the trunk in alphabetical order. Consider the advantages, Pamela! You can't miss anything out, and you know exactly where everything is. I am working on the B's—bath-soap, boots, buttons, books. Books are rather puzzling. Should Tennyson go with the ties, and Shakespeare sit on the shoes?"

He handed me the dictionary, which I accepted with due meekness.

"Now look through the B's and see if I have missed out any article I may require between bag and brush," he commanded.

I read out: "Baa, babes, baccatourcate, bacon, back-stairs, baldness, bananas."

"I want help, not humour, Pamela," he said grimly, as he watched a pile of clean shirts heave and then slide off their insecure perch on the mantelshelf.

My interview with the haughty housemaid had disturbed my usual serenity, and my little black monkey made me say—

"How am I to know that you don't want to pack your balloon or your bandoline or your bank or——" I glanced at John's troubled face and relented.





THE LIMIT.

FAIR HELPER (at the village school treat): Wouldn't you like another of these, little man?  
LITTLE MAN: No, thanks, miss. I can still eat, but I can't swallow!



SOUP-ERFLUOUS.

HIS WIFE: Do you like my hair in a bun?  
THE CRUSTY ONE: Oh, anywhere, my dear, as long as it isn't in the soup.

"Well, then, is this any help? Bank-book, bay rum, bismuth, blankets. Are you catching the mid-day train to-morrow? Then I think if we sit up all night we may win through. After all, there can't be much in Q and X Y Z."

John left the room to get some blotting-paper, so I fluttered over the rest of the B's and said "Byzantian" in a loud voice when he

returned. He looked worried, and I knew the end was near.

"Now for the C's," he said in a voice which had lost much of its enthusiasm.

"John," I said, "I know, without looking, C stands for cake, and caddy stands for tea."

I threw Nuttall's standard work among that chaos of clothes and then pulled his arm.

"Come and cook crumpets, you foolish man, and after tea a mere woman is going to finish your packing."

And when John heard that, at least ten years seemed to roll away from his brow. He gathered me—and incidentally a few dozen ties—into his arms.

"Perhaps," he said, "it's as well that all my attempts to systemise you, so far, have failed."



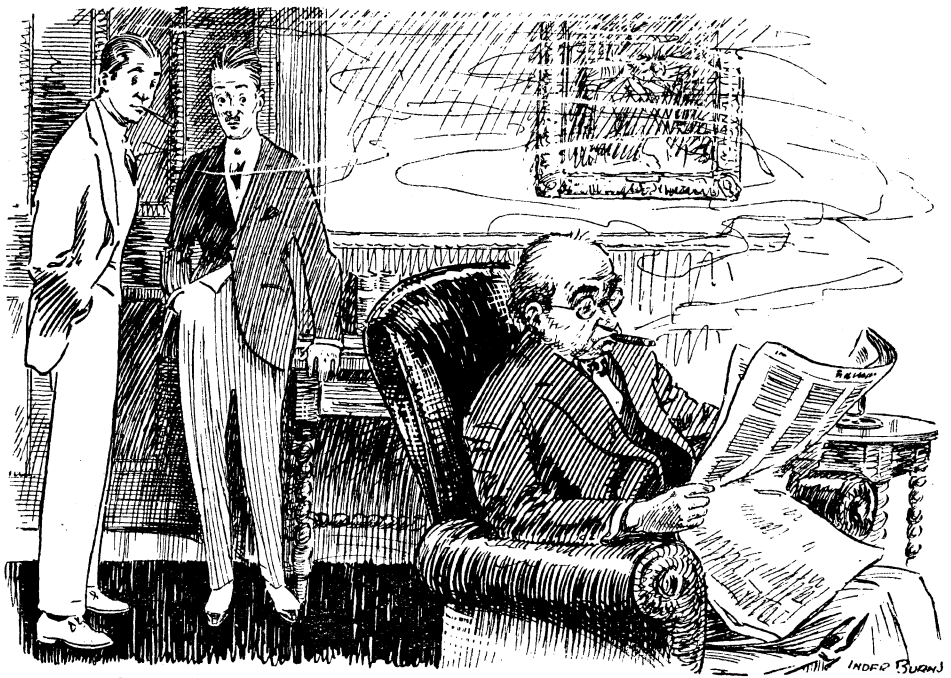
A TEACHER of music in a school was trying to impress upon her pupils the meaning of *f* and *ff* in a song they were about to learn. After explaining the first sign she said: "Now, children, if *f* means forte, what does *ff* mean?"

"Eighty!" shouted one.



THE DIFFERENCE.

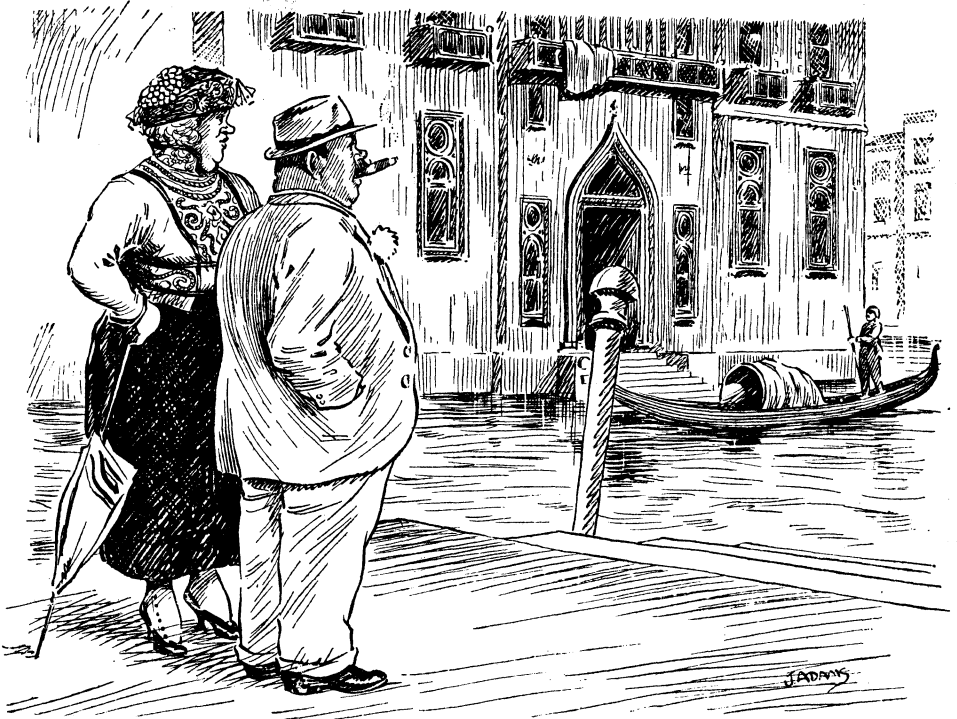
SECOND CLIMBER OF CUMBERLAND PEAKS TO FIRST DITTO: What a gorgeous holiday one can have—on the Norfolk Broads!



THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING.

"He's a vegetarian."

"I know. I've smoked one of his cigars."



FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF VENICE.

"THAT'LL be one o' them Gorgonzolas, Alf."

## THE BEACH DOG.

By Jessie Pope.

I HAVE always found that my cordial attitude towards dogs has been mutual, so that when I saw him trotting across the beach to greet me, without an introduction, I was more pleased than surprised. He was pure-bred about five times removed; one of his eyes was of the "wall" variety, but the other was bright brown and loving, and when I chirruped and caressed him he whimpered with ecstasy, and his stumpy-like tail oscillated with a speed that was absolutely pathetic. While he sidled and twisted round me, before joining my stroll along the beach, I noticed his teeth were curiously blunted, his jaws moist and sandy, and the white hair on his chest and flanks stained a tawny pink.

The sands were no longer littered with reclining holiday-makers, either coupled or in family harness, for the season was over, and I welcomed his companionship, thinking, in my innocence, that here was a rare example of palship without complications.

At first he gambolled along in front with an air of expectant anxiety, but I did not realise what he wanted till, stopping at a stone embedded in the sand, he excavated it with the speed and precision of an expert, and laid it at my feet.

Smiling indulgently, I stooped, tossed it into the breaking waves, and by that action my doom was sealed. Plunging into the froth and foam, he seized his treasure, and returned it to me with a salvo of short sharp barks that jarred every nerve in my body.

Still, prompted by my goodwill to his species, I repeated the performance about a dozen times. Then I had had enough, and said so, and found that persuasions, menaces, threatening gestures, availed me nothing. I might as well have asked the waves not to break. Uninterrupted by plunges into the sea, the barking grew sharper and more incessant, and forced me once more to bow to his will.

"Ger-way!" I ejaculated, with weary despair, but he didn't, and hasn't.

I cannot shake him off. He waits for me every morning, and ceaselessly and vociferously dogs my distracted footsteps along the beach. My ear-drums have become dulled and deadened. I am followed by frowning glances

from disturbed invalids in bath-chairs, and asked to keep my dog under control by ladies whose autumn tailor-mades suffer by his indiscriminate shakings.

My only hope is to slip unseen to the station and return to Town, but even then I know that the hard, clockwork clamour of the beach dog will haunt my dreams.



At the morning service one Sunday little Roger was seated beside a very fashionably attired woman.



SCEPTICISM.

FIRST HOLIDAY-MAKER: Great excitement in the boarding-house last night. There was a cry of "Burglars!" and I slipped on a few things and rushed downstairs two steps at a time.

SECOND HOLIDAY-MAKER: Why? Was the burglar on the roof?

When the bearer of the offertory bag came slowly down the aisle, the lady began searching wildly but ineffectually for her money.

Roger watched her anxiously and when the bag and bearer were perilously near, he pressed a coin into his astonished neighbour's hand and said softly:

"Here, you take *my* penny, and *I'll* hide under the seat."



***“They are exactly like my Real string,  
and could not possibly be told from Real.”***

A lady who had a “dreadful accident” with her real pearl  
necklet replaced it with

## **Ciro Pearls**

and she thus describes the success she obtained with same.

“I received the pearls this morning, and am delighted with them. They are exactly like my real string were, and could not possibly be told from real. The following remark from my husband, who is supposed to be a judge of pearls, will tell you that they are satisfactory. I put your pearls on this morning as soon as I received them, and my husband, who does not know of the dreadful accident I had with my real string, said: ‘I wondered when you were going to wear them again’—meaning my real pearls. Then he took a close look and said: ‘I am jolly proud of that transaction.’ He got my pearls through a business deal, and you may know from these remarks how satisfied I am.”

### **OUR UNIQUE OFFER.**

On receipt of one guinea we will send you a necklet of *Ciro Pearls*, 16 inches long, with clasp and case complete, or a ring, brooch, ear-rings or any other *Ciro Pearl* jewel in hand-made gold settings. If, after comparing them with real or other artificial pearls, they are not found equal to the former or superior to the latter, return them to us within fifteen days and we will refund your money. *Ciro Pearl* necklets may also be obtained in any length required. We have a large staff of expert pearl stringers.

Latest descriptive booklet No. 10 sent post free on application.

### ***Ciro Pearls Ltd.***

39 Old Bond Street London W.1 Dept. 10.

OUR SHOWROOMS ARE ON THE FIRST FLOOR, OVER LLOYDS BANK

Mention WINDSOR MAGAZINE when writing to advertisers.

POETRY AND PÂTISSERIE.

A pastry-cook of much renown,  
Of his delightful craft a master,  
Once let, for weekly half-a-crown,  
His garret to a poetaster.  
But bardic business came to smash,  
A blight appeared to rest upon it;  
So, as the lodger lacked the cash,  
He paid his landlord with a sonnet.

He praised the luscious Sally Lunn,  
The cake designed for rite of Hymen;  
He chanted of the Chelsea bun,  
And dubbed the maker "Prince of Plemen."

SANDCRAFT.

By J. Roland Fay.

I was dreamily planning a bungalow—my usual holiday occupation—and, in spite of Peter's clamour and even Ruth's mute appeal, I had firmly resolved to stick to my deck chair until lunch-time. However, Constance insisted, I sank down upon the sand and reluctantly picked up a spade.

"A big castle, please, Daddy," said Peter, "a castle with a moat and a drawbridge and dungeons and towers and—"

Ruth prepared to supply material. Constance beamed complacently, her gaze upon the horizon.



A CLEAR CASE.

"ARRY's suing the company for damages."  
"Oh, wot's appened?"  
"They blowed the knockin' off whistle just as 'e were goin' to lay a brick, and 'e dropped it on 'is foot."

He raved of brandy-snap, méringue,  
Of patty packed with juicy brisket;  
"Master of arts and tarts," he sang,  
"You take, as well as bake, the biscuit,"

Well pleased, the pastry-cook prepared  
A cake, and sent it to the poet,  
Who lost his temper and declared  
He found his sonnet stuck below it.  
"The matter's one of give and take,"  
The cook replied, "so spare your curses.  
You made some verses on my cake,  
I made some cake upon your verses."

José Hall.



"My husband was taking part in a dramatic performance last night, and he is so hoarse to-day he can hardly speak."

"Oh, really! Was he playing the leading part?"

"No, he was prompting."

"We will begin with the bathroom," I said lightly. "This is the bathroom." I scooped a hole in the damp sand, which rapidly filled with water. "And this is another bathroom." I scooped another hole. "This is a swimming pool in the garden—it is fed by this rivulet that casually trickles through."

"Is this the moat?" said Peter, paddling vigorously in the swimming pool. "I like the moat."

"The lawn is bordered with neatly-clipped box shrubs," I continued, with gathering enthusiasm. I moulded several with the help of the cap of the vacuum flask until Constance glanced in my direction—I moulded the rest with my fingers.

"I don't much care for the towers, Daddy," said Peter, as three box shrubs slid into the swimming pool. "Might we have an earthquake soon?"

"The drawing-room," I went on heedlessly, "has windows on all sides but one—it has lots of sides." I walled up a space of fantastic design, and made holes for windows.

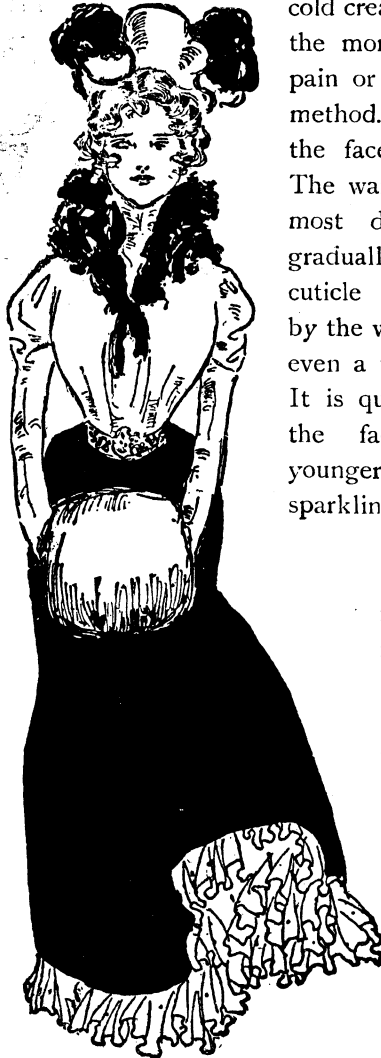
# Hints on the Complexion

## The New Absorption Method

By MILLICENT BROWN

*Illustrated by PENRHYN STANLAWS*

**T**WENTY years ago fabulous prices were paid by ladies who submitted themselves to that painful, slow and costly process known as "face peeling." And I think it is true that most of them afterwards "wished they hadn't"! For one thing, you could always tell when a face had been "peeled" in that way. Beauty-specialists did not give their secret away, but what they actually used was carbolic acid, 90 per cent. The horrible pain and swelling before the tortured skin came off can be imagined. It was called "The Heroic Process," and the woman was certainly something of a heroine to endure it. Fashionable women to-day who wish to look their best follow quite another plan. They get from their chemists a little pure mercolized wax and apply it at night like



A Debutante of Twenty  
Years Ago.

cold cream, washing it off in the morning. There is no pain or irritation about this method. Nobody knows that the face is being treated. The wax will not harm the most delicate skin. Very gradually the old half-dead cuticle is gently absorbed by the wax, without causing even a temporary irritation. It is quite a popular plan, the face looking years younger afterwards. The sparkling face bath treatment is another little "secret" which will no doubt be very much appreciated. It keeps the face firm and free from wrinkles, and removes those horrid little blackheads and prevents "shine." It is prepared by dissolving some stymol, obtainable at the chemist's, in a bowl of warm water.

"This long, handsome room, next to the drawing-room, is my study. The bath in the middle is not intentional, but I shall consider the matter. Next comes the kitchen, with a window through which emergency meals may be handed to my study. Now comes the motor shed."

"But——" protested Peter, and found a crab.

"We shall—er—require a little more space for the motor shed," I said gently to Constance. "If you wouldn't mind moving your chair just a teeny, weeny bit, we——" Constance was regarding the work intently, but not, I thought, with approval. "Your boudoir," I added hastily, "is—is just here, on the other side of the bungalow—next the bathrooms—view of sea from window. The linen cupboards and—er—all the other rooms are also on this side."

Constance announced that it was time to go. Soon after, she missed her biscuit box.

"This is most remarkable," she said, turning over the chairs.

"Most remarkable," I echoed, my eyes gazing far out to sea.

"I've had that biscuit box for fifteen years," said Constance, as we all walked round and round each other. However, it was not to be seen. Gloomily we left the beach.

Suddenly Ruth's eyes strongly questioned mine. I nodded. Ruth vanished. I broke into a low but lively song; Constance, however, remained yet gloomy.



THE CAT'S HOLIDAY.

To-morrow my people go off to the sea.

Oh, it's all right for them, yes, but how about me?



A FAMILIAR THEME.

"OLD TOMPKINS has been giving me a list of his complaints—liver out of order, indigestion, heart bad, stomach upset, and so on."

"Quite an organ recital, in fact."

I broadly indicated these by merely roughening the surface of the sand. "Now, the motor shed——" I eyed Constance's biscuit box.

But at this point Peter was discovered afar off entangled with a wave. It transpired later that, having lost interest, he had gone for a walk with the crab. Constance rose and went after him. Unceremoniously I pushed Constance's chair six whole inches.

I sent Ruth for some pebbles to tessellate the floor, and secured Constance's biscuit box. This was not an ordinary biscuit box, and it contained biscuits, but it was just the thing upon which to mould the motor shed. Carefully I pressed the sand around it, and prepared to withdraw it; but I was too late. Constance was approaching. Hastily I walled up the visible end.

*Facing Third Cover.]*

Am I to be left to look after the flat?

They're taking the dog, but not me—I'm the cat.

It's happened before, and I don't think it's nice  
To live for three weeks on a couple of mice,  
And it's bad for your health when you've nothing  
to drink

But the water which drips from a tap in the sink.

I'm feeling run-down; it would do me no harm  
To visit my cousins who live on a farm,  
Where they've oceans of milk in the dairy to lap,  
And fluffy young chickens and sparrows to trap.

But I've just been informed that I'm going to stay  
With the lady next door while the family's away.  
She keeps a canary and goldfish as well,  
Perhaps it's all for the best—well, you never can tell!

*R. H. Roberts.*



THE

1921

# WINDSOR

SEPTEMBER



GENERAL LIFE  
 SEP 7 1922  
 TIME OF HIGH



ONE · SHILLING · NET



Eat more  
**Good**  
 toffee

*Billy Boy* says:—

“Fancy putting ‘Eat more good toffee’—as though any fellow needs that advice!

“They ought to say, ‘Uncle, your nephew needs Mackintosh’s’—or ‘Dad, take a tin home to Billy to-night.’

“Still, if Dad or Uncle sees this—well, I’ve been a pretty good boy lately—and a little encouragement . . . .!”

\* \* \* \* \*

Let your youngsters have more good toffee.  
 Let them have the very best of all toffees,

# Mackintosh's Toffee de Luxe

Egg and Cream-de-Luxe  
 Almond Toffee-de-Luxe

Cocoanut-de-Luxe  
 Café-de-Luxe  
 Mint-de-Luxe

Plain Toffee-de-Luxe  
 De-Luxe Assortment

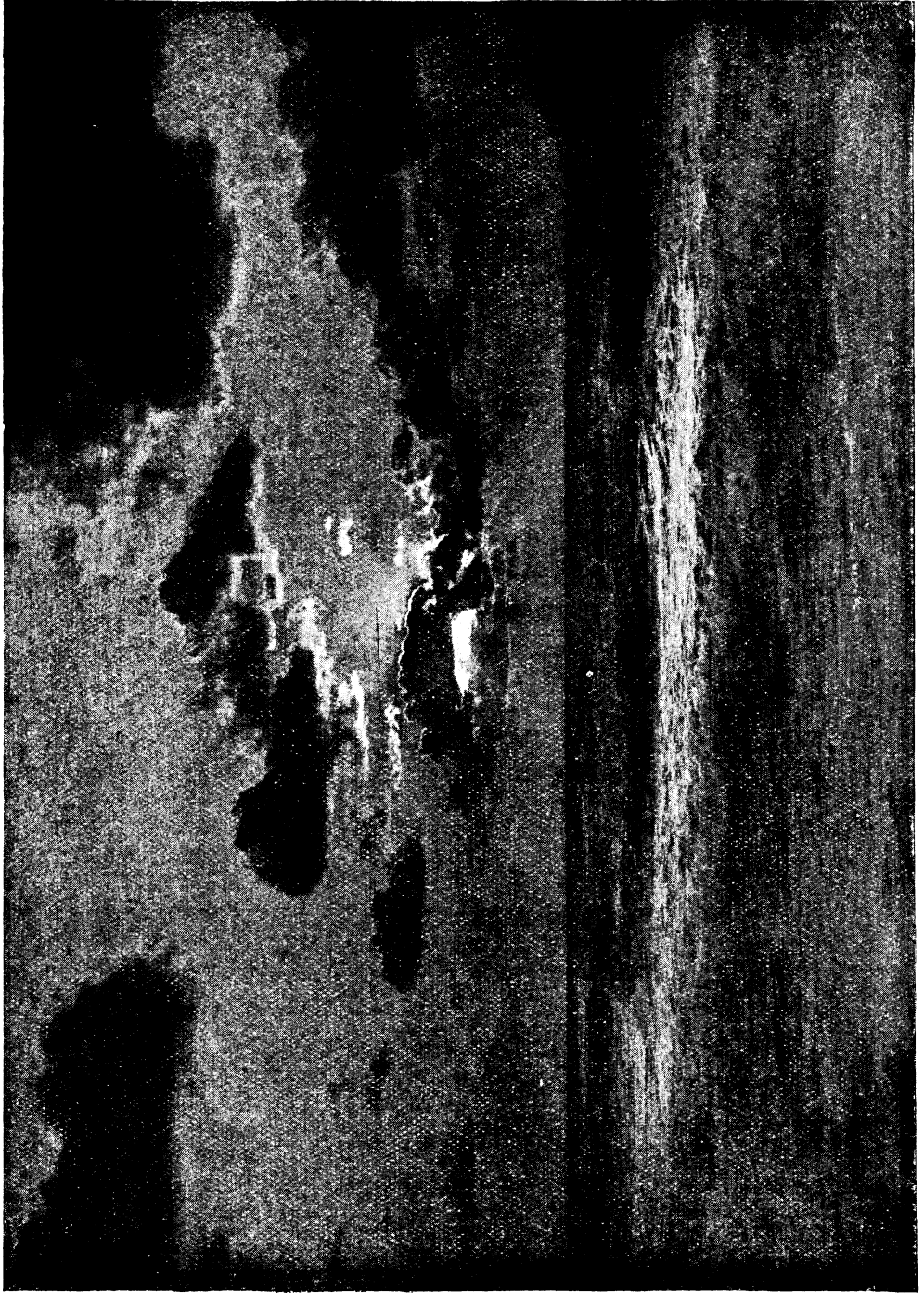
Sold loose by weight at 8d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$ -lb., and in Baby Oval Tins and Tall Tins at 1/3 each, Junior Oval Tins and Tall Tins at 2/6 each, and in 4-lb. Tins.

You can also buy Plain Toffee-de-Luxe in Seaside Pails for the Kiddies 1/- each, Popular Week-end Tins 2/- each, and 5/- Family Tins.



© J.2.





A SUNSET EFFECT AT SEA.  
A PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY BY PERCY G. LUCK.



"Our progress through the forest stands like a chapter of a dream."

# JOURNEYS END

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne," "Berry and Co.," "Anthony Lyveden,"  
"The Courts of Idleness."

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

**M**Y cousin showed us the letter with the artless confidence of a child.

MY DARLING JILL,

ROME.

It's all finished now, and I can start for Paris to-morrow. I must stay there one night, to sign some papers, and then I can leave for Pau. And on next Sunday morning as ever is, we'll have breakfast together. Perhaps— No, I won't say it. Any way, Sunday morning at latest. Every-one's been awfully kind, and—you'll never guess what's coming—Cousin Leslie's turned out a white man. He's the one, you know,

who brought the suit. The day I got back from Irikli I got a note from him, saying that, while he couldn't pretend he wasn't sorry he'd lost his case, he knew how to take a beating, and, now that it was all over, couldn't we be friends, and asking me to come and dine with him and his wife at the Grand Hotel. Old Vissochi didn't want me to go, and kept quoting something out of Virgil about 'fearing the Greeks,' but, of course, I insisted. And I am so glad I did. Leslie and his wife were simply splendid. Nobody could have been nicer, and considering that, if he'd won, he'd 've had the title, estates, money and everything,

Copyright, 1922, by Dornford Yates, in the United States of America.

*I think it speaks jolly well for them both. They've got two ripping little boys, and they were frightfully interested to hear about you. They'd no idea, of course, but I just had to tell them. They were so astonished at first they could hardly speak. And then Mrs. Trunk picked up her glass and cried out, "Hurray, Hurray," and they both drank to us both, and everybody was staring, and Leslie got quite red with embarrassment at their having made such a scene. Then they made me tell them what you looked like, and I did my best, and they laughed and said I was caking it on, so I showed them your photograph. And then Mrs. Trunk made me show her a letter of yours, and told your character from your handwriting, and we had a great time. Oh, Jill, I'm longing for you to see Irikli. Of course I love Rome, but I think we'll have to be at Como a lot. Father always liked it the best, and I think you will. It's so lovely, it makes you want to shout. It only wants a princess with golden hair to make it fairy-land, and now it's going to have one. Oh, my darling, I'm just living to see your beautiful face again and your great grave grey eyes. Jill, have you any idea what wonderful eyes you've got? I say, we are going to be happy, aren't we? So happy, we shan't have time for anything else. But I can't wear a body-belt, dear. Not after this. I promised I would till I came back, but I'm almost melted. I don't think Jonah can be right. Any way, I'll bet he doesn't wear one. Your very loving*

PIERS.

Excepting the addressee, I don't think any one of us shared the writer's enthusiasm about Mr. Leslie Trunk. We quite agreed with Signor Vissochi. It was hard to believe that the man who had instituted such an iniquitous suit could so swiftly forgive the costly drubbing he had received, or, as heir-presumptive to the dukedom, honestly welcome the news of Piers' engagement. Sweetheart Jill, however, knew little of leopards and their spots. Out of respect for such unconsciousness, we held our peace. There was no hurry, and Piers could be tackled at our convenience. . . .

The conversation turned to our impending departure from France.

"I take it," said Jonah, "that we go as we came. If we're going to Paris for the Grand Prix, there's not much object in stopping there now. In any event, it'd mean our going by train and sending the cars by sea. I'm not going to drive in Paris for anyone. I'm too old."

After a little discussion, we decided that he was right.

"Same route?" said Adèle.

"I think so," said Jonah. "Except that we miss Bordeaux and go by Bergerac instead."

"Is that shorter or longer?" said Berry. "Not that I really care, because I wouldn't visit Bordeaux a second time for any earthly consideration. I've seen a good many poisonous places in my time, but for inducing the concentrated essence of depression, that moth-eaten spectre of bustling commerce has them, as the immortal B-B-B-Wordsworth says, beat to a b-b-b-string-bag."

"I don't seem to remember," said Daphne, "that it was so awful."

"It wasn't," said I. "But the circumstances in which he visited it were somewhat drab. Still, it's not an attractive town, and, as the other way's shorter and the road's about twice as good——"

"I'm glad it's shorter," said Berry. "I want to get to Angoulême in good time."

"Why?" said Jill.

Berry eyed her reproachfully.

"Child," he said, "is your gratitude so short-lived? Have you in six slight months forgotten that at Angoulême we were given the very finest dinner that ever we ate? A meal without frills—nine tender courses long? For which we paid the equivalent of rather less than five shillings a head?"

"Oh, I remember," said Jill. "That was where they made us use the same knife all through dinner."

"And what," demanded Berry, "of that? A conceit—a charming conceit. Thus was the glorious tradition of one course handed down to those that followed after. I tell you that for me the idea of another 'crowded hour' in Angoulême goes far to ameliorate the unpleasant prospect of erupting into the middle of an English spring."

"It's clear," said I, "that you should do a gastronomic tour. Every-department of France has its particular dainty. With a reliable list, an almanac, and a motor ambulance, you could do wonders."

My brother-in-law groaned.

"It wouldn't work," he said miserably. "It wouldn't work. They'd clash. When you were in Picardy, considering some *pâtés de Canards*, you'd get a wire from Savoy saying that the salmon trout were in the pink, and on the way there you'd get



another from Gascony to say that in twenty-four hours they wouldn't answer for the flavour of the ortolans."

"Talking of gluttony," said Jonah, "if they don't bring lunch pretty soon, we shall be late. It's past one now, and the meeting's the other side of Morlaas. First race, two-fifteen."

I rose and strolled to the Club-house, to see the steward. . . .

This day was the sixteenth of April, and Summer was coming in. Under our very eyes, plain, woods and foot-hills were putting on amain her lovely livery. We had played a full round of golf over a blowing valley we hardly knew. Billowy emerald banks masked the familiar sparkle of the hurrying Gave; the fine brown lace of rising woods had disappeared, and, in its stead, a broad hanging terrace of delicate green stood up against the sky; from being a jolly counterpane, the plain of Billère itself had become a cheerful quilt; as for the foot-hills, they were so monstrously tricked out with fine fresh ruffles and unexpected equipage of greenery, with a strange epaulet upon that shoulder and a brand-new periwig upon that brow, that if high hills but hopped outside the Psalter you would have sworn the snowy Pyrenees had found new equerries.

Luncheon was served indoors.

Throughout the winter the lawn before the Club-house had made a dining-room. To-day, however, we were glad of the shade.

"Does Piers know," said Adèle, "that he's coming home with us?"

Jill shook her head.

"Not yet. I meant to tell him in my last letter, but I forgot." She turned to Daphne. "You don't think we could be married at once? I'm sure Piers wouldn't mind, and I'd be so much easier. He does want looking after, you know. Fancy his wanting to leave off that belt thing."

"Yes, just fancy," said Berry. "Apart from the fact that it was a present from you, it'd be indecent."

"It isn't that," said Jill. "But he might get an awful chill."

"I know," said Berry. "I know. That's my second point. Keep the abdominal wall quarter of an inch deep in lamb's wool, and in the hottest weather you'll never feel cold. Never mind. If he mentions it again, we'll make its retention a term of the marriage settlement."

Jill eyed him severely before proceeding.

"It could be quite quiet," she continued;

"the wedding, I mean. At a registry place——"

"Mrs. Hunt's, for instance," said Berry. "—and then we could all go down to White Ladies together, and when he has to go back to fix things up in Italy, I could go, too."

"My darling," said Daphne, "don't you want to be married from home? In our own old church at Bilberry? For only one thing, if you weren't, I don't think the village would ever get over it."

Jill sighed.

"When you talk like that," she said, "I don't want to be married at all. . . . Yes, I do. I want Piers. I wouldn't be happy without him. But . . . If only he hadn't got four estates of his own, we might——"

"Five," said Berry. Jill opened her big grey eyes. "Four now, and a share in another upon his wedding day."

Jill knitted her brow.

"I never knew this," she said. "What's the one he's going to have?"

Berry raised his eyebrows.

"It's a place in Hampshire," he said. "Not very far from Brooch. They call it White Ladies."

The look which Jill gave us, as we acclaimed his words, came straight out of Paradise.

"I do wish he could have heard you," she said uncertainly. "I'll tell him, of course. But it won't be the same. And my memory isn't short-lived really. I'd forgotten the Angoulême dinner, but I shan't forget this lunch in a hundred years."

"In another minute," said Berry, "I shall imbrue this omelet with tears. Then it'll be too salt." He seized his tumbler and raised it above his head. "I give you Monsieur Roland. May he touch the ground in spots this afternoon. Five times he's lent me an 'unter-oss out of sheer good nature; his taste in cocktails is venerable; and whenever I see him he asks when we're going to use his car."

We drank the toast gladly.

Roland was a good sportsman, and throughout the season at Pau he had been more than friendly. He was to ride two races at the meeting this afternoon.

"And now," said I, "get a move on. St. Jamines is ten miles off, and the road is vile. If we'd got Roland's flier, it'd be one thing, but Ping and Pong'll take their own time."

My brother-in-law frowned.

"Business first," he said shortly.

“Business first. I spoke to the steward about the cutlets, and I won’t have them rushed. And if that’s our Brie on the sideboard—well, I, too, am in a melting mood, and it’s just asking for trouble.”

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a fresh breeze quickening the air upon the uplands beyond old Morlaas, to whip the flags into a steady flutter and now and again flick a dark tress of hair across Adèle’s dear cheeks.

As we scrambled across country—

“Why, oh, why,” she wailed, “did ever I let it grow? I’ll have it cut again to-morrow. I swear I will.”

“And what about me?” said I. “You’re a joint tenant with me. You can’t commit waste like that without my consent.”

“I’m sure I can abate—is that right?—a nuisance.”

“It’s not a nuisance. It’s a glory. When I wake up in the morning and see it rippling all over the pillow, I plume myself upon my real and personal interest in such a beautiful estate. Then I start working out how many lockets it ’ld fill, and that sends me to sleep again.”

“Does it really ripple?” said Adèle.

“Or is that a poet’s licence?”

“Rather,” said I. “Sometimes, if I’m half asleep, I feel quite seasick.”

Adèle smiled thoughtfully.

“In that case,” she announced, “I’ll reconsider my decision. But I wish to Heaven it ’ld ripple when I’m awake.”

“They’re off!” cried Jonah.

A sudden rush for the bank on which we were standing confirmed his report. We had much ado to escape being thrust into the deep lane the bank was walling.

The lane was about a mile long, and so was the bank. The latter made a fair “grand stand.” As such it was packed. Not only all the visitors to Pau, but every single peasant for twenty miles about seemed to have rallied at St. Jamines to see the sport. The regular business of the race-course was conspicuously missing. Pleasure was strolling, cock of an empty walk. For sheer *bonhomie*, the little meeting bade fair to throw its elder brethren of the Hippodrome itself into the shadowy distance.

Roland rode a fine race and won by a neck.

We left the bank and walked up the lane to offer our congratulations. . . .

“Thank you. Thank you. But next year you will bring horses, eh? An’ we will ride against one another. Yes? You

shall keep them with me. I’ve plenty of boxes, you know. An’ on the day I will give your horse his breakfast, and he shall give me the race. That’s right. An’ when are you going to try my tank? I go away for a week, an’ when I come back yesterday, I ask my people, ‘How has Captain Pleydell enjoyed the car?’ ‘But he ’as not used it.’ ‘No? Then that is because the Major has broken her up?’ ‘No. He has not been near.’ I see now it is not good enough. I tell you I am hurt. I shall not ask you again.”

“Lunch with us to-morrow instead,” laughed Daphne.

“I am sure that I will,” said Roland.

After a little we sauntered back to our bank. . . .

It was nearly a quarter to five by the time we were home. That was early enough, but the girls had grown tired of standing, and we had seen Roland win twice. Jonah we had left to come in another car. This was because he had found a brother-fisherman. When last we saw him, he had a pipe in one hand, a lighted match in the other, and was discussing casts. . . .

Falcon met us at the door with a telegram addressed to ‘Miss Mansel.’

The wording was short and to the point.

*Have met with accident can you come Piers Paris.*

The next train to Paris left Pau in twelve minutes’ time.

Adèle and a white-faced Jill caught it by the skin of their teeth.

They had their tickets, the clothes they stood up in, a brace of vanity bags, and one hundred and forty-five francs. But that was all. It was arranged feverishly upon the platform that Jonah and I should follow, with such of their effects as Daphne gave us, by the ten-thirty train.

Then a horn brayed, I kissed Adèle’s fingers, poor Jill threw me a ghost of a smile, and their coach rolled slowly out of the station. . . .

I returned to the car dazedly.

Thinking it over, I decided that we had done the best we could. On arrival at Bordeaux, my wife and cousin could join the Spanish express, which was due to leave that city at ten-fifteen; this, if it ran to time, would bring them to the French capital by seven o’clock the next morning. Jonah and I would arrive some five hours later. . . .

The Bank was closed, of course, so I drove to the Club forthwith to get some



money Jonah was not there, but, as he was certain to call, I left a note with the porter, telling him what had occurred. Then I purchased our tickets—a lengthy business. It was so lengthy, in fact, that when it was over I called again at the Club on the chance of picking up Jonah and bringing him home. He had not arrived. . . .

I made my way back to the villa dismally enough.

My sister and Berry were in the drawing-room.

As I opened the door—

“Wherever have you been?” said Daphne. “Did they catch it?”

I nodded.

“You haven’t seen Jonah, I suppose?”

I shook my head.

“But where have you been, Boy?”

I spread out my hands.

“Getting money and tickets. You know their idea of haste. But there’s plenty of time—worse luck,” I added bitterly. Then: “I say, what a dreadful business!” I sank into a chair. “What on earth can have happened?”

Berry rose and walked to a window.

“Jill’s face,” he said slowly. “Jill’s face.” He swung round and flung out an arm. “She looked old!” he cried. “Jill—that baby looked old. She thought it was a wire to say he was on his way, and it hit her between the eyes like the kick of a horse.”

Shrunk into a corner of her chair, my sister stared dully before her.

“He must be bad,” said I. “Unless he was bad, he ’ld never have wired like that. If Piers could have done it, I’m sure he ’ld have tempered the wind.”

“Can you come?” quoted Berry, and threw up his arms.

Daphne began to cry quietly. . . .

A glance at the tea-things showed me that these were untouched. I rang the bell, and presently fresh tea was brought. I made my sister drink, and poured some for Berry and me. The stimulant did us all good. By common consent, we thrust speculation aside and made what arrangements we could. That our plans for returning to England would now miscarry seemed highly probable.

At last my sister sighed and lay back in her chair.

“Why?” she said quietly. “Why? What has Jill done to earn this? Oh, I know it’s no good questioning Fate, but it’s—it’s rather hard.”

I stepped to her side and took her hand in mine.

“My darling,” I said, “don’t let’s make the worst of a bad business. The going’s heavy, I know, but it’s idle to curse the jumps before we’ve seen them. Piers didn’t send that wire himself. That goes without saying. He probably never worded it. I know that’s as broad as it’s long, but, when you come to think, there’s really no reason on earth why it should be anything more than a broken leg.”

There was a dubious silence.

At length—

“Boy’s perfectly right,” said Berry. “Jill’s scared stiff—naturally. As for us, we’re rattled—without good reason at all. For all we know. . . .”

He broke off to listen. . . . The front door closed with a crash.

“Jonah,” said I. “He’s had my note, and—”

It was not Jonah.

It was Piers, Duke of Padua, who burst into the room, looking extraordinarily healthy and very much out of breath.

We stared at him, speechless.

For a moment he stood smiling. Then he swept Daphne a bow.

“Paris to Pau by air,” he said, “in four and a quarter hours. Think of it. Clean across France in a bit of an afternoon. You’ll all *have* to do it: it’s simply glorious.” He crossed to my sister’s side and kissed her hand. “Don’t look so surprised,” he said, laughing. “It really is me. I didn’t dare to wire, in case we broke down on the way. And now where’s Jill?”

We continued to stare at him in silence.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was Berry—some ten minutes later—who hit the right nail on the head.

“By George!” he shouted. “By George! I’ve got it in one. *The fellow who sent that wire was Leslie Trunk.*”

“Leslie?” cried Piers. “But why—”

“Who knows? But your cousin’s a desperate man, and Jill’s in his way. So are you—more still, but, short of murder itself, to touch you won’t help his case. With Jill in his hands. . . . Well, for one thing only, I take it you’d pay pretty high for her—her health.”

Piers went very white.

For myself, I strove to keep my brain steady, but the thought of Adèle—my wife, in the power of the dog, would thrust itself, grinning horribly, into the foreground of my imagination.

I heard somebody say that the hour was a quarter past seven. I had my watch in my hand, so I knew they were right. Vainly they repeated their statement, unconsciously voicing my thoughts. . . .

Only when Daphne fell on



‘ Piers began to speak—shakily.

lad. Don’t argue. Ask for the Bordeaux Exchange. Insist that it’s urgent—a matter of life and death.”

Piers began to speak—shakily.

“*Oui. La Poste de Bordeaux . . . . C’est très urgent, Mademoiselle . . . . Il s’agit de vie et mort . . . . Oui, oui. La Poste même . . . . Comment? Mon Dieu. Mais, Mademoiselle—*”

her knees by my side did I realise that I was the speaker.

Berry and Piers were at the telephone.

I heard them.

“Ask for the Bordeaux Exchange. Burn it, why can’t I talk French? Do as I say,

A sudden rude thrash of the bell announced that his call was over.

Berry fell upon the instrument with an oath.

"It's no good!" cried Piers. "It's no good. She says the line to Bordeaux is out of order."

My sister lifted her head and looked into my face.

"Can you do it by car?" she said.

I pulled myself together and thought very fast.

and fifty miles. It can't be done. We'd have to do over seventy most of the way, and you can't beat a pace like that out of Ping and Pong. On the track, perhaps . . . But on the open road——"

The soft slush of tires upon the drive cut short my sentence.

"Jonah, at last," breathed Daphne.

We ran to the window.

It was not Jonah. It was Roland.

So soon as he saw us, he stopped and threw out his clutch.

"I say, you know, I am mos' distress' about your lunch tomorrow. When you ask me——"

"Roland," I cried, "Roland, will you lend me your car?"



"My sister lifted her head and looked into my face. 'Can you do it by car?' she said."

"We can try," I said, rising, "but—— Oh, it's a hopeless chance. Only three hours—less than three hours for a hundred

"But 'ave I not said——"  
"Now—at once—here—to drive to Bordeaux?"

Roland looked up at my face.

The next moment he was out of his seat.

"Yes, but I am not going with you," he said. Then: "What is the matter? Never mind. You will tell me after. The lights are good, and she is full up with gasolene. I tell you, you will be there in three hours."

"Make it two and three-quarters," said I.

\* \* \* \* \*

The day's traffic had dwindled to a handful of home-going gigs, and as we swung out of the *Rue Montpensier* and on to the Bordeaux road, a distant solitary tram was the only vehicle within sight.

I settled down in my seat. . . .

A moment later we had passed the *Octroi*, and Pau was behind us.

Piers crouched beside me as though he were carved of stone. Once in a while his eyes would fall from the road to the instrument-board. Except for that regular movement, he gave no sign of life. As for Berry, sunk, papoose-like, in the chauffeur's cockpit in rear, I hoped that his airman's cap would stand him in stead. . . .

The light was good, and would serve us for half an hour. The car was pulling like the mares of Diomedes. As we flung by the last of the villas, I gave her her head. . . .

Instantly the long straight road presented a bend, and I eased her up with a frown. We took the corner at fifty, the car holding the road as though this were banked for speed. As we flashed by the desolate race-course and the ground on which Piers had alighted two hours before, I lifted a grateful head. It was clear that what corners we met could be counted out. With such a grip of the road and such acceleration, the time which anything short of a hairpin bend would cost us was almost negligible.

As if annoyed at my finding, the road for the next five miles ran straight as a die. For over three of those miles the lady whose lap we sat in was moving at eighty-four.

A hill appeared—a long, long hill, steep, straight, yellow—tearing towards us. . . . We climbed with the rush of a lift—too fast for our stomachs.

The road was improving now, but, as if to cancel this, a steep, winding hill fell into a sudden valley. As we were dropping, I saw its grey-brown fellow upon the opposite side, dragging his tedious way to the height we had left.

We lost time badly here, for down on the flat of the dale a giant lorry was turning,

while a waggon was creeping by. For a quarter of a precious minute the road was entirely blocked. Because of the coming ascent, the check hit us hard. In a word, it made a mountain out of a molehill. What the car might have swallowed whole she had to masticate. She ate her way up the rise, snorting with indignation. . . .

A mile (or a minute, Sirs, whichever you please) was all the grace she had to find her temper. Then the deuce of a hill swerved down to the foot of another—long, blind, sinuous. The road was writhing like a serpent. We used it as serpents should be used. Maybe it bruised our heels: we bruised its head savagely. . . .

We were on the level now, and the way was straight again. A dot ahead was a waggon. I wondered which way it was going. I saw, and we passed it by in the same single moment of time. That I may not be thought inobservant, forty-five yards a second is a pace which embarrasses sight.

A car came flying towards us. At the last I remarked with a smile it was going our way. A flash of paint, a smack like the flap of a sail, and we were by.

A farm was coming. I saw the white of its walls swelling to ells from inches. I saw a hen, who had seen us, starting to cross our path. Simultaneously I lamented her death—needlessly. She missed destruction by yards. I found myself wondering whether, after all, she had held on her way. Presently I decided that she had and, anxious to retrace her steps, had probably awaited our passage in some annoyance. . . .

We swam up another hill, flicked between two waggons, slashed a village in half and tore up the open road.

The daylight was waning now, and Piers switched on the hooded light that illumined the instrument-board. With a frown I collected my lady for one last tremendous effort before the darkness fell.

She responded like the thoroughbred she was.

I dared not glance at the speedometer, but I could feel each mile as it added itself to our pace. I felt this climb from ninety to ninety-one. Thickening the spark by a fraction, I brought it to ninety-two . . . . ninety-three. . . .

In a quiet, steady voice Piers began to give me the benefit of his sight.

"Something ahead on the right . . . . a waggon . . . . all clear . . . . a cart, I think, on the right . . . . no—yes. It's

not moving. . . . A bicycle on the left . . . . and another . . . . a car coming . . . . all clear . . . . no—a man walking on the right . . . . all clear. . . .”

So, our narrowed eyes nailed to the straight grey ribbon streaming into the distance, the sea and the waves roaring in our ears, folded in the wings of the wind, we cheated Dusk of seven breathless miles and sent Nature packing with a fork in her breech.

Sore at this treatment, the Dame, as ever, returned, with Night himself to urge her argument.

I threw in my hand with a sigh, and Piers switched on the lights as we ran into Aire-sur-l'Adour.

I heard a clock striking as we swung to the left in the town. . . .

Eight o'clock.

Two more hours and a quarter, and a hundred and nineteen miles to go.

I tried not to lose heart. . . .

We had passed Villeneuve-de-Marsan, and were nearing, I knew, cross-roads, when Piers forestalled my inquiry and spoke in my ear.

“Which shall you do? Go straight? Or take the forest road?”

“I don't know the Roquefort way, except that there's pavement there. What's it like?”

“It's pretty bad,” said Piers. “But you'll save about fifteen miles.”

“How much pavement is there? Five or six miles?”

“Thirty about,” said Piers.

“Thanks very much,” said I. “We'll go by the forest.”

I think I was right.

I knew the forest road and I knew its surface was superb. Thirty miles of pavement, which I did not know, which was admittedly rough, presented a ghastly prospect. The ‘luxury’ tax of fifteen precious miles, tacked on to the way of the forest, was really frightening, but since such a little matter as a broken lamp would kill our chances, I dared not risk the rough and tumble of the pavement upon the Roquefort road.

At last the cross-roads came, and we swung to the right. We had covered a third of the ground.

I glanced at the gleaming clock sunk in the dash.

Twenty-five minutes past eight.

An hour and fifty minutes—and a hundred miles to go.

With a frightful shock I realised that, *even with the daylight to help me, I had used a third of my time.*

I began to wish frantically that I had gone by Roquefort. I felt a wild inclination to stop and retrace my steps. Pavement? Pavement be burned! I must have been mad to throw away fifteen miles—fifteen golden miles. . . .

Adèle's face, pale, frightened, accusing, stared at me through the wind-screen. Over her shoulder, Jill, white and shrinking, pointed a shaking finger.

With a groan, I jammed my foot on the accelerator. . . .

With a roar, the car sprang forward like a spurred horse.

Heaven knows the speed at which St. Justin was passed. I was beyond caring. We missed a figure by inches and a cart by a foot. Then the cottages faded, and the long snarl of the engine sank to the stormy mutter she kept for the open road.

We were in the forest now, and I let her go.

Out of the memories of that April evening our progress through the forest stands like a chapter of a dream.

Below us, the tapering road, paler than ever—on either side an endless army of fir trees, towering shoulder to shoulder, so dark, so vast, and standing still as Death—above us, a lane of violet, all pricked with burning stars, we supped the rare old ale brewed by Hans Andersen himself.

Within this magic zone the throb of the engine, the hiss of the carburettor, the swift brush of the tires upon the road—three rousing tones, yielding a thunderous chord, were curiously staccato. The velvet veil of silence we rent in twain; but as we tore it, the folds fell back to hang like mighty curtains about our path, stifling all echo, striking reverberation dumb. The strong, sweet smell of the woods enhanced the mystery. The cool, clean air thrashed us with perfume. . . .

The lights of the car were powerful and focussed perfectly. The steady, bright splash upon the road, one hundred yards ahead, robbed the night of its sting.

Rabbits rocketed across our bows; a bat spilled its brains upon our wind-screen; a hare led us for an instant, only to flash to safety under our very wheels. As for the moths, the screen was strewn with the dead. Three times Piers had to rise and wipe it clear.

Of men and beasts, mercifully, we saw no sign.

If Houeilles knew of our passage, her ears told her. Seemingly the hamlet slept. I doubt if we took four seconds to thread its one straight street. Next day, I suppose, men swore the devil was loose. They may be forgiven. Looking back from a hazy distance, I think he was at my arm.

As we ran into Casteljaloux, a clock was striking. . . .

Nine o'clock.

We had covered the thirty-five miles in thirty-five minutes dead.

"To the left, you know," said Piers.

"Left?" I cried, setting a foot on the brake. "Straight on, surely. We turn to the left at Marmande."

"No, no, *no*. We don't touch Marmande. We turn to the left here." I swung round obediently. "This is the Langon road. It's quite all right, and it saves us about ten miles."

Ten miles.

I could have screamed for joy.

Only fifty-five miles to go—and an hour and a quarter left.

The hope which had never died lifted up its head. . . .

It was when we were nearing Auros that we sighted the van.

This was a hooded horror—a great, two-ton affair, a creature, I imagine, of Bordeaux, blinding home like a mad thing, instead of blundering.

Ah, I see a hundred fingers pointing to the beam in my eye. Bear with me, gentlemen. I am not so sightless as all that.

I could steer my car with two fingers upon the roughest road. I could bring her up, all standing, in twice her length. My lights, as you know, made darkness a thing of nought. . . . I cannot answer for its headlights, nor for its brake-control, but the backlash in the steering of that two-ton van was terrible to behold.

Hurling itself along at thirty odd miles an hour, the vehicle rocked and swung all over the narrow surface—now lurching to the right, now plunging to the left, but, in the main, holding a wobbling course upon the crown of the road—to my distraction.

Here was trouble enough, but—what was worse—upon my sounding the horn, the driver refused to give way. He knew of my presence, of course. He heard me, he saw my headlights, and—he sought to increase his pace. . . .

I sounded the horn till it failed: I yelled till my throat was sore: Piers raged and howled: behind, I heard Berry bellowing like a fiend. . . . I cursed and chafed till the sweat of baffled fury ran into my eyes. . . .

For over five hideous miles I followed that bucketing van.

I tried to pass it once, but the brute who was driving swerved to the left—I believe on purpose—and only our four-wheel brakes averted a headline smash.

At that moment we might not have been on earth.

My lady stopped as a bird stops in its flight. With the sudden heave of a ship, she seemed to hang in the air. Wild as I was, I could not but marvel at her grace. . . .

Out of the check came wisdom.

It was safe, then, to keep very close.

I crept to the blackguard's heels, till our headlights made two rings upon his vile body.

With one foot on the step, Piers hung out of the car, watching the road beyond.

Suddenly the van tilted to the right. . . .

I knew a swerve must follow, if the driver would keep his balance.

As it came, I pulled out and crammed by, with my heart in my mouth. . . .

A glance at the clock made me feel sick to death.

Fifteen priceless minutes that van had stolen out of my hard-earned hoard. I had risked our lives a score of times to win each one of them. And now an ill-natured churl had flung them into the draught. . . .

I set my teeth and put the car at a hill at eighty-five. . . .

We flashed through Langon at twenty minutes to ten.

Thirty-five minutes left—and thirty miles to go.

We were on the main road now, and the surface was wide, if rough. What little traffic there was, left plenty of room.

I took the ashes of my caution and flung them to the winds. . . .

Piers told me afterwards that for the first twenty miles never once did the speedometer's needle fall below seventy-two. He may be right. I knew that the streets were coming, and the station had to be found. It was a question, in fact, of stealing time. That which we had already was not enough. Unless we could pick some out of the pocket of Providence, the game was up.

I had to slow down at last for a parcel of stones. The road was being remade, and

thirty yards of rubble had to be delicately trod. As we forged through the ruck at twenty, Piers stared at the side of the road.

"BORDEAUX 16," he quoted.

Ten more miles—and nineteen minutes to go.

The traffic was growing now with every furlong. Belated lorries rumbled about their business: cars panted and raved into the night: carts jolted out of turnings into the great main road.

When I think of the chances I took, the palms of my hands grow hot. To wait for others to grant my request for room was out of the question. I said I was coming . . . I came—and that was that. Times out of number I overtook vehicles upon the wrong side. As for the frequent turnings, I hoped for the best. . . .

Once, where four ways met, I thought we were done.

A car was coming across—I could see its headlights' beam. I opened the throttle wide, and we raced for the closing gap. As we came to the cross of the roads, I heard an engine's roar. . . . For an instant a searchlight raked us. . . . There was a cry from Berry . . . an answering shout . . . the noise of tires tearing at the road . . . and that was all.

A moment later I was picking my way between two labouring waggons and a trio of straggling carts.

"BORDEAUX 8," quoted Piers.

Five more miles—and eleven minutes to go.

Piers had the plan of the city upon his knees. He conned it as best he could by the glow of the hooded light. After a moment or two he thrust the book away.

"The station's this end of the town. We can't miss it. I'll tell you when to turn."

Three minutes more, and our road had become a street. Two parallel, glittering lines warned me of trams to come.

As if to confirm their news, a red orb in the distance was eyeing us angrily. . . .

"We turn to the right," said Piers. "I'll tell you when."

I glanced at the clock.

The hour was nine minutes past ten.

My teeth began to chatter of sheer excitement. . . .

There was a turning ahead, and I glanced at Piers.

"Not yet," he said.

With a frantic eye on the clock, I thrust up that awful road. The traffic seemed to combine to cramp my style. I swerved, I

cut in, I stole an odd yard, I shouldered other drivers aside, and once, confronted with a block, I whipped on to the broad pavement and, amid scandalised shouts, left the obstruction to stay less urgent business.

All the time I could see the relentless minute-hand beating me on the post. . . .

At last Piers gave the word, and I switched to the right.

The boulevard was empty. We just swept up it like a black squall.

Left and right, then, and we entered the straight—with thirty seconds to go.

"Some way up," breathed Piers.

I set my teeth hard and let my lady out. . . .

By the time I had sighted the station, the speedometer's needle had swung to seventy-three. . . .

I ran alongside the pavement, clapped on the brakes, threw out the clutch.

Piers switched off, and we flung ourselves out of the car.

Stiff as a sleepy hare, I stumbled into the hall.

"*Le train pour Paris!*" I shouted. "*Où est le train pour Paris?*"

"This way!" cried Piers, passing me like a stag.

I continued to shout ridiculously, running behind him.

I saw him come to a barrier . . . ask and be answered . . . try to push through. . . .

The officials sought to detain him.

A whistle screamed. . . .

With a roar I flung aside the protesting arms and, carrying Piers with me, floundered on to the platform.

A train was moving.

Feeling curiously weak-kneed, I got carefully upon the step of a passing coach. Piers stepped on behind me and thrust me up to the door.

Then a conductor came and hauled us inside.

\* \* \* \* \*

I opened my eyes to see Adèle's face six inches away.

"Better, old chap," she said gently.

I tried to sit up, but she set a hand upon my chest.

"Don't say I fainted?" I said.

She smiled and nodded.

"But I understand," she said, "that you have a wonderful excuse."

"Not for ser-wooning," said I. "Of course we did hurry, but. . . ."

Piers burst in excitedly.

"There isn't another driver in all——"

"Rot," said I. "Jonah would have done it with a quarter of an hour to spare." So he would.

My cousin would have walked to the train and had a drink into the bargain.

\* \* \* \* \*

While the train thundered northward through a drowsy world, a council of five sat up in a *salon lit* and laid its plans. By far its most valuable member was Señor Don Fedriani, travelling by chance from Biarritz—a very good friend of mine and a *persona grata* with the French police. . . .

It was, indeed, in response to his telegram from Poitiers that, a few minutes before seven o'clock the next morning, two detectives boarded our train at the *Gare Austclitz*.

Five minutes later we steamed into the *Quai d'Orsay*.

Jill, carefully primed, was the first to alight.

Except for Piers, Duke of Padua, the rest of us followed as ordinary passengers would. It was, of course, plain that we had no connection with Jill. . . .

That Mr. Leslie Trunk should meet her himself was quite in order. That, having thus put his neck into the noose, he should proceed to adjust the rope about his dew-lap, argued an unexpected generosity.

'Yes, he had sent the wire. He had taken that responsibility. How was Piers? Well, there was plenty of hope.' He patted her delicate hand. 'She must be brave, of course. . . . Yes, he had just left him. He was in a nursing-home—crazy to see her. They would go there at once.'

We all went 'there' at once—including Piers, Duke of Padua.

Mr. Leslie Trunk, Señor Don Fedriani, and the two police-officers shared the same taxi.

'There' we were joined by Mrs. Trunk.

The meeting was not cordial, neither was the house a nursing-home. I do not know what it was. A glance at the proportions of the blackamoor who opened the door suggested that it was a bastille.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was thirty hours later that Berry pushed back his chair.

It was a glorious day, and, viewed from the verandah of the Club-house, that smiling pleasaunce, the rolling plain of Billère, was beckoning more genially than ever.

So soon as our luncheon had settled, we were to prove its promise for the last time.

"Yes," said Berry, "puerile as it may seem, I assumed you were coming back. My assumption was so definite that I didn't even get out. For one thing, Death seemed very near, and the close similarity which the slot I was occupying bore to a coffin, had all along been too suggestive to be ignored. Secondly, from my coign of vantage I had a most lovely view of the pavement outside the station. I never remember refuse looking so superb. . . ."

"Well, I don't know how long I waited, but when it seemed certain that you were—er—detained, I emerged from my shell. I didn't like leaving the car unattended, but as there wasn't a lock, I didn't know what to do. Then I remembered that just as the beaver, when pursued, jettisons some one of its organs—I forget which—and thus evades capture, so the careful mechanic removes some vital portion of his engine to thwart the unauthorised. I had a vague idea that the part in question was of, with, or from the magneto. I had not even a vague idea that the latter was protected by a network of live wires, and that one had only to stretch out one's finger to induce a spark about a foot long and a shock from which one will never wholly recover. . . . I reeled into the station, hoping against hope that somebody *would* be fool enough to steal the swine. . . ."

"Yes, the buffet was closed. Of such is the city of Bordeaux. . . . When I recovered consciousness I sought for you two. I asked several officials if they had seen two gentlemen. Some walked away as if nettled: others adopted the soothing attitude one keeps for the inebriated. Upon reflection, I don't blame them. I had a weak case. . . ."

"At last I returned to the car. Alas, it was still there. I then had recourse to what is known as 'the process of exhaustion.' In fact, I found it extremely useful. By means of that process I was eventually successful in starting the engine, and, in the same elementary way, I got into top gear. I drew out of that yard with a running backfire nearly blowing me out of my seat. . . ."

"Well, the general idea was to find a garage. The special one was to hear what people said when I stopped to ask them the way. The fourth one I asked was a chauffeur. Under his direction, one first



of all reduced the blinding stammer of the exhaust to an impressive but respectable roar, and then proceeded in his company to a dairy, a garage, another dairy and a hotel—in that order. I gave that chap a skinful and fifty francs. . . .

“Yesterday I drove home. I can prove it. All through the trams, like a two-year-old. I admit I took over six hours, but I lunched on the way. I trust that two of the poultry I met are now in Paradise. Indeed, I see no reason to suspect the contrary. So far as I could observe, they looked good, upright fowls. And I look forward confidently to an opportunity of apologising to them for their untimely translation. They were running it rather fine, and out of pure courtesy I set my foot positively upon the brake. Unfortunately, it wasn't the brake, but the accelerator. . . . My recollection of the next forty seconds is more than hazy. There is, so to speak, a hiatus in my memory—some two miles

long. This was partly due to the force with which the back of the front seat hit me in the small of the back. Talk about a blue streak. . . . Oh, it's a marvellous machine—very quick in the uptake. Give her an inch, and she'll take a hell of a lot of stopping. However. . . .”

“Have you seen Roland?” I said.

“Yes. He dined last night. I told him you'd broken down his beauty and that I had administered the *coup de grâce*. He quite believed it.”

“What did he say?” said Adèle.

“Since you ask me,” said Berry, “I'll give you his very words. I think you'll value them. ‘I tell you,’ he said, ‘I am very proud. You say she is done. Well, then, there are other cars in the *usine*. But she has saved something which no one can buy in the world—the light in a lady's eyes.’”

There are things in France, besides sunshine, which are not for sale.



## HARVEST EVE.

**A**T Weighton, in the Riding spring,  
 'Twixt wold and wold the promise grew  
 Of corn and grass and cuckoo wing,  
 And blossom lit with dew.

'Twixt wold and wold in August noon  
 I watched beneath a fruited bough  
 The billowed corn, the Riding sun  
 That blazed for harvest now.

Spring's promise held, and there I planned  
 How in brief while, with harvest come,  
 'Twixt wold and wold of that rich land  
 The wain should bear me home.

ERIC CHILMAN.

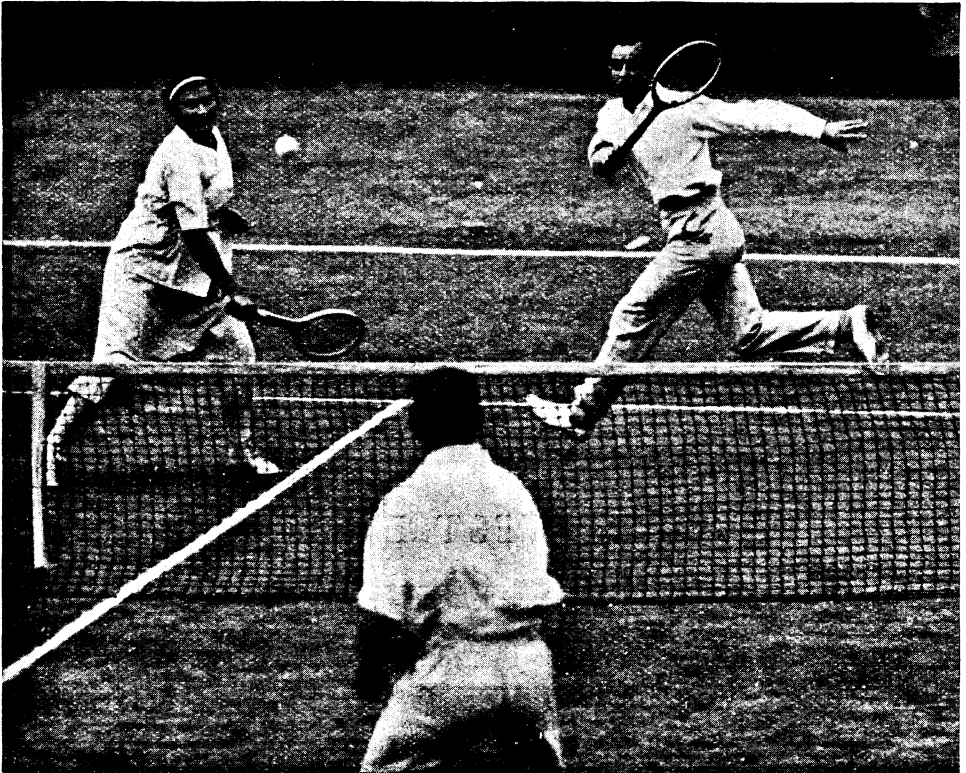
# DOUBLE PLAY IN LAWN TENNIS

By RANDOLPH LYCETT

**T**HERE comes a time to every lawn tennis enthusiast when he finds "match singles" a trifle too strenuous, however keen he may be on this department of the game.

a strenuous series of singles and regain his freshness in a few hours, or at most a night, he now finds himself not so "spry" on the following day.

Then he will find—though it will probably



*Photo by*

*(Topical.*

MISS RYAN AND RANDOLPH LYCETT, WINNERS OF THE MIXED DOUBLES AT WIMBLEDON, 1921, PLAYING J. B. GILBERT AND MRS. McNAIR IN THE SEMI-FINAL OF THIS YEAR.

The signs and portents of this stage in his game having been reached take various forms. Perhaps the first to claim his attention will be a diminution in his recuperative powers. His ligaments are more set and prone to strain from over-exertion. Where in his youth he could play

take him some time to supply the cause—that he cannot beat players whom he used to. The fact is that he is just that fraction too late off the mark in the terrific test of speed which constitutes single play in first-class modern lawn tennis. Though he may have more experience, better court craft, and even



Photo by] [Sport & General.

RANDOLPH LYCETT SERVING.

form, and consequent dissatisfaction with one's play.

To those who are instances of this state of affairs amongst the older players of to-day I would say: "Take up doubles as keenly as you did singles, and you will find them just as enthralling and not so exhausting. You will have gained more than you have lost."

Personally, I am thirty-five years old, and not in the least averse to admitting that the after-effects of strenuous singles make themselves distinctly felt these days. In my opinion a man who has led, and is leading, a normal life should give them up not later than at forty, whatever age he may "feel" in the enthusiasm of the moment.

There are some names in international lawn tennis which bear out this contention



Photo by] [Sport & General.

RANDOLPH LYCETT: THE FINISH OF A SMASH.

a better style than his opponent, he finds himself "getting to the ball" just too late, or making a return which ought to be a winner, but is not for the sole reason that his younger and speedier opponent "gets to it" in time.

Then, too, there are the all-important lasting powers in which he will find himself deficient. "Youth will be served" as much in lawn tennis as any other form of strenuous sport.

Admittedly it is an unpleasant thing to realise that for match singles one's prime is past, but far better for one's health and game to recognise the fact, and act upon it, than to continue the struggle against accumulative odds that can only result in an ever-growing number of defeats, a slow but sure descent of the ladder of lawn tennis

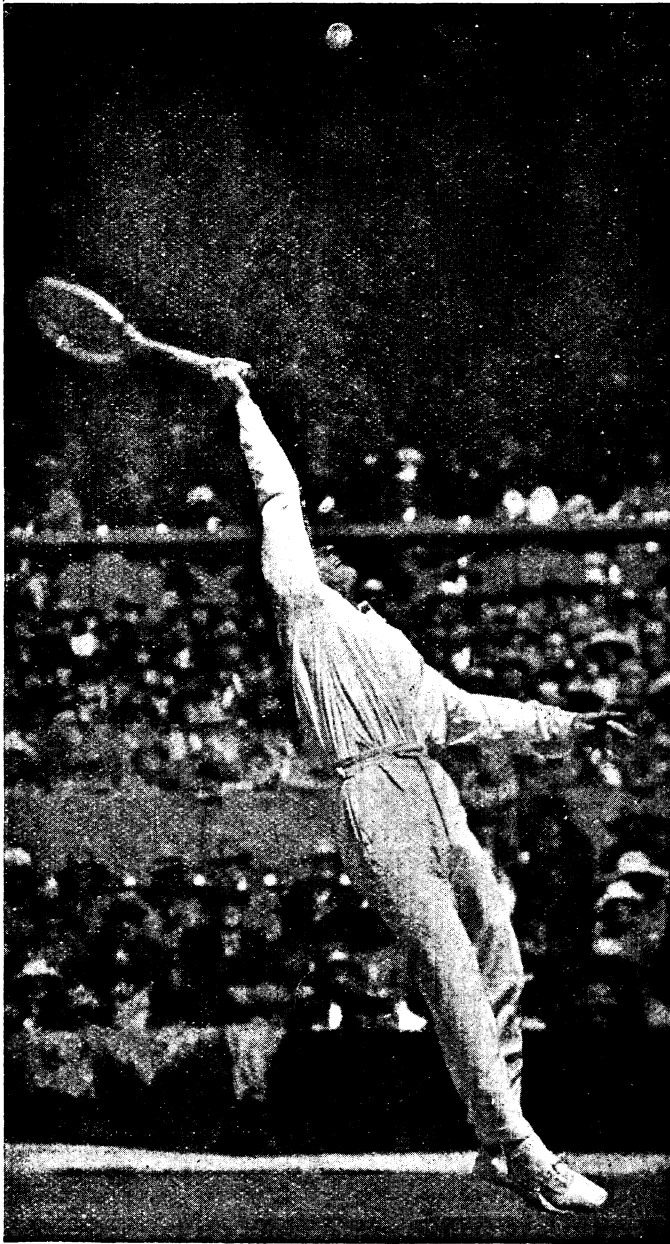
—great names that have faded from singles play at the age of thirty and less.

If I were asked to supply a list of the

America, Spain, France, Great Britain, Australia.

A general principle well worth remembering is that it is better to play good doubles than mediocre singles. To do this is not as easy as it might appear. The transition from a game requiring nothing but individual effort to one necessitating the closest kind of co-operation is disconcertingly marked. No longer is the player fighting for himself alone. He must think, and think deeply, of his partner during every phase of the game. For this reason, if no other, doubles are less selfish than singles. They savour more of playing for a "side," and consequently call for greater self-discipline, which is all to the good in any game, and especially so in lawn tennis.

It does not at all follow that a good single player will be equally good in doubles. For instance, if you would see doubles as they should not be played, watch two single experts playing together for the first time. Each is uncertain as to what the other is going to do. They will probably "poach" and collide. The better they are in singles, the more likely are these things to happen in doubles. If they play together long enough, they may settle down into a good doubles pair, but not until they can eradicate selfishness, and consider one another's play as well as their own. Then watch a good doubles pair and note how complete is their understanding. Though neither of them may be as good a player individually as the singles experts just mentioned, they



*Photo by*

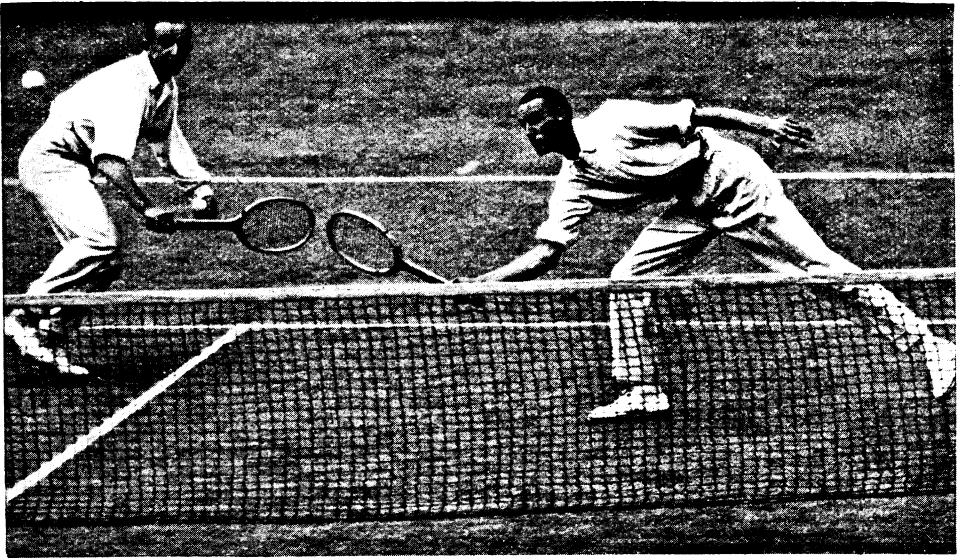
*[Sport & General.*

RANDOLPH LYCETT READY FOR AN OVERHEAD SMASH.

leading lawn tennis nations in the order of their earliest enforced retirement from championship singles, it would be as follows :

would probably beat them by sheer combination.

To show one's feelings in singles is bad



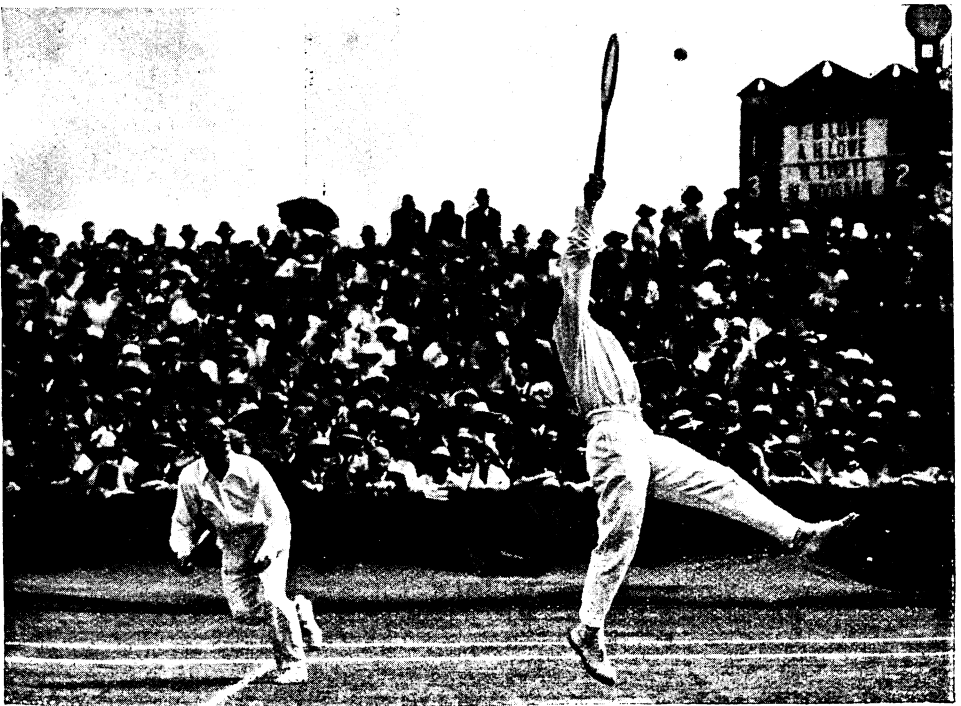
*Photo by*

*[Topical.*

RANDOLPH LYCETT AND J. O. ANDERSON, WINNERS OF THE WORLD'S DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP ON GRASS AT WIMBLEDON THIS YEAR, PLAYING GERALD PATTERSON AND P. O'HARA WOOD.

enough; to do so in doubles is fatal. In singles it affects no one but yourself; in doubles it affects another. It is extraordinary how an open display of annoyance, or "getting one's tail down," may distract

your partner. Such conditions are contagious. There is only one thing to do, and that is your best. If that best is not as good as usual, instead of fretting at the lapse, or trying to find excuses for it,



*Photo by*

*[Topical.*

RANDOLPH LYCETT AND MAX WOOSNAM, WINNERS OF THE DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP AT WIMBLEDON IN 1921, PLAYING F. G. LOWE AND A. H. LOWE.

concentrate on playing yourself into form, and you will almost certainly succeed.

In lawn tennis the two most marked types of player are the man who thinks he is better than he is, and he who thinks he is not as good as he is. Both are aggravating as doubles partners. With the former one can have little sympathy. His complaint is usually a sign of encroaching age. He cannot bring himself to believe that he is not as good as he was. Of course this is a

the cause of his own and his partner's undoing. He will play in such a state of nerves as to whether or not he is letting his partner down, that it will be impossible for him to do himself justice.

The happy medium between these two extremes is naturally the goal that should be aimed at by any player who wishes to become a desirable doubles partner, and it is worth the effort.

So much for the more temperamental side of doubles, and a very important side it is.

As for the actual play, there are equally marked differences between singles and doubles. In the former, where there is a larger amount of court to be covered by the player, he depends considerably on "length." A good length ball keeps his opponent more or less at bay on the base line, where it is possible to manoeuvre him out of position. In the latter, the place to put the ball on every possible occasion is at your opponent's feet, and as the proper position for a doubles pair is well up to the net, this necessitates what in singles would be considered a "short" shot. Roughly, the principle is that in singles the ball is sent straight, or even upward, whereas in doubles it is invariably sent downward.

In doubles, too, the importance of service cannot be over-emphasised. It is safe to say that the proper placing of a service wins more double games than anything else. To put the

ball in the most awkward position for your opponent to take it, means that his return will not be as good as it might be, and your partner at the net will be the better able to deal with it. In doubles service, placing is of far more importance than speed, and in that placing "length" plays the most important part. I should say that, on an average, the chances are two to one on the serving pair winning their game.

From the opposite point of view, that of



Photo by]

RANDOLPH LYCETT: A BACKHAND VOLLEY.

[Topical.

fault of youth also, but in that case it is a matter of conceit, which will soon be knocked out of him in anything approaching first-class lawn tennis. But the trouble with these people is that if the game they are playing is lost, they are convinced that it is their partner's fault. Happily, in these sporting days this type of player is in the minority.

With the other—who thinks he is not as good as he is—his false modesty may be



Photo by] [Sport & General.  
A FOREHAND STROKE.

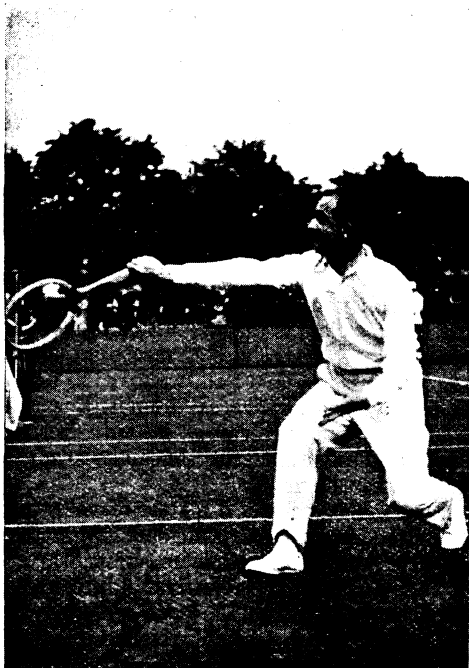


Photo by] [Sport & General.  
A BACKHAND STROKE.



Photo by] [Sport & General.  
A TYPICAL RETURN.



Photo by] [Topical.  
ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC STROKE.

RANDOLPH LYCETT IN PLAY.



the player who has to make the return of service, his sole object—if he cannot make a winner of his stroke—should be at least to get the ball back into play. It is better for him to make a weak return than to find the net. If he does that, it simply means he has lost a point outright, whereas in the former case the ball is, at any rate, in play, and anything may happen after that. This seems fairly obvious, but it is surprising how many players appear not to appreciate the fact. A good doubles motto is: *Keep the ball in play.* After all, what is the use of taking a good service as though it were a "sitter," and returning it with terrific speed and any other frills that may be added to it—into the net?

Doubles are mostly a matter of volleying, overhead work, and judicious lobbing, so that without these three important assets to one's game it is impossible to reach proficiency. And as they are probably the three most difficult strokes to acquire, it will be seen that, so far from being a simplification of lawn tennis, doubles require an even greater all-round proficiency than singles.

As for volleying, this stroke calls more particularly for speed of eye and hand and a development of the powers of anticipation. A good doubles player will always take the net on every possible opportunity, as the winning points are mostly made from there by means of the volley.

Overhead work, or smashing, is equally useful in doubles, and, as for lobbing, the day is past when this stroke savoured of "pat ball." There is a science in the judicious lob. It has been responsible for many a pair pulling their match out of the fire.

Then there is the matter of doubles "position," about which there has been, and still is, considerable controversy. Personally, I strongly favour the formation in which your partner takes up a position on the court close to the net when you are receiving

service. This enables you to take up a position of attack at the net after your return, instead of one of defence at the back of the court. Moreover, a good return by you frequently brings back a loose shot from your opponent, which is promptly dealt with by your partner. Again, the moral effect of your partner being at the net very often causes the server to hit out when running in. In doubles you *must* attack. It should be a ding-dong battle from first to last.

Judicious poaching wins many points, but how often one sees this form of play abused! A clever player will only poach when it is long odds on his winning the point outright, but there is no excuse for stepping in front of your partner and playing balls that are rightfully his and could be dealt with equally well by him.

I have purposely left mention of mixed doubles to the last, because what applies to a men's pair applies equally to man and woman. It is an ungallant thing to say, but unless a woman can volley, and is not averse to playing up at the net, she cannot help being a handicap in mixed doubles. It stands to reason. I will go so far as to say that the volleying combination will beat the formation of the lady at the back of the court and the man at the net on almost every occasion. Women players are appreciating this fact in greater numbers as time passes, and fitting themselves to become really good doubles partners.

In my opinion Miss Ryan is the best woman double player to-day. Her volleying is far more decisive than that of any other lady player, and her anticipation is excellent.

I hope I have contrived to show that there is more in doubles than meets the eye of the average player, and that, if he is finding singles a trifle too much, he may turn his attention to a game that is equally, if not more, alluring.





# OUT OF THE SHADOWS

By LLOYD WILLIAMS

ILLUSTRATED BY A. BAILEY

ANGELA found a seat in the Park and sat there miserably. Defeat was staring her in the face.

She played the violin, not because anyone wanted her to do so, but because she couldn't help herself. Indeed, she began exercises in the "first position" when she was four, and, to the disgust of her family, the love of it grew upon her until playing the violin was the only thing that made her happy.

Her father was indignant. He was a bank manager, and Angela had been beautifully educated in all the latest tricks of Roedean. She might have done something "sensible"; that was how Mr. Haslam put it. She might have become secretary to someone, and brought home good money every month. She might have been a most dangerous kind of lady doctor, or a designer of hats. Instead of that, she insisted on "fiddling." As Mr. Haslam truly said: "Fiddling's all right at kids' parties, but it isn't *business*."

Finally Angela made a bargain with father. After studying in England, she went to Milan, on the understanding that if within six months of her return she did not make a "do" of it, she would surrender at discretion and start being sensible.

The six months had almost expired, and Angela was no nearer to fame than she had been six years ago. She could have wept with humiliation, and her fairy godmother, who stood near at hand, was drab and shrunken and limp.

However, Angela did not know that her fairy godmother was present; indeed, she was not aware she possessed a fairy mother, because at Roedean they teach in three dimensions only.

Presently a man approached the seat;

he, too, was accompanied by his fairy godparent, of whose existence he had never heard. The man was gruff and cross, and his godparent floated along by his side, looking dim and attenuated.

"Did you ever see such rotten weather?" said the man, in an injured tone.

"It's not very nice," admitted Angela absently.

They lived next door to one another in comfortless lodgings, and had dropped into the way of exchanging a few words when they met. But there was little sympathy between them. Tom Venables was a black-and-white artist, who never by any chance got his sketches published, and Angela had no patience with the sketching fraternity.

Tom liked music in its proper place, but when your mind is preoccupied with "form" and "colour" and "middle distances," questions of musical technique are sheer foolery. Yet she could certainly play. Sometimes he heard her dashing through Wieniawski's "Tarantelle" in a way that made him grin.

"This is my last day of life," said Thomas Venables grumpily. "To-morrow I——"

Angela gave a start.

"You—you are not going to do anything ridiculous, are you?" she asked.

"Yes, I am. But I'm not going to commit suicide, if that's what you mean," he replied rather curtly. "I've got to admit myself beaten. I call that saying good-bye to life. Henceforth I cease to be a free man. I become a machine, that earns so much money per week, consumes so much food, does so much work, and—— Heavens, it makes you wish you had never been born!"

He gave himself an impatient shake, which nearly upset the seat, and made Angela say "Oh!" in alarm. Then he

went on to tell her one or two little things about himself. He had an uncle, who was a most respectable stockbroker, and loathed art and all "bunkum." His uncle had given him one hundred pounds for a year's run. If he could make good, he might go ahead; but if he failed to knock up a living, he was to enter the stockbroker's office as a paid clerk and work his way.

"He calls it being 'sensible,'" said Tom bitterly. "And if you talked to him for a year, you could never persuade him that he might as well drown me. Anyway, I am beaten. I have eked out his rotten hundred pounds till I'm down on my last ten bob. I have tried to get a footing, but somehow I can't do it. No doubt I'm a coward to grumble, because I'm a shy sort of idiot, and I can't face those confounded editors in their lairs. I write letters, and they forget to answer them."

Whereupon Angela gave him an outline of her own experiences, and they grumbled in unison, each secretly thinking that the other was a duffer.

## II.

BUT this story concerns the godparents quite as much as it concerns Angela and Tom, and it is necessary to consider their point of view.

They were shrinking visibly—that is, invisibly—while their charges bemoaned their respective fates, and their colours became drabber and drabber.

"There's no need to ask how your boy's doing," said Angela's godparent. "You don't seem able to manage him at all."

"I do my best," replied the other in a husky whisper, the vibrations of which could not reach the human ear. "But he's so taken up with himself and his ambitions that it's impossible to help him. Sometimes he gets cross, and I am driven from his side. For instance, this morning there was a dreadful scene with his landlady. The poor soul had over-cooked his egg, and he raved at her. She wept and snivelled and was positively heartbroken. When I returned to his side, I tried to show him what a mistake he was making. I pointed out how unfair he had been, but he wouldn't listen. Really, it's most disappointing. He used to be a fine, warm-hearted boy, but disappointment is spoiling him, and he doesn't realise that when he hurts other people he hurts me, and I can do nothing for him. Look at what I'm reduced to! I'm losing all control."

"Angela is just as troublesome," said

the other, in a low voice. "She had a letter from her mother this morning. The poor lady is ill, and I pointed out that if she went home for a few days, it would do no harm, and her mother would be pleased; but she pushed out my thought, and said she could never make a career if she fussed over everyone who had a headache. Just listen to them!"

"The world is full of selfish fools," said Tom. "It's every man for himself, and Heaven help the poor devil who can't stand alone."

"You are quite right," echoed Angela. "No one seems to realise that every girl has the right to live her own life."

The godparents became more and more limp.

"I can't stand much more of it," said Angela's godmother. "It's the old, old story. Soon she will drive me away altogether."

"I have a bright idea," said Tom's unseen guardian, in a desperate whisper. "Suppose we exchange rôles. Suppose I take charge of your Angela, and you look after Tom. Do you think you could handle him?"

"I don't mind trying, though I'm afraid you'll find Angela far beyond your strength. Still, the experiment may be interesting."

So the godparents exchanged places, and, though neither of the young people was aware of it, it was Angela's godmother who was whispering in Tom's ear, while his godfather was talking to her.

## III.

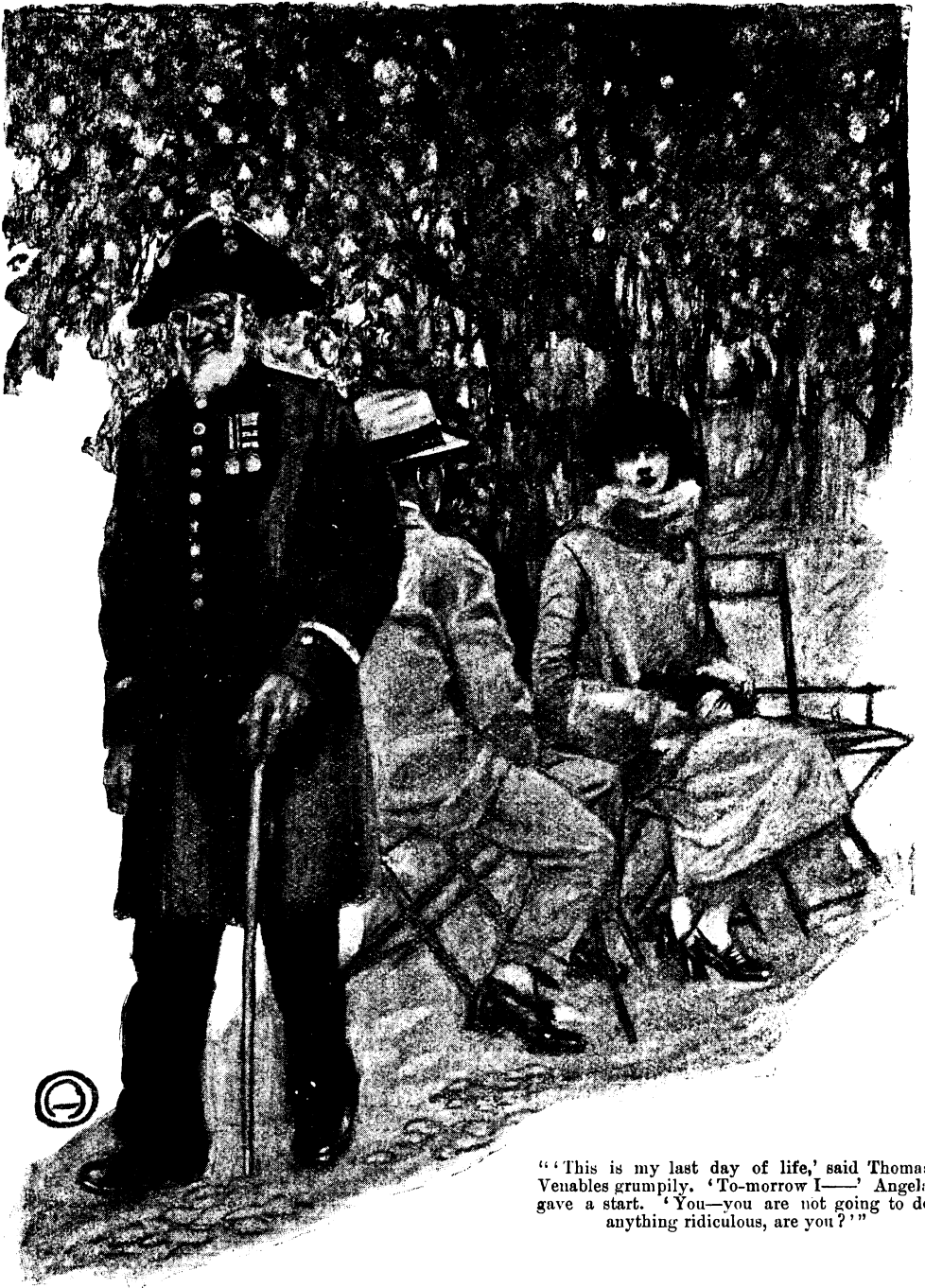
THEY had been silent for a moment, and presently Tom said: "Do you know, I have hit upon a rather nobby idea. How would it be if we swapped parts?"

"What do you mean?" she asked severely. "You don't play the violin, do you?"

"Rather not," he said heartily. "But it's rough on a girl to knock about London, and try to edge her way into the ring without anyone to help her. Now, I happen to have an old schoolfellow who is in the musical world. He's a partner with Maynard, the big agent. If I went to see him, and talked about you, and told him what a stunning player you were, he might give you a show. Would you let me try?"

Angela blushed with pleasure, and it was a long time since Angela had blushed, for her thoughts had become dry and hard.

"That's really kind of you," she said.



“‘This is my last day of life,’ said Thomas Venables grumpily. ‘To-morrow I—’ Angela gave a start. ‘You—you are not going to do anything ridiculous, are you?’”

“I’m afraid Maynard won’t look at me. I’ve called there a dozen times. The queer thing is, I was wondering if I could help you.”

“You needn’t trouble about me,” he said.

“It’s worse for a man to fail than a woman,” said Angela. “And I should

rather like to do something for you before I lower my own flag—that is, if you wouldn’t think it cheek. I could talk about your drawings in a way you couldn’t very well talk yourself. Besides, sometimes people will listen to a girl. Will you let me have a shot?”

"Of course I will, and be jolly grateful. Only you'll fail," he said good-humouredly. "The fact is, I'm not so confoundedly clever as I think I am. But it's different with you. You are really clever, and— Shall we break into my last note at the Corner House? We could talk over the plan of campaign."

The people in the Corner House saw them enter, and doubtless decided that Angela was "quite a pretty girl" and that Tom was a "nice boy"; but they did not see who followed them—they did not see two beings whose robes were becoming white and light, and whose faces were extraordinarily bright and smiling. No one knew that a voice was saying in Tom's brain: "This girl is a real sport, and she deserves to get on. Even if you make a mess of it yourself, you must see what you can do for her."

"Isn't it funny? We have never had tea together before," said Angela aloud. "Do you take sugar?"

But in her mind there was a whisper: "I know he's only an artist, but he has put up no end of a good fight, and if you give him a hand, you'll feel all the better for it."

Meantime Tom's godfather had winked at Angela's godmother a trifle familiarly. "It's difficult to make these silly people understand that we can't do anything for them until they give up thinking about themselves, isn't it? How are you feeling?"

"Much better. Isn't my Angela charming when she laughs? Do you think your boy can really help her?"

"I'm certain of it. He's getting so keen that I am vibrating all over."

"I believe there's a faint shade of pink coming into your aura," said Angela's godparent.

"What about yourself, madam? You are growing rosy."

#### IV.

THAT was Friday, and Angela altered her plans. She decided to run down home. After all, she could do nothing to help Tom over the week-end, and it would be frightfully stuffy for mother to be seedy, and have father imploring her without intermission to be "sensible." Tom insisted on going to Waterloo with her, and spent one of his few pennies on a platform ticket; but the ticket collector did not notice the godparents, although they passed literally under his nose and were looking quite well-to-do and cheerful.

On Saturday morning Tom called at Maynard's, and Angela's godmother was saying to him: "Now, don't make that nice girl cheap to this fellow. There's no need to ask favours. Let him think you are doing him a good turn."

Tom blew in with a cheap cigar in his mouth and a flower in his buttonhole; the one cost sixpence, and the other fourpence, but he dared not risk more, and they made him look fairly prosperous.

"Well, Billy, and how's the world using you?" he said boisterously.

Mr. Maynard's partner was growing rich out of other people's gifts, and cut the end of a cigar that cost eighteenpence. But he was fed-up. These dashed musicians were the limit. Tom agreed that they were a "pretty rotten crowd." "What's the particular trouble, Billy?"

"I'm arranging a concert at Pembroke House for Monday," said the great man. "It's to be a swell affair, and all-British. The worst of it is that Susan Withers has let me down. She has cut her finger, or something silly. I sometimes wish she'd hang herself."

Tom's heart gave a jump. Here was his chance, yet he went canny, because Angela's godparent was urging him to make much of his friend. "Don't throw her at his vulgar head. Let him think it's a great favour," she was saying.

"You'll have to find someone else," yawned Tom. "I suppose there are plenty of 'em."

"Are there?" growled the agent. "I could get a dozen foreigners, but let me tell you, my boy, that English girl violinists of the first rank are hard to find."

"I suppose you couldn't get Angela Haslam?" said Tom carelessly. He rose like a man who was slightly bored with the conversation. "She's a flyer, of course. Well, so long, old man. I can't waste the morning jawing about your troubles."

"Wait a minute. What about this Angela What's-her-name? I fancy I've heard of her. Went to Milan, didn't she? Can she play?"

"Can she play?" Tom looked at him sorrowfully. "You're a little behind the times, old thing," he said. "Haven't you heard her? She would give your Susan Withers a couple of stone and beat her easy. But I really can't stop any longer."

"There's no need to be in such a cursed hurry," said the great man irritably.

"Throw that cigar away and try one of mine. Do you know this girl? Would she take five guineas?"

"Not likely, dear old bean. She's a funny kid. Her people are rolling in money, and she doesn't care a toss about you agents. She can afford to wait. But I'll tell you what I'll do, Billy. You were always a mutton-headed idiot, since the days I had to do your 'prep.' at school, but you can't help not having much gumption. Make it fifteen, and I'll persuade her to turn up at Pembroke House on Monday as large as life. And, between ourselves, it will be the best day's work you ever did. That girl's going to make a name."

Tom went off squaring his shoulders with an air of enormous importance. It was strange how cleverly he had "carried off a deal" for another person. When he tried to sell his own wares, he was as nervous as a cat.

Angela returned to London on Monday morning, and she went white with alarm on learning that she was to play at Pembroke House before Royalty. "But I'm out of practice," she said.

"Good job, too," said Tom, with a grin. "If you play too well, they'll think you come from Germany. Don't forget—your game is to treat Maynard like dirt. If he offers you a contract, tell him you don't want one. Then he'll realise you are a truly great artiste."

Angela practised furiously all the morning, and intended to practise with continued fury all the afternoon until it was time to dress. She was, like all enthusiasts, inclined to overwork and make herself nervous and uncertain.

But Tom's godfather was by her side.

"You will work yourself to fiddle-strings," he was whispering. "Besides, you are a selfish cat to think only of yourself. You ought to be trying to sell some of that nice boy's drawings."

Angela put her old fiddle away with a bang, donned her smartest hat, and set off for the City with a portfolio of Tom's selected drawings under her arm.

She knew exactly what she was going to do. She had an old sweetheart who was editor of a well-known paper, for every girl worth her salt has a few old sweethearts dotted about the road of life. She had declined to marry Maurice Ffolliott years ago, and he had married someone else, believing himself—quite mistakenly, no doubt—to be a lucky man. But there was

room for a strain of tenderness still, and he welcomed Angela with both hands.

"You look charming, Angie," he said. "Come and sit down and let's talk. Why don't you come to see Mabel? And how are you getting on?"

Angela was pleased to be able to say she was "getting on quite nicely." "I am playing at Pembroke House to-night."

"You are!" Mr. Ffolliott looked deeply impressed. "I know the show. All-British and stacks of Royalty present. Where's your photograph?"

Angela blushed.

"I haven't brought one," she said. "I really didn't come about that, Maurice. I want to speak of a friend who——"

"Never mind the friend just now. Send me your best portrait by special messenger. I'll do it well. New English violinist. . . . 'Charmingly pretty performer, who plays with finished technique and an exquisite sense of colour,' and all the rest of it. By Jove, you deserve it, Angie, for I've heard you play. Now, what about your friend?"

"Don't make the boy cheap," whispered Tom's godfather.

She produced Tom's drawings and went to work tactfully, though in a different strain from Tom.

"He's a dear boy, Maurice, and full of pluck and talent, but he's shy about his own stuff," she said. "Is it good?"

The editor went through the drawings slowly, putting one on the right and two on the left, then two on the right and one on the left.

"It's jolly good, my dear," he said. "He's got something to learn in dishing it up to please the public, but we can teach him that. Between ourselves we want fresh blood here, Angie. Is this chap a worker? I loathe the people who slack."

"He works like—like old Harry," said Angela.

Ffolliott laughed. "If he works like you do, he'll suit us, Angie. Tell him I'll buy this little lot, and the rest will be sent back. And he can call—to-morrow at three. I'll run him, Angie. It's a steady job, and I want the first refusal of all he does. Hullo! Yes? Editor speaking."

He was on the telephone, and waving a hand to Angie not to interrupt by so much as breathing. The printer was making gloomy remarks about the front page. If he did not receive it by twelve o'clock to-morrow, the printer was of opinion that it had been better for all concerned if they

had never been born. Mr. Ffolliott was fairly calm—for an editor. A front page would be forthcoming at noon on the morrow; it was a portrait.

Angela rose.

"You're awfully good, Maurice," she said, "So are you. I'm glad you have put me on that fellow Venables. For pity's sake, don't forget to send your portrait. The printer will have my blood if it doesn't turn up."

After she had gone, he fancied that his office seemed brighter for her presence, and was not aware that this was because Tom's godfather had left behind a trailing pinkish radiance.

Angela returned to her lodgings feeling as if she had wings. She had lost nothing by missing the afternoon's practice, but felt confident and strong for the ordeal that night. Yet, queerly enough, she was not thinking of the concert; she was thinking of Tom's face when she rushed into his sitting-room with the good news.

And Tom nearly broke down when he heard it. It came as such a surprise, and he was so very near to defeat now, that a few hours would settle his career, perhaps, for ever.

That night, while Royalty sat in the great drawing-room of Pembroke House, with such a show of diamonds behind them that it suggested a rifling of all the jewellers' shops in London, Tom Venables was pacing the pavement outside.

He listened eagerly for the little hum of applause as the all-British musicians came forward, but he had ears for only one performer.

Presently the violin sang out, and his heart gave a leap of joy. He knew exactly how she would look; he fancied he knew how she would feel. There was no undue nervousness to-night. Every note was true and confident, and he fancied—was it fancy?—that there was a new element in her playing, something he had never heard before. She was a woman looking at life bravely, now soaring to starry heights on a strong wing, and now looking down into the depths with untroubled eyes.

She finished her first item, and it was received with the subdued murmur of well-bred applause which was all one must expect.

But when she broke into the "Tarantelle" he had heard her play so often, it was like a soul released from brooding thoughts and escaping to the woods for a frolic; her

violin was singing, dancing, screaming with fun and joy. She was a leaf fluttering in the wind, a kitten gambolling in mad joyfulness; she was a sprite, too evanescent to be seen, a girl driving her lover mad with coquetry.

Tom began to dance on the pavement. He possessed the artistic temperament, which is not to be controlled like that of a bank manager or a concert agent, and the grooms and motor drivers who waited there looked at him with a smile and without any sense of astonishment, for it seemed the most natural thing in the world.

Who wouldn't dance when a fiddle went mad? Perhaps they wished that they, too, possessed the temperament that could answer to it so quickly.

But the music was becoming too wild for human steps; no one but a fairy could have followed it, and Tom stood gasping with delight.

Suddenly . . .

She had finished, and the music seemed to snap off with a peal of heavenly laughter that went thrilling to the skies.

The applause was tumultuous; well-bred people had forgotten themselves, and Tom tossed his cap in the air and shouted such a "Brava!" that it must have been heard inside the house. Even the flunkeys applauded.

She had won. She had arrived. She had delivered the goods, and he could barely possess his soul till she appeared. They had arranged for a taxi to drive her home, but they dismissed it scornfully, and walked all the way arm-in-arm. They talked excited nonsense, and the godparents, walking invisibly beside them through the garish streets, swelled and glowed with the love-tint till they became rosy red.

Her heart was beating against his arm, and her breath came in little stabs of excitement.

"It was your doing, Tom—all yours," she said. "I knew you were listening, and I tried so hard—I—I couldn't fail. What have you done for me?"

"What have you done for me?" he asked.

They were catching at one another's thoughts half expressed.

"I don't mean selling those silly sketches of mine, though, Heaven knows, I'm grateful," he went on. "But to-night, while you were playing, you lifted me, Angela. You touched me with a magic wand, so that I seemed a giant! Oh, my dear!"

They stopped and kissed and kissed again. Mercifully the streets of London are never too bright, and no one—except the godparents—was a penny wiser.

## V.

No one saw.

Yet some of it was plainly visible. The young couple kneeling before the altar rails could be seen, and everyone had had a chance of admiring the bride's mousseline de soie as she walked up the aisle. Even a glimpse of a pale and happy face was caught.

The crowd was visible enough, and everyone was ecstatically aware of the presence of noteworthy people. Three, if not four, opera singers, an illustrious composer, several R.A.'s, and all sorts of writers, might be identified. Mr. Ffolliott was present, and had told his camera man to do the affair handsomely at the church door when bride and bridegroom came out and faced the roses.

The organist, conscious of many musicians present, had played the Lohengrin March with due majesty, and the choir had sung "The Voice that breathed o'er Eden."

Yet no one saw the godparents, who were standing over and around their children, and were shining with translucent rosy light.

A quiet, clear voice was heard asking sundry questions.

"Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour, and keep her in sickness and in health?"

And only one person in a vast congregation had a glimpse of reality, and that was a child. "Did you see how bright and pink it was, muvver, just where Angela stood?" And mother, being a thoroughly sensible woman, who had been decently brought up, explained that the brightness and pinkness arose from the sun shining through the stained-glass window.

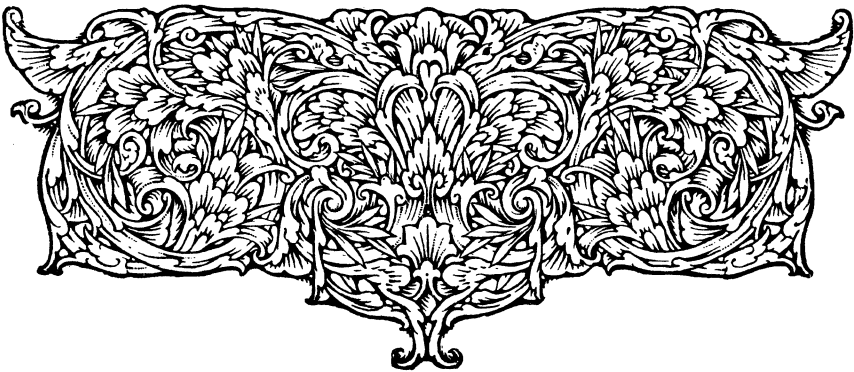
"I must congratulate you, madam," said Tom's godfather, in a voice that was strictly inaudible, as he followed the hero and heroine down the aisle. "You have handled that boy of mine admirably."

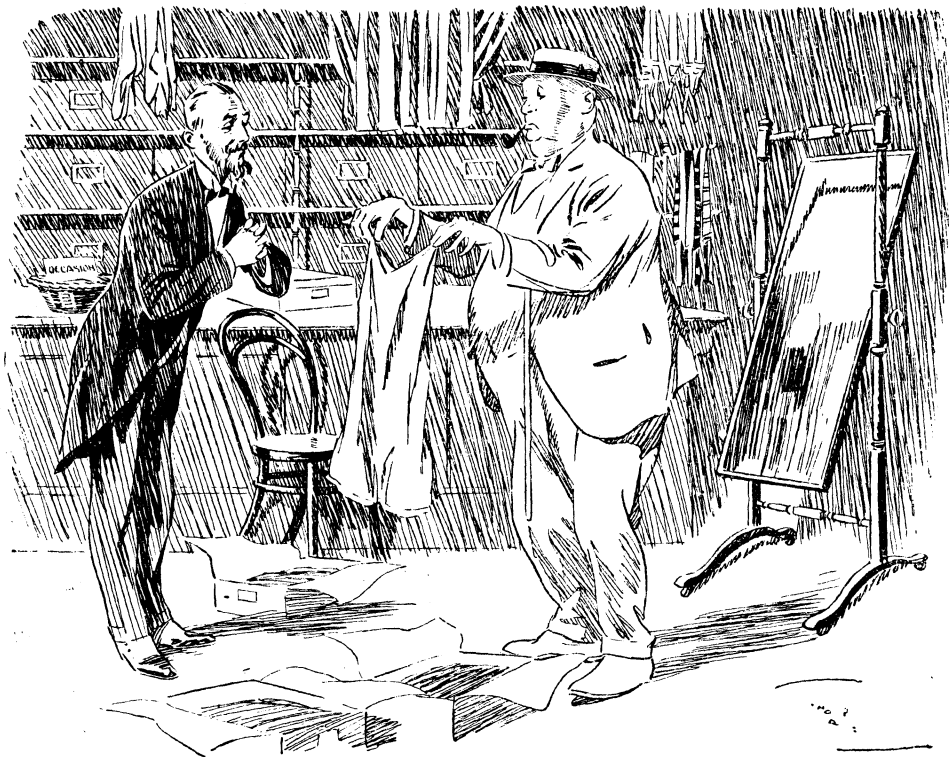
But Angela's godmother was wiping her eyes with a handkerchief so fine that beside it a butterfly's wing would appear coarse sacking.

"Angela is so happy," she whispered. "I must kiss her, though she will never know."

Outside the church the bride looked round with a smile and put her hand up to her cheek. The children were pelting them with roses, and—

It must have been a rose-leaf that brushed her cheek.





"The biggest costume in that French shop inspired him with very little confidence, but the weather was boiling hot, and he was mad to get into the water, and so he chanced it and paid his money."

# A CURE FOR SHYNESS

By WILLIAM CAINE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

**C**HUFF was a big, pink man, clean-shaven, bald as an egg, with whity-yellow eyebrows, three chins, an immense stomach and a timid smile. His age was thirty-two, but he had not yet acquired any *savoir faire* to speak of. His was a modest, retiring nature. He was a quick and vivid blusher; he was afflicted with a slight stammer; his air was always a little apologetic. He was aware of all this, and strove hard to be bolder. He believed that nothing but his fatal diffidence kept him down. He earnestly desired to rise. He wanted to be affluent. He aspired to

become a captain of industry. He would have been content, I think, with an extra ten pounds on his salary.

He didn't get it. For seven years now he had stuck and he continued to stick. This distressed him. Something had got to be done. But what?

One day he read an advertisement in a magazine which ran as follows:

Are You Shy?

I Can Make You Bold as Brass for Five Bob.

HORTON ADGER, Efficiency House,  
Long Acre.



This was irresistible. Chuff went to see Mr. Adger in his lair. He was admitted by an enormous minion, who had one broken nose and two cauliflower ears. The waiting-room was full of shy people who had come to be made as bold as brass for five bob. In time Chuff was face to face with Mr. Adger. He paid his fee, told his tale, and prepared to be made brazen.

"Quite so," said Mr. Adger. "Now, please listen to what I'm a-going fer to say to you, Mr. Chuff." He sucked his teeth and proceeded. "Shyness is a disease. It can be cured. I can cure it. I'm going to cure you. I cured myself, and ten years ago there wasn't a shy man alive than what I was. So I know what I'm talking about, and don't you fergit it. Now, I'm not going fer to cure you with drugs. I'm not a-going fer to cure you with operations. I'm not a-going fer to cure you with exercises. I'm not a-going fer to cure you with hypnotisms. What, then, am I a-going fer to cure you with, Mr. Chuff? Well, I'll tell you, and mind you listen to what I'm a-going fer to say. I'm a-going fer to cure you with common-sense. That's what I'm a-going fer to cure you with. Just common-sense. That's all. Now, listen. Shyness is a disease. Very well. That is established, ain't it? Shyness is just a disease. All right. Good! Have you got that? You nod. You have. Fine! Great! Now, listen. A man is shy because he's timid. He's timid because he lacks confidence. He lacks confidence because he hasn't got it. What, then, must he do? Why, he must *get* it. And that's what you've a-got fer to do, Mr. Chuff. Get it. See? Get it. Ah, hah! Got that?"

"Yes," said Chuff. "I've got that, b-but——"

Mr. Adger held up his hand. "I don't want you to begin fer to raise objections, Mr. Chuff," he said. "If I'm a-going fer to cure you, I must have your co-operation, not your hostility. It ain't any sort of manner of use my a-trying fer to cure you unless you're a-going fer to co-operate. I can't help you unless you're a-going fer to help yourself. Now, listen. What's shyness? A disease, isn't it? Yes, that's what it is. A disease. Very well, then. You want to be cured of shyness. You want to be bold. Very good. Then what you've a-got fer to do is to *be* bold. That's all. *Be* it. See? I expect you shun going into Society. Yes? Well, don't. Don't shun it. 'Unt it. Mix with your fellow men and

women. Go right in among them. Say to yourself, 'I'm a-going fer to be bold with these people.' Then *be* bold. See? That's all."

"I see," said Chuff, "b-but——"

Mr. Adger struck his hand on his table.

"If you ain't a-going fer to co-operate, Mr. Chuff," he said, "it's no use. If you ain't a-going fer to do what I tell you, it's no good my telling you what to do. *Is* it? *Is* it? It's no manner of kind of use to you fer *me* to go and mix with my fellow men and women. *You've* got to do that. I can tell you what to *do*; I can't do it *for* you. See?"

"But I-look here——" said Chuff.

Mr. Adger rose. "That'll do," he said harshly. "I'll tell you what's the matter with you. You ain't serious over this. You don't want fer to co-operate, and you don't mean fer to co-operate, and I've done with yer. I'll thank you to clear out of this, Mr. Chuff, for there's several other gents and ladies waiting in the outer office. See?" He rang his bell smartly. Though Mr. Adger seemed likely to do very little for his patients, there could be no doubt that he had treated himself with success.

His appalling minion now opened the door and beckoned to Chuff. Chuff gave up his idea of assaulting Mr. Adger and sneaked out into the waiting-room with rage in his heart. He was too shy to tell the herded victims of Mr. Adger to go away and save their money; or was it the close shepherd-ing of Mr. Adger's minion that kept him silent?

Yet, when his wrath had cooled, he found himself compelled—for he was a justly-minded man—to own that there had been something in Mr. Adger's recommendation. It was a fact that, if he could help it, he (Chuff) never mixed with his fellow men and women. For years, he discovered, he had been a solitary. All his evenings were spent at home over books; his Saturdays and Sundays he employed in lonely country rambles; his holidays were unaccompanied walking tours. Outside his office he hardly spoke to a soul except his landlady. Was it any wonder that his shyness grew upon him?

The long and the short of it is, that he decided to take Mr. Adger's advice. He resolved to spend his annual fortnight's holiday, then almost due, in a seaside boarding house. He realised that it would be a terrible experience, but if he was ever to be a captain of industry, nothing—so firmly

rooted was his shyness—nothing but heroic measures would serve.

On second thoughts he came to the conclusion that he might do better to take his plunge among foreigners. He believed that it might be a trifle easier for him to mingle with his fellow men and women if he couldn't possibly talk to them and if they couldn't possibly talk to him. Among such people he would still be, in a sense, alone. At the same time he would, in a way, be mingling. He felt that he had hit upon a happy compromise. He engaged a bedroom in the *Hôtel Beau Séjour*, at Trou-Plage on the Côte d'Azur, *The Daily Wire* Travel Bureau, having informed him (in the columns of *The Daily Wire*) that Trou-Plage was the very smallest and quietest seaside resort in the whole of France. No one, so he was informed, but French people ever went there. It was a place quite undiscovered by the English.

This was exactly what he wanted.

When he got there he found that the *Hôtel Beau Séjour* was as full as it could be. There were in it six French people, three Russians, two Swedes, five Bolivians, and eighty-seven English.

At Trou-Plage you could bathe, or you could golf, or you could sit and look at the sea.

Chuff couldn't afford to golf, looking at the sea bored him after a time, but he was fond of sea-bathing, though he was no swimmer. On hunting for his bathing costume on the morning after his arrival, he found that he had left it behind him. So he went and bought one in Trou-les-Dunes. (At Trou-Plage there was nothing whatever except the *Hôtel Beau Séjour*.)

The biggest costume in that French shop, when spread up against Chuff's chest, inspired him with very little confidence; it was also bright scarlet in colour. But the weather was boiling hot, and he was mad to get into the water, and so he chanced it and paid his money. He hurried back to Trou-Plage, sprinted up to his bedroom, forced himself into the costume, donned his mackintosh and slippers, and sallied out.

A few minutes later he was wallowing in the calm, cool ocean, gratefully conscious of the concealment it afforded him.

The fashionable bathing hour was almost due, but had not yet struck, and there were only about half a dozen people in the water. Chuff, obedient to his instincts, removed himself somewhat apart. This was not

the moment, he felt, for beginning to mingle. Had his costume fitted him a little less snugly, he might have been a little more ready to dare, but things being as they were, he was content to postpone.

The wetness of the water, acting upon the cotton threads of his costume, caused them to shrink closely together. Chuff began to feel constricted all over, but particularly about his throat. He put up his hand to ease the strain and discovered that he had got into his costume hind-side foremost. The scoop which should have been over his chest exposed his back, while the straight neck of the garment pressed tightly against his windpipe.

Chuff looked towards the shore. A number of people, clad in fine bath robes, were moving down upon the beach from the hotel. The fashionable hour was about to strike. Chuff visualised himself rising up out of the foam, in a skin-tight vermilion costume put on the wrong way round, and wading back to his mackintosh under all those eyes, and he knew he couldn't do it. Then a hopeful thought came to him. He glanced to right of him and to left of him. At least a hundred yards separated him from the nearest bather. He decided that he had plenty of time and lots of room. He walked quickly seawards until he was right up to his neck in water. Then he undid the button on his shoulder and peeled off the costume.

Then he began to try to get back into it.

The wetness of the water, acting upon a costume that no longer had anybody in it, caused the whole thing to collapse into a shapeless lump, with neither bottom to it, nor top, nor sides, nor arms, nor legs, nor neck. Chuff pulled it out carefully into something like its proper form. It floated out in front of his chin, flat upon the wave. He endeavoured to sink it so that he might put a leg into it. Instantly it collapsed again and was as it had been—a lump. Chuff, cursing beneath his breath, pulled it out into shape again. Again it floated. Chuff endeavoured to lift his leg high enough to get it into the place provided. This caused him to lose his balance and fall over backwards. He went under, swallowed water, got it up his nose and into his eyes, rose to the surface, and found that the costume had again huddled itself together.

On the beach stood the newcomers, their bath robes discarded, preparing to enter the water. Behind them hundreds of

thousands of gay figures could be seen emerging from the hotel, while from the road to Trou-les-Dunes yet other millions were debouching upon the sands.

Panic laid hold of Chuff. He grasped his costume firmly and began to move off towards the western end of the Plage, where nobody seemed to be. He knew that if ever he was to get back into his costume, he must not be harassed by the near neighbourhood of lady bathers. To achieve this thing, indeed, he must be far, far away from all human society. He waded some two hundred yards and then tried again.

Meanwhile the faint breeze had freshened slightly, and the waves, which, when Chuff had entered the water, were little better than ripples, had increased in size. The ocean lay no longer almost perfectly flat, but heaved gently. Inshore the acreage of foam was spreading. So now every time that Chuff tried to make his costume lie out in a negotiable shape, a soft aqueous swelling remorselessly bunched it together again. Chuff cursed beneath his breath no longer.

A party of young ladies from the hotel came in their wrappers, strolling and gaily chattering, towards him along the sand. They, too, sought a less crowded part of the bay. Very soon, it was obvious to Chuff, he would be surrounded by them. He clutched his costume and made off once more westwards. Again sufficiently remote from his fellow human beings, he set himself anew to his task. This time he had good luck. As it was hopeless any longer to try to spread the costume out, he pushed it down in the water to a level with his knees, pulled it apart by the feel—for he could see nothing of it that was of the slightest use to him—and blindly thrust in a foot. By this time he no longer cared whether he got the costume on right way or wrong. His foot penetrated, was clothed; he was aware that it wriggled onwards down a cotton tunnel. If only he could get one leg into the costume, the rest, he felt, would be easy. He pressed and tugged and cursed, and swallowed sea-water, and spun round and round, and kept on till he could keep on no longer. His leg simply refused to go any further. "Well," he thought, "it's tighter than ever, but here goes for the other foot."

Soon afterwards it was borne in upon his understanding that his leg was in one of the arms of the costume.

He uttered a sort of howl of rage and

skinned the thing off him. He tried to dance on the sand in his fury, but the water buoyed him up, and he got no satisfaction whatever out of the performance. He tried to beat with his hands, but he was up to his neck, and his arms, impeded by the water, moved far too sluggishly to afford him any relief.

He now began to feel cold, for he had been twenty good minutes in the sea, and this was his first bathe of the year. His teeth began to chatter. He began also to feel he was going mad.

Suddenly a wave, larger than any that had yet come, overwhelmed him, and at the same time took the costume from between his rapidly numbing fingers and carried it away. Chuff came up, uttered a scream, and plunged to recover the thing. Where was it? Nowhere. He stared wildly round him. Still it was nowhere.

On the beach people were pointing at him. He had attracted attention. It was supposed that he was in difficulties. Some of the girls were clinging together, hiding their eyes. A stalwart youth, in whom Chuff recognised one of the English contingent, came striding towards him through the surf. "Anything wrong, monsieur?" he shouted. "Hold on! Je vyang—je vyang. What is it—cramp? An octopus? Je vyang toot sweet."

"No," yelled Chuff, "I'm all right, confound you! Go away! Go to hell!"

The youth halted, grinning. "Thanks very much," he said. "Same to you, uncle." He turned and went back to reassure the young ladies, who entered the sea.

Chuff pushed off westwards, gnashing his teeth. He knew that he was now a marked man in the hotel. Impossible to hope that those people wouldn't remember him. And what a fool he had been to drive that young man away! Why hadn't he taken the fellow into his confidence and asked him to bring a bath robe? A bath robe, however soaked, would have at least enabled him to gain the hotel. But then that which had happened to him must have come out. Anything was better than that. Even if he had to stay in the sea till night—it only meant about ten hours—and creep ashore under cover of the darkness and find a newspaper or something, and—And even then he would have to get back into the hotel. He saw himself entering the crowded lounge-hall of the hotel in a newspaper at half-past eight o'clock at night.

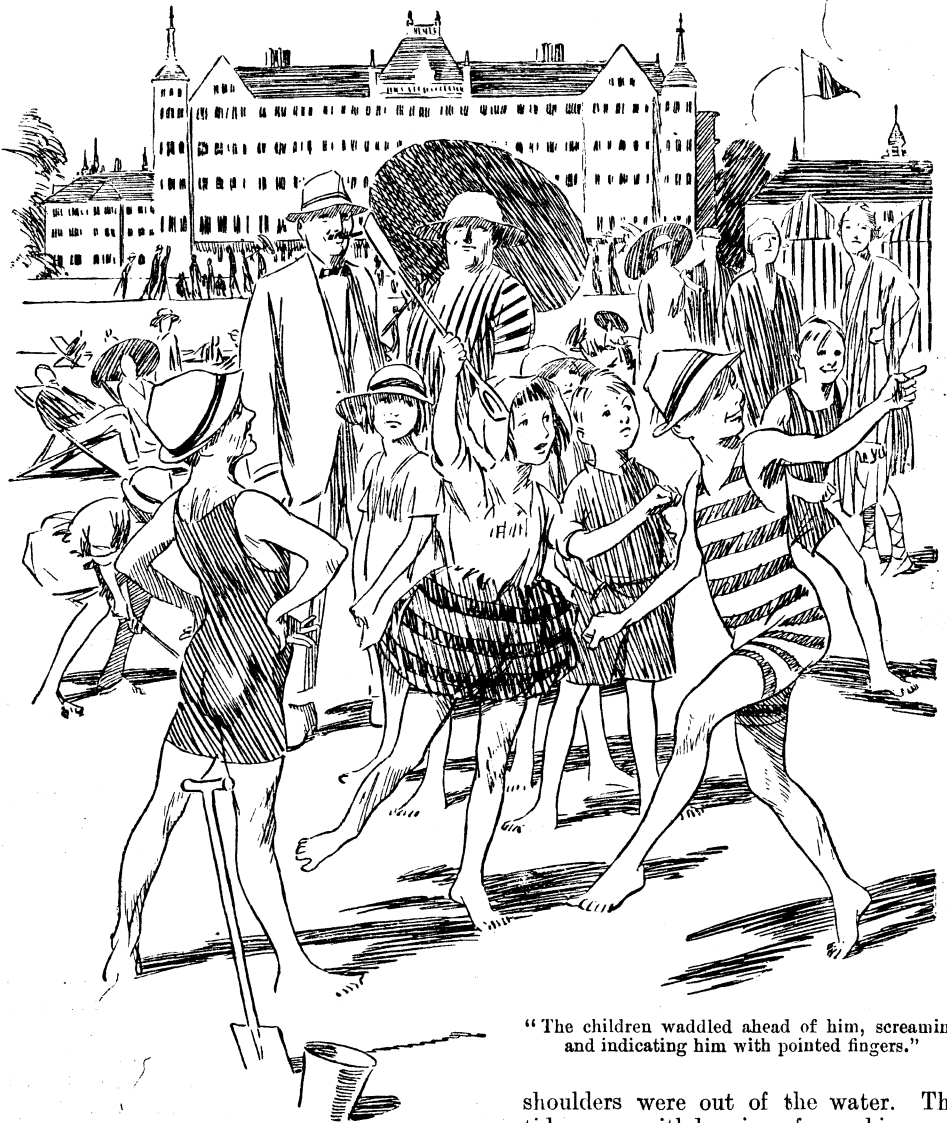
He asked himself if it wouldn't, perhaps, be best just to throw up his hands and sink and be done with it all.

A boat came towards him. It was rowed by a young woman, clad for bathing. A young man, similarly clad, steered. They were singing "I want to be in Dixie."

So did Chuff, but he didn't stop to say

The boat passed within twenty yards of Chuff. The young man waved to Chuff's head and called out, "Water pretty jolly chilly, what?" and uttered a vacant laugh. Chuff gibbered at him like an angry ape. Why did the fool have to have a girl with him? But for that—

Here he found that his



"The children waddled ahead of him, screaming and indicating him with pointed fingers."

so. He struck west again, began to emerge. He was climbing a sand-bar. He struck north—for England. Still he emerged. He struck south. He continued to emerge. He flopped down, sat and covered himself once more to the chin with the sea.

shoulders were out of the water. The tide was withdrawing from him. A little longer, and it would leave him high and dry on his sand-bar.

He scrambled to his feet and, bent double, struck east, gained deeper water, sat down again and chafed his hands. The whole beach was now crowded with people.

They were taking sun baths after bathing ; those who had not been into the sea sat in folding chairs, knitting jumpers, reading the newspapers, or completing their tan. Children flew kites, built sand-castles, laughed, screamed, galloped about, fought,

But staying here would mean his death. Which was better—prison or death? He wondered.

Now, if this were Russia, he would be all right. The Russians, so he had read, were quite indifferent to the absence of bathing costumes. Why hadn't he gone to Russia? Ah, the Revolution. Curse that Lenin! But for him—

All round Chuff patches of sand began to appear here and there above the water. It became evident that he sat in a depression, cupped in the top of the



"Two gay young fellows had picked up his train and now goose-stepped behind him."

hurt one-another, bellowed. A jolly scene. Chuff cursed them one and all. What did they care for him? Nothing.

Suppose he simply got up and waded out in their midst to his mackintosh. Suppose he did that. He had a devilish good mind to. How they would bolt! Curse them one and all, collectively and separately! But that would mean prison for him. Not good enough.

sand-bar. The question was, how deep was this depression? Also, was it a true cup, or did it ultimately drain empty through some channel or channels?

The tide was receding with a frightful velocity. Already Chuff's shoulders were again exposed. He threw himself on his hands and knees and began to crawl about, seeking an exit from the ring of sand spots. In whatever direction he sought, the water rapidly shallowed to a few inches. He was entirely cut off from all possibility of concealment. His back felt cold. The wind was blowing upon it. Another five minutes, and—

He thought, "I must dig myself in," and began to scramble with his fingers in the sand. As fast as he tore it out it closed up again.

He raised his head and looked stupidly round him, and then up into the implacable sky. He was at the end of his resources. He suppressed a desire to howl like a dog. He grovelled still lower in the water, while the whole of his past life began to flash before him in a series of pictures.

We have now reached a point in this story where it is obvious that

(a) The story must be stopped, or

(b) Everybody concerned in its publication must be sent to prison without the option of a fine, or

(c) A miracle must occur.

Since—

(a) to stop the story at this point would be to cheat a confiding public (which has paid down its good money) of its right to have its stories finished, and

(b) I, for one, have no wish to wear stripes, it follows that—

(c) A miracle must take place.

Indeed, it is only the fact that a miracle did take place which enabled me to begin this tale at all. But for that, I should have left the whole thing alone, because my time is, to me, extremely valuable.

A miracle, then, occurred. As thus—

We left Chuff just beginning to witness subjectively the whole of his past life. He saw very little of it. Indeed, he had only just come (appropriately enough) to the place where his clothes were shortened, when the whole display ceased. His mind was once more objectively employed.

For the fingers of his left hand, groping and clutching spasmodically, as grope and clutch the fingers of persons on their deathbeds, had come suddenly into contact with that which they recognised as some kind of very coarse fabric. They closed upon it, while hope sprang eternal in the breast of Chuff. He sought to draw what he had grasped towards him. It was too heavy to

be moved. He pulled himself with his heels along the sand, bent his head, and examined his trove. It was an enormous piece of brown canvas, sunk there in the depression of the sand-bar. Along one edge holes had been pierced, holes which had been strengthened with twine.

Chuff bit his arm, sucked the blood, and cried, "A sail! A sail!"

How it came there he didn't pause to consider. Nor need we. It may have been carried away from some vessel in a tempest, and this is quite likely. It may have been thrown overboard to get rid of it, and this its astonishingly tattered and patched condition makes more probable. Or its presence in that place may have been due simply to some supernatural agency, and this is what I prefer to believe. Chuff had no preferences. Here were some thirty square feet of woven material; here was a sufficiency—indeed, a superabundance—of covering. But he was in no mood to complain because the thing had been rather overdone, just as he was in no mood to wonder how it had been done at all. His immediate business was to clothe himself in this sail.

He began to do this.

Have you ever tried to drape yourself with thirty square feet of board-like, water-logged brown canvas while you lay prone on your stomach in fifteen inches of seawater? You haven't? I thought not. Then don't scorn Chuff because he didn't make a very masterly job of it. It's not the sort of thing that comes of itself. You want a good deal of practice to do a thing like that quickly and successfully. And then you won't.

Chuff didn't. I mean that when finally he rose up to go to his hotel, there was nothing particularly graceful about his appearance, nothing to suggest the beautiful sweeping lines of the Roman's toga, the Greek's tupto, or the Arab's dahabieh.

He looked, I think, something like a collapsed wigwam, or possibly something like a whelk half out of its shell. Really he looked like nothing on earth.

He was, however, noticeable enough.

The instant he staggered up on to his feet, a strong sensation passed through the whole crowded length of the Plage. Shriill cries broke from the children, who supposed Chuff to be a marine monster. They ran howling in all directions to the shelter of their parents' arms. These persons, after bestowing one startled glance upon Chuff,

had already given the reins to their merriment. They all pointed Chuff out to one another; then, moved by a single impulse, they began to converge rapidly upon him, howling with delight. Their children, reassured, accompanied them. Only the infirm and very aged of the visitors were not now running to be present when and where Chuff left the sea.

Chuff was a reasonably strong man, but the weight of the apparatus which he wore and trailed behind him made it impossible for him to advance at any pace more rapid than a crawl. Everybody had plenty of time to reach the water's edge before he did.

In the course of his manœuvres with the bathing costume he had travelled a considerable distance westward of the place where he had left his mackintosh and slippers. So when he at last won to shore, amid the plaudits of some two hundred people, he had the best part of a quarter of a mile to travel in their company before he could attain to a costume in which it was possible to enter the hotel. A dripping sail was obviously not such a costume.

Long before he was clear of the water two gay young fellows had picked up his train and now goose-stepped behind him, with their chests out and their heads thrown far back, while they worked their elbows in the manner of wings. As for the populace, it cheered like mad, while it closed in behind Chuff. The children waddled ahead of him, screaming and indicating him with pointed fingers, so that there should be no doubt about him.

Chuff laboured along, looking neither to the right nor to the left. Not that he sought to avoid the eyes of the populace. He didn't give a curse for the populace. He had his gaze fixed on his mackintosh, where it lay folded upon the sand, with his slippers on top of it. He was concerned about nothing in the world but to get to that mackintosh and rid himself of the sail. He was aware of the populace, of course, but they didn't trouble him. Not even the young ladies. He was beyond being troubled by anything whatever. He was aware also of the two train-bearers who capered behind him. They didn't trouble him, either. They didn't annoy him. They didn't amuse him. So far as he was

concerned, they were quite welcome to pose as his train-bearers. They made the sail easier for him to manage. He felt no gratitude to them.

In time he attained to his mackintosh.

He picked it up, shuffled the sail upon top of him, so that it draped him to the sand on every side, put on his mackintosh under the sail, got into his slippers, shook off the sail, and went to his hotel.

The populace raised a cheer after him. He never looked round. Their cheering died away. Some of them accompanied him a few steps. He never looked round. Their feet lagged, they halted, and they desisted from following him. Guying a person who doesn't see you is no fun whatever.

Chuff strode up the Plage alone.

When he reached the hotel, he went straight to the office, rapped briskly on the counter, and, to the clerk who approached him, said savagely: "You've given me a bad room. I want a better one. One that looks over the sea. Otherwise I shall leave at once."

"Zertinly," said the clerk, who, being a Swiss and having no language of his own, spoke all others fluently. "You sall ave zigsty-fife or sebendy-dree, wicheffer you brever."

"I'll see them," said Chuff briefly, "and let you know."

You observe that, to employ a consecrated phrase, a strange thing had happened.

Chuff had achieved self-confidence. He was no longer a shy man. He had sloughed off all his modesty. He was as bold as brass. Back rooms looking over the garage were not good enough for him now. Swiss hotel clerks had no longer the power to make him blush and stammer when he addressed them.

The worm, in short, had turned—had reached, that is to say, the turning-point. Henceforward Chuff went ahead. A month later he had got the job of the man just above him, and was holding it down firmly with one hand while with the other he reached for the next.

He is already a lieutenant of industry. In a few years he will be a captain. When he dies he will probably be a major-general, perhaps a field-marshal. Who knows?



“‘Mali,’ he cried, ‘I go to help Dindi! Do you stand by me?’ . . . ‘I come, Bwana, and those with me. It is better to fight than to rule cowards for pay.’”

# THE BROTHERHOOD OF BATTLE

By GEOFFREY WILLIAMS

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

AT the door of his tent John Vigers sat uncomfortably on an upturned candle-box, his square chin resting in his palm. Close by, a big log fire, nearly burnt out now, glowed and flickered. Beyond the roughly-built thorn fence dim silhouettes of forest trees framed the black sky, and the warm, wet night of Africa surrounded the camp like a wall. John kicked irritably at a log, and a sudden flame sprang up from the dying fire. For

an instant it lit up his strong, ugly features and shock of red hair, then faded again.

“Curse these mosquitoes!” he muttered, and struck at the cloud of insects that swam dizzily round his head. The mosquitoes of the Rulu Forest are big and fat and yellow, and savage beyond all others. They are as the sands of the sea for number. Then he laughed bitterly. “They are Africa,” he went on. “They take your life-blood, and give you—fever. Africa takes all



you have, and gives you—nothing, except broken hopes and broken health.” He relapsed into silence, while around him the air sang thinly with the voices of the myriad life of the night.

Gradually his thoughts travelled far, to the English country, where a grey-eyed, brown-haired girl lived in quiet patience and grew slowly older, waiting for the fortune that was always coming—next year. She would continue to wait. He knew that. And in some ways it was the bitterest part of it. She trusted in him so utterly, and he had been a failure all along the line. Everything had gone wrong from the very start. Each new scheme, begun with hope and carried out with energy, failed for this reason or for that. Africa treats some men so, and not always the undeserving. He had dabbled in rubber, in copra, in cotton. He had speculated in land and gambled in foodstuffs. There was nothing he had not tried, and ever the same story. A little brief promise of prosperity, and then disaster.

Three months ago he had determined to stand or fall by this trading venture to Rulu. He had ventured his last penny in it, and it had failed. Through no fault of his, but what of that? Everything had hinged on getting leave to trade in Rulu Forest from Dindi, the paramount chief. It had seemed quite certain that there would be no difficulty, and Rulu was rich in rubber and in many other things. But Dindi had refused, and that in no doubtful manner. He had developed some grievance against the white men, it appeared. And his words were plain—no white should trade in Rulu while Dindi lived. Further, he gave John three days in which to cross his borders. After that— Well, Dindi had only smiled and played with his spear, but it was enough. The Government was weak and far away, and Dindi was a man of his word. John saw that at a glance—a fine, strong man, with a set mouth and hard black eyes, not one to threaten where he did not mean to act.

So John must go back to the coast, his total fortune represented by certain loads of more or less unsaleable trade goods. And then? Then would come the writing of a letter to the girl in England, to tell her that she had trusted in a broken reed, and that she need wait no longer. So John stared on into the night and wondered what he should do with his life.

Behind the tent a native carrier groaned in his sleep, away in the trees a bush-baby

wailed like a crying child, and just beyond the thorns some prowling beast of darkness brushed stealthily through the tall grass. But such sounds only threw the silence into higher relief. It pressed upon John's mind like something alive and tangible. He rose slowly to his feet and turned to enter the tent.

Suddenly a babel of sound cut through the night—a burst of shrieks and yells, as if hell had broken loose. John leaped for his gun and stood ready, every sense on the alert. Dim shapes that lay clustered round the ashes of dead fires sprang to life as the carriers awoke to terror and dismay. They thronged around him, clamouring and shouting.

“Baruku, Baruku!” they cried, and made a bolt for the entrance to the thorn fence.

But John was before them. He expected a stampede. He stood in the entrance with his shot-gun to his shoulder. “Halt!” he shouted. “The first man who bolts I shoot!”

The crowd hesitated, doubtful. One big fellow took a step forward, stopped, looked fearfully at the gun, and turned tail. That was enough. The white man's authority had conquered. It usually does, if the white man is quick enough.

John called his head boy. “What is this, Mali? Who are the Baruku?”

“Enemies of Dindi, Bwana,” said Mali quietly. He was a big, upstanding native of a different tribe to the carriers; courage and dignity were his natural heritage.

“You mean they have attacked the village down below there?”

“Yes, Bwana. Many people hate Dindi, who is as cruel as he is strong, but the Baruku most of all. They fight well, and they come from the hills beyond the white man's rule. Soon they will destroy Dindi. Then they will come here. It is time to go, Bwana.”

John leaned on his gun, hesitating. Should he go? He hated Dindi, who had ruined his plans. He need waste no time in regrets if disaster overtook that proud and arrogant chief, and the quarrels of the tribes were nothing to him. “Let dog eat dog,” he quoted softly to himself. “What should the lion care?”

Yet he stood still in doubt, while the turmoil by the river waxed and waned as the battle swayed this way and that. There was a sudden lull. Then the shriek of a despairing woman tore shrilly through the

darkness. John shivered. Perhaps some native cared for her, and prayed in his wild way for help for his wife and home. Life was over for John, anyway, and if he met his end from a Baruku spear, what of it? At least that letter need never be written, and Helen would never know how utterly he had failed. He threw back his broad shoulders.

"Mali," he cried, "I go to help Dindi! Do you stand by me?"

The boy's dark eyes blazed with an eager light. "I come, Bwana, and those with me. It is better to fight than to rule cowards for pay."

"Quick, then," said John, "or it will be too late."

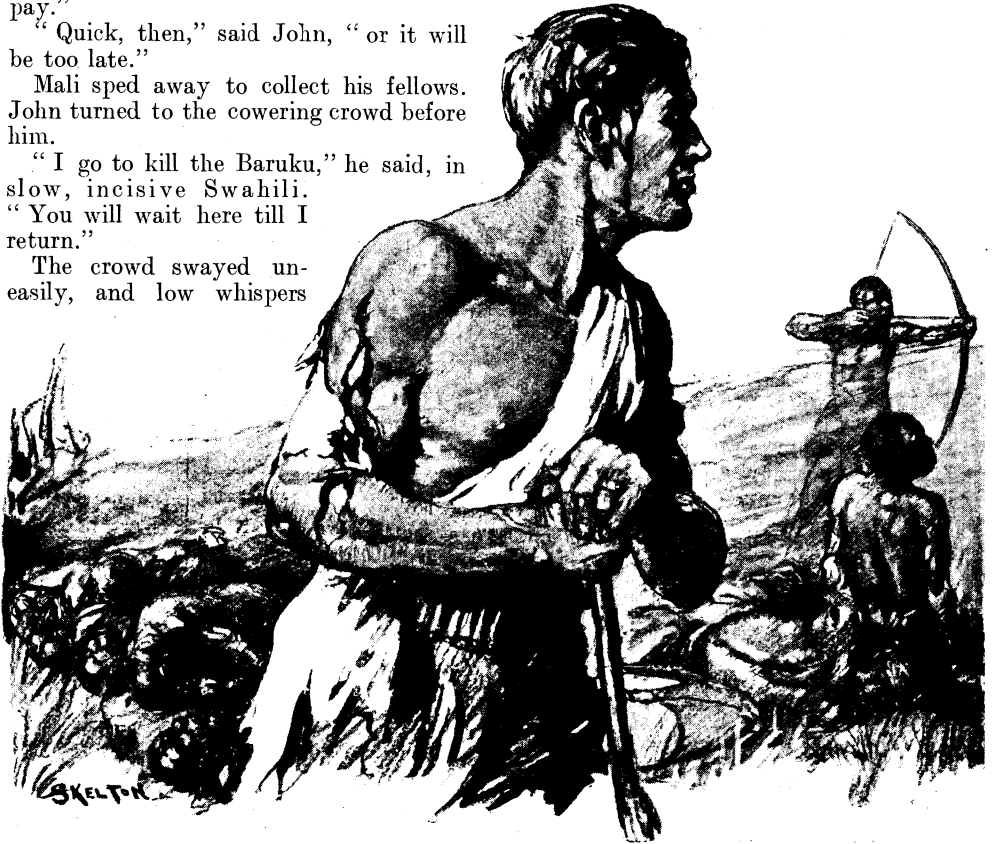
Mali sped away to collect his fellows. John turned to the cowering crowd before him.

"I go to kill the Baruku," he said, in slow, incisive Swahili. "You will wait here till I return."

The crowd swayed uneasily, and low whispers

He walked round the little band and returned to his place at the entrance. "He who crosses the line where my feet have trod will take with him a spirit of the forest under my command, and from that time on his food will be bitter in the mouth. Is it understood?"

A terrified murmur ran from lip to lip, and John turned, well satisfied, to greet Mali, who arrived at that moment with six stout men of his own tribe. Each bore the spear without which he seldom stirred—they acted as escort and did no menial work about the camp—and seemed well pleased



"As suddenly as it had come, John's madness left him . . . He stood leaning on his gun, now bent and the last of the Baruku and

ran to and fro, but he went on as though he noticed nothing.

"The white man always wins. You are under my shadow, and there is no need to fear. But lest one should strive to lead you astray and fill your hearts with lies, I, who know well the spirits of this country, lay this upon you. Watch!"

with the prospect. The battle by the river still raged on, but a red glow now shone above the tall trees—the glow of burning huts. There was no time for delay. Breathing a prayer that his threats of magic would hold the cowardly carriers steady, he led the way through the narrow pass between the piled thorns. He raced

down the path that led to the river. After him followed the faithful seven. The distance was not half a mile, but the night was hot and airless beneath the arching branches. As they burst into the clearing where the village stood, John dashed the sweat from his eyes and panted heavily. It was a strange and wild sight—an open stretch, a few hundred yards across, and studded with huge single trees. Beyond ran the wide river, dark and silent.

But in that open spot the blazing huts

little knots of men, fighting wildly and desperately with hordes of savage Baruku, easily distinguished by the eagles' feathers in their hair. Black bodies lay about the grass, in strange, distorted attitudes, their shining skins gleaming in the flames. Here and there a woman rushed screaming towards the shelter of the forest, only to fall before a Baruku spear ere she had gone fifty yards.



battered, and surveyed the scene . . . 'Well done!' he shouted in his great voice as Dindi charged at drove them from the square."

lit up the scene as bright as midday. Great pillars of flame flared up to the black heavens to meet the heavy rain-clouds drifting by. Showers of sparks, like monstrous fireworks, burst forth as the flaming roofs fell inward. The lower branches of the great trees crackled and sputtered as fire touched their rich green leaves. All around were

A sudden rage and lust for slaughter and revenge seized John Vigors. Forgotten were all doubts, forgotten his bitterness against Dindi for the scornful words of the morning. He wanted nothing but the destruction of the imps of darkness who had brought fire and death to that peaceful village by the quiet-flowing river. As he looked, a child

ran out of a burning hut near by and fled blindly towards him, followed by a pair of fierce-faced, screeching savages. John lifted his gun, and in an instant both were down. A charge of Number Three at fifteen paces is as effective as a rifle-bullet. The child dashed past and fell whimpering to the ground behind his legs. Then John saw red.

He had meant to be so wise—to take up a good position and instil terror by the skilful use of his gun. But that was all gone now. He just wanted to kill, and kill again. He made straight for the nearest bunch of struggling humanity, whirling his gun round his head by the barrel, and burst in upon them like a cyclone. He was an immensely muscular man, and his flail-like blows brought down an enemy at every stroke. The spears of his faithful Warini seconded him nobly. In little more than a minute some twenty Baruku lay writhing and battered on the reddened grass. Without pausing for breath, he hurried on to the centre of the square. It was there that the main battle raged, beside the burning ruins of Dindi's own royal hut. On that very spot, a few short hours ago, John had listened to the destruction of his hopes. There the chief had laughed and played with his spear, talking of his hatred of the whites, and threatening him with death. Now death, immediate and bloody, threatened Dindi himself, and John was running hot-foot to his rescue. It was a curious turn of the wheel.

As he drew nearer, he saw the tall form of the chief in the middle of the fight, surrounded by such as were left of his headmen and retainers. Behind him were the flames and the river, in front the wild Baruku, outnumbering his force by three to one. But Dindi was a brave man, whatever his faults. If he gave back, the enemy bought each yard with blood and death.

"Fight on!" cried John, with a yell that rang high above the din, and plunged into the *mêlée*.

Taken aback by the astounding spectacle of an apparently mad white man, with flaming eyes and a strange club that beat bone and muscle into pulp, the Baruku shrank away. In a moment John found himself standing beside his enemy of the morning, and heading a charge against the now thoroughly demoralised Baruku. They put up but a feeble resistance. Then, with cries of "Wizard!" they broke and fled for the forest.

The panic spread. Dindi collected his men—he was a man of war—and took good toll of his foes before the darkness of the night shut down on the last survivor of that ill-starred raid. As suddenly as it had come, John's madness left him. He felt tired—more tired than he had ever done in all his life before. He stood leaning on his gun, now bent and battered, and surveyed the scene. His shirt was torn to the waist. Blood trickled down lazily from a dozen flesh wounds; his bare legs were red with it.

"Well done!" he shouted in his great voice, as Dindi charged at the last of the Baruku and drove them from the square. "By the Lord Harry, the fellow's a man, and I love him!" Then he rocked unsteadily, put out a groping hand as if to support himself, and fell with a crash on the heap of dead and dying.

\* \* \* \* \*

When he awoke he was lying on a native bed in a grass hut. Through the open door he saw the river flowing gently by, glittering now with the sunbeams glancing on its smooth surface. He wondered where he was. Gradually the events of the night came back to him, and he sighed. "Pity they didn't finish me off. It would have saved a lot of trouble." But Mali arrived, bringing a steaming pannikin of cocoa with his own hands. A great honour this, for Mali would have scorned to do a servant's work. The cocoa was a token of respect, not of service. After a draught of it, life took on brighter hues. John felt himself over carefully. He was bandaged in many places, by the hand of someone unknown, but there seemed to be no serious damage done. He put one leg gingerly over the side of the bed and tested it. All was well. Presently he was standing in the door of the hut, holding on by the post, shaky still, but gaining strength rapidly.

It was a desolate sight that he looked upon. Except for a few huts here and there, of which this was one, the prosperous village of Dindi, paramount chief of Rulu, was a mass of still smouldering ruins. Little parties of men were busy collecting the dead bodies that lay about everywhere. Beside the ashes of his royal hut stood Dindi, tall and sombre, spear in hand, surveying the wreckage.

John looked at him thoughtfully, wondering if he knew the meaning of gratitude. That concession he had refused so scornfully—was it not possible that he would grant it now to the man who had, in spite

of insults and threats, come to his assistance? Possible? Yes, but far from certain. John knew the native fairly well by this time. And in any case he doubted whether he could bring himself to ask—he who had been once refused.

But while he stood in doubt, Dindi saw him and cried: "Is all well, my brother?"

"All is well," returned John, and felt more hopeful at the word.

He searched around for a stick, and found a spear on the floor of the hut. Using it as a support, he walked slowly across to where the chief stood. His wounds were only slight, but the movement stirred them into life. He grew pale and staggered a little. Dindi seized his arm and shouted an order.

"My brother is weak from many wounds," he said; "it is not well that he should stand." He held him up till a boy came running with a stool, on to which John sank with a sigh of relief. Dindi contemplated him with his hard black eyes. His face showed no expression, neither did he smile.

"You fight well," he said laconically.

"White men do not love to see women suffer or the innocent slaughtered," returned John.

Dindi scowled and drew back his thick, strong lips in a snarl that showed his white teeth. "I could tell you otherwise, brother," he muttered, "did I choose. It is not for nothing that I hate the white man. I have seen——" He broke off and stared moodily at the river, while John sat silent, regretting his unfortunate remark. Presently Dindi spoke again, in his dignified Swahili.

"My brother does not know why the Baruku came, but I know. There is a white man who lives in the Baruku country. It was he who sent them, because he desires something that is mine. He has done me much injury, and for his sake I hate all of his colour. But we will not speak of him more." He waved his hand in token that the subject was done with. "You, however, white or black, I love, because you fight well, as a man should, and because you came to my help, though I had greeted you with bad words. And now, because I call you brother, you would ask me once again for leave to trade in my country. Is that not so?"

"It is so, Dindi," said John hopefully.

"Then I grieve, my brother, that it cannot be. I swore that you should not go,

and what I have sworn I have sworn." He paused a moment, and John's heart sank under a weight of bitter disappointment. "But," he went on, "there are other ways. None shall say that Dindi does not reward true service."

"I did not come to your help for the sake of reward," remarked John rather ungraciously. The word "service" jarred a little.

For the first time the chief smiled slightly. "I did not speak of payment—rather of a gift which my brother will do me honour by accepting. That which I offer lies here." And he pointed to the smouldering ashes near at hand.

John was frankly puzzled. Could the chief be fooling him? It seemed unlikely, and yet—— But Dindi appeared to notice nothing. He called up a party of his men and set them to work to drench the ashes and remove them, a task requiring some time and labour.

"When all is ready, I will send for you, my brother," he said. "There must be no delay in this matter, for reasons which I will tell you presently. Meanwhile go and sleep. You will need your strength, for this night you must leave Rulu, and if you cannot walk, my men shall carry you." He turned and stalked away in his stately, dignified manner, and John tottered across to the hut. There he ate some food that he found ready for him, and immediately fell into a deep sleep, from which he did not awake till evening, when Mali arrived to report that the chief had sent to say that all was ready.

Feeling much refreshed, John made his way across the square once more, to find Dindi awaiting him beside a large hole in the ground where the ashes had lain. On the edge of the hole were six large square blocks, apparently of stone, but covered with mud and dirt.

"There, brother, lies my gift to you," said Dindi quietly. "White men prize it greatly. May it bring you happiness."

John stared at him in bewilderment. Those stones? Then he guessed, yet hardly dared to put his thought to the test. He bent down and lifted one of the blocks. It was amazingly heavy for its size—forty pounds or more. He breathed thickly, and a pulse at the back of his head drummed feverishly. With shaking fingers he drew his hunting-knife from its sheath and dragged the sharp point across the stone.

The knife sank into the soft surface,

making a little groove. And in the bottom of the groove, between the brown earth walls, shone a thin, bright yellow streak.

"Gold, brother," said Dindi. "My gift to you."

"Gold!" muttered John after him in English. "Ten or fifteen thousand pounds' worth."

"My father's father brought it, no matter whence. Ask me no questions. The white man of whom I told you would buy or steal it if he could. But what I will not sell I will give—to a brother. Take it, and be happy in your country across the great water."

John struggled with himself. Had he the right to accept such an amazing gift? To him it meant everything—Helen, peace, an end to all anxiety. But Dindi might not know its true value. And Dindi called him brother. With a gulp he swallowed temptation and spoke out.

But Dindi only smiled and put the matter aside. While his men wrapped the precious

blocks in grass mats, so that they might easily be carried as loads, he talked quietly of other things—of how all had been made ready for a start that night while John slept, and of how necessary was speed, lest that white man who lurked mysteriously behind the Baruku should hear of the departure of the gold. At first he would accept nothing in return, but in the end he agreed to take the trade goods as a gift from a brother to a brother. When all was ready, he held out his hand to John.

"Farewell, brother," he said. "I would that you might stay with me, so that I might learn of your wisdom. But send no others of your people here, and tell none of how or whence you got the gold."

With that he turned away and stalked off into the shadows. John looked after him for a moment, feeling as if he had lost a friend. Then he scrambled into the litter that had been prepared for him, and swung off towards the coast and England.



## LIGHT.

**S**TARS in the blue June twilight gleam ;  
 From earth to their fantastic heights  
 The domes and towers of pleasure seem  
 A web, a snare of golden lights.

A million lamps from lilled pool  
 And lotus-glass of bubbling wine  
 Flash back a radiance fairy-cool,  
 And red lips laugh and soft eyes shine.

Light, light! more light! Oh, nothing worth  
 Is every gross material spark  
 Of summer heaven and smiling earth  
 When sou's are groping in the dark.

MICHAEL WILSON.

“Hot? What? 'Minds me of the year they carried Johnstone off at eighty-seven not out. Sunstroke.'”



# RETRIBUTION

By CHARLES INGE

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

**T**HEIR friendship dated from a blazing day at Lord's, wedged in against each other, watching the Australians bat. Like many another friendship, it germinated out of the elements of a possible row. The crowd had shifted in their seats over a short run. As they resettled, Harold Tuke spoke to the mountain beside him :

“Have you got enough room?”

The mountain, Paul Jordan, slewed his fifteen stone round on its axis to observe the spirit of the inquiry, because Paul Jordan knew that he was occupying about eleven-sixteenths of the space allotted by the management for two persons. He always did. He had to. Seeing only a little man behind a huge moustache, evidently anxious to oblige, he absorbed another sixteenth in getting out his handkerchief, and offered peace.

“Hot? What? 'Minds me of the year they carried Johnstone off at eighty-seven not out. Sunstroke.”

“You mean A. F.?”

“'Course, A. F. By gum, but this sun brings it out of you!”

Tuke's immediate agreement and his own activities with a damp handkerchief synchronised with the fall of the last wicket, so that the next exchange of courtesies was obvious. Jordan suggested it. Tuke paid for it. When they returned to their seats—Tuke still busy with the lower lengths of his moustache, Jordan expanding heartily, as big men expand after refreshment—Tuke conceded another sixteenth.

It was on this basis that their friendship had continued—an instantaneous friendship, skipping all preliminary periods.

They knew at once that they were

complementary to each other. Jordan was a large man of expanses, beginning with the expanse of his nose amid an expanse of cheek, reaching the limit at the watch-chain across his waistcoat, and ending in the expanse of his toe-capless boots of horse-skin; he could not wear ordinary leather. Tuke had the moustache, the forward stoop, the sliding gait of a walrus out of water, and the expression of a recent convert fully conscious of his failings. No idyll of legendary friendship could have been more complete.

Neither had any fixed hours of work. Tuke was an inventor and adaptor of motor-car accessories; the Tuke Ray-Breaker was making a big revenue for the makers and appreciable royalties for Tuke. Jordan made an inadequate personal income by letting positions for hoarding advertisements; for the rent and living expenses of a villa in Acacia Road, Richmond, he looked to Mrs. Jordan.

Now, after three years of inseparable companionship, they were in danger of quarrelling—that is, Tuke showed signs of obstinacy. It revealed itself on a Monday at lunch. Five days a week they so arranged their work as to lunch together at the Old Bridge Tavern, Westminster, always sharing a bottle of wine on the proportionate basis. Jordan was dealing with Tuke's default on the Saturday; on Saturdays they always watched football or cricket, according to the season. Tuke had pleaded illness.

Said Jordan: "You never been ill ever since I known you. You can't have been ill. Harold, my boy, you're putting it across me!"

Tuke dipped his moustache into his wine-glass, a mere sip of protest; then, with a perfectly wrinkled forehead, he repeated his excuse: "I was quite queer. You're never ill, so you don't know."

Jordan tried an elephantine sarcasm: "Were you ill on Sunday, too? My, it must have been a bad oyster! Were you ill on Sunday, too?"

The Sunday default was a still greater grievance, because it had deprived Jordan and Mrs. Jordan of their motor drive into the country. Tuke always drove the car. Jordan could not.

That motor-car was another fine example of the mutuality of their friendship. Tuke knew cars. Jordan knew human nature. He had persuaded Tuke that a car was necessary for show and experimental

purposes. His offer to house it constituted him part-owner. Tuke had agreed to that at once.

He now elaborated his protest. "You should know me well enough. Think you should believe me."

"Would if I could, sonny! But what was it really? You wouldn't let a pal down two days running for nothing. I do know that much."

This testimonial from Jordan—it was usually he who received them—sent Tuke to his boiled mutton ravenously; and when his friend chose that moment to fill his glass—Jordan always functioned the bottle—the instinct that warned him not to confide seemed ungrateful, a disloyalty. Jordan saw the increased wrinkles and tried again.

"Well?"

Tuke gulped some wine and wiped his moustache—always a lengthy process—very carefully, looked at his friend, flinched under that unflinching stare, and ran back into his reserve.

"I said I was ill. And that's all I'm going to say—at least, now."

Having admitted there was more to tell, he might as well have told it there and then. The very manner of his partial surrender suggested a romance. The laden fork tarried half-way to Jordan's waiting mouth, while the revelation percolated through his vast insensibility. He could not permit a romance. Tuke married would be no longer his Tuke, and this friendship was really precious to him.

He set himself to lay siege to his friend's secret—cunning siege, wherein chaff and innuendo and ponderous solicitude were the chief methods.

Tuke suffered them with fortitude, but withstood him. The days went by. Jordan's attacks became more insistent, his anxiety hidden under heavy persiflage.

At the week-end Tuke defaulted on both days as before. That Monday's lunch was an uncomfortable affair—Jordan waiting for the excuses, Tuke waiting for Jordan. When no excuses came, Jordan decided on more drastic methods.

The next day he came to lunch bearing a bunch of violets he had bought in the street. These he put on Tuke's plate very solemnly.

"For her, Harold, my boy, from a sincere well-wisher."

Tuke gave them to the waitress.

Jordan took this unusual retaliation as a



joke. But he was really perturbed. The next day he came—Tuke watching his arrival with anxiety—his fifteen stone bulging with assumed portent, seated himself opposite Tuke in silence, threw up his large hands, his unfolded napkin between a finger and thumb of each, and spoke sepulchrally to the waitress :

“We are going to lose him. How? How do we lose all good, hearty fellows? Marriage!” Then direct to Tuke, suffering the amusement of the waitress: “But I congratulate you, my boy. Good taste! Superb taste!”

a stare of injured affection most disconcerting.

“You might confide in a pal, Harold, old boy! I know it ain’t anything underhand with you. I’m interested—have been ever since that day at Lord’s. By gum, it was hot that day! What? And we’ve had some good times since. ’Member that year at Lowestoft, how you swam out further’n any of us? And the year before at Margate, when you gave us that turn-up at the Rimington? You were in form that night, my hearty!” Then it came, the spear-head showing through the flowers, the hook



“He’s been a bit of a dog, Miss Morny, for all his diffidence. You don’t approve of jollifications?”

The bluff very nearly came off. Tuke did look that ingratiating, deprecatory look of his, then he dived at the bill of fare.

“Irish stew, please. Off? Then liver and bacon.”

His order confirmed Jordan’s fears. For three years Tuke had maligned liver as offal.

Jordan in turn studied the menu, ordered, poured out a glass of wine for each of them, drank his off and poured himself out another, cleared his throat. A very different Jordan spoke then—a Jordan Tuke had never encountered, the Jordan to whom Mrs. Jordan succumbed when quarter day came round. This Jordan projected his upper expanses across the table and stared right into his friend’s harassed countenance,

protruding through the bait. “Where’d you meet her, old sport? I’m your pal.”

Tuke squirmed. Jordan lolled back, knowing he had won. Tuke gulped at his wine, looked again, a pathetic appeal. Then he took the spear-head and helped it home, swallowed the hook, his expression still all excruciating doubt.

“You’ll treat it in confidence?”

Jordan’s gesture was a mountainous rebuke.

It was a simple confession, told simply. They had met on an omnibus, she going home after her day’s work minus her purse, which she had lost. Tuke had paid and consoled her, and called at her request, to be repaid. The rest was an idyll wherein Hope

and Diffidence played pitch-and-toss with a splendid visioning. It was all told with a simple pride that yet doubts the miracle of its own good fortune. It might well have pierced a thicker insensibility than Jordan's, have touched a tougher heart than his. But the gossamer disclosures went past him like blown thistledown. Not that he feared financial loss; he had never borrowed money from his friend, much as he had encouraged the spirit of unselfishness. But he could not lose that flattering acquiescence, that infallible appreciation, that faithful admiration. He decided quickly.

"Bring her down to Richmond on Saturday, my boy. I suppose you are no longer interested in 'the Rovers' chances for the Cup? I forego that. Bring her down again on Sunday! We'll give her a breath of Brighton air in the car. I'm your pal."

Tuke aimed him like a schoolboy, and, with Hope momentarily in the ascendant, he took control for once. "Here, come and sit on this side by me."

Jordan came, moving like an elephant, yet thinking like a weasel. The rhapsodies he got, whispered in his ear, completed his decision. He broke in on them.

"What's her name?"

"Miss Morny—partly French, you know; all the little niceties of the French. She's—"

"Where's she work?"

"Manson's—furs and mantles, top of Regent Street. You won't chaff her, Paul, old man? She's shy, like me."

Jordan waved away such a possibility, almost offended. But he recorded the use of his name. It was the first time during their friendship; Tuke was the sort that shies at names.

He investigated Miss Morny on Saturday during an uneasy tea at Acacia Road—uneasy, that is, for Tuke, because Miss Morny did not respond to his friend's heartiness, and Mrs. Jordan inclined towards a snub-nosed pride, being envious of Miss Morny's white daintiness, her lustrous eyes, her dark braided hair, even of her costume. It was a very simple dress of blue serge, suited to her simple figure. But Mrs. Jordan was stout and addicted to colours—afflicted by them in her face.

He had more uneasiness taking Miss Morny home. She was not at all shy in her criticism, persevered in it.

"And he's so self-satisfied!"

He became impressive. "Ah, he's got something to be satisfied about!"

"What? His size or that terrible fat wife of his? You are too easily pleased, Mr. Tuke."

That gave him an opportunity. He bungled it, as he helped her off the tram, but his very awkwardness made her shy again at once. But she returned to her criticism during the evening, which he spent with her and her mother in their tiny home of two rooms and a kitchen. Mrs. Morny was making them some coffee before he went.

He was looking across the intervening space between them, trying for the words he wanted to say. She came out with it abruptly as one who has been thinking:

"Your friend makes me nervous, Mr. Tuke. You won't mind me saying, but he seems to want everything to himself, while you—"

While she sought a word suitable for his simplicity and her own shyness, he got caught up in a rapture by her look; the slant of her straight eyebrows did it. He fidgeted all over, wiped his hands together strenuously, coughed and spoke: "While I only want one thing, Miss Morny?" His courage became daring. "Is that what you were going to say?"

She smiled him a mixture of nervousness and solemnity. "No, Mr. Tuke, it was not what I was going to say. You are necessary to him. You flatter his vanity."

Just then he was above such things as criticism, above even his habitual diffidence. He even ventured a rebuke. "Oh, I don't know. You're too particular. Old Paul's all right; he's big and hearty, while you—you"—he laughed at his own audacity—"you are little and good. I may say that? We are pals, Paul and I."

She had to be content with a reproving smile, because her mother came in with the coffee. But he was strung up. He demanded she should trim his moustache. She had once spoken, quite innocently, about small moustaches, and he had offered his as a sacrifice, if she would trim it for him. Now he appealed to her mother, craving her approval. Having got it—Mrs. Morny liked his deference—he taxed her with her promise. His look made it cruelty to refuse; besides, her mother chaffed her. So she set about it, getting a towel and tucking it under his chin, and making fun about a barber's shop. It smartened him up a lot. To him it was an advance, a reward for courage. It set Hope high above Diffidence during his walk home.

Jordan pounced on the alteration directly

he saw it the next day—would not let it alone. To him it was the visible infringement of his friendship. Tuke with that trimmed moustache and an air of pride as new as his fur gauntlets, flinging remarks at Miss Morny as he drove, spoilt the run for him. The girl's figure, enwrapped appropriately, became the figure of a dangerous trespasser.

Settled at a luncheon table in the crowded room, he made his first move as he filled her glass. "Used to wine?"

She bungled her reply under his direct stare. He nodded.

"Ah! Not used to this sort of show, perhaps, either?" He waved at the crowded tables. "Mrs. Jordan here will put you up to a wrinkle or two. What say, Ida?"

Mrs. Jordan sniffed. He had appealed to her so that she should sniff, having divined her antagonism. When he saw Tuke coming to the rescue, he headed him off with chaff. "My, you look quite fierce with that toothbrush on your lip!"—and launched into reminiscences, inflated reminiscences of the great times they had had together in such brilliant places of pleasure. At the end he dropped another seed. "He's been a bit of a dog, Miss Morny, for all his diffidence. You don't approve of jollifications?"

Going back, he put her in the back with Mrs. Jordan—though the front seat was always a penance to him—making Tuke a party to the arrangement.

"We got some things to talk over, eh, Harold, my boy?" As they slowed down through Lewes, he dropped another seed. "Bit quiet, your young lady, ain't she? Or don't she approve of us?"

Tuke put his engines out in changing gear; started again, he managed a correction. "I've no right to call her that—as yet."

Jordan grunted and dug him in the ribs by way of a reward for the disclosure.

It was only a beginning, the first creaking, as it were, of some ponderous engine of siege being brought up for the attack. But, once started, it gathered momentum. Jordan got carried away by it.

The next day he went to Tuke's rooms early in the morning. Tuke lived un-comfortably in rooms furnished by himself and served by a quite ordinary landlady. So the service was commensurate with his good nature. The call surprised Tuke, made him a little anxious. Supper after their drive had been so unlike all other Sunday suppers

at Acacia Road. Miss Morny had indeed been very quiet.

Jordan began at once, so portentously that he got Tuke away from the model he was working on.

"I'm in trouble, old sport!" He waved down the instant wrinkles of sympathy. "Oh, not my trouble. A friend of mine. You never heard of him—Joe Barrow, Inland Revenue. He's got mixed up with some girl in a shop. She's had every bean he's got and some besides, and is now threatening breach. What you advise? He came to me. I come to you, we being pals."

Tuke was manipulating a bulb at the end of a tube that set a minute hand pointing right or left, according as you pinched the bulb. It was his latest pet, an indicator of direction. But he worked it unknowingly, looking up at his friend as one who awaits a catastrophe.

He had never before been asked for advice. Jordan traded on that look.

"What you advise, old sport?"

At last Tuke spoke. "But doesn't he want to marry her?"

Jordan's shoulders moved, a sort of upheaval. "Would you—if she'd cleaned you out? Would you?"

Tuke was back at his model, pinching the bulb so that first the left hand indicated and then the right. He was looking at it now, though his answer suggested thoughts quite different.

"Yes, I think I should, if I cared for her."

Jordan recovered very quickly for so big a man, and thumped him on the shoulder, mimicking his tone of conviction: "Yes, I think I should!" Then he guffawed. "Harold, old boy, you're barmy!" Suddenly he assumed a check to his amusement, rather like a painted mountain in a stage set coming to rest. "But there! Bless me, I'd forgot!" He walked to the window as one might who would hide his embarrassment.

"Forgot what?" Tuke followed him with pained eyes.

"Forgot? Forgot it was Monday, and I've got to check a small boy cleaning his teeth as if he liked it with Oddledont—thirteen sheets of him in a line on a scaffolding at Turnham Green. Of course, I'd forgot. See you at lunch—that is, if you still intend to patronise the old tav.?"

He left Tuke still manipulating his invention, first the left indicator and then the right.

Arriving to lunch, he was different. Just then it was rather indicative of his mind. Jordan greeted him as if he had come back after a long absence. After ordering, Tuke said what he had come to say, as a man making amends for some disloyalty of thought :

"I want to say—your friend must have got hold of the wrong sort. There are black sheep in every fold. I'm sorry for him."

Jordan besmirched the simple confession with ridicule.

The next day he went at it more directly, mocked by the failure of his first attempt. "'Fraid the missus don't quite take to your Miss Morny, Harold. But there, you know what women are—mighty quick in their judgments and mighty true at times, but pernickety—pernickety. It's the meeting on the 'bus, I gather, and the lost purse. You know what women are, and Ida's a fair one! She don't believe in lost purses, it seems."

This time Tuke replied without any hesitation: "There are always people who don't believe. They are not happy people. Suspicion's worse than indigestion to give you a bad time."

Jordan disclaimed all agreement with his wife. "I told her a girl might lose her purse quite innocently. I believe in being charitable, old boy. Eh? But you know women! Oh, that friend of mine—you know, Barrow—he's paid up. Fifty, and glad to be rid of her."

He gave details of the compromise, details that got sordid as he elaborated this fictitious case of a fictitious friend, all the time fixing Tuke with his unflinching stare, talking as if Tuke were the champion of all designing girlhood.

"And what I say is, that fifty—twice fifty, for that matter—is a darned sight cheaper than being the mug all your life. You must agree with that?"

So thoroughly had he put Tuke among the fools of this world, so habitual was his influence, that he had him at the edge of doubt again.

"Of course, if she was a bad lot, he was better quit of her."

It was lost ground recovered, good work done in the cause of friendship, so thought Jordan, until Tuke spoke again after twiddling his bread.

"Do you think I could meet your friend Barrow? Could you fix it up? I would rather like to."

Jordan made his refusal an added warning.

"Afraid not, my boy. He's a sensitive chap, you see. Just the sort of chap to make a bloomer over a girl, and to be sensitive and secretive about it."

That got Tuke nodding mournfully. Enticed by his efforts, Jordan arrived at a definite plot. He called on Miss Morny that evening. He sat in their tiny room in the one wicker chair, rather like a hippopotamus in a hip bath, impressing Mrs. Morny with his assurance, ignoring Miss Morny, who, however, was listening too avidly to get on with her pile of darning on the table. His errand purported to be concert tickets. But he stayed on and gave them a history of his friendship for "Old Harold," embellished with good-humoured descriptions that somehow made out "Old Harold" a little wanting.

"You know what these inventor chaps are, Mrs. Morny—the salt of the earth, but— My, when it comes to—" The wicker chair threatened collapse noisily while he tossed about his large hands and recrossed his elephantine legs. "Why, I knew a man once—used to invent life-saving apparatus—ingenious things, too, so long as he tried 'em in a tank. But he drowned his assistant, trying one off the cliff. They've no sense of proportion, Mrs. Morny, beyond their inventions. I always tell old Harold he'll be found—" Again the chair careened sadly as he slewed towards Miss Morny, his face quite a good imitation of quizzical intimacy. "But there! Whatever am I saying? Miss Morny here'll be getting quite nervous of old Harold. But I expect you can hold your own. Eh?"

Mrs. Morny had embarked upon some plaintive premonitions, when her daughter cut into them.

"We don't have to hold our own with Mr. Tuke, Mr. Jordan. Do you?"

It was a distinct challenge. Jordan guffawed. "Good! Quite good!" He rocked about in imitation amusement, so that Mrs. Morny's anxieties were entirely for her chair. Then he went forward on his plan, addressing himself entirely to the mother.

"You'd be surprised, Mrs. Morny, how simple these inventor chaps can be. Brains! Oh, yes, lots of brains of a sort. But when it comes to common-sense—over money, for instance—well—" Here he manipulated his large hands in affected gestures as if he were handing out coins very rapidly to a circle of applicants.

Mrs. Morny improved the suggestion for him. "You mean to say he gambles, Mr. Jordan?"

He knew better than to spoil such luck, and reared up to go amid audible relief from the wicker chair. But Miss Morny rose, too, confronting him.

stopped at the door and turned, focussing his emotionless eyes on Miss Morny, took a couple of paces towards her and spoke as one giving a delinquent an opportunity to retrieve.

"You'd wish to be his guardian angel? Of course you would." He got within



"We don't have to hold our own with Mr. Tuke, Mr. Jordan. Do you?"

"My mother asked you a question, Mr. Jordan?"

He eyed her, suddenly a little venomous; he was not accustomed to such antagonism. "And some questions, Miss Morny, don't need an answer. Harold Tuke's my friend."

He made to go amid a salvo of invitations for them to come down to Richmond; he

reached her and put a large hand ponderously on her shoulder. "It's difficult with these sort of chaps. But you're game—I saw that at once—and got tact. You'd do him a good turn, eh? You are good friends, you two?"

He waited, meeting the doubt, the anxiety, the appeal in her dark eyes, his own quite

expressionless. She moved a little under stress of her dilemma.

"I'd do anything, Mr. Jordan, I thought would be for Mr. Tuke's good. He helped me, a stranger. We are friends now. Mother!"

Jordan got in before Mrs. Morny. "Knew it." He stooped a little, an elephant coquetting with a gazelle, so that she could not help drawing back. He made his voice insinuating with intimacy and instigation. "Ask him to let you keep his cash, or, better still, your mother. He's just been paid a half-year's royalties, and——" He turned round suddenly away from her. "Well, you know what inventors are, Mrs. Morny," and then to Blanche again. "It'd be a kindness. Only it'll have to be done skilfully—he's obstinate in some things, and if you mention me you'll spoil it. There! Good-bye! Good-bye!"

He let himself out quickly for so big a man, leaving behind him a problem baited like a trap.

Blanche, looking at it from all sides, could only see the intrusion of it, Mr. Tuke's sensitiveness, his probable annoyance—danger. Mrs. Morny was more practical, speaking of him openly as a lover to be protected. She quoted Mr. Jordan as if she were quoting an infallible authority. Blanche rebelled against it and yet listened to her mother's worldly wisdom. She had certainly been living in romance, and her romance seemed suddenly insecure.

Jordan went to sleep that night more loudly than usual. He had schemed shrewdly for his friendship; he felt quite justified and very confident. The next morning, feigning a giddiness he kept ever ready for emergencies, he enlisted his wife's help towards the remainder of the week at Brighton. To Tuke he wrote a letter all about his giddiness, promising to be back on Monday, and ending with well-chosen words.

*"I asked Barrow if he'd meet you, after all. He nearly bit my head off. Said he wasn't going to teach others by his experience. Fierce! And he's so sensitive, as a rule. But what can you expect? Sorry, old sport! I did my best."*

The whole scheme was a very good one, according to his lights—he had by now quite persuaded himself that Miss Morny was an adventuress—and helped him to enjoy his stay by the sea.

The following Monday he went to the Old Bridge Tavern at Westminster as a

man goes to draw his profit on a judicious speculation. He had no doubts, remembering Mrs. Morny, remembering Miss Morny's troubled eyes, remembering, too, the little signals of his friend's doubt. He had pieced them together wisely. He deserved his reward.

Tuke did not appear for lunch.

Jordan fished his letter out of a bundle of papers in his pocket and read it again. It expressed loneliness and expectation for the Monday lunch. The wording was true to Tuke as Jordan knew him, and it was dated Thursday night. Jordan did not enjoy his lunch, he who had always asserted that his appetite rose above anxieties. Even the whole bottle of wine was not so very much of a comfort—was more a source of added anxiety, because he learned, drinking it alone, how little Tuke ever had of it.

He went in search of him, heading for his rooms like a wounded elephant. Yet it took all his aplomb, all his real concern, to overcome the landlady's piqued indifference. He, as a friend of Tuke, came within her annoyance. For Tuke had left on the Saturday, paying a week's rent in lieu of notice. She got quite bitter when he persisted.

"Where's he gone? Don't ask me. Him as I'd tried to make a home for going off as if I'd got the scarlet fever in the house, and sending a stranger for his things! That sort don't interest me where they've gone nor what becomes of them neither!"

Jordan turned away without good-byes, for once stripped of his assurance, walking a little hunched. He had been so sure. Remorse closed in on him, a selfish remorse that yet had in it a leaven of affection for someone other than himself. Tuke married would have been better than no Tuke at all. He got half-way to the Mornys' street in an omnibus, and then got off and went home.

It was as he hung his hat up in the hall heavily that he heard voices in the drawing-room, listened, gasped, expanded as by inflation. He had heard Tuke's voice. He went in smiling, instantly his old infallible self again, speaking, even as he opened the door, loudly to counteract his recent despondency.

"So here you are, old sport! Flirting with the wife while I've been scouring the town for you. You gave me quite a turn. I thought of accidents or gaol; and when they told me at your rooms—I've been there. The old lady's a bit sniffy. But here you are!"

He was holding Tuke's hand at the end, shaking it vigorously, his eyes actually beaming. So relieved was he that he waived all reparation.

Tuke had begun some apologies. He cut into them.

"Want a few words? Sure! You can have a bookful, and"—he wrung Tuke's hand again—"and a little Scotch cheer? I won't take no. Come on!"

He shepherded him into the dining-room. There, while Tuke stood awkward and inarticulate, he poured out drinks, motioning one to him.

"Here's to it, my hearty! And don't bother about apologies. I was expecting you, but I guessed you'd been kept. You'd have come if you could. I do know that much. We're pals, eh?"

Having poured the drink down his throat, he stumped the glass down, wiped his mouth, and sighed in the excess of his content.

"Why, what's the matter? Drink that up, my boy, and then, if you must, have your say. Well, I'm your pal."

Tuke still fingered the tablecloth. "I owe you an apology."

"Pay it out of that glass, old man! I don't want your apologies. I told you. But why'd you leave your rooms? That's worth hearing."

"Come out in the car, will you? I won't drink, please!"

Jordan was too elated to persist. "If you have gone daft, it can't be helped. But we mustn't waste it." Having wiped his mouth, he seized Tuke's arm. "Come on now, old sport! I'm your pal, in the car or out of it. I want to hear."

He kept up this expansive heartiness, an ebullition of thanksgiving that his friend had been given back to him. He watched with something very nearly pride as Tuke drove out carefully. Then he got a sharp reminder. Out on the road Tuke stopped the car delicately against the kerb, looked as he used to look, yet somehow differently, spoke exactly as he always spoke.

"Look here, I want you to take me to this Barrow chap you spoke of, if you don't mind?"

Jordan gaped, tried a guffaw. "Why?" and then suddenly, all anxious: "You haven't—"

There, wedged in against his friend at the side of the road, the whole edifice of his misguided diplomacy came tumbling about him. Tuke had nodded, smiling sheepishly.

Jordan got a hand upon him. "And

after all I'd told you! Why, my dear old boy—"

For once Tuke interrupted. "You see, she asked to keep my money."

"You poor old sport!"

"Why?"

There was a challenge in the tone, a challenge quite unusual to Tuke. It got Jordan clawing at him across the wheel to face him round. He stared out the defiance until it became a wrinkled apologetic diffidence.

"Here, Harold, old man, cough up your trouble and don't talk tosh. How much?"

"How much?"

Jordan mimicked him. "Yes. How much? How much has she had of your money?"

"The lot, of course."

"Oh, Heavens!" Real horror for his friend's mishap gave way to satisfaction at his own miraculous luck. He became his own important self again, doling out superior reproof. "Why did you give it her, old man? Here, drive on slowly and tell me all about it. Why ever did you give it her?"

Tuke obeyed. To the slow running of the engines as they progressed processionally down the road, he made his confession.

"Well, you see, she asked that her mother might take care of it for me. She seemed to think, because I invented things, I was a spendthrift and a scatterbrain. I dare say I am. But it all seemed so kindly, so considerate." He was gradually accelerating the pace and speaking faster in sympathy. "It bucked me, Paul, old friend! Bucked me! Hurried me into it. It's not everybody'd offer to look after your affairs like that. And then, when we were married, it seemed natural."

"Stop!"

The old influence held. Tuke obeyed again. The car scraped to a standstill precisely at the kerb. He pretended surprise at the demand desperately.

"Why, what is it?"

Jordan had slewed round in his seat, so that he overflowed beyond the door. "Married?"

Tuke nodded. "On Saturday. That's why I left my rooms."

"Why?"

"Well"—the wrinkles came out in instant self-defence and explanation—"they didn't seem quite—quite good enough for her. We're at Brighton now on our honeymoon."

Jordan swelled and slashed at that quiet

pride. "I meant, why did you get married like that?"

Tuke was now all real surprise. "But I told you! Everybody wouldn't bother to look after you like that. It was just her offering that gave me the pluck to ask. I'd been wanting to. I thought you guessed."

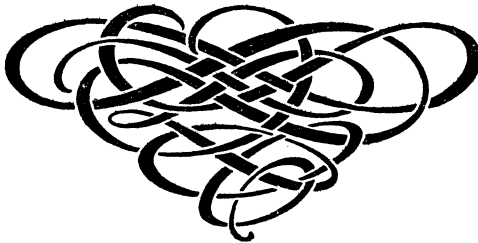
At last it came, the explosion, the unreasonable self-pity of the schemer who finds his schemes have turned against him and are consequently a shame. "Since you are married and tied up for ever, I pass over the secretiveness, the want of confidence in me, though it was hardly matey. I pass that over. I take a back seat. But since

you are married, why, in the name of goodness, do you want to see—er—this Barrow I told you of?"

Watching in impotent bewilderment, he saw a radiance transfigure the homely face, saw Tuke smile in shy content.

"I thought perhaps I might just tell him how wrong he was—tell him to try again. Happiness makes us sympathetic, I suppose. But, of course, if you would rather I did not—if you think——"

"I think——" The seat back shivered ominously as Jordan collapsed into the sulks. "Drive me back, else I'll be saying things."



## A CORNISH LANE IN SEPTEMBER.

OUT of the foxglove's bell  
 Tumbles the drowsy bee,  
 Out of the monkshood cell  
 Into a meadowsweet sea.  
 Down the narrow lane  
 Rumbles the old hay waggon,  
 Brushing the hedges twain,  
 Crushing the wild snapdragon,  
 Bearing its fragrant load  
 Into the open road.  
 Ah, how good it seems  
 Just to be here again,  
 Harvesting April dreams,  
 Fearless of autumn rain—  
 Dreams born anew to-day  
 Out of the scented hay.

PERCY HASELDEN.



# THE TREE

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. WILMSHURST

BECAUSE her voice and eyes held the utmost sincerity, Rollo told her that which twenty-four hours ago he would not have deemed it possible he should have told anyone, much less a woman.

Rollo was three-and-twenty, and in all his life he had never met anyone quite like Marita Fane. Yet it was, perhaps, a tribute to her that he did not tell her so in so many words. He accepted her as he accepted the shining beauty of the April morning, and his appreciation of both was quite involuntary and very real.

They had checked their horses at the end of a woodland ride that gave upon a wide view—the old house, mellowed and irregular, set in a tangled garden bounded by the tradition-steeped beauty of Royal Chase. It was a heritage of which to be proud, and Rollo, heir to it all, at least did not fail in that.

But it was not the beauty of it at which he looked now. Pointing with his whip, he directed Marita's attention to a corner of the wide lawns that sloped away from the terrace, the grass adrift with pale narcissus, the surrounding woods with the deep green and silver of spruce fir, the bronze and pearl of wild cherry. A little apart from the other trees, yet sheltered by them from the coldest wind, was a slim, leafless sapling, protected by a wattle fence.

"He planted that ten years ago," Rollo said. "It's coming along, isn't it? The fence is to keep the rabbits from eating the bark. The beggars nearly stripped it once—might have killed it, you know."

"That," said Marita Fane gently, "would have been a tragedy."

"Yes." He was quite serious about it. "I don't know what we should have done. The Governor's awf'ly proud of it."

There was a little pause. Then Marita Fane said slowly: "He—Colonel Sheringham planted it soon after he returned from India, after the Border affair?"

"Yes, quite soon after. This was his

first visit after the official part, you know."

"I see." Then, because of the enthusiasm that rang in the boy's voice, she smiled, and Marita Fane's smile was rather a wonderful thing.

Rollo went on, heeding the smile only as part of the sympathy: "It was the Governor's idea. A jolly good one, what? Of course, I was only a kid then, but I shall remember it always—I mean the day the tree was planted. All the village turned out." He laughed. "They'd never seen a V.C. before. They wanted fireworks afterwards, so we had 'em. And the tree—they talked about it for months. 'The Colonel's Tree,' they called it. And they talked of *him*—they liked him at once. And I—" He paused, and into the pause Marita Fane, watching him, read all the hero-worship that some few minutes since he had haltingly sought to reveal.

"That was the beginning?" she said quietly.

He drew a long breath. "If you knew Sheringham!" he said. "The whitest man that ever lived—a sportsman and a hero. He's just incapable of anything small, and he's got the biggest heart. You see, I *know*." He stopped jerkily.

Marita Fane, with that recent impulsive boyish confidence fresh in her ears, said nothing. For a moment they sat their horses in silence, looking down at the little, carefully-guarded tree that represented so much—a man's character and personality. And had he glanced at her, Rollo might perhaps have been puzzled at a fleeting expression of Marita's charming countenance—a hardness at variance with that perfect sympathy. But when at last she spoke, her voice held no hint of anything beyond a quietly detached interest.

"Colonel Sheringham was—quite young then?"

"He wasn't much more than thirty." Evidently Rollo wasn't altogether sure that this could be called "quite young." "We've

only seen him twice since then—during the War. He was at Gallipoli and Mesopotamia—got wounded and fever. He stayed here a night or two, when he was on sick leave; and I managed to get my leave then, too. It was the greatest luck. The—the other time I told you of—”

She nodded. The “other time” had been that occasion when Sheringham’s wise and strong intervention and counsel had extricated Rollo—in the boy’s own words—from the devil of a mess. It had been the last touch needed to make of his friendship and hero-worship this enduring thing.

“We were hoping he’d come down this week,” Rollo went on, “but he couldn’t manage it. I want you to meet him; you know.” He gave her one of his disarming, boyish smiles. “And, besides, he ought to see how the tree is getting on, what? It’s grown miles since he was here.”

Marita Fane turned her horse’s head.

“I am sure,” she said gravely, “that he will want to see it.”

And she moved away down the green ride that echoed with the thrushes’ song, a straight and slender figure, all poise and grace, whose thirty years certainly sat lightly upon her.

Rollo, following, thought her a ripping good sort. He was awfully glad that the Mater had asked her down instead of that stupid Carmichael girl, who lisped and giggled and couldn’t ride for toffee, and he was firmly resolved that one day she and Conway Sheringham should meet.

\* \* \* \* \*

That day, it chanced, was destined to come sooner than Rollo had imagined. Before then, when Marita Fane’s visit to the Chase was half accomplished, Fate took a hand in the game and sent Rollo up to Town. He returned in the evening, and Marita, glancing at him as he came into the hall before dinner, was startled by the expression on the boy’s face.

Grimness was there, and a sort of stunned unbelief, and that poignant sympathy of hers sensed somehow the shattering of an ideal.

She thought, naturally enough, of a girl, though Rollo had said nothing to prompt such a conclusion. All through dinner, although Rollo talked, she was conscious of his set young face across the barrier of rose-coloured tulips. She wondered, with a queer little twist of her pretty mouth, if here again was need for counsel from “the whitest man that ever lived,” for that

phrase, it seemed, burnt into her memory with odd insistence.

An hour later Rollo joined her as she stood on the terrace in the warm stillness of a night late April had borrowed from June. Faint moonlight made silver candles of the tips of the spruce firs, gleaming loveliness of the wild cherry. In a patch of light the little guarded sapling was plainly visible. Marita Fane, waiting for Rollo to speak, saw him glance at it and away. Then he said, very quietly:

“I wonder just what sent me up to Town to-day?” And that was not the kind of thing Rollo was addicted to wondering, on the rare occasions when he sought to analyse anything at all. In the moonlight she could see his hands gripping the terrace balustrade.

“A Fate that was unkind?” she prompted.

His laugh was brief and jarred.

“Unkind? I don’t know. That depends. The rotten part of it is—it may be true.”

She did not ask him what it was that might be true. She knew that he meant to tell her, as he had told her that other day, and somehow she wasn’t surprised when he added jerkily:

“It is—about—Sheringham.”

“Ah!”

“It—I heard it at the club. Two fellows were talking. Don’t know who they were, but they spoke of ‘Sheringham,’ and I—well, I was lookin’ at a paper and couldn’t help hearing. I wish to Heaven I hadn’t!” He broke off.

Marita Fane said quietly: “You are quite sure that their Sheringham and—yours are the same?”

“No, not sure. That’s the very devil of it. But it—it’s not a very common name, and their ‘Sheringham’ was evidently a soldier, too, though they didn’t mention his rank. Sometimes I think it couldn’t be, and then, again, I wonder—” His voice was strained. “You see, I’ve always counted Sheringham as incapable of anything like that. He made you think that chivalry wasn’t just a washed-out word, after all—the man who planted that—”

“And the other man—the man you heard about to-day?”

He looked at her with a sort of desperate eagerness.

“You call him ‘the other man.’ D’you believe that it is someone else, after all?”

“One can’t believe anything without some proof, surely,” she said steadily. Then: “What was it they said?”



“When at last he lifted his head, his face was curiously white and tense. ‘You—mean it?’”

Rollo drew a long breath.

"He—their Sheringham—behaved hatefully to a woman. Jilted her without any explanation—simply cleared off abroad. She—it seems she was awfully keen on him, too. And as if that wasn't enough, eight years later he had the confounded, bare-faced cheek to come back to her and expect to patch things up. The woman, you see, had happened to inherit a fortune since."

Into the pause that followed came the sound of a little night wind in the spruces; from the house behind a girl's voice singing, a clear, sweet, flute-like voice that somehow jarred a little in its careless gaiety.

"They did not mention—her name?" Marita asked.

The boy glanced at her rather anxiously, surprised, obviously, at the question.

"Why, no, they didn't—at least, I didn't hear it. But I don't see that that makes any difference to things at all. Whoever it was, that's not the point."

Her eyes, deep and grey, looked straight into his.

"My dear boy, there are two sides to every question on the earth. Hasn't it occurred to you that—she might have been unreasonable?"

"Unreasonable? Because she refused to have anything more to do with the—brute? Good Heavens, no! Upon my soul, I shouldn't think much of the girl who would!"

She smiled very faintly.

"When you're ten years older—"

"You mean I'll not care what my—my friends do?"

"I mean you'll see those two sides—perhaps." She paused. "After all, you're not even sure—"

"No. I *must* be, though, somehow. . . ."

"Do you know?"—her voice was very cool and clear and deliberate—"do you know, I shouldn't have thought that you would have been so ready to believe it *was*—your Colonel Sheringham, after all?"

She saw him redden as her shot went home.

"I—you know I'd give a good deal not to," he told her desperately. "If only—"

She looked at him relentlessly.

"There are some verses—perhaps you've read them?—about the 'thousandth man.' They're very true. You—well, you're simply one of the nine hundred and ninety-nine, aren't you?"

He said nothing. From somewhere back

in his memory the tag to which she alluded stood out, hauntingly vigorous—

Nine hundred and ninety-nine depend  
On what the world sees in you;  
The thousandth man will stand your friend  
With the whole round world agin you.

But it never occurred to him to defend himself by pointing out that the verses alluded to an equality of friendship that could not be compared to the hero-worship that stood in such peril of being shattered. And Marita Fane, to whom this *did* occur, glanced at his averted face with an odd expression in her own.

The girl with the gay, flute-like voice was singing again. Into the sound of it came another—the hum of a car on the long winding avenue beyond the spruces. A moment later the golden light of the head-lamps flashed across the tree stems.

"I wonder who on earth *that* is?" said Rollo. But he said it mechanically, and it was quite palpable that he didn't care. To Marita it was also palpable that she had disappointed him. As they turned to go back to the house, he stopped and faced her.

"I shall find out the truth," he told her doggedly.

"It means—so much?"

And even though she really knew his answer, the vehemence with which he spoke startled her.

"My faith in everything!"

\* \* \* \* \*

In the lamp-lit room the girl who had been singing—slim and shy and very young—was regarding the man who had just been introduced to her with a sort of reverential awe. She was a country parson's daughter, and this, her very first country house visit, had held undreamt delights; that Sheringham, V.C., should be a fellow-guest seemed the culminating point. And behind the reverential awe was actually the consciousness that, besides being a V.C., he was a jolly good sort—not like Rollo, of course, for he was rather a grave person and—well, quite oldish.

"Rollo will be delighted," their host was saying. "Ah, here he is. And Miss Fane—"

"Miss Fane and I have met before," said Sheringham, in his deep voice.

In the second in which they looked at one another, as Marita crossed the threshold of the French window from the moonlight to the lamp-light, that last occasion, perhaps, lived again for each of them. The second passed, and Rollo, standing

with an awkward, boyish sullenness he could not hide, heard his father's explanation.

"Sheringham's plans were altered at the last moment, Rollo, so he came straight here, after all. Took the right course there, eh? By Jove, Sheringham, it's good to see you! You must have a look at the tree, what? It's doing splendidly. Rollo's been showing it to Miss Fane this morning, I believe."

He glanced at his son for confirmation, but it was Marita who spoke.

"It is a splendid idea, and the tree certainly justifies it."

And she smiled at Sheringham with a candid, charming friendliness that two of those who saw it found oddly disconcerting. One was Rollo, the other Sheringham himself.

To Rollo just then the situation was incredible. He was conscious of a bewildering sense of relief and resentment—relief because he felt that, after all, somehow, it couldn't be Sheringham of whom he had heard that fateful story, resentment at Marita's omission to tell him straight out that all the time she had known. He was, indeed, too much engrossed with his own point of view to observe anything unusual in Sheringham's reception of that very charming smile. Sheringham had turned to him, holding out his hand, and to Rollo, as he gripped it, Marita's words re-echoed in stinging contempt—

"I should never have thought that you would have been so ready to believe that it was your Colonel Sheringham, after all!"

He had no opportunity of speaking to Marita again that evening. Vaguely he was aware that her charm had never been more vivid; there was something irresistible in her candid pleasure at Sheringham's coming, set against her beauty, her dignity and grace.

Only Sheringham's attitude remained obscure; but then Sheringham had always been a taciturn person. Rollo added uncertainty to his relief and resentment, and found the three of them exceedingly bad company.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ten hours later, when the morning sun came slanting through the fir trees on to the dew-wet flagstones of the stable-yard, Sheringham and Marita Fane, both in riding kit, came face to face in the stable doorway. The horse Marita had ridden on the previous day stood, already saddled, in the yard;

a groom, touching his cap in quick recognition, hastened to assure Sheringham that his master had left instructions that the Colonel was to take what he chose.

"There's Greyfriar still here, sir," the man added eagerly, "and I'll lay he's not forgotten you, neither. Will I saddle him, sir?"

As he moved away, Sheringham turned to Marita.

"You will wait for me?" he asked her curtly.

"Yes,"

"Thank you," said Sheringham.

And they stood there in silence until the groom reappeared, leading Greyfriar. As they rode out under the archway of the stable-yard, Marita glanced over her shoulder up the beech avenue leading to the house. But there was no sign of Rollo, who evidently did not intend joining them that morning. A moment later they were cantering down the green ride between the firs that led to the spot where Rollo had first pointed out the tree. Checking there, with the glow of the gallop and the wine-sweet freshness of the April air about them like a tangible thing, Marita turned and looked straight at Sheringham.

"I will marry you," she said quietly.

She offered no explanation, neither did he ask for one. They might have been resuming a conversation but recently interrupted.

Sheringham, who had dismounted, stood for a moment with his hand on Greyfriar's neck, looking, not at Marita, but at the cowslip-flecked turf at their feet. When at last he lifted his head, his face was curiously white and tense.

"You—mean it?"

She slipped from the saddle and stood facing him, her answer in the eyes that met his own.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rollo, stammering congratulations with boyish awkwardness and sincerity, rather avoided looking at Marita. But later in the day he sought her out, and this time, of those three conflicting things, there was only relief left. Still awkwardly, he told her as much.

"I—you've no idea what it means to me, being sure. Of course, you'll hate me for thinking it *could* have been Sheringham at all; I—rather hate myself."

She smiled at him. "I shouldn't worry—now."

There was a little pause. Then Rollo said slowly—

"If—this—hadn't happened, would you have told me that you knew—our Sheringham and the man they spoke of at the club couldn't be the same? Or would you have left me to find out later?"

The brief and scarcely perceptible instant of hesitation before her answer told him nothing.

"I wanted you to believe in him yourself. I tried to make you. I think you did really."

He shook his head.

"No. I wish I could say I did, but I can't, honestly." He paused. "At least, it wasn't your fault. You were so rippingly sure, weren't you?"

"Yes," said Marita gravely, "I was quite sure."

Rollo put his hands in his pockets, squared his shoulders, and smiled at her. The relief in his face was good to see.

"I wonder who the other blighter was?" he reflected cheerfully. "Not that it matters."

And he went off down the terrace steps and across the lawns, whistling to the dogs.

Marita stayed where he had found her, on the garden bench in a sheltered angle of the house, just outside the library windows. When she looked up, and saw Sheringham standing close beside her on the threshold, she knew instinctively, that he had overheard. She rose and faced him without speaking, and he made an odd little gesture of finality.

"Yes, I heard. I was there, writing a letter, when the boy came. It wasn't quite clear, of course, but I gather that at least it concerns me." His voice was very steady and very quiet. "I should like to hear the whole story."

"Rollo believed in you rather tremendously," she told him simply. "He heard a—story against you—at least, against a man of your name—and it upset him very much. I persuaded him that it wasn't you, after all."

Curiously, Sheringham asked the question she had asked of Rollo: "It—meant so much?"

She gave him Rollo's answer.

"His faith in everything. You see, one had to save that, at any cost."

He looked away from her across the quiet April twilight of the garden, golden with daffodils and sweet with the thrushes' song. After a pause—

"I suppose I can guess the story," he said dully. "Was it—worth a lie?"

"If I had told him the truth," she said gently—"thank Heaven, he did not ask me straight out—but if I had. . . . You see, I couldn't help remembering you. You failed because of a shattered ideal—oh, I know, I know—and—I wanted to save Rollo that."

He gave a short laugh that rang with bitterness.

"I see. So to do that—to back up what you've made him believe—you said you'd marry me. Wasn't it rather—quixotic of you?"

She made no reply. He went on—

"When you sent me away for good—a month ago—I knew that—that I deserved it. But at least you did me the honour of being perfectly frank with me. I'd behaved rottenly, and—well, all that you said that day was perfectly true. I meant to take my beating squarely, anyway. But when I saw you yesterday, and you talked as though, after all—" He did not finish the sentence. "I suppose I was a fool. But there's just one thing I'd like to know. Did you actually mean to carry it out? To—sacrifice yourself like that for the sake of Rollo's faith in human nature?"

He waited for her answer a long, long time, and then, instead, he got a question.

"How do you know that I should be sacrificing myself?"

"Marita!"

She looked straight into his eyes with a pride and candour that was echoed in her voice.

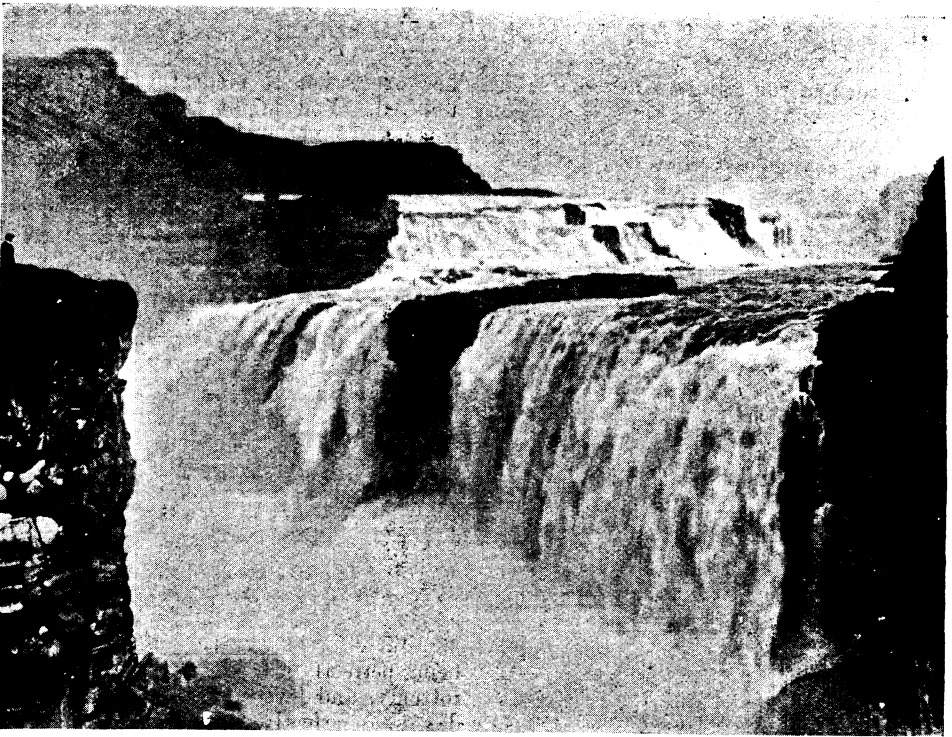
"Yesterday and this morning I thought of Rollo—Rollo and the tree, and all that it meant to him. For ten years, you see, he's had that— You didn't only plant a tree ten years ago. You planted an ideal—"

He interrupted her harshly.

"All this has nothing to do with you."

She gave a low, clear laugh.

"Rollo was lucky. But I—I had more still. I know that now. . . ." She paused. "Something that couldn't be uprooted."



THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WATERFALL IN EUROPE: GULLFOSS, THE GOLDEN FALL.

# THE WONDERS OF ICELAND

By H. DE VERE STACPOOLE

*Photographs by Magnus Olafsson, Reykjavik*

WE had left Leith Harbour in rain, but the clouds cleared away before we got abreast of Peterhead, and as we rounded the north coast of Scotland we steamed into a world of sunlight and calm summer sea.

On the evening of the fourth day out of Leith I was standing in the bow, when the first officer came up to me and pointed right ahead. "That's Iceland," he said. He was pointing to what at first seemed a trace of cloud in the gauze blue of the evening sky, the vaguest hint of a grey pavilion sketched above the haze. It was Vatna Jokul, the

great ice dome, chief of all the Icelandic mountains, signalling his magnificence to us across eighty miles of sea. But he was not the first hint of land. At noon that day a white tern had crossed our bows, and a burgomaster gull had come to inspect us; coveys of puffin had dived before the advancing ship, and great gannets had followed us, crying as they fished, and hovering in the air before they fell plumb like stones and threw up the spray in jets yards high.

That is your first impression of Iceland—a vision of ice in the sky and a vision of

bird life such as you can get nowhere else in the world.

Next day, as you steam along that tremendous south coast, that petrified lava storm, where the hills, valleys, and crags show scarcely a sign of life or movement, you get your second impression.

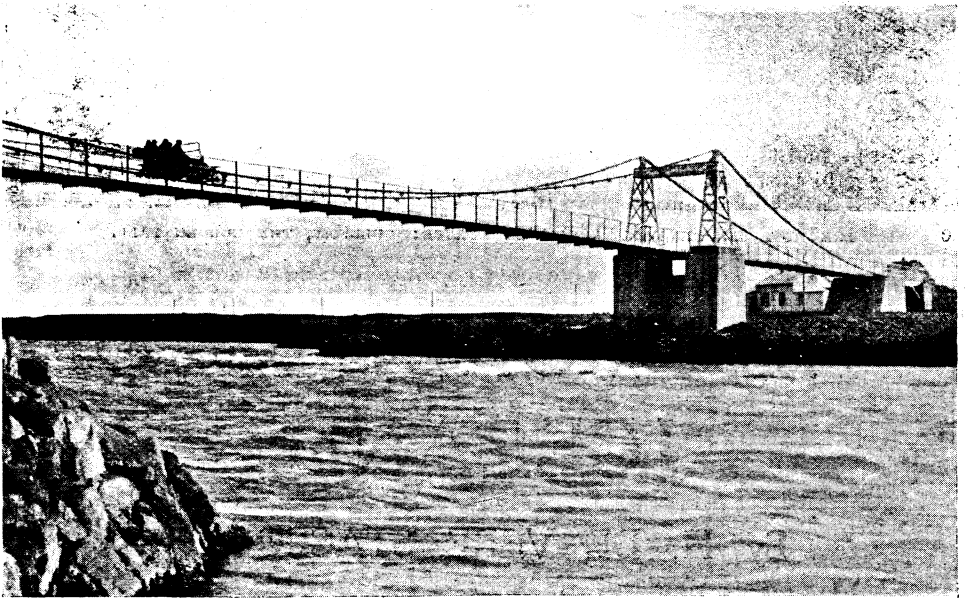
At nine o'clock in the evening we rounded the south-west cape, entered the vast Faxa Fjord, and headed directly for Reykjavik. Daylight was still broad on the world, gulls followed us like a snowstorm, and we could see Snæfell cutting the sky with his twin cones far away across the tremendous bay.

I have landed at many ports in the world,

her expression is mournful, resigned, yet uplifted. You might fancy that yesterday some great national hero had met with a tragic death, and that the fact was known only to the women.

Now, Iceland, above all lands, is the place of surprises, and half-way up the street, on the way to the hotel, we met our first surprise—a Boy Scout. An elephant would not have appeared more out of keeping with the volcanic hills, the corrugated iron houses, and the midnight day of that strange land that seems to lie beyond the world.

A day that we spent in Reykjavik, before we left for Thingvellir and the geysers, was less a day than a packet of surprises, and the



THE BRIDGE ACROSS THE RIVER ÖLVUSA.

but I have never landed at a stranger or more mysterious port than Reykjavik. It was near midnight, yet the light was the light of afternoon; the noise of London was still in my ears, yet the black beach before the fantastic town, and the volcanic hills behind it, were as the forefoot and head of the prehistoric world; the landing-stage was crowded with people who had come down to welcome the ship, yet from all that crowd there came not a sound.

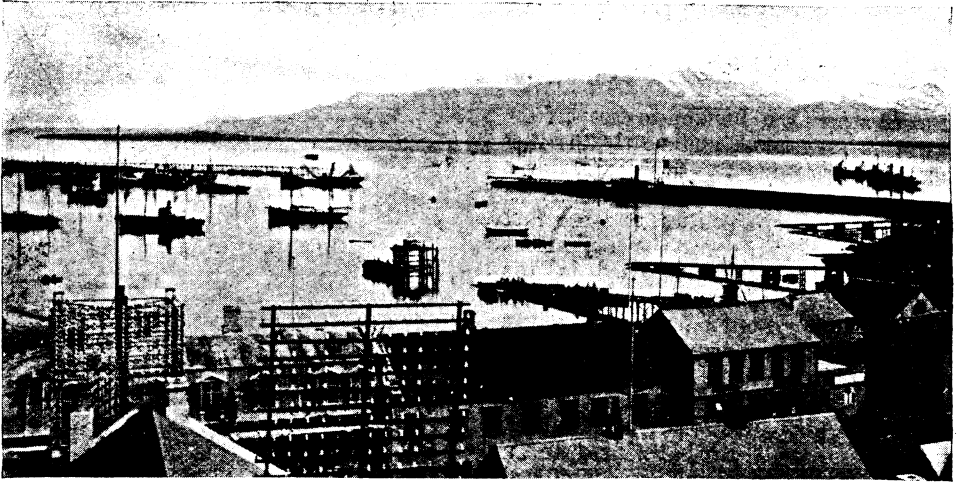
They moved aside to let us pass, but they said nothing. The men were of the ordinary Danish type externally, but the women—all dressed in the national dress—were a type apart. The Icelandic woman rarely smiles;

town itself, when closely examined, was the greatest surprise of all.

At first glance, and seen from the sea, it is just a town of tin houses set on the sea edge of a lava plain, and backed by a weird range of volcanic mountains. In the old days, when the nine cones that you may count on the skyline were all ablaze and answering to the flame of Snæfell across the bay, when the saurian fought the saurian on the black volcanic beach, the plain of Reykjavik must have presented a picture that the imagination may only reconstruct in part.

Yet enough desolation is left to make Reykjavik seem, from the sea, like a lonely





THE HARBOUR AT REYKJAVIK.

city of the wilderness. You say to yourself : What manner of people can possibly live there ? How in the long winter evenings do they manage to amuse themselves, and how in the midst of that desolation do they manage to exist ?

A day in Reykjavik answers all these questions, and gives you, moreover, a picture of high civilisation. This town of tin houses is in reality a highly organised little city. It is the metropolis of Ultima Thule. When

you stand at the Post Office and look up into the air, you might fancy yourself in New York or Chicago from the telegraph wires that you see. The telephone is everywhere, linking the metropolis with sea-coast towns and nearly every hamlet in the land. You meet a man reading a paper—it is the *Visir*; you meet another man reading a paper—it is the *Isafold*; a newsboy pursues you with the *Fjallkonan*; you buy a box of matches, and the man



A PLEASURE PARTY ON HORSEBACK PASSING THROUGH REYKJAVIK.

wraps it up for you in a piece of yesterday's *Injolfur*.

I came away from London to escape from newspapers in general, and nearly the first thing offered to me in Reykjavik was a Suffragette newspaper, the *Kvennablad*. I came away to escape politics, and the first place I was taken to was the Parliament House, a stone building situated in the public square. Parliament was in session, and was being addressed by what I might have mistaken for an Irish member, had he not been talking Icelandic. Here I met a local author of repute, who took me next day to see a play at the theatre by a local dramatist. Later I was introduced to an artist, who sold me a picture, and reminded me that Thorvaldsen was an Icelander.

The author took me for a walk and showed me sundry men—fishermen, to look at, but poets in reality—and through him I came to



THE ROAD DOWN TO ALL MEN'S DRIFT.



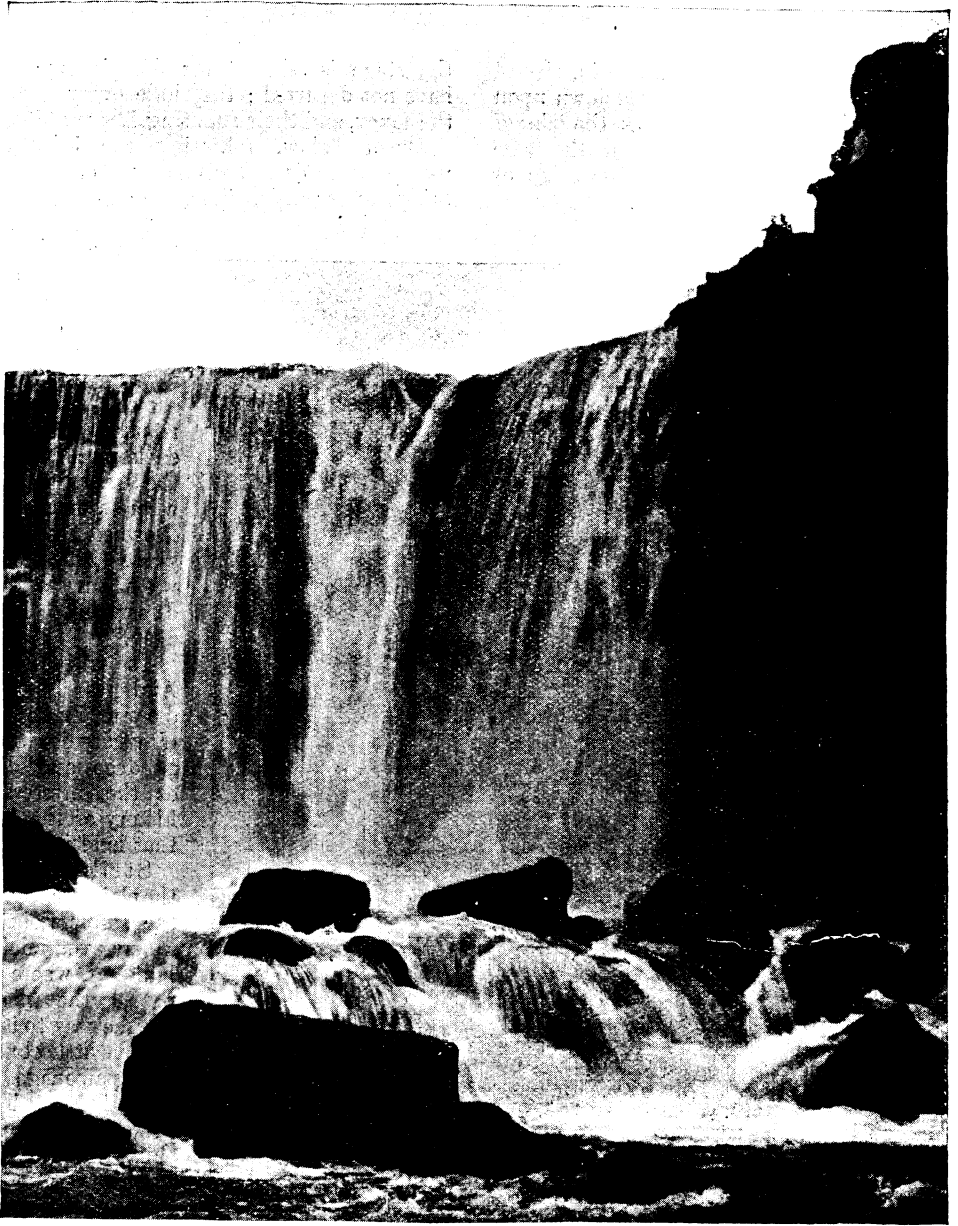
THE RAVINE OF FLOSI, A LAVA CHASM AT THINGVELLIR.

know that nearly every Icelander is a poet, and that this town of corrugated iron houses set by the Icelandic sea is in reality a town of wonders, a centre of high civilisation, a home of pure ideals, of hospitality, of simplicity in its best form, of kindness, and of the three Arts.

Then, taking me by the arm, he led me into the bar of Zoëgas Hotel. It was the full tourist season, and the place was crowded. It was a revelation of the call that Iceland makes to Europe.

Here was an English lord, out for the salmon-fishing; a professor of the Vienna University, come to see the geysers; Edwin Cleary, the traveller, come to prospect for metals; two Swiss guides, come for a mountaineering expedition with Baron X., of Berlin; Spaniards, Italians, Swedes, Norwegians, Germans, a Dutchman, three Englishmen, and an Irishman (myself).

And then presently loomed up before me a composite man, an individuality so new and quaint and strange that he must have a line to himself—an Icelandic American, an Icelander with an American accent and



OXARÁ WATERFALL, THINGVELLIR.

American progressive ideas, yet all the time an Icelander. He is the only man I have ever met who, having lived twenty years on American soil, has retained his original nationality.

Two days after meeting him I started for the wilds, mounted on a pony, with a guide on another pony, and followed by half a dozen pack-ponies carrying provisions, tents, cooking gear, and fishing-rods. And those same wilds gave me a view of the mould in which the

indestructible Icelandic character is cast. We did not bring any lamps or candles; we rode into endless daylight across the bridge that spans the Ellithar River.

The road we took leads to Thingvellir. It is the only road of any account in Iceland, and it stretches across thirty miles of bleak plateau, where the melancholy cry of the whimbrel pursues you all the way, and the great Icelandic ravens keep watch. It led us to a jumping-off place where the plateau

broke away and fell to a vast plain, ringed with silent mountains that looked down upon a lake, island-strewn and still as the lake of memory. It was the plain and the lake of Thingvellir, the centre and the stage of all Icelandic history and legend.

the stage is still set for the players; they have not departed; they hide everywhere to the fancy, and their shouting fills the silence.

Down below, following the breakneck path that leads to the plain, we crossed the bridge under which flows the Oxará River.

"Look here," said the guide, as he paused and pointed to a dark pool that drew its waters from the raving river, yet showed scarcely a ripple on its smooth, dark face, "this is the drowning pool where women were drowned in years gone by. Many women were drowned. It is deep."

It was deep. And as I gazed down into its obscurity, it seemed as deep and dark as the mysterious history of the land that held it.

Striking across the plain, we came to the summer hotel, a tiny, verandahed building, where we passed the night. On the way to it we left the little church and parsonage on our left. The parson, in his shirt-sleeves, was making hay in the little paddock of the parsonage. And that picture of an Icelandic clergyman making "the two ends meet" on the greatest battle-ground of legend

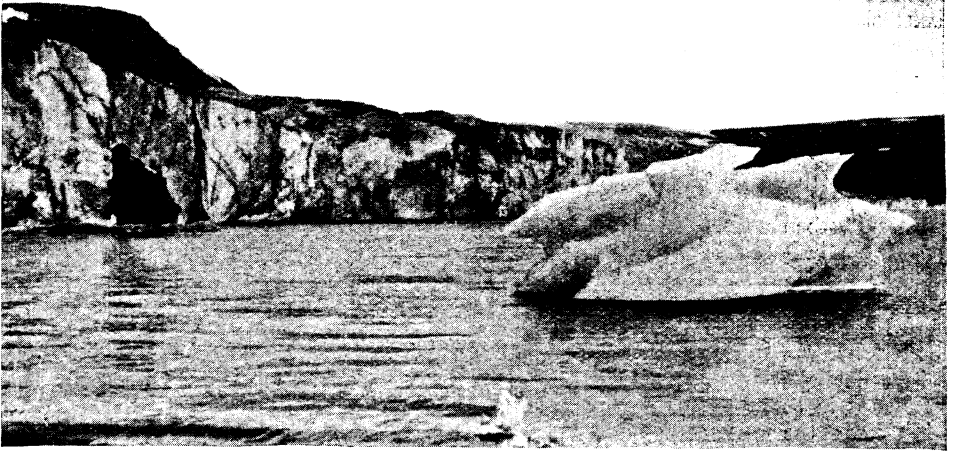
might have given a novelist the starting-point for a strange modern romance.

Eirikr Magnusson, the Icelandic scholar of Cambridge, told me that the plain of Thingvellir is in reality only the top of a vast lava bubble that rose slowly in the days when the world was made, and, failing to



THE LAST ERUPTION OF THIS GEYSER, 1907.

Those mountains saw Snorri and Hallfrethur the Skald, and they seem to see them still. That is the secret of the tremendous influence this place has on the mind of the gazer. The battle-ground and the council-ground, where men took counsel or fought with axes in the time of Norman William, lie there untouched;



AN ICEBERG ON THE HUITA INLAND LAKE.

burst, sank and formed that far-reaching level. If that was so, it was a prophecy of the Icelandic nation—that strange bubble of humanity that rose towards heaven with sound and fury in prehistoric days, and sank, cooling and solidifying, to a level desolation, strewn with the evidence of past power, with wild flowers of thought and the poetry that clings to the remnants of all great things.

The plain of Thingvellir is strewn with

wild flowers. All over Iceland it is the same. You will find them on the most barren hillsides, on the plains, and at the feet of the unclimbable ice jokuls.

There is one thing in Iceland that tries the soul more than lame ponies, endless deserts, or food that is only an apology for English food—the eternal daylight of summer, that pursues you even when you sleep. Mr. Cleary told me that, while he was prospecting along the glittering Lang Jokul, the daylight



HEKLA, AND THE BUDA FOSS WATERFALL IN THJORSÁ.

rode him like a nightmare and became at last almost unendurable. I can quite believe him now. I had a full experience of it in the little hotel at Thingvellir, when I slept in a bed-place like a ship's bunk, and was haunted in my dreams by the patient daylight that stared in at me through the curtainless window. Again, the next night, sleeping in a tent a pistol-shot away from the Great Geyser, I had the same unpleasant experience.

The Great Geyser is the king of all Icelandic sights, when he is to be seen. Even when he refuses to erupt and show himself, you can guess his presence, just as you may guess the



*Photo by* [Walter Wood.]  
THE BEST ROAD IN ICELAND, CUT THROUGH THE LAVA-FIELD BETWEEN REYKJAVIK AND HAFNARFIORD, WITH A TYPICAL POT-HOLE IN THE MIDDLE OF IT.

presence of a tiger in a jungle or an alligator in a swamp.

He has an evil personality; he sulks and hides, and the furious temper of him can only be guessed by the working of the water of the pool where his home is situated.



THE PARSONAGE HOLT, WITH THE EYJAFJÖLL MOUNTAINS IN THE BACKGROUND.



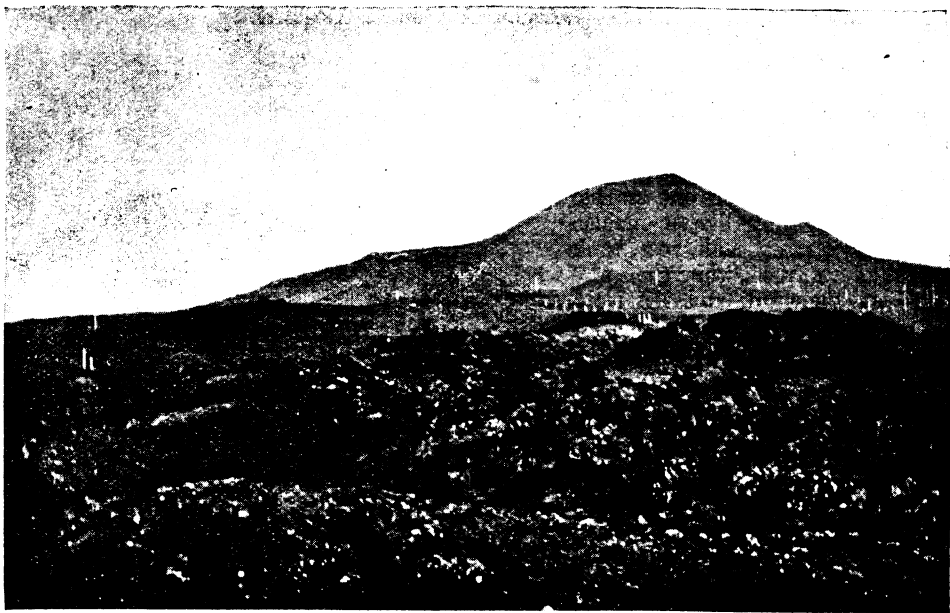


Photo by]

[Walter Wood.

THE HOLY MOUNTAIN, WESTMAN ISLANDS, AN EXTINCT VOLCANO, WITH BEDS OF LAVA WHICH ORIGINALLY CAME FROM IT, ON WHICH TELEPHONE POSTS ARE TO BE SEEN.

The pool is banked by lava cinders, grey as dead leaves, and it lies in a plain desolate as the lava mountains that surround it.

We determined, at the sacrifice of fifty pounds of soap that cost a krone a pound, to make the Geyser erupt, and exactly what happened was this.

We flung the soap into the Geyser bore

and saw it sink from sight. Five minutes passed, and nothing happened; six, seven, and then from far down in the bowels of the earth came a booming noise like the stroke of a gong. It was the answer of the genii to the insult cast to him. Again and again and again it sounded. The water of the pool domed up, the dome burst, and



WOMEN WASHING CLOTHES IN THE HOT SPRINGS NEAR REYKJAVIK.

with a roar that resounded from the hills the Great Geyser sprang to life. The earth shook with his coming, and he leaped a hundred feet high almost in a bound. There in clouds of spray he stood for one terrific moment, struggling like a maniac tangled in a sheet, sank, rose, sank again, and vanished, while the spray passed on the wind, and the plain and the sky and the hills resumed their sinister calm.

The Geyser frightens you. Such an outburst of fury and strength amid that quietness and desolation disturbs the mind of the onlooker. To the imagination there is something evil in the whole business, and this touch of the weird and the vaguely wicked is not confined to the Geyser basin.

As we pushed onward under the hot summer sun of the following days, the basalt valleys showed us things that were disquieting and not good to live among.

For one thing, the basalt has this peculiarity — that the longitudinal and vertical splits in it are so evenly placed that the valley walls seem built by the hands of giants. You come across fortifications, towers, and battlements, among which the heat-shaken air produces strange effects. At times hounds in full cry seem to be running along the sky-ridges, and far

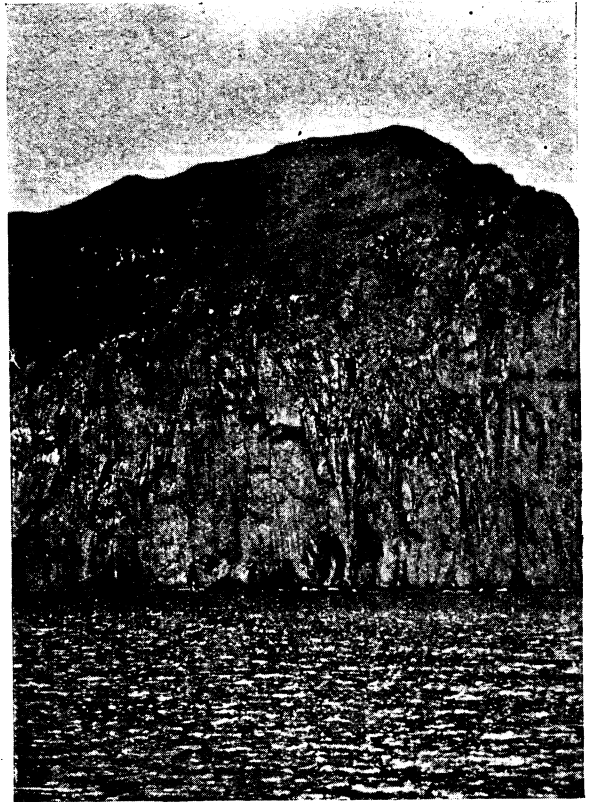


Photo by]

[Walter Wood.

CLIFFS MORE THAN A THOUSAND FEET HIGH, WESTMAN ISLANDS, ICELAND, ON THE FACE OF WHICH MYRIADS OF SEA-BIRDS NEST.



Photo by]

[Walter Wood.

A TYPICAL PIECE OF LAVA SCENERY, WITH A SHEEP IN THE CENTRE FINDING SCRAPS OF GRASS AND OTHER VEGETATION.

mountains appear to undulate and swell and sink, like a squadron of giant horsemen cloaked and riding rapidly. Quite level-headed men have told me that to live long out here among these things disturbs the mind, and produces a depression and nervous dread that makes it absolutely necessary to leave.

And what a relief it is to break from this perpetual domination of the mountains and valleys, and see the blessed sea again, as we saw



it when we struck the Breidifjord—the Broad Bay, to give it its English name—blue and island-studded, and stretching from Sandur Point to far-off Breidavik.

If you take a map of Iceland, you will see the Breidifjord lying just north of the Faxa Fjord, but you will not see its wonders. The Icelanders say that the islands of this bay cannot be numbered, and I almost believe them. It is the paradise of the northern birds.

Out on the Breidifjord in a sailing-boat you find that the days are too short to exhaust the marvels of bird-life. In the nesting season you will see on the rocks the puffins, the razorbills, the kittiwakes, the auks, and the long battalions of the guillemots in their white-and-black plumage.

The kittiwakes always build highest; in the rock-holes below them the puffins hide; and below the puffins the guillemots nest. At Grimsey you will see the swarming kittiwakes darkening the sun, and the great bird city north of Sylt is one of the wonders

of the world; but neither at Grimsey nor at Sylt will you see such variety of bird-life as in the island-strewn Breidifjord.

Here you will find the great burgomaster gulls and the skuas, true overlords and pirates of the air, that rob the lesser birds of their fish, and devour the puffin chicks whenever they get the chance; you will see the gannets flying in long strings, and hear their monotonous “Clak-clak-clak” mingled with the “Get away, get away,” of the kittiwakes and the melancholy calls of the oyster-catcher. Those are the only sounds that rise above the tune of the wind and the sea. And then out here you will meet, perhaps, the Icelandic fog, of all fogs the most treacherous and of all dangers the worst.

We came back by a coasting steamer to Reykjavik, and two days later we were steaming for Leith, and Vatna Jokul was again a grey pavilion in the sky, a vast temple built by the ice spirit above the strangest land I have ever seen.



Photo by]

[Douglas Bookless.

DRYING FISH FOR EXPORT: ONE OF THE FIELDS OF MESSRS. BOOKLESS.



"In a moment I had my arms round her, holding her tight. 'Darling, you mustn't talk like that!' I cried, but she only smiled and shook her head a little."

# THE UNRESTING NIGHT

By ALICE GRANT ROSMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY T. VICTOR HALL

WE were only fifteen miles from Town, but we might have been as many hundred for any stir of life that came to us out of the night. The tragic quiet seemed to have crept in through the wide-open windows to set itself in Patricia's eyes, and she sat passively for the first time in her life, and saw, with an indifferent glance, the days and hours go by.

Nothing could move her unreasoning placidity. It lay upon her like a pall, a thing so alien that she seemed like a stranger who had come in to us out of the night.

Across the table Clement, her husband, sat and talked, however, with an unruffled

brow, his voice punctuating the silence monotonously.

I don't think any of us knew very clearly what he was talking about, and it was a relief when Patricia moved and the dinner was at an end.

We went upstairs together, she and I, to the square, unroofed balcony that looked over the garden and the dark, massed beauty of the little wood behind.

This wood was to have been the playground of a king—a king who would make many royal pilgrimages from the flat in Town, Patricia had said, with soft laughter in her eyes. All the giants and brigands

in the world were lurking there among the silver beeches for his conquest, and in the feathery underbrush were ambuscades to cheer the heart of the most warlike monarch.

The railing of the balcony had been built high, too, for the protection of his royal person, but, alas, a month ago the crown and sceptre had been laid away.

Released from Clement's ceaseless conversation, we sat in our easy-chairs with the new peace of silence between us, and presently a wind blew up the long road. It was a little, lonely wind of the night, hopelessly sighing, and the beeches gathered it into their slender arms and swayed and whispered as though to rock a sleepy child.

"Windy night," said Clement's voice, a harsh note in the silence, and he came out and stood behind Patricia's chair uneasily.

His presence irritated me, and I said, exasperated—

"Windy? Nonsense! If you knew as little of such nights as I do, you wouldn't call it windy. You'd only know it was divine."

He nodded.

"Art is an iron taskmistress, Dulcie. She must have all or nothing, and you—doesn't the world know it?—have given your life into her hands."

"That's very pretty," I objected, "but delightfully incorrect, you know. Only the feeble amateur talks of Art, and I never was that, thank goodness. I am an ordinary human being making my way in a hard world. It is an exploded theory that the artist, so called, lives on a plane alone, picturesquely doing without the joys of life. Most of us have a tolerably comfortable time, in fact."

"And yet," persisted Clement, "no artist is quite a man or woman."

"Rubbish!" I said. "Having married one, you should know better."

He moved his hand swiftly to his wife's shoulder, and then I saw what a cruel imputation I had put into his words—words that were only making conversation, after all.

But she had not noticed, bless you. She had taken his hand absently, but her eyes were still looking out at the swaying, silver beeches under the silver stars.

I had never liked my friend's husband. How could I? Her delicate wit, her brilliance, her bewildering tendernesses, were so far beyond the deserts of any man. I think our antagonism was mutual, yet this morning he had waited while my train

ambled, three hours late, along a congested line.

I had been touring with a repertory company, and was returning to the prospect of a new and important piece in a month, with all a wanderer's longing for his own fireside. Then the train stopped, and Clement's figure, harsh and curiously dominating, came to me.

"I heard you were to be on this train," he said, "and I wondered if I could commandeer you for a day or two. We are at the cottage, you know, and Patricia has not been quite herself since—I thought it might cheer her up a bit."

Of course I went with him, and he took me off straight away in his new touring car—the car that was to have been the equipage of a king. And because he had not warned her of my coming, I heard again, for a brief moment, her own little laugh of delight. Then she relapsed into the calm, the deadly calm that Clement called not being quite herself. It had not lifted all the afternoon.

"I'll go for a stroll, dear," said Clement suddenly, "and leave you to Dulcie. Of course you want to talk, you two."

He went away, and Patricia turned to watch him, a strange light in her eyes.

"Oh, Dulcie," she said in a hushed voice at last, "Clem's gone to look for him."

It was too much. In a moment I had my arms round her, holding her tight.

"Darling, you mustn't talk like that!" I cried, but she only smiled and shook her head a little.

"It's so lonely for him out there in the night," she said in the same still voice. "Can't you hear it sighing and moving all the time? I've waited and watched, and the night never rests or sleeps. And he's such a little chap, Dulcie. Yet he never cries, either, for I should have heard him. I listen all the time, and sometimes I hear the wind racing down the road as though it were after someone, but not anyone as small as he, of course. It whistles, too, and howls until you'd think a tiny fellow like that might be afraid. Then it comes into the wood and plays among the trees. I'm glad when it does that, because we knew he would love the wood, didn't we? And one night I thought I saw him there. I'm sure he waved his little hand to me, but when I ran down he had gone away."

"Dear," I said, with a sudden inspiration, "but of course he was asleep. You wouldn't have him up so late, poor little chap."

"He never sleeps," said Patricia, with conviction. "How can he, with the nights so restless and the wind rushing by? But Clem wouldn't believe he was playing in the wood, and he was furious with me. Oh, Dulcie, he can't get over it that the little chap went away. He doesn't think I know

"*Dulcie, what was it?*"

She had jumped to her feet and now stood tense, hands tightly holding mine, though I had not been conscious of a sound.

Then I did hear something, a knocking, fitful and repeated, and the unmistakable crying of a child.

She was gone in a moment, I after her, expecting I know not what miracle, down the stairs into the square hall, which was a lounge as well, and opened on the porch. The door was standing wide,

and in it we saw a woman's figure, clutching a white bundle in her arms. Every other moment she disengaged her hand to knock on the wooden panels, but so nervously that she could never have been heard through

the closed  
kitchen  
doors be-  
yond.



"Ah, it's yerself 'll help me darlin'," she said. "Sure you've the kind heart and the pretty face, an' it's sick he is, the poor lamb."

it, but every night he goes out to look for him—the wrong way, always the wrong way."

What could I do? All words of mine were useless beside the certainty of hers. I held her close, thinking bitterly of Clement, who had so allowed his own grief to be the supreme tragedy.

"Ah, it's yerself 'll help me darlin'," she said. "Sure you've the kind heart and the pretty face, an' it's sick he is, the poor lamb, and me man away with the little horse and not a creature to turn to. Five mile it is to the doctor, but sure he'd be dead on me before I could walk that far. Then I mind me of the fine car I seen his honour drive so

splendid down the hill this evenin'. Said I: 'Tis a kind gentleman he is, and she's a sweet young creature, and they'll not be seeing the baby die on me, after losing their own, and the car waitin' an' all.'"

Patricia did not stop to ask a



"Patricia did not stop to ask a question. She had no need, for she had looked at the little quivering bundle."

question. She had no need, for she had looked at the little quivering bundle. She turned to me, once more the resourceful vivid figure of old times.

"Dulcie dearest, a rug and some matches quickly," she said, "and will you bring them out to me and open the big gates? Clement isn't here, but we musn't waste a minute. Fortunately, I can drive the car myself."

With deft and steady hands she set about the work of preparation, and in a few moments we were speeding up the road into the night.

Patricia had put the mother and baby in the back seat with rugs, and me beside them. She herself was hatless, and her coat, flung hastily over her light dress, was open to the wind.

"There's a short cut," she said suddenly over her shoulder, slowing down. "Do you remember is it the second or third turning?"

"I don't, God help us all, but it's one or other surely," said the mother. And Patricia turned to increase the speed again, just as a man became visible in the circle of lights before the car.

"Clement!" she cried, and stopped.

He recognised her with an exclamation.

"Patricia! What foolery is this?" he said.

She only moved from the steering gear and let him get in beside her.

"Oh, Clem, I'm so glad we met you. He's so dreadfully ill, poor little fellow, and we're taking him to the doctor as hard as we can go," she said.

He looked at her, and what he thought was clear to me in a moment, for the hood was up, and it was evident he had seen neither the mother and her child nor me. He said nothing, but would have turned the car and gone home, had I not bent forward suddenly and caught him by the arm.

"Clement, are you mad or blind?" I said roughly. "It's a child, a real child, and we are taking him to the doctor. He is here with his mother in the back of the car."

He looked, then bent to the steering wheel, and the next moment we were speeding through the dark.

Nobody spoke a word. Somehow I think Clement was afraid, for Patricia, relieved of responsibility, lay back in her seat quite still and quiet again. But when we stopped before the doctor's house, she was out in a moment, helping the mother, inaudible through mingled gratitude and suspense, to the door. A minute later it opened to receive them, and we two were left to wait the issue out in the windy night.

I did not move from my corner for a long time, but Clement walked backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, like someone who has set himself a monotonous task.

He had not asked a word about the mother and child—apparently he wasn't interested—but once, as he came into the light for a moment, I saw the tense, grey lines of his face, and knew that his own pain left no place for any other thought.

"Just like him, of course," I decided;

and, with some half-formed, angry desire to wrench his mind back to the realisation that there were one or two other inhabitants of the earth, I jumped out of my corner and went to walk with him.

"Poor soul!" I said. "She was almost distracted, and no wonder. He's such a fine baby."

"There are other children," objected Clement harshly.

"Yes," I said, with heat, "just as there are some other people as callous as you, though I'm sorry to believe it."

"Callous! Am I callous? Yes, perhaps I am, if it's callous to think more of a living woman than a dead child."

"But he isn't dead," I said, stupid and uncomprehending, and Clement turned on me.

"Great Scot! Dulcie, are you mad?" he said. "I brought you to Patricia because I honestly believed you could do more than any living soul to bring her mind back to its old balance. And now I find you echoing this foolishness. You artists. . . ." He stopped, and added with an effort at self-restraint: "I beg your pardon. I'm afraid I'm hardly fit for polite society just now. You see, I've had a pretty trying time. It's two months, and she still looks for him, and waits for him, and never rests nor sleeps. She says he isn't dead. Do you wonder that the loss of her peace of mind is the only loss I can really think about?"

"No," I said faintly, "I don't wonder, but—I'm very glad."

It was a stupid thing to say, I know, but somehow this new and illuminating picture of Patricia's husband shook me.

I thought of her as I had seen her standing in the hall, eyes bright again, and her dear head lifted in the old imperious way, but of this I dared not speak, for fear. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

The door opened, and we turned together hastily and started forward. Then I drew back again and crept into the waiting car.

Patricia had come out, and in the sudden glare from the doorway we saw her eyes shining with unmistakable delight.

"He's better. The doctor says he will be all right. And oh, Clem, he's the dearest, fat baby you ever saw!" she said, and came back from the unresting night in her husband's arms.



"Also there was Miss Smith."

# MALUA

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

THE floor of the Royal Hotel, Malita, trembled, then sagged, heralding the approach of its proprietress, Mrs. Kemp.

For a moment she stood—or as much of her as was physically possible—in the bar doorway, leaning through the bead curtains to glance to right and left. On the one hand, there was apparently nothing to engage her attention; on the other, a diminutive figure, in a blue wrapper, washing glasses as though its life depended on it.

"Will she do?" asked Mrs. Kemp.

"The best we've ever had," replied the barmaid, without pause in her adroit manipulation of the cork-extractor.

"Glory be, and let's hope it lasts!" sighed Mrs. Kemp, and faded like an over-substantial dissolving view into the bead curtains.

So, in Miss Smith's own words, she was

"the best they had ever had." Felisi paused in the process of glass washing to digest this satisfactory but unsurprising piece of information. It had not been intended for her ears, but then neither was a great deal more that came their way in the course of a day behind the Royal bar.

Would she do? That had been the question. But it gave rise to another of far more importance in Felisi's estimation: would the Royal do? She rather fancied that it would. The somewhat menial nature of her employment was amply atoned for by the unrivalled facilities it afforded of prying into other people's business. And is there anything more fascinating? If so, Felisi did not know of it. She blessed the happy concurrence of events—her father's desire for a little ready cash, and the Royal's urgent need of

an assistant barmaid—that had resulted in her transference from the deathly dullness of her native village to this scene of brilliance and animation.

There were men, an intermittent stream of them, who had an obliging habit of discussing their private affairs, elbow on bar, within a few feet of Felisi's observation post. There was a piano which, in response to an inserted coin, dispensed enchanting noises; a "billiard room" (containing a decrepit bagatelle board), from whence came the staccato click of balls and forceful expressions of approval or annoyance. In short, there was life.

Also there was Miss Smith.

To Felisi this dainty, tactful little lady was a never-ending source of wonder and interest. No one approached the Royal bar but was met with Miss Smith's own smile, gracious as it was impartial. No one, in the heat of the moment, was guilty of an untoward remark but she was conveniently deaf, a doubtful action but she was blind. Indeed, as Felisi soon discovered, there were two separate and distinct Miss Smiths, the one of business hours, an eminently efficient mechanism, and the other of private life, a human creature of joy and sadness, laughter and tears. The first of these all Malita knew and respected, the second was a phase so jealously guarded that it is doubtful if anyone dreamed of its existence—except Felisi.

"Come in!" this latter Miss Smith was wont to call, in answer to a discreet cough outside her *bure*, across the compound from the ramshackle hotel, and Felisi would enter another world.

Things were so different away here. There were delicately coloured draperies, and books, and photographs, and bowls of flowers that converted the outhouse (for such it was) into a temple of taste and luxury.

But of all the differences in this exceedingly different world, undoubtedly the most striking was Miss Smith herself. Gone were such insignia of office as a rolled-gold bangle above the left elbow, the slightly daring silk jumper, the high-heeled shoes and elaborate coiffure, to make way for the simplest of wrappers and loosely-coiled masses of dark hair.

"Come," she might say, "there's just time for a walk before supper." And they would leave the Royal Hotel, rearing its unlovely head above a tangle of convolvulus,

and plunge into the cool green tunnel of the beach road. These "walks," as Miss Smith called them, had become an institution. They led nowhere in particular, and had no definable purpose, but they pleased Miss Smith, which was the main point. And how she could walk! Felisi was often obliged to trot to keep pace with her. In quite a short time they covered undreamed-of distances, exploring beach, palm grove, and jungle, as fancy led.

On one occasion a narrow track leading from the beach road toward the sound of falling water attracted Miss Smith's attention. It led, as Felisi knew, to a gorge choked with tree-ferns and underbrush, where some time ago a mistaken old man named Billy Andrews had attempted to grow vanilla, and failed. His bungalow, in a state of advanced decay, still clung to the hillside, held there for the most part by creeping vine.

Miss Smith came to a halt at the edge of the clearing, and gazed about her with evident relish. There was a waterfall high up the gorge, and down below, the sea thrust a tenuous arm along the valley. But what riveted Felisi's attention was a thin ribbon of smoke rising from the lean-to behind the bungalow. Was it possible that someone had been lured into relieving Billy Andrews of his white elephant? If so, it was one of the very few things Felisi had not heard about. What was more, she would dearly like to see that someone.

Her wish was fulfilled rather sooner than she expected. Miss Smith was still absorbing the view, when, to the accompaniment of crackling underbrush, a man broke from the bush and came to an abrupt halt in the middle of the track.

"I beg your pardon," he stammered, and that was all he seemed capable of saying at the moment.

Miss Smith's own smile came to the rescue.

"Oughtn't we to be doing that?" she said. "We must be trespassing."

"Not a bit of it," beamed the man.

"But isn't this your property?"

"In a way, yes, but—"

"Well, then," said Miss Smith, commencing a strategical retreat down the track, "I must apologise. Good evening."

For a moment he stood watching her go, then burst into incoherent speech.

"Oh, but, I say, won't you—that is, what about a cup of tea?"

Miss Smith's momentum slackened, then



ceased. She glanced at Felisi and, seeming to find reassurance in that direction, turned and retraced her steps.

"You're very kind," she said; "it sounds too good to resist."

"That's right," encouraged the man, and led the way through a wilderness of empty corned-beef tins and what-not to the bungalow.

"You must excuse all this," he apologised, dragging the only sound chair procurable across the rat-gnawed verandah; "I—I've hardly got going yet."

"But I think it's wonderful," said Miss Smith, gazing steadfastly over the corned-beef tins to where the slanting sun-rays touched the rolling expanse of jungle.

"It is," agreed the man, "until you try to do something with it; then it reduces you to—well, this." He indicated his rather disreputable appearance with an apologetic laugh, and leant on the verandah rail, looking down at Miss Smith. "But what seems a good deal more wonderful to me, if you don't mind my saying so, is meeting someone from 'over there' in the Malita bush. Have you been out long?"

"Three years," said Miss Smith, with an unaccountable heightening of colour.

"Then, perhaps," suggested the man, "as an old timer, you'd be so good as to tell me what I'm supposed to do with seventy acres of rock and creeping vine, a cook who can't cook, and labour that falls asleep the minute my back's turned."

"I know it's pretty hopeless at first," laughed Miss Smith, "but you'll have to do what we all try to do—keep on keeping on, that's all."

"I see," said the man. "My name's Wade," he added abruptly.

"And mine's Smith—Irene Smith."

Their eyes met, and it was clear to anyone of perception that in that brief exchange of formalities each recognised the other as a kindred denizen of another world—the world of "over there." Felisi had seen such things happen before, and, like the perfect chaperon that she was, stole from the presence to help a distraught cook in his efforts to find an uncracked tea cup.

"It is always so," he wailed; "the guests come when least expected."

"But are none the less welcome," amended Felisi.

The cook grunted non-committally.

"As the daughter of my father, Chief of Luana," Felisi continued serenely, "I

have entertained very many guests, and know their ways."

"Luana?" mused the cook, pouring boiling water upon the tea. "I do not seem to have heard of Luana."

"That is quite possible. Nor Levuka, nor Suva, perhaps?"

"I have passed through those places," admitted the cook, with masterly unconcern, "on my way to Sydney and Melbourne."

Felisi did not so much as flicker an eyelash.

"Sydney and Melbourne are well enough," she conceded, "but when one has been Overthere, they are as naught. In Overthere the tea is served in cups of gold, and——"

"Enough!" cried the baffled cook. "Out of my way, infant!" And he hurried up the crazy steps to the verandah.

It was not so much tea that they needed up there. Out of her boundless knowledge of human nature Felisi knew that, and left them to it. Besides, the cook had called her an infant, and such things could not be allowed to pass.

When she did return to the verandah, it was to discover with satisfaction that she might have been in the moon for all the notice that was taken of her.

"You mean," the man was saying, as he gazed rather hopelessly over his primeval property, "that I've bitten off more than I can chew. I've been thinking that myself lately."

"No, no," cried Miss Smith, with a vehemence that was new to her; "I mean anything but that! You—you will chew it," she insisted, with a nervous little laugh.

"Of course you will, if——"

"Please go on," said the man quietly.

"—if you make up your mind to."

The man nodded his head slowly

"Yes," he said, "that's about it—a matter of will-power. And will-power depends on incentive. I haven't much of that, Miss Smith."

"There was enough to make you begin."

"The necessity of doing something," he admitted, with a shrug of the shoulders, "to live."

"Then why isn't there enough to make you go on?"

"I don't know," muttered the man; "I don't know."

"Shall I tell you?" said Miss Smith.

He turned at that.

"I wish you would," he said.

For a moment Miss Smith seemed taken aback at her own temerity.

"Please," pleaded the man.

"Very well," said Miss Smith, with an air of quiet determination; "but I warn you, I'm on my hobby."

"Good!" said the man.

"And you mustn't mind what I say"

He smiled encouragingly.

"I've seen such a lot of it," she went on, looking out over the valley, "and I can't let it pass when I see the symptoms. I suppose I ought to be going about with tracts and my hair scratched back."

"I prefer this method," said the man.

"Wait before you say that," warned Miss Smith; "this is much less excusable, really. You can crumple up a tract and throw it away, or light your pipe with it, and you can't very well do that with me."

"No," said the man. "No, I couldn't do that with you."

"So really I'm taking advantage of your hospitality."

"Is it as bad as that?"

"Quite. May I go on?"

He nodded. His eyes were fastened on Miss Smith.

"You're in for a bout of what we call *malua*," she said, with a certain deliberation. "It means by and by. You feel you don't want to—just yet—so you don't. And that's all it amounts to at first—a slackening. But it grows—it grows until you not only feel you don't want to, but find you can't. It leads to—to almost anything. There," she ended abruptly, "is that enough?"

"Not quite," said the man. "What causes it?"

Miss Smith leant back in her chair with the air of one who has passed dangerous ground.

"Ah," she mused, "that's difficult—difficult. There are things in these Islands that can't be explained, and *malua*'s one of them. It is the Islands, that's all. I don't believe we were ever meant to come here. They didn't want us. We just came because there was money in it, or because we were no good elsewhere, and *malua*'s their way of paying us back. Oh, yes," she added quickly, in answer to his unspoken question, "it attacks us as well as you."

The man smiled down at her.

"I don't see much evidence of it," he said.

"No? Well, I can only tell you that it does."

"And the cure?" he suggested. "You mustn't diagnose without prescribing, you know."

"I won't," said Miss Smith. "There is none that I know of when it once takes hold; but there's prevention, and that is work—just keeping on keeping on until you've made enough to go away and give it the slip; then go just as quickly as you can. That's what I'm doing," she added thoughtfully, "and it seems to have answered, so far."

"You?" muttered the man.

She turned to him with a short laugh.

"You don't imagine I wander about the Malita bush for a living, do you?"

"No, but——"

"And such a living! When next you come to the settlement, run into the Royal, and you'll see me in my war-paint."

"The Royal?"

"Yes, I'm barmaid."

The man stood silent.

"I thought that would give you a shock," she said. "A nice sort of person to be proselytising, am I not? But I'm a good barmaid, so they say, and I've nearly done—they pay well in these out-landish places—then hey for 'over there'!"

"Shock!" repeated the man. "I won't pretend that it isn't. It's the pluckiest thing I've met with in many a day."

"And not so plucky as you might think," said Miss Smith. "There's always four feet of good solid bar between you and—and anyone; besides, they're not like that 'out back.' It's in the cities. I tried most things before coming to the Royal, and I know where I've been shown the most respect. Girls are beginning to find that out."

"Yes, but they're real barmaids——"

"And, pray, what am I?" demanded Miss Smith.

The man seemed unable to reply. He shifted his position against the rail.

"Somehow I can't imagine you——" he began.

"Well, come and see," taunted Miss Smith.

"I'd rather not, if you don't mind," he said slowly. "I prefer you as you are. . . . You'll come again?" he added, as she rose to go.

Miss Smith did not answer at the moment, but she came again, as Felisi knew that she would. Indeed, the "walks" took a natural trend in that direction, and their effect was magical. Within a month Billy

Andrews's old place and its new owner were transformed, and as for Miss Smith, there was something in her eyes that had not been there before.

all good chaperons—so that the *dénouement* came as something of a shock.

It happened on an evening so still that only the whisper of the waterfall up the



"Exactly what happened was hard to determine . . . He was on his feet . . ."

Felisi preened herself in the knowledge that there was only one end to it all—the end eminently satisfactory and beloved of

gorge and the low-toned voices on the verandah reached the ear. He put it very nicely, Felisi thought, and his large

brown hands went out, covering Miss Smith's. For a moment she sat quite still, then gently withdrew them and stood looking out over the valley.

"I'm sorry," she said, in a small, uneven voice. "I hoped—I thought— Oh, what does it matter what I thought?" she cried bitterly. "It's mean, mean, to have let it come to this!"

"You couldn't help it," said the man quietly, "any more than I. We belong. You can't deny it."

Miss Smith did not try. She stood there, a silent, forlorn little figure, at the verandah rail.

Presently her lips moved.

"I should have known where it led. I *knew*, and did nothing. It's *malua*," she whispered, "*malua*——"

The dull, insistent note of a native drum floated up from the beach, reverberating through the gorge, so that for Felisi the rest was inaudible. But it was vital—there could be no doubt of that—for by the time the exasperating noise had ceased, Miss Smith had ceased also, and was hurrying down the bush track, leaving the man, a figure of stone, staring after her.

\* \* \* \* \*

What did it all mean? For once Felisi was at a loss. During the days that followed it meant little that one could detect. Miss Smith's smile was never more in evidence over the Royal bar. The rolled-gold bangle and other appurtenances appeared in their appointed time and place. The hand on the cork-extractor had lost none of its cunning.

And the man? Felisi had visions on that score. Day by day she waited on tenter-hooks for him to descend on the Royal bar—as she had learnt in her *mekes* (dances) that the hillmen of old descended on the beach dwellers—and carry off Miss Smith in spite of herself, in spite of all, whatever that might be. But nothing of the sort happened in modern Malita. Instead, he was seen emerging from a low-down rival of the Royal's, and laughing a raucous farewell to his new-found friends as he mounted his Tongan pony unsteadily and cantered off into the darkness.

So that was the way of it. Felisi sighed, and fell to glass wiping.

It was not until a week of speculation had passed that the threads of this disappointing affair could again be caught up and woven into anything tangible.

As threads, they came in curious guise—

a man, prematurely old, with cunning eyes, a twitching mouth, and uncertain ways. He came during the slack morning hours, when it was Miss Smith's custom to sit and read or do needlework behind the bar, so that she did not see him at first. But Felisi did. His movements, his very appearance, somehow, suggested a bird of prey. For a while he hovered in the doorway, peering in, then, of a sudden, swooped down upon the bar.

At the sound of footsteps Miss Smith looked up. It was ghastly. The smile was there, but transfixed in the bloodless mask of her face.

The man spoke. His voice was low and ingratiating.

"Don't look like that, my dear; one would think you weren't glad to see me." His mouth twitched. "And look here"—he leant across the bar—"don't imagine that I'm going to be the smallest bit of trouble, because I'm not. Wouldn't interfere for the world." He looked about him with evident approval. "Who'd have thought, though— However, any port in a storm, and I expect it's all right—quite all right. By the way"—his voice sank still lower—"what's the name?"

In little more than a whisper Miss Smith answered him—

"Smith—Miss Smith."

"Then that's all right," commented the man. "Who am I to cavil at a name? I'll have just a suggestion, if you please—Miss Smith."

And she served him, though no money changed hands.

"That is distinctly better," said the man, setting down the glass and smacking his loose lips. "What are you going to do about it?" he added. "Make another break for it?"

Miss Smith made answer like some mechanical instrument.

"I haven't thought. I haven't had time to think."

"No. Well, when you have, you'll let me know, won't you? It saves a lot of trouble and—er—expense. In the meantime——" He paused, gazing speculatively across the bar.

Miss Smith gave him money, and flinched from his outstretched hand.

He moved toward the door.

"Don't forget," he said in his soft voice. "No interference; no trouble of any sort—just me, where I belong, that's all." And he was gone.

But he returned, and kept returning. He haunted the Royal like an insidious wraith. One came upon him at odd times, in unlikely places, doing nothing, saying little, but ever present. And at last Felisi saw him enter Miss Smith's *bure*.

For a time the low drone of voices came from within, then the man's, raised in horrible anger, followed by a sudden silence, and presently his figure stealing out into the compound.

Without waiting for permission, Felisi thrust open the door and went in. The room was a chaos of disordered and broken chattels, and in the midst of it sat Miss Smith, vainly trying to hide a flaming wale across her cheek.

"You saw," she said.

Felisi nodded. She could do no more at the moment.

"It doesn't matter," said Miss Smith. "Nothing matters now, except— Will you do something for me, Felisi?"

She crossed a little unsteadily to the table, and sat there writing for a few moments, then handed Felisi a note and a bulky package.

"Take these to the man——" she said, and paused.

"Man with no good cook?" prompted Felisi.

Miss Smith smiled faintly.

"Yes, you uncanny child, to the man with the no good cook."

Felisi departed with all the pleasure in life. But her willingness to do anything in the world for Miss Smith in no way appeased her own burning curiosity. The nature of the package's contents was soon determined, but the note was another matter. They were wonderful, these thin bags of paper that contained so little, yet seemingly so much! She had seen people laugh over them, and weep, and ponder for hours on end. She wondered what would be the particular effect of the one she carried—which meant that she was determined to find out.

That was why, instead of following the beach road, she elected to go by canoe. The track to the landing led past the hut of Willie, the half-caste, and, as all the world allowed, there was nothing Willie did not know.

"There are certain matters, O my Willie," said Felisi, squatting in his doorway.

"You have been a good child," admitted Willie. "What now?"

"I have these," said Felisi, producing a

handful of the Royal's most poisonous cigars, "which shall be yours for one small favour."

"Name it," said Willie, his wise old eyes glinting in the lamp-light.

"Speak this to me," said Felisi, "that I may laugh, or weep, or ponder on it as others do."

Willie twisted the note in his gnarled fingers, and leant nearer the light.

"But it is not yours," he pointed out.

"That is so," admitted Felisi, "but you will speak it to me because of these cigars, and because of other things that I know."

"And if I open it, all will know that it has been opened," he protested.

"Are they like that?"

"How else?" demanded Willie. Nevertheless, his glance wavered between the steam rising from a pot of taro and the cigars.

And that was how, in the end, Felisi came to watch the paper bag curl back and open of its own accord, and listened to the droning voice of Willie, the half-caste, who, it was clear, knew all things. The translation was free, but adequate—

"You will, I know, want to return what I am sending by the messenger who brings it. You will think the very sending of it an insult, but when you have read this note, perhaps you will understand. That is what I pray.

My small savings were for 'over there,' but all hope of that is gone. My husband has found me. He will always find me. There is no escape, and I am too tired to fight any more. . . .

If you have loved me, take this my present—he will have it if you do not—and go—go now, before it is too late. It would make me feel that my work has not been in vain. It would make me happy in spite of all.

Do this for me, and cheat *malua*."

The effect of this effusion on Willie was negligible. He merely refastened the note, returned it, and lit a cigar. But with Felisi it was otherwise. This, then, was why people laughed, and wept, and pondered—and small wonder! She was pondering herself on the way to the landing, or she would have seen who followed.

As it was, she had already boarded the canoe at the landing steps when a man's figure—the same that had left Miss Smith's *bure*—disengaged itself from the shadow of a bollard and stumbled in after her. Taking an involuntary seat on the nearest

thwart, it leered at her out of the darkness, swaying gently.

"Now," it said in soft, slurred accents, "now we can talk, eh?"

Felisi should have been alarmed. But she was not. She had seen men in this condition before, and feared them not at all.

"You want talk?" she responded brightly, and dipped her paddle, heading the canoe seaward.

Apparently the man did.

"I knew it was there—and she gave it you—I saw. She gave it you just to cheat me. Hand it over, kid, and you can have anything you fancy! Hand it over and save yourself a lot of trouble, a whole lot——"

He said a great deal more. His voice rose in threat, sank in persuasion, spluttered in sudden outbursts of passion, but nothing that he said had the slightest effect on the

easy swing and dip of the paddle, nor on Felisi's thoughts that accompanied them. There was something radically wrong with all this—wrong and ugly in a world that should be right and beautiful. And it was so simple to rectify—so tantalisingly simple!

Exactly what happened was hard to determine, and quite unnecessary. The man's voice had risen in a querulous crescendo. He was on his feet. His outstretched, grasping hands were descending on Felisi. She was sure of this—as sure as she was that they missed her by several inches, that the canoe turned neatly bottom up, and remained so for a considerable time. But then dugouts are deplorably unstable at the best of times.

Felisi was thinking that very thing—amongst others—as she paddled home alone.

## DAY'S END.

**N**OW all the light of you is gone,  
Your presence from the dreaming air,  
And this, our little day, is done,  
That was so intimate and rare.

About the quiet garden ways  
The spirit of an air divine  
Wanders, and lingers there to praise  
The hours that are for ever mine.

Grasses now by the night-dew kissed  
Drooped in the noontide, hot and sere;  
And waters lost in daybreak's mist  
Are clear again and crystal-clear.

In the quick whisper of the leaves  
Trembles the secret of the lover,  
The western glory nets and weaves  
And flecks the path of Love the rover

With pennants of a flaming dawn;  
And through the changing heavens ride  
The fore-guards of another morn  
That will not find you by my side.

L. A. PAVEY.



“You mean that you want to give up the title?” “That is what I mean,” said Chick.”

# THE MAN FROM TOULOUSE

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of “Sanders of the River,” “The People of the River,” “Bones,” etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

WHEN Jagg Flower was finishing his sentence in the prison at Toulouse, the authorities allowed him certain books wherewith to improve his mind and direct him to the higher life. One such book he remembers well. It opened thus :

“*Il y avait une fois vingt-cinq soldats de plomb ; ils étaient tous frères ; car c'est de la même vieille cuiller de plomb qu'ils étaient*

*issus ; c'est avec ce vieux métal qu'on les avait tous fondus.*”

“This,” said Jagg Flower, as he flung the improving book from one end of the cell to the other, “is what makes prison life in France so immensely unpopular with the educated classes.” Which was duly reported to the governor.

Because Jagg was on the point of release,

that official, who had a kindly feeling for the long-faced bank robber, sent him one evening a bundle of English and American newspapers.

"But this," said Jagg, as he opened the Paris edition of *The New York Herald*, "is both human and luxurious. Regard you, François! Present to Mister the Governor my felicitations and the renewal of my profound respect."

François, the gaoler, grinned admiringly.

On the second day of his reading John Jalgar Flower reached a paragraph in a London newspaper which made him sit up.

"Kenberry House, which at one time ranked with the stately homes of England, has been acquired by the Marquis of Pelborough, with whose romantic career our readers are familiar. A year ago the Marquis was an insurance clerk in a City office. His uncle, Dr. Josephus Beane, of Pelborough, laid claim to the peerage, which had been extinct since 1714, his claim being admitted and the title revived in his favour. It was a melancholy coincidence that the doctor died on the very day he received a notification that the peerage had been revived in his favour. The present Marquis, being the only relative in the tail male——"

"Great snakes!" breathed Mr. Flower. He occupied the remainder of his sentence developing an idea.

Whatever pretensions Kenberry House had to stateliness had long since vanished. It was one of those residences for which fire had a fatal attraction. Its history was a history of successive conflagrations, and every time it had been rebuilt a little smaller, a little less stately, so that the battlemented towers and the grim big gate with its portcullis, which had impressed the peasantry of the Tudor era, had been replaced by chimney-pots and a very ordinary front door. Kenberry House was now too big to describe as a villa and too small to justify the description of mansion.

But the grounds, those glorious sloping meadowlands that ran down to the bubbling Ken, the old gardens and the ancient elms, remained very much as they had been when Queen Elizabeth, with her passion for sleeping at other people's houses, had rested a night on her way to Fotheringay.

Gwenda had read the description of the place in a newspaper advertisement, and had gone down one Sunday, on her return from the South of France, to inspect the property. She was enchanted. The house was just big enough for Chick. The price

which was asked was absurdly small, the property, on the whole, was in a state of good repair.

This was especially the case with the house itself, and it was due to the excellent condition of the paintwork and the interior decorations generally that the Marquis of Pelborough found himself hustled out of London and into his newly-furnished country seat before he quite realised what was happening.

That he was profoundly miserable goes without saying. Not even the arrangement which gave him Mrs. Phibbs to organise his household compensated for the violent disruption of his pleasant life in Doughty Street. He would lose Gwenda, who had been mother and manager to him, for she was to take a room in the flat below. Such of the furniture as was worthy of transference to the stately home was sent down by rail; the remainder was sold.

Chick had a feeling that he was being abandoned, and dare not let himself think of what life would be without daily association with Gwenda Maynard. He could not deny the beauty of his new situation, the quiet and restfulness of his demesne, nor was he wholly unimpressed by the discovery that he was the employer of four gardeners, a groom, and a cowman. He was also overlandlord of two farms, and learnt with interest that, by the terms of an ancient charter granted by the fourth Henry, he might, if he were so disposed, hang, on a gallows which he must erect at his own expense, any "cut-throat, cutpurse, or stealer of deer" from Morton Highgate to Down Wood, these marking the limitations of his sovereignty. The only bright spot in the situation was that, the run of her play having ended, Gwenda was free to spend a fortnight as his guest.

"But only a fortnight, Chick. I can't and won't live on your charity."

"It will be dreadful when you are gone, Gwenda," he said plaintively. "Every day something new is turning up. I had a letter from uncle's lawyers this morning, asking me for some leases he signed. He owned a tiny piece of land outside Pelborough, and there's a law case pending about the present rights of the tenant."

"But you haven't any of your uncle's documents, have you?" she asked, in surprise.

Chick nodded.

"There's a huge boxful," he said, a ray of hope shining amidst the darkness of his



desolation. "Suppose, Gwenda, you stay down here and help me tabulate the papers? I've never touched them, and this is the second time the lawyers have written."

He explained that when his uncle had died and he had disposed of his property, he had found a trunkful of letters and memoranda mostly dealing with old Dr. Beane's claim to the peerage of Pelborough, and these had been supplemented by another mass which he had found in the doctor's desk and in his old safe.

"I've always meant to sort them out and classify them," he said penitently, "but I was depending upon your assistance, Gwenda."

"I'll help you," said the girl, with a twinkle in her eye, "but it will not take more than a fortnight, Chick, and then——"

"Let's be cheerful," said Chick, brightening up. "We'll start on those papers next Monday."

"We'll start this morning," said the girl, but here Chick struck.

He had not fully explored his property, and he insisted that that day should be devoted to the purpose. She accompanied him on a tour, and it was a day of sheer delight.

They sat under the overhanging alders by the side of the little river which formed one of the boundaries of his property, and then Chick had to go back to the house for a new fishing rod he had bought, and another two hours went whilst they fixed the tackle and taught one another to cast a fly. It was a case of the blind leading the blind, but they landed one speckled beauty late in the afternoon, and Kenberry House assumed a new importance to Chick in consequence.

"Don't go, Gwenda," he said, as she got up.

"It is late, Chick," she warned him, "and we've had no tea."

"I know," said Chick. "Just sit down a minute, Gwenda. There was something I wanted to say to you at Monte Carlo."

"Don't say it, Chick," she said quietly.

She was standing over him, and her hand strayed to his untidy hair.

"But, Gwenda——"

"I know what you were going to tell me, Chick, and I did my best to encourage you to say it," she said. "I was shameless then, but I have been ashamed since. I was just fishing for you, Chick, as you fished for the trout. Oh, I must have been mad!"

He was on his feet now and had dropped

his rod, but before he could speak she stopped him.

"We've had a lovely time, you and I, Chick," she said quietly, "a beautiful, ideal time, and we are not going to spoil it. You are little more than a boy—I know you're older than I am, but girls are ever so much older than men of their age—and you have a big future. You must marry in your own class, Chick."

He made a protesting noise.

"I know it sounds hard and horrid and noveletty, but really behind these class marriages there is unanswerable logic. If I married you, what would the world say of me? That I had taken you in hand from the moment you inherited your title and had kept you so close to me that you never had a chance of meeting a nice girl. I don't care very much what they think of me; it's what they think of you that matters. You would be regarded as a helpless fool who had succumbed to the artfulness of a designing actress."

She shook her head, but avoided meeting his eyes.

"No, that little dream is ended, Chick. If I loved you even more than I do, and I don't think that is possible"—her voice shook for a second—"I could never agree."

"But you've made me what I am," he said huskily.

"I stage-managed you, Chick," she said, with a faint smile. "I produced you in the theatrical sense, and you must think of me as your impresario."

Chick stooped and picked up the rod, unscrewed it leisurely, and wound the tackle with exasperating calmness.

"All right, Gwenda," he said, and she felt a twinge of pain that he had taken his rejection so coolly.

Neither of them spoke as they trudged back to the house, to find the resigned Mrs. Phibbs sitting beside the tea-table in Chick's new drawing-room. It was a cheerless evening for the girl. She went up to her room soon after dinner, and he did not see her again that night.

Once, as he was pacing the lawn, he thought he caught a glimpse of her figure by the window of her darkened room, but when he called up, there was no answer.

For Gwenda that night was the most tragic in her life. Deliberately she had thrust away something which was more than life itself to her. She tried to think of him as a boy, but Chick was a man, a sweet and simple man, and her senior by a year,

and the realisation that she was putting him out of her life was an agony almost unendurable.

Chick saw the dark shadows under her eyes at breakfast the next morning, and the knowledge that she was suffering added to his own wretchedness.

"We will start on those papers this morning, Gwenda," he said gruffly, and she nodded.

"I don't think I shall be able to help you more than to-day, Chick," she said. "I shall have to go back to London to-morrow."

"To-morrow?" said Chick in consternation, and then dropped his eyes. "Very well," he said.

He was only beginning to understand what the ordeal meant to her. He was being selfish, considering only his own loss. When they were alone in the pretty library which Gwenda had furnished with such care, he came straight to the point.

"My dear," he said, "if you would like to go to-day, I won't press you to stay."

It required an effort on his part to say this, a greater effort to restrain himself when she dropped her head and he saw that she was crying softly.

"Thank you, Chick," she said.

"There is only one question I'd like to ask, Gwenda. If it weren't for this beastly title, if we were back again at Brockley and I was working for my living, would you have said the same?"

She did not speak, and the shake of her head was so gentle that he would not have noticed it had he not been watching her so closely.

"Now let us see these wretched papers," he said. "Poor old Uncle Josephus! What a lot of trouble he has given us!"

For the most part the contents of the boxes were copies of letters and petitions addressed to Parliament. There were, too, records of the Pelboroughs, written in the doctor's minute handwriting, which traced the history of the family back to Philip Beane of Tours.

"Will you see Mr. Flower?" asked Mrs. Phibbs, coming in with a card in her hand. "Flower?" repeated Chick, frowning. "Is he a reporter?"

A month before, when it had been announced that he had purchased Kenberry House, he had been dogged by newspaper men.

"No. I asked him that," said Mrs. Phibbs.

Chick took the card, but was no wiser, for Mr. John Jalgar Flower had modestly omitted both his profession and his address.

"All right. Show him in here. Do you mind, Gwenda?"

She shook her head.

Into the library came a smartly-dressed man with a keen, intellectual face and a pair of good-humoured eyes. He bowed to the girl, then, his golden teeth showing in an expansive smile, he advanced upon Chick with an open hand.

"Lord Pelborough?"

"That is my name," said Chick. "Won't you sit down, sir?"

"A delightful place," said Mr. Flower ecstatically. "The most beautiful country I have been in. The air is invigorating, the attitude of the natives deferential and even feudalistic. And those wonderful elms along the drive, Lord Pelborough, they must be at least five hundred years old!"

"I shouldn't be surprised, sir," said Chick.

He was wondering whether the newcomer was selling mechanical pianos or electric lighting plants. The last genial soul who had called "travelled" in the latter. There had also been three voluble visitors who had specialised in books, and would have stocked his library if he had given them the chance.

Mr. Flower looked meaningly at the lady, who he thought was Chick's secretary.

"I have a very confidential communication to make to you, my lord," he said.

Gwenda would have risen, but Chick shook his head.

"Unless it is something that a lady should not hear, you need not hesitate to tell me, sir," he said.

"It deals with a matter which is vital to you, my lord," said Mr. Flower, with proper impressiveness.

"I think I'd better go," said the girl, in a low voice.

Again Chick shook his head. "Let us hear all about it, Mr. Flower," he said, leaning back in his chair patiently.

But Jagg Flower was not inclined to say what he had to say before a third person. He said as much. He did not confess that he objected to a witness, but he intimated that the subject was of so painful a character that a lady might feel embarrassed.

"Go on," said Chick shortly.

All the girl's faculties had become suddenly alert. Her instinct told her that the communication was more than ordinarily important to Chick's welfare.

"I don't think I shall be shocked, Mr. Flower," she said quietly, "but if I am I can easily go."

Jagg Flower was puzzled. He could not define the relationship between the two, knowing that the Marquis of Pelborough was not married.

"Very well, then," he said, after a moment's deliberation, "I will tell you."

He laid his hat on the floor and took off his gloves. "I am an adventurer of the world," he began. "In other words, I am a person whose actions have never been strictly conformable to the written law."

"Good gracious!" said Chick, in alarm.

"I tell you this, Lord Pelborough," Mr. Flower went on easily, "because it is perfectly certain that, after I have made my communication, you will institute inquiries as to my character and my identity. Let me tell you that a week ago I came out of prison at Toulouse, where for three years I have been incarcerated. I was in this particular case a victim of a brutal and perjurous system, for at the hour I was supposed to be making an unauthorised entrance into the *Crédit Foncier*, at Marseilles, I was, in point of fact, robbing an insurance company in Bordeaux. But let that pass.

"Twelve years ago, Lord Pelborough"—he leant forward and his voice was very earnest—"I was working the Middle Eastern States of America with a man who at this moment is in an United States prison"—his utterance was slow and deliberate—"and that man's name was Joseph or, as I happen to know, Josephus Beane, and he was the son of Dr. Josephus Beane of Pelborough."

Chick stared at him. "My uncle was a bachelor."

The other shook his head. "Read these," he said, and took from his pocket an envelope and tossed it on to the table.

Chick extracted two long slips. The first was a certificate of marriage between Josephus Beane, student of medicine, and Agnes Cartwright. The marriage had taken place in Liverpool, and Chick remembered dimly that his uncle had studied medicine at the Liverpool University. The second slip, which was also a copy, was a certificate of birth of "Josephus Pelborough Beane."

"My uncle never told me about his marriage," said Chick steadily.

The other smiled. "He was hardly likely to," he said drily. "The lady he married died in an inebriates' home seven years

after. The boy, as Joe has often told me, was brought up by some friends of his mother's. It was one of those marriages which a young man makes in his folly. Joe grew up to hate his father, and I have reason to believe that his father returned the hatred with interest. Joe was an adventurer, but, unlike myself"—he smiled—"a petty adventurer. He was in prison three times in England, and would have been in prison for the rest of his life, if he had not got away to America, where I met him."

"Where is he now?" asked the girl. Her heart was thumping madly, and she found difficulty in breathing.

"In Sing Sing," was the reply.

Chick did not speak for a long time, and when he did the reason for his smile was wholly misunderstood by Mr. Flower.

"So really he is the Marquis," he said.

"And you are Mr. Beane," said Flower courteously.

So far his startling news had not produced the agitation which he had expected.

"And now," he said, "I really must talk to you alone."

Chick nodded, and when the girl rose and left the room, Mr. Flower followed her, closing the door behind her.

"I am a business man, Lord Pelborough," he said, "for I will call you by that title, and you are a business man. There's nobody else in the world, except my poor friend Josephus Beane, who knows your secret."

"My secret?" said Chick, looking up.

"Well, let us say my secret," said Flower good-humouredly. "Let us get down to business. What is this worth to you?"

"I don't quite understand you," said Chick.

"I am going abroad—to Australia, let us say. I am tired of my roving life, and I wish to settle in some pleasant spot. Would ten thousand pounds be an exorbitant sum to ask?"

"I'm afraid I really don't understand you," said Chick. "Do you mean that I should give you ten thousand pounds?"

"Exactly," smiled Mr. Flower.

"For what?" asked Chick.

The man was staggered. "I thought I had made it clear to your lordship," he said gently, "that I am in a position to produce a new Marquis of Pelborough."

"Produce him," said Chick, with a broad smile.

He walked slowly round the desk and came up to the man.

"Produce your Marquis of Pelborough,



"He walked down the drive . . .  
like a man in a dream."

Mr. Flower," he said, "and I'll give you the ten thousand pounds."

Mr. Flower collapsed on to the chair. "You mean that you want to give up the title?"

"That is what I mean," said Chick.

"To give up this house, these beautiful lands?"

Chick smiled. "They are the property of Chick Beane, my friend," he said almost jovially. "No, I just want to give up the title, and I'm very grateful to you for having called. Sing Sing, I think you said?"

But the man was speechless.

"When you came, I was rather annoyed," said Chick.

"I thought you were selling pianos. I hope you weren't offended."

Mr. Flower shook his head helplessly.

"I can't ask you to stay to lunch," said Chick, "because"—he hesitated—"if you don't mind my saying so, it wouldn't be

"I suppose prisoners couldn't receive telegrams in Sing Sing?" he asked. "I don't know the ways of American prisons, but you will know. Could I send him a wire telling him he may come along whenever he likes and claim the title?"

At last Mr. Flower found his voice. "He doesn't know," he said hollowly. "You're not going to put that into his hands—an ancient title like the—er—Pelborough marquisate? Remember, Lord Pelborough, that you are responsible to your ancestors."



"It is a miracle, Gwenda, a miracle! Isn't it wonderful?"

"Blow my ancestors!" said Chick. "And if I'm responsible, so is he. Will you wire for me and let me know in the morning?"

Mr. Jagg Flower had been in many peculiar and unnering situations, but he had never paralleled this experience. He walked down the drive, beneath the shade

nice for a lady to lunch with a gentleman who has just come out of gaol, would it? But there's an awfully good inn in the village, and there is a telegraph office."

He frowned thoughtfully at the dazed Mr. Flower.

of those ancient elms which he had so admired, like a man in a dream.

Chick dashed into the drawing-room, where the girl was watching the departure of the visitor. Before she knew what was happening he had taken her in his arms.

"It is a miracle, Gwenda, a miracle! Isn't it wonderful?"

"But, Chick," she said in horror, "you're not going to accept this man's bare word? You mustn't do it, Chick!"

She pushed him away.

"Of course I'm going to accept it," chortled Chick. "There is no doubt about it. Those were copies of certificates. I know all about birth and marriage certificates. I used to deal with them when I was working for Leither."

"You're going to allow a gaol-bird to take this title?"

"I'll allow any kind of bird to take it," said Chick, catching her hands. "Don't you see, Gwenda, that the big thing that hurt you has gone? I'm just Chick Beane. Don't you realise what you said to me yesterday?"

Her hands were trembling in his, and he lifted them to his lips.

Presently she drew them back. "Chick, you have to fight for this title," she said. "I am certain there is something wrong. Did he ask you for money?" she asked quickly.

He nodded. "He said he would shut up about it if I paid him ten thousand pounds. Of course the poor fellow didn't know any better."

"Perhaps he did, Chick," she said breathlessly. "Perhaps he knew that I wanted to be the Marchioness of Pelborough!"

Chick was momentarily staggered. "But you don't, Gwenda," he said, in amazement.

She nodded. "Yes, I do. You've got to fight for that title, Chick, just as hard as you've ever fought in the ring, because if you don't want it, I do."

He looked at her steadily. "You're not telling the truth, Gwenda," he said quietly. "You're saying that to spur me on, and I'm not going to be spurred. I think too much of you to believe that a title has any attraction for you. I love you too much to believe that."

Her face was white. The eyes that avoided his were bright with tears. Suddenly she turned and walked quickly from the room. He thought she had gone up to her room, but he was mistaken. She made straight for the library. He came in, and

found her sitting at the table in the place where she had been when Mr. Flower had interrupted their search.

"If there are any documents relating to the doctor's marriage, they will be here," she said.

"Do you think that fellow lied?" asked Chick.

She shook her head. "He expected investigations, he told us that," she said, "and he wouldn't have forged these copies. I don't think there is any doubt at all that he spoke the truth. The doctor was married and he did have a son."

Naturally, when they were searching for something else, the first things they discovered were the lost leases. It was not until just on midnight that Gwenda discovered a small locked ledger marked "Accounts of my practice, 1884." She tried to open the lock and failed.

"There won't be anything there, Gwenda," said Chick.

"You never know," said the girl.

She tried to put her thumb-nail between the leaves, and found they were glued together. That determined her. A hasty search of their small stock of tools resulted in the find of a pair of pincers, and the lock was wrenched off.

Gwenda uttered an exclamation of astonishment. The ledger had at one time served the purpose for which it was designed, but the doctor had industriously cut out the centre of the pages, gumming the edges together to give it the appearance of a book, leaving in the middle a deep cavity in which lay a blue envelope, innocent of inscription.

It contained two slips of vellum, and one glance at them made her drop her hands on her lap.

"Oh, Chick!" she said.

"What is it?" asked Chick quickly.

"He did tell the truth! These are the original certificates," she waived.

"Good egg!" said Chick.

"Don't say that," she said impatiently. "Chick, I could cry!"

There were three other papers in the envelope. The first of these was a letter in the doctor's handwriting, evidently a copy of one he had sent to his son.

It was not pleasant reading, for the old man had not minced his words. The second was a long list of payments, made also in the doctor's hand, "Payments made *in re* J. Beane," and the size of the total explained why Josephus Beane

had died a poor man. To this last a newspaper cutting was pinned. Gwenda did not see it until she had laid the paper down on the table. She took out the pin, rusty with age, and read the cutting, and as she read, Chick saw her face change.

"What is it, Gwenda?"

She did not reply, but, folding the cutting, took an envelope from the stationery rack and enclosed it.

"When is Mr. Flower calling again?" she said softly.

"He promised to come in the morning," said Chick. "What was that cutting, Gwenda?"

"I'll tell you to-morrow," said the girl.

Mr. Jagg Flower had completely recovered from the shock by the next morning. He was a shrewd student of men and women, and he realised that any hope he had of making easy money was centred in the girl. His inquiries as to the nature of her relationship with Chick had not produced very illuminating results, but he felt sure that the appeal must be made to her, if it was to succeed at all, and when he came to Kenberry House the next morning and found the girl and Chick in the library, he made no suggestion that his communication was for Chick's private ear.

"I've been thinking over your proposition, Mr. Flower," said Chick.

"I'm glad to hear that, my lord," replied Mr. Flower, relieved. "You understand that I court the fullest investigations. I have come here prepared to give you the name of the minister who married the parties, the address at which the child was born—"

"They are all on the certificate, aren't they?" said Chick.

"Well, yes, they are," admitted the other, a little disconcerted. "His lordship explained to you, Miss Maynard, my suggestion?"

Gwenda nodded. "He has also explained to me his alternative plan," she said, "namely, that you should produce Josephus Beane, and I quite agree that ten thousand pounds would be a small price to pay for that miracle."

"I don't get you," said the man.

"You see, Mr. Flower," said the girl sweetly, "when poor Mr. Josephus Beane was hanged at Vermont, Virginia, for the murder of a bank manager, he rather upset your plans. I've got the paragraph here. I think it is from *The Vermont Observer*, and

it gives a very full description of the trial. The bank manager was shot at his home when he was disturbing two burglars who had broken into the house. One was Mr. Beane, who was captured. The other was a man who escaped, and for whom there is still a warrant."

"Good morning," said Mr. Flower, accepting the situation. "I seem to be wasting my time here. Good day to your lordship." He nodded smilingly to the dumbfounded Chick. "A beautiful house this, and a lovely country. I'd give anything to own those old elms of yours."

He paused at the door. "I suppose it is no use asking you to defray my out-of-pocket expenses?" Chick could only stare at him.

Two hours after Mr. Flower had taken his unobtrusive departure from the village of Kenberry, there arrived, whilst Chick was at lunch, a thick-set American who claimed an instant audience.

"Sorry to bother you," said the newcomer, wiping his perspiring brow, "but I understand there's a man in this house, or he was seen coming into this house this morning, named—well, never mind his name—he's an American."

"That's true," said Chick. "Mr. Flower."

"Oh, he's given his own name, has he?" said the other, with a smile. "Can I see him?"

"He's been gone some time," said Chick.

"Do you know where he's gone?"

"I haven't the slightest idea. He was staying at 'The Red Lion,' I believe."

"He's not there now," said the detective.

"He told the people, when he took his grip away, that he was staying with your lordship. That is twice I've missed him, but the third time pays for all."

"Is he a friend of yours?" asked Chick.

The girl had come from the dining-room, and was an interested listener.

"Friend?" smiled the other. "No, sir. My name's Sullivan. I'm from police headquarters, Vermont, and I've an extradition warrant for him. I arrived at Toulouse Gaol an hour after he'd left. He's wanted for a murder committed twelve years ago—at least, he was one of the two guys that shot Mr. Stizelhouser. We got one, but the other dodged us. We've been after him for twelve years, and I guess we'll get him sooner or later. He's not a friend of yours, I suppose, my lord?"

Chick shook his head. "No," he said. "He was a friend of my cousin's."

*A further story in this series will appear in the next number.*



## RICHES

ALL ocean moods of grief or mirth  
Within one tiny shell may thrill,  
And all the music of the earth  
May tremble from one tiny bill.



And all the beauty you can buy  
Is less than what is free to all  
Who view the earth with loving eye  
From birth-time unto burial.



And all that poets ever wrote  
Has less of sweet than what you'll hear  
On any lips, from any throat  
That daily greets a loving ear.



For every day the world is new,  
And sight and sound a new surprise  
Of gladness to the chosen few  
With loving ears and loving eyes.

WILFRID THORLEY.





“I want you to go in next and give them the long handle.”

# IN THE LUNCHEON INTERVAL

By B. A. CLARKE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

ON his afternoon round Police Constable Johns always stopped where a hundred-yard gap in the houses on Crest Road gave a view southward across the valley to the grey line of the distant Chiltern Hills. But to-day the Nature lover gave place to the sportsman. Immediately below him was the cricket ground, where a man and a boy, with full approval of a contemplative horse, gave the last touches to a shaven pitch.

Old Joe Cobb, the road repairer, laid down his pick and joined him.

“If rain holds off, there’ll be runs made to-morrow,” he remarked. “Lord’s has nothing on Woodcoombe in the matter of wickets, nor of cricket neither, if we pick our right men.”

“I am glad to hear the young ’uns are being given a better show to-morrow,” said the officer. “There’s been too much dead wood in our teams against the M.C.C. hitherto.”

“Eh! Anno domini! It hits all except road-menders. With us it is the older the better always. But I am sorry Boundary Brindle has been dropped. Look at his record in this match, and look at *him*! His big figure is a cheering sight when these Londoners come on to the field and toss the ball to their professors as if the match were won already.”

“That’s him away over there,” said Johns. “I’d recognise that old yellow blazer anywhere. He’ll get into trouble, taking a short cut through Squire’s spinney.”

"There's some as says Squire hasn't the right to close a footpath that has been used so long. A society is taking the matter into the courts."

"Well, folk should keep clear of it until the courts have spoken," said the representative of law and order.

The road-mender spat contemptuously. "Of course you'd say that. Britons would be slaves if they'd listened always to men in uniform. Bigwigs are always right to chaps like you, the club committee in leaving out old Brindle, for example, and if a few of us livelier sparks show'd what we thought of 'em to-morrow by breaking a pavilion window or so, you'd be for locking us all up."

"No doubt what lost Brindle his place on the team was his fielding. I suppose, Mr. Cobb, you will admit that fielding is part of the game?"

"What do you mean by fielding? There's cover-point fielding, which is all speed and ginger, and mid-on fielding, where you stands your ground and takes what comes along. If old Boundary can't *make* ground like some of these nimble-jacks, he don't *give* ground; he'd stop a cannon-ball."

"He's giving ground now," said the policeman, "to Squire's gamekeeper."

"I'll not believe it—he's picking ground for a fight."

The two men leaned upon the rail and became engrossed in the drama being played a hundred feet below them, and perhaps a half a mile distant, where the field path beyond the wooden footbridge (the river through the valley had been reduced by drought to a brown thread connecting occasional pools) ended abruptly against a whitely new wire fence. Yellow blazer, who had climbed this obstacle a few minutes before, was retreating upon it, followed by a knickerbockered keeper. On the far side of the fence the leader faced his pursuer, but only, as it seemed, for argument. The keeper continued to advance upon him, and the man in the blazer turned too hastily for honour. The keeper took a flying kick at him, throwing him upon the wire. Blazer was up in a second with clenched fists, but, menaced by the barrel of the keeper's gun, he turned tail and re-climbed the wires.

"Where are you off to, Mr Cobb?" asked the constable.

"To get something to wash the taste of that from my mouth."

\* \* \* \* \*

On a garden seat outside the pavilion sat

Brindle, watching his alleged superiors shape like rabbits at a gipsy-looking professional whose length was confined to his figure—frightened out by mere pace.

"We need you out there, Ned," said Milner, the Woodcoombe captain, who had had no voice in the selection.

"I should have funk'd worse than the others," said the veteran bitterly.

"Never! Don't you wish you could go in now and knock the cover off the ball?"

"Success to-day would give me no pleasure."

"Well, we shall see. Young Grey has wired that he is kept in Town. You are to take his place, and I want you to go in next and give them the long handle."

"I don't care a pin either way," Brindle answered, and went into the pavilion for his pads (he never wore gloves), and had just rejoined his captain, when another wicket fell—five for nineteen!

"Well, I can't do worse than that—there were eighteen inches between the batsman's legs and the stumps—unless I shelter behind the umpire; but one never knows what one will do till one is tried."

As he walked to the wickets, Brindle was less concerned about his fate than anyone else on the ground. Century or duck's egg! What did it matter? Perhaps the century, as witness to his physical strength and fitness, would be the more shameful. He pictured his return to the pavilion after a great innings, and the cursed gamekeeper applauding ironically. The indescribable shame of it! Yes, a duck's egg would be preferable. And then his fury took a new direction. As he passed the swarthy bowler, who was pawing the turf, impatient to add another terrified rabbit to his bag, the fellow grinned at him. Had it come to this, then, that any blackguard could crow over him unpunished? Perhaps he would learn that two could intimidate! Brindle shifted his grip. He would give them the long handle all right!

The newcomer refused to take guard, impatiently waving aside the umpire's proffered services, and awaited the attack with bat shoulder high. As the exulting bowler was delivering, the batsman walked straight at him. Of course the ball was dropped short, but a fast long hop, meeting a horizontal bat behind whose two and three-quarter pounds are all the weight and strength of a powerful, reckless man (a madman's strength, nearly) returns to its deliverer

with many times the speed at which it left him. The professional flung himself on his face to avoid an impact that threatened to cut him down like a thistle, and grinned up at the umpire at the concussion of the ball against the wooden bowling screen.

"Sooner that stopped it than me." His nerve was badly shaken, and when Brindle started towards him again, he bowled a wide. In a few overs he was knocked off and sent into temporary exile in the long field. The other professional bowler, a tosser of thoughtful and quite innocuous slows, mere lettuce or food rabbits enjoy, was already taking a rest cure at short leg, where, in dumb show, he explained to all and sundry that it was lumbago alone that prevented his repeating the bowling triumphs that in his youth had caused him to be hailed as the true successor to Alfie Shaw. Brindle, despising his success now that the swarthy face no longer derided him, took every risk, and everything came off. Open-eyed he walked into bowlers' traps and came away with the bait.

"We are not bowling, we are just feeding him," said an amateur of repute, after being driven for five consecutive fours. And then the professors went on again (in local matches M.C.C. professors are rarely off much longer than is necessary to allow them to change ends), directed now to build, not upon the batsman's fears, but upon his presumption. The slips were packed for the fast bowler, who was ordered to bowl the off theory. Brindle deliberately pecked at every long hop as it flew by, and every one he touched yielded him runs. Senility at the other end set the Attewell trap for him (half volleys nearly wide on the off), and might have got Brindle's wicket had the ground been the size of Salisbury Plain. Some of these balloon hits were prodigious, notably that which sent up the two hundred, incidentally breaking Brindle's bat.

"How about lunch, Milner?" said the M.C.C. skipper to his rival, who brought Brindle out a fresh bat. "Surely it is half-past one?"

"There has been a misunderstanding with the caterer. I have been speaking to him over the phone. He had the wrong date down. He is putting the lunch together now, but his shop is nearly two miles from here, and it will be another hour, at least, before lunch is ready for us. Carry on."

The luncheon bell rang at a quarter to three, the score standing at 290 for 7,

Brindle not out 186. Instead of feeding with the teams, he went home, ostensibly for another bat. But this was camouflage merely. Home was only an excuse for taking the short cut through the spinney, where he hoped to encounter the gamekeeper. He could picture the brute coming at him, grinning confidently as that tall, swarthy "pro." had grinned, and then his face would lengthen as Brindle walked at him, as the bowler's had. Perhaps the same bat would settle them both. The fight should be fair fists if the keeper threw down his weapon, but bat *versus* gunstock if he clubbed it. Of course he *might* shoot. Well, many a man had gone laughing to his death sooner than a stain should rest upon his honour.

\* \* \* \* \*

Brindle was back in time to resume his innings, but the spell seemed broken, and he scored now but slowly. His stroke lacked power. Both hands encircled the bat handle, but the effect was of a man batting one-handed. He managed, however, to keep up his wicket until Milner declared—as the clock struck four.

Shortly after the start of the M.C.C. innings Brindle stopped a hard drive to mid-on, and, complaining of injury to his left hand, retired from the game.

"Funny," said his captain; "he appeared to take the ball cleanly."

"I thought he stopped it with his right hand," said the Woodcoombe umpire.

Some of the men in the pavilion, noticing how white Brindle had gone, offered him brandy; but he refused it, nor would he let anyone accompany him.

"I can get home all right by myself," he whispered.

But he had overrated his strength. In Lancaster Road he staggered, and saw, as through a mist, Constable Johns running (in a serpentine line apparently) to his succour. A good fellow, Johns, always congratulatory when—when——

\* \* \* \* \*

Brindle awoke to find himself laughing and waving his hand. His left, bandaged, was in a sling.

"You seem pleased with yourself," said a grave clean-shaven man beside his bed. It was not really his bed, except by occupancy (he was lying on it dressed, except for the removal of boots and blazer), nor had he ever before seen this room. And how came his hand bandaged? The last he remembered was Lancaster Road and a policeman running to his aid. He had left

the match because of the pain in his hand, injured fielding. He was not quite satisfied about this, but he let the point go. Anyway, he was fainting because of an injury. No doubt he had been taken to the local hospital, and this was the doctor who had attended to his hand.

"Oh, doctor," he cried, "I have had such a wonderful dream! It covered months. By the way, what day is this?"

"Thursday, the twenty-second of June."

"The day of our M.C.C. match still. Then the psychologists are right, and the seconds that a dream lasts can be expanded indefinitely. My dream began with the M.C.C. match this morning. No, there was something before that, something black and unutterably shameful, which escapes me. But it included this morning's play and my making a big score. Did I make a big score?"

"If you consider two hundred big."

"I am glad that is real; it is simply marvellous how the happenings of to-day have been woven into the fabric of my dream—my score and our lunch being taken later than usual."

"What time was lunch taken, by the way?"

"At a quarter to three."

"Ah!"

"Fruhling, the caterer, had forgotten about the lunch. Well, I had been batting since twelve, and was not out at the luncheon interval, two-forty-five—that's material. I didn't grub with the fellows, but went home. That really happened, you know; and now mark how the dreaming faculty took these facts as the foundation for a thriller. I dreamt that in the luncheon interval I killed a man. I was arrested. There was very little evidence against me, but if I opened my lips I must hang. Brought before the magistrate, I protested my innocence, but would not go into the witness-box. Relatives and well-wishers begged me to speak and clear myself (my mother and sisters hung imploring round my neck), but I knew better. How plainly I see it all now! Weeks passed. I was sent for trial; the grand jury returned a true bill against me. Then came the trial itself. To the horror of my friends, even then I would not enter the box, although warned how greatly this would tell against me."

"A position truly frightful."

"Frightful, doctor! Not a bit of it. I never have felt happier. As the weeks had gone by, I had seen a ray of light grow until

the whole outlook was radiant. The police, straining every nerve to hang me, had built me a way of deliverance."

"In what way?"

"The principal witnesses were two old paupers who had seen me near the scene of the murder at five minutes to three. They described my blazer, the broken cricket bat I carried (this is another clever use of material—I did take a broken bat home with me); the identification was complete. But the police weren't satisfied. They *knew* that I had batted from twelve until four, with only the luncheon interval, which is always over before half-past two. How, then, they argued, could I have been a half a mile from the ground and walking away from it at five minutes to three? So they set themselves to get the time put back. They kept visiting the workhouse (I saw all their visits in my dream), and suggesting to the old boys that the hour they had heard strike, shortly after encountering me, was not three, but two. It wasn't until shortly before the trial itself that the police got the witnesses where they wanted them."

"What a foul libel on the police!"

"It is only a dream, you know. These witnesses hadn't been called at the examination before the magistrate, because their testimony wasn't then satisfactory. I clutched the rail when the first old boy entered the witness-box, afraid that he might relapse to his original statement. But no! He was honestly convinced now that he had heard the clock strike two after I had passed him. I fell against the side of the dock, helpless with laughter. 'What are you cackling about?' growled the warder beside me. Of course, I daren't tell him the truth. 'At the witness's nose. In his time he must have been a googly bowler. He has a googly nose—it twists both ways.' The second pauper confirmed the evidence of the first. 'What amuses you now?' said my warder. 'What kind of bowler was that chap?' 'He bowled break-backs until his own back broke.' The old chap's lumbago was so bad he had to be carried out. Of course our side didn't cross-examine, and when my counsel rose again he had things all his own way. He called Fruhling, the caterer, to testify that the luncheon interval wasn't taken until a quarter to three, and had the members of the two elevens in court, but didn't have to call them, for the judge stopped the case, directing the jury to return a verdict of 'Not guilty.' As I stepped down from the dock, my mother fell into my arms,

and the whole court rose at me. Oh, doctor, it was a glorious moment!"

"No wonder you woke elated. I wonder if you are strong enough now to get up."

Brindle proved that he was.

"What am I arrested for?" asked Brindle sharply.

"In the real events of to-day that you mentioned as having reappeared in your dream you omitted the most important—



"What am I arrested for?" asked Brindle sharply."

"Well, come with me—there is a conveyance waiting for you."

The clean-shaven man held Brindle closely, although he didn't really need support, and when they emerged into the passage, P.C. Johns, who apparently had been waiting outside the door, held him on the other side.

that in the lunch interval you murdered the Squire's gamekeeper."

"I didn't, Mr. Inspector. By the way, you had no right to let a prisoner—for I suppose all the time I was your prisoner—talk under a misapprehension as to your

identity. You let me address you as doctor. Now as to my meeting with the gamekeeper: we fought, and I knocked him out in something less than a minute, breaking my left hand, but I stayed with him until he came to. There was an awful thirty seconds before he regained consciousness, and my terror then no doubt suggested the murder motive of my dream."

"Now that you are speaking of real happenings and not merely relating a dream, it is my duty to warn you that anything you say now may be used against you."

"Thanks, but I don't see how it can injure me to remark that I just now saw him enter the surgery."

"That was Keeper James. It is Keeper Stevens who has been shot."

"You are barking up the wrong tree, Inspector. My trouble has been with James."

"Johns," said the Inspector, "run to the surgery and ask Keeper James if it was he who assaulted Mr. Brindle yesterday, and whether he fought with Mr. Brindle this afternoon. There's no doubt he has been fighting."

"It is quite ridiculous holding me," said the cricketer. "I can account for every second of the luncheon interval. After James came round I led him to his cottage, where I got all the lunch I had. Without prompting he had apologised to me for yesterday's outrage, and this, with his fair fighting, had quite satisfied me. We had shaken hands as friends. He fried a couple

of chops—how long does that take, by the way?"

"Johns," called the Inspector after the retreating constable, "ask Keeper James also if Mr. Brindle lunched with him."

During his absence there was an embarrassed silence. Brindle resented the fact that, after an explanation so detailed, the Inspector had not released the hold on his arm.

"Well, Johns?" said the Inspector, when his emissary returned.

"It is all right, sir. Keeper James confirms Mr. Brindle's statement."

"Then how came you to tell me that Mr. Brindle's assailant yesterday was Keeper Stevens?"

"I didn't go quite so far as that, sir. They were a good way off, and the two keepers are much the same build. Of course, when poor Stevens was found, I thought of what I saw yesterday afternoon and reported it to you."

"I am almost certain you said you saw Stevens make the assault. Well, it is quite evident that Mr. Brindle knows nothing about the murder, so we won't detain him. As it happens, Johns, no harm has resulted from your blundering, but it might easily have led to my arresting Mr. Brindle before his innings was completed. Good Heavens, Johns, you might have lost Woodcombe the match!"

"How has it gone, Inspector?"

"A telephone message, sir, has just come through from Dr. Hall that the M.C.C. are all out for ninety-seven."



# AN IMPOSTURE OF CONSEQUENCE

By H. G. LEWIS

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HATHERELL

THE general office of Skinner & Co., importers, had an evil atmosphere at any time of the year, but to-day, the last of July, its inmates swallowed the moist stale air rather than breathed it. Not that they noticed that it was any worse than usual, for they were accustomed to it.

They had just received their pay envelopes. It is always a thrilling moment as one opens a pay envelope, though at Skinners there, was less chance of its containing a rise than a polite enclosure thanking Mr. So-and-So for his valuable services and regretting that they were no longer required. The dozen clerks who had emerged from their respective pigeon-holes for the monthly event surveyed each other's expression silently, and discovered that there was "no change."

"Figgis comes back to-morrow," observed one. "Who goes instead?"

Parker nodded in the direction of the foreign correspondent.

"Smith," he said. "Pinched my turn—first fortnight in August. Don't know what he wants a holiday for."

There was a general titter, and Smith, a big, pleasant-looking man of thirty-five, reddened uncomfortably.

"I didn't pinch your turn, Parker," he answered apologetically. "I had first choice as senior clerk. If you'd said you wanted it, you could have had it."

"You *are* generous, now it's too late," sneered Parker.

There was another titter. Everyone always tittered when Parker baited Smith, which was frequently. Parker was a small, red man of about forty, with a deep, loud voice not unlike a crow's. His long teeth and loose spats constantly vied with each other in the matter of prominence and yellowness, and his sharp-edged collar seemed always striving to cut its way through

the raw, skinny neck. Parker was the book-keeper, and acknowledged to be the all-important man in Skinners, perhaps excepting Mr. Skinner himself.

As the snigger went round, Smith wanted badly to pick up this wasp and throw him, sting and all, into Mr. Skinner's paper-basket. He often wanted to do it, but to-day the foul atmosphere of Skinners acted irresistibly.

"For two pins," he stammered, "I'd punch your head, you—you rat!"

Parker hadn't heard him; no one had, for they were collected in a group, listening to Parker discussing holidays: he was going to the Continent—Paris, the Riviera, perhaps Spain, if he had time. Smith stood alone, ignored, and felt thankful. He had had a very narrow escape from making a fool of himself.

"Smith!"

He turned and saw Parker beckon him commandingly.

"What?" he replied surlily.

"Come here, man. I can't shout across London to you."

He went.

"Where are you going for your holidays?" Parker asked, with a prodigious wink to the others.

"Me? I'm going to a little place in Hampshire. You wouldn't know it—only a small village."

"Hampshire?" Parker was staggered, momentarily, beyond words. He had been prepared to hear that Smith was going to some place like Southend or Margate, but—Hampshire! He pretended to totter, and waved an arm weakly. "Go away! Hampshire! A small village! Good Heavens!"

The others roared, and Smith, perceiving that there must be something funny in it,

laughed, too. His laugh was artificial, but he unconsciously felt that to join in the laugh was the only way to save his dignity.

"I'll kill that little beast one day," he muttered, safe in his pigeon-hole. "The— the little rat! I could eat him! If only I could lose my temper properly——"

That was Smith's trouble. He never lost his temper. Introspective to a high degree, his habit of thinking too much before he acted prevented him from ever acting on impulse. He thought too much of what others would think of him, and not enough of what he thought of them. And the bogey of his life was his fear of making a fool of himself, the result being that everyone thought him a fool.

Smith lived in a boarding-house called "Rock View," possibly because there was neither rock nor view in the neighbourhood. He sat on a rickety chair—all the worst furniture of the house was rested in his room—and packed his bags, while his thoughts turned moodily to the event of the afternoon.

Was it so foolish to go to an obscure little village in Hampshire? He remembered how he had chosen this village. Tired of the ordinary holiday resort, he had opened a Bradshaw at random, and read: "Leddergall (Hants), Waterloo via Eastleigh, 87 miles. Pop. 800." He had not previously heard of Leddergall, or even of the junction, but the name smacked rurally, and, after lengthy deliberation, he had said: "I'll go there. It will be an adventure."

As he sat packing, he prided himself on the novelty of the idea. To have told Parker would have been to invite further ignominy; yet supposing Parker had conceived the idea, what then? Parker would have said with a swagger:

"None of your common stifling places for me. I'm an explorer. Didn't know where to go, so I opened a Bradshaw haphazard, shut my eyes, and put my finger on a name and said, 'I'll go there.' Bit original that, eh?" And the rest of the office would have gaped admiration and gone home and related it to their families.

Why was it? Parker wasn't a better man than he; Parker did his work badly, made mistakes, got drunk sometimes—although he carried it off like a hero—yet Parker could command respect, and for that Smith admired him secretly.

He wondered if the trouble lay in his appearance, and surveyed himself in the

mirror. Perhaps it did. For once, angry and mortified, he acted on impulse: he went straight out and had his hair cut short and his straggling moustache shaved off. His reflection in a shop window startled and pleased him. A winged collar caught his eye, he thought it looked smart and business-like, and bought half a dozen. He tried one on and liked himself still more, and felt consciously stronger. He went to bed happy.

Up earlier than usual next morning, Smith jumped out of bed full of a new resolve, and found there was no hot water outside his door. This was not unusual, for it had long been the rule at "Rock View" that if there was insufficient hot water, Smith went without. He had often been annoyed about it, but his landlady, the elder Miss Grubb, seemed to wield over him the same moral power as Parker. A short, stout woman, with a suspicious eye and an acid tongue, she had "mothered" him, as she put it, for six years. He was her boarder in the possessive sense.

On this particular morning Smith wanted the shaving water badly—first, because he wanted to look his best to start his holiday, and, second, because of that subconscious conviction that the secret of moral strength lay in the smartness of physical appearance. He went down to the kitchen to ask for water—a thing he had done once, years ago, and never till now had dared to repeat.

The door was slightly open, and his timid knock was not heard. Voices floated out distinctly.

"There wasn't enough hot water, Ann." This from the younger sister.

"Oh!"—indifferently. "Smith didn't get any, then?"

"No. I hope he won't mind. He had none yesterday."

"Mind? Who—Smith? I'd mind him if he said anything! Him and his rotten old fiddle!"—viciously. "He's going on his holiday to-day, and he's got to pay a fortnight's full board before he goes."

"Full board? The others paid half, didn't they?"

There was a mutual giggle, then the elder Miss Grubb said:

"He's such a gaby—he'll pay anything."

Smith had long known that Miss Grubb called him a "gaby," so that remark did not greatly annoy him.

What did annoy him, however, was the reference to his fiddle. Smith possessed a one-string fiddle, and was inordinately



proud of the fact that he could play it. Never daring to bring it down to the drawing-room—no one ever thought of inviting him to do so—he played melancholy airs in his bedroom, with the door shut, and sometimes, on Sundays, took in out into the country and played it in the woods, undisturbed.

He opened the door wide, and for a second time acted on impulse.

“Miss Grubb, I’ve got no hot water.”

The elder Miss Grubb, startled for a moment, darted her suspicious gaze at him through the steam. “What do you mean by coming here about your water?” she demanded.

“You don’t like my ringing the bell,” he answered obstinately, “so I’ve got to come down for it.” Then before that stony glare he failed. “Of course, if you haven’t got any——” he added weakly.

She found her voice. “You can go to the woods and fiddle for your water!” she snapped.

That second reference to his fiddle goaded him to unsuspected fury. “If you don’t bring my water,” he shouted, “you’ll get no money! And—I’m not coming back here again, either!” He burst from the kitchen, leaving the two ladies dumb with astonishment.

Shaving himself hastily with trembling hands and cold water, he was alternately elated and fearful.

“Serve her right,” he repeated again and again, “treating me like a fool! I’m no fool. I’ll show ‘em!”

Half an hour later he left the house, breakfastless but happy. He took a taxi to the station, and, going from success to success, actually came off best in an argument with the driver over the fare.

Smith got to Leddergall late at night, and had the choice of two inns for his night’s rest. He wondered, in the morning, where the eight hundred inhabitants were; as far as he could see, Leddergall consisted of the two inns, a shop, a dozen cottages, and a blacksmith’s forge. He stood in the middle of the white, dusty road for a few minutes, and decided to talk to the blacksmith.

Within the forge were two men, working strenuously, one an old man of sixty, thick-set, rough, and hearty, the other young, brawny, and saturnine of brow. Smith wished them a “Good morning.” They both looked up, and the young man immediately resumed work. The old blacksmith, great

hairy arms akimbo, stared with frank wonder at the clean-looking figure in smart tweeds.

“Morning,” he said at last, with an intonation of respectful curiosity.

“I’m down here for a week or two,” Smith explained, “and I’m looking for lodgings.”

“Lodgin’s?” The smith’s voice was like the roar of his furnace. “Ah—lodgin’s—ah! Jack, the gentleman’s lookin’ for lodgin’s.” The young blacksmith made no comment, nor did the old man seem to expect it. “There be ‘The Crown,’ sir,” he said.

Smith shook his head.

“‘The Pig and Partridge’? Mebbe ye don’t like inns? Sooner a farm, eh?”

“That’s it,” Smith agreed.

“Ah! Sooner a farm, eh? Ah—ah . . .”

The doorway darkened, and Smith turned as he heard the swish of starched draperies. A girl stood beside him.

“Ah, there ‘ee be, Betty,” said the old man, with unmistakable relief. “Here’s a young gentleman wanting lodgin’s. Ask mother, will ye? P’r’aps he’ll go along with ‘ee.” Having said which, the old man applied himself to the bellows with a single mind. He couldn’t think of two things at once.

Smith followed the girl out to the white road and walked beside her. She was plainly nervous, and the knowledge of it gave him assurance. No one had ever been nervous in his presence before, and it gave him a peculiar pleasure. He wanted to say: “Don’t be nervous about *me*. I’m only Smith.”

He stole a sidelong glance at her and met her own inquisitive gaze. She blushed, and he felt still more her moral superior.

“Lovely country,” he said easily. “Have you always lived here, Miss Betty?”

She had. Did he come from London? How wonderful it must be to live in London! He answered, with the slightest touch of condescension, that it wasn’t in the least wonderful, knowing quite well that she wouldn’t believe him.

Mrs. Crout, the blacksmith’s wife, was frankly delighted to put him up for the fortnight, and Smith was gratified to find that the blacksmith’s farm was just the sort of place he wanted. There seemed to be a little of everything—four cows, some pigs, dozens of chickens and geese, and a pony mare in the small paddock. He smelt the baking bread, and rejoiced.

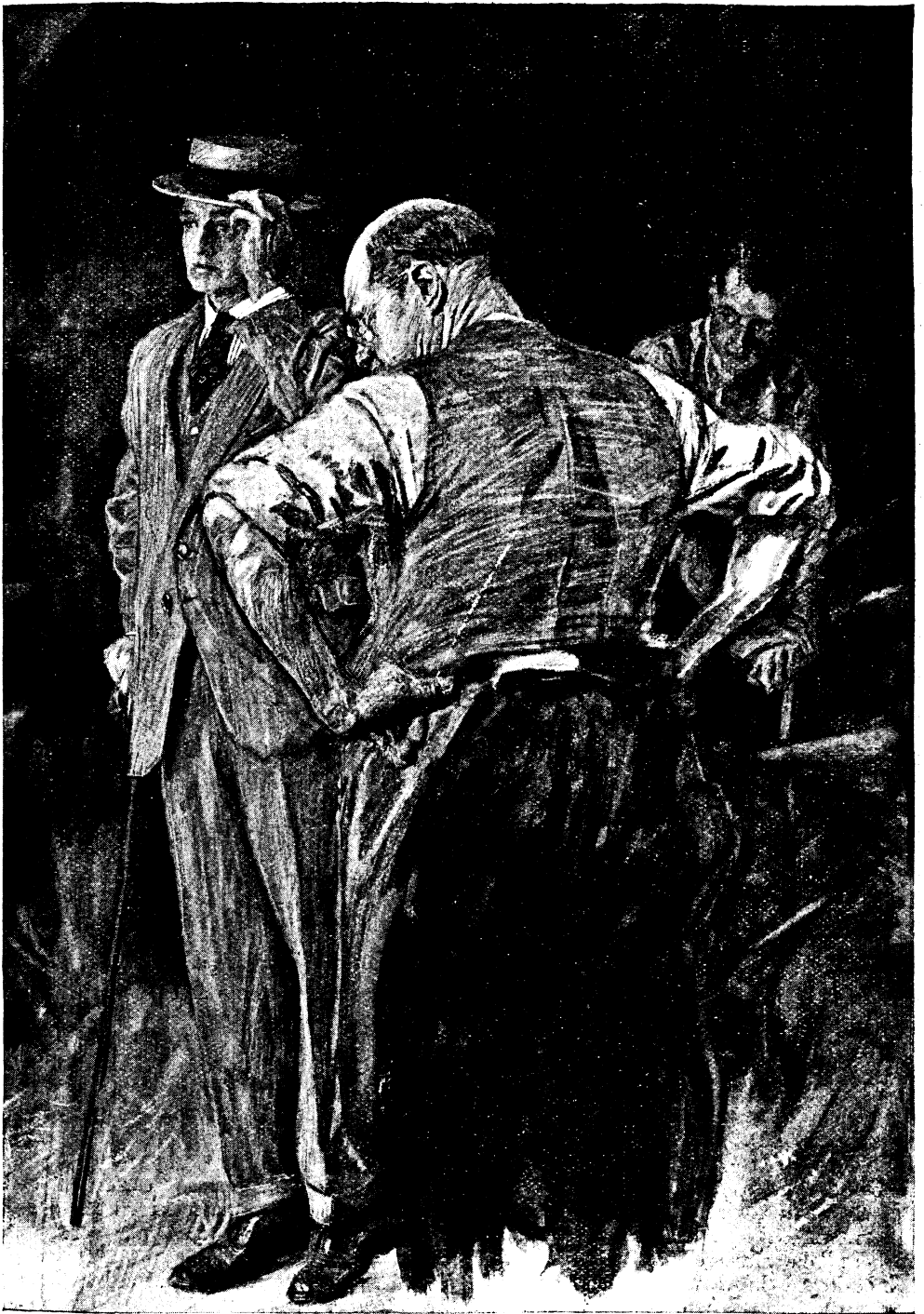


“The doorway darkened and Smith turned. . . .”

Later he sat by the open window, enjoying the fragrant summer's night, and it occurred to him to play his fiddle; he ran upstairs and brought it down. He tried the gut, resined the bow, and hesitated. Would he be making a fool of himself before the family beyond the heavy wooden door? The bow, moving idly in his fingers, rasped a loud discordant note from the fiddle, and

forced a decision. He had to play now, to show them that he could.

He raised his bow, listened for a moment to the hubbub of dialect in the kitchen, and commenced. Once his tune was started, he forgot his surroundings, as he always did, and played with rapture and passion. He could, as a matter of fact, play his elementary instrument extremely well, and the vibrant,



“ Ah, there 'ee be, Betty,' said the old man, with unmistakable relief.”

melancholy notes told their story as from human lips.

The song died away, and Smith noticed with a shock that all was quiet. Half

frightened, he sat and waited anxiously. A husky murmur reached his ear, answered by a feminine whisper of protest, then a husky command. The door opened, and

Betty stood there in the dusk, the doorway framing her figure like some old oil painting.

"Father says," she whispered, "would you play it again?"

He was thrilled with pleasure, though, fortunately, the dusk veiled his glowing features.

"He likes my little tune?" he asked carelessly. "Well, I don't mind."

He waited until the eager whispering died away, and played it through again. Without waiting for further encouragement, he played another tune, a riotous jiggish melody which danced its way from the throbbing string with a lilt which set the listeners a-tingling with rhythm. Betty had left the door open, and, laughing as he played, Smith heard the old man's knuckles tapping out the tune on the table, then his feet stumping on the cobbled floor. Then, after a boisterous argument, there came through the doorway the swish of skirts and a clumping of heavy boots. They were dancing to his jig—Betty and the burly young man, probably.

A sudden jar and rattle of crockery brought him to a halt. Apparently they had collided with the table.

"A pair o' clumsies!" the old man roared. "Ye've stopped his toon!"

He waited out on to the rough lawn and played again for them. The news spread quickly, and within half an hour a dozen couples were whirling round him, frank in their praises for the fiddler. Smith revelled in it—appreciation was a strange and welcome experience. He could have played till the morning.

The next day he invited the family to continue their Sunday custom by dining in the parlour which he occupied, and surveyed them with benevolent complacency as they sat about the table. They were all so obviously on their best behaviour, so conspicuously afraid of doing something gross before his refined presence, that he wanted to get up and cry: "It's all an imposture! I'm not Mr. Smith of London—I'm *Smith*, a man of no consequence!" This reminded him of Parker. "Hang Parker!" he muttered, and Betty viewed his darkened brow with concern, fearful that something was wrong with the dinner.

He recovered himself and ate his dinner easily, conversing with the family and listening delightedly to their naïve replies. After dinner the old blacksmith retired to the kitchen, where he removed his square black coat, carefully hitched up his triple-creased

trousers, and snored loudly from the high-backed armchair.

Smith watched Betty and her young man swing off through the meadow, and thought how idyllic this little village was. Presently the old lady came in, sat herself stiffly on a chair, and opened conversation. Looking at her, carefully prinked out in a starched, reddish-brown dress, he thought she resembled one of her own cottage loaves, except that they were constructed in two tiers, and she in three.

She told him about Betty and Jack. "Like a pair of turtle-doves," she gossiped. "When Betty's out without him, he moons round like an orphan calf. Just like my husband was . . ."

"And Betty?"

"Just the same. She don't throw herself at him, mind 'ee—she's not so foolish. But—mebbe I shouldn't tell 'ee, only ye—ye're different from the likes of us—ye're a gentleman." He turned his head to hide his gratified expression. "But Betty keeps a calendar, and she marks off every day, and counts 'em up each night till next Lady Day."

He strolled down to the forge the next morning.

"Pretty big hammer this, Mr. Smith!" roared the old man.

Smith felt it and admitted its weight.

"Here, lad"—the old man turned to the taciturn young striker—"show Mr. Smith how 'ee can swing it. Cut this for me."

He laid a slab of red-hot metal on the anvil and held the chisel with his hand. With a rhythmic motion of his supple shoulders, the striker smote the chisel full and square three times and parted the slab. Smith admired his strength, the artistry of his stroke, and the great confidence this youthful giant had in himself. Smith would have held the chisel for him without fear.

"Pretty good," muttered the old man. "Couldn't have done it in less than three meself."

"There isn't much a man can't do," said Smith, "if he sets his mind on it. Hard work and confidence, that's all there is in success, Mr. Crout."

"Ah—ah—that's true . . . hard work and confidence . . ."

Smith fancied he could hear the old man repeating it in the taproom at "The Crown," and felt himself more wise and confident than ever. Parker! Parker was a rat!

He watched them shoeing, and admired

the way they managed the horses. The old man had a way with the restless beasts which Smith felt was cruel, but the young assistant spoke to them quietly. He would utter a monosyllable which seemed to say, "I mean it," and invariably the horse would obey. Smith admired this young man intensely.

His fortnight passed rapidly. He loved nothing better than to wander, fiddle under arm, among the hills and through the pine woods. There was one grotto which he marked out as his own, known locally as the Fairies' Bower, a nook hollowed out by a stream, but now left high and dry beneath a steep bank fringed with pines. Here he could lie in perfect solitude and play to himself sometimes sad, sometimes madcap airs which sprang into his soul from Mother Nature. The grotto gave him a sense of power, of personality. Parker would have looked ridiculous in this quiet retreat.

There were also delicious mornings spent about the farm, sharing the menial labours of Betty, and occasional afternoons when they stole away together. And it was sweet to be able to talk with confidence and to be listened to as a person of some consequence. Betty was eager to hear all he could tell her of London. His petty life there seemed magnified into a stupendous adventure under the round-eyed awe with which she regarded it.

During the evening before his departure Smith took up his fiddle and made his way for the last time to the little grotto by the stream. The world about him was hushed and peaceful, as though spellbound by the magic of the falling dusk—so different from what it would be when it once more contained Parker. He would dream a little . . .

A moment later he was startled by the sound of voices—voices high-pitched in quarrel—apparently approaching his sanctuary. He was annoyed that his dream was disturbed, yet thankful that he was hidden. When they had passed, he would creep back into his thoughts.

Then he recognised Betty's voice.

"Don't be stupid, Jack! And what if I did? It wasn't like walking with Tom Peters or any of the young men about here. He's a gentleman—too good for you to be jealous of. And to think that he praised you to my face—said you were strong and a good blacksmith!"—bitterly. "But he's brought something—something new into my life, so that I don't think so much nowadays of your strength."

"You'll be runnen off wi' en next!" growled the man.

"Mebbe I shall!" cried the girl, with angry spite.

There was a sharp exclamation from the man, and a shuffle of feet which told of departure, then silence.

Smith could scarcely believe his ears. After his first astonishment he felt a wonderful exhilaration of spirits. Numerous little incidents—words, an occasional glance—which had had no meaning for him at the time, now stood prominently in all their significance. Betty loved him. More, she thought him too—too good, that was her word—to deign to care about her! It was amazing that a girl—any girl—should think of him in that way. He wanted to dance, sing, and, above all, to play on his fiddle.

And as he sat forward, nerves a-quiver, he heard a sob, a movement in the sand, and Betty stood before him in the deepening twilight, half turned from him. He sprang up, and she wheeled hastily.

"I couldn't help overhearing," he apologised. "Has Jack gone?"

She nodded, turning from him again, and after a few moments her murmured words reached him: "And you must go to-morrow?"

Smith felt miserable. He wanted to tell the girl to run after her lover and win him back, but the urging spirit stayed within.

"I am sorry you have had trouble," he faltered conventionally.

She made no reply, and he grew bolder. "You will make it up, of course. Jack's a very fine fellow—a really splendid blacksmith."

"A blacksmith!"

The depth of bitterness startled him.

"Of course he will never be a really great man in the world, but then neither shall I, for that matter."

"You will, you will!" she told him, facing him with shining eyes. "You're clever. You'll be rich and famous. I know it!"

"Not I, not I," he answered. But her words were like food to his starved nature, and he realised what he had missed in life: no one had believed in him, no one had encouraged him.

In his excitement he had taken her hand. She moved nearer, and a moment later her head rested against his shoulder. He did not try to move away; rather, he felt a curious pride that this thing should have happened to him. Greatly daring, he stroked

her neck, and felt her tremble beneath his touch.

Yet even in this great moment—the greatest in his life—Smith fell into introspective reverie. That this girl should be willing to marry him! It was wonderful. With such a woman by his side, what could he not do? Parker, Skinners, the whole tribe of them would be brushed aside, and he would carve out such a path in the world as he had often dreamed of. He could do it, he knew, if only there was someone to urge him, to inspire him to those things of which he was capable.

And as he mused, his eyes fell on a dim shape on the sand and recognised it as a tweed cap. It lay where the young blacksmith had left it.

She believed in him now, yes, but would it last? Would there not come a day when she would compare him with other London men, with loud-voiced people like Parker? Surely she would find him out, and in her disillusionment turn from him as she was turning even now from her straight-hearted lover.

The scent of her hair was about him. A few strands wafted upwards and curled against his neck, yet his brain remained cool, calculating the value of what was offered. She was infatuated by his clothes, his manners, his London "culture," and he knew, in that moment, that it would be folly to marry her—a wrecking of two lives.

"Betty," he said quietly, moving away a little, "you're making a great mistake. Men, as men, cannot be measured by wealth or appearance. It's the heart of a man that counts for future happiness in a woman's life. Your Jack is worth ten of me. He's a man—Heaven knows what I am. Marry him, Betty, and you'll be happy. He'll make you respect him, and that's got a lot to do with married happiness."

He could have gone on in this strain for hours, not knowing where the words came from, philosophising on things he had never thought about before. Suddenly, however, he realised that Betty was gone.

"Funny!" he murmured, staring after her. Highly pleased with himself, he took up his fiddle and walked home, feeling a hero, a martyr even.

It never occurred to him that he was not in love with Betty.

\* \* \* \* \*

Opening the doors of Skinners the first morning of his return, the foul air greeted Smith with depressing familiarity. But he resolved to fight against it, and felt prepared to assault the first man who insulted or belittled him.

"Smithy's shaved off his moustache," announced the office-boy, with a grin.

The office heard, stared, and giggled. Smith swelled and stared back fiercely, but without visible effect. What could he do? He couldn't attack the office, and to kick young Jenkins before the women clerks would certainly look foolish. He hated being thought a fool.

"How's Hampshire?" jeered Parker. "Brought any apples back?"

Smith raked his brain for a biting retort, decided impulsively to hit Parker, and noticed Mr. Skinner standing at the door of his room.

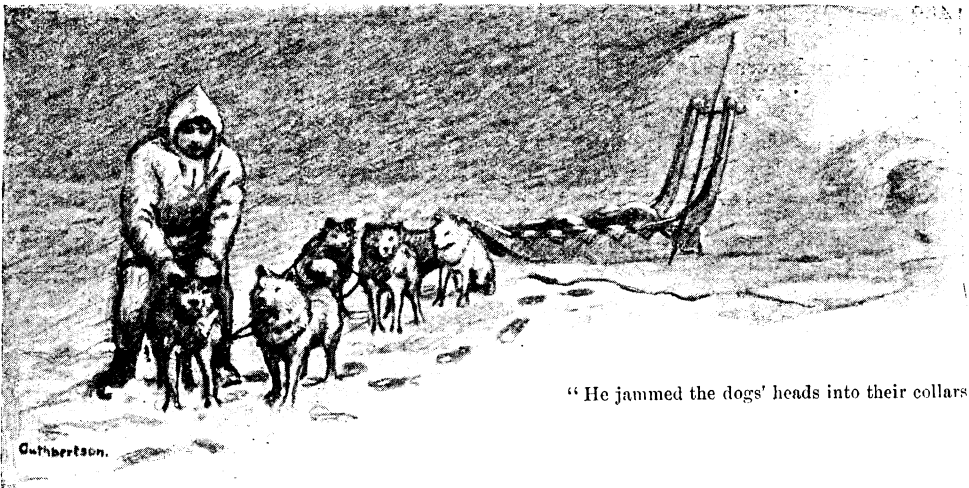
Apparently he, too, was in the joke, for he smiled broadly.

"Queer tastes some people have," he remarked, and the office dutifully burst into great laughter.

In spite of his resolution, Smith felt that he had failed at the psychological moment, that he had allowed circumstance to defeat him, and he spent the rest of the day in his old state of apathy. Other days were much the same as the first, and, gradually but inevitably, Smith succumbed to the atmosphere of Skinners without anyone noticing that it might have been otherwise.

He still boards at "Rock View," having been unable to resist the surly apology of the elder Miss Grubb, and is still cursed for playing his fiddle in his bedroom. But he plays it happily, and smiles to himself more times in a day than he used to in a year, for pleasant memories are a great consolation.

Betty quickly dried her tears and married the young blacksmith on Lady Day, according to programme. And each summer Smith takes his fiddle to Leddergall for two weeks, enjoying honour and hero-worship sufficient to carry him happily through the remaining fifty.



"He jammed the dogs' heads into their collars."

Cuthbertson.

# MOTHERS OF THE NORTH

By ALAN SULLIVAN

ILLUSTRATED BY W. A. CUTHBERTSON

**A**IVICK, the Caribou, rolled over in his sleeping-bag, then sat up and stretched his short, thick arms. A light that was hardly light filtered through the curved dome of the igloo roof, and revealed the shapeless mass where Allegoo, the Drinking Cup, slumbered with her newborn son. For the rest of it, there was the fishing hole in the floor, a stone lamp, a bundle of skins, and his hunting gear. Such, together with the kayak, hidden with its double-bladed paddle fifty miles away on shore, were the possessions of the hunter.

He sat for a moment, thinking hard. Being caged in the snow walls of his dwelling, there reached him no drone of wind, no breath from the Arctic, but from the tunnelled door came a whimper, and the quick sniffing of black and pointed noses. The team was awake, too. He smiled gravely, as smiles a man whose mind is heavy, then fingered the sinew line that ran into the green depths below. But the line was loose.

He wondered what had become of all the salmon, for with the square flipper

seal they seemed to have deserted this corner of the Arctic; but since in the North there is no room for wonder, but only for action, he wasted no time in vain regrets. The imperative need was for food. Without food those small and dusky lips would seek the comforting breast in vain. So Aivick slid noiselessly to the floor, and after a steady look at the pride of his heart, gathered spear, rope and knife, and crawled into the outer world.

The sky was grey, and he caught a threatening note in the wind, which came, with driving snow, straight out of the west. It was now time for the ice to commence its magnificent march toward Baffin Bay and the North Atlantic, where gradually it would disappear beneath the incessant assaults of the waves, but Aivick reckoned that his particular section of the tribe's floating home was too large to get into motion at once. Three miles away he knew of a lane where the green water was clear, and there, if anywhere, he should find a square flipper. So he jammed the dogs' heads into their collars, jumped on the sled, and, with a guttural command, tore



off into the unknown. In thirty seconds he had seemingly vanished from the face of the earth.

It was an hour before Allegoo was quite awake, and she lay for a while without stirring, so sweet was the new warmth at her breast. She pictured the boy in later years, when he had become a great hunter, and, like Aivick, the head of his tribe. As to the present shortage of food, she was not anxious, for there comes many an hour of fasting to those who live by the strength of the arm and sureness of the eye. Aivick would return ere night and bring that which he sought.

In mid-forenoon she was startled by the faintest possible tremor that seemed to come from beneath her feet. Only a Husky could have felt it, and only to a Husky could its meaning be clear. She sat upright with a fluttering at her heart, then, the child still at her breast, crept out through the tunnel. The air was clear now. Far to the south lifted a range of jagged hills, their tops already bare of snow, while northward stretched the glimmering ice, its vast counterpane broken by irregular pressure ridges that straggled confusedly out of sight. It was utterly lonely, utterly familiar. The sky was a hard blue, and untenanted by birds, it being not yet time for the great migrating flight from South America and the Caribbean. Somewhere in this void Aivick sat, spear in hand, waiting for that single bubble which heralds the square flipper when he comes up for air. She was vaguely wishing that he were already back, when something that crossed the ice like a black line caught her eye half a mile away. And at that she began to run nervously forward. Presently she stood breathless at the edge of a new lane a hundred feet wide. The house of Aivick, the Caribou, had started on its journey to the sea.

Twenty miles away, where an overhanging cliff of basaltic rock thrust its great mass close to the rugged shore, a gigantic form, gaunt and yellow-white, moved uncertainly toward the ice. Beside it staggered its cub, now two months old. The two brutes, big and small, moved with a curious shuffling gait, swaying their arrow-shaped heads as though half blinded by the glare. Here, in silence, darkness and solitude, the she-bear had borne her young, fasting for months while Unorri, the North Wind, howled outside, and her lord travelled far to seek what food he could for himself. Now, savage with hunger, and drunk with the

pad-pad of her great feet up and down the darkened chamber behind its blanket of snow, she sallied forth, stained, fearsome and hostile, imbued with the nameless and terrible quality of maternity. There was naught in the North that would stand and face her. And she knew it.

The ice was some forty feet from the shore, and she hesitated before entering that chilly flood; but it was on the ice that she must find food. Dabbling a broad paw, she entered slowly, then turned a pink inviting eye on her cub, who forthwith scrambled on her back. The rest was a matter of a few strokes. The cub leaped loosely, landed safe, straight over her head, and was followed by her vast and dripping body. Then, sniffing the wind, they shamblod on.

By mid-day Allegoo had traversed half the boundary of the floe. It was a large field, probably three miles long, and must soon break into smaller sections. Watching the hills on shore, a slow motion was discernible, but as yet she felt no real fear, for this field must before long touch the others, and then Aivick would find his way back. Meantime the chief thing was food. Her breast was a little cold. She rounded a pressure ridge, and saw a little way ahead a hummock that she knew was not ice. The blood throbbed in her throat, and she crept back out of sight.

Close beside an air-hole squatted the she-bear. The blackness of her nose was hidden beneath the whiteness of her paws, and the only thing that moved was when the wind lifted the long hair on the ridge of her backbone. Carved in snow was she, with every muscle tense, and the cub snuggled close against her side. Her breast also was feeling cold, and the mother instinct had filled her with a wild lust to kill.

Allegoo's black eyes peered steadily from behind the ridge. She knew that the beast would not move now, and into her mind crept a dull envy of this other mother. She had never thought of it before, but why were the she-bear's claws and brain so wise and her own empty hands so weak? How was it that Aivick had not found this air-hole for himself, instead of going miles away? She held her son tighter against her heart and waited. Perhaps there might be something left over.

Far down in the emerald depths floated a milky bubble. The pink eyes saw it, and an irrepressible quiver ran through the mighty form. The bubble moved upward,



breathed from the lungs of the invisible square flipper, and vanished as it touched the surface. Still the bear moved not, nor did she stir when there appeared, framed in the glinting walls of the hole, a round, sleek head and glossy shoulders. The head projected, and a pair of large, soft, streaming eyes glanced curiously about. They saw but a motionless mound that looked like snow. Then one flipper swung upwards. The seal twisted himself, got hold with the other, and lurched forward. In the next moment he was half-way out.

But in that instant something happened. The bear's paw shot into action with the speed of lightning. The long, black claws were extended, and, with a motion too swift to follow, the great armed pad descended on the round and shining skull. Strength beyond imagining, ferocity beyond thought, skill beyond description—all were in that blow. The seal saw and felt nothing. There was just a quivering of the warm wet body, and it lay limp.

The smell of hot blood drifted across the ridge, and Allegoo became conscious of a sudden, insensate anger. She had not realised how hungry she was. Simultaneously the small dusky lips felt for her breast, but found no response. Her black eyes flashed, and her wild, strange soul rose in revolt. This was a portion of motherhood at which she had never guessed. She did not dream that anything could have hurt so much. Two days now without food. And here was food—but not for her. But perhaps there might be something left over. Her black eyes stared unwinking.

The she-bear ate ravenously. She had been four months without meat, and her stomach was a cavern. She tore the seal to bloody rags, thrusting her sharp nose into the shrinking flesh, guzzling with a sort of famished madness. The ice beside her became a shambles. In half an hour there were left only a few gory scraps.

Allegoo waited, still motionless. If the brute slept where it ate, she was ready to dare anything, so sharp had become the torment of her own body. But presently the great form heaved itself up and moved off, accompanied by the cub. A hundred yards away it slipped between two hummocks, and settled in a shapeless mound. Allegoo caught her breath and crept forward. She was fingering a shred of meat, when overhead came the swoop of whistling pinions. An Arctic eagle, the forerunner of the great

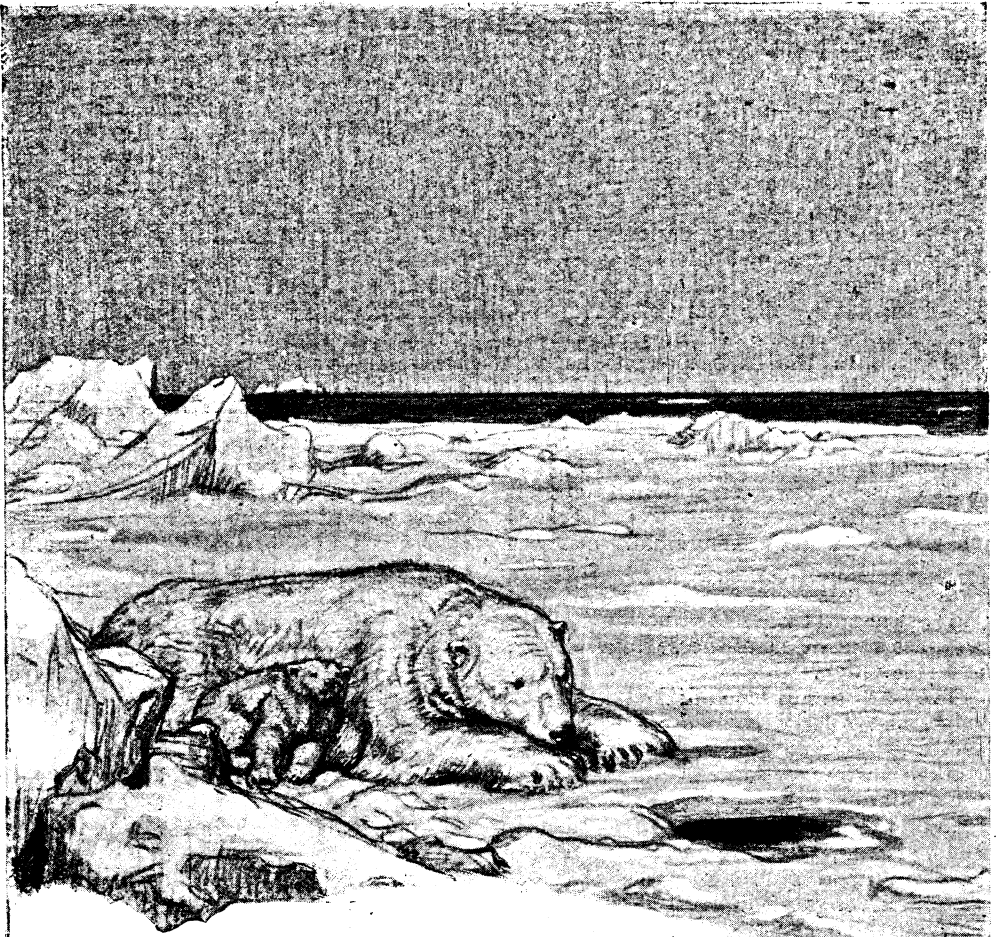
host from the south, had scented the kill. It, too, was an-hungered.

So close it hung that she looked straight into the yellow eyes. The winds of Æolus were gathered into the hollow curves of the scimitar wings and the shrouded talons hooked under the grey down. The sun flashed on the ivory beak as it swept above her defenceless head, and for an instant Allegoo trembled. This huge bird was a stranger to fear. Then there came at her breast the fumbling of helpless fingers, and all terror was washed out of her soul. She screamed, waved her arms, shouted words that had no meaning, and, squatting on the ice, began to eat ravenously. The eagle circled twice, one filmed eye bent curiously on her, then took its majestic course toward the hills.

The woman slept that night. There had not been much left, but her hope was that the bear might kill again on the morrow. Early in the morning an alarm came from the tassel of dew claws on the line that still dangled in the green depths, and she jumped eagerly toward it. There was a salmon on the other end, a salmon that after a tussle got away, taking half the line. A wrinkle deepened on her dark brows as she pulled in what remained. A little later she caught that one sound which in the North brings the most ominous message of all.

It may be that something of its terror drifted into the child's ears, for he seemed to nestle the closer. It came again, mournful, relentless, and utterly unhuman—the call of the grey wolf when he takes the hunting trail. She pictured the tawny backs, the sharp, black, pointed noses, the lean, slaving jaws, and knew that though the she-bear might kill that day, there were those to whom all the wilderness gave place at the bloody table—when the white bear turned away. Closer they came, till she caught the scratching of claws at the loosely sealed door. There were but eighteen inches of snow between them both and death. Presently the leader of the pack, very wise in murder, gave a whimper, and Allegoo heard the grim chorus dwindle in the distance. Where was Aivick now?

All that day she sat, till again the pangs of hunger assailed her. It was torture to think that what she felt she also transmitted to the nite of humanity at her breast. At midnight she stole out. There was enough moon to show the jagged hills rising into the sky like a black saw, and in the lee of the pressure ridges there were purple



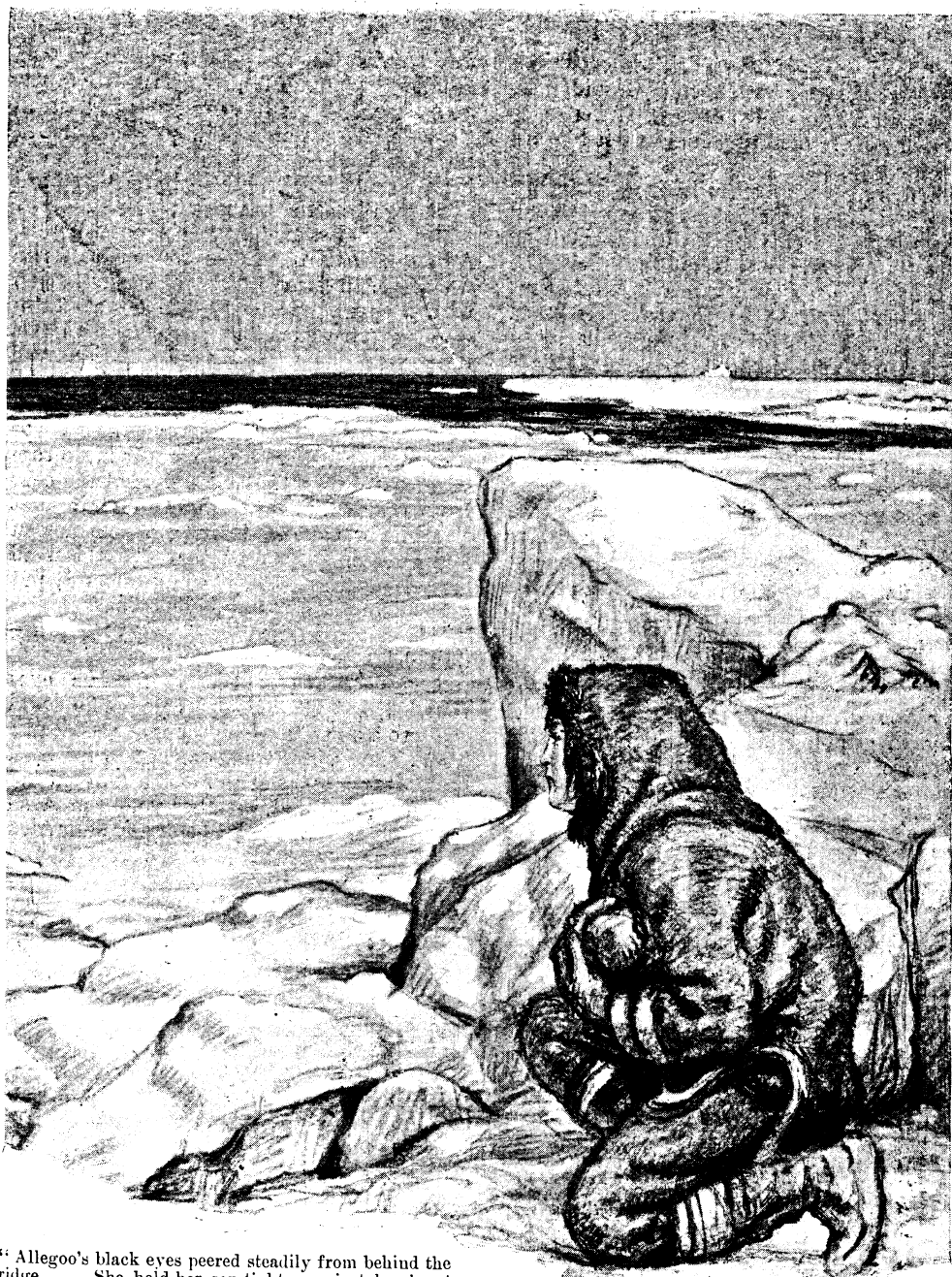
“Carved in snow was she, with every muscle tense, and the cub  
snuggled close against her side.”

shadows that might harbour any danger. The floe had moved during the past few hours, and far to the north she discerned the loom of open water. Spring was working its way up from the Barren Lands, and the Arctic ice was sliding toward the sea. With a sudden and desperate impulse she began to run south. The grey wolf was there, but it would be solid land, where Aivick might have more chance of finding her. In an hour she came to the edge of the field. The land was a mile away.

There now seemed but one thing to do. If the she-bear was still on the floe, it would shortly kill again. So it would be wise to watch the air-hole. Allegoo turned back, stumbling a little as she went, for she was very weary. Edging cautiously along the ridge, she saw the big beast slouching northward with a lazy, rolling gait. There was nothing unfriendly about it now, and her pagan soul gave a throb of thankfulness.

She reckoned that she could survive as long as the monarch of the Arctic chose to make her home on this particular patch of ice.

In the days that followed she lived on the scraps from the white bear's table. Overhead the skies became populous with geese and swans, winging their mysterious flight toward the far islands of the Arctic; but they stayed not on their way, whipping the thin air with worn and broken feathers that had borne them from the land of the cocoanut and palm. And in these days there seemed to grow between the mother woman and mother beast a strange and mutual understanding. No fear was left now. The bear killed and ate, to be followed shortly by a squat, broad figure that satisfied its hunger and,



"Allegoo's black eyes peered steadily from behind the ridge . . . She held her son tighter against her heart and waited."

with a long stare from almond-shaped eyes, stole back to its shelter of snow till again the urge for flesh should animate the white destroyer. It was a savage communion, with an icefield for an altar and the vast canopy of heaven for a shrine.

At the end of the week the weather changed, and a great wind blew out of the

north with a driving blast of fine flakes. Allegoo knew that the end was near when the bear, instead of making for the air-hole, turned southward toward the shore. Her provider had gone now, and there was nothing left save to follow. In twelve hours the floe had jammed against the solid land, and she felt the bare rock beneath her feet.

Overhead towered the cliffs, whence had emerged the grey wolves, and, shuddering, she passed into their shadow. Where was Aivick now? The tiny fingers felt like ice upon her heart.

The sun was near the horizon when, far ahead, she heard that which at first she took for the terror of the North, the hunting pack in full cry. But, listening acutely, she distinguished presently the faint and furious barking of dogs. At that the strength seemed to flow back into her body, and she hastened on. It was an hour before she caught sight of something dark on the ice, half a mile from shore. Close by was what seemed to be a pillar of snow, around which were racing a group of grey specks. And then Allegoo understood.

In the middle of Aivick's maddened team towered a great she-bear, a cub nestling between her flanks. The small ears were laid flat against the bony skull, and the black lips were drawn high. The terrible forearms projected, curved like those of a boxer, and in the small, pink eyes blazed the light that dawns when a beast fights for her young. Twenty feet away crouched Aivick, gripping his spear, his chin thrust out, his face grim as becomes the face of a hunter when he confronts the biggest quarry of all.

A dog dashed forward, snapped at the bear's side, and, just missing a mighty swing, swept past with a mouthful of white

fur. Aivick shouted with excitement, and another dog plunged in. This time there was no mistake. A massive forearm caught it in the side, there was a dull, soft sound, and the dog landed thirty feet away with a broken back. The bear leaned a little forward as though inviting the rest to come on.

But Aivick would have no more of this. A dog in the North is too precious to waste when one should be able to finish the job with a spear. So he rapped out guttural words of command, and, dropping on one knee, waited for the beast to attack. He knew that the presence of the cub would goad her on. The bear began to sway with a curious rocking motion, looking now at her enemy, now at her cub. A queer lump rose in Allegoo's throat. She knew what the bear felt. Suddenly she was quite certain that this big brute was suffering as she herself had suffered. And at that she threw all discretion away, and, running forward, put a trembling arm round Aivick's neck.

"Kah," she cried chokingly, "Kah—do not kill! It is my sister!"

Aivick turned and stared. His eyes rounded, but he did not speak. Who could reply to a voice that one thought was dead? Then, while a glad light dawned in his face, that other mother of the North lowered her gigantic form, and, with her young pressing close to her torn flanks, took her unhurried and formidable way into the vast silence of the Arctic.

## AUTUMN.

**T**HEY leaves (owld worrits!) fast be fallin',  
 An' robin 'ops a-near me, callin'  
 Wi' watt'ry waarble as 'ee sees 'em  
 Rustlin' in piles afore mi besom:  
 They seems a-shoutin' back as drear  
 As swarms o' crows in 'ard winter.

But look 'ow t' gable o' barn be glowin'  
 As waarm as feer when t' smook been't showin',  
 An' appil branches still be droop'nin',  
 As fruit be more an' more a-sweet'nin'  
 Oh, 'ark un droppen—aye, they'm ripe!  
 Now Ah mun goa an' fetch a kipe!

EVERETT HODGE.



A SOUND INVESTMENT.

HOST: Well, yes, two hundred a week is a bit stiff for a shooting box, but it was them suits of armour what decided me. See what I shall save in compensation by dressin' the beaters up in 'em!

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### CHICKEN FOR DINNER.

By P. M. Braidwood.

Mrs. SKINNER said it was time we had chicken on the table again. Mr. Skinner said if we did one in, it would teach it not to cackle in the morning. Their son Bobby gasped in greedy anticipation. I, as the humble, necessary lodger, held my peace.

"Very well, then, George," continued my landlady. "You can kill the bird Saturday afternoon."

"You know, my dear," her husband hastened to remind her, "I am taking the Boys' Brigade drill on Saturday. Besides, I've never killed a chicken before."

"Then perhaps Mr. Haycot, here, won't mind—just to oblige me?" she asked, turning a gracious smile upon me.

"Much as I should like to," I hastened to assure her, "I am, unfortunately, otherwise engaged. In point of fact, I have an appointment with a man with reference to a dog."

"I'll tell you what," suggested Bobby brightly, "I'll shoot it with my air-gun!"

I heard nothing more about it till Saturday evening, when I saw Mr. Skinner, back from the Boys' Brigade, gulp down a stiff whisky and water as I entered the room.

"Just going to have a talk with that chicken," he announced, to stifle my hint that I, too, had a mouth.

I and Mrs. Skinner followed him out to the eight-feet-by-six stock-yard. Our brace of birds were engaged in their usual pastime of chasing each other round to peck out their few remaining feathers.

"Which is it to be?" demanded the callous butcher.

"I can't bear to think of either of them being killed, now I see them in the run," confessed his wife.

"All right, then; I'll toss up. If it's 'heads,' Lazarus has picked up his last crumb; if it's 'tails,' Broncho Bill's trousers will come off!" (Broncho Bill is a Brahma.)

A ha'penny spun in the air, while the unheeding fowls continued their amusements. The coin rolled between our legs and

disappeared. After some searching I became suspicious of Bobby, who had been standing unusually still. I shoved him over a yard, and there lay poor Lazarus' fate under one of his boots! Bobby, I might mention, is saving up for a motor-bike.

As Mr. Skinner proceeded with an air of great resolution to the run, his wife crammed her fingers in her ears and rushed upstairs. The unwilling boy was sharply bidden to follow her. And I, too, not caring for scenes of violence and bloodshed, went inside to my chair by the fire.

Mr. Skinner had taken the bird into the scullery to kill and pluck it, and shut the door. There were sounds of a brief and desperate struggle, then all was still.

"Bet that's finished him!" ejaculated Bobby, taking his eye from the keyhole.

It was some minutes later when Mrs. Skinner came down from her bedroom.

"Has he done it?" asked she anxiously.

"Lazarus is no more!" I solemnly assured her. "Your husband is attending his first obsequies; I trust we shall all be present at his last!"

Then a raucous squawk, accompanied by a flapping of wings, came from the scullery. Mrs. Skinner shrieked. Bobby grabbed his gun and rushed to the door. Mr. Skinner was apparently just going out at the back. It is not surprising, therefore, that Bobby's excited discharge hit the wrong mark. His unfortunate target jumped wildly into the air.

"Just you wait, my boy, till I've done!" shouted he. "And, for Heaven's sake, shut that door!"

Bobby promptly shut it, and suddenly remembered an appointment with a friend to ring some front-door bells. He did not reappear till supper-time.

The chicken duly made its appearance at the Sunday dinner-table. We were all glad to make its acquaintance. After the meal we retired to the front room, where a fire had been made. I sat on one side, with my landlady opposite, Bobby sat in the middle, while Mr. Skinner settled himself on the sofa.

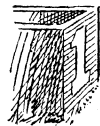
"A very nice bird," I remarked.

"Yes, but I hardly had the heart to eat my helping," said Mrs. Skinner sadly. "Poor Lazarus! And to think, when he was a tiny chick, I fed him out of my hand—"

"Is there any left for supper?" interrupted her son.

"Don't be greedy, boy!" admonished she, "I don't know which is the worst—you for eating him, or your father for killing him. I can't think how *ever* you could do it, George!"

"For goodness' sake, try and keep quiet,



Wilson Fenning.

NO DELAY.

VISITOR: By the way, caddie, you might point out the bunkers to me.

CADDIE: Aye, sir—that be one you've gone into now!

Maria! If you want to know, your Lazarus is out in the run at this moment. That bird we had for dinner came from the fishmonger's. And now, perhaps, you'll let me get some rest!"



A MEMBER of Parliament took a taxi one rainy day to proceed to his home in the suburbs.

When he arrived and asked the chauffeur the charge, the latter replied that it was ten shillings.

"But," protested the Member, "you are charging me for four miles."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I understand that the distance is only two miles and a half."

"It is as a general thing, sir," assented the driver, "but, you see, we skidded a lot."



A CERTAIN Professor confided to a friend that he had been very happy when, after years of wooing, the lady of his choice had said "Yes."

"But why did you break the engagement so soon after?" asked the friend,

"It was she who dissolved it."

"Really? How did that happen?"

"It was due to my accursed absent-mindedness. When a few days later I called at her home, I *again* asked her to marry me."



THE PACKING.

The room is strewn with dresses, coats, and skirts,  
Sand-shoes and collars, father's socks and shirts,  
Boots, braces, bathing-costumes, blouses bright,  
And garments which we cannot name aright.

After a struggle lasting half the night,  
Bags, cases, boxes, all are jammed up tight;  
And mother to a nervous wreck has sunk  
When father comes to cord the final trunk.

Next morn they go as "luggage in advance"—  
A grand idea, it saves you such a dance:  
Strong men appear to carry out the plan,  
And fling them violently into a van.

Then father sits to take a well-earned rest,  
And feels in all the pockets of his vest.  
Alas, our tickets for the train and boat  
Have gone before us in a packed-up coat!

R. H. Roberts.



For some time Mrs. Carraway had been endeavouring to instil into the heart of her youngest, Tommy, aged ten, the sentiment of

generosity, which, it seemed to her, was not naturally present. In this relation she had been especially careful to commend to Tommy's consideration the son of a poor family in the neighbourhood.

One day Tommy came home radiant.

"Well," he said to his mother, "I gave that poor boy half of the box of chocolates you bought for me."

The mother also beamed. "You are a dear little man," she said. "Was the poor boy grateful?"

"Oh, yes," said Tommy, "he was grateful all right. He came round to the school yard and let me lick him where everybody was looking on."



TILLIE had been placed by her aunt in a situation as maid-of-all-work in a family of three. At the end of a week the aunt dropped in to see how she was getting on.

"Do you like the work?" she asked.

"It's fair," said the laconic Tillie.

"And are they making you feel at home?"

"Sometimes they do, and sometimes they don't."

"Now, what do you mean by that?" demanded the aunt.

"Well," said Tillie, "they haven't asked me to go to church with them yet; but last night they went on with a grand quarrel they were having, all the three of them, with me taking the dishes off the table, just as if I had been one of the family."



A STRANGER came to Mrs. Arlington's, asking to be allowed to polish her floors. His manner was anything but energetic, and Mrs. Arlington feared that he would not do the work properly. So she asked:

"Are you quite sure you are accustomed to doing this?"

The man replied:

"You know Captain Collins's folks next door but one? Well, I refer you to them. On the polished floor of their dining-room five persons broke their legs last winter, and a lady slipped clear down the grand staircase. I polished all their floors!"



SEYMOUR  
LAZARUS

NOTHING DOING.

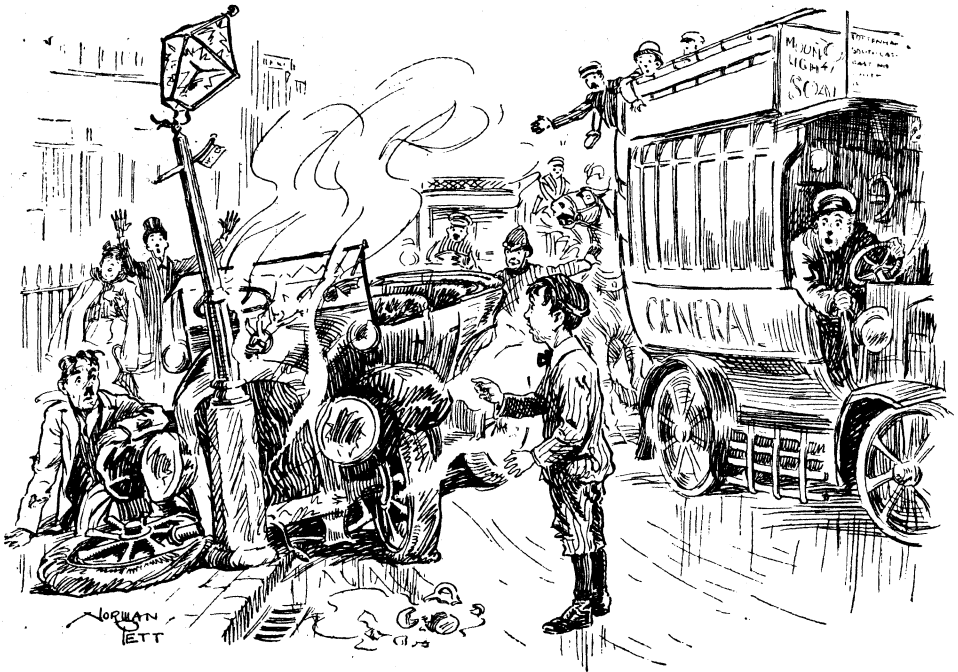
FIRST WAITER. Anything doing?

SECOND WAITER: Only coppers; even the decoy shilling's been pinched.

## SMILES FROM ADVERTISEMENTS.

Do you collect advertisement misprints, and what Mrs. Malaprop called "nice derangements of epitaphs" from the newspapers? It is a joyous hobby. Here are a few from my collection.

- "For sale Black ebony Gentleman's shaving Outfit."
- "Wanted at once respectable man for Polishing Porter."
- "Wanted a reliable Carter, with accommodation for storing margarine."
- "Gentleman washes to be received as paying guest."
- "For sale good greengrocery round; reason, owner going to work."



ESTIMATING THE DAMAGE.

SMALL BOY: 'Ere, my mother'll be after you! That jug cost one-and-three.

"We challenge a price-comparison with a few of our lies quoted below."

Parish magazines are very happy hunting grounds for these unconsciously humorous announcements. This is a good specimen:

- "Nov. 23rd. 'The Man England Needs.'  
The Vicar."
- "Nov. 30th. 'The Man of the Moment.'  
The Vicar."



"WHERE have you been, Louise," asked her mother, "and what are you eating?"

"Cheese," said the young lady calmly.

"Cheese? Where did you get it, dear?"

"Out of the mousetrap."

"Out of the mousetrap!" exclaimed her mother, horrified. "But what will the mice do? They won't have any cheese."

"Oh, they don't care. There were two of them in the trap, and they weren't eating it themselves, so they didn't seem to mind a bit!"



EVEN life insurance has its humorous side. A Chinaman whose brother was seriously ill wrote to the insurance company: "My brother he half dead, me likee half the money."

## DREAMS.

You're far above me, this I know,  
The fact, alas! is all too true,  
And yet I do not turn to go;  
Instead, I stand and gaze at you.

'Tis useless of my love to speak,  
My point of view you would not see,  
So I admire your soft flushed cheek,  
Turned tantalisingly to me.

But Fortune's sun perchance will shine,  
For, as the evening shadows fall,  
I dream that you may yet be mine,  
O nectarine upon the wall!

Leslie M. Oylar.





## An Essential Part of Your Dress

a necklet of

# Ciro Pearls

Like Oriental Pearls, *Ciro Pearls* are chosen for their exquisite beauty and as the finish to a lady's toilet. Though one costs a princely sum and the other comparatively little, experts have difficulty in telling them apart. The best-dressed women that the world boasts you will find wearing *Ciro Pearls* or real pearls.

The Editor of "TRUTH" says:—"The expert has again and again been misled into thinking that *Ciro Pearls* are the product of the oyster and not of the laboratory. This is why nine people out of ten acknowledge *Ciro Pearls* as the most marvellous reproductions of Oriental pearls in the world. There is no detectable difference to the ordinary eye between the *Ciro Pearl* and the natural pearl."

If you come to our showrooms, your own eyes will convince you, or, if you cannot, avail yourself of

### OUR UNIQUE OFFER.

On receipt of one guinea we will send you a necklet of *Ciro Pearls*, 16 inches long, with clasp and case complete, or a ring, brooch, ear-rings or any other *Ciro Pearl* jewel in hand-made gold settings. If, after comparing them with real or other artificial pearls, they are not found equal to the former or superior to the latter, return them to us within fifteen days and we will refund your money. *Ciro Pearl* necklets may also be obtained in any length required. We have a large staff of expert pearl stringers.

Latest descriptive booklet No. 10 sent post free on application.

## *Ciro Pearls Ltd.*

39 Old Bond Street London W.1 Dept. 10.

OUR SHOWROOMS ARE ON THE FIRST FLOOR, OVER LLOYDS BANK, NEAR PICCADILLY.

THE POINT OF VIEW.

By Jessie Pope.

THEY had lunched hilariously off pastry and fresh fruit, but he was conscious of a foreboding that it was a precarious place to picnic. Instinct warned him of danger, and he cautioned her to follow his lead, but she was so young, so audacious, so brimful of high spirits, that she found it hard to listen. Yet they were mates, they saw eye to eye, and had so many simple tastes in common.

The prospect was beautiful, the air inspiring. She strayed on and on, flouting his apprehensions. A subtle fragrance of nectar and lilies made her turn from the path; she was always sensitive to scents—they both were. He would have called her back, but she sped on airily, and next moment was caught in the

AFTERMATH.

They say that to remember happier days  
Is sorrow's crown of sorrow, and I know  
The dull monotony of common ways  
Since you and I together, love, did go.  
But ah! the thought of happy hours for me  
Is not so dry and bitter to the taste  
As sandwiches from yester picnic's tea,  
Which early training will not let me waste.

J. F. Smith.



THE teacher at a certain private school strives to impress upon the plastic minds of her pupils a proper appreciation of filial solicitude. Recently she asked members of a class to tell in what ways they had been helping their



A PROMISING PROSPECT.

"WELL, Thomas, what did you think of the new candidate's speech? Do you think he'll keep his promises?"

"Och! Somehow I think he wud, although he said he wud."

morass. Panic-stricken, she writhed and struggled, but each frenzied effort only sent her further and deeper.

On the verge, like one distraught, he raced frantically to and fro, looking vainly for some means of succour. To follow would be to add his extremity to hers, and avail her nothing; yet at last, goaded by the sight of her struggles, he leaped towards her. Instantly his feet were dragged down. He plunged, and fell at her side. With every twist and turn the enemy gripped them more mercilessly. Still they struggled, more and more feebly, till nature was exhausted. All was over, and—

"Two more flies on the 'Catch-em-alive-o,' cook," remarked the housemaid, who had been caulsously watching the tragedy.

Facing Third Cover.]

mothers. The answers, given in rotation as the pupils were seated, covered a wide range of little services, and the teacher was much pleased with the result of her gentle admonition. But she noticed that a little girl who was last in the row cast rather contemptuous glances upon her class-mates as they related their commonplace services, and when her turn came to answer, the eyes of the others were fixed on her, as she lives in an opulent home where several servants attend to the household routine.

"Well, Gracie," the teacher asked, "what have you been doing to help mamma?"

"Oh, lots of things!" was the reply. "But mostly I talk to father while she is at the club playing bridge."

THE

OCTOBER

# WINDSOR



WARD·LOCK·&·CO·LIMITED ♦ LONDON·&·MELBOURNE

ONE BUILDING NET

# The CHILDREN'S WELFARE

We owe it to the nation to rear a healthy stock of strong up-standing boys and girls, the future manhood and womanhood of the British race.

To this end protection from disease in early childhood days is of vital importance and no surer protection exists than washing them with Wright's Coal Tar Soap.

Children love it—they like its smell and it refreshes them, soothes the skin, and above all, protects them from infection.



# WRIGHT'S COAL TAR SOAP

7c. Per Tablet. Box of 3 Tablets 1/9.  
Bath Tablets (Double Size) 1/- . Box of 3 Tablets 3/-

USE WRIGHT'S LYSOL





RUSHING WATERS. BY T. GORDON STOWERS.

Reproduced by permission of the Autotype Fine Art Company, New Oxford Street, W.C., owners of the copyright and publishers of the large plate.





“‘Now, is that not good news?’”

# FINE LINEN

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of “*The Brother of Daphne*,” “*Berry and Co.*,” “*Anthony Lyveden*,”  
“*The Courts of Idleness*,” “*Jonah and Co.*”

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

IT was upon the seventh day of September that Aurélie Peyre, of Ruffec, made a mistake. This was notable; first, because the lady was justly accounted wise, and, secondly, because, as errors go, the mistake was a bad one.

Aurélie was the Silvia of Ruffec. She went faithfully to Mass, and what she believed to be proper, that unobtrusively she endeavoured to do. She spoke ill of no one. Her exquisite pink-and-white complexion, her raven hair, her steady grey eyes, were three great several beauties. Add that her features were regular, her teeth most white, and her

figure graceful, when you will understand that the swains of Ruffec commended her with cause. As I have said already, Aurélie’s judgment also was unusually sound. To ram home my comparison, it was, I think, the light in her wonderful eyes which you forgot last of her comeliness, while the flowers she was constantly receiving gave her actual distress. She never would wear them. No other girl in Ruffec received any flowers.

When, therefore, Aurélie Peyre, the Silvia of Ruffec, married the wrong man, the town pulled her down from her pedestal and let her lie.

Copyright, 1922, by Dornford Yates, in the United States of America.

It is the way of the world.

The announcement of the betrothal aroused consternation. People were amazed—staggered. You could have knocked them down. That Pierre Lacaze was a brute was common knowledge. They said his first wife had been bullied into her grave. . . . The astonishment was succeeded by sickness of heart. Discussion of the tragedy dissolved into sighs and tears. . . . Finally came Anger. Aurélie Peyre was denounced for an ungrateful fool. Where sighs had been heaved, fingers were wagged and snapped. Ruffec told Ruffec that Mademoiselle Peyre would soon find out her error, and that the discovery would serve her right. People began to gloat upon the disillusionment which was awaiting their darling. Upon the wedding day itself leers were exchanged. . . .

It is the way of the world.

Had her parents lived, the mistake would not have been made. But they had been killed together, five years before. Aurélie, aged sixteen, had seen no reason why the little creamery they had been keeping should close its aged hatch. As a result, this had remained open ever since. Out of the profits of the little enterprise its girlish governor and her two young brothers had been lodged and fed and clothed decently. Now the brothers were come to men's estate, while the goodwill of the business was a legacy worth having. Moreover, Jean and Jacques Peyre were no fools. About their future Aurélie felt easy enough.

For the matter of that, up to the very last she had no qualms about her own. *Quos Deus vult perdere prius dementat*. Everyone—her brothers included—disliked Lacaze. The man was so obviously a brute. Aurélie clung to him steadfastly. . . .

Then the day came, and the Silvia of Ruffec cast her pearls before swine.

Be sure Lacaze rent her.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nearly ten months had trailed by, and Aurélie had aged ten years.

The two lived in Paris, where Lacaze plied his trade of steeple-jack and made good money. The work suited him. The hours were short, the pay high. Fearless as a lion, the danger delighted his heart. The respect his prowess inspired tickled his vanity.

So much for his public life.

Lacaze married Aurélie Peyre as other men buy a fine horse. The only difference was that he got her for nothing.

In the Silvia of Ruffec he had seen a fine

stamp of animal, intelligent, well-made, good to look upon. He had judged her strong, courageous, and obedient. Her possession would be something to be proud of. Others would covet such a prize. . . .

The fellow was perfectly right.

Physically and mentally Aurélie was all that could be desired. When he took her out and about, everyone stared in admiration. When he showed her off to his friends, they made no secret of their envy. His house was always in order such as he had not dreamed of. There was, however, a fretful fly in the ointment. It was this. Aurélie's manners were perfect, but they were the manners of Silvia, and not the manners of a show horse.

Within a week of her wedding it was all over, and Aurélie had realised her plight. Of course the blow had been frightful . . . stunning . . . too terrible to describe. The first blinding flash of perception had exploded a second: the second, a third. . . . Her poor brain had staggered under this fearful appulse, her spirit fainted, her heart sunk to her shoes. Her love for Lacaze had shrivelled and died then and there. Not so her obedience. . . . So soon as she could think clearly, Aurélie resolved to do her best to dovetail her principles into her husband's demands.

The result was unsatisfactory—to Madame Lacaze. You cannot make a fair wallet out of a silk purse and a sow's ear. The ways of Lacaze were not Aurélie's. The grace the heaven had lent her, meant nothing to him. More—the man had a will. The grace the heaven had lent her, he made her discard.

The result was unsatisfactory—to Monsieur Lacaze. Aurélie bowed to his will, but not to his liking. She discarded her precious loan, if and when she was urged—never unless she was urged. His will had to be expressed—*always*. That was where her manners, as a horse, were so imperfect. Her rider's heels ached. . . .

Never once did Lacaze lose his temper. Better for his wife if he had. Instead, he smiled a quiet smile, set his strong teeth and—stuck to his spurs. After a month or two his heels developed new muscles and stopped aching. From then on, the blood upon his rowels was never dry.

Her spirit had to be broken. Well, that was easy enough. It had been done before. A pair of aching heels, however, had to be paid for. Lacaze determined to break his wife's spirit by eighths of an inch.

Fortune favours the brute.



Nine months after their marriage, a pair of spurs of a sharpness he could never have compassed fell into his lap.

\* \* \* \* \*  
A letter arrived for Aurélie while she and Lacaze sat at meat. It came from her brother Jean.

DEAREST AURÉLIE,

*I write to say that René Dudoy has taken a job in Paris. It is a good thing for him, but he will be lonely. He has said absolutely that he will not go to see you. I expect you can guess why. But we have told him not to be silly, and that you will be a good friend, if you can be nothing else. We think you would have wished us to do this. It is true, is it not? If so, look him up. His address will be 66 rue Castetnau.*

*Jacques and I are well, but still miss our only sister very much. The shop flourishes. We took twenty-six francs more last week than the week before, though a storm on Wednesday robbed us of six good litres.*

Your loving brother,

JEAN.

Covertly Lacaze watched her read it and lay it down. Something—Heaven knows what—told him that here was matter she did not wish him to see. He went to work delicately.

“Ah!” he cried of a sudden. “The thing had escaped me. My dear, to-morrow put on your very best gown. We are going to the wedding of Robert and José Tuyte.”

Aurélie winced.

“Must we, Pierre? José Tuyte is awfully clever, I know. But she is an actress, and—and I do not go well with the stage. I am too slow for them.”

(If to appear nightly in the costume of a child of seven at *The Dead Rat*, there to accept cigarettes and encourage the purchase of champagne, is to be an actress, Aurélie was perfectly right. That she was too slow for such a “stage” was unarguable.)

“My dear, what would you? Robert is a good friend, and I knew José before I knew you. They would be most hurt. Besides, marriage is like a wet sponge. It wipes clean the slate. You need not, you know, dance all the time.”

“Dance?”

“Have I forgotten again? We are to have supper that night at *Le Parapluie*. The big room has been engaged. I tell you, it will be festive. A little below us, perhaps, but we must descend, my dear. It behoves us to descend. Their feelings must not be hurt.”

Aurélie paled.

Once before she had subscribed to festivity under the shelter of *Le Parapluie*. The revels had haunted her ever since. . . .

She was about to protest—beg to be excused—when she remembered her letter. Mercifully, this seemed to have escaped notice—so far. It occurred to her that pleasant, bright conversation might save it inviolate. Desperately she strove to keep the ball rolling. . . .

Lacaze saw her anxiety, and let her strive.

When the meal was over, he pushed back his chair. For the next five minutes he debated audibly whether he should go forth to buy tobacco, or send the servant. Aurélie wanted him to go—terribly, but dared not put in her oar. She was, of course, quite satisfied that he had forgotten her letter. Her only fear was that he would catch sight of it again.

At last Lacaze decided to go himself. He rose, sought for his hat, chucked her under the chin and left the room.

Aurélie thrust the letter into her dress and thanked God.

Then the door opened and her husband put in his head.

“I quite forgot,” he said, smiling. “What does young Jean have to say?”

His wife took the letter from her bosom and gave it into his hand.

He read it deliberately. At length—

“Poor René,” he said gaily. “So I put a spoke in his wheel. Dear, dear. We must try to make up for it. I seem to remember him faintly—a calf with curly fair hair. ‘66 rue Castetnau.’ Good.” He handed the letter back. “We’ll call there next Sunday morning. The better the day, sweeting, the better the deed. ‘Lonely.’ Poor clod, what a shame! But for Lacaze, the steeple-jack, he might not have been lonely at all. . . . might have been watching your pink little hands ladle cream into pots, while he counted the takings and gave out the change. Certainly we must make up for it—so far as we can. . . .”

He sighed and went out.

As he closed the door, his eyes lighted. He walked down the passage thoughtfully, licking his lips. . . .

Aurélie sat staring at the disordered cloth.

Long ago Misery had repaired to her eyes. Now Despair had come also. She was really frightened.

Lacaze was perfectly right. But for him, she would have married René. Ever since her disastrous wedding she had tried not to

think about the past—the old days. As for what might have been, this she had shut most rigidly out of her thoughts. As if to mock her pains, here was Fate flaunting it under her very nose. . . .

Again, God knows she was patient—to a fault. But her husband's derision of René had set her cheeks flaming. That it had made her heart warm towards her old swain, she did not realise. *That it had been intended so to do*, only another Lacaze could have guessed. The man was evil.

Finally, Aurélie knew in her heart that she had always loved René, and never Lacaze . . . that she had loved René very much . . . that at the present moment she loved him more than ever.

All things considered, then, that Silvia was thoroughly frightened is not surprising. There were breakers ahead.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lacaze knew that he could trust his wife. He knew that she was loyal, incorruptible, holy. Trading upon this holiness, he fairly thrust the lovers into each other's arms. Before his dominant will the two poor wretches were helpless. . . .

The climax came one beautiful July evening.

Dudoy had been bidden to call for Aurélie and take her to the Café de la Forêt Noire. There the two were to wait till the steeple-jack joined them.

"You know my corner," he had said. "Take it and sip your syrup until I arrive. I shall not be long, but Notre Dame is ailing. She has a crack, poor lady, in one of her horns. To be frank, it is an awkward business. I hope I shan't slip. If I did—well, you two would take care of each other, would you not?" He pinched his wife's ear. "Still, we will hope and pray my poor life may be spared."

At a quarter to seven, therefore, honest, curly-haired René strode down the Rue de Tocqueville, to fold sweet sorrow in his arms. Madame Lacaze was ready, and the two left at once.

On their way through the bustling streets they spoke very little. Matter-of-fact conversation was difficult enough to come by. They kept what reserve they had for the table without the window at the Café de la Forêt Noire.

This appeared soon enough.

René saw Aurélie settled, and called for drink. Then they began to talk—artificially. Aurélie laboured hard and met with success.

After a little, Dudoy began to dance to her piping. . . .

Then a laughing-eyed rogue of a child came and snapped the poor pipe in two.

What happened exactly was this. The tot had escaped from its parents three tables away. Liking the look of the lovers, it came to them straight, showed them its sixpenny watch, made them both free of its lips and, finally, desired them to draw a castle forthwith. Lack of a pencil and paper made it impossible to comply. Aurélie pointed this out gently enough. Pharaoh-like, the child waved aside the objection, demanding a castle tearfully. The two sought to distract him for all they were worth. . . . Here the parents suspended a bubbling colloquy to look for their offspring. Aurélie and René were rescued in the nick of time. . . .

The radiant father and mother were full of apologies.

"I pray you, forgive us. We were talking, and for a moment, we forgot. It is at this age that they must be watched all the time. *When you have a fine fat boy, you will understand.*"

Hats were raised, smiles and bows were exchanged, and the incident closed.

Aurélie and René Dudoy sat ready to burst into tears.

At length—

"*Mon Dieu!*" said René hoarsely. "*Mon Dieu*, it is not to be borne! I am a man, am I not? With blood in my veins? I am not a stock or a stone. I have a heart, Aurélie, a broken heart—that cries and cries and cries. All the time we are making our small talk my heart is crying. All the time—"

"René, René," wailed Aurélie, "why do you come? Why did you come to-day? Why yesterday? Why the day before that?"

"He makes me!" cried René. "You know it. I have no choice. Besides, the hours he offers me are of pure gold. I cannot throw them away. That evening I did not come, I nearly died. I sat and drank absinthe and wept till they asked me to go. The proprietor was very kind. He understood perfectly. But it was bad for the house."

"It was very bad for you," said Aurélie gravely. "But listen, René. You are wrong. The hours my husband offers you are not of gold at all. They are of cold, sharp steel, that—"

"Gold or steel," breathed René, "I do not care. They are spent in your company. There is a fence between us, I know—a hell of a fence—but we can peer through the

bars. It is permitted to touch you . . . watch your mouth move . . . hear the music of your voice—and, when you are gone, to embrace a memory.”

castles, such as that little one desired. . . .” His voice broke, and a bright tear rolled down Aurélie’s cheek. She swept it away swiftly. Dudoy pulled himself together.



“ ‘Did you think I was dead?’ he crowed.”

“ Hush, René, hush! *Mon Dieu*, will you have me faint? ”

“ Aurélie, Aurélie, why did you marry Pierre? A-a-ah, I do not blame you! Do not think that. It was your own affair. Only . . . we could have been happy, I think, and . . . and I can draw quite good

“ Bah! The milk is spilled. I watched you spill it at Ruffec that autumn day. Now, alas, you go thirsty! I feared you would. And I am thirsty too, sweet: for I would have drunk of that milk. Consider, then. Since we both thirst, it is better to share our misfortune. Besides, if the past is dead,

there is always the future. The good God, perhaps, will give us another pitcher." He paused and looked down at his feet. "A steeple-jack's work," he muttered, "is very dangerous." Aurélie shivered. "One day, perhaps—perhaps this very evening—he will not come back."

The girl shook her head.

"Yes, he will," she said dully. "Pierre will never slip." She started violently. "*Mon Dieu*, what have I said? Ah, René, believe me, I have been dreaming. The heat, perhaps. . . ." She laughed hysterically. "The past is dead," you were saying. "The past is dead."

The man had no ears to hear. His eyes were burning with hope.

"I love you," he said uncertainly. "I love your beautiful hands. I love your soft, dark hair. I cannot play with it now, because of the bars. But one day the bars will be broken, and then I shall come and fill these arms with its glory. Be sure, my heart, I shall wait and wait always . . . until the bars fall. Ah, see how the good God has given light to our darkness. He has shown us the way to go. Now, when we are together, we shall never be sad. We will remember always that we are waiting . . . just waiting . . . until the bars fall. . . ."

Head up, rigid, white-faced, Aurélie sat staring and seeing nothing. Her ears, however, were hearing perfectly. After a moment she braced herself, drawing a deep breath. Holy, fair and wise, her resolve was taken.

"I do not see," she said slowly, "that we have anything to share—you and I. A year ago, perhaps, there might have been something. But, as you said just now, the past is dead. And since we have nothing to share, René, it would be so much better if . . . if . . ."

She hesitated and passed a hand across her eyes.

René Dudoy stared.

"But what are you saying?" he cried. "You go back to where we began. We have thrashed all this out. You said our hours were not golden. I have shown you—"

"You have shown me that it is better, René, that we two should not meet any more."

"Not alone, perhaps. I think you are right, sweetheart. I will arrange that somehow. Now that we have our understanding—"

"I wish," said Aurélie steadily, "that you would leave Paris."

The other recoiled.

"What!" he screamed. "What! Leave Paris? *Mon Dieu!* This is more than I can stand." He leaned back in his chair and wiped the sweat from his face. "I think you are ill," he said. "To hear you, anyone would think that you did not care," he added desperately.

"I do not care," said Aurélie.

The young man started as though she had stabbed him with a knife. Then he went very white.

"I do not care," she repeated. "I do not want to hurt you, but you have made a mistake. Jean wrote to me, you know, and said you were very sad. He said you would not come to see us because—because you could not forget. I showed the letter to Pierre, and we agreed that we must be kind to you. We thought, perhaps, when you saw how—how happy we were, you would join in our happiness, and so become cured. Instead, you have grown worse. More—you have involved me terribly. I have tried to be kind, and you have mistaken my kindness for something else. It is really very difficult, René, but, you see, we are not at all in the same boat. I ought, of course, I see now, to have told you at once. But I didn't. I didn't want to hurt you, and—it was doing no harm. It is an awkward thing, you know, to tell any man—let alone an old friend. But now it is getting beyond . . . beyond a joke. . . ."

René winced at the word piteously. With white lips and a bleeding heart, Aurélie struggled on.

"You see, I have not told Pierre. . . . And I do not want Pierre, my husband, to make the same mistake. I do not think that he would, but you never know. And if he did, it would be very awkward for me. I do not know how I should show him that he was wrong. . . ."

"And so, you see, my friend, that when I said that the hours we spend together are of sharp steel, I was perfectly right. They pierce your heart, I fear, and they—they—embarrass me. . . . Don't look like that, René! I tell you, I'd hoped—"

"Hope?" cried René, with a wild laugh. "Hope? I do not know what you mean. What is hope?"

Here Lacaze appeared, smiling and nodding goodwill.

"Did you think I was dead?" he crowed. "I think that you must have. As a matter of fact, I've never been off the ground. Notre Dame was not ready for me. Instead, to tell you the truth, I have been talking

business." He jerked his head at the window directly behind them. "Sitting in there. I became so absorbed that I forgot our engagement. Then I heard your voices, you know, and that reminded me." He took his seat between them and looked benignantly round. "And now about supper. . . . I think a nice little *ragoût*, with potatoes *en robe de chambre*."

The party was not a success.

René Dudoy pleaded night-work and left at once.

As for Aurélie, she fainted before the *ragoût* was served.

\* \* \* \* \*

All things considered, I am inclined to think that when Madame Lacaze deceived the man she loved, because he was not her husband, she made another mistake. But then I am of the earth, earthy. What cannot possibly be denied is that it was a most splendid action. 'So shines a good deed in a naughty world.' Probably the trouble was that she did not trust herself. René's desire to make the word 'wait' their watchword was dangerous, because it was sweet. It would have been the thin end of the wedge. Aurélie was determined to play the game. It was not Lacaze she stood by, but the office he filled. It was not Dudoy she sent packing, but the devil himself. That her lover did not stand in her husband's shoes was her misfortune. As such, however, it did not affect the case. She was a good girl.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ten days after that dreadful evening at the Café de la Forêt Noire, the War came with a crash.

The electrical atmosphere of the next three months saved Aurélie's life. No spirit, however sick, could have failed to respond to such exciting treatment.

Lacaze, the steeple-jack, the lion, welcomed the War with flashing eyes. From the moment the storm broke, his one idea was to kill. When the time came, he fought with twice the ardour with which he had reduced high places. He soon became sergeant: he was worth ten ordinary men. In all his pride, however, he never forgot how once his heels had ached. Besides, his wife's dismissal of Dudoy had made him frown. . . .

Before he left for the battle he had arranged everything.

In reply to the questions which every soldier is asked, he stated that he was unmarried, and gave the name of Madame

José Beer (*née Tuyte*) as that of his next-of-kin.

Then he visited the dame and told her her new estate.

José was flattered, but curious. Lacaze enlightened her.

"Now, if I should be killed, the news will come to you."

"I shall mourn," said José.

"As you please," said Lacaze. "But burn the paper at once and keep your mouth shut. Tell no one. You know, I fear, that Aurélie is very stuck up." He sighed. "It is no good mincing matters. Her pride has caused me much grief. You and I are not good enough. She would, I think, like to be free. If she were free. . . ." He broke off and shrugged his shoulders. "There is a young officer somewhere. They correspond. . . ."

"The jade!" raged José. "The jade! The graceless minx! Trust me." Her voice vibrated. "She shall never be free. Never!" Here she became maudlin. "But, Pierre dear, I shall not receive the news. It is not to be thought of. . . ."

"Perhaps not," said Pierre shortly, taking his leave. "But remember my words. I trust you to see justice done."

"Never fear," cried José, her pig's eyes gleaming. . . .

Finally, the steeple-jack spoke with his wife.

He chose their last night together.

It was a stifling evening: such air as found its way into their apartment seemed to be stale: odours of neighbouring kitchens rose up stagnant. Out of the roar of the traffic continual cries of newsvendors stood as syrens out of a gale.

Aurélie sat by a window, sewing hard. Lacaze lounged upon a settee, smoking calmly and oiling a pair of boots.

My lady finished her stitching and cut the thread. Then she held up her work and turned it about. After a moment she rose and crossed to her husband.

"Is that what you want, Pierre? It does not look very well, but I think it will wear. If it is right, I will do the other shoulder."

Lacaze examined the shirt.

This was a cotton affair of green and grey stripes. Over one shoulder strips of fine linen had been laid, by way of a pad. These had been quilted beautifully.

"But this is charming," he said, putting his head on one side. "Ah, me, what it is to be loved! If René could only see this, he would jump into the Seine. You know,

I shall be chaffed—devilishly. No one will ever believe that this was the work of a wife. Never mind. I am content. Now I shall be cool these hot days, yet my shoulders will not be sore.” He peered at the linen. “Where did you find this stuff?”

“I cut up a chemise.”

Lacaze blew a kiss to the air.

“Sweeter and sweeter,” he crowed. “The soldier goes off to the war with his girl on his shoulder. My dear, you are getting quite gay. How did you think of such a charming conceit?”

“I did not,” said Aurélie coldly. “I had nothing else.”

“Use nothing else,” said Lacaze. “But always have a new shirt—I have six—with just the same delicate straps awaiting the day I return. For I shall return, sweeting. Never fear that I shan’t.” His voice rang out boldly. “Never fear, madame. Nothing will happen to me. I shall always come back.” He caught her arm in his hand and smiled up into her eyes. “Do you hear, my beautiful wife? Do you realise that? Poor Pierre will always return. Jean may lie out in the mud. What can be collected of Jacques may be dumped in a grave. René may writhe out his life with a bullet inside. But poor old Pierre, your husband, will always return.” He let go her arm and sank back in his seat. “Now, is that not good news? That widowhood is not for you? Believe me, my dear, you are a lucky woman. . . . Of course I may not always come back to you. War is so unsettling; one never knows. . . . But I shall not be killed. You see. And in the end you will triumph, and I—shall—come—back. . . .”

So soon as Madame Lacaze could find her voice, she asked her smiling husband what money she was to have to maintain herself and the apartment.

His reply was definite.

“The apartment is given up and the furniture sold. I have done that to-day. You will lodge with the Marats and go out to work. I had been wondering what you could do, my sweet, but you have shown me. If you sew hard, you will make quite a lot of money.”

Aurélie walked to the window and picked up the remains of her chemise. The garment tugged at her thoughts. She let them go. . . .

In an instant she was at Ruffec, stepping the cool, quiet streets. There was old Monsieur Laffargue, the doctor, getting down from his gig. Now he was smiling broadly and rallying her about her cheeks.

‘You must do something,’ he said. She could hear his jolly old voice. ‘Something. I don’t know what. No one will ever believe there’s no paint there.’ She passed on smiling. . . . A voice called from a window. Madame Durand, of course, the postman’s wife. ‘Aurélie, Aurélie, my sister has had a son. A great fat rogue, they say, four kilos at birth. Is it not wonderful?’ Aurélie rejoiced with her, and went her way. Then Père Fréchou stopped her, to give her five great peaches—two for each of her eyes and one for her pretty red lips. . . . She came to the Rue de l’Image, all decked with the evening sun. The awnings of the little shops made it absurdly narrow, like a toy street. And there, striding into the sunlight, came René Dudoy. His healthy young face lighted up. ‘I was on my way, Aurélie, to tell you how lucky I am. The *patron* has been given the order for three mantel-pieces in stone at the Château St. Pol, and I am to do the work and to put them in.’ ‘Oh, René, I am so glad—so awfully glad. Go on and tell Jean and Jacques. Or stay—go home and get Marie and bring her to supper with us. See what Père Fréchou has given me. Did ever you see such beauties? We’ll eat them to-night in your honour. There’s plenty of cream.’ René’s face was a picture. Aurélie passed on thoughtfully. . . . At the draper’s she laid out her money—some thirty-two francs—not without much hesitation and plucking at stuffs. Madame Bidart was kindness itself, and made her a price. Indeed, the old lady refused to sell her the linen she chose. It was not good enough, she declared. Now, this was superb—fit for a king’s daughter. ‘But I am not a king’s daughter,’ protested Aurélie, laughing. ‘You are an angel from heaven,’ said Madame Bidart. ‘I tell you—’

“How long will you be?” said Lacaze, yawning luxuriously. “I mean, it is getting late, and I must be up at five.”

“A quarter of an hour,” said his wife, and bent to her work.

The night was stifling.

\* \* \* \* \*

Aurélie’s younger brother was killed that fateful August. Ere September was old, Jean had been taken prisoner. Of René, no news reached her.

For the matter of that, she heard naught of Lacaze, either. He had not told her his regiment. He never wrote. The man might have been dead. . . . might have. . . .

He came to see her at last, one dark December morning. . . .

When he went back, he took a shirt with him.

Twice more he came to see her, and each time took back a shirt. He swore by these garments—called them his mascots, his charms—declared he could never be killed while she sat on his shoulders. . . .

The idea stuck.

Aurélié began to believe her linen was preserving his life.

She tried to be grateful.

Two shirts remained to be strapped. Setting to work one Sunday, she found her chemise was gone. She had used all its stuff. Her impulse, of course, was to purchase a piece of fresh linen. Without a thought she would have done so, but for his idle words. As it was. . . .

The temptation was frightful.

Why should she cut up her own clothes? Besides, faith put in mascots was vain—heathenish. What could they profit a man? Supposing they could. . . . Supposing there was some curious guardian virtue in linen she wore. . . . Well, *what—if—there—was?*

She thrust the shirt away and went for a walk.

The next morning she bought some new linen. . . .

She came back from Mass a week later and cut up another chemise.

The third winter of the War stole upon a frantic world, stumbling and striking. Lacaze did not come. He had not returned since April—April of 1916. Aurélié began to wonder . . . wonder why he did not appear.

When the New Year was in, she went to the War Office.

She did not get far.

"You are his wife?" said the clerk.

"Yes."

"What is his regiment?"

"I do not know. He has never told me."

"Show me a letter of his."

"I have none. He never writes."

"Nor you to him?"

"Never. He was sergeant, I think."

Two shoulders were shrugged.

"So are many. You are sure you are married?"

"Of course."

"Well, then, Madame, he is safe. No news is good news. You would have heard, certainly. There is no doubt about it. Calm yourself, Madame. He will come back."

But Lacaze did not come.

Again, in June, she went to the War Office.

She saw the same clerk. He asked the same questions, shrugged the same shoulders, gave her the same reply. . . .

That autumn her orders fell off. People, I suppose, were beginning to sew for themselves. Aurélié could hardly find work for two days a week. The Marats—the people she lodged with—saw what was coming, and, meeting her trouble half-way, diverted it from their path. In a word, they gave her notice. This, thanks to their foresight, they were able to do without any compunction at all. It would not have been nice to turn out a soldier's wife—possibly 'reliet'—because she could not pay her way. As it was, they could look the world in the face. They did so defiantly. They also cancelled, with sighs, their subscription to an orphanage on the ground that they had lost a valuable paying guest. . . .

Aurélié entered the service of an English officer's wife.

Early in 1918 she received a letter from Jean.

*DEAREST AURÉLIE,*

*I have come back alive out of death. I have been a prisoner, you know, for nearly four years. Now I have been exchanged—because I am useless to France. I am rather run down, you see, and my right arm is gone. But take heart, dearest. I can do nothing just yet, and the Army has sent me home, but old Monsieur Laffargue says I shall be as strong as ever in ten or twelve months. I am with the Dudoys. René has been back some time. Do you know he is blind? . . .*

*Blind. . . .*

Those gentle grey eyes sightless. . . . Those strong brown fingers picking and feeling their way. . . .

Aurélié was at the War Office within the half-hour.

The clerk she had seen was gone, and another attended to her case. This was a kindly fellow, who had dried many eyes.

He heard her out gravely. Then—

"Madame, be happy. Absolutely your husband is safe. Take it from me. He has not even a scratch. Always the wife hears at once. That he has not been to see you is easily explained. Ten to one he is in the East—Salonica, making fat Bulgars perspire. He wrote and told you, of course, but the letter was sunk. These Germans! Madame, believe and be happy. Your husband is safe. I tell you he will come back."

Aurélié stole out of the building as she would have stolen out of a dock. She had

committed a crime, and had been given judgment.

She would have given anything to go to Ruffec . . . anything—except the one thing she had. This was her self-respect. If she went to Ruffec, if once she saw those strong brown fingers groping their pitiful way, the flesh might spoil the spirit of its only hoard. And that meant poverty she could not face. She was a good girl.

\* \* \* \* \*

Eighteen months had gone by, when Lady Joan Satinwood told her French maid that it was her determined intention to winter in France.

"We shall go down by car, Aurélie—the Major and I, and you and the chauffeur. It'll be great fun, and I expect you'll be thrilled to see your country again."

"Yes, madame."

"I suppose you've—you've no news?"

"Of my husband? No, madame."

"I'm sorry. But don't despair. Remember my cousin, Sir George. And he was reported 'killed.' Two and a half years afterwards, Aurélie, he came walking in. . . ."

"Yes, madame."

When Aurélie learned in mid-Channel, some three weeks later, that they were to go by Poitiers, she felt very faint. . . .

Poitiers lies north of Ruffec, just forty-one miles.

"*Et de Poitiers?* . . . After we 'ave lef' Poitiers? . . ."

"Angoulême," said the chauffeur, thumbing his itinerary. "That's right. Vivonne, Chaunay, Ruffec, Angoulême. Sleep Angoulême. Nex' day—Barbézieux, Bordeaux. Sleep Bor——'Elp!"

He dropped his paper and caught his companion as she swayed. Then he carried her into the saloon and sought for a stewardess. . . .

Later that day he recounted his experience to a friend.

"I arst 'er if she was a good sailor, too," he concluded aggrievedly.

Four days later, as they were entering Poitiers, a brake-rod snapped. No resultant damage was done, but the car was stopped at a garage that Terry—the chauffeur—might see if an adjustment could be made. By good fortune, it could.

The car was backed over a pit, and Terry got out of his coat and into his overalls. He was a good chauffeur. Where his car was concerned, he fancied his own fingers more than a hireling's.

The Major got out and went strolling.

Lady Joan stayed in the car. Aurélie stood in the garage, translating for Terry.

Half an hour's work, and the connection was made.

Terry heaved himself out of the pit and called for waste.

The mechanics stared.

"Cotton waste," said the chauffeur. "Comprenny? Pour wiper the 'ands."

Aurélie smiled and asked for a rag.

A mechanic went shuffling. A moment later he returned with a rectangular cardboard box.

"*Voilà*," he said.

"Wot's this?" said Terry, staring. "Dog biscuits?"

The mechanic pointed to the label—

ESSUYAGES ASEPTISÉS.

"We use nothing else," he explained.

"They are all manner of rags, quite clean and sterilised. This boxful will last a long time."

The chauffeur asked the price, ripped open the box, and pulled out the first piece of stuff. Aurélie took the box from him and stowed it away in the car.

When she returned, Terry had wiped his hands and was looking curiously at his duster.

"'Ere's a present from Flanders all right," he said slowly. "See? That's where some pore bloke stopped one."

Aurélie peered at the stuff.

This was the left breast of what had been a man's shirt. Immediately over the heart there was a rough hole. The cotton thereabouts was all stained to a dull brown, so that the green and grey stripes were indistinguishable. The shoulder was gone, but hanging from the top of the fragment was a strip of quilted linen.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let me quote from Lady Joan's letter, dated some five days later and written from St. Jean-de-Luz.

. . . I saw the shirt myself. It was a terrible document. Poor girl! The shock was frightful. As luck would have it, the very neat town on our route—a place called Ruffec—was her old home. Her brother was there. We found him and handed her over. Whether she'll ever come back to me, I haven't the faintest idea. . . .

Again let me quote from a letter her ladyship wrote when two months had gone by.

P.S.—You remember Aurélie? I've just had a note from her, saying she's married again! No wonder France is recovering more quickly than England. Most English girls would still be upon slops. However, that's her



*affair. But isn't it just my luck? She was a perfect maid.*

Which was a true saying.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two years later Lacaze alighted at Ruffec from the Paris train.

The man was changed terribly. Five years in the German mines had left their mark. He had been broken down.

His hair was grised, his broad, square shoulders were bowed, his carriage mean. None would have known the shrunken, shambling figure for that of the mighty steeple-jack. His countenance, however, was unmistakable. This was ravaged, too, but the old faint smile still hung about those merciless lips, and the old insolent scorn still smouldered in the big black eyes.

Lacaze pulled his hat over his face and stood waiting till such travellers as had also alighted should have left the platform.

A horn brayed, and the train began to move.

"Good-bye!" cried a voice. "Good-bye! If you see René Dudoy, ask him if he remembers Fernand Didier, and say I was sorry I had no time to visit him. Good-bye!"

The train gathered speed and rumbled out of the station.

Lacaze moved towards the gates thoughtfully.

Half an hour later he darkened the creamery's hatch.

René looked up from his work. He was making a basket.

"Enter, monsieur," he said. "And sit down, please. My wife will be back in a moment, and then she will serve you."

Slowly Lacaze came in, looking down on the ground.

"You are married, then?" he said quietly.

The other stared.

"Yes," he said, "monsieur. Why not?"

"No reason at all," said Lacaze, smiling.

"And how is your wife?"

René returned to his work.

"She is very well, thank you."

"I am glad of that," said Lacaze. "Very glad."

René Dudoy looked up.

"Monsieur's interest is unusually kind. Would it be indiscreet to ask why?"

Lacaze gave a short laugh.

"I know her," he said. "She was a friend of mine. But I thought that she married Lacaze—Lacaze, the steeple-jack."

"She did," said Dudoy. "But he was killed in the War. And after, she married me. But, monsieur, tell me your name. If you are a friend of hers, you must have been mine also."

"I was," said Lacaze softly, his chin on his chest. "I knew you well." The other set down his basket and rose to his feet. "We were both at her wedding. You sent her roses, I think. And I sent her—violets."

"Not violets," said René. "You must have sent something else. You forget. Lacaze sent her violets."

In a flash Lacaze had stepped forward and pulled off his hat.

"Your servant," he breathed, smiling.

Dudoy wrinkled his brow.

"I cannot think who you are," he said.

"Do tell me your name." The other's smile faded into a stare. "There are times, you know, when one misses one's sight terribly." Lacaze started. "When Aurélie's here, I can see. We share her beautiful eyes." He threw back his curly head. "Then, if you offered me sight, I would not take it. My blindness is a bond between us which those who have eyes of their own can never know. But—when she leaves me, then sometimes the old darkness returns—that awful darkness which, when she came to me, Aurélie did away . . . And now, I pray you, monsieur, tell me your name."

Lacaze turned his head and stared into the sunlit street.

Then—

"I am Fernand Didier," he said. "And—and I must go, or I shall miss my train."

He pulled his hat over his eyes and blundered out of the shop.

René cried to him to stay.

"Fernand! Fernand!"

Lacaze took no notice.

Ten minutes later he was clear of the town.

*A new story by Dornford Yates on a theme of notable interest will appear complete in the next number.*



## SEA-DREAMS

**A** TALL ship, and a tangled spire  
That leans upon the wind,  
They fill the landsman with desire  
To leave the land behind  
Where all the mad wheels grind.

Her slender spars, her windlass high,  
Her creaking chain that falls,  
So haunt him that he cannot lie  
Asleep within four walls,  
For still the wide sea calls.

He sees her sailing after dark  
With lamps of red and green,  
On waters where the phosphor-spark  
Floats by with phantom sheen,  
And tropic isles are seen.

He sees the sunken ducats glint,  
The cunning sea-girls snatch  
And rake with nails of amber flint  
The gold under the hatch,  
And keep their cruel watch.

And ships that sailed long, long ago  
To Tripoli or Tyre,  
Move in his mind on waves that flow  
With gleams of phosphor-fire  
Beneath the tangled spire.

WILFRID THORLEY.

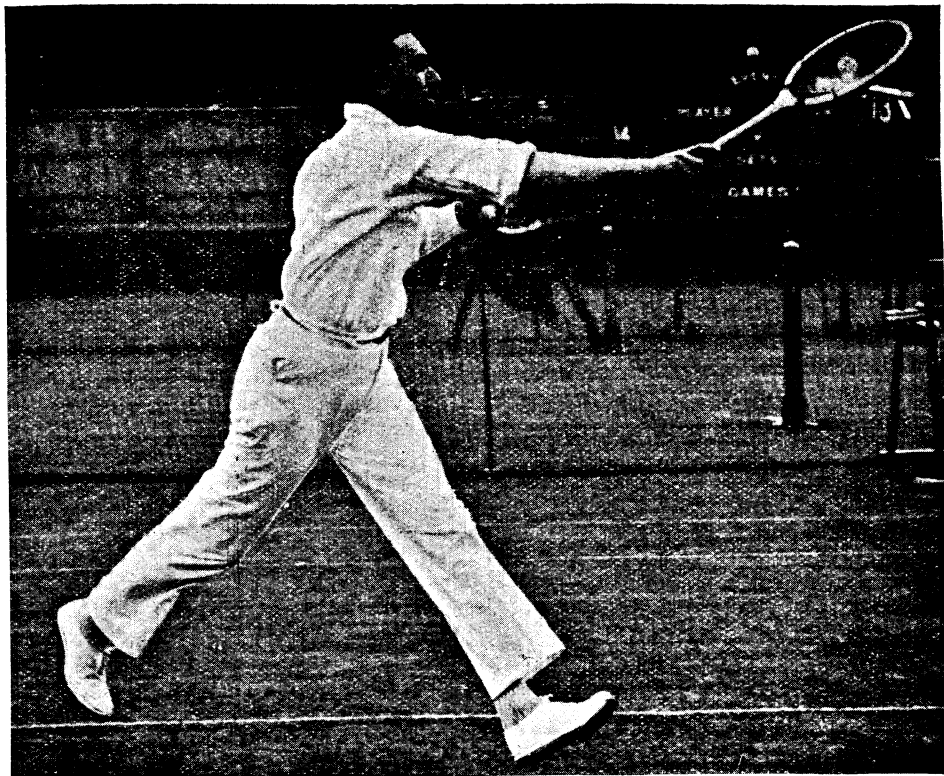


Photo by;

A. H. GOBERT IN PLAY.

[Topical.

# MY LAWN TENNIS LIFE

By A. H. GOBERT

*French Champion, 1911-1913, 1919-1920; Covered Court Champion, 1912; World's Covered Court Champion, singles and doubles, 1919-1920, etc., etc.*

I WAS born in Paris, in September 1890. My father died when I was six years old and my mother when I was twelve. My only near relation was my sister, a little older than myself. Every summer, we used to go for our holidays to a little seaside town named Cabourg, situated on the north coast not far from Deauville. There, for the first time in my life, was lent to me when I was eleven years old, a thirteen-ounce tennis racquet belonging to one of my sister's girl friends. I was permitted to pick up balls and act as ball-boy for the *grandes personnes*,

who played what I already thought to be a wonderful game. Of course, the play was really of quite a poor standard, being merely the "pat-ball" game of old times played on a court which probably had not the real proportions. This tennis court was roughly constructed between two walls separating two cottages; the lines, more or less straight and of dark blue colour, were painted on wooden laths so as not to get worn out too quickly. There was hardly any run on the back or side, certainly not two yards; immediately beyond the

outside lines the court ended and the grass (and what grass!) touched the outer part of the lines.

The tennis played was of the most simple sort; everyone stood back; it was by the unwritten law of that antediluvian epoch, almost forbidden to approach the net and volley. Any shot had to be played as near

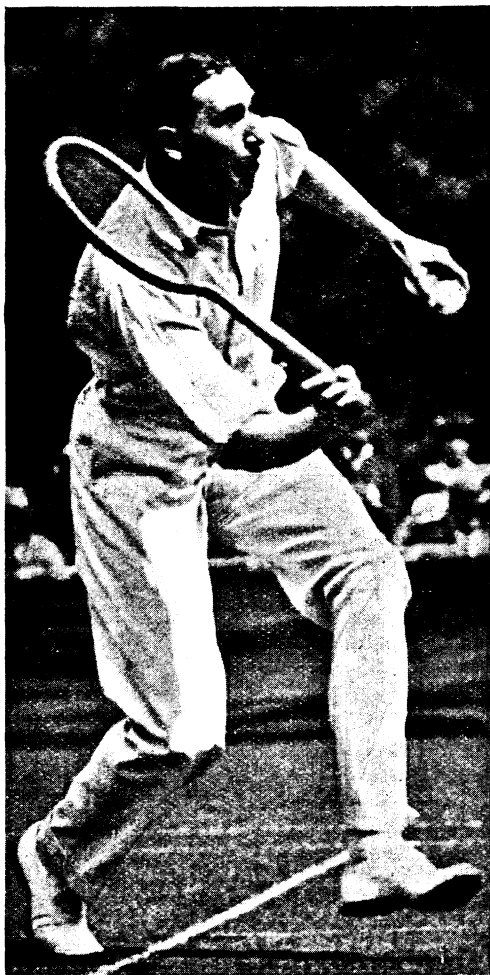


Photo by]

[Topical.

A. H. GOBERT: A FOREHAND VOLLEY.

as possible to one of the opponents and if, by transgressing this rule, any of the contestants dared to play a short one or make too hard a hit, it was considered a horrible offence. A player of such calibre was immediately called a "carottier," which meant in our cant French, that he did not play the game fairly.

I did not miss, of course, any of these

memorable *séances*, and though I was not yet allowed to play, my pleasure was great if I could handle the racquet of any kind person not actually on the court. Between every service game I first sent the balls to the other side of the net with my racquet, and then rushed promptly to pick them up and hand them to the server.

Backhands were quite an unknown thing; everyone tried to run round, and when occasionally, once or twice during the week, anyone had succeeded in sending back a real backhand hit, naturally executed in the most deplorable style, this wonderful fact was a subject of conversation for many days.

How it was that I had such a fancy for the game and loved it to such an extent as to prefer watching it to playing any game suitable to my age with my little friends, I cannot tell. But I really loved to watch it better than I liked doing anything else. This lasted two or three years. Occasionally, I was given the opportunity of practicing a few shots with some very kind person, and when, by an extraordinary piece of good luck, they missed one to complete their foursome, I was permitted to take part in a game. This was great and I remember how quickly my heart beat. Of course, there was no question of my playing during the winter in those years. I had a chance during the month we stayed at Cabourg, but that was all.

In 1905, I think, the Sporting Club of Houlgate, another town three miles from Cabourg, was opened. At that time, I had improved and I played often with my older friends; we did not know yet the benefit of what I would call the "symmetrical grip," and used to serve and play with the face of the bat parallel to the net, using a kind of push shot, with the head of the racquet always held upwards. The service had, of course, little strength and was nearly always played with backspin.

One day I had an opportunity to go and watch the play at Houlgate. It was a revelation to me, as I saw what I found was quite a different game. A few English and American players, spending their holiday in that delightful resort, played the game with good French players. To me, they seemed to play a wonderful game, driving, volleying, serving at a terrific speed and, to my great astonishment, going for *placements*! What a change, what a revolution in my mind! Back at home, I told all this to my team-mates and we tried, day

after day the "new" shots and the "real" game.

One very lucky thing for me happened that same year. During the winter I was a student at a college in Paris named the *Lycée Carnot*, where we had a very large space covered with a glass roof, used as a recreation ground for the different classes, and the floor of it was entirely of asphalt. Some of the old students had the excellent idea to ask, and the luck to obtain, permission to use it on Thursday and Sunday afternoons, when the *Lycée* was closed, to play tennis.

A collection was made amongst these enthusiasts, and they were able to buy two nets with posts. At the beginning, the lines were marked with chalk; we had to do this ourselves, of course, and it took some time. The posts could not be solidly fixed, as we



Photo by]

[Sport & General.

A. H. GOBERT: A BACKHAND VOLLEY.



Photo by]

[Sport & General.

A. H. GOBERT: ANOTHER BACKHAND STROKE.

were not permitted to dig holes in the ground. We had to put weights on the little platform at the base of the posts; every two or three minutes these used to slide on the ground, and the net in consequence lowered itself to such an extent that we had to pull them apart. To complete the appointments, stop-nettings were spread between the rails of the balcony at both ends of the courts, to avoid the balls breaking the glasses of the surrounding windows.

This was my first experience on a covered court. Half a dozen good players, most of them old students of the *Lycée* and members of the Racing Club of France or *Stade Français*, clubs which had no covered courts, used to come very regularly every Sunday and Thursday. They knew the game, had a good style, an orthodox grip and all the range of strokes. I improved my game tremendously during that winter, playing all the time against better players than myself. Watching my improvements, they gave me much good advice and encouragement and I began to understand that I might some day play decent tennis.

The result was that the next summer, 1906, I found myself a better player at Cabourg, and had no difficulty in playing with the elder players on our private court. In 1907, after some good tennis on our covered court at the *Lycée Carnot*, I badly wanted to join the Houlgate club, as they had handicaps and championship events reserved to the members of the club. The great difficulty was to convince my guardian—who had charge of me—to give me the necessary sum of money to pay the club's fee for a fortnight's membership. I needed thirty francs, a little over a pound at the pre-war rate. After much discussion and the moral help of my sister, I succeeded in raising this enormous amount of money. I then entered for the members' championship and handicap singles and lost both in the very first round by two love sets. I played, if my memory is accurate, an Englishman named Bowlen, in the championship. His game, mostly cut or sliced drives and backhands, was a terror to me and I could not hit two balls right. That same year, I played also in the open tournament; being a little more successful, I passed two or three rounds only to meet Bowlen again—the ultimate winner of the cup—who, this time, allowed me five or six games in the two sets. I had improved and understood the benefit of "Club Tennis."

I decided to join, as soon as possible, one of the leading Paris clubs and, in the spring of 1908, became a member of the Racing Club of France. My first handicap there—at the spring meeting for members of the club only—was, by no means, a success: I was on the + 15.3-6 mark and failed badly. I played again at Cabourg, and at Houlgate, where I did much better this time and, when autumn arrived, I made my application for the most famous covered court club of the capital, the *Tennis Club de Paris*. This club

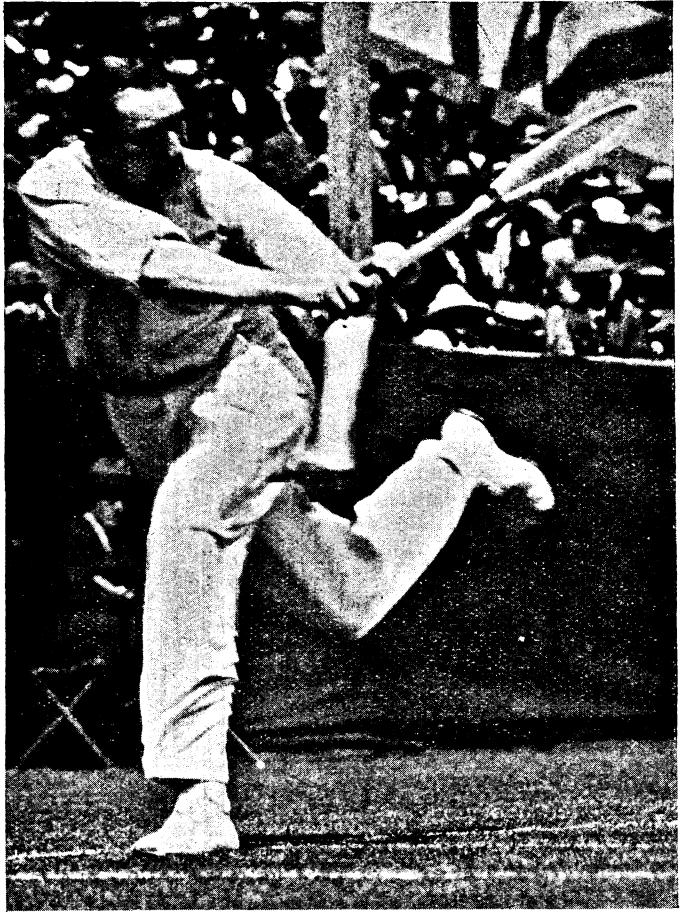


Photo by

A. H. GOBERT: ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC STROKE.

[Topical.]

was regarded by everyone as the French citadel of high class tennis, and included among its members all the leading players of France—Decugis, Germot, Aymé, Vacherot, Mény, Canet, Worth, Lebreton, Poulin, Gault, and many other prominent players. It was at this club that the modern game was played. The sporting as well as the club spirit were very high; every one played the game for the game itself, with the main idea of improving his tennis. The French style of play was carefully nursed under the keen and paternal eye of the late M. Masson, one of the founders of the club in 1895, and one of the greatest sportsmen I ever met. As the number of members was strictly limited to 250, it was difficult to get admission and the committee had power to admit only those it chose. In one word, it was the nursery of French lawn-tennis. A player of the

*Tennis Club de Paris* could easily be recognised by his free style and the execution of his strokes.

There I really advanced, playing on wood all the winter. Carefully watching such good players as these mentioned above, I, involuntarily and little by little, modelled my style on theirs and made rapid advance. At the handicap meeting of the Racing Club, in the spring of 1909 I was on the - 40 mark and I got to the semi-final of this event, losing against a + 15.3-6 player, amongst a field of sixty-four players.

That year I won my first leg on the Houlgate Cup, beating in the final my excellent friend C. C. Wyllie, of Queen's Club, whose famous forehand drive was always a terror for any of his opponents. I played consistently all the summer and when I got

back to the wooden floor in autumn, I decided to train seriously throughout the coming winter.

The difficulties for so doing were great for me. I was a student in another school preparing for my engineer's examination. Only on Sundays had I a chance to play, and of course in the different holidays during the year. But nearly every day I managed to leave the school. We were supposed to have lunch at noon. I rushed to the dining-room as soon as possible, and in less than ten minutes finished my meal. I had to catch a train on the Paris Inner Circle Railway which brought me, in less than a quarter of an hour, to Auteuil; a run to the covered Courts, and I could be on the court by 12.40, where the professional of the club, the late L. E. Ware, an excellent player, was ready

waiting for me. As I had to be back at my school by 1.30, you can easily imagine that during the play I had one eye on the ball and the other on the clock. To save time, I changed my shoes, but not my clothing. Pardon me for giving all these details, but *this is really how I improved my tennis*. Most people believe I am a natural player, who always had a style and the strokes, but nothing is further from the facts. Nearly every day for months did I have this little half-hour practice with Ware. I was also at that time—and this helped me a great deal—in interested in reading all the new books on the

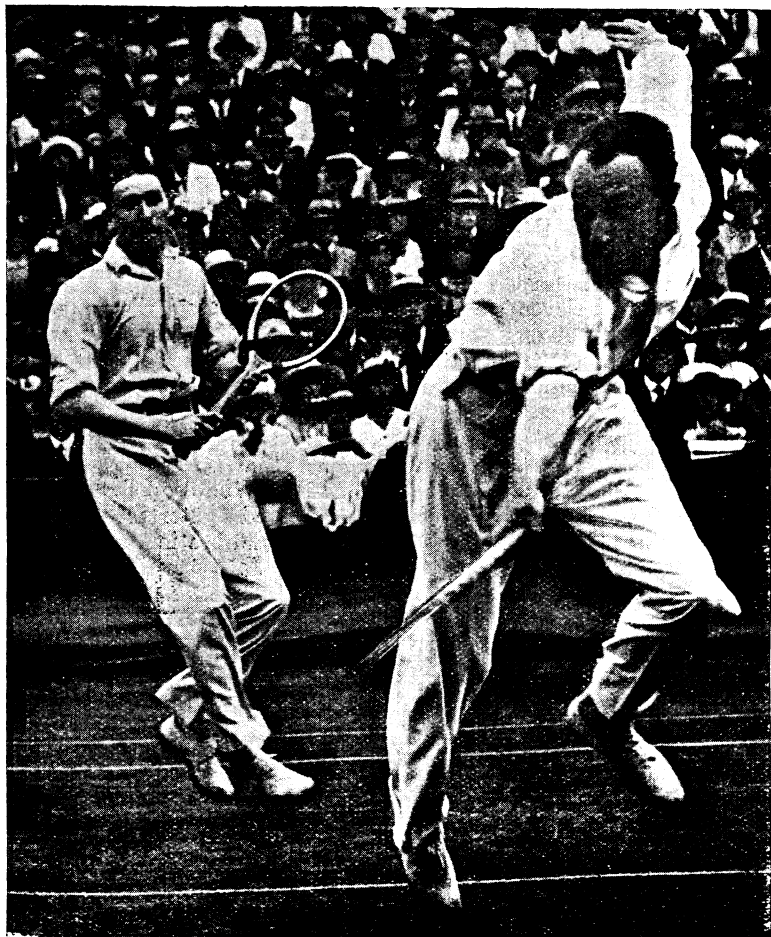


Photo by]

[Typical.

A. H. GOBERT AND W. H. LAURENTZ v. W. T. TILDEN AND W. M. JOHNSTON, IN THE DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP OF AMERICA.



game. One of the first that I read, handed to me by M. Masson, was H. L. and R. F. Doherty's book on Lawn Tennis. Then I went through the books of several other writers on the game, and Decugis's when it was published later on.

Mentally I learnt the game by forming for myself my own conception of it, but I learnt the actual strokes with Ware in those very short practice bouts that I had three or four times a week. We were never satisfied, and after practising the most important shots, fore and backhand drives, we continued through all the range of volleys, then the service, then the smash, the lobs and every form of stroke.

By this constant mental as well as physical training I gradually evolved the strokes and execution which have combined to form my style.

On Sundays I played games with my friends, and very rapidly did the best players of the club accept me in their fours. That year, 1910, I beat, during our Easter meeting, F. G. Lowe, and this was my first international victory. I then entered, the week after, in the Queen's Club meeting for the first time, and Gordon Lowe took his revenge by beating me in the fifth set and actually won the title. It was for me the first tournament of what I would call my English Tour. I stayed in England three months in succession, and played in eleven tournaments. This was my first trial on grass, and of course I could not expect to win anything, and did not. But I mention this trip because I really think it gave my game that necessary touch that nobody can acquire without playing on grass. I was, when I landed in England, frightfully unsteady. When I left, I had understood the value of steadiness, and though I could not actually, in such a short time, change my game and the conception of it which I had forged in my brain in the course of years, it certainly did me a tremendous amount of good to get beaten, time and again, by men whom I thought I could beat.

On my return home, I immediately felt the benefit of my recent experiences on grass, and nearly succeeded in beating my friend Decugis, who was at that time one of the very best players on the Continent. I really think my trip round the London tournaments made me understand many sides of the game different to those I had been

made to cultivate. I understood the right value of steadiness; I understood that tennis not only resided in the execution of strokes, but that in the brain lies, in many cases, more than half the job. The English turf did not allow my arm to hit the ball as freely as my Paris wooden and hard courts, so I had to find something else. I had also the advantage of playing some double games with such a magnificent teacher as L. O. S. Poidevin, a man who knew perfectly well what the word *placement* meant. His style of play was very much like Lycett's, especially his low drive on the return of the service and his *stance* on the court. He explained to me that the two great principles in doubles are: (a) to send the ball over the net once more often than your opponent; and (b) that in most cases the best and safest *placement* was between the two opposite players. So simple, but so true. During all the winter 1910-1911 I never forgot, during my practice games with Ware or with my friends, what the English turf had taught me.

The year 1911 was for me a most successful one, and I won the French National title (covered and hard courts) for the first time; I succeeded also at Queen's (C.C.), in Rome, Brussels, at Wimbledon, where I won the doubles with Max Decugis, and I represented my country in many international competitions.

In October 1912, I entered the army as a gunner, but beforehand I perhaps had a record as good as in the previous year, retaining my title at Queen's in a hard-fought 5-sets match with Antony Wilding, winning two gold medals in the Olympic competition (C.C.), and reaching the final of the all-comers at Wimbledon, when your wonderful player and fighter, A. W. Gore, gave me again a sound beating.

\* \* \* \* \*

After the War life had very much changed for everyone, and I never felt I played the same tennis as before; and if occasionally I managed to get through some competition, I don't think I ever did it with the same physical fitness, the same confidence, or the same quality of play as in old times. Seven years off the court is too great an interval, and the great strain on the brain as well as the nerves, of the War, has proved, time and again, a heavy handicap which I could not overcome.





“‘My friend,’ I began, ‘is a rich eccentric.’”

# THE STYLE IN HATS

By HARRISON RHODES

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

A SURPRISING number of the pleasant stories of the world begin at lunch. Lunch is, in fact, a good idea. It is an even better idea if it can be taken at a certain restaurant, of about three courses, and, to my taste, be accompanied by a light white wine. Such being my simple tastes as to the mid-day meal, it is not strange that I seated myself that day as Arthur Hatch's guest at a small table, well placed to afford a view of the room, with definite satisfaction.

The existence of an Assistant Professor of Social Sciences at Cambridge does not include regularly much lurching upon this high and frivolous plane. A fortnight in London is for me—ah, so much more than a fortnight in London as you Londoners

understand it! I come very close to forgetting economics, the socialistic future, and the reconstruction of the world, as I lecture upon them in Cambridge, and almost consider the world as I survey it (and lunch in it) already adequately constructed. And yet the Londoner who says that the 'bus-driver's holiday is always to sit on the front seat of a 'bus and see another driver drive has hit at the truth for all of us. I do not, of course, haunt class-rooms and listen to lectures by my miserable *confrères*. But into the very gayest of my gaities somehow the social sciences have often intruded. They dress gaily, as for a masquerade, of course; they, too, are on a holiday, and if they perform experiments, it is in the spirit of blithe adventure—

Copyright, by Harrison Rhodes, in the United States of America.

they execute wild fantasies upon the theme of my lectures. Yet experience seems to teach me nothing. When the *hors d'œuvres* arrived that day, in about fifteen small silver dishes upon a large tray, and I set myself to selecting from them, I recognised nothing to indicate the beginning of history.

Instead, as I raised a glass of Dubonnet, iced and its sweetness slightly corrected by a touch of the juice of the lime (an invention of Arthur's own), and drank my host's health, I thought—if I may correctly be said to have indulged in thought at all—that his health stood little in need of our or anyone else drinking to it. I thanked Heaven that I had from college days preserved so handsome, so good-natured, so genial a friend, so ignorant, too, of all the distressing facts indicating that the world has gone awry which filled my lectures and tormented many of my working days.

Arthur's mind was virgin of all knowledge of the social sciences, though adequately equipped with an acquaintance with all the sports and with all the arts needed to make life in Park Lane tolerable. He enjoyed London to the full without ever growing excited about it. He would, for example, probably have given me lunch at the Racquet that day had I not, as he put it, "thirsted for blood," and insisted on a restaurant with music and confusion and pretty women. I called his attention especially to two ladies.

"For an assistant—whatever you are—you are a fair picker," said Arthur, in compliment to my taste. "Those are Mrs. Freddie Lance, who is the last word at Cowes, and Teresa McLane, who is the first and last word in the show at the Princess. Yes, some fair assistant picker."

"Oh, I can still tell a pretty woman when I see one," I boasted easily.

"Can you?" mused my companion enigmatically, almost darkly. "That is more than I can always do nowadays. I don't suppose that I've any special call to register a personal complaint, but, honest, the hats they wear nowadays——"

We gazed about. The styles are really appalling, if you look at them in cold blood. Near by a bright scarlet feather was fixed upon a so-called hat at an angle which brought it down below the brim and in front of the occupant's face, obscuring completely an eye, which, to try to judge by its mate, might have been fit to look at. Arthur and I gazed sardonically at the lady and at each other. Of course

at such moments one feels proud to be a man.

"Women wouldn't wear such hats if they had any sense of humour," I said.

"Why drag in humour?" My companion slowly rose to the occasion. "Why not say if they had any sense?"

The waiter just then brought a very handsome *truite saumonée, sauce verte*, and I should have been inclined to quit the subject. But Arthur hung to it. I have no explanation beyond the supposition that he very rarely started on even as mildly original a train of thought as this, and so found it agreeable. Little enough could he guess that his whole future hung in the balance. Had he known, he might have let well enough alone in this matter of hats.

"Now, the prettiest woman in this whole room is, of course, Eva Morpont; but, I ask you, would you know it?"

I sat up at once. The mere name of Mrs. Morpont suggested all that was prettiest and wittiest in London, all that was gayest and most elegant, most famous and most fashionable. Indeed, an uncrowned queen! I could scarcely have maintained that I knew her, but an introduction had once been said over us; I had twice, as it were, touched the hem of her garment, and I was her devoted slave. And yet there she sat, on her lovely head, not the crown which belonged there, but what seemed a mere great plain cube of black velvet, a huge ugly square box with no trimming whatever, unless it was a thin line of what may have been a ruffle, which ran around where the brim would have been had the thing been human.

"It seems a pity," I admitted.

"Who sets the styles?" asked Arthur. "Is it Frank Crowninshield, with that magazine of his? If he does, Eva ought never to speak to him again."

"I should think that a leader of fashion like Mrs. Morpont could set the styles herself, if she wanted to."

"It is a pity she don't," rejoined Arthur emphatically, if not in quite the best grammar.

What followed was probably my fault. Indeed, I hope it was; I should like to take credit for the whole of what happened. I held my glass, *un petit Chablis*, meditatively for a moment before I drank from it. Memories of what had happened once in Venice came over me, when I had stood, a very mild young Mephisto, at a

millionaire friend's elbow and prompted him to wonderful doings. Perhaps with Arthur—though he was slower and less imaginative than Courtlandt French—something might happen.

"I wish you could find out how to change the styles," said I. "It would give you a useful occupation in life, Arthur, and some way of spending your silly fortune."

He grinned.

"You might, at any rate, ask Mrs. Morpont if she won't start a decent fashion—that is, if you have any influence with her."

He blushed slowly. It was quite obvious that, like a huge good-natured cub, he admired her enormously—or more. But his embarrassment was voiced in a characteristic Mayfairish twentieth-century way.

"Oh, I assure you I have a great deal of influence with her. Much more than Jack Morpont, anyway. Shall we go over and ask her about hats?"

"You wouldn't dare to," I insinuated.

There was a pause before the waiter might legitimately be expected to reappear with Stew Irlandaise. Arthur rose and crossed to Mrs. Morpont's table. History had begun, and I started in its trail.

Mrs. Morpont was lunching with Mrs. Ferris and Miss Talbot Fram and Eustace Henry and two officers, and was amiability itself.

"What she sees in those fellows!" Arthur muttered, and then he pulled himself together for his task.

"I hope you won't mind, Eva, if I say something serious to you," he began.

"I'm delighted," she smiled bewilderingly. "I don't think you've ever said anything serious to me, Arthur. That is, not before witnesses. What the man is in private, of course——" she went on, turning to one of her companions.

"A woman like you," Arthur interrupted her, "has a duty to the community."

The phrase in Arthur's mouth was strange and arresting. She fixed him with an astonished wide blue eye, in the depths of which, however, mischief lurked.

"You can set an example. You can set the styles in—well, in hats, for instance."

"The styles in hats, Arthur, my dear, are usually set in Paris," she explained, as to a child. "But it's sweet of you to think I could set them. Perhaps I could, though," she conceded, as if wishing to make the conversation pleasant for him.

"Then you ought to. What you are wearing now——"

She turned to him sharply, but though I was myself somewhat terrified, he went on—

"What you are wearing now is—it really is—awful, Eva."

"Oh, my poor, dear, good Arthur!" she murmured in super-honied tones. "It's to-day's fashion straight from Henri Tapdel's. By to-night every shop-girl in London may have one like it, but to-day—at least, till tea-time—he assured me it would be unique."

"I should hope so," blurted out Arthur, flushed with the encounter.

"Why don't you like it?" she asked, far too gently.

"It's—it's too plain."

Her eyes sparkled. I saw that she knew better than any of us just how preposterous was the gear she wore upon her head.

"I was afraid, instead, that it was over-trimmed," she remarked judiciously. And then, rather to the amazement of such as saw the episode, she slowly put up her arms, unpinned the thing, and took it off. Her hair had lights in it something between red and gold, and the ripples—but this is no record of my personal admiration of the ravishing creature. Let us attend to the hat. It was, as we had seen it from afar, just a plain black velvet box, with a thin line of braid or something about a quarter of an inch wide around the lower edge where the opening for the head was.

"Yes, Talbot," Mrs. Morpont continued, turning to Miss Fram, "it is overloaded."

And then with a fish fork she suddenly ripped this edging and tore it off all around.

"Take this away," she said to the astonished waiter. "Mr. Hatch doesn't like it. Now the thing's perfect, so simple."

She put the hat back on her head. It had been an agreeable episode, you must admit, and unusual in a public restaurant. Now Mrs. Morpont turned to me.

"What is it all about? Is poor, dear Arthur insane?"

"He wished the styles in hats were different, and I told him to try to change them. He has youth and energy and a large fortune. I thought it would give him an occupation."

"It would," assented the lady. "But it can't be done. At least, not by a person like Arthur, who has never done anything in the world."

"I hate to have you say that about me," Arthur said, really angrily.

"You're a spoiled child!"

Then Miss Talbot Fram intervened. "I know a perfectly sure way of controlling the styles," she asserted. "Mamma's hats are always absolutely wrong. If Mr. Hatch can induce *her* to wear anything, it's doomed as a fashion."

Everyone laughed; it was like hearing blasphemy to listen to such talk about the majestic Mrs. Grenville Fram. But Mrs. Morpont was still vaguely irritated by the whole episode.

"Don't try to meddle with what doesn't concern you, Arthur. You may take it from me, my dear friend, that you'll fail. If you can change or control the style in hats——"

"For how long, Eva?"—quite in the manner of a man asking a bet at the Racquet.

"For six months."

"And precisely what do you mean by changing and controlling the styles?"

"Oh," she answered, "I don't mean that you couldn't get Mrs. Barfax or some cat to wear things different from mine. And of course there are fools who'll wear anything at a place like this. The style in London is what everybody wears—everybody, really, I mean. That's the style."

"If I can change that, what then, Eva?"

"Oh, I'll eat my hat," she replied laughingly. "Yes, this one. And," she went on lightly, "you'd be such a wonderful, masterful fellow, Arthur, I'm quite sure I'd fall in love with you."

## II.

"STATISTICS prove," I mused, once we were back at our table, "that the average income of an inhabitant of Great Britain is—whatever it is I forget now. If," I went on, "we leave you five times as much to live on as the average inhabitant, how much besides have you?"

"Don't be vulgar," snapped Arthur. "I've a good deal. Why?"

"I was trying to figure out how much you could spend setting the styles."

"I haven't told you I was going to set the styles, son."

"Mrs. Morpont said you couldn't," I remarked drily, "and of course I knew that bet was a joke."

Are these the tactics one is supposed to employ merely with catlike and tortuous woman? They work sometimes with open-faced and incorruptible man. We sat rather silently over the Stew Irlandaise,

which, by the way, was excellent. And then Arthur spoke meditatively: "I wonder what kind of a fellow this Henri Tapdel is."

"Don't know. Why?"

"I only thought perhaps I'd have a talk to him about the styles. He might be amenable to reason. But I don't know any man milliners, and if he should prove to be a handsome, gentle creature with blondined hair, I'm afraid I might punch him in the jaw."

"He's much more likely to be a small black Jew," I said, "with the strongest domestic feelings and at least six children. But Henri may not be the king, after all. I seem to have heard of very important females in the hat trade. Wouldn't it be pleasanter to tackle one of them?"

Arthur allowed it would.

After lunch he put a question to the girl who gave him his hat.

"Nelly," he said, "if you were going to have a hat from the very top-notch milliner, what label would be on the box?"

Nelly may not be of Society, but she is in it—twelve hours a day because of our intolerable laws as regards women's work—and she took at once a tone that would scarcely have disgraced Mrs. Morpont.

"My mother dislikes me to receive presents from gentlemen. But if you must, Mr. Hatch, I suppose you must."

She twinkled at him a moment, then she went on more quietly: "Seriously, sir——"

"Why shouldn't I send you a hat, seriously? I admit I hadn't thought of it——"

"Of course not, sir," said the girl. "We must have our joke in here; that's all."

"Yes. But, by Jove, Nelly, I will send you one. I want an excuse to go to the very best milliner's in all London, and if you can tell me who that is, it's worth a hat."

"Well," said the girl, "it's hard to resist you, it is, sir. From all we can judge from the talk in the cloakrooms here, it would be Cosma's, in New Bond Street."

Cosma's was, indeed, all one could have hoped for. There was there a golden and perfumed dusk, just as one had read about in the Sunday supplements, and in this languorous gloom the loveliest women in the world, with darkened eyes and rouged lips, moved slowly to and fro, displaying the latest gowns and hats worse even than those we had seen at lunch.

We asked for Cosma herself, but obtained at first an interview only with Madame Eugenie, a majestic, dark woman in the

forties, who, if she had had her rights, could have been nothing less than an Empress of Byzantium. Had we an appointment? she asked. Cosma was engaged.

"Taking her afternoon hashish, I imagine," I muttered under my breath, "or having a few Eastern slaves beheaded."

Arthur scowled at the Empress of Byzantium.

"Perhaps you'll at least take her my name—Arthur Hatch," he suggested, with just that touch of astonished hauteur needed to convince her that the name meant something in London.

It evidently meant something to Cosma, for almost immediately we were in her private lair. She was a haggard and passionate creature, with the drawl of Mayfair. I remembered reading in some highly-coloured article that her mother had been an Italian noblewoman and her father a Polish prince. But she was English, of course, she said, and we didn't dispute her. She lit a perfumed Camel cigarette and, without inquiring our errand, chattered on.

"I'm so glad you saw a few of my models while you waited. Lovely, lovely creatures, aren't they now? But they scarcely stay with me six months. They have an enormous *succès* with you men. Perhaps it's the clothes. I do know one thing about my frocks: whatever else you may think about them, they are *troublantes*, *très troublantes*. You remember Ada Adams of the Frivolity? I dressed her—that is, I began to—about six years ago. And men have told me that until then they never noticed her at all. I'm really most awfully proud of that—really most proud."

"I came to see you about hats," began Arthur almost bluntly.

"My friend," I began, "is a rich eccentric—"

"Oh, I know about Mr. Hatch. Dear Lady Mary Mainstruthers often talked about you. I'm delighted to do anything for any friend of yours. I'll make her quite irresistible."

"My friend," I began again, "is a rich—"

But Arthur took the words out of my mouth. "Don't try to understand him, Madame, or pay any attention to him," he said. "He's only an assistant something at Cambridge. As for me, just try to think that I've made a very strange bet."

Then he explained to her with quite fair

clearness that he was prepared to spend some money if the styles could be made simple and pretty. The idea amused her.

"How, may I ask, is it your idea that we should get designs that are simple and pretty?"

"I don't know." Arthur hesitated. "I thought, perhaps, one of those artist fellows, if he had any sense—I see—you mean he wouldn't have any. Then you yourself—"

"I think there's something rather attractive in the idea of a hat's being simple and pretty. We try merely to make them new and smart, and everyone's plans were made that hats should be more elaborate this spring. To change would be rather a wrench. Yet I believe I could launch a sweet simplicity craze. On a business basis, I believe I understood you to say."

Arthur bowed.

"Of course we should have to enlist one or two of the big Paris people. I'm sure it could be done, always on a business basis," pursued Cosma, haggard but alert.

"My friend, though rich," I began again, "is not inclined—"

But, as usual, Arthur shut me up. "I'm inclined to have my own way in this, now I've started," he said.

### III.

MANY will remember that spring. Simplicity received an amazing impetus. Cosma and five or six of the West End authorities and almost half the great Parisians seemed simultaneously to catch the vision of a lost Arcadia. As the first buds swelled on the bushes in the Park, it seemed for a moment likely to be a shepherdess's spring, and London to be washed in the dews of the morning of the world. And if women with the face and figure of Mrs. Barfax looked ridiculous when they went in for the new style hats and frocks, those younger and fairer more than restored the average.

Yet there is a vast difference between being a fad and being the style. After the famous day which marked the beginning of history I returned to Cambridge, where the waves of Fashion's tides wash upon the social shore at least a few weeks later than in Town. It was perhaps a month before I could again be in the Metropolis, but I arranged by telegram to lunch with Arthur at the same restaurant as before. And, to my astonishment, he looked grim.

As I waited I had sighted a few of the new Arcadian models, and I pointed them

out to Arthur with enthusiasm. But at that moment Mrs. Morpont entered. That she would be topped off by something rococo I might have expected, and that she would greet Arthur with a smile of cloying, mocking, honey sweetness I might have known. But I had not realised that there obviously was opposed to Arcadianism a counter-fashion of great virulence. As the crush of lurching ladies became more aggravated, the shepherdesses turned into a minority and in the end were hopelessly swamped. If a month earlier the hats had been bad, then the language afforded no word to describe them now. They were sheer madness. I caught my friend's gloom.

"To me," he said, "it is no pleasure to lurch where you see so many women making fools of themselves."

"Let's go to a quick-lunch shop," I cried, with a sudden inspiration. "There is a steamed corned-beef hash with poached egg which is quite edible, and we'll see the nice shop-girls living on a modest salary and wearing sensible hats."

"Shall we?" he asked darkly, but he turned to go.

I prefer not to linger over the scene at the quick-lunch. We ended by lurching at a club.

"They have none of the Arcadian models," I half whispered in frightened tones, when we had escaped.

"Couldn't afford them, perhaps," he answered.

*Couldn't* afford them? We had seen tumultuous rich hats on the heads of the working girls.

"Do you understand it at all?" I asked in a corner of the club dining-room.

"I think I do." Who was this new, grave Arthur Hatch who thought he understood anything at all?

"Is it Mrs. Morpont?"

"Not much. No. Listen. I've learned a lot lately. This style in hats isn't just a joke for lunch at a fashionable restaurant. It's big business. It's money invested. Cosma and those people are only flea-bites. Ninety per cent. of the women of England buy their hats at the big stores, and the shapes and the trimmings and the whole fashion for the season is settled by the big manufacturers."

"I thought that Paris——" I began, rather weakly.

"That's all understood between the Paris people and the manufacturers here.

Everything was set this spring for the kind of hats you saw to-day. Cosma got us a few Parisian pikers. But the real boys over there stood by the hat manufacturers here and the spring stocks that had got to be sold. All they did, when sweet simplicity lifted its head, was to swat it hard with styles that were worse than ever, but all of them, note you, to be made out of what was ready for the early summer trade. Interesting, isn't it?" he asked, and, oddly enough, almost cheerfully. "I'm beginning to know my way about."

"Are you going on with it?"

"I am," he said.

"I didn't suppose you cared so much about hats."

"I don't care anything about them really." He grinned more like the old Arthur. "But this is a big game."

"I don't recognise you, Arthur."

He hesitated, almost blushed. "Well," he said at last, "my grandfather made all his own money—what's mine now. I—I suppose I begin to smell blood."

"But you've got money enough—always enough for lunch, at any rate," I said lightly. There was cold lobster and a cider cup, well fortified with brandy. It was better than the hash would have been.

"Oh, it isn't the money." Arthur took on almost the shy air of one making a confession. "You—and various others—have always said I couldn't do anything in the world. I thought I'd show her," he added, with what might have seemed to a grammarian irrelevancy.

"And so?" I asked.

"And so," he answered me, "I'm thinking of buying a few hat factories. The fact is, I have an appointment this afternoon about it."

He lit a cigarette with elaborate carelessness, as if to indicate how comic, through it all, his old self found his new. Then the old Arthur grinned.

"Want to come?"

"You don't suppose, you helpless babe, that I'd let you go alone?"

"Helpless babe?" he queried.

"I don't suppose you read the papers," I went on. "I don't suppose you know that there is a strike threatened in the hat factories at this very moment. Someone's trying to unload a very shaky business on you."

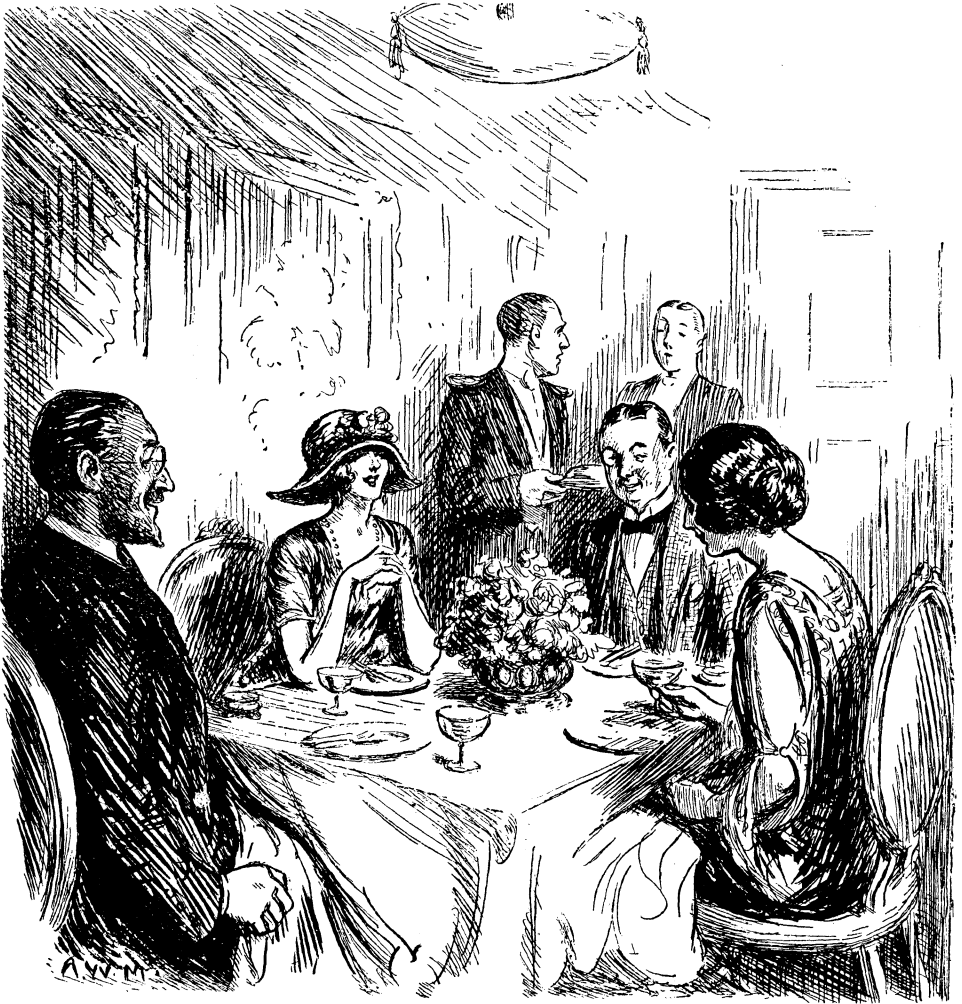
"I thought that was why I could get a business cheap."

"And the strike?" I asked.

"I think I can deal with that. In fact, I've an appointment with the chief lady striker this afternoon, too. But I'm going to stand no nonsense from her."

There was a steely glitter in his eye, and his jaw seemed to snap like a trap. He looked dangerous and eminently competent, as if his stern grandfather had come back,

illustrated papers time and again. But she was then just dimly apprehended in certain circles as a Polish girl, with perhaps a remote strain of Jewish blood, who had emerged from the turmoil of White-chapel and was organising women with a combined passion and executive ability rarely enough met with. As we went to



"'Arthur,' repeated Mrs. Morpont softly. 'So it's come to that.'"

to deal with a strike. So do we men, poor, misguided, fatuous fools, read each other. At that moment neither of us knew Rose Dimmock.

She is familiar enough to-day to everybody. That clear-cut profile, that waved black hair—literally like the raven's wing, as the pleasant old phrase goes—that proud lift of the head, have all adorned the

keep the appointment with her, I began to recall vaguely that I'd heard of her in the professional reforming and labour circles which I sometimes, as assistant professor, frequented. One reactionary employer had called her a dangerous woman, a Red. Another, however, had said darkly that she had a great business head. But I was not prepared for her.

When she came in, with her proud dark head lifted high in the way I now know so well, all I could think of was that she was like an eagle. She brought with her a suddenly wider horizon, upon which she bent those divine blue eyes. As she came, it was as if a great wind followed her, blowing from new continents and uncharted seas. I do not know whether it was the sheer beauty of her that made this effect upon you—though, indeed, we know there was once a “face that launched a thousand ships”—or whether it was that she had made herself the personification of some new love of liberty. I looked sidelong at Arthur, who, with the aid of that reawakened spirit of his grandfather, was “to stand no nonsense from her.”

I intend to make no attempt to reproduce the interview.

“I am thinking of buying the Durstein and Hillox hat factories,” said Arthur gravely, “but I want, before I do it, to understand what it is you are going to try to get from me by striking.”

And she told him, sitting there quietly. I had heard that kind of story of the workers’ grievances before, but I suppose to Arthur, as to so many of his kind, it was wholly new. Slowly she made me see the East End, the slums, and the kind of life it was to work in the hat factories that were to be his, if you were young and wanted a chance for happiness. She had statistics, too, and figures on the cost of living, and the tables of tuberculosis victims in the various trades where women worked. Perhaps, printed, what she said would read like half the dull reforming pamphlets I see so many of; but on her lips it was for me at least vivid, strangely moving. At last, in a voice that grew a little hard, she summed up and gave the hat workers’ ultimatum.

Arthur looked at her an instant in silence. I thought his face hardened, too. “In spite of what you say, I’m going to buy the factories,” he said.

“Then we deal with you.” Rose Dimmock tossed her head as she spoke.

“With me. Yes.”

Then, to my astonishment, Arthur slowly grinned at her, just in the old polo player’s simple, engaging way.

“And I’m going to do everything you want done. If all you say is true, it doesn’t seem to me you’re asking half enough.”

The next morning was to be singularly busy with Durstein and Hillox and lawyers.

But I persuaded Arthur that we ought to ask Mrs. Morpont to lunch with us and tell her the news. She was comparatively free, so she said to Arthur over the telephone. That is to say, she would have to break only three engagements to come, which of course she could easily do.

“You may as well know whom you’re lunching with, Eva,” was his greeting to her, as she joined us, with Miss Fram, in the palm garden lobby. “I’m now a hat manufacturer from Whitechapel. At last I’m going to control the style in hats.”

“Are you really, dear Arthur? It seems almost a pity that we women wear hats; it puts you to such a lot of trouble.”

She seemed to meditate, though I couldn’t guess on what.

“Talbot, darling,” she cried at last to Miss Fram, “I don’t believe my hat’s on right. Come with me while I look.”

She sprang up, and then she looked quizzically at the hat manufacturer, Arthur.

“Why do we wear them, Arthur dear? Is it just to support hat factories like yours? It’s a silly fashion, isn’t it?”

Arthur was just saying how really sensible Eva could be, when she and Miss Fram reappeared.

You saw their pictures, of course, the next day. The papers got photographers to the scene within a half-hour, and as these two abandoned young women, having sent their motors home, walked up Regent Street, the afternoon became sensational. It was in the air somehow that a really new fashion had at last been set. The legend is that Stella Barfax threw a Tapdel creation out of the window of her car and reached the Row hatless even before the pioneers, Mrs. Morpont and Miss Fram. Mr. Grenville Fram, in the window of the Union Club, had what seemed like a light stroke of apoplexy as he saw his daughter’s red head go by. Only this and club traditions prevented his dragging his offspring into the building itself and sending her home a prisoner in charge of the hall porter.

Mrs. Morpont, whose previous inaccessibility to the gentlemen of the press was notorious, welcomed a drove of them when she arrived home; indeed, she almost led them into the Morpont palace on the corner.

“Why not?” she asked them, with a bewildering smile. “My hair is lovely, and Miss Fram’s is very pretty, too—don’t you think so? We look better without hats.



What will women who haven't so much hair do? Buy wigs instead of hats, I suppose. In any case, this is so much better for the hair and for the health generally. Besides," she went on demurely, "it's doing something against extravagance, I hope. I think we all ought to, these days."

I don't suppose she had ever spent a half-hour thinking of economic conditions, but now she seemed, by some woman's instinct, to have guessed at Rose Dimmocker and social reform.

"Why," she asked, "should we make thousands of women in the slums work to produce these totally unnecessary things for our heads—especially under such brutal creatures as I understand the employers now are?"

#### IV.

THERE was no strike, of course, in Arthur's factories, but there were in the others. Public sympathy was with the girls, and so Mrs. Morpont's move to penalise the manufacturers by wearing no hats had a real popular appeal. If Arthur, copiously advertised in the press, became a popular hero, his lovely friend became no less a popular heroine. And as in the next fortnight, under the driving of Rose Dimmocker, the now infatuated and reckless young man purchased (at most advantageous prices, it may be said) factory after factory connected with the hat business, so did hordes of lovely hatless females, streaming up and down the West End, seem to endanger the very existence of his purchases. If things went on this way, the strikers would all be reinstated, but there would be nothing for them to do. It was an emergency, and I dealt with it as best I could—I asked Mrs. Morpont, Miss Dimmocker, and Arthur to lunch. It was a little like getting the delegates to a peace congress together, but after some backing and filling they all accepted. The restaurant seemed almost traditionally indicated, but they gave me a quiet little private room at the side. I ordered a good lunch, about three courses, with again a light white wine—but, oh, how different life seemed, compared with its aspect that first day only so short a while ago!

At the very beginning I saw, however, that everything was going more peacefully than at some peace congresses. Rose Dimmocker came without a hat, and Eva Morpont, who had felt the same delicate instinct of courtesy, wore one, but of Arcadian simplicity. I was radiant at

once. They were, I was convinced, the two most beautiful creatures in the world, and it was almost enough in one humble man's life that both of them should be his guests. I know now that they were also quite the nicest things in the world.

"Miss Dimmocker," said Eva at once, "I want to thank you for the strikes. I've learned a great deal about my fellow-woman. I can't think why I didn't know it before. Association with people like Mr. Hatch must have dulled my faculties, I suppose. I believe that styles in women's hats are probably less interesting and less important than styles in women's work and women's happiness."

She held out her hand. "I believe, if you'd let me help you, I'd be some good. You see what a lot of silly people follow my lead. Why shouldn't I lead the right way?"

Her eyes were, I swear, dewy. If I had been Rose Dimmocker, I should have kissed her. Instead, she just took the other's hand.

"Partners!" she said solemnly. Then she went on: "I knew that Arthur would never have liked you so much if you hadn't been all right."

"Arthur," repeated Mrs. Morpont softly. "So it's come to that."

"I've asked her to marry me, Eva," said Arthur, his colour deepening slowly.

She hesitated the fraction of a second. Then she turned to Rose Dimmocker. "Take him, my dear. The man is a fool, but he has a heart of gold."

"I was a fool, Eva. I'm a little less of one now."

"Don't say that, Arthur, because you remember that day at lunch that I said if you ever waked up and took to doing things, I might fall in love with you. Of course it's much better that I shouldn't, on account of Jack Morpont and the children, and now on account of Miss Dimmocker. So I'm not in love with you, Arthur, and I wish you all happiness."

"I think I shall take him," said Rose Dimmocker. She smiled, but I think her eyes, too, were dewy.

"And we're going to get this hat business right!" cried Arthur, with an energy that I guessed was meant to hide his emotion. "I'm going to make things in my factories the way Rose thinks they ought to be, if I go bankrupt doing it."

He meant it. And it was indeed the height of his regeneration, the climax,

so I quite justifiably supposed, of this story. But then suddenly the story began to go wrong. I was thinking of how the Revolution was really here when I suddenly became aware of Rose. Somehow she wasn't the eagle any more. She was blushing a bright red, and she finally said haltingly:

"I wonder"—she stopped almost as if she were afraid to go on—"I wonder if I really want you to go bankrupt—now!"

"Oh, my dear, my dear," cried Eva, "you're not really as much of a radical as I!"

"I'm a renegade, I suppose," said the poor embarrassed eagle. "Isn't it intolerable that there should ever be two sides to a question? With his fortune he can run so many factories and run them the

right way. We'll have such a tremendous chance to do good. Ought I to let him throw it away?"

"We might get your radical friends to allow us a one per cent. dividend. That isn't excessive. And we can live on that. You know," pursued Arthur, "we're going to live down there, near the hats. And Rose is a wonderful cook, she tells me."

This is the end of the story, though, perhaps, it is only the beginning, if you think of Arthur and his wife and Mrs. Morpont and all the things they are doing now. I lecture about them to my classes. The style in hats doesn't much matter, of course, though a lot may come out of it. So perhaps all the story proves—if it proves anything—is that lunch is almost always a good idea.



## THE TUNER IN THE CATHEDRAL.

**T**HE ORGAN: "*Good Tuner, why  
This ruthless, slow examination?  
Why, on that one poor note  
Expend such careful, patient concentration?  
Just pass it by,  
And see  
How I will let my soul respond to thee!*"

But no. Again and yet again,  
With skilled determination,  
Rang out that meaningless reiteration,  
While ever and anon, through the great aisle's dim space,  
Echoed the reverent chord and loud harmonious phrase:

Till day began to wane,  
And still most patiently the Tuner wrought  
With that one faulty note, until with zest,  
All sweet and true, it answered like the rest.

Then, as the haloed glories of the sunset flamed and gleamed,  
Swift through the storied windows long shafts of crimson streamed,  
And we poor whispering wayfarers heard, round about and o'er us,  
The throbbing, thundering triumphs of the Hallelujah Chorus!

FAY INCHFAWN.

Author of "*Homely Verses of a Home Lover.*"



“Look at me, Evan! Now, tell me. This is not because of anything you’ve heard or guessed?”

# WHAT JANIE VALENTINE DID

By G. B. LANCASTER

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

**T**HERE were a hundred places in which you might have met Maurice during the two years following the War, but they were not very likely places. The few men who now and again brought word of him to the club always had it from hearsay, and rarely was it less than six months old.

Generally and silently, it seemed, Maurice spent his time drifting on and off some one of those gaily-painted little trading-boats which serve the smaller and less reputable ports of the Farther East and the South Seas. Drifting was quite evidently the word. It appeared that he made no protest against Fate, grasped at nothing to stay that

increasing fluidity of thought and will which was drawing his powers from him.

“If he’d only marry a yellow girl, or a black or pink girl, it might save him,” said Gethert once. “But I’m afraid he’ll just do nothing. Poor old Maurice!”

That was the word. Those who had loved and admired him began to speak of Maurice as one speaks of a friend who has inadvertently betrayed one. “Poor old Maurice! He never got over the War. Bad business, that. Poor old Maurice! They called it shellshock, but, of course, any kind of letting go is called that.” “Poor old Maurice! Couldn’t practise what he preached. Lots of us the same, what?”

And then they put Maurice from their minds with a gesture of relief.

Once Waite brought news which was very nearly first-hand. Business had taken him to some of those queer-smelling little Eastern landfalls about Java and Celebes, where cities old as time stand like match-boxes on their own sticks above incredibly blue water, and all manner of things happen in the moist and shadowed heat behind closed doors. Stories of a silent white man with reddish hair going grey, and a look of seeking in his sunk eyes, had cropped up here and there, said Waite. But he had not connected them with Maurice until, in Soerabaya, an obese and yellow keeper of a chandoo-shop had told him of such a man who lay a week up the stair smoking opium, and then cursed a little wearily, as though the bite had gone out of his brain, and went away.

"Him leavee piecee paper, too," said the man. Waite mimicked him rather cleverly. You got a suggestion of his puzzle-headed contempt of the white race. "No good. Him sorree, p'r'aps. See ghostee, but no nice opium ghostee. Savvy?"

It was here that Waite connected all those past scraps of somewhat lurid history with Maurice. "I took the paper away. Here it is. You can see for yourselves," he said. The soiled and crumpled scrap went the rounds among the empty glasses and cigar-ash, and in Maurice's fine, nervous hand they read the quotation slightly paraphrased from a Greek anthology: "Formerly the dead left their city living, but I living hold the city's funeral."

"So he hasn't come to terms with himself yet," said Gethert.

About the table there was a sudden quiet. Not a man but thought of the Maurice they had known running desperately from that lost joy of life that had been his, that lost power of magic word and craftsmanship that had been his running under the slant, incurious eyes of the little yellow men on the Kobe water-front, the blue, heavy eyes of the broad white-clad Dutchmen who gave him passage here and there, contemptuous eyes of those white men who sharpen their wits into a tool to live by, eyes of women—but women had never attracted Maurice particularly. All his poems and laudations had been for men and the labour of men. For young men especially he had been a flag-bearer, going into life with eyes lit and hair blown back by the ardour of his going. Now—

"Poor old Maurice!" said Waite, breaking the silence.

Young Barton burst out with the cruel sincerity of youth: "Poor! He's a coward, hang him! A coward! Think of all he wrote about sticking it! I had his book in my kit all through the War. It—it helped us." He gulped, staring about with light eyes and chubby face, resentful and bewildered. "He had no right to tell others to do what he couldn't do himself. Don't you see? It takes the meaning out of it all. We couldn't write those splendid things, but we can carry on now, and he can't. We honoured him for writing them. It's we should be honoured, not he. We're better than he." Again he looked round as though imploring contradiction. "Better than *Maurice*," he said.

The men looked at each other. There was not one had found life easy since the War. Several were shiny about the cuffs and knees, gaunt about the mouth, anxious-eyed. Barton, who had gone straight to France from the University, had lately been driving round in a closed car, delivering dress-goods samples, and his attempt at keeping up appearances was pathetic. Barton was plainly very poor now. With the sudden dramatic impulse of youth he pulled from an inner pocket a slim dark book, its soft covers stained and worn.

"This sold by thousands. So did Maurice's essays. He made money out of telling us to carry on, and he can't do it himself!" He flung the book on the table, and laughed. "He has the joke on us all right. There's not one word of truth in all that stuff. No *truth*."

For a few moments the little rubbed book of flaming verse lay there, pleading its justification, perhaps. Then Harrington pushed it back.

"Put it away, lad. Put it away. We don't know what broke Maurice. We might have done worse in his place."

"Can a man do anything worse than give the lie to all the big things he taught us to believe in?" cried young Barton. He went away, leaving the book on the table, and it was Harrington who squeezed it into the shelf on the wall, amongst other buried things of yesterday. Then: "Poor old Maurice!" said he also, and also went away. And it seemed that over Maurice oblivion flowed, leaving on the sounding beaches of the world nothing of his but that one damning phrase of pity.

## II.

MAURICE would not have resented their pity had he known of it. At first the business of getting ahead of memory across the world occupied him too deeply. Now—there was Janie Valentine. At first there had been that idle lying in deck-chairs and watching blue skies, ebony skies of storm, crimson fires of sunset above him and the unchanging seas. He never looked at life, if he could help it, until chance stranded him on one of those lonelier little islands of the Fijis which lie like a tuft of grass down the shimmering distance, and here he glanced to earth at last and saw—Janie Valentine.

There must have been something a little unusual about the girl to attract two such essentially different men as Maurice and young Barton. Maurice, prematurely aged, embittered, grown selfishly, drearily in upon himself; Barton with his round black head and round bright eyes, absolutely vibrant with life, and yet sacrificing all chances—as he thought—to take a billet as clerk in the sugar-cane mills on this small dull island of Hapari in order that his mother and invalid sister should live in passable comfort at home. “For the screw is mighty decent,” young Barton told them, neglecting to add that the conditions and climate were not.

Two men as different as one could find anywhere, and yet it is through their eyes that one sees the tall, frank, friendly girl with her firm handclasp and the kind grey eyes below the sweep of fair hair. A good port in the storm Maurice found her when first he met her about a week after he had drifted into a casual partnership with Currie, who owned a small sugar-cane estate which he had not sufficient capital to develop. Maurice always had plenty of money, but, because he was looking for the things which money can't buy, he was poorer than Barton. But he did not know that.

It was at a bridge party that Janie Valentine first met Maurice, and encountered that experience so curious to us all when a person whose printed mind we have intimately known for years looks at us with the shuttered eyes of a stranger. Mrs. Page's party was one of those afternoon gatherings, followed by dancing, which are so common in the Fijis, where somewhat puffed and sallow women in the brightest and thinnest of frocks sit about at small tables under the palms, with fans to keep the flies off and imperturbable house-boys

to bring a continual succession of iced drinks and sweets and fruits from the deep-verandahed bungalow. There are usually children, fretful little things drained by the heat, and inevitably a long line of cars parked behind the mango hedge, and—very rarely indeed—an unmarried girl or so. At the time Maurice came there Janie Valentine was the only girl on Hapari.

Well, she could have had her pick of men to flirt with, and perhaps a man or so to marry. But to the Maurice of the printed book she had long since given that queerly passionate and secret adoration which usually heralds a young girl's awakening to womanhood. So the man stepped at once into a place already made for him; and because the silver trumpets of his poems were always making music in her heart, the tragedy of him standing there in the sunlight hit her very hard indeed. The wind was blowing Maurice's heavy, reddish-grey hair in a lock across his forehead, and his sombre eyes seemed to hold the shadow of that wind. His nervous fingers, closing on hers, were dark as his lean face, where, it seemed, the blood carrying his black thoughts ran too near the surface. He spoke a little in an elliptical, weary way, sneered at her a little when she mentioned his poems.

“Oh, those! Indiscretions of my youth. Here I can forget and be old,” he said. And then she flashed her grey eyes at him.

“That's shameful!” she cried, as young Barton had done. “You've no right to take away what you've given us.”

“Perhaps it wasn't worth the giving.”

They were walking up a grassy hill away from the bungalow and the palms. The sea came round them on three sides, wrinkled a little under the wisdom of its thousand, thousand years. It seemed to make the conventions of man a paltry thing, a crime before the great loneliness of the soul. Janie Valentine turned quick to Maurice, dropping the flowers she held. They lay at his feet, only a little less perfect offering than the words she gave him.

“You've done so much and suffered so much, and I've done nothing. But because I've learned so much from you, if I can help you—oh, help you in any little way at all—I'd be so proud and so glad.”

With girls Maurice had always taken the patronising “my dear child” manner. He did not do that now. He had been brought too low. He looked at her with miserable eyes.

"I can't write any more," he said. "I've lost the power and the will. Do you understand? The one thing I cared to do, and I've lost it. There is nothing left. I'm dead while I am alive."

"Tell me about it," said Janie softly.

And so it began, that hour on the hill, while the sunset flamed and the trade-wind sang by to the palm groves, and the fishing-boats tacked home, russet sails on the dark still blue. There were many meetings after that, with the girl walking, trembling-footed and pitying-eyed, into the black places of a man's soul, where Maurice let down those jealously-guarded floodgates at last, pouring all his wretchedness out on her. At nights in her room, with doors and windows open to the dark heat of the wind and the incessant murmur of the sea, his words would come back, hitting like stones on her gentle heart.

"Oh, yes, once I believed in work for work's own glorious sake, and so on. You'll know that. Well, it's all dead and done for, washed away in that flood of war that gutted the clear springs of the world. All is insurrection and incoherence now in me, just as it is throughout the world. I can't believe that anything is worth the doing any more." And again: "My dear, my dear, don't talk that way. The peculiarly sensitive quality of creation—it's been murdered in me by many blows. I want to forget that I ever had it. There's something unreal and curiously effortless about this small remote place of gorgeous colour and peace which is resting me as nothing else has done. Don't try to spur me on. I like to look at the moon and stars and forget the struggles of earth."

She remembered his voice, mournful, repressed, the slight shiver of his body, as though he still felt the torment he would not allow. She thought of some blind, desperate thing stumbling in a wide field where harsh winds blew. She bowed herself together, head on her knees, moaning—

"Oh, if there's anything I can do, any mortal thing. . . ."

This strange comic opera life down here seemed so empty, so little worth—sitting about and watching the dark-skinned servants—ten thousand years apart from her modernity; going with her cousin to dances, bridge parties and teas, helping to make and re-model the little girls' frocks; riding with one man and another; feeling, as all these exiled women did, the days slide

useless out of her hands. . . . "Oh, if I can do *anything* for him!" she cried.

Just when Maurice began to love her, probably neither knew. But it soon showed itself—a searing, savage, and jealous love, as though all those checked craving impulses in him clung to this new gift, which he felt near, in a furious determination that it should never forsake him as that other gift had done. They were riding together every day now, talking much of little things, homely happy things such as a man brings to his own fireside with the world shut out and loved hands in his own. Sometimes they sat awhile in native villages by the little brown grass huts, watching the brown soft-eyed Fijian mothers and playing with the fat naked babies until the lines on Maurice's face were all broken up with laughter. Sometimes they rode home when the sunset across the sea and the tall hills was a crash of reckless beauty, like a scherzo by Tchaikowsky, with larks dropping down their linked cadences of song over the sugarcane fields that were a shimmer of silver up all the slopes to the blue horizons of the sky. And sometimes they walked in the gardens, full of thick, sweet scent from the lilies and the guava and orange blooms.

In all these places she learned what was coming to her, and fought down her fears. She did not love him. She did not believe that she ever would love him in that way. But the instinct for sacrifice is very strong in some women, and he needed her. Oh, he needed her so, and hadn't she wanted to give him what he needed?

They were riding in a long jungle road on the evening when he told her, with night-birds fluting clear, sustained notes out of the shadows, and the curve of a young moon laid like a kiss on the crest of the hill ahead. He had spoken of the torments that still racked him occasionally, using picture-words that dazzled her soul. Now they rode silent through the shadows, she visualising with every quivering pitying nerve of her what he had said. Sometimes, it seemed, when he sat on his verandah of nights, listening to the solemn music of the sea, like the thunder of a storm shaking at the closed windows of his mind would come something of the old tumultuous fire upon him, bringing him upright in his chair with leaping pulses. There—surely he could catch it, the meaning of those strong beating wings, notes of transcendent symphonies, that exultance, iridescent, full-globed as a soap-bubble in his brain. There—they

would be words directly, those wheeling glories, that sudden magic of understanding which spread the world before him like a scroll. A pencil—the physical grasp of the thing—would do it now. If Currie, wearied by his long day's labour, had waked then, he would have seen Maurice pass like a grey fleet ghost to the inner room and snatch up the implements of his trade. He never carried them with him as in the old days. But already that overwhelming sense of potential life would be lessening about him. The pounding hoof-thunder of the long-wandered Valkyries riding home went by. The rejoicing of the trumpets dwindled, died; banners and colour were clean gone. In the lamp-light by the bare table only a man sat stiffly—a man who, in a kind of weak desperation, kept riding his will at the thought, as it were, and finding it always refuse the jump until he dropped the face that said too much upon the paper which said nothing, crying—

“Ah! Why wasn't I killed outright?”

With wet eyes Janie Valentine turned to that man, holding her hands out.

“Oh, can't I do anything? Anything?” she cried.

“Janie!” he said. “*Janie!*” And then their horses drew together, and his arm was about her, and his kisses on her lips, her forehead, and her eyes. “You'll make up for everything. You gospel of the real truth after many lies! Janie—*my* Janie!”

She had thought she was prepared, but it came with a shock that it took all her sweet humanity to endure. She would love him, must love him, this man who had walked with sorrow for so long. Oh, what was the matter with her that this tempest of his love beating about her made her only want to cower and cover her ears, her face? How selfish she was!

“I want to help you. I do, I do!” she cried vehemently. And he laughed, a wild, exultant laugh that somehow really frightened her.

“Help me! You're my life now. I haven't any other. You're all I have.”

They rode out of the jungle path into clear starlight. She was sick and trembling, grief-filled because there was nothing in her but dread and a stupid kind of distaste. What was this love that had transfigured him and passed her by? Why couldn't she feel it? *What was it?*

A rider in pith hat and shabby white linens drew aside to let them pass, cried suddenly—

“Why, it's Maurice!”

Maurice pulled up, speaking coldly. “How are you, Barton? Let me introduce Miss Valentine. I heard you'd come to clerk for Maclean.”

“Been here a fortnight, awfully busy. No time for calling. Have to keep an eye on the coolies all the time they're loading or unloading. Your cane's some of the best we get.”

Young Barton talked on rapidly, as though he were afraid to stop. His eyes never left Janie Valentine. And hers, as she sat a little behind Maurice, never left young Barton's. She did not know that either stared. She only knew that her soul had cried to the void “What is love?” and that this man had come—quick as that!—and answered her, “It is this.”

All her life Janie never cared to remember the nights that came just after that meeting. And the days were like sharp swords laid between, full of a fiery heat and the salt of the sea and colour from forest and flower and water pervading all like some blinding flame—full, too, of the greater heat, the greater colour of Maurice's wooing. All the pent-up poet in him poured out, not in verse—he believed that he never would write again—but in the passion of his love. Each day he had some new sweet name for her, some offering—wine-red shells from the beach, fragrant grass baskets, gorgeous dried berries to link in a chain, the loveliness of butterfly wings, orchids, a little box of garnets dredged from the sand. How she bore it, how she thanked him, she did not know, but it appeared to satisfy him. He was wrapped in the joy of spending himself again.

She met young Barton often—at dances, at bridge parties, where the thin-legged Indian coolies swung their thick cane-knives in the cleared spaces that looked like oxydised silver in the fading light, at sidings when she and Maurice pulled their horses to watch the little train pick up the loaded trucks of cane, while the mules that had brought the bundles stood swishing their thin tails. Barton was always busy then, riding about, taking notes, with whip tucked under his arm, shouting in lame Hindustani to the inscrutable little dark men. But always he came and for a moment held Janie's hand in his, looked into her eyes. That was all. Nor was there any more at any other meeting until that hot and terrible night before the rains scorched the earth with torment.

They had been dancing on the wide verandah of the Valentines' bungalow before Maurice got there. The moon was very bright over the stables, and at the end of the drive the coolie huts were globes of honey colour. A bread-fruit tree flung sharp, intricate patterns on the grass where Maurice walked softly. He wanted to see Janie, soak in her young white beauty before it flushed up at his coming. Just beyond an orange bush she stood with young Barton, her hand still on his arm as they had come from dancing. The scent of the flowers, the knowledge of her nearness, made Maurice giddy for the moment, so dearly did he love her. He stood still in that hot, velvety dark, winnowed by bat-wings and blooming with the frail flower-shapes of moths, and in that moment, while he stood smiling, he heard young Barton cry :

"Oh, Janie, Janie!"

With that sob of agony the two white figures in the moonlight seemed to fuse into one. The man in the shadows saw the thing as inevitable as the spilling of wine from a brimmed cup. Then again they were separated, and Janie whispering :

"How could you? How could you? I trusted you so."

"I could because I had to." Even in that moment the change in young Barton's voice startled Maurice. It seemed to challenge the world. "We love each other, and we did the first minute we met. One can't get away from such things. They *are*. You love me, not Maurice. You never loved him."

"But he loves me. He loves me . . ."

"He thinks he does. He's good at

thinking and pretending. He preached work, and he's never lifted a hand to help the reconstruction of the world. He preached courage, and he ran away from life the moment it began to hurt him. He



"He stood still in that hot, velvety dark."

preached love, and he has never loved anyone but himself. It's not you he loves. There's nothing in him fit to understand you. He's using you to fill the place of that



beastly writing of his that he was so proud of. He's egoist through and through. That's your Maurice!"

"Oh, he's had such a hard time!"

"Isn't all the world having a hard

Heaven if he can scratch out a living for himself and those dependent on him. We're all having a hard time—except Maurice."

"He doesn't have to work. You don't



"Two months back and I couldn't have spoken. Now I'm free."

time? Does any man worth his salt go round in these days pitying himself and asking for pity? No! He gets down to his job and sweats away at it, thanking

understand. He's—he's not strong in the way you are. He's so sensitive and unhappy, and I pitied him."

"There are too many weak men ready

to sponge on other folks' sympathy just now. Because Maurice can't stand on his own feet after all his hot-air talk, does he think he's going to stand on yours? By Heaven, I won't have it, Janie!"

"He's so clever. He has such beautiful thoughts."

"He's not *true*. He hasn't been true to himself, and so he couldn't be true to you. And truth is one of the things the world most wants just now. I despise Maurice. I don't care if you are pledged to him. Break it. He broke our belief in him. A man must be strong enough to practise what he preaches, or he's not worth consideration." He caught her hands. "Janie, you shall listen to me!"

The man standing motionless in the shadows heard that fierce, low pleading go on, heard her oppose to it her steady "No" and "No"; heard young Barton go away at last, head up, all the certainty and splendour of youth in his tread. "Two months back and I couldn't have spoken," he had told her at the last. "Now my sister has married a rich man, and my mother has gone to live with her. So I'm free to come to you. And I'm coming. A thousand Maurices couldn't keep me back, nor ten thousand!"

But she, standing with hands wrung together over her breast, had answered still, "No, no!" Then he laughed. "Oh, won't you, my darling?" he had said, going. And that laugh rode back with Maurice to his lonely verandah, and stayed with him all night, a gibing joyous accompaniment to every unforgotten word that Barton had said. Barton's was the too merciless outlook of youth, but there was truth in it. Oh, a bitter and blasting truth! thought Maurice, huddling there in his chair, with the sweat on his forehead and his hands cold in the still dark furnace of the night.

He rode with her next evening and the evening after, and if he had not known, he would have seen no change in her. It was as fine as that, her courage, he thought—as fine as that! And on the third evening he told her.

They had ridden down a level yellow beach of sand, with the sea blue as hyacinths on their left, and on their right the brick-red cliffs crested by the shining green of bread-fruits and the vermilion of the flamboyant trees and the fretwork bronze of the palms. It was a theatre drop-scene, with a couple of fuzzy-headed Fijians

launching one of their long narrow *praus* in the ripples, and, back in a bay, a bunch of the little grass huts, with children playing. To Maurice, after these three days of greater suffering than a man has a right to know more than once in his life, it felt suddenly that he stood off from his tragedy, like a man in the theatre wings, and watched himself go through with what had to be said. He had led up to it skilfully enough, talking of his wanderings. Now he said:

"I'm afraid I'm the born rover, after all. I thought I could stay here for ever, but I believe I want to be off again somewhere."

She glanced at him quickly, but her words came slow.

"We'll go whenever and wherever you like, Evan," she said.

You're too good to me. I don't deserve it. I'm ashamed to think how little I deserve it. I hardly like to say it, Janie, but I'd thought. . . ."

"You would rather go alone?"

He thought he heard the quick relief in her tone, but he did not dare to think of that. He hurried on:

"I don't know how to say it. Better to hurt you now than let you find out later, perhaps. I'm an unsatisfactory sort of chap, Janie—uncertain. I'm grateful—awfully grateful. You've helped me through a hard time. I—"

Her gloved hand was caressing the horse's mane. Her head was bent. "Shall I say it for you? You thought you loved me, and you have found out that you don't. Is that what you want to say, Evan?"

"I thought I loved you greatly, splendidly. I said I did. I have been good at thinking things all my life"—he sought for young Barton's words; they would be the best to convince her with—"thinking and pretending. I'm a poet at heart, even though I don't write now. There are so many things a poet loves—old fancies, dreams, beauty of words and forms, new faces. You were a new face. . . . it sounds so brutal to say. . . . thought I'd best be honest about it. . . . save pain later. . . ."

He mumbled into silence. Her face was white. She laid a hand on his knee, speaking imperiously.

"Look at me, Evan! Now, tell me. This is not because of anything you've heard or guessed?"

Could he do it? Oh, Heavens, could he? His eyes met hers.

"No, a thousand times no! It's because

of what I've found in myself. I'm not worthy of you."

"Don't put it that way. Have I failed you, Evan? I'd sooner die than that!"

So she had said in those very words to Barton. And again he used Barton's weapons in reply:

"No, I've failed myself again. I—I love too many things."

She gave a little shudder. Her hand dropped from his knee.

"Poor Harlequin!" she said softly.

They rode on. Presently she said:

"Thank you for telling me. It would have been very terrible to have known later. I think it was brave in you, Evan."

"You're so young . . . soon forget . . . worthless chap like me."

"No, not worthless. If you'd only take hold of life somehow. Oh"—she smote her little fist against the pommel—"if you'd only take hold as some men do—fight as they do!"

"That requires effort. I have told you how I abhor effort."

She was silent after that. He fathomed the motive that kept her so. She'd leave him wrapped in his selfish, idle egoism, would she? Never wound his conceit by speaking of her own heart. Like Janie, that. To the last her generosity persisted. She reached him her hand when they parted at the gate.

"I'm so glad I helped you through a hard

time. If you chose, you could make me proud of my friend yet."

"That requires effort," he heard himself saying. "Temperaments like mine always take the easiest way, you know—dodge responsibilities."

He did not remember anything more until he found himself on his face in the grass somewhere. It was night, and he was tearing up the clods with his hands. He stayed there until the sun was high.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was more than a year later when Janie Barton came one day to her husband with a new book in her hands and her soft eyes glowing.

"Such beautiful, beautiful things, Dick! A thousand times better than anything Mr. Maurice ever wrote before. They're wonderful. So strong!"

"I don't want to see 'em, love. I'm shut of Maurice. The truth isn't in him, and never was. Just because he's got a trick with words, he can write of what other folk feel. He can't feel. He's a trickster."

"I don't know. There are things here—little bits about love and suffering and courage—oh, Dick, they made me all hot inside! They are glorious!"

"And won't he be proud of himself to have pulled off the stunt again? Oh, he's clever! I grant you that. Chuck down that book and come here. He may pretend and bluff all he likes, but it's we who know, little Janie. It's we who *know*."





“‘I’m sticking to my word, Helen,’ he said. ‘I told you not to come whining to me for money.’”

# AUCTION BRIDGE

By E. NEWTON BUNGEY

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

“**I**F the pater only played bridge, it wouldn’t be so bad,” remarked Cyril Stanwood pensively.

“Or if the mater fox-trotted,” added Helen Stanwood.

Cyril conjured up a gloomy vision of his decidedly stout mother essaying the fox-trot, but the moment was too serious for him to find any humour in the thought.

“If we had a butler, it would make a lot of difference,” said the remaining member of the family, Stuart, the youngest. “I mean, it’s simply frightful when any

Varsity men call here and old Jane opens the door.”

“And we ought to live in Mayfair, not in a bally suburb,” growled Cyril, gazing at his lavender silk socks and not finding his customary joy in them.

“I did try to teach the pater bridge,” said Helen, “but it was hopeless. He simply had no idea of calling. How can you be smart if you don’t play bridge?”

“Bridge?”

It was Mr. Stanwood speaking. He had entered the room in time to hear the word.

His sons and daughter turned and gazed at him, and Cyril shook his head and sighed.

"You've still got that awful tail-coat on, pater," he said. "Why don't you go to my tailor?"

"And what a terrible tie that is!" added Helen.

"Um! Like you young people say in your everlasting bridge, I don't seem to be 'olding the stuff," remarked Mr. Stanwood.

"Holding, pater, not 'olding!" exclaimed Stuart.

"I said 'olding," responded Mr. Stanwood. "I didn't say 'olding. I can sound me hatches as well as hanyone."

His children gazed at each other in pious resignation, and then, started by Cyril, they gave voice to the complaints which they had been uttering prior to their father's arrival.

"Want me to learn to play bridge, and ma to dance, eh?" he said. "And a butler an' a mansion in Mayfair? Is there anythin' else you'd like? When d'you reckon me and mar had time to learn to dance and play bridge? We spent our time workin' and saving', findin' the money to send you young people to college, tryin' to turn you into trumps.

"Life ain't unlike bridge," went on Mr. Stanwood. "We're all out to get good 'ands, with plenty of trumps in 'em, and to do our opponents down. Me and mar was after it when we worked 'ard and made money, and we reckoned on you three being, the ace, king and queen of trumps. But I dunno!"

Mr. Stanwood paused and shook his head.

"Oh, come, pater, we're not so bad!" exclaimed Stuart.

"No, I give you best there—you're certainly good to look at. But looks ain't everythin'. I bought up a cheap line of good-lookin' German stuff last week, but it's all gone on the dust-'eap. That's where a lot of good-lookin' stuff goes if it ain't got nothin' but looks."

"I'm reading for the Bar, pater," said Cyril stiffly.

"Did you say 'at' or 'for'?" inquired Mr. Stanwood drily.

"What do you mean, pater?"

"Well, you do most of your readin' at your club, as far as I can see."

Cyril was going to remonstrate, but his father stopped him with a gesture.

"If I'd brought you three up to somethin' honest, some good trade, instead of sending you to college, you'd 'ave been a sight

better off," he said. "You can play bridge and dance, but what else can you do?"

His children stared at him in astonishment, for his outburst had been totally unexpected. As a matter of fact, it had been simmering in his mind for months, and this evening the opportunity for speaking his thoughts had arrived.

"What else can we do?" repeated Cyril.

"Well—er—all sorts of things, you know."

"Name some," said Mr. Stanwood. "Go on, call up your hand, like you say in bridge."

His children remained silent, gazing at him as if he were some strange specimen from a menagerie suddenly descended amongst them. As long as they could remember, he had paid all their bills without question, in addition to the handsome allowances he made them.

"What are we and mar gettin' out of you?" he demanded.

"Mar!" repeated Stuart, with a shudder.

Helen had so far said nothing. She found herself regarding her father from a new standpoint. Really, he was rather a fine-looking man, she thought. His clothes and his speech spoilt him, however.

"Not one of you ever spends an evenin' 'ome with me and mar," said Mr. Stanwood.

"What is there to do here?" asked Cyril. "We can't get a four at bridge. We could only sit and talk."

"Ever wondered what me and your mother do of an evening?"

"No, pater."

"Hang it, boy, talk English!" exclaimed Mr. Stanwood. "What d'you want to call me by a foreign name for? Why don't you call me dad?"

"Er—it isn't done, pa—er—father."

"Oh, isn't it? Anyway, me and your mother spend most of our evenings by ourselves, and we talk. D'you know what we talk about? Course not—you're never there. We talk of the old days when we 'ad the shop—what's the matter, Cyril? Cold?—when you were three innocent little 'uns. We was very 'appy then. Pity that shop did so well. Pity I 'ad the money to send you to public schools and college. It's done you no good. Not one of you's got any trumps in your 'and. Where are you all off to to-night?"

"Lady Wenderford's dance," replied Helen.

"Charity affair, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Then you won't be missed if you ain't there."



“You can all three come to my office to-morrow and start work.”

“But we’re going,” said Stuart.

“You’re stoppin’ ’ome to-night,” said Mr. Stanwood. “We’re going to have a talk, we four. Mother’s going to the pictures, and we’ll be all alone. Understand, I mean this. I ain’t calling ‘no trumps’ on three Jacks.”

“But we’ve promised to go, father!” exclaimed Cyril.

“I’m your banker, aren’t I?”

“Yes.”

“Well, take my tip and stop home. We’ll have a good four after dinner, and I shall play the hand.”

With that Mr. Stanwood went from the room, leaving his two sons and daughter almost completely dazed. For some minutes they did not speak. Cyril lit a cigarette and stared moodily at it, Helen contemplated her pretty, silk-covered ankles, and it was left to Stuart to break the silence.

“I’m going to the dance,” he said suddenly. “What’s the matter with the gov’nor? If he wasn’t a T.T., I should say

he’d had one too many. You’re coming, aren’t you, Helen?”

“I—er—I don’t know.”

“What about you, Cyril?”

“Not sure yet.”

Both Cyril and Helen had vivid recollections of their father’s reference to the fact that he was their banker. Each had some heavy bills coming in, and they wanted to run no risk.

“You’d better stay, Stuart,” said Helen. “I shall.”

“So shall I,” added Cyril.

Stuart was inclined to be mutinous. He was only just down from Oxford, not properly out yet. He expected one of his university friends to get him a political appointment. He was not studying for any career.

“You’d better stay, Stuart,” repeated Helen.

He yielded eventually, and in due course they entered the dining-room, with its saddlebag furniture and copies of Landseer’s pictures. Two large bronzes of gentlemen with apparently unmanageable horses towered up on the mantelpiece, and between them was an immense marble clock. The three younger people were the only un-Victorian things in the room, excepting the food,

of course. The menu was Victorian, too, and not bewildering. It consisted of saddle of mutton—which Mr. Stanwood carved—boiled potatoes, cabbage, apple pudding, and cheese. Mr. and Mrs. Stanwood drank beer, and their children wine.

“There, I wish I was stopping, I do!” said Mrs. Stanwood, with a comfortable sigh, when she had absorbed her second portion of pudding. “But I don’t want to miss the serial at the cinema. It is exciting. It left off last week with the heroine fallin’ through a trap-door into a pool full of crocodiles, and three masked men shootin’ revolvers at ’er.”

“Were they in the pool?” asked Cyril.

The sarcasm was lost, and Cyril paid a heavy price for it, for Mrs. Stanwood warmed to her subject and gave a detailed account of the three previous instalments—the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth.

Eventually, however, Mr. Stanwood led the way to a room which he called the parlour,

and his children referred to as the red drawing-room. He proceeded to fill and light his pipe, and then he sat and regarded his children thoughtfully.

"I've had rather a tight time during the past few weeks," he said at length, "and it's made me think 'ard. I'm glad to say I've come through all right, but it's been all on me own, you understand. There's been times durin' the last month or two when I'd 'ave pretty near given my right 'and to have had a boy of me own in the business, but I haven't had any luck that way."

He paused for a moment, puffing at his pipe.

"It made me wonder sev'ral times," he went on, "what would 'appen to you three if I'd gone under. You'd be like people playin' ten pounds a 'undred and picking up nothin' over a ten each time."

"Why, you talk as though you can play bridge, father," said Cyril.

"I'm talking that way 'cos I reckon you'll understand better. Now, then, what *would* you 'ave done?"

Illuminating silence greeted his question.

"Quite so!"



"His children stared at him open-mouthed."

he exclaimed. "You wouldn't know what to do. Well, I'm your dad, and I say it isn't good enough. You've dealt all the cards up

to the present, but now I'm goin' to deal and to call, and those of you who can't play to my calling will get left. D'you follow me?"

"Yes, father," replied Helen.

"The quarter ends to-day," continued Mr. Stanwood, "and from to-morrow you start different. Your allowances will be reduced fifty per cent. I will pay outstanding bills, but no others. What is it you say when you play a suit and your partner doesn't follow? You say: 'Aving no spades?' or whatever it is, don't you? And the answer is 'Aving no spades, partner,' isn't it? Well," said Mr. Stanwood slowly, "that's goin' to be my answer when you want extra cash. 'Aving no brass,' I shall say."

"How can I go on reading for the Bar, father?" demanded Cyril hotly.

"How have you been reading so far?" retorted his father. "Standin' drinks all round at another sort of bar. But that's got to stop. You three 'ave got to earn your livings. Course, you may marry, Helen."

"I don't want to marry—not yet, anyway."

"Then you'll earn your living, my dear."

"But how are we to?" asked Stuart.

"How did I do it?" said Mr. Stanwood.

"I began with one shop. Then I bought those on either side. Then I bought the whole block. I sold the business, I started in the wholesale, and now I'm a merchant, dealin' in a 'undred different things. That's how it's done."

"You don't mean to suggest that we open a shop?" said Cyril hotly.

"No, I don't reckon you've got sufficient go for that," replied Mr. Stanwood candidly. "But I tell you what I'm going to do for you," he went on. "You can all three come to my office to-morrow and start work. I'll put you in the way of things, and then start you on your own. If you've got anything in you, you'll make a do of it."

His children stared at him open-mouthed.

"No need to look like that," he said.

"When I started I didn't get anyone to deal me a good 'and right away—I 'ad to take the leavings of the pack. I 'ad no allowance, and no one to 'elp me. Now, then, I've finished talking. I've got some letters to write. I'll come back presently and see what you've decided."

Silence followed his departure. It lasted for several minutes, and was then broken by Stuart.

"The guv'nor seems to think we've got no more brains than rabbits," he said. "I'd—I'd like to show him he's wrong."

"How can we?" asked Helen

"Why, let's take his offer."

Cyril and Helen stared at Stuart, who was standing up, his body bent slightly forward, his jaw set, just as he had posed himself so many times when several burly "threes" had been bearing down on him on the Rugger field.

"But what about the Bar?" asked Cyril.

Stuart laughed.

"You won't stand a chance for that, anyway, unless you make good. Come on, let's try our luck. Are you game?"

Helen sprang up, her eyes dancing.

"Yes, we will!" she cried. "Oh, say you will, Cyril!"

"All right," he answered grudgingly.

The decision was made, but it was followed by regretful allusions to what they would miss—Lord's, Ranelagh, Ascot, Henley and a hundred and one other forms of amusement which had been on their programmes.

"Well," said Mr. Stanwood, entering the room suddenly, "have you decided?"

"Yes, we'll do as you wish," replied Cyril.

Mr. Stanwood's face lit up, and then he turned his head suddenly, biting his lower lip, thrusting back the desire to tell his children he had only been trying them. He knew he must not show his affection in this moment, or he would break down. He drew in a deep breath, and when he looked at his children again there was a quiet smile on his face.

"Right!" he said. "The hands are dealt now, and we'll see how you'll play them."

Mrs. Stanwood came in then with reassuring news concerning the young lady and the crocodiles.

"She was so clever," she said; "it was marvellous how she escaped. But we left 'er to-night fallin' in a motor-car off a bridge in front of a train. I reelly don't know 'ow to wait for nex' Tuesday—the pore dear, and so pretty and young, too!"

Presently, however, she recovered sufficiently to listen to the arrangement that had been made.

"I'm sure that will be very nice," she said.

Mr. Stanwood continued to behave in a matter-of-fact manner, his children not realising how deeply their acceptance had touched him, not dreaming that on his knees that night he said "and bless them dear children and 'elp 'em."



Before the following day was out, Cyril, Helen and Stuart had begun to repent their decision bitterly. They had expected to be treated as the children of the head of the firm, but their expectations were only partly realised, and that was as far as the "children" portion of their hopes.

They went out to dinner and the theatre that night, to wash the taste of the business from their minds, and they seriously discussed whether they should throw their hands in.

"Father holds all the trumps, though," said Helen.

"And he'll be more sure than ever that we're not worth a cent," added Stuart.

Pride came to their aid, and they resolved to continue to play the game. So next morning found them ready to set out with their father, though he more than half expected them to refuse to carry on.

"They're chips of the old block, after all, Lucy," he whispered proudly to his wife. "They don't chuck the towel in after a punch in the jaw. They're stickers, bless 'em!"

They did not think their father knew how hard a task he had set them. Certainly they did not dream that they had all the sympathy in his generous nature, for he knew better than to reveal his feelings.

Their display of grit had surprised him, but he was still more surprised by suggestions which emanated from them—suggestions formed as a result of first-class education, born in brains sufficiently keen to play a good game at bridge.

"I'd never 'ave believed it, Luce," he said one night. "They're takin' an interest in it, and, though I daren't let on to 'em, they've given me some good tips between 'em."

"Now, isn't that nice?" responded Mrs. Stanwood.

"I wish they were stoppin' with me, but I've got to stick to my word. I'm goin' to start 'em on their own, and that'll be the biggest test."

It was really surprising how the three Stanwoods settled down, though, of course, the business instinct was probably in their blood, and would help to explain the apparent miracle. What was more surprising was that they became really interested in their father's many and varied transactions, which one day might consist of buying a cargo in a ship at Vladivostock and taking his chance, and the next day minutely inspecting the

small stock of a factory and making a close deal.

"Business is business," he told his children several times. "You've got to get in first, and in most cases you've got to be careful, or you'll get your fingers burnt. There's no room for sentiment. When you see what you want, you got to go straight for it and get it. See?"

The time was not long in arriving when the three younger Stanwoods were eager to strike out for themselves, and they reminded their father of his promise. He listened gravely, concealing the sorrow that he felt.

"You think you're fit for it?" he asked.

"Yes, dad," replied Cyril, for Mr. Stanwood was generally addressed in this manner now.

"You reckon you can play the 'and all right?"

"Yes, dad."

"Don't forget that 'earts ain't trumps in the City; it's gen'rally clubs, and you can get some pretty good thumps with 'em."

"I always go 'no trumps' if I get half a chance," said Cyril.

"Well, if you've made up your minds, I'll carry out my part," Mr. Stanwood said. "But keep this in your minds," he went on; "it's up to you to make a do of it. Don't come to me for money. I told you what my answer would be. If you're strong enough to make your own way, you'll make money, too."

"And don't forget what I said," he continued, "business is business. If you can keep the other feller out while you make a deal, then it's up to you to do it. Business is like a prize fight—the chap that can 'it 'ardest and stay longest is goin' to win."

One other thing Mr. Stanwood insisted on, and that was that his children should not bask in the reflected glory of their father's name. Stanwood & Co. was a name to be conjured with in the City, and Mr. Stanwood was insistent that his children should stand on their own merits.

"What are you calling yourselves?" he asked.

"Well, Stanwood & Co. fits us, but we can't very well use it," replied Cyril.

Helen proposed that they should take their mother's maiden name, and eventually the new firm was registered under the title of Maxwell & Co. Mr. Stanwood fitted up offices for his children, and intimated

that at the end of a year their allowances would cease.

"By then," he said, "you ought to be makin' your own money."

To no one, not even to his wife, did he confide how lonely he was on the first day of the new firm. He had been happier than he had ever expected to be whilst his children were working with him, and their departure from the business created a gap which he felt could never be filled.

He was more keenly interested in Maxwell & Co. than in his own business, but he masked this feeling successfully, and managed to convey to his children the impression that he did not expect them to succeed.

"Well, started goin' 'no trumps' yet?" he said to Cyril, at the end of a week.

"We're calling one club to start with, dad, and for very small points."

"H'm! Well, a little caution won't hurt you."

A month passed by—a month fraught with considerable anxiety for the new firm, and just as much for Mr. Stanwood, though he did not say so. His anxiety was for his children, and if he resisted the offer to help them once, he resisted it a hundred times.

He could not help realising that their laughter was not heard so often now, that shows and dining out had been cut down to a minimum, and he heard, with a grim smile on his face, that bridge was played for only sixpenny points now—when it was played at all, which was not very often.

"Fred," said his wife one evening, "I don't like the looks of the children. Aren't you being a bit too hard on them?"

"Are they 'aving as 'ard a time as we 'ad, Luce?"

"Oh, no, Fred."

"And would I stand by and let 'em go smash?"

"Course not, Fred."

"Well, then, we'll go on waitin', old lady."

"It hurts me sometimes, Fred."

Mr. Stanwood's feelings suddenly broke loose.

"And doesn't it 'urt me?" he said.

"Why, Luce, old lady, they could walk on me and kick me, if it'd 'elp 'em! I love 'em more'n I can tell you, but I'm goin' to be firm and stick to my part of the bargain. They're stickin' to theirs, and they aren't whining, bless 'em! 'Ow I love those dear boys and Helen! That night I talked straight to 'em I never dreamt

they'd stand up like they've done. I told 'em to make their own way and not come to me for money, and, sure enough, they ain't."

"You'll give it, if they do, won't you, Fred?"

He shook his head.

"Only as a last resource, to put 'em straight and then bring 'em back into the firm."

Mr. Stanwood's pride in his children for not coming to him for money received a severe shock on the following day.

He was seated in his luxurious office, smoking a cigar and dictating to his secretary, who was capable of translating his employer's sentences into grammatical English.

"That'll do, Walker," he said presently. "I've got to go along and fix up that big deal with Morton & Sons now. It's going to be a very good thing for us, Walker."

"Yes, sir. Three o'clock is the time of the appointment, sir."

"Then I've just got nice time."

At that moment there was a knock at the door, and a clerk entered.

"Miss Stanwood to see you, sir," he said.

A slight frown puckered Mr. Stanwood's face.

"Ask her to come back at half-past four," he said. "Tell her I have to go out on important business now."

"Yes, sir."

The clerk withdrew, but three minutes later the door opened again and Helen entered.

"Oh, dad," she exclaimed, "did you say you wouldn't see me? Oh, you must, dad!"

He glanced at her quickly, somewhat startled.

"Must?" he repeated.

"Yes, dad."

Mr. Stanwood signed to his secretary to leave them, and then he gazed at Helen.

"I can give you five minutes," he said. "What's the trouble?"

"Money."

"Um!" Mr. Stanwood's lips came tightly together. "Well?" he said.

"We want you to let us have some, dad."

He shook his head.

"You remember the agreement?" he said.

"But, dad, you must."

"Having no money," he responded.

"But you can't say 'partner,' can you?" flashed Helen.

He wished he could, but he let that go.

"I'm sticking to my word, Helen," he said. "I told you not to come whining to me for money."

"I'm not whining. We're not whiners." "No, thank Heaven, you're not," he said under his breath, but his face was expressionless.

"Will you put some money up, dad? Only a thousand."

"Only a thousand!" he repeated. "So we deal in thousands, do we? And you only just started! I dealt in shillings when I started."

"But you hadn't a father like we have." He shook his head again.

"That sort of soft talk won't work, my dear," he said.

"Will you help us, dad?"

"Are you down and out?"

"No, dad."

"Well, keep on pegging away on your own, like I had to."

He anticipated that this was the last word, but Helen had other views on the matter. She continued to plead, until at length he had to tell her almost roughly that he refused.

"Now, I'm off," he said. "I shall be late, as it is. You've got my decision, my dear. Keep on pegging away."

She stood up and faced him calmly.

"Very well, dad, we will," she said. "See you later. Good-bye."

She was gone before he could say another word, and he stood gazing in a slightly puzzled manner at the doorway through which she had vanished.

"Somehow I didn't think they'd have come to me for money," he murmured.

Then he shrugged his shoulders, rang for a taxi, and went to keep his appointment.

It was half-past three before he entered Mr. Morton's private office, and he was full of apologies.

"I couldn't get away before," he said, "but I'm ready to talk business now."

"It's too late, Mr. Stanwood. Three o'clock was the time arranged. The deal is concluded."

"With someone else?"

"Yes."

"Who?" demanded Mr. Stanwood.

"Maxwell & Co. They're new people, but they furnished the necessary guarantees, so we made the deal. Why—er—what's the matter?"

"Maxwell & Co.?" said Mr. Stanwood hoarsely. "What address?"

Mr. Morton told him.

"They're all right, aren't they?" he said.

"All right!" repeated Mr. Stanwood, almost angrily. "As safe as the Bank of England!"

Then he was gone, and Mr. Morton looked puzzled.

"Seemed almost as though he was pleased," he murmured.

Mr. Stanwood was driven to the offices of Maxwell & Co., where he asked to see the principal. His name was taken in by a junior clerk, who returned presently and said Mr. Cyril Stanwood was busy at the moment, but would see him presently.

"Busy! I should say he is!" said Mr. Stanwood to himself.

For a quarter of an hour he cooled his heels in the small general office, alternately furious and happy, and then a bell rang, and he was conducted into the private office, where Cyril, Stuart and Helen awaited him.

The door was closed, and he stared at them.

"You young——" he began, broke off suddenly and began to laugh. "This is the 'appiest day of my life," he said, and then shook a finger at Helen. "You didn't want money; you kept me talking while your brothers made the deal."

"Business is business, dad," she said. "Personally, if I had a big deal on, I should not waste my time talking."

"That's one in the eye for me, my dear, and I deserve it. Oh, you young demons, you! You've bested me! Well, this is the 'appiest day of my life. What a nerve, though!"

"Yes, dad," said Cyril, "we went 'no trumps' on a poor hand, and made a grand slam."

"And did your father down! But 'e don't mind."

"That's where you go wrong, dad," said Cyril quietly. "We have made this deal, and can go on with it. But we want to go on with it as Stanwood & Co."

"As what?"

"Stanwood & Co. You're Stanwood, we're the Co."

"Amalgamate, you mean?"

"Yes, dad."

Mr. Stanwood's fists clenched and he bent his head. In a moment Helen was by his side and her arms were round him.

"Dad, you're crying!" she whispered.

"Oh, dad!"

"This is the 'appiest day of my life!" said Mr. Stanwood brokenly. "Helen! My boys!"

They came round him, but he could not see them. He felt their hands, their arms, Helen's lips, and he wanted to fall on his knees.

And so Stanwood & Co. came into its

own, and that night the firm went to the pictures with Mrs. Stanwood and saw the thirty-ninth episode of the serial, which left the unfortunate heroine hanging by one foot over the edge of a steep precipice.

"Oh, it is nice to be all together!" Mrs. Stanwood said, as they drove home. "I do wonder 'ow she'll escape!"

## THE DARK HONEYCOMB.

### A NEW FOREST SONG.

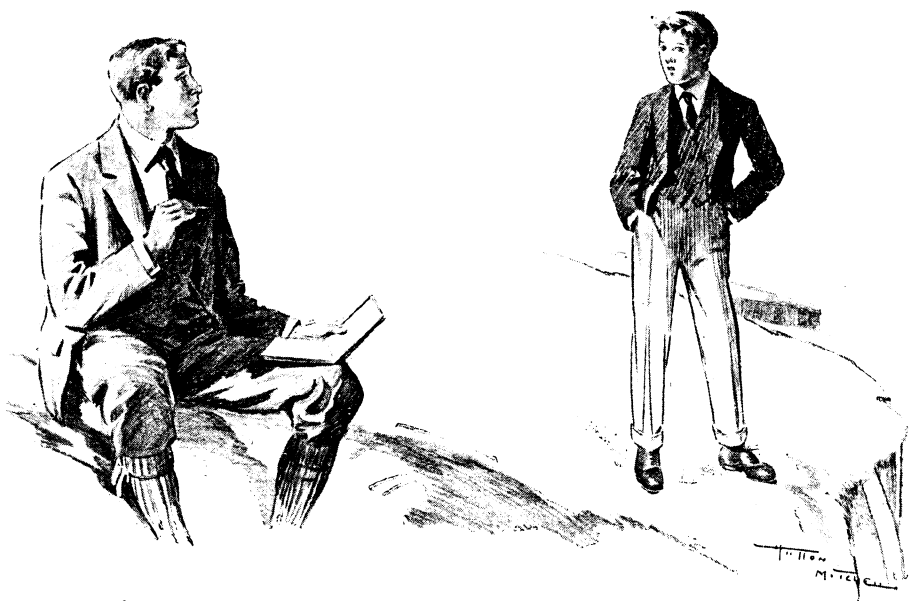
**O**H, give me lulled forgetting  
Of the fretting and regretting,  
Before the sun is setting  
On those bramble-skeps down home!  
For their cells store honied slumber,  
For the cares that crush and cumber,  
And home stories without number  
Holds the dear dark honeycomb.

Oh, there's spice o' red bog-myrtle  
In the dark honeycomb!  
There's juice o' the black whortle  
In the dark honeycomb.  
There's scent of gorse together  
With the nectar of pink heather,  
Where the turf breathes mead and mether  
From the chimney-stacks down home!

Oh, give me the tear-stilling  
Dark honey that is spilling  
From the heather bells fast filling  
Those rushen skeps down home!  
Where cool streams heather-springing  
Run down the furze-dip singing  
Like the brown bees homeward winging  
To their heather-honeycomb!

Oh, there's resin and sap of willow  
In the dark honeycomb!  
Dream-spells to soothe one's pillow  
Holds the dark honeycomb!  
There's love and joy's full measure  
In the hive's dim hidden treasure!  
And may God of His good pleasure  
Let the Forest call us home!

Alice E. GILLINGTON.



“Got any gaspers?” asked the boy suddenly.”

# MAKING USE OF OSWALD

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY HUTTON MITCHELL

**T**HERE are a number of conventional and generally accepted solaces for the man who is blighted in love. He may, for example, if his means permit, travel widely and fast; he may become a recluse, let his hair grow, and drag out a solitary existence in some remote cottage; he may, if he is at his ease with a gun, seek forgetfulness in shooting leopards, elephants, tigers, or himself. There is no lack of occupation for the man with a broken heart. Yet Freddie Datchett, on the occasion of his jilting by Violet Jamieson in favour of an elderly stockbroker with three chins, a five-figure income, and a motherless child, did none of these things. He went to Tagg's Bay.

Tagg's Bay is one of those typical seaside villages consisting of seven cottages, one general shop, four public-houses, and several oldest inhabitants. To the eager holiday-

maker, thirsting for promenades, cinemas, and dancing-halls, it cannot be recommended. Tagg's Bay cannot offer for his delight even a single minstrel, unless we so describe the landlord of "The Dog and Hayfork," who does things with a cornet. On the other hand, it was just the place for Freddie Datchett.

Freddie himself was of this opinion when, on the morning after his arrival, he took his broken heart out upon the cliff-top. He had learned of Tagg's Bay from an acquaintance, and he was glad that he had come. It suited his mood admirably. A thoroughly dull, rotten, unattractive hole, thought Freddie Datchett, with a kind of gloomy satisfaction.

It was, no doubt, foolish of Freddie to take his jilting so much to heart. Other and better men than he had been engaged to Violet Jamieson; Freddie, to be precise,

was number seven on the list. But he was young, and had only been engaged for ten days. It seemed to him that he could never be the same man again. One sympathises.

For half an hour he sat huddled upon the cliff's edge, gazing sadly out to sea, reflecting morosely upon the beastliness of life. A casual observer, I am afraid, would not have recognised in him a sufferer from a fractured heart; rather would it have been deduced that here was a martyr to indigestion, for Freddie was not one of your romantic figures. It may as well be admitted that his person was short and almost plump, his hair reddish, his countenance normally cherubic and smiling. By no means an outwardly interesting young man.

Presently he sighed, drew a sketch-book from his pocket, and began almost mechanically to transfer to paper the lighthouse at Tagg's Point. For Freddie, unexpectedly enough, was by profession an artist, and an artist of considerable promise and some small achievement. Even the condition of his cardiac organ had not power to hold his fingers idle for long.

He had been working for some little time when first the Voice impinged upon his ear. It came from immediately behind his left shoulder, causing him to start violently.

"Pretty rotten, I call it," said the Voice.

The startled Freddie pivoted upon his axis. A yard away stood a small boy. Freddie, who had been one himself not so long ago, and liked nearly all boys, saw at the first glance that here was one of the other kind. This boy was apparently some twelve years of age; he was short and stout, so that he bulged; his face was large, pallid, and globular; he was arrayed in a very small cap and a very tight Eton suit which merely served to accentuate his bulginess. As he stood, surveying Freddie with a glassy and unfriendly stare, his jaws moved rhythmically and he breathed heavily through his mouth, in the manner of one addicted to adenoids. Rarely had Freddie seen a more unlovely child.

"What are you talking about?" said Freddie coldly.

The boy extended a fat finger towards the sketch.

"That." He ceased chewing for a moment, as if occupied in seeking words suitable to the occasion. "What is it?" he demanded at length.

Freddie eyed him with a rising rage. This was manifestly one of those boys who seem

to be created for the sole purpose of being well and repeatedly thrashed. His first impulse was to arise and hurl the youth over the cliff, but a moment's thought assured him that even in Tagg's Bay such an action might provoke remark. He groped for a crushing rejoinder.

"Got any gaspers?" asked the boy suddenly.

Freddie regarded him frigidly.

"I have plenty, thank you."

"Will you gimme one?"

"I will not. It'd make you sick, for one thing, and you seem to be having some sort of a meal already."

The youth scowled venomously.

"Funny, you are! Be a sport and gimme one."

Slowly and with dignity Freddie rose to his feet; the cigarette-lover backed a step. In another moment the latter might well have had good cause to understand that it is not wise to trifle with a broken-hearted man, however cherubic his outward seeming. Freddie, however, in the act of opening his mouth to speak, halted suddenly and stood at gaze, staring past the youth down the path that climbed up from the bay. The fat boy, observing his absorption, turned and gazed also.

"Aw," he said, "it's only Joan. I say, you might gimme a gasper."

Freddie made no reply; his whole attention was fixed upon the girl approaching rapidly up the path.

I have said that Freddie was quite young. He was also a simple, homely soul, impressionable, with an artist's eye for beauty. And it seemed to him that this girl, coming towards him with the sunlight playing about her, was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. She appeared to be of about his own age, slim and graceful, with a quantity of corn-coloured hair; as she drew nearer, he noted that her eyes were of the blue of the sea. Of her dress he remarked nothing but a green jumper. He remained dumbly gazing.

The girl drew level with them and addressed the fat boy:

"So there you are, Oswald. You might wait for me another time. Come along. We shall have to hurry to catch that post."

She favoured Freddie with a cool, politely uninterested glance, and moved on towards the village. Oswald, pausing only to make a face at the hoarder of gaspers, followed sullenly. Freddie stood as if he had taken root, and thus remained until they had

passed round a bend in the path and from his sight. Then he sighed, slipped his sketch-book into his pocket, and walked slowly in their wake.

At this point I think it wise to urge that too hasty a judgment should not be formed of Freddie's character. He was not by nature fickle, a youthful Don Juan, an habitual squire of dames. It was merely that hitherto he had considered Violet Jamieson the most beautiful of women, and now had reason to revise that theory. Who are we to blame if at the moment he felt slightly less unhappy? Let us be charitable and assume that Time, the great healer, had got smartly off the mark.

When he reached the village, there was no sign of the fat boy and his companion. Freddie entered "The Dog and Hayfork" and called for a stoup of ale. The landlord, a vast gentleman in shirt-sleeves and an apron, set the tankard before him with a wide and genial grin.

"Visitin' 'ere, sir?" he said.

"Yes," said Freddie. "By the way, I thought I heard a cornet just now. Imagination, I suppose."

The landlord's face brightened.

"Aye, that was me, sir. Just practisin' like. Wonderful fond o' the cornet, I am."

"It's a beautiful instrument," said Freddie unashamedly.

The landlord, overjoyed at this encounter with a kindred spirit, leaned upon the bar and proceeded to discourse at considerable length upon the proper treatment of cornets, his audience nodding approval at appropriate intervals. Finally, when at long last the fount of knowledge showed signs of running dry, Freddie led the conversation to village matters, and thence, by easy stages, to the object of his visit.

"By the way," he said idly, "talking of kids, who's that small boy in Etons I see about? Generally with a fair girl."

"Ah," said the cornetist, "I know 'oo you mean, sir. But I dunno 'oo they are. On'y been 'ere a few days. Lunnon folk, likely. I 'ear they've took old Mrs. Dimble's 'ouse for a month—up beyond the pine wood. More of 'em comin' in a day or so, I 'ear. But I dunno yet 'oo they are. They two you speak of, sir, they'll be brother an' sister, now, I reckon, an' father an' mother to follow."

Freddie choked on his beer. Brother and sister? Was it possible? Could such a girl have such a brother? Yet the supposition was sound, for the boy wore a

school cap, and, besides, was too old to have a governess. Brother and sister! The repellent Oswald, then, must be an atavism, a throw-back to some degenerate ancestor.

Freddie left "The Dog and Hayfork" in a thoughtful frame of mind. It is here, perhaps, worthy of record that for the space of half an hour he had thought of Miss Violet Jamieson not at all.

\* \* \* \* \*

The wide expanse of Tagg's Bay lay tranquilly blue and unruffled beneath the summer sun. No cloud was in the sky, little wavelets lapped upon the strand, everywhere was peace—everywhere, that is to say, except in the small dinghy which was being propelled unskilfully across the bay by Mr. Frederick Datchett. The dinghy was a little private centre of industry and unremitting toil, for Freddie was no accomplished oarsman. It having seemed good to him that sunny morning to take aquatic exercise, he had promptly done so, and was now beginning to regret his hasty impulse. The sun gained steadily in power, and he was very hot. The tide was going out, and considerable labour was necessary to regain the shore. For the first time in his life Freddie knew sympathy for galley-slaves.

Presently he desisted, panting, from his endeavour and rested upon his oars, glancing over his shoulder to learn how far he had yet to travel. Suddenly he stiffened in his seat and riveted his eyes upon a figure seated by the water's edge. He had battled close enough to the beach to recognise at once that corn-coloured head, now bent above a book, that slender figure, that green jumper. Even as he watched she rose, looked out to sea, waved a hand, and began to move along the shore.

For one delirious instant Freddie thought that she had waved to him, but he was soon undeceived. Between him and the beach bobbed a small black object, which a brief inspection revealed to be the head of Oswald.

"Oh, curse the brat!" muttered Freddie, with deep feeling.

The three days that had elapsed since first Joan (as he was ignorant of her other name, it was thus that he thought of her) had swum into his ken he had spent in earnest endeavour to make her acquaintance. In this he had failed, lacking, as he did, an adequate reason for speaking to her. She remained calmly heedless of his existence, and Freddie, after some deep thought, had perceived that only through Oswald could he win to her side. Unfortunately Oswald,

since the episode of the gaspers, had shown no wish to be cultivated, presenting to Freddie, whenever they met, a lowering scowl of dislike. It was all very difficult and unpromising.

Freddie, seated in his dinghy, stared malevolently at Oswald's bobbing head. Suddenly, as he prepared to take to his oars again, the fat youth rolled over, flung up an arm and sank from sight. Freddie saw him re-appear, his globular countenance strangely distorted, writhe convulsively, and again sink.

With a startled exclamation Freddie leaped to his feet.

"All right!" he yelled. "I'm coming!"

Here, vouchsafed by a kindly Providence, was his opportunity. Plainly the wretched Oswald had contracted cramp. Joan, though it was incredible that she could really love the child, could not but be obliged to one who salvaged him from drowning. Hurriedly Freddie shed his coat, dived over the side of the boat, and plunged towards Oswald as the latter sank yet again.

Freddie, treading water, thought rapidly. He understood vaguely that drowning persons sink three times, and three times only. Oswald, having reached the limit of his allowance, must therefore be sought and brought back. Freddie took a deep breath and dived.

Immediately something gripped his right leg. He gasped, swallowed a quantity of sea, and strove to free himself, while terrifying visions of sharks, octopi, and other creatures of their kind flashed through his brain. The clutch on his ankle persisted, and he kicked vigorously. Abruptly he was free and shot to the surface. As he battled to regain his breath, there emerged suddenly from the ocean, a few yards away, the sleek, wet head of Oswald. The fat youth seemed entirely at his ease; a wide, unpleasant grin threatened to split his face in twain.

"I say," he remarked, treading water easily, "that's a rummy way to bathe!"

Freddie, regarding him in some astonishment, saw, as in a flash of blinding light, the true meaning of all this. In more senses than one, Oswald had pulled his leg. He choked with rage.

"D-do you mean to say," he stammered furiously, "that you d-did it on purpose?"

Oswald rolled over on his back and chuckled ghoulishly.

"Well, I can't help it if you want to bathe with your clothes on," he said, splashing happily.

Freddie gave a low snarl of rage and hurled himself at his tormentor. But as a swimmer he was no match for Oswald. The latter grinned again, rolled over, and shot away at a speed that left his pursuer hopelessly behind. Freddie, mumbling strange, regrettable noises, swam back to his boat and climbed miserably aboard.

On his return to his lodgings his landlady, a stout, motherly soul, was deeply concerned at his appearance.

"Why," she said, as one who stumbles upon some epoch-making truth, "you're all wet, Mr. Datchett!" Mr. Datchett admitted frankly that such was the case, but hurried to his room without further explanation.

The landlady, however, had a kindly heart, and when her lodger, clothed in dry raiment, reappeared for lunch, she returned to the attack.

"Fell in the sea, did you?" she said. "Tehk! Tehk! Proper wet, you was. You're looking all peaked now. If I was you, I'd have a nice ride on your motor-cycle this afternoon. That'll warm your blood. Have a look at Dimdale Abbey. You can't miss it. Straight out along past the church. Such a pretty place, too."

Which explains why, some time later, the pleasant lanes to the north of Tagg's Bay echoed to the passing of one who, hatless and goggled, ripped through the landscape as if pursued by seven devils. His landlady's suggestion had seemed to Freddie as sound a method of killing time as any other. He did not know where he was going, nor did he care. He had forgotten all about Dimdale Abbey, and passed the venerable ruin at thirty-five miles an hour. It was on his homeward journey, two hours later, that Destiny stepped in. This she did by causing a large nail to enter Freddie's front tyre, thereby all but hurling him headlong into a ditch.

Freddie, having by herculean efforts retained control of his mount, alighted, inspected the damage, swore heartily and looked about him. To his right, down a narrow lane, arose the remains of what, he realised, must be Dimdale Abbey. A short distance from it stood a cluster of farm buildings. In that direction he proceeded, with much labour and strong language, to push his machine, which seemed to gain in weight at every step.

He reached the gate of the farm and paused to mop his brow, glancing about him the while. Suddenly his heart seemed to stop.



A bare quarter of a mile away the ruins of the Abbey graced a low mound. Upon a heap of *débris*, gazing in the direction of the distant sea, stood a girl—a girl with corn-coloured hair and a green jumper. At her feet lay two bicycles.

Freddie, entirely forgetful of his puncture,

to speak. Then an evil grin spread across his face, and, without a word, he began rapidly to produce from his pockets a large number of apples, which he dropped at Freddie's feet. This operation he accomplished in less time than it takes to describe, and while the astonished Freddie still strove



“Come along. We shall have to hurry to catch that post.”

had been gazing at her for what seemed eternity, but was actually about four seconds, when there arose from the farm a confused medley of sound. He swung round in time to see the hedge agitate violently, burst asunder, and erupt beneath his very nose the dishevelled figure of Oswald.

Becoming aware of Freddie's presence, the stout youth started and seemed about

to achieve speech, Oswald had leaped with an astounding agility across the road, crashed through the opposite hedge, and vanished again. As he disappeared, there issued from the gate of the farm three men, who, perceiving Freddie, came running towards him, uttering hoarse, unintelligible cries.

“There ye are, then!” shouted the

leader. He was a large, bony man with an untidy goatee beard; he seemed in the grip of some powerful emotion. His companions, obvious farm-hands, said nothing, but stolidly stared. The bony man thrust his beard into Freddie's face.

"Robbin' my orchard, eh? Thought as no one'd see ye, eh? Ye didn't know as my little gel saw ye, an' came an' told me, eh? Well, we got ye now—though y'ain't what I expected," he added.

Freddie, slowly recovering his wits, blinked rapidly. If he had correctly grasped the situation, he stood accused of pilfering apples from this person's orchard. His first thought was to deny the absurd allegation at once and with dignity, but, even as he framed the words, inspiration gave him pause.

What if he were to take this crime upon his shoulders, thereby averting from Oswald certain and probably heavy punishment? Naturally he did not propose to do this solely for Oswald's sweet sake, but by reason of the impression such an action must make upon Joan. His imagination, leaping ahead, pictured the subsequent scene. Oswald, penitent, a little frightened, standing before his saviour with downcast mien; Joan, her eyes wide with admiration at his ready wit, hanging upon his words. He heard himself speak: "There, there, my boy, say no more. Let this be a lesson to you. I have settled with the farmer. I told him that I took the apples!" And then Joan: "Oh, Mr. Datchett, how *kind* of you!" It was an affecting vision. He faced the farmer.

"You complain that I've taken your apples," he said. "Well, what about it?" The farmer was plainly taken aback.

"What d'ye mean—what about it? I've caught ye in my orchard, that's all about it, an' I'll have the law on ye. What beats me is how a grown man like you didn't know better than to go around stealin'. From what my little gel said I reckoned it was a nipper she saw. You're old enough to know better, ain't ye? What did ye do it for?"

"Simply high spirits," said Freddie. "Pure boyish fun. I'm quite ready to pay. How much?"

The farmer snorted angrily.

"Pure boyish fun, is it? I'll tell ye boyish fun comes high in these parts! High spirits, ye say? Well, I've got high spirits, too, an' just for that I'll lock ye up till I get a p'liceman. Six times this month my orchard's bin robbed! Pay for it? Ye don't

get away that easy! Bring him along to the shed, boys."

Freddie started. His imagination could do a great deal, but it had not prepared him for this. The scheme did not seem to be proceeding according to schedule. He had confidently supposed that this matter of the apples could be adjusted by the distribution of a little largesse, but it appeared that the assumption was incorrect. He felt a twinge of alarm. He was prepared to suffer much for Joan, but not even for her would he become a convict. A strong protest seemed indicated.

"Look here," he began, "this is all rot, you know! I didn't——"

"That'll do," said the farmer crisply. "Just you come along quiet." He motioned to his minions, who promptly laid ungentle hands upon Freddie. The latter jerked himself free, and was at once seized again and urged forcibly towards the farm. His temper began to fray.

"If you don't stop this fooling about," he snapped, "I'll——"

"In here, boys," said the farmer, and held open a door. Freddie, struggling, kicking, and (I regret to say) cursing, was thrust forward and flung into darkness. A bolt clicked, footsteps retreated, and he was alone with a gloomy silence and a powerful odour of onions.

As his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, he saw that he was in a small shed devoted apparently to the storage of vegetables. Potatoes lay piled around the walls, onions depended from the roof; he found that he was reposing upon a mound of turnips. He rose and inspected the door; it was immovable. There was no window, but only a small opening high in the wall and large enough to admit a small cat. He tested the walls, but they declined to yield. Sick at heart, he resumed his seat upon the turnips.

So this, he reflected bitterly, was the end! And for his present impossible predicament he was indebted to Oswald. At the thought of the latter he ground a turnip beneath his heel. At that moment he would gladly have bartered his chance of Paradise for the privilege of a brief interview with the fat youth and the loan of a pliable cane.

Engrossed with these and similar meditations, it was some little time before he became aware of the tapping on the door. When finally it filtered through to his understanding, he sat up sharply, causing

the pile of turnips to give way beneath him, so that he lay on his back among them. The tapping continued.

"Are you there?" came a whisper.

Freddie climbed to his feet. The question annoyed him. Of course he was there. Would to Heaven he were not! He approached the door cautiously, suspecting a hoax, a trap, a—he knew not what.

"Hullo!" he said.

"Oh, do be quiet!" came the whisper. "I'm going to let you out. The men have all gone back to the fields, and someone's gone to Dimdale for the policeman. Are you ready?"

"Ye-yes," said Freddie faintly. He knew that voice.

The bolt clicked, the door swung open, and Freddie, blinking in the light of day, looked upon the face of Joan.

"Come on quickly," she said. "We'll have to push your motor-bike." She closed and locked the door again.

"But——" said Freddie.

"Never mind that now. We must get away at once. Come on!"

The ensuing ten minutes passed for Freddie as a kind of dream. Shoving valiantly, he urged the motor-cycle out of the yard and up the lane to the main highway. There, at Joan's command, he wheeled through a gate and up a little path into a small, thick copse.

"You'll be all right here till you've mended it, I think," said Joan. "If anyone comes, we'll cover the bike with leaves, and you'll have to shin up a tree. I hope you *hadn't* stolen those apples, by the way. Oswald told me you'd been arrested for it, so I came to see. It sounds more like the sort of think *he'd* do, so I decided to let you out."

Obviously she was revelling in the adventure. But Freddie had not heard. He was looking past her to where, propped against a tree, stood two bicycles. Beside them, eating something from a paper bag, sat Oswald. The sight of the fat youth caused something to snap in Freddie's brain. He forgot Joan and the marvellous fact that she had aided him in adversity; he knew only that here before him was that adversity's cause, eating something from a paper bag. He sprang forward.

Oswald, all unprepared, found himself hoisted into the air and inverted above a masculine knee. The little copse rang to a sound as of carpets being beaten.

Not until his arm began to ache and the

unhappy Oswald's wails were shattering the welkin, did Freddie realise what he had done. Before Joan's very eyes, he had shown brutality towards her brother! He had wrecked all his own hopes. Incontinently dropping Oswald, he turned a contrite countenance to the girl.

"I—I'm awfully sorry," he faltered. "I can't think what made——"

His voice died as he saw her face. It was alight with approval—the face of one who sees a good deed well and truly performed.

"Splendid!" she cried. "Oh, thank you so much! It's just what he needs. I've simply longed to do it myself. Please go on!"

"B-but," gulped Freddie, "he's y-your brother, isn't he?"

The girl laughed gloriously.

"My brother? Good gracious, no! Preserve me from that! He's my employer's son—the apple of his eye. His father's just married again, and when he heard I'd nowhere to go this summer, he asked me if I'd care to come here, while he was on his honeymoon, and look after Oswald. I'd never met Oswald, so I came."

Freddie reeled back against a tree and clasped his head.

"But he calls you Joan."

"Well, is he the kind of boy to call me Miss Felton?"

"Great Scott!" said Freddie dazedly.

"And here have I been trying to toady to the little blighter because I wanted to know you!" He checked himself, afraid that he had said too much. A faint colour appeared in Joan's cheek; she evinced a sudden interest in the toe of her shoe. There followed a pause, replete with meaning.

"Anyway," said Joan, "I—I'm going home to-morrow. Mr. Croxley-Smythe is coming."

Freddie started as if stung.

"Mr. *who*?"

"Croxley-Smythe—Oswald's father."

Freddie gasped, for she who once had been Violet Jamieson was now, as he had good cause to know, Violet Croxley-Smythe. So Oswald was Violet's stepson! Curiously enough, this discovery left him quite unmoved.

"Have you met his—er—wife?" he asked, rather anxiously.

"No," said Joan. "Why? Do you know her?"

"I—I've heard of her," said Freddie. "By the way, I'm going back to Town, too, to-morrow. What's your train?"

# WILD FLOWERS FOR THE GARDEN

## TRANSPLANTING AND CULTIVATING OUR WOODLAND, FIELD AND HEDGEROW FAVOURITES

By M. H. CRAWFORD

IT is not by any means a simple matter to get wild flowers to grow well in an ordinary garden, but that it can be done I have proved. Of course, some grow more readily than others, especially when the soil from which the plant was taken happens to correspond with the soil in the garden. If clay predominates, there will be few blossoms, though the roots may take hold and live. Therefore some preparation is necessary before the transplanting is actually done. A little trouble in this direction is always well worth while, and once a "pocket" of good, suitable soil is made, nothing further need be done, beyond ordinary garden operations, as long as the garden is under your care.

It is usually fairly safe to transplant flowers from one spot to another in the same district. For instance, the common yellow iris and the reed-mace (generally but erroneously called bulrush) will grow without any trouble at all if moved from a

swampy field to a neighbouring garden. The same is true of the very ornamental marsh marigold, with its large, glossy leaves; the double variety that is usually

found in gardens is not so beautiful as the wild. I have found it in special abundance and beauty in Escrick Woods, in Yorkshire, in the month of May.

Yorkshire, with its moors and glens, is a splendid county in which to go flower-hunting. Just outside Saltburn, on the coast, I have found the lovely rose-coloured blossoms of the musk mallow, as well as the common feverfew, burdock, nipplewort, scabious, wild teasel, black medick, restharrow, and many others. In July the water elder is not uncommon, with its snow-white blossoms in spring and red berries in autumn; the garden variety, known as the snow-

ball tree, is not any more beautiful. The small but pretty marsh valerian grows on the banks of many of the smaller streams and

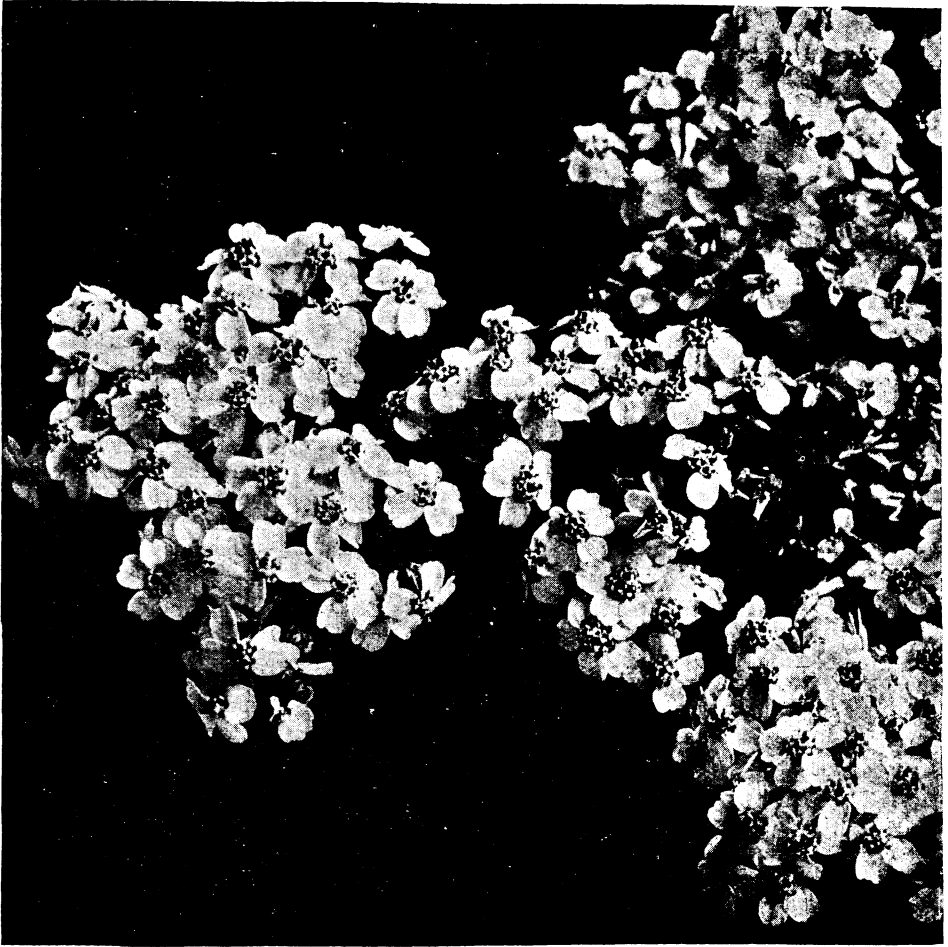


IRIS.

ivers, and the pink blossoms are abundant in May. In the west of Yorkshire there grows wild that lovely, quaint plant, Solomon's seal. This bears transplanting well, and increases every year as if it appreciated its new home. It is certain also that the faint, mysterious scent of its waxy green-and-white flowers grows stronger

wild on the banks of streams and rivers, generally in company with reeds and rushes, it is content to accept much drier and higher places when transplanted.

I have stolen from the hedges three very pretty and useful climbers, though all are more or less poisonous. But this is true of many plants that find prominent places in



MILFOIL.

and more distinct under a little care and cultivation.

Another plant that shows distinct improvement under garden culture is the common soft rush, found in all ponds and marshy places around London. There is also the common purple loosestrife, with its really magnificent flower-spikes; this is as ornamental as any garden plant one could buy, and it requires absolutely no attention. Though it is found growing

the garden, and these climbers are not likely to do anyone any harm. One is the woody nightshade, or bittersweet, and never have I had a climber that has more successfully withstood the disadvantages of drought, lack of sun, and poor soil. It grows to a height of six or seven feet, and its prettily shaped leaves, lying thick and close together on the trellis, form a sort of mosaic pattern; the blossoms, yellow and purple, are effective in their hanging bunches, and the berries

often last far into the winter. The other climbers are the two bryonies, the white and the black; though they enjoy a common name, they are not related to each other. The large, palmate, rough leaves of the white bryony make a useful screen, and the tendrils and whitish blossoms are both picturesque. They come out in May and

useful and abundant; they appear first about May and are found as late as September. Wherever there is an old wall or an ugly fence, no better wild climber can be found with which to cover and conceal it. The crowfoot tribe, to which traveller's joy belongs, contains also the pretty little pink or white wood anemone,



WHITE WILD-ROSE.

are followed by berries that are first green and then deep red. The black bryony is just as useful and ornamental, but the berries of both are said to be poisonous.

Traveller's joy is a useful wild climber, but unless plenty of space can be given to it, its masses of silvery seed tufts are apt to be a little overwhelming. The greenish-white blossoms, however, are most

or wind-flower, one of the most lovely spring flowers to be found in the woods. It needs a shady spot, and the soil must be light, otherwise the delicate creeping roots will not be able to find nourishment. It is no use planting this in spring, but during mild weather in winter the roots may be gently pulled up out of the loose, woodland soil and pressed into prepared garden soil. No water should ever be given to wild plants put into the ground during the winter, but the soil should be made very firm round the collar, or top part of the root where it joins the stem, to keep away insect pests. Several of such pests are always apparently on the watch for plants that are not in very robust health. Slugs are troublesome also under such conditions, and if the plant flags at all and decay sets in, a slug is sure to find it out. To this large tribe belongs also that very beautiful plant, the globe flower. I have only found it growing wild in the north of Yorkshire, but, once transplanted, it seems able to thrive anywhere.

Both the bindweeds are delightful, well worthy to be allotted places in gardens where they may be useful climbers or trailers, though all farmers detest the small bindweed. "It is a troublesome pest of cornfields and potato beds; the manner in which it binds together the potato haulms renders it difficult to dig the crop." This is according to the views of an agricultural writer; but, all the same, nothing can surpass the beauty

of the blossoms, and whenever there is chalk in the soil, it reaches great perfection. There is also a delicious scent about the flowers. It must be admitted, however, that at times the bindweeds thrive a little too well, and they are then difficult to get rid of.

The order of the Scrophulariaceæ, of the figwort tribe, includes that lovely woodland plant, the foxglove. This is always willing to be transplanted, and year after year the roots increase, and the self-sown seeds germinate in unexpected places. I have found it in wooded districts, generally with purple blossoms, which, under cultivation, often become much lighter in tone. Some of my roots are now producing flowers that are nearly white, and some of the pale purple varieties are much more exquisitely spotted inside than any I have seen growing wild. The flower stems also



BLACK BRYONY.



WHITE DEAD-NETTLE

reach a great height in the garden, and are very ornamental, never, even when covered with seed vessels, being ragged or untidy-looking. The toad-flax, with its familiar yellow - and - white blossoms, called by country children "eggs and butter," is common in the hedges about September everywhere, and a clump of the plant looks well in the garden. A relative of this is the ivy-leaved toad-flax; it is hardly, perhaps, a wild flower in the sense that it is a British native, but it is so widely naturalised that it may be included. It will grow anywhere and seeds itself, as well as rapidly increases by means of the rootlets on its underground stems. It may perhaps be recognised by some as the "mother-of-thousands," under which name it thrives in the West of England. Some plants are well worth transplanting for the sake of some curious habit or mode of growth, and that is the reason why I admire the little ivy-leaved toad-flax. It has a most ingenious method of sowing its seeds. When the time of flowering is over, the flower-stalk gradually

turns its head towards earth, or towards the old wall on which the plant is probably growing, and it actually deposits its seeds in some convenient little chink or hole. Just as wonderful is the way in which the stork's-bills plant their own seeds. In their case the seeds fall to the ground, releasing themselves from the carpels, but carrying their styles with them. The styles dry up

but the plant itself is so unattractive that I have not yet been tempted to take a root from the hedgerows. All the same, I have often looked at the hooks by which it draws its long stems right over a hedge. The leaves also possess these hooks, and then, when the seeds are formed, there are more hooks, which cling to our clothes as we pass, or to the wool and fur of animals, and thus the seeds are carried far away from the parent plant, around which there is, perhaps, no room for them to grow.



THE GREATER STITCHWORT.

in the form of corkscrews, but they are acted upon by the weather, becoming in turns moist and dry. When they are moist, the pointed end of the seed is forced into the ground, as the spiral or corkscrew opens out. Tiny hairs on the seed act as grappling-irons when dry weather comes and turns the style once more into a corkscrew, thus preventing the seed from being drawn back out of the soil. The habits of the very common goose-grass are just as interesting,

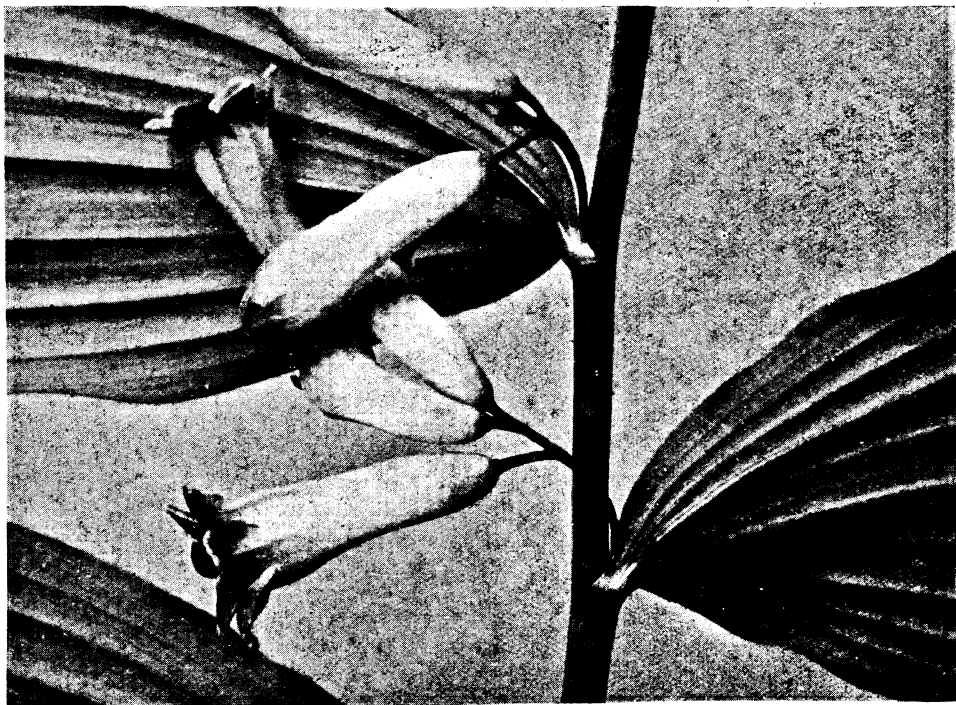
Amongst the very common wayside flowers there is the white dead-nettle. A group of these in the garden is rather an uncommon sight. The large white flowers with their striking black stamens have a much more handsome appearance grouped closely together than scattered amongst the ordinary stinging-nettles. The white dead-nettle is often cited as a good example of protective mimicry; it is so very much like the stinging-nettle, which, with its poisonous stinging hairs, would injure any

browsing animal that tried to eat it. The two kinds of nettle often grow together in the same patch of waste ground, quite untouched by animals, who do not generally seem to have found out that the white-flowered nettle cannot do them any harm and is very good for food. Another wayside plant that is well worth notice is the stitchwort. Though it has an appearance of hardihood as it grows in the hedges, it is not very easy to find for it a suitable



place in the garden. It likes to have its stems surrounded and upheld by those of other plants, and is suitable only for the wild garden, where no attempt at cultivation is made and where things are allowed to grow their own way. But once it finds a spot to its liking, it makes a splendid show. There is a marsh stitchwort, too, with which I have not made any experiments. The common little chickweed belongs to this stellaria group, and introduces itself into every garden without any invitation; fortunately, it is an annual.

particular soil, but because the farmers are mistaking it for hemlock, and doing their best to eradicate what is in reality a wholesome cattle food. Amongst other compound flowers there is the common yarrow or milfoil, and in its case also its beauty depends on masses of blossoms. The flowers grow in corymbs, and those which are pure white seem to be the largest. Under cultivation the purplish or pink flowers tend to become white; but this is probably due to soil composition entirely, and in some gardens, after transplantation, a tendency to a pink



SOLOMON'S SEAL.

Another extremely common plant, especially in meadows, is the cow-parsnip. It appreciates a good soil, and after a season's care is hardly recognisable as the mere weed that was dug up the previous autumn. Very often, even in a wild state, its white flowers are very conspicuous, but in a garden they are quite beautiful. It is desirable, however,—just as it is with many ordinary garden plants—to have a good stock of cow-parsnips, all growing in a group or mass, so that the very most is made of the umbels of small white blossoms. In some districts it is a scarce plant, not because it will not grow naturally in that

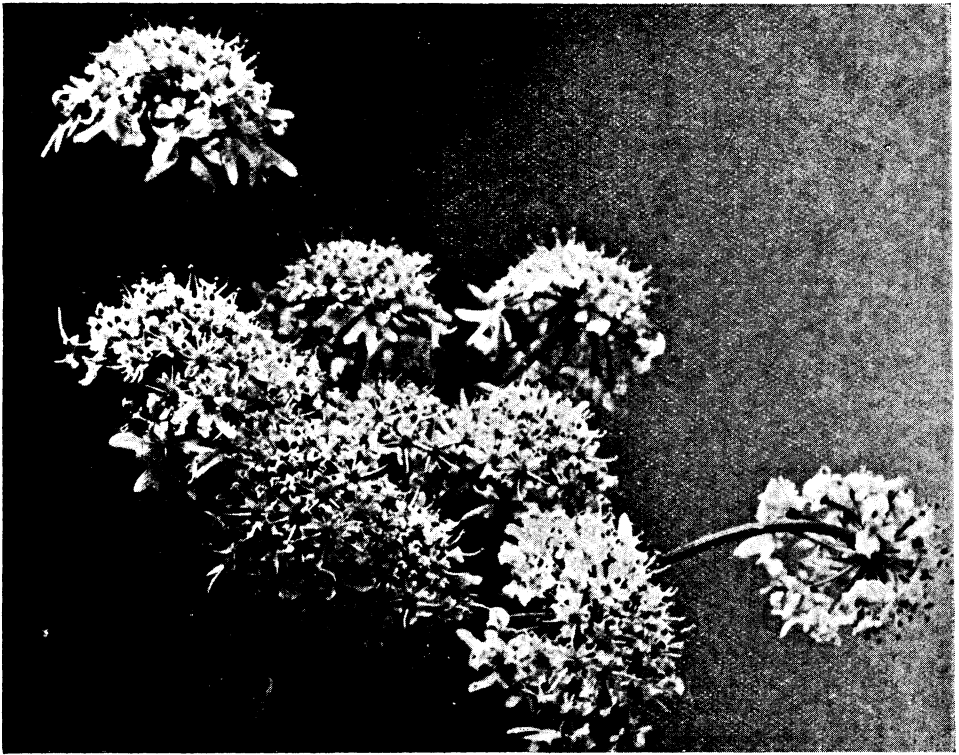
colour might be the result. The ragwort, that grows so splendidly in some woods near the East Coast, is a very showy plant when well grown and not allowed to get untidy. This is obviated by keeping up a healthy and abundant supply of flowers till August, and then cutting it down. The ragwort reminds one of a rather uncommon use to which a great number of wild flowers may be put; it is the food plant of the Cinnabar moth caterpillar, which is rarely found where the ragwort is not abundant. The black-and-yellow larvæ feeding on the pinnatifid leaves add a distinctly interesting touch to the ragworts in the garden, especially

as no birds will eat these caterpillars, which possess, therefore, no instinct to hide themselves, as is the case with most larvæ.

One need not be an entomologist in order to detect and appreciate any remarkable or beautiful larvæ that are feeding in the garden, and the visitor does not exist who would fail to be interested in some of the most extraordinary of these. There are the big velvet-brown and blue caterpillars of the fox moth, that feed on the bramble bush that was brought in from the lanes; and on

from enemies, but preserve an easy exit for the moth itself when it is ready to emerge. The cocoons are spun up amongst the leaves and remain there all the winter, till the moths fly the following May. Dock leaves are useful as providing food for the larvæ of the ruby and the cream-spot tigers, and tufts of grass, under bell-jars, may harbour the interesting larvæ of the drinker moths.

A few thistles should be allowed in the wild garden, because it is always probable



COW-PARSNIP.

the trefoils and plantains there are often grass-eggars, very pretty in their orange, black, and blue jackets. On another bramble bush in the wild garden there have been, all the summer, the very gorgeous emperor moth caterpillars; these are green and black, with black tufts of hair, and bearing seven tubercles of pink or yellow. They are noted for the strange cocoons they fashion in which to pupate at the end of the summer. These are bottle or flask-shaped, closed at the narrow end with stiff hairs that protrude outwards to a point, and that effectually guard the chrysalis

that they will attract that exquisite little bird the goldfinch. Furze bushes will, for some reason, please the yellow-hammers, and they will come to perch on the prickly tops of the bushes and sing their queer little refrain of "A little bit of bread and *no* cheese." It is remarkable how the birds will keep down superfluous weed seeds. Linnets, for instance, eat enormous quantities of the seeds of thistles, dandelions, and wild mustard, and chaffinches will forage all the winter amongst the roots and dead leaves of the perennials whose seeds ripened and fell in the autumn.

Next to the flowers that grow in the woodlands those that spring up in the meadow are, perhaps, the loveliest and best to transplant. There are the fragrant cowslips, the most beautiful of all the meadow flowers; the delicate lady's-smocks, which sometimes refuse to be happy anywhere but at

dog violets and the pink flowers of the herb-robert that country children call "kiss-me-quick." It is strange that in West Cumberland this same plant is called "death-come-quickly," because of a legend that death will follow it if it is taken into a house. Under the hedges, too, grows the wild



A CORNER OF MY WILD GARDEN.

home; the mayweeds and ox-eyes and the tufted vetch. The spear-plume thistle, growing often to a height of five feet, is really quite ornamental enough for the wild garden, with its crimson blossoms and characteristic leaves, and this plant is often found growing in great perfection in the corners of meadows. Under some of the hedges, in these corners, are also found

strawberry, and this is a delightful little plant for the rockery, flowers and fruit often to be seen at the same time. The hedges themselves are often covered with the exquisite white wild roses, whose roots adapt themselves to almost any soil. Under cultivation a longer flowering period is obtained, and it will be found that green-fly do not attack to any great extent these wild

roses. They have also a delightful perfume, as delicate and haunting as that of the cowslip.

The perfume of wild flowers is generally not at all strong, though there are exceptions. A great number of plants are worth transplanting solely on account of their scent, such as the blue-flowered wild sage, the yellow fleabane, the mints, and the wild thyme. On waste ground is often seen the rather uninteresting-looking bushy plant called wormwood, with its yellow flowers. The whole plant, when rubbed in the hands, smells bitter and aromatic, and has a tonic effect on some people. By river-sides I have found the common tansy, growing nearly four feet high, covered with yellow buttons of flowers, and with a very aromatic odour. This plant is always improved under culti-

vation, and if it is cut down early in the autumn, is never an untidy sight in the garden. These aromatic plants are not so much used in herb medicines as formerly, but many are very valuable for home-made tonics, and a herb bed is a delightful thing to have. Red clover for whooping-cough, yarrow for headaches, bugloss for chest troubles, betony for nerves, colt's-foot for bronchitis—there used to be a remedy for every human ill amongst the wild flowers of the woods and hedgerows, but the advent of mineral drugs has, unfortunately, done much to shake public opinion in the efficacy of herb medicines.

If you have been wise enough to take a note of the habitat of your favourite wild flowers, now is the time to go forth, with a trowel and basket, to dig them up.

## THE BEDROOM OF DUTCH WILLIAM AT HAMPTON COURT.

**H**ERE in his leisured stately way  
The King arose in far-off springs,  
Preparatory to the day,  
The stately leisured days of kings.

High to proud Verrio's fresco towered  
The canopy above the bed:  
"Sleep" on the ceiling throned embowered,  
Below lay off a restless head.

Would you have stood his shoes inside,  
Amid the plaudits and appeals—  
Thrust to their points your toes in pride,  
Or poised upon those high red heels?

Unloved this alien king, nor e'er  
Sure, as he looked through windows tall,  
If yew trees and white blooms out there  
Would spit the traitor's pistol-ball.

Fain would I think the hero lay  
Beneath this tester's damasks red,  
Glad in his stern and simple way  
That at the last he died in bed!

VICTOR PLARR.

# THE OTHER MAN'S CHAIR

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

I NEED not say how Kenrick wronged me. It will not matter to you. It mattered a deal to me; set a black mark on my life; made me a stranger to the place that knew me; robbed me of the only woman I have ever wanted, or ever shall want, to marry. When I had gone overseas, Kenrick married the woman; and you can guess, as well as I, why the wrong was done.

Nine years afterwards Fate, working in its slow way, put into my hands the proofs to clear me and disgrace him—proofs that were sufficient evidence in a court of law. I went home to use them, and found that he had passed beyond justice and revenge a few months before. The little world where the trouble occurred had forgotten me, as I had forgotten it, and my acquittance there did not seem of any great importance or urgency. Just for the sake of my father's name, I meant to clear myself in court at Dulbery before I returned abroad; but I wanted to take my own revenge before the court of Margaret. That was her name. She should acquit me and condemn her husband. If the dead still knew things, that would hurt him most. Incidentally, it would hurt her; but that was not my main purpose, though I thought—and still think—that she deserved it.

I went to the little house at Rocksend, where she lived. He had left her well-to-do. I sent in the name of Maxwell, by which I went now, and waited in the dining-room for her to come—wondered if she would know me. I knew even the step of *her*, as she came down the passage; saw the bonny pink Margaret of old in the quiet pale lady who entered, stopped just inside the door and clutched at her dress with both hands.

"George Hallam!" she cried. "They said Maxwell!"

"I have changed my name," I told her. "For the same reason that I do not offer my hand to be refused; the reason of nine years ago."

She held out her hand.

"Nine years," she said gently, "are a long time. I pray God that the new name is honoured and respected."

"Respected," I said.

I shook her hand formally. The touch of her still thrilled me, but I did not mean to betray that.

"Nine years," I repeated. "Yes, it is a long time. We have passed the nine long years differently. I have been a wanderer on the face of the earth, and you—I am glad to see that you have had a comfortable home. I suppose you lived here before—"

"Before Jack was taken," she said. "Yes. We lived here. It was not always quite what it is now. He added some rooms and better furniture. That was to please me. I was always fond of my house and of old things. You used to laugh at me about it. He'd, too. The house is rather large and lonely for me now, but I do not like to leave the memories. I always seem to see him sitting in that chair." She pointed to a large arm-chair by the side of the fireplace. "He used to sit there a deal when he wasn't well. He ailed for some time before. . . . It was sudden at the end. . . . Please sit down."

She turned another chair a little toward me, but I took the one which had been his. I would turn him out of his place in her memories, I thought. She would never want to look at that chair again after what she was going to hear from it now.

"Nine years ago—" I began.

"Never mind that," she begged. "The past is a long time past—nine years, and they say we change our skins in seven."

Don't talk of those times. Tell me about what has happened since; how you have prospered, what you do. It was fine of you not to give in after—after your trouble. Tell me about yourself. I shall like to hear."

"I have a little ostrich farm," I told her, "in South Africa. As for my doings, I principally work. That is what life has come to mean to me. There was a time—a long time—when I lived hard, and became used to it. So I live hard still. . . . *You* have lived soft."

She sighed and nodded.

"Lived soft," she echoed. "Thanks to him. He was very careful of me from the time that he brought me here, a foolish, incompetent child, whom an older man might easily have been impatient with. He was never impatient. I remember the first night we came here—after our honeymoon. He was sitting in that chair, where you are sitting now, and I was sitting on the rug at his feet. . . ."

She seemed to lose herself in thought for a moment, and I seemed to lose myself in myself—or was it in *him*?—to be a younger man, looking at the face of a younger Margaret, turned up to me in the firelight. She was leaning against one knee, and her two hands were on the other knee, one hand upon the other. . . . It would have been I who sat there nine years ago but for his villainy. . . . And now *I* sat in *his* chair! . . .

Presently she went on speaking.

"He said: 'Understand one thing, Margaret. Whatever I do—good or ill—it is done for you, whatever I say, even if I speak crossly'—he scarcely ever did—'or if I find fault'—he never found fault with me—'underneath my heart is loving you and praising you and planning all things for your good. To understand me and judge me fairly, you have to remember this one thing. You are the little sun that my life swings round.' . . ."

I seemed to see myself, a younger man, looking down into the girlish adoring face and saying that, leaning forward to her, as if I wanted to lean away from a thought in my mind—a screaming thought of something that I had done; a torturing, shaming thought of what I had done, not for her, but for myself to get her by foul means. That I knew was how he had felt when he sat there nine years before. . . . And now *I* sat there. . . .

"And I will be judged," she continued to quote, "'by how I do by you. But I do not care for any judgment but yours. Your

good opinion is all I want.'" She gave a little gasp. "Nothing," she declared, "can ever rob him of that!"

"Nothing," I said. "Eh? 'Nothing' is a big word, Margaret. Nine years ago. . . ."

I was going to tell her then, but I swear that I seemed to feel fingers clutching at my shoulders, to hear a voice—no, not hear; I appreciated without hearing, as you hear your mind—"Don't tell her! Don't tell her! . . . I am in the grave, Hallam. You can't hurt me, only her. If you love her as I did, you won't hurt Margaret."

"Nothing," I repeated, "is a big word."

"His love for me," she declared, "was a big thing. How he worked for me! Worked when he was ill and work was a cruel effort. I didn't know then, but I think *he* realised for years that he would not have a long life. He always tired so. I remember that he often used to come home and sink into that chair, and just sit and look at me. . . ."

Again I seemed to be a younger man for the moment—*younger*, but weak and weary; most of all, weary of mind, feeling as if some weight inside my body crushed me; feeling as if I should go down, down, down, but for the strings which held me to Margaret. And behind me there was something lurking with a knife to cut the strings. It looked like myself. Yes, it was I whom he feared more than death. Death could only take him from Margaret's body. I could take him from her soul. And I would! . . . I felt the shadowy hands at my shoulders again. . . .

"Perhaps there was something on his mind," I suggested. "Nine years before—" How the hands clutched! I paused in my speech, not for fear, but for wonderment.

"I always knew that there was something on his mind," she stated, "some trouble that he did not tell me. He often spoke as if he could never be happy himself—only through me. When I was pleased, then he was happy. Sometimes I told him of things that I wanted, even though they were rather extravagant, because I knew it would cheer him up to give them to me. 'After all,' he used to say, 'you'd have money's value, if anything happened to me; and I get the chance of seeing you gloat over them.' I think he knew for quite a long while that he wouldn't live very long. He was so keen on making provision for me. When I think of him sitting in that chair, looking happy and smiling, he is always talking of something done for me. 'If anything *should* happen to me, Margey,' he'd

say, 'you'll have an income and a nice place. You love your household gods, don't you? Tell me just the things you want, and let me get them. Then when I'm gone—if I go. You never know, do you?—you'll look round and remember that there was some use in poor old me. That old grandfather's clock will tick "Jack," won't it?' . . . 'Jack, Jack Jack.' . . . But the whole house ticks that! I used to say I wished that he'd get something for himself; and he used to say that he was always busy trying to get things for himself—'pleasant memories of me for you to have, my dear. That's what I want to leave you.' Well, he's left me those. They are what I live upon now. They make me—a not-unhappy woman. I don't look an unhappy woman, do I?"

Again his thin hands seemed to clutch me, turn me round to look at her. . . . Not happy, but calm of soul, and so "not unhappy," perhaps.

"Not an unhappy woman," I agreed, "but rather dependent upon some fancies for your not-unhappiness. He seems to have been very confident that nothing would ever disturb them. There aren't many husbands who can feel such confidence. 'The evil that men do lives after them'—or comes to light. . . . If anything should disturb your memories—the trouble that you spoke of, that he didn't mention? Or a second husband, perhaps?"

She laughed faintly. I felt a little compassionate toward her then. It was so unlike the way that she used to laugh. There was only the name of laughter to it, as on a coffin. Perhaps I could bring the old laugh back if I married her? That would be a better revenge than merely telling her of him. To sit in his chair as he had sat in mine!

"Or a second husband," I repeated. "He may have feared that!"

"He knew there would never be that," she said. "If he knows anything now, he still knows. There could never be anyone else."

"Nine years ago," I said, "there very nearly was. Nine years ago I— Perhaps he thought of that."

I paused and looked into the fire, saw things. I seemed to fancy that I was Kenrick sitting in the chair and seeing other things—things for Margaret, always for Margaret, wondering between times about a queer feeling at the heart.

"Was it heart?" I asked suddenly. I

nodded at his portrait—a recently enlarged photograph evidently—over the sideboard.

"It was heart," she said. "Yes, as you were saying, George, once upon a time there was you. It was only a girlish feeling, but more than I ever had for anyone else, except Jack. I was very grieved at what happened. I never believed it was so bad as they made out, and I never lost a regard for you. I keep that regard, and I am lonely and should like to be friends. That is why I tell you plainly that there is no one who can ever compete with the memories of my husband. I am wife to them. You will have wondered why I laid such stress on our affection. Now you understand. It was because I was going to make a bid for your friendship, and I wished you to know that a friend of mine must respect my memories—my dear memories!"

She smiled up at the portrait.

"I did not come here to court you, Margaret," I told her. "Since you choose to be frank, I do not suppose I shall ever marry anybody else; but you deserted me in the time of my need, and so I don't think that I should ever ask you to marry me—not even with the memories turned out of your mind."

"No one could!" she cried. "No one could!"

"Ah!" I said. Again the ghostly hands were on my shoulders. They seemed to fall there whenever I was about to dishonour the man who had sat in that chair—the chair which should have been mine. Well, they should not stop me. I would play with his ghost if it was there—and I hoped that it was—tell the story slowly, make the hands clutch and clutch! . . . "Have you never guessed at the trouble? At what he saw in the fire when he sat in this chair? Suppose someone came and told you about it? Suppose it was something very bad? Something that—"

The hands seemed to clasp me across the mouth. Again I seemed to be the other man, sitting in his chair, watching Margaret with mad adoration, fearing something in his mind, fearing something strange knocking in his heart. . . . The grandfather's clock struck four. Margaret turned to it, seemed to be listening to its ticking. . . . Jack—Jack. . . . Jack—Jack. . . . I knew what it said to her; what the man who had sat in my chair had taught her to hear. . . . But now I was sitting in his chair! Ha!

"Suppose even that," she said presently. "Suppose it were so bad that it nearly

broke my heart—or broke it quite—it couldn't keep me from loving him. It shouldn't touch the memories of his great

something very, very dreadful. And you told me. And you told me. But I know you are too chivalrous to do that. You are a



"I seemed to be the other man, sitting in his chair, watching Margaret."

care for me. Suppose—let me be absurd—that *you* had something dreadful to tell me,

better man than you think, George; a little embittered by trouble, but not cruel:



compassionate to me, I think. I hope so, for I know that I ought to have stood more by you. George, I know it. It wasn't your trouble. It was that I loved Jack. I did. . . . You can't help loving people. . . . Suppose that someone who is not chivalrous like you, or at heart my friend, as you are, told me. . . . When he left, I would fight for Jack. No, I should let the memories—they were all he wanted for himself—fight for him. I should go round the house and look at all the things he gave me. Touch them, perhaps cry. But I don't think I should be able to cry. Do you know, he came home that day and staggered to the chair—the one you are sitting in. 'I've got it,' he said, 'the little cabinet that—I feel queer—that you wanted in—' I screamed then, because his voice stopped in a funny sound. He only spoke once again. 'I've done things for you, haven't I? God knows—' He didn't finish it. Perhaps it *was* finished. God does know. I was just the world to Jack, and I couldn't blame him. If I could, I wouldn't. When you went—the you that wasn't you—my enemy who tried to take from me all that is left in my life—you wouldn't do it. When he had gone, I shouldn't walk round the house very long. I should come to the chair where Jack used to sit, and—I'm losing myself rather. I will ring for some tea, and then we'll talk about—whatever my old friend likes to talk about, the friend who forgives me what there is to forgive, because he knows that I was just the silly girl that I was. . . . The tea, Mary, please. No, don't lay it over there. Bring the little table between us. Mr.—Mr. Maxwell is such an old friend that I'll let him sit in Mr. Kenrick's chair. . . . He was very ill when he sat there last, George. He suffered—"

The spirit hands seemed to plead with me, shivered on my shoulders. I don't think that compassion for Kenrick's past suffering had the slightest influence upon me. It was the absence of laughter in Margaret's laugh that I couldn't stand. I must leave it the name of a laugh at least.

We talked over the tea of operas and things like that; how I took Margaret to the first opera that she ever saw, and said that I would rather hear Margaret sing than

Marguerite. Jack liked her singing, too, she said. And some day, perhaps, she would sing some of the old things to me. She always promised Jack, she told me, that she would never give up her singing. Twice she had tried to sing "to the chair," but she "couldn't just yet."

"You will bear with an old friend who wasn't very good to you," she pleaded, "won't you? Because you know she has been very, very hurt. Life doesn't seem to have very much left, George, for me. Do you know what I think is the one thing which has given me a real pleasure, since—since it happened? To find that you have been a brave man, and fought up again. And I must try to be brave, too—to do something in the world, not just sit at home with my memories. But I can keep them, too, can't I—just for myself?"

The ghostly hands seemed to turn me to face her then. I did not know whether it was my soul that looked at her or his. Perhaps it was both. Anyhow, it couldn't hurt Margaret. My chair or his, and whichever sat in it, the eyes that stared from it rested with the same love on her. I would compete with him only in that.

"He was good to you, Margaret," I said. "I think I should have been, but— Since it is the memories of *him* which comfort you, may you keep them. Now I must go."

I rose and held out my hand.

"You will come again," she entreated, "and be friends?"

"I shan't come again," I told her. "Friends—of course! . . . That is why."

She held out both hands—put mine together between hers.

"God bless you!" she said. "You leave me a memory in the chair. . . . A true, chivalrous, kind-hearted gentleman, and my very dear friend. . . . I knew you wouldn't say it. Jack told me before he died. . . . Don't say anything. *Don't*. . . . God bless you, George!"

I did not say anything—just lowered my lips to her hand and went. I looked in through the window afterwards. She was in the firelight and had not lowered the blind. She knelt, as if she prayed, by his chair. I think, perhaps, I had a little piece of her prayer; and she had all of mine.





"Towards evening she found herself ornamenting her hair with a red hibiscus blossom."

# THE EPISODE OF THE IMP

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

**T**IME passes, even in the Islands. Felisi of Luana had reached the mature age of sixteen.

And things had happened—drastic things that have a habit of changing the whole aspect of life. No longer was she called upon by her father to adventure forth from the family roof-tree and wrest from a grudging world the wherewithal to purchase such luxuries as his advanced tastes demanded. Such excursions were no more, so that for Felisi the curtain was rung down on the thrilling drama of other people's business. Henceforth she must attend to her own.

That is why we come upon her engaged in nothing more romantic than turning the handle of a borrowed sewing-machine.

It came hard at first. For the matter of that, and after eighteen months of eventless Luana, it still came hard at times, and she paused in her work to gaze wistfully through the doorway and across the stretch of sparkling Pacific that separated her from the great "outside."

What was happening over there? she wondered. Who was now dispensing imitation pink coral on Suva's crowded wharves, or lending a helping hand where it

was needed—and sometimes where it was not—in the multifarious and intricate problems of human existence? In short, how was the world continuing to survive without her? She was sorry for it—as sorry for the world in its bereavement as she occasionally was for herself.

Such a mood was upon her now, for a white man had come to live at Luana, a white man of an entirely new pattern, sparse as to hair at the temples, almost blind, to judge by the size of tortoiseshell-rimmed sun-glasses that he wore, thoughtful of countenance, and content to sit in a cane chair under a mango tree for longer than Felisi had ever seen a white man sit in any one place.

True, he occasionally wrote letters with a chewed pencil on flimsy paper, and as often tore up what he had written, but for the most part he merely sat there in the little square of croton-bordered garden before the house he had acquired, staring into vacancy.

So much she knew from casual observation, but what of the rest? Who was he? Why was he? In fact, what about him? It was still a physical impossibility, then, for Felisi to live in the neighbourhood of a mystery without trying to solve it? She was afraid so.

Towards evening she found herself ornamenting her hair with a red hibiscus blossom, donning her most striking sulu, and practising her smile. Why? Well, such things play a more prominent part in the elucidation of mysteries than might be supposed. Besides, it was necessary to fill the bamboo with drinking water, and the path to the spring led past her new neighbour's abode, and—and is it not permissible to look as attractive as possible, anyway?

Leaving the sewing-machine in a state of suspended animation, Felisi set out. At the croton hedge she paused for breath, but was allowed to proceed without so much as a glance in her direction. It was strange, but not past remedy. On the return journey she came swinging down the hill, a truly devastating apparition. Precisely at the croton hedge the water bamboo needed readjustment to the accompaniment of a hummed *meke* air. But nothing happened—nothing whatsoever.

That was why, a few minutes later, Garnet was brought back from a particularly promising flight of fancy to things practical by a mango dropping fair and square in the middle of his manuscript. It was a

disturbing occurrence, but when he came to think of it, the wonder was it had not happened before, considering the heavily-laden state of the tree overhead and the litter of fruit about the garden. This last would have to be attended to. There were several things that needed attending to, and that was as far as Garnet usually got in attending to them. But on this occasion it seemed providential that a native of some sort was staring at him over the hedge.

"Hi!" he called. "You want mango?" He indicated the untidy garden with a wave of the hand.

The "native of some sort" seemed unimpressed with the possibilities in mangoes. Or was it that she failed to understand?

"Mango!" repeated Garnet, stabbing the air in their direction with the chewed pencil. "Plenty mango, savvy?"

Felisi pouted, then smiled. She was equally adept at either.

"Me get you," she said brightly, displaying her latest linguistic achievement fresh garnered from an American schooner.

It had the desired effect. Garnet removed his sun-glasses, levered himself out of the chair, and strolled over to the hedge.

"Oh, so you get me, do you?" he observed, also and unconsciously observing those qualities in Felisi of Luana that he had been intended to. "Well, what about it?"

He looked considerably younger without the glasses, Felisi reflected, and he had kind eyes. There was a button missing from his shirt, and a hole in one of his socks. A freshly crumpled letter protruded from the left pocket of his duck jacket. His manner was of the bluff, playful order universally adopted by white folk in dealing with children, dogs, and natives, but it was assumed, she decided. He was not really like that.

"Clear them up, and you can have them," he continued. "How would that do?"

"You no like 'em mango," suggested Felisi.

"Hate 'em," said Garnet.

"Me, too," admitted Felisi.

Garnet laughed. Refreshing little imp, he told himself. Evidently had ideas of her own, and, after all, why not? Wonderful eyes, and what hair, and skin, and carriage! But it was the possibility of a mind that intrigued Garnet. What if she actually had one? And if she had, what did it harbour? Rather interesting, that—life through a

Kanaka's eyes. Entirely new viewpoint. He wondered— That was his trade.

His wonder grew as the sun-drenched days passed by, and each evening Felisi appeared with a reed basket to relieve him of some of the mangoes—never all, because that would have ended the visitations, but sufficient to make a showing before she squatted at his feet, and they indulged in a sort of mango social. It was a quaint occasion, but they both enjoyed it.

"What about the princess and the poor man?" suggested Garnet. "You might let me have that again, will you?"

"You like 'im, eh?" questioned Felisi.

"Very much," said Garnet. "But there's something wrong with the end. They were drowned, weren't they?"

Felisi regarded him reproachfully

"Them no drowned," she said. "Them marry."

"But how can that be if they dived together off a cliff higher than Suva church because the king wouldn't let them, and never came up again?"

"Me no say them never come up again," protested Felisi, in injured tones. "Me no finish."

"Ah, I see," murmured Garnet, leaning back in his chair. "Another powerful instalment in our next, eh? Well, fire ahead."

"Them dive," proceeded Felisi dramatically, "down, down, an' never come up—"

"There you are," said Garnet.

"—never come up three—six days," continued Felisi, ignoring the interruption.

"Jove, they must have had a pair of lungs on them!" came another that met with a like fate.

"King him think them finish, but——"

"Ah!" breathed Garnet.

"—poor man him hunt plenty turtle. Him see turtle go in cave under sea. Him take princess in cave."

"And I suppose, when they did come out, the king was so pleased to see his daughter again that he made the poor man a chief, and let them marry."

Felisi nodded gravely.

"How you know?" she demanded.

"I have an instinct in these things," said Garnet.

Felisi decided it was a disappointing process to recount Island history to people with instinct, whatever that might be. It robbed the narrator of a legitimate and hard-earned climax.

"You now," she announced, after sitting in silence, while Garnet produced reflective smoke clouds that hung on the still air above his head.

"What's that?" he exclaimed, with the sudden dread of his species that something was expected of him.

"You now," repeated Felisi, with quiet insistence.

Garnet leant forward in his chair.

"But—I don't know anything," he faltered. "Besides, I come from a cold, uninteresting place where princesses don't dive off cliffs or—do anything like that."

"You write plenty letter," accused Felisi, with seeming irrelevance.

"Letters? Yes, I suppose I do," admitted Garnet, on reflection. "I must write quite a lot of letters, Heaven help me!"

"What for you write 'em?"

Garnet pondered the matter, perceiving that it was, in truth, "his turn now."

"Money mostly," he stated truthfully

"Plenty friend belong you, eh?"

"A fair number."

"An' you write 'em letter for money?"

"In a way—that is, yes."

Felisi relapsed into silence. The mystery was solved. She had no idea that writing to one's friends for money was such a remunerative proceeding

There followed further cursory conversation, possibly a cup of tea, and Felisi's departure, impeded by the laden reed basket.

Such were the mango socials, and they continued with marked success for nearly a month. But there was a calendar in Garnet's house—an advertisement of the local shipping company, whereon was printed, in small blue letters, "S.S. *Levu* arrives Malita"—and a calendar is a mistaken thing to have in the Islands, as will shortly be demonstrated.

"Only another three days," he told Felisi one evening, "and we shall have another playmate in our garden. What d'you think of that?"

Felisi was diligently eradicating mangoes, and Garnet was staring into the tangled branches overhead with a smile of pleasurable anticipation, so he failed to observe the sudden cessation in harvesting operations, and the expression on Felisi's face as she scrambled to her feet and came towards him.

"Playmate all right?" she inquired gravely.



"But they would have none of her. She was not for them, their pantomime implied."

"Very much so," said Garnet. "Of course, I may be prejudiced, but that's my opinion, and I think it will be yours. You see, she knows so well how to play, and as for stories, she's chockablock with 'em."

"Playmate belong you?"

"As much as a wife does these days," said Garnet. "I think we ought to be very happy together, don't you?"

Judging by the dazzling smile with which Felisi answered the question, she did.

"Me now," she informed him pleasantly. "All the same story. Playmate belong me him all right. Him know how to play an' tell plenty story. Him——" And, with that, she turned and fled.

Which left Garnet thinking. What did she mean? Why had she gone? He fumbled blindly for his pipe, and presently the uncomfortable truth began to dawn. Yet what had he done? Nothing that could account for his present state of mind.

Unintentionally, unconsciously even, he had won the affection of this child, and the realisation of it filled his susceptible soul with pity. He was probably her world, and she would be an exile after to-night. She resented the intrusion of another. . . . Poor little imp! Yet what had she meant?

It was purely by accident that he came to know. A few mornings later—on the same portentous day that heralded his wife's arrival by the *Levu*—he was awakened by unaccustomed sounds—the sonorous beating of a *lali* interspersed with the murmur of many voices and occasional shouts.

It seemed incredible that Luana could be responsible for such a disturbance, but on sauntering forth and taking up a position on the hillside overlooking the village, he found it to be a fact. The place resembled a disturbed ant-heap. People issued from grass houses or entered them on ceaseless missions. Others streamed into the metropolis from all quarters, along the main tracks, through the palm groves, across the beach from a young fleet of canoes. And all carried something, a bale of sinnet, a pig ready trussed, a turtle, finely woven mats, taro, breadfruit, which they added to an ever-growing pyramid beside the Chief's house. Fires sprang into being, sending up their blue spirals of smoke on the still air.

It was a common or garden *meke*, Garnet decided. They would dance and gormandise until the following morning, perhaps longer. He settled down to be quietly bored. But in both respects he was wrong. There was an orderliness about the proceedings foreign to any *meke* he had ever witnessed, and he watched with ever-growing interest.

At a given signal from the *lali*, the

apparently undisciplined horde split asunder, the men to one side of the compound, the women to the other. So they waited, squatting in serried ranks, chanting softly, swaying rhythmically, until a small, upright figure, resplendent in fluted sulu and scarlet drala blossoms, appeared in the Chief's doorway. It was a girl. It was Garnet's "imp" of tender memory. From then onward no detail of the proceedings escaped him.

The chant swelled to a roar of welcome. For a moment the child paused, as though stricken with awe before the multitude. It was the correct thing, and equally correct to be thrust from the house of her father towards the outstretched arms of the women-folk. But they would have none of her. She was not for them, their pantomime implied. They laughed as they thrust her from them to the accompaniment of the swelling chant. Her entreaties were heart-rending, but, finding them futile, she turned, to behold a man advancing upon her from the opposing ranks of males.

In feigned terror she fled from this menace of a particularly amiable-looking bronze giant, until, all sanctuary being denied her, she was caught up in his powerful arms and borne forth from the compound, down the beach, and through thigh-deep water to the waiting, flower-bedecked canoe. The paddles dipped, the happy pair stood laughing and waving a farewell as they glided up the coast and were lost to view in the shimmering heat haze.

Such was the quaint marriage ceremony that afforded Garnet a last glimpse of his "poor little imp." After lifelong interest in other people's business, Felisi had at last attended to her own.

## THE FOUNTAIN.

**T**HE music is a memory now,  
The beautiful folk have gone,  
But the garden lamps in myriad glow  
Shine as they shone.

Stiff-set about the bandstand slope  
The hot geraniums blaze,  
And here, an unextinguished hope,  
The fountain plays.

MICHAEL WILSON.



“Just as I thought I'd got him.”

# THE BEATING OF THE MIDDLE-WEIGHT

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of “*Sanders of the River*,” “*The People of the River*,” “*Bones*,” etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

**T**H**E**R**E** is a sixth sense which all criminals acquire, and which, whilst it is of the greatest value to them in the active pursuits of their profession, must invariably bring their careers to a disastrous finish. It is the sense of immunity. The ostrich is popularly supposed to share this characteristic, but even if it were true that the ostrich, when hotly pursued, dives his head into the sand, he at least does not

adopt this suicidal policy except as a last desperate resort.

Mr. Jagg Flower, who had described himself as a gentleman at large, had been in the habit, throughout his chequered life, of hiding one crime by committing another, and when, as it occasionally did, the strong hand of the law came upon his collar and he was retired to a place where, in the argot of his class, “the dogs did not bite,” he

regarded his punishment as both a penance and an atonement, which wiped out all his earlier indiscretions and produced him to the world, at the conclusion of his sentence, more or less spotless.

A certain burglary, which had been accompanied by murder, had disfigured his earlier career; but, thanks to the assistance of friends, a swift voyage to the other side of the Atlantic, and his subsequent arrest and punishment for a breach of the European laws, he had forgotten that Vermont, Virginia, was on the map until, in the solitude of his Toulouse cell, he had read that the Marquis of Pelborough had acquired a country seat, that his name was originally Beane, and he was the nephew of Dr. Josephus Beane.

Whereupon Mr. Flower had remembered that an erstwhile companion of his, one who, indeed, had been a fellow-adventurer in the Vermont enterprise, was the son of Dr. Josephus Beane, and therefore, had he lived, would be the holder of the title. Unfortunately, Joe Beane had not lived. The outraged laws of Virginia had been vindicated, and that dissolute young man had been jerked to death, regretted by none.

To resurrect him was an easy matter to a man of Mr. Flower's plausibility, and, having failed in his object to extract money from Chick Pelborough by a promise of silence, he had accepted his defeat, and there the matter might have ended.

"That girl was surely a queen," he thought, on his way to Town.

He harboured none of the malice against her which had brought him in stealth to Anita Pireau, in Marseilles, to impress upon her the enormity of the offence she committed when she stood up in the courts and testified against him. He was so philosophical a man that he could admire the force which had beaten him. His sense of immunity, however, had received a jar. He had been uncomfortably reminded that there was at least one offence which had not been erased by various imprisonments, and he decided that, on the whole, Holland, in the rôle of an American tourist, might offer him a successful livelihood.

For a week he lay low, enjoying the hospitality of a private hotel in Bloomsbury, and then one of his fraternity, a London "confidence man," gave him the first hint that the police were searching for him. He had only hidden in case Lord Pelborough had communicated with the police, and when he received the first warning, he

attached only that importance to the search.

Nevertheless, he decided to leave England. He had taken his place in a first-class carriage on the Harwich boat train, when there appeared at the open door a thick-set man, whom Mr. Flower recognised before he spoke.

"Say, Jagg, come a little walk with me, will you?"

Behind the American detective were two obvious London policemen.

"Sure," said Jagg, rising slowly and taking down his bag from the rack. "I guess you've been having a talk with dear little Gwenda."

The detective had his foot on the carriage floor to enter, when the bag struck him in the face and sent him floundering back upon the platform. The next second Jagg Flower pulled open the door on the other side of the carriage, crossed the rails, mounted a further platform, and was racing through the goods yard at Liverpool Street Station before the alarm was raised.

He slackened his pace to a walk as he came to an open gateway, at which, in his windowed lodge, a station policeman was sitting. He came out into High Street, Shoreditch, and mounted a tram which was on the move. At Islington he changed cars and reached King's Cross. Here a train was on the point of leaving for the North, and he had time to take a first-class ticket before it moved out.

So that queen of a girl had set them on to him! Jagg Flower smiled. Women had betrayed him before, and had been sorry. Given the leisure and the opportunity, Gwenda—that was her name; he had heard the Marquis address her—would be sorry, too.

The train's first stop was at Grantham, and there were an unusually large number of policemen on the platform.

"Gwenda!" said Mr. Jagg Flower softly, as he dropped on to the line on the side opposite to the platform. He was in one of the last carriages, and the ground was clear for him. Again he made use of the goods yard and succeeded in getting clear of the town.

"These English police are surely maligned," said Mr. Flower, as he took to the open road.

The quietude of Kenberry House was not disturbed by news of Mr. Flower's peril.

After his unsuccessful attempt at blackmail, he passed out of Chick's life and his



thoughts, representing no more than an exciting interlude. At one time it seemed that the news he had brought would reshape the life of the youthful Lord of Pelborough. Chick almost wished it had.

"Chick is a curious man," said Mrs. Phibbs, his housekeeper.

Gwenda's thoughts were running on the same lines, but she was not ready to agree even with the criticisms offered by such a good friend of theirs as Mrs. Phibbs.

"Why?" she asked.

"He has so many unexpected moods," said Mrs. Phibbs, putting down her book and polishing her pince-nez. "He came here in the depth of gloom. Really he was most depressing, Gwenda. And then the day that very nice American called I found him capering round the library like a demented child. And now——"

"Now?" said Gwenda inquiringly.

"Now he's neither one thing nor the other. He's just quiet. I don't suppose he has spoken a dozen words in the last three meals."

Gwenda had noticed that, too. The time was coming for her departure, but the situation had changed so often that to be consistent now would mean perpetuating her inconsistency.

Chick's avoidance of any discussion of her future she could understand. He was trying to help her, but somehow she did not want help in the way he intended.

"Where is he?" she asked.

"He's fishing."

Gwenda took her mackintosh over her arm and walked across the sloping meadows toward the river. Chick, she knew, would be in his favourite spot, a hollow in the river-bank secluded by a screen of trees from wind and rain and observation.

He turned his head, as she came stumbling down the bank, and reached up his hand to help her.

"Fishing, Chick?" she asked unnecessarily.

"Fishing," agreed Chick, his eyes on the stream.

They sat for a long time without speaking.

"What is the matter with you, Chick?" she demanded.

"Nothing," he said, not turning his head.

"Don't be silly, Chick. Of course there's something the matter. Are you angry with me?"

He looked at her and smiled. "No, dear, I'm not angry with you," he said. "Why should I be?"

There was a glint of a silver-grey body, a snap of vociferous jaws, and the fly went under. She watched him curiously as he played the trout.

Chick seemed to have aged in the past two or three months, she thought. The boy had become a man. He had thickened a little, and the face, which in other days carried a hint of indecision, had grown stronger.

"You have become quite a fisherman," she smiled, as he landed the struggling trout.

"Haven't I?" he said.

His reply piqued her.

"Don't you want to talk to me, Chick?"

He put down his rod and turned to her, clasping his knee in his hands.

"Gwenda, the last time we were here I talked to you about marriage," he said quietly, "and you refused because I was a marquis, and people might think that you were after my title. And then, when I thought I was losing that title, I talked to you, and you said you would marry me if I kept it. I dare not talk to you now, Gwenda, because"—he hesitated—"I know you only said that to make me go after that American fellow and prove he was wrong."

She was silent.

"There is only one thing I can talk to you about, Gwenda, and that is you and I," said Chick, and took her hand from her lap and patted it. "You used to be so much older than I, Gwenda, and now you're so much younger I feel quite grown-up beside you, but not grown-up enough to do what I want."

"What is that, Chick?" she said in a voice a little above a whisper.

His arm slipped round her and her head dropped upon his shoulder.

"Just to hug you like this," he said huskily, "and hold you until—until you behave!"

"This isn't behaving, Chick," she murmured.

His fishing rod slipped into the water, and he watched it float in the swift stream.

"You'll lose it," whispered Gwenda, her face against his.

"I can buy another," said Chick, "but I can't buy the minute I'd lose."

Mrs. Phibbs saw them strolling back hand in hand, and did not see anything extraordinary in the circumstance. And when she detected them holding hands under the table-cloth at dinner, she thought no more than that some little quarrel which had occurred, unknown to her, had been patched up. But when she walked into the library

to find a book, and a sepulchral voice said from the window recess, "Don't turn on the light; it hurts my eyes, Mrs. Phibbs,"

for amateur champions, when they lecture upon the noble art, do not find it necessary to sit so close to their audience.



"Then suddenly he leapt."

she very wisely withdrew, realising that something had happened — something for which she had prayed.

At the moment the interruption came, Chick was talking about boxing, although Mrs. Phibbs would never have guessed this, had the light been turned on,

"I'll build a gym. when I can afford it," he said.

"One day I'd like to see you box, Chick,"

she whispered. There was no need to speak louder; her ordinary speaking voice would have deafened him—in the circumstances.

"But I should really. Lord Mansar said—please don't shudder, Chick; it shakes me—Lord Mansar said that you had a 'miraculous left'; your left arm doesn't feel any different to the other. It is *terribly* hard, but so is the right arm. Do you mind me pinching you, or don't you feel it?"

"I'm supposed to hit harder with the left," said Chick, "but I hope you'll never see me hit with either. Boxing is wonderful for boys. That is why



"The girl watched in horror."

"I don't think you'd like it," he said. He did not shake his head, because it would have meant shaking two heads—in the circumstances.

people shouldn't sneer at these big champions who fight for money. It seems degrading, but it isn't. It stimulates the little people, the schoolboys and chaps like that, to do a little better."

"What is the use of boxing, Chick? I know it is splendid to be able to defend

yourself, but there's nothing—spiritual in it."

Chick laughed softly.

"Gwenda, the man who loses his temper in the ring is beaten before he starts; the man who doesn't fight fair is beaten by the people who see him. Discipline and respect for the laws are spiritual—what's the word?—"

"Qualities?" suggested the girl.

"Yes, spiritual qualities. But, darling, let's talk of Monte Carlo. I never want you to see me fighting; I'd be scared to death."

So they talked about something else until the hall clock struck midnight.

In the midst of the third day of his sublime happiness came a stocky man whom Chick had seen before. He was not exactly in the same state of repair as he had been when he had left Kenberry House, for his eye was a dark purple and the bridge of his nose was heavily plastered.

"Just as I thought I'd got him," he explained to Chick bitterly, "he threw a forty-pound bag in my face and bolted."

"What makes you think he will come here?" asked Chick.

The interview took place behind the closed doors of his library.

"That's Jagg's way. He's got an idea that you or the lady squealed to the police," said Detective Sullivan, "and he's a pretty dangerous man. You've heard of Jagg Flower, my lord? I understand you take an interest in boxing."

"Jagg Flower!"

Chick frowned.

"I don't remember his name."

"He'd have made a fortune in the ring if he'd only gone straight—the finest light-middle we ever had in America, and a dead shot, too," he added significantly. "He carries a gun. We know that, because when the English police searched his lodgings in Bloomsbury we found the remains of a box of cartridges. Now, I'll tell you, my lord, why I've come to you." He drew his chair nearer to the desk and lowered his voice. "I'm as sure as anything that he'll return here. The country is closed to him, and he can't get out, and, naturally enough, he'll come after the people who have squealed—I mean who have betrayed him. He did the same thing in France, and he did it once in America. There isn't a meaner fellow in the world than Jagg."

"He seemed quite nice," said Chick dubiously.

The detective laughed, and related briefly what had happened to Anita Pireau, a companion of his who had given information to the police.

Chick listened and shivered.

"So you see, sir," said Sullivan, "it is not safe for you to be living in this house, the only man here."

"How did you know that?" smiled Chick.

"I've a tongue in my head," said the detective good-humouredly. "What I want to know, Lord Pelborough, is, will you let me sleep in this house for the next week?"

Chick hesitated.

"I'll have to consult my—my *fiancée*," he blurted, cherry-red.

Gwenda was inclined to treat the matter lightly, but she had no serious objections to offer. Mrs. Phibbs, on the other hand, who saw in this a sinister plot on the part of the detective to have a week's lodging in a pleasant country village, free of all charge, was sceptical.

In the end, Mr. Sullivan's one bag was taken to a room adjoining Chick's. To relieve them of the embarrassment of his presence, he asked that his meals might be set in the servants' hall, but Chick insisted upon his dining with the "family," and he proved to be an entertaining guest.

He had a fund of fascinating stories of crime and criminals, and Chick learnt of a world of which he had never dreamt, a world of human tigers that preyed alike upon the weaklings of their own species and upon the society which had offended them by its prosperity.

"Jagg had a friend named Beane," said Sullivan, on the third night of his visit, "a weak fool of a fellow. He was an Englishman, too. His father was a doctor in this country, and he could have occupied any position, but Joe Beane just naturally hated work. He was pulled in once or twice in New York for mean little crimes, and then he drifted down to Virginia and met this fellow Flower."

He went on to describe the erring Beane's career, and Chick listened to the story of his cousin's life and death without a muscle of his face moving.

It was a curious thought that far away in Virginia, in a neglected corner of a prison yard, lay one who, if Fate had been kinder, might have taken his seat in the House of Lords.

After the meal was over, Chick took the girl's arm and led her into the study.

"I was so sorry for you, dear," she said. "I tried to stop Mr. Sullivan."

Chick shook his head.

"It didn't matter a bit," he said. "Poor old Uncle Josephus! No wonder he was impatient with me. It must have broken his heart. You're marrying into a queer family, Gwenda," he said, his arm about her, his hand gently stroking her face.

Then he remembered a half-brother of hers, a slinking thief of a brother, and when he saw her smile he knew that she had remembered, too.

He went to bed a little later than usual. He had a number of letters to write, for Chick, since his adventures in the oil market, had acquired two directorships—he traced the hand of Lord Mansar in each appointment.

He did not go straight to bed, but wearing a dressing-gown over his pyjamas he sat on a seat in one of the windows looking out over the grounds. It was a moonlight night, and he could see almost to the stone wall that bounded the tiny park. He had not been disturbed by Mr. Sullivan's ominous prophecy, partly because he did not believe that the man held him responsible for the attentions of the police, and partly because he did not know Jagg Flower.

Chick said his prayers, and went to bed and was asleep in a minute. When he woke, the first grey of dawn was in the sky, and he wondered what had aroused him to instant wakefulness.

He listened. There was no sound but the distant faint tick of a clock in the hall below. And yet something must have awakened him. There was no sound coming from Sullivan's room, so he had evidently slept through the noise, whatever it was.

He slipped out of bed, pulled on his slippers, and opened the door softly. The corridor was in darkness, and there was a profound silence. Tightening the string of his pyjamas, he stepped noiselessly along the carpeted floor and stopped at Gwenda's room, listening.

He was on the point of returning to his own room, when he heard the faintest of whispers.

He tried the handle of the door gently, for fear of disturbing her if she were asleep, but it was locked, and he went along to the door of the bathroom, from which a second door communicated with Gwenda's room. This was open, and the door of her room was

ajar. He pushed it open with the same caution.

The room was in darkness, save for the faint light supplied by the dawn, and he saw standing by Gwenda's bed the figure of a man. His back was toward Chick, and he was bending over the bed, one hand over the mouth of the girl, who was lying motionless. There was an electric switch near the door, and Chick pressed it down.

Instantly the room was flooded with light. The man turned quickly, and Chick looked into the smiling face of Jagg Flower.

"You did hear, then," said Mr. Flower pleasantly.

Chick walked slowly toward him, heedless of the automatic pistol Flower held in his hand.

"Stop right where you are," said the intruder.

Chick looked at the girl. Her nightdress was torn at the neck, and there was a big ugly scratch on her white shoulder. His eyes went slowly from her to the man, and then down to the levelled pistol, and he spoke no word.

Then suddenly he leapt. One hand closed round the wrist of the hand that held the Browning, the other struck straight at the man's throat a blow which would have paralysed a less hardy mortal than Jagg Flower. As he staggered back, there was a crash of glass as Chick sent the pistol through the window. He never underrated an opponent, and a voice within him whispered a warning. The man was a middle-weight.

The lightning stab that the smiling Flower aimed at him missed his face. A second blow he lowered his head to meet, a third quick uppercut met the air.

Then the slim figure was on him, and in the heart of Chick Pelborough was cold murder.

The girl, leaning on her hand, watched in horror as Chick's arm swung left and right so quickly that she could not follow the blows.

"Hands up, Flower!" It was Sullivan in the open door of the dark bathroom, pistol in hand.

"Leave him alone!" snarled Chick. His lip was cut, and a great red bruise showed where Jagg Flower's fist had reached him.

"On the whole, I think I will put up my hands," drawled Flower. One eye was closed, and he bore the marks of his punishment conspicuously. "If I had known what I

know now, I would have tackled you first, young man—with a hammer."

Chick walked to the table by the side of the girl's bed, and his hand closed over a blue bottle before she had realised it was there. Then he faced the man, about whose wrists Sullivan had snapped a pair of American handcuffs.

"The reason I haven't killed you, Flower," Chick said, his face as white as death, "is because you're going back to Virginia to be electrocuted. Mr. Sullivan says that the State will make it a point of honour to get you to the chair."

He showed the bottle in the palm of his hand, and Mr. Flower was no longer smiling.

Two people in their dressing-gowns watched through the library window the departure of Mr. Sullivan and his prisoner. It was six o'clock, and the house had not been aroused.

"What will happen to him?" asked Gwenda.

"He'll hang," said Chick. He bit his lip thoughtfully. "I should like to see it," he said.

"Chick," said the girl reproachfully, "how can you say such a thing?"

She had been wakened in the night by the pressure of Flower's hand on her face, and had screamed. It was the scream which had awakened Chick and which had even aroused the detective.

"I struggled a little. That's when he scratched me." She nursed her shoulder with a smile. "Oh, really, dear, it is nothing. And I *did* see you fight—you were terrifying!"

Chick smiled uncomfortably.

"Chick, what was that little blue bottle you took from the table by my bed?" she asked.

"That was nothing, either," smiled Chick.

"But, really, what was it? Did Flower bring it?"

"I brought it in myself," said Chick. "Didn't you see me put it down?"

"What was it?" she asked again.

"It was liniment. I thought Mr. Flower might want it."

Later he emptied the contents of the bottle in a secluded part of the grounds, and watched it smoke and steam, and the grass wither, and he shivered as he had when the detective had told him of the horrible vengeance which Jagg Flower had reeked upon the French girl who had betrayed him.

Chick really took the most unexpected views, thought Gwenda, when they were discussing plans in the library that night. She had thought that he, whose painful shyness had first awakened her interest in him, would prefer the quietest of weddings, but Chick, to her astonishment, had vetoed that suggestion.

It was to be at St. Margaret's, Westminster, and was to be a wedding of the most ostentatious character.

"I'm going to be married so that everybody knows that you're the Marchioness of Pelborough," he said firmly.

And so they were married one dull October day, and the church was filled with people in all stations of life, varying from the Lord Chancellor to the boxing instructor at the Polytechnic.

There was a crowd to see them go in and come out, and on the edge of the crowd was a very pretty girl who had figured alarmingly in Chick's life. Miss Farland, the lady in question, wept silently as the newly-married couple drove away.

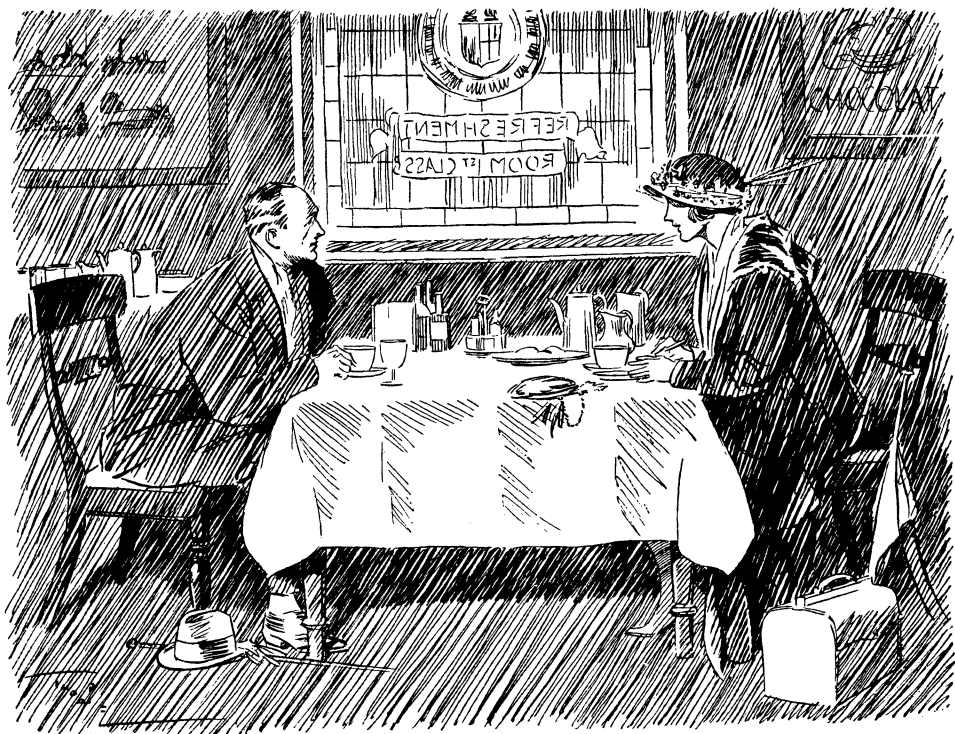
"He was engaged to me once," she sobbed to her friends, "but you know what these lords are. When an actress gets after them——"

She attracted the attention of a press photographer who was just folding his camera.

"Excuse me," she said, "I was the young lady who was engaged to Lord Pelborough."

"Fine," said the photographer. "I hope it was a good job. How did you lose it?"





"For the third time he made a mental correction as to the precise colour of her eyes."

# UPSETTING THE ARRANGEMENTS

By H. F. FRAMPTON

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

**J**AMES MANNINGTREE, in the course of a correspondence with his cousin Hilda, who had married a man named Bertram Poole, gave it as his opinion that the countryside was not attractive in November.

"... All the autumn glories of the woods and hedges are gone by the middle of November," he wrote. "As for accompanying my mother and the others to Scotland—quite out of the question! Moreover, your fears that my mother will feel hurt at my refusal to accompany her are, happily, quite unfounded. She knows as well as I do that since my sisters have

altered the arrangement of their hair, they have become insupportable. When one of them is at a loss to make clear to me my insignificance in the general scheme of the universe, the other one can be relied on to fill the breach. We are better apart. I shall therefore remain at the Club until you and Bertram come to Town, and then merge myself into your *entourage*. I anticipate effecting a considerable economy by boarding, lodging, and generally enjoying myself at Bertram's expense, apart from the advantages of basking in a species of reflected glory by being seen frequently in the company of a charming relative . . ."



Hilda's husband replied :

"Hilda's objections were, of course, merely a matter of form. She was trying to view the situation from a possible point of view of your mother. She is really as delighted as I am that we shall all be together for the month we are spending in London. If you fail to meet us at Paddington—our train gets in at 11.37 a.m.—I will arrange to leave a note at the Rutland Club for you, as there is still some uncertainty as to whether the decorators will have finished at Lancaster Gate. In the meantime—though much hindered by Hilda's frequent changes of mind—I am mapping out a programme, and have, in fact, written and made several arrangements on the strength of your addition to our train. Hilda has also made an extremely thoughtful provision. However, more later, as Oliver should have been informed. . . ."

Having nothing particular in view on the morning the Pooles were due to arrive at Paddington, Manningtree decided to meet the 11.37. He had only recently taken up residence at the Club, but had already commenced to miss the bright society of his sisters, who were twins. The prospect of congenial activity in the company of Bertram and Hilda warmed him through and through—a highly convenient circumstance, for the day was a chill one, and the outlook on Knightsbridge from the windows of the Club lounge dull and depressing. He expected shortly to take up an important post in connection with a huge engineering undertaking in Egypt, and was accordingly desirous of making the most of his time in the interim.

The faint echo of a bugle-call from a neighbouring barracks induced him to glance at his watch ; it was not yet eleven o'clock. A moment later the noise of a swinging door interrupted his reflections, and he turned to discover that he no longer had the lounge to himself.

"I guessed I should find you here," tonelessly exclaimed the newcomer. He was a year or two Manningtree's junior, and his countenance bore a passing expression of hopelessness and dejection. "You were the first person that occurred to me. Let's have a drink."

"Not for me. What's the trouble?"

"Not exactly 'trouble.' I've been obliged to fix up a rather urgent appointment for eleven o'clock, which interferes with what I'd originally intended to do. I thought you might be willing to do it for me—meet

someone for me and tell her where I am to be found."

A spasm of pain shot across the young man's attenuated face. He subsided into an armchair and closed his eyes. It was admitted by his friends that Frederick Whitstable was a very ordinary individual. They had been known to remark that the most extraordinary thing about him was his name, which was pronounced "Whibble." This morning they would have agreed that his bearing was a little out of the ordinary.

"It is only a question of meeting Aunt Marian," he presently resumed, "and telling her I am unfortunately prevented from meeting the train, but shall join her at twelve at the Principality. The hotel, you know, not the theatre."

He then closed his eyes again and gripped the arms of his chair.

"I'd practically decided to meet a train myself," Manningtree hesitated—"eleven-thirty-seven at Paddington."

Whitstable produced a screwed-up telegram form from his pocket and opened his eyes in order to flatten out the message and consult it.

"That," he announced, "is Aunt Marian's train. It's the West Country morning express—a popular train. You will be able to combine the jobs. I take it that settles the matter?"

"You want me to wait at the Principality with your aunt till you arrive?"

"I shall be there at twelve prompt. Er—many thanks."

He prepared to leave the lounge.

"Half a minute—how shall I know your Aunt Marian?"

Whitstable gazed at the speaker reproachfully.

"You dined with us at least three times when she was last in Town."

"Oh—Miss Ellenborough! You called her 'auntie' all the time."

A few minutes after the departure of Whitstable, his "man"—a little Cockney with a leathery skin—poked a furtive head above the clouded portion of the glass in the swing-doors. Manningtree happened to catch sight of him, and beckoned him in.

"Beg pardon, sir—thought I should find Mr. Whitstable here. Dentist has 'phoned up to say he can see him immediate."

"Has Mr. Whitstable got toothache?"

"He broke a tooth, sir, at two-thirty this morning—crackin' Brazil nuts for a wager."



Manningtree reached Paddington at a quarter to twelve, and found that the fog which had delayed him had not delayed the train, which had been in some ten minutes. He had not been seriously disturbed while passing through Hyde Park, where the fog lay in billows and seemed no more than a mist, but thereafter the gloom thickened perceptibly, and finally enveloped him and his surroundings in almost total impenetrability.

He was lucky to have reached the terminus at all. Traffic appeared to have come to a standstill, and the station arc-lights were blurred and ineffectual. As he groped a hopeful way towards the taxi-stand, he established contact with a number of more or less stationary obstacles, some of which energetically exercised the power of speech. Eventually he collided almost simultaneously with a portmanteau and the wooden flooring of what subsequently proved to be Platform No. 1.

"I do hope you have not hurt yourself!" a sweet, solicitous voice exclaimed.

Manningtree rose and automatically dusted himself, a meticulous regard for appearances being an English trait.

"The usual shock to the system," he replied, "aggravated by a continuous electric current in the right arm and acute agony in the left shin. But many thanks for inquiring. I know people who would merely have asked me what I thought I was doing."

"Glad you're not hurt," commented the voice unsteadily.

Confused murmurs and the shrieks of engine whistles resumed sway. The owner of the voice evidently considered the incident closed. Manningtree was now able to see that the portmanteau was part of a heap of luggage as high as the level of his head. Of the kindly interrogator he could discern nothing.

"Thank you," he repeated. "I wish I could see who it is I am addressing. Yours is the only friendly voice I've heard since the descent of the pea soup, and if you are as sympathetic as you sound, you might be willing to advise me on the subject of the best course to pursue when looking for people in fogs."

He sat on the portmanteau and waited. When five minutes had passed in silence—so far as the voice was concerned—he sighed and groped for his stick.

"Are you still there?" came then the timid inquiry.

An irrational thrill of pleasure overwhelmed Manningtree.

"Shall I," he asked, "address my reply to the top of the luggage?"

"I beg your pardon," said the voice. "I thought you had gone. It was just to make sure. Please be careful of the portmanteau when you do go."

Manningtree circumnavigated the portmanteau and unexpectedly found himself facing the wall of the first-class refreshment buffet. His knees gave him warning of the bench in front, and a dim form at the more distant end of the bench indicated to him the location of the voice.

"You are further away than I'd thought," he announced. "You may rely on me to be careful of the portmanteau when I go. Meanwhile, can I help you? It is as clear to me as the fog permits it to be that you are a ship in distress. How, by the way, did you know that it was a portmanteau I rammed? I can't even see the luggage from here."

"You consigned it to the nether regions."

"Out loud! I'm sorry. I hope that will not prejudice you into declining the pilot."

A diffused light struggled through the fog from a window of the buffet, but it illuminated Manningtree and left the girl in gloom.

"It is kind of you to offer, but apparently you are equally helpless," she rejoined. "I've become separated from my party, that's all. I followed them as far as here, and discovered it wasn't them, but somebody else, so I'm just waiting till I'm found."

"Or till the fog lifts?"

"No, till I'm found. I've been vainly trying to remember the name of the hotel we were to stay at."

"But you have friends in London?"

"I dare say—if I only knew where they are to be found."

Manningtree considered the various aspects of her dilemma in silence.

"As a temporary measure," he at length propounded, "and in the hope that the fog will have lifted in the meantime, don't you think we might as well drop into the buffet here and have some lunch? Even if you have been amusing yourself by nibbling biscuits from a bag——"

"I haven't. But what about the people you are looking for yourself?"

"Obviously I can do no good in this atmosphere—especially to the various portmanteaux in the vicinity. The fog can't very well get much worse. I have a feeling,

in fact, that we shall see the sun shining in an hour or so. Won't you take the pilot on board—while the fog lasts?"

"If it is understood," she said slowly, "that when the fog lifts——"

"It is understood," Manningtree assured her, "that when the fog lifts, the pilot is dropped."

"Then I accept gratefully," she responded. "And as you are bound to learn the truth presently, you may as well know it at once: I'm starving. I've had nothing since seven this morning."

Manningtree forgot to sympathise, for the light from the buffet window had afforded him a sudden impression of smiling lips and eyes and of a shapely face beneath a smart grey hat, whose narrow brim curled away each side with cunning symmetry. That impression he knew to be indelible.

"*En avant*," he light-heartedly commanded, "but permit me the inside berth. I am convinced that my right arm is charged with electricity, and I'm going to locate the buffet door by a magnetic process."

\* \* \* \* \*

In the comparative cheerfulness of the buffet interior Manningtree's guest exercised charms in addition to that which made its chief appeal to the eye. She displayed sufficient animation to make the task of her entertainment an easy one, but although Manningtree was at first flattered by her lack of constraint, he gradually discovered that this was not altogether to his liking. He began to wish that she would evince some inkling of a possibility that the acquaintance might not end with the lifting of the fog. Meanwhile her manner made it more and more clear that as the meal was presumably only an interlude, she did not consider it necessary to act as if it possessed potentiality.

"I wonder," remarked Manningtree impulsively, *à propos* of his thoughts, "why you consider it necessary to be so reticent?"

She paused in the act of buttering a biscuit and regarded him with a faintly surprised lift of the brows. For the third time during the course of the meal he made a mental correction as to the precise colour of her eyes.

"I thought I was being the reverse of reticent."

"There are two ways of saying nothing. One is to remain silent—a method universally condemned as clumsy; the other is not to remain silent. For instance, I have learned that you are fond of golf, but not where you play it; that you like Kensington, but not

which particular part of it; that you regard certain old English Christian names, such as Mary and Elizabeth, with favour, but not whether you yourself happen to——"

"But is it essential you should know all these things?"

"I think the pilot ought to know the name and—and so on of the ship."

She shook her head gravely.

"What a pity you didn't mention that in the terms of—pilotage!"

Manningtree silently consigned the terms of pilotage to the category in which they had the society of the portmanteau. At the same time a perceptible lightening of the opaque squares of the buffet windows became apparent to him without in any way adding to his satisfaction.

"Of course," he admitted, "I have been equally reticent myself, but that was merely——"

"Modesty. And, besides, there is no reason why you should speak like a book of reminiscences, is there?"

"I was going to say," insisted Manningtree, "that I have hitherto refrained from furnishing you with those particulars which you are entitled to demand, because, so far, I have been so pleasantly absorbed that the necessity did not occur to me."

"So far" is delightful," returned the guest. "So cautious! I must take particular care, of course, not to spoil that good impression. Or were you going to say something different?"

An access of colour had invaded her cheeks, a reinforcement which routed the pale onset of the buffet lights. By Manningtree the conflict passed unnoticed.

"I was going to say," he continued imperturbably, "that now the necessity occurs to me, I shall have pleasure in making a virtue of it. In order that we may have a point of departure, what, for example, have you discovered up till now?"

"The name of the hotel I had forgotten," she unexpectedly returned. "It was something you said just now about opera appealing principally to foreigners."

"I meant—concerning the pilot. However, please go on. Why should remarks about opera remind you of the hotel?"

"I don't know why, but it did; the name occurred to me immediately."

"Which is——?"

"Very convenient," said the guest, glancing at her wrist-watch with a smile. "It's much lighter now outside, and I don't think I ought to delay getting to the hotel."

My friends won't realise that I forgot the name, and will be worrying."

"You are mistaken if you think the episode can be allowed to end like this."

"You mean you are willing to see that I don't lose my way to the taxi-stand? There is no fear of that; it is almost clear daylight again. In fact, I would prefer that you should take no more trouble over me. I owe it to your friends to take up no more of your time. You've been very helpful, and I'm exceedingly grateful."

"Then," said Manningtree, "I must fall back on the only course left open to me. The advertisement will allude to the taxi-man 'who drove from Paddington a lady wearing a grey hat with a narrow brim and grey coat.' When that materialises, I shall consider what other steps to take."

The girl rose amidst a fanfare of muffled engine shrieks.

"I'm afraid your advertisement will cover a multitude of fares," she commented, "but please don't let that stop you. And on no account forget to mention the narrow brim."

Manningtree spent ten minutes, after she had gone, in debating whether or not the last remark could be construed as indicating acquiescence in his suggested procedure.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was three o'clock before Manningtree re-entered the Club. He had in the interval been at great pains to ensure that Frederick Whitstable's aunt was not lingering in one of the many waiting-rooms at the terminus. It is to be feared that the sense of duty to Frederick Whitstable which had protracted the search owed its inception to a belated twinge of conscience.

In the Club lounge Whitstable, plainly less depressed since his visit to the dentist, was chatting with a crowd of congenial fellow-members near the letter-rack inside the doorway, but he detached himself from his company when Manningtree appeared, and followed him into the writing-room.

"I missed the eleven-thirty-seven owing to the fog," said Manningtree. "I hope your aunt reached the hotel all right?"

"I've just left her," he was reassured. "I couldn't get to the Principality till two, after all. It seems that she wasn't travelling alone, as I thought; there were five of 'em—Aunt Marian, Betty, her two brothers, and Betty's mother. The Principality being auntie's 'home from home' they had already arranged to make for it. And that brings

me to the business before the committee: will you turn up to dinner—at eight o'clock? I was going to ask Forest, but I'd rather it was you."

"I'm already fixed up, but thanks, all the same. How's the tooth?"

"Conspicuous by its absence," Whitstable hastily returned. "That reminds me: I must warn Forest to keep off that subject to-night. What he wanted to mention it all for, I don't know."

He gave Manningtree no time to correct this injustice to Forest—a youth of twenty with a notoriously susceptible heart and confiding disposition—but incontinently left his companion in possession of the room.

Manningtree promptly sat down at a writing-table and dealt in a characteristically practical manner with the matter uppermost in his mind. He headed a sheet of note-paper:

POSSIBLE MOTIVES BEHIND HER  
RETICENCE.

And proceeded as follows:

1. Latent Victorianism.
2. Dislike for the pilot.
3. Irrationality.

Deep cogitation revealing to him no further possible reasons why his guest at lunch should have thought fit to withhold from him the means of pursuing the acquaintance, his next heading was—

PROCEDURE.

1. Get to know her.
2. Get her to know me.
3. See correctives 1 and 2.

He concluded the exercise with a resolution:

"That in view of our approaching removal to another sphere, we devote the whole of our time and energies to the trail without regard to scruple."

He read over the summary and found that it afforded neither help nor satisfaction. It indicated no alternative to the notion of advertising for the taxi-man.

Thrown back on that idea, he toyed with it abstractedly, and even went to the length of dotting down on the bottom of the sheet of paper a few details of appearance descriptive of his luncheon guest. This was the moment at which Frederick Whitstable made a reappearance.

"There's a note for you in the rack," he observed. "Busy?"

Manningtree tilted his chair back and clasped his hands behind his head.

"Not particularly."

Whitstable sank into a convenient chair

and lit a cigarette, which drooped precariously at the end of a long holder.

"Forest is coming along," he announced gregariously. He was not, in fact, often on speaking terms with himself. "Strictly between ourselves, he accepted like a shot. Betty, you know."

"Betty?"

"You don't know her, of course. But Forest does. She's a cousin. I told you, didn't I? Came with Aunt Marian and the rest of the crowd."

"So you did."

Frederick Whitstable threw one leg over the other and made himself comfortable. Manningtree surmised that the congenial spirits had all departed, and glanced at his watch as a preliminary to doing so himself.

"They lost her at Paddington," continued Whitstable, "in the fog. Betty, I mean. She turned up at the Principality a few minutes before me. The two boys, in fact, were still out looking for her. She didn't want any lunch—said she had a headache, but my idea is," he concluded darkly, "that she'd had it."

Manningtree's chair noisily regained its stability. Its occupant picked up his pen and carefully inserted in his recent composition an unnecessary punctuation mark.

"Not that I should dream of giving her away," resumed Whitstable reflectively. "She's the only relative I've got who doesn't treat me like a toy terrier that requires breaking in."

Manningtree tore from the bottom of the sheet of paper in front of him the descriptive details of the appearance of his luncheon guest, and handed the strip to Whitstable.

"Grey hat with narrow brim," Whitstable audibly puzzled out, "grey coat, white gloves."

His face became suddenly illuminated.

"So ho!" he commented. "It was you who gave her lunch?"

"If she didn't think it necessary to mention the fact herself," rejoined Manningtree, "you must regard it as a confidence. Consequently, you must make no allusion to it during dinner, your kind invitation to which I accept. Principality at eight, I think?"

Whitstable's cigarette dropped out of the holder and was trodden on as he jumped up.

"But they've only arranged for one," he pointed out, "and I've asked Forest. It's not twenty minutes since you said you couldn't manage it."

Manningtree poised his pen and violently stabbed the blotting-pad.

"I'm sorry about Forest," he said coolly, "but you've plenty of time before eight o'clock to find him and tell him that circumstances unfortunately make it imperative that the invitation should be postponed. Or, rather, cancelled—not postponed. We mustn't raise hopes that may not be fulfilled. And don't wait about if you think you ought to let him know at once."

Whitstable missed his cigarette and, in a slightly distracted fashion, commenced to scan the floor in the vicinity of his feet. The cigarette by this time, however, was adhering to one of his soles.

"Of course," he hesitated, "if you really mean it, I——"

"I mean it."

"In that case, I—er—I'm willing to oblige. But what beats me is: why decline in the first place?"

Manningtree vouchsafed him no enlightenment. He was wondering whether, in view of his imminent departure abroad, it was altogether desirable that his appearance at dinner at the Principality Hotel that evening should have the air of being accidental. He felt that the sooner Miss Betty realised how much in earnest he was, the better. To have cause to hope had become a craving with him.

Meanwhile Frederick Whitstable was gingerly feeling the front of his waistcoat, in some alarm lest the cigarette had dropped between that garment and his shirt. This had the effect of restraining his curiosity. By the time he discovered the cigarette, obviously beyond first-aid, on the floor at his feet, Manningtree had made up his mind on the point that had troubled him, and was thoughtfully sealing down an envelope.

"Will you give this to your cousin for me?" Manningtree requested, holding out the sealed missive. "It will add greatly to my indebtedness to you, by the way, if you will postpone any questions."

Whitstable accepted the envelope and eyed it curiously.

"Anything to oblige," he said. "But I suppose this doesn't mean you've altered your mind again?"

"Certainly not!" declared Manningtree. "I shall be along at eight prompt."

He returned to the writing-table, whence his recent compilation had disappeared, and sat down. For a moment Whitstable eyed him hopefully, as though even yet an explanation might be forthcoming. Manningtree.

however, began to turn over the pages of a games catalogue which had been left behind by a previous occupant of the writing-table.

"Well, I'll pop off and break the news to Forest," was Whitstable's last word.

He withdrew with the envelope, and thus the summary inside it had not, after all, been compiled for nothing.

\* \* \* \* \*  
As Manningtree had anticipated, the note earlier referred to by Frederick Whit-

stable was from Poole, confirming the fears expressed in his recent letter—namely, that the house at Lancaster Gate was not yet ready for occupation—and mentioning the locality at which his wife's cousin might find him. The note added that Manningtree would be expected in time for tea that afternoon at the location thus indicated, which was the Toreador Hotel near Hyde Park Corner.

Manningtree presented himself there shortly after four o'clock, and encountered Poole in the lounge. Poole, who was a clean-shaven, dapper little man of thirty-five, with a lean, sanguine face, had been on the point of issuing from the hotel.

"Hilda will be down presently," he announced, as he shook hands. "Sit down and smoke one of your own cigarettes; I was just going out to buy some. I'm thinking of all sorts of things at the very last minute. I very nearly forgot to leave the note for you. Since mid-day I've been running about like a retriever. But, first of all, have you heard anything about the Egyptian job?"

"Not yet."



"Through the doorway there passed the girl with whom Manningtree had lunched at Paddington."

"Good! We shall be able to go ahead with the programme. I'll give you a brief outline of it. Item: there's no chance of shifting across to Lancaster Gate for at least a fortnight, and as we shall all therefore remain here, I've booked your room—the last available one on our floor. Now as to——"

"One minute," interrupted Manningtree. There was a pause while he carefully chose his words. "Since my last letter to you, certain things have happened which are likely to make my movements a trifle uncertain. I hope you haven't gone away—particular trouble—and so on . . ."

"My dear fellow," ejaculated Poole, "of course I've gone to trouble. All our ordering and commandeering and booking and so forth has naturally been done on the assumption that our comings and goings will include you in the itinerary. In fact, your movements won't be in the least uncertain."

"I'm sorry," rejoined Manningtree slowly. "I've special reasons for wishing the remainder of my time to be kept as free as possible."

Poole threw him a puzzled glance and frowned into space.

During the silence that followed, a temporarily idle official of the hotel happened to encounter the frown and immediately hurried busily away.

"I feel sure," said Poole presently, "that this hitch in our arrangements can be overcome somehow. Let's drop the subject until dinner-time. I know exactly what's wrong: you are suffering from acute depression, due partly to the weather, but chiefly to lack of cheerful society. The effect this has on you is to induce gloom and truculence. There is a special charm for that sort of thing. You shall have it 'dry' or 'extra dry'—just as you like. So, until dinner-time, no more. This, by the way, should have been the reply to *Oliver Twist's* request for a refill."

"I hate to say these things," returned Manningtree shortly, "but I'm dining elsewhere to-night."

A lady with dark hair and a slender, plainly-dressed figure advanced smilingly towards him as he spoke.

"He has done nothing but talk treason since he arrived," Poole at once informed his wife. "I leave him to you. I shall be back as soon as possible. In the meantime, let him say the things to you he's been saying to me—if he dares. *A bientôt!*"

Hilda seated herself on the settee which

Manningtree had pulled forward, and made room for him by her side.

"What does he mean?" she inquired.

"I've just told him that, owing to unforeseen circumstances, it is necessary for me to be able to count on complete freedom of movement for the time being. I must cut away soon after tea."

Hilda clasped her hands in her lap, and, pushing forth one small foot, seemed about to pass an adverse comment on that neat extremity.

"That means you have heard about the post in Egypt?" she quietly suggested.

"Not yet."

"Bertram has managed to offend you, perhaps?"

"Certainly not!"

"How many guesses," said Hilda lightly, "do I get?"

Manningtree refrained from an answer.

"Then you are quite determined to be secretive? And we are to resign ourselves to losing you without even the satisfaction of knowing why?"

"While appreciating the fact that the thoughtful arrangements made by you and Bertram for——"

"Not by me," corrected Hilda. "I am only responsible for one arrangement that could be described as thoughtful. Don't bother to ask what it is—under the circumstances."

Manningtree consulted his watch and brought the offended silence to an end.

"Will there be time for explanations," he asked, "before Bertram returns?"

"If there isn't, and you'd rather not have an audience, he can easily be sent away again."

Manningtree sketched the circumstances of his encounter in the fog at Paddington. He also related how chance and Frederick Whitstable had ranged themselves in his behalf. He concluded by hinting at the crisis which faced him at eight o'clock.

"I hope everything is now quite clear," he added. "I should have tried to be more explicit if you could have kept from smiling a little longer."

"I am sorry I can't even smile without offending you, James," returned his cousin, with becoming gravity. "You are growing very self-conscious these days. Silvia Westbrook actually noticed the fact from a mere photograph of you. And, now, may I ask you one or two questions, please?"

"By all means."

"First and foremost, why is it so urgently

necessary that you should see—your friend—to-night ?”

“The reasons are too involved to go into.”

“Very well. But you say Mr. Whitstable recognised his cousin from your description ?”

“I had dotted a few particulars down on a piece of paper—to the effect that she was wearing a grey hat with a narrow brim, a grey coat, and white gloves.”

“Nothing else ?”

“There was no necessity. Whitstable recognised her at once from those details.”

Manningtree was aware in due course of a slight vibration of the settee.

“I’m sorry,” said Hilda tremulously. “I can’t help it. I suppose you have quite made up your mind to desert us this evening ?”

She recovered her gravity with an effort.

“I wonder why you consider it desirable to be so provoking ?” Manningtree remarked.

“Am I provoking ? I’m extremely sorry. I only asked a simple question, I thought.”

“A question to which the answer has already been plainly indicated. Much as I regret any inconvenience or disappointment it may cause you and Bertram, I shall dine with Whitstable’s relatives to-night, though the heavens fall.”

“What I am thinking of more particularly,” rejoined Hilda, “is that Silvia Westbrook may possibly be disappointed, too. We induced her to come to Town with us because four is company and three is none, and now you—”

“I’m getting used to that name. If I only knew the person you refer to, I might be able to gauge the extent of her disappointment.”

Manningtree glanced away from his cousin as Poole’s voice became suddenly audible. Poole, encumbered with parcels, was in the act of holding open the inner door of the lounge. Through the doorway there passed the girl with whom Manningtree had lunched at Paddington that morning. As in the first brief glimpse of her he had obtained in the light from the buffet window, lips and eyes were smiling as she met his incredulous regard. She yet wore the grey hat with the narrow, curling brim, but a white fur had supplanted the travelling coat. At sight of that charming and unexpected face, Manningtree felt the foundations of reality rocking.

“Miss Westbrook, James,” he heard his

cousin say. “Did you get all you wanted at the stores, Silvia ?”

Manningtree became cognisant of the fact that Silvia was offering her hand.

“Practically everything,” she replied to Hilda. “At all events, I’m quite satisfied with the proportion.”

“So am I,” Poole interjected. “This is the result of going out for cigarettes, or, rather, of being driven out by James. I hope,” he added, heaping the parcels on the settee, “that you’ve soothed him, and that he is back in the fold again ?”

Manningtree felt the necessity for anticipating a reply from Hilda.

“There seems to have been a general misunderstanding,” he said calmly. “I’m sorry if I’ve given anyone the impression that I ever contemplated upsetting the arrangements. Nothing is farther from my mind.”

“Then you will not even be dining away ?”

Manningtree shuddered visibly.

“I am reminded,” he replied, stooping for hat and stick, “that I must intercept Whitstable at the earliest possible moment. Till after tea—*au revoir* !”

\* \* \* \*

“My mother and sisters,” Manningtree remarked to Silvia one afternoon, some days later, “are back from Scotland, and I should be very glad for you to meet them. Would to-morrow suit you ?”

Silvia looked up in a startled fashion from a book, the pages of which she had been idly turning. It was another day of fog, and since lunch-time the Pooles and their two guests had not quitted the radius of the lounge fire. A few feet beyond the farther side of the fireplace Hilda and her husband were each occupied with an illustrated paper, though Poole himself was holding his in a manner suspiciously lax.

“I half expected the request would call for explanation,” continued Manningtree. “You see, a very short time in the company of my mother and sisters will enable you to form a fairly correct estimate of me. To do so, you will only require to strike an average between the mater’s encomiums and the derogatory innuendoes of the twins.”

“Is it so very necessary that I should be furnished with such an estimate ?”

Manningtree impressively drew from his pocket an envelope. It yielded a sheet of paper with the bottom torn off.

“This human document,” he explained, “was designed on the afternoon following

our encounter in the fog. It is self-explanatory, and owes its existence to your wilful omission to say, on that occasion, who you were."

Silvia received and proceeded to study the composition. As she did so, the colour in her cheeks slowly extended its boundaries. She was so long studying his eloquent survey, indeed, that Manningtree grew uneasy.

"It *is* clear, I hope?" he inquired nervously.

Silvia returned it to him with composure.

"Quite."

"Then I have made plain," resumed

Manningtree, with a change of both manner and tone, "that what I value most in the world is within your gift." He slowly tore the "human document" into strips. "You must be very generous and give with both hands. Won't you retain the pilot for the whole voyage, my dear?"

The mirror on the opposite wall showed Hilda in process of withdrawing gently from her husband's unconscious fingers the journal on that sleeper's lap.

"I think," answered Silvia softly, "that when we visit your mother to-morrow, I'll wear the grey hat—the one with the curly brim."



## THE BEAUTIFUL LAND.

**Y**OU that on the four winds come  
To the Beautiful Domain,  
Pilgrims all that seek for home,  
Rest you—go not forth again.

Time moves here, like time of old,  
Even as the millwheel turns.  
Spring comes softly to the wold,  
Soft the flame of Autumn burns.

Thorpes like many jewels set,  
Brooks that into silence creep—  
Sleep has all things in his net;  
The wide acres are asleep.

Seekers of the tranquil mind,  
Hither on the winds that come,  
Leave your pilgrimage behind—  
Rest you here, for here is home.

ERIC CHILMAN.

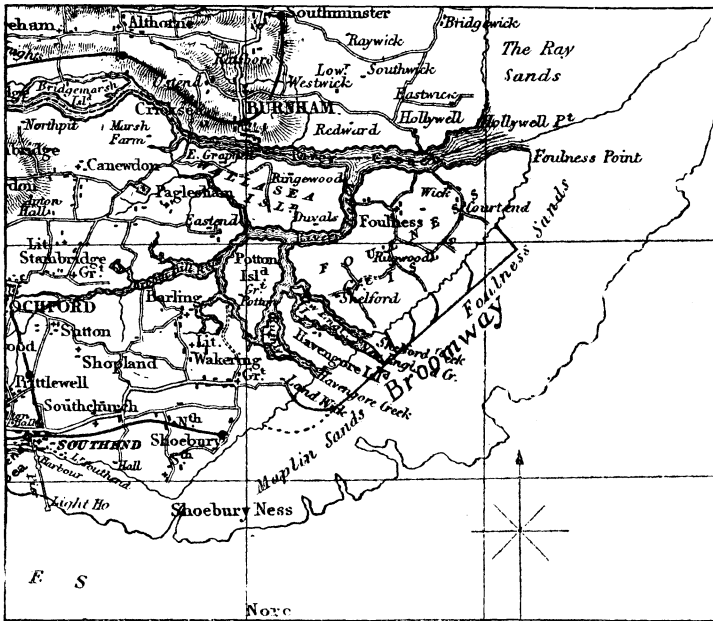


# A HIGH-ROAD IN THE SEA

By MILLER CHRISTY

WITHIN a short time, there will probably cease to exist one of the most extraordinary thoroughfares in the world—a regular and much-used road along the sea-bottom, available only at low

between the estuaries of the Thames and the Crouch) is formed largely—as a glance at the map here reproduced will show—of a curious archipelago of islands, six in number, divided from one another and largely



THE ISLANDS OF THE BROOMWAY: A MAP OF THE COAST-LINE WITH THE NAME OF THE BROOMWAY AND AN OUTLINE INDICATING THE AREA DESCRIBED IN THIS ARTICLE ADDED.

*Reproduced by permission of Messrs. G. W. Bacon & Co., Limited.*

tide. Few know of its existence, though it lies little more than forty miles from the Royal Exchange; fewer still have had occasion to travel over it; and now that it is in danger, its unique features seem worthy of passing record. Elsewhere round the British coasts there are wide expanses of sand which may be crossed at low tide by wheeled vehicles, but nowhere else are such sands crossed by a permanent highway which has been in use for centuries.

The extreme south-easternmost portion of the County of Essex (that portion lying

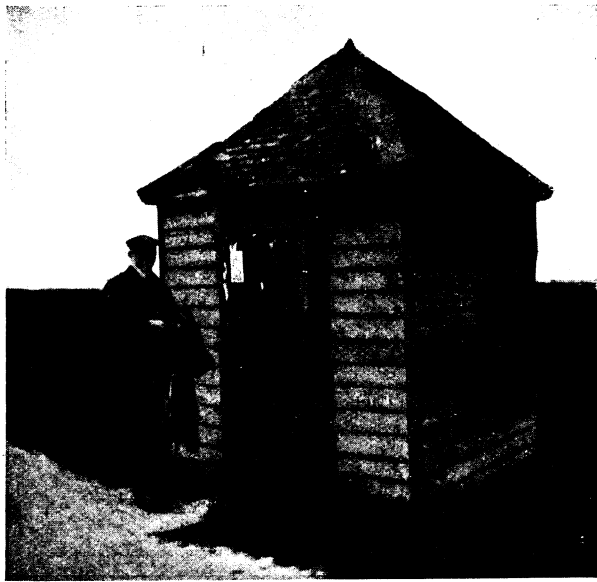
intersected by a maze of broad, muddy tidal creeks. The islands are all low-lying and strongly "walled" against the sea, which otherwise would soon overwhelm them; for the greater part of their area is below the level of the higher tides, and no point on any island reaches more than a foot or two above it. Yet these low lying and unattractive islands consist, for the most part, of rich cornland and fat marsh pastures, while the creeks dividing them contain valuable oyster-layings and provide excellent sport for wild-fowlers in winter.

By far the largest island is Fowlness, which extends to just over six thousand acres. In summer it is pleasant and smiling enough; but in winter its aspect is dreary and depressing. At all times it is more than a little outlandish, from the ordinary man's point of view. Its sparse and decreasing population of 479 souls averages about one-thirteenth part of a person only to each of its many acres. It has no hard roads, for all its highways are in a state of Nature, and almost impassable in winter. In dry weather, when they have become too rough for use, they are simply ploughed! Of trees there are scarcely any, and "the fences are only ditches," as Morant, the county his-

which bears a notice stating that all arrangements for His Majesty's mails "are governed by the state of the tides."

As to the name of the island (the proper spelling of which has been much discussed), the last half of it comes, of course, from the Scandinavian or Saxon *næs* or *ness*, a nose or point, met with so commonly on our east coast. The discussion has been about the first half. This comes undoubtedly from the Saxon *ful*, foul, muddy, or miry; but nowadays there is a fastidious inclination, not justified by history, to derive it from the vast numbers of *fowl* which frequented the island formerly, as they still do to a less extent. Indeed, the official spelling is now *Fowl-ness*, but the native pronunciation is *Fow'ness*. Only the inhabitants of the adjacent island of Great Britain are accustomed to sound the *l*.

Immediately to the south of Fowlness lies New England, a very small, long, narrow island, which presents only one attenuated end to the sea-coast. Morant dismisses it with the curt statement that it has "nothing remarkable." Formerly cultivated, it was overwhelmed by the disastrously high tide of November 29, 1897, which broke down its sea-walls, and it has lain derelict ever since, submerged by every tide. South of this, again, lies the larger Havengore Island, having an area of about one thousand acres, largely cultivated. Behind these three islands lie three others—the large Wallasea Island (about three thousand acres), the smaller Potton Island, and the still smaller Rushley Island.



THE OLD LOCK-UP ON FOWLNESS ISLAND.

torian, quaintly says. No professional man of any kind, except the rector, lives on the island. Even its leading farmer, who farms on the most scientific lines, resides on it during part of the year only. Its public buildings are three in number. The largest and most important is its small, though adequate, church, built of stone in 1850 on the site of an earlier timber church; for the island has been parochial since 1547. Next comes the parish lock-up or cage shown in one of the photographs here reproduced. (The well-known public man seen standing by it need not have tried to pretend he has not escaped from it, for I guarantee that he saw the *outside* of it only whilst he was on the island.) The third is the pillar-box,

Another glance at the map will show that the three islands first named above—Fowlness, New England, and Havengore—all lie actually on, and form the greater part of, the ten miles of coast extending from the mouth of the River Crouch, on the north, to Shoeburyness, on the south, the remaining portion (about four miles) being formed by mainland, comprised within the parishes of Great Wakering, North Shoebury, and South Shoebury. The three inner islands are connected one with another and with the mainland by means of fords and causeways, but wheeled vehicles can reach the three outer islands by means of the sea-road only.

This sea-road, long known as "The

Broomway," runs for about ten miles along the surface of the Maplin Sands, half a mile or so from the shore, and is covered at high tide by four or five feet of water. Over it

used by our warships during their speed trials; or of the outrageously long and costly law case which decided the ownership of the various fishing and other rights over them.

Yet very few, except dwellers in the immediate vicinity of the sands, have any personal knowledge of them.

From a slight distance the surface of the Maplins looks to the eye like a dry, dreary desert of brown sand, as level and smooth as a billiard table. Viewed close at hand, however, that surface is seen to be covered everywhere by countless shallow

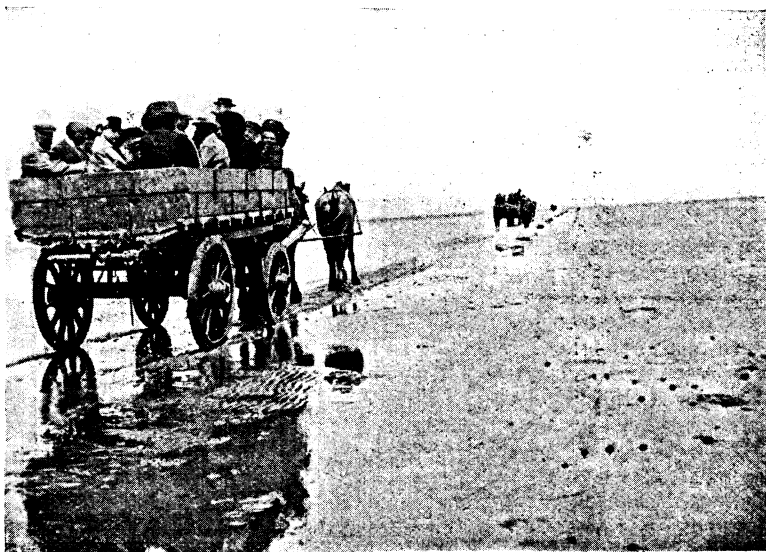


MEMBERS OF THE ESSEX FIELD CLUB, THE COUNTY SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY, LEAVING WAKERING STAIRS FOR FOWLNESS ISLAND.

has to pass all heavy traffic to and from the islands, both supplies for those who dwell thereon and the produce they send to the mainland. Lighter articles can be brought on to the island by ferry across the Crouch (here about a mile wide) from Burnham and elsewhere—that is, when weather permits.

Most people have heard of the Maplins—that great stretch of sands, some fifteen miles long by three or four broad, uncovered only at low tide, which lies immediately against the Essex coast and on the north side of the estuary of the Thames. One has often read of ships which have been stranded on them; of test-firing over them, carried on by the heavy artillery at Shoeburyness; of the "Measured Mile" on their southern edge,

waterplashes, millions upon millions of tidal ripple-marks, and worm-casts in number beyond estimate. Moreover, it is not really level, having a slight and imperceptible



CROSSING THE BROOMWAY ON WAGONS.

slope towards its outer edge and the same on its inner edge, close to the land, where sand gives place to deep mud. No one has given a better description of the appearance

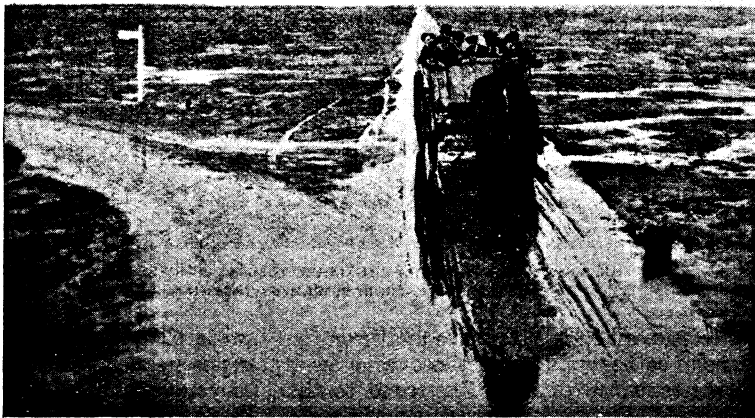
of the Maplins at low tide than old Walter White, who toured much of England on foot in the middle of last century and described what he saw in several books which, though apt to be prosy, were well known in their day and widely read.

Though the surface of the Maplins is as brown as sand can be, scarcely an inch below it is as black as the marsh mud of the Essex coast, the blackness being due, of course, to the decay of organic matter. On it, at low tide, countless sea-birds seek their food. Here, too, fish are taken in large quantities, mainly by means of the "kiddle" or "kettle," a very ancient contrivance, now practically obsolete elsewhere. It consists of a net, generally about

one hundred and twenty yards long and three or four feet wide, which is set up on the shore, supported on stakes, and arranged in the shape of a V, the point being directed towards the sea. As the tide rises and covers the sand, the fish advance towards the shore, some of them passing behind the net. As the tide falls, these find themselves within the jaws of the V and ultimately right in its point. This is provided with a "purse," in which the fish collect, to be removed by the owner of the kiddle as soon as the tide has fallen. A kiddle is, in fact, a kind of fixed seine-net. It was largely the proved antiquity of the right of the lord of the manor to grant permission to set kiddles which decided the great law case in reference to the manorial rights over the Maplin Sands—a case which, after occupying the attention of the Courts for eleven years, was taken to the House of Lords, where, after a hearing extending over seventeen days, judgment was given by Lord Herschell on May 12, 1892.

"The Broomway" across the Maplins is, as has been said, a permanent and very ancient road, used regularly at all times of

the year. It is marked on all the maps of the Ordnance Survey in exactly the same way as the land roads. How ancient it may be is hard to ascertain; but old Harrison, whose admirable "Description of England" was published in 1577, in Holinshed's "Chronicle,"



VIEW ALONG THE BROOMWAY AND OVER THE MAPLIN SANDS.

says of Fowlness that "at a dead low water, a man may (as they saie) ride thereto, if he be skilful of the causie"—that is, the causeway, or road. Again, the Broomway is shown quite unmistakably, and much as it is to-day, on the fine manuscript map of Essex made for Queen Elizabeth by John Norden in 1595, and now in the British Museum. Probably, however, the road was ancient even when Harrison wrote, three centuries and a half ago. Possibly, indeed, it had a Roman origin, for remains thought to be Roman have been found on Fowlness Island.

However this may be, the Broomway starts from a spot on the coast about three miles from Shoebury Station, five miles and a half from Southend, and in the parish of Great Wakering. Here the land road ends and a paved way over the sea-wall, known as "Wakering Stairs," gives access to the sea road. Formerly the Broomway was longer than it is now; for it then left the land, not at Wakering Stairs, but at a point bearing the undignified name of Pig's Bay, which is two miles or more farther south and nearer Shoeburyness. It is so shown on Chapman

& André's large map of Essex, published in 1777. This southern portion was done away with about half a century ago, probably because the traffic over it was endangered by the long-range gun-trials from Shoeburyness.

From the "Stairs" the road runs out on to the sands, curving eastward, for about a mile, until it has reached a distance of nearly half a mile from the shore. Then, turning about north-eastward, it runs almost perfectly straight in that direction, and at the same distance from the shore, for about five miles, when, having reached a certain point off the coast of Fowlness known as Fisherman's Head, it turns suddenly in towards the land and gains the shore. In this five-mile course it fords the shallow runlets draining Havengore Creek (between the mainland and Havengore Island), New England Creek (between Havengore and New England Islands), and Shelford Creek (between New England and Fowlness Islands). At seven different points, too, branch roads leave the main road more or less at a right-angle and run in towards the shore, giving access to as many landing-places or ways over the sea-wall—one on Havengore

roadside kind. When the tide is high, these "sea sign-posts" (as they may be called), rising from the water, present a very curious appearance. These branch roads add nearly three miles to the seven, or thereabout, of the main road, making about ten miles altogether. When the Broomway started from Pig's Bay it must have extended altogether to nearly thirteen miles.

Those who do not know the Maplins might fear that travellers along the Broomway were in danger from quicksands. There is no such danger; for the surface of the sand is surprisingly hard and firm, though covered in places by a thin film of mud and in others by many tiny pools of water. The actual "road surface" (if it may be so called) is, indeed, as firm as that of a well-made land-road, although it is of sand only and has never been "made up." Those driving over it in wagons or other springless vehicles feel a vibration much like that felt when driving over a cobble-paved road, due to the ripple-marks left by the retreating tide; but fortunately there is none of the noise associated with driving over cobbles. The road surface is, indeed, so good that, in 1843, the late Mr. D. R. Scratton, of

Prittlewell Priory, drove his cricket team over the Broomway in his coach and four, to play a Fowlness team.

Yet to motor traffic the Broomway is closed completely. History records that, in the early days of motors, an adventurous motorist drove on to Fowlness, and even managed to drive back again, but that afterwards he had to expend a large sum on repairs, the fine sand having got



ARRIVAL AT FISHERMAN'S HEAD ON FOWLNESS ISLAND.

Island, one on New England Island, and five on Fowlness Island (at Shelford Head, Asplin's Head, Rugwood Head, Eastwick Head, and Fisherman's Head respectively). At each of these branches there is set up an inscribed hand-post of the commonplace

into and ruined all the bearings of his car. Cars may be built better now, but all motorists will be wise to keep off the Broomway. For cyclists, too, the road is practically impassable, owing to the number of shallow creeks and runlets which have to be crossed

For ordinary wheeled horse-drawn traffic there is little or no difficulty. Mr. Reginald A. Beckett, in a delightful account of his rambles through Essex, says ("Romantic Essex," 1901): "One of the most curious sights I have ever beheld was when, reaching the Stairs just before dark, there appeared a procession of market-carts (coming from Foulness and) rapidly driven across the sands, through water about a foot deep, with two or three fishing-smacks beyond and a distant steamer on the horizon." Then, again, pedestrians who do not mind getting their feet wet may pass easily over the Broomway. Walter White, in his "Eastern England" (1865), tells how he traversed it barefoot. Leaving Eastwick Head, he says, "I took off my boots, bared my legs to the knee, and stepped into the sludgy track. It was something to ascertain by actual experience that mud varying from six inches to a foot in depth is 'nothing much to speak of' [as a local publican had told him] at Fowlness. I struggled through it [he continues] to a rude beacon staff about a furlong distant. . . . Near the beacon the mud gives place to firm sand, but so wet and overspread with shallow pools that you will perhaps find most pleasure in continuing barefoot."

Further, there is, in ordinary circumstances, not the least danger of the traveller losing his way, for the road is so absolutely straight for at least five miles that one can scarcely miss it. When midway, one may see it stretching away for miles, both behind and before, in an absolutely straight line across the level sands, till the two ends are lost below the horizon. No Roman road could be straighter. There could be, indeed, no better place for the flat-earth faddist to convince himself, by personal observation, that this old world, in spite of wars and all other worries, does really still possess a quite aldermanic rotundity of figure. Further, the road, on its seaward side, is "broomed out" (as the local phrase is), throughout its entire length of six miles, by means of "brooms"—small tufts of bush, about a foot high, like short-handled besoms, stuck firmly in the ground: whence its name of "Broomway." On the main portion of the road there are 366 of these brooms, placed at intervals of thirty yards. It is said that their maintenance costs the parishes concerned fifteen pounds yearly. Moreover, even by night, the quaintly named Thames-mouth lights (the Nore, the Mouse, the Maplin, and the Swin) afford guidance to anyone on the sands who knows them,

just as effectively as they guide the sailor afloat.

How pleasant a crossing of the Broomway is in favourable circumstances, and how strange the view over the desert-like expanse of wet sands, may be gathered from the photographs which accompany this article. One of them shows, not only the party crossing and their conveyance, but also the waste of sand and puddles, the straightness of the main road, the "brooms" marking it, one of its forks, and one of the "sea sign-posts." Two more illustrate other stages of the journey, one of them showing the ripple-marks left in the sand by the retiring tide; and another shows the party disembarking at Fisherman's Head, on Fowlness Island, their romantic journey completed. In short, with the exercise of reasonable care, the Broomway may be traversed in perfect safety, even by night, provided there is light enough to see the "brooms."

Yet at times the crossing of the Broomway may be attended with the direst peril. There are on record, especially in the pages of Philip Benton, a local historian, many cases in which persons traversing it have lost their lives or have been in the greatest danger of so doing. The road is available daily, in ordinary circumstances, for two periods of six or seven hours each, between half-ebb and half-flood; and anyone who, before crossing, foolishly neglects to inform himself as to the state of the tide (or, having ascertained this, runs things too close) courts disaster. An even greater danger arises from the sudden oncoming of fog—a not uncommon occurrence on a low, marshy coast in winter. Even a native so thoroughly familiar with the Broomway as to be able to traverse it with ease in ordinary circumstances, either by day or by night, may find himself in the gravest danger when overtaken by fog and unable to see either the brooms or the lights.

Some twenty years ago there was published in *The Essex Review* a most graphic account of the adventures of a then rector of Fowlness, who, returning from a Ruridecanal Conference in Great Britain, and over-confident in his knowledge of the road, attempted to reach the island by night on foot, laden with two bags filled with parish books and papers. It was pouring with rain, and he was soaked through before he reached the Broomway. There in the darkness he soon lost the line of brooms, and wandered about on the sands, stumbling over kiddles

and falling into the runlets of creeks. All the while he was trying to obtain guidance from the lights, with which he was thoroughly familiar; but, owing to fog, they could be seen at intervals only, and their colours were indistinguishable. All this time, the tide was rising, and he knew well that, if he failed to reach the shore, his position was hopeless. At last, however, during a clearance of a few minutes, he was able to identify one of the lights with certainty, and this enabled him to ascertain the direction of the shore. Then, after floundering for some time through the rising tide, he reached land safely, climbed upon the sea-wall, walked along it till he came to one of the landing-places, and thus ascertained his whereabouts. He reached his rectory about midnight, with absolutely nothing dry about him except his bags of books, which he had never once been able to put down, owing to the rising tide.

Others, whose adventures have ended less happily, have left, for an obvious reason, no record whatever. Benton's pages show that several medical men have lost their lives during professional visits to the island. Thus one Thomas Jackson, an "apothecary," of Rochford, was drowned in 1711; as also was Thomas Miller, a surgeon, of Great Wakering, aged forty-five, in 1805. Later, a policeman of Irish birth perished in the performance of his duties, having had a paper to serve on the island. In 1836, two poor girls, wishing to visit their sweethearts on the island, attempted to cross from Wakering after dark, and were overtaken by a severe thunderstorm. Their bodies were found next day, their deaths having resulted, it is said, more from cold, wet, and fright

than from drowning. As recently as March 1917, a leading farmer on the island, having attended Rochford Market, disappeared when crossing the Broomway on his return home in the evening. His body was washed ashore a fortnight later, but his horse and cart were never found.

Yet another class of accident was due (according to Benton) to a kind of sporting competition against the tide in which some of the Fowlness farmers used to engage. They were accustomed, he says, to stay on the mainland (attracted by the delights of the local inns) until the last moment, when they would race the tide on horseback, swimming the fast-filling creeks. Naturally some of those who were not quite sober, or in whom familiarity with the danger had bred contempt for it, paid the penalty: others escaped solely through the intelligence, sobriety, and remarkable direction-sense of horse or pony. It is generally different with strangers, who (as the local publican told Walter White) "somehow don't get into trouble, because they are more particular in asking about the state of the tide."

But the range of modern artillery has increased enormously, and the entire length and breadth of the Maplin Sands now scarcely provide sufficient space for test-firing. The Admiralty authorities have already acquired control over some of the islands. Havengore has been purchased outright, together with large portions of Fowlness. It is the intention to bridge Havengore, New England, and Shelford Creeks, and thus to carry a land road on to Fowlness Island. This done, the Broomway will probably cease to be used, and the world will lose one of its strangest roads.



A SEA SIGN-POST ON THE BROOMWAY.

# THE SECOND POST

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HATHERELL

TO Mary, riding through the lifting mists of the grey autumn morning, the man at her side had never seemed less amusing, never looked so steadily and persistently grim, never failed so entirely to respond to her own joyous mood, in all the years of their acquaintance.

Looking at him with wide eyes lit with the sheer enjoyment of the best of mounts and the best of hunting mornings, she told herself that he mustn't be allowed to get dull and stupid like that. Not that he'd ever before evinced any likelihood of so doing, and their friendship dated from the day when she was ten and he was twenty.

The smile in her eyes deepened rather charmingly at the memory of those days. No, certainly Andrew Carroll shouldn't be allowed to get dull and stupid, if she could prevent it.

Why couldn't he enjoy things as she did? Forget the part that was best forgotten, live for the prospect of a glorious run?

As if she had spoken, he turned to her, looking at her with a sort of slow deliberateness.

"Adair will be out to-day?" he said.

"Yes."

She spoke quite gaily and carelessly, but, across the charming countenance he watched, Carroll caught a fleeting light that held neither gaiety nor carelessness, but a strong excitement, and something else that was almost akin to triumph. And almost involuntarily, it seemed, she touched the little mare she rode to quickened action, as if that question and reply had been an unconscious spur to a purpose already defined.

Something of which, perhaps, Andrew realised, for the lines on his own weathered, rather heavy countenance deepened to a sort of dogged watchfulness. He drew the big grey level again, and spoke slowly—

"And Hugh? You've not heard from him?"

The little mare plunged suddenly, whether

from a tightening of her rider's hand on the curb, or because a blackbird dived out of the hedge under her nose with all the commotion of its kind, was not apparent. Mary laughed.

"My good man, what a question!"

He turned and looked at her.

"It is as good as the answer—apparently."

She looked at him charmingly, from beneath her lashes.

"Don't you know that questions and answers kill conversation?"

"Do they?"

"What on earth is the matter with you this morning, Andrew? It's going to be one of the divinest days of the season, you're riding your beloved Rocket, the draw is in the most perfect corner of the whole country, and you talk to me like a counsel addressing a witness!"

He said bluntly—

"Hugh's my friend."

"Well?"

He made an odd little gesture of helplessness and was silent. Suddenly she turned to him again, facing him squarely.

"Hugh has never written, Andrew, since the day he went away, nearly three years ago."

Her voice was quite cool and clear. It did not tell Andrew anything beyond the mere words. The raillery had left it as completely as that glow of excitement and triumph had left her face: both were now quite sincere and direct.

And Andrew Carroll, cursing that sense of clumsy helplessness, rode on in silence.

Out of the mist glowed the burnt orange of the beeches at the cross-roads, the vivid crimson and glossy green of a holly tree against grey and purple distance, wet rust-red bracken at the roadside, pink coats of riders, the clean black and white and tan of the hounds padding along the road—all the poignant charm of colour of a meet on a November morning after rain.



Someone at the edge of the crowd, as the big grey and the brown mare came in sight, said solemnly—

“There’s Carroll and Miss Villars”—and looked across to where Captain Freddy Adair, mounted on a raking chestnut, was in the act of throwing away a half-smoked cigarette as he rode forward to greet the new arrivals.

The man addressed gave a short laugh, and said that Hugh Clinton was a fool, at which the other shrugged and made no reply.

It was Andrew Carroll who was nearest to Mary and Freddy Adair as they greeted one another.

They rode together up the lane and across the wet turf and bracken to the covert appointed to be drawn, and it seemed that Mary’s prophecy of an excellent day’s sport was destined to be fulfilled by the getting away on good terms with the hounds, over a line of the best galloping country in the hunt, the little mare taking her fences like a bird. Had she needed a pilot—which assuredly she did not—an able exponent of the *rôle* was at hand in the person of Captain Freddy Adair.

It wasn’t until the early afternoon that her luck turned. The little mare, in a sudden fit of perversity, had a difference of opinion with her rider over a big bramble-shrouded bank, and by the time Mary had convinced her of the futility of her objections, the rest of the field, including Adair, were well away, and, running a straight line, soon out of sight and hearing—a *contretemps* enhanced by the fact that the mist, having lurked during the morning in a piled-up bank of dazzling whiteness over the shoulder of the hills, now descended in a soft clinging shroud, blotting out all objects further than half a field away.

Twenty minutes’ vain endeavour to pick up any sort of clue, and the heaving sides of her mount had almost decided Mary to give it up and find her way homewards, when the splash of hoofs in a narrow cattle-track at the edge of the wood heralded the unexpected appearance of a rider in pink. It was Andrew Carroll, riding in the forlorn hope of recovery of a bad start. He looked at her sharply as he recognised her, at the mud on her habit and on the mare’s shoulder, and swung himself out of the saddle.

“You’re all right? Where’s Adair?”

“Miles away by now, I should think. That fox has got his head straight. Of course

I’m all right—except in my temper at getting left like this. Freddy didn’t notice—Dinah’s been jumping like a hare all the morning—or when he did it was too late. And in this beastly mist—”

Andrew said nothing. He was at no time a particularly talkative person, but to-day, for some reason, his taciturnity struck Mary Villars with an odd sense of impatience. There was somehow a tension in the atmosphere out of all proportion to the occasion, and the shrouded stillness of the surrounding world lent emphasis and a sense of dramatic inevitableness. She stood quite still, with Dinah’s bridle loosely over her arm, and after a long pause she slowly lifted her eyes to Andrew’s face. She knew then that it was for that he had been waiting.

“Mary, it isn’t true?”

“What isn’t true?”

“What people are thinking—and saying—about you and Adair.”

He had never thought she could look like that—so utterly and recklessly lovely.

“It is quite true—quite true.”

“Hugh—”

“Andrew, listen! Hugh went away three years ago. Since then he’s never written once. D’you think I didn’t look for a letter—those first months—every day, I think, for the first two years?” She gave an odd little laugh. “No one ever guessed that, did they? Not even you. But that couldn’t go on for ever. And now—”

He said thickly, remembering the Mary of sixteen years ago—

“I wouldn’t believe it was true, it couldn’t be. You—”

“Why not I, as much as hundreds of others, who have grown tired of waiting?”

His idol swayed then. With a face grown very hard, he realised how he had held out against that admission. He had known no more than others of the exact story of that break between Mary Villars and Hugh Clinton. It had happened quite soon after Mary, as heiress of Wood Gate, had come to live there with the rather nondescript older cousin who was her accredited chaperon. Without a word to anyone, Clinton had gone, vaguely, overseas, and Mary had stayed on at Wood Gate, piquant and reckless and gay. The third autumn of Clinton’s absence came Freddy Adair, for the hunting season.

But if the neighbours in general found the progress of his friendship with Mary

diverting, to Andrew Carroll the situation held no diversion at all. He thought of Freddy Adair, and felt a contemptuous pity; he thought of Hugh, and set his teeth; he thought of Mary, came to her, and put his hands on her shoulders.

"I wonder," he said deliberately, "just what it meant to you—that day three years ago?"

A wave of rose swept into her face and away, but the carelessness of her quick little laugh made his grip tighten unconsciously.

"Since when," she countered, "have you taken this extraordinary interest in my affairs?"

The shaft glanced.

"Why, always," said Andrew simply.

Somehow she couldn't answer that. After a pause—

"Yours—and Hugh's," he added quietly.

"And Freddy Adair's?"

The audacity of it stung him white with anger. Through it he looked down into her uplifted face.

"I don't know much of Adair," he said, "but I know Hugh. And I thought, once, I knew you—a little." He paused. "The devil I do!" he added suddenly, and forgot to apologize.

And then Mary laughed.

All the charm of her was vivid as she stood there, straight and still before him, all the grace of her uplifted head and slim round throat. But that amazing trill of laughter left him white and grim. Somehow her defiance and audacity he had understood, but laughter of sheer amusement, fresh and candid and ringing—

Quite suddenly she grew grave again. She touched his arm with a little rather charming gesture of apology.

"You know, it—isn't any good, Andrew. It doesn't make any difference. Everything—everything is settled."

She thought, as she looked at him and away, how surprisingly old he looked, his heavy, rather stolid face, weathered red-brown from many good seasons' hunting, seemed to have lost the little laughing lines that redeemed it from grimness. She told herself impatiently that that was why he didn't understand—that was why he could only look at things from Hugh's point of view. He and Hugh were ten years older than she and Freddy Adair.

She heard his voice again: "Supposing a letter came—too late, Mary?"

"One can suppose anything."

He looked at her steadily.

"There's a sporting chance, Mary. Won't you give Hugh that? You—you get a second post at Wood Gate, don't you?"

She nodded.

"Yes. It's generally in when I get home from hunting."

"If you would give Hugh that one last chance. . . . Ah, I know it may sound absurd—to you. If you would put off your decision until that post is in—"

"I have decided."

"But if a letter came by that second post. . . . Mary, make it a bargain."

She began to laugh.

"The second post after three years!"

"I know. But still—" He broke off clumsily, desperately.

There was a long pause. Mary had broken a hazel switch from the hedge and was stripping it mechanically of its tawny leaves and little stiff next year's catkins. The curves of her half-averted face as Andrew watched her were very lovely; she reminded him irresistibly of the Mary of sixteen years ago.

Into the silence came suddenly a sound that made Dinah and the grey throw up their heads and listen.

"They're coming back!" cried Mary incredulously. She held up her hand, listening to the distant echo of hound music, and looking at Andrew as if their conversation was already quite forgotten. Almost before he realised it she was in the saddle, gathering up the reins with eager fingers. She looked down at him.

"I'll wait," she said breathlessly, "for the second post!"

And she wheeled Dinah and was gone.

When she looked back some minutes later, she found that Andrew had not followed her. Hounds were running fast and silently now through the mist, and only the Master and three fortunate followers remained. She heard the former say casually that Adair's horse had got a nasty over-reach, and that he had gone home. The words were not addressed to her, but she felt that they had been meant for her to hear, and the colour burnt suddenly in her cheeks. As she rode, three words beat in her brain with maddening rhythm:

"The second post! The second post!"

\* \* \* \* \*

The quick burst lasted perhaps twenty minutes, and ended in defeat.

In the greying twilight Mary turned

Dinah's head for home. She felt very tired, and vaguely conscious that the events of the day were very far from ended. She wondered what had become of Andrew Carroll, and when, some three-quarters of a mile from her own gates, she overtook him leading the grey horse in the same direction, she gave a little exclamation of surprise.

To her inquiries he replied briefly that Rocket had had enough. They walked beside her past the quiet wet woods and up the short drive. Mary said—

"You'll come and see if the second post is in?"

"Yes."

The elderly man who came to take away the horses looked at Andrew curiously and not unfavourably. As he led them away, he muttered something about "the other one" that would not have flattered the vanity of Captain Freddy Adair.

The hall, as Mary and Andrew entered, was lit only by the leaping banners of flame of the big wood fire. It flickered in ruddy gleams on the panelling of the walls, and on the round oak table where Mary threw down her gloves and crop.

On the table lay a letter: the second post was in.

The torn envelope fluttered to the floor; in the firelight Mary read the single sheet it contained. She looked up at Andrew, who was standing by the fireplace.

"It's from Hugh. He's coming home. Read it."

And she held the letter out to him.

As she spoke, the log that had been flaming died down, after the fickle manner of its kind, to a spasmodic flicker, quite inadequate for reading anything. There were tall candlesticks on the mantelshelf, and Andrew, stooping for the discarded envelope, hastily folded it into a spill, kindled it at the fire, and lit the candles. His hand seemed unusually clumsy over the task, and before it was accomplished the spill had burnt down to his fingers.

He took the letter, read its telegram-like brevity, and laid it on the mantel. He did not look at Mary for a moment. When he did she said very quietly—

"You've won."

He said nothing. He could see the clenching of her slim hands, hanging straight at her sides. She turned and looked at the fire.

"You—always believed that he would come back, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Because—because you were Hugh's friend."

"Yes."

"And I was to have been Hugh's wife." She paused as if the words struck her with some unbelieved force, and the colour came into her white face. Suddenly she swept round to him once more.

"Andrew, you didn't know? He—Hugh hadn't written to you? You didn't know of this—all the time?"

"No."

She drew a long breath and took up the letter again.

"There's no address—only 'London.' And there's no date. Where's the envelope? The postmark——"

"I lit the candle with it. I'm afraid it's burnt. I'm sorry."

"He might mean to-morrow or to-day." Her voice shook. "It was such a chance—a hundred to one!"

"But you took it," he said gently. "Thank God, you took it—the sporting chance."

"Because of you," she said.

"No, because all the time you still cared for Hugh."

She lifted her head and stared at him, the colour coming and going in her face. Outside the wind was rising, driving the mist from the stars, making little scurrying rushes among the rhododendrons in the shrubbery, accentuating the stillness of the firelit room.

She gave an odd little laugh.

"You—you believe in everybody, I think. First Hugh, and now me."

He took her two hands in his, seeing, determinedly, the Mary of sixteen years ago, with the wide serious eyes and irresistibly provocative laughter.

In the drive there were footsteps; the opening of a door let in a gust of cool soft air that set the candle-flames dancing. A man, halting in the doorway, saw the two standing by the fireplace, the girl's hands in Andrew's, her face upturned to his.

He stood quite still and looked at them, and his eyes, that were very blue in a square, tanned face, held a sort of beaten horror, as of a man who at the end of the trail finds his hoped-for goal a ruin at his feet. He took a step forward, and they turned and saw him.

"Hugh!"

It was Mary's voice, and the ring in it, in direct contradiction of appearances, and quite candidly unembarrassed, made



“Andrew looked at them gravely.”

him look at her oddly. For one bitter moment he thought that she was acting a part. He said quite bluntly and steadily—

“You thought I shouldn’t come back. It was my fault. But I couldn’t write. I joined an expedition—Antarctic affair—and we got blocked up—cut off from all communication. Of course you thought I shouldn’t come back. I understand.”

But the understanding, it appeared, left his face curiously drawn and grey.

Mary said in a low voice—

“He—Andrew *said* you would come back.”

In the dead silence that followed her words she looked at Andrew for the first time since Hugh’s entrance, and the expression on his face dumbfounded her. For had Hugh been a ghost, Andrew could hardly have looked at him more oddly, more incredulously.

There was a long, long pause, while Hugh looked from his friend to the girl and back again. Then he gave a short, bitter laugh.

“Andrew said that, did he?”

“Yes.”

“He doesn’t exactly look as if he believed it himself, does he?”



“‘But I never wrote this!’ . . . ‘It’s your writing—except those ‘c’s’ and that capital ‘L.’”

She gave a little cry.

“Hugh, you don’t know—you don’t know! If it hadn’t been for Andrew. . . . He made me wait for the second post. He said there might be a letter from you,—he made me feel that there might be! too—he seemed to believe it so. And—and when we came in, there was——”

Suddenly her voice broke. But Hugh was looking at her in bewilderment.

“A letter—from me? But I didn’t write! There wasn’t time—we only got to Plymouth this morning. I wired instead. Didn’t you get my telegram?”

He glanced round as he spoke, and then, crossing to a writing-table in the window, picked up an orange envelope.

“Why, it’s here—unopened. I suppose it came while you were out, and you never noticed it when you came in.”

Mary took it from him dazedly.

“But—your letter! I had your letter—from London. It came by the second post, just as Andrew said.”

Her fingers shook as she held out the paper for him to see. He had come close to her now, and perhaps the thought struck her suddenly that there had been no greeting

between them except her own involuntary "Hugh!"

He looked up from the letter blankly.

"But I never wrote this! I haven't even been in Town—I came straight from Plymouth. It's extraordinary."

"It's your writing." She was looking over his shoulder now, conscious of a strange relief, a strangely pleasant sense of re-adjusted values, even through her bewilderment. "It's your writing—except those 'c's' and that capital 'L.' I don't ever remember seeing you make 'L's' like that, now I come to think about it."

Hugh Clinton laughed.

"It may be like my writing three years ago, but it's certainly not like it now. I smashed my wrist just before we started home, and I've had to manage with my left hand, which doesn't achieve anything much like that. It's confoundedly odd—I don't know who on earth—Haven't you got the envelope anywhere?"

He looked at Andrew, and Mary, as if struck by the same sudden thought, followed his glance. She gave a little cry: in one flash the significance of Andrew's burning of the envelope was revealed, and with it all the amazing thing that Andrew had done.

"You wrote it! You made me promise first, and then you wrote it!"

Andrew looked at them gravely.

"The postmark was the thing that

bothered me," he said, as simply as if he spoke of the most ordinary occurrence in the world. "I had to fake it, you see. I trusted to luck and the bad light, and as soon as I had the opportunity got rid of the envelope. I thought I knew your fist well enough. When Mary left me on Fir Hill, I rode to the nearest place—that little pub at the cross-roads—borrowed a sheet of paper, and wrote it. I waited for the postman, and—well, got him to leave it here. That's all, except that it was deucedly obliging of you to turn up at the right moment!"

In the silence that followed his words the three stood very still. Almost imperceptibly, it seemed, they had changed places in the triangle; it was Andrew now who was the one who looked on. After a moment he turned to collect his hat and gloves and whip.

"No, of course I won't stay. No, don't ring. I'll go round to the stables for Rocket myself. A fellow's first evening, after three years——"

He smiled as Hugh gripped his hand in silence, and to Mary came the shamed memory of her indictment of his dulness and stupidity. She looked at Hugh, who had turned towards her, and, for the first time, found no words at all.

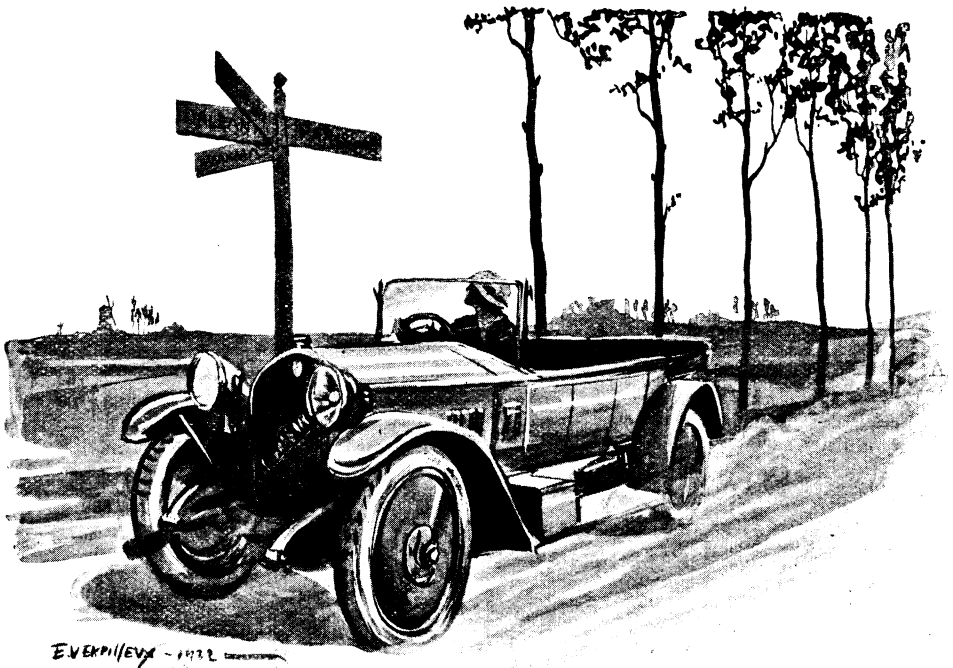
A grey horse carried his rider home, at a hunting jog, under a sky where the wind had swept the mist from the stars.

## RONDEAU.

**W**ITH rod and reel we took our way,  
 To seek a moorland stream to-day.  
 We hoped to lure the lazy trout—  
 They guessed a novice was about!  
 We tempted them with dun and grey,  
 We tried the fly they loved in May,  
 But unconcerned and deep they lay;  
 As if contemptuously to flout  
 Our rod and reel.

Yet still Hope whispers we might play  
 Some furtive fish this autumn day;  
 Where moorlands burnished brown with drought,  
 And radiant sun-kissed rocks stand out,  
 But streamlets laugh at our dismay  
 With rod and reel.

EDITH SPENDER.



"The signpost indicated that the most insignificant road of the three led to Marmiton."

# MADAME BLANCHEFLEUR, CONSPIRATOR

By C. KENNETT BURROW

ILLUSTRATED BY EMILE VERPILLEUX.

"THIS is divine," said Jean Rimbaud. "It makes one begin to enjoy life!"

"It is pretty, certainly," said Jacques Coriot. "As to life, I have always enjoyed that, even when I was hungry."

"Poof!" said the other. "It is all very well to talk with a full glass at your elbow and the dinner cooking in the kitchen."

"The worst of you, my friend, is that you allow nothing to the imagination."

The pair were sitting outside a *café*, celebrated for its simple but excellent cuisine, some five-and-twenty miles from Paris. Though it stood close to a high-road; it had an air of seclusion, partly because it was an old, low-built, unassuming house, and partly because it was flanked on either side by

immense lime trees. Moreover, between the house and the road there was a gravelled space sprinkled with oddly-shaped flowerbeds.

Rimbaud's exclamation, however, had not been evoked by the *café* and its surroundings, but by the beauty of a beech wood at the other side of the road. The trees were beginning to show the first gold of autumn, and the leaves, which still retained the drops of an afternoon shower, were, in the westering sunshine, lovely beyond the art of any craftsman in gems. The total effect was one of subdued splendour; the high lights did not obtrude themselves; they became a part of the shadowy mystery beyond.

"This beauty almost moves me to tears," said Coriot.

"Two minutes ago you called it pretty."

"My dear Jean, if I had not checked your enthusiasm, you might have become lyrical."

They fell into silence for a time. Neither was thinking; each, in his own way, was absorbing the visible. At last Coriot said:

"I am hungry."

"Hunger is an illusion," said Rimbaud.

A blue-and-white automobile flashed along the road; it had come and gone in an instant—a mere flicker.

"The devil!" cried Coriot. "Did you see that?"

"What, my poor friend?"

"The blue-and-white car—the car of——"

"In which direction was it going?"

"Away from Paris."

"Then it was not Madame Blanche-fleur's car," said Rimbaud.

"You are as stupid as a pig!" said Coriot.

"Do you imagine that because a thing seems absurd, Madame Blanche-fleur is incapable of doing it? I tell you that it was her car. She was at the wheel, and she was alone." Coriot rose. "You perceive, Jean, what this means?"

"It may mean anything or nothing. Why trouble yourself?"

"It means, at any rate, that she cannot be in Paris by seven o'clock. And I trouble myself because I am interested in Hélène Remuet. I'm off!"

"Then you propose to lose your dinner?"

"Sacred Heaven, does a man think of dinner in a crisis?"

"Go, then, my friend," said Rimbaud.

"I would do much for you, but I cannot sacrifice this dinner. Afterwards I shall go on to Marmiton and find a bed there."

Five minutes later Coriot was tearing back to Paris on a motor-cycle (Madame Blanche-fleur, to Hélène's disgust, had persuaded him to buy it), leaving Rimbaud in deep reflection.

"I wonder," he said to himself, "what has happened?" This question occupied him until dinner was served, also during that meal and for half an hour afterwards. He speculated, in the manner of a weaver of plots—which, indeed, he was—and though he invented many plausible theories, none seemed to fit in with Madame Blanche-fleur. The unexpected—and Madame Blanche-fleur had always a tincture of unexpectedness—has no rules for the guidance of perplexed psychologists.

While Rimbaud dined and pondered, Madame Blanche-fleur drove steadily on. As a matter of fact, she had no more idea of where she was going than had Rimbaud or any chance passenger on the road. The destination was of no importance. What mattered was the sense of freedom, of escape, of delicious irresponsibility, and, finally, the consciousness of having, by one stroke, asserted herself, helped Hélène Remuet, and done something of which she was certain Arnaud Dorain would approve.

It was, however, an irresponsibility strictly conditioned by time. She need not—she would not—return to Paris that night or the next day; she might even allow herself a second or third day. She glanced at her wrist-watch; it recorded to her the quite curious fact that it was half-past eight. Hélène Remuet, she thought, at that moment might—

"Well," she said aloud, "she will not fail. She has genius, that child."

So far Madame Blanche-fleur had driven straight ahead, keeping, as she supposed, to the main road. She ought now to be near Nemours. As a matter of fact, Nemours was a long way to the left. But she was not distressed by the absence of Nemours. However, she was getting hungry, and so, becoming more immediately interested in her surroundings, she pulled up under a signpost at the junction of three roads. In the fading light she could scarcely distinguish the words. Apparently, if she went straight on, she would reach, in time, Orléans. At what point, then, had she turned to the south-west? If she had not become so unexpectedly hungry, she might have decided to put on speed, and conquer Orléans. But she was too hungry seriously to consider that idea, and she also rejected it because it offered no satisfaction to her mood.

The signpost indicated that the most insignificant road of the three led to Marmiton. She remembered that she had heard Jean Rimbaud speak of Marmiton, and the name suggested food so unmistakably that Madame Blanche-fleur, taking it for a providential intimation, switched on the headlights and drove slowly along the Marmiton road. It was narrow, ridgy, loose—a road not calculated to attract the ordinary motorist. No sane chauffeur, she reflected, would have chosen it. That, perhaps, added to the enjoyment of the enterprise.

The moon was rising, with an infinite



solemnity which touched Madame Blanchefleur strangely, when the car lurched into Marmiton.

"You are, no doubt, Madame la Comtesse?" The voice came from the shadows on the left, where a bulging wall seemed—as, indeed, it had seemed for years—to be in the act of precipitating itself into the narrow road.

"No doubt," said Madame Blanchefleur, "I am nothing of the kind. But if you will be good enough to reveal yourself, and if you are honest—" A square, squat figure moved into the light of the head-lamps. The man's face, thus violently illuminated, had an exaggerated pallor and an almost grotesque rigidity. His eyes were blinking alive.

"I am honest, yes," he said. "But if you are not Madame la Comtesse—"

"I assure you that I am not. However, you may give me what title you please, provided you direct me to the best inn. Is there an inn, is there food, is there anything whatever in Marmiton?"

"There is Monsieur Montfaucon."

"I cannot exist on a name," said Madame Blanchefleur. "I would rather have an omelette than all the Montfaucons in the world!"

"Then you are not Madame la Comtesse."

"Are you mad, my friend? Be good enough to stand out of the way. I will explore Marmiton for myself." As the car moved on, a distressed and pleading voice followed her.

"On the right—the house with the big window. Monsieur Montfaucon—"

For a moment Madame Blanchefleur feared that the house with the big window might have something to do with the mysterious Montfaucon. But it was merely a simple wayside inn, innocent of any suggestion of the unusual, and apparently suffering from a general inertia due to lack of business. The door opened into a room dimly lit by a single hanging-lamp. The landlord, his boots heavy with the reddish soil of the fields, was nodding in a straight-backed armchair; his wife, with a pile of coarse stockings in her ample lap, nodded in a companion chair; and a nondescript dog, of advanced age, breathed heavily before a wood fire. All three roused themselves simultaneously and stared at Madame Blanchefleur. Then with equal unanimity they got to their feet.

"My good people," said Madame Blanchefleur, "I am starving. Can you give me food?"

"Annette," said the landlord, who was tall and as lean as a greyhound, "bestir yourself. What we have, madame," he continued to the unexpected guest, "is at your service. We will do our best."

"That is admirable," said Madame Blanchefleur. "My car is at your door, and the road is narrow; perhaps it had better be got out of the way. Have you a yard or a clean shed?"

"An immense yard," the landlord said with pride. "I am a farmer, madame. This inn is—shall I say?—a toy for my wife."

He went into the road with Madame Blanchefleur and opened a wide gate. With a little manœuvring the car was induced to pass through and establish itself in the immense yard. When Madame Blanchefleur returned to the inn, Annette was laying a table behind a wooden screen which partitioned off a wide angle of the room. The screen was just high enough to give a kind of semi-privacy.

"In five minutes," said the stout Annette, whose good-humoured face shone redly, "madame shall have an omelette, and ten minutes later there will be ready some chicken, fried in butter, and a salad. Also I have a ham, a wonderful ham!"

"You are an angel!" said Madame Blanchefleur. "I could embrace you!"

The natural politeness of the innkeeper and his wife had restrained them from showing any marked surprise at the appearance of so unusual and unexpected a guest. But, nevertheless, they were moved by an intense curiosity which revealed itself, from the recesses of the kitchen, in a sustained whispering, punctuated now and then by explosive comments. More than once she heard the name of Montfaucon. Who, she wondered, was this pervasive person, and who was the countess who had, apparently, failed to appear?

Though the table appointments were primitive, the meal was excellent, and the landlord was able, as by a miracle, to produce a small bottle of Drusillon. That exactly fitted Madame Blanchefleur's mood, for had she not drunk that wine with Emile Bourdon, its grower, in the Château Drusillon itself, and were not her thoughts almost exasperatingly centred on Dr. Sylvestre Bourdon, who possibly, by this time, had heard what, to-morrow, would be discussed as only Paris could discuss a matter of art—if, indeed, it were presented in that light?

Madame Blanchefleur had a clear conscience. Moreover, the opportunity for this brief spell of freedom had come at the right moment. Even if she had made the decision to resign the career which had become so strangely unsatisfying, there still remained a little time—this snatched interval, for example—in which to express her unattached individuality.

And she was expressing it merely to herself in an undistinguished inn. But she was, for the moment, content with that. She felt, and this with a conviction both humble and proud, that she had, as it were, got hold of herself.

She was wrapped in a most pleasant contentment. It was one of those interludes when life is at flood—a brimming interlude, undisturbed by ambition or desire, untroubled by memories which make a shambles of the heart.

She heard the sound of an opening door. There was a scurry from the kitchen, and the name Montfaucon was flung out, as it were, by two voices, though the voices were controlled.

Madame Blanchefleur rose with caution and glanced over the partition. Monsieur Montfaucon—he was plump, grey-haired, pink-complexioned, and suggested the decorum and innocence of a dove—stood irresolute, with his hand on the door which he had just cautiously closed.

“My good Annette,” he said, as the stout landlady advanced, smiling with anxious benignity, “that idiot Manchet—whom I must, I fear, send about his business—tells me that he directed a lady to your house.”

“And why not, monsieur?” Annette demanded. “Is it not a good house, and am I not able to cook for the best?”

“Yes, yes. But he had the audacity to address her by a title which, fortunately or unfortunately—as to that I do not judge—is not hers. I admit that the anxiety of Madame Montfaucon may be regarded as an excuse for Manchet, but to intercept travellers—”

“Well, well, monsieur,” said Annette, “the lady is here, and if you desire to make apologies, she will, no doubt, consider them. But understand that I am not to blame.”

At this point Madame Blanchefleur emerged from the shelter of the partition.

“There is no need for any apology,” she said. “I have dined well. And to be addressed as Madame la Comtesse is no indignity.”

Monsieur Montfaucon swung round with

a gasp. He gazed at Madame Blanchefleur as though she were an apparition. Then he pulled himself together and made a profound obeisance.

“I become more and more bewildered,” he said. “Are you, by any chance, the Comtesse de Marigny? And yet I have here a telegram which I am afraid to show to my wife—fortunately I intercepted the messenger—from—”

“The elusive Madame la Comtesse?” Madame Blanchefleur paused for an instant. “This, monsieur, is evidently a serious matter.” She sensed all manner of possibilities in this curious situation. And she liked the timorous little gentleman. He was so perturbed, so much in need of support, so innocently charming. Somehow she had to help him.

“It is a serious matter,” said Montfaucon, “in the eyes of my wife.”

“For Heaven’s sake, monsieur, let us sit down and discuss this. It is possible that I may be of some assistance. I am Madame Blanchefleur, and you, as I already know, are Monsieur Montfaucon.”

“That is true.” He sat down for a moment in the landlord’s chair, and then jumped up again. “Annette,” he cried, “be good enough to close that door!”

“If you accuse me of being an eavesdropper”—Annette’s red face glowed in the doorway like a dimmed sun—“you destroy my reputation.”

“I accuse you of nothing,” said Montfaucon. “Nevertheless, in the name of a thousand saints, remove yourself!”

The door was closed softly. Annette had removed herself.

“Let us return to the telegram,” said Madame Blanchefleur. “Consider me entirely at your service. Possibly Fate guided me to Marmiton, and it is always well to humour Fate.”

“Fate, then, has guided you to a place of barbarians! That Manchet, for example!” Montfaucon had resumed his seat, and Madame Blanchefleur, in Annette’s chair, faced him.

“No,” she said, “but to a place of hospitable souls. And now, monsieur, the telegram and Madame la Comtesse.”

“I have never seen her.”

“And the telegram is from her?”

“Yes, yes. It is all my own fault. I have boasted to my admirable wife of my relationship to the Comtesse de Marigny. It has become a habit with me. You must understand that my admirable wife—”

The sound of a motor-cycle interrupted Montfaucon's explanation. He looked at Madame with a wild hope in his eyes. Was it possible that, after all, the Countess had arrived? The noise of the engine ceased, and a moment later Jean Rimbaud entered the room.

"Jean!" cried Montfaucon. He jumped to his feet and advanced to meet Rimbaud. Madame Blanchefleur also rose with a warning gesture. The two men embraced with affection. Then Jean turned to the lady.

"If I am not mistaken——" He paused in order to give her the lead.

"I am Madame Blanchefleur, yes," she said. "But what are you doing here?"

"You are acquainted!" cried Montfaucon.

"We might be described as friends," Jean said.

"The name of Marmiton attracted me, and I was hungry," said Madame Blanchefleur. "I have been provided with good food, and also enjoyed for a few minutes the society of Monsieur Montfaucon. What more could one desire? But you have not replied to my question."

"I had nothing particular to do, and felt a sudden desire to see my cousin and Madame Montfaucon and, of course, Clotilde."

"Clotilde," explained Montfaucon, "is my ward, the orphan child of a dear friend of Madame Montfaucon's." Rimbaud exchanged a glance with Madame Blanchefleur.

"When I came in," he said, "you two appeared to be in consultation."

"I was about to confide in Madame Blanchefleur. I find myself in a most difficult dilemma, Jean." The poor gentleman became extremely agitated. "I am almost ashamed to confess!" he cried.

"If it is a matter that demands tact, or resource, or sympathy," Rimbaud said, "you could have no better confidante than this lady."

"It is a matter that demands all three. Madame la Comtesse de Marigny was to have arrived at my house to-night. But a telegram informs me that she is unable to come, that she has, in fact, left Paris for Madrid."

"Well," said Jean, smiling, "you need not distress yourself about a lady whom you have never seen. Are you sure that she exists?"

"I wish to Heaven," cried Montfaucon, in a gust of exasperation, "that she did

not! . . . And that is precisely the question which Madame Montfaucon may address to me. You must understand," he continued, turning to Madame Blanchefleur, "that I have an absurd pride—yes, I confess it—an absurd family pride. And I have impressed my wife with the fact that a Montfaucon, a distant cousin only, married the Comte de Marigny. It is true that he left her a widow in two years, but that does not alter the fact. And at last my wife insisted that I should invite her to Marmiton. I did so, and to my amazement she accepted the invitation."

"But why, after all these years," asked Rimbaud, "should Madame Montfaucon suddenly desire to make the acquaintance of this lady whom you yourself have never set eyes on?"

"In order to impress Monsieur Roubaix."

"Oh!" said Jean. He became gloomy and turned away for a moment.

"And who is M. Roubaix?" Madame Blanchefleur asked.

"You must surely have heard of M. Roubaix? He is a man of great wealth and also a famous explorer."

"And why, at this juncture, should Madame Montfaucon wish to impress him?"

"Because she is devoted to the interests of Clotilde."

Rimbaud gazed beseechingly at Madame Blanchefleur. He saw sympathy and understanding in her regard, but yet he hesitated before he said:

"Madame Blanchefleur, why should not you become, for a few hours, this unknown——"

"That is precisely what was in my mind," said Madame Blanchefleur. Something was clearly at stake, perhaps the destiny of Roubaix or Jean, perhaps the soul of Clotilde. The situation must be grasped and controlled. Obviously Jean could not manage it, and Montfaucon, who admitted his fatuity, was wiping damp hands on a damp pocket-handkerchief and gazing helplessly at nothing.

She swung round to the distressed gentleman and turned on him the full battery of her personality and charm.

"Monsieur Montfaucon," she said, "I am grieved to see your trouble. I beg you to look at me." His gaze had already returned to her, but now he met the direct appeal of her eyes, and that was irresistible. "Could you persuade yourself," she continued, "that I am this unknown countess? I assure you that I can play the part—even

to your wife and M. Roubaix—though I am not so sure about Clotilde.”

“But this would be deceit!”

“Nevertheless,” said Madame Blanche-fleur, “you will encourage this quite innocent deceit? As you will, of course. I merely suggest. My car can be at the door

not myself. . . . Jean, why do you look at me like that?”

“My good cousin,” said Rimbaud, “I was admiring your sense of the appropriate. Some men would have hesitated, but you—no! Can you find a room for me, or must I sleep here?”



“That idiot Manchet. . . . tells me that he directed a lady to your house.”

in five minutes, and it is an admirable car. What more natural than that your visitor should arrive a little late? I am sure that Manchet will not recognise me.”

“Madame,” said Montfaucon, with a gesture that suggested resignation to a superior power, “I am overcome. I am

Montfaucon, as though he had at last really entered into the plot, said:

“You will be my guest. If Madame la Comtesse—Madame Blanche-fleur—I again become confused—would also take you in her car—”

“We could support each other,” said

Rimbaud, "and I could explain that my machine was tired out, and that Providence had projected me into your arms and into the blue-and-white car. By the way, have you seen it?"

"Enough!" said Madame Blanchefleur. "This is serious, Jean."

"Infinitely," he said.

There was a little difficulty when Madame

Madame la Comtesse with such absurd details. Madame Blanchefleur slipped a note into the man's hand, and said:

"Open your gate at once, my good friend."

In five minutes, under the direction of Rimbaud, who undertook the office of guide, they reached the door of Montfaucon's house. Its walls, once white, glimmered



"Madame Blanchefleur rose with caution and glanced over the partition."

Blanchefleur summoned the landlord. Annette had retired, he said—this was untrue—and accounts were always a trouble to him. Montfaucon very emphatically told the man that he was an imbecile to worry

wanly in the moonlight, and Madame Blanchefleur had an impression of quite extraordinary remoteness. The place seemed, somehow, to be farther away from Marmiton than Marmiton was from Paris. This

indicated to her clearly that her nerves were on the stretch; but the tension was not unpleasant, nor did she feel any particular anxiety.

Montfaucon played his opening part quite creditably, performing the introductory ceremonies with sufficient dignity. Madame Blanchefleur explained that she had already dined and needed nothing. She apologised for being late, but offered no explanation. Madame Montfaucon was frigidly polite; her attitude, indeed, was almost expressive of astonishment that the Comtesse de Marigny had arrived at all. She was a small, alert woman, with kindly eyes and complete self-command.

Jean, who merely said that the Countess had been good enough to give him a lift from the inn up to the house, was not greeted by Madame Montfaucon with any marked warmth; but he was not perturbed by that. When he was reminded that he had not been to Marmiton for six months, he said that it seemed only six days, and immediately seated himself by Clotilde. Her youthful grace and prettiness were almost pathetic, and Madame Blanchefleur felt that one person, at least, in that serenely decorous and almost chilling drawing-room was in need of help. That protecting tenderness which was so essential a part of her went out towards this child. She had noticed, as they entered the room, that the unexpected sight of Rimbaud had paled the girl's cheeks and brought to her eyes a look which appeared to be conscious that it had no business there.

It was to Roubaix, however, that Madame Blanchefleur directed particular attention. It struck her at once that this man was not in the least likely to be impressed by a title or a score of titles. His face was somewhat roughly modelled, but it had the distinction of strength and purpose. His friendly but imperturbable gaze baffled Madame Blanchefleur; there was no trace of admiration in it, no suggestion of surprise, but at the same time there was a kind of approval. His complexion was of the reddish-brown which comes of fierce suns and the wandering life, and his hair, slightly grizzled, looked as if it would crackle under the touch. His age might have been about forty-five.

Madame Blanchefleur was a little nonplussed, Rimbaud was obviously ill at ease, and Clotilde was painfully nervous. Montfaucon, after his brave opening effort, instead of encouraging and exploiting his

wonderful cousin (the unknown who had suddenly become a visible presence), devoted himself to twiddling his thumbs. Madame Blanchefleur had played many parts, but she was at a loss how to make an opening at what might be a critical moment.

As a matter of fact, nothing whatever happened. Not a word of the slightest importance was spoken by anyone. And when Madame Blanchefleur was conducted to her room by her hostess she felt infinitely relieved.

"I confess," said Madame Montfaucon, before leaving her, "that I never expected to see you. And I can hardly even now believe that you are actually the Comtesse de Marigny."

"Are you, then, of so incredulous a disposition?" asked Madame Blanchefleur, smiling.

"In some respects," said the other, answering the smile pleasantly enough, "I am most credulous, but in others . . . Monsieur Montfaucon has one weakness—an inclination, a most amiable inclination, towards romance."

"And you, madame?"

"I have to recognise that this is a practical world. At the same time I would not sacrifice everything to the practical."

Madame Blanchefleur, after a somewhat restless night, rose early. The two windows of her room overlooked a considerable extent of garden, and beyond that, straggling up a narrow valley, she saw the little white houses of Marmiton. The place seemed to be at the bottom of a shallow cup.

The sound of footsteps on gravel drew her attention, and presently she saw Rimbaud pacing reflectively below. In a few minutes she had joined him.

"What do you think of Roubaix?" he asked abruptly.

"He is, at any rate, a man."

"Oh, yes, he has done remarkable things, but would you consider him a suitable husband for little Clotilde?"

"He would surely be a desirable husband."

"But she has no affection for him!" cried Jean.

"Has she already told you that?"

"Not directly. I merely used my eyes and ears."

"You are in love with her yourself?"

"I suppose so. Yes, I must be, though I was not sure of it until last night."

"It is unfortunate," said Madame Blanchefleur, "that it is the mission of the Comtesse de Marigny to impress M. Roubaix."

"But not necessarily to encourage his suit."

"That, doubtless, is Madame Montfaucon's idea. Yet she told me that she would not sacrifice everything to the practical. If it were indeed a question of happiness, I doubt whether she would sacrifice that pretty child."

"The thought is abominable!" cried Jean. After a pause he said:

"But what are you doing away from Paris?"

"At the moment that is of no consequence. Try to remember that I am, for the present, the Comtesse de Marigny. If you forget it—well, M. Roubaix is not likely to let a slip pass unobserved. By the way, who is your cousin Montfaucon?"

Jean shrugged his shoulders. "He is a country gentleman, neither poor nor rich. Also he has the idiotic pride which has led to this absurd situation, but he has the best intentions in the world. That is all there is to know about him."

That was one of the most crowded days in Madame Blanchefleur's experience. Before lunch she gained with ease the confidence of Clotilde, who besought her to use her influence against the proposed match—though the proposal, it seemed, had not definitely been made—between her and Roubaix. If Jean had not suddenly reappeared, Madame Blanchefleur gathered that Clotilde might have been controlled by obedience and a perilous sense of duty; but now the girl declared that she would rather run away or die than marry M. Roubaix—he was old, and he frightened her!

"Madame la Comtesse, you can do anything. Save me!" was Clotilde's final plea. And Madame Blanchefleur was in the mood to listen to any cry of the heart.

In the afternoon, at the particular request of Madame Montfaucon, she took M. Roubaix on an expedition in the blue-and-white car. Montfaucon possessed nothing more modern in the way of vehicles than a carriage which bore a striking resemblance to a badly-rejuvenated post-chaise.

"I leave the direction to you," she said to Roubaix. "I do not know this neighbourhood."

"Suppose, then, that we take the Orléans road for twenty miles or so and return by way of Voves. I wish to call at the railway station there."

"Anywhere you will," said Madame Blanchefleur.

"It is evident," said Roubaix, when the car was getting into its stride, "that you and I, Madame la Comtesse, are expected to discuss matters. The Montfaucons are very simple people. They could not deceive a child."

"Pray understand that I am not in their entire confidence."

"Not in the matter of Clotilde Tardieu?"

"No. Naturally, however, I draw my own conclusions."

"I will be frank with you," Roubaix said. "I am a man of experience; I have seen and endured much because I have a passion for the unknown. But I have neglected the softer side of life, and need guidance." The unaffectedness of this pleased Madame Blanchefleur extremely. She nodded.

"If you choose," she said, "to consult me on any affair of delicacy, I promise to give you the advice of a woman, but not the calculated counsel of a woman of the world."

"You would give that advice even though it were contrary to the wishes and the interests of the Montfaucons?"

"Assuredly."

"Then perhaps we shall understand each other." It was some time before Roubaix spoke again. Madame Blanchefleur had the impression that his trained eyes missed nothing; they searched meadow and hill-side, woodland and cultivated field, with an insatiable interest and curiosity. It seemed to her that he must perpetually be making discoveries. And presently, like Clotilde, she began to be a little afraid of him.

"Do you mind stopping the car at the top of this hill?" he asked. "We can see my house from there, and to a wanderer like myself—who, I may add, carries France with him everywhere—a house, always waiting like a friend, means—how shall I put it?—a sense of final rest."

Madame Blanchefleur stopped the car. Her companion stood up.

"Down there," he said, pointing with extended arm and forefinger, "do you see a long line of poplars and a spire?"

"Yes."

"And to the left of those do you see a white patch?"

"Yes. And I catch the sunlight on windows."

"That is my house." Roubaix resumed his seat by Madame Blanchefleur. "I had a fancy," he continued, "to settle down. It has often come to me—in the desert, on mountains that had the face of

death, in forests that sheltered abominable life. Some day I would become a quiet dweller at home. I told myself that a man cannot roam about strange countries all his life. But this fancy did not take definite shape until I saw Clotilde Tardieu, who is the ward of my friend Montfaucon, and I was foolish enough to imagine"—he paused; Madame Blancheffleur said nothing—"foolish enough to imagine, I repeat, that with her I might begin that settled life. I had made no definite proposal either to Montfaucon or Clotilde, but the affair was understood to be in the air. And then you arrived—and M. Rimbaud."

"I take it that my arrival made no difference?"

"On the contrary, it made all the difference. I was at once aware of a new atmosphere." He hesitated for a moment, then added, with a disarming smile: "And that atmosphere was not what Madame Montfaucon had anticipated."

"I need no assurance," said Madame Blancheffleur, answering the smile, "that you would be as little influenced by a title as by, let us say, a puff of wind."

"That is true. I find it difficult to explain, but in this new atmosphere created by you I knew that I could no longer deceive myself. It was as though a veil of mist had suddenly been withdrawn, and I found myself at the edge of a precipice. And then I felt that absolute candour and, as it were, absolute sunlight could alone give security."

"This is strange," said Madame Blancheffleur.

"In reality not at all strange. I felt that with you evasions and excuses and the ordinary talk of a desirable union would not avail. You were concerned with the honesty of the heart, with the truth of the emotions. You would brush aside everything but the essential, and that was love." Madame Blancheffleur was conscious of a shock. Was she, at that moment, entirely honest? Was she not playing a part? Yet Roubaix had hit upon the truth of her being.

"I saw also," he went on, "that Clotilde was overcome by the arrival of M. Rimbaud."

"She was deeply affected."

After a long pause Roubaix said, in a tone of subdued intensity:

"I heard her crying in the night. . . . Her room is close to mine, at the opposite side of the narrow corridor, and I heard her sobbing. . . . I have faced many perils and am not afraid of death, but, madame, the tears of a child who felt that she might

be sacrificed, and to me—I could not endure that terror! And consider, too, the eyes of a woman who hates even as she consents. No! I resigned Clotilde at that instant."

Madame Blancheffleur's eyes became very hot; she choked back a sob. Then she restarted the car. For some minutes neither spoke. At last Madame Blancheffleur said:

"I am grateful to you for this confidence. I am touched and distressed. Your decision is generous and wise. And because I admire and applaud your wisdom and generosity, I cannot allow you to be under any illusion about myself. . . . I am not the Comtesse de Marigny."

Their eyes engaged for a moment.

"Well," he said, "even if you are not, I still believe that I am not mistaken in my judgment of you."

"You are not mistaken, if I know myself, and lately I have learnt much about myself."

"Was this a foolish plot of Montfaucon's?"

"He acquiesced in it. He did not invent it."

"I might have known that. My good friend has no invention."

"Listen," said Madame Blancheffleur. She told Roubaix briefly of her arrival in Marmiton, of the appearance of Manchet, of the distraction of Montfaucon and of the appearance of Jean Rimbaud. Then she explained the simple conspiracy.

"You must have seemed a special providence to Montfaucon," Roubaix said, laughing.

"But I have not yet told you all. I am not Madame Blancheffleur. That is merely a name which I assume for convenience."

"I resign myself!" said Roubaix. "Anyway, you appear to be an admirable actress."

"That is the opinion of many people. I am, Monsieur Roubaix, Mademoiselle Fadette, of the Théâtre Racine."

The car came to a standstill outside the railway station of Voves. Roubaix jumped out.

"I am so accustomed to surprises," he said, sweeping off his hat and bowing profoundly, "that even this does not overwhelm me. But I admit that I have reached the limits of astonishment. Another change, another revelation, and Heaven knows what might happen!"

He disappeared into the station and presently returned with a small box, carefully sealed, and a newspaper. The box, he explained, contained a little present for Clotilde, which, in spite of the changed circumstances, would still be hers.



"In that newspaper," said Madame Blanchefleur, "you will probably find an inaccurate account of a little affair at the Théâtre Racine. As I am in the mood for confidences, I will give you the truth. You have heard of Arnaud Dorain, the master?"

"An undoubted master. I have carried some of his books into the wilds."

"Good," said Madame Blanchefleur. "Some little time ago he admitted to me that once he had written a play and had almost forgotten it. It had never been produced or published. I induced him to show me the manuscript. It was a curious mixture of lofty idealism and sordid truth, but every stroke told. He consented to allow me to submit it to the Director of the Théâtre Racine on condition that his name was not disclosed as the author. The play was accepted. I was cast for the principal part, and a month ago the play was produced."

"I have read about it," Roubaix said. "At first it did not succeed?"

"Not entirely, but I was determined that it should. I put my soul into it. In a fortnight the crisis was over: all Paris was talking about the new playwright whose name was unknown. Only one critic, and he is also a playwright, guessed correctly from whose hand the work came, and that one was Jean Rimbaud. He had no hint of the truth from me. . . . Yesterday the Director requested me to alter certain passages in my part. He had the audacity, indeed, to make the alterations himself. I refused."

"Did you consult Arnaud Dorain?"

"No. He is indisposed. But I knew that he also would have refused."

"And then what happened?"

"The Director insisted. When I say that we quarrelled I imply only that he stormed. I remained calm and obdurate. I threw up the part."

"Is not that a serious matter for you?"

"I am not afraid of serious matters," said Madame Blanchefleur. "And now my dear friend Hélène Remuet will have an opportunity that she has never been given before. She is my understudy. . . . Within an hour of quitting the Director I had left Paris and had become, according to my habit, Madame Blanchefleur. . . . That is all, M. Roubaix."

"It is by no means all."

"You admit, then, that I can act?"

"I am not competent to judge of acting,

but I understand sincerity, personality, the value of a heart that knows and reveals the truth."

As they descended from the car at Montfaucou's door, Rimbaud rushed out, holding a newspaper in his hand.

"This arrived after you left," he said.

"Marmiton does not see the morning papers till the afternoon, it appears."

"Why are you so excited, Jean?" Madame Blanchefleur asked. "Surely the Théâtre Racine has not tumbled down?"

"Oh, Hélène Remuet was an immense success, and——" He stopped abruptly and glanced at Roubaix.

"M. Roubaix and I understand each other," she said. "I have confessed."

"And I also," said Roubaix. "But for the present Madame Blanchefleur had better remain the Comtesse de Marigny." He took the little box from the car and entered the house.

"As I told you," said Madame Blanchefleur, "that is a man. You need no longer be afraid of him."

"He retires?"

"Absolutely. But, once again, why this excitement?" Jean pointed to a paragraph which stated that the indisposition of the master, Arnaud Dorain, had taken an unexpectedly serious turn. The report of Dr. Sylvestre Bourdon was grave.

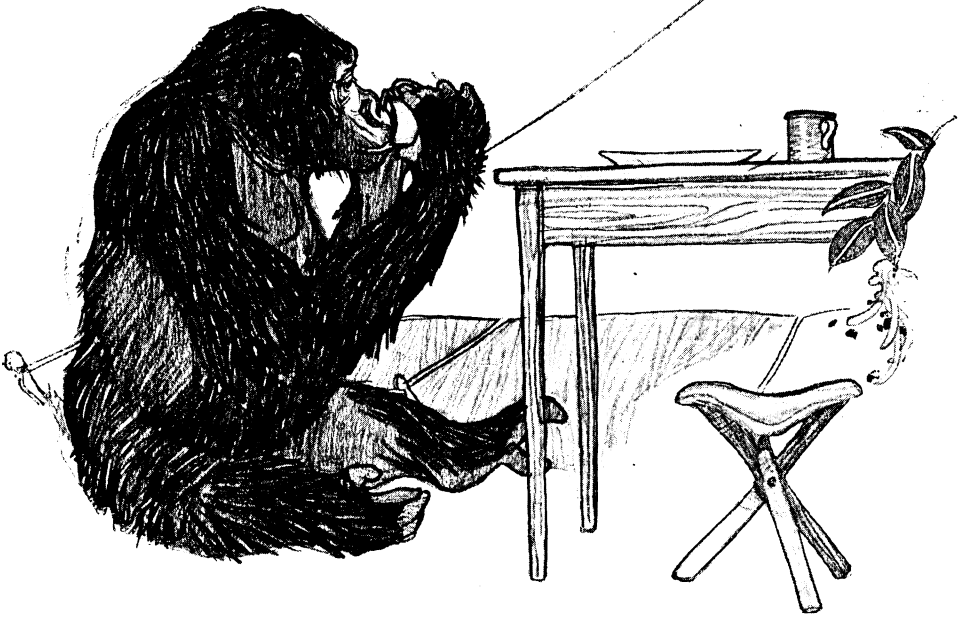
Madame Blanchefleur leant against the door of the car for a moment. Then she stood erect. "I must return to Paris at once," she said. "I will leave you to disentangle your own affairs. Where are our host and hostess?"

"In the drawing-room," said Rimbaud.

The departure of Madame Blanchefleur was more surprising than the arrival of the Comtesse de Marigny had been. She left the Montfaucous staring at each other, breathless. As she embraced Clotilde, she whispered: "Have courage, my child! All will be well!"

In half an hour Madame Blanchefleur was racing along the road towards Paris. Would she be in time to see the master? Thoughts came to her in flashes and visual impressions. She saw Vannes and the islands of the Morbihan, she saw Boisbisons and the smoke of the burning street, she heard Dorain's voice speaking calmly of life and death. He might at that moment be on the verge of the great mystery. But surely Sylvestre Bourdon, that great physician, could save him! Would she be in time?

*A further story about Madame Blanchefleur will appear in an early number.*



“He did not know what the cup was for, but, that evening, had watched the men putting it to their faces time after time.”

# THE SPIRIT OF THE MAN

By ALAN SULLIVAN

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

**T**HE jungle's edge rose like a solid, green wall within a hundred feet of the white men's camp. On the other side was a strip of yellow sand, and, beyond that, a black, unwrinkled river, gliding mysteriously from the unknown. Three men sat on camp stools around a small table that was set close to the strip of sand. At a little distance a group of blacks squatted near a fire, from which a thin pencil of smoke climbed into the motionless air. There was talk, in the low, even accents that the wilderness imposes on those who brave her solitudes, then a lighting of pipes—and

silence. Presently the three disappeared into the brown pyramid of a weatherbeaten tent, the blacks vanished to their own shelter—a little further down stream—and there was heard only the lisp of water along the shore, and a faint crepitant sound from behind the jungle wall.

A damp coolness succeeded the day's blistering heat, while from innumerable caverns of distance came the voice of the forest, tuned to every conceivable pitch. It seemed that every tree-top harboured some invisible tenant who suddenly flung his secret message to the throbbing air. Deep

and shrill, rough and smooth, bland, hoarse, broken, threatening, from a myriad of throats the challenge swelled, with the quiver of a violin, the pure note of a flute, the thrill of pipes and boom of beaten drums. Thus for an hour, till the diapason reached its height, and sank slowly to an almost imperceptible whisper, punctuated at times by a bell-like call, whose monotone heralded the advance of silence.

The camp was deep in sleep, when something stirred at the edge of the jungle colonnade. The tangle of lianas parted, and, framed in vines, the flat face of a great ape was turned toward the river. He stood, monstrous, hairy and half human, his black lips lifted, his pointed ears twitching, a master of the jungle surveying the environment of man with a savage and poignant fascination. With nostril and ear he tested the silence for sign of danger, then moved noiselessly forward.

A hundred yards away a black porter sighed in his sleep, and the beast became instantly rigid. Presently he raised himself to full height, rolling a round head on his massive shoulders, so that his trunk thrust up from the tangle of grass and vine like that of some hideous god, till, dropping on all fours and crouching close to the ground, he crept stealthily on. A moment later he put out a horny hand, made a deep soft rumble in his muscle-bound throat, and felt timidly at the corner of the camp table. Strange odours assailed his nostrils, and every nerve was tensely ready for escape.

Soon the fear in the black eyes became assuaged, and he slid his blunted fingers along the smooth surface toward a metal cup. He did not know what the cup was for, but, that evening, had watched the men putting it to their faces time after time. Then his teeth fastened in it, and, as the edge pressed hard against his nose, he became horribly frightened and threw the thing away. Next he essayed a fork that a lazy cook had left unwashed, and the faint taste of strange food gave him a queer thrill, just as if the taste were not entirely new. After that he stayed quite still for a time, till he began to hunt nervously about for the cup, and, finding it, laid it back on the table with a little chuckle of pleasure. Finally he leaned his great arms on the smooth boards, and stared wistfully at the tent.

There was now neither fear nor anger in the terrible features, but only a vast wonder. He had known of the presence of these new

animals for days, and something had been calling him ever since they came. He knew, too, that the jungle was afraid of them—as it was of him—and this made him feel as though they were not his natural enemies. He could not trust them yet, for, balanced in the tree-tops, he had seen too much killing, but a far-away voice told him to keep as close as he dared and see as much as he might. And it appeared now that, for animals who were weak and moved so slowly, they were very powerful.

From the tent came the sound of a voice, sleepy but distinct. The great ape stiffened where he stood, ready for instant flight. But in the same instant he heard a whisper commanding him to stay, and promising that there was no danger, so he remained tensely poised, while little quivers ran through his body. The sounds sank into his brain, and presently his wide, grey lips began to twist in wordless imitation. He made no noise, but stood there with contorted face till the sound died. It seemed that he ought to be able to do this if he tried. But he was also sure that this was not the time. Presently, creeping close to the tent, he crouched low in the half light and rested a long time without stirring.

In the middle of the next forenoon the white men struck into the jungle, walking single file. The trail was crooked, much overgrown and indistinct. A hundred feet above them the great ape swung easily through the branches. He did not know where they were going, or why: he only knew that he wanted to go, too. He had been thinking about them in his own way ever since he slipped out of camp in the small of the morning, his brain full of tumult. Finding his mate, he had angered her by making strange sounds with lips and throat, so that he had not slept at all. And he desired, above all things, to keep this new matter secret.

So for hours he watched and brooded. The rest of the tribe swung along, but he chanced them away with a fury that drew glances of surprise from the men beneath. As time passed, the great ape became conscious of a queer, protective impulse that prompted him to search the tree-tops for dangers which might threaten the things below, and which, he was somehow assured, they could not see for themselves. Busy with all this, he forgot—for the first time in his life—to eat, and was downcast when the men began to retrace their steps. He was even a little used to

the report of a rifle, having decided that there was no danger unless he could see the

strange animals' eyes at the same time. That night, at sundown, his mate received a severe beating, and he took up his observation point again.

There was little done in camp that



“He landed just outside the hissing swing of the crocodile’s deadly tail, and,

evening which escaped notice. Fire was made, and the ape screwed up his eyes at the red flower that sprang between the heap of sticks. He reasoned that it had to do with food. The fact that the three white men did no work, removed them—in the ape's mind—from the blacks, who were in no way strange to him. So he followed everything with a steady, unwinking stare and profound stirrings in his hairy breast, and when the camp had gone to sleep, he began a close and painstaking survey.

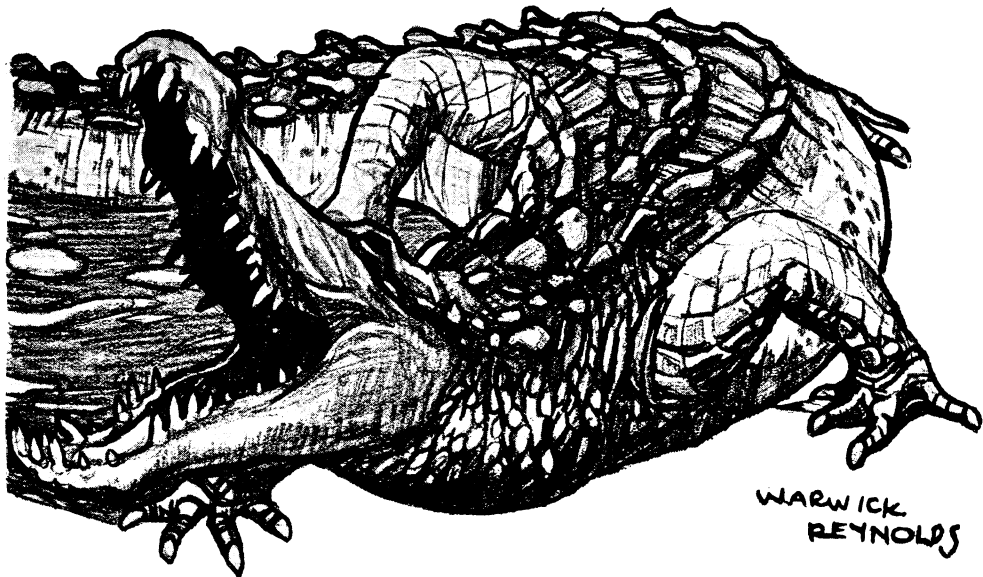
First to the fire. There was no red flower now. When he looked for it, he hurt his fingers. Then to the table, where he found more things than before. Lifting the cup, he did not bite, and a little water trickled down his gullet. The hairless brows lifted with surprise. He tried the fork again, and, pushing it too far in, pricked his throat. He puzzled over this, and did it the second time, without hurting. From that he went on, learning not to grasp things too strongly, because it seemed to hurt them. Finally he sat in a camp chair, which immediately collapsed. He leaped from its ruins straight into the air, with the poignant knowledge that he had done something wrong. Then, as though to conceal the crime, he stuffed the fragments under a bush.

And all this time he was getting happier. The camp was very quiet. He made no noise himself, and was perfectly aware of all that went on in the near-by jungle.

He knew that there was a leopard not far off, hunting wild pigs; he knew there were elephant within smelling distance; he knew that his mate had stolen up as near as she dared. But, for all of this, a subtle instinct told him that his place was here. He wanted to crawl near the strange animals and lie down beside them. And just then he heard the faintest possible splash in the black water. A crocodile had lifted himself, shining, from the river, and waddled slowly across the strip of sand.

The ape bristled where he stood, for to all apes the crocodile is a thing of fear. There is no escape, once those long jaws have closed, and it is vain to batter at that bony skull. The man-like beast knew this, and his first impulse was to fly, when there rose within him a grim fury that this monster should threaten those whom he now suddenly and in a queer way recognised as friends. His hairy throat began to swell, the flat face grew distorted with rage, great muscles bulged on neck and arms as he crouched. The crocodile glanced at him malevolently with a narrow, vicious eye, then, taking no further heed, waddled nearer the tent. He had strayed down stream from a pool miles further up, and was in strange waters. But the tent interested him exceedingly.

The scaly twenty-foot length had covered half the distance, when the ape made a little dancing motion. Simultaneously his right paw touched something round and smooth and hard. It was the handle of a



lifting the shovel, brought it down with terrific force on the broad, sheathed neck."

shovel. The callous fingers closed on it, and for the first time in his life the big brute knew that he was armed. It had no weight, but he felt that with this he could strike and stand further off than ever before. The crocodile halted for an instant, having perceived something new, then lurched silently forward. He had smelled that which was within the tent.

There were only a few yards left when the ape hurled himself into the air. He landed just outside the hissing swing of the crocodile's deadly tail, and, lifting the shovel, brought it down with terrific force on the broad, sheathed neck. A clatter of metal on bone, and the thing split in his grip. Grabbing the handle, he waged war, giving vent to hoarse, choking grunts of fury. The crocodile rocked in anger. He hardly felt the blows, but the smell of live meat was in his black muzzle, and he was not wont to be balked of his desire. The great jaws clashed and half his length skidded to right or left as the big, hairy body danced, barking, beside him. Then from the tent came a shout, and three men tumbled into the moonlight.

The ape recognised something in the hands of the first, and heard more shouts from the blacks, who came racing up, but for the very first time he was too lost in anger to know fear. The passion of protection had transformed him into a demon. Came a flash and a sharp report. His side felt suddenly sore, and where the crocodile's eye had been was now a gaping hole. At that he knew instinctively that there was no further need for help, and these new kinsmen had hurt him. Swaying in sheer wonder, he waited, till at a shout that saved his life, though he could not know it, he flung himself at the jungle, and traversed the clearing in a series of amazing leaps.

A guard was posted at the water's edge, and the camp drifted back to slumber after a hot argument as to what the fight had been really about. But no man came near the truth. Half a mile away the great ape flouted the consolation of his mate, and nursed a bloody tear in his side. He was horribly chagrined. He could not reason the thing out—for no reason was in him—but was divided between resentment and a strong desire to be alone. His memory was applicable to places, food, and other apes, but not to any previous emotions, so he could not go back over what he had done and see where the fault lay. The point was that he had made a mistake. He sat

for a long time, then, toward morning, worked his way deliberately toward the clearing. Swinging across the tree-tops, his mind cleared, for this seemed the solution to all things. He was willing almost to be hurt again, if they would only let him be near them.

So it came that the white men never left camp without their invisible convoy. When they went up the river to shoot crocodiles in the big pool, he paralleled their course on shore, cheerfully silent as he clambered from branch to branch. Silence, he had learned, was the chief requirement. When the black water was thrashed yellow by dying monsters, he did not chatter with excitement, but watched it as evidence of the power of these mighty pygmies whom he was beginning to love, in spite of the bare scar on his side. When they stopped in the jungle to eat, he remained poised and motionless, far overhead. When they talked, he listened, his ears stiffly erect, and at their laughter he knew that all was well. When they slept, he patrolled the jungle wall, unseen by the black guard at the river's side, a grim sentinel, held in dread by all that moved within the forest.

In the same degree did his tribal instinct dwindle. Noisy conclaves in the tree-tops held no invitation for him now. Avoiding the insensate chatter of his band, he made for himself a particular domain, a few square yards of green, where no other ape intruded, and gave himself up to wistful imaginings that always ended just where they began. Once he threw some ripe fruit into the camp, and fled because a man reached for his rifle. The next night he laid fruit on the ground beside the tent, and was rewarded when his masters picked it up with wonderment. And all the time something warned him to keep carefully out of sight.

Then came the greatest day of his life. It was toward evening when one of the men picked up his rifle and sauntered into the jungle, passing close to the ape's hiding-place. The latter followed automatically. It was the first occasion when any one of them had walked thus alone. They moved deliberately, man and beast, while all around the jungle throbbed with teeming life. The ape felt more important than ever before, but experienced a strange sense of apprehension. They were half a mile from camp when the rifle spoke without warning, and the invisible guardian saw that it had not been lifted to the

master's shoulder. Simultaneously the master pitched forward on his face.

The ape hung motionless in space and stared down. This had never happened before, and he knew that something was wrong. The man did not stir, so he dropped to a lower branch, choking with excitement. Still there was silence, and, with wild nerves tuned to the highest pitch, he descended inch by inch till he swayed twenty feet above the ground. Man-smell and blood-smell were in his twitching nostrils.

On his great rounded back the hair rose stiffly as, grasping the rough trunk, he moved imperceptibly earthward. Touching the ground, he had a strange feeling of joy at being alone with the master. He was full of fear and nameless delight.

The man did not stir. A broad black paw went timidly out, and rested like a feather on the slack shoulder. The ape quivered at the touch, and fear became suffused in dumb compassion. The smell of man and blood rolled up in thick invisible waves, burdened with death and danger, but he fought back his savage instinct with all the power of a new and profound conviction. They were kinsmen, this thing and he. Then, prompted by he knew not what, he turned the man over, marvelling at his lightness, and laid a horny finger on the hole in the torn shoulder. And all the time he knew that the jungle was whispering, watching, and waiting. But the jungle would never get this.

After an instant of indecision, the great beast darted a hundred yards away, returning with a few aromatic leaves, which he pushed gently into the wound. It was what he would have done for himself. The bleeding decreased and he was very happy. Soon it seemed there was something else to be provided, and he flung himself into the jungle, coming back burdened with fruit. This he laid beside the still figure.

Moments passed, and the brute became convinced that something had been forgotten. He puzzled over it, growing more and more excited, till, following the law of the wild, he began to call. The voice of him, rough, broken, and beseeching, lifted into the tree-tops, and the jungle all around became populous. A myriad bright eyes peered through the leafy screen; a myriad small forms drew closer and closer. The ape knew it, but paid no heed. Ever his voice swelled, the vast lungs emptied and filled, and hairy hands drummed on the great, arched breast. The clamour of

it rolled through swamp and thicket, till, all in a breath, the jungle became silent, for, far away, moved that which was stranger to its gloom.

The ape heard them first, and, darting up the nearest tree, watched till his other masters found that which they sought. He heard their exclamations, and saw faces turned to the green canopy overhead. His sharp eyes missed nothing when they slung the limp figure between two black porters, and one of the white men, with a quick upward glance, stooped and put the fruit in the bulging hammock. And when the small procession moved riverward, he glided above it—a ghost in the shadows—his throbbing heart filled with unspeakable things.

A week after that, the new animals went away. The ape knew for two days that they were going. Nothing else could explain what he saw. At the same time he had a definite feeling that it was no use to try and follow. He brought no more fruit; he forgot even to eat, but balanced hour after hour in his hiding-place, watching with eyes that were full of age and a nameless wistfulness. He was conscious now of things that made his head hurt, and when he saw one of the new animals—his one—carried into the biggest canoe, great tears rolled down his naked face. Then there were voices and a stir by the water's edge, and after that the jungle silence.

Dropping to the ground, he moved across the clearing and stood upright where once had been the camp. The man-smell still clung to it, and came most strongly from the flat place where the tent had stood. The ape surveyed the litter that was left, picking up things here and there, only to let them slip from listless fingers. Presently he found a battered metal cup, and from a near-by bush pulled out the fragments of a camp chair. At that he sat down, holding the latter between his feet and the cup in his black paws. Then he put the cup slowly to his lips.

Day waned, but the big brute did not stir. Night came on, and the jungle began to talk. The shadows lengthened, till he was lost in their gloom. Of all the forest people, he alone was motionless, he alone felt grief. A breath had reached him from without the wilderness, a light had flickered uncertainly in the savage brain. The breath had died away, and the light was nearly extinguished, but somewhere in that formidable skull glowed a surviving spark.

He swayed where he sat, and, beating

his breast, flung a wild complaint to the stars. The harsh note penetrated the purple distance till lesser beasts shivered in the dark, and all that walked or climbed or crept took heed to their going. Gradually

the cry sharpened, while grief merged into wonderment, and wonderment mounted to a blind fury. Then, grasping his treasure, and drunk with the lust to kill, the gorilla hurled himself into the jungle.



## DAPPLE THE WIND.

**D**APPLE, he cried; but what the word  
 Never I guessed, and never heard.  
 Over the meadow, full to the brim,  
 Sped I, piggedly, after him;  
 Quaking grasses and bells a-drop  
 Calling and calling to me to stop.

Scoffed the trees: "Can you hope to catch  
 Him who is more than the morning's match?"  
 Bush and briar they tripped me up:  
 The daisy tittered to buttercup;  
 Dew and raindrop fell drip-a-drip,  
 And a sudden nettle stung at my lip.

"Are ye coming?"—I saw him run,  
 Cross the hill in the streak of the sun;  
 Over the wobbledy plank I dashed  
 (Loudly the stream laughed as it splashed)  
 Round the river-way moist and brown  
 Raced to catch him as he came down.

Never he came. Beneath the trees  
 Down I fell on my hands and knees!  
 Cried the morn, "Are ye there again  
 Mocking the hearts of simple men?"  
 Then I fondled my sleeve and cried;  
 And I knew that the wind laughed as he died.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.





A MATTER OF £ S. D.

CAPTAIN: 'Tain't no good carrying on this club if you blighters won't pay yer subs. We must 'ave money in 'aud 'cos, as we are now, the minute the ball busts the club busts.

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### INSURANCE DE LUXE.

By *Herbert Strudwick.*

WITH all the daily papers simply tumbling over themselves in their efforts to insure their readers against every mortal thing, there seems no reason why their enterprise should not be extended indefinitely.

Insurance against accident and sickness is all very well in its way, but what about the many minor perils of the home?

Where is the enterprising paper that will cover us against the cook giving notice, the milk boiling over, and the baby swallowing its comforter?

What a godsend it would be if our papers would cover us against oversleeping in the mornings! Fancy being insured against missing the 9.5 to the City! Instead of dashing off and leaving that succulent second rasher, you could linger over the marmalade in the comfortable knowledge that a cheque would follow from the office of *The Daily Yowl*.

For instance, how useful it would be if we could be insured against bad eggs! When you take the last one left in the house on Monday morning, and it goes off pop, how nice to feel that the compensation payable will enable you to have an eight-course dinner at the Savoy free!

Any man would be glad enough to be insured against cutting himself whilst shaving. He would start out as gay as a lark, with an inch

of cotton-wool plugged in his chin, if he knew that his "partial disablement" meant a year's free shaves at Truefitts!

We get insurance against the weather, but when will *Garden Gleanings* cover its readers against green fly on their *Dorothy Perkins* or wireworm on the allotment?

How about going the whole hog and insuring us against Income Tax and gas bills? That would add another hundred thousand to any paper's circulation.

And when will *Girls' Gush* insure its fair readers against hair coming out of curl, freckles, and shiny noses? I ask you!

*The Sporting Snippet* could add thousands to its readers if it would insure them against backing the loser of the 2.30 race. Its circulation would be trebled if it would indemnify them against "ducks" at cricket, putting through own goal, and double faults at tennis. And the golf paper that will give cover against lost balls and stymies will outdistance its contemporaries in a week. Oh, the joy of being insured against the horrors of "looking up" and "slicing"!

There is a thumping circulation waiting for the first paper that will cover us against losses at "shove-ha'penny," and if it will throw in indemnity against "revoking" and partners trumping tricks, all to the good.

And when we have secured all these free benefits, perhaps we may get additional

insurance against such things as straphanging, baldness, and the wife demanding a new hat.

It may be that the day is not far distant when the daily newspaper will become one glorified insurance coupon, with the stop press column reserved for any stray bits of news for which there is room. Who knows?

wife's next hat. Therefore I answered Daphne in my usual stern manner.

"Good gracious!" I said (I never use bad language). "Here am I rushing through breakfast, with a train to catch that I'm pretty certain to lose, and you start talking about hats! Good Heavens, woman, d'you think I've nothing to do but think of buying hats?"

Daphne has an irritating way of winking at me when I rebuke her. She also has an irritating way of replenishing my tea-cup and asking me to accept another slice of bread. "There, there," she said soothingly, "is the little man upset, then? Did he—"

"Madam," I said sternly, my mouth full of bread-and-butter (I have no time in the morning to observe the finer points of table etiquette)—"madam," I said, "I am now a *real* manager, and at this time of day I have to think of my train and my daily duties—not of buying hats. If you want a hat—if you really *need* a hat—if I really promised to buy you a hat, you must—I must—well, I suppose you must have a hat. But do not talk to me of hats first thing in the morning. The subject does not appeal to me. I have other things than hats to think of first thing in—"

"I'm sure your tea's getting cold, dear. And *do* have another piece of—"

"Don't interrupt me, please, and pass the sugar. As I was saying, to talk about hats over the breakfast-table is—is—well, it's not the time to talk about hats. Breakfast-table topics should be essentially—I might say pre-eminently—er—an—essentially—"

I floundered and stopped. I knew what I wanted to say, of course, but at the moment I could not find words exactly to express my meaning.

But I had said quite enough. Daphne's elbows were on the table and her head was resting in her hands.

I confess I felt a brute. I can be so confidently cutting at times. I cannot help it—it is in me.

"Of course, dear," I began penitently, "I didn't really—"

Daphne looked up.

"I've been wondering," she said slowly, with a preoccupied air, "whether to get a silk



AN OVERSIGHT.

"How is your experiment with tomato growing getting along?"

"Oh, I'm afraid it's a failure. It was my fault. I planted them all right, but I forgot to open the tins."

#### A MORNING MONOLOGUE.

By William J. Taylor.

"WELL," said Daphne, thoughtfully cracking her morning egg, "now you've been promoted, perhaps you'll meet me at the station to-night and buy the hat you promised me."

Now, Daphne is extremely pretty and is almost an ideal wife, but she is not diplomatic. Breakfast-time is not, I think, the time to talk to a man about hats. Man is all right of an evening, when his day's work is done, and he has managed to get a seat in an Underground train all the way home; but in the morning he is in no mood for talking of his

with a paste buckle, or a fancy straw. I think a fancy straw will go better with a *crêpe-de-chine*—”

It is futile to argue with a woman.



#### THE POPPING SPOT.

THE latest idea about engagement rings is that they should be adorned with a miniature engraving of the scene of the proposal. This little sentimental touch will make a strong appeal to all lovers, but it provides an additional worry for the man who is about to propose.

Before taking the fatal step he will have to



LOCAL COLOUR.

MRS. PROFITTEER (apologising for her son's use of slang in his last remark): You must excuse my son's language. Ever since he was in the Army, an' went to France, he talks just like what our vicar calls a "parishoner."

consider whether the surroundings are sufficiently picturesque for representation on the ring, and for this reason he must avoid popping the question in the vicinity of the gas-works or on the platform of an underground railway station.

The lady, of course, may be trusted to put him right on this point. "George," she would say, "this scenery is too unromantic for engraving purposes. Ask me again by a rustic stile or in the immediate neighbourhood of a waterfall."

#### THE CONSULTANT.

They nod to me, they smile at me,  
They scowl, they look askance.  
I keep their secrets faithfully:  
I scorn no wayward glance.

I tell them wholesome things, 'tis true,  
Because I cannot lie.  
When ears are red, and noses blue,  
Who knows as well as I?

The bagman steals a furtive look  
At me, and goes his way.  
Yon scented miss puts down her book  
To have me say my say.

The little bride of yesternoon  
Consults me, wistful-eyed,  
The straight-haired poet of the moon  
Stares long, as if I lied!

They all seek me—the country lass,  
The fop with the carnation:  
I am the "First Class" looking-glass  
Fixed at the railway station.

Fay Inchfawn.

Author of "Homely Verses of a Home-Lover."

## THE PERFECT SPORTSMAN.

(It is urged that housework is an ideal exercise, employing every muscle in proper proportion.)

The cricket bat no more I wield,  
The racket lures me not;  
Alike I reckon court and field  
An overrated spot;  
When to an end my toil is brought,  
And Saturday is here,  
To keep my muscles trim and taut  
I clean the chiffonier.

There are who find the cycle please,  
Or love to pull an oar,  
But I am never one of these,  
No never any more;

## THE FATAL FOUNTAIN.

A FOUNTAIN should form a feature of every garden, says a horticultural journal. Yes, we know, but although it is quite easy to construct a fountain, it is frightfully difficult to get it to fount. I know only one satisfactory way of doing it, and it was adopted by a friend of mine, who was very proud of the result. Of course, it didn't throw a jet of water 267 feet high, like the famous one at Chatsworth, but it put up a jolly good spurt for any length of time. One day a stranger put his head in the back gate and exclaimed: "What a charming fountain you have!" This pleased my friend. "Come in and have a look at it," he said. The man came in. "Wonderful!" he ejaculated. "How do you make it work?" "It is quite simple," replied the proud



A DARKENED MOMENT.

FOND MOTHER: Quick, Amelia! Mr. Jenkins has called to ask for your hand!  
AMELIA: How annoying—just when I've upset the ink all over it!

Such dull diversions I despise  
As merely second-rate;  
I want a perfect exercise  
Like polishing the grate.

There are who dearly love to box,  
Who simply can't refuse  
An interchange of lusty knocks,  
Regardless if they lose;  
I like to win the games I play,  
So, better far than that,  
When I would while the time away,  
I go and beat a mat.

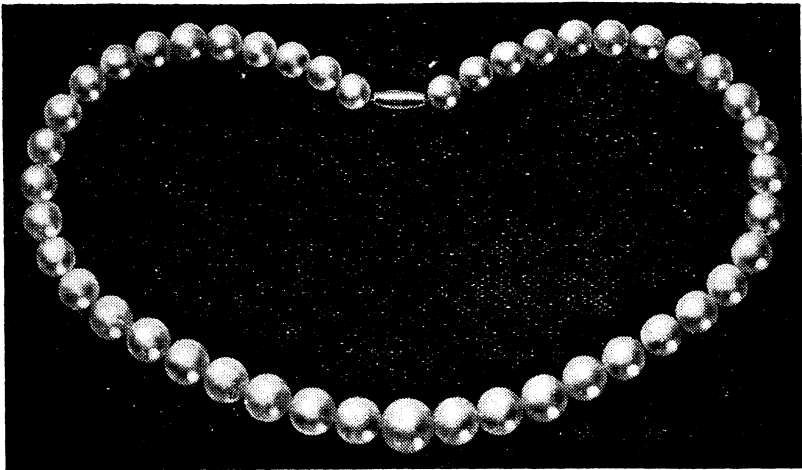
proprietor of the fountain. "It is fed by a hose buried in the garden, one end of which is attached to the scullery tap." "How interesting!" said the stranger. "I am the water inspector."



A MAN repeatedly returned home from race meetings with empty pockets.

"How is it, Abe, that you always win at cards, and never win on horses?" asked his wife anxiously.

"Well, you see, my dear, I don't shuffle the horses," was the candid reply.



## The Points of a Perfect Pearl

**W**HAT does a good judge of pearls look for in valuing them? Delicacy of Tone and Texture, softness of Sheen, elusive subtlety of Colouring and Lustre, natural Shaping and those indefinable qualities that ensure long life. In the finest pearls of the Orient he should find all these.

But to-day no one need incur the great expense of owning such costly luxuries. Science has shown how perfect facsimiles of natural pearls can be produced that deceive even the best judges.

All the qualities that make the Queen of Gems esteemed everywhere are to be found in

## Ciro Pearls

The other day a connoisseur was looking over some pearl necklaces in a West End jeweller's. His verdict was that some marked £500 or more seemed no better than these, and if he had to choose between them, without knowing the price, he would choose CIRO PEARLS.

Yet, in spite of the established reputation they have attained, we do not ask you to take this opinion or our statements entirely on trust. We give everyone an opportunity to test the truth of our claims. If you come to our showrooms, you will be convinced, or if you cannot, avail yourself of

### OUR UNIQUE OFFER.

On receipt of One Guinea we will send you a necklet of *Ciro Pearls*, 16 inches long, with clasp and case complete, or a ring, brooch, ear-rings or any other *Ciro Pearl* jewel in hand-made gold settings. If, after comparing them with real or other artificial pearls, they

are not found equal to the former or superior to the latter, return them to us within fifteen days and we will refund your money. *Ciro Pearl* necklets may also be obtained in any length required. We have a large staff of expert pearl stringers.

Latest descriptive booklet No. 10 sent post free on application.

**Ciro Pearls Ltd.**

39 Old Bond Street London W.1 Dent. 10.

OUR SHOWROOMS ARE ON THE FIRST FLOOR, OVER LLOYD'S BANK, NEAR PICCADILLY.

UNSELFISH SELFISHNESS.

(From a recent article: "If everyone thought only of others, the world would soon come to pieces.")

Though an unselfish way you may yearn to display,  
It's as well to remember the fact,  
If at all overdone, of the danger that's run  
Of the world not remaining intact.

It often gives pain to a man in the train  
To see a girl stand while he sits,  
But he fears, if he rose, the earth he'd expose  
To the danger of falling to bits.

If your wife wants a dress, and you hear with distress  
That she hasn't "a rag to her back,"

NEW DOMESTIC: Madam, may I have this afternoon off for the pictures?

MISTRESS: Certainly, Mary. To which cinema are you going?

NEW DOMESTIC: Cinema! Madam, I propose visiting the National Gallery in order to study the paintings by Velasquez.



THE boy was playing in front of a neighbour's house when Mrs. Smith said to him: "Bertie, your mother is calling you."

"Yes, ma'am, I know it," he replied, but with no sign of any intention to depart. "I don't think, though, she wants me very badly."

"But she has called you six or seven times already."



THE OTHER JOKE.

EDITOR: Rather a good joke!

ARTIST: Glad you like it.

EDITOR: Oh, I'm afraid I didn't mean the drawing—I was looking at the label on your portfolio.

Say, "I'm sorry, old thing; you must wait till the spring,  
In case both the hemispheres crack."

It's the fear of a crash which our planet would smash

Which makes the collector come round,  
And that's in reply to the often-asked "Why  
Are our taxes six 'bob' in the pound?"

R. H. Roberts.

"Yes, ma'am, I know; but she hasn't called me 'Herbert' yet."



"THE doctor said my wife needed more exercise, so she has gone to Switzerland for the winter sports."

"Just what the doctor told my wife, so she has gone to London for the winter sales."



**They look like new!**

YES, one cannot be always buying new furs. I sent mine to EASTMAN'S — and you see the result. Not only perfectly cleaned, but remodelled to the latest fashion.

**EASTMAN & SON (DYERS & CLEANERS) LTD.**

For over 120 years the London Dyers & Cleaners.

*Eastmans for Excellence*

WORKS: ACTON VALE, LONDON, W.3  
Country orders returned carriage paid

No Heating Required. Absolutely Indelible.

**MELANYL**

**Marking Ink.**

Metallic Pen with every Bottle.  
Nickel Linen Stretcher with each large size.

**COOPER, DENNISON & WALKDEN, LTD.**  
7 & 9, St. Bride Street, London, E.C.

**You Save Money**

in Home Baking, by using the famous British-made raising agent,

**BORWICK'S BAKING POWDER**

the quality of which makes a little go such a long way.

One teaspoonful is equal in effect to two teaspoonfuls of most other raising agents.

You can't possibly get wet in the

**42/- "Mattamac" (Reg'd.)**

**Feather Weight STORMPROOF.**

Don't risk disappointment with an imitation. Get the genuine "Mattamac" Stormproof, which is labelled "Mattamac" beneath the Coat-hanger. That is your safeguard against the "make-believe."

A "Mattamac" is identical in appearance with the usual five-guineas Weatherproof. In utility, also, it equals its much-more-costly Competitor. It wears as long, weighs one-third, and is absolutely Waterproof. Light and compact-folding, Wind, Chill and Wet proof, a "Mattamac" is the Ideal, every-purpose Coat for Holiday Wear. It occupies very little room in a Suit Case.

**WEIGHT 19 OZS.**

**FOLDS INTO THIS SIZE.**



**42/-**

*Fits the jacket pocket or Attaché Case*

**(Regd. Trade Mark.)**

For Man, Woman, and Child. Also made for Equestrian, Military and Sporting Wear.

"Mattamac" Fabric is exceedingly compact. The Coat worn by the 6-ft. man beneath, when folded, just made this handful.

This is an actual photograph of his hand and the "Mattamac" he wears, folded to fit snugly into his jacket pocket.

**3 OZS. HEAVIER THAN AN UMBRELLA.**

**19 OUNCES WEIGHT 42/-**

Belted Models (21½ oz.), 47/6

Colours:—  
Fawn, Olive, Tan, Grey, Black and Blue Shades.




Children's Models for all ages at size prices (See Booklet).

Equestrian wide-skirted (22 oz.) Model, (In Fawn and Khaki only.)

**59/6**

With Belt (24 oz.) 65/-

Belted Models (21oz.) 47/6

Illustrations are direct drawings from photos of stock "Mattamac" Stormproofs costing 42/-; Belted Models, 47/6.

Made in 6 Shades, 11 Adult Models, and 40 Sizes. Also for Children.

**MADE FOR EVERY OUTDOOR PURPOSE.**

Town and Country unbelted Models in Fawn, Olive, Grey, Tan, Black and Blue, 42/-; Belted Models for Adults, 47/6; Military Models from 42/-; wide-skirted Equestrian Models from 59/6; and Children's Models for all ages at size prices. Made entirely from the genuine, hard-wearing, all-weather-proof "Mattamac" (Reg'd.) Fabric, with wind-cuffs, perpendicular pockets, lined shoulders, Raglan sleeves, roomy "under-arms," and the famous cut of Conduit Street.

**"MATTAMAC" ART BOOKLET POST FREE** illustrating Adult and Children's Models. A p.c. brings Booklet and Patterns of "Mattamac" Fabric, or you can safely order now.

**SENT OUT ON SEVEN DAYS' FREE APPROVAL.** You buy without risk. Send chest measurement over waistcoat (Ladies measure over Blouse), height, and remittance, stating colour, and your "Mattamac" will be sent post free in the U. Kingdom (extra abroad). If you are not fully satisfied, you can return it within 7 days of receipt, and get your money back in full.

"Mattamac" Stormproofs are only obtainable from the London and Birmingham Showrooms, from certain accredited Provincial Agents, and through the post from the London Showrooms. If unable to call, write for the "Mattamac" Booklet "49 Y."

**PEARSON BROTHERS**

NEW MIDLAND SHOWROOMS  
134, New St., Birmingham.  
(Opposite Corporation Street).

Falmouth House,  
**45, CONDUIT STREET,**  
London, W. 1.

**BIG GAME.**

*By H. F. Clark.*

For the last thirty miles or so the big man in the corner seat had been holding forth. At first his fellow-passengers had been interested, but now his big game adventures were beginning to pall.

The little man opposite sought shelter behind his newspaper, but even the shrieking headlines were overpowered by the booming voice of the hunter.

Presently the train ran into a station, and the voice was silent for a moment or so whilst its owner hung out of the window. By the time he had resumed his seat the little man was ready, and, drawing a deep breath, remarked in a quiet voice: "Your adventures are, no doubt, very thrilling to you, but they are so *common-place!*"

"Commonplace! What d'you mean, sir?" barked the hunter.

"Well, in Africa one naturally expects to meet lions, you know."

"You've met 'em running wild in England, I s'pose?" queried the traveller, with a heavy sarcasm which, however, was lost on the little man.

"That's just what I'm coming to," he replied. "You know, I'm very fond of taking long walks in the country, and it was on one of these occasions that I met with an adventure. It was a hot day, and I had been resting under a tree, when all of a sudden I looked up, and there, a few feet away, stood a lion."

The little man paused, then, pleased with the impression he was making, resumed. "I was unarmed, save for the heavy walking-stick which was lying beside me. I reached out, clutched it, and rose to my feet. The lion was in the same place, its big yellow head moving slowly from side to side."

"I'll bet you got the wind up," boomed the hunter.

"On the contrary," replied the little man, "I give you my word I felt quite calm and collected as, grasping my stick firmly in my right hand, I walked towards the lion. He made no effort to attack first, so, swinging up my stick, I brought it down swish!"

"What happened then?" queried the hunter, in astonishment.

"Why, I delivered such a blow," came the quiet voice, "that I completely severed its head, which rolled off at my feet."

"Tch!" snorted the hunter. "I *suppose* you think we're believing that."

The little man smiled. "I assure you I'm not lying," he remarked. "My tale is quite true. You see, it was a dande-lion!"



A TRAVELLER, who was stranded in a remote village, sat on the porch of the small inn,



CONVERSATIONAL ARREARS.

CURATE (to deaf old parishioner): You've got an ear-trumpet, I see, David. That's what I've been telling you to do for the last year or more.

DAVID: Ah, so *that's* what you've been talking about all the time!

patiently awaiting the announcement of dinner. At noon a servant appeared at the door and rang a big hand-bell.

Immediately a dog, which had been asleep in the sunshine, awoke and, raising his nose toward the sky, howled loud and dolorously.

The man stopped ringing the bell and scowled at the dog.

"You shut up!" he shouted. "You don't have to eat this bloomin' dinner!"



# “HOME AND BEAUTY.”

**T**HE only kind of beauty which is really worth having is the “home-cultivated” kind. Apart from artistic considerations, it is far too risky for any woman to depend entirely on her coiffeur, her complexion specialist, and her corsetière, for her looks. At any moment circumstances may deprive her of their services—and of her dearly-bought looks! The simple treatments suggested below will, it is hoped, supply a long-felt want. All the recipes can be easily made up at home, but it is essential to get the exact original ingredients prescribed in each.

## A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

Too many women are the slaves of their hairdresser. This tyrant with his red-hot tongs (real instruments of torture for the hair) threatens most of us into submission by reminding us how plain we are with straight locks. Are you one of the independent souls who coax your hair into its attractive waves with silmerine, instead of bullying it with curling tongs? Silmerine is a clear, harmless liquid; it doesn't make the hair at all greasy, and, if used with discretion, the results are really wonderful.

## THE “MILK AND ROSES” COMPLEXION.

We read a great deal about the “milk and roses” complexion, but tangible examples of it, are, unfortunately, rare. Yet pink-and-white-cheeks, thought charming enough, are not necessarily more beautiful than cream, olive, or even brown skins. As long as the skin is clear, smooth, fine-grained, and free from blemishes, the actual colour matters little. That is why it is useless to try to tone up a poor complexion by applying cosmetics. The outer skin, which has grown coarse and dirty with constant exposure, should be entirely removed.

Smear some pure mercolized wax over the face at bed-time, wash it off in the morning with warm water, rinsing finally with cold. After a day or two of this treatment, the oxygen in the wax will have absorbed the discoloured outer skin, leaving the clean new skin beneath free to breathe. This is the only scientific way to obtain a really good natural complexion. Nothing is better for the neck and arms, of course, than to treat them in the same way.

## A VERY UGLY THING,

and one that will ruin any complexion, is the obnoxious presence of blackheads. The simplest and best way to remove them is to bathe them in a little warm water in which a tablet of stymol has been dissolved. They will then come out, without forcing, on the towel.

The texture of the skin depends on the size of the pores. When the pores are over-enlarged, the skin becomes coarse and “shiny” and blackheads form on the face.

To keep the skin fine-grained an occasional astringent is needed. A sparkling face-bath with stymol is really excellent for keeping the pores normal.

## A VERY PRETTY THING.

Few things add more to the charm of a face than well-marked eyebrows and long eyelashes. Of course, one must be very careful to choose a pomade that is absolutely harmless, and it is never wise to dye the eyelashes. If you rub a little mennaline into the roots of your lashes every other night, you will find that they will gradually grow longer, thicker, and darker, and will develop a delightful tendency to curl at the tips. The eyebrows will also grow thicker and darker with the same treatment.

## THE “LINE OF BEAUTY.”

Nowadays, more than ever, a woman must be slim to look well. The modern straight frocks lose their beautiful “line” at once if the figure below is too bulky. Nevertheless, when trying to reduce superfluous fat, do not be too violent, or you may do yourself more harm than good. Have you ever tried eating a few clynot berries after each meal? They have wonderful digestive and absorbent properties, and are quite pleasant to taste. You can obtain them from any chemist.

IF ANIMALS STRUCK.

If animals could go on strike,  
Whatever would the world be like?  
It would, without a doubt,  
Be awkward for the human race,  
And make the earth a horrid place:  
I ask you—think it out.

Supposing that the gentle cow  
About her food should have a row,  
And stop the milk supply,  
What fearful scenes would infants make,  
If in the night they chanced to wake  
And found their bottles dry!

If dogs demanded shorter time,  
And burglars all intent on crime  
Should break in very late;  
They'd be quite safe—if after dark  
All dogs declined to bite or bark—  
And walk off with the plate.

freckles, but he glanced about him with a dignified air of controlling the situation.

"I'm going to be captain this year," he announced convincingly, "or else father's old bull is going to be turned into the field."

He was elected unanimously.

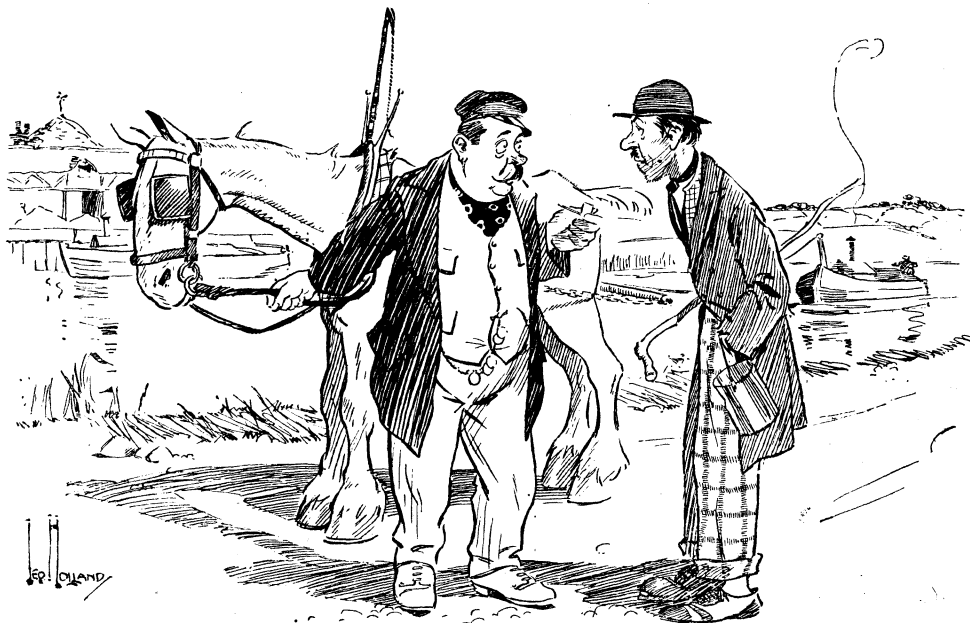


A RUSTIC was lately accused by a farmer of stealing a chicken.

"See here, my man," said the employer of the accused, "are you quite certain that he shot your chicken? Will you swear to it?"

"I won't swear to it," said the farmer, "but I will say he's the man I suspect of doing it."

"That's not enough to convict a man," said the other. "What aroused your suspicions?"



HOSPITALITY.

TRAMP: Give us a lift, gov'nor.

BARGE: Righto, matey—take 'old o' the 'orse's 'ead and lead!

What if the union of cats  
Refused to handle mice and rats,  
And hens declined to lay,  
Or if the horse you fancy most  
Should strike before the winning-post  
Was passed on Derby Day!

"Well," said the farmer, "I saw him on my property with a gun; then I heard the gun go off; then I saw him putting the chicken into a bag; and it didn't seem sensible, somehow, to think that the bird committed suicide."



ONE year the youngsters of a certain Devonshire village met for the purpose of electing a captain of their football team for the coming season, and, since there were too many candidates for the post, trouble was expected.

Youngster after youngster presented his qualifications for the honour, and the matter was still undecided, when the son of the owner of the football field stood up. He was a small, snub-nosed lad, with a plentiful supply of



MARGARET is only seven years old, but sometimes quite naughty. On one of these occasions her mother, hoping to be particularly impressive, said: "Don't you know that if you keep on doing so many naughty things your children will be naughty, too?"

Margaret dimpled and cried triumphantly: "Oh, mother, now you *have* given yourself away!"

ONE SHILLING NET

# WINDSOR

NOVEMBER

NOV 10 1922



WARD LOCK & CO LIMITED  
LONDON & MELBOURNE



# Rinso



*Don't be a Drudge!*

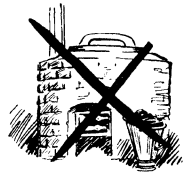
**WASHDAY** is either a day of drudgery, or a day when there's practically little extra work—it all depends on your method of washing. The Rinso way is just a matter of soaking the clothes in cold water and then rinsing. It is easier, quicker and more economical than the old way.

Get Rinso next washday—the clothes will be clean and fresh without bother or mess. Just follow the directions

*Put the clothes in cold water with Rinso overnight, leave them to soak, then rinse and dry in the morning. That's all!*

**SOLD IN PACKETS EVERYWHERE**

*By all Grocers, Stores, Oilmen, Chandlers, etc.*



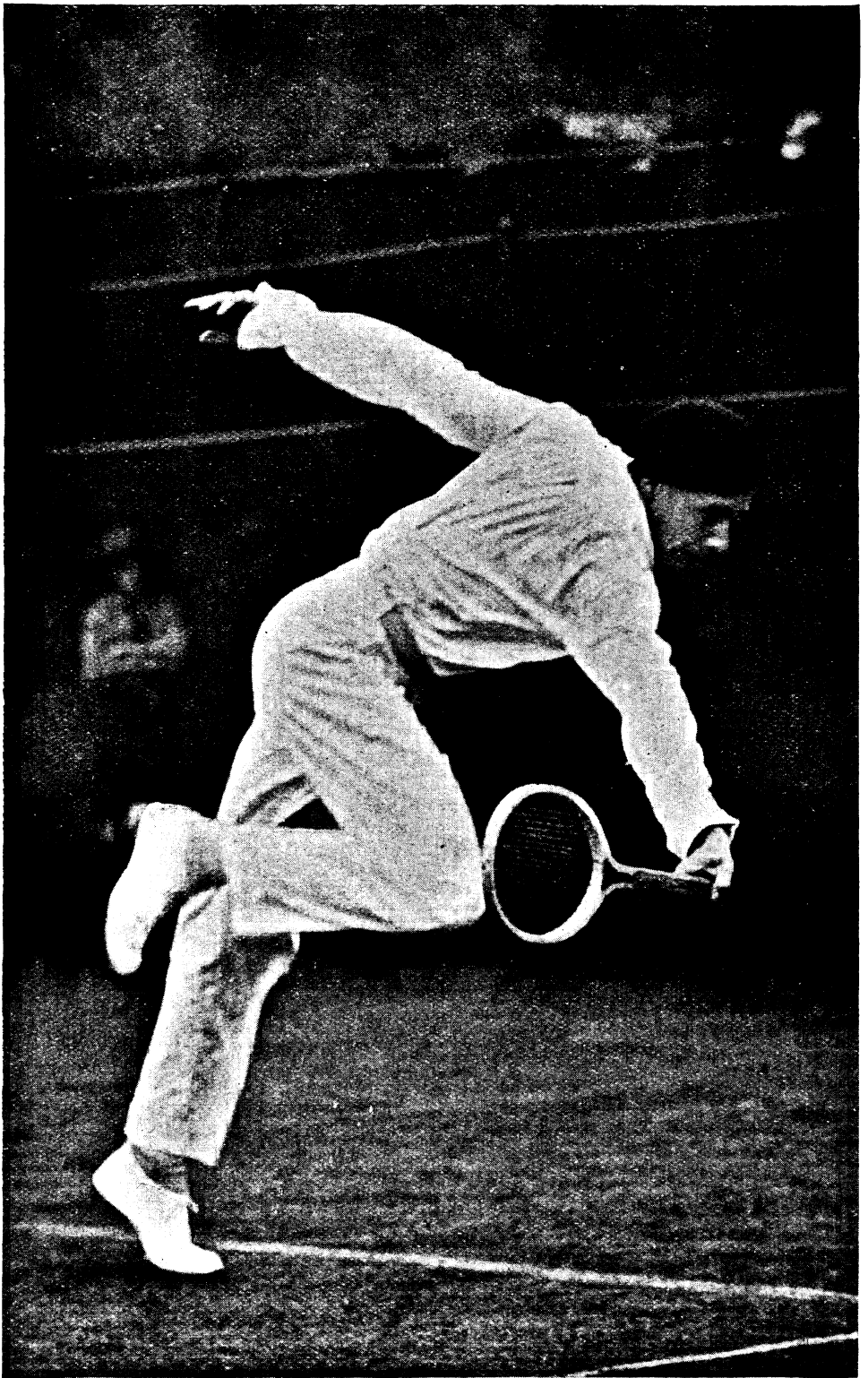
*Rinso saves a scuttle of coal every washday*

## THE COLD WATER WASHER

R. S. HUDSON LIMITED, LIVERPOOL, WEST BROMWICH & LONDON.

R 139—23.





JEAN BOROTRA, LAWN TENNIS COVERED COURT CHAMPION OF FRANCE.  
*Photograph by Sport & General. See article by Lieutenant Borotra on page 606.*



"Your very good health, Sarah. I'm sorry you can't marry George. But I'll do my best."

# FALSE PRETENCES

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne," "Berry and Co.," "Jonah and Co.,"  
"Anthony Lyveden," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

SARAH VULLIAMY stared at her pink finger-tips.

"But," she protested, "I wanted to marry George Fulke."

"I can't help that," said Pardoner gloomily, filling her glass with champagne. "I didn't make the rotten Will."

"Well, you needn't be so ungallant about it," retorted Sarah. "And it's no use giving me any more champagne, because I shan't drink it. Filthy stuff."

Her companion raised his eyes to heaven.

"'Filthy stuff,'" he breathed. "And I brought you here because this is the only place in London that's got any left. 'Filthy stuff.' I daresay it doesn't appeal to you,

but why blaspheme? Never mind. When we're married, I'll——"

"I tell you," said Sarah, "I want to marry George Fulke."

"I'm not surprised," said Pardoner. "George Fulke is a most desirable young man. I should think, as a husband, he'd feed right out of your hand. But there you are. You've refused him three times—on your own confession—and now it's too late."

"It's not too late at all," said Miss Vulliamy. "I'm lunching with him tomorrow, and, if I'm nice to him——"

"For Heaven's sake," said Pardoner, "don't go and play with fire. I know what these lawyers are. If you went and got

Copyright, 1922, by Dornford Yates, in the United States of America.

engaged to somebody else, there'd be the devil to pay before we could straighten it out. Which reminds me—the sooner our engagement's announced—”

“But I don't want to marry you,” wailed Sarah.

Pardoner clasped his head in his hands.

“Look here,” he said. “I don't know how many proposals you've had, but—”

“Thirty-nine,” said Sarah, “to date.”

“Well, do those thirty-nine include one from me?”

Sarah shook her fair head.

“I've often wondered why they didn't,” she said.

Pardoner felt inclined to scream. Instead, he emptied his glass. Then he leaned forward.

“Shall I tell you?” he said.

“Oh, do.”

“Because I'm—I'm already in love with somebody else.”

“Oh, Virgil, how exciting! Who is it?”

Pardoner swallowed.

“It isn't exciting at all,” he said aggrievedly. “It's very tragic. Here have I been waiting and waiting for old James Tantamout to pass to a well-earned rest, and now he's done it—and fairly cramped my style.”

“But who is it, Virgil?”

“You wouldn't know her,” protested Pardoner.

“Tell me her name.”

“Townshend. June Townshend. One of the Lincolnshire lot.”

Sarah knitted her brows.

“June Townshend,” she said musingly.

“I never heard of her. Does she—”

“I told you you hadn't,” said Pardoner.

“But that's neither here nor there. There's my skeleton or cross or whatever you like to dress it in. You see, my lady, we're both in the same sad boat. You want George, and I want June. And we can't have 'em.”

Sarah stretched out a hand.

“Let me look at the Will,” she said.

Pardoner produced and handed her a paper.

*... subject to the aforesaid legacies give devise and bequeath all my real and personal property of every sort and description as follows to be divided equally between my nephew Virgil Pardoner of 79 St. James's Street, S.W. and my ward Sarah Cust Vulliamy at present of Palfrey in the New Forest upon the absolute condition that my aforesaid nephew and ward are married the one to the other within three months of my*

*death. But should my aforesaid nephew and ward or either of them fail to observe this condition or dispute this Will then I devise and bequeath the whole of my aforesaid property equally to the undermentioned Institutions. . . .*

Sarah read the words thoughtfully.

“It doesn't say how much, does it?”

“Wills don't,” said Virgil. “That's where the lawyers come in. Forsyth tells me that, when everything's paid, the money alone will be over six hundred thousand.”

“It's a shame,” cried Sarah. “A beastly shame. They say the Law's just, but it isn't. Men always get the best. Here I get three hundred thousand and lose my freedom. You get your share and me into the bargain. And what about poor George? I shan't know how to tell him.”

As soon as Pardoner could speak—

“What about June?” he demanded.

“She'll—she'll never forgive me.”

“Oh, blow June,” said Sarah. “Besides, it's not settled yet, and I'm not at all sure I'm going to do it. Money isn't everything.”

“That,” said Virgil, “depends upon the amount. Besides, I daresay after a bit we shall—we shall be—er—quite happy.”

“Ugh,” shuddered Sarah. “We shan't. We shall be miserable. No,” she added suddenly. “It's a great temptation, but we'd better not.”

She handed the paper back.

“‘Better not’?” cried Pardoner. “What d'you mean—‘better not’?”

“Better not marry,” said Sarah. “It'd be selling ourselves.”

Virgil took a deep breath.

“My dear child, you don't know what you're saying. You can't go and throw away three hundred thousand pounds. Besides, what about my share? If you chuck up yours, you chuck up mine too.”

“That,” said Sarah deliberately, “does not weigh with me. I came to dinner to-night to decide whether I could possibly do it. And now I know I can't.”

“My dear Sarah,” said Pardoner, “be reasonable. By the mercy of Heaven, neither of us is already married. To complete our good fortune, neither of us is even pledged to marry anybody else.”

“What about June?” said Sarah.

“She's got nothing in writing,” said Virgil shortly. “Listen. If either of us had been engaged, it would have complicated everything, especially for me. The damages, for instance, would have been painfully easy to assess. So we've much to be thankful



for. Of course it would have been nicer if we'd been left the money unconditionally, but there you are. We might be worse off. Supposing I had false teeth or a long matted beard or something. . . . And I've always thought, Sarah, that you were very charming, and I shouldn't be surprised if after a year or two you got quite crazy about me."

Miss Vulliamy sighed.

"I feel very uneasy about June," she declared. "George'll find somebody else, I expect. Men are like that. But poor June Townshend . . . I should hate her to think that my—my husband—"

"June's very intelligent," said Virgil. "I'll write and explain the position. Don't worry about that. She's most sympathetic. I'm sure she'd be the first to—"

"Congratulate you?"

"Well, almost," said Pardoner. "She's an awful good sort, June."

"What brutes men are!" said Sarah. "However, if you must have your wretched money, I suppose I shall have to give way. Incidentally, you might begin by choosing me a peach, will you?"

Virgil selected one carefully. Then he looked at Sarah.

"Tell me the worst," he said. "Shall it be rough or smooth?"

"Smooth, of course. And don't rush it. Peel it properly. Remember, you're my slave now. Oh, and I'd like some grenadine. I'm thirsty."

Pardoner set down his knife.

"I beg," he implored, "I beg that you will not disgrace me by supplanting this nectar by a tumbler of—of Schoolgirl's Joy. I mean, I'd rather order you a pint of draught stout. Stout may be coarse, but, at least, it's got some body."

"Grenadine," said Sarah relentlessly. "All nice and red and sweet. I love it."

Physically and mentally the epicure writhed. . . . Then he gave the order.

Sarah smiled maddeningly.

"That was very sweet of you, Virgil—darling."

"Not at all, my love"—shakily. "When we're—er—married—blast this peach!" he added savagely, plunging his hands in water. "I suppose you couldn't do with a walnut?"

"Get down to it," said Sarah shortly. "When we're married, you were saying."

"Was I? Oh, yes. Well, when— By the way, I'd better announce it, hadn't I?"

"I suppose so," said Sarah.

"Right," said Virgil. "The usual thing,

I take it. 'A marriage has been arranged, and—'"

He stopped short and looked at her.

Sarah smiled back.

"It has, with a vengeance," she flashed. "Hasn't it?"

Virgil wiped his hands and lifted his glass.

"Your very good health, Sarah. I'm sorry you can't marry George. But I'll do my best."

He drank luxuriously.

Sarah lifted her grenadine.

"And yours, Virgil. I know your feelings exactly. As for poor June, words fail me. But, since it can't be helped, I'll do what I can."

"We shall get through—dear," said Pardoner stoutly. "And—and you've got a very sweet way."

"That," said Sarah, "is thanks to the grenadine. And now get on with that peach. Where shall we live?" she added artlessly. "Lincolnshire?"

Pardoner choked. Then—

"I'm sure," he said stiffly, "it would have been your guardian's—"

"—and your uncle's—"

"—wish that we should live at Palfrey."

"Is there any reason why we should consider his wishes?"

"Hang it," said Virgil. "The old fellow's left us six hundred thousand."

"And blighted our lives."

"Oh, not 'blighted,'" said Pardoner.

"You can't blight three hundred thousand quid. You can make it a bit sticky, but you can't blight a sum like that. It's—it's invulnerable."

"I was speaking of our lives," said Miss Vulliamy, "not our legacies."

"Same thing," said Pardoner comfortably, passing a somewhat rugged sculpture across the table. "Same thing. You see. The two are indistinguishable. Supposing another Will turned up, leaving the lot to me." Sarah shuddered. "Exactly. Your life would become a blank—same as your bank balance."

"Not for long," said Miss Vulliamy.

"Why?"

"Because," said Sarah, with a dazzling smile, "I should sue you for breach of promise." Her companion paled. "The damages would be—er—painfully easy to assess, wouldn't they?"

Pardoner frowned. Then his face cleared.

"The contingency," he said, "is happily remote. If it ever happened, I should give

you half, because you've the sporting instinct."

"How much," said Sarah dreamily, "shall you give June?"

The other started.

"June? Oh, June's all right! She—she wouldn't expect anything. I—I shouldn't like to offer it. It'd be—er—indelicate."

Miss Vulliamy sighed.

"Well, well," she said, "I expect you know best. Any way, we've had a nice straight talk, haven't we? I mean, we haven't minced matters. I've told you that, but for the money, I wouldn't be seen dead with you; and you've been equally frank."

Pardoner shifted upon his chair.

"I said," he protested, "I said you'd a very sweet way. I remember it perfectly."

"That," said Miss Vulliamy, "was your only lapse." She raised her straight eyebrows, and a faint smile hung upon her red lips. "But for that, you have been disconcertingly honest."

Pardoner lighted a cigarette.

"You're a strange girl," he said. "One minute you talk like an infant, and the next like a woman of forty. Which are you?"

"That," said Sarah, "will be for my husband to discover."

\* \* \* \* \*

James Tantamount, Esquire, had died at San Francisco.

The direct cause of death was his consumption of iced melon. The physician, who travelled with him mainly to pull his stomach out of the disorders into which the *bon vivant* was constantly haling that valuable member, had besought him again and again to eschew the delicacy. On each occasion James Tantamount had asked him what he thought he was there for. "Any fool," he insisted, "can prevent. I can prevent myself. But I'm not going to. I'm not going to earn your money. Your job's to cure—when I'm sick. Stick to it." It was, indeed, I fancy, as much with the idea of giving his attendant work as with that of indulging his appetite that he had upon the tenth day of June devoured two more slices of melon than he was accustomed to consume. If I am right, his ghost must have been disappointed. The man himself did not have time. In a word, he had consumed the delicacy and, pausing only to make a long nose at his physician upon the other side of the table, had laid down his life and his spoon at the same moment.

His secretary had cabled to London for instructions.

Forsyth and Co., Solicitors, had referred to the Will, and replied that their client was to be buried forthwith, adding that, by the terms of that remarkable document, if his doctor and secretary desired to receive the year's salary apiece which it offered them, they must be prepared to produce credible testimony that they had followed the coffin attired as convicts and playing vigorously upon harps.

The heat prevailing at San Francisco had not only precluded any discussion of the provision, but had made the asportation of the harps a perfectly hellish business, and only the hilarious encouragement of an enormous crowd had enabled the two contingent legatees to stagger into possession.

There, then, you have the late James Tantamount—bluff, greedy, generous, but blessed or cursed with an incorrigible love of what are called 'practical' jokes. It was not his fault. He had been bred upon them. To the day of his death he could recall with tearful relish the memory of his father, amid roars of laughter, pursuing the vicar round the dining-room, while the doctor blew frantically upon a hunting horn and other guests arranged recumbent chairs as timber to be leaped. . . .

If such a passionate propensity had not asserted itself in death, it would have been surprising. To lovers of fun, riches and a Will offer the chance of a lifetime. The tragedy of it is, they are not alive to enjoy the jest. When James Tantamount, of Palfrey, left his vast fortune to his nephew and his ward upon the condition that they should marry, he knew he was being funny. He had no conception, however, that he was perpetrating the joke of his career.

The news of the old fellow's death had sent hopes soaring. It was generally assumed that his nephew and ward would each receive half of his fortune. For a few days, therefore, the two enjoyed undreamed-of popularity as a highly desirable couple, and frantic efforts were made by countless matrons to catch their respective eyes. All wrote: some called: others sent flowers. The hearts that 'went out' to them in their 'irreparable loss' argued an esteem for the late James Tantamount hitherto too deep to be expressed.

*There is a grief,* wrote Mrs. Closeley Dore to Virgil, *too deep to talk about. . . . As soon as you feel able, come and spend a few days at Datchet. You shall do as you please, and*

*use the house as an hotel. Bring your man, of course. . . .*

The Closeley Dores had four daughters.

*My child,* wrote Mrs. Sheraton Forbes to Sarah, *I know so well that dreadful sense of loneliness which gnaws the aching heart. Come back to Fairlands with us on Saturday. We will leave you entirely to yourself, but I should like to think that my dear old friend's sweet ward had someone to turn to in this darkest hour. The world is so hard. . . .*

Mrs. Sheraton Forbes had three sons.

It was a dreadful business. . . .

Then the announcement appeared, and the sympathy died down. It was generally, if grudgingly, admitted that Virgil and Sarah had done the right thing. Crestfallen mothers, consoled by the reflection that, even if they had lost the prize, nobody else had won it, agreed that it was what 'that old Tantamount' would have wished. Some said, sniffing, that his death had drawn the two together.

Finally, the contents of the Will had become public property.

The effect upon the matrons of Mayfair was electrical. With, I think, the slightest encouragement, the late millionaire would have been burned in effigy. As for the two legatees, the outburst of execration with which their determination was posthumously and somewhat illogically received beggars description.

"My dear," said Mrs. Closeley Dore to Mrs. Sheraton Forbes, "my dear, I can stand worldliness, but I detest indecency. Only a man with the mind of a Nero could have conceived such an infamous idea. But then he was always gross. My father, you know, would never have him inside the house." She shuddered. "But, for an old relic of the Roaring Forties to make a degrading suggestion is one thing; for a decently brought up young man and woman to adopt it is quite another. Those two have no excuse. It is the apotheosis of immorality. I don't pretend I'm not worldly—I am, and I know it. But deliberately to abet one another in debasing one of the Sacraments of the Church—"

In a voice shaken with emotion, Mrs. Sheraton Forbes replied with a misquotation from the Solemnization of Matrimony.

It was a dreadful business. . . .

In the Clubs the affair got the laugh of the season. Virgil Pardoner, who had always been liked, was openly chaffed out of his life and secretly voted "a devilish lucky chap." As for the deceased, he was declared

a fellow of infinite jest, and his scheme for "keeping the goods in the family" boisterously applauded. The sluice-gates of Reminiscence were pulled up, and memories of "Old Jimmy Tantamount" were manufactured and retailed by the hour.

In my lady's chamber Miss Vulliamy was frankly envied.

"I don't mind admitting," said Margaret Shorthorn, "that I could have done with Virgil. They talk about Sarah's selling herself. Well, what if she is? We're all trying to do it. The only difference is that in Sarah's case the conditions of sale have been announced in the Press. Besides, Virgil's no monster. . . . I only wish to Heaven I'd had such a chance."

"I agree," said Agatha Coldstream. "If I had to face love in a cottage, I'd as soon face it with Virgil as with most men I know. But Virgil plus half a million. . . ." She raised her black eyes to heaven expressively. "Besides, I like Sarah. And I'll tell you one thing—her pals won't be the worse off for her good fortune. Those two'll give their friends the time of their lives. You see if they don't."

So much for Society's reception of the news.

The attitude of Lincoln's Inn Fields was not advertised, but since John Galbraith Forsyth was a sound judge of character, his opinion may be recorded.

"Tantamount had no right to make such a Will. I told him so at the time, and I've often regretted since that I didn't refuse to draw it. He was playing with fire—hell fire. He might have messed up four lives. And, if he had, he'd 've paid for it. That sort of thing isn't forgiven. . . . Now that I've seen the parties, my mind's at rest. They're out of the top drawer, both of 'em, and they're splendidly matched. They don't know it—yet, and they don't like their hands being forced. For that's what it is. One's only human, you know, and in these lean years six hundred thousand's a bait you can't ignore. But they'll come through all right. I'm not at all certain, myself, that we couldn't have upset the Will. I'd always got that possibility up my sleeve. But now I shan't use it."

Upon the night of their betrothal, neither Miss Vulliamy nor Pardoner had been at their best. They were uncomfortable and suspicious. They felt their position. To my mind, it does them real credit that they



“He bowed an apology to Sarah and followed his executioner out of the room.”

were not exceedingly sour. The circumstances were affording a unique occasion for the expression of irony and distaste. Each was, indeed, a millstone about the other's neck. Add to this that they had been brought up as brother and sister, and had never looked upon one another in any other light, when you will see how easily Bitterness might have taken her seat at the board. The two had seen each other in the making—without any frills. . . .

But Sarah and Virgil were two very charming people. After ten minutes with either of them you felt refreshed. I do not think I can pay them a higher compliment.

Somebody once said that Miss Vulliamy

always looked as though she had just had a cold shower. It was a good description. Her big blue eyes were always alight with

expectancy, her eager face glowing, her pretty red mouth upon the edge of laughter. Her little way, too, of raising a delicate chin stuck fast in your memory, while the length of her exquisite lashes was almost unfair. Her figure was perfect, and her little shining ankles just fairy. Looking upon the lady, you thought first of the dawn and then of dew and cool meadows. Sarah would have made an arresting Naiad. Shepherds who



repaired to her fountain would have been constantly crowded out.

Pardoner was tall, and conveyed the idea of laziness. It was his soft brown eyes that gave this impression. His thick dark hair and his high colour had earned him at Oxford the sobriquet of *Rouge et Noir*. An aquiline nose and a firm, well-shaped mouth

distinguished a handsome face. The way in which he wore his clothes brought his tailor much hardly-merited custom. His most attractive voice delighted the ear. It was, in fact, hereby that his personality emerged. When he was silent, he passed in a well-mannered crowd; when he opened his mouth, other people stopped talking.

The two met in Bond Street a fortnight later.

"Good morning," said Virgil. "I bet I've been cut by more people than you."

"Four," said Sarah, "since half-past ten."

"Five and a half," said her *fiancé*. "Mrs. Sheraton Forbes had a child with her under fourteen. This ostracism amuses me to death. Never mind. How's Fulke?"

"Desperate," said Miss Vulliamy. "I knew he would be. He bucked up a lot when I said he should be our first guest."

"Did he, indeed?" said Virgil. "Truly a forgiving nature."

"Yes, he is very sweet," agreed Sarah. "Couldn't he be your best man?"

Pardoner fingered his chin.

"I'm afraid he's too young," he said slowly. "I must have a compeer."

"Very well, then," said Sarah. "He can give me away."

"That," said Virgil, "will be a most becoming rôle."

Miss Vulliamy frowned. Then—

"As we're here," she said, "what about an engagement ring?"

"Of course," said Virgil. "Come on. We'll get it at once."

The two repaired to a jeweller's and bought a beauty.

"And while we're about it," said Pardoner, "a wedding ring, too."

A wedding ring was selected.

"And we might as well get our presents," said Sarah, staring at a tiara composed of diamonds and emeralds. "You know: 'The bridegroom's presents to the bride included . . .'"

"Right," said Virgil. "Have what you like. I'm in a generous mood. Besides, my turn's coming. In fact, I'll just have a look round."

Before they left the shop, the bride had given the bridegroom a gold cigarette-box, four pearl pins, six pairs of sleeve links, and a green crocodile dressing-case, which, with its gold-mounted fittings, cost her eight hundred pounds.

On being acquainted with the lengths to which her generosity had gone—

"They will think I love you," said Miss Vulliamy, as soon as she could speak.

"Remembering that tiara," said Pardoner, "they'll say I'm doting. I didn't know they made such expensive things. But for my brain-wave about that dressing-case, I should have been left standing."

In a shaking voice Sarah demanded luncheon.

"Not that I want to presume upon your hospitality, but we've many things to discuss," she concluded coldly.

"On condition," said Pardoner, "that you do not drink grenadine, I'll do you a treat."

"I don't see why," said Miss Vulliamy, "I should give up my staple drink."

Virgil shuddered.

"I'll try and explain some day. For one thing, it's bad for the heart."

"It's never affected mine," said Sarah.

"No," said Virgil, "I daresay it hasn't. To be frank, I was thinking of my own. But never mind. Give it a miss till we're married—a sort of interim injunction. We can argue it out later."

"Very well," said Sarah reluctantly.

That the table which was offered them at Claridge's should lie directly between one presided over by Mrs. Closeley Dore and another at which Mrs. Sheraton Forbes was entertaining two stylish Americans was sheer good fortune. . . . Virgil and Sarah had the time of their lives. Placidly to browse under their enemies' noses was delightful enough. The reflection that the more they vented their good humour, the higher must rise the fever of indignation raging on either side, made the two positively festive. . . . When the two Americans asked their hostess the identity of 'that most attractive couple,' and seemed surprised to learn that they were not of the Blood Royal, Mrs. Sheraton Forbes' cup began to overflow. . . .

At length—

"Ah," said Pardoner, "the rot's set in. 'The tumult and the shouting dies, The Closeleys and the Dores depart.' I'll bet old Chippendale doesn't last two minutes alone."

"Got it in one," said Sarah. "She's up. Her guests haven't finished, but she hasn't seen that. She's ordering coffee in the lounge. I'm afraid she's terribly upset."

"Good," said Virgil. "And we've shortened 'Slam It's' life. When I called you 'darling' just now, I thought she was going to founder. Incidentally, I said it very well, didn't I?"

"Like a professional," said Miss Vulliamy. "You must have said it before."

"Never, darling."

"O-o-oh," said Sarah. "Any way, you needn't say it now. The audience has dispersed."

"But it comes so natural."

Sarah tilted her chin.

"We are not amused," she said stiffly.

"And now to business. We'd better be married about the end of the month. What about the twenty-fifth?"

Virgil consulted a note-book.

"Can't be done," he said. "I'm playing polo. I can manage the twenty-fourth."

"Don't be a fool," said his fiancée. "What about the honeymoon?"

After a lot of argument, Pardoner agreed to waive the polo, on the understanding that the wedding-trip was restricted to fourteen days.

"Well, that's that," said Sarah. "Now, then, where shall it be? I may say that I insist upon a church."

A church was at last selected, and Pardoner promised to make the necessary arrangements.

"The next thing," said Miss Vulliamy, "is where to go. What about Dinard?"

"As you please," said Virgil. "I suppose that's where Fulke's going," he added carelessly.

Sarah shook her sweet head.

"Not till the first," she replied. "Which brings us to June."

"August," corrected Virgil. "August. July—August—Sept—"

"June Townshend," said Sarah shortly.

Pardoner started and dropped his cigarette.

"What about her?" he said uneasily. "She wouldn't like Dinard. She's a—a clergyman's daughter."

Sarah bowed before a little gust of laughter.

Then—

"Have you written to her?" she demanded.

"Er—no. Not yet. I mean, it's a delicate matter."

"Virgil," said Miss Vulliamy, "unless you write to her to-day, I won't marry you."

"But—"

"That's flat," said Sarah. "I mean what I say. After all this time, to let that poor girl see our engagement in the paper, and nurse her sorrow without one word of explanation or regret. . . . I confess I'm disgusted. No honourable man—"

"I'm not an honourable man," said Pardoner. "I'm a loathsome and venomous worm. Ask Mrs. Closeley Dore."

"You will write to her now," said Sarah. "You will send for a sheet of note-paper

and write to her now—in the lounge. I'll help you."

By the time the document was settled, it was a quarter to four.

MY DEAR JUNE,

Possibly by now you will have seen the announcement of my engagement in the papers. Had I been able, I should have wished to tell you of it myself, but a recent bereavement has not only kept me in London, but has affected my brain. The marriage I am contracting is one which you would have been the first to wish me to make. Indeed, I have often fancied that I could hear your soft voice urging me to go forward. My poor uncle is dead, dear, and I have reason to believe that it was his earnest desire that I should wed with his ward. I feel, therefore, that the least I can do is to respect his wishes. Nothing, however, can take away the memory of the many happy, happy hours we have spent together, and I look forward confidently to bringing my wife to see you, as soon as we are settled. I am sure that you and she will get on together, and perhaps one day you will come and stay with us at Palfrey, which we shall make our home.

Your affectionate friend,

VIRGIL PARDONER.

"Now address it," said Sarah, "and send for a stamp."

Pardoner hesitated.

"I'd—er—I'd like to sleep on it," he said. "I mean, it's—it's a ticklish business."

Miss Vulliamy indicated an envelope with a firm pointed finger.

"Pretty hands you've got," said Virgil musingly. "Pretty nails, too."

"What are June's like?"

"Oh, very good," said Virgil. "Full of character, you know. But yours are bewitching. That left one—"

"Apostate," said Sarah. "And now address this envelope."

Virgil did so laboriously.

Miss June Townshend,

The Rectory,

Roughbridge,

Lincolnshire.

They posted the letter together before they parted.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was two days later that Mrs. Purdoe Blewitt was seriously annoyed.

"Such impudence," she said, bristling. "As if she were the daughter of the house. . . ."

The Reverend Purdoe Blewitt, Rector of Loughbridge, laid down his pen.

"What is the matter, my dear?"

His wife stabbed at the bell and flounced into a chair before replying.

"Jane, of course," she snorted. "Fortunately, I met the postman, or I should never have known." She tapped a letter with meaning. "She's still doing it."

The Rector knew better than to inquire the nature of the iniquity. Mrs. Blewitt believed in remembering her servants' offences and expected this belief to be shared. He assumed an aggravated look.

"How very trying!" he said, playing for safety. "I should say to her that the next time she does it——"

"Does what?" said his wife.

The Rector started guiltily.

"I understood you to say, my dear," he faltered, "that she was still doing it."

"So she is," said his wife.

The Reverend Purdoe Blewitt put a hand to his head.

"It's not nice of her," he said, blindly endeavouring to avoid collision. "Not at all nice. I mean——"

Here he observed that his wife was surveying him with a profound contempt, and quailed accordingly.

The appearance of a pert parlourmaid postponed his chastisement.

"Jane," said Mrs. Blewitt, at once averting her face and stretching forth the letter as though it were some contagious body, "I suppose it is not the slightest good desiring you to remember that your address is not *The Rectory, Loughbridge*, but *c/o The Rev. Purdoe Blewitt, The Rectory, Loughbridge*. However, for what it is worth, I will again point out that, even if you were here as a guest—which you are not—it would be the essence of bad taste to omit the Rector's name from the head of your note-paper."

"An' if," sweetly rejoined Miss Townshend, taking the letter, "if your gues's frien's—not knowin' you—didn't take no notice of what was wrote at the 'ead of the note-paper, I s'pose your gues's 'ld still get it in the neck." Mrs. Purdoe Blewitt recoiled, and the Rector emitted a protesting noise. "You know, you're too particular to live, you are; and p'r'aps you'll take this as notice. Servants aren't no good to you. What you want is 'alf a dozen Archangels—and then you'd show 'em 'ow to wear their wings."

Apparently unable to speak, Mrs. Blewitt, crimson with fury, clawed at the air, while the Rector, feeling that something must be done, rose to his feet and cleared his throat.

Ere words came, however, Miss Townshend was out of the room.

The look of her letter was promising.

This had been addressed to "Roughbridge," but, there being no such place, the Post Office had risen to the occasion and above the mistake.

\* \* \* \* \*

Five days had gone by since Mrs. Purdoe Blewitt had been so annoyed, and Pardoner and Miss Vulliamy were dining together, ostensibly to discuss arrangements for their alliance, actually because they enjoyed each other's company.

"I wonder she hasn't replied," said Sarah, obediently sipping her champagne.

Virgil shrugged his shoulders.

"I daresay she won't," he said. "She's very considerate. I mean, it's delicate ground, and it'd be just like June if she sank her own feelings and—er—let bygones be bygones."

His *fiancée* shook her head.

"If she doesn't answer," she said, "I shall be really worried. Silence can only mean one of two things: either that she doesn't know how to behave——"

"Oh, she knows how to behave all right."

"—or that she's almost beside herself."

"No, no," said Virgil. "June's not that kind of girl. I shan't be at all surprised if she doesn't reply. In fact, I should be rather surprised if she did. You know, I had a feeling, when I wrote that letter, that it would never be answered. You see, June——"

"But you used to kiss her, you know."

Pardoner pulled at his moustache.

"Once in a while," he said. "But I never made a meal of it. It was more of a salute."

Miss Vulliamy stared across the room.

"I think," she said softly, "your love for her is very beautiful."

"Was," said Virgil uneasily. "I've—I've trodden it under."

Sarah shuddered.

"Hush!" she said. "Hush! Don't talk like that, Virgil. It's—it's blasphemy."

As she spoke, a page came to the table.

"Mr. Pardoner, sir?"

"Yes," said Virgil.

"Miss Townshend would like to speak to you, sir, on the telephone."

Pardoner started. Then he turned to Sarah with a sheepish smile.

"Who's come in on this little deal?" he demanded.

"Whatever d'you mean?" said Miss Vulliamy, striving to keep her voice steady.



"Nothing doing," said Virgil, continuing to smile. "Admit it's a plant."

"By all that's solemn," said Sarah, "I swear I've nothing to do with it."

"But you've—"

"I haven't, Virgil. I swear I haven't. I'd—I'd be ashamed," she added tearfully.

Three times did her betrothed endeavour to speak.

At the fourth attempt—

"Must be some mistake," he muttered, wiping his brow. Then he turned to the page. "All right. I'll come."

He bowed an apology to Sarah and followed his executioner out of the room. . . .

Of the two, Sarah was, if possible, the more dumbfounded.

Upon the very first evening she had made up her mind that Miss June Townshend was non-existent. She could have sworn that Pardoner had invented the lady to be a foil to George Fulke. Gleefully she had decided to turn the foil into a lash to be laid mischievously about her *fiancé's* shoulders. The laborious drafting of the letter to June had afforded her the highest gratification, and her searching cross-examinations of Virgil upon his associations with the lady had never failed to bear her most refreshing fruit. Now, without a word of warning, the Palace of Fun had fallen, and out of the ruins were sticking some extremely ill-favoured truths. The very least of these was suggesting that the edifice had been erected upon a foundation of distasteful fact.

It was while she was staring at Virgil's empty place, considering these things, that for the first time she realised something which was still more to the point. This was that with her future husband she was most heartily in love. . . .

Pardoner walked down the hall, thinking furiously. Arrived at the box, he took the spare receiver and told the page to speak for him.

"Say you can't find me," he said, "and ask her to leave a message."

The boy did so.

A voice which was anything but gentle replied:

"All right, I'll come round."

Virgil blanched.

"Say I'm not living here, and you don't know my address."

"Then why you ask me to leave a message?" flashed Miss Townshend.

"Er—on the chance," stammered the page.

"Well, 'ere it is—on the chance," said Jane. "I'll be round in 'alf an hour."

The receiver was slammed into place.

Virgil and the page stared at one another in dismay.

Then the former said an extremely unpleasant word under his breath and erupted violently from the box. . . .

Miss Vulliamy greeted him with a cold smile.

"Get on all right?" she said acidly.

"We must leave at once," said Virgil.

"Go on to the Berkeley, or my rooms, or somewhere. We can't stay here. She says she's coming at once—may be here any moment."

"Then why go?" said Sarah.

"Well, we can't be here when she comes.

You don't want a scene, do you? Screams and yells in the hall, and all that sort of thing?" He mopped the sweat from his face. "It's all that blinking letter you made me write," he added savagely. "I might have known—"

"But of course you must see her," said Sarah, rising. "I'll go, if you like, but you must stay. Poor, wretched girl, you can't—"

"Stay?" cried Virgil. "You're mad. I don't want to be blackmailed."

"But you said that June—"

"It—it *isn't* June," wailed Pardoner. "I mean, it can't be. It—it isn't her voice. It's an impostor—that's the word—impostor, Sarah. Someone or other's got hold of that blasted letter, and now they're trying it on."

"But it must be June," said Sarah. "The telephone's very deceptive. Sometimes those very soft voices—"

"I tell you it's *not*," raged Virgil. "*June doesn't drop her 'h's.*"

With a bright red spot upon either cheek, Miss Vulliamy preceded him to the door.

While she was getting her cloak, Pardoner gave the porter instructions too definite to be mistaken. These he reinforced with two pounds.

Then a taxi was summoned, and a moment later the two were flying up Brook Street. . . .

Pardoner entered that cab with the determined intention of telling Miss Vulliamy the truth. He meant to humble himself. He intended to apologise for his reception of his amazing luck. He meant to ask her to do her best to love him, and to confess there and then that "if the Will went west

to-morrow morning, I'd beg and humbly pray you to become my wife."

Fate ruled otherwise.

The tone in which his *fiancée* cut short his opening sentence with a request to be taken home, would have silenced anyone. After a second effort, which was met by the lady with a true flash of temper, Pardoner told the cabman to drive to Rutland Gate.

The journey was completed without a word.

Arrived at the house, Sarah was handed out with her head in the air. Virgil's offer to ring or use her latchkey might not have been made. His presence was ignored utterly. My lady let herself in, and closed the door behind her exactly as if she were alone. The broad white step without might have been empty. Then she went to her room and burst into tears.

Virgil repaired to a club and ordered a brandy and soda. This he imbibed in the library, where no one may speak, cursing all women with a deep and bitter curse. . . .

After a perfectly poisonous hour and a half, he went to bed.

Upon the following morning he received two several communications.

The first was from the hall-porter at Claridge's and made his hair rise.

The second was from Sarah, and desired him to meet her at noon at Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Pardoner agreed, but went early, proposing to have Forsyth to himself for a valuable quarter of an hour. Miss Vulliamy went early also, with the same idea. They met on the doorstep and, as Forsyth was engaged, spent an awkward ten minutes in the same waiting-room. . . .

At last they were shown into the presence.

The solicitor, who had been hoping to congratulate them as lovers, was much disappointed. Still, his hopes were not dashed, and, wisely making no attempt to thaw the atmosphere, begged to be told the nature of the trouble.

Virgil stammered the facts. He was careful to tell nothing but the truth. But for Sarah's presence, he would have gone further, and told the whole truth . . . but for Sarah's presence . . .

Forsyth heard him out gravely. Then he rang for a clerk.

"Get me on to Claridge's," he said.

In silence the three awaited the connection. Presently a bell throbbed.

Forsyth picked up the receiver.

"Is that Claridge's? Put me on to the hall-porter. . . . Hullo! . . . This is Forsyth and Co., solicitors. . . . Yes, Mr. Forsyth. . . . I understand a lady, calling herself 'Miss Townshend,' has been asking for Mr. Pardoner. . . . Yes? . . . Sitting in the hall now, is she? Good. Tell her that he will be there to see her at three o'clock. . . . Right. . . . Good-bye."

"But, look here," said Virgil, "I'm not going to—"

"Yes, you are," said Forsyth. "You're going to be in the lounge. Two of my clerks are going to be there also. One of these is going to take your name in vain. He's going to meet the lady and say he's you. Of course it may not come off, but it's worth trying. If it does, we've got her cold. There's the evidence of a spare clerk and the hall-porter to say she took John Snooks for Virgil Pardoner. You must be there yourself, to have a look at her. If, having seen her, you've anything more to say, say it to the spare clerk. And to-night you must leave for Lincolnshire. The real Miss Townshend must know the facts of the case, and we obviously can't trust the post. If all goes well, she won't be needed, but if there's any hitch, she'll have to be produced."

Pardoner broke into a sweat.

Then—

"Need she be mixed up in it? I mean . . ."

The solicitor shrugged his shoulders.

"If A says she's B," he said shortly, "when she isn't, the obvious thing to do is to produce B, isn't it?"

"I'd better come back here at four," said Virgil positively. "After I've seen the woman."

Forsyth shook his head.

"I'm leaving for Paris," he said, "at two o'clock. Can't get out of it. Back in a week, I hope. But don't worry. When's the wedding?" he added pleasantly.

"Twenty-four—fifth," said Virgil, with a sickly smile. "Soon be here now."

Sarah moistened her lips.

"I think," she said slowly, "I think I ought to say that I'm rather unsettled." Her *fiancé* paled, and Forsyth shot her a swift glance. "I don't say here and now that I won't go through with it, but—"

"But you must," cried Virgil. "You must. Why, that tiara alone—"

"—unless and until this matter is cleared right up, I'm sorry, but . . ." She drew off her engagement ring and laid it upon the

table. "I think, perhaps, if Mr. Forsyth would put this in his safe . . ."

There was a dreadful silence.

At length—

"I'm sure," said Forsyth, turning to look at Pardonner, "we both understand. It's very natural. The wretched business places you both in a false position." He picked up the ring and slid it into an envelope. "I may add that I look forward confidently to restoring this pretty thing to you directly I'm back." He rose and walked to the door. "And now good-bye. Don't worry because I'm away. My managing clerk, Maple, will be at your service."

As in a dream, Virgil followed Miss Vulliamy down the stairs and out into the broad square. There she gave him her hand and bade him farewell.

\* \* \* \* \*

At half-past ten the next morning Pardonner received a letter of some importance.

*Private.*

DEAR MR. PARDONNER,

*From the clerk who attended you yesterday I understand that you are not proposing at present to leave for Lincolnshire. I write to beg you to do this without delay.*

*What took place at Claridge's yesterday afternoon makes it abundantly clear that the person who called there to meet you is no fool. Thanks, no doubt, to the periodicals in which your photograph has recently so often figured, she is well acquainted with your looks, and from the papers which I understand she produced I see no reason to disbelieve that she is, in fact, Miss Jane Townshend, late of The Rectory, Loughbridge or Roughbridge, Lincolnshire. It is, of course, a most unfortunate coincidence that there should be two ladies bearing the very same name and address, but, since such a coincidence exists, it is not at all easy successfully to contend that this woman's possession of your letter is unlawful and was never intended.*

*In these circumstances, you will surely appreciate the extreme desirability of your seeing the other Miss Townshend without delay, explaining to her the position, and, if possible, inducing her to come to London at once. Indeed, in my opinion, her production alone can now snuff this matter out.*

*Yours faithfully,*

F. S. MAPLE.

Virgil fell upon the telephone.

After a maddening delay—

"Is that Mr. Maple?" he said.

"Speaking," said a brusque voice.

"I'm Virgil Pardonner."

"Yes?"

"The name isn't *Jane*. It's *June*."

"Ah! I thought Mr. Forsyth said 'June,' but I wanted to see what you said. That's splendid. She's altered your letter, of course—changed the 'u' into 'a.' That was easy. And now we *have* got her—tight. All you've got to do is to trot out Miss *June* Townshend, and if she has any letters of yours—she probably has—to see that she brings them with her. There's a train at—"

"She hasn't," yelled Virgil. "She hasn't. I know she hasn't."

"Oh, but she may. Lots of women promise to destroy—"

"She can't. I never wrote any. There's—*there's no such woman*."

"No such *what*?" cried Maple.

"Woman," said Virgil calmly. Now that the murder was out, he felt much better. "You know. Female of man. *June* Townshend is a creation of my lightning brain. I also invented Stoughbridge, or whatever the rotten place is, complete with Rectory. I pictured an old-world garden, with a hammock and croquet-nets. Oh, and a bamboo cake-stand. *June* was there, feeding the aspidistras with crumbs of rock-cake. The letter, I may say, was written to substantiate the fantasy. It was a beautiful piece of prose. . . ."

There was a long silence.

Presently—

"Are you serious?" said Maple. "I mean, d'you mean what you say?"

"Absolutely."

"Well, this is a facer," said Maple. "Of course I'll do what I can, but you've disarmed me. If the thing's to be kept quiet, it looks as if that beautiful piece of prose—"

"Will prove extremely expensive?" said Virgil cheerfully.

"Exactly."

"An action for breach of promise couldn't succeed?"

"Good Heavens, no. But she'll be a nuisance."

"Let her," said Virgil. "I won't pay a blinkin' cent."

"But what will Miss Vulliamy say?"

"That," said Virgil sweetly, "remains to be seen. I may tell you I wrote the letter under duress. *She made me do it*. Of course, if she likes to buy my literature back, she's at liberty to do so. She's plenty of money—or can have. Besides, it'd be a pretty compliment. So please do nothing for me. And

just acknowledge these instructions, will you? Before you lunch. I'd like her to know the worst this afternoon."

"Very good," said Maple, laughing. "I'll dictate a letter at once."

*Private.*

DEAR MR. PARDONER,

*I have carefully considered the conversation which we had upon the telephone this morning, and I have come to the conclusion that, in the circumstances, your wisest course is, as you suggest, to take no further action.*

*Since the Miss June Townshend to whom you addressed your letter has never in fact existed outside your imagination, and there is, therefore, no one with whom we can confront the woman into whose hands that letter has fallen, the only possible move we could make would be to offer to buy the document back.*

*As, however, your hands are perfectly clean, I agree that to make such a move would be beneath your dignity, and that you can well afford to ignore such petty molestation as that to which this person may resort.*

*An action for breach of promise could not possibly succeed.*

*As I have already pointed out, her alteration of "June" to "Jane" has, in the absence of "the original," no bearing upon the case.*

*Yours faithfully,*

F. S. MAPLE.

This note and its predecessor reached Sarah Vulliamy while she was dressing to dine tête-à-tête with George Fulke.

Beyond that Sarah was unusually pensive, the dinner calls for no remark.

Exactly a month had slipped by.

There had been rain in the night, and Luchon was looking her best.

So was Mrs. Pardoncr. She had just had a cold shower.

Seated upon the edge of the breakfast table, one bare leg dangling from the folds of an apricot kimono, her sweet pretty hair piled upon the top of her head, she periodically frowned upon a letter, regarded her new wedding ring, and gazed at the sunlight upon the mountain-sides.

Presently she raised her voice.

"Virgil."

A lapping noise in the bathroom was suspended.

"Yes, darling."

"George Fulke says I've blighted his life."

"So you have," said Virgil.

"By not going to Dinard," added Sarah.

"Serve him right," said Virgil.

"He says he quite understood that ours was a marriage of convenience."

"So it was," said Virgil. "Great convenience."

"But what shall I do?" said Sarah.

"He says that his heart is 'aching for a vivid, stimulating personality to fill the emptiness of life.'"

Her husband appeared, swathed in a bath dressing-gown.

"My dear," he said, "it's too easy. Take a fresh envelope and pass the letter on."

"Who to?" said his wife.

Virgil fingered his chin.

"The trouble is," he murmured, "I'm not quite sure of her address. I think it was Bloughbridge."

In the next issue of THE WINDSOR, which will be the Christmas Number, will be published the opening instalment of a powerful novel on a very remarkable theme by

## DORNFORD YATES

in which, under the title

### "VALERIE FRENCH,"

the author tells a deeply affecting story with all his accustomed skill in the presentation of modern social types.



## THE RAINBOW

**B**EHOLD! Behold! the broken arc  
Of sevenfold hues that shine and gleam  
Above the carol of the lark

That sings below the phantom beam.  
One end beyond the wood, and one  
Far on the grey aerial sea,  
The broken stairway of the sun  
That climbs across the vacancy.

'Twixt birth and death a hollow lies,  
And heaven's bow too oft seems rent  
To those who walk with weary eyes  
Through days of long bewilderment;  
When lo! the sun-veil's denser spun,  
And they can see the arc complete  
With sevenfold hues that shine and run  
From bound to bound on phantom feet.

All men are travellers and each  
Beneath a fickle sky fares on  
To find his heaven beyond reach,  
And blackness where the beam has shone.  
But constant eyes no cloud shall thwart,  
For them the perfect arc shall rise,  
Whose heaven is in the faithful heart,  
Whose sun is in the seeking eyes.

WILFRID THORLEY.

# LAWN TENNIS EXPERIENCES AND OPINIONS

By JEAN BOROTRA,

*Covered Court Champion of France; World's Hard Court and Covered Court Champion  
in Doubles with Henri Cochet, etc.*

*Photographs by Topical*

IT was in England, in 1913, and at garden-parties that I played lawn tennis for the first time. The standard of play was very low, and it is better to say nothing of the courts. Mixed doubles were the game chiefly in vogue. I thought then that lawn tennis was a highly fascinating, if not athletic, game, and the best sport in it was when, after the play, we were pretending to hunt for lost balls with our charming partners.

On my return to France I became very busy with my studies, and later on I was involved in the succession of great events which in August, 1914, changed the face of the world, and kept me away from the tennis courts for five years. It was only in the autumn of 1919 that I began to think of tennis again; but I played very seldom, and merely took my racket to rest my overworked mind from the strenuous preparation for the examinations of the famous *École Polytechnique*, which is not very different from your *Woolwich Military Academy*.

It was in the summer of 1920 that I played in tournaments for the first time. I am obliged to confess that I was not very successful at the start. I had absolutely no strokes, and relied mainly upon my physical abilities, never believing that a point was lost till the ball had touched the ground twice. I was very often defeated until a certain match at the *Biarritz* tennis tournament in September. I must tell you a little about this match, during which I discovered the tactics which, within a few months, brought me from the third

French lawn tennis class to victories over some of the best players in Europe.

My opponent, *Le Besnerais*, the best of our second-class players, was very steady from the back-court. I had lost the first set six love, remaining on the base line playing my opponent's game, and losing point after point. *Le Besnerais* was leading two love in the second set, when I discovered the inanity of my tactics and found out that by sending a slow, long, heavily-cut ball, and following it to the net, I could volley every return. My opponent could then score only another game, and I won the match easily. I learned later that these tactics were the favourite ones of the old American champion, *Beals Wright*.

On coming back to Paris the next autumn, I joined a tennis club for the first time, becoming a member of the *Sporting Club* of Paris. There I improved my recently-acquired tactics during the following months, and my advance was very quick.

Later, in *Bordeaux*, I defeated *Samazenith*, champion of France, and *de Gomar* in the hard court championship, in June, 1921. In September I was lucky enough to score two victories over *Manolo Alonso*, in *Guethary* and *Lisbon*. My next season of covered courts was still better. I won the covered court championship of France, defeating *Gobert* and *Brugnon*. I scored victories over *Morpurgo* at *St. Moritz*, and over *Norton*, *Lycett* and *Gilbert* in the *Paris-London* match.

The only reasons for this sudden improvement were the very peculiar tactics I adopted, requiring great speed on the court



JEAN BOROTRA IN PLAY.

and quickness of eye, which I owe to the Basque game of "pelota." To follow every ball to the net and jump on every return asks for great fleetness of foot and agility.

The player must be able to run backwards very quickly in order to kill the lobs which are the best defence against this type of game. In the matter of quickness I owe a great deal to my Basque origin. The Basques have proved themselves the quickest people on a football field. Alonso, one of the fastest players ever seen on a tennis court, is a Basque, too, and his birthplace is just on the other side of the Pyrénées, less than thirty miles from mine. I had also practised every sport, and this was one of the great factors in my improvement.

After such a run of successes I well might have thought my tactics nearly perfect. Rushing to the net on every possible ball, sending slow, heavily-cut balls of a good length, and following them to the net, then killing every return with acrobatic volleys, seemed to me the ideal game. Then I came to Wimbledon, was badly defeated by Patterson, saw, thought, and learned. I found out that my tactics were no good against the Australian game, which never gave me the opportunity of taking the offensive. I understood the absolute necessity of good ground strokes, which I lack almost completely, for they want months and months of practice to be learnt. The Australians serve so hard that perfect ground strokes are needed to send back the ball. They hit their own returns with such power that, unless your service is a very strong one, following it up to the net is courting disaster. The fastest jump does not enable one to touch their cannon-ball returns, and one's vain attempts seem only useful as

inspiration for Tom Webster's cartoons.

Against this type of game one must be able to wait on the base line for a good opening before rushing to the net. I know

now that I have to work and learn better service and ground strokes.

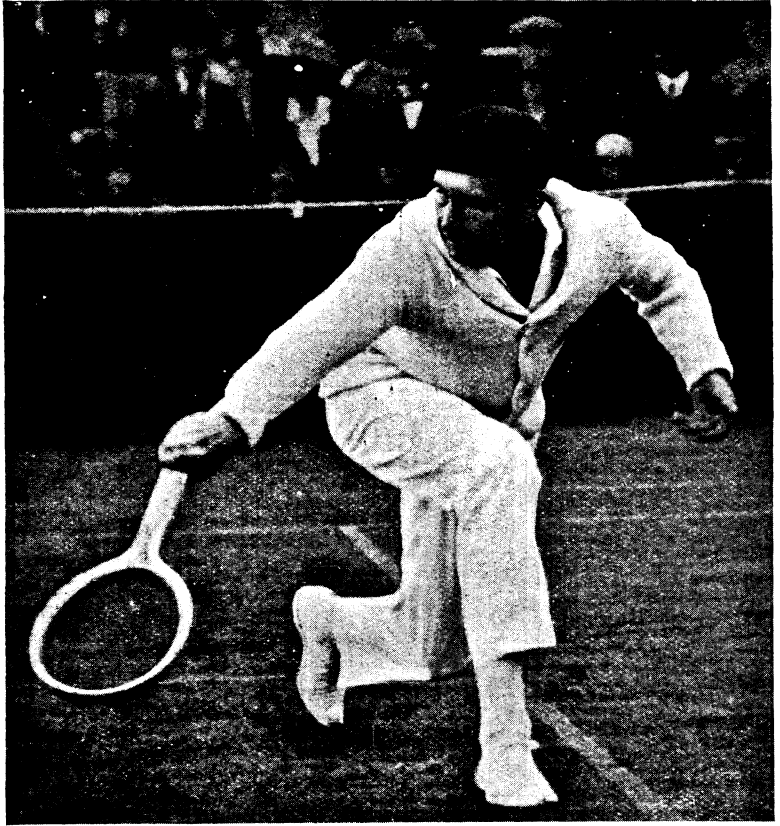
The Australian game really appears to me quite a different game from ours. Power and pace are used rather than fine placing. The cyclonic service, if it does not score outright, makes it possible to come to the net. Once there, the Antipodean player tries to make a winner of every volley. He always plays an offensive game, and hits so hard that he keeps his opponent on the defensive.

The fault of our French game is that, if we are very daring volleyers, we do not take enough risks on the base line. Ground strokes are merely, to most of us, an opening to come up and volley. We very seldom score aces from the back-court with cannon-ball drives, as Patterson and Anderson do. All these reasons explain why the Australian players swept the board at Wimbledon.

The cannon-ball game of cyclonic service drive and volley seems to be the game of the future. More and more speed should be the motto of every growing sport. Some genius may, however, appear, like Suzanne Lenglen amongst the ladies, and vindicate the cause of steadiness and delicate placing.

Of course the Continental players were very badly handicapped this year at Wimbledon. The courts were very dead and slow, and very unlike our hard courts. We never had a chance to kill a high-bouncing ball. Our footwork was also very insecure on the slippery and treacherous surface.

On the hard courts, and specially on wood, we were accustomed to stop at once through a great pressure on the ground. We also started in one step, taking all our speed in



JEAN BOROTRA: AN ACTION PORTRAIT TAKEN AT WIMBLEDON THIS YEAR.

the first jump. On grass it is impossible to do so—the adherence is not good enough for such pressure. I noticed that the great difference of the Australian and European footwork was in the former's way of stopping and starting in two or three small steps to divide the pressure on the ground.

There is also a very big difference between the Australian and Continental double game. The Australians seem to dislike long rallies. They kill or lose the point. Their service is many times a winner. They take all sorts of risks on the return of service, and the striker's partner is always safe in his position close up to the net, for the return of service is never a defensive one. In fact, they will rather miss by much than send a slow and weak stroke. It makes the game highly spectacular, but I prefer personally to see players like our old French champions Decugis and Germot exchanging volleys five or six times before finding openings in their opponents' defence. These long rallies at the net make a double very interesting. In this respect it was really a



fine treat to watch Barrett against Patterson and O'Hara Wood in that memorable double at Wimbledon.

He was beating them time after time, finding in their defence holes through which to place gentle-looking but very deceptive volleys. His splendid court craft and his accurately placed shots were the antidote for the Australians' hard-hitting game.

In England very few young players adopt the modern attacking methods. It may be that the beginner on a wet and dead grass court stands no chance of having to hit a high-bouncing ball. Killing every ball above the net is the essence of modern lawn tennis. Hardly a young boy plays the modern attacking game. It is curious to state that a player like Kingscote, whose game is a perpetual attack, has no followers in his own country.

The average of play amongst the men is far from improving in England. As transplantation of thyroid glands has not yet proved itself able to give back to the old champions their youthful form, England will have to encourage the young players and make them learn lawn tennis at school under coaching. Trying to find and train the champion of 1930 is the only way for an European nation to win back the Davis Cup and the blue ribbon of the lawn.

In contrast, the English ladies appear to me much more up to date than the men, and are, excluding our Suzanne Lenglen, the best in the world. They are never afraid to take risks, to come to the net and volley.

It is "Suzanne's" great influence which has caused the improvement. One finds now many of your English girls who play a strong attacking game and are potential champions.

As a consequence of their good volleying, it is possible to play better mixed doubles in England than in any other country. In France two or three ladies only are first-class partners; in England fifteen at least are good volleyers and are able to play the modern mixed double.

I am obliged to say that I was very fond of the old type of mixed doubles with the lady playing on the base-line. I enjoyed poaching every ball and intercepting my opponent's returns. It was a very attractive game, and I could use to the utmost my speed and court-covering capacities. This form of mixed double is gradu-



JEAN BOROTRA: ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC STROKE.

ally dying out. Amongst the ladies most of the champions and practically all the coming players are consistent volleyers in a mixed game. I have heard people say that mixed doubles are not mixed any more, and are becoming bad men's doubles. I don't think they are right, for a mixed double must not be played exactly like a men's double. The man must always take more than his own side of the court. He has to stand a little back, and be ready to take and kill all the lobs, while his partner, who plays very near the net, crosses the court immediately she is well lobbed. I personally think that this is the right way of playing a mixed double, as no lady player, except Suzanne Lenglen, can step back quickly enough on a deep lob.

Very few people nowadays will deny that lawn tennis is a very athletic game. A long five-sets match, in which you follow every ball to the net, is exhausting. The American players understood very wisely the necessity of a ten minutes' rest at the end of the third set, and it is a custom we ought to adopt.

I have played practically every sport—Rugger for a famous French club, l'Aviron Bayonnais, Soccer in the first Polytechnique eleven, I am an adept at pelota, and have sometimes been successful as a hundred and four hundred yards runner—yet I have never found a sport harder to play than tennis, nor one which asks for greater physical training. In my own opinion a hard five-sets match of modern attacking tennis taxes the human energy to its utmost, and requires more stamina than any other game. A tournament player has often to play two or three hard matches a day, whereas football is only played once or twice a week. To keep your tennis form and stay at the very top you

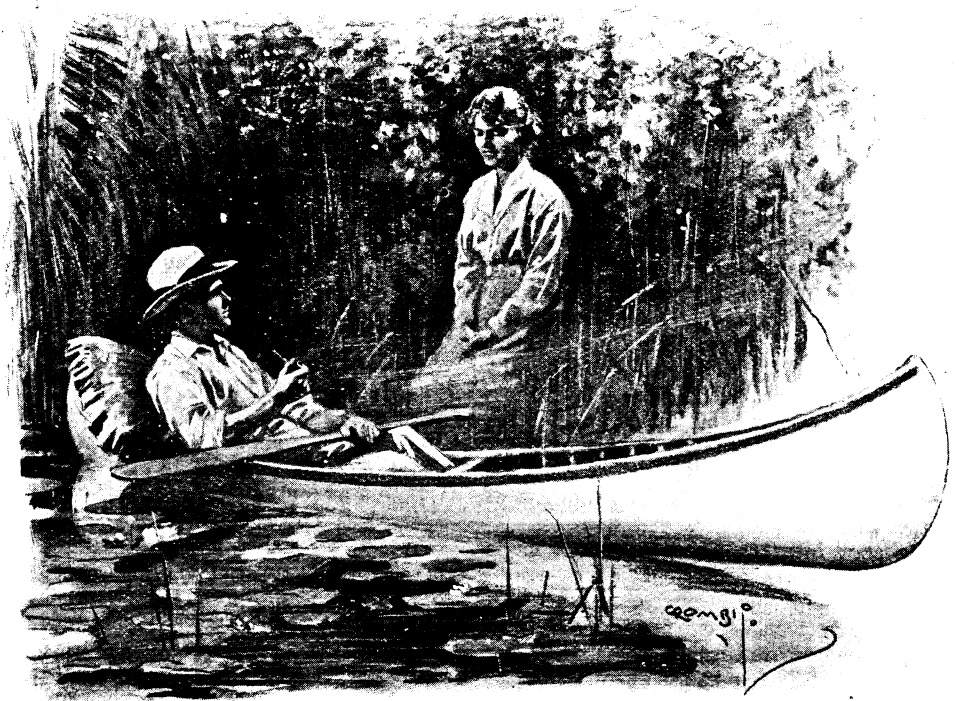
have to be a very strong athlete, and there cannot be a better illustration of this than Gerald Patterson, the new champion. He is built like a prize-fighter, and his physical power is one of the main factors of his successes.

To attain this great athletic proficiency I believe one must be an adept at many other sports. Although injuries received on the football field kept me away several weeks from the tennis courts, I believe that, on the whole, football benefited my tennis in improving my stamina and wind. Of course running would be also a splendid training, but by no means so interesting as football. It is not improbable that the tennis champion of the future will have to be trained like a Carpentier or a Dempsey, for a purse of five hundred thousand dollars.

I have already said that all kind of sports are good for training. Although dancing may be considered by some people as a real sport, I believe that one obtains poor results in training by dancing till late hours.

To conclude, I will settle a very controversial point of which I heard many people speak at Wimbledon—that is, the reason which makes me wear a cap when I play tennis. It is neither a skull cap, as some said, nor a means of preventing my "perruque" from flowing in the air after a strong jump—my hair is really mine. As I have no time, when jumping before the net, to brush away the rebel locks which come before my eyes, I need something to hold my hair. I thought of the cap which my countrymen wear in the Pyrénées. Now it has become like a mascot to me, and I am proud to wear on the courts the emblem of my native Basque country, in my opinion the most picturesque part of my beautiful France.





"The dream of Agnes smiled at him, and did he hear her say, or did he *feel* her say, 'Of course, Ralph, it's really me. It was really me before.'"

# THE WOOD OF SEEN DREAMS

By DOUGLAS NEWTON

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

CARDEN went into the jungle tangle that some of his people called the "Forest of Seen Dreams," and others "Wood of Love." Perhaps both meant the same thing; many thought so, but then your Brazilian is a sentimental creature. Ralph Carden had no opinions either way. He just went in.

He did remember, as he drove his canoe beneath the arabesque of vines, with their heliotrope and daffodil-yellow flowers, that he ought to be carrying the tail feathers of a hyacinthine macaw. Unless one carried the tail feathers of a hyacinthine macaw in

magic places, the *curupira* (evil spirit) invariably turned one into a jaboty turtle. Carden grinned as he span his light craft along the canoe-path under the mat of vines, and into the deep, hushed, sunless heart of the wood. The Senhorita Iola Maria Cravo would think twice about marrying a jaboty.

But *was* he going to marry the Senhorita Iola? She certainly did not know it—officially—yet. And now he was a little uncertain himself. Idiotic for a man of his stamp to become uncertain just when he *was* certain. But then it had been idiotic to

think of Agnes Cheyney after having forgotten all about her for three years.

Why think of a girl like that at all, especially when one wanted to think determinedly about another woman? Why should she occur to the mind—unless, of course, one put it all down to the preposterous magic of this fantastic wood?

He had thought of her here, of course. He had come into the place against the weighty warnings of his mayodomo, just as he was doing to-day, because he wanted space and quiet to think—to think of the Senhorita Iola, her father's importance, and the significance of his marriage with her. He had settled himself down, with a pipe, in his canoe to think weightily of her and all she meant, and he had thought of Agnes instead.

He shot into the little lake that made the heart of this magical wood—really one could easily believe in magic when one rode like a feather on that silent pool. It had been created for fairies out of sheer beauty. One came on to it abruptly out of the green-black sunless gloom of the canoe-paths, out of their deep and massive silence. The magic of the place had made them silent. There was no racket of insects or the chattering and calling of birds and beasts, and in all the waters of this place no snake or fish or alligator broke surface with a splash.

The lake burst on one in a silent explosion of beauty. It was so tiny that the sun could not get down to its waters, but, over the tree-tops, laid a wash of brilliant, brazen gold across the summits on the further side, shining on tall umbrella heads of scarlet, blue and yellow blossom and turning them to fantastic beacons of flame. This bold light sent filtering down towards the water a faint and mealy glory that flooded the cup of the lake with a subtle and shining fairy radiance.

Tall, austere, and as solid as cliffs the trees massed round the pool, and the vines on them hung down like fabulous scarves, jewelled with flowers so abandoned in their colour that they had all the splendours of a spectrum made of gems. In the still polished waters trees and vines, jewel flowers and the thick, shining swath of gold along the tree-tops shone delicately mirrored.

A fairy place, certainly. The place of places to think of Iola and his marriage, and—Agnes. Good Heavens, the thought of Agnes was coming back already! It had

been over there, under that vine thick with flowers of iris-blue and smelling like honey and limes subtly commingled, that he had seen her. . . . But no, he mustn't be an ass. He hadn't seen her. How could he, with her several thousand miles away? Thought of her—yes, thought of her was better.

Thought of her, of course, that was the sensible way to put it. But was there ever a thought so intimate, a dream so real? He had been lolling back on the cushions, smoking, trying to concentrate on the practical and blissful side of a marriage with so important a girl as the Senhorita Iola, and he had looked up, and there was the girl he hadn't seen for five years—hadn't thought of for three.

Queer! So vivid was the—the dream that she seemed to be sitting there (on a mangue root, no doubt), looking down at him, smiling at him. There was the same old brave, candid, rather boyish friendship in her look, and something more—something deeper and more sumptuous and more gentle in her eyes; but that must have been sheer imagination. He hadn't remembered that look. In fact, he didn't see how a kid of sixteen could have looked like that—too much wisdom and worldly knowledge and strength in it.

But, now he came to think of it, she hadn't been at all like the kid he had remembered. Like, but not like. The slim, leggy, coltish grace had gone; something more mature and fine was there. The same strange white skin—lovely skin—and corn-coloured hair, of course; a slimness—yes, but not the same; the same deep blue eyes, candid, honest, laughing, jolly, but not quite the same. Again, more knowledge in them, a depth, a serenity and a trust that spoke of a noble maturity overlying the clean, fine sweetnesses of youth. And—and by Jove, her hair was up, and her skirt was long! She'd grown up. He checked his canoe and stared at the patch of iris-coloured flowers. As he had seen her under those flowers she was *grown up*, and he had never seen her, herself, grown up.

He was quite startled. How could this thing have been? He had last seen her as a kid, and feminine sixteen is redoubtably kiddish to masculine twenty. She had been his kid chum—the only one who had any sort of human feeling for the rough, loutish, rather overbearing doctor's son he had been. The only one who had

believed there was something in him. The only one who had given him moral support—when he needed it badly—in his vague, big dreams of a splendid future overseas.

She may not have understood half of the pioneer heroics he poured out—or did she? There was always something quick, intelligent, and discerning in her—but merely to talk to her had helped to stiffen him. A fine kid, a fine pal, nothing more, she was too young. But why had she grown up in—in his dream?

He told himself that of course she would grow up in his mind. It was five years since he had seen her, and his mind naturally and automatically fitted her out as it fancied the years would deal with her. But somehow his mind would not allow him to think this. It also finally floored him by demanding why he should have thought of her at all.

“Must be the magic of the place,” said Ralph Carden, grinning, and not believing it a bit, and he began to pull towards the iris flowers. And then he said, to show how superior he was to local superstition: “Must be careful about this magic. Iola and her father go to Rio by the first train to-morrow, and I’ve settled nothing. Unless I see old Cravo to-night, I shall probably never marry Iola. I must see to it that no spells are put on me.”

The grin that accompanied these words faded a little, and again he stopped paddling. After all, perhaps it wasn’t wise even to monkey with—with these thoughts. It was because of what had happened a week ago, because he had so suddenly and inexplicably thought of Agnes, that he had driven this vital matter of marriage up to the last moment. A week ago he had been ready to propose formally to Senhor Cravo for the hand of his daughter. He had, in fact, resolved to do so at the first opportunity. The whole thing had been settled in his mind. And then he had seen—no, remembered Agnes, and since then he had dilly-dallied like a positive ass, had put off going to Cravo’s estate for no valid reason at all.

He must not let that folly overcome him again. He must think out the whole thing, his settlements, the whole of the contract as the Brazilian law ordained. (He was tying up under the iris-coloured creeper as he thought this wisdom.) It would also be a happy idea to arrange to join the Cravos in Rio in a month or so’s time. That would be jolly; he’d like to see Iola

amid the vivid gaieties of the capital. And then he’d be introduced to the Cravo relatives in the Government, useful people who would help him a great deal in the future work he had planned.

Cushions were at his back now, his pipe was drawing well, the thick scent of honey and limes fell like a caress on his senses. He was comfortable, and thinking in his old habitual sureness. It was a good plan, this marriage. Iola was a nice girl. The Cravos were of old grandee stock—good blood. Iola was probably as clever as the most modern of high schools in Rio could make her, and pretty—not with Agnes’s queer, deep quality of beauty. Ah, he had caught that in time! Agnes creeping in. He must stop that.

He lifted his head and sniffed at the sedative and enrapturing scent from the iris flowers. Lovely stuff! What did the dagoes call it? Oh, “The Melter of the Heart.” The Portuguese name had a richer sound, but that was the literal meaning. “Poetic beggars, these dagoes,” he thought. “Melter of the Heart! It fits in with the name of the wood, ‘The Wood of Seen Dreams’—more magic!”

He grinned and told himself this was not practical business. He got back to Iola and the marriage. A good thing in every way, this marriage. Of course he could stand without Cravo and his political influence and the money and land that would come through the only child. It would naturally mean something, help him enormously in the great plans he had made. No doubt at all about that. At the same time he could do without Cravo. He was big enough, he had the power to do all he wanted himself. Yes, he had forced his way into a position that counted, not only on The River, not only in Brazil, but in the world. The world knew Carden of Brazil. He’d made the most of his short time. A bit startling for those at home in Greenlanes, that. They hadn’t expected anything at all from the doctor’s lout. Nobody had seen the quality in him—except Agnes.

Agnes again! All the same, Agnes *had* seen it. She had felt the “something” in him that the others had missed, had been attracted by it, had encouraged him in it. Hadn’t she sort of—sort of shown that when he saw her the other day? Hadn’t she let him know that she was glad, that she knew he had made good, and, better, had always known he would. But

that was absurd. That suggested he had talked—well, communicated, rather—with her, who was thousands of miles away, when he had only remembered her—only remembered her. But it was strange how near and real she had seemed, how *actual* she had been. Almost those thousands of miles might have been annihilated. He might have been talking to her. Almost she might really have been there, under the iris-coloured flowers, as—as she was *now*. . .

As she was now!

He stared at the iris-coloured flowers, and he said, or was it his mind said, "Hallo, it was you—it is you, Agnes!"

And Agnes, sitting under the iris flowers, the—the dream of Agnes smiled at him, and did he hear her say, or did he *feel* her say, "Of course, Ralph, it's really me. It was really me before. You can see I'm not the same as the kid I was. And it's really you, or am I only dreaming rather—real?"

"I must be dreaming rather real, too," he smiled. "It's the magic in this place." His grin was sceptical, ironic, even in his dream. "It is 'The Wood of Seen Dreams,' you know."

"I see," she cried. "Of course, that's why."

"But we're dreaming," he said desperately, with a dreamer's seriousness of conviction. "I'm dreaming, and presently I'll wake up."

"But it's real, too," she said with a sort of breathless gladness. "It's a dream, and real—I can see it is. I never saw you as brown as that, or with that scar on your temple."

"No," he answered (but he couldn't say if he made use of spoken words). "That was a dago knife. I never even wrote home about that, naturally."

"Why didn't you go on writing, Ralph?" she asked.

"I meant to, but work got hold of me. You know how it is. I was always saying 'Next mail,' and next mail found me so deep in things that—that it was always next mail."

"You were going ahead; but of course you were—you were made to. I never doubted it."

"No, you never did," he agreed. "But I wonder how you knew. You were only a kid."

"A woman kid," she smiled at him. "They know more than knowledge tells

them, Ralph. They feel things. I felt the something in you; you had a force, a direction. I knew you must be big."

"But others didn't. Why didn't they feel it, too?"

"Oh, *they* weren't the same." She seemed to stare at him as though half hoping, half fearing he would understand that. "Of course they couldn't see." She smiled a little at the uncomprehension of his face. "Lots of people don't see things which—which one thinks obvious."

"Such as?" he asked.

"Oh, well, let's get back to facts," she said softly. "Tell me about you."

"Oh, well, as to that, look here. Did you get my last letter? I sent it about June 19—. It was never answered."

She stared at him, eyes suddenly bright.

"That's it, of course," she cried. "It's somewhere in the Dead Letter Office. We left Greenlanes the December before."

"Left Greenlanes!" he cried. "Left the Manor!"

"Had to," she said sadly. "The smash came. Too much family, too many mortgages, and too little income. We were on the way to the crash even before you left."

"Poor kid! I never imagined—I always looked up to you, we all did. All of you in the Manor seemed so above the world's cares and affairs, a sort of rooted tradition, a hierarchy going on for ever and coming from for ever. Poor kiddie! Tell me about it."

Curious how this dream in a South American wood could be so circumstantial. He really believed what he heard, what he dreamed, just as he really believed she was there before him. Absurd, of course. Even though he dreamt he knew it to be absurd. But why had he already noticed that the clothes marked a change in her condition? Neat clothes, clothes that realised her strong, candid personality, but not the smart clothes of his memory; these were the clothes of a worker, really.

"Oh, it's all rather trivial," she went on. "We smashed, as many old families smash these days. Some of us married and escaped. Some got jobs."

"You?"

Why was he suddenly anxious?

"A job," she smiled. "But let's get back to you."

"Why not marriage for you?" He was puzzled, and his plain speaking seemed natural to the dream. "You were—*are* really beautiful!"

"You think so, you really do?" she cried, and for a moment her face glowed, and was more beautiful than ever. Then a reticence stronger than the candour of a dream conquered her. She said evenly: "I—I preferred a job. I always wanted to do things, you remember. You haven't forgotten how I envied you. And now about you? Tell me the things I've only guessed about you."

"Can't you see them?" he said. "This is a dream. Can't you see them?"

"No, you've got to tell me."

"Oh, well, you know I came up to the Jacunda as a sort of superior office-boy. I sweated over the desk work and did all the odd jobs that my honoured superiors, with heat languor and jungle fever in their blood, thought it better for youth to do. It is the routine, but it was beastly. Then I went up to a place called Pajee."

"You sent the last letter I had just as you were going up. You said a man had been killed there."

"Bragged of it, maybe," he smiled. "I was rather proud in my heroics then. But Pajee explains why I did not write—Pajee was rather a busy place. As a matter of fact, not one but five men had been killed at Pajee. It has a good climate, but its Indians were bad. Years before, when they knew not white men, and were trusting, a white man had come among them. He was a bad hat, and swindled them as his nature ordained. He and the four good hats who followed paid for that."

"But they didn't kill you, those Indians?"

"It was expected. The office on the Jacunda tried to stop my going. It was even suggested that this outlying division should be closed down, in spite of its good rubber yield, because it was so dangerous and costly. But I got my way, and went up, and—and I suppose the thing you saw in me came out then, for I changed things at Pajee."

"Tell me," she said. "We're dreaming and can speak plainly. Tell me how."

"I went up, I found out what tribe had done the murders, and I went straight to their village."

"With a fighting force?"

"Well, if you like. Five scrappily-armed dago peons, all of a-tremble, went with me. But I didn't really need 'em. The mere fact that a white man had the nerve to walk straight into their midst seemed to take the wind out of the Indians. The whole

tribe simply stood and gaped at me, funkled me, too—thought I had some sort of magic about me."

"They were armed? How many were there?"

"Oh, yes, armed all right—spears and blowpipes, and bows and their seven-foot reed arrows, you know. There were about five hundred fighting men, I should say. Of course they ought to have wiped me and the dagoes off the face of the earth. But—well, they just didn't. I got through."

She looked at him, past him, eyes brooding. She was seeing, he vaguely felt, his tall, square figure moving into that jungle village, the mighty trees round, and the little leaf roofs that made the huts under the trees, and the mob of naked red men standing about the clearing, staring at him, not one of them daring to raise spear or blowpipe for fear of that "something" that came out at them and dominated them from the figure in white ducks that moved so calmly among them.

"What did you do to the murderers?" she asked.

"Hanged 'em," he said.

"There?"

"Oh, yes, from the big 'saint' tree they used as a town hall."

"They gave them up?"

"I ordered them to give them up. I named them. I spoke their crime, they could not deny it, so I hanged them before the tribe. The lesson had to be brought home."

"And nobody threw a spear?"

"I shouldn't be alive now if that had happened. It would have broken the spell. They'd have massacred us all if somebody had given a lead."

She stared at him and suddenly laughed. She was seeing him sitting there in the jungle gloom amid the spears—a lonely white figure whom any man could stab, whom no man dare stab. He was sitting there calmly, his face aloof and firm, the eyes under the powerful forehead dark, resolute, and dominant. She knew that glance. It had been called uncouth and vulgar in Greenlanes, and it had been recognised by the primitive men of the jungle as the glance of might.

"Why do you laugh?" he asked.

"I was thinking. What affronts the civilised is power in the bush. Well, you hanged them, and then?"

"I went back to Pajee and started work."

"And succeeded?"

"Well, yes, there was no more trouble, and in a few months it was paying. I said it was rich in rubber, didn't I? There was no reason why it should not pay. It only wanted proper handling."

"Only that?" she smiled. And in that was summed up the difference between the lack of proper handling that had made the Pajee Division of Jacunda Developments a very bad debit on the balance sheets and the genius that had turned the scale.

For Agnes understood, and Ralph Carden, though it was only a dream, thrilled at the old joy of being understood by her. She recognised that it was the strange quality of command in him that had worked the miracle. She knew that it was the instinctive "something" within him that

had enabled him to dominate and win the natives, that had enabled him to treat them squarely, to develop a sour land fairly, to administer and build up with the large, sure gestures of a born commander, a born pioneer.

She and she alone of his intimates and his acquaintances recognised the genius that had lifted him above the ruck, that would lift him always above the ruck. No other man, no other woman, certainly not Iola, could get through to the real *him*, could react so on him. Iola! He was suddenly conscious that he should think more of Iola, that he should break off this queer dream for the sake of Iola. It wasn't fair to her. And yet somehow he felt that he was really being fair by being unfair to her—that he was getting a new angle on this marriage question. And also he didn't want to break off, did not want to lose Agnes's strong, sweet presence in waking. She said:

"And you went on working at Pajee, making good?"

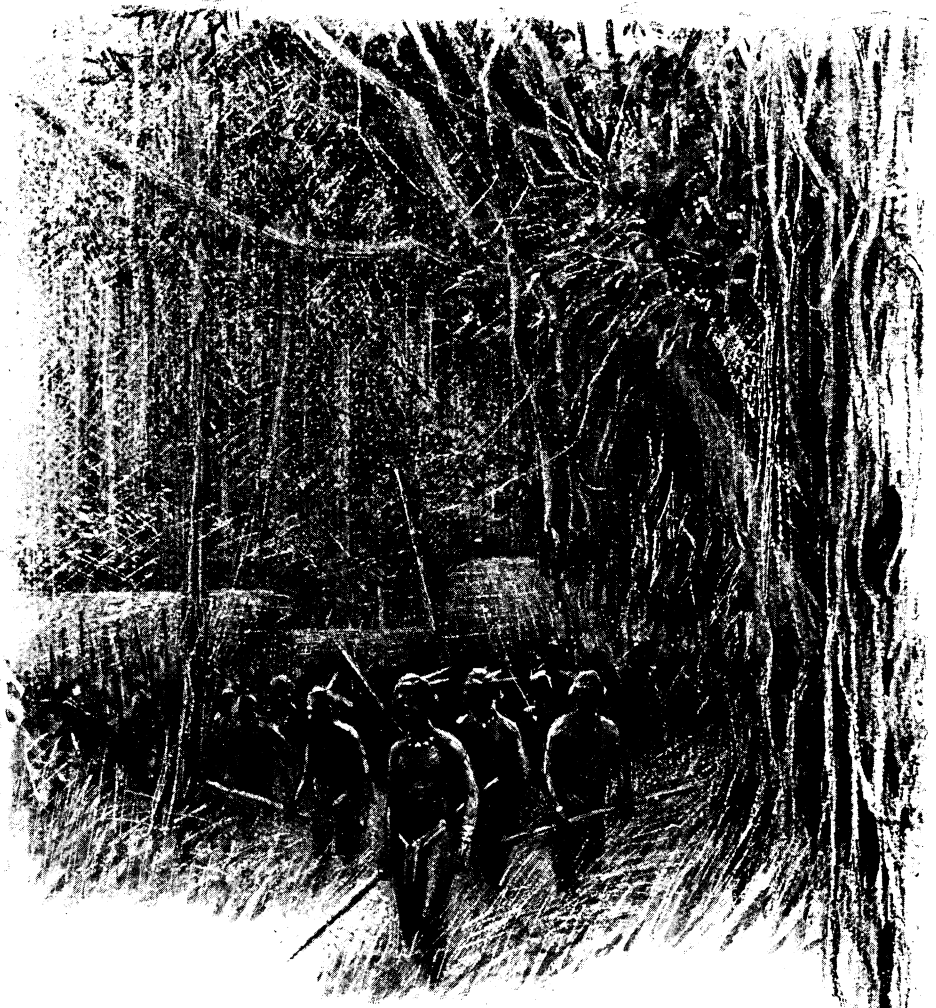
"Too well," he smiled. "For nine months

I was a sort of pet, a sort of successful joke—the young fool who had gone up to Pajee and conquered where wisdom had failed. Then the others began to get jealous. It is a



"I found out what tribe had done the murders, and I went straight to their village."





"Not one of them daring to raise spear or blowpipe."

mistake to be too successful if you value the friendship of men. At first they merely sneered, then they began to hunt for reasons explaining why I was a danger to them and their official returns. It wasn't hard to find an excuse. It was soon entered in reports that I was having a malignant effect on the natives. I was enticing all the best workers away by my pampering and so forth and so on. The rest of the estates were being drained for me."

"Was it a fact?"

"It was, only I didn't pamper. The Indians seemed naturally to take to me. It wasn't because I didn't hold them with a strong rein. I stood no nonsense from them, but I did understand them. Somehow their customs and ways of looking at things were plain to me, and I could treat them

on their own terms. And according to their lights I was fair with them. Funny how a little thing like that counts. I had Indians from beyond the Amazon itself coming to me to get advice."

"I don't think it a little thing," said Agnes. "It seems a big thing to me—the thing that is the difference between a big and an ordinary man. But I understand—that was always in you. Go on. What was the upshot with your colleagues?"

"The Anglo-Saxon one. They decided that it would be best for all concerned if I was promoted to a fine fat post where my effectiveness could be entirely and successfully suppressed."

"You saw through that?"

"A blind man could have done so. As politely as they had suggested the transfer, I declined it. That stirred up things. They sent along a Para director to persuade me. When he found he could not, he grew hot in the collar, took a high hand, and asked me if I realised the alternatives to such a refusal.

"I said I not only realised them, but intended to take them, and I tendered my resignation there and then. He was rather taken aback, but had reached a pitch where he could not climb down. So I left then, not waiting even for my six months."

"Well?"

"Well, I didn't go to the workhouse. Having made friends with the Mammon barbarity, so to speak, I rather fell on my feet. The headman whose lands ran along the border of Pajee gave me concessions—good land, rubber, timber and growing grounds. I did well there—in fact, in a year I had bought Pajee. Nothing startling about that. The Indians still came to me. No rubber-gatherers would walk the Pajee estradas, and the land went sour and to weed. It was because I did not like this, because I was fond of Pajee, that I bought it. And then—and then I went on buying. I'd got the habit, I suppose, and I seemed to have the knack of making good."

"And your old firm, the Jacunda Developments?"

"I'm Jacunda Developments now. It all seemed to come my way, just naturally. The thing that was in me, that you always saw in me, Agnes, made me go on. I worked straight through until I was on the Amazon bank. And it wasn't all getting riches and land."

"It couldn't be," she whispered. "I know you. You build up as you grow."

"Yes," he said, "I'm like that. The thing in me makes me put something into it for others. I've sweetened this great track, organised it, made it healthy. It knows what transport is now, and roads and railways and how the water-paths can serve. And there's something like justice in it, too, even in a dago land, and there are some of the sweets of life. It isn't all grab for the top and misery for the lower dog. It isn't heaven yet, my land, but it's several degrees further away from hell than when I came to it."

"You needn't have said that," she smiled. "Don't I know you?"

"Better than anybody," he answered.

"It's because you know—it's because of you—you that have been in me, even though I seemed to forget the memory of our talks, remaining always with me, that I am what I am, my land is what it is. I'd forgotten, Agnes, but now I'm remembering and seeing. Forgetting on the surface, I have never forgotten in my heart."

"I've never forgotten, Ralph, on the surface or in the heart."

He looked at her, and how real was this dream, and more than real, for he could see deeper than the surface! He could see that in her heart which she had never shown him—the child love that a child knew how to hide, that had now grown glorious with her superb womanly growth.

"No," he said, "I see. You would never forget, not for a minute. You are not the sort. You love me. You always have!"

"Yes," she answered, "I always have, I always will. I can tell you this, because it is only a dream."

"There is a magic in it, too," he smiled. "It is a dream and more than a dream. It has brought us true knowledge of each other. It has told me I love you, too, Agnes."

"But not always?"

"Not always like this, my dear," he smiled. "But in my heart, always." He thought of Iola—deliberately thought of Iola—and said again with absolute certainty: "I have always loved you, if I didn't always know."

"There is no one else?"

"There never was anyone else, my dear," he smiled, and he didn't even think of Iola.

"Oh, Ralph, Ralph, my dearest," she cried, and he saw she was crying, "come home to me—I've waited so long!"

"I'm coming," he said. "Give me your address."

She gave him her address—a little flat which she shared with a girl from the office where she worked. It was set in a street in a congested city district he had never heard of.

"I'm coming," he said. "I'm coming straight to you—"

Something rapped, wood on wood—his pipe falling in the canoe. He sat up. The thick, jewel-flowered, scented silence of the pool was about him. The smell of honey and lime was about him. He looked towards the iris-coloured flowers. Agnes was no longer there.

No longer there—only this South American

forest pool was there—but he repeated the address she had given him, and looked round the pool with a soft smile.

“The Wood of Seen Dreams,” he said quietly. “Yes, it *has* magic. I have dreamed and I have seen, and have seen right.”

His mayodomo came fussing down to the landing stage as Carden’s canoe came up. He was scared and anxious. He could only say: “Senhor! Excellency! Senhor!”

“You thought I was lost?” smiled Carden.

“Senhor . . . so long a time away . . . and that wood. It is a bad place.”

“Not bad,” smiled Carden. “Its magic is a good magic.”

“But you know it has magic, senhor?”

“Yes, much magic—the Wood of Seen Dreams, the Forest of Love—its magic is exactly as its names say.”

“Then—then you are all right, senhor?”

“More than all right,” said Carden, landing.

“That is so,” said the mayodomo. “Then—but the senhor will know that his launch has been waiting to take him to Senhor Cravo’s this hour. What will your excellency? Will you go in it at once, or will you dine?”

“I will dine, and not go in it. I stay at home to-night.”

“Senhor!” cried the mayodomo, for he had at least a suspicion as to what Carden’s visits to the Cravo estates might mean.

“Senhor, you do not visit Senhor Cravo?”

“It is the magic of the Wood of Seen

Dreams,” said Carden, smiling. “I do not leave the house to-night. But to-morrow, yes. You will pack my clothes. I go to Para to-morrow. Steamboat clothes, Juan, for I sail for my home at once.”

“Sail for your home—now?” cried the mayodomo. “Is it because of that wood you have—?”

“Gone mad,” smiled Carden. “No, I have gone sane. The wood has given me sanity.”

And he knew the full extent of his sanity a few weeks later when he walked into a little flat set in a district he had never heard of outside his dream.

An Agnes changed from the adorable kid he had left at home, an Agnes of fine, clear, sweet maturity, such as he knew, such as the dream had made him know, sprang up, crying:

“Ralph, Ralph, you here! How did you find me?”

“Because you told me,” he smiled.

“I told you?” She was suddenly glowing in exquisite confusion.

“In a dream on a magic pool in a magic wood,” he smiled. “Don’t you remember?”

“Then it was—*was* more than a dream!” she breathed, her breast heaving and her eyes bright.

“And there was more in it than your address, dear,” he said. “Do you remember what?”

And her eyes told him that she remembered, even before she went into his arms to confess.



## A REVELATION.

**A** MIDST the sound of feet  
I heard a child cry,  
Down in the lamp-lit street—  
'Twas sorrow passing by

I bowed my head until,  
Amidst the gathering gloom,  
The child’s voice grew still—  
For love was in the room.

SYBIL RUEGG.



“He also watched Kemp. It afforded him endless entertainment. The man was quietly working himself to death.”

# THE WET BLANKET

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

IT is difficult to describe Bowker.

Outwardly he was sufficiently unremarkable to cheat analysis. Small, quick, busy about being busy, you may find his prototype in any City office. But that is precisely where you would never find Bowker. It is the first peculiarity to be noted in the man that he shunned the environment to which he so obviously belonged. It was ever the “great outside” for him, the home of big men and big things, where, by the way, he looked uncommonly like a black-beetle strayed from its fastness in the light of day.

From this it must not be inferred that Bowker was incapable of holding his own in the strenuous sphere of his choice. He chose it for the very reason that amongst men of his own calibre his cunning would be met, perhaps submerged, by a like quality in others, whereas amongst the comparatively unintelligent he passed for a man “with a headpiece.”

In dispute, for instance, his tongue took

the place of his fist with surprising effect. A large, more or less inarticulate man knows what to do with one of his own species, but how is he to treat a physical worm who in a few well-chosen words flays his adversary alive and holds the carcass up to public ridicule? Bowker came to be known in the toughest camps as a man best left alone.

At work he contrived to make as good a living as most by manual labour in a world of manual labourers, which is something of an accomplishment for a man of five feet four with flat feet and a thirty-inch chest. He had merely plumbed the fundamental truths that brains will tell even in the wielding of a pickaxe, and that, apart from his own particular genius for successful malingering, there was a knack in most things, which, once mastered, gained the utmost effect with a minimum of effort.

Had not the final futility of all human endeavour so impressed him, it is probable that he would have made an excellent

inventor of labour-saving devices. The spectacle of a strong man employing the last ounce of his strength filled Bowker with pitying contempt. He longed to argue with the fellow, show him the error of his ways. And this, during a nomadic career, he came to do. It grew to be his hobby, his mission, if you will, to preach the doctrine of "What's the use?" to assail all forms of honest endeavour with the battering-ram of destructive logic, and watch the effect. It amused him.

From which it will appear that Bowker was not a pleasant sort of person. He was not, though you would never have thought it—at first.

Bob Kemp, for instance, engaged in the pristine struggle for independence, *via* poultry, a few miles out of Sydney, found him a distinct asset for nearly a month. Bowker had tired of wharf-lumping, or wharf-lumping had tired of Bowker, and he had undertaken to watch the incubators and the house for his board and a nominal wage, while Kemp worked about the place or went to town with produce. The position suited Bowker to a nicety. A corrugated iron shed called a house, set in a dusty expanse of nothing in particular, needs little watching. As for the incubators, they gave equally little trouble, and both tasks could be accomplished with no more effort than was necessary to sit in the sun and smoke.

He also watched Kemp. It afforded him endless entertainment. The man was quietly working himself to death. As well as pandering to the wants of countless silly fowl that appeared to indulge in every ailment from "pip" to plain inanition, and produced a grossly inadequate number of eggs in return, he was digging a well. During his spare time, which consisted, at the most, of an hour or two after dark, Kemp was digging a well. And all for what? There were moments when Bowker could have laughed aloud, but he never did. It was contrary to his methods.

"How is it going?" he would ask, his small mouth twisting into a smile as his bone-weary employer dropped into a chair. "Not so bad," was Kemp's invariable response.

"Think you'll strike water?" Bowker enlarged on one occasion.

"May," grunted Kemp. "Worth while trying, anyway."

"I suppose it is," mused Bowker, with a delicate upward inflection of the voice that converted the remark into a question.

Kemp looked up, his tired eyes momentarily alert.

"It'll just about treble the value of this place," he asserted. "Think what it'd mean, water laid on instead of man-handling it." He relapsed into blissful reverie at the prospect. Bowker contemplated the strip of nothing in particular comprising "the place that would be trebled in value," and contrived not to smile.

"Yes," he said. "To be sure, yes."

"And that reminds me," Kemp went on presently. "I've been meaning to make a suggestion to you, and somehow haven't. It's the devil trying to get water and work this place at the same time. Sometimes I'm quite tired of a night—must be getting old or something. What do you say to taking on a bit more than you do at present?"

Bowker appeared to ponder the matter, but in reality he was doing nothing of the sort.

"Do you mean I'm not worth what you're paying me?" he suggested gently.

"Heavens, no!" protested Kemp. "You're doing all you agreed to for the money offered, doing it well. I'm not complaining, but if you care to take a real grip of things, I'd be willing to give you real wages."

"Could you afford it?"

Kemp examined his broken finger-nails. He had made no secret of his position when hiring Bowker, so he could hardly resent the unusual question.

"I'd see that you got your money," he defended.

"I don't mean that," said Bowker; "I know I should get it if you said so. I simply mean, can you afford it?"

"You're thinking of me?"

"Yes."

Kemp flushed.

"Well, rightly, I can't," he confessed. "It's an uphill game, this, and things are not exactly what you could call rosy; but a fellow's got to take a chance if he's to get anywhere, and water's going to be mine."

"Just where do you expect to get?" suggested Bowker in his quiet fashion.

"Well, it's looking rather a long way ahead, and it's the getting there that troubles me at the moment, but I can see things humming here—in time. The birds must pick up before long, eggs are high, birds are high, the market's at the door, and the town's growing. With water, labour would be cut in half——" Kemp leant forward, with the light of enthusiasm

in his eyes. "I'll tell you what I'll do. You take on the well. If we fail, you get standard wages; if we succeed, you get taken into partnership!" He leant back expectant.

The naïve suggestion caused Bowker's mouth to twitch. It was incredible that such fools existed.

"Thanks, no," he said.

"Why?" demanded Kemp.

"Do you really want to know?"

"Yes."

"It's against my principles."

"Partnership?"

"No."

"Then what?"

Bowker drew a deep, satisfied breath. The fellow had asked for it. Very well . . .

"I'll put it to you this way," he said.

"What have you got that I haven't?"

The question plunged Kemp into an unaccustomed sea of thought.

"I don't know what you have," he answered cautiously on coming to the surface.

"What you see," declaimed Bowker with outflung hands—"enough clothes for decency, food, a bed, tobacco."

Kemp was still thinking when Bowker went on—

"You have a certain number of diseased birds, a place, and an infinite amount of worry and work which I do not envy you in the least; but of the good things of this life—leisure to think, see, and do the things you want to, a contented mind, and all the rest of it, where are they?"

"Coming along," said Kemp—"at least, I hope so."

"So do I," echoed Bowker, "sincerely, for your sake. But if and when they do come, what then? You will only have got as far as I have at the present moment. No one can go further. And look at the trouble you will have had in getting there."

Kemp sat staring at him dully.

"You're a proper sea lawyer," he said, "but there's something in what you say. A fellow is a fool to thrash away at a thing, but—he does. Why?"

"Don't ask me," returned Bowker; "that's your business."

"I suppose it must be something," muttered Kemp, groping in the murky alleys of his mind, "something I can't put a name to, anyway," he ended shortly.

"Shall we call it a natural desire for progress?"

"Yes, maybe that's it."

"Well, what is progress? More money, more happiness, what? If you can answer that, you'll have solved the riddle of the universe. What are you all doing with this wonderful progress of yours, but making the world harder and harder to live in?"

"Electric light, telephones, machinery," muttered Kemp, "what's the matter with them? What should we do without 'em?"

"Much as we did before we had them. They've only made life swifter and more complicated. They haven't helped much in the long run."

Kemp sat staring at his gnarled hands. Bowker leant back, puffing his pipe with relish.

"No," he said, "this 'something' that you say makes you keep on keeping on, what is it but an illusion? Take a good look, and it isn't there. Even if you're reduced to calling it work for work's sake, what then? What is work but the curse of Adam? Eliminate the work, and you've rid yourself of a curse, that's all."

"Then you're for doing nothing?"

The question constituted a challenge which Bowker took up with gusto.

"If you like to put it that way. Mind, you asked for this, for my principles, and there they are. Anything wrong with them?"

Kemp gave a sort laugh, and reached for his pipe.

"Oh, I couldn't begin to argue with you," he said. "You've got me tied in a knot with the ends spliced already. I can't think as far ahead, and back and sideways as you do. I daren't, for one thing, and haven't the time for another. There are the birds."

Bowker sighed, and drew from his pocket a small black notebook and a pencil. Here was a case calling for practical demonstration. He proceeded to supply it.

"Concerning these birds," he said. "As you infer, I've had time to think about them. Would you care to know what I've found out?"

"If you've found out anything more than I have about them, I'll lie down and you can walk over me," offered Kemp.

"Very well, then."

There was literally nothing that Bowker could not prove with his notebook and pencil. It was a species of Doomsday Book, a final summing up in the cold light of figures. In it, and by a simple sum of proportion, he had demonstrated to a fence post-hole digger of the plains that bar accidents, and if he persisted in his arduous task at the

present speed, it would be finished in a fraction over three years; that when the fence was completed, it was a ten to one chance that the first post would have begun to rot, and that from a financial standpoint he would be slightly in arrear of the position he occupied at the moment. As to what the fence post-hole digger did about it, the notebook held no record, but he certainly omitted to shoot Bowker, for here he was dealing with Kemp.

In rather less than twenty minutes he had reduced his already harassed employer to a state bordering on mental collapse by proving beyond doubt that, given the most favourable conditions, it was a physical impossibility to live by poultry rearing. He took the table bird as an example, and showed that, unless one had sufficient acreage to grow feed, the bird cost more during its life than it fetched at death.

The argument at first appalled, then fascinated Kemp. He was a simple soul. If the fellow were right, which he certainly was. . . . Kemp's brain reeled. He laughed weakly and went to bed.

At breakfast he was dumb, ate next to nothing, and sat with puckered brow. Bowker was making some cheerful remark about the weather, when, without the slightest warning, his employer's massive fist descended on the table.

"You're right!" he thundered, *à propos* of nothing, and fell to loading his pipe with vicious deliberation. "I didn't sleep last night for thinking about it," he continued between clenched teeth. "I went over the figures again, and they're right. Your whole scheme's right, and I'm wrong. I'm selling out."

And he sold out. The last news concerning him was of his arrest during a drunken brawl up country. The man who bought him out struck water six feet further down and made a success of the place, which, by the way, ultimately went as town lots at an exorbitant figure.

\* \* \* \* \*

There followed the case of the much-blessed immigrant of the bush whom Bowker succeeded in convincing, and with truth, that by the time he had cleared sufficient acreage of giant eucalyptus to support his family, he would be in his grave. Then



"Even the Doomsday Book, with its persuasive columns of 'for' and 'against,' failed to impress."

Bowker made the gross mistake of going to the Islands.

Not that there is anything against this delectable spot, but it was the wrong place for Bowker. It is one thing to preach a doctrine amongst the heathen, and quite another to carry it to its natural home.

He was attracted thither by visions of absolute instead of partial indolence, and for a time, and by the usual methods, he realised them. Then he met Adams, and anyone who has been in Papua knows what that means. There was gold in the mountains, it seemed—so much was established—but Adams happened to have picked up inside information in respect to a district where it literally lay on a dried river-bed waiting to be picked up by the handful. They would take no one with them but the native who had supplied the information, so that expenses would be reduced to the minimum—sufficient for a grub stake, that was all—but unfortunately Adams was not possessed of even that amount at the moment. Yes, he agreed with Bowker's views of life *in toto*. He had seldom met a man so entirely of his way of thinking, but this was an exceptional case. There was no work attached. It was simply a matter of strolling at leisure through some of the grandest country in the world, and returning with a fortune that would render it unnecessary to so much as lift a finger in the future. Look at the thing in its worst possible aspect, say they found no gold—which was, of course, absurd—and what had they lost? Nothing.

Baldly, very baldly, that was the project as set forth by Adams. It may seem incredible that one of Bowker's cunning should have been lured from his cast-iron principles by anything so crude, but it is impossible to convey Adams's subtlety of approach. Unwittingly Bowker had met a past master in the art of which he was merely an able exponent. Also it must be noted that he knew nothing about prospecting, and still less about Papua. He was lured.

Two days later, and following in the wake of a furtive-looking Kanaka with splay feet and an engaging habit of carrying tobacco in his ears, the expedition plunged into the dank silence of the jungle.

For a time there were tracks, so-called, though you would have hardly noticed them, then they camped for the night at a village which Adams rather surprised Bowker by referring to as the starting-point. He had been under the impression that they had started already. During the day

he had contracted aching limbs, sundry scratches from encroaching vegetation, and a curious sensation under his toe-nails; he knew that. But he held his peace. It was not until on the following day, when all signs of tracks had vanished, and Adams had thrust a hatchet into his hand with the brief injunction to help cut their way through an apparently impenetrable tangle of underbrush, that Bowker began to give vent to his feelings.

"I like your 'grandest country in the world,'" he observed in a tone of light badinage that he was far from feeling.

"Takes some beating, doesn't it?" said Adams, the perspiration pouring from him in a torrent. "Thousands of acres of this—valuable timber, most of it—untouched. You'd get more out of that tool if you held it so," he added irrelevantly, illustrating his meaning on the hatchet handle with a hairy maw.

"And I like your idea of 'strolling through' it," supplemented Bowker a little later.

Adams regarded him for a moment through narrowed eyelids.

"Do you?" he said. "Then that's all right."

There was no gainsaying that Adams was not the same person at a bar that he was in the Papuan jungle. Bowker was beginning positively to dislike him.

By nightfall they had won their way to the foothills of a mighty range, glimpsed at intervals through the roof of tangled foliage. The heat, the sense of oppression, were indescribable. When camp was made, Bowker lay where he fell, staring stonily at a luminous fungus. By its ghostly light he saw many things. He wanted to think them out, dispose of them, but it was impossible under the present conditions of physical discomfort. With an oath he tore the boots from his feet and clutched at his toes.

"Jiggers," commented Adams, and, despite Bowker's protestations to the contrary, proceeded to extract the insidious insects with a jack-knife. "Mustn't let 'em get too far in," he explained cheerily during the operation; "they don't know enough to come out when they've finished."

There was something immutable about Adams—the jungle Adams. It frightened Bowker. He had never felt so helpless in dealing with anyone. The man's singleness of purpose and determination were appalling. But one more day of mental and physical torture drove Bowker to summon all his



forces, whatever the result. He began very mildly :

“Are you sure this is worth while ?”

“What ?” said Adams. That was all.

“What ?”

“This,” replied Bowker, staring at his feet.

“Jiggers ? Oh, they’re nothing. Bound to get ’em sooner or later, like fever.”

“No, I mean the whole thing. I’ve been thinking. How do we know. . . .” He was launched. There was no turning back. He talked as even he had never talked in his life. He put pertinent questions, and answered them himself for the simple reason that no one else did. The native blinked, and Adams yawned. Even the Doomsday Book, with its persuasive columns of “for” and “against,” failed to impress.

When he had done, and mopped the moisture from his brow, Adams turned with his slow drawl—

“Feeling a bit cheap, aren’t you ?” he suggested good-naturedly.

Bowker made a noise in his throat and collapsed.

If he had remained in that condition, all might have been well, for Adams was the kindest of men—up to a point. He carried Bowker bodily for a considerable distance the next day, treating him like a sick child. But Bowker continued to air his principles with such insistence that when camp was made, Adams came and stood before him, his long legs apart, his hands on his hips. It was an unconscious attitude of his, denoting that the limit had been reached, but Bowker was unaware of it.

“Have you been like this long ?” inquired Adams.

“If you mean have I been able to sum up a given situation and decide on the best course, I have been like it all my life.”

“Married ?”

“No ; but what has that to do with it ?”

“Anyone dependent on you ?”

“No, why ?”

Adams took a turn of a few paces, thinking deeply, then returned.

“And you think it best to turn back ?”

“I do. You misrepresented this undertaking—”

“We’re after gold,” snapped Adams. “At least, I am, and I thought you were.”

“Yes, but I had no idea the hardships—”

“Call this hardship ?” boomed Adams. “Why, man—but what’s the use of talking ? What you seem to expect is something for nothing, and you won’t find it in this old world.”

“You agreed with my views before we started.”

“About work ? I still agree. As little as possible of that commodity for yours truly, that’s why I don’t feel like packing you any further.”

“You’re leaving me here !” Bowker started into a sitting position.

Adams did not answer at once, but stood looking down on Bowker with grave, discerning eyes.

“You know,” he said slowly, “I can’t see that you’re any use to anyone. Can you ?”

“You’re going to leave me here !” repeated Bowker.

“Not a bit of it. I’m not going to carry you any more, that’s all. We’re coming to some rather stiff country. You want to turn back. All right.”

“You know I can’t go—alone.”

“It isn’t as if you were really sick,” mused Adams. “You’re all right, bar jiggers, and they’re nothing. I’ve never had dealings with your sort before, and you’ve got me beat. But you’re not going to be carried. I know that.”

The rest of this little scene in the green heart of the Papuan jungle is rather distressing, and, for Bowker’s sake, is best left unrecorded. Adams never mentions it. He simply relates that Bowker elected to remain where he was, with his full share of provisions, and be picked up on the return journey. Well, that return journey occurred only two weeks later, and there were enough provisions to have lasted him at least a month. But when, after a pretty strenuous time, Adams reached the spot, bursting with the information that for the first time in history a Kanaka had not lied, and out of the fulness of his heart quite prepared to recognise the partnership, Bowker was not there.

Perhaps he had underestimated the chances of Adams’s return, or over-estimated his own ability to estimate with no one to listen to him. Perhaps— But “perhaps” is a small word and an infinite possibility in Papua.

# THE DAY OF ST. MERAC

By ALAN J. THOMPSON

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HATHERELL

THE Day of St. Mérac is a great day in Puisayonne. Who Mérac was, or what he had done in the remote past, none knew, not even Father Auban, the learned *curé*. Enough that he is among a host of blessed, and equally mysterious, canonised saints, and that on the twenty-second day of September the people of Puisayonne enjoy a *fête glorieux*, to be talked of with much opening of eyes and nodding of heads until the arrival of its successor.

Truly a day of wonders for Puisayonne, this day of their patron saint, and the narrow, irregular streets echo from dawn to midnight with joyous laughter and the sound of eager, dancing feet.

There are so many things to see and to do. The procession, *par exemple*, to the old yellow church for the service in memory of the Saint; the feast of familiar friends, when the wine of Médoc is as plentiful as jesting, and one eats to repletion—and often, alas, to excess!—of the little white almond cakes which M. Boulque, the round-faced baker, has been making for days past.

Later come the lighting of lamps, yellow and red, blue and green, to twinkle at the windows of the tall houses, the fireworks, the music, and the dancing—above all, the dancing on the grass, for which Puisayonne is justly famous.

It was of the dancing and of Michon, her lover, that Elise thought as she faced Dr. de Brassac across the bed on which lay the insensible form of her aunt.

The girl still held in a pendent hand the shabby cloak she had thrown over her finery to run for the doctor, and she was a little breathless yet from hurry and agitation. Her white, oval face, in its setting of lustrous braided auburn hair, wore a dazed expression. It was not easy to realise in a

moment the full significance of the words of the doctor—

“This is no ordinary attack, as formerly, Mam’selle Darreau. The condition of your aunt is critical. Madame Regnier must not on any account be left. It will to-night be necessary for you to sleep in this room.”

Silence had followed these words, broken now by the girl’s quick, indrawn breath.

“But, monsieur, surely—surely my aunt cannot be so ill!” she pleaded. “You see—to-day it is the *fête*, and I have promised . . . I *must* go, if only for—”

De Brassac raised his hand. “*Pardon*,” he said coldly. “One is well aware of the *fête*. But illness, mam’selle, has no respect for *fêtes*. If you must go—well, is there a competent person who would come to release you?”

Elise flushed and bit her lip. “From where, monsieur, is to come that ‘person competent’?” she asked bitterly. “Who is there in Puisayonne who would come to sit beside my aunt to-day, of all days? But there is not anyone; you know that there is not anyone.”

De Brassac shrugged his shoulders. It was true. He had for the minute forgotten that the Widow Regnier, proud, poor, and an aristocrat, was anything but popular in the village.

“It is true, mam’selle,” he said. “Madame Regnier would have done well to be less reticent. Friendships do not always come without sacrificing a little the opinions, the scruples, the—but of what use to deplore that now? Except that it is you, mam’selle, who have so great a disappointment.”

“You mean that it is I who must remain here all the day?” said Elise slowly.

“I see no alternative,” replied de Brassac. “I am sorry.”

Elise gave a little hard laugh. “But of

course you are 'sorry,'” she said. “And I, too, I am 'sorry.’”

She felt that she hated this doctor. Yes, she hated his cold, assured manner, his indifference to the suffering of those to whom he gave his orders. If it had been old Dr. Pons—whom Eugène de Brassac had succeeded two years before—Elise was sure *he* would have been more sympathetic; he would never have permitted a girl to be imprisoned on the Day of St. M<sup>é</sup>rac.

Without doubt he was of great ability, this young—no, this middle-aged—doctor; without doubt he had won much affection as well as gratitude and respect in the *département*; without doubt he had been of unfailing kindness to her and her aunt. Yet she hated him. Also she hated Aunt Sare.

Her glance passed from the grave face of de Brassac, with its firm lips and deep-set brown eyes, to the motionless form of Madame Regnier. Yes, she hated these two. They had come between her and her happiness, these two, and her anger was hot against them. She was, after all, little more than a child.

De Brassac picked up his bag. He realised that nothing *he* could say to the slender, blue-eyed girl, in her pretty white dress, would lessen her disappointment. And if his heart ached for her, she was not to know that.

“Yes,” he said, “it is indeed a misfortune to come on this Day of St. M<sup>é</sup>rac. Now we can but wait for the recovery. Nothing more can be done to help.”

“To help!” Elise caught at the words with a sudden change of manner. “Ah, monsieur, to help! It is so much more than to be sorry! If you would but help so that my aunt might recover quickly! There *must* be some medicine, some injection—something! Try, monsieur, try for—for my sake!”

In her eagerness she dropped the cloak and held appealing hands across the bed. De Brassac looked steadily at her flushed face and shining eyes. For a moment he hesitated, biting his lip, then he shook his head.

“I need no incentive, mam’selle, to do all that is possible,” he answered slowly. “There is nothing more to be done but to wait and to watch.”

The clasped hands that Elise had pressed to her girlish bosom dropped to her sides, and her downcast face was sullen and mutinous. The Doctor suppressed a sigh as he slipped his stethoscope in his pocket.

“I will look in later, mam’selle,” he said.

The girl made no response, and on his way to the door de Brassac paused and put his hand on her shoulder.

“Courage, my child,” he said, in the fatherly manner which he could so well assume. “Is it so long, then, until tomorrow, to other happy days that remain for you and”—he paused, perhaps to take breath—“and for those you—love? Recall, I would recommend you, that here beside the good aunt is your duty. Happiness is good, Mam’selle Darreau, and love is good—ah, but very good—yet duty, it is the best of all.”

His low voice was vibrant with emotion, and his countenance assumed a nobility that touched Elise for the moment with a sense of awe. Only for a moment, then once more aggrieved vexation resumed its sway.

She jerked her shoulder free and walked across the room to the bed. “Duty! Yes, it is a favourite word with you, Doctor de Brassac. All the world knows that!” she said, with a sneer. “It is so with most elderly people, because their duty has come to be their pleasure. With me it is otherwise. With me it is altogether hateful!”

She drew forward a chair and sat down with her back to the Doctor.

De Brassac stood for a few moments in silence, looking at the girl with pity, and something more, in his fine brown eyes. Then, with a scarcely perceptible shrug, he went from the room. A very busy man, he had already given more time than he could afford to the case of Sare Regnier.

## II.

ELISE sat like a statue beside the narrow bed with its insensible burden. She had found the hours of her vigil incredibly long.

From the street came the sound of laughter and hurrying feet. As she had risen to draw the curtains, the distant cheering came from the meadow where the little ones ran their races. Music rose stridently and died away. That would be the band which led the procession to the church.

She was to have walked in that procession with Michon. All eyes would have been upon her—eyes full of admiration, of envy, of surprise.

What was Michon thinking of her now? What would he say to her when they met? With whom was he walking instead of her? Would it be Vivienne Corbier, Odile Lavan, or the fascinating Julie Beliot?

In the big blue eyes of Elise welled slow, smarting tears. It was hard indeed to be separated like this from her lover, the gallant, the handsome, the heroic Michon Ferrenaud, who had chosen her—truth incredible!—when other belles of the countryside were languishing for his regard.

No man had so favoured Elise before. Michon was her first lover. These others might call him fickle, jealous, bad-tempered, if it pleased them. To her he was a king, a god, and the mere touch of his hand on hers thrilled her with ecstasy.

So she thought of Michon as the hours passed, and the condition of Madame Regnier remained unchanged—the same pallor, the same rigidity, the same laboured respiration. Nothing could be done except to keep her warm and to watch.

Elise was renewing the hot-water bottles, when the street-door bell tinkled. She finished her task, the bell tinkling impatiently all the while. Her heart beat fast. Surely there was but one person in Puisayonne who would ring like that.

Yes, it was Michon. He stood with an impatient foot on the doorstep.

"There is, then, somebody in here alive!" he said. "*Ma foi*, Elise, but one began to fear you were all gassed or ascended, *sans cérémonie*, to the saints!"

M. Ferrenaud was evidently in high spirits. His black eyes sparkled, his broad, sanguine face was aglow with excitement. A light brown suit and a fawn waistcoat, with little pink spots on it, adorned his sturdy figure. In his buttonhole was a large pink carnation, and a diamond twinkled in his pink silk cravat.

He was without doubt a magnificent sight, yet Elise could not help wishing he had worn the shabby suit of horizon blue in which she had first learned to admire him. For *le brave* Michon had won much honour in the War, and had returned in triumph to his native village, his broad breast aglitter with medals, the sleeves of his tunic adorned with chevrons and badges innumerable.

But Michon was now a civilian again, assisting his father in the stained-glass factory, which had branches at Toulouse, Castres and Puisayonne.

The Ferrenauds were people of importance, and although Madame Regnier despised them for their vulgarity, she could not conceal her gratification when Michon began to pay attention to her niece. The girl herself had not yet ceased to marvel

at the choice her lover had made, and she glanced at him timidly now as he clasped her pink fingers in his big brown hand.

"*Allons, ma mie!*" he said, his bold eyes full of admiration, as they swept from the girl's beautiful face to her dainty dress. "Have you, then, no word for the faithful Michon, who gives not a word of scolding to the partner who disappoints this morning, but comes to escort her to the abode of Monsieur Duboisson and the repast magnificent of St. Mérac?"

Elise, her eyes downcast, her voice a little unsteady, explained why she would be unable to accompany him to the house of M. Duboisson.

"An attack of the heart!" exclaimed Michon, frowning. "Name of a name, but was there ever a woman so inconsiderate as this Madame Regnier? Does she realise, one would ask, that it is the Day of St Mérac?"

"I am afraid that she realises nothing at all," replied Elise sadly. "She remains always lost to consciousness. Dr de Brassac has ordered that she should be watched all day and, it maybe, all through the night."

"Bah!" said Ferrenaud contemptuously. "He is an old woman, this same Doctor! How people can believe his fables, I do not comprehend. There are, it appears, many fools in Puisayonne."

He spoke with a venom that made the girl start and withdraw her hands.

"But how unjust!" she exclaimed indignantly. "And it is always thus that you speak of Dr. de Brassac! Why is it, Michon, that you are so unfair?"

Her lover made a grimace. He was, it appeared, somewhat ashamed of his outburst. "I dislike his manner, that is all," he said.

He would have admitted to no one that he was jealous of de Brassac, that he grudged him his place in the affection of Puisayonne. The Doctor had served with distinction in the Army, but he (Michon) had won much greater glory. It was he who had brought honour to Puisayonne. Yet Puisayonne, while it acclaimed him loudly enough, gave him neither the affection nor the gratitude it gave to the Doctor. Michon had always grudged de Brassac his popularity, but he had come lately to hate him for it.

"Let us not speak of this Doctor," he said impatiently. "Put on your hat, little one, and *en avant* to the feast! Quickly, I beg

of you! Would you disappoint me again?" He caught her hands and held her gaze with the ardour that Elise found so intoxicating. Truly he was a man, Michon Ferrenaud, who made light of obstacles. Yet the poor Aunt Sare—

"You know I would never willingly do that, Michon," she murmured. "But how can I leave my aunt, alone, so ill?"

"Just for one little hour, that is all I ask of you," said Michon firmly. "What is it that you do yonder but sit idle beside the bed? Is there any change important within an hour? Scarcely! Place the medicine at the hand of Madame, your aunt, so that, should she wake, it is within reach. She is not yet so ill that she cannot take her medicine, *hein?* I know these attacks. Bad while they last, I grant you, but of no danger to a woman of middle age."

"Ye-es," said Elise doubtfully. "As you say, Michon, but the poor Aunt Sare looks—oh, she looks so strange! I——" She broke off, struck by a sudden idea. "Will you not come to see her?" she asked eagerly. "Understanding these attacks, you will judge if——"

"No, no!" interrupted Michon hurriedly. He drew back from the door, his colour fading. Brave enough in the hour of excitement, he was no domestic hero, and the very thought of entering the sick-room alarmed him.

"It—it would not be *convenable*," he stammered. "*Point du tout*. If—— But of what use to argue? Once more I ask whether you come with me or not? Choose quickly, if you please. There is not any more time for me to waste here."

Elise caught her breath. Michon looked so stern, his eyes so fierce, that she was filled with alarm. In this mood he was capable of anything, even of a quarrel. A quarrel! The idea was indeed dreadful and not to be endured.

Surely to run to the house of the hospitable mayor for a little while would not matter. How should it? Aunt Sare would continue in this sleep of stupor for many hours. That was certain, or almost certain. And even if she did happen to wake, it would be but to drink the medicine beside her.

To remain so useless at her bedside was absurd, and the aunt herself would be furious if there should be any—any upset with Michon. Violent emotion was bad for the aunt, so it would be wrong as well as foolish not to go.

The girl put a fluttering hand on her lover's arm. "And you will be satisfied with one hour?" she asked. "You promise—you will not—keep me?"

"*Pardieu*, yes!" cried Michon, flashing into radiance. "But one short hour! And you come, *ma belle*, you come!" He caught her hands and covered them with hot kisses. "How they will stare when we enter! Those other *demoiselles*, they will look as vegetables when you, my rosebud, pass to your seat! And we shall have a trifle of news for the company, *hein?* That is so, is it not? And now hurry, hurry, hurry!"

Blushing and breathless, Elise ran up to her little room. It was all she could do to steady fingers busy with the becoming hat, the gauzy scarf. She was to go! Ah, but she had been a simpleton to hesitate! When she returned in one short hour, it was possible—indeed, it seemed certain—that she would be the betrothed of the glorious Michon, the hero of Puisayonne. His ardent glance, his eager words had meant no less.

On her way to her lover Elise peeped in at her aunt. There was no change. Madame Regnier lay as formerly, motionless. She could surely be left just one hour. And the impatient Michon must not be disappointed. It was her duty to go, when—— Her duty! Her—duty!

Elise stood still, the white cotton glove slipping from her lax fingers to the floor.

"Happiness is good, Mam'selle Darreau, and love is good—ah, but very good—yet duty, it is the best of all!"

The girl's eyes darkened as she recalled the transfigured face of Dr. de Brassac when he had spoken those words. And he knew—he knew. She had told him, in her petulance, that duty was easy to him, but she knew otherwise.

She knew—all Puisayonne had come to know—that the young Doctor had refused a post of the highest distinction at the Hôpital Beaujon in Paris, because it was necessary that his invalid mother should come south. He had felt that it was his duty to accompany her, although in performing it he was well aware that he must not only sacrifice his career, but his happiness. The girl to whom he had been affianced had resented his refusal of the fine appointment, had declined to leave Paris, and had put an end to the engagement.

There could, then, be no doubt that de Brassac had the right to remind her of her duty, which, as he said, was to remain beside Aunt Sare, who had always been so



"It was evident from his gesture that he was recounting some of his exploits during the War."

good to her. Yes, even to gain all that Michon offered, she could not evade her duty.

Elise sighed, took off her hat and scarf,

and went slowly back to her lover. In a low voice she told him that she had decided, after all, she could not leave the invalid.

Michon refused to be convinced.



“At the margin of the enclosure Elise stopped and looked eagerly for her lover.”

“But why?” he demanded. “*Ma foi*, but you are as changeable as a weather-vane! Why is it that you refuse now to come?”

“Because I must,” murmured Elise, raising piteous eyes to the man’s scowling face. “I must do my duty, Michon. And the Doctor—he—I—I must obey. It is he



who declares that my aunt is too ill to be left."

"Truly?" sneered Michon. "Truly? Then if Madame is so ill, why does not this incomparable Doctor telephone to Castres for a nurse? Does he suggest that to you?"

"He does not," replied Elise gently, "and for a good reason, Michon. There is no train arriving from Castres until to-morrow."

"Yet there are automobiles, are there not?" said Michon sharply. "No, no! Monsieur de Brassac has no need of any nurse but Elise Darreau, of the blue eyes! *Pouf!* It is as easy to see as the sun on a clear day! De Brassac—*ciel*, but how sagacious a man!—has an eye for the beauty, the grace feminine—notably, it is said, for *your* beauty, your grace. He prefers, then, naturally, that you remain here on the Day of St. Mérac, instead of straying perchance into the arms of a younger man!"

For a moment the girl stared at her companion incredulously, then the colour flamed in her cheeks and she drew back a pace.

"*Michon!*" she cried. "Is it possible that you can say such a thing? It is false—altogether false! You—you insult me, as well as the good Doctor, when you speak so."

"I insult no one," rejoined Michon sullenly. He lit a cigarette and began to smoke very fast. "I only tell you what I hear in the market-place. It may be wrong. It is that which has to be proved, and"—he flung away his cigarette and caught the girl by the wrists—"and which *shall* be proved to-night!" he added fiercely. "The Dance of the Maidens is at nine o'clock. If you come, we dance it together—for *the last time*. You comprehend, *hein?* If you do not come—*Eh, bien!* There is then no more to say. I shall know you prefer your Doctor so sagacious. I—"

"No, no!" cried Elise. "No, no, no! You are not serious, Michon! You could not—you must not ask this! I dare not leave the Aunt Sare! Who is to say that she may not be worse, may not die? Do you not see how hard—how impossible is that which you ask?"

Michon, frowning and suspicious, drew back from her pleading hands. "I *have* asked it," he said. "Is it so hard a thing to come to the man that you love? 'Impossible!' Would Odile, would Mam'selle Beliot, find it 'impossible' to come to me to-night if I asked them? One imagines not.

And you, Elise, have the opportunity. Until nine o'clock I wait—yes; afterwards—no." He flourished his hat, turned, and swaggered away.

For a moment Elise seemed about to run in pursuit, then, as if recognising the futility of further argument, she went into the house and closed the door.

### III.

Ssss-ssh—*boom!*

The muffled report roused Elise from her apathy and brought her to the window in time to see the glittering cluster of green and purple stars float earthwards and fade into the dusky azure of the tranquil evening sky.

The fireworks had commenced. Seven o'clock! Daylight lingered in the street, but the room was full of shadows. Seven o'clock! It was but two hours, then, to the Dance of the Maidens.

The famous dance—for those over eighteen and under twenty-five who were neither wedded, widowed, nor betrothed—was one of the ancient customs of the Day of St. Mérac. Many a betrothal had been announced on the Day. Many a maid who danced it one year came the next with husband and *petit enfant* to join the circle of admiring spectators.

Elise turned away from the window. Two hours only! Whom would Michon lead out to the plaintive whisper of the violins? Would his partner be simpering Lolotte or the brilliant Odile Lavan, with her glittering black eyes, her superb figure, and her notable *dot?* Ah, well, *n'importe!* It would not be Elise Darreau. It—

Hush! Had the Aunt Sare stirred? Was that a whisper, a sigh?

With deft hands Elise lighted the small brass lamp on the table behind the bed, and leaned over the recumbent figure of the woman she had watched so long. No, there was no change. Still the same immobile limbs, still the closed eyes and mask-like face.

As it had been all day, so it was now. Nothing had happened. She might have gone to the fine house of the hospitable M. Duboisson for an hour, two hours; she might have been by now the betrothed of the gallant Michon; she might have been by now the happiest girl in all Puisayonne, and her aunt not any the worse.

Yet she had not gone, and she would not go. She *could* not go. She— Listen! What was that? The bell! Again the bell!



Could it be that Michon was back again, Michon kinder, more reasonable?

When her trembling hands unfastened the door, it was not, however, to admit Michon, but Dr. de Brassac. He looked pale and weary, but mounted the stairs with his usual quick stride.

"Madame improves," he said, after a brief examination. "The pulse has regularity." He took off his light coat, tossed it across the end of the bed, and sat in the chair which Elise had vacated. "Go now, Mam'selle Darreau," he added. "It is I who will watch your aunt. Return, if you please, not later than midnight."

The girl looked at him in stupefaction. She could not believe that the Doctor—known to all the world as the busiest person in the *département*—intended to sacrifice his precious time for her.

"But it—it is impossible!" she stammered. "You—you could not remain here, monsieur, till midnight!"

De Brassac, who had taken out a pocket-book and begun to write in it, looked up with a frown. "Hah!" he said. "What is it, then, that we have here? Disobedience—insubordination? But no, that cannot be with Mam'selle Darreau! See!" He flicked a finger towards the clock. "He does not stand still, that little one. It would be a pity, would it not, to be late for the Dance of the Maidens? There is someone who waits, *hein*? Yes, yes! It is easy to see. As for the aunt here, rest tranquil! *Moi*, I will see that all goes well."

He waved away protestations and gratitude, and Elise sped like one in a dream to her little room. It was the work of a few minutes only to slip once more into the dainty white muslin dress, the white silk stockings and white shoes. As to a hat, there was no need to trouble about that now.

"I am to go to him, after all! I am to go to him, after all!" Her tumultuous thoughts only gave birth to that one realisation. She was to go to Michon, to dance before all Puisayonne with his arm about her.

As she crossed the landing, she caught a glimpse of de Brassac. He was no longer writing, but sat with his square chin in his hand. The lamp-light shone on the strongly-marked face. Stern and purposeful, it was not the face of a happy man. The sight of him filled Elise with disquieting emotion. She had sneered at this man, she had flung his forty years in his face, yet he came at the eleventh hour

to send her to love, to happiness—to Michon! Why? Ah, why *did* men do such noble things as this?

"Shame to you, Elise, the little fool!" she said to herself. "What next will you dream?"

Elise never forgot that run along the narrow lane beside the farm of old Du-boisson, which led past the pear trees to the smooth grass where all Puisayonne had gathered to dance.

It was clear and mild, like a summer night. Above her glittered the friendly stars, and the light breeze that fanned her hot cheeks seemed fragrant with the bounty of the kindly earth that her flying feet touched so lightly.

The music of the flautists and the fiddlers came ever louder, and she knew, as she flitted within the lake of light shed by the fairy lamps and great Japanese lanterns strung from high poles, that the stately pavane for those whose dancing days were nearly over was nearing its conclusion.

At the margin of the enclosure Elise stopped and looked eagerly for her lover. The old folk moved with mincing steps about the square of smooth green turf, on which the coloured lights spread a fantastic carpet, while onlookers crowded to the ropes, laughing and joking, applauding and encouraging the ancient dancers.

It was some time before she caught sight of Michon Ferrenaud. He was the centre of a little group, inattentive to the pavane, near the gate that led to the orchard. Michon stood with one hand on the shoulder of young Henri Lavan, and beside him was the Lavan belle, the sumptuous, dark-eyed Odile. He was hatless, and the breeze stirred his long black hair. It was evident from his gesture that he was recounting some of his exploits during the War.

The narrative had ended and the group had begun to disperse before Elise could reach her lover.

Michon was walking towards the enclosure, when she touched him on the arm. He turned and regarded her with astonishment.

"*Ciel!*" he exclaimed. "It is you! You come, then, after all? Yet it was 'impossible,' was it not? Ha, ha! Impossible! Truly—yes!"

His laugh was so harsh, his manner so curious, that Elise was perplexed as well as disappointed. What had annoyed him now? Why did he not take her hands as usual and tell her how pleased he was to see her?

Could it be possible that he was not pleased, that—— But that was too absurd!

"Truly," she assented, "I thought it would be impossible to leave my aunt, but I was mistaken. I——"

"So one perceives," interposed Michon. "And I thought you might be able to favour so far the poor Michon!"

It occurred to Elise that the young man was intoxicated by popularity, by the praise and flattery which she knew he must have received in abundance, this Day of St. Mérac. In such a mood his vanity was apt to be almost overwhelming. Yet he must be humoured.

"Then you are right," she said gaily. "I have come, Michon, as I wished to come, as you knew all the time I wished to come. It is for me good fortune unexpected, and for it I have to thank the Doctor. See now, is it not you who misjudged him?"

The beauty of the slender, graceful girl in her white dress was enhanced by the softened glow from the lamps. There was no one—not one—to equal her in all that gathering. Michon knew it. In spite of his jealous vanity he knew it, and he had slipped his hand within her arm. Now he withdrew it roughly.

"The Doctor!" he muttered. "You say that he, de Brassac, came to you—again?"

"By all means," replied Elise. "Is it not right that he should come again, when my aunt is so very ill? You know it is. Ah, Michon"—in her earnestness she put her hand on his arm—"do not, I beg of you, be vexed any more about the Doctor. It is so foolish, it is so unkind."

Her big blue eyes were soft, her lips were tremulous with entreaty. But Ferrenaud was not looking at her. He was forcing the heel of his smart boot into the turf and looking down with a sullen face.

"So," he said at length in a repressed voice, "you come by favour of de Brassac, is it not? And you return all obedience to de Brassac?"

Elise made no immediate response, and the hand she had stretched out fell to her side. "Yes, Michon," she said gently "One obeys naturally the Doctor. You know that——"

With a fierce gesture Michon silenced her. "I know!" he exclaimed, and the face he raised was dark with fury. "I know! *Mon Dieu*, yes! But why is it that you do not return now—*now*—to this de Brassac so admirable? That is what one would wish

to know. Why do you wait, *man'selle*, why do you wait?"

Elise felt suddenly cold. She shivered. "Michon," she said faintly, "you must not look at me like that! You—you frighten me! Why do you speak so strangely? You know that I have come because you begged me to, that we might dance together on this Day of St. Mérac."

"It is true!" cried Michon. Throwing back his head, he laughed harshly. "But one has been counting on it all the day! Ah, that one might dance with the *protégée* of this so wonderful Doctor! It has been whispered to me this very day that he, the noble de Brassac, attends the Widow Regnier without any fee, except the favour of the pretty niece. It has been whispered to me, *mon ange*"—catching the frightened girl by the arms, he drew her roughly to him and thrust his face close to hers—"that he—he loves you!"

He released her suddenly and again broke into noisy laughter. Elise stood still for a moment, her face in her hands. Then she looked steadily at her lover. Even now she would not quarrel with him.

"It is not—true," she whispered. "Who can have been so wicked, so cruel? You do not believe them, Michon. You cannot believe them."

Michon watched her with a composure that was more impressive than his rage. "I believe what I believe," he said heavily. "I believed that there was not anyone in Puisayonne who would play with Michon Ferrenaud. Such treatment is not for the man who fights for *La Patrie*, who bears on his body the marks of a dozen wounds as well as"—he touched the multi-coloured ribbon on his chest—"the medals of a score of battles. No. Yet a brave man, one hears, is a fool very often. Perhaps you believe that, *ma chère* Elise? Perhaps—— But attend! The music! Yes, the music! They prepare at last for our dance. No! No more of words now! Let us forget all but the dance, the dance of joy and of love. Come, my heart, come! There will be news yet for the noble de Brassac!"

He slipped his arm about the girl's waist and, deaf to remonstrance, drew her rapidly to the enclosure. Here the musicians were busy tuning up for the Dance of the Maidens. Here fresh candles were being placed in flagging lanterns, while the laughing, jesting crowd surged in a state of flux about the well-guarded space reserved for dancing.

Elise, impelled by Michon's strong arm,

found herself against the taut rope which formed the barrier between dancers and spectators.

"Remain there, *ma petite*," he said. "I will come to you when I am ready for our dance." An instant later his broad shoulders were pushing a way through the press, and Elise almost at once lost sight of him.

The tuning up became each moment more strident, and as the crowd struggled for the best places, the master of the ceremonies rang his bell. Almost immediately the musicians broke into the famous "*Valse des Rêves*," and a few moments later a pair of blushing dancers stepped into the enclosure amid a tumult of applause and ridicule.

It was an accepted thing that those who danced this dance together were well on the way to betrothal, and some of the remarks—from disappointed suitors and the like—were neither good-humoured nor in very good taste.

Elise took no more notice of these than of the curious glances of those about her. She stood very pale and erect, her hands gripping the rope, her eyes intent on the dancers as pair after pair glided past her, turning and swaying in the golden light.

She was possessed by a desire to dance more urgent than she had ever known. Her breath came fast, her foot beat time to the music.

Where was Michon? Every moment she expected to feel his hand on her arm. But he did not come. Neglected, partnerless, Elise stood waiting while the fateful dance proceeded, while her eager expectation gave place to the dreadful suspicion that Michon did not mean to dance with her at all. . .

Yet, if not with her, why not with Lolotte Renne, Odile Lavan, or another of his many admirers? It seemed incredible that Michon, who gloried in his skill as a dancer, should miss this chance of displaying it.

Yet there was no sign of him, and the lilting valse, which had passed its acme, began to slacken and die away. The music sank soon to a whisper and quivered into silence. Once more the Dance of the Maidens was over.

And Elise had taken no part in it. The thought filled her with anger and mortification. So much, then, for her expectations! So much for the sacrifice of the good Doctor! So much for her swift-footed journey!

She had put up with Michon's bad temper, with his foolish jealousy, because—well, because Michon was like that. But this was too much—this humiliation. She would

tell him so. She had been too meek. She would endure it no longer.

Her eyes smarted with scalding tears, and she wished that she had not come. Better the little lamp-lit room and the motionless form of the Aunt Sare than this! She would go home.

Elise had actually turned from the rope, when the clang-clang of the dominating bell made her stop and look back.

A portly, grey-bearded gentleman in a high hat and a tight dress-coat, with a broad red ribbon across his shirt-front, had stepped into the centre of the enclosure. It was not the President of the Republic (appearances are so often deceptive), but Monsieur Duboisson, the Mayor of Puisayonne and master of the ceremonies.

"My children," he said, with impressive dignity, "one little word. You have seen this dance magnificent of the maidens. Never in all experience has there been better dancing on this sacred Day of St. Mérac. And of all who danced, it is decided that Mademoiselle Triault and Monsieur Nicole of Castres excel. To these accomplished neighbours, then, we shall award the prize."

M. Duboisson paused to give opportunity for the applause of the onlookers, and the bows and smiles of M. Nicole and his blushing partner. Then he raised his hand for silence.

"But one is asked," he resumed, "where is that gallant hero, Michon Ferrenaud, the soldier illustrious, the dancer incomparable? Why does he not dance to gain the honour for Puisayonne? Is it that his wounds incapacitate him? My children, it is not. *Le brave Michon* receives to-day a fresh wound—to the heart—which makes him no more eligible for this same dance! He is taken captive, not by the Boche unspeakable, but by the grace and beauty of Mam'selle Odile Lavan of Puisayonne. Let us give them felicity; let us wish them all the happiness, all the good fortune!"

He turned with outstretched hands to greet the radiant Odile, arm-in-arm with Michon, followed closely by her mother, her father, and a dozen more triumphant Lavans.

With deafening shouts, shrill whistling, and loud clapping of hands, the crowd signified its delight, and many broke the barrier to surround the hero and his betrothed. The air was filled with confetti and flowers, as well as with the strains of "*La Marseillaise*," which the band always played on the least provocation.

Elise had a glimpse of Michon. He stood in the golden light, with his head thrown

back proudly, his black hair falling about his forehead, his eyes flashing, his dark, handsome face wreathed in smiles. Then she turned away.

Conscious of furtive glances and murmurs of compassion from those about her, she tried to appear indifferent, but she realised that all knew her ignominy. Her faltering steps quickened, and once clear of the scene hot tears, born of rage and shame, fell fast.

This, then, was the "news" for Dr. de Brassac! This was the result of the mad jealousy of Michon. He had punished her for an offence she had never committed. He had not scrupled to trample on her heart, and she realised, as she stumbled blindly homewards, that her girlish worship of the hero of Puisayonne had been crushed beyond possibility of resurrection.

De Brassac met her on the threshold of the little lamp-lit room, his finger on his lips and amazement in his eyes. Madame Regnier, he told her, was becoming restless.

"But you return already?" he added. "It is, then, that the dancing is at an end so early?"

They stood close together in the narrow passage, and Elise, her face averted from the lamp-light that streamed into the gloom, shook her head.

"I did not dance," she said. She wished that he would stand aside and let her go to her own room. "I have no wish to dance—to-night." She moved forward, but still de Brassac remained immobile. She felt that he regarded her with attention, with perplexity.

"Pardon, mam'selle," he said slowly, "but surely I do not altogether comprehend. You did not dance? What, then, of the Dance of the Maidens? What, then, of the gallant Corporal Ferrenaud?"

But Elise raised a trembling hand. "No, no! I beg of you not to—to ask—" She broke off, struggling to maintain her composure. "It—it is not *convenable* that Monsieur Ferrenaud should dance with me the dance you speak of. He—they—he is betrothed—to Odile Lavan!"

The Doctor started. "To Mam'selle Lavan!" he cried in bewilderment. "To— But it has been said by Ferrenaud himself—I have heard it from his own lips—that he—" De Brassac stopped in some embarrassment.

Elise, her cheeks burning, her eyes on fire, turned and faced him.

"You have heard, monsieur, that it is I whom he had chosen," she said proudly, "that he was this night to announce our

betrothal. All Puisayonne, all the world has heard it. Yet it is not true, and I—I—" Her voice trembled. "I beg of you, monsieur, to let me pass."

Again she went forward, and this time the Doctor moved. He put his arm about her and drew her to him.

"My child," he said, "you are in distress: you have been weeping. Will you not tell me about it? Perhaps I can give you help. At least I, who have suffered here"—he touched his heart—"can give you sympathy. As for this Michon Ferrenaud, if he has treated you with cruelty or insult, he shall live to regret it! I will— Ah, do not weep, little Elise, but tell all to your devoted friend."

Elise did not stop weeping, but with her head on the shoulder of the sympathetic de Brassac, her tears seemed to lose their poignancy. She told him much, but not all, of the sad happenings of the Day of St. Méric, and if she found much comfort in the telling, the Doctor was equally satisfied to fill the rôle of listener.

So the day which had treated Elise so unkindly made full amends in that last swift hour, and when, with tranquil dawn, Sare Regnier returned to consciousness, her shrewd eyes read news in the happy faces of her attendants that was as welcome as it was unexpected.

She knew, however, that nothing would be told to her. De Brassac would not permit anything likely to agitate or excite her. Indeed, she was scarcely allowed to speak at all as yet.

"How many hours is it that I have been asleep?" she asked, as the Doctor at length prepared to depart.

"Fifteen," was the curt reply.

"Fifteen hours!" murmured the patient. "And but one dream!"

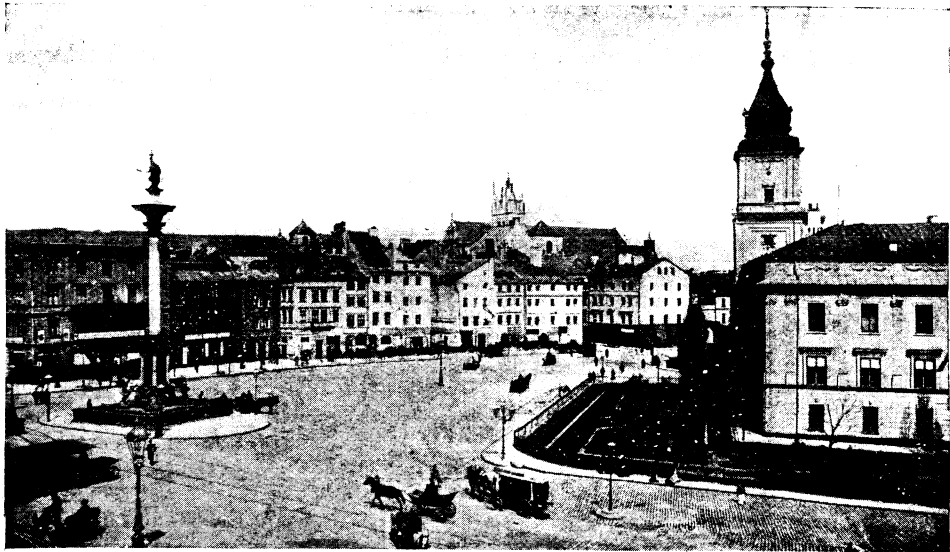
She glanced through half-closed eyes at de Brassac, but found no encouragement in his impassive face.

"I dreamed," she went on softly, "that you, *mon ami*, had your arms about this foolish little Elise here and called her your wife-to-be! What folly—this dream!"

De Brassac flushed, but he was equal to the occasion.

"Who knows?" he said, picking up his hat. "They say, madame, do they not, that the best dreams are those which come true? *Au revoir*, Madame Regnier; *au revoir*, Mam'selle Darreau!"

But Elise, smiling, blushing, and bright-eyed, went with him to the door.



*Photo by*  
THE CITADEL, WARSAW (ON THE RIGHT), THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE POLISH GOVERNMENT, AND  
THE MONUMENT OF SIGISMUND III. *[Central News.*

# THE POLAND OF TO-DAY AND HER PLACE AMONG THE NATIONS OF EUROPE

By I. A. BROWN

**F**EW people in England did not rejoice when the Treaty of Versailles gave the final recognition to the independence of Poland. Before the War Poland was the darkest spot in Europe. There, almost at our very doors, was a land where bitter and continued oppression still held sway, where race persecuted race with a barbarity that ill suited an age that could boast of so many achievements in the way of political freedom. We have most of us heard something of Poland's story—it was handed down as part of the historical tradition of the last century; and then in our own time we have seen history made before our very eyes; the War came and ended, and the history of Poland and of Europe entered upon a new stage. The Treaty of Versailles was the first great international treaty that definitely adopted the principle that a separate nationality has a claim to be recognised as an independent and sovereign state; and though

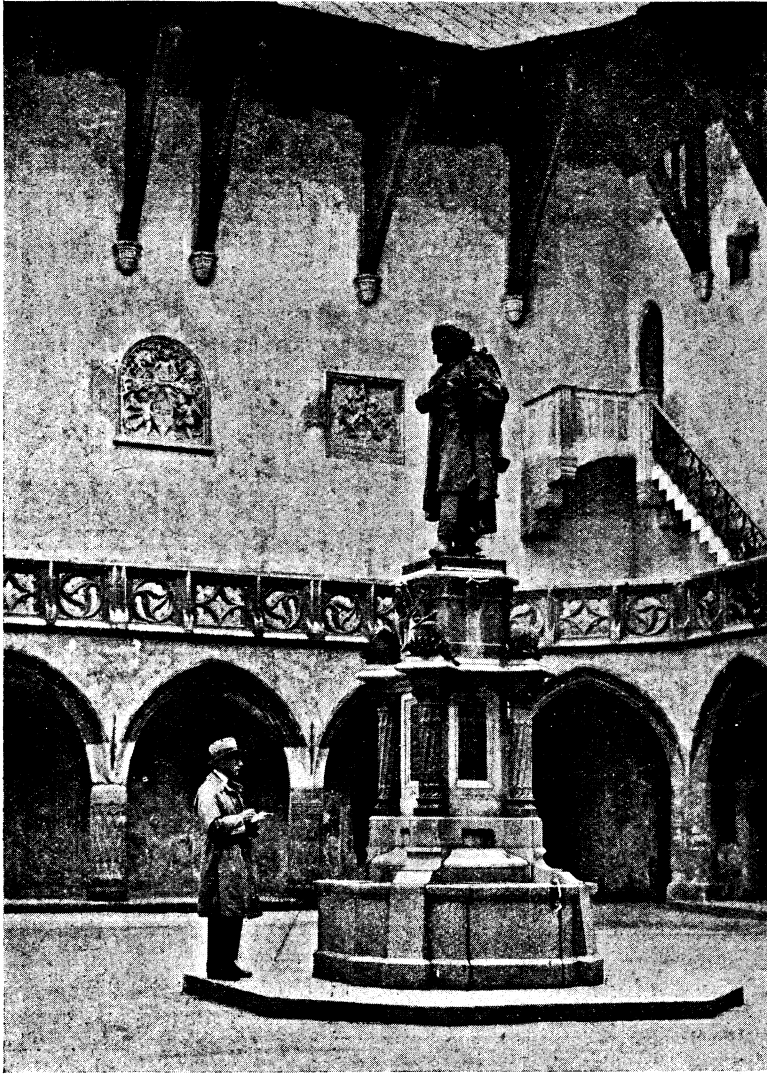
this principle has proved to be no easy one to apply in practice, it has borne fruit in the creation of a number of new independent states in Central Europe and on the Baltic. Among these Poland can claim this distinction, that more than any other she can look back to a great and brilliant past—to the days when she stood as one of the great Powers of Europe.

Poland at the present day is at the same time one of the most ancient and one of the most modern of European States. The traveller in Poland now sees the characteristics of both side by side. The historical tradition and the love of freedom have become a real binding power, giving the whole nation a common policy and a common outlook; on the other hand, there are everywhere signs of improvisation and innovation pointing to the incomplete organisation of the state and its government; on all sides new ideas are being pursued, and people are full of

energy and of the desire to repair the ravages of centuries and to make their land again one of the most prosperous countries of the world.

The Polish nation, divided and conquered at the end of the eighteenth century, has

of Lodz and Bielsk, and the leather and metal works of Warsaw, the coal and iron mines of the south-west, the oil and petrol industry of Galicia, the alcohol industry of Poznanian, have all become famous among the world's manufacturing centres. The

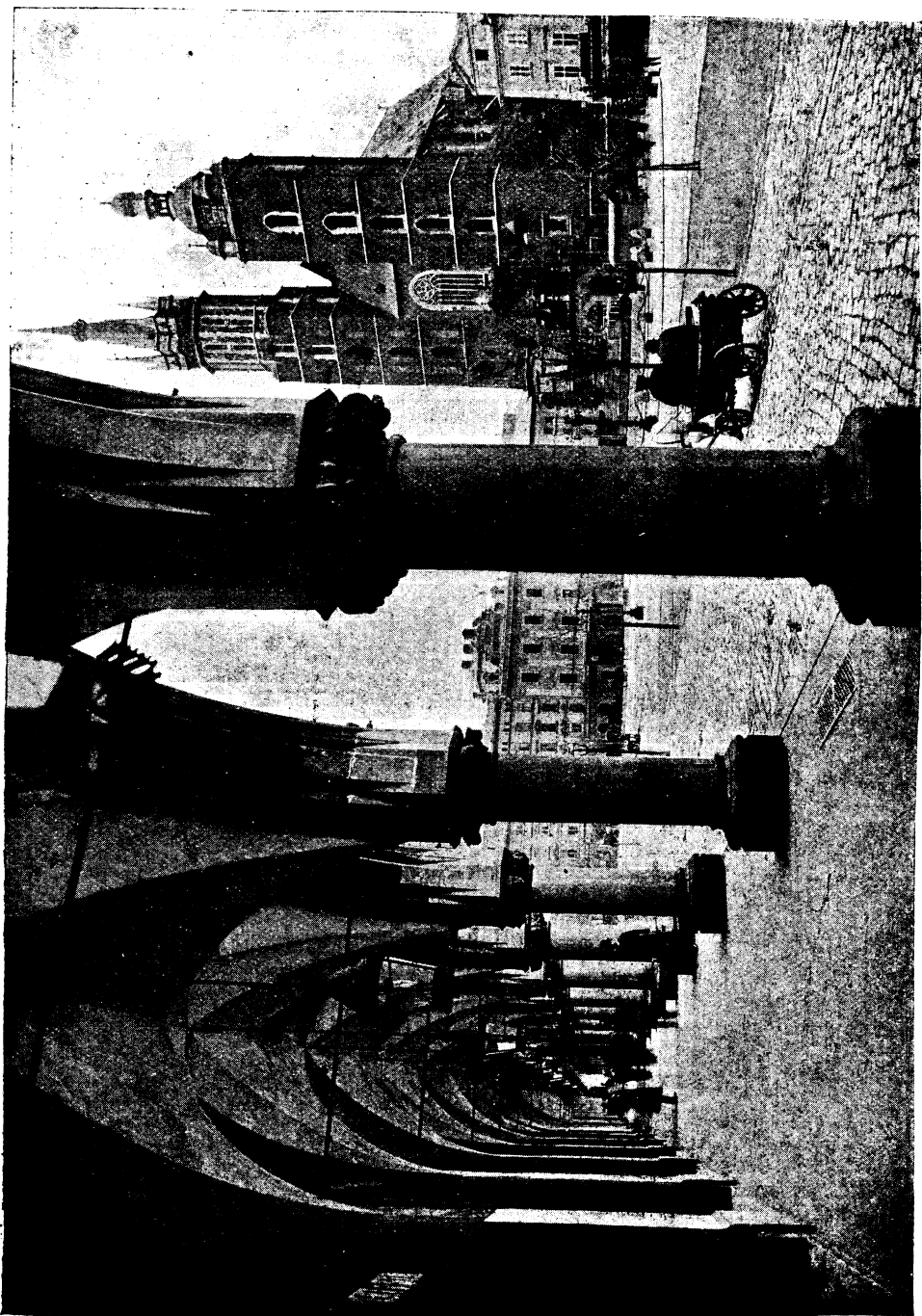


BRASS STATUE OF COPERNICUS IN THE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY COURTYARD OF THE ANCIENT UNIVERSITY OF CRACOW.

now come together again, but with many changes and many new characteristics. The new Poland is not the old Poland. The industrial and business Poland has arisen. Poland has now great industries—before the War they were the most important in the Russian Empire. The textile factories

result has, of course, been the growth of a large industrial population, and with them new ideas and new wants have arisen. The peasants also have not only acquired freedom and secure possession of their lands, but they are now peculiarly well organised. The growth of the co-operative movement and of peasant self-help organisations has been very remarkable; the co-operative idea is applied, not only to the distribution of goods, as is usual here in England, but also to the raising, collection, and marketing of agricultural produce. Further, there are everywhere self-help organisations for local government affairs, education, and the relief of distress both in town and country—these grew up under the old *régime* in spite of the opposition of the Tsar's Govern-

ment. All these movements have led to the development of new ideas; the principles of industrial and social co-operation have taken strong root. The most pressing problems of Poland now are largely administrative, social, and economical; fresh efforts are needed to secure the national welfare,



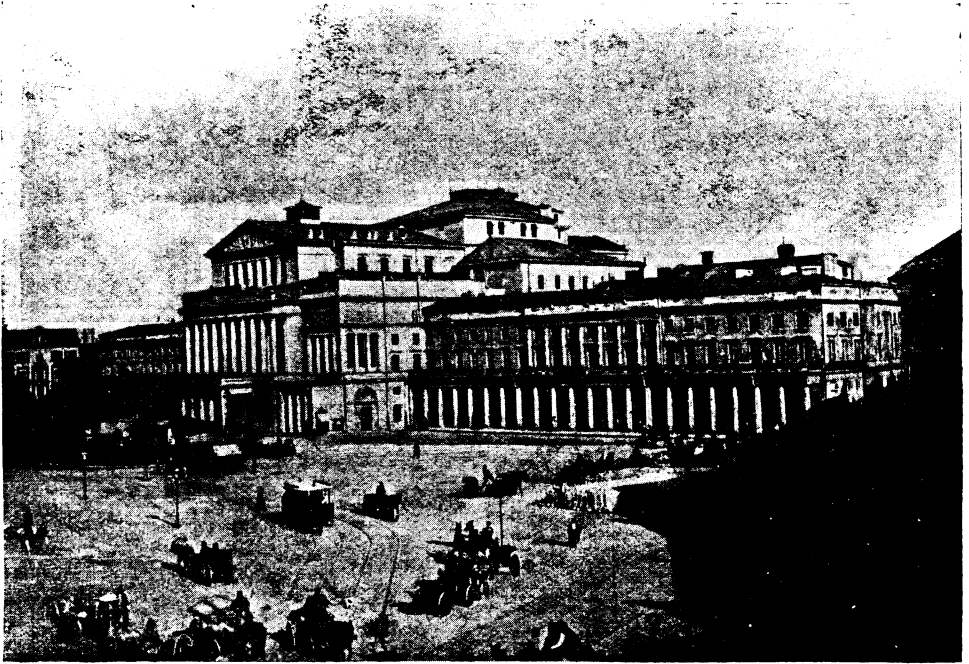
ST. MARY'S CHURCH, CRACOW.



different from those which the troubles of the old Poland demanded. But the Poles now, as then, have no lack of that true patriotism, the spirit of sacrifice for the common good, and they will find that spirit is no less essential now than in the days gone by.

Foreign trade and industry generally go hand in hand. Poland for half a century before the War was expanding as a commercial community at the same time as her manufacturers were bursting into activity. Much of what was then foreign trade across the old artificial frontiers has now become internal trade. On the other

Russia and the East. From this it is clear that Polish prosperity depends upon having frontiers free and open to intercourse with foreigners. Customs barriers such as existed before the War would be extremely harmful. This is realised, and commercial treaties have already been concluded with Roumania, Czecho-Slovakia, and Danzig. A provisional trade agreement with Austria has been in existence for some time; most important, perhaps, is the agreement with Russia—part of the general treaty of last year. The policy of having an open frontier towards its neighbours—so that trade can move freely without heavy customs restric-



THE OPERA HOUSE, WARSAW.

hand, commercial links were formed in those days—particularly with Russia, but also with Austria and Germany—which Poland naturally desires to resume. Through Poland, also, passed a great transit trade from Central and Western Europe to Russia and the East. This transit trade and trade with near-neighbours was always the most important part of Polish trade. The position is now improved as far as external commerce is concerned, because there is the outlet through the neutral port of Danzig; but this is not sufficient to turn aside the natural currents of Polish trade towards her immediate neighbours, and particularly

tions and payments—is being adopted in Poland, in spite of many serious practical difficulties, which time alone will overcome. Poland's neighbours, however, are all suffering severely from the results of the Great War. Russia now is economically poor after long years of war and internal disturbance; Austria is a willing customer, but terribly impoverished, and Germany, with whom there are possibilities of a great trade, set up a sort of blockade during last year for political reasons, though happily the situation has now greatly improved, to the advantage of both countries concerned.

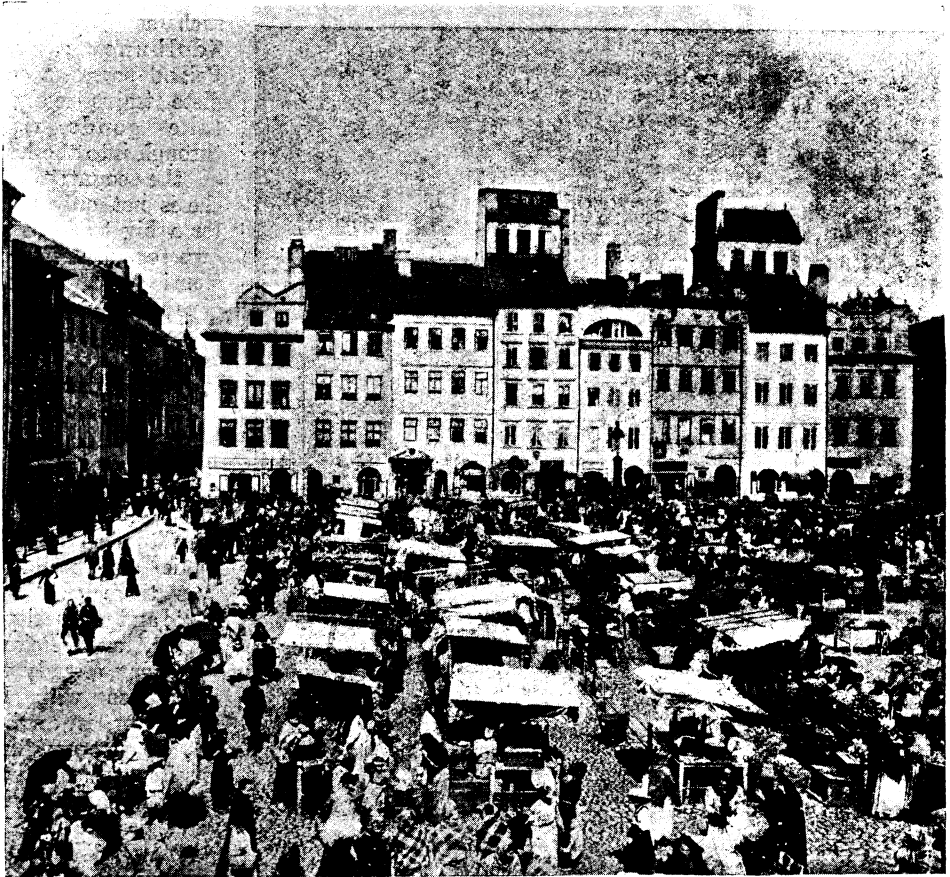
Poland herself probably suffered more



material damage during the War than any other country. Her lands were the battleground of the Eastern front, just as Belgium was of the Western. First the Russians, then the Germans carried away or destroyed everything of value in industry; this was done deliberately—by the Russians during their retreat, in order that valuable equipment should not fall into the hands of the Germans; by the latter in accordance

conditions of life. The necessities of the moment, therefore, force Poland to adopt a policy of free commercial intercourse, and, above all, of peace.

With no country have peace and intercourse been more earnestly needed than with Russia. Before the War Polish commerce and industry worked to a very large extent for the Russian market; eighty per cent. of Polish exports went to Russia, and the



*Photo by*

THE OLD MARKET, WARSAW.

*[Daily Mirror.]*

with the well-known policy, pursued also in France and Belgium, of wrecking the factories of their industrial competitors whenever the fortune of War gave them the opportunity. Poland urgently requires complete tranquillity, both within and without, in order to restore these ravages, and thus to develop her great natural resources. It is only thus that she can obtain the security necessary for the reconstruction of her industries, and for the return to normal

loss of this trade at the present moment is a most serious handicap. The bitter enmity of the days before the War directed against Russia, as the chief among the partitioners and oppressors of Poland, was to a large extent concentrated upon the old Government and bureaucratic system. Everywhere people in Poland to-day are anxious to assist the Russian people and resume peaceful intercourse with them. The Treaty of Riga, made with the Russian Government last

year, was intended to be a permanent peace, and it made provision for the immediate resumption of trade between Poland and Russia. Trade delegations were exchanged with Moscow and the Ukraine, in the same way as has taken place between Great Britain and the Soviet Government. Finally, at the end of last March, we find the representatives of Poland and some of the Baltic States meeting with Russian delegates and making further arrangements for the benefit

enough, when it is remembered that so large a part of Poland was actually part of Russia until quite recently, and Poles travelled widely throughout the Russian Empire. Besides this, communication between the two countries is extremely good. No great natural barrier exists; railways, rivers and roads lead straight from Poland into Russia. The broad gauge railway lines of the Russian system start in Polish territory—you see them running side by

side at frontier towns such as Stolbee and Zdolbunow; and Poland possesses complete trains ready to take goods right through into the heart of the country. So she is not only ready for a big trade of her own on the Eastern frontier, but is also capable of undertaking a great deal of the work of transporting goods between Russia and the rest of the world.

To Poland the preservation of peaceful and friendly relations with Russia is essential. It is also necessary that there should be peace and prosperity in Russia, and Poland, forgetting already the old feuds with her neighbour, is anxious to do everything possible to assist actively in the restoration of the prosperity of the country. With this end in view, the Poles are ready and able to render material assistance to the Russian



*Photo by*

*[Central News.*

MILL GIRLS OF LODZ EMPLOYED IN THE LARGEST COTTON FACTORY ON THE CONTINENT, LODZ BEING ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL CENTRES OF COTTON MANUFACTURE IN THE WORLD.

of commerce and the restoration of peace in Eastern Europe. This is certainly a step on the part of these countries towards helping themselves. Poland is in a particularly good position for entering into trade relations with Russia. Poles, on account of their past connection, have a better knowledge of Russia than any other people have; their knowledge is far more intimate than that of the Germans. This is natural

nation. They have no desire to interfere in Russia; but they naturally desire their neighbour to be friendly and prosperous, and will honestly do everything in their power to establish good relations with the Russian people, and to bring to a peaceful conclusion the difficulties through which that unfortunate country is still passing.

Poland shares this desire for Russia's prosperity with the other countries that



*Photo by* [Sport & General].  
A TYPICAL POLISH SCHOOLROOM: A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AT AN ORPHANAGE AT  
LISKOW FOR WAR ORPHANS.



*Photo by* [Sport & General].  
POLISH SCHOOLBOYS WHIPPING THE TOP IN THEIR SCHOOL PLAYING-GROUND.

formerly were part of the empire of the Tsar. They now, like Poland, are close neighbours of Russia, and their welfare, like hers, will depend largely on their intercourse with the Russian people. This is especially true of the Baltic States of Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. All these peoples suffered under Russian rule; but all alike,

of personal and political liberty; and so Poland and the Baltic States stand, in a way, as the outposts in Eastern Europe of what we call constitutional government and the ideal of personal freedom. The Baltic States, however, being neither large nor powerful, will have to nourish carefully their industrial prosperity and natural wealth, and encourage



Photo by]

BORYSLAV, A GALICIAN OIL TOWN.

[Central News.

having achieved the liberty for which they had been waiting, find their position severely menaced by the poverty and disorganisation of their huge neighbour. So all alike look forward to the revival of Russian prosperity. These nations have, like Poland, worked diligently to set up an orderly government; they have adopted Parliamentary constitutions, and have laid the foundations of the state on the principles

intercourse with each other on the freest possible lines. It is of the utmost importance that they should stand together as regards foreign affairs, and particularly in their dealings with Russia. Poland, Roumania, and the Baltic States bound Russia on the Western side, and through them will pass the greater part of Russian trade with the rest of Europe and America. A league of the Baltic States has been proposed,

and important understandings have been reached and treaties concluded. These have borne fruit in a treaty signed at Warsaw in March of this year between Poland, Finland, Esthonia, and Latvia. It is to be hoped that Lithuania, the last of those on the Baltic seaboard, may soon join with them. A firm alliance of this sort should ripen into a close and permanent League of the Baltic Nations, and from this Poland, no less than her neighbours, would benefit greatly.

States came together and discussed the serious economic problems that confronted them. This year even more has been done, and at an important conference at Belgrade these countries decided to act together and take steps to encourage trade, industry, and reconstruction in Central and South-Eastern Europe. Towards Austria the Poles have always been well disposed—a fact which people in England often find difficult to understand. Austria was one of the three great Powers which partitioned Poland at



Photo by

[Central News.

THE PICTURESQUE CHURCH PARADE OF THE POLISH PEASANT, THE WOMEN STILL RETAINING FOR SUNDAY WEAR THE TRADITIONAL NATIVE COSTUMES.

Roumania and Czecho-Slovakia are Poland's neighbours on the south. With both of them she is on the most friendly terms. Poland is the ally of Roumania, a treaty having actually been concluded between the two countries. In this way Poland became connected with the alliance known as the "Little Entente" (Roumania, Czecho-Slovakia, and Jugo-Slavia), which has more than once recently shown itself a powerful factor in South-Eastern Europe. With Czecho-Slovakia Poland concluded a commercial treaty. Last year these four

the end of the eighteenth century, but the Poles have always regarded her as the least guilty of the three. During the century that followed, the Austrians allowed a certain degree of self-government to their Polish subjects, and their rule, in spite of many mistakes, always appeared mild in comparison with the tyranny of the pre-War days of Russian bureaucracy and the persistent "Germanisation" of the Prussian régime. So Poland has become the friend of the almost friendless Viennese. Soon after the Armistice these sympathies bore fruit

in a working arrangement for mutual trade and intercourse. This arrangement has been renewed, and Austria is now one of the best of Poland's customers.

In reviewing Poland's attitude towards her neighbours, the relations with the city-state of Danzig must not be forgotten. This ancient Polish city—now half German and half Polish—was ardently coveted by the Poles in the days before the Treaty of Versailles. The Treaty, however, made Danzig independent, though with certain stipulations that the use of the port, the outlet of the Vistula, should be available to Poland. The establishment of some working arrangement regarding their relations with this independent city has been a matter of the greatest importance to the Poles, and a final treaty was concluded in October, 1921, which must be regarded as highly satisfactory to both sides. It is a hopeful sign, not only for the future relations of these two neighbours, but also for the chances of concord and agreement between Germans and Poles elsewhere.

It is not perhaps very surprising that Germany, the most powerful of all Poland's neighbours, should also have been the least friendly. Nearly one-fifth of Polish land was before the War under the Kaiser's rule. For more than a century the population of these provinces had had to struggle against the attempts of the Berlin Government to incorporate them completely; and though they had failed, the Germans—or, at least, the military party among them—felt the separation of these provinces to be a severe blow to their pride. Various thorny political and economic problems aggravated this bitterness; for three years a controversy raged over the partition of Upper Silesia—a rich mining area—between the two peoples. Fortunately, this dispute came to an end with the division of the area by the League of Nations; both Governments loyally accepted this arrangement, and since then have settled down with surprising rapidity. Only then did people begin to appreciate the advantages of the new frontiers. In the first place they put an end to the dangers of Germany's eastern border; Germany always feared the old Imperialist Russia, with her ten-million army that stood all along her line on the east, and the substitution of Poland is an immense advantage. True, Russia herself has altogether changed, and Germany is more inclined to exploit commercially that

great but exhausted country; and therefore Poland has been regarded as a possible barrier. But the Poles have no intention of losing a profitable transit trade, and, in fact, look to the transit trade between Russia and the West as one of the great sources of wealth in the future. They will do everything to encourage it, and will give the Germans every facility, though not, of course, any unfair privilege as against other peoples—ourselves, for instance—who must share in the trade with Russia. All these advantages point to a real and permanent settlement of the German-Polish problem. The peaceful settlement of the Upper Silesian question has been a great step towards removing the causes of racial hatred and warfare; and already the horizon is marked by hopeful signs.

The differences between Poland and Germany might, perhaps, have been solved more rapidly, had it not been for the influence of other currents in European politics. Poland has, ever since the commencement of the War, looked to France as her deliverer, and, indeed, for centuries the Franco-Polish friendliness has been an historical fact. It was in France that regiments of Poles from the Austrian and German armies were organised and led into battle on the side of the Allies, and thus the foundations of the Polish army were laid in the French foreign legions. England and the other Allies were not directly concerned in these early developments, so after the War it was to France rather than to England or America that Poland turned, and it was in this way that the Poles came to be regarded as the particular *protégés* of the French. Now a commercial treaty has already been concluded with France, and it is obvious that France and Poland, one on each side of Germany, have many important interests in common, and that the two countries would equally be subject to attack if ever the military party seized power in Germany and attempted to restore the position as it was in 1914. Poland, however, is, as we have seen, by no means necessarily an enemy of Germany, and Polish interests and prosperity would certainly be served best by the permanent establishment of good relations in Central Europe and close intercourse with the German people.

England is vitally interested in the maintenance of peace in Europe, and is equally concerned in reconstructing those countries which the War and its consequences have



brought so near to ruin. So England wants to see Polish prosperity put on a sound basis—her finances restored, and her frontiers settled. A weak Poland is a danger to Europe, just as it was a provocation to its neighbours in the days of the partitions, a century and a half back. Poland separates Russia from the West, but it must also be a channel of communication between them. A prosperous Poland linked with the other States of the Baltic and the Near East, and having full freedom of intercourse with Russia on one side and Germany and the Western peoples on the other, would, from a British point of view, be a great factor for the political health and welfare of Europe.

Hitherto the settlement of all the countries of Middle Europe and the Near East has been seriously hindered by the delay in the final determination of the frontiers. These racial problems have raised questions of the gravest difficulty and intricacy. The ideal solution is clearly that most in accordance with the principles of nationality. But the most ardent nationalist must admit the difficulty of deciding the fate of a district where two nationalities are almost inextricably mingled. The problem of national minorities springs up everywhere. There is only one way out—both sides must realise that their welfare depends on the maintenance of peace and the abandonment of race persecution. In certain cases it may be necessary to grant autonomy—a greater or lesser degree of self-government—to these mixed communities, and then they must

be linked with the larger state by some form of federal organisation similar to that of the United States of America. The ultimate solution of the dispute between Poland and Lithuania over the possession of the town of Vilno will no doubt have to be found by some such means. No purely political arrangement, however, can be successful without a spirit of give and take on both sides, the cessation of race persecution, and the fullest freedom of intercourse.

Poland, face to face with many such racial problems, should be able to give a lead to the world in her ability to deal with them. Poland, the oppressed, was regarded as the typical martyr country, suffering in the cause of the freedom of the world. The lessons of those dark times have not been lost. No visitor to Poland to-day, taking even a fleeting glance at the social conditions existing there, can fail to be struck by the efforts being made by the three divisions of old Poland to come together again. The policy of the Russian and Prussian Governments before the War was to demoralise the Poles and destroy their initiative and self-reliance. Happily it failed. Poland throughout the darkest times never ceased to develop her own particular culture; she never wavered from those principles that stand for personal and political freedom. So now, reunited as one of the most naturally wealthy and vigorous of European States, she will stand for peace, freedom, and free intercourse in the comity of nations.





# RINGS OF GOLD

A GIPSY SONG.

**O**H, slowly sails the silver boat  
Of the lady moon, on clouds afloat—  
And slowly beats my heart so cold,  
Though my ears be gay with rings of gold.  
The shining stars they follow the moon,  
But I heed not how they shine—  
There's many a face in the Romany camp,  
But none with eyes like thine, ah me!  
My dear one!

The bees that hide in the rose's breast,  
They have sipped their fill and are home to rest;  
The gorgio's flocks, they are housed in fold—  
The sun went down like a ring of gold.  
But day by day I have called in vain,  
To cry to thee where thou art;  
Thou com'st no more by valley or plain,  
To heal my sorrowful heart, ah me!  
My dear one!

I would thou couldest behold me now—  
Thou would'st haste thee back to the forest bough—  
Thy pitying tears would fall so fast,  
Like drops of rain when the wind is past;  
And I would gather those pearly tears,  
That from thine eyes have roll'd—  
I would take them to the Romany smith,  
To be set in rings of gold, ah me!  
My dear one!

MAY BYRON.



# A STUDY IN MODELLING

By F. S. CORYN

ILLUSTRATED BY LILIAN HOCKNELL

**A**UGUSTUS BROWN, lord of creation, lounged at ease in a large armchair by the fire, an outstretched newspaper concealing all but his legs. On the other side of the fire sat Mrs. Augustus Brown, sewing.

"Amaryllis," said Augustus absently, as his eye roved down the reduction in food prices column, "Amaryllis, isn't it nearly dinner-time? I'm hungry."

Amaryllis looked up, her large blue eyes resting reprovingly on the back of her husband's newspaper.

"You can come out from behind your newspaper, if you want to talk to me, darling," she said, a dimple appearing in her left cheek and vanishing again.

Augustus's reply was drowned in a squeal of delight from the neighbourhood of the window, where Augustus Junior, *àtât* five, had been busily and suspiciously quiet for the last ten minutes.

"Look, Mum!" he cried joyously.

Augustus Junior had turned from the window with a gurgle of delight, and now advanced beaming into the room. Augustus himself lowered his paper and regarded his son with open and delighted approval.

"Look, Mum, look!" cried Augustus Junior again. "Look at my nose!"

Amaryllis glanced up with a smile. But as her eyes fell upon the small miscreant's face, the smile vanished and an exclamation of horror escaped her lips, for attached to Augustus Junior's fat little nose was a large grey piece of that putty-like substance known as plasticine.

Augustus's rapt approval of his son's prowess faded magically as he followed the expression of his wife's face.

"Take it off this *minute*, Jimsy!" she cried. "It's all over the house, Augustus dear!"

The delight faded from Jimsy's face as he slowly and rebelliously peeled the offending plasticine from his nose. It had taken much perseverance and nose-squashing to induce it to adhere, and he felt that his efforts had not been appreciated.

Twisting uncertainly on one leg, he threw a tentative glance at his father. That worthy, however, had his eye fixed on the weathervane of his wife's countenance, which registered its nearest possible approach to stern disapproval, and Augustus struggled dutifully to compose his face to a fitting severity. But Jimsy's face was a study in rebellious misery, and at last Augustus could stand it no longer.

"Never mind, old man," he said, with a tentative eye on his wife. "Go and get the nigger book, and we'll have a read, eh?"

Jimsy's face underwent a magical transformation.

"O-o-o, *ye-es*, Daddy!" he cried. "I'll get it."

The nigger book was an old school geography of Augustus Brown's, a never-failing source of delight to his son, filled as it was with weird pictures of various uncouth races of mankind, which filled his heart with thrills of delight.

Safely ensconced on his father's knee, the book open in front on him, Jimsy beamed.

"Let's have the cammibul pictures, Daddy!" he cried eagerly. "You know, them wot eats each other. I like them better'n fairy tales."

"All right, old man."

"You turn the pages, Daddy; you know, these ones——"

Augustus turned obediently to the required page.

"O-o-o, *look*, Daddy! Is vat a black one?"

"Black as a nigger, my son," said Augustus gravely.

"What's he black for, Daddy? Did he paint himself wiv black paint?"

"Oh, no; he—he just grew that way," said Augustus, somewhat at a loss.

"Oh! Could I grow black if I wanted to, Daddy?"

Augustus surveyed his son's grubby little paws with mild amusement.

"You generally seem to manage it by the end of the day, old man," he said whimsically.

Jimsy ignored this remark as being beneath his notice, and continued to study the picture of a repulsive African negro with grave attention.

"Does look like Aunt Mary, doesn't it, Daddy?" he said meditatively.

Augustus burst into a roar of laughter, checked suddenly by the sound of his wife's voice.

"Augustus dear, you *shouldn't* let him say such things."

Augustus obediently composed his face to a rigid solemnity. "You're not to say such things, Jimsy," he said, with another dutiful attempt at severity.

"Why not, Daddy?"

"Because your mother says——"

"Augustus!" came a warning voice.

"Because your mother *and I* say so, Jimsy."

"Oh! I say, Daddy"—with sudden animation—"w'en—w'en I'm growed up an'—an' get married to Elsie, we're going to have *ten* children. Wouldn't it be nice if one of them was black, eh?"

Amaryllis giggled audibly, and Augustus, feeling himself in deep water, resolutely drew his son's attention back to the book.

"Look at this one, Jimsy, with the funny hair."

"What's his hair like vat for, Daddy?"

"Oh, I expect he thinks it looks pretty, you see."

"Oh!"

There was a short, meditative silence.

"It's like Mummie's hair, isn't it, Daddy?" said Jimsy guilelessly at last.

Augustus roared again, and Amaryllis looked across at him, dimpling.

"Does Mummie do her hair like vat because she thinks it's pretty, Daddy?"

"No, Jimsy," said Augustus confidentially, with a furtive glance at his wife, "because she *knows* it's pretty—eh?" But Amaryllis, intent on her sewing, pretended not to hear.

"Look at vat one, Daddy! Wot's vat rood his neck?"

"Native of Central Africa," read Augustus slowly, "'showing neck'ace made of human teeth.'"

"O-o-o!" said Jimsy, with delighted thrills. "Wot's 'human,' Daddy?"

"Men and women, old man."

"Oh, an'—an' little boys, too?"

"Oh, yes, little boys, too."

"Where—where'd he get the teef from, Daddy?" said Jimsy, after some minutes of mature deliberation.

"Oh, well," said Augustus, searching for adequate explanation, "I expect they were loose ones, you know."

"I've got a loose toof, Daddy!" exclaimed Jimsy, sitting up so suddenly that his head came into devastating contact with Augustus's nose.

"Loose tooth?" said Augustus, nursing the injured member.

"M-m. An'—an' Elsie had one yes'day, an'—an' she tied a piece of string to it and *pulled* it out—she did, Daddy—an' gave it to me!"

Jimsy, struggling with a small pocket—a newly-acquired dignity—finally produced, amid a welter of string, dead matches and plasticine, a tiny white tooth, which he held up for inspection.

"Look, Daddy!"

"Er—yes. But let's have a look at the loose one, old man."

"You'd better get a piece of string and have it out, darling," said Amaryllis calmly. Augustus's jaw dropped.

"*Me!*" he said in a feeble voice. "But, I say, won't it come out by itself? Can't you do it, Amaryllis? I might—I—I——"

Amaryllis eyed him with large, scornful eyes.

"Oh, you men," she said, "you're *all* cowards!"

And Augustus Brown, feeling remarkably like an executioner sent to fetch his axe, departed in search of a piece of string.

\* \* \* \* \*

For two weeks life flowed smoothly along in the Augustan household. Augustus himself continued to rule his universe, Amaryllis ruled Augustus to the complete satisfaction of all concerned, and Jimsy, the small tyrant, ruled them both.

Nothing of note happened, save that Jimsy developed an insatiable passion for pennies, for which he cajoled his father, in a hoarse whisper, whenever Amaryllis was out of earshot.

But, most remarkable of all, for the whole two weeks Jimsy behaved himself. Never once did he climb out after having been put to bed; never once did he rouse the household at five o'clock in the morning; never once did the lure of the jam on the pantry shelf get the better of his conscience. Jimsy was engulfed in a vast preoccupation which left no time for mischief.

At the end of the fortnight Augustus took his small son to task on the matter of finances.

"Jimsy," he said gravely, "what have you been doing with all those pennies I've been giving you?"

Jimsy's face became a troubled blank.

"Been buying chocolates?"

Jimsy shook his head silently.

days were divided into days on which there were presents and days on which there were none. "O-o-o, Daddy!" he breathed rapturously.

"And," continued Augustus impressively, "here's another penny." He held it out



"Clasped to his bosom was a flat cardboard box. Very solemnly he crossed the room."

"Well, look here, you know to-day's Mummie's birthday?"

Jimsy nodded. "Yes, Daddy."

"H'm! Been saving your pennies to buy something for Mummie?"

Jimsy squirmed uneasily on one leg, but vouchsafed no reply.

"Well," said Augustus, forbearing to press the embarrassing question of finances, "I'm going to give Mummie a present at tea-time—"

Jimsy's eyes widened. There was a magic in the word "present" which never failed to appeal to his small heart. Jimsy's

gravely between thumb and forefinger. "Would you like to run and buy a present for Mummie? Then we can both give her our presents together, eh?"

"O-o-o, ye-es, Daddy!" cried Jimsy ecstatically, grasping the penny.

"Then be off with you—quick!"

And Jimsy was gone.

Tea-time found Augustus surveying the

table with critical eyes. For days he had punctiliously waylaid the postman, and hidden all parcels addressed to Amaryllis. Now, stealthily, he brought them forth, decking them in pink ribbon, and arranged them round her plate. Only Augustus knew the qualms it had cost him to enter the draper's shop and demand of the smiling houri therein a supply of that same pink ribbon, "suitable for tying up presents, y'know." But the deed had been accomplished, and the gorgeous array on the tea-table amply compensated him for all his pains.

When Amaryllis entered the room, she found Augustus awaiting her with the air of a monarch of all he surveyed. She hugged him ecstatically—somewhat to the detriment of the dignity of his pose—and sat down, busying herself opening the parcels with little squeals of delight, while Augustus beamed inanely. Then, just as she was about to open Augustus's own present, and he was composing himself to an attitude of careless munificence, the door opened and Jimsy marched gravely into the room.

Clasped to his bosom was a flat cardboard box. Very solemnly he crossed the room, laid it at Amaryllis's elbow, and looked up at her, large-eyed.

"Many happy turns of the day, Mummie," he said gravely.

Amaryllis caught him up and hugged him hard. When she put him down, his gravity had vanished.

"Open it, Mummie, open it!" he

shrieked, dancing up and down with excitement. "It's a present for you, Mummie! Open it!"

Amaryllis started to untie the string, but Jimsy's patience outran her fingers.

"Open it quick, Mummie! It's a present an'—an' a *cammibul necklace!*"

At that moment Amaryllis removed the lid, and gave a little gasp of dismay. Augustus leaned forward and looked.

In the centre of the box lay a penny bar of chocolate. Encircling it, necklace-wise, was a long strip of grey plasticine, embedded in which were no less than *six small teeth!*

Jimsy was excitedly shouting explanations.

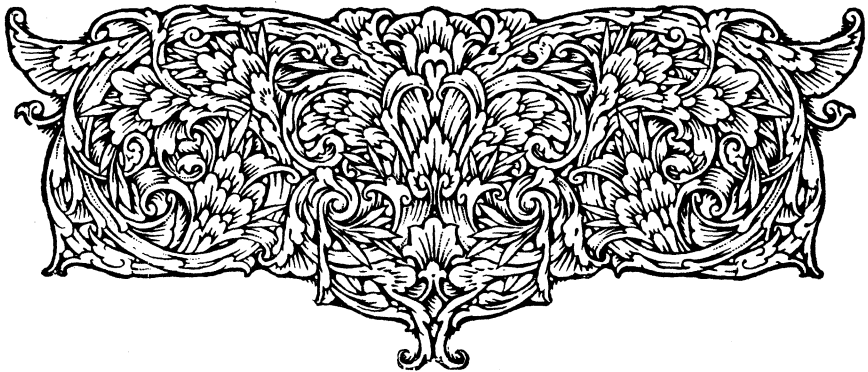
"Look, Mummie, vat one—vat's the one Daddy pulled out; and vat—vat's the one wot Elsie gave me; an'—an' vat big one, Mummie, vat's Joey's! I had to give him *two* pennies for vat one 'cos it's big, an'—an'—"

Augustus, on the verge of apoplexy, was desperately searching his waistcoat pockets. He had but one remedy for all crises in which his son and heir was concerned.

"Here, Jimsy," he said in a thick voice, "here's sixpence! Run out and spend it now—quick!"

With a whoop of excitement, Jimsy seized the coin and dashed from the room. Amaryllis and Augustus stared dumbly at each other over the "*cammibul necklace.*"

"You'll *have* to wear it, Amaryllis," said Augustus at last, with a malicious grin, "or you'll break his little heart!"





“If my misanthrope of an employer doesn't appreciate that, he is no true man, and deserves to be poisoned.”

# SAVING THE SITUATION

By MARY DELANEY

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

**T**HE little tarts were filled with a delicious frothy mixture and stood in rows around the pastry board, seeming like very trim and smart soldiers, all ready to march into a baptism of heat.

Their creator turned to the oven, from which she took the twin of an apple pie standing on the table. She put it down with a slight bang and said conversationally to the empty kitchen: “If my misanthrope of an employer doesn't appreciate that, he is no true man, and deserves to be poisoned. It looks just like the pictures in advertisements of the pies mother used to make.”

Then Virginia went serenely on with her work, unaware that the kitchen door had drifted apart a good twelve inches, and that from the shadows beyond a man was watching her. His face wore a look of blank

amazement which changed to annoyance, mingled with a reluctant admiration.

“Minx, anyhow!” he muttered. Hearing Hannah, his housemaid, returning from the dining-room, he slipped quietly round a corner of the cupboard and stood silently until the maid had gone into the kitchen and closed the door. Carefully he crept along then and reached the hall. There he turned to the left and went into his bedroom to prepare for dinner.

With great energy he flung off his coat. As he moved about the room, he murmured: “What the dickens is afoot in this place? Some conspiracy by women, I swear. I'll get to the bottom of it after dinner.”

Godfrey Lawson's face did its best to assume a bitter expression, but it was not quite successful. He himself recognised

that curiosity and not anger was his paramount emotion.

Cynically he mused on the fact that there are few sights better calculated to haunt a man's memory than that of an attractive woman, standing in the midst of shining pots and pans, preparing a meal for the "lord of creation." It centres the appeal of two primitive forces—the instinct for beauty and the hunt for food.

He crossed the hall again into his one big room which combined the functions of study, dining and sitting-room. Typical of the owner, the place was absolutely devoid of ornament, but possessed great comfortable chairs, plenty of books, and a few good pictures. At a small round table drawn up to the fire he ate his dinner, served by the taciturn Hannah. Meanwhile the unconscious Virginia dished up blithely in the kitchen.

"No flowers, by request," she murmured irreverently, handing the sweet to Hannah and preparing to take her departure. Useless to deny that Virginia was proud of her culinary skill. That, however, was not the main reason why she was cooking "Old Lawson's" meals. Having comfortably established an erroneous image of him in her mind, the girl did not know that her reference was somewhat misplaced.

Nearly three weeks had flown by since Simmons had brought her tale of woe to Virginia. Once in the position of cook to Virginia's family, her devotion took the form of relating all her troubles to that young lady.

"I really don't know what to do, miss," she explained. "My sister has been taken to the hospital, and she's fretting about her children being left. I feel I ought to go down to them straight off, only what can I do? There's Mr. Lawson's breakfasts and dinners, and it's too good a place to lose. He's inclined to be cantankerous, on account of some lady he was engaged to having gone and married someone else while he was at the War, and now he won't have any young women or flowers about, nor anything fanciful, and he says if he 'as any bother he'll shut the flat up."

"Can't the housemaid manage while you are away?" asked Virginia.

"*Her cook!*"—the contempt in Simmons's tone was terrible. "She says as she'd only be too willing, but, as I ses, *that's* hopeless! Besides, she has to wait on him."

Suddenly Virginia had her flash of inspiration.

"I'll manage it, Simmons!" she cried. "You know I can cook, because you've taught me partly. Well, I'll cook your Mr. Lawson's dinners, and he needn't know anything at all about it."

Simmons gasped, but she had next to no chance with Virginia, who, in the course of the ensuing hour, had made acquaintance with Mr. Lawson's kitchen and induced Hannah to lend her connivance to the scheme.

Mrs. Simmons, not at all grateful, but gloomily foreboding, was packed off to her sister's with firm instructions to return before next pay-day.

"Oh, well," said the good woman mournfully, "perhaps it's all for the best, though they do say Satan always finds some mischief for idle hands, and you haven't seemed to settle to anything properly since your Government work give up, miss."

"That's gratitude," scolded Virginia half laughingly, as she nevertheless went to look out her overalls and to survey Simmons's list marked "Faverite dishes *re* Mr. Lawson."

The adventure amused her greatly. Every morning at eight-thirty she heavily veiled herself, put on an old voluminous cloak, and was admitted secretly by Hannah.

Every evening at five o'clock the process was repeated, and after dinner was served, Virginia, tired but triumphant, reached the shelter of her own pretty sitting-room.

Certainly the dinners had been a success. Three times the grumpy Mr. Lawson had even sent a message into the kitchen to say some dish was excellent. Virginia was gratified by this tribute to her skill. Only another week, and she would be able to present Mrs. Simmons with the situation saved, and she herself could go down to her uncle's country house, feeling extremely virtuous and conscious of good deeds done. All was well, therefore, in her mind, but—

Godfrey Lawson had eaten his dinner. It had been a good one, and, sitting with a glass of port and the walnuts before him, he felt that at least a bachelor's life was comfortable.

He pooh-poohed the subconscious suggestion that it was lacking in interest, though his thoughts returned persistently to that glimpse of a warm and shining kitchen, of the slim figure, with a strand of bright hair, escaping the plain white cap, focussing and radiating light.

A pretty memory, and for a moment he allowed his fancy to hover around it. Then, with an impatient movement, he reached

across and rang the bell. In response Hannah appeared, elderly and plain.

"Send cook in to see me," was his curt order.

Hannah showed visible embarrassment.

"It's cook's evening out, sir," she answered, with some hesitation. "She's just gone, sir."

Lawson saw plainly that even the trusted Hannah was in a plot to deceive him, and he became angry.

"Just one moment," he said emphatically. "Let's be quite clear. Are you speaking of Simmons, the cook I engaged and pay, or of the person someone else has apparently engaged, and *who cooked my dinner in my kitchen this evening?*"

The vindictive triumph of his tone was worthy of a greater cause.

Poor Hannah turned an awful brick red. She had only very reluctantly consented to the project forced upon her by the determined Virginia and feebly seconded by Simmons. Here she was now left to face the music entirely unsupported, Virginia having really gone home. While she stood hesitating, her master spoke again.

"You had better explain what it's all about. I tell you one thing—I do not intend to have any strange women brought into this house, and if you and Simmons are playing tricks on me, I'll live at the club until I can find a decent ex-soldier to wait on me." Having delivered this ultimatum with great energy, he waited for the result.

So Hannah, who dreaded to lose her comfortable place, turned traitor, and made a clean breast of the whole story, telling of Simmons's troubles, and artfully stressing the difficulty of finding anyone else to cook the master's meals at such short notice.

"I'm sure Miss Graham's a real lady, and can cook beautifully, sir," she concluded.

"The confounded minx!" muttered Godfrey under his breath. "Masquerading like this in order to give Simmons a holiday to look after her sister's brats!"

He rose and walked to the mantelpiece, meaning to stand with his back to the fire and deliver judgment; but, as he did so, his eye caught the whiteness of some invitation cards ostentatiously waiting to be answered. Fingering one of them, he asked Hannah with some curiosity:

"What did you say this evening's temporary-acting cook was named?"

"Miss Graham, sir—Miss Virginia Graham. Her uncle's Sir William Graham, very rich and a Member of Parliament."

Hannah's tones were respectful. She was a true snob.

"Indeed," answered her master ironically. "Well, understand, Hannah, that I don't wish any arrangements made for me by a pack of women. You and Simmons deserve to go, for allowing yourselves to be managed by this young lady."

"I'm sure, sir, I didn't mean any harm, and only thought it would be best for you," answered the maid, very humble outwardly. Inwardly she was formulating in her mind what she would say to Mrs. Simmons on her return.

"Well, I'll exonerate you for the present, on condition you don't say a word about the matter to anyone, especially Miss Graham."

"Certainly, sir." Hannah was enormously relieved.

"How long did you say this arrangement had been going on?"

"Three weeks nearly, sir."

"And when does Simmons return?"

"Mrs. Simmons is expected back next Friday, sir."

"H'm! Very kind of her, I'm sure. Well, that's all I have to say for the present. Remember what I said about keeping quiet."

"Yes, sir." And Hannah finally withdrew to the kitchen. There she vented her annoyance on the cat. For the first time in her righteous life she had been the accomplice and victim of wrong-doing.

Left alone, Godfrey refilled his pipe and sank into the big chair. He picked up the white pasteboard again and read it meditatively.

It was the invitation to an "At Home" given by Sir William and Lady Graham the following Thursday afternoon. Godfrey recalled that he had met Sir William and his wife at a dinner.

"Rather distinguished old chap," he said aloud, having fallen into that habit of the solitary person. "Influential, too. Suppose I ought to go. Wonder what he'd think if he knew his niece was installed as my temporary cook? Like her cheek, too. Expect he'd be furious."

Before he went to his bed, Godfrey had indited a polite note of acceptance, having convinced himself that it was essential to his business success not to neglect certain social opportunities.

For the rest of that week he avoided the flat, eating dinner at his club, so that Virginia's services were little in demand.

She imagined Simmons's employer was beginning to tire of her cooking. Well, she wouldn't be sorry to see Simmons herself. Some qualms had begun to assail her about her position. Perhaps it wasn't quite the right thing to be always stealing in and out of another person's kitchen and cooking their meals so deceitfully. Still, the time was nearly ended, and she had done her best, so that Simmons would soon be back in her job, the sister out of the hospital, and the "old curmudgeon" never a penny the wiser.

Virginia forgot to reckon with the proverb "There is many a slip 'twixt cup and lip."

Thursday morning found her staring at the calendar with a horrified air. She had just remembered that it was the day of her aunt's big "At Home," and that she had promised, on strictest honour, to be there and help to entertain the guests.

Was there not, indeed, at this moment hanging in her wardrobe an entirely new and alluring affair of golden-brown from Carolina, presented to Virginia by her aunt expressly for this occasion?

And that wretched Lawson creature would want his dinner at seven o'clock just the same. Little knew he or cared that it was most inconvenient for his cook!

Aunt Cicely had impressively reminded her that she was no longer eighteen, adding:

"Now, look your most charming, my dear. There are several eligible and attractive men invited—men who have done their share in things, and ought to be settling down. So should you, Jennie, so should you."

Virginia had laughed at her aunt for worldliness and matchmaking, but in a tiny remote corner of her heart the girl was beginning to agree with her. After a few minutes' deliberation, she decided to go and return in time to fulfil her duty to the dinner.

"I will slip away early, and if Aunt Cicely notices and says anything to me afterwards, I can easily say I felt bilious or had neuralgia."

Thus an unusually dutiful niece gratified Lady Graham by appearing very early for her reception and behaving most charmingly to all the stolid City magnates and their wives.

By the time Godfrey Lawson turned up, Virginia's aunt was taking a short breathing space and looking across the room. She was wishing the girl would not be quite so assiduous towards all the elderly friends of her uncle.

Lawson's eyes followed his hostess's anxious gaze. There they beheld and rested on the vision last seen through his kitchen door, although hardly recognisable in her dazzling transformation.

"I was just thinking," said Lady Graham meaningly, "that my niece over there must be getting very tired."

"Perhaps she would allow me to get her tea," suggested Godfrey suavely, a gleam of triumph in his eye.

He had come determined to be on his best behaviour and not show a churlish spirit. Fortune was already favouring him.

So unusual was it for Godfrey to join in any social function that it almost surprised him to find himself really there. Three years of solitary life since the War were beginning to pall. He was weakening a little. Sometimes even he caught himself thinking that maybe all women were not heartless, faithless money-grabbers.

Lady Graham sailed up to her niece, Lawson following.

"Jennie, you really must take a rest and have some tea quietly. Show Mr. Lawson the Chinese Room. You can hear the music there."

Godfrey watched Virginia narrowly to see the effect of his appearance. At the name she gave a slight start, but recovered herself. The golden-brown eyes that matched her dress met his gravely, though a hidden twinkle lurked in their depths. Virginia realised her aunt's manoeuvre, but was quite willing to be taken charge of by this time. At first the name—only, of course, it couldn't be the same. *Her* employer was well on in middle age at least, and a cranky creature to boot, whereas this man was reasonably young and handsome, if a trifle grim.

"Rather like a rock," reflected the girl, giving him a sideways glance as they made their way through the Chinese Room into the garden, with its miniature waterfalls and trees.

"I wonder," she inquired anxiously, as soon as they were seated, waiting for tea, "if you're any relation to a Mr. Lawson who lives near me? In fact, I know his cook quite well. She used to be ours at one time."

Godfrey laughed.

"Well, I believe I am a sort of relation, but not in his good graces, I'm sorry to say."

"Nobody seems to be that," returned Virginia sympathetically. "He's a crusty old curmudgeon, but did awfully well in the



War, I believe, and is doing equally so in peace time—at least, so Simmons says.”

His relative murmured something in

Virginia chattered on, evoking some laughs and responses from her companion. Only once there was a curious pause, when the girl's loose chiffon sleeve fell away, showing the pretty rounded arm as she poured out



“The temporary cook could have killed him where he stood but, instead, her eyes fixed on the carpet, Virginia explained in a somewhat shaky voice.”

reply which Virginia couldn't hear very well, and the subject was dropped.

The two got on together excellently.

the tea. Godfrey forgot himself and stared at it, remembering how he had seen it similarly bare, patting pastries into shape.

She was very charming and feminine, decided the woman-hater.

"Will you have sugar? That's the second time I have asked," said Virginia impatiently, wondering at his fixed gaze.

"Yes, please. I'm sorry, but—well, I was thinking what a picturesque ceremony tea-making is, and so appropriate in this Chinese setting."

His look plainly implied that it was the English girl and not the Chinese setting that he meant.

Virginia veiled her eyes swiftly. "It's most refreshing in any setting," she declared demurely.

A man passing looked at them and said to his companion: "Looks to me as if Lawson is breaking through his crust again. Never does anything by halves, either."

Then Virginia remembered with a sudden start.

"Do you know what time it is?" she asked her companion.

"Nearly six o'clock," he answered, serenely polite.

"Six!" she almost screamed. And she had to be back, change her dress, and cook a dinner by seven!

Swiftly she rose and extended her hand. "I shall have to rush away this moment. I have an appointment to keep. Good-bye."

In a flash the girl had gathered her bag, twinkled her draperies, and disappeared through the door.

"Quick work," commented Lawson, lifting his eyebrows.

It was no quicker, however, than his hasty adieu to Lady Graham and extravagant tip to a man-servant.

While Virginia was agitating distractedly for a taxi, Godfrey Lawson was well on his way home. As soon as he had let himself in, he ordered Hannah to take a note to his club.

"What about the dinner?" asked the woman, aghast at this departure from routine.

"Don't ask questions, but go. If cook can't manage, I'll wait till you get back."

Hannah knew well that cook was not even in the house at that moment, but there was that in her master's voice which made her say no more. She hurried out, full of misgivings.

Her master left his dining-room door open, and hardly had ten minutes elapsed than the bell rang—three short, sharp rings in succession.

"Ha, ha! The signal!" he triumphed.

"Well, here goes! After all, she deserves it, for meddling in my affairs." He stood well behind the front door as he opened it.

Virginia came breathlessly but quietly into the hall. She was still dressed in her festive garments, having had no time to change them, and hoping to escape observation.

Silently she was about to steal in the direction of the passage leading to the kitchen, when something in the way the door shut—sounding like a trap snapping behind her—caused the girl to turn her head to look.

Her petrified stare saw not Hannah, but her companion of the afternoon.

"You!" she gasped feebly.

He bowed.

"You!" came the swift retort.

Virginia realised that the situation called for some explanation on her part.

"I am the cook here," she emphasised haughtily.

"Indeed! That is strange, seeing that Mrs. Simmons is the cook I happen to employ."

"I'm here in her place," flashed Virginia.

"Then you lied this afternoon, saying you were a relative. You are Mr. Lawson?"

She was near breaking-point. The rush and flurry of getting to the flat in time, and an untimely block in the traffic, had unnerved her. This last blow of a double discovery was too much.

"Pardon me, I certainly am a very near relative," the man objected.

Virginia was pale and dead tired, but she mustered all her pluck, answering scornfully: "That, of course, is a mere quibble. I will explain, however." And she marched straight into the dining-room, sinking down into the nearest chair.

Godfrey stood on the hearthrug, his face rather mask-like, awaiting her explanation.

The temporary cook could have killed him where he stood but, instead, her eyes fixed on the carpet, Virginia explained in a somewhat shaky voice, concluding with—

"So, you understand, Simmons was able to go right off, and I thought you'd never notice the difference."

"It was certainly an extraordinary idea to take the liberty of managing a perfect stranger's household. Hannah and Mrs. Simmons had no business to lend themselves to such an arrangement."

This came in emotionless tones, and the speaker gazed over Virginia's head. It

stung her vitally, and with a last vicious spurt she flung out recklessly :

"If you hadn't frightened Simmons and made her afraid she'd have to go, with your fussy old woman's ways, the idea would never have occurred to me, and I *made* them do it. Some people would be grateful."

She leaned back, exhausted after this tirade, but gathered energy to continue, the man standing silently by.

"Now, I suppose," she almost wailed, "everybody will get to know about it, and Simmons will lose her job! After all I've done, too! If only you weren't such a beast, and you seemed so nice this afternoon!"

Poor Virginia was very tired, too overtired to realise the humour of her situation.

A large and beautiful teardrop gathered in her eyes and rolled slowly down her cheek.

Godfrey made a hasty expedition to the sideboard and returned with a glass of wine.

"I am afraid you're tired," he said compassionately. "Drink this."

Virginia shot a quick look at him, and took immediate advantage of the opportunity she discerned in his glance.

"Don't dismiss Mrs. Simmons," she implored, gazing up at him with misty golden eyes.

Lawson realised he was being made a fool of again, as he put it to himself. She was a minx maybe, but a charming, capable minx. And he didn't mind. Tired of a wise loneliness, he desperately wanted to yield to such foolishness. Still, his mouth stiffened with determination.

"We'll talk about that when you've drunk this," he said sternly.

The wine revived Virginia, who sat up and put her hat straight.

"If I apologise humbly, and remind you that I *have* cooked your dinners for three weeks very well, will you forgive me and

say nothing to Simmons?" she demanded once more.

"What about my dinner to-night?" questioned Godfrey, allowing himself to smile at last. "It is your responsibility, and it's past seven now. Since you're too late to cook it, will you share mine?"

"You do forgive me!" cried the girl triumphantly.

"On condition you don't call me an old curmudgeon again."

"Oh, I won't!" she uttered fervently. "Besides, it isn't really true, is it?"

He looked at her more and more steadfastly. She was alluring in her humility.

"It isn't going to be any longer. I'll begin the reformation at once. Perhaps you'll lend a hand, since you like so much to help." He smiled mischievously and held out his hand.

Virginia conceded hers graciously. Being a woman, she knew the man wanted her to be nice to him. And she wanted to be attractive to him.

Five minutes later Hannah, returning from her reluctant errand, saw her master in the very act of handing a lady into a taxi.

The lady wore a fluffy golden-brown dress, and showed slim ankles in silk stockings and bronze shoes. Hannah, however, was not to be deceived. She recognised her erstwhile comrade of the kitchen.

The next day she had the relief of speaking her whole mind about the business to the returned Simmons. Relenting somewhat towards the end, she related what she had seen with her own eyes.

"Oh, indeed!" uttered Simmons oracularly. "Well, all's well that ends well, and fond of Miss Virginia as I have always been, I must say as there's some as can do with a firm hand over them."

With which statement Simmons showed a reprehensible lack of gratitude.



# THE HERO-WORSHIPPER

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

THE man was young, and the situation as old as the hills, yet distinguished by just that twist of Fate that made it seem as though it was for him alone that life had reserved its complexity.

To the outsider, perhaps, it would not appear so very complex, after all; but then the outsider has a way of standing far enough off to see the way in and way out of most situations—a perspective denied to the person involved.

And Graham Halliday felt himself to be very deeply involved indeed.

It was, of course, his own fault. If he had only carried on with his purpose—the purpose for which he had come eleven thousand miles; if that sudden flash of sympathy, or folly—or was it cowardice, after all?—had not made him defer that message that should have been delivered the very first evening. . . .

And this was the sixth.

Just six days ago he had stood for the first time on that grey stone terrace, with its riot of golden roses against a background of bay and ilex, under a sky of so deep a blue that it seemed almost incredible that this should be England—the England he had not seen for four long years. Just six days ago he had taken the first false step and, for the first time, perhaps, in all his life, had hesitated.

For just six days ago he had first seen Doreen Napier, in a gold frock among the golden roses, and for a man rarely given to viewing things in a fantastic or picturesque fashion, Graham Halliday's vision of Doreen did him credit.

Her hair was tawny, and the sun had tanned her small, square face a warm, clear brown. Eyes of amber-hazel, black-lashed under straight black brows, met Graham's

with an impersonal measuring glance that quickened to a smile of approval.

To Graham Halliday, late engineer of the steam-yacht *Seraphina*, her voice was golden, too.

And he had looked at her golden frock and reflected that, after all, it was nearly a year since Randolph Lowry had been reported lost in that South Pacific hurricane that had reduced the smart and shining *Seraphina* to ribbons and splinters.

She had talked to him, out there on the terrace, for exactly fifteen minutes. But she hadn't talked of Randolph Lowry. For she didn't know—how should she?—that it was the man before her who, with infinite courage and unflinching patience, had loyally searched for some clue to the whereabouts of the chief whom he alone refused to believe was drowned.

At the very last, when hope had almost died, he had found Randolph Lowry serenely encamped on a palm atoll, handling Kanaka boys with the skill with which he had handled the *Seraphina's* crew, perfectly happy and absorbed in the merits of coconuts, bananas, and *bêche-de-mer*.

Halliday stayed with him a week, heard the story—told very casually—of his chief's escape, and related that of his own and of two of the crew who had shared his luck. Over the fate of the *Seraphina* the yacht's owner was stolidly philosophic; irresistibly Halliday was reminded of a child consoled for the breaking of his cherished toy by a new distraction. And in that one week he came to know more of the man, who, brilliant and erratic, was yet possessed of a strangely incompatible power of concentration and an almost fatalistic philosophy, than he had learnt during the whole of their four months' cruise.

It was actually not until the very morning of the arrival of the missionary steamer by which Halliday was to regain the realms of civilisation that Lowry spoke of the girl in England.

Somehow the possibility of there being a girl in England had never occurred to Graham Halliday. He found himself looking at Lowry with actual amazement, and Lowry, seated on a packing-case, engaged in cleaning a rifle, explained calmly how grateful he would be if Halliday, who he knew intended returning to England, would let Miss Napier know that he was alive, after all. For he couldn't, of course, forsake his bananas and coco-palms at the very outset of their career.

That he might have written did not appear to occur to him. He had, it would seem, acquired with his new life a primitive preference for the spoken message, yet six months ago the word primitive, in connection with Randolph Lowry, would have seemed ludicrous, impossible. Halliday, remembering how he had looked on the occasion of their interview in Town prior to the cruise, how he had looked as owner of the *Seraphina*, wondered grimly if the unknown Miss Napier would recognise her *fiancé* in this amazing individual, whose sole concern at the moment was the possibilities of a palm atoll in the South Seas. For he had gathered, from Lowry's somewhat casual allusions to the subject, that her life was the ordered and conventional one of the daughter of a country magnate of the old school.

Wherefore Lowry's next remark was the more amazing. "Of course, when we've time to put up a better shack. . . We could get some corrugated iron . . ."

Halliday looked at him curiously.

"You mean—she'd come out to you? To live on this atoll?"

"Why not?" asked Lowry cheerfully. "In a couple of years, perhaps, when the cocos—"

Halliday said very softly: "Oh, hang the cocos!"

But he didn't refuse what Lowry asked. So he became an ambassador—a *rôle* which men have accepted, and made a mess of, since the beginning of time.

And he sailed for England with the full intention of telling Doreen Napier that Randolph Lowry was alive, and that, if she married him, she could have a house with a corrugated iron roof on a palm atoll in the South Seas.

He had been six days a guest at the country house where she, too, was staying, and he had not told her. Yet the reason was not so obvious as might be imagined. It concerned Tommy Trevor.

Tommy Trevor it was who had interrupted that first *tête-à-tête* on the terrace. He did it with a frank, gay air of possession that was boyishly disarming. Quite palpably he adored Doreen, and she—well, he was of her world and of her age—they had everything to make for comradeship, and it was a year ago. Somehow Halliday could not accuse her of heartlessness.

All that evening he watched them together—the golden girl with her splendid young vitality and beauty, and the boy who seemed surely more suited to her youth than the man who was growing coco-palms eleven thousand miles away. And the message went unsaid.

Fate had played into his hands, in that he had met Doreen at the house of the acquaintance whose hospitality he had accepted immediately on arriving in England, for she had, it appeared, no inkling of his connection with the *Seraphina*, and was little likely to learn of it, since their host was a carelessly genial individual whose sole idea was to fill his house with friends, old and new, and leave them to amuse themselves and each other, a scheme that invariably proved triumphantly successful.

So to Doreen Napier and the rest of his fellow-guests Graham Halliday was simply "an engineer man who'd been out in the Antipodes or somewhere . . . jolly nice fellow . . . didn't talk about himself much . . . he must come again for the shooting." And nobody, during that first week, tried to make him "talk about himself." They were a jolly crowd, bent on enjoying themselves, and chiefly diverted by watching the promising affair of young Trevor and that charming Napier girl.

It was, they said, "so delightfully suitable"—far more so than would have been her marriage with that odd, interesting man—Lowe, wasn't it?—no, Lowry—to whom she had got engaged about two years ago, and who went off to the South Seas in a yacht, and was drowned in a cyclone, or waterspout, or whatever it is they have out there. Really, in a way, it was rather a blessing that things had turned out as they had. Of course it was very tragic and all that, but still, when you saw Doreen and Tommy together— So Halliday, hearing simply the confirmation of his own first

impression, followed the dictates of an impulse strengthened by an ever-growing force, and kept silence.

though she spoke with her usual frank gaiety, she gave him a quick, curious glance almost as if she sought, too, to



“‘If it was impossible then, it is ten thousand times more impossible now,’ she said.”

She found him on the terrace that sixth evening. It was the first time that she had deliberately sought his company, and

learn his recognition of the fact. But it seemed that his grave, brown face told her nothing. She looked away again and,

leaning slim round arms on the stone balustrade, began to talk idly, irrelevantly, yet all the time with a subtle sense of purpose.

It was a halcyon evening, golden, clear, and warm, fit setting for the golden girl. And this time Tommy Trevor did not interrupt them.

Not that Doreen could have found Graham Halliday very conversational. For

when, by some art that was surely indefinable, she accomplished that which no one else had done, and led him actually to talk about himself and his life, he baffled her by abruptly breaking off with a curt "I beg your pardon. I'm sure this cannot interest you."

She said, golden-voiced: "But it does. Please go on."

She did not, perhaps, notice that his hands were gripping the balustrade as he stood beside her. After a long pause she added slowly:

"You see, I am interested partly because it is all so different from this."

And she made a little gesture that included the ordered beauty of their surroundings.

"I see."

She turned and looked at him gravely.

"No, I don't think you do. You think that—that things such as you have spoken of—life like that—couldn't really appeal to anyone living as I do. You think that



"I'm going out to him—South Seas or Antipodes, or wherever it is."

because I wear a Paris frock, and I enjoy this kind of life—oh, I don't deny that I *do* enjoy it— But the other—the other"—suddenly there was a ring in her voice; unconsciously she stood upright, her head tilted back and her eyes alight—"I could enjoy that, too!" she said.

He looked from the gallant picture of her, forcing himself to see, instead, a shack with a corrugated iron roof on a palm atoll, a slimy pile of *bêche-de-mer* ready for curing, and a man who would never realise what she sacrificed. He spoke with a sort of desperate conviction. "No, I don't think you could."

She gave an odd little, half-angry laugh. "You are very clever, Mr. Halliday, and—don't you think?—a little impertinent, claiming to gauge a person's capabilities? How can you know?"

He said steadily: "It's not at first that I'm thinking of. There'd be the novelty of it then. But afterwards, when that had gone, and you knew there'd be years and years of what you already hated, you'd think of this then, and wonder how in the world you could ever have been crazy enough to give it up. Let me save you that, at least—"

He broke off, conscious that she was looking at him curiously, for he had been speaking, indeed, as if this were no hypothetical case, but a real fate from which he would have shielded her—a real disaster threatening her happiness. And since she herself had voiced no definite statement, she must surely have noticed and wondered at his interpretation of her words.

There was a long silence, then Doreen said slowly: "Thank you for your estimate of my sincerity and endurance. But I don't suppose that either will be put to the test in that way, after all." She paused. "At all events, you are quite convinced about the result."

He said nothing, despite—perhaps because of—that new note of appeal in her voice. It seemed almost as if she wanted him to reiterate or recant his conviction. But she waited in vain. For Graham Halliday, looking away from her, was determinedly remembering Tommy Trevor, who would surely make Doreen happy as Randolph Lowry could never have done.

Yet her next words struck him with a curious shock.

"Tommy Trevor has asked me to marry him."

She said it as simply as though they had

known one another all their lives, and she sought his advice. His ear, attuned and quickened to every tone of her voice, caught again that note of appeal and uncertainty. But he held to his purpose, and, turning to her, said quickly:

"You will?"

For a moment they looked at one another, the girl grave, the man with a forcedly conventional smile. Then—

"Yes," said Doreen.

\* \* \* \* \*

The purple-grey army of cloud that came up from the west that night, to threaten the golden weather, broke next morning in a wild storm of wind and rain, sweeping a drift of yellow rose-petals across the terrace, whirling them in at the open window of the room where three of Sir Peter's guests were at least upholding the tradition of his hospitality, and were providing their own entertainment with entire success.

Only it was not the sort of entertainment that Sir Peter intended. He had, above all things, horror of anything approaching a "scene," and this—well, one glance at Tommy Trevor's face as he entered the room had told the other two that something was wrong indeed.

He came across to where they stood by the window, and he said, without preliminary, looking at Halliday:

"You knew—you knew! All the time you knew that Randolph Lowry was alive. And yet you could keep silence, betraying him all the time, the finest man who ever lived! You utter cad!"

"Tommy!" It was Doreen's voice, steady and clear. "Tommy, please remember that Mr. Halliday is my friend."

"Friend?" He gave an ugly, unsteady laugh. "I suppose he was Lowry's friend, too. At any rate, Lowry trusted him—and you, too!" He looked at her; his eyes were dark with anger in a white face from which all the boyishness had gone. "You were engaged to Lowry a year ago. I wouldn't believe it at first, when the fellow told me—" He broke off. "It—it is true?"

"Quite true," said Doreen. She did not look at Halliday. The boy went on:

"No wonder you hesitated! No wonder you wouldn't give me my answer to-day! Even you had that much shame. You couldn't help it, even believing Lowry dead. But, Heavens, if you had married me, and we'd found, too late, that Lowry was alive. Doreen! Lowry is alive—he wasn't drowned



at all. He got chucked up on a sort of desert island, and he's *living* there, making something out of life with his two hands. He's splendid! If I'd known that you'd known him, too! Ever since I was a little chap I've thought him splendid. He *is*——"

Doreen said, very quietly, standing there between the man whose thought for her had involved all the tangle, and the boy whose hero-worship came before all else:

"How did you find out?"

"One of the *Seraphina's* crew, it seems, was picked up by a native boat and taken to an island not very far from the one where Lowry is. Oddly enough, he happened to be a fellow from the village at home, and it seems had spoken of that to Lowry. Everyone talked to Lowry, you know—he's like that. Well, the fellow was pretty bad at first—got bashed on the head somehow—but the niggers looked after him all right. Of course he thought that Lowry was dead, but when he got better he heard from the natives—he says they gossip in the South Seas like anything—that a white man from a wrecked boat was living on an atoll some miles away, and that another white man, who'd been looking for him, had found him and had just left for England. He couldn't go and see Lowry, or he'd miss his chance of catching the next steamer home—he's got a wife and kids here, and they thought him dead—but he got the names clear, anyway—Lowry's and Halliday's—and he knew there was no mistake. He must have reached home, by a different route, a day after Halliday, and as soon as he found I was staying here he came to tell me. He knew, you see, how anyone, knowing Lowry, would be glad." The boy's voice deepened and shook. Then he swung round to Doreen.

"He heard your name mentioned—one of the servants pointed you out to him last night, in your yellow frock on the terrace. He asked me to confirm it. You could see how surprised he was, though he tried not to show it. Mr. Lowry was engaged to a Miss Doreen Napier. You!" His laugh jarred. Involuntarily Halliday took a step towards him, and was checked by Doreen's hand on his arm.

After a long, still pause she asked him, very quietly, the inevitable question:

"Why didn't you tell me?"

So he told her. "Because I thought you would be happier married to Trevor than to Randolph Lowry."

"Oh!" There was an odd note in her voice and something strangely akin to pique.

She looked at him curiously, as if she did not altogether believe him, and she thrust remorselessly under his guard.

"Why should you count my happiness before your own—honour?"

And, because the shaft went deep, he answered her, harshly and uncompromisingly:

"Because I was a fool!"

There was a silence, broken only by the steady splash of the rain. Then Doreen said:

"I knew all the time."

"You *knew*?" Tommy was staring at her. "You couldn't——"

She gave a little laugh.

"Was it so very difficult? You see, I happened to remember Randolph mentioning that he was taking a new engineer, and that his name was Graham Halliday. When Mr. Halliday turned up here, eleven months after the wreck of the *Seraphina*, and avoided all mention of the affair, did you think I didn't wonder? It was only guessing at first, of course, and then, last night, I tried to make him tell me." She paused, the faintest smile trembling at the corners of her mouth. "I was beaten there. But somehow it only made me more sure that Randolph was alive, and that Mr. Halliday did not mean me to know."

"Now that you do know," Tommy said, "now that you know for certain, what are you going to do?"

He did not try to keep the antagonism out of his voice, to disguise the fact that Doreen would never again be the girl of those golden hours. But if she had already accomplished the dethroning of his idol, her next words shattered it completely.

"Just before the *Seraphina* was lost, I wrote to Randolph, breaking off our engagement. It was an impossible mistake. I didn't know, until now, whether he ever received the letter or not."

The boy drew a long breath.

"You could do that! But he doesn't know—he doesn't know! And now he never *need* know, thank Heaven!"

She looked at him for a moment in silence.

"You think—— Oh, Tommy, you don't understand! I meant that letter. I mean it now!"

"You'll jilt him—Randolph Lowry? You *can't*!"

"I must!" Suddenly a wave of colour swept to her face and away, but her voice was very steady. "If it was impossible

then, it is ten thousand times more impossible now," she said, and saw Graham Halliday check a quick movement towards her.

Tommy faced them both.

"Then there's only one thing to do—for me. People may laugh at Lowry for choosin' coco-palms, but, by Jove, he's *right!*" He gave an odd, excited laugh. "It can't go back on you—a palm tree—can it? It can't smash all the faith you've ever had in human nature, it can't make you feel that—that it's out of fashion to play the game. Lowry knows, and I've found out now, too. I'm going out to him—South Seas, or Antipodes, or wherever it is. I'm going to throw in my lot with him, and he shan't regret it. I'm going just as soon as I can fix things up."

They said nothing. If, knowing Randolph Lowry, they found such hero-worship incredible, they found it also rather fine.

As the door closed on Tommy, the girl turned to Halliday.

"He'll go," she said, "and I'm glad." She paused. "Oh, I wonder why Randolph should be a hero to Tommy, and just—just common clay to you and me?"

He did not attempt to answer that. Looking out at the grey veil of rain across the valley, the drenched and tossing sprays of golden roses, he was thinking, perhaps, that, after all, the situation had worked out with strange inevitableness: those two dominant forces—Tommy's hero-worship and his own thought for Doreen.

He heard her voice again.

"It's funny, isn't it? Tommy wanted me to marry Randolph, and you wanted me to marry Tommy."

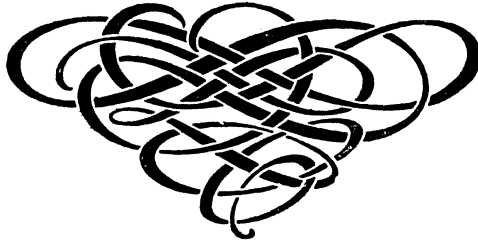
He said, without turning round: "I—wanted your happiness!"

"And you would not allow me to judge for myself. You were so very sure of knowing better than I. Perhaps, even now——"

"Doreen!"

He swung round then; across the width of the bow window they faced one another, as they had on that first evening on the terrace. Only so much had happened since then; he had put her happiness before his honour, and she——

Very clearly and steadily she asked him: "Won't you give me the right to judge for myself—now?"



## A SONG OF AUTUMN.

**R**OSES are dead and the lily's perfume sped,  
 Cast the corn's gold, no more the fields can give.  
 The warm sunfall that was so prodigal  
 Is feeble now and fugitive.

**B**ut you, O my Trees, are more permanent than these,  
 Richer grow your robes as new colour springs to birth.  
 Till, at the end, steals sleep, and they descend  
 As vesture for the cold, nude Earth.

GEOFFREY FYSON.



'He patted the jar with shaky hand. 'Cuca leaves,' he slobbered softly. 'Cuca leaves. Know the action of the cuca-leaf infusion, Stuyne?'"

# THE RULE OF CÆSAR

By JOHN RUSSELL

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

**A** MAN has to be built with piano-wire nerves, no feelings to speak of, and a serene lack of humour to do business on the West Coast. So Stuyne was travelling superintendent for the Lagoon Trading Company. He was a simple-minded man, with a smooth, almost priestly face burned deep walnut, and his success was phenomenal. It was told of him that

he never missed anything he went after, and that he never broke his word.

Nothing had ever disturbed him in his regular and stated voyagings up and down the particular strip of steaming hell that was his patrol—neither fever nor sleeping sickness nor malaria nor clay bullets nor black witchcraft.

Nevertheless, the most perfect human

*Copyright, 1922, by John Russell, in the United States of America.*

mechanism cannot wholly and indefinitely act the part of clockwork. Nor has human mind ever absolutely mastered a system for treating the African Continent like a rent collector's route along a suburban street. There came a time when Stuyne was made a monkey of, not once, but twice in the same day.

His landing that morning was just like all the other landings he had to make—the little Coast steamer lying a mile or more off the misty green belt that was Africa, the agent's surf canoe paddling up to receive him, and Stuyne himself swung out on a knotted rope from the end of a davit.

At every heave the steamer swept up on the edge of a crumbling green hill, and the little dugout dropped away into a gulch below. At every fall she went down as if the props had been kicked from under, and the canoe came shooting up on a wave to the level of her deck. And always the great sullen waters shouldered in for shore, where their cannonading hit a steady, vast note, and the smoke of their explosions stood high above the mangroves.

All very ordinary for Stuyne. He hung like a spider on a thread, thrown back and forth, dipped and snatched until the tiny craft was poised for the merest second just under his feet. Then he simply let go, sagged into a limber bundle in the prow, and waved his hand. Whereupon the Kroo boys spaded for home with their sharp paddles.

All so ordinary that the canoe was far out of hail of the steamer before Stuyne noticed the man at the stern in the agent's place. This man was squatting on Stuyne's baggage, which had been lowered from the other davit. Stuyne was sitting on a low thwart, and they could look at each other over the bobbing woolly wigs. Stuyne did look presently, and encountered a pair of bleary, red-rimmed eyes wholly strange to him.

"Hello!" said Stuyne, blinking. "You're not Hummel."

"No," said the other, in a weary, slobbering effort of speech. "Hummel's dead. I buried him."

It was not the loss of his agent that struck Stuyne. Such incidents are trivial on the West Coast, where men die very readily. Stuyne had outlived his whole string of agents and replaced it again, and he had every expectation of outliving it many times over, and every qualification, too. But he didn't

know the heap of rusty duck in the stern, and he divined that the heap had been at some trouble and risk to come off for him.

"What do you want?" he inquired, with usual bland astuteness.

"I want the job."

Preposterous, of course. Agents are not selected in any such wise. They are shipped on from happy lands where the supply of young men anxious to fertilise an alien soil seems never to slacken. Nobody picks an agent on the spot. Nor had Stuyne ever encountered such an applicant before.

"Not so," said Stuyne.

"Oh, I believe so," returned the stranger.

Stuyne blinked at him. There was nothing impressive about the man. He seemed a physical wreck. He had a curious, feeble trick of wiping a shaky hand across his mouth. Stuyne was puzzled at the assurance of the demand and how to account for it.

"I said no."

"And I say—yes."

Another superintendent in the same position would have laughed at that. But Stuyne was not another. He was Stuyne, and he explained very carefully and seriously.

"My dear sir, it is impossible. I can't hand over an agency as I would a cigarette. And you can't make me."

"That's all rot," returned the stranger, in his loose-lipped way. "You can deal out any agency you like. And I can make you—or make you uncomfortable if you won't. Look over this crew, Stuyne. I own them—anyway, I hired them. What's more, I speak their language. You don't. Ah, that's a pity! Funny things you pick up by the gift of native tongues, Stuyne."

"You seem to know me," said Stuyne stiffly.

"Yes. You see, I lived with Hummel for a week before he died. He told me a whole lot. And I've had seven days to think and make my plans, if you call it thinking."

"Well?"

"Oh, come," said the stranger wearily, "you're not as stupid as that. These canoes are treacherous, you know. You've heard of painful accidents in the surf. Usually some visitor foolish enough to squabble over the fare. Now, I'm collecting the fare. The Kroos would lug me out in an upset, naturally. But you— Just take the trouble to glance shoreward."

Stuyne had no need. He knew very well what a roaring stretch of water lay between him and Africa, and how much chance he would stand trying to swim it. As a means

of homicide, nothing is quite so safe nor so certain as a canoe landing on the West Coast.

It was then Stuyne perceived that he had been foolish to part with his luggage, for his revolver was in his satchel, and this lunatic was sitting on the satchel—a lunatic with limbs showing like hinged rails under his rags, who drooled and slavered, and yet could offer such a threat calmly, logically, a pitiful creature, and formidable by his very pitifulness, which could only have been spurred by some single inexorable purpose.

“Impossible!” said Stuyne, startled to an exclamation.

The stranger laughed.

“Why all the fuss? How many agents have you had here, Stuyne?”

Stuyne did not answer.

“Six,” supplied the other. “Six, and all dead or chucked the job. And none ever made the place pay. Oh, I know what I’m getting. A hell hole, Stuyne!”

He brought himself up jerkily from that outcry, the only one he made. Stuyne sat looking at him.

“Nobody keeps a bargain made by force. You want to be agent. Very well, suppose I say you are agent. But when we get to shore, who is going to install you agent?”

“You will,” said the stranger, nodding. “You keep such bargains. What’s the use, Stuyne? I know you. You’ve built up the best business on the Coast by a simple system—amazing, too, I call it—and that’s sticking to your word, once passed. Break it for a thing like me? Not you. A man don’t reign who can’t.”

And Stuyne knew that he was beaten. After all, there was little harm the fellow could do.

“I shall fire you.”

“Oh, naturally. Soon as you like, after to-day. We’ll say till sundown. Allow me to introduce myself. I’m—name is Cæsar Smeek.”

He grinned loosely.

“It is, though. I wouldn’t be up to inventing it. Cæsar—do you see? He asks for the billets and accepts the same. Cæsar Smeek, Lagoon Trading Company agent. Does it go?”

“How is business at your station, Mr. Smeek?” asked Stuyne, quite simply.

“Ask me when you come back to-night. You’ll be going up river to see that Kobango chief, I suppose?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll report on your return. Thanks. And, thank Heaven, that’s done!”

He subsided amid the luggage—collapsed more exactly, like one whose last small store of energy had been drained. He lay in the stern, inert, with his dirty mushroom helmet tipped over his head, and left the travelling superintendent at leisure, during the rest of the journey, to reflect, if he were so minded, on the inconvenience of a reputation.

And that was the way Stuyne was made a monkey of, for the first time.

They came ashore after a clever running of the bar at the river’s mouth where the village lay sprawled, a row of yellow building blocks on the long, yellow sandpit in the yellow sunshine.

Stuyne found no reason to improve his estimate of the new agent at closer inspection. When Cæsar Smeek climbed out and tried to stand, his legs spun under him like rope yarn. The superintendent caught him from falling. He felt the ribs of his wasted body and could measure the weakness of him as he clung.

“Easy a bit!” he gasped. “I’ll be all right. Wait till I get the feel of the ground. There, that’s better. Now come on.”

He set off at a lunge, as if he had been jolted from behind.

“Come on!”

Stuyne started toward the factory.

“Not that way.”

“What?”

“Korler has the keys.”

Stuyne looked at him, and from him to the clump of mud walls and corrugated roofs off to the left at the crest of the sandpit, domain of the only other white in the place.

“Korler?”

“Took possession when Hummel died. That’s the usual arrangement, isn’t it? He’s done the same six times now, hasn’t he—every time you lost your agent?”

And yet the fact took an odd significance with the presence there of this visitor, who had lived with Hummel, who wanted Hummel’s job.

“You haven’t been staying at your place?”

“No,” mumbled Cæsar Smeek. “It’s been locked.”

“H’m! Korler feed you well?”

“He didn’t feed me.”

“Then where have you kept yourself?”

“With the blacks.”

Stuyne lost a pacc.

"You've been living with the blacks, here?"

"Heavens, no!" A laugh jarred from Cæsar Smeek. "Here? Not likely."

He flung a hand toward the big dark fringe of the mangroves, beyond which the limitless wilderness stretched down to the lagoon.

"In the swamps."

It was an amazing confession. Stuyne had some glimpse of what it meant, and he turned with sudden new vision upon the settlement that this man had shunned for the horrors of that bubbling slimy jungle.

He had never been able to make much of the place. Successive agents had made little of it. It had always been dirtier, slacker, more wretched than any other post on his string. He had set the reasons at scant labour, a shy and difficult race of natives, the lack of racial tradition, and so had passed to more profitable points.

Now he saw it as it lay grilling along the inland half of the spit before him, a miserable jumble of huts. The straggling street was almost deserted. The doors were closed. There came no sounds of activity, of merriment, such as belong by right to a prosperous African town. There were no small black babies kicking in the dust, no pigs, no lolling figures in the shade, no cheerful smokes. The place might have been stricken with a pestilence or with a curse.

The few blacks abroad moved furtively, slinking from the sight of the white men. By the pathway a cripple cowered away, whining, an abject thing. A couple moved aside to avoid them, fearfully and sullenly.

Something was wrong with the place. Something had always been wrong with it, though Stuyne formulated so much to himself for the first time.

"Does anybody live here at all?" he asked.

Cæsar Smeek laughed again.

"Oh, they're here all right. It's a transplanted sea village. They can't get away very well. And there is work, you know. Korler does a good trade——"

He brought up with a check.

"Come on!"

They went on, but Stuyne noticed a curious detail. Although the new agent had started out in haste, the nearer he drew to Korler's factory, the slower lagged his gait. At the entrance to the compound he reached a dead stop. Stuyne thought it was his weakness again or the heat. But he stood straight enough.

"Where is Korler?" Stuyne was saying, when Korler himself swung around the corner, noiselessly as his shadow before him.

He was a big man, bunch-muscled inside his tight drill, with thick legs apart, so that his thighs stood knobbed. He had a wide, red, fair-skinned face that seemed burning under his helmet brim, seemed to blaze openly with the upflung, intolerable sun-glare, until one met his eyes and their cold correction. Fish eyes of dead blue, of fish some time dead and laid away in ice. And then one saw that this was no organism to be distressed and sweltered by a climate, for that is a generous sign.

The way of his coming was strange. As he approached he held in one fist a kind of looped knout, a dog lash, and before he even spoke, at sight of Stuyne's companion he raised and darted it, true as a striking snake. It cut Cæsar Smeek across the face and sent him stumbling over his own feet, to sprawl headlong.

Cæsar Smeek picked himself up at a safe distance and crouched there, one arm raised, the other hand pressed to the shameful bright welt across his cheek.

"I told you to keep away from my place," said Korler slowly, in a heavy, slurred voice.

Cæsar Smeek said nothing. Hiding his face, he tottered away to the wall of built-in oil tins and leaned there. He had not cried out nor made any sound.

Stuyne looked gravely at Korler. The big man looped up his whip again. He turned to the superintendent and nodded, as if he had just happened upon him that instant.

"You want the keys? Come in, Mr. Stuyne. These lazy niggers of mine didn't spy you soon enough, or I'd have met you at the landing. It's a pity about Hummel. I suppose you've heard. Went all to pieces, poor chap."

He led the way into the verandah, where the iron roof made tingling heat noises over their heads.

"Drank himself to death—that and cuca leaves. Would you believe it? Positively. A perfect slave of the drug. And with brandy, you know—I tried hard to make him stop in time. But he got rather stuffy with me. In fact, I didn't see him for a week before he died. Rather hard to get on with, poor fellow."

He clapped sharply, and a tall Mandingo servant appeared.

"What will you have, Stuyne? I can offer you some fairly cool soda with it. Pede. take'n cap'n's order."

Stuyn remained standing on the step.

"Thanks," he said, "I'll only trouble you for the key."

"Well, that's all right. Sit down, anyway. Have a drink?"

"Thanks," repeated Stuyn. "I've got to install my new agent."

Korler wheeled.

"Agent?" he echoed, with an involuntary glance behind Stuyn. "You brought one? I didn't notice."

"No, I found one here."

"Found one?"

Korler stared at him through a moment of silence.

"You mean——"

"His name is Smeek—Cæsar Smeek. You seem to be acquainted with the gentleman yourself."

As a mild hint it was an eminent success. Korler stared open-mouthed, and suddenly a deeper flood of colour made his face almost purple.

"You don't mean to say you've named that tramp out there your agent for the place?"

"Mr. Smeek is my agent," said Stuyn.

Korler began to laugh, and stopped short.

"Oh, look here, Stuyn, you've been done, you know. He's done you. Why, the man's no good. A tramp, a common larrikin. I won't have him on the premises. Agent? You can't name him!"

"I have named him."

"Then you'd better chuck him quick, that's all. He dropped in from Heaven knows where the week before Hummel died. They were thick. In fact, that was the point I quarrelled with Hummel about when I tried to loosen this Smeek's clutches on him. He had Hummel hypnotised, I think. I believe he hastened the poor chap's death. I wouldn't trust him. He's not right. Half thief, half beggar—one of those low creatures that go native, don't you know. You know what a man has to be that takes to Coast tramping. Why, Stuyn—you can see for yourself. You *saw*."

Stuyn made no answer. He had seen, and it was not a good thing to see. He had seen a white lashed with a whip—a white man in a land where white men learn to hold themselves as demigods and to act the part, too. But his serious, thin mouth only set.

"And now, if I may trouble you for the keys, kindly——"

He walked over to the post of the Lagoon

Trading Company with Cæsar Smeek. Only this time he did lend his new agent a touch to brace his reeling footsteps. They said nothing on the way, unless the breath of Cæsar Smeek, drawn with the sound of a finger-tip pressed along a window-pane, was a way of saying something.

The place was in poor shape. Rubbish littered the compound. The store shed was empty. Inside the bungalow was evidence of a hasty departure. Korler had done only the needful. He had left intimate traces of poor Hummel's habitation in the disordered rooms: a frayed hammock, some photographs, a pad almanack with the date two weeks old, scattered playing cards, empty brandy flasks, a pencil with a chewed end lying beside the account books at the little desk—dumb details that acquired a tragic eloquence in the stillness where death had been.

Stuyn surveyed it all, took a glance at the accounts as in duty bound, noted that Hummel's personal effects had been boxed after a fashion and made ready for shipment, and turned to find that Cæsar Smeek had stolen across to a shelf cluttered with bottles.

He plucked from the end a large blue jar with a red label, nursed it in his arm, and stood leaning.

"Stuyn," he said, with a certain hesitant restraint, "you've learned how to take things for granted on the Coast. You'll have to take a lot for granted in this mess."

Stuyn made a gesture of aversion.

"Oh, I don't intend even trying to explain," went on Cæsar Smeek. "Only this. When you come back, if I'm not on hand, look for a little package of Hummel's on this desk. It's to be forwarded to his folks in England—registered, you understand. If it's not there—well, never mind."

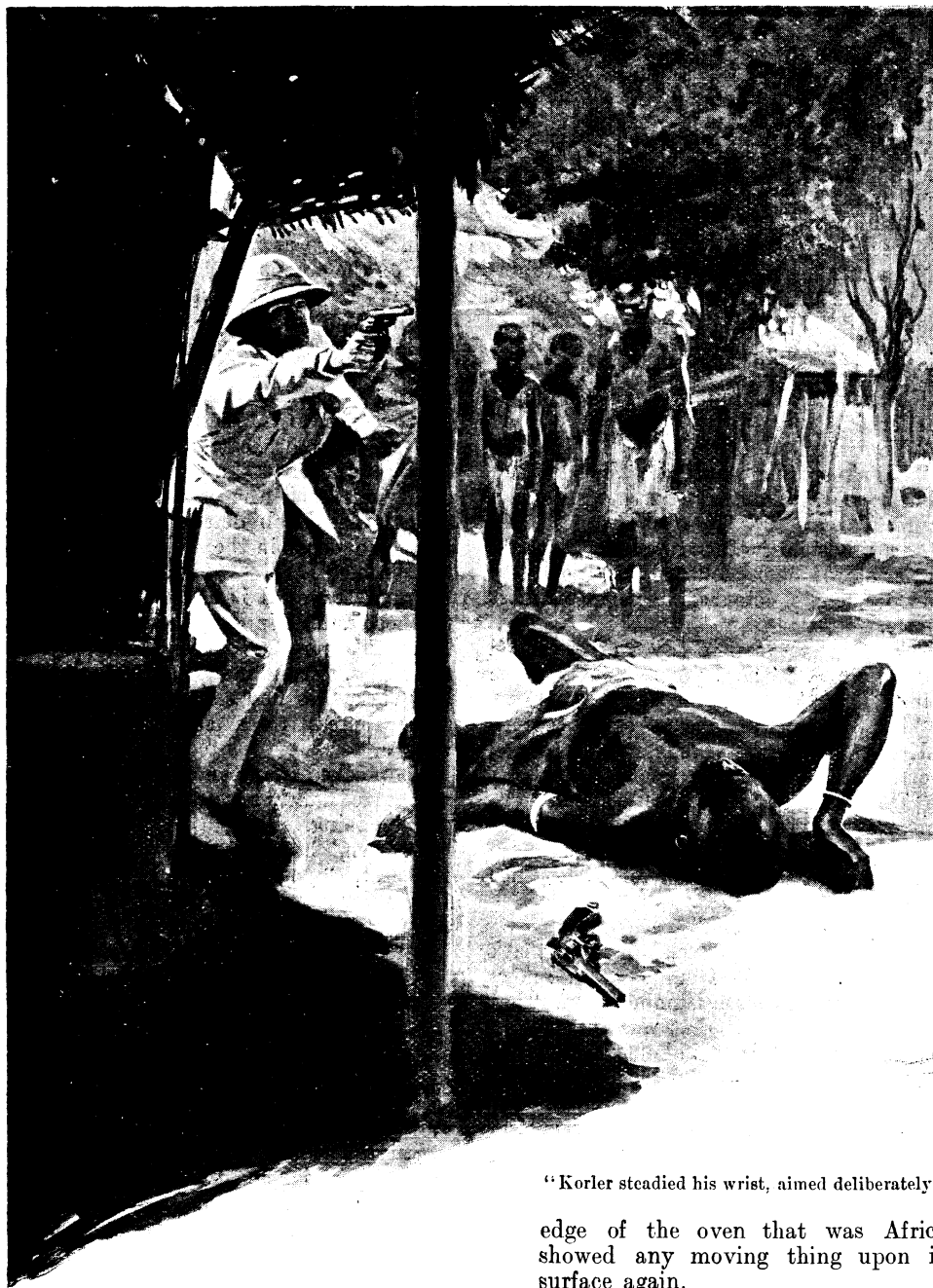
Stuyn assented by silence as he looked at the blue jar in the other's arm. And presently the drooling smile came back upon the branded face of Cæsar Smeek. He patted the jar with shaky hand.

"Cuca leaves," he slobbered softly. "Cuca leaves. Know the action of the cuca-leaf infusion, Stuyn? Ah, a pity that! Marvellous stuff!"

Stuyn shrugged once and tossed the keys on the table.

"That will be all, I hope. You are installed, Mr. Smeek. I shall return before night."

"Good-bye," mumbled Cæsar Smeek. "You'll find the station interpreter down



"Korler steadied his wrist, aimed deliberately."

edge of the oven that was Africa, showed any moving thing upon its surface again.

by the landing. He'll get you a river crew. Pleasant trip. Bye!"

Stuyn walked out without other word or glance, the way one gets free from something loathsome, leaving his new agent propping and swaying there and looking after him from a death's-head face with a red welt across it, and patting the big blue jar.

It must have been about noon before the griddle of sand, set down at the

Two black men lay in the shadow of a pile of squared timber balks at the back of Korler's compound. They had lain there throughout the day, and through the night, and the day before that, and for many days. They never changed place, except to drag themselves from time to time with the little blot of shadow that was their cramped oasis in the blinding heat.

These two black men were chained to the





"As if his mission were upon him like a shield, he advanced unfaltering. And when he was ready, he fired."

timbers behind them. One was old. He wore around his head, just above his ears, something of the appearance of a red fillet or twisted cord. But the red was raw flesh, a kind of wound familiar among the Buganis, and some few other peoples who cherish the ancient art of head torture. The man with him was his son. He was far gone of a skin disease, and was no longer black, but grey, like elephant hide. He was the weaker, and the old man helped him when he must shift, and held the gourd of brackish water to his lips when he must drink.

Neither of these men was much interested in what went on around him. The world

was that angular blot of shadow. Neither was in a state to reason very much about things. Life was largely a matter of drawing one gulp of superheated air after another.

Still, they were alive, and they did see what happened in the place, or the beginning of it. What they thought, or whether they thought at all, is a question unanswerable.

First came Pede, the Mandingo servant, issuing from the house, clean and aloof. He was armed, too, like a cloud, for he bore a darting lash that could sear and bite. He carried and flung to them another gourd of the brackish water—their own had been

empty these two hours—and some remnants of bad fish. And he cut twice apiece with the whip and said, in a dialect such as they could understand :

“Here, dogs, eat your carrion.”

They needed the water first, and Pede stood over them and taunted them while they drank.

“Will you ever try to run away again? You see now how long is our arm. When you are sent for wax hereafter, perhaps you will get wax, and not think you are free. We can reach you wherever you go, for all tribes obey us. And then comes bad fish—and worse things.”

Then he cut them again and went away out of sight around the bungalow to another part of the compound, and they heard a creature screaming there and the snap of the whip.

While they were eating their fish later, the great white man came out of the house, a huge and terrible apparition. They were very much afraid, and pressed their faces to the ground. But he did not approach. He turned away toward the corner of the compound, and entered a hut.

Lastly, they saw a third thing, and while the others were ordinary and daily, this was the unaccountable one. From their timber pile they could look out of the big gate of the compound and down the yellow slope to the other trading station. On the steps below suddenly appeared another white man, tall and slim. He was a very white man, clad from head to foot in dazzling white garments, save for leather bands around his legs that shone in the sun, and a polished girdle about his waist from which hung, at one hip, a compact case that meant firearms as surely as the whiteness meant authority.

This second white man marched quickly and briskly up the path toward them, and presently they recognised him as one who had not before been so white, nor seemed so powerful, one who had dwelt in the jungles among their people and was known and not feared. He came through the gate without pausing, and stopped before them and looked at them. And he spoke also in a dialect that they could understand.

“What are you here for, you men?”

But they were frightened, because he seemed strange, and because of their fear of the great white man, and because of Pede and his whip. So they did not answer.

“Did you fail to obey?”

They made the gesture “Yes.”

Then the second white said something in an unknown tongue, and turned away and walked straight to the hut in the corner of the compound. He raised his hand and smote the door, and they quaked where they lay, and knew indeed that he had been transformed by the Sun God, who sows madness. He smote again, and the door flew wide and the great white man bulked there. He stared at the second white man, who did not immediately fall on his face in the sand, but stood erect before him.

Korler had difficulty in accepting the plain evidence of his senses. He stood in the hut doorway, peering out under his broad, knotted brow, and he saw this thing, and yet how could it be? The bellowing wrath with which he had sprung to answer that insolent summons ebbed in his throat.

The man before him, the man who had descended upon him and his affairs like a bolt from the fleckless sky, was none other than the tramp who called himself Cæsar Smeek—the same, and yet by every stupendous reversal not the same.

This apparition was groomed and garbed meticulously. The clothes of the deceased Hummel fitted him well enough, snappily drawn and held with belt and puttees. His ducks were spotless, his buttons shone with military brightness, his fresh-clayed helmet was jauntily tilted. He held himself like a wand, lean and erect. Aye, and his clean-shorn face, sharp as a cameo, had been tended carefully with powder, so that it showed no mark.

Korler stared and still stared, with the colour rising thick along his jaw. If the corpse of Hummel had stood so and spoken so, it could not have seemed less likely than this dapper figure, self-sure, dominant, poised so easily before him. Of one thing he was completely aware, however. That was the right hand of the apparition, with thumb thrust through the belt just above the revolver scabbard, and the further fact that the hand was absolutely steady.

“What do you want?”

“I’ve come to make the customary call on my neighbour,” said Cæsar Smeek. “Look me over again,” he said. “Perhaps you haven’t seen me very well. Get all the points.”

Korler gauged the distance to him with his fish eye, and Cæsar Smeek saw him so gauging.

“That’s not the way you talk to Lagoon agents, Korler, not at first. You’ve had six of them here—six that you played with

and wrung dry and drove to their graves, or flight. Well, here's the next, Korler. Look me over."

Korler was looking him over, but his gaze only came back to the gun hand.

"You begin by flattery, winning his confidence, his gratitude, advising him, spinning your slimy web. You trap him cunningly—a lonely man is such easy prey—with cards, and win his poor earnings, and with drink and drugs, until he's helpless. You bring him to the mouth of the pit because it's your pastime and your avocation, and because nothing can touch you—you big, strong fiend, you!"

All very quietly.

"You did it with the others. Alone here you and one other poor devil of a white, each time. Good business, for you kept all the trade—profitable fleecings. And such amusement! You'd have done with the next, and the next, if I hadn't happened along and found shelter with Hummel one night, just when he was breaking up. He knew then. He knew what a man's soul can become in Africa. He told me. And you'll do it no more."

Korler's surge of choking rage had passed, and his big fists rested on his thighs. The full-blooded face had taken a grim smile.

"You'll stop me, I suppose! Why, you crawling jungle toad, you steal a suit of clothes and a gun, and you think that's enough to blackmail me? Where did you get the cheek, I'm wondering? Why, I lashed you, you pup!"

Cæsar Smeek nodded.

"And it's curious, I'm thinking of that particularly. I'm pretty low, that's a fact, as you say. But, Korler, I've an idea I've been preserved just for this, just for this purpose. A fit instrument, do you see? I'm your judgment. Look me over again, and see how it strikes you."

Korler glared at him.

"It strikes me that you're going to have a hard time getting far enough back in the swamps so that I can't find you, after this."

"Come out of that doorway!" said Cæsar Smeek.

Korler did not move. They looked at each other during the pause, and the break came when, with a flick, Cæsar Smeek had the gun fisted at his waist.

"Come out, or I'll spread this through your rotten body!"

Korler came out, intent upon the sharp, white face before him.

"First," said Cæsar Smeek, "we're going to clean up your compound and the sheds. After that, I'll take the money in your strong-box as restitution, in some sort, for Hummel's folks; it ought to be a goodish sum. After that I——"

"You can't do it," said Korler.

"You think so?"

"I'll be interested seeing you try."

Cæsar Smeek motioned him with the pistol barrel. "March over there by that tin shed!" he said.

Korler slouched away, still smiling, and Cæsar Smeek followed, a step to one side and to the rear.

Behind the hut they came upon a man at work, a muscled young buck in a studded belt, who was hauling a huge balk of timber for sacking. He was a model for a black Sisyphus, straining at the unequal task. He quivered, panted, with sweat-washed shoulders in the pitiless sun, and at Smeek's voice he stumbled and dropped the timber that seemed to crush him. And while he rested on one knee, hard-breathed, and blinked in sullen expectancy of the lash, Cæsar Smeek bade him be gone and toil no more. He only looked once at the formidable great figure of his master, standing by, attentive.

"Do you hear the message?" asked Cæsar Smeek.

The man stooped in the dust and caught up the balk and raised it with difficulty to his bowed shoulder, and went on, unheeding, with his work. Nothing more.

"You can't do it," said Korler.

"You think so?" said Cæsar Smeek.

He directed his captive on to the next building, a shed of rippled iron sheets, and made him stop while he glanced within. The shed was tenanted. Between two posts, in a pair of chained cuffs that barely let him touch the ground, hung a wretched, emaciated black whose head lolled upon his chest.

Cæsar Smeek drew back, and his jaw was jutted and angled like a rude rock carving.

"Let that boy down!"

"I haven't the key."

"That's bound to be a lie. Let him down!"

It was another test, and Korler came out of his solid pose with a little jerk as the revolver moved an inch. He opened the shackles, and the victim sank to the ground at his feet. Others, too, he released at order.

Cæsar Smeek began gathering them, one at a time, slowly, because few could more

than drag themselves. He carried on a hideous kind of recruiting, a strange muster, outside the shed. They made horrors in the sunshine. He stood and watched them, with the armed fist hooked in his belt. It so happened that his back was turned to the bungalow.

When the last had been loosed, he spoke in the vernacular.

"Men of the villages," he said, "you are free."

They regarded him. They were human creatures—what was left of them—but they might have worn masks in black putty, variously sunken and carved, not with the immobility of the Orient, for that holds something of calculation, of craft, but with the dull, impervious hopelessness of Ethiopia.

"There is no more forced toil," explained Cæsar Smeek carefully, "no unpaid services, no punishment, no whips, no chains, no torture. Every man shall do as he likes—work as he likes, live as he likes, he and his family, in peace. The evil times have passed. I have said it."

They did not stir. No spark lighted their eyes. No urge of new life thrilled their limbs. They were aware of him, as they would have been aware of any incomprehensible presence. But they were aware, too, and shrinkingly, of their master, to whom their gaze came inevitably coasting back. Nothing more.

"You are free," repeated Cæsar Smeek.

Korler broke into a throaty chuckle.

"If you were anything but a madman, or drunk, or whatever it is, you would have known."

Cæsar Smeek observed him.

"Yes, it is a big curse," he said slowly, "a big and black one. You've been a long time laying it, but I'm going to lift it."

Korler was smiling now protectively into his face, as if holding him.

"You think so?"

Cæsar Smeek proved his fitness again and for the third time. It was a curious proof. Only the most alert perception, the keenest readiness, could have met it. He looked at the black faces. They had not changed; they did not change, nor was there any word, but from the illegible masks he caught some subtle and instant warning.

He span about, just as a whanging report spat a bullet at his feet. Pede had stolen from the bungalow behind, and was almost upon him, a big gun in each fist. Discovered, the Mandingo fired again and

darted behind a hut. At the same instant Korler flung himself the other way and ran around to meet him.

Without so much as a gesture, Cæsar Smeek shot from his hip. Pede stumbled in full career and flapped to the ground like a great, clumsy bird struck on the wing. He fell almost at Korler's feet, hand outstretched with the weapon he had given his life to bring. Korler stooped and caught it.

A great, bellowing laugh rang out in defiance.

"You think so?"

It was a strange duel. Korler used the edge of the hut to cover himself, steadied his wrist, aimed deliberately. Cæsar Smeek did not take shelter, nor seek it. He stayed in the white sunshine, a shining target, and began to walk straight into the hail of lead that Korler loosed at him. As if his mission were upon him like a shield, he advanced unflinching. And when he was ready, he fired once, and Korler's gun was smitten away from his grip as if by magic. The big man floundered to his knees in the open, shrieking and flecking the white sand from smashed fingers.

"Yes, I think so," said Cæsar Smeek.

When he had strung Korler in the hanging cuffs, he made another round of the station, and recruited blacks once more. This time he carried Pede's whip, the one with the forked lash, and merely at the sight of it they came, trembling. He gathered them all, the father and son from their shadow, the timber slave, the servants in the house, every wronged and cowering soul that remained. He ranged them for public ceremony where all might see, and he stepped up to the writhing brute in the shackles and he visited judgment upon him, as he had come to do.

And from that dark spot went up a cry of many voices, a great cry of amazement, of exultation, the cry of bondage broken, of hopelessness relieved at last.

"Yes, I *decidedly* think so!" said Cæsar Smeek, as he tossed away the frayed and reddened instrument of execution.

Stuyn came back when the sun had fallen, a copper pan, near the shelf of the horizon. The houses, the trees by the lagoon, the mud walls, stood against a flaming sky like charred edges upon a conflagration. Its shadows lay barred across the world.

Stuyn had done a hard day's work, negotiating for a new line of trade up

the river. Incidentally, he had gained the confidence of the Kobango chief, and the resulting knowledge he had gained concerning Korler and his methods and the reasons for local failure had proved illuminating. He was tired. The steamer would wait for him off shore about dusk. He meant to get away on her.

But first he meant to take steps toward clearing up matters and putting his factory in shape. He looked forward to that event, an understanding with Korler, and the accounting of his new agent, with characteristic patience, focussed and simple. A nasty little job, and, therefore, quite the kind of a job he was accustomed to handle.

At the river landing he unpacked from the dugout, stepped ashore, shook himself like a terrier, and was reaching to take his field-glasses from the interpreter, when his move was suddenly arrested.

The crew, too, stayed stricken, listening, their group marked in sharp silhouette on the ruddy western horizon. In the bow the leader forgot to pole, leaning there with arched back and flexed muscles. A startled paddle hung, dripping as with molten metal. Black faces, touched in bronze, were lifted skyward.

The sound that came to them above the roar of the surf had not been heard there for many a day. It was the high keen of a tribal chant, pulsing to the beat of a tom-tom.

One gave a shout and waved towards a smoke banneret trailing by. The crew yelled in unison.

"Feast, him make 'm!" cried the interpreter. "Look-see! Plenty dance and eat!"

His teeth flashed in the first grin Stuyun had seen, as he leaped up the low bank and pointed eagerly. At the far end, among the huts, early fires were glowing and sparking like bits broken from the sky. Stuyun, doubtful and cautious, trained his glasses there.

He saw dancing figures, lines of them, hand in hand. Great kettles were going. The doors all stood wide. Knots of blacks were singing and chatting, with the little, naked children playing about. A peaceful, contented village—more, a festive village.

Stuyun dismissed his men, who took it on the run for the huts. He followed more slowly. He took the way past Korler's, and here he stopped to stare. The place was dark, the gate closed. But something else struck him as stranger. The plan of the

station seemed changed. A moment, and he saw why. Rows of outhouses had vanished, burned to the ground, and the compound was paved with their ashes.

An instinct informed him that he need not pay his intended visit.

He went on, and presently passed the spot where the cripple had whimpered in the sand. But good cheer was to be had now, and the cripple was gone.

A turn brought him around the wall of the company's compound. The store shed stood open, and he entered and blinked with amazement. It was full. Nets of palm-kernels stood stacked along the wall, with bundles of horn and solid kneaded hassocks of rubber sponge and the precious little sacks of carnauba wax—all the wealth of jungle and plain that make the good fame of trading stations, and all in quantities that might have taken weeks or months to gather, even at the best post.

He stepped through and around to the front. The bungalow was open to the tempered air and sun of late afternoon. The verandah showed clean and bare, the rooms orderly. And there at his desk, posting books with rapid and practised hand, sat Mr. Cæsar Smeek. He was primly dressed and groomed, busy and efficient, the very image and model of an agent for the Lagoon Trading Company. He glanced up at Stuyun, nodded, and continued his work.

"Just a moment, if you please, until I fill up these entries."

It has been intimated that Stuyun was not a demonstrative person. He proved himself, if he ever had, at this juncture. During the next five minutes nobody said anything. Stuyun stood in the doorway regarding Cæsar Smeek. The scratching of the pen filled the interval. Of the images and reflections that filled the mind of Stuyun, he gave no signal.

"There!" said Cæsar Smeek, with a flick that closed the book. "That's done!"

He put away the pen and stood up.

There were a great many things that Stuyun might have voiced—a variety of cries, ejaculations, oaths that might have crowded to his lips—but what he did say went unerringly beyond them all.

"Have you killed him?" asked Stuyun.

For the travelling superintendent had mastered, in Cæsar Smeek's word, the gentle art of taking things for granted, and in this case those things were very close to the truth.

"No," returned Cæsar Smeek.

They stood eye to eye for as long as it took Stuynt to plumb the depths of his tone and its subtle intimations. Then—

"Did you land that Kobango chief?" inquired Cæsar Smeek. "He ought to be a good customer."

It was still quite warm, and perhaps that was why Stuynt took off his helmet and wiped his forehead, white as paper above walnut-brown cheeks. More than ever one would have remarked the priestly cast of his sober face.

"I got him."

"We've done very fair business here. There ought to be a new shed in the compound. And somebody has looted most of the tin sheets off the verandah. You might make a note to ship down some of that corrugated stuff."

Stuynt nodded.

"Other repairs can be made at hand, I fancy. The place needs trimming a bit; it's rather run down. I've noted some suggestions in the loose-leaf."

"Very well."

"I've paid the station boys their wages—overdue three months. There were station boys starving. They're a pretty good lot. Then old Shali the headman's just in—this is part of his bailiwick, tribally, you know—and he's a decent sort. For getting up a quick chow, I don't know his equal. You can afford to be pretty liberal with him."

And Stuynt, with the magic of the filled store shed in mind, thought so too. He did not ask why Cæsar Smeek took this testamentary line, nor the why of a hundred other things. He was a simple little man, and a most efficient superintendent for his company, and he held his tongue among these miracles and was careful not to jeopardise his great good fortune.

"The steamer's about due back from Praca," said Cæsar Smeek, shading his eyes seaward. "Isn't that her smoke out there? I've a little more to do, Mr. Stuynt, checking up the shed and making fast. I'll join you down at the landing in half an hour."

It was not so much a suggestion as a command, and Stuynt took it humbly.

Dusk was drawing down as he left. It was no time to be afloat for long in a section of hollowed tree, and when Cæsar Smeek appeared at the last moment, the superintendent, anxious to be gone, tumbled into his place forthwith. He sat twisting chin over shoulder and gauging the distance to the steamer as they squattered out through

a green-and-saffron sea. Afterwards he took notebook and pencil and scrawled a memorandum.

They had covered half the distance, perhaps, before he spoke.

"I'll have the things you need sent out from St. Thomas's. Also some extras I've noted myself—comforts and such. You ought to get them within the month. Do you suppose you'll be able to make a shipment this week?"

There was a laugh from the other end of the craft, a drooling laugh without sequence. It plucked even his wire nerves to a start. He looked up. He had not observed in the hurry of departure. He was not prepared for what he saw now, over the bobbing wigs of the Kru boys.

Cæsar Smeek lay in a heap in the stern upon the luggage, a frayed and rusty heap of rags. His bleary eyes looked out from under a dirty mushroom helmet, eyes red-rimmed and shifty. The welt stood out once more on his cheek. He wiped his slack mouth shakily as he spoke.

"What are you talking about?" asked Cæsar Smeek in a slobbering way of speech.

Stuynt had stood a good deal of this affair without a quiver, but his jaw fairly dropped. He sat transfixed. And yet even in the moment of dismay he was before all else the sturdy servitor of the Lagoon Company. While Cæsar Smeek laughed, Stuynt was alert, squaring his shoulders to do battle in its interest, playing its game. "I said I'd send you the stuff you want."

"Me? Oh, no! Not me, Stuynt. You'll get a nice pink-cheeked youngster out from home and send the stuff down to him, and he'll use it and very likely make some good profits for you before he goes the way of the Coast. But he'll live out his normal Coast years. And don't cut the indent, will you, Stuynt? There's a good chap."

"Didn't you just say, up at the house there—"

"Keys?" maundered Cæsar Smeek. "I forget. Oh, yes, they're tied to your satchel, here. I tied them. The station is fast locked, and all the keys here. And that little package of Hummel's—you know you promised to forward it to his folks. His trunk can go later. But this—see to it, Stuynt, will you?"

Stuynt gripped the sides of the boat.

"Mr. Smeek!"

"Hey? What's the matter now?"

"There are some things a man can't do, Mr. Smeek. He can't do them. You called

that turn on me yourself. I put it back to you. I say a man that's done what you have done can't chuck it up this way. He can't."

"Can't he? You don't know. He can, though. You see, I'm not a man. Not a whole one. Those are just the sort of things I can do."

"You are my agent," declared Stuyt.

"Wrong," was the loose-lipped answer. "Wrong, Stuyt. It's sundown. You fired me at sundown yourself."

"You're my agent. I haven't fired you."

"Then you've got to!"

"Pull yourself together, for Heaven's sake, Smeek!" pleaded Stuyt. "I don't know what silly, senseless notion you've persuaded yourself of. But you've done a big job this day. You've proved yourself. You're the agent we need here. Don't be a fool."

"Flattering!"

"Quit that!" cried Stuyt. "It's posturing. You're putting it on. What do I care what you've been elsewhere? What does anybody care down here? I've seen what you have accomplished. This is your place."

There was silence while they tipped along the hissing wave-crests, working out toward the steamer.

"I wonder if it's possible you don't understand yet," observed Cæsar Smeek wearily. "You're a good little man, Stuyt, but so simple-minded."

Stuyt pointed landward.

"There is your place," he repeated.

Cæsar Smeek laughed again.

"You saw me this morning, a common hooligan, a left-over, a remnant. You see me so now. That's what I am. What happened between doesn't count. I couldn't take your job. I couldn't hold it. I'd wreck the place—I'd sell it, I'd burn it! Can't you see? Hang it, man, look at me!"

He was not pleasant to look at. As a

blown bladder slowly shrinks and wrinkles, so he had lost all the force, the dignity that had sustained him. He seemed to collapse visibly with the escape of some transient essence. There was left of him nothing but the rag and the frame.

Stuyt did begin to understand partly. But he pleaded—

"Go back and make it count, and keep on counting. Make it last. It's your chance."

"Too late!" said Cæsar Smeek.

They were near the steamer, which rode heavily in the trough, a great bulk against their little craft. The knotted rope was slung outboard, ready to receive the superintendent, and on the bridge the captain waved impatiently.

But Stuyt would not yield.

"You're my agent," he insisted doggedly. "I don't release you. I need you. You're my agent."

"Shall I have to bully you out of the job, as I bullied you into it?" chuckled the other. "I can still land you in the drink, you know. Don't tempt me!"

He wiped his mouth.

"The reign of Cæsar is over. Take back the emblem of power—talisman—what you like."

Something crashed at Stuyt's feet, and he sat gazing at a big blue jar with a red label which lay rolling there. It was empty.

"Cuca leaves!" crooned Smeek. "That's my pay, Stuyt. I took 'em all. Know the action of the cuca leaf? Ah, a pity! You'd be so much wiser!"

The Kru boys paddled in until the rope dangled to the superintendent's hands. He had no choice but to climb aboard. What else could he do? He did climb, and his luggage was hauled up after him.

"Good-bye!" called Cæsar Smeek mockingly.

And so that was the way Stuyt was made a monkey of for the second time in the same day



# LITTLE MOTHER

By MARJORIE BOOTH

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

“YOU visible, mater? I’ve got half an hour and there’s nobody in the place to talk to.”

“Come in, then, only don’t sit on the bed. Last time you positively ruined a new hat!”

Mrs. Heatherton waved an amiably protesting hand toward her son, who pushed open the door, stumbled over a pair of Louis-heeled threes, and advanced toward a chair which, holding only one ostrich-plume fan, two lace handkerchiefs, and a telegram, constituted a fairly promising goal.

“Look out, Tom! All that new ribbon——”

A small, bejewelled hand flashed out upon a length of still slim white arm and retrieved a yard of blushing pink that had attached itself to Tom Heatherton’s large left shoe with all the soft and wicked tenacity of the coquettish to the clumsy.

“And mind where you put that fan, won’t you, dear fellow?”

“Look here, if I’m in the way——”

“Oh, fie! You cross creature! I haven’t seen you since yesterday—let me see—yesterday afternoon.”

Mrs. Heatherton turned an ingratiating smile from the mirror, where it repaid the trouble she had taken with her evening effects in powder and rouge, to the almost ugly face of her big son, where it kindled a reciprocal good humour.

Tom made a drastic clearance and sat down to watch the brown curls, as pretty as they had ever been, twined and twisted into the youthful coiffure that was Mrs. Heatherton’s challenge to a world which had a habit of adding Tom’s thirty years to the admitted twenty-seven of Tom Heatherton senior’s bride, and then one or two, of course. . . .

If Time didn’t tell, as Mrs. Heatherton often thought when she tried to smooth out her crow’s-feet, what worlds might yet be conquered!

And as, where her appearance was concerned, Time only told just here and there, in this and that, it was a little habit of Mrs. Heatherton’s to take bits of girlish faces and graft them mentally on to her own—a habit that coloured bad nights with haunting dreams in which faces could be built up and taken to pieces with jig-saw precision.

“Are you nervous, Tom?”

She was interested enough in the answer to transfer once again from her own reflection to his face the intelligence of her very blue eyes.

“A little pale, perhaps,” she added, with a touch of concern.

“Oh, first nights are the very devil!”

“Yes.” She threw a quick glance over her bare white shoulder at the rose and silver tissue dress laid out on her bed. It was weeks, simply weeks, since she’d been able to manage a first night. She hoped she would be a sensation. Surely, in that wonderful dress. “Yes,” she repeated. “Always a bit dithery beforehand, aren’t you. Poor old thing! Oh”—as she caught sight of the pipe in his hand—“not that stinking thing up here, *please!* I’m not an actress, and I’m not used to dressing in a——”

“Well,” challenged Tom, sighing audibly, “in a what?”

“Oh, don’t bother me so!”

Tom returned the pipe to his pocket viciously.

“Confound—confound everything!”

And he stuck his legs out until the heel of his shoe crushed the softness of pink ribbon as though it symbolised the frivolity of his mother’s protracted youth.

“Now, what——”

Her voice came languidly pleasant above the vague half-mist of her perfume spray.

“Oh, I’m all nerves with the work of this show. Rehearsals! Rush! I feel I’m still rushing even when I sit still. If only I



could rest somehow, somewhere, before to-night!"

"I'm so sorry, old fellow."

Her smile was genuinely sweet. She wouldn't have upset him for the world. Of course he was tired. She might have told him that she was tired, too—all those late bridge parties—though, of course, it would sound absurd. People with careers never could see that you had to do anything but wait for them to come home.

A small hand fluttered persuasively over his knee. He patted it absently, frowning into space. That gust of irritability had swept his thoughts out of the warm, fragrant bedroom back to the wearying theatre, as an October wind retrieves the worn leaf that has dropped forlornly into a sheltered nook and sends it whirling upon its way.

"Why the devil *did* she get a green frock instead of a blue? Green—staring green!"

"Who? Marion?"

He nodded, and, thrusting his big hands into the pockets of his trousers, began a measured tread of a small patch of carpet behind his mother's chair.

"Green! Well, she wouldn't dare to, off the stage. Marion's pretty well forty, I'll wager."

"Dash it all, mater, she's twenty-one! Twenty-one!" He fell into his chair with a groan. "I've got to be ardently in love with that girl, and then you remind me that she smiled the tooth smile with a false set when picture postcards first came out. Have you no thought for me at all? Oh, what a place to spend a first-night afternoon in! Next thing I shall forget my lines." He fixed an abstracted glare upon her face. "I say, ma, I have forgotten—"

"Don't be silly, Tom. You know you're working yourself up for nothing at all. Marion's very charming *on the stage*—very charming, though her face really is more lined than mine when you see it close. And, by the way, I wish you would not call me that. Ma! You know how old it makes me feel. Now you can just hook up my dress for me. That will take your mind off the play."

"But I don't want my mind taken off the play. Yes, I do; not that way, though. Oh, I don't know. How does the darn thing do up, anyway?"

"Now, now, do be calm. You'll never get it right if you go at it like that. Besides"—she blew him a kiss, as coquettishly as Marion ought to and really didn't—"I don't like to see my Tom so cross."

"I'm not cross. Can't you understand I'm worried? I'm not really frightfully sure about the show."

"Well, don't tear at my dress like that. Tom! You'll make it look like a dish-rag. Tch! Leave it alone, dear, and I'll ring for Lena."

"Oh, dress, dress, dress!"

He turned sharply upon his heels with a vicious sibilance of indrawn breath as Mrs. Heatherton rose to press the button which summoned her companion-chauffeuse-secretary in the rôle of maid. She slipped between him and the door.

"Are we going to quarrel, Tom? We see so little of one another. Don't be a silly boy."

He smiled tolerantly, but the clouds lurked in his eyes. "I'm a bad-tempered brute, I suppose," he told her, and took his chance of slipping out of the room as Lena entered, genuinely thrilled at the dainty picture her employer represented.

"Beautiful, Mrs. Heatherton! Beautiful!"

That was the best of Lena; she did appreciate her looks. That Marie—that dominating French creature—had been always peering for wrinkles, always insinuating about her age: "A leetle face-massage zees evenin'—yes? Madame a leetle tired. One must smooth zem out, zose tired lines—madame not tink so, eh?"

Life was a harassing business in Marie's time. Now that Lena had come, Mrs. Heatherton massaged her own skin, with her back to the light, and the memory of the wrinkles which she carefully never saw would be gradually hushed to rest by the lullaby of this unspoilt young creature's appreciation.

As the capable, almost motherly fingers of the girl united hooks and eyes, with a certain enjoyment of the exact harmony into which they fell, Mrs. Heatherton regarded herself pensively.

"I wish Tom wouldn't bother with plays he's not sure about from the start. A good love-story, that's what people enjoy, and even if it doesn't turn out an artistic success, people can't keep away from it. Paying for love," she laughed, "is such an ingrained habit of human nature that it has to go on doing it even at the theatre box-office! But"—and now she frowned heavily—"a play like this 'Little Mother,' it worries Tom to death and makes him so bad-tempered in the home. It quite upsets me. I can't think why he chose the play.

From what he tells me of it, nothing happens." She turned eyes filled with childish dismay upon Lena. "My dear, positively nothing!"

"But there are lots of plays like that," put in Lena hopefully. "And you don't

there's a girl, a simple young thing, whom both brothers love. One refuses to see the mother because of the girl; the other refuses the girl because of the mother—that's Tom, quixotic Tom. Exactly what he would do in real life. But the girl goes after him, because he's the one she loves, and shares in the general confusion at sight of the dear little old lady. Hark!"



"'I'm so sorry, old fellow.'"

notice it—at the time. It's only afterwards, when you think it over. . . ."

"Well, this is sentimental rubbish, as far as I can see. A woman who is supposed to have been a bad lot, and left husband and children years ago, turns up again when the sons are grown up, and, instead of the cynical woman of the world they expect, proves to be a little white-haired thing who only went when the jealous old ass of a husband turned her out. Of course

She broke off with a frown. "Did you hear that? It's Tom gone out. I heard the door. And he hasn't said 'Good-bye'! I wish he wouldn't put on these silly worrying plays that upset the house."

But she felt she could have danced in the

exquisite little gold slippers in which she swept downstairs to dinner.

"Lena," she cried gaily over her shoulder, "do I look like an actor-manager's mother?"

"No," declared Lena, with perfect truth but too much indulgence, and the answer pleased the other vastly. Yet to be the mother of Tom Heatherton, the successful young actor-manager, was a fact for self-

charms into the shadows of the stalls. She realised it every time she was separated by the footlights from his magnetic ugliness, but outside the theatre she was too much in the limelight herself to be able to keep that glamour of sentiment. Though they had only each other in the world, the world seemed to need them both so much that they had to sacrifice each other.



"He stuck his legs out until the heel of his shoe crushed the softness of pink ribbon as though it symbolised the frivolity of his mother's protracted youth."

congratulation. The absurdly youthful beauty realised that quite fully an hour and a half later, when the rising of the curtain upon Tom's new play threw her

She often wished to see more of Tom and to develop those possibilities of comradeship which stray hours and occasional week-ends revealed. But the charms which

she still managed to retain in her person kept the doors of a tolerably gay society open to her, and the managing to retain those charms filled the rest of her life very full.

As for Tom, his popularity was enormous. Everybody liked him. He was the embodiment of those adjectives which the press-agents have immortalised as the traditional right of the theatrical celebrity—"simple and unspoilt," as though Nature herself had reacted to this representation in the creation of his being, whose ugliness, despite its quality of fascination, would have seemed a guarantee of modesty in a man of ten times his small self-opinion.

Yet his success, both financial and artistic, was remarkable.

Even this play, that he had bought upon impulse and produced in doubt and hesitation, was another triumph. Mrs. Heatherton really felt inordinately proud of the big son who surprised her with his relationship each time she saw him in the setting of glamour and glory into which every scene that held him seemed to develop. She was one with the adoring crowd that was plastic to his subtle power. She was one apart from the crowd in the sense of ownership which thrilled her.

"Surely he's satisfied," she said to Lena during the second interval, after a middle act which had been received with a crash of applause that seemed to lift her up out of her seat as upon a solidity of intoxication. "It must be all right now to the finish."

Generally she was present at the dress rehearsals of Tom's plays. This time the play was new to her in all but the skeleton of its plot, which, fleshed and dressed, held her attention as entranced as that of any other member of the audience.

As the curtain went up on the third act, she leaned forward, her blue eyes wide, her lips parted in tremulous expectation.

For twenty minutes she sat thus, then moved to make a stealthy dab at her eyes with a flimsy lace handkerchief.

Through the veil of tears in her eyes she watched Tom, her big son, and his little stage mother, with her soft white hair and tender, faded face.

"If only I had known that you were as I find you now, what a difference there might have been in me!"

How full of feeling Tom's voice could be! She saw him press the white head against his coat-sleeve, and a strangely unfamiliar little pain ran through her.

The faded voice rebuked him:

"The hearts of the old are as their bodies, they break easily, my son."

"Forgive me." He dropped upon a knee at her side.

"Have you thought once, in all these years, of the ache that might be in your mother's heart? No, no, youth does not think. Yet I have borne my loss and your loss, too, and now I am a tired, little old woman."

"A beautiful woman, my mother. You don't know—you can't ever have thought of that—how beautiful a mother can look to her son, just because she is his mother—just because he knows that once she held him dearer than her very life, that once she was the universe to him. When I was little I used to play a game of having a mother." He laughed softly and turned away with dreamy eyes. "I would build an image, a mother image, and try to creep into its arms, just as savages build their gods. It was the same need, the same longing. Perhaps that is why it is the *motherhood* of God that I have always believed in. For the father I had was no father to me, and the mother I had lost was the being I clung to."

The being he clung to! There was such sincerity in the words that the beauty in her rose and silver tissue visualised this big man, even in his manhood, yearning toward his dream of the mother he had lost. Absurd! She pulled herself up with a little silent laugh that sent a tingling chill through her limbs.

"I have played, too," came the quiet tones of the old woman—so quiet, they seemed but the echo of a distant passion, whose very distance was pathos in itself, for when Joy tarries upon the road Time may steal her gifts. "I have played at being mother, very much as a little girl plays at it. A little girl comes into the world with the instinct to mother: I went out into the world with the memory of you and Peter; that was the only difference. I would imagine sometimes that I still held you in my arms. It was so easy to imagine." She let her eyes rest thoughtfully upon his. "I sometimes felt that you came to me in your sleep."

He took her hands and drew her close, almost whispering his confidence:

"I often dreamed that, mother—that I came to you. But there were always tears in your eyes, and I would wake up sobbing. As I grew older I knew that I must dream

of you as I had seen you last, kissing me good-bye."

She put out a protesting hand, as though the memory of that distant day were a shaft of pain reaching through the resistance of time.

"Ah, but never mind that now, dearest little mother." He knelt before her, smiling, and the promise in his face lit up her eyes, like the sun painting gladness upon the windows of a weather-worn house. "Never mind; we will be all the world to each other now. I'll be better to you as a big son than I ever could have been as a little 'un. I was a rascal, mother, a beastly, dirty-faced little rascal!"

"Ah, they let you get dirty. I used to hope they would." And she laughed a little sudden laugh of emotion that found, strangely, a jealous spot in the heart of the beauty in rose and silver tissue.

The big son took up the little stage mother bodily in his arms and sat down with her on his knee, the while she let out tiny cries of protesting delight, which drew sobs into the throats of those who smiled their amusement in the audience.

"Now, you see"—there was delight, too, in his full, rich voice—"it was destined that I should hold you so, instead of you me. Something knew that you wanted looking after more than I, and it just let us wait until things could be round the right way. You were made to be looked after, little mother, and I feel that in some strange way I know how to do it better than anyone else in the world. Perhaps that's how sons always feel about their mothers—I can't tell—it's all so wonderfully new to me—"

It was as if a great living question swooped down upon Mrs. Heatherton, like an unearthly monster, demanding its prey, the answer. Mrs. Heatherton groped for that answer blindly. Was that Tom, the tender, the adoring son of the little white-haired mother? Was that the real Tom, who had never been able to express himself to her? Or was that Tom, the great actor, living and feeling his part in the play, assuming it as a hand assumes its glove, a thing foreign to it, yet concealing it utterly for so many hours a day?

The question tugged at her throat, threatening, menacing. She had to cough to get her breath.

Then habit took the powder puff out of her bag, and with its soothing, perfumed service to her tear-stained face she felt

a little fortified against the importunating monster. "It must wait," she temporised. "It must wait—the answer." And she jerked off the hold of the question upon her throat.

"Did you speak?" whispered Lena, the alert poise of her head as substitute for the attention that was held rapt by the stage.

"No," replied Mrs. Heatherton. Then she leaned close to the girl. "I don't feel very well. I want to hurry out the very moment it's over."

Lena was all concern. She dipped into her bag for smelling salts, her application to the play penetrated lightly by a certain satisfaction in her preparedness for such emergency. But Mrs. Heatherton waved the bottled solicitude away.

She recognised the crisis of the play upon the crest of the emotional wave that ran through the theatre, by its delicate humour lifting something of the weight of tears from her heart, and she began to draw her cloak closely around her.

"Now!" she whispered to Lena. And the pair of them were out of the auditorium before the red eyes of the beauty in rose and silver tissue became the light's revelation to curious eyes.

The one thought in Mrs. Heatherton's mind was sanctuary for the bruises which her son, in his marvellous tenderness to a make-believe mother, had inflicted upon her soul. Followed by the tall, clear-eyed, anxious Lena, she was driven by this impulse up the winding staircase and across the still almost empty vestibule, then at headlong pace on to the wide pavement outside.

"Wait," begged Lena. "I'll see about the car."

She dodged back quickly to avoid a news-vendor who was pushing his rough way through the crowd. Mrs. Heatherton resisted her detaining hand, and there was a moment of swaying uncertainty, followed by a stupefying crash and collision. Lena, clutching at the hurtling form beside her, missed her hold, and saw the little beauty in rose and silver tissue fall heavily a yard away, with her head upon the sharp stone steps of the theatre.

\* \* \* \*

"Are you sure you feel strong enough to see him?"

The uniformed nurse gleamed white at the foot of her bed against a vague background of shaded window, a dim abundance

of flowers, and Lena, remote, detached, trying her eyes over flimsy *négligés* that they insisted she must want; whereas it was perfect contentment to rest in suspension from the exacting demands of appearance which—she realised it now—had grown upon her like a parasite, with their roots in mistaken values, sapping her life, rapping her life.

The phrase had been singing in her mind all day, a triumphant, warning refrain.

There was a hint of rebellious scorn in the quiet smile of affirmation that she gave the nurse.

As though Tom wasn't with her even more continually, and certainly more emphatically than Lena! For days and days she had lain in that nursing-home bed soothed by the sound of his voice in her mind—a voice of such tenderness that it filled her with an exquisite thrill, unspeakably tired though she was even to-day.

There was no excessive excitement in just seeing him after that. It was the logical thing to open her eyes and find him there by her side.

She closed them, waiting, and slipped back with the sheer fatigue of definite thought into that state of just-a-little-more-than-semi-consciousness in which the mind seems to have withdrawn into an ante-room to the present, where it waits, overhearing the hum of events, for a summons from the senses.

In that ante-room she became aware of a voice, distant-seeming, yet subdued—the tender voice that had become an integral part of her life since the night of the

play, an event she remembered without distressing emotion, for the interim had seemed a long span of untroubled promise—

“A pretty little place right on the sandy beach that I can go to and from——”

Then the voice of the nurse cautious and dispassionate—

“It won't be next week. Perhaps not even the week after that. She needs rest, and she must be carefully looked after for a long time.”

“Oh, I am going to look after her.”

A simple phrase, but if it seemed only vaguely familiar to Mrs. Heatherton, at her dreamy outpost of attention, it recalled vivid memories to Lena, who flashed a quick glance at the speaker, curious as to whether or not he were sensitive to the hand of Destiny pouring life into the mould of a play.

She saw the still form respond to his caressing touch, and heard a low murmur of voices entwined in close affection, saw the consternation spread over the man's frank ugliness, and a white hand, pathetically frail, push back the newly grey curls from her brow.

“You think I mind,” came the low voice, “but I don't. I don't want to go back to that old pretence.” She slipped her head into the curve of his arm. Then, after a little pause: “I think, Tom, that trying to cheat Time is cheating oneself. Every age brings its joy.”

He held her close, awkward and silent, yet with a yearning in his eyes that showed Destiny had created a finer piece of work than the author of “Little Mother.”

## LEAVES.

**T**HESE last autumnal leaves that linger,  
 Hanging on frail and quivering stems,  
 Yellowed by Winter's ruthless finger  
 And webbed with dewy diadems—  
 They fall, as fall my dreams long-cherished,  
 And dark their resting-place beneath,  
 'Mid other tragic things that perished  
 Where Summer left her fading wreath.  
 Yet their decay shall serve to nourish  
 The delicate buds they left behind;  
 And so may faint, new dreams still flourish  
 Over these dead ones in my mind.

DOROTHY ROGERS.

# EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

By AUSTIN PHILIPS

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

“YOU will proceed to Boniton, inspect the office there, and enquire into the case of Postman Somerford, who is reported to have come on duty apparently suffering from the effects of over-indulgence in alcohol on the 18th of last month. I enclose the relative papers, and also the usual record of Somerford's career up to date.”

(Initialled) S. M. T.

The afternoon train out of Exeter sidled slowly into Boniton Station: George Geoffrey Grandison, late of the University of Oxford and now junior member of the Postal Inspecting Staff in the Western District of England, restored the above document to his despatch-case, got out of his first-class compartment, and saw his luggage safely into the Angel Hotel 'bus. He had had a long and tedious journey from West Cornwall, and he decided to stretch his legs a little. So he began to stroll in the direction of the half-mile-distant town.

To a man of under thirty—especially to a man who in some ways is exceptionally young for the number of years that he carries—the sound of music, even though inferior, is always more or less intriguing, so long as it be somewhat gay and riotous. The sound of music was borne upon the ears of George Geoffrey Grandison as he passed the corner of a meadow. Looking over a hedge, he perceived that same meadow to be crowded, and was aware that he had arrived on the occasion of the famous Boniton Fair.

He hesitated a moment. He had been a long time in West Cornwall and had found it very dull there; he had had no time to stop *en route* at Exeter or to go to a theatre at Plymouth; and this, by sheer contrast, seemed life. He had intended going straight to the post office and making a preliminary inspection. But that now seemed a little previous, and so he entered the field.

He approached a gilded roundabout, whose organ, with pipes Pandean, was pounding out “The Merry Widow” waltz. It was crowded with people, mostly feminine. He stood surveying them calmly, though with the eye of an eager amateur.

For George Geoffrey Grandison—late of the University of Oxford, ex-officer, once a Cricket Blue, and regarded by his chief as a zealous and rising young official—had two sides to him, like most of us. He was as hard as nails officially, and exceedingly susceptible to women, and out for all the fun he could come upon. Hence his nickname “Grave-and-Gay Grandison,” which had been given to him by his colleagues on the Postal Inspecting Staff.

The susceptible side of him was uppermost at this moment. In the crowd, watching the roundabouts, he observed a girl of some attractions. She observed him equally. Grave-and-Gay Grandison gradually gravitated to her side.

She was, he observed, accompanied by an older woman who struck him as being a person of some austerity, and the smile which the girl gave him seemed tempered with something like apprehension. Grave-and-Gay Grandison was steadily getting nearer to her. She shook her head suddenly—shook it restrainedly yet visibly. He promptly sheered away.

But presently he saw her get upon the roundabout. Now, roundabouts are private property upon which anyone may enter by paying, and Grave-and-Gay Grandison saw and snatched his chance. The girl had mounted a minotaur-like animal on the outer circle. He leapt upon an unicorn on the inner circle and level with her. The music blared. The platform began to revolve and the beasts to rise and fall on their stems which connected with the flooring. During one half of the revolution the girl was in

sight of the older woman. During the other half she was invisible to her. It was on the latter portion of the circular, Channel-passage-like journey that this conversation ensued.

"This is rather fun, isn't it?"

"Yes, jolly!"

"Are you having another one?"

"No. This is my last. My grandmother's down there, waiting for me."

"Is she strict?"

"Appallingly!"

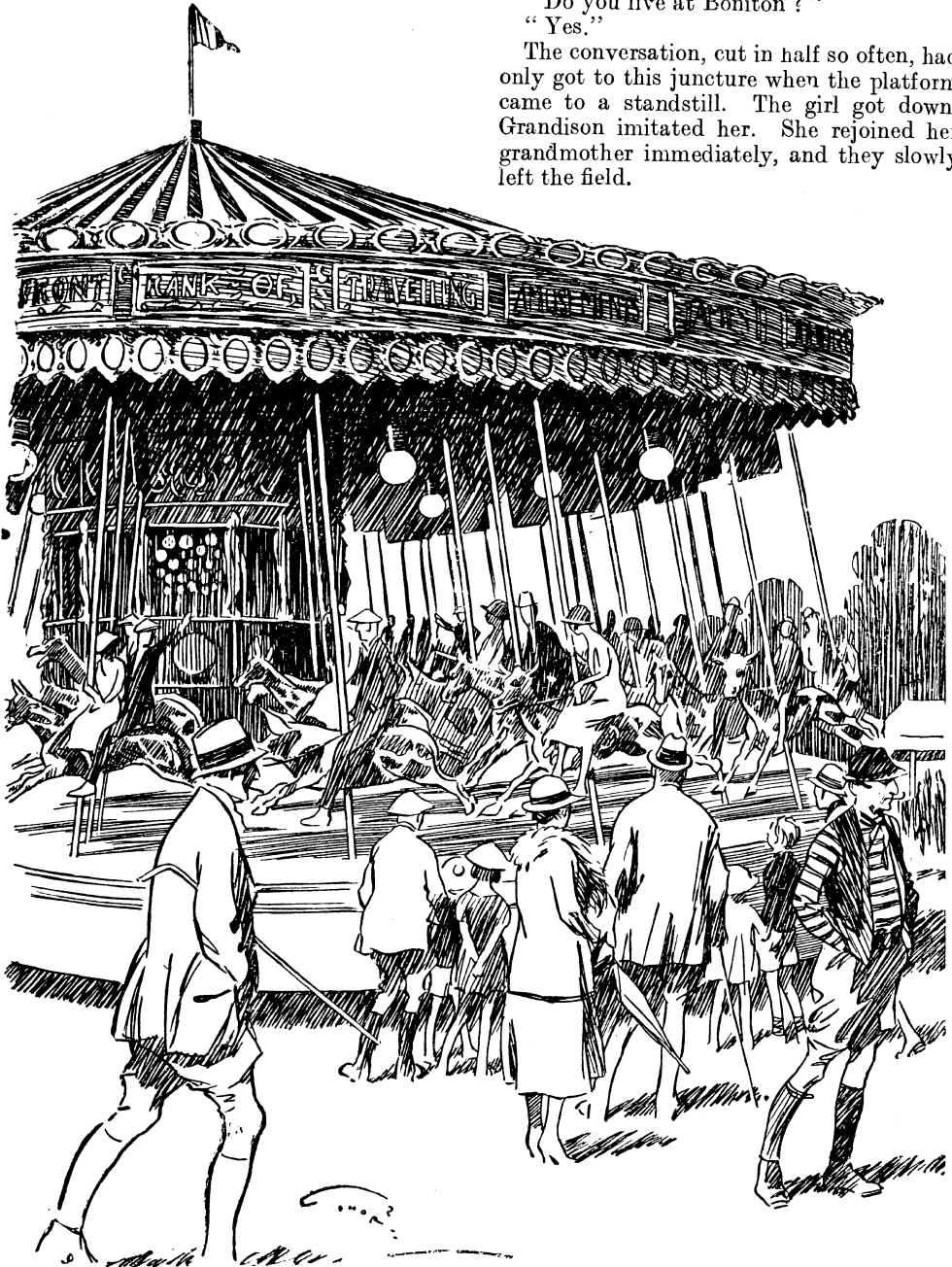
"Shall I see you again?"

"I don't know."

"Do you live at Boniton?"

"Yes."

The conversation, cut in half so often, had only got to this juncture when the platform came to a standstill. The girl got down. Grandison imitated her. She rejoined her grandmother immediately, and they slowly left the field.



"A gilded roundabout, whose organ, with pipes Pandean, was pounding



He as slowly followed. Only a young man, full of life and intelligence, who sees a pretty girl (whom his ardent imagination makes prettier), and who had not spoken to a really educated woman for months past, can know what Grandison felt. The pair drew into the High Street, then took a side turning. Two or three times the girl glanced round at Grandison. Once she waved her hand to him, to cease following—or not to follow too nearly. The couple entered a gate presently. Grandison walked right past it. He had spotted the house quite definitely. The name was Ebury Lodge.

He lingered in the neighbourhood half an hour or more. Presently he heard a clear cough. It came from above. He glanced upwards. The girl was at a window at the top.

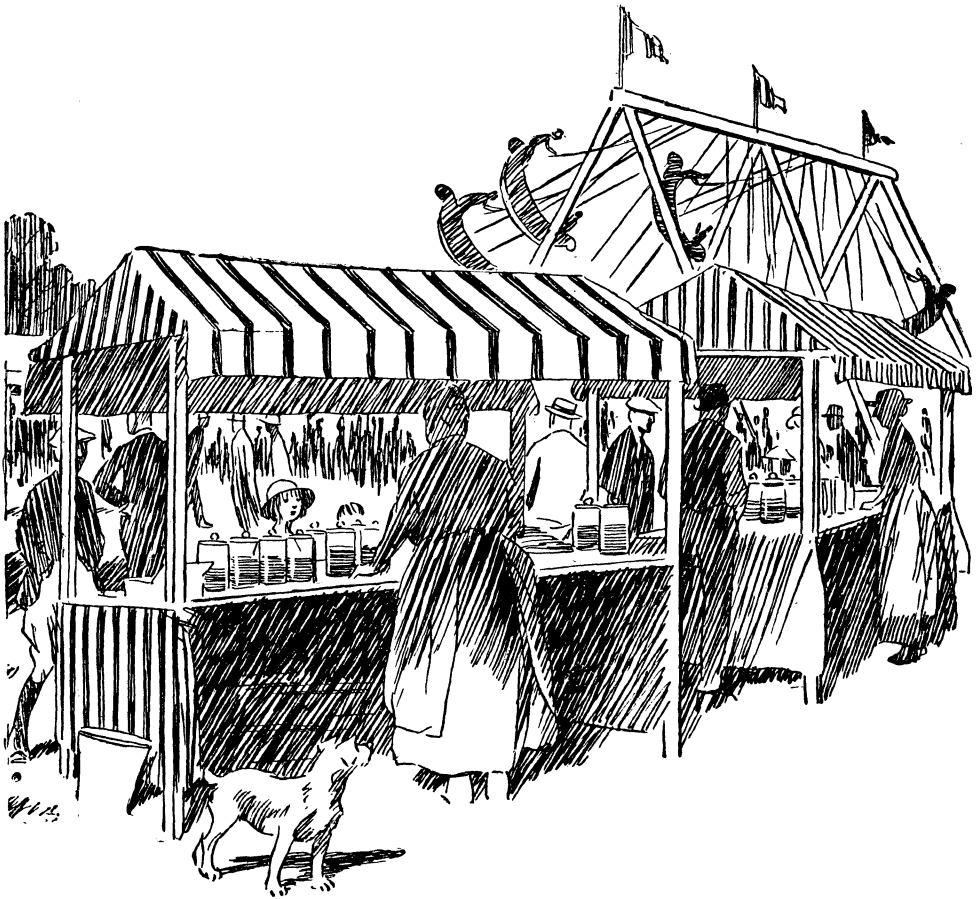
She smiled, waved her handkerchief, shook her head at him, and beckoned to him to be gone. He obeyed regretfully but immediately,

and went to join his luggage at the Angel. Before dinner he called at the head post office and arranged about beginning his inspection. The inquiry into the delinquencies of Mr. Peter Somerford, Postman, reported for indulgence in alcohol, he proposed to defer until he had had a few opportunities of quietly observing that gentleman while working and delivering letters in the town.

The next morning urgent papers reached him, calling for a journey into the country and making it certain that—plus the other work he had brought with him—he would be occupied at Boniton for three weeks. Three weeks! And he knew not a single soul there. He must—he just *must*—meet that girl!

He happened, an evening later, to be in the Postmaster's room.

"By the way," he said carelessly. "I see you have an *Ebury Lodge* here. I was at



out 'The Merry Widow' waltz. It was crowded with people."

Oxford with a man named Ebury. I wonder who lives there. . . ."

"An old couple, with their granddaughter, Mr. Grandison. I forget the name for the moment. Shall I look it up for you?"

"Oh, dear, no! Don't trouble. I only asked the question in a most casual kind of way."

That was well enough before the Postmaster. But Grandison presently did more.

He went to the local Free Library. He took down the Devonshire Directory and looked up Boniton town. In due season he discovered that the tenant of Ebury Lodge was called Norton—Edward James of that ilk. He smiled and made due note of it, and pondered a valiant stroke.

On reaching his rooms he delivered it, taking paper and pen.

DEAR MISS NORTON (he wrote),

It seems rather foolish that we shouldn't be able to make each other's acquaintance properly and according to the conventions, but if you are as bored with Boniton as I am, can't we fix up a meeting somehow, and have a walk and talk?

I'm horribly lonely—always travelling—(Civil Service)—and rarely, if ever, meet anyone socially; so do be a brick and answer!

He signed his full name—it seemed so much more frank and straightforward—and put the address of his hotel. He posted the note and possessed his soul in impatience. At the end of twenty-four hours he found a private envelope amid the large and cumbersome official covers which lay, at breakfast, by his plate.

He tore it open swiftly. This is what he read:

DEAR MR. GRANDISON,

I am disposed to agree with you. I am bored rather. I feel inclined for that walk and talk you speak of. I shall be at the Exeter end of the town, two hundred yards past the last house, to-morrow afternoon at three o'clock.

Yours sincerely,

RUTH NORTON.

"To-morrow" was to-day. He lived in vain till the time of the rendezvous, to which he repaired in proper course.

He was early. He waited most impatiently. The hour appointed presently was past. There was still no sign of his lady. But he perceived another—and a prettier—one.

Naturally he regarded her attentively. She, too, considered him with some care.

Without apparently intending it, he found himself in her path.

"Mr. Geoffrey Grandison!" she said, in a voice which seemed to draw like a bow upon his heartstrings, though that was the first time he had heard it.

"That's my name," he answered—and because of her voice—almost shaken.

"I got your note, you see."

"My note?"

"Yes. I'm Ruth Norton. It was duly delivered to me, though we left Ebury Lodge, where you addressed it, nearly a year ago."

Grandison gasped and gazed at her. He went red with shame at his mistake. He cudgelled his hot head for explanation. The girl, however, spoke again.

"I'm so glad to have met you," she continued in that voice of hers which had such a perfectly amazing effect on him.

"Thank you. You're very kind. . . ."

"I must write and tell Stella."

"Tell Stella?"

"Yes, your sister, you know. I was at school with her at Cheltenham. She often spoke about you. . . ."

"And about you, too. I understand now. You're her great friend, Ruth Norton."

"Yes. Wasn't that why you wrote to me? I think it was extraordinarily human of you. Mother thought so as well."

Grandison gasped again and answered nothing. He dared not look at her clear eyes. She began to walk. He put himself into step with her. For a couple of hours they wandered through the quiet lanes together. For him they were hours of utter ecstasy. He had brains. Those brains were starving. She could talk. It seemed to him hardly twenty minutes before they reached a distant country inn.

They had tea in an arbour on a bowling-green which went back to the days of Queen Elizabeth. He sat rapt with her oval Celtic face, her dark hair, her skin of a beautiful dusky cream colour. But it was her voice—always her voice—which most mattered and which drew upon his heartstrings like a bow.

"Thank Heaven, I met you!" he said suddenly, his happiness having to find verbal outlet.

"You were bored and lonely."

"Oh, yes, unspeakably. I love my work, but I'm not exactly a Methuselah, and it's months since I met an educated woman."

"Or I a man. These little towns are awful, and I'm rather harnessed to my home. But mother's a dear and father's quite clever. I'll introduce you to-morrow. I think you'll like both of them. Meantime I want you to help us."

"To help you?"

"Yes, the Boniton Cricket Club. You had a Blue at Oxford."

"I suppose I had."

"Well, we've a match to-morrow against Mudleigh Pepperton. It's a seaside place, and they've got three or four visitors playing for them, and we want to beat them if we can. Feeling runs high, and we're better than they are in local talent, but these strangers always turn the scale."

"And you think I might be some use to you."

"I'm sure you will be. Do, do oblige us! You see, we Nortons subsidise the cricket here. Father largely runs it on his own."

Grandison nodded and sat hesitant. He ached to accept, to give her pleasure; but there were two important reasons why he should refuse. The first was that on the day on which he had entered the Civil Service he had given up cricket finally because he loved it too dearly; the second was that, though he ached to oblige her, he had had no practice for a year. He was about to decline—definitely. Perhaps she guessed it, for she spoke.

"Do!" she said. "Do, please, help us!"

Her voice absolutely finished him. He looked at her beautiful dark eyes.

"All right," he said. "I'm delighted to try and be of use to you. But don't expect very much of me. I've hardly bowled a ball since I came down."

She thanked him warmly. They set out back for Boniton. The journey seemed to Grandison even shorter than the journey to the inn. They parted where they had met, his playing in the match against Mudleigh Pepperton finally and definitely arranged.

"To-morrow I'll introduce you to my people," said Miss Norton. "You'll turn up at the cricket ground."

"Yes. But where is it?"

"Oh, near the church. Just at the back of the High Street. You can't miss it if you ask."

She turned away. Grandison stood looking after her, charmed by her looks, her brains, her manner, but conquered, bowled and beaten by her voice. When she had passed

from his vision he strode to the post office in hot haste.

"The mail arrives at four a.m., does it not, Mr. Sinnett?" he asked the Postmaster.

"Yes, sir."

"Then have my official letters brought to the Angel at five-fifteen to-morrow morning. I'll be down to receive them myself."

He strode off again, to make straight for the watchmaker's. There he bought a cheap alarm clock. He retired to bed at nine and fell asleep, thinking of Miss Norton, and rose in the morning with the lark. His letters came duly. He worked on tea and biscuits until breakfast-time, and, later, worked on again till noon.

Then he strolled towards the cricket ground—a fine one, with elm trees shading it and backgrounded by high wooded hills. The groundsman was rolling the wicket. Grandison went up to him and spoke.

"I'm playing against Mudleigh Pepperton this afternoon," he said.

"Yes, sir. They've told me, sir. I'm pleased to hear it. I hope you'll bowl 'em out, sir!"

"I greatly doubt it." Grave-and-Gay Grandison was much more grave than gay at this moment. "But I want you to spare me a few minutes. Go to the pavilion, bring half a dozen balls out, and then come across to that net."

The man obeyed on the instant. For the next quarter of an hour he was occupied in throwing back the balls which the aforetime Oxford fast bowler delivered steadily at a stump. Then Grandison put his coat on, and five shillings in a not unwilling hand.

"Thank you very much," he said. "That's loosened my arm just a little. I shan't be quite so stiff this afternoon. But to-morrow—Heavens, I shall feel it! I shan't be able to move!"

He strolled off to the Angel, lunched, and got into flannels. At the ground he made the acquaintance of the Boniton captain, a young local solicitor, who treated him with very great respect.

Before the arrival of the Mudleigh Pepperton eleven the two walked out to see the pitch.

"What do you make of it?" asked the captain.

"I think it's as dry as a bone, and that it'll crack speedily, and I'd like to go on at this end. If you win the toss and we make

a hundred and fifty, I think we shall manage to win."

The Boniton captain did win the toss. His team made a hundred and sixty. Forty-odd of these were due to vigorous hitting by Grave-and-Gay Grandison—more gay than grave just at present—no great batsman in class cricket, but good enough, though dead out of practice, to go in and take the long handle quite successfully in country club cricket of this class.

In the interval between the innings tea was taken. Grandison naturally gravitated to Ruth Norton. She introduced him to her mother, then to her father—a local manufacturer and potentate—who was talking to a middle-aged man.

Grave-and-Gay Grandison—most particularly grave now—stared at the latter aghast.

It was his chief—the Head of the Western Counties Postal Staff of Inspectors, and whose headquarters were at Exeter—a stern and zealous official, with whom Grandison had only had three interviews since coming to the district, being always kept travelling because unmarried, and so not having any home.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Grandison!" said the great man, smiling.

"Good afternoon, sir!" his subordinate answered anxiously.

"Taking a day off, eh?" the other—whose name was Torquilstone—continued.

"Yes, sir. I got up at five, though, and cleared off all my cases."

"Good. There are extenuating circumstances, then. I used to do the same thing when I was your age. Hope to see you bowl 'em out quickly. Looks to me as though the pitch is cracking. I ran across from Exeter to chat with you, but that will keep till to-night!"

Grave-and-Gay Grandison grew gay again. He answered his chief with a smile. Mr. Torquilstone turned away to talk to Mr. Norton, who was a thirty-years-old friend of his. Grandison found himself with Ruth. He talked hard to her for five minutes. Then his team took the field.

"You *are* going to bowl them out, aren't you?" she asked him rather anxiously, as he left her.

"I'm jolly well going to try to!" he answered, laughing. "But to-morrow I shall have to get a masseur and be lifted in and out of bed!"

He did bowl them out—perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he frightened them out, for he bowled, as he always thinks,

faster than ever before in his life. He bowled exceedingly badly. But that was only natural, seeing he was so out of practice; and the actual result was much the same. He got wickets with long hops and full pitches, and the Mudleigh Pepperton side were out for forty despite their summer visitors' aid.

After the match Very Gay Grandison talked for a little while with Ruth. Her father and mother joined them presently, and Mr. Torquilstone, too.

"You'll dine with us this evening, won't you, Mr. Grandison?" said Mrs. Norton kindly.

"Oh, I thank you very much. But my chief, Mr. Torquilstone, wants to see me."

"He can see you in the morning. He's coming to dinner also. Aren't you, Mr. Torquilstone?"

"Certainly, Mrs. Norton. Grandison, of course you will accept."

Grandison bowed his gratitude and went to the Angel to change. He was deadly stiff already. But a hot bath temporarily restored him. He reached the Nortons' house in due course.

There a new shock awaited him. It was perhaps the greatest of his life.

Amongst the people in the drawing-room a girl was standing, her fair-haired face and rounded features forming the strongest contrast with the dark and Celtic cast of Ruth Norton, who happened to be standing by her side. Ruth approached him immediately and led him across to her friend.

"I don't think you've met Miss Carberry," she said, presenting him.

"I—I don't think I have," he stammered, bowing.

"At least, not officially," Miss Carberry added.

"Miss Norton knows, then!" he gasped, fairly horrified.

"That you spoke to me on the round-about? Oh, yes, rather."

"And that the letter I wrote to her . . ."

"Was meant for me. Yes, she told me about getting it and meeting you, after you'd been that walk together. Of course we guessed how it had happened. It amused us both very much."

Grave-and-Gay Grandison stood *planté*. The Grave was uppermost now. He looked first at Ruth, because she mattered so much more to him. Then he looked at Miss Carberry. His face was rueful indeed.

"I know it was pretty cool of me," he said, trying to laugh a little. "But you must

try to forgive me. I was simply horribly lonely and aching for someone to speak to and I clutched at a straw. . . ."

"Oh, *thank* you, Mr. Grandison!"

"No, I didn't mean that, really."

"Didn't you?"

"No, really, really! You don't know what loneliness is!"

His voice was really very serious. Both girls looked at him hard. Then they looked at one another. And he heard Ruth Norton say this in her voice which, whenever he heard it, drew across his heart-strings like a bow—

"But why?"

"Because she is an older friend of yours than I am."

"But not, necessarily, such a good one."

"You don't regret that mother insisted on your having me beside you?"

"Rather not!"

"Then I don't. And, after all, perhaps it's better. Mr. Mortimer, the solicitor, who wants to marry her, is sitting next her, as he wants."

The meal was gay and jolly. Presently, well towards the end of it, Mr. Norton called out to Grandison's chief—



"Miss Norton knows, then!" he gasped, fairly horrified. "That you spoke to me on the roundabout? Oh, yes, rather."

"I suppose we don't, Mr. Grandison. Janet, we shall have to forgive him, as he won the match for us to-day. The verdict is certainly 'Guilty.' But we find 'extenuating circumstances.' Perhaps he'll be satisfied with that!"

\* \* \* \* \*

They went in to dinner shortly after. Grandison took Miss Norton on his arm. As they left the drawing-room she smiled at him and almost in a whisper said this:

"I'm sorry you're not taking in Janet Carberry."

"By the way, Torquillstone, I've been getting a postman into trouble here."

"How's that, old man?"

"Why, a friend of mine smuggled over a bottle of a new drink called 'hydromel,' they're making in Brittany, and gave it me, and I don't like it one bit. So I gave it to this postman, Somerford—quite a good chap he is—and he took a couple of tots. They completely bowled him over. He went tight to his work, and had to be sent back home again. He's in a dreadful funk of dismissal, and it's really all my fault!"

There was a curious and awkward silence. In it Grandison looked at Mr. Torquilstone, and Mr. Torquilstone looked at Grandison. Then the senior official turned to his life-long friend. "What is this hydromel made of, Norton?" he asked curiously.

"Honey and honeycomb. They say it's deadlier than absinthe, which is forbidden now by French law. I was talking to a wine-merchant yesterday. He tells me it's the very devil. I do hope you aren't going to do anything harsh, Torquilstone. It is really all my fault."

Again senior looked at junior. Then senior said this:

"You have the case, I think, Grandison? I sent you the papers recently."

"Yes, sir."

"Have you done anything in the matter?"

"Nothing yet, sir. I thought I'd see what I made of Somerford before I tackled him."

"What do you make of him?"

"Quite a good fellow, sir. No signs of habitual drinking."

"Then caution him formally and report me accordingly. There are extenuating circumstances, clearly, and we won't send the case up to Town."

Dinner ended. Presently Grave-and-Gay Grandison found himself in a garden alley-way with Ruth. "But you're tired. You'd like to go in," she said, noticing that he limped and moved with difficulty.

"Not a bit of it!" he answered determinedly, though every bone in his body ached and each separate muscle seemed to have its individual agony. "Only mightn't we sit down somewhere? It rather hurts to walk!"

They found a rustic arbour. They said nothing for some moments. Then Grandison, who had been watching her profile in the moonlight, broke the silence first.

"I'm glad I played," he said, "even though I broke a vow to do it."

"Broke a vow?"

"Yes. I swore when I entered the Civil Service never to play any more. I love cricket too much, and I wasn't going to let anything interfere with my duties."

"Boniton is indebted to you, then, for breaking that vow."

"I didn't do it for Boniton."

"Didn't you?"

"No, I did it for you. I couldn't help it. I suppose it was the way in which you asked me, or else something in your voice."

She flashed a sudden searching glance at him and found his eyes on her own. Then,

looking down again, quietly she asked him: "Do you think it was very dreadful of me to answer your letter?"

"Not a bit more dreadful than it was of me to write it."

"Even though I guessed it must have been for Janet?"

"How did you guess?"

"Because she told me she had talked to you on the roundabouts, and how you had followed her."

"It was awful of me. But I was so lonely!"

"And I was aching for an intelligent man to talk to. And I didn't steal you from Janet. She wouldn't have come, you know. She is practically engaged."

Grandison nodded and sat thoughtful. Then his lips wreathed into a smile.

"You are amused," said Ruth Norton suddenly.

"I was thinking about Stella," he said.

"Stella!"

"Yes. What she'd think about it. Whether she'd think—as I think—that I've known you all my life."

"All your life?"

"Yes, all that matters of it. The last ten years or so she's talked of you often and often, so that meeting you just seemed natural."

"That's what I felt!"

"Did you?"

"Yes. She talked of you, too, so often. Meeting, as you say, seemed simply natural."

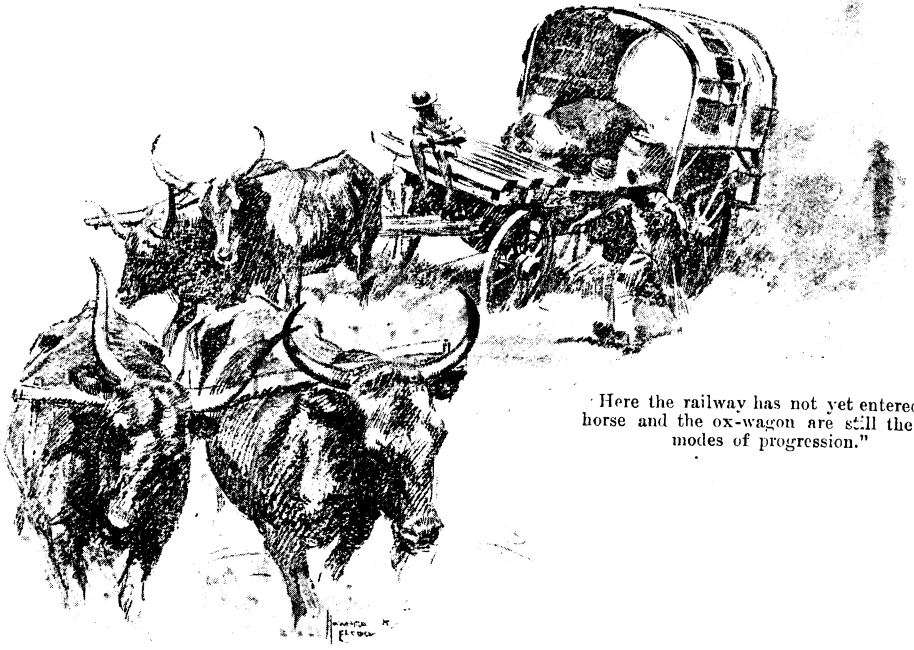
"Did it? Then the verdict is. . . ."

"'Extenuating circumstances,' surely. The inevitable is a thing we can't defy."

He laughed, shot one glance at her, found her eyes on him, and put his arm round her forthwith. Their cheeks touched. Then their lips encountered in a long, long kiss of youth and love.

"I think I've known you always—since the beginning of the world!" said Grandison presently, rather shakily. "We lived in 'some old spent star' together—and I've found you once more—by your voice!"

Grave-and-Gay Grandison did not lose her again. It was the Service, however, which lost *him*. When he married her he entered the Nortons' business, much to the regret of Mr. Torquilstone, who thinks he should have stuck to his billet. His late chief allows, however, that there are extenuating circumstances—very cogent ones—and says, too, that perhaps it is as well that a good cricketer has now proper leisure for the game.



Here the railway has not yet entered, the horse and the ox-wagon are still the only modes of progression."

# AN AFRICAN TRADER'S DAILY LIFE

By A. LOTON RIDGER

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

**I**N Dr. Livingstone's time trading in a large native territory was a very profitable occupation. A store was a little gold mine to its owner. Owing, however, to the inroads of civilisation, it has become a somewhat precarious livelihood. The African native has become too civilised, or too Westernised, for the trader to reap the big harvest he did. Competition is keener. But, despite this and the slow opening up of the country by the railway, the old romance is still there.

Bechuanaland is one of the few large native territories where Kaffir trading is

still carried on to-day with some measure of profit and a certain amount of risk to one's life. Here the railway has not yet entered, the horse and the ox-wagon are still the only modes of progression, and the life of the few traders in this wild part of Africa gives the wanderer an insight into the old days when a rifle had always to be near at hand, when lions were ever ready to share in the trader's profit by feasting on his cattle, if not on himself.

To reach the spot where our trader is living, it is necessary to cross many hundreds of miles of waterless desert and lion-infested

veldt by wagons, each pulled by a span of eighteen oxen. It is no light journey. The wagons stick fast into the yielding sand of the Kalahari Desert. Water, too, is terribly scarce, and before the river is reached the spans are all but dying from thirst. More than four whole days and nights without water, and ever steadily pulling at heavy loads over the hot, waterless, sandy desert! Here and there wells have been sunk—veritable oases in the desert—affording a most welcome opportunity for the poor beasts to rest, not to mention the begrimed and worn-out traveller.

When the desert is left behind, we come on to the first solitary trading store. There are, of course, no stores in the desert, as no one, save the nomad bushman, could exist there. This store was near the River Botletle. Its chief mainstay was the purchase of raw skins and cattle in exchange for Kaffir "truck," chiefly consisting of print, blankets, beads, knives, pots and pans, etc. Periodically the trader sends down to civilisation his wagon full of the produce he has bartered for, and the wagon on its return brings him up another load of "Kaffir" goods—and a few newspapers! It may be imagined what a godsend the arrival of a white man is to the lonely soul marooned here.

Our trek continues along the banks of a lovely river, the Botletle. Lions are numerous in the district. We light big fires at night and quarter our livestock in the centre of our wagons. Night treks are abandoned save only when the moon is full. Then the lion is not so much to be feared.

After trekking for weeks, at last Lake Ngami is reached, and we outspan outside the capital of Ngamiland, Tsau, the residence of the chief. This "capital" possesses more than one store—three. This means competition, thus smaller profits. Competition in this little trading centre, two months' trek from Mafeking, is as keen as in any thriving suburb of the city of London. Each trader offers some special inducement to attract the trade to his store. And the native takes full advantage of the situation.

A word of description. The surroundings of the village are very picturesque. Large shady trees encircle the little *stadt*, and the moist heat of the day is cooled by the waters of a small stream running near by. The village consists only of a number of grass-

thatched huts made of reeds and mud, each little location of huts being separated from another by a narrow lane deep in sand. Here and there the whitewashed roof of one of the three trading stores stands out prominently above the sea of thatched huts. It is hard for both man and beast to plod a way through this heavy sand, and to lose one's way is the easiest thing imaginable.

The village is ruled by the chief and his various headmen. Without the chief's permission no white man can trade, and the rival traders vie with one another in ingratiating themselves in the good books of the chief and his headmen. And the latter are not blind to the possibilities of their position. They play off one trader with another as skilfully as do Balkan diplomats. Now that we are at Tsau, I will give my reader a peep into a typical day in the life of one of our three traders.

The sun's rays are just topping the thatched huts of this little village in the heart of dark Africa. The quiet of the sleeping *stadt* is giving place to stir and bustle. Oxen are being driven out of their kraals to graze by the river, fires are being kindled by the housewives to cook the morning mealies for their lords and masters, and the little piccaninnies are tumbling over the sandy ground. Our friend the trader is also beginning to bestir himself.

He gazes sleepily round his bedchamber—or the portion of his little hut which contains his bed—and his lazy glance alights on his inseparable friend, his pipe. This he slowly fills and lights, then shouts lustily for his cup of morning tea. It arrives, and he takes a few sips of the muddy-looking concoction that passes muster as that beverage. Leisurely he proceeds to wash himself and dress. Neither occupation could with truth be termed lengthy. The former consists of a hasty sluice in a pail, whilst the latter consists of donning a pair of khaki trousers and a shirt to match. Thus garbed, he strolls out of his hut towards his store, ready to begin his day's work. When he reaches the store he finds a goodly collection of cattle, with their various owners, assembled outside, awaiting his arrival. The same thought immediately passes through the minds of both trader and native alike. Each fondly hopes that he is going to make a good bargain. The native is vainly imagining that he is going to sell the stock at his price, whilst our friend the trader is



sanguinely hoping that he is going to buy it at his.

The trader leisurely unlocks his store, completely ignoring, whilst doing so, the existence of both cattle and owners. He makes not the slightest attempt to apologise for his tardy arrival, and makes even less effort to repair the loss of time, for he knows that time is of little consequence to an African native, and he also knows by experience that the slightest sign on his part of eagerness to trade means at once an increase of price in the native's mind. So, having unlocked the store, he proceeds leisurely to knock out his pipe and to refill it. No! In order to gain more time, before refilling it he blows through it most conscientiously, looks most carefully in the bowl, and then knocks it out again, all the time gazing out into the veldt with a far-away look in his eyes. This far-away look of his does not, however, prevent him from casting covert glances at the cattle by his store and from reckoning up just how cheaply he can get them.

If my reader has in his mind that there is only one possible conclusion to the forthcoming transaction—that the poor native is going to be most unjustly treated, that he is going to be sent back to his kraal less his valuable live stock and with only a tithe of its value in place—let me hastily assure my kind-hearted reader that his pity is quite unnecessary. This “poor, unlightened heathen aborigine of Africa's plains” is more than a match for the most soft-spoken peddler from Whitechapel. What he doesn't know of the subtle arts of haggling and bargaining—well, it isn't worth knowing. Let us now watch the game.

The first move comes from the trader. He suddenly feigns to become aware of the fact that there is a customer in his store, and in a most casual sort of way asks him whether he wants to sell any of his cattle outside, though, judging from their very juvenile look, he supposes not. The native at once begins a lengthy oration on the merits of these particular animals, and concludes by saying that nothing would induce him to sell them at a price less than so much—a price exactly double that at which the trader hopes to buy them. The native further adds, as though it were an afterthought, that Ramolele—the native name of a rival trader in the village—has only the day before offered him this very figure. The trader is quite aware that

this is a pure fabrication on the native's part, knowing his rival is not a philanthropist, so he promptly retorts by telling the nigger to take the cattle to that store and hastily accept the price offered him by this public benefactor. On this the native fervently assures him that he has no use for this particular trader, but has, on the other hand, a most ardent desire to sell his cattle to our friend.

Thus native and trader bargain. The former knows that he will not get a better price in the *stadt* than what this trader will offer him, whilst the latter clearly realises that if the native doesn't get somewhere near his figure, he will try another store, or possibly take back the cattle to his kraal and let them grow a bit more. So each gives way a bit, and at last the deal is concluded. The native parts with his cattle and receives in exchange hard cash. Years back the native would receive payment by getting only half in cash and the other half in goods; this method of payment meant, of course, considerably more profit to the trader. But to-day, thanks to the competition, the native demands, and gets, all cash. And then he buys just when and where the spirit moves him.

After this strenuous transaction is concluded, the trader refreshes himself with a cup of coffee, and again fills his pipe, whilst reclining on the counter awaiting the advent of more customers.

In one respect woman is the same the wide world over, no matter what her colour or caste—she dearly loves to array herself in garments that are pleasing to the eye, and particularly the eye of her men-folk. It would seem a far cry from London to Lake Ngami, but not so much when you note the similarity of methods employed by the dainty shopper in Bond Street and the dusky belle in the wilds of Africa, selecting wearing apparel.

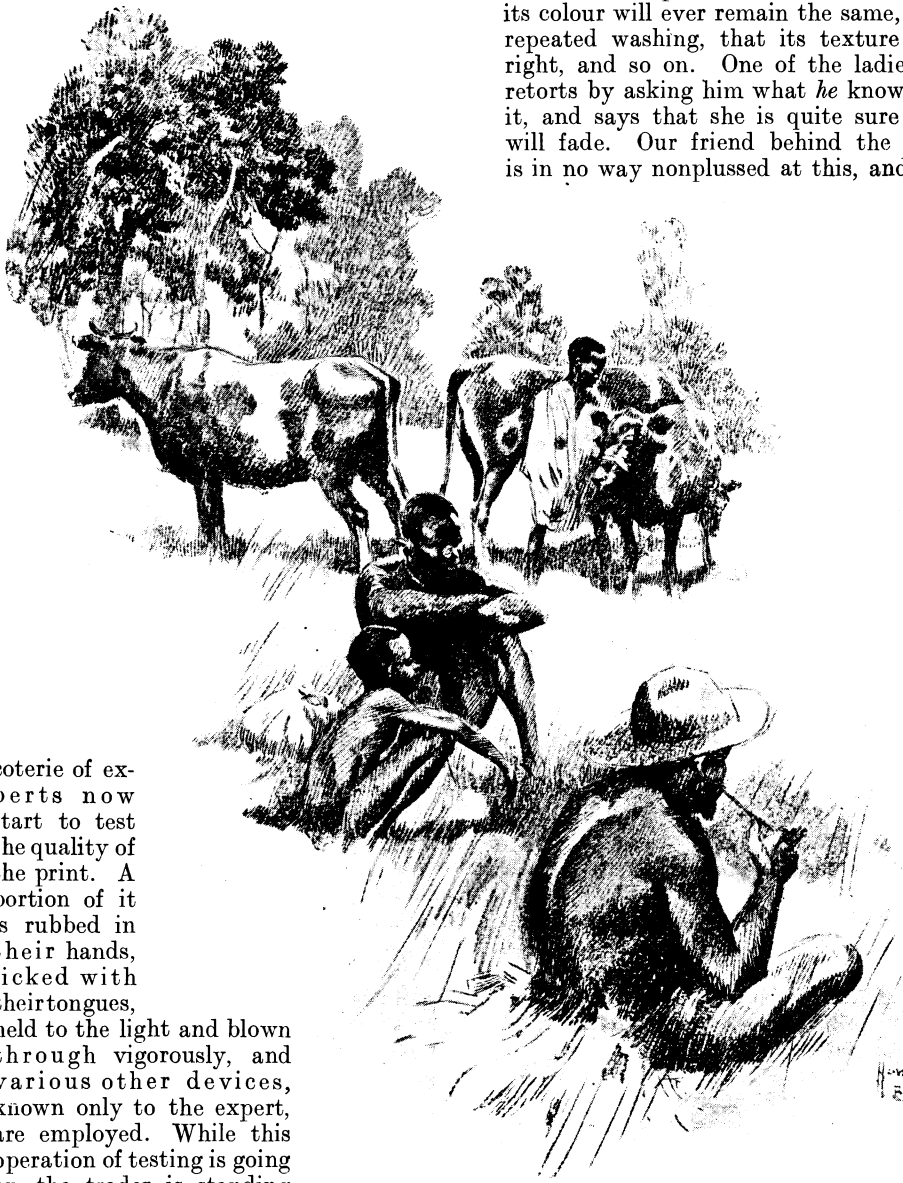
Perhaps our friend the trader is thinking this as he wearily gazes on a collection of black beauties who have come to assist *one* of their party in the purchase of some print for a dress. They have not yet decided, after a good half-hour, on the particular piece they want, and, like their fair sisters in the West, they do not seem quite to know what they do want. The trader has already unrolled half his stock of print (and he carries a good supply), and still the fastidious lady customer has not yet made up her mind. At last, however, after much picking and choosing, and sundry

pieces of advice from her friends, the customer is seen to hover over two or three pieces. And it is now the real business begins.

The prospective purchaser and her little

nothing. At last, however, he notices that the attention of all seems to be concentrated on one particular piece, so he now ventures to say a word. He makes a few tactful but casual remarks on the special charm of this piece. He assures them that its colour will ever remain the same, despite repeated washing, that its texture is just right, and so on. One of the ladies, true, retorts by asking him what *he* knows about it, and says that she is quite sure that it will fade. Our friend behind the counter is in no way nonplussed at this, and begins

coterie of experts now start to test the quality of the print. A portion of it is rubbed in their hands, licked with their tongues, held to the light and blown through vigorously, and various other devices, known only to the expert, are employed. While this operation of testing is going on, the trader is standing behind the counter, placidly smoking. He has to use much tact, poor fellow, for if the print is thick, his lady customers will tell him that it is full of starch, and if it is thin, that it is of very poor quality. He is between the devil and the deep sea, so he wisely says



“Cattle, with their various owners, awaiting his arrival.”

to speak in parables to help the placid working of the native mind. He says that just as her father’s luxuriant locks have grown grey after many years, so possibly this print in years to come may change

its present hue to a colour less resplendent, but not till many years. This happy touch does the trick, and the print changes hands.

During this lengthy proceeding the lady's husband has been standing by, with just that same look of boredom on his face that my reader himself has seen (if not shown) in Bond Street. But the dusky husband has this one advantage—he can “swop lies” with all his pals and exchange pinches of snuff in any attitude he likes. The husband, encouraged to extravagance by his wife's purchases, now decides to buy himself a pair of trousers. As he bought a pair at some former period in his life-time, more or less remote—he generally goes about in a shirt—he airily informs the trader of the number. Our friend happens to be out of this size at the moment, so gives his customer, instead, a pair three sizes larger, informing him it is better so, as they shrink in the wash. He conveniently forgets that he has assured another customer, only a few minutes before, that this class of trousers is quite unaffected by washing, save in that they become cleaner. But this slight inaccuracy doesn't worry him. The native examines the trousers with a critical eye, looks inside them, turns the ends up to note the stitching, and so on. He then decides to buy them, *after* he has tried them on. To this the trader offers no objection, whereupon the native climbs over the counter and proceeds to don his new garment. As they are only two sizes too big for him, he decides to have them. He is helped in making up his mind by the fact of one of his friends repeatedly assuring him—and in a very loud whisper—how strong they look, how he (the speaker) knows this type of trousers well, as also the splendid assortment of goods stocked by this store, etc., etc. The guileless purchaser lends an ear to these flattering words, which are, however, really only for the special benefit of the trader, who clearly recognises in this flattering oration the prelude to a request for a gift of some sugar or some tea; for just as the deal is being concluded, he hears another extremely loud whisper to the effect that somebody is quite sure that the trader in his own country is a very big chief. The trader cannot resist this insidious piece of flattery, and feels it is really up to him to reward this faithful friend, so he hands over to the native in question a small *barcella*, in the shape of some cheap article

from the food department. The fact that the flatterer is a fairly good customer also considerably affects him in his decision.

Another hanger-on in the little crowd in the store, noticing the success of his pal, decides on the same course of procedure. So another whisper—again in a very loud voice—is heard to say that somebody has never seen such a handsome specimen of humanity as the Adonis behind the counter. This stream of disinterested flattery flows for some little time, till the speaker begins to realise that his compliments are falling on thin air; for, as the trader happens to know that this native is one who is very fond of patronising the store of his most hated rival, he blandly ignores the stream of semi-subdued compliments. In trading parlance, he decides “there is nothing doing.”

Our friend now decides to take some breakfast, so clears his store and strolls back to his hut. Having eaten his fill, he is sitting there smoking, when some very clamorous female voices outside his store claim his attention. As it will never do to keep the ladies waiting, he returns to his counter. More print is wanted, shawls also. The old routine is repeated.

Being winter-time, there is a good trade doing in blankets, especially amongst the poorer class of native. A *lapie*, as the native in this part of Africa calls it, cost before the War anything from one shilling to seven. Fancy a blanket in Tsau—a thousand miles from nowhere—costing one shilling! It sounds incredible, but it is true. It savours somewhat of sweated labour, I fear.

Let us watch a native buying a *lapie*. He first looks through the huge pile of blankets on the counter, and finally selects one. He then insists on opening it out to its full extent, whereupon he grumbles, as a matter of course, at its small dimensions. The trader pays no attention whatever to this, for he knows that if he supplied a blanket the size of a drawing-room carpet, the native would still grumble, would still murmur “*Nnyannyane*” (very small). The next move on the part of the customer is to take it to the light. The trader does his best to frustrate this little manœuvre by holding firmly to the end of the blanket in an absent-minded sort of fashion, as though his thoughts were far away from anything so mundane as a blanket. The native, foiled in this attempt to examine the distant scenery through the texture of the blanket, then inquires whether it is

strong. The trader, in reply, has not words sufficient to express his high opinion of the strength and durability of this particular blanket. So the native buys the blanket, though not without having incidentally told the trader that he

Quite the contrary—he does. He gives a squarer deal than does many a tradesman in some European countries. True, he barneys and cajoles his customer into purchasing his goods, but this is necessary, as the native mind is more than childlike in its simplicity. He demands extravagant praise with every shilling blanket he purchases. The African trader never errs, however, on the wrong side in the matter of weight in his grocery sales, and never sinks to taking advantage of a customer's mistake or his ignorance in the matter of change. To a certain extent the natives get attached to their own particular trader, and will always buy and sell at his store, so long as they get their money's worth; and it doesn't take long for a native to find out that he is being "done."



"The trader has already unrolled half his stock of print . . . and still the fastidious lady customer has not yet made up her mind."

doesn't believe one word he has been told. Whereupon they both laugh and part quite good friends.

It mustn't be thought that the African trader doesn't play the game with the native.

The whole secret of successful native trading in Africa is just the possession of unlimited patience and of unlimited tact. The trader who loses the first and is bereft of the second will never make a living,

let alone a fortune, in South Africa. The natives in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, more especially the men, are, on the whole, very easy to trade with. If a native seems discontented with a certain purchase, a joke in his own language and in his own style soon restores him to good humour.

The bulk of the goods bought from the store are in the clothing line. Boots are especially popular. In buying them, the native invariably asks if they squeak, as this is a sure sign, in his mind, that they are of first-class quality. Needless to say, the purchaser is always assured of their powers in this respect.

During the heat of the day the trader closes his store, as little business is then to be done. Just before sundown he opens again and finds a few customers, of both sexes, lolling against the store. More print, blankets, and other kinds of goods are retailed, and beads.

My reader must not think that any kind of beads will satisfy the dusky belle of

Tsau. Oh, no! Fashion in beads amongst native women in Africa is as exacting as fashion in hats amongst the fair of Paris and Mentone. Our friend the trader in vain endeavours to dispose of a certain kind of bead of which he has unfortunately too large a supply. They are of last year, which spells contempt amongst the *élite* of the village.

The sun has set. The trader has eaten his evening meal in solitude. He is now sitting before his hut in the soft light of dying day. Everything around is very still. His mind is on scenes far away. He hears in the quiet of the African night the hum of the busy Strand; he sees over the dark African veldt the throbbing lights of Piccadilly; and perhaps—who knows?—he sees also the fair face of one he has left behind.

We inspan and trek away. We leave our friend the trader alone with his thoughts. As wanderers we never attempt to delve deep in the past of others. Sufficient if we but portray a glimpse of their lives.

## TO A CRISIS.

**YOU** came from nowhere, so I thought,  
 All unexpected, undesired.  
**Ah, me!** The havoc that you wrought,  
 And, oh, the awe your ways inspired!

**You** were my latest guest at night,  
 At dawn you stood beside my bed;  
**You** dulled my brain and dimmed my sight  
 Till I forgot to eat my bread.

**And** then you passed! Once more the wheat  
 Swayed greenly, wet with Springtide rain,  
 The lilac-scented air was sweet,  
 Pear-blossom time came round again.

**I** know you cost me blood and tears,  
 Searchings of heart and thoughts of flame.  
**To-day**, after a lapse of years,  
 I scarcely can recall your name.

FAY INCHFAWN,

*Author of "Homely Verses of a Home Lover."*



"A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE IS A DANGEROUS THING."

AFFABLE YANKEE TOURIST: Well, Mac, I guess you've fattened up some nice plump haggises for your "Burns' Night" dinner, haven't you?

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### HER HUSBAND.

By Grace Fordham Spence.

It was at Ranelagh that I met him. I was in the Winter Garden, at a reasonable distance from the band, and the sound of a deep sigh attracted my attention. Turning round, I saw, at a table a few yards off, a man whose appearance puzzled me. I seemed to know his face, but was baffled by his air of melancholy.

His face was thin and haggard, yet it looked like the face of Mr. Giskins: we used to call him "jolly Giskins," because he was bubbling over with gaiety and an irresistible cheeriness, sometimes a little trying. The clothes, too, were strange, for "jolly Giskins" was something of a beau, and this man looked as if he were dressed in a suit of reach-me-downs chosen on a foggy day. However, I noticed that he wore a cut opal signet ring, and that was conclusive. I felt moved by a great wave of sorrow for him: he had been my husband's best man, at our wedding, and was quite a good sort.

I got up and went to sit down at his table, but he took no notice of me until I said "Mr. Giskins!" Then he started and recognised me quickly, and asked a flood of conventional questions. When it had ebbed, I said rather timidly—

"What's the matter? Is your wife quite well?"

He laughed with the laugh of a pantomime

demon: "Quite well? Oh, yes! Radiant—splendid!"

"And your health?"

He gave another deep sigh that seemed to come from the bottom of a sorrow-laden soul.

"Don't feel hurt by my questions. Remember we are old friends."

"Do you write?" he asked in a curious, fierce way. "I mean write books or things for the papers?"

"Oh, dear, no," I replied. "Only a short story now and then. But your wife, I remember—"

The unhappy man seemed moved by great emotion and to be making a big effort to speak lightly. "Oh, yes, she writes, and they print the things in *The Evening Howler*, and pay very well for them. You wouldn't know—you've been away for a long time."

"Quite an agreeable addition to your income."

He really hissed his next remark to me: I did not know till then that people really do "hiss" their words except in books and plays. "Do you think that Rockefeller could afford a wife who earned money with her pen? What about the Rolls Royce we bought on the strength of her earnings, and the little place in the country that we never visit, and the new piano which she never touches, and the new furniture, and the gowns and furs and goodness knows what?"



A NATURAL TENDENCY.

INTERVIEWER: And what made you take up weight-lifting as a profession?  
 PROFESSOR: Well, I've always had a weakness for that sort of thing.



GOOD VALUE.

GENTLEMAN (discussing terms for lodgings): But the "use of a piano" is no use to me. I can't play.  
 LANDLADY: Oh, sir, but you'd 'ave the use of it, all the same. My daughters is always a-practising.

I began to see daylight. "I am so sorry; money troubles are very upsetting."

"It isn't money troubles. Nothing of the kind. Nonsense!" Then he continued in a milder way: "You're all right, and you don't really write things. Your husband is a lucky man. Look at this." He rummaged in his pocket, brought out a crumpled newspaper, and pointed out with a finger, no longer manicured, an article entitled "What I think," and ornamented by a block of the head of a woman which I recognised at once as the head of Mrs. Giskins.



JUST A POLITE ENQUIRY.

"'ERE y'are, lidy! Ninepenny 'addick fer er tanner. Just bin cured."  
 "Ho, yus! An' what illness 'ave they bin cured of, might I hask?"

"Not a very good picture of her—not flattering, anyhow."

"The block's getting worn out; they use it every day. Read what she says."

I did. It was quite foolish stuff, the advice of one ignorant woman to another, but I noticed nothing remarkable, and said so.

"Look at the last paragraph," he hissed fiercely.

I did, and smiled a little. It explained that Mrs. Giskins, if her husband seemed gloomy on a Saturday, used to cheer him up by giving him a relish with his afternoon tea, such as liver and bacon, to which he was very partial.

"Liver and bacon? Oh, Mr. Giskins, I thought you were such an epicure!"

"Beastly stuff," he replied, "when cooked in England. Leather spoil! I never eat it. But that appeared on Friday, and how many men do you think during that blessed day asked if I would like a relish, or invited me to take a whisky and liver, or asked whether I generally drove off a high tea, or suggested that I should try wheelks as a change? Do you know," he continued, speaking with an intense suppressed passion, "they have published that sort of thing about me every day for months. That

woman"—fancy a man calling his wife "that woman"!—"makes me the *corpus vile* of all her articles. She has told the world how she got me to use safety razors because I always swore when I cut myself with the old ones, which I much prefer; how she knitted me a neck tie with silk which she unravelled from an old pair of ribbed stockings—I was in a merry mood about that, and raffled the tie for a large sum on the Stock Exchange for charity—how she has reduced the quantity of whisky which I take—I'm afraid I make up for it away from home—how she has got me to wear the same soft shirt twice by turning the cuffs; how she is educating me to like good music and go to the highbrow plays; and how she has cured me of the habit of biting my nails by putting aloes on the tips—I never bit them in my life—how she keeps me from worrying over business by her lively conversation or making me do housework." He paused breathless.

I was really startled, horrified by the fury of poor Mr. Giskins. However, he got his breath and started again.

"Before she began to write for that loathsome rag I belonged to two jolly social clubs and three golf clubs. I was a well-known member of 'The House,' though not a big operator, and I believe I used to swagger a bit in the street; and now I have resigned all my clubs, I crawl about the House as though I expected to be hammered, and I sneak to the office by all the back streets and slums, so as not to meet my friends, and I don't care about my clothes, of which I used to be rather fussy. But there is no escape. Everybody pulls my leg every day except Saturdays and Sundays, when, as a rule, I stay at home and mope. The cruelty of the human race is appalling. Nobody can resist the chance of making a joke, however rotten and painful to another man.

"On Friday Jones, ex-middleweight champion, asked me whether I would like a relish, and I



said to him: ' Jones, it is half-past three o'clock, and I've been about since nine. If you had any intelligence—which I doubt—you might have guessed by now that over fifty other fools would have asked that silly question before you did.' He asked whether I recollected that he was ex-middleweight champion, to which I replied that I didn't mind if he struck me, as I was quite willing to die. Anyhow, what's the good of life? "

It need hardly be said that I was just a little



THE EXPLANATION.

VICAR: The weather is very changeable, Brown.

BROWN: That it is, sir. They do say as it's all because we never get a single day alike.

bit moved, though rather diverted by his story. "But, my dear Mr. Giskins, haven't you appealed to your wife? She is quite a good sort."

He interrupted again. "Of course she is a good sort. All women are, but why doesn't someone invent a way of getting at their goodness? I've appealed to her, and she laughed. She doesn't believe what I say: women never

do, if you tell them the truth. The only men I know whose wives believe in them are thoroughly bad lots. She says I ought to be proud of being the husband of a famous writer, and I've tried to reason with her. You might as well try to reason with a rabbit. And, of course, the house is neglected on account of her literary work, and the servants do just what they like, which is nothing, and I had to black my own boots till I got tired and left the dirty and poisonous things." He added in a

whisper: "I'm making money madly. Think of it—everything to make me happy but one, and I am the most miserable creature on earth!"

As he was finishing his sentence, a strange look came over his face. He rose in a curious fashion and, without any ceremony or word of departure, went away by some process that was not exactly walking. My eyes followed him, and, looking beyond, I saw in the doorway Mrs. Giskins, bright, healthy, radiant, and a trifle plumper than she used to be, wearing a fantastic toque that yelped of tomorrow, and sables—but not real Russian—reaching almost to the ground, and I turned hastily away lest her eyes should meet mine, for I felt sure that if she had come up and spoken to me, I should have failed to behave like a lady.



"THESE are very fine cigars, doctor," remarked his guest. "Where do you get them?"

"Oh, I just ordered one of my profiteer patients to stop smoking," the doctor replied, "and confiscated his supply so that he wouldn't be tempted."



"MOROCCO," says a contemporary, "has no newspapers." Then how do the inhabitants manage to insure themselves against accidents and the measles?

## SO SHOULD I.

As they came up to business in the train the other day, Bilkins said to Wilkins: "I have a poser for you. Can you tell me a noun of which the plural sometimes implies less than the singular?"

WILKINS: Perhaps I could if you gave me a few weeks to think over it.

BILKINS: In that case perhaps I'd better tell you at once. When you find you owe a visit to the barber, you say, "I must go and get my hair cut." But if you had only three hairs on your head, you would probably say, "I must go and get my hairs cut."

WILKINS: Nonsense! You are wrong in both cases.

BILKINS: How's that?

## FORBIDDEN FRUIT.

HOTHOUSE strawberries are now often hired for dinner-parties, to give a regal air to the table, and it is considered bad manners to eat them. This kind of thing will add a new terror to dining out. It is usually quite possible to tell if the butler has been hired for the occasion, but what about the turbot? Even if we pass the fish course, the status of the spring chicken will be in doubt. For all we know, it may have been acquired on the "eat or return system." Glass grapes and waxwork pineapples are bad enough, but at any rate you can't eat them. Now the only thing to do is to have a good square meal before you arrive, and carefully watch your host.



THE BETTER 'OLE. SCENE: A SMALL WESTERN TOWN.

DEFAULTING MINING STOCK PROMOTER: Where can I hide? The Sheriff and his posse are after me.  
HEAD CLERK: Get into the simplified index letter-file case. There ain't a guy could find anything there.

WILKINS: Why, firstly, when I want my hair cut, I go to the barber without saying anything about it; secondly, if I had only three hairs on my head, I shouldn't be such a blithering idiot as to go to the barber at all, but should cut them myself.

LADY IN MUSIC SHOP: Have you "Two Tender Souls"?

ASSISTANT: I'm afraid not, madam.

LADY: Or "The Place of My Dreams"?

ASSISTANT: No, we haven't, but there is a fishmonger's next door.

A SCIENTIFIC journal points out that potash lozenges can be ignited by friction and used as a substitute for matches. It is not, however, advisable to chew matches if you happen to run short of potash lozenges.

MRS. OLDACRES: Have you a pergola in your garden?

MRS. NEWRICH: Not now; we found it barked at the tradespeople so, we had to get rid of it.

## THE MUSIC-LOVERS.

By Harold Murray.

"PIANO Department? Yes, madam. First on the left, and then to the right."

The little woman who had inquired, and who was coaxing along a very small boy who wanted to go and buy up the Toy Department, smilingly beckoned to a young ex-Service man who was looking rather bored with the whole show.

"Come on, Jim! Here's something in your line."

Well, it was in my line, too, so I don't apologise for following and observing what took place. I love to be amongst pianos of the second-hand and slightly soiled variety. I am always wondering how callous folk can pass by the dear old things without a touch of sentiment. If only they could tell you where they

They ran the gauntlet of a dozen grinning pianos, looking longingly at each, and pulled up at a massive table grand, a solid old fellow who looked as if he would have to have a special room built for him, and would make a good dining table for a score of people.

"There!" said the little woman. "How would Bobby like to have *that* to learn on, eh?"

"What's it all for?" said the small boy, gapping at the monster somewhat contemptuously

"Tum, tum; tum, tum!" Jim had been unable to resist the temptation. I knew he would be.

I waited, trying hard to make a noise like a buyer of grand pianos.

"Come on, Jim!" said the little woman



A FAR CRY.

MR. TOOTING BECK: You've got a new baby at your house, I hear.

MR. KENSINGTON GORE: By Jove, can you hear it out in the suburbs?

have been, what sort of treatment they have received, what romances have unfolded around them, what comedies and tragedies they have witnessed! You have a piano in your home? Well, just think for a minute.

But when we got to the Piano Department, it was fairly full of people who were not dreaming about pianos—they were trying them. They were, to tell the truth, very trying.

"Tum, tum; tum, tum!"

Why do people who want to test a piano in these places strike those four miserable chords with the right hand in such a nervous way?

"Tum, tum; tum, tum!" And then:

"H'm! Pretty good tone." That settles it. The little woman with the ex-Service man interested me because they were not quite so casual and off-hand.

proudly. "No one's looking. Sit down proper and play 'The Maiden's Prayer' thing. And then Bobby can play 'The Blue Bells o' Scotland,' and tell 'em all at home he's performed on a *real* table piano, there!"

Jim affected to be unimpressed. "Used to rattle off all the rags on one o' these things in the Y.M.C.A. hut," he remarked, as he sat down, put a rather heavy, muddy foot on the loud pedal, and went over the top, so to speak, with a vengeance.

The little woman glanced at me, as if to say: "Now, you hear all these other folk tum tumming, but my husband is a *player*, he is!" I looked, as I felt, entirely sympathetic. I was back in the old camp with the boys . . . the nightly sing-song . . . It was really most annoying when an interfering chap, whose

dull business it was to sell the pianos, came round a corner and disturbed the recital.

He addressed the little woman, as the amen to "The Maiden's Prayer" came with startling abruptness.

"You wish to buy a piano, madam?"

This is the part I like. I knew exactly how the dialogue would proceed, and it was so.

"Very good tone that, and very cheap, madam. Allow me." . . . "Terum, terum; terumpety rumpety rum!"—with a grand concluding flourish.

"Sounds like a good tone," said Jim (we all say that). "About how much?"

"Hundred guineas," said the salesman casually, as if one could have the thing wrapped up in brown paper and carry it home straight-way.

The little woman nudged Jim. I knew she would. "I don't think that one would do, thank you. We——"

"Oh," said the immaculate and polite piano merchant, "this other one here, perhaps,—a really lovely tone—a hundred and seventy, this" . . . "Terum terum, terumpety tum——"

"I—I think," said the little woman, "we shan't be able to choose ours to-day. (Bobby, don't you *know* your fingers are sticky?) Thank you all the same. Perhaps to-morrow——"

I was really sorry when they slipped out. A lady smothered in a tiger skin, accompanied by a nonchalant gentleman with a monocle, who looked as if his pockets were stuffed with bank-notes, came to make sarcastic remarks about the dignified old quadruped which Jim had honoured, and they were not half as interesting. In between vigorous "tum-terums" on more aristocratic instruments, the salesman talked to these people about concert pitch, and overstrung pianos, and action, and dampers, and escapement, and all sorts of things that you and I don't worry about when we have a jolly family party.

So I left them at it. It so happened that as I was leaving I saw Mr. and Mrs. Jim again. They were in a corner, discussing something very earnestly.

"You can get very good ones," said the little woman.

"Eh," said Jim, "and I used to enjoy playing one myself. Why, on a route march out in France——"

"*S-sh!*" said the little woman. "We'll get one, for his birthday! He won't *half* be pleased!" And in a stage whisper she asked a passing assistant: "Please, do you keep mouth organs?"



"So you got your poem printed?"

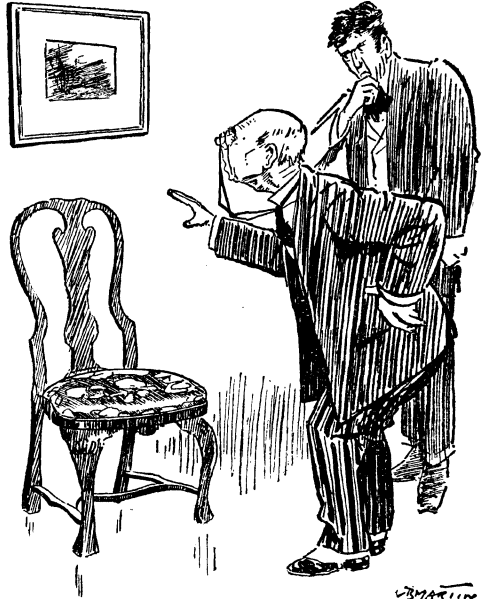
"Yes," replied the author. "I sent the first stanza to the editor of the correspondence column with the inquiry, 'Can anyone give me the rest of this poem?' Then I sent in the complete poem over another name."

### THE LORD MAYOR'S COACH.

I saw the Lord Mayor's coach one day  
Go driving through the Strand.  
The people cried, "Hip-Hip-Hooray!"  
Because it looked so grand—  
There cannot be a finer coach,  
I'm sure, in all the land.

The coachman on the box who sat  
Was also fine and big.  
He wore beneath a gold-laced hat  
A snow-white, curly wig,  
And when the people cheered he did not  
Seem to care a fig.

His stockings, made of silk, were pink.  
I felt I'd like to climb  
Right up and tell him that I think  
(To think it is no crime),



ONE OF TWO THINGS.

OLD GENTLEMAN (looking over artist friend's house): My sight gets worse and worse, Horace. Now, what have we here? Is it a picture or is it one of your paintings?

The Lord Mayor's carriage was a pumpkin  
Once upon a time!

Ada Leonora Harris.



THE near-sighted guest, who had vainly tried to decipher the bill of fare, finally turned and said: "Waiter, will you please tell me what is on this card?"

"Sorry, ma'am," the waiter replied sympathetically, "but I can't read, either."

Give Her  
a  
necklet  
of  
Ciro Pearls



*"How Perfect"*

**WHAT** is the gift a woman values more than any other, that always charms and fascinates, is ever appropriate? **CIRO PEARLS**—the one true reproduction of real pearls, with exactly the same lustre, sheen, colouring, texture, shape and weight, so that when worn side by side the cleverest judges cannot tell which is which. There is indeed but one difference between **CIRO PEARLS** and the genuine products of the deep-sea—their price. If you come to our showrooms, your own eyes will convince you of this, but if you cannot, then avail yourself of

**OUR UNIQUE OFFER.**

On receipt of One Guinea we will send you a necklet of **Ciro Pearls** 16 inches long, with case and case complete, or a ring, brooch, ear-rings or any other **Ciro Pearl** jewel in hand-made gold settings. If, after comparing them with real or other artificial pearls,

they are not found equal to the former or superior to the latter, return them to us within fifteen days and we will refund your money. **Ciro Pearl Necklets** may also be obtained in any length required. We have a large staff of expert pearl stringers.

Latest descriptive Booklet  
No. 10 sent post free on  
application.

**Ciro Pearls Ltd.**  
39 Old Bond Street London W.1 Dept 10

Our Showrooms are on the  
first floor over Lloyds Bank,  
near Finsbury.

Mention WINDSOR MAGAZINE when writing to advertisers.

JELLY-PADS.

By Christopher Stone.

"THE thing," Brenda explained, with her usual lucidity, "is as easy as anything. You just write what you want to say with special ink and a new nib on a sheet of hard, shiny paper, put it on to the pad, leave it for three minutes, peel it off, and then print as many copies as you like off it. Father always used to use it for programmes of school concerts and that sort of thing."

I seemed to remember those programmes vaguely.

"Beautiful violet ink, very faint and tantalising," I mused.

"There's no need for it to be faint, if you do it properly," she assured me, bending over her writing-table and laboriously writing the heading of her manifesto in capital letters: SONNINGLY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE. The ink costs one-and-six, and so do a hundred and twenty sheets of paper; and we've only got fifteen members at present, so that means I can send out eight notices all round for three shillings. It's cheap enough, anyhow. Our great idea is economy."

"I see you're moving with the times," said I, and put a log on the fire before sitting down in my armchair.

Brenda kept up a flow of conversation—or, rather, monologue—while she worked, recounting a talk she had had with Lady Mayne-Chance, the new squire's wife, about the Institute, of which that good lady was president.

"She's giving us two bolts of rushes to start with—from the lake at the Hall—but she isn't coming herself to the class because she hears that one has to work with wet fingers. I tried to persuade her, but she's afraid of rheumatism and——"

"Two whats of rushes?"

"Bolts," said Brenda, with an absurd air of being surprised by my ignorance. "Rushes are always sold in bolts."

"How many rushes do you have to make before you can make a bolt?"

"I do wish you wouldn't talk so when I'm trying to work! If I make a mistake, I'll have to start all over again."

I relapsed into the novel that I was reading. Brenda had rescued the jelly-pad from the box-room where all the rubbish was stored that she had fetched from her old home when her father, a schoolmaster, had died. It was an old jelly-pad, and its unpleasant odour began to pervade the sitting-room. But I was too tolerant to complain. So long as the dear girl is happy——

"There, that's done!" she announced, and brought her sheet of paper to the fire to dry it.

It looked well enough, though from the first I had my doubts about Brenda's discursive handwriting which she did not improve by smudging several words with her finger in her desire to find out whether they were really dry. At last, with a flushed face, she rose from the fireside, carried the sheet to the jelly-pad and carefully laid it thereon.

"Only a gentle pressure with the palm of the hand," she reminded herself. "Take the time—will you, dear?—and give me three minutes."



CLOTHES AND THE MAN.

SYMPATHETIC MOTHER: 'E'll 'ave to join the Navy when 'e's old enough—them's the only trousers for 'is legs.

When the time was up, she peeled it off gingerly. The jelly-pad looked like a picture of a purple skin disease in a medical journal; but Brenda, who was, for her, rather excited and brusque, said: "No, they always looked like that, and it was silly to laugh at everything which one couldn't do oneself." She then took a sheet of special spongy foolscap and laid it reverently on the jelly-pad, passed her hand over it, gazed for a moment at the ceiling as if rapt in the

**VanHouten's**  
 -the cocoa that  
 for a century  
 has charmed  
**MILLIONS**  
 with its perfect  
 flavour



*Best & goes  
 Farthest*

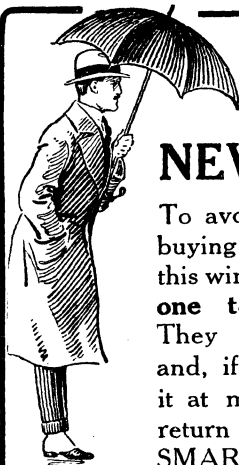
No Heating Required. Absolutely Indelible.

**MELANYL**

**Marking Ink.**

Metallic Pen with every Bottle.  
 Nickel Linen Stretcher with each large size.

**COOPER, DENNISON & WALKDEN, LTD.**  
 7 & 9, St. Bride Street, London, E.C.



Don't  
 buy a  
**NEW Overcoat.**

To avoid the expense of buying a New Overcoat this winter, send your old one to **EASTMAN'S**. They will clean, press, and, if necessary, reline it at moderate cost, and return it to you looking **SMART and NEW.**

**EASTMAN & SON** (*DYERS and CLEANERS*) **LTD.**  
 For over 120 years the London Dyers and Cleaners.

**You Save Money**

in Home Baking, by using the famous British-made raising agent,

**BORWICK'S**  
**BAKING POWDER**

the quality of which makes a little go such a long way.

*One teaspoonful is equal in effect to two tea-spoonfuls of most other raising agents.*

*Eastmans  
 for Excellence*

**WORKS ACTON VALE, LONDON, W.3**  
 Country orders returned carriage paid.

solemnity of the ceremony, and peeled it off again.

"Aha!" said I, or words to that effect.

"The first two or three never come out well," she retorted quickly. "The ink is too strong."

At the end of the sixth she admitted failure. "The dust must have got into it," she explained. "I ought to have washed it before I began. You see, it's an old one: I don't know how long father had it."

"Old age is incapable of vivid impressions," I agreed.

"But it'll be all right next time," she said, "and I shall do it in capital letters to make sure."

"You're not going to try again to-night? It's your bed-time."

"It won't take a minute. You just put it under the cold tap and sponge it very gently, and then dry it with old newspapers."

The washing was fairly successful, though it left the jelly with a suffused violet tinge, like an actor's chin, and made Brenda's hands very cold and filled her nails with grey matter, which distressed her. But the drying with newspapers was a fiasco, as the paper tended to pick up particles of jelly—it was like rolling the lawn in a thaw—and I persuaded Brenda to let the surface dry by itself while she wrote out a fresh manifesto in capital letters. This gave it twenty minutes, owing to the doubt as to the proper formation of a capital G, and at the end I dare say it was tolerably dry. Not so the printed page, which had to be held to the fire for a long while. When dry, it was also hot; and when applied to the jelly-pad, it hesitated till Brenda's back was turned, and then raised itself, so to speak, on its hands and knees.

"Oh, dear!" said Brenda, when she peeled it off at the end of three minutes. "The middle hasn't come out at all."

The violet capitals lined the banks of the jelly-pad, while a broad stream of blankness meandered down the middle of it.

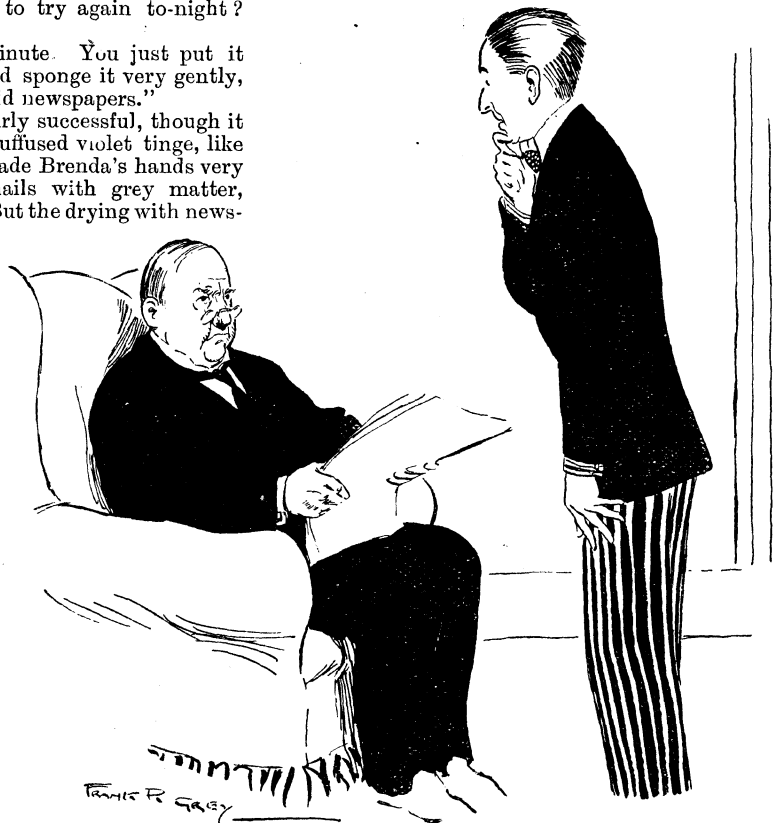
Brenda took an impression of it, frowned, set her teeth, and with the calmness of desperation tried to fit the original script back on to the pad so as to impress the missing words on to it.

The result exceeded my expectations. It was one of the most intricate palimpsests that I have ever seen. Brenda was so disheartened that I persuaded her to go to bed,

and at last got back to the novel that I was reading.

I only mention this incident of the jelly-pad for the benefit of other men whose wives are interested in women's institutes. I know perfectly well what the wives will say, if they read this.

But perhaps I ought to add the sequel, though it reflects credit on my goodness of heart. I was so sorry for Brenda that I slipped the original of her manifesto into my pocket, took it to the office next morning, and got one of the clerks to type it and make twenty copies on the duplicator.



A FAMILY PROBLEM.

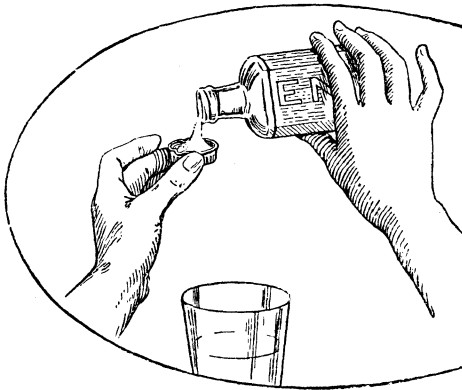
"So you want to marry my daughter? Can you support a family?"  
 "Well—er—how many of you are there, sir?"

Brenda was very thankful when I gave them to her. "How sweet of you!" she said. "But, as a matter of fact, I bicycled round this morning and told all the women about the meeting. It only took me an hour."



THEY were discussing a concert which had been held the night before, and the club bore remarked: "Whenever I hear that song it carries me away." With a mischievous side-glance at the circle of other members within earshot, a fellow-member said: "Can anyone whistle it?"





The new patent screw-cap stopper of the **HANDY** (1/9) **SIZE** **ENO** makes a useful measure.

*For the same reasons  
that you enjoy a tub—  
drink ENO in the morning*

To feel thoroughly clean and refreshed, is to be clean *within* as well as without.

That is why **ENO'S FRUIT SALT** is an important part of the

*Toilet of Health*—**ENO** carries away the poisons that clog the system, while soap and water merely cleanse the skin.

To have the clear complexion that betokens perfect health, let **ENO** be a feature of your morning toilet.

To have the clear head and elastic step of buoyant health, let **ENO** help to keep you fit.

To correct digestive troubles that cause headaches and serious discomforts, get one of the handy size bottles of **ENO** at 1/9. Read the little health guide that goes with it.

**ENO** acts gently but effectively by removing in a natural way the *causes* that lower your physical 'tone.'

Ask your Chemist for

**ENO'S  
FRUIT SALT**

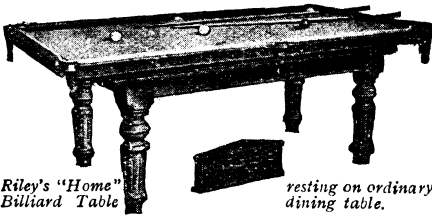
*In two sizes now*

Household Size 3/- Handy Size 1/9

**THE BRITISH CHARACTER AND REPUTATION OF ENO**

Just as the morning tub is an essentially British institution, so is the taking of **ENO** in the morning. And **ENO** is completely British, both in origin and manufacture. It has built up a world-wide reputation and sale during the past half century, and is recognised everywhere to be the finest preparation of its kind; in fact, it is in a class by itself.

J. C. ENO LTD., "FRUIT SALT" WORKS, LONDON, S. E.



Riley's "Home" Billiard Table resting on ordinary dining table.

## Riley's "Home" Billiard Tables

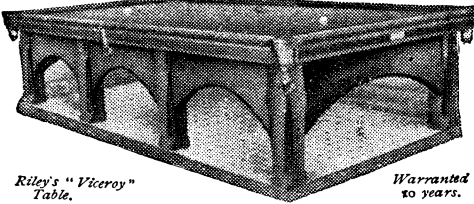
In solid mahogany, best frost-proof rubber cushions. All accessories included.

### Sizes and Prices.

4 ft. 4 in. by 2 ft. 4 in. ..	£ 7 15 0	} Or on 9 3 13 11 9 Monthly 15/- Payments 19/- of 25/9
5 ft. 4 in. by 2 ft. 10 in. ..	9 15 0	
6 ft. 4 in. by 3 ft. 4 in. ..	12 10 0	
7 ft. 4 in. by 3 ft. 10 in. ..	16 0 0	
8 ft. 4 in. by 4 ft. 4 in. ..	21 10 0	

**Seven Days' Free Trial Given**

## Riley's Full-Size Billiard Tables



Riley's "Viceroy" Table.

Warranted 20 years.

This is only one of the many attractive designs.

# Riley Billiards

—induces everyone to take their pleasures at HOME

It is the one great indoor game which the whole family can play together, and spend the dark Winter evenings in a round of continual enjoyment and healthy rivalry.

There is a "Riley" to fit comfortably on your dining table, and the "easy-way-to-pay" enables every home to possess its own billiard table—one that will last a life-time.

**15/- DOWN**

Send a P.O. for 15/- to-day. You will soon receive the popular 6 ft. 4 in. size (Cash Price £12 10s.) Riley "Home" Billiard Table. All accessories included, and carriage paid to your door if within one mile of a railway station in the United Kingdom. For other sizes see opposite.

**Riley's "Combine" Billiard & Dining Tables**  
Elegant pieces of furniture—comfortable dining tables, and perfect billiard tables. Cash prices from £25. Can be purchased in 13 or 20 monthly payments.

**FREE. Write now for Illustrated Price Lists.**

Riley's are the largest makers of Full-size Billiard Tables in Great Britain. Prices Free. Estimates given for all repairs. Accessories supplied. Write to—

**E. J. RILEY, LTD.**  
Commercial Works, Accrington.

London Showrooms: Dept. K, 147, Abchurch Lane, E.C. 4.

*Buy your Ring direct from "The Ring Shop for the World" and save money!*

A Canadian purchaser wrote:

"... after seeing the Ring, I was more than ever sure that I could not have done so well by dealing in a small town... you give in every way just what you advertise."

Thousands of people, Abroad and at Home, have bought their Rings from the Northern Goldsmiths. You might do worse than follow their example.

The RING BOOK, which we will send to you, describes the method which has made Ring Buying safe for all the World. It contains numerous testimonies from satisfied buyers.

Our method of Ring selling enables you to select from 122 different styles of beautiful Gem Rings in your own Home. We send the Ring you have chosen, fully insured, on a fortnight's free approval. If, within the 14 days, you wish to change your mind, we will either exchange the Ring, allowing full value for it, or you can return it and receive your money back in full. If you decide to keep the Ring, you do so on this understanding:—

Whenever you wish, after one year or ten years, we will repurchase your Ring, under Ring Book Conditions, less 10% of its cost.

This is the fairest method of Ring-Selling known. The RING BOOK tells all about it. We send it and FINGER SIZE CARD, POST FREE, to anyone interested in Engagement, Gift, Dress and Men's Rings, priced from £5 : 5 : 0 up to £325.

The NORTHERN GOLDSMITHS Co.

"The RING SHOP for the WORLD,"

No. 8, GOLDSMITHS' HALL, NEWCASTLE-upon-TYNE, ENGLAND (Estd. 1892). (2)

Don't neglect your Hair

USE **KOKO** for the HAIR

Has 35 Years Reputation.

**1/6, 3/- & 5/6** per bottle.

OF ALL CHEMISTS & STORES.

KOKO MARICOPAS Co., Ltd., 16, Bevis Marks, London, E.C. 3

For cleaning Silver, Electro Plate &c

**Goddard's Plate Powder**

Sold everywhere 6d 1/- 2/6 & 4/6

**HIMROD'S**

**ASTHMA CURE**

4/6 a tin AT ALL CHEMISTS

Gives instant relief from Catarrh, Asthma, etc.

The Standard Remedy for Over 50 Years

# Snuggle-comfort for "Mother's Joy" is ensured. by the little Silk-woven Tab

Soft and fleecy, pure, *new* wool—just like Down—so cosily warm and protecting, warding off the chilly hand of winter from your teenie bundle-of-love. Such is the Otterburn Baby Rug—with the little Silk Tab.

The little Otterburn Tab silently, but none the less *surely*, vouches for honest worth. In effect, it says: "This Rug, made—as all Baby-things should be made—by people with a conscience, is worth *far more* than its very reasonable price—for it safeguards the health of your Baby."



The small illustrations beneath show a few of the various ways in which the Otterburn Baby Rug can be used for the protection of Baby.

Mother-love is the same the wide world over—swift, and eager to procure the Best for Baby. That is why Otterburn Baby Rug orders come to us, cheek-by-jowl, from South Wales and South Africa.

Carefully and conscientiously made from the wool of hardy, healthy sheep, born, reared, and sheared in the Mother Country's Cheviot Hills, Otterburn Baby Rugs have endeared themselves to Mothers everywhere—at home and abroad alike.

Wool from the neck and shoulders is the softest, fleeciest, and warmest, and it is this *neck-and-shoulder wool* from Cheviot sheep which is selected for making Otterburn Baby Rugs. Each manufacturing process is personally controlled by Waddells of the third and fourth generation. Spinning, weaving, dyeing, and finishing are in full accord with the Otterburn principles of honesty and goodness—laid down in 1821 by the first William Waddell.

Every hour of the twenty-four, waking or sleeping, *your* Baby could not have a more faithful guardian against Baby chills and ills than this honest Otterburn Rug. For Cot or Cradle it makes a cosy blanket; when Baby "walks out" it does protecting duty as a Pram Rug; indoors, it makes the suggest Nursing Wrap.

The "Otterburn" is substantial, fleecy, and warm, without undue weight. It lasts for years and washes excellently. In fact, with ordinary care, it *improves* with washing. Handy, yet *ample* in size, the "Otterburn" measures 30 in. by 36 in., and is made in Grey, Cream, Sky, Saxe, Rose, Navy and Bis-cuit Colours. Price

**13/11**

Sold by Drapers, Pram Sellers, etc.

Ask to see Otterburn Baby Rugs and look for the little Tab. If your Draper is unable to supply, send us his name and address with your own, enclosing remittance for 13/11 and *stating colour* needed. We will then supply you, post free, and credit your shopman with the sale.

**Otterburn Mill, Ltd., Otterburn-on-Rede, Northumberland**

Trade enquiries are invited from Drapers, Pram Sellers and Stores dealing in Baby Wear

(11) Ⓜ

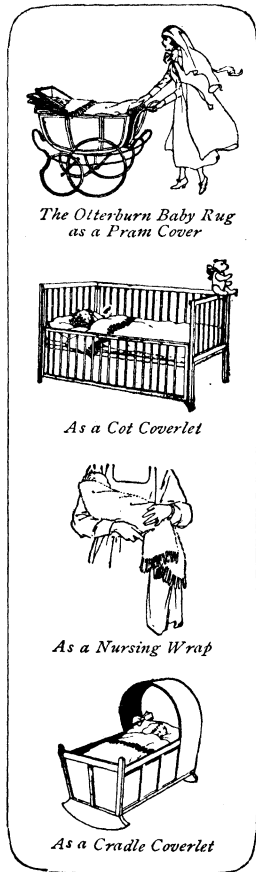


# Otterburn Rug

Made from Pure, New Cheviot Wool.

### A Warning

The silk-woven Tab showing the old Mill is stitched on each genuine Otterburn Rug. Look for it always. If you are offered an imitation, say "No" firmly; take no chances with Baby's Health and Comfort.



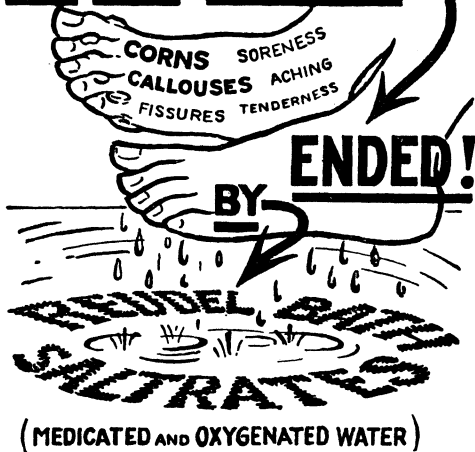
The Otterburn Baby Rug as a Pram Cover

As a Cot Coverlet

As a Nursing Wrap

As a Cradle Coverlet

# ALL FOOT TROUBLES



**YOU** have only to dissolve a small handful of **Reudel Bath Saltrates** in a hot foot bath and rest your feet in this for a few minutes. Then, **Presto!** Away go all your foot afflictions, almost as if by magic.

The *medicated* and *oxygenated* foot bath prepared as above has a truly marvellous curative action upon all kinds of foot troubles, immediately relieving them, even in their worst forms. Every sensation of burning, chafing and bruising, all swelling, stiffness, and inflammation, *any* sort of corn, callous or other foot torture, will soon be only an unpleasant memory of the past.

*Reudel Bath Saltrates* is sold by all chemists everywhere, prices being only 2/- a half-pound and 3/8 a pound. Satisfaction is guaranteed every user or money back immediately and without question.



## The New Patent SOUND DISCS

Completely overcome DEAFNESS and HEAD NOISES, no matter of how long standing. Are the same to the ears as glasses are to the eyes. Invisible. Comfortable. Worn months without removal. Explanatory Pamphlet Free.

THE H. O. WALES CO., 171, NEW BOND ST., LONDON, W. 1.



# HURCULACES

The Lace with the extra long wear

HURCULACES are made in many varieties for Ladies', Men's and Children's Boots and Shoes in all the popular shades.

Ask for HURCULACES and you know that you are getting the best possible value for your money, prove for yourself that they are THE LACES WITH THE EXTRA LONG WEAR

Stocked by the leading Boot Shops, Drapers and Outfitters.

MANUFACTURED BY FAIRE BROS & Co. Ltd., LEICESTER

## INVALID FURNITURE

FIG. 7212. \$7.50  
 FIG. 7192. \$5.10  
 FIG. 7236. \$7.50  
 FIG. 7237. \$8.170  
 FIG. 5061. \$1.15.0

Inspection of Showrooms Invited.

Write for ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE. The SURGICAL MANUFACTURING CO. LTD. 83/85 MORTIMER ST., LONDON, W. 1.

# A MARVELLOUS INVENTION FOR THE DEAF

WRITE TO-DAY FOR BOOKLET

## Explaining how the Deaf can now hear.

It does not matter what the cause of your Deafness (unless you were born deaf), you can hear with this wonderful appliance as well as others.

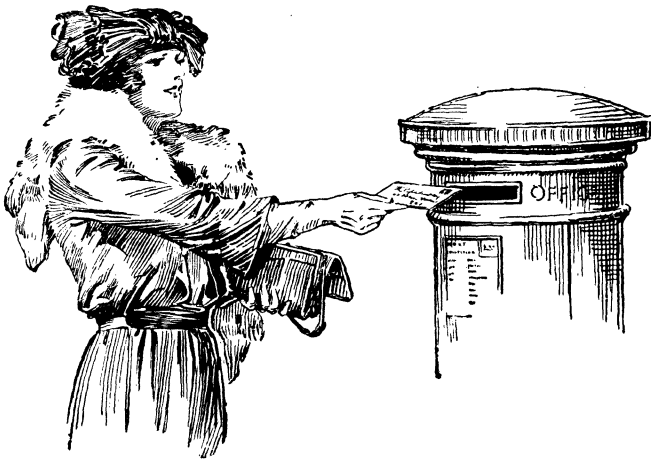
Age is no barrier, nor the length of time you have been deaf. Mr. R. G. Smith, of Tottenham, was deaf for 24 years, and can now hear as well as anybody. We can give positive proof of hundreds of similar cases.

"The Murray Ear Drum" makes low sounds and whispers plainly heard. A miniature Telephone for the Ear—invisible, easily adjusted, and entirely comfortable. Thousands sold.

People affected with this distressing complaint are invited to write for valuable Booklet, fully descriptive of this wonderful and yet simple invention, which enables the deaf to hear, and also contains convincing proof of its efficacy from users in all stations of life. If you are deaf or know anybody who is deaf, write for this Booklet. It costs nothing; we send it free to anyone on receipt of stamp to pay postage.

THE MURRAY CO., 193 Century House, 205, Regent St., London, W.





careful people employ them nearly all the world over, largely by dental advice.

A new-type tooth paste has been created, to comply with modern requirements. The name is Pepsodent. Those two film combatants are embodied in it for daily application.

## Two other essentials

Two other effects are essential, as proved by modern research.

The saliva contains two great tooth-protecting agents. One is a starch digestant, one is alkali. One is to digest the starch deposits which cling to teeth and gum them. Often they ferment and form acids. The alkalis neutralize mouth acids as they form.

Pepsodent stimulates those factors. It multiplies the starch digestant, multiplies the alkalis. Thus every use gives those natural powers a manifold effect.

## Watch the film go

Note how clean the teeth feel after using Pepsodent. Mark the absence of the viscous film. See how teeth whiten as the film-coats disappear. The after-effects are refreshing, and the mouth is left in an alkaline condition.

These are facts you should know at once. Write us today for the 10-Day Tube.

Cut out the coupon now.

# Ask the Way

to prettier teeth—you are welcome to it

A new-day method is bringing millions whiter, cleaner, sounder teeth.

It is used by your friends, your neighbours. It is advised by dentists, urged by modern authorities. Glistening teeth seen everywhere now show the benefits it brings.

This offers a ten-day test to reveal its results to you.

## It combats the film

Film is that viscous coat you feel. It clings to teeth, gets between the teeth and stays there. The ordinary tooth paste does not effectively combat it. So much is

left. It is also the basis of tartar.

Film absorbs stains, making the teeth look cloudy or discoloured. It holds food substance which ferments and forms acids. It holds the acids in contact with the teeth and the acids may cause decay.

Few escape the effects of film, despite the daily brushing.

## New methods found

Dental science has now found two ways to fight that film. Able authorities have proved their efficiency. Now

**Pepsodent** MARK  
TRADE

*The New-Day Dentifrice*

Approved by modern authorities. Advised by leading dentists everywhere. Now employed by careful people the world over.

All druggists supply the large tubes.

*S. African distributors:*

Verrinder, Ltd., P.O. Box 6824, Johannesburg, to whom S.A. residents may send coupon.

## 10-DAY TUBE FREE <sup>890</sup>

THE PEPSODENT COMPANY,  
(Dept. 156), 40, Holborn Viaduct, London, E.C. 1.

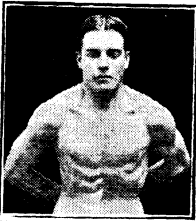
Mail 10-Day Tube of Pepsodent to—

Name.....

Address.....

Give full address. Write plainly.  
Only one tube to a family.

*Windsor Mag., Nov.*



**GOOD HEALTH  
AND  
FINE PHYSIQUE  
ARE  
THE REWARD OF  
KNOWLEDGE**

Says M. SALDO.

Every normally constructed Man, Woman, and Youth possesses all the Nerves, Muscles, and Organs which, when treated rationally, and not spoiled and fatigued by the use of drugs and apparatus, can be controlled to such a degree that Perfect Health, and Strength above average, can be secured and maintained in any organically sound person of any age.

There are thousands of Men, Women, and Youths in all parts of the world physically comparable to the gentleman whose photograph appears herewith, and the majority of these people have been treated in

**MAXALDING BY CORRESPONDENCE**

for one or more of the complaints and disorders mentioned on the Coupon.

The Photograph shows a Mail-instructed Maxalding performing the wonderful Maxalding exercise known as the Single-sided Isolation which is taught to all students. This feat alone ensures perfect Digestion, Elimination, and freedom from any form of liver trouble.

**BY A NEWLY-DISCOVERED PROCESS OF BREATHING.**

the tidal respiration is increased by an average of 50 cubic inches, ensuring speedy and ample blood oxygenation, sound heart and lungs, and rich, disease-resisting blood.

Please send particulars of your case by letter or by underlining your requirements on the Coupon, and post to:—

Alfred M. Saldo, MAXALDING,

4A, Cranbourn Chambers, Leicester Square, London, Eng. By return you will receive in plain sealed cover a copy of "Maxalding," the booklet explanatory of the method, and Mr. Saldo's opinion upon your own case, free of any cost or obligation.

- (1) I desire to eradicate Indigestion, Constipation, Nervous Debility, Neurasthenia, Insomnia, Rheumatism, Susceptibility to Colds, Weak Lungs, Stagnant Liver, Obesity, Depression, Languor, Headaches, Weak Stomach, Biliousness, etc.
- (2) I desire to increase my Nervous Energy.
- (3) I desire to secure Great Strength and Muscular Development.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

Windsor, Nov. 1923.

**COOPER'S**  
*John Peel Brand*  
**EMBRICATION**



**IMMEDIATELY ALLEVIATES  
ACHES, PAINS, STIFFNESS,  
RHEUMATISM & LUMBAGO**

Cooper's is a creamy white, clean-handling preparation that rubs right in and quickly reaches the pain.

**A user writes:**

"Since my accident I have suffered from very severe periodical attacks of sciatica and rheumatism . . . Your embrocation is everything that is claimed for it and more . . . the first application gives relief."

**YOUR CHEMIST SELLS IT.**

For Household Use - - 2/-  
For Animal Use - 1/6 & 2/9

**WILLIAM COOPER & NEPHEWS, LTD.,  
BERKHAMSTED, HERTS.**



**STUDY AT HOME**

and prepare for promotion. Pitman's offer a choice of 80 Postal Courses, embracing: English and Secretarial subjects, Shorthand, Book-keeping and Accountancy, Banking, Law and Accounts, Economics, Modern Languages, subjects of general education. Write for free booklet, "Home Study—the Key to Success," which gives full particulars.

Pitman's School, 248, Southampton Row, London, W.C. 1.

**WISE WEDLOCK**

This new volume, by Dr. G. Courtenay Beale, is full of sane, sober information with an entire absence of the frivolity and unnecessary erotism which some authors exploit when writing upon intimate matrimonial relationships. Enquiries which reach us through the articles on Birth Control, published in our 6d. monthly magazine, "Health and Efficiency," prove that there is a very urgent need for plain, straightforward answers to questions that trouble 99 per cent. of married couples. This demand has been filled by

**WISE WEDLOCK, 6/9 POST FREE.**

It is a most necessary book for every man and woman of mature age, and should be read very carefully by those about to be married. It answers every question likely to worry man or wife. It will save much misunderstanding and promote very considerable happiness. The price includes a copy of "Health and Efficiency," the only journal in the English language with an advanced programme for Health, Purity, and Physical Culture.

Send your cheque or P.O. for 6s. 9d. to—

**HEALTH PROMOTION LTD., Dept. 32,  
19/21, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON, E.C.4.**

*The Kynaston Method*

"The Kynaston Method—Cures"  
The Kynaston Method of treating

"Adenoids and Tonsils"

without operation has already proved successful in hundreds of cases. The system of postal advice was established in April last. To-day every post brings a monotonous record of cure or alleviation. The results have been so extraordinarily successful that it has been found possible to establish the system of postal treatment on an economic basis. Doctor Kynaston has a faculty for clear description, his treatment based on common-sense appeals to common-sense people.

Doctor Kynaston's Methods Limited (Chairman Lt.-Colonel John Kynaston, ret. pay late R.A.M.C.) will give full details of the treatment on request. Doctor Kynaston has long specialised in the West End of London in all forms of

**Catarrhal Trouble.**

His treatment is based on wide knowledge and unequalled experience. If you, or yours, are threatened with operation, or if you suffer from Catarrh, "chronic" or otherwise, put a loose stamp in an envelope and write to the Secretary:—

**Dr. Kynaston's Institute, Sicilian House,  
Southampton Row, London, W.C. 1.**

**HEIGHT INCREASED**

IN 30 DAYS.

**5/- COMPLETE COURSE.** NO APPLIANCES NO DRUGS NO DIETING

**The Melvin Strong System NEVER FAILS.**

Full Particulars & Testimonials—Stamp, or complete course by return of post for 5/- P.O. Melvin J. Strong, Ltd., 10, Ludgate Hill, London, Eng.



# The Direct Route to SUCCESS is *via* a METROPOLITAN College Training.



*The Swift and  
"Get-You-There" Way  
to SUCCESS in Business.*

Are YOU progressing swiftly and surely towards the realisation of your great hope to become a successful business man? If not, why have men of your acquaintance—men whose natural ability is not a whit superior to your own—reached Success before you?

In every case it is specialisation and expert training in one of the branches of modern business, such as Accountancy, Secretaryship, Costing, Advertising, Insurance, Banking, etc.

Are you specialising? Are you qualifying for a better position, ready to acquit yourself triumphantly when the opportunity comes? The modern employer cannot wait for a man to prepare himself; he takes the one who is trained and *waiting for him*. It is easy to temporise—"Oh, well, I shall have more

time in January"—but procrastination is fatal to Success, and that is the way life's failures are made. *There is no time like the present!*

With Summer-Time over and the clock put back, the long dark evenings make fireside study—in the cosy depths of one's favourite armchair—a very congenial pursuit, as pleasurable as profitable when an expertly prepared Metropolitan College course is in question.

Write at once for your copy of the 132-page "GUIDE TO CAREERS," which handsome and informative volume will be sent to all applicants on request—

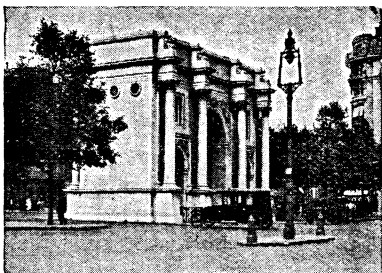
POST PAID, an **FREE TO KEEP**  
—without any kind of obligation attached.

## Individual Postal Training—Taken at Home, in Spare Time.

That a Metropolitan College postal training is outstandingly efficient is demonstrated conclusively by this famous Institution's continuous stream of **REMARKABLE SUCCESSES IN THE PRINCIPAL PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS**, wherein the College's Students have frequently achieved more passes than all other entrants aggregated.

# METROPOLITAN COLLEGE

Dept. W.M., ST. ALBANS.



THE MARBLE ARCH, LONDON

**OUR NEW ADDRESS**

IS ONE MINUTE'S WALK FROM THIS SPOT. SEE ADDRESS BELOW.

**SEND FOR PATTERNS**

OF

**RIDING BREECHES & RIDING SUITS**

Cut to your measures by experts at about half the price usually charged for such garments. No matter in what part of the world you are, we guarantee to fit you perfectly from your own measurements.

**BREECHES from 21/- SUITS 97/6**

**BEDFORD RIDING BREECHES CO**

(late of Great Titchfield Street)

(Dept. W.M.) **19 NEW QUEBEC STREET, OXFORD ST**  
**MARBLE ARCH, LONDON. W.1**



**HOW I MADE £3,000**

**In 2 years with £5 to start.**

With £5 and an idea this man made £1,000 in one year in the Mail Order Business. We will tell you how it was done. We will tell you what to do and how to do it. Let us start you in business. Stop being a wage slave and establish your own business supremacy **NOW**. We will send you **FREE** our brochure,



**"BY POST TO PROSPERITY."**

It tells how you can start a spare-time business at home, points a quick certain way to a big income, and shows how £5 can be made a basis of independence.

**CONVINCING TESTIMONY.**

*I wish to say how thankful I am that I took your course of Mail Order. I only started five weeks ago, but results are so gratifying, and I felt so certain of success, that this morning I resigned my position with Messrs. — in order to devote the whole of my time to the development of this business. My cash turnover has already been over £120.*

**SEND THIS COUPON**

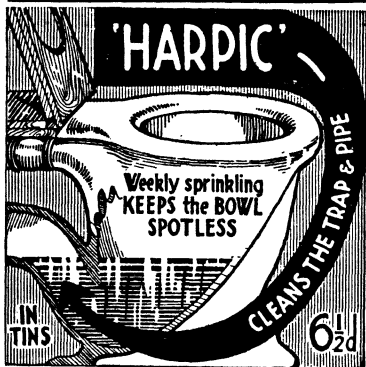
The first step is to cut out, fill in and post the Coupon. Only 1d. stamp required if envelope is used. Do this **NOW** while you think of it!

The Secretary,  
(Dept. 71), SHAW INSTITUTE,  
1, Montague Street,  
London, W.C. 1.

To  
The Secretary  
(Dept. 71),  
SHAW INSTITUTE,  
1, Montague St., London, W.C. 1.

Please send me **FREE** your Brochure "By Post to Prosperity" and other literature on Mail Order Trading.

Name.....  
Address.....



**'HARPIC'**

Weekly sprinkling  
KEEPS THE BOWL  
SPOTLESS

CLEANS THE TRAP & PIPE

Makes W.C. Bowls a spotless pride, removing all disease-carrying deposit without labour, trouble or danger. "Delighted with results," epitomises the many testimonials received. Get a 6jd. tin to-day. If your chemist, ironmonger or grocer cannot supply, send his name and address for **FREE SAMPLE** to

Dept. 6W., **HARPIC CO., 1, Avenue Road, London, S.E. 5**

**PEACH'S CURTAINS**

**DIRECT FROM THE LOOMS.** Send for **FREE CATALOGUE** of Autumn Furnishings. Curtains that are **JUST RIGHT** for every type of window. Nottingham Net Curtains, Imperial Hem Curtains, Cordine Colormets, Casement Curtains, "The Weave that Wears" Nets, Muslins, Cretonnes. Special Values in Household Linens, Hosiery, Laces. Write **To-Day, S. PEACH & SONS, 128, The Looms, NOTTINGHAM.**

**Real HARRIS, LEWIS, and SHETLAND HOMESPUNS**

**DIRECT FROM THE MAKERS.**  
High Class Material and Exclusive Shades.  
Patterns and Prices on application.  
**S. A. NEWALL & SONS** (Dept. 30), Stornoway, Scotland.  
State shade desired and if for Ladies' or Gents' Wear.

**Put a Permanent Crease in your trousers—just like HETTY KING**

The World's Premier Male Impersonator says:—"Every pair of trousers I wear is treated with 'WRAY'S EVERCREASE'—the trousers last longer and keep shape to the end." "WRAY'S EVERCREASE" is the secret of the smartness of thousands of men. Puts in an everlasting crease that neither wear nor rain can take out. No gum or rubber to harm the cloth. Simple to use. 1/6 per tube (light or dark according to cloth).

Obtainable from all Stores, Chemists, Outfitters and Hairdressers. In case of difficulty write direct to the manufacturers:

**W. WRAY & SON, 15, New Street, Covent Garden, W.C. 2.**



**BE BIG**

During the past ten years we have supplied our Girvan Scientific Treatment for increasing the height to over 20,000 students. Less than 200 have written to say that they have not secured all the increase they desired. 99 per cent. of successful results is a wonderful achievement. Results reported by students are from 2 to 5 inches increase. If under 40, send postcard for particulars and our £100 guarantee to:—Enquiry Dept. D.M., 17, Stroud Green Road, London, N. 4.

**TOWLE'S VITALIQUE TONIC**

—The best Tonic for sufferers from—  
Anæmia, Lassitude, Palpitation, Nervousness.  
This Tonic acts as a Nourishing Food to the Nervous System, and produces a fine healthy colour to the skin.

3/6 BOTTLE, POST FREE.  
**E. T. TOWLE & CO., Ltd., 69, Long Row, Nottingham. Established 1826.**





## FRETWORK IS A FINE HOBBY

Very many happy hours may be spent with a set of fretwork tools, making articles for use in the home. Each one is cut out in wood and constructed for strength as well as good looks. A free design is given every week with "Hobbies," price 2d., and with any Hobbies outfit a start can be made.

### START NOW WITH A HOBBIES OUTFIT

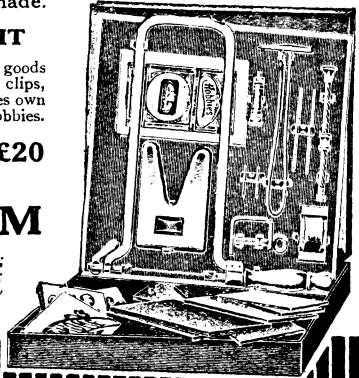
By obtaining any tools from Hobbies you are sure of getting British-made goods of splendid quality and value. Each tool is held to the Outfit by patent clips, so that you have a permanent tool rack. Many of the tools are of Hobbies own design and patent, and are not procurable elsewhere. Be sure and ask for Hobbies.

**OUTFITS 4/- to 60/-; MACHINES 50/- to £20**

*Write for Illustrated Leaflets and specimen "Hobbies" to Dept. 51.*

## HOBBIES, Ltd., DEREHAM

65, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.; 147, Bishopsgate, London, E.C.;  
79, Walworth Road, London, S.E.; 326, Argyle Street, Glasgow;  
10a, Piccadilly, Manchester; 9a, High Street, Birmingham; 15, County  
Arcade, Leeds; and all Authorised Agents.



This Outfit is the  
A1, and costs only  
**16/6**  
Post Free 17/6

## For wind blotched skins—

that have become rough and irritated by exposure to the weather, relief may be had by rubbing in

## Trade Vaseline Mark CAMPHOR ICE

which cools the skin allays the irritation, and protects the complexion

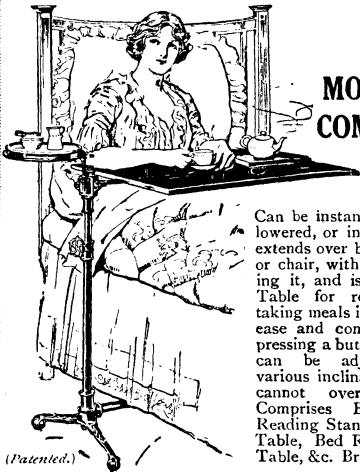
Your nearest Chemist will supply you.



Chesebrough Manfg. Co., Cons.,  
Willesden, London, N.W. 10.

## The "ADAPTA" Bed-Table

A  
**MODERN  
COMFORT**



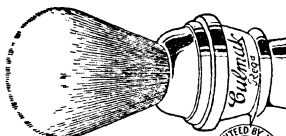
Can be instantly raised, lowered, or inclined. It extends over bed, couch, or chair, without touching it, and is the ideal Table for reading or taking meals in bed with ease and comfort. By pressing a button the top can be adjusted to various inclinations. It cannot over-balance. Comprises Bed-Table, Reading Stand, Writing Table, Bed Rest, Card Table, &c. British made.

- (Patented.)
- No. 1.—Enamelled Metal Parts, with Polished Wood Top ... .. £3 15 0
  - No. 3.—Ditto, with Adjustable Side Tray Book-holders, and Polished Oak Top (as illustrated) ... .. £5 10 0
  - No. 5.—Complete as No. 3, but with Detachable Candle Sconce, and all Metal Parts finished Polished Brass ... .. £7 15 0
- Carriage Paid in Great Britain. Write for Booklet A5.

J. FOOT & SON, Ltd.,  
171, NEW BOND STREET, LONDON, W.1.

# DANGER-FREE -SHAVING-

SCIENTIFICALLY  
STERILIZED  
ALL BRITISH  
BRUSH



Deadly Anthrax, present in many foreign Brushes, can never be found in an all-British, guaranteed "Culmak," the first and only Shaving Brush to hold the certificate of the Incomp. Institute of Hygiene. Every bristle sterilized by most powerful germicide. Set in "Celsit" unbreakable germ-proof handle.

3/6

EACH 8

UPWARDS

## "Culmak"

SHAVING STICK  
STERILIZED TOO!

"Culmak" Shaving Stick—a lovely, easy-shaving soap—immediately sterilizes any razor-cut or broken pimple, guarding your skin against air-borne infection. Sold in blue tins.

1/-



USE BOTH & LAUGH AT GERMS!

Up-to-date Chemists and Stores sell "Culmak" guaranteed sterilized Brushes and Shaving Sticks.

**SAFEST AND BEST IN THE WORLD.**

Explanatory leaflets free from:—

"CULMAK," 50, Durham Road, London, N.7.



"There's Sweetness in Remembrance"

How often the sweet fragrance of flowers unlocks memory's chamber and brings back dear thoughts of other days. Like the fragrance of the actual flowers, Zenobia Lily of the Valley means to many women treasured memories—of the dance, the party, the *l'été-à-tête*. This exquisite perfume is wonderfully true to the very breath of the tender flowers at their moment of perfect freshness.

## ZENOBIA PERFUMES

Faithful to the natural perfume of the tenderest of flowers—Zenobia Lily of the Valley—3/-, 5/-, 8/6 and 16/6 per bottle. Equally dear to woman's love of exquisite perfume are Zenobia Sweet Pea Blossom and Zenobia Night Scented Stock—3/-, 5/-, 7/6, etc., per bottle.

Zenobia Ltd., Manufacturing Perfumers, Loughborough.

## The Danger of Ignorance

THE great conspiracy of silence on sex matters has been tolerated too long. The result of the false knowledge gathered from undesirable sources is apparent everywhere. YOU must realise the necessity of understanding, for your own guidance and happiness, and for the sake of those who look to you for help on the complex problems of sex and Nature. These books are pure, clean, and wholesome, yet they remove the veil from Nature and lay bare the wonderful secrets of life and sex.

The prices include postage and a copy of the improved "Health and Efficiency 6d. Monthly Magazine."

- MATRIMONY: Its Obligations and Privileges.** By MONA BAIRD. A remarkable exposition of the truth concerning marriage .. . . . 3/-
- MANHOOD: The Facts of Life Presented to Men.** By CHARLES THOMPSON .. . . . 3/-
- WOMANHOOD.** By MONA BAIRD. Prefaced by Dr. Mary Scharlieb. The true, beautiful meaning of Womanhood explained .. . . . 3/-
- BOYHOOD: The Facts of Life and Sex for Boys.** By CHARLES THOMPSON, with preface by the Bishop of Birmingham. Teaches them cleanly and keeps them straight .. . . . 3/-
- YOUTH AND MAIDENHOOD, or Sex Knowledge for Young People.** A new book by WALTER M. GALLICHAH dealing sympathetically with the difficulties of young men and women .. . . . 3/-
- ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SEX.** By LADY BLOUNT. Prefaced by Dr. C. de Lucy Evans and many others .. . . . 3/-
- HOW TO LOVE: The Art of Courtship and Marriage.** By WALTER M. GALLICHAH. The way to true happiness is by understanding. This book gives that understanding .. . . . 3/-

**SPECIAL OFFER.**—The complete set of above books 18/6, post free, including a copy of "Health and Efficiency."

Send for these important books to-day to:

**HEALTH PROMOTION, LTD., Dept. 32,**  
19-21, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON, E.C.

EST. 1884. *J.S.S.* Adding Machines

THE  
ERIKA  
FOLDING  
VISIBLE  
WRITER.



The Portable de Luxe. With neat travelling case and instructions .. £14 14s. *Hire Purchase Easy Terms.* OFFICE FURNITURE.

## TAYLOR'S TYPEWRITERS

74, CHANCERY LANE,  
HOLBORN END, LONDON.

HIRE, BUY, EXCHANGE, SELL  
REPAIR, AND

All Makes of Typewriters & Duplicators  
Sun Adding Machine, £10 10s.  
Write for Bargain List 46.  
Tel.: Holborn 4810. 4 lines.

## VAMPING AT A GLANCE



Why spend years in learning to play the Piano from Music when our wonderful New Method enables you **IN ONE WEEK** to play dozens of pieces by ear, improvise, and vamp to hundreds of songs, &c., without the slightest previous knowledge. Simple as A B C. Success absolutely guaranteed in every case. Complete, post free, 2/8 (per postal order).

**THE IMPERIAL PUBLISHING CO. (C Dpt.),**  
28, South Castle Street, Liverpool.  
Violin in 12 Easy Lessons, 3/1. Singing Made Easy, 3/1. (Established 1872.)

## FREE.—THE JOY OF LIFE.

You can revel in the delight of buoyant health 365 days in every year. With a pure blood-stream and contented nerves you can enjoy the very spice of living. You can banish disease and every condition which makes life a burden. Without medicine, exercises, or food fads, "The Joy of Life" tells how to get well and keep well, how you can lengthen life and keep young all the time. Send postcard to-day for a free copy. Mr. W. M. SCOTT, 47, Huddleston Road, London, N.W. 2.

## CURED IN 7 DAYS! BLUSHING

Why be Shy, Awkward in Company? You needn't continue to be a misery to yourself and others. You can now be permanently cured in **Seven Days** of all Nervous Timidity, Blushing, Rashful Shyness, Self-Consciousness, Lack of Confidence, etc. No harmful drugs. No auto-suggestion drill. Write at once for free particulars. Will be sent free privately if you mention Windsor Magazine.

**W. M. DEAN, 12, All Saints Road, St. Annes-on-Sea.**

## ENDS STUBBORN COUGHS IN A HURRY.

For Quick Relief This Old Home-Made Remedy Has No Equal. Easily and Cheaply Prepared.

You'll never know how quickly a bad cough can be conquered until you try this famous old home-made remedy. Anyone who has coughed all day and all night will say that the immediate relief given is almost like magic. It takes but a moment to prepare, and really there is nothing better for coughs.

From your chemist get 1 ounce of Parmint (Double Strength). Take this home and add to it  $\frac{1}{4}$  pint of hot water and four ounces of sugar or two dessertspoonfuls of golden syrup or honey; stir until dissolved. Take one dessertspoonful four times a day.

You can feel this take hold instantly, soothing and healing the membranes in all the air passages. Breathing becomes easy, clogged nostrils open right up, the cough stops and the tightness across the chest will soon end. It is splendid, too, for bronchial asthma, hoarseness, or throat troubles.

Parmint is a highly concentrated compound of genuine Japanese Mint and Norway pine extract, and is famous the World over for its prompt effect upon coughs. It tastes pleasant, and is good for either children or adults. This plan of making cough medicine for the home saves you money, and has become very popular with thousands of people who have learned its value.



# PARMINT for Coughs

LAUNDRY

**LOST IN THE WASH**  
Through not being marked with the indelible

**JOHN BOND'S  
'CRYSTAL PALACE'  
MARKING INK.**

FOR USE WITH OR WITHOUT HEATING  
(WHICHEVER KIND IS PREFERRED).

Sold by all Stationers, Chemist & Stores. 6d. & 1s.  
Used in the Royal Households.

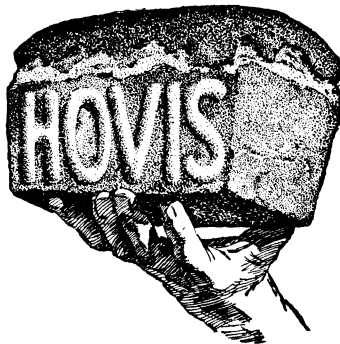
LOST IN THE WASH.

**ZOX FOR  
HEADACHES  
AND  
NEURALGIA**

**FREE TWO ZOX POW-  
DERS Free.**  
Mention this Magazine and  
enclose 1d. stamped address-  
ed envelope. Sold by Chem-  
ists and Stores in 1/6 and 3/-  
boxes, or, if unobtainable  
locally, Post Free at these  
prices from.

# ZOX

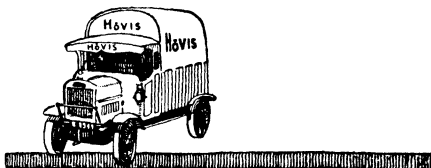
THE ZOX CO.,  
11, Hatton Garden, London, E.C. 1.



## The Bread for You

**R**ICH in nourishment—that is an essential. Digestive, too, as all good bread ought to be. But, more than this, HOVIS is doubly delicious—and appetising to a degree.

**Your Baker  
Bakes it.**



Women who use Pond's

# The Business Girl



Occupations that necessitate much time being spent indoors are not good for the complexion. It is therefore no wonder that the modern business girl is a staunch advocate of the use of the two purest and popular creams—Pond's Vanishing Cream and Pond's Cold Cream.

**Pond's Vanishing Cream**—for day use—being non-greasy, requires no massage, but disappears instantly into the skin, leaving no trace of use. It is a protective cream against the elements, making the complexion delicate, appealingly soft and smooth at all times.

**Pond's Cold Cream**—a food and cleanser for tired pores—should be gently massaged into the face, neck, hands, and arms each night on retiring. Because it supplements the natural oil of the skin it aids in preventing lines and wrinkles forming around the eyes and mouth.

Pond's Creams never promote the growth of hair.

**"TO SOOTHE AND SMOOTH YOUR SKIN."**

Both Creams of all chemists and stores in handsome opal jars 1/3 and 2/6, also collapsible tubes 7d. (handbag size) and 1/-

# Pond's Cold Cream and Vanishing Cream

POND'S EXTRACT CO. (Dept. 154), 71, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1

## Beacon Oilskins for All.

There's a Beacon for each member of the family, from the tiny three-year-old to full-grown outdoor men like Father; and each Coat, Mother's too, has a finish that cannot stick, and is guaranteed absolutely Waterproof. Money back if otherwise.

### ILLUSTRATED LIST POST FREE.

Send a p.c. to-day for "Weather Comfort" (describing Beacon Oilskins and honest Country Boots for all) to BARBOUKS, Ltd., 20, Beacon Buildings, South Shields, England.

Ladies', 27/6 up

Men's Coats, 18/6 to 87/6

Kiddies' Oilles 17/6 upwards



## How Doctors Avoid Colds



A great Physician said he never had a Cold although constantly in the way of infection, simply because he KEPT HIS NOSE IN ORDER. Another prescribed inhaling anti-septics.

To avoid Colds and Influenza, use **Dr. MACKENZIE'S SMELLING BOTTLE**

Of all Chemists & Stores 2/- or post free in U.K. for 2/3 (stamps)

**Dr. Mackenzie's Arsenical Soap**, Ideal for the complexion.

**John Taylor's Oxygen Tooth Powder**, In tins 7d., 1/3, 2/6 and 4/-.

**DR. MACKENZIE'S LABORATORIES LTD., READING.**

DELICIOUS FRENCH COFFEE

# RED WHITE & BLUE

For Breakfast & after Dinner.

In making, use LESS QUANTITY, it being much stronger than ORDINARY COFFEE

## ARE YOU DEAF?

Try our New Popular Danjhill Earphone, 42/-. A perfect aid at a low price. It will enable a deaf person to hear in church or theatre and enjoy the delights of conversation. Unique trial terms. Full particulars sent free by return post. D. & J. HILL, 299, Danjhill House, 267, Gray's Inn Road, King's Cross, W.C.1.



## HOME DECORATION. ENGLISH & JAPANESE STENCILS

For Decorating Curtains, Cushions, Table Centres, Scarves, etc., etc. Small Sample Boxes (several varieties) containing 12 designs 2/3 and 2/6 each (postage 2d. extra). Stencil Outlets 7/6 and 15/- each (postage 3d. and 1/- extra). English and Japanese Stencil Brushes, Washable Stencil Colours, Stencil Paper, Stencil Knives, Coloured Bronzes. Practical Handbook, profusely illustrated (just published) 1/2 post free. Write for Temporary Catalogue, enclosing 2d. stamp for reply. (Dept. W.L.), BRODIE & MIDDLETON, 79, Long Acre, London, W.C.

GASTRITIS

DYSPEPSIA

INDIGESTION

**ACID**

**is the root of indigestion**

Useless to trifle with symptoms if you've got some form of digestive disorder such as gastritis, indigestion and dyspepsia. You must get down to the CAUSE. *Acid is the root of the trouble*—harmful acid in your stomach which sets up fermentation, sours the food, pollutes the blood, induces headaches, insomnia and such-like troubles and generally makes you fit for nothing. The one remedy is Bisurated Magnesia. Sure, safe and speedy; it just neutralises the disturbing acidity instantly, and forthwith your food commences to do you good. There is no possibility of stomach discomfort when you take Bisurated Magnesia, which banishes digestive troubles root and branch—acid and ailment—cause and effect. This product is used in hospitals and advised by doctors. Chemists everywhere sell it at 1/3d. a package, either powder or tablets, and you've only to try it once to praise it always. Be sure to see the word 'Bisurated' on the wrapper when buying if you want the real cure . . . remember . . .

***'Bisurated' Magnesia banishes  
Indigestion root and branch!***

*Bismag Ltd., London N.W.1.*

ACIDITY


# I Will Tell You Free How To Reduce Your Weight.



I was just a strong young woman, full of life and vigour, and fond of good things to eat, enjoying life to its fullest extent, when suddenly my weight began to increase, and, strong as I was, I began to feel the burden, especially as I am a business woman and have plenty of work to do. While my earthly self was rapidly assuming abnormal proportions, the progress in this direction brought sorrow and consternation, because I knew that I must give up business or reduce my weight. I began to feel lonely, because I felt that my company was no longer desired, and I made up my mind that I was at the dangerous point of my life.

One day an inspiration came to me, after I had spent time, money, and patience in vain efforts to become slim again. I acted upon this inspiration, and succeeded, for 36 lbs. of ponderous weight vanished in five weeks. I did not use drugs, practise tiresome exercises nor starvation diet, nor wear any appliances, but reduced myself by a simple home method; and, although this is some time ago, I have never gained any weight since, and my health is as good as I could wish.

You could reduce your weight the same as I have done, and I will tell you how, free, if you will enclose two penny stamps to pay postage.—W. Grace Harland, Dept. 460, Diamond House, Hatton Garden, London, E.C.1.



## SHORTHAND

The SLOAN-DUPLOYAN System saves a year's study and is unrivalled for accuracy and speed. Used on Parliamentary Reporting Staff. Record, 300 words per minute.

*Illustrated Handbook free.*  
SLOAN-DUPLOYAN HEADQUARTERS.  
(Dept. D.), RAMSGATE.



## An hours darning IN THREE MINUTES

with the "Star" Automatic Hand Darning Machine  
**Price 2/9**

This wonderful invention speedily weaves perfect neat darn in any material. Send now 2/9 and 3d. for post to:—

THE E.J.R. CO. (Dept. W.M.),  
682, Holloway Road, London, N.19



# CASH'S WOVEN NAMES

*will ensure your garments being safely returned from the wash.*



The neatest and most efficient method of marking linen.

Woven on fine Cambrie Tape in fast turkey red, black, green, gold, helio, sky or navy blue lettering.

PRICES:

5/- for 12 dozen  
3/9 „ 6 „  
2/9 „ 3 „

Robert Cecil

Style No. 11

*To be obtained of all Drapers and Outfitters.*

WRITE FOR SAMPLES and complete list of the many styles in which these Names can be woven

J. & J. CASH, Ltd. (Dept. A5), Coventry



TRADE MARK

CASH'S WASH RIBBONS—Made in Plain and Brocaded effects in White, Blue, Pink, Heliotrope and Maize. Fast colours.

## ART

### FASHION DRAWING.

LEARN THIS INTERESTING ART & EARN BIG MONEY.

POSTER, BLACK AND WHITE, STORY ILLUSTRATING also taught. LESSONS GIVEN at Studios Morn., Aftn. or Evn. or by post. Help given to good positions. Sketches bought and sold. Terms:—SECRETARY.

THE COMMERCIAL ART SCHOOL  
12 & 13, Henrietta Street, Strand,  
London, W.C.2. Est. 1900



## I SELL SUEDE LEATHER

in all colours at 11d. sq. ft.

**LADIES, SAVE MONEY!**

and make your own reliable Gloves, Hats, Dorothy Bags, Chair Covers, etc. Send 2d. stamped addressed envelope for a full set of beautiful patterns. — CATT, Leather Merchant, NORTHAMPTON.

FOR ALL LOVERS OF HOME.

## HOMELY VERSES

OF A  
HOME-LOVER

By **FAY INCHFAWN,**

*Author of "The Verse Book of a Homely Woman,"  
"Verses of a House-Mother," etc.*

Fay Inchfawn is the acknowledged Laureate of the Home. Her earlier books have passed into edition after edition, and it is certain that a no less warm welcome awaits the present volume, which contains her best and latest work. It would be difficult, indeed, to find a more appropriate gift for Christmas, birthdays, and other occasions, or one more certain to yield pleasure and profit alike to giver and receiver.

Size 6½ x 4 inches. Cloth, 2/6 net. Velvet Leather, 5/- net.  
FROM ALL BOOKSELLERS.

WARD, LOCK & CO., Ltd., Salisbury Square, London, E.C.4

*Wouldn't be without  
it for Worlds."*



"I just love polishing my furniture with Ronuk Furniture Cream—it gives such splendid results so easily and quickly. Its brilliant, beautiful polish is lasting and does not finger-mark . . . and it has such a charming smell, so suggestive of health and cleanliness."

# RONUK

## FURNITURE CREAM

*"The Brightest Shine in the Shortest Time"*

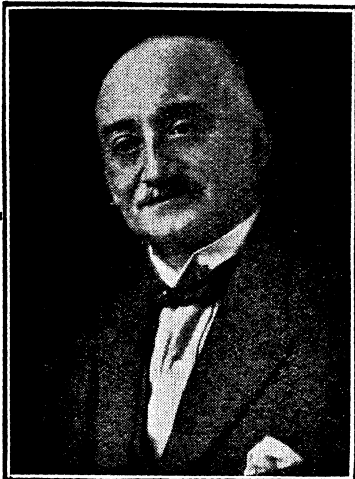
**POLISHES, PRESERVES, PURIFIES**

For your Parquet Floors and Linoleum, use RONUK Sanitary FLOOR POLISH. Floors polished with RONUK reflect your good taste!

*When buying RONUK ask to see that wonderful labour-saving device, the RONUK HOME POLISHER.*

**Sold Everywhere.**

**RONUK, LTD., Portslade, Sussex.**



*Can I help you?*

### I WILL GIVE YOU £50

if I fail to produce over 7,000 testimonials from others I have helped TO A SUCCESSFUL CAREER.

Yours to  
success,

*Every man is the architect of his own fortune!*

If you are not in a trade, **learn one**; if you are already in a trade or profession, reach the **top of it**.

### ARE YOU QUALIFIED? for the JOB YOU SEEK.

WE TEACH  
BY POST

ADVICE FREE.  
Most Moderate  
Charges.  
Payable Monthly.

LEARN A  
TRADE OR  
PROFESSION

Write for one of our **FREE BOOKLETS** on any of the following subjects:—

- |                        |   |                         |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Architectural Drawing  | } | Matriculation           |
| Building Construction  |   | Metallurgy              |
| Clerk of Works' Duties |   | Mining                  |
| Aviation               |   | Mine Surveying          |
| Boiler Engineering     |   | Motor Engineering       |
| Boiler Making          |   | Naval Architecture      |
| Chemistry              |   | Pattern Making          |
| Civil Engineering      |   | Salesmanship            |
| Concrete and Steel     |   | Sanitation              |
| Draughtsmanship        |   | Shipbuilding            |
| Electricity            |   | Structural Engineering  |
| Engineering            |   | Surveying and Levelling |
| Foundry Work           |   | Telegraphy & Telephony  |
| Internal Comb. Engines |   | Wireless Telegraphy     |
| Marine Engineering     |   | Special Course          |
| Mathematics            |   | for Apprentices         |

If you have any ambition tell me what it is and let me advise you free.

We specialise in all exams, connected with technical subjects. If you are preparing for any exam., ask our advice. All particulars free of charge. Parents should seek our advice for their sons. If you are interested in any of the subjects mentioned above, write naming the subject, and we will send you our **FREE BOOKLET**. Please state your age. (Courses specially combined to meet all requirements.)

Established  
over 20  
years.

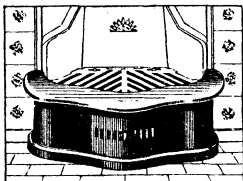


Department 25.

SHEFFIELD

# The "HUE" FIRE reduced in price

The enormously increasing demand for the famous "HUE" Fire has enabled us to so reduce our costs that we have made a reduction in price of nearly 20 per cent., but the same high standard of workmanship,



efficiency, and finish has been maintained.

The "HUE" Fire is the best investment it is possible to make—it gives double the heat, thus halving your coal-bill and saving its own cost on the first ton of coals. It can be fitted in five minutes to the bottom grating of

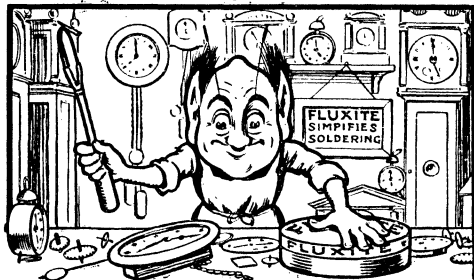
your stove without mess, bother, or trouble, and the fact that over 65,000 are in use in public buildings, institutions, hospitals, and private houses is ample evidence that the "HUE" is regarded as the most efficient barless fire on the market.

## SEND 15/9 TO-DAY

if your grate measures 12 ins. wide between the bars (16/6 if 14 or 15 ins., other sizes in proportion), and a beautifully finished HUE FIRE, with bright steel table, will be sent by return, securely packed, carriage paid, to your door. State height of bottom grating from hearth. Illustrated leaflet FREE.

**YOUNG & MARTEN, Ltd.**  
(Room 41), Stratford, London, E. 15.

To protect the public, the word "HUE"  
is cast on every genuine stove.



TIME AND TIME again has "FLUXITE"  
proved its worth;  
To SIMPLIFY YOUR SOLDERING it's the  
finest stuff on Earth.

All Mechanics WILL have

# FLUXITE

BECAUSE it

## SIMPLIFIES SOLDERING

All Hardware and Ironmongery Stores sell FLUXITE in tins, price 8d., 1/4, and 2/8. **BUY A TIN TO-DAY.**

Ask your Ironmonger or Hardware Dealer to show you the neat little

### "FLUXITE" SOLDERING SET

It is perfectly simple to use, and will last for years in constant use. It contains a special "small-space" Soldering Iron, with non-heating metal handle, a Pocket Blow-Lamp, FLUXITE, Solder, etc., and full instructions.

Price 10/6. Sample Set, post paid United Kingdom.

FLUXITE LTD., 201, Bevington Street, Bermondsey, England.

THE EDISON BELL (All-British)

# "HANDEPHON"

Britain's  
Best Portable  
Gramophone

PLAYS ANY  
KIND OF  
RECORD.

Reduced  
Price £4-10s.



Weight 12½ lbs. Tone-arm automatically lowers into Cabinet as the lid is closed. NO LOOSE PARTS TO RATTLE

The "HANDEPHON" is entirely British made—motor, tone-arm, sound-box, cabinet, and every other part. Thus satisfaction is absolutely guaranteed. The model is the acme of portability and compactness. When closed, looks no bigger than an attaché case.

Use "Chromic" Needles on all your Records, 1/3 per 100. Each Point Plays TEN Records.

Ask your Dealer for Descriptive Pamphlet. Also for Catalogues of Edison Bell "Velvet Face" and "Winner" Records. Or write direct to Style Manufacturers and Patentees—

J. E. HOUGH, Ltd., Edison Bell Works, London, S.E.15

There is Thirty Years' Reputation Behind the Name of EDISON BELL. All British, You Know.

AT ALL LIBRARIES AND BOOKSELLERS.

Size 7½ x 5 inches, 7/- net.

## BRILLIANT NOVELS BY DORNFORD YATES

PUNCH says:—"To give Mr. Yates his due, he is expert in light banter. He can be strongly recommended to anyone who thinks that the British take themselves too seriously."

NEW VOLUME NOW READY.

### JONAH AND CO.

This vivacious story of the motoring adventures on the Continent of "Jonah" Mansel and his amusing group, of kinsfolk, already known to the public as "Berry and Co.," is even more notable than the author's previous books, in its unique blend of experiences, ludicrous, exciting, and charmingly sentimental, set in an atmosphere of high-spirited comedy which is irresistible. A delightful book, distinguished by gay humour and an abundance of vivid character-drawing.

### ANTHONY LYVEDEN.

"Mr. Dornford Yates goes from strength to strength. 'Anthony Lyveden' is, in every sense of the word, a desirable book in the vein of true humour."—Financial Times.

### BERRY AND CO.

"The book is full of good things, and he is a sad person indeed who cannot appreciate the fun of its episodes and the brilliance of its repartee."—Dundee Courier.

### THE COURTS OF IDLENESS.

"Mr. Dornford Yates shows himself as a writer of piquant wit, quiet humour, and true pathos—a very rare and notable combination."—Yorkshire Observer.

### THE BROTHER OF DAPHNE.

"A book of innumerable frivolity, eminently suitable to be read in train or boat, or on the sands or moors, or at any time when one wishes to be pleasantly diverted without much mental effort."—Oxford Chronicle.

WARD, LOCK & Co., LTD., Salisbury Sq., London, E.C.4.





*First  
impressions  
count*

# Instinctively his glance falls on your hair —

. . . hardly knowing it, he hopes to find your tresses radiant and beautiful . . . to disappoint him is unkind, unwise and *unnecessary!* Often beautiful hair results from a mother's care during childhood days; frequently it is achieved through judicious efforts later in life. Thousands of letters have been sent to us by people who suffered the handicap of unsatisfactory hair for years, and then, with the help of Lavona Hair Tonic, found real hair beauty. Success *must* follow the use of Lavona Hair Tonic for it embodies a wonderful element (contained in no other preparation in the world) which permeates down to the very hair follicles, stimulating them to new life as nothing else can. Lavona *grows* hair but it does more—it grows it crisp and lovely. All trace of dandruff and horrid grease disappears, and the natural oil of the hair is induced to function normally and in just the right degree. Remember . . . beautiful hair confers a wondrous charm upon its owner . . .

*To gain beautiful hair - use*  
**LAVONA**  
 HAIR ☆ TONIC

*It is sold by all good chemists at 2/11d. a bottle and a free shampoo sachet is included with each package. Your money back in full if not delighted with results. . . . You risk nothing, so do not delay!*  
 INTERNATIONAL CHEMICAL CO., LTD., WYBERT ST., MUNSTER SQ., LONDON, N.W. 1.

**FREE**

*Until Dec. 30th, we will send one 2/11d. bottle of Lavona Hair Tonic and one Shampoo Sachet FREE and post paid to any friend or relative of yours on receipt of the circular enclosed with the new style (Buff colour) Lavona Package. Please mark envelope "GIFT"*

# CAN YOU DRAW ?



If you want to make use of your talent so that you can make money, fashion drawing offers you the best opportunity. It does not require years of hard study, such as other branches of art, before you realise any compensation. Providing you have the correct training, you can soon learn in your spare time at home to draw fashions that are in urgent demand.

## FASHION DRAWING IS THE BEST PAYING ART WORK OF TO-DAY

The Associated Fashion Artists, comprising London's leading Fashion Artists, give thorough tuition by post in this lucrative art work, and assist students to sell their drawings as soon as they are proficient.

Write to-day for the handsome booklet "The Art of Drawing Charming Women." It will be sent you by return of post, gratis and post free. Address your enquiry (a postcard will do) to :

The PRINCIPAL (STUDIO 163),  
**ASSOCIATED FASHION ARTISTS**  
11, New Court, Lincoln's Inn, W.C. 2

# DIXON'S ELDORADO

*"the master drawing pencil"*



It isn't a question of how much you pay for a pencil —1d., 2d., 6d.—but what you get for what you pay. The "Eldorado" gives you greater value in proportion to its price than other pencils, and an incomparable smoothness of touch. Thus economy and quality are combined.

6d. each. 5/3 per dozen.

Of all Stationers.

Write for Interesting Booklet.

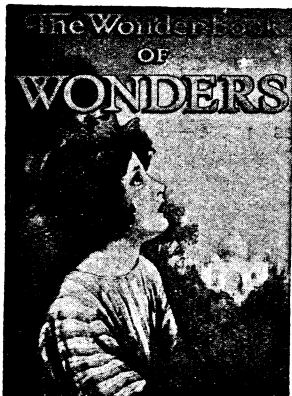
L. G. SLOAN, LTD.,

The Pen Corner Kingsway, London, W.C. 2

## IDEAL PRESENTS FOR JUVENILES.

WARD, LOCK & CO.'S

# "WONDER BOOKS"



Size 10 X 7½ inches. Picture Boards. 256-264 Pages. Hundreds of Illustrations in Tints. 12 to 16 Colour Plates. Special End-papers. Coloured Jacket. 6s. net. CONSTANTLY REVISED AND BROUGHT UP TO DATE.

**NEW VOLUME NOW READY.**

### The Wonder BOOK OF WONDERS

Recent discoveries have led us to realise as we never realised before that this "wide, wonderful world" is a veritable treasury of marvels, and that it spins in space surrounded by marvels even greater. The infinitely little, and the infinitely great, the mighty works of Man, and the mightier works of Nature, are described and illustrated in a manner that has never before been attempted in a single volume, so that the book will be at once the most entertaining and the most instructive that any boy or girl can hope to possess.

### The Wonder BOOK OF WHY AND WHAT ?

Daily Telegraph:—"A mine of interesting instruction upon all kinds of matters. . . . Should set at rest, for a long time at any rate, that eternal question mark upon the face of its lucky owner, and for this reason above all its advent in the home will be hailed with delight by many a harassed parent. Its sale among fathers of families this season is likely to reach phenomenal proportions."

**The Wonder BOOK OF AIRCRAFT.** Tells all about our gallant Air Services, "The most romantic fighting force in history."

**The Wonder BOOK OF ANIMALS.** A Zoo in every home.

**The Wonder BOOK OF RAILWAYS.** Has scores of interesting, chatty articles about engines, signals, tunnels, and so on, in all parts of the world.

**The Wonder BOOK OF SOLDIERS.** A mine of information on Army life and military matters generally.

**The Wonder BOOK OF SHIPS.** Describes the great liners and other vessels of the Mercantile Marine.

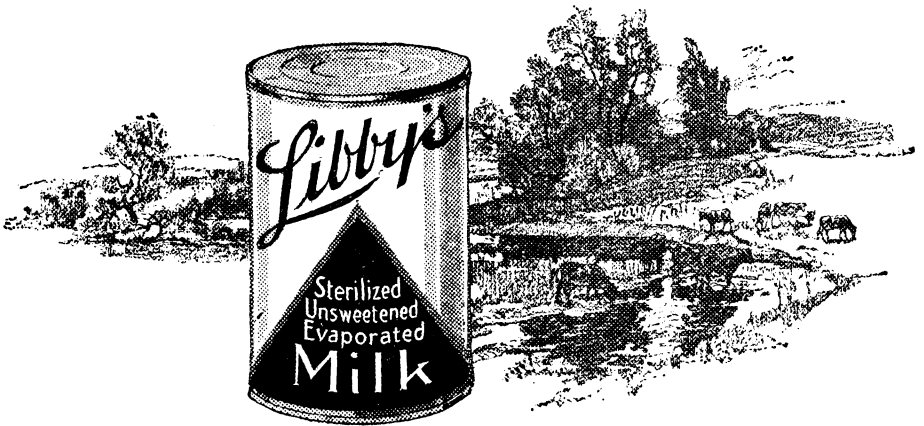
**The Wonder BOOK OF EMPIRE.** Tells all about the lands under the Union Jack and the people who live in them, including the former German Colonies.

**The Wonder BOOK OF CHILDREN.** Gives glimpses of children in all parts of the world, and of the people with whom they dwell.

**The Wonder BOOK OF THE NAVY.** Tells how the Navy proved again a "sure shield" in the years of the Empire's trial.

From all Booksellers.

WARD, LOCK & CO., LIMITED, SALISBURY SQUARE, LONDON, E.C. 4.



## What the name "Libby" stands for

**T**HE name Libby is a guarantee in itself. It stands for the perfection won by 60 years' experience. It is only placed on products which are the finest that modern enterprise and skill can produce.

Housewives, everywhere, recognise that "Libby" stands for quality.

That is why the sales of Libby's Evaporated Milk are continuously increasing day by day. No amount of advertising would give such great popularity to an unworthy product.

Libby's Evaporated Milk is simply pure, full-cream milk from famous pasture lands. It is made richer by the evaporation of more than half the natural moisture. Nothing else is taken away—nothing is added. Its fine quality never varies.

You can be sure that Libby's Evaporated Milk is clean, wholesome and sweet. It is suitable for all uses. In cooking it adds a noticeable richer flavour to all dishes. In its undiluted form it takes the place of cream.

Order a supply of Libby's Evaporated Milk from your grocer to-day, the "Blue and White Pyramid Label."


*Let your grocer be your milkman.*

*Write for our free booklet "Finer Flavoured Milk Dishes." It is full of delicious butter and cream saving recipes that will please the whole family.*

*Libby's*  
Evaporated  
**MILK**

**Libby, McNeill & Libby, Ltd.**

(Dept. 43), LONDON, E.C. 3.



**"THE MERRY MODELLERS"**

**"To give a Child something is Good!  
To give a Child something TO DO is Better."**


And nothing will keep them so busy as a  
**HOME MODELLING OUTFIT**  
 Box Complete, 4/9, Post Free.  
 Other Outfits, 9d. to 7/6, or send for Full  
 Lists—on receipt of Post Card.

**HARBUTT'S PLASTICINE, LTD.,**  
 57, Bathampton, Bath.



*Children, where a  
 Night-light glows,  
 have pleasant dreams  
 and sweet repose*

**PRICE'S  
 NIGHT LIGHTS**



**Evinrude**

ON the river, lakes, broads or sea, the Evinrude Detachable Motor is ideal. It can be slipped onto the stern of any rowboat—your own or hired—which at once converts her into a sturdy, reliable little motor-boat. It requires no skilled knowledge or attention, and the cost of running is fractional. Your money returned in full if not satisfied. Write to-day for Catalogue with full particulars and prices.

**EVINRUDE MOTOR CO. ENG. LTD.**  
 (MANAGER A W BRADBURY)  
 107 WATERLOO RD. LONDON SE1

**YOU MUST WEAR A TRUSS**  
 if you are ruptured.

**WHITE'S MOC-MAIN  
 PATENT LEVER TRUSS**

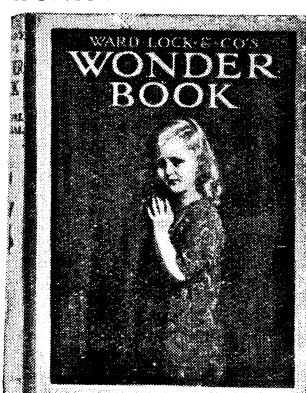
BEST IN 1841—BEST TO-DAY.  
 Call or write for Booklet.

**J. WHITE & CO., 15, Walbrook, London, E.C.4.**  
 The Truss House (W.M.),  
 15, Walbrook, London, E.C.4.

**18th YEAR OF ISSUE**  
 WARD, LOCK & CO.'S

**WONDER BOOK  
 ANNUAL**

A PICTURE ANNUAL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS



12 Plates in Colour.  
 264 Pages of Stories and Verses.  
 Hundreds of Illustrations in tints.  
 Humorous Endpapers.  
 Size 10 x 7½ in.  
 Picture Boards  
 Jacket in Colour

**6/- net.**

All young folk agree that there is no Present for Christmas or the Birthday to equal the  
**WONDER BOOK**

FROM ALL BOOKSELLERS

WARD, LOCK & Co., LTD., SALISBURY SQUARE, E.C.4.



# “Player’s Country Life”

**Cigarettes**  
*Medium Strength*

*Pure Virginia Tobacco*  
10 for 5½ — 50 for 2/3

*“Country Life” Smoking Mixture*

1/- per oz.



Contentment

4/- per ¼lb.



John Player & Sons

REGISTERED NO 332,785

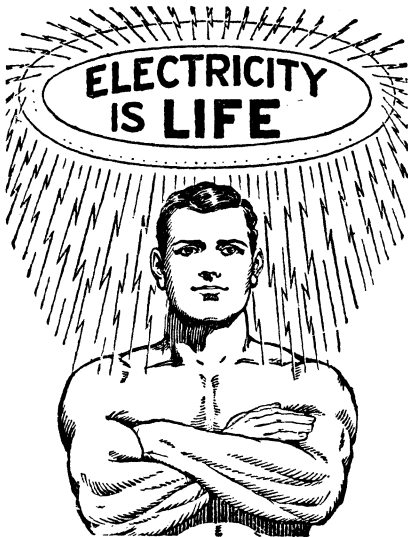
Nottingham.

BRANCH OF THE IMPERIAL TOBACCO CO (of Great Britain & Ireland), LTD

P 997

# ELECTRIC "SHOWERS OF LIFE"

Amazing Success in the Cure of Illness and Nerve Weakness.



An amazing scientific feat is the invention and perfection of the "Ajax" Dry Cell Body Battery. Under this unpretentious name practically the whole force for good that electricity possesses in relation to the human frame has been harnessed and controlled.

Practically it supplies what is equal to a shower bath of electric life which, though it cannot actually be seen, continually passes into the system and builds up exhausted nerve centres and tired tissues.

The nerves and organs of the body only get run down when the supply of fuel is exhausted—in other words, when the electric reserve of vital energy is at a low ebb. This is the reason why the "Ajax" so quickly replenishes and renews health and strength.

You can easily experience this wonderful healing, curative, and strengthening power by simply putting on one of these batteries while you are resting. Then this shower bath of electric atoms streams through into the nerve centres without the slightest shock, irritation, or pricking of the skin. All you feel is the slow, steady, pulsating action—scarcely more perceptible than the heart-beats themselves—that conveys the current to every nerve, muscle and tissue.

In this way are such troubles as Rheumatism, Gout, Lumbago, and Sciatica abolished for ever. Thus are all forms of nerve weakness, Neuralgia, Chronic Tiredness and Sleeplessness thrust from the system, never to return. So also Indigestion and Dyspepsia, Kidney Trouble, Liver, Bowel and Stomach complaints are cured without the slightest inconvenience, and in the most pleasant manner possible. Just one hour each day, while you are resting, you put on the "Ajax" Battery, which is permanently charged, and enjoy the gradual but sure return of health and strength that once you thought impossible.

## Stop Drugging and Taking Useless Medicines

*If once you start this you will find that the habit grows upon you. Get back to Nature—the greatest gift conferred upon mankind to cure the ailing and to restore strength to the weak.*

*More about this fascinating subject you can learn, quite free of all cost, by sending for the wonderful free book describing the "Ajax" and how it cures. Just send your name and address. Or if you call at the British Electric Institute you can learn in a personal consultation, and at the same time test the appliance itself without cost or obligation of any kind. The one point to remember is DO NOT DELAY. Write or call to-day while the address is fresh in your mind.*

AJAX LD.

**BRITISH ELECTRIC INSTITUTE (Dept. 19), 25, Holborn Viaduct, London, E.C.1.**

South African Branch: 70, Pritchard Street, P.O. Box 7222, Johannesburg.

# CHARMING COLOUR BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Each with 48 COLOUR PLATES by MARGARET W. TARRANT, A. E. JACKSON, or HARRY G. THEAKER, and with Pictorial End-Papers and Envelope. Size  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$  ins. Cloth, Handsome Binding Design, 6s. net.

## NEW VOLUME

### THE WATER-BABIES. By CHARLES KINGSLEY.

With 48 Colour Plates by HARRY G. THEAKER.

The charming story of Tom, the little chimney-sweep, who was turned into the cleanest of clean water-babies, and had the most marvellous adventures, will always appeal to children. They will love the book all the more for Mr. Theaker's dainty illustrations, so full of fun and fancy, so delicate in colour, and so exactly suited to the story.

**ROBINSON CRUSOE.** The text has been specially adapted for the benefit of younger children introduced for the first time to the prince of story-tellers. With the lavish illustrations and large type, this is easily the most attractive edition of this favourite classic on the market.

**CHILDREN'S STORIES FROM THE BIBLE.** The old favourite stories from the greatest book in the world, charmingly re-told in simple language. The illustrations, entirely in colour, are delightfully fresh and unconventional.

**THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.** Aladdin, Sindbad, Ali Baba, and other old favourites are here presented in the most fascinating guise.

**VERSES FOR CHILDREN.** Edited by HARRY GOLDING. One of the most delightful and artistic gift-books for children ever produced.

**ALICE IN WONDERLAND.** THE edition of LEWIS CARROLL's famous story.

**ZOO DAYS.** By HARRY GOLDING. A book of delight for every child, every lover of animals, and every lover of children.

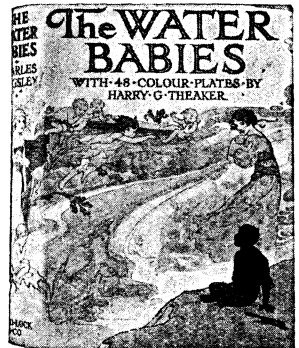
**NURSERY RHYMES.** A complete collection of the old favourite Rhymes.

**GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES.** This beautifully illustrated edition will win for the Tales a host of new admirers.

**FAIRY TALES.** All the old yet ever new tales: Cinderella, Puss-in-Boots, Red Riding Hood, and a host of others.

**TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE.** A beautiful edition of Charles and Mary Lamb's "Tales."

**HANS ANDERSEN'S FAIRY STORIES.** A selection of the stories which most appeal to younger children.



AT ALL BOOKSELLERS.

WARD, LOCK & CO., LTD., SALISBURY SQUARE, LONDON, E.C.4.

# How long would you promise to be good?



## Bribery and Corruption

—the wrong way to bring up children. So say those who have forgotten how they promised to be good for a month . . . for a mere stick of barley sugar.

Well, it's worth promising to be good for a very long while—if Mackintosh's Toffee-de-Luxe is the reward. And it's easy to be good if you have Mackintosh's, simply because Mackintosh's is good itself.

And good things must make you good—if you get lots of them . . . mustn't they?

Of course.

Sold loose by weight at 8d. per ¼-lb., and in Baby Oval Tins and Tall Tins at 1/3 each, Junior Oval Tins and Tall Tins at 2/6 each, and in 4-lb. Tins.

# MACKINTOSH'S T o f f e e - d e - L u x e

Egg & Cream-de-Luxe. Almond Toffee-de-Luxe. Coconut-de-Luxe.  
Café-de-Luxe. Mint-de-Luxe. Plain Toffee-de-Luxe. De-Luxe Assortment.



**"WINDSOR" MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS**

**CHRISTMAS!**—Make your own puddings and mince-meat with "Atora," the best Beef Suet. Saves time and patience. Write for Booklet of 100 tested Pudding Recipes.—Hugon, Ltd., D, Openshaw, Manchester.

**64-page BOOK ABOUT HERBS** and how to use them. 2d. Send for one.—Trimmell the Herbalist, Richmond Road, Cardiff.

**THE LADIES' SHOE** that looks smart, keeps its shape, and wears well, is the "Mascot" at 21/-. Write for Style booklet and name of nearest Agent.—Norvic Shoe Co., Norwich.

**LEARN TO WRITE ARTICLES AND STORIES.**—Earn while learning. Booklet free.—Regent Institute, 13E, Victoria Street, S.W. 1.

**STAMPS FREE!**—20 French Colonials. Send 14d. postage. Mention Gift M 218.—Bright & Son, 164, Strand, London, W.C. 2.

**LEARN DUTTON'S 24-HOUR SHORTHAND.**—Lesson Free.—Dutton's College, Desk 85, Skegness.

**RUG WOOL THRUMS, 1/11 lb.** Beautiful Cable Rug Wool, all colours, 3/6. Illustrated instructions and samples free.—Stoddart, Department P, Empire Works, Halifax.

**ENGINEERING BOOKS.**—Booklet Free.—Bentley's Publishing Co. (Dept. W.), Halifax.

**STAMPS.**—20 Unused 2d. 50 1/-.—G. H. Barnett, Limington, Somerset.

**STAMMERING.**—H. D. wishes to recommend a specialist successful in own case.—H. D., Box 504, Smiths' Agency, Ltd., 100, Fleet Street, London, E.C. 4.

**AUTO-SUGGESTION.**—A book published at 1/- will be sent absolutely free to anyone interested, on application to Secretary, Dept. 459, Raymont Institute, Ltd., 42, Museum Street, W.C. 1.

**HOTELS.**

**LONDON.—IMPERIAL HOTEL,** Russell Square. Central. 1000 Rooms. Magnificent Turkish Baths.

**ABERYSTWYTH.—CAERLEON HOUSE BOARDING ESTABLISHMENT,** Victoria Terrace.—Facing Sea. Near Golf Links. Lounge and Recreation Room. Four Reception and Eighteen Bedrooms. Excellent Cuisine. Terms on application.—Mrs. Hellaby, Proprietress.

**AMBLESIDE.—QUEEN'S HOTEL.**—Entirely under New Management. First-class Family, Tourist and Commercial. Visitors will find every comfort, Excellent Cuisine, and Courteous Service. Moderate Tariff. Large Garage. Tel. 13.—Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Savage, Resident Proprietors (late of Waterhead Hotel, Ambleside).

**AMBLESIDE.—SALUTATION HOTEL.**—First-class. Under new management.—M. E. and L. Feirn.

**BARNMOUTH.—HENDRE HALL PRIVATE HOTEL.**—Situated in own grounds, overlooking Sea. Facing due south. Spacious Lounge. Bedrooms overlook Sea. Separate Tables, Golf, Tennis, and Croquet. Garage. 'Phone 25.—Proprietress.

**BOGNOR.—SYDNEY HOUSE PRIVATE HOTEL.**—On Sea Front. First-class Residential.—'Phone 103.

**BOURNEMOUTH.—SEA VIEW EN PENSION,** Bath Road. Pleasantly situated on East Cliff, one minute from Pier and Winter Gardens and within few minutes of Golf Links. Moderate tariff and excellent cuisine. Under personal supervision of proprietress, Mrs. White.

**BOURNEMOUTH.—THE PARAGON PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL HOTEL,** West Cliff Gardens.—Established 32 years. Situated within 50 yards of the Cliff, close to the noted Chineses. Steps and lift to sands quite near. View of the Bay. Golf Links less than 1 mile away. Cliff well wooded, with sheltered walks. Within 10 minutes of Pier (where Band plays daily) and the Gardens. Surroundings are open and quiet. Full-size billiard table. Terms moderate. Tariff on application. 'Phone 1075.—Miss K. Tomkins, Proprietress.

**BROADSTAIRS.—CHOLMELEY PRIVATE HOTEL.**—Granville Road. In Sheltered Position, yet close to Sea-front. Ideal for Winter or Summer. Excellent Cuisine. Terms from 4 to 6 Guineas per week. Tels.: "Cholmeley, Broadstairs." 'Phone Broadstairs 248.—Mrs. Armstrong.

**BUXTON.—OLIVER'S HYDRO HOTEL.**—Ideal position. Highly recommended for catering and comfort. Hydro Electric Baths. Electric Light and Lift. Tennis. Golf (Sunday Golf). Garage. Tariff. Central Heating. Terms Moderate. Official Hotel to the A.A. & M.U.—A. Oliver. 'Phone: 474.

**BUXTON.—THE BRUNSWICK PRIVATE HOTEL.**—Central and elevated position. Near Pump Room and Gardens. Easy distance to Golf Links. Motor and Coaching Excursions arranged.—Mr. & Mrs. S. D. Gent, Resident Proprietors, 'Phone: 45. Tels.: "Brunswick."

**DROITWICH.—THE RAVEN & PARK HOTELS.**—Both in Own Extensive Grounds. Close to Brine Baths. Garage. R. A. C. & A. A. Inclusive Terms. Souvenir Tariff on Application. Tel. 50. P. A. Geddes, Ltd., Proprietors.

**EASTBOURNE.—THE IMPERIAL HOTEL,** Devonshire Place.—On the sunny side, adjoining Grand Parade. Splendid central position. Accommodation for nearly 200 guests. A Residential Hotel of the first class. Newest and most up-to-date in Eastbourne. Central heating. Gas fires. 'Phone 1410 and 1411. Hot and cold water and 'phones in all rooms.

**EASTBOURNE.—YORK HOUSE PRIVATE HOTEL.** 14-19, Royal Parade.—Unrivalled position on Sea Front. Spacious Dining, Drawing, and Dance Rooms. Smoking Lounge. Billiards (full-size table). Tea Lounge. 80 Bedrooms. Electric Light throughout. Heated by hot-water radiators. Terms, £3 3s.—Mrs. Douglas E. Williamson.

**HARROGATE.—THE REGAL HOTEL,** Clarence Drive.—This Hotel is pleasantly situated in the fashionable part of Harrogate, near the Baths and Parks. Cuisine excellent. Garden. Tariff on application. Telegrams: "Regal Hotel, Clarence Drive, Harrogate." 'Telephone 601.

**HARROGATE.—ADELPHI HOTEL.**—First-class Residential. Private Grounds for use of Visitors only. Tennis and Croquet. Recommended A.A. Telephone 255 and 256. Telegrams: "Adelphi, Harrogate."—Apply the Manager.

**HASTINGS.—QUEEN'S HOTEL.**—First-class and most comfortable Hotel on sea front (central). Telephone 201. Telegraphic Address: "Queen's, Hastings."

**HASTINGS.—ALBANY HOTEL.**—First-class Hotel. Excellent cuisine. Finest position on sea front. Away from trams and traffic.

**LEE, N. DEVON.—LEE BAY HOTEL.**—Between Ilfracombe and Woolacombe. Situated in own grounds. Own Farm, Cows, Poultry, and Vegetables. Charming Walks and Drives. Golf Links, Lawn Tennis, Sea Bathing, Fishing and Boating. Garage. Motor Boats and 'Bus to and from Ilfracombe. Telegrams: "Hotel, Lee, Devon." 'Phone 60 Ilfracombe.—Apply, Digby W. Easton, Prop.

**LITTLEHAMPTON.—BEACH HOTEL.**—Strictly first-class. Standing in own lovely grounds. Facing Sea. 'Phone 55.—G. S. Stacey.

**LLANDUDNO.—DRUMMOND HIGH-CLASS BOARDING ESTABLISHMENT.**—Central. One minute from Sea, Promenade, and few minutes from Pier, etc. Thirty Bedrooms. Electric Light throughout. Separate Tables. Daily Motor Taxis in own cars. Telephone 417.—For terms apply Proprietress.

**LLANDUDNO.—"EL SINORE."**—First-class Private Hotel. Centre of Grand Parade. Facing Sea. Close Links, Pier, Pavilion, etc. Lounge. Separate Tables. Electric Light throughout. Personal supervision. 'Phone 223.—Mrs. R. Baxter & Misses Ellis, Proprietresses.

**LYMINGTON.—THE ANGEL HOTEL.**—Leading Family and Commercial. Telephone No. 50.—R. H. Russell, Proprietor.

**OXFORD.—THE MITRE HOTEL, LTD.**—First-class Family. Centre of High Street. Established 1400. Electric Light. Billiards, Morris's Garage. Night Porter. Telephone 335. Telegraphic Address: "Mitre, Oxford."—Apply Manager.

**OVERSTRAND, near CROMER.—OVERSTRAND FIRST-CLASS HOTEL.**—Charmingly situated in own grounds, adjoining Sea and Beach, midst Finest Scenery on Norfolk Coast. Five minutes from Royal Cromer Golf Links, and convenient for Sheringham, W. Runton, and Mundesley Golf Links. Splendid Cuisine. Tennis, Grass and Hard Courts. Golf Nets for Practice or Tuition. Croquet. Garage with Private Lock-ups. Inclusive Terms. Telephone, Cromer 106. Telegrams, "Overstrand Hotel, Cromer."

**ST. LEONARDS-ON-SEA.—17, WEST HILL.—BOARD RESIDENCE.**—Overlooking Sea and Pier. Two minutes from Sea Front. Close to Golf Links. Electric Light, Excellent Cuisine. Moderate terms.—Mr. & Mrs. J. Wesley Kingham, Proprietors.

**SCARBOROUGH.—PAVILION HOTEL.**—The best appointed Hotel in Scarborough. R.A.C., A.A. 'Phone 70.—R. E. Loughton.

**SCARBOROUGH.—PRINCE OF WALES HOTEL.**—First-class. Facing South and overlooking Bay. Enclosed Suites. Close to South Cliff Golf Links. Telegrams: "Princely, Scarborough." 'Phone 49.—H. Furniss, Proprietor.

**SEATON, DEVON.—WESTLEIGH PRIVATE HOTEL.**—On Sea Front. Terms moderate. Home comforts. 'Phone 25.—Mrs. Wallace, Proprietress.

**SIDMOUTH, S. DEVON.—WOODLANDS PRIVATE HOTEL.**—An ideal Summer and Winter Residence. Situated within five minutes from Sea. Close to Golf Links. Tennis and Croquet Courts. Excellent Cuisine. Moderate Tariff.—Apply, Miss C. B. Gilbert, Proprietress.

**TEIGNMOUTH, S. DEVON.—CLIFTON PRIVATE HOTEL.**—Old-established. Situated on Sea Front. Magnificent View. Close to Bowling Greens and Tennis Courts. Tel. 127.—For Terms, apply Mrs. Nutman.



# DIZZINESS

*Its Natural Causes, Treatment, Relief and Cure*

Dizziness and debility go hand in hand. Though dizziness is sometimes due to the presence of serious heart trouble, and for that reason should *never* be neglected, it is more often indicative of some functional disturbance of the stomach, liver, or kidneys, or, even more frequently, distressing evidence of weak and disordered nerves.

From any cause it is a serious handicap. It fills its victims with fear and robs them of resolution and self-confidence. Usually accompanied as it is by flatulence and acidity, it clouds the brain and depresses the spirits. Whether the dizziness be of a permanent character or "comes and goes" from time to time, no one should neglect this grave condition or treat it lightly.

## WONDERFUL CURATIVE TREATMENT.

IT SHOULD BE SEEN TO AT ONCE.

But no dieting or drugging will avail to banish it completely. The only permanent and radical method of removing it is the Pulvermacher Electrological Treatment as now recommended and prescribed by the most distinguished medical men and neurological specialists. The Pulvermacher Electrological Treatment is by far the best and most effective method of Electro-Therapeutics, and its long and uniform record of success has compelled recognition from famous scientists and physicians as well as from the tens of thousands of weak and ailing men and women who have been relieved and cured by it. In every form of nervous and functional disorder—in neurasthenia, dyspepsia, constipation, liver sluggishness, disordered kidneys, and in such painful complaints as Rheumatism, Gout, Sciatica, Lumbago, and Neuritis, the Pulvermacher Electrological Treatment has scored success and brought relief and happiness to tens of thousands, often, too, after many other methods of treatment have been tried in vain.

## "IT QUICKLY RESTORES."

The batteries employed in the treatment are light, portable, and comfortable to wear. They furnish the body with the electric or nervous motive power which quickly restores the healthy, easy and normal functioning of every organ and system. From the moment one of these batteries is put on, new Life Force is introduced into all the great nerve-centres and invigorates the millions of microscopic nerve-cells upon whose well-being the bodily health is so supremely dependent. The Treatment can be carried out from first to last in the patient's own home without the least interference with the usual daily routine of life and without costly medical supervision or nursing. The Treatment will completely

- banish dizziness and debility
- impart vim and vigour to the body
- conquer aches and pain
- invigorate the nervous system
- improve appetite and digestion
- increase bowel, liver, and kidney activity
- strengthen the heart's action
- stimulate brain activity

and raise the drooping spirits and energies of all who are "run down" in health or even seriously ill. The beneficial effects of Electrological Treatment must, in fact, be experienced to be believed.

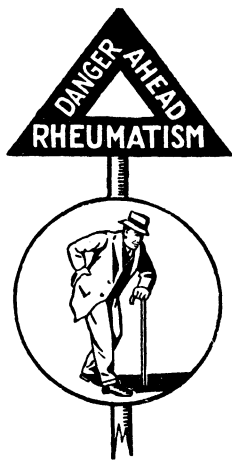
## HEALTH-HELPFUL BOOKLET FREE.

All who are interested can have, gratis and post free, a copy of a most informative and health-helpful little work aptly entitled "A Guide to Health and Strength." No money or stamps need be enclosed. Just write your name and address on plain sheet of paper and post to the Superintendent, The Pulvermacher Electrological Institute, Ltd., 22, Vulcan House, 56, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. 4. — It to-day to prevent possible disappointment.

Branch in Spain. — The Electrological Institute, Apartado, 89, Moraza, 3b, San Sebastian, Spain.

# FOR GOUT, RHEUMATISM AND ACUTE KIDNEY TROUBLE.

Alice Landles, Certified Nurse, explains a natural and permanent cure at home by the same treatment as used in hospitals.



When even slight kidney derangement is neglected there is not only the risk of Bright's disease, dropsy, or other practically incurable maladies, but the certainty that rheumatic disorders must eventually result. I know from years of hospital experience that rheumatism, gout, lumbago, sciatica, neuritis, bladder disorders or gallstones, etc., are all simply the penalties of neglecting kidneys which have become weakened so that they cease to excrete the constantly

accumulating uric acid and other impurities. However, no one need be a martyr to these complaints for a single day. Simply flush, cleanse and purify the kidneys occasionally by drinking a tumbler of water to which a level teaspoonful of pure refined *Alkia Saltrates* has been added. Any chemist can supply this pleasant-tasting compound at slight cost, and *Alkia Saltrates* dissolves sharp uric acid crystals as hot water dissolves sugar. *When dissolved they cannot be painful*, nor lodge in joints and muscles; also, the acid is then quickly filtered out and expelled by the kidneys. The saltrated water will also stimulate a torpid liver or clogged intestines, clearing them and the entire system of poisonous impurities or acids, sour bile, mucous, and bacteria.—A. L.

# TOBACCO HABIT

Conquered in 3 Days

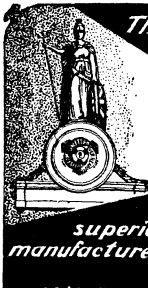


I offer a genuine guaranteed Remedy for tobacco or snuff habit. It is mild, pleasant, strengthening. For either sex. **Overcome that peculiar nervousness and craving for cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, or snuff. It is unsafe and torturing to attempt to rid yourself of tobacco or snuff habit by suddenly stopping by will power; don't do it.** The correct method is to eliminate the nicotine poison from the system, strengthen the weakened, irritated membranes and nerves, and genuinely overcome the craving. You can give up tobacco and enjoy yourself a thousand times better while feeling always in robust health.

My FREE book tells about the wonderful three days' method. Legions of Testimonials. Inexpensive, reliable. **Book on Tobacco and Snuff Habit, testimonials and all particulars, sent in plain wrappers FREE on request.** — Write to-day to EDWARD J. WOODS, Ltd., 167, Strand (437, T. C. M.). London, W.C. 2

**SECRET FREE**


*The* **EVER-READY**  
ELECTRIC SPECIALITIES



*throw the  
superiority of British  
manufacture into strong relief*

No. 004. Price 9/- each. If required with large reflector, as illustrated, 2/6 extra. Polished fibre case, with nickel-plated fittings, intermittent and permanent switches.

**ELECTRIC TORCH**



Postage 9d.

**POCKET LAMPS**

THE SMALLEST IN THE WORLD.

No. 1679. Price 2/6 each. Body covered in real leather. Top and bottom caps nickel-plated. Postage 4d.

**INSPECTION LAMP**

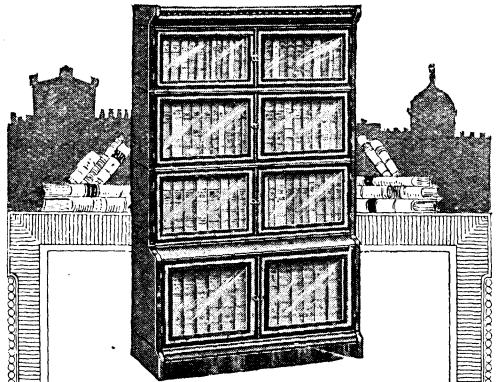
No. 1830. Price 9/6 each. Battery in canvas bag for attaching to belt. Bull's-eye lens fitted with clip for attaching to buttonhole. Postage 9d.



POSTAGE SHOULD BE ENCLOSED WITH REMITTANCE.

*Call and Inspect our Showrooms.*

Our AIT Catalogue "E" will be sent upon application to:—  
**THE PORTABLE ELECTRIC LIGHT CO., LTD.**  
120, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W. 1.



**MINTY'S OXFORD VARSITY SECTIONAL BOOKCASE**

SO DIFFERENT from the ordinary clumsy type of sectional bookcase. Beautifully designed in oak and mahogany.

**Buy as your Books increase GREAT REDUCTION IN PRICES**

Complete 3-Section Stack in SOLID OAK from £6:14:3  
Booklet & Prices from the Patentee & Manufacturer—  
**MINTY (Dpt. W), 44 & 45, High St., Oxford.**

Write to Oxford, or call at London Showrooms, 36, Southampton St., W.

**STAMPS!**

**100 War and Armistice Stamps**

**6d.** *Postage Extra*

This special packet contains many scarce and interesting War and Armistice varieties, including Ukraine Republic (Trident on Russian), Dantzig Free State, Czecho-Slovakia (Perf. and Imperf.), Hungary (Carl and Zita issue), etc., Lettland Republic, West Russian Army, Liechtenstein, etc., etc., including many unused. When writing ask to see my latest price list containing many attractive Bargains. Approvals for all classes of Collectors. State requirements.

**ALAN TURTON, 32, Great St. Helens, LONDON, E.C. 3.**

Your money refunded if

**Mothersill's SEASICK REMEDY**

does not prevent and cure train, air or seasickness

*Of all Chemists*



**HOW TO PRESERVE A SOFT WHITE SKIN DURING THE WINTER.**

BEETHAM'S

**La-rola**

Entirely Removes and Prevents all ROUGHNESS, REDNESS, IRRITATION, &c., and renders the SKIN DELICATELY SOFT and VELVETY. It is invaluable for preserving the delicate tissue of the skin from all the ill-effects of Frost, Cold Winds, and Hard Water. Men will find it delightfully soothing after shaving.

It is neither sticky nor greasy, and can be used at any time during the day.

BOTTLES 1/6 AND 2/6, OF ALL CHEMISTS AND STORES.

If your complexion be too pale, try "LAROLA ROSE BLOOM." It's lovely! 1/-

**M. BEETHAM & SON, CHELTENHAM, ENGLAND.**



# The Windsor Magazine.

No. 335.

## CONTENTS.

*All rights reserved.*

	PAGE
JEAN BOROTRA, LAWN TENNIS COVERED COURT CHAMPION OF FRANCE	591
FALSE PRETENCES ... ..	591
<i>Illustrated by Henry Collier.</i>	
THE RAINBOW ... ..	605
LAWN TENNIS, EXPERIENCES AND OPINIONS ... ..	606
<i>Illustrated from photographs.</i>	
THE WOOD OF SEEN DREAMS ... ..	611
<i>Illustrated by Charles Crombie</i>	
A REVELATION ... ..	619
THE WET BLANKET ... ..	620
<i>Illustrated by Steven Spurrier.</i>	
THE DAY OF ST. MÉRAC ... ..	626
<i>Illustrated by William Hatherell.</i>	
THE POLAND OF TO-DAY, AND HER PLACE AMONG THE NATIONS OF EUROPE	
<i>Illustrated from photographs.</i>	
RINGS OF GOLD: A GIPSY SONG ... ..	637
A STUDY IN MODELLING ... ..	648
<i>Illustrated by Lillian Hocknell.</i>	
SAVING THE SITUATION ... ..	649
<i>Illustrated by P. B. Hickling.</i>	
THE HERO-WORSHIPPER ... ..	653
<i>Illustrated by J. Dewar Mills.</i>	
A SONG OF AUTUMN ... ..	660
THE RULE OF CÆSAR ... ..	666
<i>Illustrated by Howard K. Elcock.</i>	
LITTLE MOTHER ... ..	667
<i>Illustrated by Norah Schlegel.</i>	
LEAVES ... ..	680
EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES ... ..	686
<i>Illustrated by J. H. Thorpe.</i>	
	687

*(Continued on next page.)*

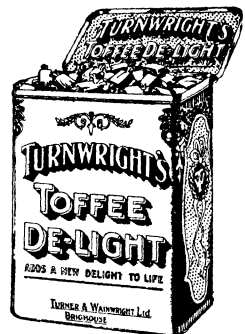
*Healthy nourishment  
for children in the  
sweets they love the best*

Mothers are always most anxious and careful for their children's welfare, and their discrimination for and allegiance to Turnwright's "Toffee De-light" speaks volumes for the goodness in this splendid confection. So, therefore, this great British Sweetmeat, with its good nourishing ingredients, is splendid for us all, young and old.

**A Thrill of Delight with Every Bite.**



Good  
for  
a  
Cold.



**TURNWRIGHT'S**  
"TOFFEE DE-LIGHT"

*Sold in daintly wrapped pieces, 6d. per ½ lb., and in tins.*

Obtainable from Harrods, Whiteleys, John Barker & Co., Ltd., Searc's branches, and all confectioners. If any difficulty is experienced, we will send 1/- or 2/- tin POST FREE on receipt of remittance.

**FREE AND POST PAID**  
Send a postcard for a delightful series of coloured flower and natural history cards. Mention "Windsor Magazine"

Makes: TURNER & WAINWRIGHT, LTD. (Dept. A), BRIGHOUSE, YORKS.

CONTENTS—continued.

	PAGE
AN AFRICAN TRADER'S DAILY LIFE ... .. A. LOTON RIDGER	695
<i>Illustrated by Howard K. Elcock.</i>	
TO A CRISIS ... .. FAY INCHFAWN	701
THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK ... ..	702
“A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE IS A DANGEROUS THING” ... .. HARRY LOW	702
HER HUSBAND ... .. GRACE FORDHAM SPENCE	702
A NATURAL TENDENCY ... .. FRED BUCHANAN	703
GOOD VALUE ... .. NORMAN PETT	703
JUST A POLITE ENQUIRY ... .. L. B. MARTIN	704
THE EXPLANATION ... .. MORGAN RENDLE	705
SO SHOULD I ... ..	706
THE BETTER 'OLE ... .. FRANK R. GREY	706
FORBIDDEN FRUIT ... ..	706
THE MUSIC-LOVERS ... .. HAROLD MURRAY	707
A FAR CRY ... .. CHARLES CHILCOT	707
THE LORD MAYOR'S COACH ... .. ADA LEONORA HARRIS	708
ONE OF TWO THINGS ... .. L. B. MARTIN	708
JELLY-PADS ... .. CHRISTOPHER STONE	708
CLOTHES AND THE MAN ... .. MORGAN RENDLE	708
A FAMILY PROBLEM ... .. FRANK R. GREY	708

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION of “The Windsor Magazine,” post free to any part of the world, 15s.  
At reduced postage rate to Canada, 13s. 6d.

Binding Cases for half-yearly volumes, with the “Windsor” design, can be obtained through any bookseller at 1s. 6d.

Entered as Second-Class Matter at the New York, N.Y., Post Office, May 11th, 1903.  
Registered at the G.P.O. for transmission by the Canadian Magazine Post.

Many of the original drawings, from which the illustrations in the following pages are reproduced, are for sale.  
Terms on application.

[All MSS. (which should be typewritten) and Drawings submitted must bear the names and addresses of the senders, and be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope or stamps; otherwise they will not be considered. The Editor does not hold himself responsible for the safety of any contributions forwarded for his inspection. All communications must be addressed, “The Editor, ‘The Windsor Magazine,’ Warwick House, Salisbury Square, E.C.4.”]

# daily!



Crestona Ginger Wine is a truly delightful drink with a meal. Drink it at luncheon or dinner, or between meals—it is a welcome change from tea or coffee. Try Crestona Ginger Wine this way—-you'll enjoy it

*For your table every day*

Whenever you feel the need of a little refreshment—before you go out or when you come in—you will enjoy a glass of Crestona Ginger Wine—and remember it is ready to drink. You make 75 glasses from the shilling bottle.

Makers: BROWNHILL-WHITE Ltd., LEEDS.

From all good Grocers.

1/- size makes 75 Glasses.

4 1/2 D. size makes 15 Glasses.

**CRESTONA** *Ginger Wine—An inexpensive luxury.*

# WINTER SPORTS.

Your outfit should certainly include a pair of FOX'S PUTTEES. Made in many shades for both LADIES' and MEN'S Wear.

FOR LADIES:	per pair.	FOR MEN:	per pair.
With Spats ...	12/6	Regulation Heavy-weight, 9/-	
(detachable l. extra)		Extra Fine Light-weight, 11/-	
Without Spats ...	7/6	Extra Fine Light Shade, 12/-	

**CAUTION.**—See that the name 'FOX' is on the metal discs (right and left) attached to every genuine pair of FOX'S New Non-Fray Spiral Puttees.



Patentees and Sole Manufacturers:  
**FOX BROS. & CO., Ltd.**, (Dept. Q), Wellington, Somerset.  
 Agents for United States:  
 The Manley & Johnson Corporation, 260, West Broadway, New York.



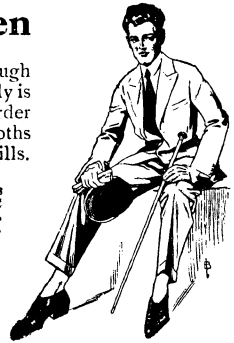
## FOX'S PUTTEES

(F.I.P.—Fox's Improved Puttees)

'Non-Fray Spiral.'

# TAILORING for Particular Men

Tailorcraft at its best is yours, wherever you may reside, through Groves & Lindley's Super-tailor Service by Mail. Individual study is given to every garment by cutters specially trained in post-order tailoring, every vital part is hand-worked by man tailors, and the cloths are the best pure wool fabrics produced by Britain's most famous mills.



**Write To-day for Over 100  
 Cloth Patterns Post Free.**

And illustrated Catalogue of London styles for men. Measurement Chart and self-measure instructions also included.

By cutting out the middleman, Groves & Lindley's **HIGHEST PRICE** for Chesterfield or Ascot Overcoat of best possible cloth is only **£8 10s.** Equally well tailored less expensive cloth from **£4 4s.** **HIGHEST PRICE** Lounge Suit, **£7. Lowest price, £4 4s.** Suit lengths 34 yards; top quality cloth, highest price, **£0/-**. Lowest price, **24/-**. Perfect satisfaction or cash refund without argument guaranteed.

**GROVES & LINDLEY, 106, The Lion, Huddersfield, England.**

## A COST ACCOUNTANT

says—"I feel I owe a great deal to the I.C.S. Book-keeping and Business Training Course. I knew practically nothing about account keeping; now I am Cost Accountant to my firm, who employ upwards of 1,000 hands. My salary has been largely increased." (Student No. AB-19999.)

Ambitious Cashiers should write to-day for the detailed Prospectus "Commercial Training," Gratis and Post Free.  
**International Correspondence Schools, Ltd.,**  
**96, International Buildings, Kingsway, W.C.2**

"THE LIGHT OF THE FUTURE."  
**400 Candle-Power AIR GAS LAMPS**  
**STANLEYS** Approved by the largest Fire Offices.  
 Operating Expenses, **3 HOURS 1d.**  
 1Lantern will illuminate a Barnyard 600 ft. sq. Sixty Styles. Write for List to  
**Dept. 97, STANLEYS (Stratford), Ltd.**  
 Carlton Works, Daubeny Road, Clapton, London, E.5.  
 Showroom: 37, Oxford St. (1st Floor), W.1.  
 Trade Enquiries, 94, Warton Road, London, E.15.

yes, **Iron Jelloids** are a **Reliable Tonic** for man, woman, and child —  
 & only 1/3 per box

# INEBRIETY *and* DRUG-TAKING

These diseases are completely eradicated by the Keeley Treatment in from four to six weeks.

For well over 30 years the Keeley Treatment has been completely successful in the treatment of thousands of cases of Inebriety and Drug-taking. Doctors, scientists, and prominent business men have personally examined the Institute's records, and after witnessing the Treatment in operation, have declared themselves as satisfied that here at last is a permanent, non-injurious cure for the unfortunate victim of drink and drugs. "Truth" itself recently investigated the Keeley Treatment, and in a subsequent four-page Supplement stated frankly that "The usual time needed to effect a cure is four weeks in the case of Inebriety and

five to six weeks in victims of drug habits." The Secretary of the Institute will be glad to furnish proof that the Keeley Treatment definitely removes the *terrible craving for alcohol, opium, morphine, laudanum, chloral and similar drugs*. The patient is not subjected to discomfort and inconvenience, and while in residence at the Institute enjoys perfect freedom to come and go at will. There are all the amenities and the excellent cuisine of a first-class hotel. Within a few days the desire for stimulants disappears, the health begins to improve, the will-power is restored, and in four to six weeks *a complete cure is established*.

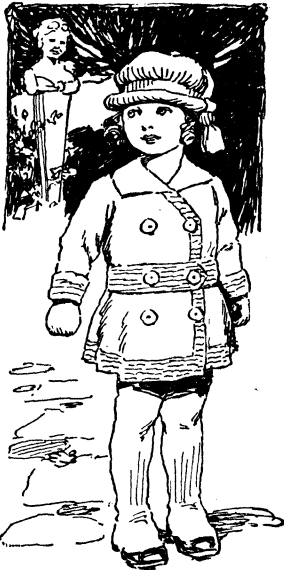
**PROSPECTUS AND "TRUTH" 4-PAGE SUPPLEMENT**  
sent free on application. **All communications in confidence.**

**Honorary Committee:**

Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, Lord Forster of Lepe,  
and the Rev. R. J. Campbell, M.A.

Arrangements can be made, if necessary, for the Treatment to be administered at home, or for a doctor to travel with the patient while taking the cure. The Treatment is always administered by one of our own physicians.

THE KEELEY INSTITUTE (Dept. 10), 9, West Bolton Gardens, LONDON, S.W.  
(Telephone: Kensington 813.)



## Jaeger Comfort

helps to keep the Children healthy and strong during the trying days of Autumn and Winter.

This little "Brushed" Knitted Suit can be worn by Boy or Girl. It consists of Double-breasted Coat, Breechette Gaiters to waist, Hat and Mitts.

**Ask for Style 3257**

Length of Coat 14 in. 16 in. 18 in. 20 in. 22 in. 24 in.  
35/- 37/6 40/- 42/6 45/- 48/-  
White, Fawn, Lemon, Sky, Saxe.

**JAEGER**  
*(Pure Wool)*

**London Depots:**

126, REGENT ST., W.1.	102, KENSINGTON HIGH ST., W.8.
456, STRAND, W.C.2.	131a, VICTORIA STREET, S.W.1.
39, SLOANE ST., S.W.1.	85 and 86, CHEAPSIDE, E.C.2.

Jaeger Agents in every town and throughout the British Empire.

Ask for the Jaeger  
Children's Booklet.

# Mr. Jeffery Farnol

Author of "The Broad Highway," "The Amateur Gentleman," "Black Bartlemy's Treasure," etc., etc., has literally millions of admirers, and he possesses a Berkeley chair of which he writes:—

*"The Berkeley Chair is very comfortable and roomy—I find it a chair conducive to thought; and if I must confess it—to sleep."*

**S**PEND the long evenings in the luxurious ease and restfulness of a Berkeley Easy Chair. In the Berkeley is all the comfort the heart can desire. It makes the fireside sheer delight to every home-lover. Every year the demand for Berkeley grows and grows—sure evidence of the pleasure and satisfaction afforded by this wonderful combination of comfort and value. Now is the time to add this handsome and durable piece of furniture to your home.

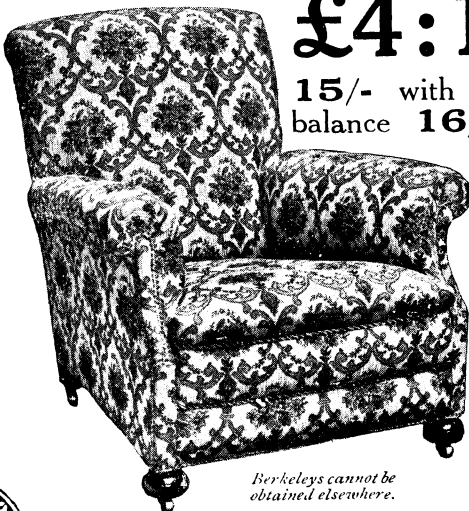


## The **Berkeley** Easy Chair

HAS THE LARGEST SALE OF ANY EASY CHAIR IN THE WORLD.

Berkeley value is as wonderful as Berkeley comfort. Every chair is sold direct to the public, saving all intermediate expenses and profits, and the huge output enables us to reduce manufacturing costs to a minimum. Therefore the Berkeley has all the comfort, elegance, durability and refinement associated with Easy Chairs costing far more than the Berkeley price.

The Berkeley is designed to afford perfect rest to body and brain. It is fitted with long steel-coppered springs in the seat, back and front edge. It has bold, broad, heavily upholstered arms with an extra deep seat and double-bordered front. Get a Berkeley NOW; you will then have a sound, handsome Easy Chair which will give you perfect service for long after the price is forgotten.



*Berkeleys cannot be obtained elsewhere.*

### £4:15:0

15/- with order, and balance 16/- monthly.

FULL CASH WITH ORDER  
£4:10:0

FREE DELIVERY  
in England & Wales  
(Scotland 5/- extra)

You take no risk in ordering a Berkeley, for every Chair is

#### SOLD ON THE MONEY-BACK PRINCIPLE.

Soon after receipt of first payment with your order, we send the Berkeley *Carrriage Paid* in England and Wales (Scotland 5/- extra). If upon examination it is not completely satisfactory, you may return it within 7 days AT OUR EXPENSE and we will REFUND YOUR MONEY IN FULL.

**FREE** Write for samples of Tapestries to choose your own covering, Post Free with full specification.

#### H. J. SEARLE & SON, LTD.

Manufacturing Upholsterers,  
(Dept. W.M.), 70-78, Old Kent Road, S.E. 1

West End Showrooms:

133, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W. 1,  
And at 61-63, London Road, Croydon.

# Pascall



BY APPOINTMENT

# PRINCE OF WALES CHOCOLATES

WILLIAM CLOWES & SONS, LTD.  
WARD, LOCK & CO., LTD.

London: Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES & SONS, LTD., Duke Street, Stamford Street, S.E.1, and Great Windmill Street, W.1, and Published Monthly by the Proprietors, WARD, LOCK & CO., LTD., Salisbury Square, London, E.C.4.

Editorial communications to be addressed "The Editor, Windsor Magazine, Salisbury Square, E.C.4."











**BOUND**

**FEB 26 1928**

**UNIV. OF MICH.  
LIBRARY**

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



**3 9015 05707 6385**

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
1922

WINDSOR  
MAGAZINE

56

AP  
4  
W 7

JUNE NOV  
1922

UNIV  
OF  
MICH