

"THIRD HAND HIGH"—A NOVEL BY DUFFIELD OSBORNE.

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THE SMART SET

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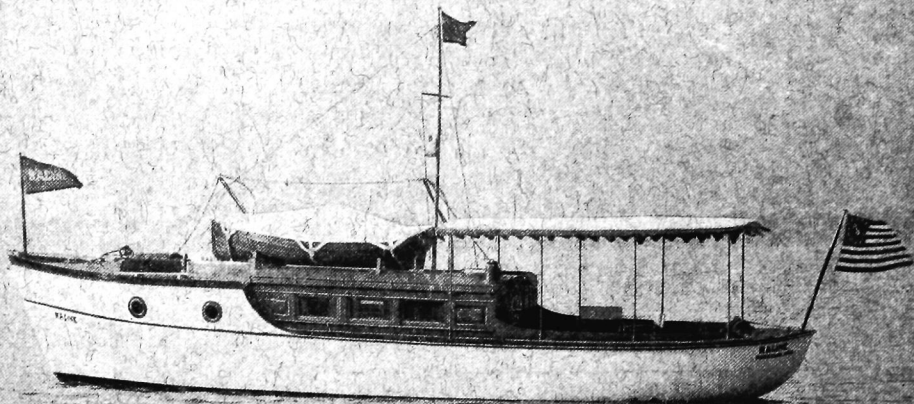
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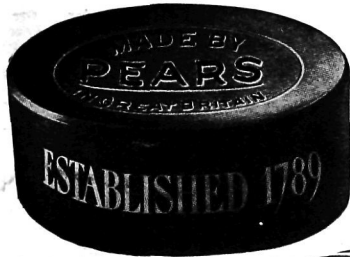
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THIRD HAND HIGH

By DUFFIELD OSBORNE

THE gloom that enveloped Drayton as he lay in his steamer chair was not of the night alone nor of the cloud of tobacco smoke that enveloped him. Eight bells had tolled, and the good old *Illyria* plowed her way eastward through the billowing hills of the Atlantic, staidly, steadily, inevitably, as became a conservative Cunarder, quite content that newer lines or even degenerate Cunarders on northern and more fashionable routes should hustle their five and six day tourists through their five and six days of undignified roll and plunge and "git thar" vibrations of screws that would not stay under water, as a well bred screw does. All that concerned the *Illyria* was that they *should* get there—ultimately, and, curiously enough, this certainty lay heavily upon Drayton's soul. Already they were eight days out. Four more, and then the romance of his life would be over.

He had always loved the peaceful laziness of good, old-fashioned steamers with big, livable staterooms and without big, unlivable crowds, and his slender artist's purse was quite willing to forego palm gardens and gymnasiums and fancy prices. Now there was no peace or comfort in comfortable things.

Had the *Illyria* been a six-day ocean leviathan, he might never have seen Constance Trevor; or, at any rate, probably not enough to know her for the only woman he ever wanted to know. On the other hand, had theirs only been a Latin ship—and he fell to dreaming over his dead pipe—why, they might have got into some sort of trouble, and then everybody would have lost his head

except himself, who, having lost only his heart, would have fought off the mob of swarthy little sailors and crazy stokers till he got Constance a place in a boat. Maybe they'd be picked up a few days later, after he'd gone without his rations and his coat so that she'd be better cared for. Maybe they wouldn't. It didn't really matter much. Nothing mattered except getting safely to Palermo, and old Uncle Trevor and Mrs. Trevor and Constance bidding him a friendly good-bye and going off with that unspeakably rich young McArdle of Pittsburg.

Perhaps Constance would express a hope that they might meet somewhere in Sicily. He felt pretty sure her uncle and aunt and McArdle would express no such hope, since the latter had all too evidently been asked to become one of their party expressly to marry Constance, and since that young woman had been inconsiderate enough to spend at least half her time with the impecunious New York artist.

Well, there was no use lying on deck all night. He got up and shook the pleasant dreams and grim realities out with his rug. The sandwiches were doubtless all gone by now and the smoking room closed. Perhaps he'd sleep, even if he had no right to. He was sane enough yet to hope he would.

Penfield Drayton was past thirty. He had worked hard for the last ten years, in Paris and at home, and he had worked because he loved it and with no eye toward the material side of his art. His wants were simple, or had been until the coming of this great new want, and they had been supplied he hardly knew how. Some day he

might be rich and famous, when riches and fame would be only riches and fame, because Constance would be Mrs. McArdle. Drayton tossed in his berth, and the dreams came again. Did she *want* to be Mrs. McArdle? That was the question. McArdle was rich with all the wealth of his ironmonger father, but Drayton doubted if the young man had fallen heir as well to the simple, rugged, illiterate manhood of the old ex-furnace hand—except, perhaps, the illiterate part. Young McArdle had wasted his four years at Harvard, so he'd heard, and had worse than wasted some of the rest of his life. Still, he was rich, and Mr. and Mrs. Trevor liked him. Constance was nice to him, as she was to everybody, but did she love him? That she'd given so much of her time to Drayton meant little. Girls played off that way with men, and the best of them were inexplicably prone to give their hearts to the most hopeless duffers. All he felt fairly sure of was that the money wouldn't influence her conclusively, and that, at least, was a comfort.

Would it be perfectly square, though, for him to play the game for all it was worth—to ask her to share, instead, his life with its present hard times and its more than doubtful future? Could he, loving her as he did, assume that his best happiness would be hers? And must he not place her happiness above his own? These were questions that drove him mad with their insistence.

Mrs. Van Santvoord always used to say that Drayton thought too much; that that was the only thing could ever prevent his being a great artist; and I'm generally disposed to believe what she says, no matter how revolutionary it sounds. I've learned to from experience. She maintains that the men who succeed most nowadays—not always best, but *most*—are the men who have something of the feminine in their make-up; who don't stop to balance and analyze, but work their intuition instead of their reason, see one thing at a time and go and get it without stopping to consider whether there's any reason why they shouldn't. The

other fellow, who sees both sides, is apt to be a little slow for a rapid, progressive age, when most people don't have time to think and can't, anyhow, and the mob appreciates none but the man who is cocksure of himself and everything else, and who just *does* and thinks afterward—if at all—when it can't delay action. Even the fool things he does don't hurt him, because he's done so much else before it's found out that folks' attention is distracted.

II

WHEN Drayton woke up—for he had slept a little in spite of all—he saw the morning cloudless and calm, as if callously unconscious that for him there could be, at the best, but three more. On deck, outside his window and above, he could hear the tramp of conscientious fellow passengers "taking exercise" before breakfast, and, tubbed and dressed, he soon joined them.

Uncle Trevor happened to be the first he greeted. Uncle Trevor was usually inclined to be sociable and friendly when Aunt Elvira was not around. He liked Drayton well enough and did not bother much about Mrs. Trevor's opinion that the artist was in the way, nor her intuition that it might be troublesome to get him out. Mrs. Trevor had set her heart on the McArdle alliance, and Trevor's heart was his wife's. Naturally, his niece would do as her aunt wished, just as he and everyone else did, even supposing there were not several other good reasons, as there were.

Therefore, he said "Good morning" pleasantly and let Drayton join him in his tramp.

"Been to Sicily before, haven't you?" he remarked, as they made the circuit.

"Twice," said Drayton.

"Stay there long?"

"Three months the first time and five the second."

"Must have found a good deal to interest you."

"It's very paintable, and it interests

me in all sorts of ways. When the world is hustling so and every place is trying its best to get like every other place as soon as possible, I find it rather a luxury to slip back into the Middle Ages for a while."

Trevor looked doubtful.

"I take it the Middle Ages weren't especially comfortable to live in," he said. "Things rather higgledy-piggledy and dirty and dangerous."

"Oh, yes, if you look at it that way," smiled Drayton; "but what I like is the contrast. I find I appreciate my morning tub and all the rest of civilization lots more after I've had a few months of the other thing."

"Don't know how I'll get along without plenty of water and clean food," growled Trevor, drawing his brows together.

"Better keep out of the kitchens," said Drayton, laughing. "As long as you don't look you'll be all right."

"No good hotels at all?" queried the older man, with a sort of pathetic appeal in his voice.

"Here and there and after a fashion, in two or three of the big towns, but they're spotty. You'll find electric lights and no bathtub in one place, and bully grub and all the room sweepings under the bed in another. I don't know one where it hangs together; but the food is usually good."

Trevor brightened perceptibly.

"Well, it's not my funeral," he said resignedly. "Constance has been crazy for a year to go, and McArdle took kindly to the notion—I suppose, because it gives him a pretty good chance to have Constance all to himself; and Mrs. Trevor—well, I don't know why Mrs. Trevor agreed with them. She's pretty fond of her comfort, but she has her reasons for most things—and they're generally good ones."

The last words, Drayton thought, came out a bit defiantly. He imagined he knew why Mrs. Trevor was willing to forego her comfort for a few weeks. You can't gather in a millionaire nephew-in-law without some sacrifices, especially when you're cursed with a

niece who has foolish notions of her own. In his chats with Miss Trevor, allusions to McArdle had always been quite incidental. He was "a friend traveling with them—an especial friend of her aunt's." Drayton had not wasted time in wondering whether this phrasing was a straight tip or a girl's regulation classing of an admired admirer as "a friend of the family." He knew enough to know he'd never know any more until Time, in her gracious fullness, should be pleased to enlighten him. Frankly, he did not like McArdle, but he was fair enough to realize that he might be prejudiced in the matter.

III

ANOTHER day had come and gone, and Drayton noted its passing with a sinking heart. He had seen little of Miss Trevor, and had smoked and pondered gloomily over what it seemed wildly imaginative to call his "chances." She would be in Sicily for three weeks, he understood. So would he, and for more, but what good would that do him? Sicily was a pretty big place, and his *pensions* and little artist hotels were not for such as the Trevors and McArdle. First star in Baedeker would be all too unpretentious for them. Besides, he had an abiding conviction that Mrs. Trevor would see to it that their points of contact were as few as possible, and he cursed himself because, early in the voyage, he had so freely given them his itinerary.

Four bells struck. He had spent the evening reading in the saloon, probably because the deck and the stars would have been much pleasanter. She was on the deck, though, and so was McArdle, their steamer chairs side by side. Voices came to him from the companion way above—a woman bidding a man good night; and, with ears preternaturally sharpened, he recognized whose they were.

A moment later, she came down and, book in hand, he met her at the door of the saloon.

"Isn't it rather early to turn in on a night like this?" he asked.

"You don't seem to appreciate it much."

Drayton looked embarrassed for an instant. Then he said:

"One needs the best company to appreciate the best nights, and it seems a pity to spoil them by taking them at anything but their best."

"Very logical and very sophistical, I'm afraid, Mr. Drayton," she said, shaking her head at him.

He saw the little blond locks curled close about her temples by the sea air, and blurted out:

"Anyhow, I didn't care to see anyone else getting more out of the night than I could. The best way to go without luxuries is not to see them—or think of them."

Her eyes opened wider.

"How narrow and selfish and—cowardly! And I was wondering what had become of you today and hoping you'd come up and take the chair next me."

"With Mr. McArdle on the other side?" He could not help saying it.

"Why not?" she asked innocently. "Perhaps he'd have gone to the smoking room in a little while."

Drayton sprang to a quick resolve. "Come back and give me a chance to enjoy the evening a little," he pleaded.

"But how can I? I've just told him I felt tired and was going to turn in. What will he think to see me come back with you?"

He disposed of McArdle briefly under his breath.

"There's the after starboard boat—pretty much in the shadow. Put on a head wrap instead of your cap, and we can roll our rugs around us and lie on the canvas and look out at the ocean."

"What a conspirator you'd make!" she laughed.

"Conspire with me, then. I haven't had a bit good time today."

She eyed him a moment, considering.

"Well," she said with much deliberation, "if you really have had such a horrid day, it's been mostly your own fault, but I suppose that doesn't make it any better. I'll risk it for half an

hour. I warn you, though, if I'm caught, my aunt will make it very unpleasant."

"Oh, you won't be caught," said Drayton gleefully. "She'll think you're up here with McArdle, and they won't compare notes."

"I'm not so sure," and, while she left him to get the wrap that was also to do duty as disguise, he found himself construing her last remark.

It would not quite construe, though, and, in a moment, she was back. They dodged out together on the deck, Drayton first, narrowly missed McArdle as he was starting down for the smoking room, and scurried off in safety to the boat. There he arranged her comfortably on the springy canvas and spread himself out alongside.

For a while they lay watching the Mediterranean and the stars, each dreaming or thinking—what dreams or thoughts the other knew not. She turned toward him abruptly:

"You don't like Mr. McArdle. Why not?"

Drayton gathered his wits together in the darkness.

"Really, I don't know him," he said. "We've only exchanged a few sentences. His manners are all right. I haven't got any further."

"Yes; but you don't like him," she persisted. "I know you don't, and I want to know why. It isn't just curiosity."

"Well, if you really must know, I think it's because if he wasn't here I might see a little more of you."

"Oh, please be serious."

"I am. More serious than you can believe. More serious than I ever dreamed I could be. And I'm trying to be fair to him, too, which isn't easy."

He could not see her face very well. The wrap shadowed it, and she was gazing straight out over the sea. At last she said:

"I think you've done quite well, Mr. Drayton, all things considered."

"You've been very good to me," he said slowly; "but, don't you know, there are times when a man is unreasonable. I've wanted all the time I

had and all he had, too. In a day or so it's he that will have it all."

Again there was a pause, while he still saw only her profile. Then she looked him full in the face.

"I suppose you know my aunt wants me to marry him."

It was no news, but the frankness of the statement hit him hard.

"Do *you* want to?" he blurted out.

"No."

"Then don't."

"I'm afraid you don't know Aunt Elvira—and, besides, you haven't given me any reason why I shouldn't."

"You've given the best of all reasons."

"But Aunt Elvira will insist on a better. Other people's mere wants have never counted much in her life."

Drayton half rose on his elbow and squared himself toward her.

"Will you marry me?" he said. "I have next to nothing to give you except a love that McArdle could never feel, even for himself. I *don't* like him, and that's straight, but I'm not going to run him down. I don't doubt he's a good enough fellow in lots of ways and that he'll treat you well. No one could ever treat you badly, and he, certainly, can give a hundred things that women like you want and ought to have. With me it's always been and always will be a fight for the decent necessities of life, and I'm a selfish brute to ask you to fight beside me. I can't help it, though. Will you?"

His words had poured out like the rush of damned-up water suddenly loosed. She had put out her hand to him. Now she laid it gently on his with a touch that carried with it a sense of check.

"You must not talk that way," she said. "You haven't known me long—don't know me at all. I like you—like you very much indeed—better than any man I've met. If I loved you I wouldn't stop a moment for the material side—and it's more material than you think. I'd be happy in a tenement house; but a woman must really love—for that. Then it's all right."

She had drawn back her hand and

with set face he watched the ever advancing waves.

"You mustn't feel badly about it," she said. "I *do* like you better than anyone. Isn't that something?"

"I'm afraid it's worse than nothing, when a man wants more. I *have* more. I have my love for you. I hadn't the least reason to imagine you cared, but I'm glad you know that I do. I've only given you what was yours, and you shall do what you please with it for all my life."

"You are very generous," she said, but he shook his head, smiling, and answered:

"No. You don't understand. I'm only honest, and all I give, I keep, to make up for what you don't give—and for what you do. I've sometimes wondered whether that Old Testament story of the widow's cruse was not meant to symbolize love, giving support for the lives of all the household and yet, in giving, always filled again by God."

Her voice seemed to tremble a little when she spoke again:

"You *are* good to me. I may think that, mayn't I? And—and, even if I don't love you, I'm afraid I need you. I'd feel very sad if I thought this was the end. It isn't, is it? I shall see you in Sicily, shall I not?"

Drayton's eyes flashed with gladness. "I'll be near whenever you want me. Not near enough for your aunt to trouble you about it, but always in the town where you are for as long as you stay."

"And you won't let me marry Mr. McArdle?"

She was inscrutable again behind her laughing mask, and Drayton felt at once both depression and exultation without knowing the wherefore of either.

"Not if I have to dispose of him in true *mafioso* fashion," he said, falling in with her mood. "One can do as one pleases about such things in Sicily, you know. There's something else I want to say, too. I'm not going to give up. I've always thought it rather shabby for a very poor man to try to

make a girl care for him when she didn't, but, somehow, it looks different now. I don't think I'm strong enough to live up to my principles, you see, and I'm going to try to win you."

"I wish you could." She rose quickly from the boat. In an instant he stood beside her on the deck and she gave him her hand, frankly, in very friendly fashion, and yet its warm pressure seemed to carry to him an encouragement he had not felt before. Then she drew it away.

"I'm going now. You must stay here a few minutes. Aunt Elvira may be waiting for me, and I don't want to make your task any harder."

"I don't care how hard it is. I'm going to win," said he doggedly.

"You have my best wishes, sir," and she courtesied low. The next minute he stood alone on the deck.

There are men who might easily have thought she was playing with them, but this never once crossed Drayton's mind. He knew she was not like that. He had told her how much he cared, and he felt that, behind all her badinage, there was something of earnest; more hope, a thousand times, than in her seriously spoken words. Very thoughtfully he went to his stateroom. It was to be a fight, then, for the best prize in the world. He could not solve the puzzle of her feelings; perhaps she did not know them herself. It had all been very sudden and unexpected; but, if she did not care for him, he knew now she cared less for the other man, and, somehow, way down in his inner consciousness lay the certainty that he had a chance.

IV

WHAT bade fair to be the last day of the voyage, for the ship was making excellent time, dawned calm and cloudless. Drayton rose late. He did not want to have to talk to old Trevor. He did not want to talk to anyone. After breakfast he saw Constance walking with McArdle, but this did not trouble him, and he played chess with the ship's doctor. After luncheon, per-

haps, it would be different, but before she came on deck, and as he lounged over the rail, he was conscious of someone beside him and a voice said:

"The Captain tells us we'll land tomorrow morning. Isn't it a pity, Mr. Drayton, these delightful steamer acquaintances that one makes only to lose?"

Mrs. Trevor stood at his elbow and Drayton wondered vaguely what she wanted. She had been rather pleasant to him the first two or three days out. Then she had stiffened up more and more, as his evident interest in her niece had grown, and when McArdle had had to fight for that young woman's society. Now she was all smiles, more affable than ever. Was it only to suggest to him that his acquaintance with Constance was to end? If so, he opined that Aunt Elvira, with all her cleverness and habit of getting her own way, was wrong for once.

"There's no place like a steamer for setting things right between young people," she went on; "and this voyage has taken a real weight from my mind."

Drayton was still all at sea—in both senses, but he smiled pleasantly and said:

"I'm glad to hear it, Mrs. Trevor; but I'm afraid I don't know just what you mean."

"Oh!" She looked at him with surprise. "I thought you knew about my niece and Mr. McArdle."

Drayton felt gritty and angry. It seemed a pretty shallow trick for a clever woman to play, one that spoke poorly for her estimate of his intelligence. Either he had made himself a dangerous factor and knew too much to be fooled so easily, or else he hadn't, and could be safely ignored. In either case Aunt Elvira's transparency might have been left unlighted. His tone may have voiced a little of his disgust.

"I presume I'm too much of a stranger to you all to make my congratulations worth while."

Mrs. Trevor ignored the comment and seemed to burst out as if with a spontaneous confidence:

"Of course Jack McArdle is the dearest kind of a dear boy, and I've always been fond of him, but I've never been quite sure that Constance was."

Drayton smiled. There did not seem to be anything else especial for him to do, and Mrs. Trevor went on:

"You see—really I don't know why I'm telling you all this. Isn't it funny how intimate people get on a steamer? Somehow, I feel as if we had known each other for ages. You *are* interested, aren't you?" (He could assure her on that point with absolute truthfulness.) "Mr. Trevor has always been a very decided man, you know. Not but that I recognize he's generally right, but I *have* sometimes thought he might be a little more diplomatic. He knew Mr. McArdle and Constance were just made for each other, and, with him, that settled it; but Constance is such a queer girl, so independent, that he might easily have set her against all his ideas, and then I tremble to think of how unpleasant it would certainly have been for her. He'd have used his authority as executor and guardian to the full."

Drayton looked mildly interrogative, but a glimmer of what was coming and why began to light his mind.

"Do you think men should make their wills so their children's inheritance depends on someone else's approval of their marriage? I don't, generally speaking; but John Trevor, Constance's father, you know, had such absolute confidence in William that that's just what he did. In this particular case I believe it was right, because girls are so erratic nowadays and you can't tell whom they *may* marry. Constance only has about fifty thousand dollars, but I don't believe she'd ever have got a cent of it if she'd thrown Jack McArdle over. Mr. Trevor would never have approved of anyone else, and Constance's younger brother would have got his money and hers, too, as the will provided, because George is a dear, and I know he'll always take his uncle's advice. You see, if one child is disobedient the other gets the whole hundred thousand dollars John Trevor left. Isn't it horrid?"

The highly inconsistent peroration brought no smile, even to Drayton's eyes. He was filled with a resentment that, for the moment, swamped both his sense of humor and the pain that must follow. The asininity of the late John Trevor (even if he was Constance's father) touched him, but touched him lightly. It was this woman's fatuous posing of poor old wife-ridden Uncle William as the principal of her own mercenary and ambitious scheming, and it was her obvious motive in telling the story to him, Penfield Drayton, that stirred him to a rage he could scarcely keep within polite bounds. What did she care how patent and in how wretched form it all was? He was only an artist, with a small and precarious income, and his opinion of her weighed nothing. The one thing in her mind was to get the fact flatly before him, and she had done it with feminine and brutal simplicity. The only redeeming feature of the performance was its seeming to concede that his depriving Constance of her inheritance would clinch the impossibility of his suit, since his own prospects could hardly hope to make it up to her. This, at least, inferred that he had in him a measure of decency, and it never occurred to him that, even there, he might have flattered her, that she might have assumed that a penniless Constance would have fewer charms for him. Such a viewpoint, as Mrs. Van Santvoord said later, when we talked the whole affair over, was a thing that evidenced most clearly Drayton was a gentleman. He could never imagine anyone would think he wasn't.

Mrs. Trevor had said what she had to say and was silent, studying, doubtless, the effect of her *coup*. Drayton was holding fast to face and speech that she might discover nothing behind the mask of his careless smile. Then, her furtive scrutiny ended, she changed the subject.

"You've been in Sicily before, haven't you, Mr. Drayton?"

"Twice," he said. Trevor had asked the same question, just as would everyone else on a steamer who knew he had

been—merely to make conversation. Mrs. Trevor, however, followed the subject up on different lines from those that had interested her husband.

"Tell me, is it quite safe there, with all those horrid brigands one hears of? I read a perfectly awful story once, by Washington Irving; but that was long ago, wasn't it? I can't help feeling nervous about such things."

Drayton could not, for the life of him, feel called upon to relieve her anxiety. She was a woman, to be sure, but there were limits to consideration. Still, his words were all right on the surface and strictly truthful withal.

"I've never had any trouble, Mrs. Trevor," he said carelessly. "They don't bother poor people, you know, who don't make any splurge."

"But, really, are there any brigands now? I'd been told—that is, I've thought—Oh, I wouldn't have dreamed of coming if I'd supposed there was any danger!"

"I don't suppose there is. Of course the Sicilians are a rather lawless lot—the result of centuries of bad laws harshly enforced and badly enforced good ones. Those I've talked with don't seem to like to say much about such things as organized brigandage. There may be sporadic outbreaks in some districts, but I know of no authenticated instance of it for several years. I think I wouldn't worry. McArdle had better be careful he isn't known for a Pittsburg steel king, though."

For his life he could not have withheld that last shot. Also he frankly hoped Mrs. Trevor would ignore his wise advice not to worry, and it pleased him to surmise that she probably would. She walked away a moment later with the words:

"Well, I think such places are perfectly horrid, and I wish I'd never consented to our coming. We needn't stay any longer than we want to, thank goodness!"

She was not very agreeable company, he reflected, but, left alone, his own reflections were worse. If his shot

had hit, hers had gone clean through, and he did not doubt the truth of her statement or that Trevor would do as she dictated in the matter. The few words Constance had dropped had carried a suggestion that strong material influences would be brought to bear in McArdle's favor. How, then, was it possible for him to urge a suit that meant not only her sharing a poor artist's slender fortunes, but losing her own patrimony into the bargain?

V

WHEN they docked the next day, the inherent and disgustingly sordid difficulties of the situation loomed quite as large in Drayton's vision. Constance, too, had seemed to avoid him. Perhaps he had not tried very hard to be with her. How could he? And he could hardly expect that she, ignorant of the knowledge that restrained him, should force the note. In her adieu, though, there was a gleam of consolation.

"We shall spend a week in Palermo, at the Hotel des Palmes," she said, as she gave him her hand. "You will call, won't you?"

Drayton could only trust himself to thank her and say he would. Then he surrendered his slender baggage to a persistent cabman and was whirled away toward his modest hostelry of past Palermo days, the Pension Suisse.

Why it was called that, Drayton had never been able to determine, except because it was cheap and comfortable. "Pension Suisse" is pretty apt to mean these things in Italy, but in this particular case the name seemed even less nationally descriptive than usual. It was Sicilian through and through, Sicilian in ownership and service and table and guests, and it occupied the ancient Palazzo Monteleone, with its delightful terrace and rich gardens, whose gigantic pine trees looked down, for aught one knows, upon the slayers and the slain of the bloody "Vespers."

It was pleasant to be greeted by old friends, and here they were so indeed,

at least in the warmth of their greetings. There were the pine trees that nodded their great bushy heads and said nothing. There was the slim, black mustached Sicilian Count with the cigarette stained fingers, and the fat Roumanian Princess, who had both lived here perhaps not quite so long as the pine trees, but who said much more; and, last but not least, there was the spry, round, little Pietro, majordomo, headwaiter and general factotum of the establishment.

With how grand a manner, such as no servitor of tourists' hotels could ever match, did Pietro's huge candlestick lead the way up the broad, dark stair with its hand grip of heavy purple cording festooned and tasseled! Behind came Giuseppe, the *facchino* and Annunziata, the *cameriera*, all bubbling with welcome. The signor Americano had not forgotten them! The famous artist was glad to return? Did he know that Luigia, the wife of the *portiere*, had another *bambino*? And that it was christened Vittoria? That the *padrona's* daughter was to be married next month? That Pio, the lean, black cat, had run away and they feared—but he was in his big comfortable room now, with its windows looking down on the garden, and these warm-hearted, chattering children were falling over each other to put things in order for him. Under such conditions even the most exemplary New England housewife could not look too closely at the dust in the corners or demand an absolutely clean towel cover for the rickety little table.

Dinner was such a function as greeted that other homecoming of a prodigal son, only the calf was kid, admirably cooked, and the fish such as the Mediterranean gives and none but a Sicilian chef can turn out. Pietro danced about, urging repeated helpings of this dish and that, and Drayton and the Count and the Princess touched glasses brimming with the Marsala that was "on the house" in honor of the ancient guest's return. Not till he had gone to his room for the night and looked out upon the moonlight and the pine

trees could pain find place again in his heart.

Two days passed, days of mental wrestlings, before he went to the Hotel des Palmes and sent up his card. He had decided definitely that he would not go and he knew all the time that he would. Probably she'd be off sight-seeing that evening. The thought gave him an excuse for going and deep anxiety lest it should justify itself; but she was at home and soon came down to him in the salon.

"Oh, Mr. Drayton, how divine it all is!" she burst out, with what, he imagined, was a nervous eagerness to take the lead in the conversation and carry it to harmless tourist topics. "I love every bit of it: the air, the city, the people. No wonder you come here so often. We've been *rushing* every minute of the time."

"I'm glad you're not rushing now," said Drayton, but she led him back again.

"I suppose you find lots of old friends."

"Yes," he assented, rather wearily. "They're glad to see me at the *pension*; but, then, you know, they get glad pretty easily; just as they get sad or angry or anything."

For a moment the exchange of artificialities seemed to lag, and he watched her with observing artist's eyes, and thought her less happy than her words and manner tried to express.

"Are you really enjoying yourself?" he asked.

"No."

"I feared not. Won't you tell me why? I wish I could have taken you around and shown you Palermo."

"Oh, it isn't that. Aunt Elvira has been—well, she's been horrid. She wants her way, and I suppose she'll have to have it, sooner or later. Why didn't you ask for her, too, when you sent up your card?"

"For several reasons," said Drayton. "In the first place, she didn't ask me to call. In the second, I didn't want to see her, and, in the third, she and I are at war and we might just as well recognize the fact."

"But, don't you see, it's all used against me? Logic and justice don't count, and perhaps you might see more of me if you made yourself useful to her."

Drayton shook his head. "It's *à outrance*, and we both know it. She wants to make you do what you don't want to. I'm not going to let her."

"But you don't understand."

"Yes, I do. She told me, and I've been telling myself that I must not trouble you. All the time I knew I must, and I know it now most surely, when you're unhappy. You need not marry me, but you shan't marry McArdle if you don't want to."

She had heard him with quickly changing expression. He saw the flush of indignation when she realized Mrs. Trevor's act, and he thought he detected something of relief and hope when he spoke with an assurance he knew he did not feel. Then another flush came, and she answered hesitatingly:

"Mr. Drayton, I'm afraid you think me very mercenary and mean. It isn't quite that. Uncle and aunt have been the only father and mother I've ever known, and she's very kind, even if she does want her own way. Frankly, I like Mr. McArdle and I'd have married him with a pretty clear conscience, and aunt knows it, if—if—"

"If what?" and Drayton leaned forward.

"If I hadn't met someone else on the steamer," she said, and her eyes rose level with his.

There were others in the salon. Drayton could only lay his hand on hers. Then he rose, because he knew that, unless he went away very quickly, he'd take her in his arms, in spite of the place and the shocked spectators.

"You've given me new heart," he said, still holding her hand closely imprisoned. "I know you won't marry McArdle now, but I can't think quite clearly enough to know anything else just yet—only, will you leave it all to me? I'll promise not to ask you to do what will lose you anything but him and his wealth."

"I'll do anything you tell me to," she said in a low voice; "and I don't care what I lose. You mustn't think too much about that side of it, and Aunt Elvira has earned a little bit of rebellion."

She was standing close to him and, as she spoke, she looked up with a flicker of the old smile. He bent quickly and kissed her. Then he went out. It seemed all so brother-and-sister-like that the hotel crowd wouldn't know—only he and she.

VI

DRAYTON walked rapidly across the Maria Square, walking on air rather than pavement; but the pavement was there, hard and uncompromising, and he came down to it before he reached the Via Cavour. He had made two promises and he must keep them both. How was another matter, if Mrs. Trevor stood fast and held Trevor to his discipline, as he divined she would. After that was the future, its door open to happiness. So, planless but resolved and with mind veering from exultation to depression and back again, he gained the Via Monteleone and the house of his friends. A pipe on the terrace would clear his mind and that refuge would doubtless be empty at this hour.

But the terrace was not empty. Lying back comfortably in a reclining chair was Count Ascanio, his ever-present cigarette between his fingers. He waved it sociably toward Drayton, who realized suddenly that company was not such a bad thing, after all, when it breathed in its very presence the *simpatia* of the Latin south. He sat down beside the little Count and they smoked a while in silence. That was part of the *simpatia*. He did not even realize how closely his companion was studying him out of the corner of his eye.

The Sicilian dropped the ashes from his cigarette with a graceful gesture.

"The signor is sad," he said. "Is it of the sadness that goes away with

words? If so, I beg you to remember you are with a friend."

Drayton felt strangely inclined to confidence. He had by nature all the reticence of his race, a reticence that makes the heart a fortress to which few can penetrate, but the Latin blood knew not such reserve, and the Sicilian moonlight, playing amid the darkness of the Calabrian pines, works potently. He felt that he really wanted to speak, and yet he could not.

"The moon is very beautiful," said the Count dreamily. "She is kind to lovers."

Drayton started. There seemed to him something uncanny in such intuitive knowledge, or was his heart in his face? The Sicilian went on:

"When the young are troubled and do not speak, it is money or love. The signor does not play and he is an artist. The money does not disturb him, therefore—"

"Yes," broke in Drayton quickly. "But your moon is kind only to her own lovers of the South. She does not care for us cold Americans and English."

"Ah, but she has of the hospitality for the strangers who come to us and who yield allegiance to her power!"

It seemed easier to speak now; much easier. In some mysterious way, Drayton felt himself, for the moment, of the very soil. God knows, he had wanted to talk—had felt that he must to someone, and his words, once loosed, poured forth into willing and appreciative ears.

Count Ascanio lighted another cigarette and listened to all the story of the steamer and the rival and the aunt and uncle with their purpose and their power. Of course, the money part that had seemed so sordid to the American would loom vital and very reasonable to the Sicilian mind. It was a natural feature of the complication, and, though Drayton tried to impress his hearer with the point of honor that alone affected him, he was conscious that the Count's ideas would embrace it from all its sides. He found himself resenting this probable misconception

in advance, but there is an intuitive tact that avoids perils outside its comprehension.

He ended his tale almost defiantly, and the other spoke gravely, after a moment of soothing silence.

There was much of good fortune in his friend's affair. The lady he loved loved him and would be guided, but he was right in feeling he should not guide her to the losing of her patrimony. Doubtless the uncle and aunt would use their power to the full. That was to be expected, and, from their standpoint, they must not be blamed. It was for the lover to outwit them. What was there of love without such obstacles and their overcoming? The signor must take courage. The place counted for much. He was in Sicily, where romance ever triumphed and he, Ascanio, Count di Calascibetta, would do himself the honor, as the host of a romance, to ponder over the matter and advise.

There was not a word of it all from which Drayton's morbid sensitiveness could shrink. He especially admired the adoption of his own point of view, however foolish or narrow it might seem to his friend; and he realized, with a certain sense of comfort, that the Count's confidence of winning the game must include saving Miss Trevor's money as well as gaining her hand. After all, it didn't make much difference how that gentleman reasoned it out. Let him think, if he pleased, that an undowered maid was less desirable than a dowered one. Drayton could still stand firm on his principle that only rank selfishness could permit a generous love to sacrifice everything for him. He had a lurking suspicion that pride had a good deal to do with his attitude, and he found himself doubting with positive satisfaction whether he would not end by throwing every consideration to the winds except marrying Constance. Later, he went to sleep with a cheerfulness he had not known of late and a subconscious reliance on he knew not quite what: something that did not admit to itself the possibility of failure.

VII

Two days more had passed. Drayton had seen Miss Trevor once, for a few minutes, and two letters had come from her. The situation had taken shape on definite lines. There had been a polite scene between her and her aunt after his call; she had refused to be advised into the McArdle alliance, and Mr. and Mrs. Trevor had made it quite clear that, in that event, he, as her father's executor, would feel justified in exercising the power of choice given him in the will. They had put it this way. A hundred thousand was little enough to start a young man in these days. Fifty thousand was nothing. It was in her power to assure the family fortunes by a marriage to which she had felt no repugnance until the last few days. If, now, a foolish whim led her to throw it aside and practically jilt a man to whom she had given every encouragement, she could not complain if she was invited to depend on her own choice or on such generosity as her brother, when he grew up, would doubtless show, in the event of her remaining a spinster. Here was no diversion of her father's estate; that the son should receive all was not at variance with the ideas of justice held in some countries and, under the present circumstances, its justice was so evident that Mr. Trevor considered himself morally bound in the matter. Either Frank Trevor should go out into the world with the backing of a multi-millionaire brother-in-law, or he should have the whole hundred thousand his father had left. Constance could not fairly complain or ask that a dutiful heir should suffer from her unreasonable contumacy. All this Drayton learned. She told it and wrote it, laughing; because, she said, if he took her now he must not expect an heiress. She would not marry McArdle if he were the only man living. Better stenography than surrender.

Drayton could not but feel that if Aunt Elvira had yearned for McArdle as a nephew, she had played her hand badly. Her niece had been driven

frankly into rebellion and he, the poor suitor, had been carefully freed from every scruple of duty or pride that might have aided her ambition. He was going to marry Constance. A few stolen minutes in the ruined cloisters of the Eremiti had settled that—hardly time enough for a kiss which no hotel lounge, let alone the old Garibaldian *custode*, could have mistaken for brotherly. Hardly conscious of his hearers' lack of interest, that worthy's vivid narrative had got to where the bells of this same Eremiti had once rung in the Sicilian Vespers. "Ting-a-ling-a-ling," and he drew his hand quickly across his throat and uttered his gurgling cluck with ghastly fidelity. Then he woke up to his environment; a slow smile broadened behind his beard, and he slipped away with a magnificent disregard for both his climax and his fee.

Here was the upshot. Everybody's trip was smashed to flinders; everybody's plans and several lives had been changed, all by the mere chance that two young people had happened to drop into the same steamer. McArdle was going north with a praiseworthy desire to study the great Krupp plant at Essen; the Trevors would sail for home next week, and Drayton, for the peace of Constance's voyage, would go by the next ship. Once in New York, she should soon be free from Aunt Elvira's nagging. Meanwhile, McArdle sulked and the Trevors saw sights with a feverish energy that helped preserve the externals of their strained relations.

Drayton had poured the tale of the soon-to-be happy outcome of all his doubts and troubles into the ears of the sympathetic Count, who had smoked and smiled and never said a word of the dollars so blithely sacrificed on the altar of love. Somewhat to the American's surprise, these seemed to affect him as lightly as they did the *forestieri*. He was deeply overjoyed in his young friend's happiness and asked only such questions about the plays in the fast ending game as his polite and kindly interest prompted.

VIII

It was the evening before the Trevors' steamer sailed. Drayton had received a line from Constance in the morning that they were going to spend the last day in the long drive out to Piano dei Greci, because Aunt Elvira was eager to see the Albanian costumes of the place. They would return late, probably, and, as they sailed early, he might not have a chance to see her again until they met in New York. She was sorry, but, after all, what were a few weeks when they would soon be together for all time? Perhaps it was just as well. Aunt Elvira might be less disagreeable, and her own last month with her family would be relieved from new causes for regrettable friction.

Drayton fumed. He thought he recognized the motive of Aunt Elvira's interest in peasant dress; but there were other things in the letter that went to soothe and console him, and he could not but see the wisdom of his own and Constance's acquiescence in present fate, when the fast-nearing future promised so much.

For all this, the day was not a cheerful one. Only a month of separation, to be sure, but how much that was untoward might happen in a month! Evening came. The dinner was good, but not to Drayton's taste, and he was glad when it was over. The Count was dining out that night, and the Princess had been tiresome. He lounged into the salon, debating whether, in spite of all, he would not go to the Des Palmes and try to see Constance. There was a chance of catching her in the short time that might be between her return and retiring. It was Pietro who appeared in the doorway, somewhat flustered and with a card in his hand.

"A gentleman to see the signor."

Drayton took the card with a sense of irritation. Then he started in surprise.

It read:

MR. WILLIAM S. TREVOR

"The gentleman was waiting in the big hall. He seemed much disturbed,"

supplemented Pietro, bobbing his head up and down like a sparrow.

Drayton hurried through the long passage, full of a dazed surprise, in which anxiety was beginning to take shape, and Trevor met him with a rush.

"She's gone!" he almost shouted. "They got us all, but Elvira and I escaped, God knows how! The Consul's away for two days and the hotel people are damn fools! My God, what shall we do?"

"Who got her?" said Drayton, in a voice strangely calm.

"Brigands!" cried Trevor.

He was pacing back and forth across the square hall, wringing his hands, and Drayton noted how disheveled he looked. He himself was still very calm and he wondered vaguely at it.

"You must try to keep your head, Mr. Trevor," he said, "and tell me just what has happened."

"What a fool I was!" went on Trevor. "What a fool any civilized man is to let himself be dragged to such a God-forsaken country as this!"

"Don't be a bigger fool, then. Tell me what has happened."

There was a stern ring in Drayton's voice that seemed to bring the other to his senses. He still paced the floor, but he began to pour out the story of the day:

"We never dreamed there was any danger. The tourist agent and the hotel people said there wasn't; and we got there all right, and a quarter of the way back. Then something broke about the harness, and the driver began pottering with it. God, how he pattered! And then it began to get dark. We hadn't much more than started again when three or four villainous-looking creatures jumped out and held us up. I don't know how many there were, but they had a couple of guns. I'd have fought, though, if they killed me, but poor Elvira went into hysterics and I guess the driver did, too. Anyhow, he got down and wallowed in the road and prayed."

"And Constance?" asked Drayton quickly.

"Oh, Constance did better than the

rest! As I remember, she just looked dignified and superior. Then they made us get out of the carriage and took us across a field, only Elvira threw fits, and, at last, two of 'em went on with Constance and a couple tried to get Elvira along and dropped behind, till I saw my chance—they hadn't seemed to bother much about me—and I let one fellow have it in the jaw—not so bad for an old fellow, was it?—and he dropped. The other scuttled, and I grabbed Elvira and got her back to the road and kicked the driver into the box. He ran his poor old bags of horse bones all the way back, and the Consul's off for two days. I can't talk Italian. For heaven's sake, what shall I do?"

He began to go to pieces again, but Drayton brought him up sharply.

"So you left Constance, did you?"

"My God, man, how could I help it? It was better for somebody to escape, so as to be in a position to get her free."

"I should think Mrs. Trevor would have stayed," said Drayton grimly.

"I tell you Elvira didn't know what she did. She's had hysterics ever since."

"I don't wonder. Our modern masterful women aren't as good as the old kind when it comes to something that ought to be mastered."

Trevor looked at him dully. He was too far gone to be indignant.

Meanwhile, Drayton's thoughts were getting into shape. It was no time now to give way even to anxiety. He must keep all his coolness and energy under full command. Years ago the road to Piano dei Greci had been considered unsafe, but of late no one seemed to have given it a thought. Nothing unpleasant had happened for a long time. To be sure, Sicilians don't like to talk about such things. They prefer to pull the wool over their own eyes to admitting that any danger might beset visitors to their island, an inclination that is partly due to pride, partly to pocket. Still, Drayton had imagined he knew the situation pretty well. He would not have been especially surprised if a party had been

held up in certain districts by ordinary footpads and relieved of their valuables, but that there should be a recrudescence of organized brigandage, a kidnapping within ten miles of Palermo, and of foreigners at that, seemed an almost unconscionable anachronism. The fact, though, was indisputable.

The first measure to be taken seemed clear. They must notify the *carabinieri* at once. Pray heaven, some higher officer was in command at the barracks tonight—or one of an intelligence that could advise them as to the wisdom or danger of different courses! The Count's aid and counsel might have been invaluable, but Drayton did not know where he was dining or when he would be back. Therefore, they must go alone to the barracks, and then look up whoever was in charge at the American Consulate during the Consul's absence. Not that the native secretary would be apt to be of much use, but it would be necessary to get in touch with his superior as soon as possible for whatever his knowledge and action might be worth.

IX

DRAYTON hurried to his room, got his hat, and, as he plunged down the dark stairs again, nearly dashed into Giuseppe, the *facchino*, who was ascending leisurely. Before they had untangled themselves the latter had a chance to gasp that he was seeking the signor with a letter left for him with the *portiere*. Drayton seized it and hurried on to the hall. A glance, when he got within range of the lamp, made him catch his breath and stop short.

It was one of Constance's cards with a few words penciled by her on the back.

Well treated and safe. Ransom must be paid.

Trevor stared open-mouthed at the younger man, as he raced by him down through the court and out to the *portiere's* lodge under the vaulted entrance.

"Who left this?" he demanded.

It is a mistake to ask a Sicilian anything excitedly or as if the answer were vitally important. Whether it puts him on guard or whether it merely rattles, is a question, but he is apt either to shut up tight or become inconsequentially garrulous.

Drayton made this mistake, and Jacopo and Luigia and all their plentiful family thronged at the little window, but gave practically no information.

"It was a man," said Jacopo. "He did not know him," and then shook his head and would say no more. Luigia and the two grown daughters and the many children said much, and Drayton gathered that the messenger was anywhere from fifteen to seventy years old, full-bearded and wearing only a mustache, dark, tall, slender, blond and thickset, well and rather shabbily dressed. At last he threw up his hands in despair and returned to his visitor, raging within, but knowing the folly of external wrath.

He showed Trevor the card, much to that gentleman's relief, and together they set out for the barracks of the *carabinieri*, found the captain in command and told the story of the kidnapping in Drayton's excellent Italian and Trevor's indignant English.

The officer was amazed and he showed it. "Not for many years—not during his service or knowledge—had such a thing happened." In fact, Drayton thought he detected, under the Italian's mask of sympathetic courtesy, a doubt as to the truth of their yarn. "It was most inconceivable," he said; but he made elaborate entry of the foreigners' statements and assured them there would be immediate action. He thought they need fear no violence. The day for such things had long passed. As for the ransom—he shrugged his shoulders. He would advise doing nothing at present. It was natural the signorina should desire to be free, but no amount was mentioned. They must wait until the brigands made their proposition. The card and the authenticated writing of the prisoner seemed to stagger his assurance

a little that it was all a mistake of some kind, but, with another shrug and a most affable smile: "Surely no ransom could be paid till one was asked." Meanwhile, the machinery of his organization should be set in motion.

Trevor came away fuming; raging at the country and its people and its government, but Drayton had begun to weigh the circumstances of the case. His anxiety was quieted, but he was none the less eager that Constance's keeping should be exchanged from the hands of the most considerate of brigands to the perhaps less considerate but more conventional chaperonage of Aunt Elvira. Now that he could formulate his ideas, it seemed probable that some blunder had been made. He knew, despite Sicilian reticence on the subject, that the kidnapping for ransom of wealthy natives was not a dead industry; only he felt more and more certain this molesting of foreigners had been a case of mistaken identity by inexperienced workmen who, now that it was done, might try to realize on it to the best of their ability.

The visit to the Consulate next morning added little to their knowledge or their reassurance. The Consul himself, a recent appointee, would be back in two days. He had gone to Trapani. Meanwhile, his factotum, a Sicilian, was rather uncommunicative, but promised to make statement and complaint to the authorities. That was all he could do. "Perhaps, when the Consul should return, he would communicate with the American Minister at Rome, but the *carabinieri* would be the only reliance, after all." Drayton got a sort of impression that this man, too, doubted or preferred to doubt. Then he flew back to the *pension*. The Count would be at home now and up, late riser though he was; and it was upon him and his advice that the artist most relied. He had made no effort to seek or disturb him before, because the other things had to be done, anyhow, and he knew his friend's deliberateness and love of formality well enough to realize that nothing would be lost by considering them. Besides, it is always well

to go to the ultimate adviser with the fullest budget of facts, minor advice and routine measures, provided always you have been careful to run no risk of a false step.

Ascanio, Count di Calascibetta, was indeed awake, and he received the tale with all the interest and sympathy Drayton could have asked. Here, at least, there was no atmosphere of irritating doubt. He quite agreed as to the possibility of a mistake in identity having been made, but, once made, the problem confronting the kidnapers was the same. It was absurd to doubt the facts. A ransom would doubtless be demanded, probably through a confederate in Palermo, while the girl was kept in some farmhouse in the mountains. Under the circumstances, he was inclined to advise paying anything in reason.

"Everything would be in reason," cried Drayton, "if we're going to pay at all. I confess the idea makes me pretty hot; but it's she, and we've got to do it."

Calascibetta waved his cigarette.

"Yes, assuredly; and will not the money come out of what the signorina would not otherwise get the benefit of?"

Drayton assented, smiling grimly. That phase of it had not occurred to him.

Then the Count rose. He was at the service of his friend and the lady's family for all time. Would Drayton like to present him and his aid to Mr. and Mrs. Trevor?

The suggestion seemed a wise one. Trevor had gone from the Consulate back to the Hotel des Palmes to notify his wife of their progress, and Drayton sent for a carriage.

"Above all, my dear friend," said the Count, as they drove through the streets, "do not disturb yourself with fears for the young lady's safety. From my knowledge of such matters I could assure you she would be in no danger, even had she been silent. Evidently she is not at all in discomfort or terror as well, only," and he smiled sweetly at his companion, "I do not think I

will say these things to the signor uncle and to the aunt. It is perhaps better they be not too much assured, and we will get her back quicker and at, to her, no loss."

Drayton said nothing. Naturally he could not altogether rid himself of anxiety, but there was a serene confidence about his friend that had its effect. The carriage drew up at the hotel and old Trevor flustered out to meet them. Drayton found himself, for the moment, lost in a comparison of widely divergent types as affected by environment.

Trevor, in a strange land and ignorant even of its language, seemed like a helpless child beside the Sicilian, and yet he was undoubtedly an able and resourceful man of a race in which ability and resourcefulness are national characteristics.

Drayton introduced them and Trevor groveled in an abasement of gratitude and dependence. Calascibetta presented his condolences and begged to ask after the health of the signora. Trevor steadied himself a bit.

"Thank you, my wife is better," he said, "but she has had a severe shock and a bad night."

The Count spread out his hands in comprehension and sympathy.

"I think she'd like to see you," went on Trevor. "She's badly shaken, but it might do her good if we all talked it over together."

Calascibetta bowed. He would be delighted to make the signora's acquaintance, and Trevor led the way to his suite of apartments, Drayton wondering vaguely whether McArdle was in Palermo and, if so, where he stood in all this turmoil.

X

TREVOR answered the unworded query as he knocked on the door.

"Mr. McArdle is with Mrs. Trevor, you know. I telegraphed him to Catania last night, and he came back at once. Decent, wasn't it?"

Drayton admitted that it was, but

he could not quite see what good Mc-Ardle could do, and his presence might complicate things in several ways. Blunders were easy and a young millionaire on the ground, who'd always had his own way, seemed to multiply the chances of them. Then they entered, and the introductions were accomplished. Mrs. Trevor was subdued and tearful, McArdle glum and silent. Trevor opened the conference.

"The Count di Calascibetta, my dear," and Drayton thought he detected a hushed awe in both the speaker and the hearers, "has been good enough to offer to aid us in saving our poor niece from these scoundrels. I knew you'd be delighted to see and thank him."

Mrs. Trevor expressed her thanks with fitting deference.

At that moment a knock at the door drew Trevor away, and he returned with a none too clean envelope, addressed in Italian, which he gazed at hopelessly.

"You will permit me," said the Count. "Ah, it is for you! Is it your desire that I open and read?"

Trevor assented eagerly and the Count ran his eyes down the page.

"It is as I had feared," he said.

They gathered around him, and he handed the communication to Drayton to be translated. The latter's brow darkened.

"Well," he said, "it's simple and straightforward enough. We're to pay fifty thousand dollars for Constance."

"What?" cried Trevor. "Every cent she has? Not by a damn sight!" Mrs. Trevor wept silently, and McArdle glowered. Perhaps he could not see just where he stood in the matter now, —unless the Trevors expected him to ransom a girl who'd jilted him. Well, maybe he'd do it, but, for the moment, he was rather sick of everything and everybody. Drayton felt conscious of an atmosphere of reinforced disapproval of himself on the part of his compatriots. A sane person might be fooled into going to such a country as this once, but a man who'd go three times was beyond com-

prehension. That was how he interpreted the sentiment. The Count waved an unlighted cigarette at him.

"I am a friend of your American artist," he said, "a friend for many years, and I adore the beautiful ladies of your country," with a low bow to Mrs. Trevor. "Therefore, I am altogether at your distinguished service."

"What had we better do?" asked Trevor humbly.

"You have the money—or the young lady has?" said the Count. "Then, frankly, my friends, I think I would pay it."

"Fifty thousand?" exclaimed Trevor.

"She's worth it, isn't she?" broke in Drayton savagely. "It's worth everything to save her an hour in the hands of such people."

"Oh, they will not be so unpleasant," said the Count deprecatingly, "not for a while—until they learn they will not be paid or that the *carabinieri* are near them. Then, I do not know. They are desperate men or they would not have done such a thing and they must guard themselves."

Mrs. Trevor's face blanched.

"Oh, pay them, William; pay them anything they want," she bleated, "and let's get away from this place as soon as we can."

Calascibetta smiled winningly, regardless of the insult to his dear Palermo. Drayton, for all his outburst, felt vaguely disappointed. Without quite knowing why, he had hoped for something else from his friend than placid acquiescence in the demands of the kidnappers. If only he or some other man were the victim! It was a girl, though—Constance. No. Count Ascanio was right, tame and spiritless as this yielding seemed.

"How are we supposed to pay it? How much time do they give us?" asked Trevor.

Drayton glanced again at the paper in his hand.

"It says the money is to be paid the second night from this, at nine o'clock, to a fisherman, who will be in a small boat at the quay in the Cala opposite Santa Maria della Catena, and who will

place his right hand upon his heart. Then, in the morning the signorina will return to us."

"That's the play, is it?" broke in McArdle. "Well, we'll be there, all right—with the police."

The Count shook his head, smiling one of his gentle smiles. Probably it meant pity for McArdle's ignorance.

"And what then?" he said. "You will have but the man and you will learn nothing from him, even if he knows, which is doubtful; and, should you harm or imprison him, there is always the vengeance."

Mrs. Trevor shuddered.

"It will take three days, anyhow," calculated Trevor, "to cable New York, sell Constance's share of the holdings, and have the money cabled back."

"I would suggest, then, that you be there with a letter for the man, requesting that he come again the next night," said the Count, "and, above all, let me advise the best of faith."

Trevor caught the grim inference and winced.

"It seems all the faith is to be on one side," he said. "How do we know these villains won't want fifty thousand more?"

"It is on the honor of the Sicilian that you may safely rely," said the Count stiffly.

"Their what?" cried McArdle, and even Drayton laughed; but he understood. Calascibetta seemed to comprehend dimly the humor of his remark in American ears.

"It is of the business, as you call it, of these men," he explained apologetically. "They are, truly, criminals, today, but they do not know it. Therefore, they will keep to their word, better, perhaps, than your broker of the exchange."

"Think they'd take any less?" suggested Trevor. He was more at home at this stage of the game.

The Count shook his head.

"That, too, is of the honor," he said mildly.

"Convenient kind of honor," sneered McArdle. "Well, you may draw on me, if you need to, but I'd rather spend

a hundred thousand to hang the gentlemen."

"Constance has the money," spoke up Mrs. Trevor sharply. "She *would* come to Sicily and she may as well pay for it. I'm sorry for her brother, though."

Drayton divined that Aunt Elvira was beginning to feel more like herself. There was a flavor of satisfaction in her voice.

"Well, then," said Trevor, after a pause, "I suppose it's settled. We're to knuckle under considerably and Constance is to pay her fifty thousand for her Sicilian tour. If Mr. — His Grace here will give us the points, we'll beg the party with his hand on his heart for an extension—better make it forty-eight hours to cover possible delays." The Count nodded. "That means Constance prolongs her visit four days more."

Drayton's brow contracted, but Calascibetta pressed his arm.

"I am quite sure that she will be safe and not uncomfortable," he said.

McArdle had glowered more and more densely as the plan of surrender took definite shape. Now he burst out:

"I want you to take notice that I consider this a pretty cowardly business all around, and that I sha'n't sit still one hour, let alone four days. I'll spend all that's necessary, and I'm going to fight these fellows. If I don't find Miss Trevor before any of you do, it will be because money isn't appreciated in Sicily by the right people, and I haven't noticed any backwardness anywhere yet."

Trevor seemed to waver; Count Ascanio straightened up at the word "cowardly." Then he smiled very sweetly.

"I suppose the customs of the signor's country do not permit his holding himself responsible for his discourtesy," he suggested; but McArdle flushed, growled something under his breath, and flung out of the room.

"He can truly do nothing," said Calascibetta scornfully, and Trevor wilted again. The procedure for Con-

stance's release was agreed to on the proposed lines.

Drayton's feelings had been badly mixed. Every drop of his blood, every prompting of temperament and nationality, called for fight and revolted at the idea of ransom. On the other hand, familiarity with the situation and environment, together with a measure of common sense, told him that, with Miss Trevor at the mercy of the kidnapers, they were hopelessly overmatched and that her safety was the stake McArdle would play with; a stake that might well be lost, even in the event of that gentleman's victory. It was too big. He'd gladly risk his own life to save her, but he'd risk his reputation for courage and manliness rather than add a grain to the weight of her peril. Perhaps she would not understand; women are not apt to go beyond the obvious in such matters. Perhaps McArdle, with the means at his command, might even blunder upon success. Well, he'd sooner risk that, too: lose her, if must be, to the man who could help her better than he.

After all, though, the latter questions were really academic. The practical problem was more disturbing. Both Drayton and the Count understood the possible danger of militant intervention, and the *carabinieri* would be cautious enough in that direction. If, however, McArdle went in for war, as he had proclaimed, he might worse than neutralize the united efforts of them all; for, while they negotiated, his acts would show as the rankest bad faith and might easily provoke some blindly furious revenge.

XI

As the American and the Sicilian drove away from the hotel anxiety settled more heavily on the former's mind, despite the buoyant cheerfulness of his companion.

"We will have her for you soon, my friend. We will have her," cried the Count gaily.

"How will it be if they find that ass

is trying to catch them?" said Drayton gloomily.

The Count laughed. "But he will not come so near that they will ever find he is trying. Of him I think as of the froth on the beer."

Little as Drayton admired his compatriot, he had a feeling that the subtle Italian mind might, in its contempt, do scant justice to certain of McArdle's capabilities, and when he reached his room, he found his problem there before him in the shape of the subject of it himself, smoking vigorously and evidently waiting for him.

"I wanted to see you," said McArdle, rising, "so I came straight over and told the chap below that you expected me and I'd wait upstairs. It worked all right. Hope you'll pardon the liberty. Look here, Drayton, are you with me in this, or do you stand to pay out to these curs every cent Miss Trevor's got? I suppose we're rivals, and I tell you fair I haven't quit yet; but I'm pretty helpless on this particular job without their guinney lingo, and I may make a mess of it. What I want to ask is, will you chuck the rivalry for the present and help?"

For the first time Drayton was conscious that the Pittsburg man might not be altogether a bad sort. His attitude was folly, fast enough, but it was good American, such an attitude as he himself would have taken were he less familiar with the situation or the stake less vital. The pig-headed know-it-allitiveness of the chap was the thing to be condemned, and it was most characteristic. Doubtless McArdle was the kind that would have argued violently with Edison on electrical questions had he met the wizard. Such things were of McArdle and his type. On the other hand, Drayton had a clear comprehension of what the Count would advise, a heaven-disclosed course he would be quite unable to grasp an American's inability to take. Throw in his lot with his rival by all means; divide with him all the credit for militant measures, and, meanwhile, steer him aside into innocuous and futile paths. No, he couldn't bring himself

to that exemplification of the "fine Italian hand," even to win Constance. Verily, his situation was one for quick thought and slow speech. McArdle eyed him impatiently.

"Well?" he said.

Drayton's resolution was taken.

"Look here, McArdle, I'd like nothing better than your methods in this thing, but I can't use them. Don't you see the risk, man—to her?"

The other's lip curled and his face looked ugly.

"I suppose there is some risk," he said, "and, if you don't like it, all right. As for risk to her, if you think Italy's going to have an American woman kidnapped and assassinated here, I guess you don't know how Uncle Sam stands in these days."

Drayton controlled himself with an effort, under the taunt.

"But it isn't Italy," he said. "The Italian government counts for mighty little in such things. We open negotiations. You try to seize the girl and punish her captors. Ignorant, desperate and hot-tempered men kill her to protect or avenge themselves and punish our bad faith. What good will it do us, if the *carabinieri* catch and punish them six months from now? Methods and reasoning here aren't American or English. A few years ago, when I knew less about it, I asked a little barber once why he'd move heaven and earth to save the assassin of his brother from the police, and perjure himself in court to clear the fellow if he was ever caught. 'Assuredly,' said he. 'Were the man seized and convicted, he might be imprisoned'—there's no capital punishment in Italy, you know. 'Five, ten, fifteen years later he might get out, and then, perhaps, I am dead.' It's all perfectly simple when you understand it. I do and you don't. Won't you take my advice?"

"No," said McArdle shortly. "Keep your advice to yourself. It's safe for you to follow it. I see that much, and I'll find another interpreter, buy up a rival lot of brigands and have the girl out before the rest of you can pay away her money. That's my way, and it goes."

He rose, and Drayton faced him, filled with rage at the stupidity and boastfulness of the man.

"Let me tell you, then, with equal frankness," he said, "that I'll do all I can and in what way I see fit to keep you from doing any harm."

"Whatever you please and be damned!" cried McArdle. "And if Miss Trevor's the girl I think she is, she'll admire your performance."

He rushed out and slammed the door. Drayton heard him blundering down the dark stairs; ominous prelude to the more perilous blundering he would doubtless bring about amid the darkness of Sicilian intrigue. Calascibetta was probably right in his scorn of what McArdle could accomplish. The danger was that he underestimated the amount of noise the millionaire might make. Meanwhile, the artist contemplated himself rather ruefully in Constance's eyes, posed as the opponent of her more heroic rescuer's endeavors. Despite her advice to pay a ransom, he could count fairly well, he thought, on feminine misconstruction in such a case.

XII

Two days passed, and, on the second night Drayton found himself on the quay at the Cala, watching eagerly for the "boatman with his hand on his heart," to whom he should deliver the letter promising payment in forty-eight hours. The two days had not been without incident.

Trevor had cabled, wavered, stormed and finally yielded to the Count's dictation. Mrs. Trevor had alternately wept over Constance's plight and bemoaned her own misfortune in having such an obdurate, ungrateful and altogether troublesome niece. The Consul had returned, wobbled around helplessly and done nothing. The *carabinieri* had ransacked the countryside (so they said) most diplomatically, and finally intimated with much polite circumlocution that there were indications of a love element, perhaps an elope-

ment, in the affair, that would remove it effectually from their province. Whence they had extracted this suspicion neither Drayton's insistence nor Trevor's violence nor the Count's investigations could disclose, but the Consul clutched eagerly at the theory. The idea of brigandage was ridiculous—and it made it all so much easier for him. Trevor's profane animadversions were scattered too promiscuously to affect anyone very much.

Meanwhile, McArdle had certainly made a noise. Even Sicilian journalism, with its rooted antipathy to news less than a week old and to anything reflecting on public order and safety, took appreciative note of the disappearance (they termed it disappearance) of the beautiful American heiress and the romantic pursuit of her millionaire lover. Drayton had ground his teeth and grown pale with the fear of what effect this might have. Count Ascanio alone had been suavely undisturbed and reassuring.

"Courage, my friend!" he exclaimed. "It is not of such as he that my countrymen take heed."

Now, at the Cala, Drayton would learn if the situation was still the same. If the boatman appeared, all would be well thus far. If not, it would be disturbing evidence that the malefactors had taken alarm and feared to treat.

Ten o'clock had struck, amid the usual confusion of bells, before he heard the noise of oars in rowlocks. A clumsy boat crept out of the night and neared the quay, a queer, nondescript craft, such as Sicilian fishermen use, that in lines and decoration suggest here a Greek, there a Norman, parentage. He could see the form of a man standing in the bow and another in the waist bucking leisurely at the oars.

Drayton sauntered toward the point where the boat was heading, his hand upon the letter in his pocket. As he did so, he became conscious of footsteps and shadowy figures behind him in the passage that opened out from the Via Cassaro. Then the incoming craft touched the stone pier and the man in the bow placed his hand care-

lessly on his heart. The American drew out the letter and was about to reach it down, when the patter of footsteps changed suddenly into a rush.

A quick glance behind showed half a dozen men running rapidly toward him, as yet invisible to the man under the quay. With a leap he landed full in the boat, almost sweeping the messenger overboard as he came.

"Back out—out!" he cried.

Fortunately his own impetus had carried the rocking craft a few feet from the quay. The fellow in the bow staggered, recovered himself, and his knife flashed in his hand, but he at the oars saw more and seemed to grasp the situation. With two or three quick strokes he swept the boat back a few yards, and Drayton caught the other by the wrist.

"Fool!" he hissed. "This is no treachery of ours. It is of others. Row—row hard! Here is the letter—our word. We agree to the terms."

He could not altogether blame the dazed messenger for his slowness of comprehension, but the oarsman was now rowing out and one peril at least seemed past. He of the knife made no further struggle and Drayton loosed his wrist. The men on the quay were running backward and forward, and now one of them whistled a low, clear call.

Drayton swept a glance over the dark water around them. He saw a shadow looming farther out, as of some larger craft, and caught the splash of oars.

"Your friends?" he questioned sharply, but the man shook his head, and a second whistle came from the group on the quay. The other boat, too, was nearer, heading straight for theirs, with quick strokes, and the American could make out that it contained at least seven or eight men. The trap was evident.

"An oar each!" he cried, snatching one from the hand of the rower and thrusting it into an empty rowlock while he pushed the messenger toward it. "Over to the Piè di Grotta!"

He had taken in the situation quick-

ly, as there was need. The larger boat, with more men and oars, made escape out by the Antemurale hopeless. The only chance was to cut straight across the Cala, land before their pursuers, leave the boat and lose themselves in the dark streets above the Piazza del Castello. Even the success of that looked doubtful, if the other rowers divined their purpose soon enough to cut them off or the confederates on shore had the sense, energy and speed to win in a race around the harbor. The latter contingency might fairly be ignored, for they probably could not do it at the best, and, whether from laziness, stupidity or reliance on their marine allies, they still did nothing but trot up and down the quay.

Meanwhile the peril from the real pursuers was imminent. Drayton's impressed crew took his orders readily. Whatever might have been their comprehension or interpretation of the things that were happening, they could, at least, see that others were trying to catch them and that their passenger, captain or prisoner, however they regarded him, was working for their escape. Therefore, they bent furiously to their oars and the clumsy boat made good headway.

For a minute the other crew had failed to note the objective of the chase and had lain on their oars, seemingly confident in their ability to block escape toward the sea. Perhaps they relied in turn on the shore contingent to guard its own side, but now a glimmer of the facts and the possibilities came to them. There was an instant of confusion, a babel of voices over the water, and they swung about to cut across the bow of Drayton's boat, and began to row with the strength of many arms, if not with overmuch science or skill.

The American's eyes, as they ran over the lines of his new command, read her name: *Corpus Domini*, and he smiled in the midst of his anxiety. Would she make good? That was the question. Half the Cala was crossed now, and the pursuers were coming up fast, steering, as he had feared they

would, to cut him off from the shore and the little chapel and the market that loomed up ahead. He could make out a man standing up in the bow and urging on the rowers. His own men bent to their task with a will. Agents of brigands as they were, they had much to lose. To lie in an Italian prison was far less pleasant than lounging in the entrance of a cave-dwelling on the ground floor of some old *palazzo*, humming endlessly repeated Sicilian songs in minor keys and watching Carmelita or Emilia nurse the youngest *bambino*. What if food were none too plenty or too good? Labor also was but now and then, and leisure plenty; and there were always the *forestieri* from the steamers to be fleeced for the asking. So they threw their weight against the oars, while Drayton's eyes measured the decreasing distances and the chances.

He began to hope. Apart from the dangers and the complications that capture involved and an appreciation of his own strong position if he saved his men, he found himself carried away by the game itself. For the moment he, too, was a brigand, a rebel against the law, one of Constance's captors—not so bad a part to take, after all, in Sicilian drama. Then he realized that if the other boat held to its course it would fail and, almost at the same instant, the pursuers realized it, too, and steered a new diagonal. Would they come side by side to the quay, or would it be a length or two one way or the other? It looked now as if he might win by the narrowest of margins.

Suddenly the man in the pursuing bow shouted. Drayton felt no surprise that the voice that came over the water was McArdle's or that he called in English to men he must have supposed were Sicilians:

"Stop, or I'll shoot!"

"Ass!" muttered Drayton viciously, but he was rather glad his crew could not understand.

The next moment a shot rang out, and then another and another, as if McArdle were working his self-cocker as fast as he could crook his finger.

With the bullets came volleys of excited Sicilian. Every man in the other boat seemed to be shouting at once. Drayton's fellows screamed as well—oaths, invocations to saints, he could not distinguish which—and bucked frantically at their oars.

A second later, whether splintered by a shot or broken by a sudden impact of frightened strength, the sweep of the chap who had stood and pushed snapped off at the rowlock and, with a shriek of "*Dio mio!*" the man pitched forward upon his companion. The boat swung around, scarcely a length from the quay and straight across the path of McArdle's craft, which drove into it amidships. In an instant Drayton found himself struggling in the Calà.

He struck out, grasped at something before him—a man—and, clinging fast to it, swam away toward the Carbone. The confusion in the other boat left him undisturbed or unseen in the dark water, and he soon made the stone quay, fortunately at a point where several steps led down for a landing. Up these he dragged his charge.

XIII

THE fellow was only half unconscious, but there was no time to bring him around. The men from the other side of the harbor might be upon them at any moment, and the American, with a strength he had never known he possessed, swung the boatman over his shoulder and plunged across the Piazza del Castello and into one of the narrow streets beyond.

Help here was prompt and willing. It was an escape of some sort, and, of whatever kind, appealed to Sicilian nature. Two or three villainous-looking loungers relieved him of his burden; an ill smelling, windowless room off the street, evidently a low wine shop, offered its refuge, and the heavy door was closed and bolted behind them. Then the good Samaritans stood around, dumb and unquestioning, while Drayton proceeded to bring his companion

back to full consciousness. Doubtless both etiquette and fellow-feeling taught them the value of reticence in such cases.

Soon the rescued man was able to be supported to his feet and swallow a glass of wine, though still pretty seedy. Drayton found him to be the one to whom the letter had been given, and was quick to realize the importance of getting him back as soon as possible to the people who had sent him, lest prolonged absence might lead to suspicions and the chance of reprisal. He emptied all his loose change into the willing hands of their silent and considerate hosts and explained the need of hasty departure.

"*Dio mio!*" said their eyes. "Then it was serious."

With natural aptitude they undertook to scout at neighboring corners, and the American, taking the arm of his charge, now fast recovering, thanks to the warming wine, made his way into and up the Via Bambinai, wondering vaguely what the next chance of the game would disclose and whether gratitude might not even go so far as to guide him to Constance's prison.

But once across the Argenteria, the fellow halted awkwardly. He was almost himself again and eyed Drayton with wavering indecision.

"The signor had better go no farther," he said at last.

"Very well," said Drayton carelessly. "As you please. I hope your friend escaped and that you still have our letter with word we will pay?"

The man felt in the pocket of his wet jacket and nodded. Still he hesitated.

"The signor has saved my life," he began again; "also he has called me 'fool.'"

Drayton almost laughed out, but restrained himself in time. It took him a few seconds to remember his hasty word when he had jumped into the boat and assumed command. Then he smiled and held out his hand.

"You will accept my profound apologies," he said, with all the manner he could muster, and the face of the Sicilian lighted.

"Then I can freely thank the signor for my life, now that he gives me back my honor," and he bent over and kissed Drayton's hand. "Believe me, I would help you further, but I cannot. It is the order of the *padrone*, and the signor will understand it is best."

He dropped the American's hand and strode away toward the Corso, leaving Drayton wondering vaguely whether the etiquette of Sicilian vagabondia might not have regretfully substituted knife for kiss had he lacked the tact to apologize. It was a complicated question. Perhaps the Count might be able to solve it, but, after all, it wasn't important now, and he turned his face toward the Pension Suisse with a growing consciousness that the night had been an eventful one and that he was wet and very tired.

XIV

DRAYTON woke the next morning, none the worse for his experience, and, when the Count had appeared, as he did at a much later hour, the story of the pursuit and escape was told to him and to Trevor, who now haunted the Via Monteleone in a chronic state of pathetic dependence. The latter might naturally have been expected to sympathize with McArdle's plan of campaign, both on racial and financial grounds. That he did not was best evidence of the abject estate to which he had fallen. He was at least enough man of affairs to know when he knew nothing of a subject and to rely, however painfully, upon the representative to whom he had intrusted it. Therefore, he cursed McArdle and all his doings and approved fully of Drayton's interference. This, when the Count had highly complimented the artist on his admirable judgment, courage and presence of mind.

"It was the most grand diplomacy," he said, waving his cigarette, "and of a bravery always American."

Trevor grunted a grudging supplementary indorsement. He evidently preferred damning McArdle to praising Drayton.

As for the latter, he was not free from twinges of self-condemnation. One cannot always do acts that seem like treason to every national and personal instinct, however wise and necessary they are, without a certain measure of native repugnance. Therefore, his tone was apologetic rather than vainglorious.

"I was sorry," he said, when he had finished his recital, "but there seemed to be nothing else for it."

"It is you who have again saved the life of the signorina," declared the Count, "and that is everything. This other—pouf! He is but a fool."

"I guess you're right on that," said Trevor; and then, after a pause: "The money'll be along some time tomorrow. I suppose we have to pay it over in the evening. Will that half-drowned devil dare come there again?"

"He will dare much for such a sum," said the Count; "and this Signor McArdle, I think he does not know equally of the place of payment—that it is the same. It may be also that we have word to change it."

"I wonder what became of the second chap in my boat?" suggested Drayton, with drawn brows. "Hope they didn't get him."

Ascanio smiled. "Doubtless he swam to somewhere. If he drowned, well, it is not much—but they are hard to drown, these Palermo harbor people."

It seemed an easy point of view, and reassuring. As for new efforts on McArdle's part, it certainly looked as if his ill-aimed bolt was shot and that further effective interference from that quarter need not be very seriously feared.

So Trevor went back to the Des Palmes to acquaint the once all-controlling Aunt Elvira how matters progressed, the Count di Calascibetta politely took his leave, "to attend to affairs of business," and Drayton lounged nervously about the terrace and tried in vain to read or think. Anyhow, it seemed as if all must be fair sailing from now on.

Evening came, but the Count had not returned to dinner, and the Ameri-

can went to his room with a sense of vague irritation against his friend. He had never known the claims of business so to absorb that gentleman of Mediterranean leisure, and he needed his company now, even if it meant only the odor of cigarette and an occasional "coraggio!" He would not sleep much, he supposed, but he knew that the songs of the Princess in the salon, however charmingly she sang, would get on his nerves. "Calascibetta might have foregone his cards at the club and a few francs one way or the other. He was not generally so lacking in the subtleties of friendly intercourse."

With a mind working actively on such lines, it was not surprising that Drayton's sleep was as unsatisfying as he anticipated. How long he tossed about and listened to the ever unintelligible bells, he did not know, but the gray of the morning had not yet begun to filter through his blinds when his half-waking mind became conscious of someone knocking gently at his door.

In a moment he had sprung up and opened it. Pietro stood in the hall, his eyes shining big out of the darkness. He tiptoed into the room, one finger resting impressively on his lips, his glance roving from corner to corner, as if fearing they might be peopled with spies upon his movements.

Drayton gazed at him in awakening wonder. Here was a new conspirator of some sort, if the hour and demeanor stood for anything. Pietro, the ever-restful, up at four A.M.! Pietro, the little round rattlepate, dramatic!

"The signor is alone?" whispered his visitor, still peering into every dark recess of the room.

"The signor is never alone in the presence of one of his good friends," said Drayton, bowing with all the dignity pajamas would permit.

"Ah, it is indeed so!" cried Pietro, and he beamed with gratification. "I—I, Pietro Sangapulci—am ever the friend of the noble signor Americano. He shall find I speak truth—always truth." (Drayton had not been impressed with this quality in the *pension's* factotum.) "Is it that he de-

sires to see the beautiful signorina—to save her and take her away with him from the wicked family of her?"

"Something very much like that, my dear Pietro," said Drayton, smiling.

"Know, then, that it is I—I, Pietro Sangapulci—who will aid him." This with five feet three inches drawn up to its full height and a manner that announced: "Lo, it is done!"

"It sounds all right, Pietro," said Drayton.

"Listen! Tonight I take him to the house where the signorina is—I, Pietro."

"Better yet, but we're going to get her tonight, anyhow, after certain little formalities. How about that?"

"Yes," and the headwaiter came very close, emphasizing each whispered word with a jab of his finger toward Drayton's stomach, "but it is thus the wicked family shall get her. Through me, it is the signor who shall take her from them all."

"The scheme has its points, I'll admit." The American was beginning to be interested in spite of himself. His new ally was certainly all seriousness, and heaven only knew what might happen—in Sicily! Anyhow, from the mere standpoint of psychological study, it was worth following up. "How are you going to do it, Pietro?"

"It is for me to lead," said the other mysteriously. "The signor shall follow and all will be well."

"Oh, yes, of course, but can't we start a little sooner than tonight and save the money?"

"The money?" echoed Pietro vaguely and in some confusion. "Perhaps; but there is need of darkness, that I lead the way."

Drayton had never noted feline qualities in his benefactor, but he nodded comprehension. Somehow, he could not get away from the joke viewpoint toward Pietro's aid, but for worlds he would not hurt his feelings. Acquiescence with words and thanks was easy. Later, the Count, too, would enjoy the humor of it, and they could devise some means to sidestep politely.

"All right, my friend," he said.

"I'm consumed with gratitude for your aid. Tell me when you're ready, and, meanwhile, I suppose I'd better rest a couple of hours more so as to be in good shape for tomorrow. It's beginning to get light."

"That is wise. The signor is always wise," and Pietro tiptoed out, closing the door silently, while Drayton threw himself on the bed and thought and laughed.

XV

WHEN daylight at last broke, amusement at the new phase of the game still went far to relieve the anxiety that oppressed Drayton, and both sensations made it hard to await the Count's appearance. To arouse him before his hour or to interrupt the mysteries of his toilet was, however, quite out of the question, so the American lounged and smiled and fretted until the welcome "*Buon giorno, signore!*" came to his ears. Then he drew his adviser out on the terrace, and, while the Count sipped his coffee and lighted his cigarette, told the story of the night's adventure.

Calascibetta listened attentively and with his gentle smile that Drayton had come to look upon as the most impenetrable of masks. When he had finished, the coffee pot was empty and the second cigarette half smoked, but Count Ascanio was still silent.

"Well," said the narrator at last, "why don't you laugh?"

"And why should I laugh?"

"Because it's funny, man. Think of it—Pietro."

"He is an honest man. I think I would go with him."

Had a thunderbolt fallen at Drayton's feet he could not have been more astounded.

"What!" he exclaimed.

"I think that I would go with him," repeated the Count. His face was perfectly serious.

This was funniest of all. Surely the Sicilian could not regard the headwaiter's aid seriously, and when everything was arranged to pay the money and get Constance. Could it be that

Calascibetta feared some failure and was disposed to grasp at any new measure, however ridiculous? Could it be that he had learned something new that made him willing to cast aside at the last moment all the measures taken under his advice and acquiesce to try for a *coup* on McArdle lines, but apparently far less promising? New anxiety at once sprung up in Drayton's mind and sense of humor fell flat.

"But, but," he stammered, searching the Count's face for some explanation.

"Listen, now, my friend," said Calascibetta. "How shall we say what our good Pietro designs? But he is honest and loves you—that is much. Also he is *mafioso*." Drayton opened his eyes wide. Pietro *mafioso*—in touch with the mysterious Sicilian society, cult, state of mind—no foreigner can ever know which! "Tonight the Signor Trevor pays the money. If but you take the lady from these brigands, how shall that not favor you with both?"

"But the danger to her?" cried Trevor, and, as the Count raised his hand for lower tones: "You yourself feared it when McArdle tried to play that game."

"The Signor McArdle could not succeed, and the play had then but begun. I think it is different now and with you. Also there is always what Pietro may know."

Drayton thought he gathered part of the sense of this enigmatic utterance. Part seemed pure flattery and its dependence on the little headwaiter absurd. After all, though, it loosed him to activity in the line he preferred, and surely the Count would not favor any step that imperiled Constance. He had given ample proof throughout that he understood himself and of his grasp on the situation.

"All right," said Drayton. "It's Pietro and I, then. What hour do you pay the money? I suppose it's up to us to find her first."

Ascanio was silent for a moment, and when he spoke it was with a vagueness new to him in the matter.

"Ah, yes; of the hour of the pay-

ment I do not know precisely. It is the Signor Trevor who desires to pay it himself to the agent of these adventurers, doubtless at ten o'clock, unless some other direction be received. I shall see he has someone of reliability to accompany him and, for myself, I shall remain here. The General should be always at his headquarters during the battle, that the news of it reach him most surely. For you, should you succeed, you shall first escort the signorina to me. I will arrange with our good friend, the Princess, that she offer her chaperonage. So? Is it not best, altogether?"

Drayton nodded. The Count had become definite once more and the plan, as to the General's part in it, seemed wise and far-seeing.

"Then I'm to wait orders from Lieutenant Sangapulci?" said Drayton, smiling.

"That is what I advise."

XVI

THE day drifted along wearily, and, until the hour of dinner, Drayton waited. Then, at last, when Giuseppe was bringing the coffee, he noticed his new ally and commander making signs to him from the doorway. The Princess had been peculiarly affable, almost maternal in her friendly interest, and the Count had sparkled with his best wit. Even the conversation of the German transients seemed lighted, perhaps by some subconscious tonic of impending events.

Drayton broke away from it all at the first possible moment and joined Pietro in the little writing room from which he had signaled.

"Well?" he said eagerly.

"The signor is ready? Good! Then it is I, his friend, Pietro, who will conduct him to the beautiful signorina," and he drew himself up to his full height.

Drayton controlled his face. A new question presented itself; one he would have put to the Count had it occurred to him before.

"I suppose I ought to take a revolver," he said, "but I've never had one here and—"

Pietro threw out his hands and burst into voluble protest.

"Oh, but no!" he cried in a voice full of terror. "It is no peril to which I take the signor, no peril, upon my honor, and no one must be injured. There will be necessity for the fight, oh, so little, and they will yield when they behold us firm. You shall see, yes, you shall see."

There were points about this harangue that, taken together with the personality of the speaker, puzzled Drayton, nor did they altogether strike him as convincing. However, he knew well enough that the possession of firearms is not always an undiluted advantage in a Sicilian row, with its curious admixture of courage and cowardice, chivalry and treachery. A stout stick would answer many of the requirements and avoid some of the complications. Therefore, he nodded carelessly.

"All right, Pietro. You're the boss of this expedition. Wait a minute till I get my cap and cane."

"I am the servant of the signor's pleasure," bowed Pietro. "I am ready."

Drayton was back almost as quickly as he was gone, and, after fifteen minutes' impatient waiting for his "ready" guide, they hurried away down the Via Monteleone at as rapid a gait as the latter's short, fat legs could negotiate. Thence, along the Via Pannieri, across the Corso and into the maze of streets to the southward.

Here were rows of little shops, some of them mere stalls, others with the dark, cavelike homes of the shopkeepers behind, churches, old decayed palaces let out to twenty families. It was not a prosperous section of the city.

Drayton had rather assumed, when the direction became apparent, that they were heading for the railroad station, whence a train would take them away among the hills to within striking distance of some lonely hut where Constance was doubtless detained. The logic of the situation he was quite un-

able to grasp. Unquestionably Pietro had, or thought he had, one or more allies among the kidnapers, but the danger of the affair all around seemed manifest, and the American found himself wondering again at the Count's advising such a venture at a moment when the success of all he had argued and planned for was imminent. If, indeed, that gentleman had fears, or, worse yet, information that made him doubt the vaunted good faith of the brigands and that prompted him to change, at the last moment, his carefully arranged, orderly proceedings for these desperate ones, the supposition would not down, and it was most disturbing, for the venture seemed little less than desperate under such guidance. To be sure, Calascibetta had advised it with a smile that argued no hesitation or anxiety, but he would be likely enough to smile when he feared most. Surely, though, Latin diplomacy would not involve shipping a friend on a perilous quest without some warning hint to place him on guard. It was all confusing to the last degree, and every way he viewed it, Drayton could come at no satisfactory solution. Then, having that quality of the good soldier who, whatever doubt besets in mind, relies indeed upon his General and obeys orders, he put aside the puzzle and went on, alert only to think and act quickly the moment he should seem to be thrown upon the necessity for independent action.

At last Pietro stopped. The street was narrow and unlighted and the darkness of the night held possession. Drayton could make out that the building, stretching along the scanty sidewalk, was one of those old palaces, half fortress, with no opening on the ground floor save a frowning archway, above which windows fantastic with Gothic carvings told of the abode of dead and gone nobles who knew not, when they feasted and gamed, how soon might come the call to defend the entrance against the fierce onset of a rival house.

Pietro whistled and waited. Then he whistled again and looked anxiously around.

"Do you mean she is here, in Palermo?" whispered Drayton.

"I—I do not know, I had thought—there was to be—"

Evidently Pietro's assurance or his courage had oozed out in the failure of some coöperation on which he had relied.

"Because, if she is, I'm going in to find her," and Drayton walked toward the archway, beside which sat a very small girl, evidently of the poorer class, singing a low, monotonous chant. Pietro grasped his arm.

"No, no; how shall you find her? There are many apartments."

"Then she *is* here"; and Drayton wrenched himself loose from the grasp that held him. The fight was on now, the enemy near, and his blood up.

Pietro followed, with an outpouring of whispered protest, as Drayton entered with quick, silent steps, his stick grasped firmly, and looked eagerly around the many corridors that opened on the inner court. Two stone stairways led up into opposite sides of the building and a coat of arms was sculptured here and there in the stone, but so battered and worn as to be well-nigh undecipherable even in the daylight. If Constance was hidden somewhere in this vast pile, the thought of the hopelessness of finding her prison oppressed him, and he hesitated. He thought he detected a movement behind a window, as of someone watching, and a woman came to the door at the head of one of the stairs and eyed him with frank Sicilian curiosity. Nine chances out of ten it was a fool's errand, after all. What else could Pietro lead him on? That was why the Count had not objected. He had wanted him out of the way, and employed.

A man came quickly down the stair on the other side and swaggered toward him with a manner at once suspicious and insolent.

"What is it that you wish here, signor?" he demanded.

"Oh," said Drayton carelessly, "an interesting old *palazzo* this. I'm a foreigner, you know, an artist. I thought I'd like to look it over. Any objection?"

"Yes," mumbled the man sullenly. "There are those that live here, and they sleep."

"All of them?"

Pietro had sidled up, as they were speaking. Now he came close to the fellow and, drawing him back, whispered something in his ear. The other's expression changed. Then he said in a quieter voice:

"It is late to view the *palazzo* and the rooms are dark, but, if you desire to follow me, I will show you some of them."

Drayton bowed in surprise. "That is better," he said; "if it would not trouble you."

The man turned with a quick gesture and led the way toward the stairs he had just descended. The American studied his back, puzzled more and more at the whole performance. It struck him that his new guide was not a resident of the city. His clothes and gait were rather those of one of the small wine-growers of the countryside. Therefore, he hesitated to offer the money he had instinctively drawn from his pocket. It might easily be a trap of some sort, for the hall which they now entered was very dark; but no; Pietro now seemed quite in touch with the situation and Pietro was at least faithful. He noticed that the head-waiter had remained behind in the court. At any rate, he was in for the adventure, whatever it portended, and if the puzzle was too deep for him, better to put it from his mind.

They mounted a broad flight of stairs, once stately, no doubt, but now worn and unkept. He knew that squalid apartments opened from right and left on the hall above.

"Have you the eyes of the cat, signor?" said his conductor over his shoulder, as Drayton stumbled slightly.

"No," he said, "but I have ears of the dog to follow your steps—and a stout cane to feel my way." He might have added, "nose of the dog," for the bad odors that beset the place.

Another stairway, narrower than the first, led him up to a floor where a dim light played through several narrow

windows and showed, to his surprise, a half-open door leading into what seemed a suite of apartments, clean, and with definite pretensions to comfort, if not elegance. Then he heard the rapidly retreating footsteps of his guide and then, nothing.

XVII

VERILY, the mystery deepened, but he was there to solve it. He pushed open the door and stepped into a little square hall with a great table of inlaid woods and a handsome mirror with an intricate Florentine frame. Light shone through the broad cracks around a second door just in front of him, and he hesitated for the first time. Should he knock and plead the stranger who had lost his way?

At that moment there came to him through the narrow windows from the court below a sudden, sharp challenge in Sicilian, a loud, angry answer in the more Italian dialect of the city and then a sudden uproar as of a dozen men shouting at once—oaths and hissed defiances. Soon, if he knew the native, there would be knife-thrusts that he would not hear and shrieks that he would.

The door with the light around it opened suddenly, letting a flood out into the hall, and a stately, white-haired dame in a gown rich, but old-fashioned and well worn, stood facing him. Behind her he saw the startled eyes of Constance.

"You will defend us, signor?" said the old lady. His presence seemed no cause of terror to her; and Drayton, amid all his amazements, wondered least at the medieval request. It fitted perfectly into the setting.

His gaze, oblivious of everything else, was upon Constance, as if her presence here might be only a part of some weird dream, and then, suddenly, she recognized him and rushed forward, and he took her in his arms, as a matter of course, and kissed her again and again. He had not fully realized, until in the revulsion of that moment, how

deep had been his anxieties. There were words each spoke, hardly knowing what they said, words that were commonplace and inconsequential enough, and that did not matter in the least, and were but half heard.

Meanwhile, the old lady stood there, looking at them with an expression benign yet uncertain, and changing more and more to dismay as the noises from below seemed to be increasing and drawing nearer. Now there was a trampling of feet and a sound of many voices, muffled and mingled somewhere in the halls below.

"You will defend us, signor?" she repeated. "They are coming up the stairs. There will be aid soon."

Defend them! Drayton would fight to the last drop of his blood against all the brigands in Sicily. He had not the most remote idea what anything meant, but some persons were evidently coming whom she who seemed to be Constance's friend feared. That was enough, and much more than he had had to guide him of late.

"Take her inside," he said, loosing the girl from his arms, "and shut the door."

"I won't go and leave you here to them. Oh, who are they?" she cried, but Drayton pushed her gently back.

"Don't you see, dear. I'm good for any number on the stairs and in the dark! If I have to think of you I'll be a coward, and it's usually the cowards who get hurt. Quick! Shut that door!"

The sudden authority of his tone and the old dame's arm swept Constance back, and the door closed behind him. He heard the rush of steps, now just below them, and he grasped his stick and crouched in a deep shadow at the head of the stairs.

There was short time to wait. At least half a dozen men were blundering up with as aggressive speed as the darkness permitted. What manner of foes they were Drayton could not know, but his cue had been given, in the vague plot of this particular drama, to fight someone, which was certainly a great relief, and the newcomers seemed to

fill the requirements of the villains' part. Therefore, he struck at the first head and body that loomed in sight, and he struck hard and true, with all the reserved forces of four days of suppression.

There was a grunt, and the man toppled over, falling, evidently on a confederate just behind, who cursed viciously in the low Palermo patois. Now was the moment to follow up and get the full benefit of the surprise; and Drayton, lowering his head, threw himself against the two with all his weight.

Never in his old college days had he bucked the center with better will; never with nearly so much effect. The stunned receiver of the first blow and the comrade, half staggering to support him, were both borne back upon the crowd that thronged the stair behind them. None could reckon the number or resources of the attacking party and each man, as he lost his footing, became transformed into a virtual assailant of the rest. How Drayton kept from falling headlong amid the howling, tangled mass of humanity that landed in the hall below seemed little less than a miracle, but he succeeded, and regained his place at the head of the stairs to wait what might happen next.

As for the aid that was to come, he did not count very heavily on it. Certainly, from his knowledge of things Sicilian, it could not be expected from the other tenants of the building. It is not etiquette to meddle in or even to see a row wherein one has no personal interest. Therefore, every door in every hall had remained tight shut, despite a pandemonium that might have roused the curiosity of the dead. What Drayton mainly relied on was a doubt that must pertain as to how many people he was, a doubt that he could see little chance of his antagonists solving, so long as those still able to discuss the question confined themselves to promiscuous profanity. He felt quite able to stand off a score of unfriendly brigands indefinitely, for he had come to the conclusion that the assailants were Constance's unregenerate captors, who

had learned of his coming. Doubtless Pietro had held them at the entrance as long as possible; and then a good, round, Anglo-Saxon damn rose above the babel of names of saints and of things unsaintly.

This was a new mental facer, and he listened, scarce believing the evidence of his ears.

"Come down out of that, you damned brigands, or I'll shoot!" called a voice in English—McArdle's, by all that was amazing! Drayton smiled amid the tumbling of his assumptions. It was so much more English than American to expect Sicilian outlaws to understand one's own language that he felt quite justified in ignoring compatriotism with his rival for the time being. Here were he and McArdle joining battle, each on the assumption that the other was Constance's kidnapper. Perhaps each was trying to be, in an American way, but Sicily had, for the second time, set them by the ears according to its own standards. There was humor in it. Therefore, Drayton, having a sense of humor, smiled, and, smiling, ignored his rival's command. The next moment the dark hall re-echoed with shot after shot, and the bullets splintered around him on wall and ceiling.

XVIII

DRAYTON crouched down, grasping his stick, the fight instinct again paramount against this inspired idiot. Then the door behind him opened. He heard Constance's quick step and, frightened thoroughly at her peril, he sprang to his feet.

Fortunately, the man below had emptied his revolver and was probably reloading. Her voice came clear and indignant. Somehow she seemed half to divine the situation.

"What do you mean by this? I am under Mr. Drayton's protection."

"Constance! Is that you?" called McArdle. "Have I found you?"

"You certainly have," said she, with truly feminine pitilessness, "but Mr. Drayton has found me first and is here. Won't you please go away?"

Drayton almost laughed out at the picture in his mind of what must be McArdle's confusion.

"But—"

She had seized Drayton's hand, drawn him back into the apartment and closed the door. The old, white-haired lady looked up peacefully from what could have been but the pretense of embroidery. Drayton threw himself down on a sofa and shook his head hopelessly.

"Constance," he said, "I really haven't the faintest idea of what all this is about, but—but, it's funny."

"I suppose it is," she said, with still a touch of anti-McArdle indignation in her voice. "I think you've been *very* brave."

"So has he."

"But he's a fool."

There did not seem to be a grain of logic or cohesion in any of their "Through a Looking Glass" tangle, but he sprang up and kissed her, and the old lady smiled approvingly. There was a gentle knock at the door.

"I wonder if that man has the impudence!" and the girl turned, flushed and again indignant.

The knock was repeated, soft and deferential. Drayton shook his head, laughing.

"That's not McArdle," he said. "I fancy he's started for Pittsburg," and, stepping forward, he opened the door.

A man stood in the hall, a Sicilian, his cap in one hand and a parcel under his arm. There was no sense in being surprised at anything now, but it dawned slowly on the American that he had seen this fellow before. Yes, surely, he was the messenger of the Cala, the chap he had dragged ashore and revived in the wine shop.

The recognition was mutual. The man had been bowing repeatedly, and lower each time, till his head bade fair to reach the floor. He approached slowly, took Drayton's hand and kissed it. Then he turned to Constance, and, with a last and lowest inclination, placed the parcel in her hands, speaking a few quick words in Sicilian dialect:

"For a betrothal gift, with the devotion of the most illustrious cavalier, Count Ascanio di Calascibetta."

The old lady beamed and Drayton stared from one to the other, more helpless than ever, but Constance laughed.

"Poor Uncle Will and Aunt Elvira! Perhaps you'd better keep this for me, Penfield. It's my fortune, you know. At least, I suppose it is."

Drayton took the parcel mechanically. A new footstep sounded on the stairs, the bearer of the parcel stood aside, and the Count himself entered, smiling his inscrutable smile. The little mustaches seemed to curl up more jauntily than ever. He turned quickly to the messenger, to Constance and to Drayton, and bowed profoundly. Then he kissed the old lady affectionately on each cheek.

"I fear I have many apologies to offer," he said slowly. "Some I make with the utmost of humility; others—it is that they would not be received in the spirit. Therefore, unless there is demand—" and he shrugged his shoulders. "I trust that the signorina has been comfortable and content. Signor Drayton, I beg to present you to my most honored mother, the Princess Ravinelli."

"My dear Count," said Constance, and her manner seemed strangely of Sicily; "you allowed my fright to be so short that I have forgotten it, and I thank you for your kind plot and its success. For the delightful chaperon-

age of your dear mother I can never thank you enough."

Calascibetta kissed her hand. He was radiant, but he shot a side glance at Drayton, half timid, half inquiring.

As for the latter, full comprehension was gradually coming over him. He grasped Ascanio's hand.

"You dear old medieval devil!" he said. "You've given me a big scare, but it's all right and so are you. I'm afraid our foolish Western affairs have been an awful bother to you."

"Ah, my friend," cried the Count, "you must not say that! I am transported to have served you, and in so charming a cause. My men were in the country, not far away, and my mother has always pleased to occupy this floor of our ancient palace. The society of your beautiful American signorina has been for a delight to her. Only I regret that Luigi was taken in the water and that he permitted himself to be frightened or bribed by your very foolish millionaire. It has been a source of much trouble and of a danger that I could not foresee. Luigi we will attend to. That he was born in March I did not know. I think he had better go away with this Signor McArdle. Sicily may not be well for him."

"Poor chap," said Drayton; "he was up against it," but the Count frowned. Then his smile beamed again.

"Did I not tell you," he exclaimed, "that my country was ever most hospitable and friendly to lovers?"



A WOMAN will tell you she dresses to please her husband, even though he swears every time she buys a new dress.



THE heart of an innocent girl is a finished love letter—without address.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT- HEADED BRIGADE

By FRANK R. WALTON

MAN and wife, man and wife,
Man and wife onward,
All to the court room went,
Wedded Four Hundred.
Forward the huge brigade,
All for divorce now prayed,
There in the crowded court,
Stylish Four Hundred!

Forward the huge brigade.
Was there a one dismayed?
No, for they all were glad,
Glad to be sundered!
Theirs not to make a sigh,
Theirs not to sadly cry,
Theirs but to break the tie,
Seeking a quick divorce,
Eager Four Hundred.

Lawyers to right of them,
Lawyers to left of them,
Lawyers in front of them,
Argued and thundered;
Deafened by voice and word,
Calmly they sat and heard
Talk from the jaws of them,
Talk from the mouths of them,
Patient Four Hundred.

Flash'd many bright eyes there,
Flash'd, but they didn't care,
Though all the lawyers there
Told many scandals, while
Simple folk wonder'd.
Dressed in the height of style,
Waiting with hopeful smile,
Women and husbands,
Then in a little while
All were quite sundered.

THE SMART SET

Much could the kind judge do,
 Making each one now two,
 Four hundred pairs were now—
 Now just eight hundred!

Oh, they were fickle men!
 Each chose a wife again
 Out from those sundered.
 Honor the pairs new made,
 Honor the huge brigade,
 Once more Four Hundred!
 All were rewedded there,
 All of those ladies fair,
 Who once had blundered,
 Thought they would try again,
 Picking out diff'rent men,
 From those Four Hundred.
 Simple folk wondered!



SHADOWS

By MAUD A. BLACK

YOU live where the dream flowers grow,
 And under the silver moon,
 The whispering trees of Slumberland
 Sway to a dreamy tune—
 And I know, whatever the world may say,
 You hear and you understand,
 When we walk each night 'neath the silent skies
 'Mid the shadows of Shadowland.

Amid the rush of the busy crowd—
 The hum of the noisy day,
 I walk with my silent soul apart
 Alone, on my lonely way—
 And I long for night and the hour to come
 When together we two will stand
 In that mystical light, where soul meets soul,
 'Mid the shadows of Shadowland.

WE DANCE AT THE PRINCE'S

By R. K. WEEKES

DORREL and Alexis von Etelmar were standing together on the white marble balcony which overlooked the ballroom of the royal palace of Lichtenberg. Dorrel, as maid of honor to Her Highness, the Princess, wore a gown of thick white satin, straight and heavy, its short-waisted bodice sown thick with the pearls that had descended from generation to generation in the house of the Von Etelmars. Her brother was attired in a court suit of dark green velvet embroidered with silver, and a velvet cloak lined with white satin and fastened with clasps of silver. Both were fair, pale and aristocratic; but whereas Dorrel's blue eyes and serene brow had merely the prettiness of youth, Alexis was so strikingly handsome that his gorgeous costume seemed no more than a fitting frame for such a figure. In all Lichtenberg, a city where good looks were at a premium, there was no man so remarkable as Alexis von Etelmar.

"Who's your next partner, Dorrel?" he asked, as they watched the picturesque crowd of the dancers below.

"Only Bruno von der Heide." Dorrel's tone was a disparagement.

"Don't you want to dance with him?"

"Oh, I don't mind," said Dorrel. "But, you know, he is not *born*."

Alexis laughed. "He has a hundred and fifty years to his name."

"A hundred and fifty years!" Dorrel's little chin expressed scorn of a lineage that went back no farther than a hundred and fifty years. "I like Bruno well enough, of course."

"And he likes you, doesn't he?"

"Alexis!"

Alexis laughed again. He had himself a full share of family arrogance, but Dorrel's outreached his. He did not wish to see his little sister married, partly because he wanted her for himself, and partly because in Lichtenberg it was not wise to love and marry, to give hostages to fortune; but it amused him to tease her about the suitors she disdained.

"If you wait to dance till you find your equal in birth, my child, you will wait a long time. There is no one in Lichtenberg fit to stand up with a Von Etelmar."

"There are one or two."

"I do not know them."

"Well, the Prince himself is born," objected Dorrel with a touch of reproach.

"True. Sometimes I am driven to wonder whether birth is, after all, such a privilege," returned her brother in his negligent voice, fine in *timbre*, studiously pure in accent. Dorrel sighed a little and knit her brows.

"I do wish—"

"Well?"

"I wish you would be more careful what you say, Alexis. You know how risky it is, and yet I've heard you say these things even before his very face. Of course, His Highness is—is—"

"An irredeemable scoundrel?" suggested her brother.

"He is—not all he should be," said Dorrel firmly. The divinity that doth hedge a king tempered her expressions. "But he has always been just to us—kind, even. Why, it's only a week since he made you Master of the Horse!"

"Yes—for the purpose of seeing me

look an utter fool," responded Alexis, glancing down at the green velvet which was the official costume for the post he held. "Did it never occur to you that His Highness has a passion for dressing dolls?"

"Oh!" said Dorrel. It never had occurred to her; she was not, like Prince Heinrich, a connoisseur of pure beauty. She looked doubtfully at her brother. In her eyes he was the goodliest sight in the world, and she could not find it in her heart to condemn the green velvet, preposterous though it was; but she did not ascribe similar feelings to others, who did not love him. "You do look nice, of course. But I don't think he could really have done it for that reason, it seems so childish! I expect that's what Jacinette was hinting at the other day," she added in a reflective tone. "She told me you would never go to the scaffold so long as you didn't break your nose. I couldn't think what she meant. I wonder if it really is true?"

Alexis looked as though he would have liked to break his nose on the spot. "I doubt if my features would save me if Heinrich discovered that I was a member of the League."

"But you aren't a member of the League," pointed out Dorrel, who was of a literal turn of mind. "*We* are not disloyal, no matter what the Prince may choose to do. Besides, the League is only composed of shopkeepers and peasants."

"You think so, do you?" said Alexis. "Ah! Well, here comes your partner to claim you."

The two men exchanged a brief salutation; but while Dorrel and Von der Heide descended the broad and shallow steps, Alexis leaned on the balustrade and watched the dancers. The ballroom at Lichtenberg had been the chapel of the palace, until Heinrich abjured the Catholic faith and converted it to its present uses. From their niches the patient saints looked down upon a scene as beautiful and wicked as the visions of a dream. All the exquisite tracery of arches and pil-

lars was overwreathed with living roses, white and golden, mixed with long, light garlands of tropical fern. Among this greenery hung lamps of silver, burning scented oil. The dancers were dressed in a thousand lovely pale hues of satin and silk. Beauties were there, of European fame, whose robes were scarcely less diaphanous than those of the sirens of the Venusberg. Alexis's face grew contemptuous. Darker feelings lay in him than stirred his sister's placid youth; his eyes had the power of hatred, and the foreshadowing of tragedy.

Meanwhile Dorrel was floating round the room on her partner's arm. Bruno Von der Heide was a tall and rather ugly young man, with a pair of melting dark blue eyes which were fixed somewhat ardently on Dorrel's blond head. He knew very well what he wanted, but he scarcely expected to get it. It was not easy to dance in that crowded hall, and before long the pair withdrew to the terrace, which ran the whole length of the palace, cool, unlighted, pure with the scent of the woods. Dorrel sank into a chair with a sigh of contentment.

"It is tiring in the ballroom," she said sedately.

"It is, trying to dodge people. I've come to the conclusion that it's poor fun dancing at the Palace after supper," responded Bruno, sitting forward on the bench to fan her. "They're a rowdy lot. You oughtn't to be here at all, you know."

"I must."

"Oh, you mean that you can't very well get out of it, being maid of honor? I meant that I wonder the Graf lets you go on being maid of honor. It's—well, it really is pretty beastly for you here."

"We Von Etelmars are loyal," observed Dorrel, as she had observed before, and with much the same haughty lift of her little chin. Bruno laughed.

"Yes, I know the Graf's politics—*loyal quand même*, and all that sort of thing. You're about the only people left in Lichtenberg who are, you know.

I'm thinking of going over to Valentin myself soon."

"You join the League?" Dorrel opened her blue eyes in frigid surprise. "I thought that no one but the lower classes joined the League."

"Oh, Lord, no! I dare say two-thirds of these people here are in it."

"I include them in the lower classes," said Mademoiselle von Etelmar.

Bruno looked chastened. "Perhaps you include me in the lower classes," he said meekly.

"No, I don't; I shouldn't have been so shocked at the idea of your joining if I had."

"No, by Jove, I'd forgotten that! Well, that's some consolation. But honestly, mademoiselle, the League's not what you think. There are all sorts in it. Of course I don't know officially, but I've heard it said that even Prince Max—" He nodded in the direction of a handsome, dark-eyed young cousin of the Prince's, who had just appeared on the terrace.

"Then I think the less of Prince Max," said Dorrel calmly. "I'm proud to think Alexis will never join."

Bruno looked as though there might be two opinions on the point, but he did not contradict her. "It's rather a fine object, though, don't you think—the freedom of Lichtenberg?" he urged. "And, anyhow, Valentin himself is a fine chap—heroic, and all that. Everybody says so."

"Valentin is the son of a shopkeeper. I do not admire the sons of shopkeepers."

"Nor do I," said Bruno hastily, throwing Valentin and his League overboard together without a pang. "I don't approve of rebellion at all, really. One ought to be loyal to the powers that be and support them, even if they are a bit queer at times."

"One ought never to support them in what is wrong."

"Oh!" said Bruno.

He continued to fan her patiently. Dorrel's face turned slightly toward him. There was a faint twinkle of amusement in her demure eyes. "You

really are rather good tempered," she acknowledged handsomely.

"I'd let you trample on me to any extent."

"But you shouldn't be good tempered to any extent. You ought to have spirit enough to stand up for yourself when the proper time comes."

"Oh, I don't say I couldn't, with other people! I only said with you."

"That is silly."

"All right, I am silly!" Bruno declared recklessly. "You know I am, mademoiselle. I'm more than silly; I'm—"

"Dull?"

Bruno looked at her reproachfully; then, averting his eyes, he heaved a profound sigh. Dorrel contemplated her victim with a touch of naughty satisfaction—it was fortunate that her brother could not see her—and rapped him on the arm with her fan. "Come," she said; "we've been out here long enough, and there's another dance beginning. Take me back to the ball-room."

Bruno offered his arm with another deep sigh. His love affairs had been many and cheerful, but this was not quite of the same type; he had a sad prevision that Mademoiselle von Etelmar would not allow herself to be forgotten so easily as his previous lady loves. Nor had he much hope that she would relent. She might coquet a little demurely, but she would not permit herself to marry a Von der Heide, even if her heart desired it. Family pride was part of the religion of the Von Etelmars. They were almost the only surviving representatives of the ancient aristocracy of Neuber Lichtenberg. Loyal throughout the centuries, they were loyal still when others left their fatherland, or went over to the party of revolt; loyal even to the extent of letting fair Dorrel hold her traditional post as maid of honor in Prince Heinrich's discreditable court, where no woman was safe. Old Von Etelmar would have allowed himself and his children to be cut to pieces, but never would he have raised his hand against his Prince. Bruno, who, in spite of his

cheerful levity, possessed a long head and had a clear view of the perils of the situation, wished ruefully that they were not quite so loyal. In a mood of unaccustomed seriousness, he fell to pondering about the future. Dorrel and her father, they who worshiped Alexis; what would they say when they knew—"

"Look!" said Dorrel suddenly, pressing his arm. "There is the Prince—talking to Alexis."

They had just crossed the threshold of the chancel door, and from where they stood could see into one of the side chapels, which had been curtained off and left in semi-darkness for such as liked seclusion. Warm though the night was, a fire was burning on the hearth to please Prince Heinrich, who liked to live in a hothouse, and beside it he was standing—a man of middle height, frail and slender, but truly royal in his bearing. Ill health and dissipation had set their marks on his pale, irregular features; twenty years of absolute power spoke in every movement. The contrast between the fragility of his body and the strength of his will would have made him noticeable in any assembly of men.

Alexis stood opposite, leaning his elbow on the mantel shelf. His expression horrified Dorrel; she had long known that her brother did not like the Prince, but she had never dreamed that he had it in him to feel such active hatred as now looked out of his dark gray eyes. The two were alone, nor did they notice Bruno and Dorrel among the shadows by the door. "Listen—oh, listen!" murmured Dorrel, as Heinrich prepared to speak again. Bruno was rather pale; he listened full as eagerly as she.

"My dear Alexis," said the Prince in his light, cold voice, "I suppose you hope to persuade me that I have been misinformed. But when I tell you that it was I myself, with my own eyes, who saw it pass from him to you—"

"I have never denied receiving a letter from Von der Heide. I do deny your right to interfere with my private correspondence."

"Oh, rights! My subjects have no rights," said Heinrich insolently. "I act as I think fit, and shall continue to do so. Whether you approve is matter of indifference; you will certainly submit. I have a curiosity to see this letter. You are not a friend of Von der Heide's; you don't even regard him as your equal. Why, then, are you two in secret correspondence? He gave it to you with a very furtive air, when he thought himself unobserved. That, in the present state of Lichtenberg, is a little suspicious, my Alexis. In fine, reason or no reason, I intend to see that letter. You have it on you still?"

"I have."

Heinrich stretched out his hand. "Give it to me, then."

"I regret to refuse Your Highness."

"If I were six inches taller and had lived a clean life, as you have, I'd take it from you myself," said Heinrich. "As it is, you will force me to summon the guard."

Bruno felt Dorrel's hand clench itself on his arm. "Oh, speak and tell him what is in it!" she breathed.

"I daren't," said Bruno.

"Daren't!"

"Dorrel, it would hang your brother."

Dorrel whitened so suddenly that Bruno thought she would fall. He put his arm round her, but she pushed it away and listened, the sweet youth hardening out of her face. Alexis was speaking again.

"Do I understand that Your Highness is about to summon the guard, in order to take by force and read a letter addressed to me?"

"You understand rightly," smiled Heinrich.

Quick as light, Alexis snatched the letter from his pocket and held it to the flames. Heinrich sprang forward, but the younger man seized him by the wrist and warded him off, overpowering him easily with one hand. There was a moment's struggle; then Heinrich, deadly pale, disengaged himself and stepped back with a bow.

"You have proved your guilt, Captain von Etelmar," he said, pointing to the fire, where the thin sheet was al-

ready crackling in ashes. "I do not think you would have ventured to lay hands on your sovereign on your own account. That paper contained the names of others who are confederates with you and Von der Heide in the service of Valentin."

"I'll freely admit that only extreme need could have induced me to touch Your Highness," said Alexis. A faint look of distaste at his own hand completed the sentence.

Heinrich smiled.

"After all, I care less for your accomplices than for yourself. You, I imagine, are about as sensitively proud as any man in Lichtenberg. It is agreeable to me to inflict punishments that are appreciated. I strongly disliked to feel that you were my superior in strength, but I think, my Alexis, I can repay you to the full."

Alexis bowed.

"I shall send you to the triangles," continued Heinrich. He had the triumph of seeing the involuntary, uncontrollable change that went over Alexis's face. "And if you anticipate your punishment by shooting yourself," he continued mercilessly, "by heaven, I'll send the Graf in your stead! Like father, like son; I dare swear you are both tarred with the same brush."

"Your Highness—"

It was Dorrel who spoke. She had slipped from Bruno's arm and stood now, white and tense and cool, at Heinrich's elbow. Alexis started violently.

"Take her away, Von der Heide!" he said.

"No, she shall stay," interposed Heinrich. To him it was a moment of pure pleasure; his critical eyes passed from one face to another. "What have you to say to me, mademoiselle?"

"Only this, sir. I can tell you what was in that letter."

"Dorrel, I order you to be silent!" said Alexis. But Dorrel met his anger without fear. Heinrich waved him back.

"I command here, not you, sir. Now, mademoiselle, how can you tell me that?"

"Because I wrote it myself."

Heinrich did not fail to perceive the flash of utter amazement, the quick, mute question that passed between the two men. "Indeed!" he said politely. "You wrote it yourself—and to whom, then? To your brother, if I may ask?"

"No, to Herr von der Heide." Vivid color rose over Dorrel's face, but she went on unflinching. "My brother would not allow me to marry him because he thought he was not of good family. We have carried on a secret correspondence. My brother found it out and put a stop to it. He could not give up my letter because it was—was not—"

"Was a trifle compromising?" suggested Heinrich blandly. His voice was drowned in the quick, vibrating tones of Alexis.

"That is a lie!"

"It's true," said Dorrel defiantly.

"It is a lie," Alexis repeated. "That letter, sir, was from Von der Heide to me. We are both members of the League; and it contained a list of those who are affiliated with our division."

Heinrich turned his mocking eyes on Bruno. "*Et vous, monsieur le chevalier?*"

"Von Etelmar is correct, sir," said Bruno.

"*Splendide menteur!*" commented Heinrich. He looked from one to the other with a curious blending of irony, cynicism and—could it be admiration? "You are two noble and chivalrous young gentlemen," he resumed, "though I scarcely think it polite of you to imply that Mademoiselle Dorrel is capable of such finished deceit. As I am a model of good manners, I must elect to believe the lady. After all, what harm? There are plenty at Court who are in mademoiselle's case, and who do not repair their faults as I propose she shall repair hers." He took Dorrel's hand and laid it in that of Bruno. "Take her, Von der Heide. You deserve her, pedigree or no pedigree. And I promise you that I myself will be present at the wedding. No, I am resolute, Alexis; don't bore me with remonstrances. This thing shall be. I

defy you to interfere with my purposes, because, as you may remember, it is my custom to punish the innocent for the guilty, and I warn you that I shall not spare."

He let his glance fall significantly on Dorrel and turned away. Alexis leaned against the mantel shelf, his face half hidden in his hand. Bruno, unable to

meet Dorrel's eyes, tried to draw away his hand, but she held it fast. Into the silence her voice broke softly timorous, yet with a faint apologetic note of laughter.

"Alexis," she said, "Alexis, dear, I—I—I'm very sorry, but, do you know, the truth is that I'm really rather—glad!"



APPROXIMATE PHILOSOPHY

By GRACE WOODWARD SMITH

TO find what is the most glaring sin of society ask the man who has not been able to break in.

HE who invented wisdom died and was buried and his bones are forgotten, but the purveyors of foolishness are on the lecture platform and the stage, and we hand them every dollar we can dig up.

OUR critics may be our best friends, but we do not embarrass them by leaving them money in our wills.

A WOMAN's idea of Paradise: a pocketbook full of money, a bargain sale, and she the only customer in the store.



SYMPATHY

By BEATRICE IRWIN

OUT into the world of men
 Let me go;
 Love and pity dwell not there—
 That I know.
 What wouldst find, then, in the world—
 Renown?
 To its heartbeat I'd atune
 Mine own.

ONE OF LIFE'S HARLEQUINS

By MABEL WOOD MARTIN

A LAUGH, a wonderful, clear-toned laugh, like the opening chord of some glorious pæan of youth, chimed down the hall.

The girl stopped to listen, waiting for it again as, in spite of herself, she always waited. "A mountebank! Imagine making a life profession out of a laugh!" A bitter little shadow crossed her face at the thought—a face lovely and sober enough for a religious painting.

She adjusted her hat, wondering for the thousandth time why she had let him come for so long—a creature of footlight glare and perpetual joke. All the prejudice of her ancestors was concentrated against the actor, the "near-man," she called him, who puts on his character with his coat, whose emotions are conjured by cotton flowers, electric moonlights and garish women. The armies of these last that he had held in his arms, while he wooed them with ready made love—and a horsehair mustache! No, there couldn't be anything fine or real in his feeling for her after these exotic debauches.

The daughter of distinguished men, of soldiers and explorers, who had fought with real swords, who had faced danger and death and carved their name into the stone of history, she was asked to exchange that name for one blazoned upon every billboard of the city!

Steele, hearing her approach, put down the copy of Maeterlinck, and resuscitated a nervous conversation with Harrington, who was to accompany them this afternoon in a sortie into Bohemia—Steele's world—to which she was to pay a probationary visit!

Eda, looking quietly lovely in a dark fur toque and coat, entered the room. The thrill of her beauty was peculiar. It seemed to vibrate on some sixth sense. Steele, familiar to satiety with sensational good looks, let his eyes dwell upon her for one miserable, yearning moment. Then he turned restively away. Harrington saw that the sight of her was a stab to the comedian.

"What were you two laughing about?" she demanded, looking at Harrington. She approved of the young lawyer—he had fought through the Spanish War.

"I was propounding an absolutely new theory of Maeterlinck," Harrington the man of private life, explained easily, while his comrade of the footlights stood by tongue-tied. "Genius in George Eliot's case, you remember, was hard work. In Maeterlinck's it's indigestion, with mince pie for the muse. Steele, here, laughed. He's always laughing—his business, you know," with a careless wave.

A volcanic change came over the comedian. His lithe form straightened; a dull flush sprang out on his face. "The clown in the ring!" he broke out bitterly. "It's 'Laugh, you devil, laugh,' at the crack of the whip."

The two stared at him disconcerted. "Oh, see here!" the lawyer expostulated. "It won't always be that. You'll get into tragedy yet."

"Are you ready?" Steele demanded shortly, snatching up his hat.

But when they were in the carriage, he recollected that he had forgotten some music that the hostess had loaned him, and would be obliged to stop at

his apartments for it. They might as well come in, too, and see some of the curios he had picked up at a recent auction.

His old landlady came wheezing after them up the stairs. With a grin of amusement she delivered into Steele's hands an enormous stack of letters. "They give themselves away, don't they—those little lavender and blue ecstasies?" she declared with a wink at Eda.

Neither Eda nor Steele joined in the laugh.

"But I never saw so many in my life!" The girl flashed a keen look at Steele. "Do you mean that—women write him all these?"

"You forget how good-looking a popular god our Dicky is!" Harrington's tolerance irritated Eda.

Steele flung the entire bundle furiously into the grate. He had not broken a single seal.

"Never mind!" Mrs. Vance exclaimed, following a silent Eda out of the room. "He'll pick them all out when he comes back."

It was all a mistake of Steele's—this introducing Eda, whose life and interests were at opposite poles, into this mixed world. But he had been on the stage all his life, had learned to accept the talk of comparative values—and he judged Eda to be wiser than she was.

The hostess's hail-good-fellow fashion of slapping the men on the back might be a triumph of cordiality—but it was unusual.

Eda found this person an interesting study. She was an extraordinary mosaic, pieced together from chips off other people's souls—a kleptomaniac, in whose vicinity no personality was safe.

Eda was deeply amused to hear her confide to a friend, with a trick of gesture, cribbed from the stock-in-trade of a well known Broadway favorite, that in her opinion any one of those frowsy chorus girls would make Steele a better wife.

A girl with a distinctive face and beautifully simple manners held her

under a remarkable personal spell for a quarter of an hour, before she remembered that the actress was well known to have had the record of a Catherine the Second.

Eda looked bewilderedly about her at the circle of graceful women with the lure of Loreleis in their manner, the sparkle of wine in their utterance, and tried to understand. What was their philosophy of life? She would have liked to step into an intimate moment with them and put the problem she was facing before them. She recalled with a start that many of them had been married—a number of times.

The men, too, were interesting, indefinitely different from those she knew. They were clever and handsome, but their personalities seemed exaggerated beyond the average pattern. How far might one trust one's life with that temperament, surrounded by multifold temptations and applause? Doubt settled deeper upon her.

Yet these men found something in her, for they were gathered thickly around her. There was something pathetic in their admiration for her flowerlike freshness and the charm that had not come out of an author's head.

Her devotees dispersing in quest of refreshments, their place was taken by a little old lady with a face that glowed with the vitality of a live coal. Eda recognized in her a star of the past generation. Mrs. Gardener laughed as she looked from the girl to the retreating line of gallants.

"Paper knights!" she chuckled, reading, with her vast experience of people, the girl's face in a second. "You haven't fallen in love with one of them, I see. I've been on the stage for sixty years, my dear," she confided, "and, think, not one of them ever caused me a quickened beat of the heart. My husband is a broker. Do you think he'd be my husband still, with all these wrinkles, if he'd been one of them? Eternal youth is the law of the stage, unless you frankly placard yourself as venerable, as I do. Yet, if you'll believe me, I have contemporaries who are now doing the 'reigning beauty'

act—but they were long since skinned and massaged out of their own Maker's recognition.

"We're strange people. But the men—h'm! I don't say they're any worse than the general run, but—" The little old face became suddenly wise. "We women, whose part in creation is to amuse, who have been dancing girls since the dawn of time, we crave something more solid of men than make-believe."

Eda's glance fell instinctively upon Steele in his distant window seat. The older woman saw the look. "Now there's young Steele—he's different, somehow," she exclaimed. "He hasn't the gallery eye, the 'take my photograph' look. Steele," she declared critically, "is a fine comedian—the best, in fact."

"He has the soul of—a jester." Eda flushed violently at her own indiscretion.

Mrs. Gardener's eyes opened very wide. "And isn't that better than having no soul at all, like the rest of us poor Undines?" she demanded.

Someone drew her away, and Eda shrank into a corner with her decision between her teeth. She could never live this life!

Steele crossed to her, his face, usually nonchalant and smiling, looked tired and gray. "I have something to say to you; let's go home."

Harrington, in enthralled conversation with a fair tragedienne, was not to be dragged away. Eda looked after him with a singular little feeling of defeat. "Is there something in these women with which, we, my kind, can't compete?" she wondered. "A hundred men would carry Miss James's standard to one who'd bear mine. Why? She and her colleagues are always brilliant, always beautiful and *alive!* Ah, there it is! They do not look down through latticed windows on the street of life. They struggle in it, and they are trained, every nerve and fiber in them, to the contest, while I—am a lady." She laughed a little. "Can't one see it—portrait of a lady, nice, dressed like everybody else, think-

ing the thoughts that have passed through the safe channel of ten thousand other minds! Oh!" Eda was conscious of the first throb of revolt against herself.

Seated in the carriage, Steele broke out grimly: "Well, I've failed, utterly, entirely, and I have no right to ask anything more of you."

Eda looked at him, startled.

"You told me if I'd give up vaudeville and try the legitimate drama you'd give me hope. I went to all the managers and tried to get them to put me on with a company in Shakespeare or something on that order. That was what you wanted. Why, I even studied 'Hamlet'!" He gave a short laugh. "The managers all thought it was a joke, one of the kind I get off down at the Academy—and that was all I could make them think. I got my own company then, leased a theater and the crowd came, for I was on exhibition—the public's familiar arch-clown, with a brand new trick.

"They came—and roared!" he went on in a husky voice—"just as they always roar at everything I do. But this time it was unintentional comedy, and of a very excruciating sort. I saw that it was no use, and the other night at the end of an act I gave up and laughed with the rest. The house shook for ten minutes. Nothing like it ever happened in a theater before!"

Steele stopped, his face deadly white. He did not add that he had lost in the venture every cent he had.

It was Eda's moment to speak. She brushed the mist from her eyes. "I wish I *could* marry you, Dick!" she cried. "But you can't think how I fear the life. Why, I wouldn't even trust *you* at the first. Around every corner, I would be expecting the inevitable—"

"Woman—of course!" he commented disgustedly. "And I never heard of a single one of these women who wrote those confounded notes. If they'd been on the stage, I should have.

"I want to tell you a few things before I go—for good," he said. "I know the kind of man you have in mind—the sort your people have been,

who have done things in the world. But let me tell you that it's not the creatures of the stage who supply the champagne suppers and wait in the wings for girls not yet out of their teens. It's the high hats and the fur coats—the brothers and husbands—and fathers, yes, by Jove—of your class, who are not too busy building bridges and fighting battles to add their part to the world's shame.

"I don't say that the private biography of the stage is all that it ought to be. But, then, look into the histories of those famous fellows in the other arts! I can't recall very many of *them* who could set up as saints.

"As for the tinsel and glitter, it all harks back to the imagination—the leaven of our lives. Why, when I'm twanging a ridiculous guitar, that I don't know how to play, under a canvas castle, do you suppose I remember all *that*? I'm living in the days of old gray castles and troubadours, and the people around me are the real, rollicking peasantry of long ago, as happy as I'd be if I had the chance." He looked at her earnestly for a moment, but Eda's eyes disclosed no new hope.

At her door Steele helped her from the carriage. Never had the appeal of his presence been so strong. She struggled with herself. "I wouldn't dare!" Such was the answer she flung at their pending fate.

She neither saw nor heard from him after that. Gradually it was forced upon her that something exhilarating had gone out of her life. The atmosphere of her regular existence had always seemed to lighten when he had approached. "I'm one of the latticed women," she told herself—"one of those for whom their husbands are selected in the Old World. The others, down there in the street, would have had the courage to venture!"

One night she resolved to see him act—for the first time. Hitherto she had liked to separate Steele, in her mind, from his vagarious profession. Would it be possible, she wondered as she sat with only her maid for company, to get through the performance

—the antics, the grimaces, the crazy songs, without a recoil?

Her seat was unobtrusive, in the back of the theater. She was early, and to occupy herself she fell to studying the house. Her analytical eyes roved over the audience in search, not of the familiar face, but the metaphysical common factor of this human unit. A hard problem—for they represented every condition of life and soul. The gradations of castes were sharply defined, increasing in number in mathematical ratio to the price of their seats, from the very few rows of aigrettes and glistening necks through the thick stratum of shirtwaist respectability, on and up to the crowded gallery with its plauditory cotton gloves. The weariness of the day's end sat on that sea of faces—the workers of the world, drowsing in the dusk of the Temple of Mirth.

Eda's glance traveled back to the occupant of the seat at her right, a middle-aged woman dressed in black with a face seared with lines. Here at last was the great human average, with the letters of life branded upon its brow. The girl had grown to recognize it, in the throngs of the streets, in the crowded street cars when the mills of labor had closed for the night.

The curtain rose. A gale of music and movement swept out to the house, starting it erect in its chairs. Against a pastoral landscape the chorus danced and sang in joyous abandon. The melody was one of those sorceries that set the pulses tingling.

At the height of the gaiety a young man, absurdly gotten up and radiating a genius of mirth, came out upon the stage. He spoke a word or two, then broke into a laugh that was a miracle of sound. It swept over the audience like a compelling touch. In an instant the house was in a gale of laughter.

Eda stared about her, amazed. There was not now a tired face in the house. Weariness and stupor had left it under the incantation of a laugh.

"Dicky Steele," famous on two continents for his drolleries, began to talk. As the girl listened and laughed a sin-

gular elation seized her, the bravery of cheer that makes of life a stirring song.

At the end of the act her eyes encountered her neighbor's in the comradeship of fun. "What a gift!" the woman exclaimed earnestly. The lines seemed for the moment to be effaced from her countenance. "It's easy to draw the tears," she reflected, encouraged by the girl's interest. "Life is such that we never get far away from them; but the laughter—laughter like this, that makes you forget—it's a wonderful thing!"

Eda looked at her thoughtfully. "But do you think we ought to make an anesthetic of laughter—drug ourselves against life?" she asked.

The other opened her eyes in puzzled surprise. "Oh, it's natural that you should think that way," she said with tolerant patience. "You're young, and," she ventured, "well off. You haven't anything to forget."

Fearful of having taken too much for granted, she added hastily: "What I mean is that when you have had trouble, a great deal of it, it means everything to be able to forget for a while, to go to some place where you can see a lot of people happy and be happy yourself—for an hour." She looked with anxious questioning at the girl.

"But how—just how can anything like this help?"

The woman did not reply at once. The girl watched her face and saw it slowly resolve into lines of tragedy. The woman spoke hesitatingly, with eyes fixed in front of her.

"Why, with me, miss—I lost my children, both of them, two years ago in a train accident. I was all alone; my husband had died some years before. For a long time I couldn't think of anything but why I hadn't been killed, too. Then one day a friend brought me here, and it seemed to put a kind of color on life. I've come ever since. That's what I meant by the laughter helping one through."

She sat silent a moment, wrapped in her thoughts. "Why, what would become of all these people," she exclaimed, "if they didn't have some place to go

and someone to make them forget they're poor or tired or lonely? It's as good as any church, I say, and I'm a believer, too, with a minister who dins life's trials into your ears as if you didn't know all about them yourself. Then," with a brightening eye on the curtain, which had commenced to rise on roseate vistas, "you know this will always turn out well."

They turned their attention to the stage. The farce moved on at a rollicking gait, but to Eda the action seemed all at once irrelevantly to heighten. Even the vagaries of light comedy could not be held responsible for the sudden abandonment of plot.

When the players started with a terrific noise to storm the very tavern in which, but a moment ago, they had been making merry, the audience were plainly mystified. But they were soon engrossed in the progress of the fight. The atmosphere thickened with smoke; a faint glow of battle lit the background of the stage, while the chorus danced their exultant victory.

To the girl there was something terrifyingly ominous in this wild movement.

Steele, coming quickly to the center of the stage, began one of his monologues. He danced, laughed, sang. He threw his personality out over the footlights and seized the audience in its grip. That human magnet on the stage held two thousand beings in breathless thrall.

Eda realized as never before the tremendous coercive force of a single will. It seemed to have her at the throat, forbidding her to think or move.

But this was not the nonchalant, the casual Steele, whose fun flowed carelessly. That man upon the stage was working, straining every nerve to a supreme effort. Every word told like a shot. The audience sat forward in profound stillness, too interested to applaud. Never had they heard anyone talk or laugh like that.

Eda grew more afraid. Back of it all she recognized the superhuman note, and under the unbearable tension she could have screamed.

Then understanding came—the flame shooting back of that pirouetting figure, whose spell snapped like a taut cord, and panic started. In a second the stage was obscured by the towering human tidal wave that bore with a rush out of the seats. The girl got to her feet in a kind of frozen terror. The crunching trample of that multitude of feet seemed to forebode her fate.

She was swept to the aisle and hemmed in there in a vice of human forms, clutching, swaying and straining forward. Crushed and suffocating, she realized she could no longer keep her feet. Then something roused her fainting senses, an extraordinary sound, floating over the pandemonium of cries and cracking seats. It was the loud, undaunted echo of a laugh.

The pressure about her relaxed enough for breath. People in the rear were beginning to recover their heads. Voices in the crowd adjured coolness. Once more the spell from the stage gained sway. Snatches of music could he heard now.

People looked upon the spectacle of a group of actors, singing their lines against a blazing background, and the sight did them good. The evil moment was past. The house emptied swiftly and quietly into the streets.

When the night air struck Eda with its realization of relief she remembered Steele. With him and his company things had transpired far differently. She pushed her way wildly through the

crowds to the side street, where the fire engines were clustered around the stage entrance. She could see the helmets of the firemen as they passed in and out. Far ahead of her a file of men crossed the street with what looked to be bundles of burned rags in their arms. With a desperate effort she flung herself out to that moving line. She got there just as the last one of the actors was being carried past. In the glow of the street Eda recognized the ridiculous clothing. It was Steele's.

She waited till dawn at the hospital in that anxious company of relatives and friends. Nurses and doctors on their hurrying way glanced at the crouching figure in the corner but could spare no time for inquiries.

At last, her face ghastly in the morning light, Eda caught trembling at a nurse's arm. "Tell me," she begged, "how is Mr. Steele? I—can't bear it any longer." Tears started down her cheeks.

The nurse looked at her commiseratingly, then, as if overriding judgment, beckoned Eda to a small white room.

Steele lay there on a bed, his head a mask of bandages. Not till she kissed the cloth across his eyes did she understand that he was alive. He didn't move, but the odd, valiant shadow of a smile crooked about his mouth.

Eda dropped to her knees beside the bed, and burying her head against his shoulder sobbed joyfully: "You'll laugh again—Dick!"



SAVED BY A TECHNICALITY

MAYBELLE—But it has been said that you are a gambler.

HAROLD—That's a mistake. Gamblers sometimes win.



WHEN a woman makes a show of herself it isn't always a comedy.

"VOTES FOR WOMEN"

By FREDERIC ARNOLD KUMMER

"CABBAGE!" exclaimed Professor Hathaway disgustedly, as he entered his study and closed the door behind him with an elaborate care. "Hereafter on wash days I shall lunch at the club." He puffed at his pipe discontentedly as he seated himself at his desk, drew a mass of papers toward him, and picking up his pen, set to work.

Professor Alonzo Hathaway, of the chair of Biology at Morningside University, was a modest man and an earnest man, but it must not therefore be inferred that he was lacking in *esprit*; nor would it be proper, upon hearing his name, to at once conjure up a figure grave, bewhiskered, bespectacled and of solemn mien. Nothing, indeed, could be further from the truth, for the Professor was but thirty-five, tall, clean shaven, athletic of build and of an appearance decidedly prepossessing. It is, indeed, not impossible that in his youth the Professor may have even sown a modicum of wild oats, but since his marriage, some three years before, an event coincident with his accession to the academic post above mentioned, he had become the most sedate and circumspect of men. Every evening found him at his desk in the excellently appointed study of his apartment near Riverside Drive, preparing his lectures or working industriously upon his forthcoming book upon the Origin of Life, and now that the vacation season had arrived and the duties of his classes no longer claimed him, he devoted a large part of his days as well to that absorbing subject. In fact, it might fairly be said that Professor Hathaway had be-

come so deeply engrossed in the origin of life that he almost forgot the necessity of living it.

No children having appeared to bless the Professor's household, it naturally followed that Mrs. Hathaway, after the novelty of housekeeping had begun to pall, cast about her for something in the nature of a hobby wherewith to amuse and occupy her somewhat active mind as the months rolled by. She had tried art for a time, in the shape of china painting, but after having filled her own and her friends' china closets with various cups, saucers and plates decorated with every form of fruit and flower known to man, and some that were not, she voted it stupid and bootless, and looked about for pursuits of a more stirring nature. In due course bridge claimed her for its own, and but for the influence of a certain Miss Granby, an unmarried lady of uncertain age, might have been doing so still. From Miss Granby, however, she learned the true purpose of her life, the mission which she had so long sought in vain. Miss Granby expounded to her, in a series of eloquent discourses, the downtrodden condition of woman—and Mrs. Hathaway straightway became a violent Suffragette.

She determined to devote her life to the cause of her sex, and soon became an active member of a woman's club having for its avowed purpose the securing of "votes for women." Her husband, anticipating no more serious consequences from this new departure than possibly a little neglect in matters of housekeeping, placed no obstacles in the way of her ambition,

with the result that within six months Mrs. Hathaway had become a new woman. Along with the most ardent of her coworkers, she now assumed a brisk and businesslike manner, cast from her the usual weapons of her sex, repudiated scornfully all assertions that dress, bargain sales and babies are the chief concerns of the feminine mind and sallied forth to do battle with mayors, governors and the unsympathetic police in the severest of common sense costumes. No more French heels, Marcel waves or Merry Widow hats for her; instead, she affected the broadest and most sensible of English walking boots, twisted her hair into the tightest and most unbecoming of knots, and abjuring all plumes, laces and picture hats, appeared in simple and businesslike felt or straw, unadorned save by a single knot of velvet or ribbon. Even this concession Mrs. Hathaway at first declined to make, but perhaps some lingering desire for personal adornment, more deep rooted than she knew, persisted in spite of her severe and uncompromising common sense.

It was annoying enough, Mrs. Hathaway felt, to have stupid and overbearing men write long articles for the magazines, contending that woman's primal instinct and chief purpose in life is to attract the opposite sex, that her use of bright colors, jewelry and figure revealing costumes prove her to be but a step removed from the savage, a creature by nature illogical, untruthful, ruthless, almost barbaric. She determined to prove that woman's place in the great battle of life is not inferior to that of man, that all this chatter of dress and sex and woman's proper sphere was but part of a great and unjust conspiracy which all men, in the very nature of things, were bound to uphold and maintain. She, for one, would show them what little need a woman had for the gewgaws and fineries which apparently formed so large a part of their existence. "We must strike off our shackles," she cried, in her maiden speech at her club. "Shall we allow ourselves to be governed by the weak, contemptible crea-

tures we see all about us, like so many children or slaves? Our forefathers fought for liberty; let us do likewise. Let us go to the Governor, to the Legislature, to the people, who elect them both, and fight for our rights. We may not win this year, nor the next, nor the next; but if we stand together we cannot fail to win in the end." From which it may be seen that Mrs. Alonzo Hathaway was very much in earnest.

The Professor, wrapped up in his biological researches, gave but scant attention to his wife's theories. He noted that "cars for women only" in the Subway had failed because women refused to ride in them, and smiled knowingly. Mrs. Hathaway made several requests that he cast his vote in future for woman's suffrage, and he finally agreed to do so if she would consent to wear her hair like a civilized woman and abjure mannish hats and shoes, but the offer was rejected with scorn. After that the Professor went on with his writing and scarcely noticed that his better half devoted two or more nights weekly to the meetings of her club, where startling plans were being evolved for influencing legislation in favor of the cause. Mrs. Hathaway was not only very much in earnest; she was also very busy and therefore, of course, quite happy. It is probable that, had she possessed a pair of troublesome and noisy children, she would have been equally busy and somewhat more happy; but no one could have made Mrs. Hathaway believe this.

It was at this juncture that Mrs. Hathaway received an unexpected and, to tell the truth, rather unwelcome letter. It was from an old school friend, Nancy Maddox, of Louisville, who in earlier days had been somewhat of a chum of hers, but whom she had not seen since her marriage. Now, just at this most inopportune of all times, Miss Maddox, who had been spending the winter and spring in Washington, wrote that if agreeable she would come on to New York for a short stay before returning home.

The letter further announced that she would arrive the following day, probably about noon, and would come directly to the apartment without putting her friends to the trouble of meeting her at the train.

Mrs. Hathaway read this letter through twice with feelings of considerable annoyance. Not only did she have an engagement for a meeting at her club that very day at twelve, but her evenings for the coming two weeks were sure to be filled to overflowing, on account of a monster petition which the various clubs interested in the Votes for Women movement were preparing to present to the Governor—signatures to which were being secured through the medium of nightly open air meetings, more or less disturbed by the police. For all of which reasons Mrs. Hathaway was tempted to wish her not entirely welcome visitor in Halifax or some other equally remote place. She read the letter for the second time, then glanced sharply at her watch and proceeded briskly to her husband's study.

Professor Hathaway, deep in a complex dissertation upon protoplasmic formations, was disturbed by the sudden opening of his study door. Divining instinctively that it was his wife, he thrust his pipe into his coat pocket and turned an inquiring and somewhat guilty look toward his better half. Mrs. Hathaway did not approve of pipe smoking, especially within doors. She sniffed disdainfully as she came into the room. “That horrid pipe again!” she exclaimed.

The Professor, with a recalcitrant look, felt mechanically in his coat pocket, and having succeeded in burning his finger, withdrew his hand with a smothered exclamation. “At least, it's no worse than cabbage,” he fumed peevishly.

“Very much the same thing, I should say,” returned Mrs. Hathaway with uplifted nose. “Do you know what time it is?”

The Professor glanced at the clock. “Close to twelve, isn't it? That clock is usually not more than a quarter of

an hour out of the way. If you would only wind it more regularly—”

His wife took out her watch. “It's five minutes to twelve, and Nan Maddox hasn't come yet.”

“Hasn't she?” The Professor appeared a bit puzzled. “Who's Nan Maddox, anyway?”

“Alonzo! Have you forgotten already?”

“Quite,” said the Professor. “Who is she?”

“She's my college friend—don't you remember? The one I've been trying to induce to visit me for the past three years.”

“Oh, that girl from Louisville,” said the Professor, turning to his work. “Is she coming at last?”

“Yes, and what's more, she's coming today.” Mrs. Hathaway said this in so tragic a manner that her husband looked up in surprise. “Well, why not?” he ventured. “It's a bit hot, of course, but it usually is about this time of year.”

“But don't you see, Alonzo, how very awkward it will be for me? I sha'n't have any time at all to entertain her during the next two weeks; my work demands it all. There's our club meeting tomorrow night and speeches in Madison Square on Wednesday and a conference meeting with the Woman's Political Club of Brooklyn on Thursday—and—well, something every night; and the worst of it is she's coming here about twelve today, and she isn't here yet, and I am simply *obliged* to meet Miss Granby and Mrs. Hutchinson at twelve. We're on a committee for drawing up a set of resolutions to be forwarded to the Governor—”

“Resolutions to the Governor! Good Lord, what for?”

“Votes,” said Mrs. Hathaway with the greatest solemnity. “Votes.”

“Votes!” Her husband appeared mildly amused. “What on earth do you want with votes? Kitty,” he went on, taking her two hands in his, “I wish you would drop all this ‘woman's rights’ nonsense. We used to have such jolly times together before that

old grouch, Miss Granby, began to take up all of your time with her chatter about votes that you wouldn't know what to do with if you had them."

"Alonzo, I forbid you to speak in that way of my friends! Miss Granby is a most charming woman, and since I have known her I have realized that it is my duty, my life work, to devote myself to the cause of downtrodden woman. I have determined that—"

"All right—all right," interrupted the Professor hastily. "What about this Maddox girl? Is she pretty?"

"Some people might think so," replied his wife. "I suppose she is good-looking in a way. She's one of those clingy sort of women—from the South, you know. I never admired her looks particularly. She's likely to come at any moment, and I simply *must* go." She looked at her watch again. "Why, it's after twelve, and I'm sure to be late. You must receive her, Alonzo. I sha'n't be gone long."

Professor Hathaway glanced down at the mass of papers on his desk and then at his wife. "I receive her!" he replied. "Good heavens, Kate—just when I'm so busy on my new lecture! It's most annoying."

"I sha'n't be long, Alonzo," replied his wife, as she stepped to the door. "You must receive her politely and make her welcome."

"And you might undertake to see to her trunks and offer her a glass of—of water," concluded Mrs. Hathaway as she stepped into the hall.

"Water?" called the Professor after her.

"Oh, well—sherry, if she wants it, of course. I'll be back very soon."

The Professor waited until he heard the door of the apartment close. Then he slammed his own door, relighted his pipe and walked nervously about the room. "Humph," he growled, "sherry!" Then he stepped to one corner and took from a cellaret a bottle marked "Best Rye," and holding it to the light, noted that it was still two-thirds full. "Sherry," he grunted again—"from Louisville." He re-

placed the bottle and returned to his desk and his work.

Some fifteen minutes later there was a brisk knock at the door, but the Professor was so absorbed in his work that not until it had been twice repeated did he turn and reply with a grudging, "Come in." Dolly, the maid, entered. "There's a lady at the door, sir," she said. "Says she wants to see Mrs. Hathaway. I've told her she's out, but she won't go away."

"Go away?" replied the Professor. "Of course not. Show her in at once." As he spoke he rose from his desk, pushing his papers impatiently from him. "It's that girl from Louisville, I suppose," he muttered. "What's her name, anyway? Maddox—Maddox—" He hastily threw his pipe into one of the desk drawers, adjusted his tie and smoothed down his hair. There was a sound of light footfalls in the hall, and with a swirl of laces a young woman swept into the room. She was somewhat above medium height, of that figure which is referred to as willowy when coupled with the graceful and curving outlines with which Miss Maddox was blessed. Miss Maddox struck the Professor as remarkably beautiful. She was decidedly handsome and stunning, in her elaborate costume of snowy lace, her long coat and her picture hat of rough straw with salmon-colored plumes. As she undulated into the room, the Professor stepped back a pace or two, gasped slightly, then extended his hand. "Miss Maddox," he began nervously, inquiringly.

"Oh, this is Professor Hathaway?" The Professor noted that the vision in lace had a voice as soothing and low as the sobbing of a 'cello. He took her outstretched hand and shook it gingerly. "We're so glad you've come. Mrs. Hathaway was obliged to step out for a few moments, but she will be back directly. Won't you sit down?" He indicated an easy chair, near the center of the room.

"Thanks, so much," cooed his visitor, seating herself comfortably and laying her parasol across her knees.

A faint odor of tobacco filled the room. "You mustn't stop smoking on my account, Professor, please! I simply adore it."

The Professor resurrected his pipe from his pocket. "Thanks," he rejoined, smiling. "It's hot, isn't it? Won't you have a glass of—a—a drink?"

"I don't mind." Miss Maddox seemed perfectly, charmingly at ease. "It is hot."

"Er—ah—what will you have?" began the Professor lamely, turning to the maid.

"Oh, anything," smiled his visitor; "something long and cold." Evidently he was not going to get any help in that direction.

The Professor hesitated no longer. "How about a—a highball?" he said.

"Splendid!" said Miss Maddox, with one of her brilliant smiles, that made the Professor's heart flutter. "Dolly," he said, turning to the maid, "bring some cracked ice, a siphon and two long glasses."—"I'm awfully sorry Mrs. Hathaway's out," he continued, as the maid left the room.

"Are you?" commented his guest placidly.

"Well, of course, you see, it would have been so much pleasanter—"

"Yes," cooed Miss Maddox, "of course."

"For you, I mean." The Professor was scrambling wildly. This girl had a most confoundingly queer way of making him feel like a fool.

Miss Maddox crossed her knees and bent her parasol about them with her two beautifully gloved hands. "I'm very comfortable, thank you," she said sweetly, as the maid returned with the glasses and ice.

The Professor mixed the drinks in solemn silence. His mind was in somewhat of a flutter. Long contact with classes of the male sex, unrelieved by the atmosphere with which Mrs. Hathaway's latest hobby had filled his home, had not prepared him for contact with a creature so deliciously feminine, so charmingly alluring, as was the new arrival. From her dainty

white ties, with just a suspicion of salmon pink hose above them, to the curling plumes that bordered her chestnut hair, Miss Maddox delighted and yet confounded him. Here was the primitive woman in all her twentieth century war paint, ready to engage in mortal combat, with weapons of her own choosing, with any member of the opposite sex who should be so venturesome as to enter the lists with her. Even the almost imperceptible fragrance of the creature disturbed him. Inanely he reverted to the weather. "Awfully hot, isn't it?" he remarked.

"Isn't it!" Miss Maddox rose and placed her parasol on the desk. "I think, if you don't mind, I'll take off my coat."

The Professor started and almost upset the siphon. "Of course," he cried. "How stupid of me! Take off anything you like—that is—ah—" He ground his teeth in angry annoyance with himself, and blushed, actually blushed, at the hideous stupidity of his remark. What an ass she must think him, to be sure! He glanced at her guiltily, wondering whether she were offended. Miss Maddox eyed him demurely. "Only my coat, Mr. Hathaway," she said, as she slipped it from her dainty shoulders and threw it upon her parasol. "Don't be alarmed." She accepted the tall glass he proffered her, and relaxing into her chair, sipped it with almost childlike enjoyment.

"Miss Maddox," said the Professor desperately, after a long and to him distressing pause, during which he had groped hastily through his somewhat befogged brain for a suitable subject for conversation, "what do you think of this thing of 'votes for women'?"

"Of what?" said that young lady, turning in unfeigned surprise.

"Of votes for women—woman's suffrage, you know."

"I don't think of it at all," remarked Miss Maddox with decision.

"Why not?"

"Well, you see, Professor Hathaway, I've so many other things, nicer things, to think of that I really haven't time. What do *you* think of it?" She swept

him with a momentary glance of curiosity.

"I—oh, it isn't I; it's Mrs. Hathaway, you know. She's deeply interested in it—goes to meetings—makes speeches, interviews governors and mayors, and all that sort of thing."

"No!" Miss Maddox's tone expressed the most profound surprise and disappointment. "Why, Professor, I should never have thought it of you!"

"Of *me!*" gasped the Professor faintly. "What have I got to do with it?"

"Everything," returned his visitor decisively.

"I don't see how."

"I could tell you, but it might hurt your feelings."

"Never mind about that. Why do you consider it my fault that Mrs. Hathaway is a Suffragette?" The Professor's voice and manner were a trifle stiff. Somehow he felt that this demure young lady was trying to make game of him.

"Because you're so—so tame."

"Tame!" The Professor's voice indicated an entire lack of comprehension.

"Exactly," continued Miss Maddox sweetly. "Tame—domesticated. All Suffragettes have tame husbands, or none. You should be more of a savage."

"A savage!" thought the Professor meekly. "I suppose she thinks I should throw plates and things."

"All women like their husbands to dominate them," Miss Maddox went on. "If you made her think more about *you*, she wouldn't have time to think about suffragetting. But you mustn't think that I am criticizing. I wouldn't do that for worlds."

"But she *does* think about me," interposed her host meekly; "I'm sure she does."

"What do you do every night?" demanded Miss Maddox with startling directness.

"Why—I—I generally write, you know."

"Write! Don't you ever stay at your club, or telephone home that you

are dining with a friend, or play poker, or meet an old college chum, or anything?"

"I've hardly been away from home a single evening since we were married," asserted the Professor proudly.

"Heavens!" cried Miss Maddox, sinking back into her chair and gazing at him hopelessly. "No wonder poor Kate's a Suffragette! Why, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

The Professor was a trifle annoyed. "I did it to please her," he said.

Miss Maddox laughed derisively, yet with such a pretty grace that the poor Professor found himself admiring her dimples instead of resenting her criticisms. "Why, you might as well be a mummy," she laughed. "Pardon me, won't you? And does she stay at home, too?"

"Well, you see, she has her club and her political meetings and all that. And, of course, I don't mind; she seems to have taken such an interest in it."

"Hopeless," said his inquisitor, setting her glass upon the desk, "quite hopeless." She inspected him with a critical and appraising eye. "Yet you seem to have possibilities," she concluded, with a fetching show of dimples and even white teeth.

This time, however, the Professor failed to be dazzled. He was growing just a little bit angry. "I assure you, Miss Maddox," he began stiffly, "I—"

"Please forgive me, Professor Hathaway. You mustn't mind what I say. Down home they think I'm awful."

"Awful?" The Professor was a bit mollified. His tormentor looked so bewitchingly sweet and unsophisticated.

"Oh, just generally speaking. I'm too frank, I suppose. I ought to have been a man, that's the trouble. But tell me about your work; I adore lectures."

"Lectures!" gasped the Professor. Miss Maddox expressed her adoration for lectures as she might have her liking for dancing or for *marrons glacés*.

"Certainly. You lecture, don't you?"

“Oh, yes, of course.”

“What about?”

“Well, generally on biological subjects. I’m just completing one now upon the Artificial Fertilization of Sea Urchins’ Eggs by means of Saline Solutions and Electric Vibrations.”

As the Professor delivered this startling piece of information in the easy and colloquial style of the classroom, Miss Maddox, gasping slightly, and with a look of dismay in her violet eyes, leaned gently back in her chair. “Oh, Professor,” she cried in her most dulcet tones, “I have something in my eye!” She clapped the filmy bit of lace which courtesy called a handkerchief to her right eye and observed the Professor calmly through her left. He hurried to her side.

“In your eye?” he began lamely.

“Yes—yes, and it hurts, just terribly!”

“I’m awfully sorry.”

“Yes, of course, but can’t you get it out?” There was a slight appearance of moisture in the single orb which Miss Maddox bent upon the now agitated Professor. As a result he became straightway filled with the deepest feelings of pity. “I’ll try,” he cried sympathetically, “if you will take away the handkerchief.”

Miss Maddox removed it gingerly, and with much blinking and winking, looked piteously into the face of the Professor, who stood beside her. “Do you see anything?” she demanded.

With unaccustomed hands, the Professor as gently as possible separated her eyelids. “I’m afraid I don’t,” he said, peering into the violet depths.

“Oh, Mr. Hathaway, *do* look again! Closer—it hurts just terribly!”

Bending over until his face nearly touched hers, the Professor took another look. All that he saw was a deep and liquid well of blue, a roseleaf cheek and a scarlet mouth so provokingly saucy and so delightfully alluring that he almost forgot his quest. “I really can’t see a thing, Miss Maddox,” he said, pulling himself together.

“Of course not,” said Miss Maddox with a faint tinge of sarcasm in her

caressing voice. “That’s why your wife’s a Suffragette.”

“Really, Miss Maddox,” said the Professor, somewhat annoyed, “I do not see what that has to do with the matter.”

“I was afraid you wouldn’t,” she replied, quite forgetting her eye.

“I don’t grasp you at all,” said the now thoroughly bewildered Professor.

“I was certain you wouldn’t.” She almost pouted in her annoyance. “After all,” she thought, “he *is* stupid.”

“Is it out?” said the Professor.

“What?” she replied, for the moment off her guard.

“Whatever was in your eye.”

With a little cry, Miss Maddox clapped her handkerchief to her eye again.

“No, it isn’t,” she said. “I’ll give you one more trial.”

The Professor approached her. “I’ll look again,” he said, and bent over her.

She smiled up at him enticingly. “Now look very, very closely,” she said softly.

“I will,” said the Professor, then started in surprise as he observed that his patient, instead of holding the handkerchief to her right eye as before, now held it to her left.

“Why, Miss Maddox,” he cried, “it was in your right eye before!”

“So it was. How stupid of me!” Miss Maddox rapidly changed the handkerchief to her other eye, smiling provokingly up at him the while.

The Professor removed it gently, during which process his fingers came in contact with hers. It disturbed him a bit, but he went ahead with his investigation. Long and searchingly he gazed, twisting her eyelid this way and that, but the clearness of those depths was unmarred by a single mote. “I don’t see a thing,” he said at length.

“Not a single thing?” cried Miss Maddox despairingly.

“Nothing.”

“Are you blind?” she asked scornfully.

A faint light began to break in upon the Professor’s mind. He bent his

head even more closely. Clearly he saw that Miss Maddox was laughing—and before him, not six inches away, were the most beautiful pair of pouting red lips he had ever seen. A faint perfume, as of some tropical flower, rose to his brain and made it reel; he bent still lower toward those mocking lips.

Suddenly he heard a sound behind him, a footstep, a voice. "Alonzo!" it said with a rising inflection, and left him petrified with fear. Miss Maddox rose with her most charming smile. "Why, Kate Hathaway!" she cried joyously. "I'm so glad to see you!" And it was quite evident that both the embrace and the kiss which she bestowed upon the astonished Mrs. Hathaway were entirely genuine. "Mr. Hathaway has been so good. He's been trying to get a nasty cinder out of my eye. It's gone now. It was lovely of you to ask me. You always were such a dear." She kissed her again. The Professor, somewhat recovered, glanced fearfully at his wife, but she seemed to be entirely mollified. "I couldn't seem to get it out," he said. "Cinders are bad things, anyway."

"You're only too welcome, Nan," said Mrs. Hathaway, ignoring her husband's remarks. "I'm so sorry not to have been at home when you came."

"Oh, I know how busy you must be," said her guest, resuming her seat. "Mr. Hathaway has been telling me all about your work. It must be *awfully* interesting."

"I don't believe he thinks so, at all," said Mrs. Hathaway.

"Why, Kate, you know I've always said—"

"You think I'm making a fool of myself, Alonzo, but of course a man would think that. What do you think, dear?" She turned to Miss Maddox with a smile.

"I?" said that young lady with a Delphic smile. "Why I think everybody ought to have a vote that wants one."

Mrs. Hathaway was evidently pleased. "There, Alonzo, you see?" she said, glancing at her husband.

"Yes—oh, yes, I see," said the Professor. He started for the door. "Excuse me a moment, won't you?" he called back as he passed into the hall.

"Where are you going, Alonzo?" his wife called after him. "Luncheon is nearly ready."

"I'm just going across the street to—to send a telegram. I'll be back in a moment." They heard his footsteps echoing down the hall, followed by the closing of the front door.

Left to themselves, Mrs. Hathaway and her guest indulged in a rapid fire of questions and answers regarding the events of the three years since they had last seen each other. Mrs. Hathaway straightway began to regret the fact that she had so little time for the entertainment of her friend. She was genuinely fond of Nan, and would have enjoyed immensely showing her the sights in New York. "Alonzo must take you about," she said. "He knows all about New York, and you can flirt with him to your heart's content." She knew her guest's propensities in that direction and the harmlessness of it, and felt no compunctions in leaving her husband in Miss Maddox's care. As a matter of fact, she secretly felt that it would probably do him good, for it cannot be said that Mrs. Hathaway entirely approved of her husband's hermitlike mode of life. She would, as Miss Maddox had very wisely observed, have been much more interested in her husband's comings and goings had there been a bit more uncertainty about them. Alonzo had, she reflected, become like a reliable and always correct eight-day clock, that required no attention, no looking after, from one week's end to another, to be depended upon, it is true, but equally to be forgotten, except when one desired to know the time of day.

Miss Maddox, in agreeing to her plan for seeing New York under Alonzo's care, had remarked that it would be a splendid opportunity to make Billy jealous. Billy, she explained, otherwise Captain William Rollins, U. S. A., she had met some two months before in Washington. Consequently he was

her latest. As she explained it to Mrs. Hathaway, she and Billy had had an awful row, and she had determined to run away from him by coming over to New York and accepting Mrs. Hathaway's long standing invitation. Billy, she informed Mrs. Hathaway, was very handsome and very charming, but altogether too wild; she was engaged in taming him, she confided to her friend.

They were deep in these mutual confidences when the Professor returned. Mrs. Hathaway excused herself, in order to hurry up luncheon. The Professor, left alone once more with their guest, approached her with somewhat more assurance than he had previously shown. It had flashed over him that Miss Maddox had been flirtatiously amusing herself at his expense, and he determined to play his part. Miss Maddox observed him calmly. “We're to do New York together,” she observed. “Won't that be just splendid!”

“I'm sure *I* think so, if you do,” replied the Professor, gazing at her admiringly. “Suppose we dine together this evening, and go to a roof garden?”

“I'd simply love to. Where shall we dine?”

“We might go to—to Martin's,” said the Professor, delving into past recollections of the places to which he had so long been a stranger.

“Oh, let's! That would be just lovely. I've heard so much of Martin's.”

“And of course we must flirt terribly,” suggested the Professor with a mischievous expression.

“Oh, of course, Mr. Hathaway.” She gave him a sweeping glance from the corners of her wonderful eyes that seemed almost a caress.

“And to start with,” he suggested almost boyishly, “you might call me Alonzo.”

“Alonzo?” said Miss Maddox with well feigned surprise.

“Yes; and I'll call you—”

“You must call me Nan, by all means. All my friends do, and it seems so much more jolly, don't you think?”

There was no doubt that the Professor did. “Nan,” he murmured softly; “shake.” He extended his hand.

Miss Maddox placed her own soft and exquisitely modeled hand within his with a fluttering motion, as though she claimed the offer of his strength to shelter and protect her. The Professor was in the seventh heaven. “What a tender and innocent little soul she is!” he thought to himself, retaining her hand gently in his.

Miss Maddox attempted to withdraw it. “Oh, you mustn't do that, Professor,” she cried gently, but he did not release her. On the contrary, he drew her gently toward him. “I want to see if that cinder is still in your eye,” he said, leaning toward her.

She drew back with a soft laugh and evaded him. “Oh, no; it's quite gone, I assure you.”

“Then perhaps some time you'll have another,” laughed the Professor.

“I may. It often happens, you know. And then, too, your eyesight may be better.”

“It's better now,” cried the Professor, as he again tried to take her hand.

“You've had your chance,” she laughed, and began gathering up her parasol and gloves.

“May I have another?” he asked.

“Perhaps—Alonzo,” she said softly, as Mrs. Hathaway, coming in, briskly summoned them to luncheon.

II

THE Professor and Miss Maddox got along prodigiously well. That night they dined together and went to a roof garden. When they returned about midnight they found Mrs. Hathaway waiting for them, her manner betraying just a faint note of irritability. The evening had been warm, and she had spent it listening to interminable speeches upon the unalienable rights of women. More than once during the evening her mind had pictured her husband and the immaculate Miss Maddox, charmingly ensconced in a

corner of the big, cool roof garden, chatting gaily in the intervals between the music, their minds unburdened, free, meeting in that delightful contest of the sexes which, like a sort of spiritual champagne, causes even the dull to sparkle, the timid to become bold. It was not that she was exactly jealous —she felt too sure of her husband for that—but it seemed as though, somehow, she envied their gaiety, in spite of the deep interest she took in her self-appointed task. Most of the women of her club were older and less attractive; Mrs. Hathaway was but twenty-four, and even her common sense costumes could not disguise the fact that she was pretty.

The following evening was a repetition of the first. The Professor and Miss Maddox dined at Claremont, and went to another roof garden. Mrs. Hathaway attended a spirited open-air meeting, and made a speech upon the question of Votes for Women, standing upon a soap box. A red-faced Irish woman in the crowd, with a tousle-haired urchin in either hand, had interrupted her frequently with audible comments upon her appearance, and speculations as to the number of children she had, if any. "Sure, 'tis votes we do be needin'," she said. "Me old man tells me Foley will lose th' district next year, the way things do be goin'. Give ivery man, woman and child in th' district a vote, an' th' dommed reformers won't have a look in." The crowd was with her. Somebody threw a tomato can. There was a small riot, dispersed finally by the police. Mrs. Hathaway came home in a cab. When the others returned she had retired.

On the third day the Professor and Miss Maddox spent the afternoon at Coney Island. Mrs. Hathaway was scheduled to attend a committee meeting in Harlem, but it had been arranged that they should all meet at the apartment for dinner. Tired but happy, the Professor and Miss Maddox ascended the porch of the Manhattan Beach Hotel at five o'clock on their way to the train. The Professor was having the time of his life. "There's

time for a little something to drink," he suggested, "before the train goes. Suppose we sit down for a while and cool off?"

Miss Maddox agreed. They selected a table by the railing. The Professor seemed years younger; he fairly beamed with happiness and a certain pride at the very obvious fact that all the other men, seeing Miss Maddox, regarded him with looks of envy.

"I'm not quite sure that I ought to take this drink," he said as they sat down.

"What, not one?" laughed his companion.

"Well, perhaps one," he returned. "You see, Nan, you are like sparkling wine; you go to my head; I feel intoxicated with the joy of your presence. It's been a new experience to me."

"Oh, you'll keep your head, I'm sure," Miss Maddox laughed.

"Very likely," he returned, "and my feet. But how about my heart?" The Professor looked at her fondly, tenderly. He almost imagined himself in love.

"Why keep your heart?" Miss Maddox laughed gaily. "Hearts are useful only to give away, or spend—like money." Her look caused his pulse to rise at least five beats to the minute.

"Yes, perhaps that's true—but to be spent judiciously, upon the proper persons."

"Persons!" exclaimed Miss Maddox with a bewitching smile. "Why the plural? Alonzo, you must have an enlargement of the heart."

"No, a contraction, whenever I look at you." He raised his glass and their eyes met. "To you, dear," he said, "to you alone!"

Miss Maddox rose. "Alonzo," she said, "I think we had better take the train now."

All the way up on the train the Professor was in a brown study. Fond as he was of his wife, this girl seemed to make of life a sparkling and delightful thing. Such a delicious and companionable creature she was, he

thought. No doubt all her sparkle and wit, her alluring charm, her sympathetic understanding, were but of a piece with her dainty femininity, her laces, her picture hats. Perhaps, after all, he thought, she might be adorable as a companion, delightful for a flirtatious contest and a failure as a wife. Such women, he argued, knew nothing, thought of nothing, as a rule, but their toilets and their conquests—impractical butterflies, as light and airy as their own persiflage. He had quite argued himself into this belief by the time they reached the apartment. Here a shock awaited them. Mrs. Hathaway had not returned. Being Thursday, it was the cook's afternoon out. The maid had disappeared, they knew not where. The place was deserted. It was six o'clock, and no evidences of any preparations for dinner. The Professor was disgusted. “We must go to a restaurant,” he declared.

“But we can't possibly do that,” his guest replied. “Kate will be here at any moment now, and she will be hungry and tired. Let me cook the dinner.”

“You!” cried the Professor. “Can you cook? Impossible!”

Miss Maddox removed her hat and gloves and proceeded calmly to roll up her sleeves, exposing the roundest and smoothest of arms. Then she pinned up her skirt in a businesslike sort of way, and inquired, “Where's the kitchen?”

To say that the Professor was amazed would fall far short of expressing his feelings. He could scarcely believe his eyes. Could it be possible that this butterfly, this creature of laces and lingerie, could actually cook? “The kitchen!” he repeated in a daze.

“Certainly.” Miss Maddox's tones were most matter of fact. “Don't you know that I keep house for my mother all the time when I am home? I'm considered a very good cook.” She laughed gaily, and so infectious was her laugh that the Professor laughed in turn and led the way to the kitchen and the ice chest.

Such a time as they had the Professor had not known since the days of his boyhood. It seemed almost like a picnic. Miss Maddox donned a gingham apron and set him to paring potatoes while she shelled the peas. Before the clock struck seven a delightful meal of chops, peas, potatoes and salad was ready for the table. Miss Maddox was just putting the finishing touches to the salad dressing when Mrs. Hathaway, tired and hot, burst in upon them. “Good heavens, Nan!” she cried. “What does this mean?”

“The cook is out, and Dolly was nowhere to be found,” said her husband, “and Miss Maddox is cooking the dinner.”

“We knew you had to go to that horrid meeting tonight, Kate,” said Miss Maddox in her deep contralto voice, “and you mustn't be worried by such things as cooks and the like. I'm mighty glad that I could be of use.”

Mrs. Hathaway, who knew no more about cooking than a babe, gazed at her friend in wonder. “Nan,” she said, “you are the most remarkable girl I have ever seen. The idea—you cooking a dinner! It seems positively absurd.”

“It looks extremely good,” said the Professor, who was hungry. “Let's try it.” They repaired to the dining room.

It was close to eight o'clock when they finished dinner, and Miss Maddox's cooking was voted an unqualified success. The Professor was beaming. “We're going to take a walk in the Park, Kate,” he said, “and after that, we shall go to Claremont for a while, and perhaps get an ice or something. It's too bad you can't join us.”

Mrs. Hathaway, indeed, was thinking the same thing. It had begun to dawn upon her that perhaps, after all, there was an element of danger in this little affair of Miss Maddox and her husband. They seemed enchanted with each other's society, and there was a subtle air of intimacy and understanding in their conversation and their attitude toward each other that she

would have been dull indeed not to have observed. And Mrs. Hathaway was far from dull. When the others had departed with much gaiety and laughter, leaving her seated at the dinner table with a tiresome evening before her, she felt herself somehow abandoned, out of it, and she resented it bitterly. Presently she got up, and walking into the bedroom, inspected herself critically in the mirror. She was tired, and showed it. Her brown silk shirtwaist and dark skirt, her tightly coiled hair and unbeautiful boots seemed to suffer terribly in contrast with her friend's dainty costume. For the first time Mrs. Hathaway was jealous of her husband, and it seemed to her all of a sudden that woman's rights theories and common sense costumes were not exactly the best weapons in the world with which to win him back. After all, she thought, perhaps even the brightest and most estimable of men are most strongly appealed to by the feminine note in women, whatever arguments might be raised to the contrary. If it became necessary to revert to the time-honored weapons of her sex to hold her own, she, for one, had about made up her mind to go back to them. After all, if a woman wanted to vote, she could do so equally well in a Directoire gown and a Paris hat, in spite of Miss Granby's arguments to the contrary. She wasn't exactly sure that she cared about asserting her position of equality with the opposite sex if it entailed the sacrifice of all those subtle means of overreaching the masculine mind which from time immemorial had been considered woman's prerogative. She turned from the mirror with a movement of quick decision, just as the door bell rang sharply.

The young gentleman whom Mrs. Hathaway admitted seemed distinctly worried. His card indicated that he was Captain William Rollins, U. S. A. It was apparent that, from her appearance and her prompt arrival at the door, he supposed Mrs. Hathaway to be the maid. She led him into the sitting room.

"Is this Mrs. Hathaway's apartment?" he inquired, a bit nervously.

"It is," said Mrs. Hathaway.

"May I—may I see her?" he asked, presenting his card.

Mrs. Hathaway looked at the card. "I am Mrs. Hathaway," she said a trifle stiffly.

The Captain bowed. "I'm awfully glad to meet you, Mrs. Hathaway," he said. "Miss Maddox has so often spoken of you. She is staying with you now, is she not?"

Mrs. Hathaway did some rapid thinking. Here was a weapon ready to her hand. "Yes, she is," she replied. "Did you wish to see her?"

"I—I had hoped to," returned the Captain somewhat nervously. "Is she—is she in?"

"No, she isn't. She's gone out with my—with Mr. Hathaway."

"I'm so sorry." The Captain raised his eyebrows slightly and took up his hat. "Will you be so good as to tell her that I called?" He rose with military stiffness.

"Don't go yet, Captain Rollins." Mrs. Hathaway was still thinking quickly. The Captain promptly sat down again. He had not the least desire to go. Having by devious methods ascertained that the elusive Miss Maddox had come to New York, and knowing of her intention to visit her old friend, Mrs. Hathaway, he had obtained a short leave of absence, come over to New York, looked up the Hathaways' address through the medium of the telephone book, and descended upon them as soon as he had finished a hasty dinner. He felt aggrieved and angry, and was determined to bring Miss Maddox to her senses. Mrs. Hathaway, with feminine intuition, divining all this, determined to take the Captain into her confidence. "You are very fond of Nan, aren't you, Captain?" she began with an engaging smile.

The Captain was not sure whether to resent this intrusion into his private affairs or not. Upon second thought he decided not. "Indeed I am, Mrs. Hathaway," he rejoined, "very." The

emphasis which he placed upon the latter word left no doubt as to the depth of his feelings.

"So am I, Captain; therefore I know you will understand me when I say that Nan is a terrible little flirt."

"She certainly is," assented the Captain with excessive vigor. "She doesn't mean a thing by it, of course. It's natural with her; she simply can't help it. Who's the victim now?" he inquired, smiling.

"Just at present," Mrs. Hathaway rejoined, "she's keeping herself in practice with Mr. Hathaway."

The Captain whistled softly. "Really!" he exclaimed. "That's hardly fair, is it?"

"Perfectly so, Captain Rollins. I egged her on. It's really my doing, you know. I've been extremely busy for the past week, and I suggested that she and Mr. Hathaway should see New York together. You see, my husband is awfully quiet, and goes about so little, that I thought it would do him good. Just at present I think the experiment has gone far enough."

Captain Rollins looked at her searchingly. "How shall we stop it?" he inquired.

"Wouldn't it be perfectly delightful," said Mrs. Hathaway, leaning forward with a mischievous smile, "for us to make them jealous!"

The Captain, taken a bit off his guard, stared at her incredulously. His eyes traveled quickly from Mrs. Hathaway's unbecomingly arranged hair to her broad-soled boots. Somehow, the idea of this not particularly attractive person undertaking to make the diaphanous Nan Maddox jealous struck him as being rather incongruous. His good breeding asserted itself, however, but not before Mrs. Hathaway's quick intelligence had grasped the reason for his momentary hesitation.

"Delightful," he murmured, a bit confused. Mrs. Hathaway rose. "Captain," she said, "wait for me here. They have gone to Claremont for supper. We'll go, too. And would you mind, should a Miss Granby call, letting her in and telling her to come to my

room? My maid is, unfortunately, out." As she spoke, she swept gaily to the door, filled with a newly formed resolution.

The Captain bowed. "I shall be very happy to be of service, Mrs. Hathaway," he said, his face, however, expressing some doubt as to the advisability of the experiment which his hostess had proposed.

Mrs. Hathaway, in her boudoir, looked at herself once more in the mirror and laughed. Then, grasping her hair, she shook it loose, and a shower of hairpins fell to the floor. "I'll show him," she said softly to herself, with all the repressed gaiety of her nature once more loose and dancing in her eyes, as she shed her common sense garments as a butterfly its cocoon, and prepared to array herself for the fray. Once more she felt herself a woman, and the thought of her coming triumph filled her with joy. Nan Maddox was pretty, undeniably pretty, but not a bit more so than she herself—of that she felt sure. The Captain was charming—and so good-looking. She must justify herself in his eyes; she must make him repent bitterly of that appraising look which he had so unconsciously bestowed upon her when she suggested her plan.

Bang, went one heavy-soled shoe into the corner. Crash, the other followed it into the waste basket. With trembling hands, Mrs. Hathaway delved into long closed drawers and drew forth her neglected finery of the season before. Evening gowns change but little in style, after all, she reflected, as she inspected a dainty princess gown of gray voile. Rapidly she drew out silken stockings, foamy laces and a stunning big black hat, with gray plumes. Her cheeks were brilliantly red with the excitement of this unaccustomed departure, as she deftly unarranged the masses of brown hair loosely and becomingly about her face. Long unused puffs and "rats" were brought into play. Gray *suede* ties, rings and brooches, discarded as unworthy the attention of a serious-minded new woman, were once more

resurrected from their long banishment to the recesses of her jewel casket. It seemed as though the excitement of the moment had smoothed from her face all the tired lines, and lent a suppleness and elasticity to her figure, in striking contrast with the appearance of relaxation and fatigue which had characterized her movements such a short time before. When, after three-quarters of an hour of hard work, Mrs. Hathaway again inspected herself in the glass, a quiet smile of triumph played about the corners of her mouth. She felt that she had never looked better in her life, and if Nan Maddox would not be obliged to look to her laurels, the fault would not be hers. Even as she finished and turned to pick up her gloves and gray marabou boa, she heard the sound of heavy footsteps without and Miss Granby knocked at her door.

When, in response to her gay, "Come in," that austere lady entered the boudoir, she nearly fell over backward in her surprise.

"My dear Kate," she began, "what on earth is the matter? Have you forgotten our meeting tonight with the Woman's Political Club of Brooklyn? I expected to find you all ready."

"I am ready," laughed Mrs. Hathaway, "but not for that meeting. I'd like to go, Honora, but I've got something more important on hand tonight."

"Something more important!" Miss Granby gasped, looking at the figure before her. "What can possibly be more important to women than votes?"

"Husbands," laughed Mrs. Hathaway deliciously, and proceeded to powder her nose, to the complete stupefaction of poor Miss Granby.

"But I don't understand," the bewildered lady wailed. "What on earth have you dressed up like that for?"

"Honora," said Mrs. Hathaway impressively, "I've put on my war paint, and I'm going after Nan Maddox's scalp. Good night." She swept into the hall. "Tell them I really couldn't

come, won't you?" she called back. The astounded Miss Granby saw her glide down the hallway with the most captivating of steps and enter the sitting room.

Whatever surprise Miss Granby had felt at the defection of her friend, Mrs. Hathaway, from the ranks of the reformers, it was as nothing compared with the astonishment of Captain Rollins, as the vision in gray swept into the room. Such a metamorphosis seemed well-nigh impossible, a miracle almost. The woman who had left him, characterless, tired, devoid of charm, had disappeared, and in her place there came this radiant being, her eyes dancing with excitement, eager with expectancy. He rose, bewildered, and stammered a few words of compliment. "Stunning, Mrs. Hathaway, perfectly stunning! We must get a taxicab, and some flowers." Already the weapons of the sex had begun to exact their tribute, and the curiously simple masculine mind, which would have given a somewhat bored attention to unattractive mentality in a surface car, passed with mechanical certainty to taxicab and flowers at the command of a nodding plume and gray *suède* ties.

It was approaching ten o'clock when they ascended the steps of the Claremont, Mrs. Hathaway, rejoicing in a huge corsage bouquet of sweet peas which the gallant Captain had insisted upon obtaining for her. They walked slowly along the narrow veranda, Mrs. Hathaway sweeping the tables with eager eyes. At last she saw what she expected, her husband and Miss Maddox comfortably seated at a small table overlooking the river. At a vacant place, a short distance away, an obsequious waiter stood in pleased expectancy, flourishing his napkin.

They sat down, Mrs. Hathaway facing the table where sat her husband, the Captain back to back with the unconscious Miss Maddox. The Captain ordered a claret cup and some ices. Mrs. Hathaway observed that the other party were drinking a champagne cocktail. "Really," she thought with a

trace of irritation, “Alonzo is an awful fool.” As she gazed at him he happened to glance up, and saw her smiling. It is doubtful if the Professor had ever before experienced a greater shock. His jaw fell; his conversation ceased suddenly; he gazed at his wife in open-eyed amazement, taking in the nodding plumes, the flowers, the broad and athletic back of Captain Rollins. His wife smiled pleasantly and nodded. Miss Maddox, observing his startled air, but completely unaware of its cause, turned slightly, and as it happened, at the same moment the Captain, following his companion’s gaze, did likewise. Their eyes met, and Miss Maddox, who had not observed Mrs. Hathaway closely, so occupied was she in gazing at the unexpected sight of the Captain, supposed her to be merely some unknown person in gray, with whom her lover, as she might have expected, was consoling himself. Miss Maddox, jealous and angry, turned quickly to her companion without returning the Captain’s bow. The Professor, partially recovering his equanimity and equally jealous, turned to her. “Who is that gentleman?” he asked quickly.

“I don’t know him, at all,” replied Miss Maddox stiffly.

The Professor wiped his brow. Here was a pretty state of affairs. His wife, having deceived him into the belief that she was going to one of her confounded woman’s rights meetings, appears in a popular restaurant with a total stranger, a most dangerous-looking fellow, thought the Professor. Miss Maddox, equally furious, boiled with indignation at the thought that but a few paces behind her sat her beloved Billy, with some gaily dressed creature, who had, apparently, quickly consoled him when, by all the laws of man, he should have been abjectly begging her, Miss Maddox’s pardon, for his outrageous behavior during the preceding week in Washington—said outrageous behavior having been his persistency in asking her to marry him after she had refused to do so.

There was no more conversation at

their table. The Professor sat and glared at his wife, who pretended to be totally unconscious of his existence, while Miss Maddox gazed at the Hudson in aggrieved silence. Even the Captain did not seem to be greatly enjoying himself, although he made valiant efforts to affect a gaiety he did not feel. After all, Mrs. Hathaway was the only one of the party who thoroughly enjoyed the situation, but that she did there could be no manner of doubt. She laughed joyously at the Captain’s feeble jokes, and chattered on with magnificent assurance, and, though she appeared unconscious of the presence of the occupants of the nearby table, in some feminine and inexplicable way she managed to observe fully both Miss Maddox’s preoccupation and her husband’s air of angry jealousy.

The tension at last grew too great for Miss Maddox. Hastily finishing her ice, she took up her gloves and coat. “Suppose we go, Professor Hathaway”—Alonzo no longer, though he scarcely observed it. The Professor paid his check in gloomy silence. He certainly did not wish to depart, leaving his wife alone with this man, whoever he was; and on the other hand, he could not bring himself to make a scene in a public place. Miss Maddox, her nose in the air, her eyes fixed upon infinity, swept by the table on her way to the entrance. Captain Rollins, she assured herself, should henceforth be a stranger forever. As she passed the table she heard a smothered laugh and someone calling, “Why, Nan! What on earth is the matter with you?” It was the familiar voice of her friend, Kate Hathaway. She looked down, as the latter rose and held out her hand. “Won’t you join us?” she said sweetly. “The Captain’s dying to see you.”

“Kate!” gasped Miss Maddox, and fell into a chair. Only the Professor remained standing. He was too mixed up to realize exactly what was going on. “Sit down, Alonzo,” said his wife. “You must know Miss Maddox’s friend, Captain Rollins.” The Profess-

or shook hands and sat down like a man in a daze. Everybody seemed desperately relieved. They remained till midnight, and went home in a happy whirl.

That night the Professor remarked, apropos of nothing in particular,

"Kate, you're the most stunning-looking woman I've seen in years," and kissed her.

Mrs. Hathaway has given up her political work, having taken up a new hobby—her husband. Also she is learning to cook.



DEFECTION

By JEAN WRIGHT

OH, pretty bread and butter miss,
Whom I'd have slain my soul to please,
I fondly thought our life would be
One long, long dream of bread and cheese.

But, ah, a woman came my way!
She smiled on me—I could not fail
To think that life with her would be
A pleasant thing of cakes and ale.

She spoke—her voice was molten gold,
And I'd have died to make it mine,
For well I knew that life with her
Would be the walnuts and the wine.

So, go your way in peace, my dear;
May cream and peaches be your lot.
You never knew, so you'll forgive,
And as for me—I have forgot.



A CHANCE IN ANY CASE

MURIEL (letting him down easy)—I should advise you not to take it to heart. I might prove a most undesirable wife. Marriage is a lottery, you know.

MALCOLM (bitterly)—It strikes me as more like a raffle. One man gets the prize and the others get the shake.

HAPPY ARE THE BLIND

By W. H. G. WYNDHAM-MARTYN

THE two old men had an air about them which fascinated me strangely. There was something so Old World in their manner and dress, something which marked them as apart from other men, that I was constrained to ask the waiter if he knew who they were.

He glanced at them quickly. "They are of the *noblesse*, monsieur. It is said they come here each year."

Then, infected with the money grabbing tendencies of his sort, he hurried off to attend a more profitable customer. I noticed that the two men were of a height, both tall and slim, and were dressed in the long frock coat worn at the time of the Third Empire. They had the air of soldiers, and it did not tax my imagination to see they were poor. I supposed that they were of the older *noblesse*, who pray for the Bourbon restoration and are seen now and again in modern Paris. I watched them so closely that the host came to my side unobserved. I almost started as he spoke.

"Ah, monsieur," he said with a sigh, "there are very few like them left."

"Who are they?" I demanded.

"The stern-looking one with the saber cut across his forehead is the Duc d'Eroneuil; the other is the Vicomte St. Seronne."

"You know them well?" I hazarded.

"I was in the Duc's service nearly thirty years," he said. "When Madame la Duchesse died I came here, and with my savings and my wife's bought this hotel."

"I don't recall their names," I said. "Duc d'Eroneuil—Vicomte St. Seronne—"

"They are from the Midi," he said, "near Villefort, among the Cevennes. They come here every year on this date. Madame la Duchesse is buried in the little church in the woods on the road to Barbizon. Look at them now, monsieur; see how green their black coats look in the sunlight, and think that I have seen them both in uniforms covered with orders and crosses and medals. I, even I, servant to the Duc, am richer far; and old Fanchot, the butcher across the street there, is richer than I. And they were once lords of all the land about their chateaux. Ah, everything is wrong now!"

At this moment one of the two beckoned to him, and he bowed to them with a deference that I had never seen him accord the rich tourists who came to the Cygne d'Or in their fifty-thousand-franc automobiles. He presently went from the room and returned bearing a bottle of wine on an ancient silver salver. This he placed before them and retired bowing.

It was necessary, in order that some furniture might be shifted for the proper cleansing of the salon—for it was the time when trade was slack—that I should shift my seat and take one nearer the two old men who interested me so much. Almost with the feeling that I had ventured unbidden on holy ground, I saw them rise each with a glass in hand.

The Duc d'Eroneuil held his on high, and there was a smile on his face that seemed infinitely pathetic to me.

"To her dear memory," he said slowly.

"Who is now a saint with God," said

the Vicomte, bowing his head so that I could not see his face.

Then for a space they said nothing; and I, having a taste for weaving strange fancies together, so often given to the unpractical, pictured an idyll in which the two old men figured. The husband of the dead woman and his friend, and hers. From the fragments of their conversation, phrased in that exquisite old French now almost extinct, I knew they were recalling the days in which she had lived. So intimate grew their memories that I felt an intruder and walked to the rear of the room, where the proprietor was cleaning some glass.

"Was she very beautiful?" I asked.

"The most beautiful woman I have ever seen," he answered slowly. "They have just returned from her grave. After the bottle of wine they go back to their province to live like ascetics until next year."

"But she must have been very beautiful," I murmured.

He laughed good-naturedly.

"Ah, you foreigners!" he said. "You think you know France so well, and yet have never heard of Madame la Duchesse d'Eroneuil! She was as witty as she was beautiful. Her salon in the Faubourg St. Germain was the most celebrated in Paris. They are mentioned in the memoirs of every statesman of note who has ever passed through the city. The cold Gladstone said of her that she was the most brilliant woman living, and the compliment she valued most was that Bismarck feared her. Oh, la, la, the duels that were fought about her!"

"Then how is it that they are so poor?" I looked toward the shabby old aristocrats.

"They lost their money in some speculation," he said. "Remember, you Americans are not the only people to lose money in the canal at Panama. Ferdinand de Lesseps was a Frenchman, and many millions of francs left our country to dig that accursed ditch. It might have been other things as well. One never knows. This much I can tell monsieur, that, whereas the Duc

formerly had fifty servants in his chateau, he now has two. The Vicomte was never so rich, but he now has one old man only. Ah, here they come!"

He stood up to receive them, while I buried myself behind *Le Gaulois*.

"Well, Clement," said the Duc, "we go back to Villefort now. Have you forgotten how Mount Lozere looks, or the smell of the flowers that grow about the chateau?"

"Ah!" sighed Clement, "only death can make me forget. They were times, indeed!"

"Do you go to her grave on Sundays? There were flowers there to-day."

"Every Sunday we go, my wife and I."

The Duc turned to his friend.

"How many more pilgrimages shall we make, do you think?"

The other smiled a little sadly.

"Already my limbs grow stiff, Raoul," he said. "I think one might lie under the chestnut trees by the Church of Our Lady of the Woods without much regret."

They forgot the presence of the landlord, of me and the others, these two old dreamers, and I could see how happily their lives were given to the memory of the beautiful dead woman.

"How lovely she was!" sighed the one.

"Ah, how lovely!" echoed the other.

Then the two old men with the shabby frock coats and strange hats passed out through the door with stately bearing, and slowly up the little village street and so back to their deserted homes in the Midi.

I turned to Clement and was about to ask him some question, when I was arrested by his strange smile as he, too, watched them.

"Why do you look like that?" I cried, for there was a complete alteration in him; and it seemed to me that he looked after them bitterly.

"My friend," he said, placing a hand on my shoulder, "if God should grant you in marriage a woman as beautiful as she was, and you should be permit-

ted to love her as the Duc did—then, pray for his blindness.”

I shook my arm free; there was something sinister in his voice.

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“Monsieur,” he answered, “if I love any one being in life better than another, it is the Duc. We are foster brothers, and until he went to the military school of St. Cyr we were close companions. When he was betrothed to Mademoiselle Adrienne Thérèse de la St. Croix, of Ysère, there was no prouder man in all the land than I. For she was a great heiress and was a greater beauty, and more than all, a woman I thought worthy of him.”

He turned away from me with a gesture that had a pathetic dignity in it, and brushed away a tear with his coarse, red hand.

“Monsieur perhaps has seen enough of Europe to know that there are servants here who do not deem such an estate beneath their dignity. My family had always served his. When the English King, Henry the Fifth, swept through France on his triumphal way, and later, when France won back her conquered provinces, there was always a Clement Dubois among the men-at-arms who followed their lord to the wars. Monsieur will see that I know whereof I speak. My wife was of the household of the Duchesse when she came from Ysère, and it was at the Chateau d’Eroneuil that I met her.

“The Duc was ever a slow, grave man, given to the study of military matters rather than to the lighter side of affairs. Three years after their

marriage came the Vicomte St. Seronne. You saw yourself how handsome he must have been when he was young; but he was more: he was witty, possessed a voice of great beauty and could thread verses like a troubadour. He and the Duc had been friends at St. Cyr. What could a man in my position do, monsieur? I saw the dawn of love coming to them—to the Duchesse and to the Vicomte. Well, you understand, my heart nearly broke. There was my foster brother, who loved his wife and loved his friend; loved them both with a love that was too noble for suspicion. And there was I, his foster brother, who knew everything!”

I looked at the man in astonishment, but there was a ring of truth in his voice which attested his sincerity.

“But you told him that you went each week to pray at her grave.”

He looked at me quickly.

“I said we went each week, but I did not say it was to pray at her grave. Do you wonder what it is I have begged of Our Lady of the Woods since she died?”

“How can I know?” I said.

“I pray each week that the blindness which has been his all his life, the failure to think ill of others, may be granted him after death; and that, if there is some other land, he may find her there—still his saint.”

I looked at the old innkeeper, and then followed his gaze up the long white street to where the old men were ascending the hill that leads to the Gare du Sud, and I joined my prayers to his.



WHEN Desire calls upon a pretty young matron, his card always bears a fictitious name.



THE man who is liberal in his views seldom lets it affect his pocketbook.

THE CRY OF THE HUMAN

By S. J. ALEXANDER

WE were near to each other a moment, and nearer we were when I saw
The touch of the Human upon you, and loved you for stain and for flaw.
We were dear to each other a moment, but now you have grown
from me far,

And bright as the lance of the Sun God, and clean as the light of a star.
The sound of your name has grown holy; I falter it under my breath.
Can you hearken that cry of the Human, flung back through the gateways of
death?

Though I add to my stature a cubit, though I clasp to the breast for my own
The belt of yon hunter in heaven, could I reach you to where you have grown?
Though out of the depths I approach you, and draw down your soul to my touch,
Can I bid it be you as I knew you, and hold it and love it as such?
Shall I seek you, who held you the dearest, where the lilies blow cold and white
On margins of motionless waters, in the perfect and passionless light,
Where the hymns rise up heavy like incense, and the harps and the viols are
strung?

I want you again as I knew you, with the earth stain on heart and on tongue.
I want you again as I saw you, when booted and spurred and astride,
You sat with your knee on the pommel, a-flush from the heat of the ride.

You rode through the gates of the morning, and a breeze of the dawn, as you came,
Breathed on life's smoldering embers, and stirred the wan ashes to flame.
You came as the breaking of daylight, through the branches of blossoming trees,
And the desert of life became vocal with the voices of birds and of bees.
And the hands of the spring, in their weaving, had woven you garments of joy,
And your wine of the summer ran over from the jeweled gold cup of the boy.
Oh, stranger, in Strangerland yonder, new god, with the old feet of clay,
Were dearer the roses that faded, and the loves that went out with the day?
Do you weary of harp and of viol and the droning of passionless tunes,
And the heavy, barbaric splendor, through the heavy, unchanging noons?
'Tis noon in the courtyards of Heaven, unbegot of the kiss of the sun,
And the souls pass up without shadow, for the noon and the night are as one.
There is light in the ultimate heavens, fathomless, blinding and white.
Oh, boy that I loved in the foretime, engulfed in abysses of light,
Do you shrink from the pitiless splendor, and clutch at the jewel lit bars,
And sigh your soul into the distance to the best beloved star of the stars?

THE MAGNATE AND THE CURTAIN

By EDWARD OSTROM, JR.

THE myriad offices of the Wells Building on lower Broadway were mostly vacated for the night, but in one on the nineteenth floor a man was working late. His office was well lighted and luxuriously furnished, and the man was seated behind a flat-topped desk of polished rosewood, thinking deeply and signing an endless number of yellow bonds with a fountain pen of carved gold. His hand was clawlike, his manner quiet and precise; and his face, which was that of a man past middle life, had the quiet appearance of a high pressure boiler. The forehead was tall and polished, the cheeks scarlet, the mustache snow white; and the shaggy brows cast a curtain of gloom across the eyes beneath them. Invisible though they were, however, these eyes seemed capable of growing terrible at an instant's warning.

As he sat signing the bonds and revolving important matters in his mind, the man was suddenly distracted by a sound of soft rustling in the air. He started. Raising his eyes, which proved to be dark and piercing, he stared with a look of vague distress at the fluttering folds of the window curtain. Although it may have been purple in the daytime, this bit of upholstery now looked black beneath the rays of the electric lights, and there was a hint of decent blossoms scattered down it, as if in commemoration of some prominent magnate. As the man stared, he perhaps fancied something animate was in its quivering, as if the noises it produced were sighs of agony, because,

like him, it could not protect itself from its relentless enemy Death. At any rate, he lost no time in touching a button that was sunk into the face of his desk.

The office boy responded instantly. He halted just inside the door, a small boy, poorly dressed, with cavernous black eyes and restless fingers. He seemed to want to ask a question, but did not dare. The look of pitiful confusion that overspread the meager face of this boy was coldly disregarded by the man at the desk, who no doubt was occupied with weightier problems than the unspoken wishes of a subordinate.

"Fix that curtain!" he ordered almost savagely.

The boy started, glanced about, and rushing across the floor to the window gathered the fabric into his spindle arms. Caught in a wilder gust of wind from the river, it strained, bellied and fought with the small hands dexterously, but at length, with freakish suddenness, it grew very still and hung down dark and patient in funereal folds. The boy peered upward, shivered and buried his face in the cool plush. This posture seemed quite unusual, quite uncalled for, like an effort to restrain tears; but it only served to heighten the annoyance of the red-faced man who wanted the curtain fixed.

"Put a chair against it, you little fool!" he yelled.

Desperately obeying, the boy slunk toward the door, red-eyed, with a wild expression.

"Baldwin!"

"Yes, sir."

"Send Donovan in."

Baldwin slipped out, and holding the door ajar with his wan hand, whispered:

"Mr. Donovan, Mr. James wants you."

Donovan, who was the President's bodyguard, moved into the room without a trace of emotion and settled himself slowly against the wall, his right hand in the pocket of his grim-colored coat, his colorless eyes spread out before him in the general direction of the curtain. The door swung to beyond him, shutting out the boy.

Mr. James instructed him as follows:

"I've decided to stay and finish these bonds. I'm going to the club now for dinner. You remain here and keep an eye on everything. Understand?"

Probably Donovan understood that he himself was to have no supper. But his gaze did not waver. He nodded curtly, and when the Boss jammed on a hat, reopened the door for him, while Baldwin rushed to open the door of the anteroom leading into the hall. Mr. James strode out, recalled a car from the floor below and started toward the earth absorbed again in thought.

"Did you ask him?" asked Donovan, when the Boss had gone.

"No. He was too busy," faltered Baldwin.

"If she's very sick, your mother, you'd better take my advice and cut an' run—I'll take the blame," said the detective stoically.

But with a look of terror the office boy shook his head. He still seemed to be hypnotized by the fear of the Boss's presence.

Mr. James meanwhile had reached the ground floor of the building, where were located the magnificent suite of offices which his company rented, but which, if rumor was true, were too exposed to the freaks of mad anarchists to suit a fugitive like Mr. James. As he threaded the brilliant arcade he observed carefully that all his clerks had gone home, and an old slipshod woman was crooning dolefully over her baskets. He hesitated before venturing out

upon the twilit street without Donovan just behind him, and perhaps mentally upbraided his private secretary for being ill at home; but as safety lay in the midst of this numberless crowd which was hurrying up Broadway, he presently relapsed into abstraction again and hastened with the throng, often casting a nervous glance behind him. All his authority over other men could not, it seemed in certain situations, control himself.

He became ugly upon entering the club, which was nearly empty, and he abused the obsequious attendants most unmercifully. Mr. James's waiter drew back the commodious chair from the snowy table with a profound bow and a smile which overspread his seasoned countenance like the thick, warm gravy on a cutlet. His patron being seated, he tiptoed across the springy carpet to another table and returned flourishing a tinted menu card, which he carefully slid beneath the line of Mr. James's gaze upon the spotless cloth.

"A little busy at the office tonight, sir?" he ventured, trying to express impossible depths of self-abasement.

The billionaire grunted, and took in vaguely an array of hand-colored roses, little neck clams, olives, celery, radishes, puree of chicken with rice, grilled Spanish mackerel—

"Oh," he sighed, "bring me a little milk toast and a cup of weak—very weak—tea."

The polite waiter bent nearly double in deference to Mr. James's aristocratic frugality, and he hastened to convey the valued order to his compatriot, the chef. Then by way of preparation for the gluttony he removed from a goblet a snowy napkin folded conically and spread it out with great nicety on Mr. James's knee. Next he lifted the goblet high up, filled it with water from a glass carafe and set it down upon the cloth, just so. Then he brought two knives, two spoons and a little pat of butter on a plate, and arranged them all with infinite exactness under Mr. James's nose. But the position of the large knife did not suit him, and so he moved it one-sixteenth of an inch. As

a final touch, he hospitably opened the sugar jar, slid it forward toward Mr. James's hand and placed in a line beside it four little silver-topped shakers containing red pepper, black pepper, plain salt and celery salt. Then off he tiptoed to the kitchen, to return in five minutes, bearing the favored morsels of his patron's choice.

"Get me an evening *Star*," growled Mr. James, as with a disgusted expression he helped himself to the mush. Each spoonful that he swallowed seemed to disgust him more than the one before it, and he glared about him savagely, as if burning with universal hate.

When the paper was handed him, he snatched it impudently, banged it out flat on the table and swept a glowing eye through the headlines:

DASHED TO DEATH—Three killed in Falling Elevator; DIES BY HIS OWN HAND—Banker, Distracted, Uses Pistol; BROADWAY SCENE OF MURDER—Assassin Kills, then Escapes.

The billionaire thrust the paper from him with a spasmodic gesture, and rising from his unfinished repast, came out of the dining room muttering. The liveried attendants shrank from his path as though he were a caldron of seething lead; and he splashed and scalded them with hateful sneers, which they accepted in silence and wittily returned behind his back. The check that the breathless waiter handed him he scribbled his name on blindly. Tottering on his feet in the anteroom, he soon with recovered fury snatched his hat from a lackey and strode away, whereat the attendants all heaved a sigh of relief, as if a plague had been averted.

Still agitated when he reached the street, his progress down Broadway resembled a flight, and he showed a nervous inclination to glance behind him and to halt abruptly if anyone approached him with too much point. He reached his office building just as an ambulance left the curb with the gong clattering and a small crowd which had collected began to disperse.

An obsequious window polisher hastened to enlighten Mr. James.

"Hot engine room—electrician's assistant—big, strong, husky guy—never sick a day in his life—apoplexy—gone like that!"

He snapped his dirty thumb and leaning closer, with a disgusting air of comradeship, fastened upon the listener his pupilless eyes.

"Money won't save us, will it?" he hinted. "We all gotter go, the rich as well as—"

Mr. James dashed the talkative fool aside and strode up the steps fuming.

The long, brilliant corridor was deserted, save for the giant figure of the night watchman in his leaden uniform and peaked cap.

"Car right down, Mr. James, sir," said the night watchman in a guttural voice, as he touched first his hat and then the elevator call. No suspicion had he that the magnate would have legged it up the nineteen flights of stairs that night, except for a slight but troublesome disability of the heart. And the night watchman stood mentally deploring the monotony of a night watchman's life and the slimness of a night watchman's supper.

The elevator plunged into its cradle with a fluttering sigh, opened its teeth and released a belated clerk, while its tongue, which was green and narrow, made a dapper squirm to Mr. James. The latter advanced cautiously across the sill and clutched his bosom as the death trap mounted softly. Upon arriving at his floor, he bolted, terror-stricken, upon the landing toward his office door.

Entering, he strode past Baldwin and Donovan without seeming to notice them, entered his private office, glanced at the bonds, hung up his hat, sat down and fidgeted among his papers nervously. Presently he rose, and drawing aside the curtain from behind the chair, peered downward over the river.

Soft, golden lights were dancing on the misty water, and the whistles of many boats kept blowing for right of way; and perhaps the magnate fell to dreaming of a gigantic tugboat corporation that would monopolize the

towing industry of the whole city and place it all in the hollow of his hand. At any rate, as he stood idly dreaming, like a miser who whimsically fingers pennies although gold eagles are within easy reach, a fragment of the toast he had eaten rose scalding into his throat, his face flushed, his hands perspired, his eyes shuddered, his body swayed to and fro, and to save himself from falling he clutched the curtain. The latter, like a thing possessed with hate, snugly wound itself around his body in constrictive folds and refused to loosen its grip.

But if the truth were known, Mr. James did not notice this impediment at all, and in fact became wholly oblivious of his physical pangs, for something far worse was torturing him as it often did—a mystic sixth sense added to his other faculties, a sense of destiny profounder than all his dreams, which whispered to him that his days were nearing an end. He experienced a horrible feeling that his mind was giving way, and nothing, absolutely nothing, could save him. Dashing from him these morbid terrors, he pushed the curtain instinctively aside and reeled with chattering teeth to his office chair, upon which he sank with his face hidden in his hands, a magnate destitute of all authority, a Samson shorn of everything except iron chains. Common people who read of Mr. James in the papers usually imagined that luck had been unduly kind to him in giving him more money to spend than he deserved; but had they only realized the truth of his situation, the real incongruity lay not in the excess of his wages but in the deficiency of them. His reward was the mere control of an industry for a few short years; his sacrifice had been the cutting of every string of joy and happiness within his soul that makes life worth living. And the marvel was that he had chosen this path himself among the myriad of paths open to him.

He struck the call button a blow of agony, and the boy sprang into the room.

"Medicine!"

To poor Baldwin it may have seemed as if those blazing eyes were pouring pain upon him, as hesitating in brief uncertainty, he felt his request to go to his mother blister a second time upon his tongue.

"Hell!" roared the Boss.

Baldwin sped toward the water pitcher, his face contorted with hate and fear. He carefully poured a small quantity of water into the thin goblet, reached from a mahogany wall cabinet a bottle and a heavy spoon, and set them all down on the Boss's desk. But in placing the bottle he made several unnecessary flourishes of the blood red skull and crossbones that it bore. Mr. James perceived that his office boy was mocking him, but he withheld his fury until the medicine was swallowed and the utensils were returned to their proper places. Then, fixing his ugliest glare on Baldwin, he snapped:

"You and Donovan stay here until I tell you to go home!"

"Yes, sir," said the lips of the boy, although his throat produced no sound.

"Baldwin!"

The small figure, which had started toward the door, spun around.

"Come here, close to the desk."

Baldwin crept forward with lowered eyes and paused before his master, quivering.

"I want you to keep a close watch on Donovan," hissed Mr. James. "If he leaves his post one instant without asking my permission, I want you to report it to me at once. And now pay attention to this: Donovan is keeping his eye on you, and if you lie or sneak off or do anything you ought not to, I will know it. Understand?"

Baldwin hung his head.

"And finally," continued the Boss with a concentrated sneer, "I know what you are, Baldwin; you're a damned thief—I can see that in your face, and I hate you for it. If a dead man were lying there at the foot of the curtain you'd try to steal the pennies off his eyes. But never try to fool me; never try to fool me!"

Baldwin gasped for breath as tears of rage began to roll down his pinched

cheeks and fall upon the floor unheeded.

"That's all," smiled Mr. James.

But no sooner had the willing fugitive fastened upon the handle of the door than his torturer ordered him back again.

"Cover me up," said Mr. James, as a final tyranny, and stepping to the sofa, stretched himself out.

With mute obedience the small slave carefully tucked a fringed lambrequin around his master, and then loitered near the lounge in a quandary whether to go or stay.

"Tell Donovan I'm asleep and the bonds are on the desk. Turn out all the lights but the one over my chair."

Baldwin darkened the room, and later, as he tiptoed toward the door, peered backward. The curtain rose softly from the floor, balanced itself in midair without a tremor or a sound and then descended with a low, sad murmur, blotting out the stars of heaven and seeming to suggest the presence of another curtain near at hand, an unearthly barrier of death and motherlessness, that might soon blot out the last joys within Baldwin's soul. He rushed out, closing the door noisily behind him, and then stood confronting Donovan with a sullen lip. The latter was stationed in his habitual position, his right hand in the pocket of his grim-colored coat and his hueless eyes fixed on vacancy.

"Mr. Donovan," recited the boy, "Mr. James is going to sleep, and the bonds are lying on the desk, and you and I are to wait until he tells us to go home, sir."

Donovan blinked, sighed and said nothing.

"He'll keep me here all night because he knows I'm poor," muttered Baldwin in a fury. "It's my measly five dollars a week he knows'll keep me here, and so he tells me to stay when there's nothing for me to do, the mean, low, stingy old cuss. I'd like to kill him! If I had a hundred dollars—" Baldwin interrupted himself to glance sharply at Donovan, who, however, seemed to be paying no heed

to his words. The office boy bit his lip and swallowed his rage down into his stomach. He said no more, but retreated into a corner and hoisted himself into a gigantic dark leather settle, whence he also stared straight before him into space. And at length his eyelids began drooping heavily and covered his tired eyes.

Baldwin slept a little, but Donovan stayed awake, wide awake. There was no means of ingress to the inner office except through the anteroom in which the detective stood, and hence there was no loophole for him to keep his eye on save the one door out of the hall. But no one was likely to intrude as late as this. Indeed, the only caller proved to be a white moth, which entered boldly through the black transom and set up a steady fluttering against the bulbs of the electric lights, as if bent on plunging headlong into the dazzle of her ambitions, angered perhaps by the safeguards which barred her way. The pounding of her delicate wings was almost human in its fury. Donovan eyed the struggle without apparently seeing it. An hour passed, and still Mr. James did not awake.

Suddenly, however, within the private office there rose a succession of frantic noises. The sleeper's voice shrieked for Donovan, and scurrying footsteps were to be heard, mingled with the racket of furniture dashed aside and sent crashing into the wall. Had an angel with a fiery sword appeared before the detective, the latter could not have looked more astounded. He stood spellbound, perhaps fearing that he had failed in his duty, yet instinctively arguing that no mortal could have entered either by the door he guarded or by the inner window with the curtain nineteen stories above the street. After a while he drew his revolver and plunged into the scene of trouble. Baldwin fled the other way into the safety of the hall. Mr. James had left the couch and was hiding behind the desk, shouting hoarsely:

"There's a man in the curtain there! Shoot him! Shoot him! He tried to stab me! Shoot him!"

Donovan must have fancied that he, too, saw a murderer behind the window drapery, for he fired two rapid shots into it and blew the soul out of—the window pane. But hardly had he pressed the trigger when he burst out laughing in spite of himself, and wiping his forehead, walked to the wall button and lit the central chandelier. In the bright glare the curtain was to be seen, flapping light-heartedly, as empty as a delusion.

"Did you have another nightmare, sir?" he grinned without looking around, as he returned the warm pistol to his pocket.

A deep groan caused him to wheel quickly and take in at a glance the edge of the desk, two fists with their nails digging the wood and a livid face behind them, sick and distorted. It was Mr. James clawing himself to his feet, dragging his body to his chair, sinking into it as if his strength were spent. He looked as if the pistol shots had awakened him to a reality far worse than any dreaming. His huge head wobbled frightfully; his eyes were closed; several drops of blood fell from his lips upon the front of his shirt; his head fell back noisily against the chair, and his eyes unclosing stared at Donovan with a glazed appearance, and then went shut again.

"I—I've broken a blood vessel!" he gasped. "I thought sure there was a man in the curtain."

The detective sprang forward in consternation.

"What's the matter, sir?" he blurted. "Did you fall and hurt yourself?"

Mr. James shuddered as he murmured:

"I can feel the blood pouring into my lungs. I'll be dead before you can get a doctor."

Donovan stared as if in the presence of a falling world. Suddenly he turned and rushed into the anteroom and flung himself into a chair in front of the telephone. He held the receiver to his ear, but Central did not respond. In vain he hammered the lever and shouted "Hello!" The 'phone proved to be out of order, although it had been

all right but a few hours before; and in despair he rushed into the hall, hallooing for Baldwin. The office boy, however, did not see fit to appear. As a last resort, Donovan pounded the elevator call—probably the night watchman was playing pinoche in the engine room—and getting no response, he laughed outright, yelled to Mr. James to keep his courage up and started running down the long resounding chain of stairways toward the street. As the last murmur of his footsteps died away, the corridor relapsed into a profound silence, save for the fluttering of the moth in the deserted anteroom, through the ground glass door of which a golden light was streaming. Donovan was absent about eight minutes; when he returned, all breathless from his exertions, he found that a new eternity had been ushered in.

The elevator came whirring up the shaft at top speed, and was brought to a stop above, and then below the landing, by the detective himself. The gate was dashed open, and he scrambled out clumsily, followed by an ambulance surgeon in a dapper white uniform, who looked as calmly indifferent as if nothing were expected of him.

"Mr. James!" bawled Donovan.

But there was no reply.

"Baldwin!"

But still no answer.

With a look of agony, the detective dashed into the anteroom with the surgeon at his heels. He pulled open the inner door, but the sight which met the eyes of the two professionals, hardened as they were to terrible scenes, caused both to halt open-mouthed, as if stopped by bars of iron. Mr. James had knocked most of the bonds off his desk in a vain effort to regain the sofa, and was stretched along the floor upon these tufts of gold, one of which he still clutched with desperate fingers. He was prone on his breast, with his face turned toward the would-be rescuers; his other hand was spread palm downward beneath his jaw. His eyes were wide open. They had a stony stare that lent his countenance an expression of wild terror, but as the physician at

once perceived, there was no longer a mind behind that forehead to reflect terror in the outer mask, and therefore the expression must have been a pure accidental effect. A pool of blood mirrored the dead face, the staring eyes and the mimic terror exactly; and this pool, the face, the body, the scattered bonds, the spectators, the entire picture, remained as motionless and silent as if framed in oils, with the simple exception of the window curtain in the right foreground. This faintly shook, as if with suppressed merriment, down its entire length. The magnate of a moment before had yielded unconditionally to his destiny, and even the window curtain, even the senseless velvet, could not repress a somber smile.

The surgeon, a young man, soon recovered himself. He took two steps past Donovan, bent over the prostrate form, touched the heart and turned to the detective with a disparaging shake of the head.

"I told you so! It's aneurism," he cried emphatically.

Then he stooped again, picked up a bond and read the face value; and

then, suddenly discovering that one of Mr. James's hip pockets was turned inside out, he ran his finger through several of the other pockets in quick succession and found them all empty. This brought to his attention a small oblong of paper pinned beneath the dead man's necktie, on which were traced the following words:

MR. DONOVAN:

He was dead when I took the money. I wish he'd been alive and seen me do it, so he could know I stung him at last. I don't care who knows I took it. I wanted it to save my mother's life, Donovan. She's awful sick. I took more than a hundred dollars, because I wanted that much to take her to the country.

BALDWIN.

"Hello! Someone's been here ahead of us!" exclaimed the surgeon when he had finished reading this note. "It's too late for me to do anything, but this looks like a good job for you, officer, eh?"

"What! Is the Boss dead?" gasped Donovan.

The doctor looked up sharply.

"More than dead. Robbed," said he.



A GREEK FRIEZE

By JOHN MYERS O'HARA

AS figures, on a frieze processional,
 In marble march across the metope
 Of some old temple to eternity,
 Go golden-stained of time's smooth kiss, so all
 Those loves that carved for life its coronal
 File slow across the flame of dreams for me;
 And I, as senile Casanova, see
 Each profile flower and fade, and shadow fall.
 They pass with gaze oblivious of mine
 That singles those undying passion knew;
 She, tigress-orbed, whose sin was blight malign
 To youth's high thought; and she, once regnant through
 Her lips' red luxury; and she, who drew
 My soul to her with song as to a shrine.

THE WINTER RESORT

By THOMAS L. MASSON

FAT women are sitting on the piazza, fanning themselves idly in the sun. Bored-looking men are smoking cigars in out-of-the-way places.

The tennis courts hum with an intermittent activity.

Palms—palms everywhere, on the edges of the lobby and in the entrance to the dining room.

Off in the distance the golf links keep up their ancient reputation.

The liverymen are busy. In the kitchen the cooks are always preparing the next meal. Everybody is happy but the guests.

Guests of all sizes and shapes. Tall guests and short guests, women with diamonds clustered on their hands and necks, women with angular faces, pale with morbidness, pampered women and fresh young things, unconscious of the misery of others.

Smart young men shift about uneasily. Some of them have found a permanent occupation as flirtation makers.

Little Loves are stalking about. Some of them, for want of something to do, have fallen asleep in the piazza chairs.

Busses are coming in and going out. Good-byes are being said and kisses given in exchange for nothing more valuable than—kisses.

Money is being spent—silently, unobserved but surely.

True Contentment, passing by on his sober old mare, sings softly to himself and says:

“Nothing doing there!”



THE honeymoon is over when a man and his wife cease to be lovers and become candid friends.

THE INTELLECTUAL MISS CLARENDON

By ADELAIDE STEDMAN

MISS CONSTANCE CLARENDON, B.A., if heredity and environment count for anything, was predestined to be clever. The daughter of an eminent sociologist father and a charming poetess mother, whose forebears before them for at least three generations had spent their days in educating a perversely mocking world, Constance's early developed mind and her dignity of manner seemed fitting products of such an ancestry. Besides these things, however, she possessed a wonderful, glowing beauty, and, better still, a sense of the divine fitness of things, which must have been inherited from some black sheep forefather, whose name had been wiped from the family archives because he had gleefully laughed at the accumulated B.A.'s, Ph.D.'s and other alphabetical adornments of his learned kinsmen.

Enough, however, of ancestors. This story is Constance's tale of woe—well, perhaps not of woe, since it ended in—
But I am getting ahead.

When Miss Clarendon reached the age of twenty-one and had achieved the honor of a Vassar degree, she made her bow to her parents' friends, the so-called "clever set" of New York. The occasion chosen for her debut was an evening reception, and almost every lion and lioness of which the city boasted put in an appearance; and of course each one was expected to roar after his or her particular manner when conversing with the daughter of the house, for whose special benefit all this dignity was summoned to the surface.

The worst of it was that Constance seemed to enjoy it. Clad in a long white gown of Grecian design and with an antique gold band in her Grecian coiffure, she might have posed as Minerva on the spot, and she looked just about as approachable as that austere goddess. True, when the question of gowning had come up, she had timidly suggested a fluffy pink chiffon confection, but her mother had decided on the classic as "far more appropriate." So that had settled it, and who will say that nine women out of ten do not live up or down to their gowns, as the case may be?

Each celebrity was presented to Constance with proper *empressement*, and Mrs. Clarendon always so worded the introduction as to give the impression that her daughter was tremendously interested in that particular person's vocation.

So the slow moving procession passed along, the guests embarrassed at having to talk about themselves, the girl embarrassed at having to talk about them, while Mrs. Clarendon was an ever present Malaprop to keep the conversation on the wrong tack, fondly imagining the while that she was thus proving her daughter a brilliant and charming conversationalist.

Only three men stood out in the girl's mind from the uninterested and uninteresting mass. The first was Mr. Hodge, a diplomat and incidentally a typical clubman. He had stood listening for a moment to her mother's praise of himself, then suddenly smiled at her with a twinkle in his eye, ex-

pressed himself as "charmed" in a tone so tepid that it gave the lie to himself, and passed on.

Then came the Man. She had not even caught his name. He had been big and bluff, and had shaken her hand hard while he chuckled: "I certainly am a fish out of water here! There are enough brains in this room to give every one of us a few if they were evenly divided, aren't there?"

"I'm sure you have plenty of your own, without having to annex any," Constance smiled.

"I!" he laughed. "Oh, I don't pretend to be interesting. Why, I've never done anything even to interest myself! But I must hurry—I've a train to catch. I wish I could stay!"

Again her hand had been grasped and shaken, a pair of keen blue eyes looked straight into hers, and in a moment he was gone, leaving her between a smile and a gasp, strangely excited and thrilled.

There was no time for introspection, however, for close on his heels had come Mr. Ingraham, Mr. Lucius Ingraham, a lawyer. He stayed and talked, and talked indefinitely, not at all distressed that the subject was himself. Constance had little need to say anything. His flow of soul was continuous, but then he talked rather well. He was still by her side when the good-byes began to be said, the procession turning and marching the other way; and Constance was secretly grateful that one man had found her interesting enough to remain.

She was tired and miserable. A stiff little smile which hurt hovered continually on her lips, but her eyes refused to smile. She was suddenly recalled to herself by hearing a woman, a witty magazine writer, say to her mother, loud enough for all the nearby group to hear: "Good-bye, my dear. It has been a real pleasure to meet your daughter—such a beautiful girl and so intellectual!"

Constance's cheeks flamed. So that was the impression she had made! So that was the result of being forced to discuss "careers!" "Intellectual!"

The word caught like wildfire, and from that time on the adieus were larded thick with it, until it stood out, a thing distinct. If the woman had only said clever, brilliant, or original, all would have been well; but intellectual! She might as well have said boring and have done with it!

A wave of dull misery swept over the girl, for she well knew that her fate was being sealed. Nothing she could do in the future would ever efface this first false impression. She saw, now that it was too late, that in trying to interest when she was not interested, in trying to be her mother's daughter when she should have been herself, she had gone astray; and now— She looked up, the tears pressing hard behind her eyes, and saw Mr. Hodge standing beside her. She didn't know it, but the strange softness which had come into her face with pain had drawn him to her.

"Miss Clarendon," he said, "we didn't have time for a very prolonged chat this evening, but in spite of that fact I'm going to ask permission to call—on approval, let us say. Then, if I don't please, you can send me back and no harm done!" He laughed his easy, assured laugh.

Constance blushed brilliantly. This was the first real compliment, the first personal note which had been struck that evening. Somehow, overwrought as she was, it forced a lump into her throat, which forbade speech; and in her vain efforts for self-control, her voice, when it finally did come, sounded cold to frigidity. "Mother and I are always at home on Tuesdays," she murmured desperately, with no answering smile or pleasantry.

Mr. Hodge bowed and hastily withdrew, not having set a day, and a few moments later, as he passed by her, she could hear him humming something about, "Ice, ice, ice!"

Constance's last chance for popularity was lost. When the last guests had gone, the girl stood for a long time quite still, forlornly pulling to pieces the flowers in her withered bouquet, trying to realize that through all her girlhood she would be branded, with

all that it implies, as "the intellectual Miss Clarendon."

For three months after her "coming out" life resumed somewhat the even tenor of its way. Invitations for lectures, teas and club meetings were plentiful, but dance cards and dinner invitations were painfully rare.

But then, as a consolation, there was Mr. Ingraham. From the night of her debut, when he first crossed her horizon, he loomed larger and larger in view, until at the end of ninety days, so unceasing were his attentions, so shy was the girl's manner, that it really seemed as if wedding bells were ready to wag their joyous little tongues in the near future. Formal, punctilious Mr. Ingraham would never have gone so far without the fullest intention of finishing his course at the altar, while Constance—well, when he came into the room soft lights glowed in her eyes, which she had to lower her white lids to hide, so surely did the Fates seem propitious.

Then, one afternoon in early spring, Constance raged in the door, flew to her room and gave herself up to a tempest of angry tears, until her mother, alarmed, insisted on entering. First, the girl was mute as to the cause of her trouble, but Mrs. Clarendon, in spite of her misunderstanding of her daughter's character, loved her as only mothers can love, and soon won her into speech.

"I hate all men!" the girl burst out finally. "They are all alike, stupid weaklings! Oh, mother, why is there such a thing as brains or intellect or culture or education? I wish I were an ignoramus! I wish I didn't know how to write my name! I wish—I wish—" She ended wildly in choking sobs, her head in her mother's lap.

For a long minute the older woman stroked the wonderful gold-brown hair in silence. Then, "Tell me the trouble," she suggested. "Nothing is ever as bad as it seems at first."

"No, it's worse!" came the muffled voice. "I—I am going to be an old maid! Mr. Ingraham asked me to marry him, and I refused!" She raised her head defiantly.

Mrs. Clarendon gasped in astonishment. "Why, I—I thought you liked him, dear!"

"I did—very much."

"Well, isn't he a fine man?"

"Yes—"

"And a brilliant and successful lawyer?"

"Ye-es—"

"And you liked him; then why—"

"Oh, mother, mother, don't!" the girl implored. "Every word you say is true, but I can't marry him, because—because he is afraid of me!"

"Afraid?" Mrs. Clarendon echoed weakly.

"Yes. Listen; I'll tell you everything." Constance's breath came in long, sobbing gasps. "I did like him and he liked me. Then today he asked me to go to the Metropolitan Museum with him. We took a hansom—and then we didn't go—just rode and rode in the Park, like any other adorably silly couple, before he made up—his mind to say—it. I was so happy! It seemed so beautiful to be loved!"

"Finally he—asked me, all mixed up and hesitating, you know!" Her cheeks burned scarlet, and her eyes dropped as she went on slowly. "We got out of the hansom and walked down a secluded lane, and finally I—I said yes. It all seemed like some beautiful dream, till suddenly he asked permission—yes, actually asked permission—to take my hand! Then I knew he was afraid of me, and I hated him! I hated him, and I told him so! Then I—came home! Oh, dear, isn't it ridiculous!" She laughed and cried, then cried and laughed until Mrs. Clarendon began soothing her like a little child.

"S—sh, s—sh, darling!" she murmured. "Never mind. You were quite right. He was not worthy of my little girl, but some day you will find your Prince Charming, who will make you smile at this trouble."

"No—I won't!" Constance sobbed. "I—don't know why I'm not like other girls, but I'm not! I don't want to be intellectual or stiff or cold, but, somehow, everybody thinks I am. Nobody

is ever silly or dear or funny with me, but horribly sober and—and polite. I can't help it if I am clever; but I'd love a good time, and—and I've never had one! I—I'll be an old maid and grow crabbed and ugly, and then, when I die, they'll put on my tombstone, 'Constance Clarendon, Spinster,' and everybody will say, 'Poor thing!'"

The girl sobbed on, until, with her head still on her mother's knees, she fell asleep, while Mrs. Clarendon, staring out into the thoughtful twilight, wondered with growing fearfulness just how many of Constance's first heart-aches might be laid at her door.

The melancholy caused by the incident in the Park clung to Constance to such a degree that her mother worried and her father fidgeted until they decided to give her that American idea of a panacea for all ills, a trip to Europe. She could easily make the voyage alone with her maid, and once across, a pressing invitation from Mr. Clarendon's English relatives, which had long been held in abeyance, could be accepted with mutual pleasure.

The girl consented languidly to the plans made for her benefit. What difference did it make whether she was with English relatives or her own family? To both—for her reputation had gone before her—she was "the intellectual Miss Clarendon," and as such she looked on the world with cynic eyes.

However, it takes a bitter sorrow, indeed, to withstand the exhilarating sting of an ocean breeze, especially, when the sunbeams are dancing a sportive fandango on the water; so once aboard and among blessed strangers, to whom she was just a girl with big brown eyes and a wealth of Titian hair, a faint tinge of color stole into Constance's cheeks and her face brightened with an intangible expectation. She lay back in her steamer chair, staring out at the green waters, strangely at peace.

Just as she was thinking that this pleasant, peopled isolation was far more friendly than the intimate world she knew, a man's voice, hearty and loud, exclaimed at her elbow: "Why, bless my soul, if it isn't Miss Clarendon!

How do you do? I don't flatter myself that you remember me, but I'm Robert Jones, and I was at your party."

It was the Man, and Constance experienced the same little thrill of half-laughing pleasure she had felt at their first meeting. She held out her hand, smiling brightly in response to the cordiality of his tone. "I do remember you," she responded, "and I'm glad to see you." For the first time in her "grown up" life, the pleasure she felt showed itself in her voice and manner. She had thought of him often as the one man who had been "different" on that eventful night, and always the memory had brought a smile.

No man had ever treated her with that intangible suggestion of *camaraderie* which he had injected even into his greeting. She glanced at him doubtfully. Perhaps he had forgotten for the moment that she was intellectual, but he would remember presently and be startled into stiffness. Oh, if he only wouldn't! Her thoughts flew lightning swift as he ordered his chair placed beside hers, without so much as a "By your leave."

Finally, all arrangements made, he sat down in beaming comfort. "It is going to be a jolly voyage," he affirmed. "There are bowling, shuffleboard and a few pianos on board. We'll have all sorts of a good time!" He said "we" with *insouciance*.

Constance trembled with delight. A man suggesting fun with her! Then the tide of joy receded swiftly. He would remember her reputation presently and change. With a sudden determination, she made up her mind to be herself for once, as gay and irresponsible as the two pink-veiled girls already promenading the deck with some laughing college boys in tow. She would, come what might!

Mr. Jones watched her for a moment in silence, a fine smile, as if of recollection, breaking the firm lines of his mouth and chin. Then he broke in on her self-promises with, "Funny, I met your father and mother on a steamer, too. They were on their wedding tour. I was a small boy then, and one day

your father caught me throwing pennies down into the steerage. He stopped me, and gave me a little lecture on the self-respect of the poor, and we became chums, though I insisted that I enjoyed throwing the pennies and didn't do it for the poor at all."

"Isn't it plausible that that is the feeling of many greater philanthropists? How father must have reasoned with you! He loves psychology," Constance answered, amused to the point of forgetting herself.

He held up his hands, chuckling. "Listen to the college words!" he mocked. "Plausible, philanthropists, psychology—go on; I'll take my Freshman year right now! It will be the only college course I've ever taken; I don't think I would make a good student of—psychology." He laughed again, and to her amazement, Constance found herself laughing with him, not at all offended, but beginning to enjoy herself to an astonishing degree.

"I hadn't seen your father from the afternoon he left the steamer until three days before your party, when I happened to bump into him in an office," Mr. Jones continued after a moment. "He didn't remember me, but I remembered him and spoke to him. We had a few minutes' talk together, and as a result he sent me the invitation.

"I left for Shanghai that very evening. I am General Manager of the Standard Gum Company, and we are opening up branches all over the world; but I just had to stop in for a few minutes. I didn't see anyone I knew, except Charlie Hodge; you can meet him all over the globe." Constance started. "But he was at the other end of the room, with the crush in between."

"You should have stayed and been introduced," Constance murmured. But her face shone. No wonder he didn't remember her despised intellectuality—he didn't know anything about it! Here was her opportunity for an unspoiled friendship. She smiled dazzlingly at the beaming Mr. Jones, as he finished.

"It certainly did seem queer to see

Mr. and Mrs. Clarendon a middle-aged couple with a grown up daughter. I remembered them as a pair of spooners!" Once more his jolly laugh rang out.

Constance nodded absently. Everything about her seemed so suddenly beautiful as to merit the closest attention—the long, undulating sweep of deck, the gleaming white paint of the cabin structure, the smiling, chattering groups of people, and, best of all, the blue-gray ocean mountains. "Isn't the water beautiful?" she exclaimed exultantly.

"Oh, the water's all right—wet, as usual!" Mr. Jones parried. It wasn't a new joke, nor a very good one, at best, but in a flash they were both laughing again in happy unison, laughing because they were glad; and when two people, a man and a woman, laugh in that way, it means that they are preparing to go together on a voyage of discovery into the Land of Romance, but what they will find there only the love imp knows, and he never tells!

To a girl of Constance's temperament the hearty cordiality of her new friend acted like a tonic. All the graces in which she had come to consider herself deficient were suddenly at her command, and for three glorious days she alternately teased, coquetted with and mystified the faithful Mr. Jones. Luckily, he was not given to analysis, so it did not seem queer to him that the girl who smiled and jested with him was the same creature as the tall, stately maiden with a gold wreath in her hair, whose sweet face, with its expression of half-pathetic surprise had crowded out all lesser images in his mental gallery since that night when he had first seen her and perforce torn himself away. Nor did it strike him as odd that, though Miss Clarendon could quote the most exquisite poetry, and though fragments of many 'isms and 'ologies often rose unconsciously to her lips, she could sit long hours through, contentedly listening to his discussion of the business outlook or the latest baseball celebrity. True, he was some-

times amazed when, in the middle of one of their discussions, she would suddenly laugh until the tears ran down her cheeks; but then, in his category women were entitled to their moods, and to attempt to account for them seemed a useless waste of time.

To him Miss Clarendon was simply a lovely girl, beautiful in her bright coloring, sweet and lovable, with a dainty aloofness of manner which added the last touch to her charm.

So for three days—and three ocean days are the equivalents of years on *terra firma*—their laughter proved a wise prophet, and they sailed gaily away into the Romance Seas. Then, on the fourth day, came an occurrence which threatened to shipwreck them before ever they reached a port.

Early that morning Mr. Jones strolled up to Miss Clarendon's steamer chair. "Whom do you suppose I saw at breakfast? Charlie Hodge, of all men! He has been seasick ever since we started, and he had to leave the table this morning in a good deal of a hurry."

Constance paled, all the brightness gone from her face. That Mr. Hodge should be on board! Of all undesirable happenings that was the worst. Let the two men but have a talk, and her brief pleasure would be over. She knew that Mr. Jones would mention her name, and then—well she remembered the little tragedy which had ended in the refrain of "Ice, ice, ice!" She nodded a dumb acknowledgment of Mr. Jones's remarks, even as she thought miserably: "If men of the type I have always known shrank before my fancied superiority, how much more will this comparatively uneducated man shrink from such a girl as 'the intellectual Miss Clarendon!'"

For a moment dull resentment held her; then that iron streak which is in the frailest of us asserted itself. She loved this man; she knew that—this big, simple man, who treated her with the frank friendliness of a child. She loved him. She would fight to hold his regard, and fight hard! She glanced up at him, only to find his eyes on her with an expression so tender and pro-

TECTIVE that she hastily looked away, in rosy self-consciousness. Then, woman-like, suddenly the desire to test him took possession of her. He must know her reputation some time; why not let Mr. Hodge tell him, as well as another man? Then she would know if he was proof against the awe with which she had inspired other men. It was a fearful risk. He loved her now, and perhaps by tomorrow morning even friendship would be impossible; but even so, she must know if he would be like all the other men.

"You say Mr. Hodge is ill again?" she finally queried.

"Yes," he laughed. "He is a regular landlubber!" Scarcely, however, had the words left his lips, before the aforesaid gentleman hove into sight, a trifle yellow as to complexion, but perfectly able to be about.

At sight of him panic seized Constance. It is very easy to make brave resolves, but the carrying out of them is quite another matter. She would do as she had planned, but she would keep them apart for just this one day, a few more happy hours, before— But to do this, she must act quickly. "Let us take a peek at the steerage passengers, Mr. Jones," she suggested, a bit breathlessly. "They say there are some adorable babies down there—and I'll let you throw pennies!"

He followed her obediently, as she moved swiftly across the deck, and for the time Mr. Hodge faded into the background.

The two spent the day together. Never had Constance been so kind. Never had she allowed him to be with her so much. The hours flew by, for it is an old truism that happiness has wings.

At four o'clock, as they were drinking tea, Mr. Hodge once more appeared upon the scene, this time walking directly toward them. "Hello, old man!" Mr. Jones hailed him cheerfully.

He came up to them, with a hearty greeting for Mr. Jones, a tentative one for Miss Clarendon.

For once in her life Constance was almost grateful for her reputation, for so

chilly was her manner and so frigid the atmosphere that Mr. Hodge beat a hasty retreat. Then the girl smiled more freely; so far, so good! Her companion's next words, however, brought her to a realizing sense that her day of grace was almost over.

"Nice fellow, Hodge," he commented. "I must see him this evening. He has a business address I have been wanting."

"There—there is going to be vaudeville this evening," Constance murmured. "One of the ladies said that it was going to be very clever." Every instinct of the girl's nature rebelled against this part she seemed forced to play. It seemed so cruel that she should lose her chance of happiness to a false thing, a reputation; and yet what could she do?

They went to the vaudeville show in the saloon, Constance bewitching in a soft white gown, cut away at the throat, her wonderful Titian hair coiled low and threaded with a black velvet ribbon which accentuated the creamy whiteness of forehead, cheeks and chin.

Mr. Jones was blind to all save her. The performance may have been good, but to him the music, the dancing, the lights, the flowers, were simply a setting for her.

Another man also watched Constance. Seated in a dark corner of the room, Mr. Hodge seldom took his eyes off the unconscious Miss Clarendon. One is not a diplomat for twenty years without acquiring a taste for the study of human nature, and Mr. Hodge was trying to reconcile the laughing, animated girl he now saw with the cold, stately creature who on two occasions had frozen him, with the girl whose face assumed from time to time the expression of strange softness, with its pathetic little pained smile which had first attracted him to her.

His attention never wandered from her the evening through, and when Constance and her escort finally left the room he was still wondering.

For a long hour Constance and Mr. Jones wandered over the moonlit deck. Many things were on the man's lips to

say, but something in his companion's manner always halted the impetuous words. Finally, even desultory conversation ceased, and in silence they stared blindly at the black water, with the golden moon path leading off into infinity.

Constance's testing had begun. Well she knew that if for a moment she lowered her barrier of reserve he would ask her the one question which would settle all things. But could she answer him that night, answer him without knowing if his love would have been strong enough to see the real woman in her if she had met him as she had met Ingraham, for instance? She shivered at thought of him, and suddenly she realized how different and weak was her feeling for him, compared with this sweet something which in the last three days had somehow made her over anew. But she must be careful. Robert—she half formed the word with her lips—must know that he would be marrying not only Constance, but "the intellectual Miss Clarendon"; then, if he was still the same—but would he be? Her heart cried out yes, but the teasing imp of doubt kept repeating, "I wonder—I wonder."

She lifted her head slowly, as if seeking inspiration, her eyes deep with feeling.

To the man standing beside her, this vision of her slender, white-cloaked figure and the silhouette of her rapt, upturned face was strangely humbling. Though he had no poetic words for his thought, suddenly he felt himself unworthy.

In silence still they walked back to the doorway, to find Mr. Hodge smoking his good night cigar in its shadow. Constance smiled a little, even as she paled; then she slipped away quietly, leaving the two men together.

Through her long, sleepless night the girl went over and over in her mind the things Mr. Hodge would say of her. And there, in the darkness, where the possibility of ill swells to enormous proportions and the likelihood of good shrinks like ice in a summer sun, she saw her new friend drinking in the oth-

er's words, while the fear of her, which all other men had felt, took root in him. What she suffered in her imaginings drew her face into pinched pallor, and when the gray dawn came she dressed and wandered dreary-eyed out on deck, welcoming the cold, salt breeze.

No one was in sight, so she wearily leaned against the rail and gave herself up to her brooding. She had hoped for love, but doubtless it was not for her. To the end of the chapter she must play her part, pretending to like the mountain peaks of intellect, when she far preferred the cozy valleys of the commonplace with their warmth of human life. How long she stood there, alternately looking at the dun-colored clouds and at the seething, gray water she never knew, but finally the consciousness of someone staring at her caused her to turn abruptly. There stood Mr. Jones in his familiar gray tweeds, regarding her with an expression far removed from his usual beaming composure. She blushed crimson and stood hesitant. What should she do?

He settled the question by striding toward her and taking up a position against the rail, with an awkward embarrassment equal to her own. Evidently he had something on his mind of serious import.

Suddenly Constance decided to cut the Gordian knot. The one subject filled her mind to the exclusion of all others. "You—you talked with Mr. Hodge last night?" she queried.

"Yes, but—"

"Then"—Constance's head was bent, her eyes averted—"then, you—know!" She might have been confessing some heinous crime.

"Know? Know what?" he demanded; then he turned abruptly. "Constance, you—you are not engaged?"

"Engaged! No!" She tried to speak lightly. "Surely he told you that I was horribly clever, that I am known as 'the intellectual Miss Clarendon'; that I'm a Vassar B.A., and that I'm as cold as the—the North Pole!"

"He said nothing about you, but—well, what of it?"

"What of it?" The girl's cheeks flamed. What of it? What had possessed her to talk so? How unmaidenly she had been! Whatever this man's sentiments were, he had said nothing. She turned away abruptly to hide her tears.

"What of it?" he repeated. "What do I care for B.A.'s and intellect? Constance, I love you! I'm crazy about you! I—I don't know how to say it, but if you think you could put up with such a big, rough fellow as I am, why—why, Constance, darling, will you marry me—will you marry me? That is the only thing that counts! I—I—" He broke off for a moment. The girl said nothing, but merely turned around, a great questioning in her eyes. "I love you!" he repeated doggedly, "and—and—" He glanced around swiftly; the deck was still deserted, except for a man scrubbing in the distance. Then he caught her in his arms. "Tell me you love me, too!" he commanded. "You must! Tell me you love me, too!"

Gently the girl freed herself. "You are not afraid?" she whispered.

"Afraid of what?"

"Of me—because of—what I told you?"

"What did you tell me?"

"About being—intellectual," she murmured.

He turned almost wrathful. "What has that to do with love?" he demanded.

Hot tears welled into Constance's eyes. "You are right! You are right!" she sobbed. "What has it to do with love?" Slowly she put her arms around his neck. "It is the love that counts," she murmured, "and if you—care—for—me—why"—she lifted her face to his—"why—why—" He finished by kissing her lips.

When the early passengers began coming on deck they wandered to a secluded corner, indulging in the blissful questioning which is always welcome when questioning is no longer necessary.

"What did Mr. Hodge say about me?" Constance demanded.

"He said he wasn't sure he knew you. Wasn't that odd?"

Constance was mystified. Naturally, she did not know of Mr. Hodge's observations, so to relieve her mind she told Mr. Jones the whole story.

When she had finished he exploded into hearty laughter. "You—intellectual!" he chuckled. "It is the funniest thing I ever heard!" The girl beamed, and her heart sang as if he had paid her the most exquisite compliment.

"I do love books and pictures, and—such things," Constance insisted, however.

"Well," he smiled, "I'm sure I don't care how you amuse yourself. In fact, I am rather proud of the fact that my future wife has brains."

Constance's hand nestled more close-

ly in his. "Dear," she whispered, "I have been very foolish. I should have known that only real things have power; and 'the intellectual Miss Clarendon' was a myth, a thing made by man, while the real 'me,' the real Constance Clarendon, was there all the time, waiting—"

"Waiting for me, I hope!" he finished.

"Yes," she answered, a thrill in her voice. "She didn't know it, but I think she was!"

When the wedding announcements were issued, all Constance's friends exclaimed with one voice: "How could the intellectual Miss Clarendon marry a man like that, in no way her equal? Why is it that brilliant people so seldom marry kindred spirits?" They shrugged their shoulders, mystified; but Constance knew!



W O M A N

By ALOYSIUS COLL

THE wind caught up the golden word of God,
 And hid it in a tiny drop of rain,
 Which, like red wine, with rubies gemmed in vain,
 Disowned the gift, and spilled it on a clod!
 Out of that crumbling urn, a seeded pod
 Burst into life, wind-wandering back again
 To God's intent—the breath of ripening grain,
 Of attared rose and sunny golden rod!
 Then God took up the music of the wind,
 The laughing rain, the secret of the clay,
 The flowers as sweet as dreams of Pagan Pan,
 And giving then a heart and soul and mind,
 Deep as the night and merry as the day,
 He called them Eve—and gave them all to man!



IN the social swim the water is never as fine as it looks.

THE WIND TRAIL

By A. MERRITT

OVER the hills the wild winds are sweeping,
Whistling thro' pine and humming o'er lea,
High on the rocks the surges are leaping,
Shouting the song of the fetterless sea,
And it's oh, to be free!
Free from the city and free from the striving,
Free from the well ordered, atomic plan,
Free from the faiths and the profitless hiving,
Free from the limitless lockstep of man—
Down with the north wind in Viking sally,
Clasping with laughter each wild forest maid,
Smiting their green knights, then roaring the rally
With conquerors' wassail in dell and in glade,
Scattering the red and the gold of the plunder,
Vandal's largesse to the cowering plain;
Leap thro' the clouds to the drums of the thunder,
Rush down the fields to the tambours of rain;
Then off to the deeps where the storm scud races,
Dive far down to the cool green wave
Where a sea girl lifts white arms for embraces;
Dart with the gulls where the mad breakers rave.

Drive on the mist to the cold lily's tower,
Besiege her with lances of languorous light,
Strip the shy wild rose in her hidden bower,
Dream with the poppy thro' the soft purple night—
But free, free, free!
Free to leave them or free to love them,
Free to forget or free to care,
Free as the hawk high circling above them,
Free to gather or free to spare.
Dervish mist on the meadow whirling,
Moonbeams in minuet 'thwart the glen,
Roistering stream from the far heights swirling,
Wild fire dancing over the fen,
Make me one of you! I am as one of you!
Make me free!

AT THE LIPS OF THE SPHINX

By INEZ G. THOMPSON

THEODORA'S footmen made me nervous, and her black silk housekeeper fussed me, and I was rude enough, I dare say. But it had been such a tiresome journey, and I had put my toe through my drop skirt, getting into the carriage, and it worried me that Theo wasn't able to meet me, and the pomp and formality before I got in to her was so distressing, that the first thing I said was, "I hate your house!" Then I giggled—I'm always so funny to myself in a temper—and then I cried out and rushed and clung and wept just over being with her again after so long—and all in less time than it takes to tell it. And Theo laughed—laughed and laughed in a shaky, sobby fashion, and held to me as though she meant never to let me go.

"Oh—bless you, Vally! You're not changed, are you? You're just the same dear, queer little—"

"Why, good gracious," I said when I could, "why should I change? It's been only a year, after all, and I don't want to change, anyway! I'm used to myself as I am, and I like myself much better than any other me I can possibly imagine; but I'm glad to hear you say I've not, for I've been worried about my nose since I've been with Aunt Janet. I believe it's her shape—her nose's shape, that is—and if it is, will it eventually be pink at the tip like hers, do you suppose? If I used a bleach regularly and never took port, couldn't I avoid it, don't you think? For it would remind Dicky of her continually, though he wrote that it wouldn't, and he's detested her ever since the day she talked so dreadfully

to us about the responsibility of young parents, and I cried and gave him the ring back, and poor Dicky was a week getting engaged to me again. Now, is it like her nose, really?"

And then Theo laughed—and laughed without the sob. And these first few minutes of me, what I said and what she said, will explain better than any other words of mine why Theo wanted me, and why I think that anyone must believe I'm telling the truth about everything else. For, as I told Dicky on that awful, blessed night when he got back to me, nobody in his senses could accuse *me* of fibbing about such a thing, or imagining or adding, or anything of that sort. Mercy knows, I've never wanted to think about such things—disagreeable and horrid and shivery and hopeless. It's like running around in circles. And because I won't bother my head over uncomfortable thinking, I'm called frivolous. I suppose I am. Aunt Janet said, when the letter came from Theo: "You're the last person they'll allow with her, in her condition. She must have written without her husband's knowledge—or perhaps he didn't see enough of you to realize your utter unfitness for responsibility of any sort."

"But Theo cares for me," I told her, choking all at once over the word. I missed Dicky hideously. He'd been away from me a week, and was to be away three more; and I'd gone to Aunt Janet partly because I hadn't visited her since my marriage, and partly because Dicky wanted to be easy about me. I didn't mean to imply that Aunt Janet didn't care for me when I said Theo cared for me, but she took

it that way, and stiffened up, and folded and refolded her hands a great many times, and said: "Then, of course, there's no further objection to be raised," and was unbearably polite to me all the rest of the time. So it was heavenly to be with Theo.

I sat on the floor, my cheek on her hand, just as we used to sit at Miss Mitford's, and told her everything. That means that I told her all about Dicky. It was so good to have someone want to hear of him; Aunt Janet didn't. Of course I apologized for saying I hated her house—Theo's house—and explained to her how scary it was, after our weeny little apartment, and how tremendous men servants were when I'd been used to but one teeny, weeny maid, and how horribly expensive it was for us, in spite of its littleness—Dicky knocks things over when he teases me by yawning, but I wouldn't have *him* smaller for worlds—because, having heat and cold that you regulate by turning a handle, and pipes in the refrigerator that make one's own ice, and an air thingummy for Angeline to dust with, and electric stoves in the kitchenette for her to mess with when we wish her to cook—and a course dinner, from cocktails to flowers, sent up, with a butler to serve, just by speaking down a tube, when we don't wish her to cook—of course, one must pay for that sort of thing, and it's quite nice enough for me always. For, if there were footmen to consider, I couldn't meet Dicky as I must, for one has a feeling that their eyes see everything all the time they seem not to see.

When I was a bit out of breath at last, Theo's maid brought in a tea tray, and I got into a chair to take mine decently, and was beaming at her and she at me, when the thought struck me—

I put my cup down, click, and I said: "Whatever are you thinking of me? I've been here for ages and talked ever so—and never once asked for *your* husband, but made you listen to endless twaddle about *mine!*" And all at once she changed from my sweet saint Theo

to a scared, white, strange Theo, with fire sparks in her brown eyes—the sparks I've come to know mean un-speakable fear, fear of someone or some thing—which is worse—or—and worst of all—fear of oneself. I, being I, couldn't let her try to smile and lie with her poor, pale lips, as I saw she was struggling to do. I fell from my chair to her side again, and took her tight in my arms, and pitied and cried over her, and begged her to tell me what was the matter—or else never to tell me, if she didn't wish; but only not to look so, not to look so, for I loved her and I couldn't bear it; and all at once she began to cry.

My tears are the easy kind. I really feel very fresh and comfy after them, just as a plant looks after a sprinkling. And it's such a comfort to be able to cry becomingly when you're the crying sort. Not that I don't *mean* my tears; I do! But Theo—her tears shook her and tore her and choked and drowned her. I held to her, but I was hysterical with fright; and just as I was about to scream for someone, and was wondering where the bell was, and whether I could get to it, there was a nurse standing over us, quiet and clean and nice-looking. She nodded to me and smiled and whispered to me not to be frightened—that it would do her good, and that the maid was waiting to take me to my rooms. Then she knelt in my place, took out her watch and held Theo's wrist in her other hand. I just gaped at her and backed away to my wide-eyed maid. It was all so surprising, as though Theo's attack was usual. There was a wicked-looking little hypodermic syringe ready at the nurse's hand on the table. I wanted to run at the sight of it; and when she turned her head inquiringly and gave me that cold, superior, rebuking stare they manage so well, I went!

My new maid was a dear. She gave me a hot, aromatic bath. I did feel a twinge of envy at the gorgeousness of my great sunken plunge, all white-tiled and silver-fitted and modern Aladdin luxury of appliances all about, and after that I got my nerves in hand. Then

I sat down to tell it all to Dicky, for there's nothing relieves me like leaving bothers to him—I'm so sure they'll be taken care of rightly. So I asked him, first off, if he didn't think I'd better try to get Theo to go with me to the honeycomb—that's what Dicky calls our bit of a living place—for I thought the "bigness" of things was on her nerves, just as they'd gotten on mine at first, and that she wasn't quite happy, I was sure, and that there was something queer about the way she'd taken my reference to her husband; and then I got to telling Dicky all the things I'd been thinking of him since I'd written last, and I was barely through three pages of it when Theo's nurse came to tell me Theo was asleep and none the worse for crying. That was what she *told* me; but even I saw that she'd really come to be asked—what I instantly asked her. And so she answered, in her cool it's-nothing-to-what-I've-seen-before way, that Theo was in a "highly nervous state"—would probably be all right again as soon as the hoped-for little one came to occupy her, but that in the meantime it was desirable to divert her in every way possible, and that I'd had a wonderfully good effect on her, and she hoped I'd stay for a little.

"For, to be wholly frank," she ended, "the real trouble is mental. Mrs. Sayre fancies herself—er—unbalanced—or in a fair way to become so. You understand? There's nothing to be alarmed about; it's purely imaginary and not unusual. She may even tell you of it. If she does, try to find out for us what her ground is, what her hallucinations are. She won't tell the doctor nor me that. And it would help us greatly—"

By that time I got my tongue to act again.

"Unbalanced!" I gasped at her. "Theo? Why, the utter absurdity of—"

"Of course." The nurse looked at her watch. "That's the way I hoped you'd take it. There's no reason, as I said, for you to feel alarm. She is very quiet; today's outbreak was the

first of that sort, and it was a good symptom. Of course, if you get to being nervous over it, if you feel you can't stay on, get away naturally, please. Have a telegram or something; but don't let her see that you notice any—"

I cut in again on her silly precautions. As though I'd treat Theo in any such way when she was ill and needed me!

"But Mr. Sayre—does he know this? Does he understand—"

"Mrs. Sayre particularly requested that nothing whatever be said to Mr. Sayre of her—belief." The nurse's eyes were gray, and they looked as hard and cold as bits of granite, as she answered: "Her physical condition is my excuse for being here."

"Then," I wondered, "I'm not to mention to him—"

"If you please, no," she said, and shut the door.

I wrote Dicky then and there that at last I was ready to believe that Theo had made a mistake in her marriage; for I can't imagine anything that could happen to a happy wife that she wouldn't tell her husband first of all the world. I felt it in my bones—after the crying and this—that Theo didn't have any such blessed companionship as I had with Dicky. I'd stood up for Theo's husband all along, because he *was* her husband. As a matter of fact, though, I'd seen him but three times—at a tea, at her wedding, and at my own. In between I'd been buried at Aunt Janet's, for mother died that summer, and I couldn't bear to see anyone, even Theo—except, of course, Dicky, when Aunt Janet would let him come for a week end at long intervals. Theo hadn't written much of her engagement, save that she was happy, but it wasn't Theo's way to talk very much of what she felt deeply about. I felt she loved him—and that, of course, he loved her—and it made me furious to hear the hints, when I got back to the world, the catty hints about his money, and the mysterious shakes of the head and allusions to his "past" in awful whispers, and all that. In the

minutes I'd seen him I'd observed that he was very handsome in a big way, that he was very quiet and that he had fine hands. I'd taken the rest for granted. But now—well, I asked Dicky what he thought, and promised to add a word after I'd seen Mr. Sayre at dinner, as I surely would; and then I wrote something of my own thankfulness for my own boy, and so got to wanting him terribly and crying a little, and felt tired and wretched, and cuddled up on the couch to weep it out comfortably; and it was Theo herself who came in and woke me.

It was so like being back at Miss Mitford's—I asleep and Theo tickling my ears with one of my own curls, and I grumbling till I got awake, and then laughing at my own peevishness—that everything the nurse had told me went straight out of my head, and I giggled over some silly trick that came to me from the Mitford days, and asked Theo if she remembered it, and she did, and we had a beautiful don't-you-remember hour together, and had barely time to be dressed for dinner, after all.

Mr. Sayre didn't appear. A message came; Theo hardly nodded when it was brought to her, and went on talking. For Theo's angel of an Aunt Georgie and Aunt Georgie's military old husband and the Feltons, old friends, dined with us that night; and afterward Mrs. Felton sang for us in a fashion to take one straight to wherever it may be that music has its abiding place. All the dreadful worry was forgotten, and I had nothing to add to my letter to Dicky save a happier ending than beginning; and Theo came in to kiss me good night after I was tucked away in bed.

Next morning there was no Mr. Sayre, but it really didn't matter. I can see that I was heedless and foolish about it, but I was absorbed in Theo. We "visited" together and had a simply perfect morning, and all the unhappy spots of the day before blurred into something like a dream. Theo was herself. Actually, we went to drive in the afternoon, and petrified Aunt Georgie and her callers by de-

scending on them for tea. There were tears of joy in Aunt Georgie's eyes when she kissed me good-bye, and I knew she'd been worried, and that she was glad I was with Theo and doing her good. For I *did* do her good. She brightened and grew better with each hour—I could see it; and I feel absolutely sure that she leaned on me, and that I was normal and sane and not influenced by her to think—

There, I'm off again! And I *must* keep myself in hand and write it down with no explanations and no arguments, if I'm to get it before anybody who can give me an opinion worth while; and to be worth while, it must be unbiased. Even Dicky can't look at it in cold-blooded fashion, as he would a lighthouse proposition or a bridge, for he—

But Dicky comes into it last of all. To get back, then: we went home from Aunt Georgie's in great spirits. Theo's cheeks were pink, her eyes like stars in wine, her exquisite face a-twinkle with laughter and love for me and rest and content. I rattled on, gloating to think I'd helped her—trifling I—and happy that she could be happy with me, and we scandalized the fat-legged footmen. I was telling Theo about a New Thought somebody who'd fastened on me at Aunt Georgie's, and who had talked through his nose about "reabsorption into the Universal Consciousness," and advised me to "kill out desire" all the time he was gorging on hot cakes and dropping crumbs on himself.

"And he should have been given a straw to take his tea with," I was saying, as we tumbled, laughing, into the elevator, "for the unspeakable noise he—"

"What's this about a 'he'?" asked a man's deep voice close behind us; and at that I made the most extraordinary noise—half gasp, quarter choke, quarter squeal—as I shrank away from him. I knew here was Hugh Sayre! I don't know why I was so frightened, but I was. I stammered something as Theo told him who I was, and felt ridiculously relieved to hear her voice

steady and calm. But the life had gone out of it. I dropped my eyes like a gawky girl when I felt his eyes on me, and it wasn't till we were on the landing before Theo's sitting room that I looked at him square. He was a big man and a handsome man; I'd been right in that. But there was something— He looked too artificially fresh, as some ghastly women do who will keep on being young when they'd make really charming old ladies. Not that he was old; but he had the same puffy pinkness and kneaded and stimulated look about him. Moreover, one was forced to notice how immaculate he was—nails and skin and linen and shoes and clothes; and with the right sort, like Dicky, that never obtrudes, it belongs. I told myself in one breath that everything about him was handsome, and in the next was certain that everything about him was repulsive—everything contradicted, as it were, the mouth by bad lines and lax muscles, the jaw, face and nose—it was as though they might change completely to grossness while I looked. Suspension—that's the word. The man seemed hanging between—well, beauty of a powerful sort, and brutality—even depravity. Yes, I stared at him hard and well; I had time. After a civil glance and a word to me, he looked at Theo—looked and looked, mumbling something about his prolonged absence in a way that wasn't even superficially convincing, and under his look Theo faded, drooped, grew white, as she stood quietly pulling her gloves off finger by finger. Something very quiet in her held me silent, and I saw that it held him, too. He seemed in awe of her—I had almost said afraid of her but that it was preposterous. There was a look about him that suggested a dog one has beaten, who wants to make friends; and I was glad, glad from my soul that it was so. For—oh, Theo! That look—that dreadful revelation showing plainer and plainer—to you! I believe that if I were to see the shadow of such a menace in Dicky's eyes, I should die, body and spirit! And small wonder that you drooped

under it till you were as I had seen you in that black moment of my first hour with you! There is a shame beyond the power of words to convey. Enough to say that Hugh Sayre's expression, as I saw it, would have justified a clean man in beating him away from any woman's presence. And Theo, my Theodora, was his wife!

I said something about dressing, dinner, and turned to go. I am a coward. But as Theo looked up at me quickly, and I saw how sick with fear *she* was—well, I was none the less coward, but I went back to her and burst into the silliest babble, determined that I wouldn't leave her, excuse or no excuse. He, her husband, had stepped forward and opened her sitting room door for her to enter, and the look he gave me— But even as I quailed a bit, around the curve of the corridor that led to the wing came the nurse, almost on the run. In the instant's unpreparedness at sight of us, of me, her calm wavered a second, and she showed openly relief. Then she was impassive again.

"I have your bath ready, if you please, Mrs. Sayre." She said it tentatively, but with the hint of command she was privileged to assume. And Theo said, "Oh, I'd forgotten," darted past her and was in her room, the nurse following.

"Here!" Hugh Sayre broke out, his face crimsoning. "I'm coming in there; I want to see my wife."

"Certainly," said the nurse, and she opened the door for him, looking full at him with her granite chip eyes, and made no move toward leaving. He stood an instant, undecided, scowling at her, growling, then swung about, plunged into the elevator, jabbed the button and dropped from sight. The nurse closed and locked the door without a word to me, and I locked mine.

If there's anything more trying than talking against such odds as I met at dinner, I don't know it. But I could not let those awful silences engulf me; I felt panic at the prospect. I rattled on and on. I saw Theo's worried look at me, but it didn't matter; I talked.

Once or twice Hugh Sayre laughed, and many times I felt his eyes on me with curiosity and new interest. When I *had* to, I looked—not at him, but at his tie, which answers every purpose when one doesn't mind whether it's resented or not. He didn't resent it. He'd been in a sulky rage when we came down, and most evidently had been drinking. But my talking put him in good humor of a sort; he even told a story and called me "Valeria" in the course of it. I gulped with relief when we got away from his astounding devouring and drinking; but I knew it wouldn't do just to sit with Theo. I put my arm about her and drew her on into the music room.

"You haven't once asked me to sing," I reproached her; "but I feel the desire strong within me, and I shall, anyway. When you can't stand it another minute, throw something."

She didn't look at me—I knew that she couldn't—as I put her in a big chair by the grate and got a stool for her feet. She looked a wraith lady in her soft gray gown that hung loose from her shoulders and piled mistily about her as she sat; and she was so white! I kissed her forehead; and I had to make a long business of the candles, my throat did ache so. But by thinking hard of Dicky and how it would be when he was back to me, I drifted from humming to singing softly, and so to a fair gaiety. Dicky likes my singing; he says it's like a wet, blue, clean morning in April, and he says there's nothing like it for driving out blue devils and worry. I think Theo liked it, too, for I saw her sink back till the wings of the big chair hid her, and her hand, that had clenched on the arm, relaxed and lay restfully. And I sang on and on.

I was half through my pet French *chanson* when I knew that Hugh Sayre had come in; I felt him. But after a catch and a chord I kept on. I told myself that it was ridiculous to feel so; yet, when he moved on stealthily, and stood close behind me, I knew that, in spite of common sense, I should spring up and run to the fire as soon as the

last note would let me. But the last note quavered off in a cry, and my fingers jangled the keys, and I fairly flung myself beside Theo, clinging to her skirts. With the refrain hardly ended, the creature had stooped over me, his heavy hands burning my shoulders, and had kissed my cheek.

I think he was a little ashamed and afraid, but he knew Theo hadn't seen, so he blundered over to us and tried to turn it off.

"Scared you, eh? Shouldn't have intruded, maybe, but that was mighty pretty. S'pose you wouldn't sing another—jus' for me?" He was unbelievably awkward and coarse in his speech and manner, increasingly so with each minute I saw him; and he had not been so at our few past meetings—I should have noticed it, surely. It seemed nightmarish. The mellow light and flickering shadows where he stood obscured the unpleasantness of him, and to my scared eyes his outward seeming, even then, was fine and impressive and manly, the sort you'd expect rather splendid things from. But when he spoke, it was in a thick, dreadful voice that might have come from a gutter drunkard.

"Oh, come on now, little lady with the long name, an' be sociable. You was sociable 'nough, dinner time. Come on, play me a piece."

He bent and caught my hand to pull me up.

"Hugh!" Theo's voice rang out, and he dropped me like a shot, the handgrog look flashing back again. She tried to go on quietly. "Valeria's played enough for one evening; you mustn't tire her. Suppose we go to the library. We can have the graphophone brought in—"

There he snarled—just that—snarled at her and swore.

"I'm sick of being treated like a damned puppy!" he roared. "Whose house is this? Who pays the bills here? Ain't you my wife? Ain't I good enough to meet your friends? I've a right to speak—"

"Hugh"—she said it appealingly—"Hugh—don't!"

"Well, why don't you treat me right, then? Why don't you gimme a chance to talk to you, the way you ought to? Do you think I'm a fool? First you ain't well; then your maid's paid to hang around when I'm in, an' then comes this nurse. You've treated me like a leper for six months, an' if I shame you now, you're to blame. I won't stan' for it any longer. You'll come to time or I'll— No I won't get out, either; that'd suit you too well! I'll stick—an' you'll come 'round to my way! You married me; ain't I the same man I was a year ago? Ain't you my wife? Speak up!" He caught her, as he had me, but brutally, and I scrambled up to run for help. But Theo had stood, to avoid being pulled up, and put out her free hand to stop me.

"Don't say any more, Hugh, now," she entreated. "Remember our guest. I'll see you—later—tonight—"

"You lie! You mean to play with me! Promises don't go, any more; I'm going t' show you who's master!" He jerked her toward him so violently that she lost her balance and fell against him, and he caught her in his arms. "There!" he exulted. "Now how about it? If I had a mind to handle you rough, what could you do? You ain't kissed me for pretty near a year—know it? I'm goin' to take one now." But on the word he checked himself so abruptly that I thought someone coming in had silenced him. I looked over my shoulder—no one. Had Theo fainted? But as I started forward I saw her face. She lay without movement—and it seemed without fear; but her eyes were alive and burning, and held his immovably.

"I can—kiss you if I—want to," he said; but it was a faint echo of the first declaration, a husky bravado. "I'm goin' to kiss you!" He exploded it suddenly and bent over, but he did not touch her. He stopped again, his face almost touching hers, and she just looked at him—looked! And all at once he tore his arms from her, thrust her away, and slammed out, cursing and kicking the chairs out of his way.

I suppose a wiser woman would have known what to say; but, upstairs in Theo's sitting room, I put my arms about her, as she sat, and spoke out. "Theo, Theo, dear, why not come with me to our honeycomb cells—just for a little? There'll be room for nurse, and there'll be Angelina and Dicky and me; we'll all adore you. And Dicky—"

I couldn't finish. Theo rested her head on my shoulder and looked at the fire. "It would be nice," she said after a moment. I jumped.

"Oh, then, will you, will you? Truly, Theo?" She looked at me, then put out her hands to me.

"Vally"—and oh, her breaking voice—"I believe you do love me and want me, and it's good to know. I need all the love you can give me." I thought my heart would choke me.

The nurse shook her head at my tears when she came in, but I believe Theo was none the worse for that hour. At least, I think so *now*. Then, a few hours later on that night, I was conscience-stricken at the harm my weak tears might have done. I woke with my mind full of fancies, and seemed to feel that Theo was waking, needed me. I got up, got into my robe and slippers and hurried to her.

The sitting room door was ajar, and light from the fire alone dispelled the gloom within. It was so still that I had half turned to go back, feeling vexed with myself and a little nervous, when there came a long sighing moan that made me clutch at my throat to keep from crying out. After a steady-ing instant I stepped within the door, and was about to go around the screen that stood just within, for I knew that Theo was up and in trouble. But she spoke, and I stopped short.

"Why don't you come?" she said. "Can't you? I'm not questioning—any more; I want you—I want you—want you!"

The eerie tone and her words made my scalp creep. I peered through the crevice between the folds of the screen. Theodora was on her knees by her low chair, her arms outstretched to a second empty chair that stood on the far

side of the fireplace. Of course there was no one— With no reason at all, for I didn't try to think what it meant, I began to shake, and I had to get back to the landing so that she shouldn't hear my teeth chatter. I crouched against the wall a long time, but she did not speak again; and when I looked she was still on her knees, head down on her arms. But presently she got up slowly, crossed to the other chair, bent and kissed the chintz back just where one's head would rest. The firelight was rosy on her white gown and showed me her face, grieved and weary, but sane. There was not the fear, the wildness, that I had seen in my first hour with her. She went languidly across to her bedroom and disappeared. It grew so still that I could hear the breathing of the nurse, who slept on a cot in the dressing room; and it got on my nerves so that I ran back to my own room, half crying for Dicky. But I didn't understand; in spite of her words, I thought she wanted her husband, Hugh Sayre.

She was poorly next day, and talked little. I talked, though, because she seemed to want it, of everything on earth that amounted to nothing, for that's the sort of thing I can rattle on about. She slept in the afternoon, while I wrote to Dicky; and as dusk drew on, dismal, foggy and drizzly, she grew brighter and better and would be dressed and would go down to dinner. I'd have been almost happy about her if it had not been that those miserable sparks had come back, too bright and hot, in her dear eyes. None the less, we had a fairly cheerful meal. Aunt Georgie came, on her way to something or other, and 'phoned to ask if she might bring some eleventh hour guests, the Nelson Tillmans. Aunt Georgie believes in "rousing" people; and she was delighted at the way Theo roused, though I wasn't so easy; it seemed to me just nervousness, and feverish animation.

I played for them afterward, and she got quieter for it, and seemed a little weary before they went. I was glad and insisted on reading a stupid book

to her till the print danced, and she seemed very sleepy, and the nurse came in, so that I went to bed with my mind at rest.

The next I knew I was sitting up in bed, wide awake and nervous, just as I had been the night before. I switched on the light and found it to be the same hour. The coincidence brought me out before I had time to argue the silliness of it, and I pattered, shivering, to Theo's door again. It was all identical—the door ajar, the firelight, but no sound, though I waited for what seemed ages. I crept in and peered through the crevice of the screen again, to make sure.

Theo was in her low chair, lying back in it, her face turned from me, her white dressing gown rosy in the light, her hands lying limply on the chair arms. In the chair on the farther side of the fireplace sat her husband—*sat her husband!* His face was in shadow, save when a gust of wind in the chimney made the embers flare, as they did after I had gaped an incredulous minute. In that space I saw his face clearly against the chintz, and was grateful to the soft light that made him seem changed—almost sharper featured and finer, I could fancy. He was as quiet as Theo—just sitting there, looking at her—looking! I thought—and dismissed it as sacrilege—of his unspeakable look of yesterday. But this Hugh Sayre was laying his heart, life, faith and manhood wordlessly at my dear girl's feet. My eyes stung with thankful tears. I didn't ask what had brought it to pass, nor how. He was with her, whole and in his right mind. It was not for me to interrupt. I flicked away my tears and blessed them silently, as I looked my last before stealing away. Another flare of the fire showed him plain—glimmered on his shoe tip, where one foot was thrust forward, reddened his shirt front, threw into relief one of his good hands that rested easily on his black knee, a different white from the cuff just above it. I saw the line of his square chin, thrown out as it settled into his collar, saw the firm, tender line of his mouth,

no longer lax, and felt that I might not spy on the guessed ardor of his eyes, intent on her. I marveled—but happily; and I crept back to my room and wrote it all to Dicky—a tear-stained thanksgiving.

The sun came in, bright gold and glorious, next morning, and I had a long letter from Dicky. So I sang, as Netty Martin, my maid, did my hair.

"Netty," I said, "do you think you could possibly get me a most enormous lot of fresh, pink carnations—big ones—and before breakfast? Think hard."

She giggled delightedly. We got on well.

"I think William could manage it, ma'am," she said. William was the young second man, and her first young man. So I gave her money, and William managed it; and I took them in with me to the breakfast room and piled them in Theo's arms, all brave and spicy and sweet, and laughed at her surprise, and kissed her across them; and she loved them and had them put near us.

The little room was gay and all aglitter, sun splashing the rug, sun glinting from our glass and silver and steaming urn. We both loved sunlight. And I laughed and talked on and began on my fruit when Theo seemed to expect it; but all the time I was waiting.

I wonder if I ought to have spoken? But I did; I couldn't help it. "Isn't Mr. Sayre to join us?" I asked, trying to keep my eyes innocent. Theo looked up at me, as though in surprise, then frowned a little, as though she didn't relish the question.

"No," she said. Then, as though repenting of the monosyllable: "I think that he hasn't returned yet."

It may have been a long or a short time afterward that she asked me what I meant. How could I have kept from telling her? Why should I have misled her, or have supposed that, of all topics, this was the one on which I should not have touched? Why should I have doubted what I had seen? I fumbled out that I thought—I didn't know— Then I just looked at her. And at what she saw, guessed or felt,

Theo got to her feet. I can see her now as she was then in the sun—tall, her gown shimmering blue and loose, like a drift of the sky, but her face white and eyes terrible in contrast to the joyous light and color. One hand gripped her chair, and the other twisted in the cloth.

"Tell me—what you mean!" Her voice was strange to me. "Tell me why you asked—that! What did you mean? Answer me, I say!"

After that I can't remember connectedly. I know I was frightened and wanted to go to her, but dared not; that there was broken question and halting reply; and that at last I had blurted it all out: my second night's vigil, what I had seen, my conclusion and the reason for my carnations. I remember she seemed not to understand till I had told her over and over that I had seen Hugh Sayre—seen Hugh Sayre—*seen* him! She was swaying far back and far forward between her gasped repetitions of my words, but I was dull to all save her changing face. So that when I saw it transfigured with radiant joy, and she flung her arms straight up, standing for an instant still, haloed and garmented with light, I shrank back and covered my eyes from this madness that had proved itself thus suddenly. Then, "God—God—God!" she cried, and fell.

II

MADAME HENRI has a tiny mirrored compartment into which she waves you for self-inspection in your finished gown, with a "*Voilà!*" It's interesting to see one's attire from every viewpoint, but if I let my mind get above my gown I find myself dreadfully nervous. So many me's, and I don't quite recognize them all. It seems as though the real inside I were saying: "Dear me! And that's the sort of shell I live in, is it? And all this while I've been thinking I knew my outside. Well, well, how strange!" I begin to feel that the outside isn't the real me, at all, and that— Oh, I can't explain

what I feel exactly, but when Theo told me everything that afternoon, I kept thinking of the Henri mirrors and my selves. It made things in some way more bearable.

For Theo has been seeing two Hugh Sayres!

I'm going to let that line stand in all its baldness. I've got to state it without argument, simply giving the gist of it as she told it to me. For to attempt asides, arguments or our muddled conversation would tangle it all hopelessly. I must go back to the beginning of Hugh Sayre first.

She met him at a birthday dance. His murky reputation, his wealth, his good looks, his eccentricities, had made her curious beforehand; all that, of course, is pitifully usual. But it was not infatuation or willful blindness that held her afterward. She said that the first look from him meant something different, absolute; and there was never any question as to what he felt. The third time they met he told her, in a halting, awkward and almost unhappy way, that she must marry him. No asking about it, little love making—just that she must. And she said that she knew she must and would, and did not evade the admission. She was not happy, as we think of happiness in love; she said that she knew him as he was, knew his tendencies to be evil, and had little hope that they would turn to good. Yet something irresistible spoke through him; she was conquered by the occasional, the struggling, hampered, all but dumb soul that she saw striving within him and looking at her through his eyes. She believed that aspect to be the better nature of Hugh Sayre, and staked her happiness on the strength of her love to bring it to full expression. The rumors of him kept on; there were long absences he never explained. But she trusted. Then came marriage.

Well, in any acceptance, there were two Hugh Sayres. One, the brute, owned her and wreaked his will on her. The second sometimes changed the brute's eyes to those of an anguished devotee before her gaze; would check

the wanton act of authority, cut short the coarse word and would abase himself in horrified humility, praying in an altered tongue: "Theo, Theo, forgive me!" For a long time she thought it the warring of two natures, and hoped while hope was possible. Then came, after months, the inevitable day, the final outrage, the revolt. There had been a scene such as she found no words to describe to me; but she locked herself in from him and held firm. Outside her door he had berated her more horribly than she had believed even his worst self would have found possible; and in his drunken raving he had accused her of wanting to be rid of him, of preferring an indefinite "other," of a conspiracy to do away with him, her lawful husband; and he threatened what he would do to her and to the imaginary "him." That was the hour of final separation, though they resumed a seeming of intimacy before the servants. Her salvation lay in an inexplicable fear of her that he developed, the uncertainty I had seen on meeting him. Later, she had protected herself by subterfuge—her maid or the nurse was always with her when he was at home. Not that he had ceased to care for her—she shuddered when she touched on that; but his love had now no redeeming quality. There were scenes, of course, even moments of peril; but she was deadened to bodily fear. Nothing occupied her save guarding against the horror of submitting to wifehood. She stayed on without hope, because of the tie that was to come. And on a night when the existence had come to be unbearable she had seen the second Hugh Sayre.

Hugh Sayre the First had been drunk. That alone saved her from him. His unsteady limbs and ineffectual lunge gave her the fraction of time that served to get her beyond his reach and to the security of her locked room. Outside again, he had raved and threatened and finally thundered away to his now accustomed haunts. The night through she had crouched on her hearth rug, facing full the desperate failure of her life and striving

against a great weariness of it that urged her toward—the desperate remedy. It was just at the dawn when she lifted herself, half resolved; that she felt—she hadn't known what. She thought that she felt the presence of that Hugh Sayre she had fancied existed. And after a little space, first of blessed peace, then bitter renunciation, she had looked up. And he had looked back at her from the shadows—a darker shadow, indefinite, impalpable, but real beyond anything she had known. What it had meant to her she couldn't tell me—didn't try. Of course, cold reason came with the day; and so she had been torn between fear and desire, reason and unreason, till, driven to the wall by doubt, she had given herself over to the doctors and written me.

"I wanted you because you love me and are honest and are—yourself, Vally," she said, and clung to me. "I never thought to hope that you might see. But you did see! Tell me you saw him!"

"I saw him, Theo."

"Saw him plain, Vally? Not expecting it, you saw him—as I saw him—sitting with me by the fire?"

And I told her, over and over, that I had. When Hugh Sayre the First had drunk himself to insensibility, or lay asleep, she had come to expect Hugh Sayre the Second. The discovery, made by accident, she had verified repeatedly, by sight and sure report. And with the weeks Hugh Sayre the Second had come more and more unmistakably, had grown substantial, actual, and she had found that, though the two were one externally, there was the difference of the poles in their expression, suggested personality, in every line and look that reveal character. There had been no spoken word, no touch—yet she had been content beyond her utmost anticipation in his love. Small wonder that she had come to welcome the madness that gave her what reason denied. But I—I had seen that other Hugh Sayre, hadn't I? Hadn't I? Over and over again I vowed it true.

"Then, Vally, I must believe—

I *must* believe! And what does it mean?"

"I don't know." I had to say it.

"But what will be the end of it, Vally? Think, dream, hope for me—I dare not. What *might* it mean?"

"Theo, Theo, I can't even guess; I don't know. Nobody knows about anything much."

I wrote it all to Dicky, listening hard, between pages, to the dear old known noises of life—the grunt of the auto horns, the wheels on the asphalt, the clatter and calls. They and the Henri mirror recollection kept me from hysterics—I wrote Dicky about the mirrors, too. And he came, across the continent to me, as fast as he could come.

III

ALTHOUGH I wasn't surprised in the least, I felt queer and cold when he came in on me. I gave him my hand and said in a funny voice, as though I were speaking with another person's, that it was very good of him to come, and that I was glad to see him—which was what I had been saying for three days to all the relatives who came to poor Theo. Aunt Georgie came to stay for a time, and a suffragist, mannish cousin, and a silly old dyed and rouged cousin, who lived on a pinchy annuity and who seemed to get a dreadful enjoyment from the luxury about her; and there was a fat, solemn, pious great-aunt, and a small, weak-eyed, nice man connection, who looked after Theo's affairs, and who was quite mad over entomology and was forever having specimens sent by mail and opening them at the table. They all loved Theo, though, and were concerned about her. I had let them know at once, when she didn't rally as we wished after the too soon little baby's hour of life. It had been four days, and there was no change.

I suppose I'd really been under a greater strain than I realized—aside from her illness. For it was dreadful to bend over at daybreak, when I always stole in to see how things went,

and have her smile up at me, so white and sweet and heavenly content, and whisper that *he* had been more near and dear than ever—that he had almost touched her at his coming, and his lips had moved, though she could not catch his words. What could I say to her? Was I to remind her of the nurse, just the other side of the screen, of the man who watched, night through, at her door? No; she knew all that; but she no longer questioned or thought that I questioned. Hadn't I seen him? If I did wrong, may it be forgiven me, but I never let her see a shadow of doubt or dread; I just kissed her and said I was glad. And I couldn't help remembering that Hugh Sayre, her husband, hadn't been home for three days—since she was pronounced out of danger! Yet the muddle of it had got me to doubting the very evidences of my senses, and I just stared when Dicky took me by the shoulders without a word, and wondered if those were really his eyes, so blue and eager and tired and scared.

"You dear, dusty, devoted man!" gushed the dyed cousin. "We'll leave this room to you, you dear children. Don't blame us if you find her looking worn; I'm sure we're all worried to shadows."

"Lie for yourself, Amelia," Great-aunt Simms interrupted. "I'm not worried; I know that whatever happens will be for the best, as Providence—"

Dicky cut in on them both. "Vally, Vally, say something!" he cried. And at his real touch, his real voice, I thawed and croaked and fainted for the first time in my life.

I believe there are two everybodies. At least, I knew another Dicky in those next hours. Not that there was any uncanny duality about it, but for a little I was privileged to look straight on the true, shaken, loving soul of the man.

It was growing late when we started to Theodora. Netty Martin had seen to it that we dined well in my sitting room, and her William had done for Dicky. She told me that things had

gone well, in spite of my falling out—and I had fancied that only my supervision kept things right! I believe I'd half hoped to hear something had gone wrong—I felt so ready for anything, with Dicky to see to it! Oh, to have him again! I believed that all the queerness would end just because he was come, that Theo would be better and would get normal, once we could take her to the "honeycomb." I think Dicky felt that he could help; I knew it by the pucker of his eyes when I told of Hugh Sayre's treatment of her, and the flicker of muscles about his mouth. He wore his "fighting job look," the look he puts on when there's a bridge to be built that someone says can't be built, or a lighthouse to go in an impossible place, or something of that sort. He didn't stop me when I told him I knew, *knew* that I had seen another Hugh Sayre. Even when it was all told, he didn't speak till I opened my lips to ask him—the inevitable, useless questions; and then he caught me close so that I couldn't speak, and said, quick and angrily: "Why did this have to come to *you*? Why couldn't you have been left in peace a little longer?"

I wrenched myself away. "Dicky, Dicky"—I cried it—"do you believe, then, that it's true? Do you think—"

"No, I don't think. I won't think—and you sha'n't think!" He stopped me, but instantly grew gentle and took my head between his hands. "Little girl, don't you know that if all you say is as you believe, that nobody on God's green earth can tell you the why of it? Nobody knows—"

Somehow, to hear him say that made me hopeless and more afraid. And he saw it and—I can understand now—set himself to make me forget and be happy. I was ashamed to find how long I'd been away from Theo!

We found the door of her sitting room closed. The footman who watched stood at attention, unable to sit because of Mr. Preble—the weak-eyed relative who looked after Theo's affairs—who was pacing back and forth on the landing, squinting through a

magnifying glass at his own palm with absorbed interest. He jumped when I spoke, put up his glass and shook both Dicky's hands, then shook mine with real feeling.

"Well, well, well, you're looking much better, my dear Mrs. Merrington. I'm very glad your husband"—he made Dicky a precise little bow—"is here to look after you. I don't know what we'd have done without her—" I stopped him.

"Theo is no worse? Why is her door closed? This one has always been open."

"Eh? Oh—no, no; no worse. She's overtired a trifle, I fear. She would have her attorney here this afternoon to make sure her affairs were in order. There are some bequests to friends. Er—she wished us to make sure that she was in her—er—right mind. A whim—"

But I grew afraid. I knew Theo wasn't given to whims. I turned to her door.

"I—we must go to her, Dicky. I'm afraid I shouldn't have been so selfish; I stayed away too long. If anything has gone very wrong—"

Just then I caught Mr. Preble looking over his shoulder at the elevator, which had clicked as though someone had entered it below, and I knew.

"He—Mr. Sayre has come!" Mr. Preble started and nodded, and got out the glass and a silk handkerchief and fell to polishing.

"Hem—a little lower, please. Yes, he came this afternoon—and he is—very nervous. In fact—"

"He wants to get to Theo—is that it?"

"Why, yes. I may as well confess he is not quite—er—himself. Of course, we can't permit him to see Theo; he's really in no condition—" He looked at Dicky meaningly, and polished more vigorously.

"I'll stay here with you for a time," Dicky volunteered. "You go to Mrs. Sayre, Valeria."

Mr. Preble protested, but I saw he was glad.

"Oh, there's no need, no need, really.

I'm keeping an eye out, and John here is capable—so long as he does nothing more than travel up and down!"

There was something horrible in the way the elevator slid to our level just then, with Hugh Sayre peering at us through the grill. A Hugh Sayre—but neither the first nor the second, it seemed to me, as he half lurched toward us when the bronze door shot back. This creature was disheveled, gray-white of face and puffy, weak-limbed and ill. He was fouled from head to foot with mud and food stains and grime and spilled liquor. He breathed stertorously and his flabby lips made uncouth mouthings instead of words. His eyes were on Dicky, and malevolent under their swollen lids; and all at once, to my dismay, Dicky walked up to him and put out his hand.

"How do you do, Mr. Sayre?" he said pleasantly. "I'm Merrington; you'll hardly know me—"

The man in the car gloomed at him uncertainly; then a spark of intelligence lighted his face, and he let go of the grill to paw in the direction of Dicky's hand, muttering something unintelligible. Dicky, still holding to the hand, got in with him, and the unsteady bulk perforce turned as he turned. Dicky's voice was perfectly natural as he went on: "Good of you to look me up. I was a bit fagged and didn't realize how time went. I'd have seen you before I slept, though—"

I started toward them—too late. With a glance at me, Dicky pressed the button and they dropped from sight, the grill sliding shut.

Mr. Preble caught my arm as I turned to rush to the staircase. "Here, my—my dear!" he expostulated. "You mustn't—"

"Let me go!" I snapped at him. "Do you think I'll leave my husband alone with that—"

"Now, now!" Mr. Preble held to me. "You don't understand—but your husband saw. He, Hugh, is in a bad way, really. There's only one thing to be done; that is to—to give him—er—a little more. I think your

husband means to—get him drunk, if you'll forgive me." Which was precisely what Dicky did.

I stayed with Theo—fibbed to her about business that Dicky must see to—till I heard his knock, and went out to the sitting room to meet him. He was pale and more tired than ever, and grim. He nodded.

"Got him. He's locked into his room now, dead to everything, and John at the door. He won't stir till noon tomorrow. I mean to get you away from this, Vally. It's—the limit."

I like to remember that Dicky went on his knee to kiss my dear's hand, like to know that he saw her so beautiful and sweet and heartbreakingly gentle and—sane. She was, beyond doubt, that last; Dicky says so. She was very quiet, as she had been through the evening, but, oh, so loving to me and of me! She smiled when Dicky promised her all sorts of experiences roughing it in our "honeycomb"—smiled wistfully; and when I bent to kiss her good night she caught me close, and I felt her cheeks suddenly wet with tears. All my terror came back. I besought her to let me—let us—stay with her a little longer, begged her to tell me if she were worse—if she were nervous; and then she smiled at me and grew quiet.

"No, I'm better, Vally, truly, better. It's just that I—want you to be happy, am glad you're happy, glad to see this good man of yours. Don't mind me. I was just happy for you, dear; and I'm tired now. I know."

I have wondered since how much she knew. Just before dawn of the next morning, Hugh Sayre shot himself through the head.

We were out almost before the sound ceased, Dicky and I, for neither of us had been easy. John, the footman, rushed up to us, panic-stricken.

"Hi ain't dared open the door, sir, but it's 'im! An' 'ow could 'e, the wye 'e was? Hi'm scairt!"

"Go to Theo," Dicky told me. "Tell her it's an accident—anything."

I was terrified to have the gray-eyed

nurse catch my arm as I entered the sitting room. I thought no mere noise could shake her. I pushed past her in a hurry of apprehension, and went on to the door of the bedroom. But with my hand out to the portière—I stopped; and I stood so, motionless, till I began to shiver, and my hand dropped, and I faced around to the nurse, who had crept after me. She was livid and stiff-lipped with fear. We caught each other's hands, staring into each other's eyes in the dim light of the night lamp.

"What—" I managed to form the word without sound; and she answered me in like fashion: "I don't know; I can't go in!" But then the dreadful thread of sound from Theo's room came clearer. She was saying, pleading, praying: "Hugh—Hugh—Hugh!"

I had faced about again to go to her when the wind struck me—a little, noiseless, very cold air, that made me cringe and shut my eyes; it seemed so like the sweep of a keen blade close to me. The rings clicked on the brass pole; the curtain swirled and swept in; and as it dropped, the heavy silken folds touched me like wings.

"Hugh!" It was ecstatic, questioning, that first cry that I shall never be able wholly to forget; but the next rang wild, exultant, triumphant:

"Hugh! Yes, Hugh!" We heard her lift herself up strongly; and we heard her fall.

The nurse put my hands away after a time and shuffled, like a very old woman, into the room. She was a strong woman, that nurse! I heard her begin to cry. But I stayed flat to the wall, dumb and wild, till Dicky put the gathering people aside and picked me up and carried me out.

"He came and got her," I found myself telling him by and by. "The other Hugh Sayre came and got her, and we couldn't stop him—the other Hugh Sayre!" and Dicky groaned and held me and let me say it—over and over and over—till the meaning of my own words unlocked my brain and brought the saving tears.

RANDOM THOUGHTS OF A COSMOPOLITE

By FRANK MORTON

AMERICANS

A NEW YORKER is an inveterate villager who talks about Cosmopolis. A Kentuckian is a good-looking Anarchist who talks about political economy. An American is a boy with a jewsharp, who wants to give music lessons to the golden-throated Israfel. An American woman is a dryad who has lost her way in the woods, and bathes her soul twice daily in champagne to prove the purity of her principles. When she makes a noise in her bath, the American newspapers swear she is a poetess. An American child is Caliban caught young and fixed up by a beauty specialist. An American reformer is the devil playing prayer meeting. An American home is a boarding house marked "private." An American marriage is the passing contact of two experimenting idiosyncrasies, arranged to the accompaniment of the "Voice that breathed o'er Eden" on a phonograph.

KISSES

You may be a mere theorist like me, but, anyhow, you may have read in books or heard it stated by undergraduates that all girls do not kiss alike. Some participate, and some submit. Some find in the kiss an act of worship, and some a shocking indulgence. The mouth of one girl will bring you visions of some gallant faun new-mated in a dell of Naxos, and the mouth of another will recall to you our dear Chesterfield's pet abhorrence—cold boiled veal, un-

derdone. In short, some girls *can* kiss, and some can only try to. The girl who can kiss will never permit you to be persuaded that the gods are dead; but the girl who can only try to kiss slays the gods every day.

Some girls know how to kiss from the beginning—I don't pretend to know why. You cannot explain this mystery by any reference to experience. It is pure instinct adapted to temperament and attuned to adequate knowledge of the glad side of things. To your lips that blunder and are brutal or shy there come pouting two lips that seek and sue. Your four lips catch and cling in compressed parentheses, as it were. There are new heavens on a new earth. There is no more sorrow or pain, nor any shadow of a grim foreboding. Sorrow and pain, indeed, are stupid fallacies that some mad, sad fool once dreamed of or ever young Love was born. Infinitely close to yours are two eyes that catch your eyes' fires, and being speedily overfull flash the fires divinely back to madden you. The little hills clap their hands and the seas about the world roar royal anthems. And—and—well, there you are!

NONSENSE

SENSE is the mark of the measles on the unwashed skin of Time. Nonsense is the bloom of innocence on the unquenchable hope of humanity. Any fool can talk sense; but nonsense is the dearest relaxation of the worthy and the rare. Nonsense is love; sense is

merely matrimony. Nonsense is the redeeming spice of a truly cultivated taste, the sugar on the insipid strawberry, the salt in the monotonous egg, the rouge delicious on the cheeks of Circumstance.

You will have noticed that when you tell a man to get sense you merely convey your desire that he shall get to the devil. Bookmakers and politicians have sense. It is commoner than dirt, less inspiring than mud, less stimulating than warm salad. It is the worm in the apple, the fly in the ointment,

the microbe in the corpuscle, death in life, pain in gladness, hate in love. It is the one thing that the most industrious and careful lover of himself can never entirely escape. It is like chronic gout in an otherwise sound organism. It is perversity in paradox. It is a ghoul garbed as saint. It is the open drain that poisons Arcady. It is Hell invading Paradise. It is the most obstinate and mischievous delusion of humanity. It is the creeping paralysis that kills wit. It is Psyche with an ulcerated throat.



HER REAL AGE

(A Toast)

By M. C. MORSE

SHE has seen just enough springs to make her a perpetual May Day to her friends,
 Just enough summers to warm her heart to the right degree,
 Just enough falls to make her big and lenient to those of others—
 But no winters; if she has, they have left no traces.



SATISFACTORILY EXPLAINED

ACTOR-PLAYWRIGHT—I have been told, sir, that the Corot you sold me is not genuine!

ART DEALER—Who said so?

ACTOR-PLAYWRIGHT—The Art Critic of the Daily *Whirl*.

ART DEALER—Do you believe what their Dramatic Critic says about your plays?

ACTOR-PLAYWRIGHT—I never thought of that! What have you to show me today?



THE modern way is to marry at leisure and divorce in haste.

THE HEIRESS MART

By HROLF WISBY

Being a letter of advice written by Friedrich von Sturer, now a resident of New York City, to his friend, Baron von Schwarzenflügel, at Schloss Grätsch, Mühlendorf am Rhein, in reference to the latter's proposal to come to America in search of a wife able to restore his impaired fortune and estates.

LIEBER KAMERAD:

My advice to you is to stay home on your eagle roost by the Rhine. Not that I care to disillusion you, but the plan you unfold for a return trip dash to these shores in quest of an heiress would be less likely of failure were the quarry a Bengal tigress and the field of operation the jungle.

Heiresses do not sit around the corridors of the hotels here, let me tell you, waiting for their Prince Charming to bob up. You innocently mention the Waldorf. It requires a force of seven lynx-eyed detectives, working in shifts, to maintain apparent respectability in those exclusive precincts. Everything certainly has been done to protect and accommodate patrons, but you won't find your heiress in Peacock Alley or Alimony Row.

With a baker's dozen exceptions—interested patriots would acknowledge several dozen—the average heiress is not removed from steelage and trade antecedents by more than one and one-sixteenth part of a generation. She, nevertheless, entertains most surprisingly exalted ideas of her own social importance, and you, *alter Kriegskamerad*, must be prepared to find every mother's babe of them wedded to the conviction that she is "just as good as" you, and perhaps a bit better!

Preposterous, you'll say; but you'll say a lot more that a certain newspaper here would not consider "fit to print" before you get through with the heiress proposition.

Your idea of jumping right into the pit and getting your patent of nobility listed by the social board of governors is a correct enough move in itself, but you must exercise patience and go about it, not as a Nimrod hunting tigers in the jungle, but rather after the gingerly clever fashion of Austrian diplomats facing Muscovite dilemmas.

Behold, this is the land of make-believe! Everything is just about the opposite of what it seems. For the multitude the country poses as a republic, while a self-chosen few exploit it privately as an empire. The only essential difference is that the power of autocracy, instead of being vested in a single hand, with commensurate responsibility, is here farmed out among a greedy pack of political and industrial czarlets, who lord it over that champion ass of asses, the freeborn American citizen, who is more easily duped and manipulated than even the children of the steppes. Some fine day the ass will wiggle out of harness and indulge in some vicious kicking, when this proud Republic—which is at present in the perilous position of a pyramid balancing on its apex—will flop over and touch off a revolution tending to some more vital and necessary end than making negroes free and miserable. Republics are all right so long as they are poor; when they acquire wealth and power they become empires in disguise.

If you get your heiress by the jungle

method I will cheerfully eat my hat—to employ a delicate Americanism. You must not be unmindful of the fact that these *geldmädchen*, as you call them, are either members of some czarlet household or descended, according to well paid and not overscrupulous genealogists, from some seasick passenger on the *Mayflower*, some august member of the “First Families of Virginia, yes sir,” or from the even more remarkable and innumerable sons and daughters and sisters and brothers of the Revolution. This, doubtless, conveys no meaning to you. Neither does it to me, and I have yet to find a single American who understands it, except, as I remarked, those of the self-chosen elect, whose family memories have been subjected to the stretching process, warranted not to shrink, by hired heraldic sleuths.

According to the latest returns, there are more *Mayflower* descendants, direct and accidental, roaming about the land than there are Jews in Warsaw. Among the monarchs to whom this special breed of oligarchs are pleased to trace what they term their “descent,” His Imperial Majesty, Charlemagne, and His Royal Majesty, Alfred the Great, are among the popular victims. Fancy a German bourgeois heiress bribing a genealogical knave to show that the name of Schönberg, which has been deftly rendered “Belmont” into English by a marvelous, if not unbroken, chain of great-great-great-grandfather’s granddaughters, started, once upon a time, with an unsuspecting “gode knygte” in Alfred’s suite, or even laying the blame of infidelity on the otherwise “grate and gode kynge” himself! That which would lay a woman open to social ostracism abroad apparently raises her to a show of dignity here. They have all had family trees and arms made up specially for themselves to enjoy and their friends and callers to envy—these self-conscious daughters of self-made men. And in these two words lurks the keynote to the whole business of egotism and cultural inferiority, which you will find an insurmountable barrier to a nobler and

deeper understanding with these ladies. Even the ancient *par la grace de Dieu* princes had the decency to give Providence some credit for their being, but this particular *suinus Americanus* must needs proclaim himself created by personal initiative, unaided by God or man!

You refer to the fact that so many American girls have married poor Latin and Slav titles that it ought to be easy for a chap like you, with an *uradeligen* Teutonic title and coroneted princely ancestors in ermine and plate of the real old Barbarossa brand, to make a splendid match here. Not necessarily. American girls know less about titles than geese about arithmetic. Most of them are sent, not to Munich, where there would be real danger of their absorbing some culture, but to gay Paris, ostensibly to be “educated,” and with what result you doubtless can imagine if you do not already know.

It makes no difference that French titles are of no account since the Republic; the export heiress will insist on marrying one in preference to any other. Believe me, Barthold, these geese had rather be styled Madame la Marquise or Madame la Princesse any day, no matter how rotten the family antecedents, than try to annex what in Europe is understood by a great and noble rank—for example, yours—and metamorphose into a Frau Baroninn or even a Frau Gräfinn. This stupid predilection is founded on a rather innocent enough misconception. The American girl is ambitious to marry as near the throne as possible. The family dictionary encourages her fairy story illusion that dukes and princes are somehow in the train of royalty, whereas barons and counts are out of it. That settles it; she will go gunning for the princely label, no matter how mean and ill descended, for it is the outside of the apple, and not the core, that counts here. She ignores baronial titles, unaware that many of them are of more than present princely name—that is, ancient princely rank—and more closely affiliated with the

Crown, in many instances, than many high sounding ducal titles. If you tell her that imperial genealogists consider a baronial title, like that of Freiherr von Riedesel, one of the highest in the Empire, she will take it as a joke and ask you to write her a limerick. She is constantly confounding the two decisive elements that determine the value of a title, namely, the nominal rank and the heraldic status. She cannot conceive of the title "Prince" or "Duke" as being of low lineal status, nor can she be made to see in the rank "*Freiherr*" or "*Graf*" the highest status of nobility extant.

"Well, but 'Princess' sounds so much nicer," was the concluding reply of a pretty little society savage with whom I was incautious enough to argue. Which goes to show that the sooner we fellows of title tumble to the fact that we are on the bargain counter in this land, and label our goods to suit the popular demand—and set to work catering to our patrons with every trick of the Jew tradesman—the sooner we will tumble right.

Another interesting fallacy is firmly rooted in your untraveled and unexported heiress's nursery imagination: she believes in English dukedoms as a Hindoo believes in transmigration. To her fancy the British strawberry leaves are superior to all other insignia of rank on earth. I promise you a delectable two-hour argument and a wilted collar, *Kamerad*, should you ever be called upon to defend your "*Fürst*" and your "*Herzog*" against her English "duke." If you can get her to visualize the peers of the German and the Austrian realms as nominally outranking the peers of England, because empires are of higher heraldic status than kingdoms—hence the higher ducal rank of "*Erzherzog*," "*Grossherzog*" and "*Kurprinz*"—you are a wizard, and as such you don't need any heiress.

There is another side to the question—male competition. There are to be considered the Holy American Dude and the Shirtsleeve American Sacrosanct. They control the heiress mart. An American

statistical authority asserts that this country is burdened with a plutocratic population of thirty-five hundred millionaires, who control fully one-half the wealth of the Republic. About three per cent of this number are incautious enough to part with large slices of accumulated lucre every year as marriage dowries or settlements on widows and daughters. In other words, about one hundred fortunes change hands within the circle of the American hierarchy annually, and there is surely an average of seventy marriages to each yearly crop. As a matter of fact, it has taken Europe's nobility a whole century to marry some six hundred American girls, not all of whom were genuine heiresses; and comparatively few of those who were made settlements in favor of their husbands. Compare this handful with the at least ten times greater number of moneyed marriages between American men and women during the same period, and you can see where the American Dude and Shirtsleeve Sacrosanct, Esq., come in.

Don't lose sight of the fact that the American man of either species not only has the support of matchmaking relatives, but not infrequently, in hunting his quarry, he is assisted at the death by persons of suspicious cleverness, who would not eat quite so many dinners in fashionable homes were the exact nature of their cleverness exposed in shirtsleeve terms. Not an unkind voice is raised nor a disapproving comment printed in protest of such marital transactions as the American man may choose to exploit. He is holy. If he marries money—and does anybody suppose those dudes marry shopgirls and nurses?—it is his own blessed business, and no ukase posted by the Czar meets with more reverend approval by the great, freeborn mob. Let a foreigner of rank capture a moneyed bride, however, and the whole roost goes off cackling native jealousy and slander. He is treated like a thief and envied like a king. It is taken for granted that he is after the money only—as if American women were incap-

ble of other attractions than those associated with a mint—and, for that matter, as if the American Dude considered himself entitled to a claim of priority on the money himself. So beware of the *suinus Americanus*, in case you come over here. He has not only the monopoly on the public sympathy, but that sycophant of the unthinking mob, the press, is with him hand and foot, and hostile to all foreigners except those who are imported in the steerage and keep the scale of wages down for the oligarchs.

I do not for the life of me see what a man of your ultra-aristocratic tastes wants with an American heiress, when it is so much easier to marry money in Europe, where you are always certain of a *dot* as compared to an income-divided-by-two here. You refer to my own success as a motive for your inquiry. My dear Barthold, mine was not a money marriage at all. We fell in love quite romantically, under circumstances where neither of us had any clue to the other's social status, and I was engaged to the girl before I learned from her own lips that she had not a sou marquis to her name. This did not deter me. We were married and began life together on my modest income of three thousand dollars a year. That her rich old uncle finally did have the courtesy to die and leave her sole heir and executrix was an entirely unexpected, but not entirely unwelcome, solution.

You remark that you would consider sixty million reichsmarks a satisfactory settlement, provided the girl was *anständig* and presentable. Are you mad? That much money, nay, not even half that, never changed hands before the altar in this country. Europe still holds the record for *les grandes dots*, but America makes all the noise. A measly two millions of ill begotten dollars is the American measure, so far, but most alliances here are made without any settlement whatever, the groom taking his chances of getting in on the bride's revenue. A grocer's policy like this is rather difficult to contemplate with a straight face when one knows

something about the princely settlements made by great European heiresses.

A man of your military appearance and scrappy, *königliche*, *kaiserliche* set-up would not stand much chance here, because the girls would not readily catch on to your fine points. Perhaps, if you would live here quietly a year's time and get acquainted with people and things, and allow me to risk my friendship for you in an attempt to tame you, as it were, and coach you for the Newport season, you might eventually get in on a fifty-thousand-dollar annual payroll as side partner and husband to somebody else's former wife—despite your title.

Take my word for it, baronial titles are quoted lower here at present than ever before. Princely titles, no matter how tainted, are the fad now. In America there are styles in everything, from the stuff they give the baby to eat to the stuff they put on their backs and in their minds. Then, again, a great deal depends on how you arrive here. If you come trotting across the gangplank, as I did, entirely unheralded, in strictest incognito, to make your way after the manner of a tradesman, you will find the social atmosphere way down below the freezing point. No matter how respectably you may behave and work, you are always under a cloud, if you have not been started right among the right people and possess the equipage of a born and bred gentleman. There have been too many fortune hunting adventurers here, and too many international crooks have hidden behind stolen titles for any foreigner of rank to expect a better reception than that accorded ex-convicts on the Continent.

To make a solid social success in America, here is my recipe: Get your passport in shape just as though you were bound for Siberia and expected trouble. You will be held up before they get through with you here. Stir up your venerable *Oberhofmarschal*, and make him give you a personal official introduction to the German Ambassador in Washington, followed

by a personal confidential letter from His Venerableness, explaining the purpose of your tour, and that it has met with the approbation of your sovereign, His Royal Highness, the Kurprinz. The Ambassador, who is supposed to look after fellows like us, anyhow, especially when there is a chance of exchanging dollars into reichsmarks, will assemble you under his standard and goose-step you around to his club and his residential friends and colleagues on a grand, gala, glad hand cruise, which should effectually secure for you precisely the solid, official introduction you need for your campaign, not to mention a valuable amount of advance publicity. You probably don't know what that means, and it is just as well you don't until it is all over with.

Don't dare to forget your orders and decorations. And lay in a full stock of whatever uniforms you are entitled to wear, not omitting your Royal Chamberlain habiliments, though there is no court here, and consequently no proper place to wear it in, which makes not the slightest difference, I assure you. The American people are so accustomed to judge by outward appearances—their whole life is a training on the surface of things—that these accoutrements, which a serious person would scorn to include in his luggage, may be said to make a greater impression here than your title proper, absurd as that may sound. Give me a sparkling hussar outfit and a Hebrew name, if you like, and I will beat the noblest blood of all Europe, ununiformed, off the matrimonial field.

In your glittering cuirassier tunic, a string of resplendent decorations twinkling and clinking on your hereditary *heldenbrust*, and your martial mustache accentuating the exemplary military bearing of a true Schwarzenflügel, you are a creature of great splendor and wonderful possibilities as a centerpiece at special receptions and Newport garden parties. Of course, you are not to parade the Avenue rigged out in helmet and clanging saber and spurs—not even the most resource-

ful of ambitious hostesses is likely to require valorous service to this extent—but there *are* occasions when other wonderful people will make it a point to show up in a blaze of bullion and gold lace, and you do not want the girls to think you have not got the gilded goods, my boy. American heiresses have a funny trick of believing exactly what they see, and seeing exactly what they believe.

After Washington gets through gossiping about your personal affairs, and the newspapers have had a chance to pay you the customary national compliment of washing your private linen in public print, you are to break camp and move on to Newport or New York, according to the season. Before you decamp be sure to take something to make you fall in love with the proper person. It is obviously quite as feasible, and much safer, to fall in love with the daughter of a chatelaine as with the offspring of a delicatessen dealer. I will admit it is not always possible to tell the difference. Not infrequently you will find the scion of a sausage magnate neighboring in accomplishment the indolent inheritress of blue blood and fashionable fortune. Some of the best examples of womanhood in this hybrid human chaos are found vegetating behind the counter, lacking only the cultural veneer, and some of the worst specimens of degenerated womanhood are encountered among the self-styled elect.

Then, there is what I call the American caste system. India is nowhere compared to the ascendancy of caste considerations here. Should you happen to fall in with the horsey, fox hunting, well fed set of Featherhook, you are certain to be despised by the bridge playing, motor mad, stunt turning clique of Flyclothes; and to be popular within the gates of the staid house-party loving, scandal whispering and Sabbath observing, ancestor boasting "best families," would mean that you are wiped off the calling lists of the other sets, and so on *ad infinitum*. The proper caper is to land hard, on all four feet, as it were, on the necks of

the half-dozen old girls with bossy airs and masculine faces who "run" the blooming society circus here, from the holy "inner circle," and sit on the box tickets.

Should you inquire what "the best families" means, you will discover that this term is capable of being defined in a dozen different ways by as many cliques, all rampantly arrayed against one another and occupied in the highly edifying enterprise of exchanging indignities and sniffing mutual contempt. Where the men are too busy and ill bred to take charge of social affairs, and the women are allowed free sway to do exactly as they like, a state of anarchical provincialism like this is the natural result. I tell you, Barthold, the quickest way to convert a foreigner of rank to the Mussulman principle of keeping the females shut up under lock and key is to give him a glimpse of American high life.

You probably remember what an inflexible democrat I used to be in the days when I regarded the Imperial uniform as an incursion on my personal liberty. I will now cheerfully go on record with the statement that there can be no society in a republic, since there is no authority, and consequently no respect for authority, which is the first principle. To all appearance, the good people are very much alike, except in their own commodious imagination; but one will please say things like that with bated breath here, for there are tremendously strong feelings on the part of the B.F.'s, several of which are related to noble European houses, and descended from ancestors that are apparent without the romancing cooperation of hired tracers. Nothing is so madly repudiated as that which is most true, and nothing is so fondly taken for granted as what we least know.

Do not let me impart the impression that there are no good people here, though undoubtedly the percentage is smaller than in older and settled communities. The trouble is that the good people have been put to the undignified, and somewhat ludicrous, task of hav-

ing to defend themselves, tooth and nail, against the *nouveau-riche* riffraff. To hear these well born people forever harping on the theme of ancestry and connecting up laboriously with the famous dead is a bit rough on a fellow who was brought up to mention neither money nor lineage, it being understood that his family has enjoyed both for centuries.

"Why, my great-grandfather's uncle was Governor of this State when the Squanderbilts were ferrying farmers across the Hudson with their own hands," one hears a blue-blooded belle say.

"And my mother actually bought a mouse trap from a tramping scissors grinder—the very father of those stuck-up Gotrox girls," another will remark.

"That's nothing," a third will finally triumph; "those vulgarly rich Waddes had a milk route in this city when my grandmother entertained the Prince of Wales at *our* house in Washington Square."

On such and similar shallow pretense is built the aspirations to superiority of the B.F.'s, when all they need do to receive their due share of proper esteem—at least, among Europeans—would be to preserve the Jeffersonian balance and stop talking.

When you are invited out here, avoid all topics containing the slightest seed for profitable conversation—an art as unknown to Americans as kissing to the Eskimos. Say nothing that amounts to anything, or that could possibly be construed as having a possible meaning. Grease along in a streak of glittering generalities. Never mind inspirations; should you chance to spout a good one, sit on it promptly. Save it for the Vaterland, where an all-wise Kaiser is "laying for" the real spark with a pocketful of *rothen* and *schwarzen* eagles. Just be nice—that is, agree with everybody in everything without seeming to be too anxious to do so. If you must toast somebody, find out first from the butler if the party is a welcome guest, for all these fine folk live in glass houses, my boy, and love the sound of breaking panes and caving

roofs—at a distance. Not a solitary duck in the whole pond is certain of its job. There are no social positions. People are afraid to meet people, lest there might be other people present whom people don't know—a lovely mess, *Kamerad*. No central power, no authority, no respect, no standard—nothing except a poolful of combative, old toads, each surrounded by its own little chorus of scrapping croakers.

In proposing to a moneyed dame, be careful you do not commit yourself. Above all, don't tell her you love her, unless she happens to be from the provinces, and, not knowing any better, would seem to insist on love as a necessary adjunct to a marriage contract. Love is considered quite bad form in New York—so beastly old-fashioned, don't you know—unless, of course, the girl takes a notion to do the proposing. Avoid the near-society people as a plague. An heiress of that ilk has no shame, and you will run the risk of being haled to court and spread-eagled in public print on breach of promise proceedings if you as much as grunt approvingly in her presence.

Avoid also the Blue Bloods. They have no money and little influence. All they can do for you is to tell you stories of their wonderful ancestors, and impress you with their noble scorn of eighty millions of base born countrymen.

When an heiress occasionally bobs up in their midst the whole clan is up in arms, nevertheless, to have her spliced to a Blue Blood boy—the stoop-shouldered, loose-jointed type of the harmless degenerate, common also in Europe among families who marry too closely. There remains for a fellow like you only the offspring of the vulgarly rich Mr. Shirtsleeves. If you could explore a presentable one, at the adaptable age, and if she would not insult you right off the bat by putting your name down on the payroll with the domestics, I do not see any necessity of your scrapping with her. Of course, her papa, having made his dollars meanly, will suspect you of only the meanest of motives. You will re-

main in his eyes a “grafter” forever and ever, amen. The swine will consider himself in the position of buying you for his daughter, just as he would buy a horse or a motor to please her whim. The transaction is all the more galling to him because he feels to the marrow of his penny counting soul that, whereas he would stand a chance of getting his money's worth in the blooming machine and the nag, he is not a bit sure of getting value received in buying you up. The fact that your title represents, not only a valuable hereditary rank, which will open any door in polite society, but five hundred years of continuous and inherited wealth, counts only a cool *nothing* with Papa Shirtsleeves. If there was something left of the family fortune, outside of your meager allowance, maybe the fellow would talk to you—at least, with one side of his face. On the other hand, if you would be adventurous enough to toss away your uniform and rank, as a friend of mine did, and jump into overalls; and if you could persuade yourself to go down into his grimy factory and mess about with his greases and lubricants till you could not tell yourself from a sewer hog, such a stunt would probably win the tradesman's heart of Mr. Shirtsleeves, and he might give you a job at eighteen dollars a week for a start. I can just see you, *Kamerad*, trading oils and greases, and the unmentionable by-products in competition with lantern-jawed commercial pirates, and getting slapped on the back by people who would be polishing your shoes and tending your stables, had emigration not occurred to them or their forebears.

There are, however, very real advantages in marrying an American heiress, which must not be ignored. In taking the girl, you do not tacitly agree, as one does in Europe, to marry her family. That is a damnable European custom they have not aped here, as yet. Your family would not have to bother with her family, which is always an argument in favor of ultimate parental consent. It is a private and undivided row between you

and her alone, as long as the bout lasts.

You have the mutual satisfaction that the row is all of your own making, and that the process is not being infringed upon by well meaning but asinine relatives.

Then, it is less difficult to gain an entrance into European society for the daughter of an American grease magnate, because she was born in a republic, where no one is supposed to be any better than the next one—and everybody is hammering someone else. Europe would forgive her shortcomings more readily than were the girl of European bureaucratic antecedents, and Europe would not consider that

you had lowered yourself in taking an American bride, whereas you would be certain to court criticism, if not ostracism, by accepting the daughter of a European bourgeois.

In closing this rather ambitious epistle, allow me to append an appraisal of the American heiress. By omitting the Blue Bloods I dare say you will find this a fairly accurate estimate of the average heiress, such as you would be most likely to encounter here. It is little wonder to me that this type of woman has been able to attract only a trifling drop of the best blood in Europe, and remains so popular with aristocrats of questionable, not to say unsavory antecedents.

PLUS

1. Beautiful in photos and at a distance.
2. Captivates on first sight.
3. In manner "dashing" and snappy—
4. Appearance altogether "stunning"—
5. Practical and adaptable.
6. Intelligent, but—
7. Well educated, but—
8. Well posted and informed—
9. A born diplomat—
10. In friendship true—
11. A good comrade—
12. An admirable sweetheart—
13. A splendid wife—
14. A brilliant conversationalist.
15. High-spirited and clever—
16. An all-round loving nature.

MINUS

1. Just pretty up close.
2. Bores you ever after.
3. And rampantly self-conscious.
4. Like a poster.
5. Shallow and changeable.
6. Not intellectual.
7. Not cultured.
8. Chiefly on other people's business.
9. In handling American men.
10. To men, and false to women.
11. For junkets and picnics.
12. To other women's husbands.
13. For an American man or a fool.
14. At her best when silenced.
15. When presented with dressmaker's bill.
16. Ask her hubby's college chums.

N. B.—Should you desire statistical data on this subject I would refer you to the Association for the Suppression of Unnecessary Noises and the Society for the Liberation of American Husbands.

I beg to remain, my dear Barthold, your sincere friend and comrade,

FRIEDRICH.



A POPULAR Lenten diversion is playing diablo with the commandments; the rest of the year the world forgets all but the eleventh one.



BREAK one woman's heart and two others will come forward to see if you can do the same to them.

IN DEATH'S DESPITE

By MAUDE ANNESLEY

*You have been mine before—
How long ago I may not know.*

*Has this been thus before?
And shall not thus time's eddying
flight*

*Still with our lives our love restore
In death's despite,
And day and night yield one delight once more?*
D. G. ROSSETTI.

JULIETTE placed her string bag of provisions on the door mat, pulled up her skirt and from the pocket in her neat petticoat she took the key and opened the studio door. She was blowing a little through her nose, for even she could not mount the seven flights of stairs without losing her breath just a little. Her nostrils dilated and deflated quickly as she shut the door behind her, placed her bag on the table and looked around. Then she changed her walking shoes for a pair of slippers and put on an apron. She had no hat to take off, and her charmingly dressed head needed no brushing. She filled a *bouilloire* from a can of water, lit a spirit lamp and placed the water on it to boil. She began to hum "*Viens Poupoule*" in a happy little voice as she walked across the studio to the bedroom door and opened it.

"Lazy!" she stopped her song to say, as she stepped across to the open window and flung open the shutters.

"*Jour, chérie,*" said a sleepy voice.

Juliette laughed, showing all her beautiful teeth.

She bent over the bed and kissed its occupant.

He put his arms round her neck and rubbed his unshaved chin against her soft cheek.

"*Mon petit poulet!*" he murmured affectionately.

She drew herself away and laughed again, and put her hand up to her cheek.

"Horrid rough boy!" she said, pouting. "Get up. You shall have your hot water in two little minutes."

The French "two little minutes" usually means anything from a quarter of an hour upward, but within five minutes Juliette brought the *bouilloire* in and emptied the hot water into the basin.

Then she began to prepare breakfast, and by the time the scent of freshly ground coffee filled the studio she could hear violent splashing from the next room. She had got used to his "English habits" in the last two years, and no longer left off her duties to laugh at the idea of anyone taking a cold bath every day.

She bustled backward and forward, rattled the cups and saucers, swept and dusted the studio, made the coffee and boiled the milk. Then she laughingly called out, "*Monsieur est servi!*"

Marcel came in at that moment, fresh and smiling, and they sat down to their breakfast chattering like two magpies.

If any one of the conventional persons who fill this world had suddenly told Juliette that she was leading a "life of sin" she would have opened her gray eyes very wide, then probably burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter. How could it be sin? Was she not true to her *cher petit* Marcel? Was he not the only one ever, ever? Marriage? Why, who wanted marriage except the silly, miserable girls with

dots? She was quite happy; she loved and was loved—what more could anybody want?

But nobody did lecture her. She lived with her old grandmother, who knew nothing about the matter and was quite content as long as she had food enough to support her fat person and a comfortable room to live in. That her granddaughter was a model, she knew, and that models earned very good money she knew also, much to her content. For the rest, if anyone had been tactless enough to tell her that for two years Juliette's work had been almost entirely with one artist, she would have shrugged her broad shoulders, thrown up her hands and said: "What will you? She is a good girl and is very kind to me."

As for Marcel, Juliette was well known in the Quarter, and all his friends knew when the "little arrangement" first became a permanent thing. His father in England knew and thought it was "a very good thing for the boy." His French mother was dead, leaving him as his legacy a perfect pronunciation of her beautiful language.

So these two lived a harmless, happy life, and in their own opinion there was nothing wrong at all.

If Marcel had known poetry he might have quoted:

'Tis conscience makes us sinners, not our sin,
but as he did not, he just thought
nothing about it.

Every morning Juliette came at eight o'clock, did all his work for him, prepared the breakfast, cleared up and then when he wanted her to pose she sat for him the rest of the day.

He was now painting his picture for the autumn Salon, and after he had finished his breakfast he rose.

"Hurry up, dearest," he said briskly; "the light is divine today."

She washed up the breakfast things and put them away in the corner cupboard; then she took her broom and feather brush and went into the bedroom.

He heard her begin to ladle out the water from the bath, singing all the

time a popular *chanson* from the music halls. Then suddenly the tin can fell into the tin bath with a rattle, the song stopped abruptly on a high note and there was silence. He stopped squeezing out the little blobs of color on his palette and listened; it was so seldom that Juliette stopped singing when she was tidying up. Then he shrugged his shoulders and took up a large tube of white paint, unscrewed the top and made a fat spiral next to the black.

As he squeezed the last little knob onto the top of the white mass the door opened slowly and Juliette appeared in the opening. He looked up, then sprang to his feet with the palette still on his thumb and upsetting the tubes of paint all over the floor.

"What is it? Have you hurt yourself, dear?"

Juliette's usually rosy face was white to the lips and her eyes looked frightened.

She passed her tongue over her dry lips before she could speak; then she jerked her head back over her left shoulder.

"Who is it?" she whispered.

Marcel clutched her hand. "Who? What?" he inquired anxiously. "What do you mean?"

She lifted a shaking hand and pointed behind her.

"She," she answered with her voice still trembling. "I never noticed this morning. Who is she—the head—"

Then Marcel gave a ringing laugh and put down his palette. "Oh, I forgot!" he exclaimed quickly. "Did it startle you? Poor little Ju! I meant to have shown it to you this morning, but it quite slipped my memory. Isn't it charming?"

He had pushed her gently back into his bedroom, and was standing with his arm round her shoulders looking at the wall above the head of his bed, on which hung the marble head of a woman.

Juliette shivered violently.

"Who is she?" she asked again, still in the same intense voice. Marcel laughed.

"Jealous?" he asked quizzingly.

"You needn't be. I don't know who she is—I picked her up for only fifteen francs yesterday. It was awfully cheap; it's a beautiful piece of work. It's marble, you know, not plaster, and it is eighteenth century work. Some beauty of the French court, I should think. It's a real bargain; it's worth a good bit. Don't you think it's beautiful?"

Juliette passed her hand over her eyes and shivered again. Then she began to speak hurriedly in a low voice, gasping now and then as if for breath:

"I hate her—I hate her and she hates me. Send her away, Marcel! Give her to Jean Berger—to anyone! I can't bear her here—she will hurt me if she can. I know it—she *looked* at me just now, and oh, she hates me, she hates me!"

Marcel held her away from him at arm's length and stared at her agitated face with perplexed eyes.

"What is the matter with you? You can't be well, *chérie*," he said soothingly. "How could she look at you? Her eyes are closed."

She clung to his arm with trembling hands.

"Yes, I see her eyes are closed *now*, but five minutes ago she was looking at me and—and—and—oh, don't you think I know hate when I see it?"

Marcel sat down on the bed and drew her to his knee and stroked her bright hair.

"Little one," he whispered, "you must rest today; you are not well."

She stood up abruptly and frowned. "You think I am hysterical; I am not. When have you ever known me hysterical? I am quite well. But I tell you she looked at me."

Marcel stood up and took down the heavy marble head and held it in his hands. Juliette shuddered.

"See here," he said quietly, "look at it! The thing is solid marble; the back is flat with a brass fastener for hanging it up by. How can the eyes alter?"

Juliette stared with distended eyes at the lovely marble face. Beautiful fine, straight features, a tender curved

mouth, long, straight eyebrows over the closed eyes, and from the low forehead hair rippled, so lifelike that it seemed as if the breezes entering through the open window must cause it to flutter; beneath the rounded, lovable chin was a full, firm throat cut off abruptly where it should have joined the neck.

Juliette clasped her hands.

"Give it away, Marcel, I beseech you!"

He gave himself a little shake and stood up and hung the head up again on its nail.

"Juliette, if you go on like this I shall be angry," he said somewhat impatiently. "It is not like you to make scenes for nothing. I shall *not* give it away; it is one of the best things I have ever picked up. Please pull yourself together and try to be sensible. I hate hysterical women."

At his angry voice Juliette's startled eyes opened wider; it was seldom he was angry, and never with her.

"Very well," she forced her trembling lips to speak; "I will try and not—not think of it—but I *know* she hates me."

The last few words were murmured to his coat as she buried her face there, and it is doubtful if he heard.

The next morning she worked about the room without singing; and Marcel, missing the pretty voice, went in with an excuse to fetch a handkerchief. He glanced at the wall over his bed, and had to bite his lips to keep from laughing. The marble face was covered with a cloth.

She saw him look and turned her back while she spoke, sweeping busily in a corner.

"It—it is only for now. I will take it off when I go back to the studio."

He shrugged his shoulders, but said nothing.

Two days later Juliette's grandmother had a *bronchite* and fancied herself very ill, so Juliette sent a message to the studio saying she could not come till the next day. She knew that it was not very important, as Marcel could go on with the background of the

picture and the *conciierge* was always ready to go up and tidy the rooms for him.

The next morning when she arrived she did her usual work, awakened Marcel and proceeded to clean the studio. Against the old bureau was leaning a canvas that was not there two days before, and she turned it around, wondering what old canvas Marcel had got down off the shelf. Then she quickly covered her mouth with her hand to prevent herself screaming. It was a painting, done hastily, but wonderfully living and clever. The bedroom door half open, with a piece of the wall, was painted on the canvas, the view taken from about where she was standing. From the other side of the door appeared a hand and arm holding the curtain back, and over these a face—a delicate oval face with regular features, fair hair rippling back from the low forehead, and under straight, dark eyebrows were gleaming two soft blue eyes.

The picture was painted by lamp-light, and the glow of the red paper lampshade was over all, giving an extraordinary eeriness to the face and hand, and was it the lamplight that gave the look of expectancy to the blue eyes?

Juliette stood staring with distended eyes, unmindful how the time passed.

Then Marcel's voice said from the door: "What have you got there?"

She turned to him. Every vestige of color had gone from her face and lips—she only looked at him.

He came over to her; then he gave a jump and cried out.

"What is it—what is it?" he whispered.

She did not answer; she only stared and stared as he frowned at the picture.

"That's my work," he said at last in a curious voice.

She nodded.

"It's the marble woman," he went on with the same far-away intonation.

She nodded again.

"*Mon Dieu*, can't you speak?" he burst out angrily. "When did I do it and how?"

"How should I know?" she asked bitterly. "Last night, I suppose."

"But I went to bed at ten, and went straight off to sleep. I certainly had not done it then."

She put forward her forefinger and rested it on the edge of the painted door; then she lifted it. On the little pointed finger was a dab of very fresh paint.

"Good God!" he cried as he staggered back. "Then I must have done it in my sleep."

She nodded in the same hopeless sort of way as before. Then she said in a whisper:

"And *she* posed for you. She came. She is more beautiful than I; you have no need of me any more." She leaned the painting against the bureau again and rubbed the palms of her hands drearily up and down her dress; then she walked straight into the bedroom. He followed her. His brain was chaos and he felt as if all power of thinking had gone.

"See!" she said, pointing at the head. "See! She is triumphing over me! Look! Look! She knows she is more beautiful than I!"

Indeed, even to Marcel's eyes, the marble seemed alive. The soft, curved mouth appeared to wear a smile of triumph; the closed eyes seemed open and narrowed with a smile of joy.

Marcel closed his fingers over Juliette's arm.

"Come away!" he cried. "We are both crazy! You have done it all! Ah!"

His brain began to think quickly, and he suddenly poured out an explanation.

"Of course, of course, that is it. You affected me the other day by that extraordinary scene, and I must have dreamed the thing was alive. I used to do things in my sleep when I was a kid. That's the reason of it all. Why, can't you see, you silly little thing? Let's see, what did I have for dinner last night? Why, *langouste*—that accounts for it. Oh, come on, Juliette, and let's have breakfast. God! Fancy painting like that in my sleep! And

it's jolly good, too. I shall touch it up and send it to—"

But Juliette had fallen a limp mass on the floor. She had fainted for the first time in her life.

Marcel was very tender to her for the next few days. His handsome face wore a worried expression, but he did his best to cheer her up and laughed and talked gaily while he was painting.

He chaffed her once about her tragic face, and said he would have to change the picture, and make her looking into the glass at a ghost instead of smiling at her own reflection as she arranged her hair. But the soft eyes filled with tears at his words, so he changed the subject and praised her hair and skin, which brought a little smile to her mouth.

As the days passed and the picture grew to completion under his hand, some of Juliette's old gaiety returned, and he was happy to hear again her little songs as she bustled about. Only for a few minutes after she entered his room in the morning did she remain silent, and then, when he heard her song begin again, he would smile to himself, knowing that she had covered over the hated head.

He puzzled a good deal as to why such a usually sane and well balanced little woman should suddenly develop a fancy so bizarre and pronounced; then he would dismiss his wondering thoughts with his habitual shrug, supposing that all women were more or less imaginative at some time or other in their lives.

One evening, after dining for one franc fifty (*vin compris*) in the "Boule Miche," they came back to the house and mounted the seven flights of uncarpeted stairs with little rests to get their breath on every other landing. As they reached the apartment beneath the studio a woman came out holding a milk bottle in her hand.

"*Tiens!*" she cried. "*Bon soir, m'sieu!* I'm just off to fetch milk for Marthe; she's rather feverish tonight. Monsieur has visitors?"

"No, madame; only Juliette, as always."

"But there is someone in monsieur's studio," answered the woman. "I heard something knocked down above me just this instant."

Juliette started nervously.

"*Mon Dieu!* Is it a burglar, Marcel?" she exclaimed hastily.

Marcel turned to the stairs.

"There's nothing to steal," he said laughingly. "Madame must have been mistaken. It was next door."

The woman threw out her hand.

"Ah, well, if monsieur wishes!" she said obstinately. "But I know the difference," she added, as she began to descend the stairs.

Juliette crept up the last flight of stairs holding to Marcel's coat like a frightened child.

After he had opened the door with his key she waited on the mat while he went in and lit a lamp; then she hurried in, shutting the door behind her and casting frightened glances around. There was no one in the studio. Marcel went into the bedroom and looked about, while Juliette opened the cupboard where she kept her brooms and peered in. Then Marcel came back and laughed.

"Well, *mon petit chou*, no burglar, you see!" he said, holding up her chin and smiling at her.

Then she saw a curious expression come into his face and stared at him wide-eyed.

He looked over her shoulder, and his lips pleted themselves into a firm line.

"Someone has been playing pranks," he exclaimed angrily. "Where is your key, Ju?"

"Here," she answered, pulling up her skirt and diving her hand into her pocket. She held up her duplicate key and turned round. She cried out and shrank against him.

His easel was just where he had left it when he ceased working, but the picture was standing on the floor, and in its place was the picture he had painted in his sleep some weeks before, and which he had hidden behind a pile of canvases on a high shelf.

In the light of the lamp the inquiring

face stared out at them more lifelike than ever, and the man and the girl stared back at it with beating hearts.

"I must go—I must go," stammered Juliette, crossing herself hastily. "You must go on with her picture. She hates me being here. You see, she has put it back for you to work upon."

The man swore loudly.

"You little idiot!" he said. "Can't you see that it is someone who has played a trick upon us? Madame Clère had a very odd manner, didn't you notice? She came up and did that. It's just the silly thing she would do."

Juliette continued to tremble.

"Why should she?" she muttered. "How should she know about *her*? How could she get in? We have both the keys."

"She probably has a key to fit," the man said, answering only the last question. "I shall have a new lock put on tomorrow. Come, I will go on with the book. Cheer up, darling; it's all a stupid plot to frighten us."

The girl said no more. She lighted another lamp and sat down with her sewing. Marcel sat with his back to a lamp and began to read to her.

It was an amusing book, and soon he was delighted to hear a ripple of laughter from Juliette. She pricked her finger and stuck it in her mouth still giggling.

At ten o'clock she got up to go.

While she was tidying away her work, Marcel took up the mysterious canvas from the floor where he had placed it, mounted a chair and pushed it in behind a pile of other pictures on the shelf. Then he replaced his own picture on the easel.

Juliette watched him seriously.

"Go to a locksmith on your way here tomorrow, Ju, and tell him to come and put on a new lock. Tell him to come before ten; we don't want to be interrupted afterward."

She nodded, and crept into his arms to say good night.

"I wish I could stay," she said quickly, "but I did not tell *grandmère* and she would fret. I hate going; I want to stay."

He patted the head on his breast tenderly.

"I wish you could, darling," he answered lovingly. "Tell her you will tomorrow, will you?"

"Yes, oh, yes," she cried. "I haven't for weeks. She knows I cannot get back from Passy so late. I will say I am sitting to M. Jules tomorrow. *Au 'voir*, well beloved; *à demain*."

He held the lamp over his head to light her down the first three flights; the gas was extinguished above the fourth floor at ten o'clock every night.

She looked up and blew him a kiss out of the shadows; then he went back and locked the door.

"*Nom d'une pipe!*" panted Juliette, as she mounted the stairs. "I have no breath at all this morning, and the bag is so heavy."

She rested twice on the way up and puffed loudly.

"That's a mercy!" she exclaimed, as she arrived outside the studio door. "Phew! It's good to be up."

She changed her shoes as usual, put on her neat apron and put the water on to boil. Then she went into the bedroom.

She flung open the shutters and breathed a deep gulp of the sun-laden air.

"What a lovely day!" she sighed. Then she turned to the bed.

The sun still shone on her face as the color went out of it. Cheeks and mouth turned livid, and round her lips came suddenly a bluish shade as they fell apart, gaping like a dead person's.

Marcel was lying on the bed with his arms stretched out over the coverlet as she was used to see him morning after morning. His curly head was resting sideways on the pillow and his eyes were closed.

But on the temple exposed to view was a dark blue mark—and he was quite dead. There was no mistaking it. Juliette had seen death too often to doubt now. Above the bed a nail was in the wall, but the head was not there. The marble face was resting on

the pillow, face to face with that of flesh and blood. The cold marble pressed to the cold flesh, the marble lips to the human lips—the eyes were closed now beyond all doubt, and Juliette, as she crept across the room, had no more terror of the marble head.

She put her hand on Marcel's dead face. Yes, it was cold—not with the

cold of marble, but that far more terrifying cold that Death brings as one of his agonizing gifts.

She stared at the beautiful face lying mouth to mouth with her beloved; then she swung up her hands and swayed.

"My God, my God!" she screamed. "I *knew* she hated me! I *knew* she hated me! Marcel—Marcel!"



A GIPSY SONG

By MARTHA HASKELL CLARK

THE gray road stretches to open plain,
 And swift we swing into step again,
 You and I and the open sky,
 And the breath of the spring wind drifting by.

Scent of the rain wet meadow,
 Echo of blackbird's trill,
 Challenge of vagrant daisies
 Gipsying up the hill;
 White of the mist, upcurling,
 Sweet of the fragrant dark,
 And deep in the tangled shadows
 Glint of a firefly spark;
 Call of the long, white roadway,
 Lure of the hidden turn,
 Cool of the forest byway,
 And scent of the moorland fern.

Past the white of the hawthorn hedge,
 Through fragrant shadows at highway's edge,
 Where the gray moths flutter with sleepy wings,
 And the lilies lie in the drifting sedge,
 You and I and the open sky,
 And the cool of the night wind drawing nigh.



WILD oats and grass widows are often affinities.

HAPPINESS

A Poem in Prose

By ANNA TRESSLER LONG

MY heart sings like a cicada on an August afternoon.

I, a poor student, whose lunch was a roll and a drink at the fountain—
I lie in the park amid a rhapsody of green.

The young grass—the wooden bench where I lie—the leaves above me—the
trunk of the giant tree—all green, a luminous green.

And I, even I, am no jarring note in the green melody.

For my coat, once black as the bark of a young willow, has put on, like the
willow, a green shimmer with age.

Yet my heart sings like a cicada on an August afternoon.

Yesterday is forgotten.

Tomorrow—pouf! That for Tomorrow!

The sun is shining hot and dazzling—the shadows under the trees are black—
the silver piece in my pocket will buy my dinner of fried perch and lettuce and
a little black bottle of sour wine—and I have a clean shirt in a drawer in my
attic room.

There go a pair of beautiful chestnut horses, dangling their silver chains
in front of a purple-lined victoria.

The face of the woman beneath the parasol of Bruges lace is flabby and
hopeless—and between her dull eyes is a deep worry line.

My mouth ever lilts upward with happiness—

And no Yesterdays nor Tomorrows scar my forehead.

My heart sings like a cicada on an August afternoon.



WHEN lovely woman stoops to folly Mrs. Grundy shoves her in.

THE OTHER MAN'S ROMANCE

By VANDERHEYDEN FYLES

PROBABLY Morton should not have told the story. He has admitted as much himself. And it certainly was not like him to. But an explanation, if not excuse, might be found in the circumstances and, too, in the long standing intimacy of the four young men strolling down Fifth Avenue after Frank Paulding's bachelor dinner.

The discussion really began with the youngest usher's startling denunciation of large church weddings as "humiliating and indecent."

"These modern circuses are revolting," he exploded. "To think of a couple of corkers like Marian and Frank acting out the biggest moment of their lives before a churchful of rubbernecks! Isn't there any reverence for romance left?"

"Romance, indeed!" the usher who reads Nietzsche exclaimed. "There never was such a thing as the *other man's* romance."

"Oh, pull up a bit," the Best Man put in. "I can't let it go that the last flicker of romance went out of the world when motor boats and dirigibles came in."

"Quite the contrary. You misunderstand my point. The world is full of romance. Every life story is a romance. My contention is that the story never looks that way to the other fellow. To him it is either a commonplace courtship-and-marriage affair or something too much like a scandal."

They had reached Morton's rooms, and without distinct deliberation the three followed him in for a good night whiskey and soda.

"I am not sure," the self-styled cynic took up, when they all had settled

themselves variously about the shaded, easeful room, "that Paulding himself may not pull up with a doubt some time or another as to whether this marriage of his is all romance or not."

"A thing he's waited for so long and doggedly!" the youngest of the four exclaimed. "And not too all-fired patiently, either."

"Still, we must admit it isn't the most flattering thing for a girl to throw her fiancé over for one of 'our brightest young stockbrokers' and revert to him only when said broker goes broke."

"It was half past nine or a quarter to ten when the machine hit the trolley post in Jerome Avenue and turned completely over."

The three men turned abruptly toward Arthur Morton. He had taken no part in the discussion as to the existence or death of romance. Indeed, he had almost pointedly held away from it. Now, sitting in a deep leather chair in a shadowy corner, he was barely visible. The red tip of his cigar could be seen; the enigmatic smile behind it could not.

"Well, Mort, out with it," the Best Man demanded. "What bearing, Mr. Bones, suh, has your flip-flap motor on the 'street parade' we all are due to perform down that monstrously long aisle tomorrow?"

"I didn't say it had any bearing on Marian and Frank."

"On romance?"

"I thought all 'other men's' romances had been thrown out as imaginary."

"Clearly, though," the Best Man broke in, "there *is* a story. So let's hear Morton Ancient-Marinerize for us.

And remember, Mort, three wedding guests in place of one should inspire you to make good."

"As soon as Mrs. R. had pulled herself together—" the narrator began.

"By designating the lady as 'Mrs. R.,"' the Nietzsche chap said, squinting, "you give us the inestimable advantage of knowing which of the twenty-six letters in the alphabet does *not* stand for her name."

"On the other hand," the Best Man qualified, "Mort does not help us further by saying whether we dined at her house last week or expect to this or hope to next."

"As I was saying," Morton went on quietly, "as soon as Mrs. R. reassembled her nerves after the violent jolt, she muttered an epigram."

"Thursday night—mine. A dinner of twenty, with Bonci and a snake dancer in to follow."

"It was a poor epigram," Morton continued; "not at all up to the lady's standard. But bear in mind she had just emerged from a sudden, violent and very serious accident. 'Possibly it doesn't matter,' she stuttered, 'whom one lives with—but it *is* important with whom one is killed.'"

"Why, Mrs. Harraden, of course," came simultaneously from two of Morton's audience. "Give us the story as it was—or not at all."

"Very well. Yes, then, young Mrs. Harraden. Her characteristic comment was lost in space. She was ignorant of its ghastly significance in the instance. For poor old Lloyd—"

"Harry Lloyd; I supposed so," the Best Man murmured. "Poor old chap!"

"Harry lay under the machine—pinned horribly beneath it."

Morton paused for several moments. A heavy cloud of smoke floated from his dark corner. He cleared his throat twice before going on.

An hour later, in a stuffy, tawdry bedroom on the second floor of Murphy's road house, it was up to me to tell Lloyd. Perhaps I might have left it to the outcome. But it seemed the

thing to do—and little enough, after all the years we'd chummed together.

"Better now, aren't you?" I began, closing the door behind me and crossing over to the black walnut bedstead.

"Yes. My legs hardly hurt at all. Perhaps, though," he added—and managed a laugh, "it's because they're too far gone."

I sat on the edge of the bed. "This doctor we hustled in has 'phoned to town for a surgeon—the best, you can depend on that. And I thought we'd better have your family's man out, too."

"As bad as that?" he murmured interrogatively. When I said, "You'd rather know, wouldn't you?" he answered simply, "Yes."

I hesitated several moments before finding heart to go on. "Of course it may come out all right. We've hope to hang to. But it will be a dangerous operation. And the doctor says it is imperative—the only way. If the others are as sure—"

"I guess I can face it, Mort," Lloyd broke in. "I've done a lot of going in my day—I'd be a pretty poor sort if I couldn't pay up when the time comes."

"Don't put it with such finality as that, old man. Why I suggested the possibility—what I meant is that when the pay-up day does come our thoughts turn involuntarily to the—someone. The others fade naturally into their right places in the background. Even if we weren't sure before, we know then—"

Poor old Lloyd's eyes looked directly into mine throughout a silent minute or two. "I see what you're driving at. Thanks, Mort—thanks heaps."

"We've chummed a lot together," I went on. "But close as two men may be, I fancy the one thing neither knows about the other is which story is the *real* story. I've telephoned to your rooms in town," I finished. "Do you want me to send for—anyone?"

His gaze wandered about the ugly room, rested vaguely on the chairs of the red plush parlor set, on the imitation marble mantelpiece, on the "Mon-

arch of the Glen" in an oak frame on the garish wallpaper. "No, old man," he finally muttered; "no need to send for her. But before they cut me up I think I'll have something to ask you to look after for me. Come back, will you?"

While the surgeon and the nurses who had been hurried up from town were with Lloyd, I went down to look after Mrs. Harraden. I think I never saw so incongruous a picture as the woman and her setting. Her pale pink motor veil, the voluminous folds of her pongee coat, the protruding edge of her dinner gown—all were spattered with mud. Yet she had not removed even the outer garment nor the veil. She sat in the hideous back parlor of the road house, her fingers playing a nervous tattoo on the center table, her lips drawn, her eyes staring straight ahead of her.

"Arthur," she said as I came into the room, though she did not turn head or eyes toward me, "Arthur—I'm done for."

"Rot, dear lady," I reassured her in a tone of more conviction than I felt. "Am I not chaperon enough? Besides, it isn't as though there was anything to conceal."

"*You* know that," Mrs. Harraden retorted, "and *I* know it and *Harry* knows it. But *people* don't. And they'll take precious good care to believe the worst. Also, recall, if you can, the fact that I have a husband. He does not let my existence disturb him overmuch. It seems rarely to occur to him. But he would be beast enough in a fight. It is at times such as this that sleeping husbands won't lie."

The tattoo of the delicate pink fingers seemed to become an insufficient outlet for the pent-up nerves. Of a sudden she jumped up from her chair. With the panting sinuousness of a caged animal she paced up and down the small room. I was little less than shocked each time she passed beneath the iron chandelier. Its single, unshaded gas jet threw a hard, uncompromising light on her handsome face. For the first time I could make out the

line between the real and the artificial coloring of her cheeks.

But shocking as was the revelation of what anxiety and a gas jet can undo for a handsome woman, I was thinking less of that than of the thing she had failed to say. Not once had she referred to poor old Lloyd, not once asked whether he would live or die. I resented it, as I looked on her distress, with an intensity I think I never felt in my life before.

A few months before, when Harry's reckless "corner" went to smash and Marian straightway broke off her engagement to marry him, he had taken up with Mrs. Harraden. Of course there was nothing in it. But it rankled with me to see Harry go in for that sort of thing. It wasn't good enough, that's all, for a man as frank and healthy-minded as Lloyd to philander with a married woman. And it wasn't like him. As for his divorce two years before that, when he was barely twenty-five, we all know he was not to blame. Harry and that New England ice queen never could have got on. When she married Captain Jennings two weeks after the divorce it set old Lloyd straight, right enough. But this Harraden flirtation was playing it a bit low down for a man of Harry's stripe. I told him so at the time and suggested that he and I go up to Irvington for a time and sidestep the New York pace.

Yet that woman never thought to ask what hope there was for Harry as he lay there in the room above us. "I'm done for!" was what she moaned as she paced up and down, up and down; "I'm done for!"

Of a sudden she stopped short. "No, by God," she cried, "I'm not! I'll not give up."

She crossed quickly to a corner of the room. I followed her with my eyes. She reached for the telephone.

"A good idea," I exclaimed. "Call your husband up yourself. Be the one to tell him. Ask him to come out to get you."

"I will," was her reply. But with it her lips curled in a smile that was awfully like a leer.

She took down the receiver and I moved toward the door to let her carry off her comedy without being overheard. But I was pulled up short by the number I heard her call for.

"What do you mean?" I cried. "That number—why, that's Marian's!"

Standing still, she smiled on my agitation. "Of course. What more natural than that Harry should want to see his dear, wide-eyed fiancée at such a time—even though she did break off the engagement and go back to Paulding? Besides, with the girl here, why, I—"

I swung round the table to deter her. I am not sure I might not have stopped her forcibly had not a waiter entered just then. He brought a card, adding that the lady was impatient. One glance at the name and I slipped quickly into the hallway. I suppose such haste was stupid of me; during my brief absence Mrs. Harraden trumped up her story to bring Marian speeding to the road house.

But at the moment my one purpose was to intercept the woman who had just arrived, whose own car I could hear chugging at the door. For, as you must have guessed, the visitor was no other than the former Mrs. Lloyd.

She stood at the far end of the hallway, beneath a varied array of beer escutcheons in gilt frames, and not far from the wicker half-door to the smoky barroom. I had the waiter show her to a less unseemly place.

"Harry's—Mr. Lloyd's—own doctor," she began in her familiarly positive tone, "the physician his family and mine have always had, you know, telephoned me directly he himself was informed. He understands me. He knows I would feel it my duty to take my place at Harry's bedside at such a time. I do not dare to think what Captain Jennings will say to my having come here. But I hope I shall never let fear or selfishness deter me from the strict performance of a duty."

It was like a voice from the ages to hear the girl's firm, dictatorial tone. But as she threw back her dark green veil I was struck anew by the marble

beauty of her. It brought back Mrs. Harraden's remark one evening we both faced her across a centerpiece of orchids: "If that girl had a heart or soul or one drop of human blood it would mar the classic perfection of her."

"I am right, am I not," Mrs. Jennings went on, "in believing there is practically no hope for Harry?"

"Practically none."

"I shall wait here. You will go to him, will learn if he wishes to see me. In any case, I shall remain within call until the end." She selected the stiffest chair in the room and seated herself stiffly upon it.

As I turned to obey her command—I could call it nothing less—I could not restrain myself from throwing back a word, almost my only word. Seeing her had brought back to me the life she led Lloyd—and his steadfast silence, then and afterward.

"I don't know whether Harry made a will or not," I said. "Doubtless you are more definitely informed. But perhaps you don't know that there's practically nothing for him to leave since he came a cropper in the Street."

The last thing Harry said to me before passing under the influence of the narcotic—

("Hold up a minute!" the Best Man interrupted. "Which of the women had he chosen to see?")

None of them. He asked me to go to the family's house at Irvington. He wanted me to find a bit of paper and destroy it before his things were taken over by his father or his lawyer. The house was closed, as you know, but he gave me the keys.

"It's a bit of yellow paper," he explained; "you know the kind I used to use for memoranda. And it's folded very small, hardly bigger than a postage stamp. If an unmarried man willed everything to a woman," he added whimsically, "she might laugh at gossip—so long as he left anything worth while. But as things are now—well, just destroy the thing, old man, will you?"

We gripped hands on it.

When I reentered the road house parlor I found the three women standing about the center table, facing one another. Rather, I might say the elder two, though opposite, faced toward Marian. She was dressed even more incongruously than the others. Mrs. Harraden's summons had caught her just starting for a dance. An evening cloak fell from her shoulders, revealing her bare throat and arms and the soft folds of her white chiffon gown.

"Be honest, one of you, be honest!" she was demanding passionately. Her lips trembled and her eyes flamed with an intensity one would never have expected of her. "I've thrown my cards on the table—face up."

"Is it quite wise," Mrs. Harraden sneered, "to risk another broken betrothal—even for so beautiful a picture?"

"One of you," the girl in the soft white gown went on, "knows why I broke with Harry—knows just how little money or any other man in the world had to do with it. One of you knows," she repeated, leaning across the table, "the kind of love he can give—the kind of love he gave me. I don't doubt one of you has owned that half-love of his, too. But the other knows that there always is a divinity in his heart no other woman can ever reach or rival."

"Really," the bloodless goddess on her left broke in, "in justice to Captain Jennings—"

"Considering the dear girl has betrothed herself to another man," Mrs. Harraden smiled, "it is shrewd of her to throw the honor of Harry's devotion upon another woman."

"Ladies—" I interrupted. The three women stopped speaking and turned abruptly toward me. "I have waited patiently some minutes. I am sorry to disturb so lively and so personal a conversation. In a moment you may resume it. But first I may mention that Harry Lloyd is dead."

Harry's mother and father being in Cairo at the time, it devolved upon me to attend to all arrangements for the

burying of the poor old boy. They filled my day, with the result that it was close on to twenty-four hours after his death before I could go to Irvington.

Have you ever seen the Lloyd house on the Hudson? It was built by Mrs. Lloyd's great-grandfather and is really a rather wonderful old mansion, rambling along the slope between the Albany Road and the river. Splendid old trees hide most of it from view. At that, I've heard Harry say the reason the family keep it closed almost all the time is that it is too near the road. I suppose that very fact was an attraction in the days when an occasional stagecoach rumbling along the highway was an event. But honking, scurrying automobiles proved hardly so welcome a diversion.

I must say the old postroad seemed quiet enough that night. Indeed, not a motor was in sight, except the one I left at the gateway—the machine in which I had run alone up from town. It was an unusually cloudy night, and as I walked up the short driveway the windows of the deserted house seemed to look out at me like the sightless caverns of a death's head. And the huge old trees seemed to sigh and moan for the dead boy who used to play beneath them.

Recalling the right key without difficulty, I opened the heavy outer door. Once inside the large, empty entrance hall, I became possessed of a single paramount purpose—to find the slip of yellow paper, destroy it and get away. Producing my matchbox, I was annoyed to find only three matches left. Of course I had not come away in an auto without more. But they were in my motor coat in the car. Undoubtedly these I had would do.

Striking a light, it was hardly surprising to find all lamps—with pretty much everything else—removed or stored away. But I knew the house so well—in kid days Harry and I had so often played Indian in every nook and corner of it—that it was simple enough to pick my way across the paneled hall, through the close, musty

library and into Harry's den. I pulled aside the curtain of a window near the desk, but the night was far too dark to help me in my mission. However, it was not difficult to fit the key into the lock, open the desk and find the small drawer mentioned.

I struck a match to make sure the square of folded paper was the right one. Harry had even scribbled "H. D. L.'s Last Will" on it. Relocking the desk, I started to go, not sorry to quit the shadowy, deserted house.

But when I reached the doorway from the library to the entrance hall I drew back in dismay. There could be no mistake. Unquestionably, though in dark, vague lines, a crouching figure was discernible against the white paneling. Why the intruder had not heard me as I walked across the rugless floors or seen me in the doorway I could not guess. Evidently, though, he was unconscious of an observer, for without a sound he crept toward the stairway.

I rather fancy if I had paused to consider I would have let him take what he liked and be blowed. If the Lloyds had been unwise enough to leave anything of value in the house, it was not up to me to be foolhardy. But I acted on impulse. Without reflection I followed the creeping figure up the stairs. He stole along the broad hallway of the second floor. I always supposed thieves ascertained the rooms worth robbing before they broke into a house. But this idiot led me, following him without noise, past all the larger bedrooms to a passageway leading to the servants' quarters.

Suddenly I was pulled up with the realization that the crass stupidity was mine, not his. For at the doorway of the housekeeper's old room he turned alertly and without warning and hurled me to the floor. Kicking the door closed behind us, he was upon me. Whatever his purpose, I had been the dupe. Ingenuously imagining myself the unsuspected sleuth, I had been easily lured to a remote wing of the house.

Naturally, I didn't lie down without a struggle. As we rolled and grappled

on the rough, dust-covered boards, I strove to keep my mind alert. What was the thief's purpose? How was he to know I was not the stronger, or, at any rate, not better armed than he? For you may be sure that after my first stupidity I had, as we clinched, felt him over, made sure he was unarmed. And you may be cussed sure the discovery relieved me. But it added to my bewilderment.

In a moment his scheme was made clear—or yet more baffling—by the evidence that the man was not a common burglar. He had me on my back, my arms pinned down—one with his left hand, the other with his knee. With his right hand he was going through my pockets. But he left a wad of money, my watch, my scarf pin, all untouched. The discovery was illuminating. While he was bent upon his search, I contrived to move my right hand cautiously enough to draw my matchbox from my trousers' pocket. I pulled my trick off pretty well. With a sort of conjuring stunt one of you boys taught me once, I held the box and struck the match on it with the one hand, at the same moment throwing all my strength into a sudden lurch which flung me loose from my antagonist.

But it was the effect of the light rather than the jolt which overcame him. Instead of coming back at me, he turned, as though in panic, to blow out the light. At the same time he loosed the grip of his right hand to seize the matchbox and hurl it to the furthest side of the room. It struck an uncurtained window and cut clean through a pane of glass.

No light came in from the black night outside, but the brief flash of the match's flame had been enough to explain the panic of the man. He was indeed no ordinary thief, no ruffian. Over his face he wore an improvised mask—a handkerchief with slits in it for eyes. Amateurish as it was, though, it sufficed.

One purpose filled me now—to make sure who my man was. A plan sprang full-formed to my mind. I don't know—never since have felt sure—whether

it came back to me from years and years ago in this same room, when an occasional terrifying light used to flash across the bureau mirror while the old housekeeper held Harry and me on her knees and told us ghost stories. In the distance I could hear the honk-honk of a motor. If it was going south the light of the lamp would strike the mirror. If north—

In his terror over the matchbox the man had lost his advantage. With a quick thrust I had him on the floor, under me, his face down. I wrenched his arms behind him. This time I had him fast enough. But the stunt was to get him over to the mirror. And it was a tug, I warrant you. Grappling, writhing, snorting, snarling, we wormed across that filthy floor. I could hear the chugging of the car. It surely must have almost reached the gateway.

Straining every nerve and tissue, I dragged myself upright, and with me I hauled the struggling man. One more pull and I had him up. With all my strength I flung him backward across the bureau. His head hung down, facing toward the uncurtained window.

Again the horn bellowed out a warning. With one sweep I tore the mask from the man's face. The auto flew past. It was only an instant, but for that instant the light flashed full across the dangling face—directly, clearly, with fierce intensity.

He squirmed up with the fury of a wild beast. He fought now with neither trick nor caution. Openly he struggled for my pockets, not for me. For now I knew his purpose, and he knew I knew. Also I now knew my opponent, and knew his staying power. And I realized that I myself was nearly spent. He must inevitably get the best of it in the end. I would have been a fool to doubt that.

Seizing my moment, I drew the little square of yellow paper from my pocket and slipped it into my mouth. I thought I had been subtle. But he saw me. With a bound he seized me by the throat. I warded him off. Still, I knew my time of even adequate defense was short. I could hold him

off only a minute more at most. But while I held out I chewed on that damned slip of paper, tore it with my tongue and teeth, soaked it to a colorless pulp.

Everything was over now. I felt myself going. The man backed me toward the wall. As I went—almost without resistance now—I stumbled and fell against the bureau. Reaching toward it for support, I must have gripped it harder than I knew. For its great bulk swayed, toppled, fell forward with a crash.

As it fell it hurled my antagonist and me beneath it. The mirror was shattered into sharp fragments. My face and hands ran blood. But in the heap of humanity and glass and splinters the other man lay senseless. The heavy marble top of the bureau had slipped loose—slid off—struck him in the temple.

"Well?" It was the Best Man's voice which finally cut through the haze of cigar smoke. The listeners had waited a long time in silence for Morton to go on. "You bite off a story as ruthlessly as you chew up a 'mysterious paper.'"

"Oh," Morton replied, "the rest is unimportant. The paper was irrevocably destroyed. That was the only point that mattered. The poor chap didn't come to for hours. I carried him down to my machine and got him to town in good time." He paused meditatively and smiled. "The next time I saw him was at the Opera. A Bréval and Saleza night, I recollect, because it was just after the scene at the foot of the temple steps—in 'Salamambo,' you know. Each of us hesitated a moment doubtfully. Then I held out a cordial hand. Taking it and smiling, he said: 'Something of a stunt, though, for a chap to take a header down forty feet of marble steps and then get up and sing about it.'"

"However," one of the listeners prompted, "we were not talking about adventure—but romance."

"That objection is not quite fair," the Best Man protested. "None of

us is so stupid as to miss Morton's meaning. Of course it has nothing to do with whether he got indigestion from eating yellow paper, vilely seasoned with ink, or who the other man was, or whether said man didn't deserve a good bump for playing around such a hideously obsolete affair as a bureau with a marble top. Naturally, the point is just and only Harry's loyalty to the woman."

"Granted."

"All I say," he went on, "is that she wasn't worth it."

"Oh, that's what *you* say?" came from Morton's corner.

"Assuredly. A commonplace woman led by commonplace traditions. A cold, unimaginative New England sense of duty in place of a heart and red blood. Harry made his mistake when he married her. But he paid up in full. Recognizing it as fine and big and generous of him still to reverence the woman who had been his wife, it nevertheless goes to show that a man's romance exists only in his own mind—is imaginary, not real."

"Glad to hear you champion my thesis so well," the man who reads Nietzsche took up. "But I must admit you suggest a sharpshooter who throws a glass ball in the air only to shatter it with a single easy shot. The idea of Mrs. Jennings as the sacred shrine of a man's life is too preposterous to be even funny. But a *correct* interpretation of Morton's story proves conclusively what I said at the outset. I can see how Lloyd's love for Mrs. Harraden—for Mrs. Harraden," he repeated with emphasis, as though challenging contradiction, "seemed to him a romance. His silence, self-restraint, that sort of thing. But from the outside—knowing the woman as we do, I mean—the rosy hues of his romance are rather scarlet."

"You two remind me," the youngest of the ushers muttered from his couch, "of a couple of chaps getting out of bed in the morning and facing toward the west, and then declaring there is no beauty in a sunrise. Obviously, if either woman was Lloyd's 'story,' you

would have just your claims—the colorless or the too highly colored. But Marian—for, of course, after the least reflection, no other heroine is to be considered—pretty well wrung the romance out of their engagement when she broke with Harry so easily and almost the next day reverted to the other man. Poor old Lloyd may have still cherished his belief—but it was only an illusion."

There was a longer silence before the teller of the story finally took his turn. "Each of you," he said, "has proved to his own satisfaction that there was no such thing as our especial 'other man's' romance. Yet do you realize that not one of you has asked me what Harry said when I told him of the three women waiting in the room below?"

"Well?" The youthful champion of romance swung upright eagerly from the mass of cushions.

"He asked the surgeon to delay a moment, to leave him and me alone. I went over to his bedside.

"'Mort, old man,' he began, 'you said yourself, just now, the one story a man oftenest doesn't know about his closest friend is the real story. Of course, when the man can speak out—But with so many of us there's an obstacle—a barrier of some sort. Sometimes the only way to guard her is to keep yourself away, to let no one guess. And playing the game is to shuffle out as silently as you've lived.

"'You know my rooms in town. I've been guyed more than once for the veritable wilderness of photographs on walls and mantels, desk and chiffonier. There are girls of our own sort—and many of a sort quite different. There's a sketch of that mad little soubrette who caused a furore two years ago as the "Live Wire"; and there's a large photograph of an English princess, with the ribbon of the Garter and an Alexandra bang. That picture's autographed—but it is huddled up with a lot that are only signed. There's a French *chanteuse* swishing her skirts in a most brazen manner toward a young matron who gives the best dia-

ners on Bellevue Avenue. Then, too, there's an imposing Polish tragedienne, who sent me her photograph as a Giacometti queen, because I was the only man at a dinner who could chat with her in her native language—though I never have succeeded in making out what she wrote clearly enough to guess

whether the quotation was from some Russian Chaucer or George Ade.

“‘What I mean,’ poor old Lloyd wound up, ‘is that the real story is usually the one photograph that is not there—the one girl in the crowded room the man doesn't pause too long to talk with.’”



HAD I THE POWER

By LURANA W. SHELDON

HAD I the power, I would wander away
From that merciless monitor, Self,
That scourging old monitor, Self.
I would say to my heart: “You and I, we must start
For the regions where love is the whole of life's part;
To that glorious strand where the senses command,
Where the ships of desire are those only that land”—
Just this I would say to my heart.

Had I the power, I would wander away
From that o'erzealous guardian, Self,
That Argus-eyed guardian, Self.
I would say to my brain: “Let us go to the plain
Where no effort is false and no effort is vain;
Where the treasures of earth lie in folly and mirth,
And the fool and the knave have both value and worth,
And the errors of life do not pain.”

Had I the power, I would wander away
From the stern, silent whisper of Self,
That all powerful whisper of Self.
I would say to my soul: “Let us off to the shoal
Where the wind-driven waves all contentedly roll;
Where no beacon light plays o'er deep, treacherous ways,
And no warning is tolled of the oncoming days”—
Yes, this I would say to my soul!



WHEN money talks, good taste is too quiet to be heard.

SONG OF THE AEROPLANE

By CHARLES C. JONES

STEEL spun speed and the night swings by,
Lights long lost in the mist behind,
Swift swept scud and a sullen sky,
Planes set hard to a whooping wind;
Gray-green wastes and the billows flee
White-fanged deaths on the hungry main—
What to me
Is a hungry sea?
Ho! Sing ho, for the aeroplane!

Wide wings wrought to a wilder birth,
What care I if the earth be fair?
'Way with word of the wide, wide earth;
I am king of the trackless air!
Lo! I go where the gray clouds fly;
I alone to the world attain.
Lord am I
Of the boundless sky.
Ho! Sing ho, for the aeroplane!



A FALSE CHORD

By J. M. VAN DEUSEN

I HEAR the singing of a Lyre;
Can you hear it, too?
It says you are my life's desire.
I hear the singing of a Lyre,
Singing, "I will never tire
Loving, loving you."
I hear the singing of a Liar,
Can you hear it, too?

THE SUPREME SACRIFICE

By GRACE CRAWLEY OAKLEY

ELIZABETH VAN ALISTER drew her chair back farther into the gathering gloom, as if half afraid the chance passers-by might read the intensity of her thoughts. Far into the shadows of the vine-clad porch she drew herself.

The hour was fast approaching which she felt was to be the crucial one of her life, and, with its nearness, a thousand rushing memories, reminiscences of a past grown doubly dear because she felt it was soon to become in every sense a past—a memory laid away in lavender.

The twilight deepened. The scent of the clover and new mown hay was wafted to her as the breath of the summer breeze, which was gently swaying the bushes and shrubs in a ghostly rhythm, and through the sweet dusk of the summer evening shone the first pale rays of the young moon. How often beneath those beams she had wandered with Allen Dart; how often, beneath their magic spell, he had opened up his very heart to her, and told her its inmost secrets, its doubts, its hopes and fears!

Her mind traveled, even as she listened, with an acute, nervous intensity to his footsteps, back to the far Western prairies where they had met, to the little village schoolhouse where she had taught, and to the farmhouse, whither he had come in search of health. How hard the struggle had been, and how brave the man! How well she knew, and understood the moments of elation and the dark hours of despair!

She lived over again the long days of vacation, when they were con-

stantly together. She wandered again, in fancy, through the countryside. She sat with him beside the hurrying brook and read aloud to him. She recalled with loving memory how together they had known and understood the great minds of the past centuries, handed down to them in their beloved books. She drove with him through the country lanes. She closed her eyes and she could almost feel the intimate nearness of his spiritual presence. She saw again the impatient gesture with which he tossed the hair from his forehead; she could hear the little husky note, indicative of his disease, as he cleared his throat before he spoke. Every little trick of look and movement came back to her with startling vividness, and she hugged them to her hungry heart with a fierce joy. Oh, the long joy of those summer nights when they had sat upon another porch, not always alone but alone in spirit, often silent, their two souls communing as only souls can which understand, which are in tune!

She recalled their delight when they began to feel that he was on the mend, their anxious waiting as, one by one, the ugly symptoms of his disease left him. The little, almost imperceptible gain day by day, how they watched and rejoiced together! How this fearful, anxious waiting was replaced by a profound trust in his ultimate victory. And then, oh, then, the great joy when they knew that he had won! The overpowering, surging delight of the memory shook her even now, and she half rose from her seat, urged forward by the intensity of her emotions; but she sank back again, her ears straining to

catch the sound of his approaching footsteps.

He was coming! That was he coming down the road! Could it be? It seemed too short for him. Was it his step? She could not tell, she was so excited. She half rose. But now, without so much as a glance, the figure swung on past the path that led to her door. She sank back again.

For a year she had not seen him. And she loved him; why deny it to herself? No, she hugged the knowledge with a dear delight. How precious his letters had been in this time of separation; how she read his very soul beneath the written words! Tonight, within the hour, he was coming to her. Tonight was to be the crowning joy and sorrow of her existence, for she felt that he, too, loved her. The absurdity of it struck her with cruel directness; for she was not a woman given to sophistry. She felt her age; the weight of her quarter of a century and ten bowed her liked a burden, as she thought of him in the ardent strength of his youth.

His letters of late had been full of a sweet personal note, a sense of their spiritual unity; and from the last, she could not but feel that he was coming for his answer. That he should have loved her was joy sublime; that she should marry him was beyond comprehension. She loved him far too well, she told herself, to saddle him with a woman ten years older than himself. She felt the fire of sacrifice; the greatest of all sacrifices, sacrifice on the altar of her love, was demanded of her, and yet, with a woman's inconsistency, not for a thousand worlds would she have given up this moment. His pain would be brief, and then, new interests crowding in, she would be forgotten. But hers would be the joy of service; to her it was given to surrender her very life for his best good, and if the renunciation was bitter, the fact that it was voluntary, that this last act of sacrifice was hers to give him, softened the pain. It was given to her of her own free will to refuse the glorious joy he had to offer her,

and—oh, paradox of paradoxes—because she loved him!

But now a tall, broad-shouldered form strode up the path. She rose, stepped forward, held out her hands, and in a moment they were clasped in his.

"Oh, Bessie, how good it is to see you again!" he cried. "How I have missed you, and how I have longed to see you all the year! I declare, you are growing younger and handsomer every day. I believe you are a darling of the gods."

"I was horribly afraid that something would happen at the last moment to keep you away," she said, and smiled back at him. "It seems a thousand years since we wandered together in the moonlight."

Still holding her hands, he led her to a chair and drew one up beside her.

"How dreadfully good you were to me that summer, and how you cheered me when I got the blues! I believe without you I should not be here tonight. But your courage gave me strength and pulled me through."

"And your dependence gave me strength and something to live for," she said softly.

"Do you remember the time we drove over to Meadowville and ate our lunch on the river bank?" he cried.

"Yes, and you lost our old chum, Bill Shakespeare, into the water, and I had to fish him out, for you were not strong enough in those days to do it. You could do it now," she added.

"Yes, and I made you believe the horse was afraid of autos, and you insisted on turning into a lane every time you saw one coming, even when we had to turn back to do so. Do you remember?"

"Indeed I do. He wasn't afraid at all, but just eyed them with a mild curiosity when one did overtake us. You were such a worthless old fraud, Allen."

"And how you used to pretend I wasn't ill at all, just making believe to excite your sympathy, until I sometimes half believed it myself. Oh, a man never had a chum like you, Bessie;

you are the best ever, and I am going to keep you always."

She started. The soft color stole up into her face, but she drew her hands away. She was not quite ready for the supreme moment. She must enjoy him a little more before she gave him up forever. So she guided the conversation back to the old days, and together they traversed their favorite haunts, the books they loved, the music they had enjoyed together, the little rippling brook, beside which they sat and talked, in the shade of the big elm tree; there had never been another such nook.

"You know, Bess," he cried at last, "I told you I had something to tell you tonight, something special, the greatest secret of my life, the most precious thing that will ever come to me. But I needn't tell you; I can see you have guessed it from my letters. You must have read between the lines. It has been the impulse of my life all winter, and it was so delicious to tell you and yet not tell you, to reveal and yet conceal."

"Yes," she said softly. Let him go on. She would feel the protecting tenderness of his arms, the warmth of his kisses; she would allow herself this supreme joy before she passed out into outer darkness.

"You know? You have guessed?" he cried. "I can read it in your eyes. The great mystery, of which we wondered and philosophized, has come to me. I am in love. Another woman would think me a conceited ass to sit and talk like this, but I knew you would understand. You always understand. That is the dearest of your many dear traits."

"Yes," she whispered.

He took her hand again. "I wanted to tell you before I told anyone else, because I have always shared my joys with you since first you gave me back my health. She is the finest girl in the world—the finest girl in all the world. I wonder if you can guess who she is?"

Elizabeth's face was averted. Her eyes were shining. Her hand lay pas-

sively in his, but she swayed gently toward him.

"I tried not to say too much about her in my letters. I didn't want you to know before I was sure she loved me. Now I know, and I want you to be her best friend, as you have been mine. I know you will love her. It is Mary Bell. You will remember I met her in Omaha."

The night grew dark to Elizabeth Van Alister. It seemed to her that suddenly the heavens were clouded, the moon had veiled her face, the stars had paled, and all nature paused in compassion that such agony could be. Then, mercifully, for one awful moment her senses were paralyzed. The blow was so sudden and so unforeseen. "Oh, besotted fool! Oh, fool of fools!" she thought. "To imagine for an instant that such a joy could be mine! To imagine he would stoop to me! Had I not been so demented with my own dreams, I might have known."

Twice she wet her parched lips to speak, but no sound issued forth. She put forth her hand in protest. She grasped the arm of her chair to steady herself. Oh, just God, have mercy! She must be calm. She must reply. He must never guess her shame. Then by a supreme effort she spoke, but when the words came her voice sounded hoarse and unnatural, her words cold and unsympathetic. She, his faithful friend, was failing him in his supreme moment.

But now her ideas were forming themselves from the chaos of her thoughts. Now she was speaking clearly, though for a moment it seemed as if it were another person, as if she were standing aside and viewing her own suffering as a stranger.

"With all my heart, I am glad for you, Allen," she heard herself saying. And as the words came, she was vaguely comforted. She knew she meant it. She understood, with only the understanding that comes to us from sharp and terrible suffering, that the battle was won; the joy of sacrifice was to be hers, but not as she had dreamed. "Because I am so very

fond of you, and because I hope so much for your future, I trust she is the one woman, the right woman for you. But I feel sure that she is, for I am certain you would choose wisely."

"And you will be her friend, as you have been mine? What should I have done without you? I have told her of you, and she is prepared to love you at sight. She has sent you a photograph and looks forward to meeting you. She is so beautiful. We are to be married very soon. There is no need of delay. We want you to dance at the wedding."

Elizabeth rose. A great revulsion of feeling was stirring her. She wondered now, had the opportunity really been hers, had he urged her, would she have been strong enough to refuse? After all, was it not better so? He would never know, but nothing could tear from her aching heart its memories. A great flood of love poured into her heart, blotting out for an instant all bitterness, all regret. She hugged her thorns. They, at least, were hers, all hers. Then came a vague pity that the man would never know, would never dream nor comprehend the power, the depth, the strength and the purity of the love he was trampling in the dust. She smiled.

"My dear, your friends will always be my friends, your joys my joys, your successes my successes and your failures my grief. You are my boy, and if my strength gave strength to you, then your regained health gives me the right to rejoice with you. Forgive me if I grow trite, but I long to say, 'God bless you, my children.' And yet you must not expect too much of Mary and me. Women are often incomprehensible. I doubt if she would care to have you share things with me as you have done. Those moments now belong to her. It would occur to you, if you were not a big, stupid, obtuse man, that she might even be a little jealous of our delight in one another's society, because your time now belongs to her. I am sorry I cannot be with you, that I cannot meet her; but I am sailing Saturday

for the South of France. I will write you both. And you, Allen, I want you always to remember that, though I may be far away, you have been my friend, my best friend, and, I might say, my one and only friend. New ties and joys will surround you, and I shall at length be forgotten, but, somewhere under the same blue skies that greet you, I shall be hoping for your greatest good, sharing your joys and sorrowing in your sorrows, for that is the lot, the recompense of friendship." She rose. "And now good night, and my love to Mary. I will write her very soon. There is no happiness too great to wish you both."

He clasped her hand again and went out into the night. As he lighted his cigar and sauntered moodily along, he was surprised that a feeling of loss should grow upon him. Somehow, he felt himself summarily dismissed, and he did not like the feeling. Perhaps, after all, he had never understood Elizabeth. Could she have loved him? He started and half stopped, but dismissed the idea as ridiculous. What a companion she had been! What a wonderful woman she was! He did not want to give her up. He had a vague, dissatisfied feeling that Mary could not supply all his nature demanded. He wanted them both. He felt a little defrauded. Elizabeth had failed him. She had not stirred to his mood, as was her wont. He could not give her up like this; he needed her, too. Something of what he was losing began to filter into his obtuse masculine understanding, and he was more than a little disturbed. Then his thoughts took a new trend, as he opened his watch and saw Mary's face smiling up at him. In his fancy he could see the lovelight in her beaming eyes; her red lips were raised to receive his betrothal kiss; he heard her pretty laugh; he recalled her thousand delightful womanish ways. Mary was irresistible. He smiled content.

Back in the dim recesses of the vine-shrouded porch a woman was sobbing out her foolish woman's heart alone, forevermore alone!

THE BOOKMAKER'S SHOES*

By EARLE MITCHELL

CHARACTERS

BUCK WILSON (*a bookmaker*)
GEORGIA LANGFORD
A MESSENGER BOY

TIME: *The present.*

PLACE: *New York City.*

SCENE—*The living room in Wilson's flat. It is furnished plainly, with pictures of pugilists, actresses and race horses hung on dingy walls. A table stands at the right side of the stage, on which are a watch, cigarettes, matches, a decanter of wine and glasses, various sporting and theatrical papers and a dish of fruit. On the left side of the table is a worn-out easy chair and a footstool. To the left of the stage is a sofa, and there is other furniture common to such a room. Entrance, center door.*

At the rise of the curtain BUCK is discovered in the easy chair, asleep, his right leg in splints, dreaming, as if in pain. He stirs and awakens stupidly, feels the splint and places his leg on a footstool.

BUCK

Gee! I dreamed Frank Gotch was trying to twist that leg into a pretzel. (*Adjusting the splint.*) The doctor says the bones are knitting. I guess he's right. I can feel the needles. Wonder what time it is? (*Looks at his watch.*) Four o'clock! I've been pounding my ear for the last three hours. (*Lights a cigarette. Looks around the room and sees a letter under the door.*) Hello, there's a letter! Wonder if I can get that without hurting this leg? (*Rises slowly, limps to the door, gets the letter and starts back, opening it.*) That's from Eddie McCue. (*Reads.*)

"DEAR BUCK:

"Just received your note, and, as you requested, have put a five spot on Goody Two

Shoes to win. She's a hundred to one, and has about the same chance at the money that a jackrabbit has of hooking a cow. Who touted you to that, anyhow? Things are a bit dull at the track right now, and I hope you will soon be well enough to be out here at work. Also hope that the next time you tear off a piece of change, you will have sense enough to sidestep the big celebration thing. Climbing a tree with an automobile full of chorus girls is a good trick—if you can do it. "Yours,

"EDDIE McCUE.

"P.S. Take a trip down to Huber's Museum and see the boy that weighs four hundred pounds. He got fat buying wine suppers for the merry-merry."

Well, suffering cuttlefish! Can you imagine that fellow lecturing me? I couldn't tell a chorus dame from a Brooklyn Sunday school teacher till I started to pal with that dub, and I

*Acting rights reserved.

thought Moet and Chandon was a dan-druff cure until he put me over the hurdles a few times.

So Goody Two Shoes hasn't got a chance, eh? Well, I suppose not, but when I was doping those skates this morning I noticed that Goody Two Shoes was out of Morning Glory, and that old Morning Glory mare was once owned by Colonel George Langford, and it was Colonel George Langford that give me the first whole pair of shoes I ever owned. A shine hunch, maybe, but it looked real to me. (*Looks at his watch.*)

That was the first race. It must have finished an hour ago. Oh, well, I guess Eddie was right! It's a dead one. (*There is a knock at the door.*)

BUCK (*rising*)

Come in!

MESSENGER (*entering*)

I've got a special delivery message for Mr. Buck Wilson.

BUCK

Give me that! (*Grabs the letter excitedly.*)

MESSENGER

Are you Buck Wilson?

BUCK

Surest thing you know.

MESSENGER

All right. Sign here. (*Indicates a line in his book.*)

BUCK

Sure. (*Signs.*)

MESSENGER

Say, what's the matter with your leg?

BUCK

I busted it kickin' a fresh messenger boy; but the other one's all right.

(*MESSENGER winks knowingly and goes out whistling. BUCK opens the letter nervously and shakes it. Five one-hundred-dollar bills and a note drop out. He looks at them, drops into a chair, recovers his breath and reads.*)

"DEAR BUCK:

"The rest of them had sore feet. Goody Two Shoes could have walked away from them on one leg. I inclose the five hundred. Now I guess it is your cue for fine, large doings with Miss May Lorraine and the rest of the Casino bunch. They haven't even asked about you since you were laid to rest, but I'll

bet this evening finds you in Mr. Hector's spree shop, passing it out to them just like the Times Building was the smallest thing you owned. Take it from me, old chap; pinch enough of this to pay for the flat and the *table d'hôte* thing until you get well.

"Yours,

"EDDIE."

Well, I guess that's hard to take! Me? Why, I'll put every piastre of that way down in the bottom of the grouch bag and try to spend it like a human being. Guess that's right about May and them. When they found out I had made a mess of myself, they forgot to remember me. Gee! Will I ever forget her the night of the accident? A half-dozen men trying to lift the car off this leg and she hollering because I was sitting on her hat! (*Looks at the money retrospectively.*) Colonel George Langford, this is the second time you've slipped me something when I needed it, and if you were alive now I'd—

(*There is a knock at the door.*)

BUCK

I'll bet four dollars that's somebody coming to take this away from me. (*Puts the money in his pocket hurriedly.*) Come in!

(*GEORGIA enters timidly.*)

BUCK

The dressmaker's room is across the hall, little girl.

GEORGIA

Are you Mr. Buck Wilson?

BUCK

That was my maiden name. Come in.

GEORGIA

I wanted to see you on a matter of business. I was sent to you by Miss May Lorraine.

BUCK (*aside*)

Didn't I tell you? Miss May Lorraine is certainly the first aid to the injured. (*To her.*) Won't you sit down?

(*GEORGIA sits on the sofa.*)

BUCK

You tell Miss Lorraine that I'd like to, the best in the world, and I know she needs it or she wouldn't send for it, but—

GEORGIA

I beg your pardon. I meant that Miss Lorraine told me about you. The business I spoke of is my own, and if you have the time I—

BUCK

Oh, I've got more time than a boat can haul. Make yourself comfortable and tell me all about Miss May and the rest of the ladies' aid society up at the Casino.

GEORGIA

I'm afraid I don't know very much about them. I've never been in the Casino. You see, my mother did sewing for Miss Lorraine and the other ladies there before she was taken sick, but they haven't been at our house since.

BUCK

Oh, that's the answer, eh? I thought your birth certificate was a little bit fresh for you to be mingling with that mob.

GEORGIA (*piqued*)

Well, I am older than I look. Why, I am nearly as old as Miss Lorraine. I heard her say she was twenty-one.

BUCK

She meant she was twenty-one. She hasn't been bothered by the Gerry Society for some time.

GEORGIA

Miss Lorraine told me that she had heard you had met with an accident—

BUCK (*aside*)

She *heard* I had! I guess they had to wake her up to tell her what happened. (*To her.*) Yes. I and a party of lady friends were frolicking through the Park in a big red naughtymobile, when a tree walked right out in the middle of the road and I looped the loop.

GEORGIA

—and that you were confined to your room, convalescing.

BUCK (*mystified*)

No-o, I've been playing solitaire most of the time.

GEORGIA

So I thought I would have a better opportunity to talk to you here than if I waited and came to your office.

BUCK (*aside*)

My office? I wonder what kind of a frame-up this is?

GEORGIA

I wanted to ask you to look at this. (*Rises, goes to BUCK and hands him a roll of manuscript.*) It is a collection of poems that my mother wrote when she was a girl. I don't know very much about such things, but I think they are beautiful, and my father used to read them when he was tired and worried. He said that they made him forget that there was anything in the world but contentment and peace. (*Returns to the sofa, slowly.*)

BUCK (*handling the manuscript awkwardly*)

I'm much obliged, I'm sure. I'll read 'em some time and—

GEORGIA

But, please, won't you look at them now and tell me if you think you can use them? I don't want to leave them with anyone. I'd rather not sell them at all, only—only, mother is ill, and we want to leave New York and go back home.

BUCK (*aside*)

Somebody has been stringing that kid. (*To her.*) Did you say Miss Lorraine sent you to me?

GEORGIA

Yes, sir. I thought that Miss Lorraine, being an actress, would know many literary people; so I told her about these poems and asked her whom I could get to make a book out of them. She sent me to you. She said you were a bookmaker, and about the easiest one she knew.

BUCK (*aside*)

So this is that lady's idea of a joke! The next time I see Miss May Lorraine I'll decorate her with a bunch of conversation that'll make her wonder why she missed such a good chance to keep still. (*Looking at the manuscript.*) How the devil am I going to get out of this without putting that little thing wise to some of the meanness there is in this world? (*To her.*) Yes, little girl, I'm a bookmaker all right, but the books I make—well, they haven't got any poetry in 'em. (*Handing the manuscript back to her.*)

GEORGIA

No, no; I would like to have you

look at them, anyhow, and tell me what you think of them.

BUCK

Sure! I just love poetry (*aside*)—and the toothache. (*To her.*) So I'll be glad to give you an expert opinion of it. (*Aside.*) O, Lord! I wonder if I've got to wade through all this? (*Reads aloud.*) "In Frankfort Town—" Well, well, this poetry is about Kentucky, isn't it? (*Reads to himself for a moment.*) Why, I can just see the blue grass hills rising up behind that old town now.

GEORGIA

Were you ever in Frankfort?

BUCK

Sure—I used to live there.

GEORGIA

Oh, I must tell mamma! It is our old home, and mamma says that the best people in the world come from Frankfort.

BUCK

Your mother is dead right. The first good man I ever knew was in that same town of Frankfort.

GEORGIA

Won't you tell me about him?

BUCK

Why, there ain't much to tell, 'cepting that he was an awful good man, and I met him at a time when I needed to know someone of that sort.

GEORGIA

Please tell me all about it. I'd rather hear about home folks than anything else in the world.

BUCK

All right. People that want to tell you the story of their lives run for the end of the book with me, but I guess if I make this yarn clear to you I'll have to dope out my whole pedigree. I believe most people start bigraphing with, "My childhood days were spent," or something like that, but I didn't have any childhood days. Mine were hustling days. I was busier than a one-eyed kid at a three-ring circus, trying to keep Toots and me from going to bed hungry.

GEORGIA

Who was Toots?

BUCK

That was my little sister. We lived in Louisville then, in the funniest little tumble-down shanty you ever saw, down in the Cabbage Patch. There were just us three, Dad and Toots and me. Dad was an awful busy man those days. He was looking after the interests of several of the Kentucky distilleries. He didn't get around to the house more than once in a while, but I don't remember that we ever cried ourselves to sleep over not seeing him. So I sold papers and did everything else I could, and the kiddy used to tag along after me and run herself ragged tryin' to help me. So we kept something to eat in the house most of the time, if we did slip up on it once in a while.

GEORGIA

Do you mean that you went without food sometimes?

BUCK

Oh, we didn't miss any meals, but we did postpone a few. We got along pretty well for a couple of youngsters that were turned loose on the world. The neighbors didn't have much more than we did, but they kinder kept their eyes peeled for us, and when Dad got one of his worried spells and tried to kill a rhinoceros with a lead pencil, they'd come in and soothe him. Things were moving along pretty soft for us until, one night in the early fall, I came home and found the little one sick. She wouldn't eat the supper I brought to her, and she kept talking about things I wasn't wise to. I didn't know how sick she really was till a long in the middle of the night when I was rubbing her hands to try and get 'em warm—(*Drops his head in his hands for a moment.*) Of course, I wasn't old enough to understand it, and I only knew that when I thought of it I hated everything in sight, and just as soon as it was all over I put on my little raggedy hat and ran away. (*Glances at her.*) Why, I've made her cry! Oh, I'm awful sorry, little girl! I didn't mean—(*Forces a smile and offers fruit.*) Won't you have an orange? Why, I didn't mean to make you cry.

GEORGIA (*with her handkerchief to her eyes*)

I'm not crying.

BUCK

I don't know why I told you all that stuff that ain't of no interest to nobody. I don't believe I ever told anyone about it before. Maybe because the kind of people I go around with wouldn't just understand. We were having a pretty good time till I went and crabbed it, weren't we? (*Changing his tone to one of assumed gaiety.*) Well, I just told you that so that you would know what a little freckle-faced chap, that was doing a hotfoot on that Louisville and Frankfort pike, had on his mind. But I kept on going, in spite of stone bruises and an ingrowing appetite, until finally I lit in Frankfort.

GEORGIA

I've ridden on that pike lots of times.

BUCK

I expect it is a good pike to ride on, but it wasn't a bit soothing to bare feet. Well, I nosed around town till I found a stable of race horses, where they let me stick around and live with the rest of the stableboys, because I was too insignificant to kick out, I suppose. One morning, when it had just turned cold weather, the big, fine-looking man that owned the stable came in with a basket on his arm, and said, "Boys, that old stork bird was around at my house last night and left a pretty nice little baby girl, so I guess it's up to me," and he opened the basket and gave 'em all cigars and some of the stuff that makes everybody love Kentucky, and then he got a peek at me. "Youngster," he says, "you ain't old enough to enjoy these things. You'd better get yourself a pair of shoes. It's getting frosty," and he tossed me a five-dollar bill.

GEORGIA

Isn't that just like them? Bless their old hearts!

BUCK

You bet! They are certainly there with the "big heart" stuff. Well, sir, do you know I took Mr. Five-Spot and ran all the way to town, lickety-split, as hard as I could go; and I bought

those shoes. They were the first new ones I ever owned. Then I ran all the way back, carrying one shoe in each hand. When I got a little way from the place I set down and put 'em on and strolled up to the stable feeling so proud you couldn't hand me a ripe peach on a forty-foot pole. But that night, just for a kid, I suppose, some of the stableboys tried to swipe that beautiful pair of shoes, and I was so afraid they'd do it that I skipped out and ran away again. I haven't seen Frankfort since. So, you see, it ain't much of a story, after all, but it meant a lot to me, for meeting that one good man kinder put me wise that everybody wasn't just waiting for a chance to land on me with a swift kick, and things had a brighter look after that. (*Looks at the manuscript.*) Is there any more of this poetry about Kentucky? (*Turns the leaves of the manuscript and reads.*) "Acrostic to Georgia Langford." (*Looks at her in astonishment.*)

GEORGIA

Mamma wrote that about me when I was a baby.

BUCK

Is your name Georgia Langford?

GEORGIA

Yes, sir.

BUCK

Are you Colonel George Langford's little girl?

GEORGIA

Yes, sir; I am his only child.

BUCK

You were fifteen years old last Thanksgiving Day, weren't you?

GEORGIA

Why, how did you know that?

BUCK

It was— Why I—I— Well, you see, I published the birth records of the State of Kentucky not long ago, and I took particular notice of all the Frankfort people's ages. (*Draws some money from his pocket, and in doing so gives his leg a slight wrench, which causes a twinge of pain. Looks at the leg, then at the money, and starts to divide it. After a moment's pause he takes all the money in one hand and limps across the stage to GEORGIA, taking her hand.*)

THE SMART SET

Little girl, you tell your mamma that Mr. Buck Wilson, the bookmaker, thinks her poetry is just bully, and he don't want ever to forget that little verse about your birth; so he's going to keep it, whether he ever publishes it or not. (*Puts the money in her hand.*)

GEORGIA (*looking at the money*)

Thank you so much, sir. I was sure someone would like the poems, but I didn't think they would be worth so much. I am going to take mamma back to Frankfort as soon as we can get ready, and she can have a long rest. I

must go now and tell her all about it. (*Looks up into his face.*) Good-bye, sir.

BUCK (*taking both her hands and kissing her forehead*)

Good-bye, little girl.

(*GEORGIA goes out*)

BUCK (*turning down stage. He pauses in deep thought and starts to limp to the chair.*)

I hope this leg of mine gets well pretty soon!

CURTAIN



THE QUESTION

By ARTHUR STRINGER

DISTURBED by dreams, he turns up to the stars
 Half-brutelike eyes to ask if stalking Death
 Shall set him free or bring some newer ill.
 One stifling moment at the eternal bars
 He wakes and rages, and exhausts his breath
 Rattling the eternal chains—and then is still!



THE RETORT CAUSTIC

“**A**ND now, Miss Pepper,” asked the Professor, when he had fully elucidated his theory, “do you not think, as I, that men progress after death?”

“If they do not,” replied Miss Pepper, “it would seem entirely unnecessary for most of them to die.”

HER HOUR OF RETROVISION

By MIRIAM CRUIKSHANK

MRS. OGDEN VAN ALLEN watched the ruffled strings of the waitress's trim white apron disappear through the spring door into the pantry; then, faintly curious, she turned once more to the unusually bulky envelope addressed in her sister's handwriting—Eloise was seldom diffuse on paper.

The eight o'clock breakfast, as much a part of the day in this well ordered establishment as the rising of the sun, was over. Her two small stepdaughters, after imprinting dutiful kisses upon her cheek, had gone off to school. Her pretense at the adjustment of domestic machinery—for the servants were bewilderingly competent—was at an end, and her husband was out of town. It was their first twenty-four-hour separation since their wedding day five months before, and when Ogden bade her good-bye he had expressed the hope that she would not be lonely. Lonely! Would a savage be lonely, she wondered, if transplanted from his native haunts of wood and stream to the pave of effete civilization? She broke the seal of the letter.

"This came for you yesterday," Eloise wrote. "It is, as you see, addressed to Miss Marcia Winston, and was forwarded by the postman who delivered at the Alhambra. Possibly it is only an advertisement, for surely everyone knows by this time that you are married, but I thought I'd better send it on. We are all well and—" The sheet drifted to the floor, the concluding page unread, as Marcia Van Alen, with a little cry of surprise, caught sight of the inclosure.

So he did not know of her marriage—

his use of her old name proved that. Announcements and newspapers had both failed to reach him in his wanderings in the Far East, as she had fancied they might. Correspondence between them had languished in the first six months of his absence, and then it had not seemed to matter—much. Today his black, upright, clerkly written characters brought back with startling vividness the life that had once been hers—the life in which Ted Spencer had played so important a part.

"—Only landed yesterday"—Ted was ever chary of introductions and salutations—"and am up to my eyes in work, but hope to see you Thursday. I'll drop in at the Palace—top floor back—for I'm taking for granted you're at the old stand—about twelve, for an old time chat and feed. If the novel is finished I may not be too late for the illustrations, as we planned—"

Marcia got up and walked to the window. She looked out at the wide asphalted street, damp and slippery from the November drizzle; at the rows of houses with high brownstone steps, sedately lining the opposite pavement; at the few passers-by; but she saw none of it. She was back at the old Alhambra Apartments, in her own shabby little domain under the eaves. She had been out all the morning interviewing Sunday editors who were captious and syndicate managers who must be persuaded that her explanations of the component parts of raspberry jelly or of the intricacies of tissue paper patterns were convincing.

Her skirts were dragged and her shoes a bit damp, but there was no time to change. Ted was to drop in

to lunch on his way between assignments, and she must have the two-burner gas stove and the other kitchenette paraphernalia in readiness. Because of a recent cheque, she had been extravagant enough to buy oysters—Ted had a peculiar weakness for them creamed. He— Oh, how absurd she was, how pitifully absurd! Ted had been away for three years. No doubt he was already jeering at himself for sending that letter. Of course someone had told him of her marriage—and when Thursday came— Why, today was Thursday—today! It was nearly ten now, and by twelve he would be at the Alhambra.

He would climb to the top floor and knock, and a stranger would come. She wondered what the stranger would be like. Possibly another young woman who did Sunday supplement and woman's page work and dreamed of a great novel—would *she* in time give it all up for surroundings like this? She had no notion of the identity of the present tenant of her old home. Because the lease had still two months to run at the time of her wedding, she had clung to the key until it was no longer legally hers. Then she had told Ogden and asked him to return it—some time; she had not cared to question him concerning conditions at the Alhambra. Now she wondered if it would be wise to try to reach that new tenant by telephone, and ask her to make the necessary explanations to Ted Spencer when he came; but that seemed out of the question, since she didn't know her name. She might go to see her—might borrow the apartment for an hour—might pretend for just a little while that she was her old self—and then—and then— Her cheeks were crimson, her eyes dancing.

Otherwise her day would be vastly like the hundred and fifty others that had preceded it. Her sister-in-law would drop in presently on her way to the dressmaker's, and they would talk of servants and clothes and little Ruth's tendency to croup. There was a meeting of a charitable board at three and the bridge club at four. She had or-

dered luncheon—the rice and mutton chops deemed suitable for midday juvenile appetites, and the children would be there—soft-voiced, well behaved little things, with a subdued enthusiasm for roller skating. Could she—should she—stand another hour of the respectable uneventfulness of it all without screaming? Marcia wheeled sharply from the window and laid her hand on the electric button at her left with such vigor as to rouse a fleeting consternation in the breast of the white-capped sovereign of the pantry, who returned to hear of a revolution in the domestic program for the day.

Upstairs, confronted by a wealth of closet space, Mrs. Van Alen brushed contemptuously past a natty silk raincoat and burrowed deep into camphor-scented recesses. There was a blue cheviot affair, her best last winter—ready made, of course, and possibly a bit doubtful as to shoulder cut, but deemed eminently satisfactory in the Alhambra neighborhood. A modest little silk turban, her thickest veil and her shabbiest gloves next found favor in her eyes, and then, with one last scrutinizing look into the long mirror, she was ready.

At a little after eleven o'clock a quietly dressed young woman, who might have got her living by writing books or by peddling them, stepped into the dark, narrow hall of the Alhambra Apartments, where Mrs. Michael Kearney, a gingham apron tied about her ample form, was absorbed in her weekly scouring.

"Blessed Mother! But it's Miss Winston herself—Mrs. Van Alen—excusin' me, ma'am—" and then in the basement regions there rose from the throat of the youngest Kearney an insistent wailing. The anxious mother, heedless of her visitor or of her bucket of soapy water, hastened to assuage her offspring's grief, calling a parting: "Yez can walk right up, ma'am. The key's jist in the lether box, an' ye'll find everything in place."

"But, Mrs. Kearney—" Marcia stood for an instant irresolute. But the hall was chilly and close with the com-

mingled odors of cooking in its various stages, and the protestations of the Kearney heir showed no signs of abating. Time was short and the key was in the old place. Why not go up? Explanations could be made later.

Breathlessly she gained the fifth floor and ran a pair of groping fingers along the bottom of the letter box. The key fitted into the keyhole with old time accuracy, turned and then—Mrs. Van Alen drew back and brushed a shabbily gloved hand before her eyes. Surely this was no age for visions, no day for enchantments, those dark, steep flights of steps no road to Yesterday, yet—

The Alhambra Apartments were—so ran the advertisement—rented partially furnished. This might account for the familiar presence of the once glaring American Smyrna rug, the tables and chairs, but surely not for the makeshift divan in the corner and the open desk, her desk, at which she had sat so often. She remembered again that she had asked Ogden no questions about her old home. The new tenant might have been pleased at the arrangement of things—might have wanted to take them over herself, but why had the new tenant clung to the green tablecloth, with the *fleur de lys* border of Ted's stencilling, to the half-dozen pet engravings, to the charcoal head—also Ted's handiwork—to the custom of keeping a tiny bunch of violets in the little glass vase on the mantel? Obviously the new tenant was not an original person, and in the matter of the violets she had allowed her habit of imitation to extend to the line of impertinence. Ogden had established the custom of the violets—had sent them to her every morning during the three months of their engagement.

Marcia slipped off her hat and coat and with them some of her bewilderment. She looked over her marketing with an appraising eye and rejoiced that she had forgotten nothing—not even salt. She remembered occasions when Ted had been forced to descend to the basement and borrow this necessary article from Mrs. Kearney. A

peep into the kitchenette brought a slight return of first sensations. "The truth of the matter is," Mrs. Ogden Van Alen announced solemnly to herself, "that I have been dreaming all along, and this is the real thing. I am not married; there isn't any house or children—or—Ogden—or dinner tonight—or roller skates. After Ted is gone I'll have to hustle if I want to get my copy in before Saturday."

"Marcia," called a familiar voice from the hall. "Confound the old hole! It is darker than Egypt, and Kearney is more afraid of gas light than he is of eternal damnation. Where are you, Marcia?" Mrs. Van Alen opened the door and held out a welcoming hand.

He was the same—no, not quite the same. Broader, sunburnt—and had he always had such shocking ties and boots, or was it because Ogden—

"My dear girl!" Spencer caught the hand in his and his fingers slid along toward her wrist. He drew her a little toward him; the wrist turned rigid within his grasp and Marcia's head flew back. He laughed good-naturedly.

"You never used to be so squeamish," he said; "but never mind. You are looking fine, Marcia—a little heavier, but then you were too Burne-Jonesy for comfort—elbows better covered, I fancy and— Lord, child, what have you done to your hair?"

"My hair?" Marcia's cheeks crimsoned. Guiltily she glanced into the mirror. "I had to have it done for a reception yesterday," she answered glibly enough—"shampoo—Marcel and all—and some of the glory remains. Do—do you like it?"

"Like it!" Ted struck an attitude and salaamed in mock reverence. "Does the humble subject like the regal splendor of his queen? But when did you get into the reception class, Miss Winston? You haven't turned society reporter, I trust?"

"I do a few things occasionally—to help out," Marcia parried hurriedly, as she turned to the kitchenette. "Now don't stand idle, Ted. I have a busy

afternoon ahead of me and our oysters are all ready. Have you forgotten how to set a table in your wanderings?"

"Same old girl," said Spencer contentedly, as he brushed the contents of the table onto the divan. "You have the domestic instinct all right, Marcia. What a pity some good chap didn't marry you!"

"While there's life there's hope," said Marcia evenly. She turned away to hide her crimson cheeks. She had asked, nay, demanded, this hour of fate. Surely she could pay the price, however disagreeable.

"Ye-es, I know." They were seated at the table and Ted, lounging back in his chair, watched her hands busy with the bread and butter. "But you are getting on. Thirty, isn't it? And you've cut yourself off from the men in the outside world, while the men of my sort—"

"—Prefer the wistful-eyed *ingenuë*, who has been kept unspotted from the world of toil." Marcia Van Alen's smile was a trifle wan. "Isn't it a pity, Ted, that getting an honest living should have so disastrous an effect on one's matrimonial prospects? But, then, we pay for most things in this world. You, for instance, must reform in the matter of cigarettes and footstools if you would not bring tears to the gazelle orbs of some fair damsel, while I—"

"Confound it, Marcia, you snap a fellow up too quickly!" Spencer tossed his cigarette into the wastebasket and brought his offending extremities to a more conventional posture. "I don't mind telling you that there was a sweet little girl on the steamer coming over who revolutionized some of my ideas, but there was nothing more in it. Frankly, now that I have come back to the old life, and find how comfortably I am fitting into it once more, I have decided that I want to stay—providing you want to stay, too. I fancy we were built for each other, after all, Marcia."

"You think so?" Marcia's voice was very low; her lips trembled; but Spencer was too absorbed in his own scheme of reasoning to notice.

"Why not?" he queried blandly.

"We are tremendously chummy—or used to be. We like the same plays, books and soups—which last is an important factor in matrimonial bliss, if one may believe the all-wise spinster who conducts the correspondence column of the woman's page. We are neither of us in the heyday of youth; therefore you will not expect me to make love like a matinee idol or the hero of the latest best seller, while I shall not be disillusioned with you in maturity, since you've already—to some extent—arrived. I am in for a pretty good thing on the morning *Globe*, so there's nothing left but—"

"It's awfully good of you, but, unfortunately—or I might say fortunately for the taxing of your generosity—" Marcia hesitated, and something in her face arrested Spencer's wavering attention.

"You mean—" He got up suddenly and crossed the room to her side, dropping dramatically on one knee by her chair. "Surely I'm not too late, Marcia. Is there another chap ahead of me? Cater used to be a bit sweet on you, I remember, but no—someone told me he had married Miss Betts, who did the fashion plates, and had gone to housekeeping in a Harlem flat. Little Ferguson—you never had any time for him. Whoever he is, he doesn't count. I am in earnest, girl. I want you."

"You are sure, Ted?" Marcia had drawn a little away from him. Her head was tilted back; her eyes and mouth were sweet and mocking. "It helps some, doesn't it," she drawled, "to know that Ogden Van Alen has discovered me, too."

"Van Alen!" Spencer stared. "Not the eminently correct chap from 'down home,' who used to hang around in the early days when you first essayed to skirt Bohemia's coat? I thought he married his senior partner's daughter, years back, and was making his mark as a financier. Surely, Marcia—" Her cheeks flamed crimson under the implication hidden in the last two words.

"Mrs. Van Alen died about six

months after you sailed," she answered hurriedly, "and two years later—" She put out her left hand impulsively as though to place a barrier between them, and a stray gleam of yellow sunlight struggled through the breaking mist into the narrow window and played on the heavy gold band that circled the third finger. Spencer got to his feet.

"You married him," he finished for her, and his tone had in it a new metallic ring. "I congratulate him, and you upon—your success as an actress. Good afternoon."

Long after he had left her Marcia sat still in her chair, staring unseeingly about the little room. It was over—her hour of retrovision. She had seen things as they had been—as they might have been—as they were. She had discovered that another doll was stuffed with sawdust, and that the present was unchanged. In a little while she would go back; she would live through the uneventful monotony of the days, missing something—the intangible, illusive something that had been lost in the November mists; but that was—life. Mrs. Kearney's voice, cordial, apologetic, rich with brogue, broke in upon her.

"An' it's roight up, thin, ye'll be goin'; Mrs. Van Alen's still there—leastwise—" The sounds trailed off to a murmur and were lost in the slamming of the basement door. There was a firm footfall in the corridor, an imperative knock and then—

"Ogden!" Marcia stared at him helplessly across the little table littered with soiled dishes, cigarette stumps and charred ashes. For the second time that day she put out her hand as though to ward off calamity, and this time it was caught and pressed firmly against the breast of a London tailored topcoat.

"I had a fancy I should find you here." The words came jerkily; the man's thin, clean-cut face was flushed a dark red, for, despite his thirty-six years, the hair graying about the temples, his two essays into matrimony and his reputation as a power in the

world of finance, Ogden Van Alen was very much of a boy at heart. "I got in earlier than I expected, and Janet said you were lunching out. I thought—I hoped—Marcia, were you a little homesick, too?"

"Homesick?" She repeated the word with grave questioning. "Perhaps a little—I hardly know how to explain. A letter came this morning from a man I used to know. He had been away for three years, and had not heard of my marriage. He wanted to see me again—in the old way. I didn't know who was here, but I thought perhaps the new tenant—she must be a very curious person, Ogden, for she has kept everything precisely as I left it, and hasn't put a trace of her individuality anywhere—would let me borrow the apartment for an hour and—"

"So that you could go back," said Van Alen gravely. He put back a straying tendril of her hair with a caressing touch; the last trace of his boyish shyness had dropped from him. "You couldn't go back alone, Marcia—that is impossible for us now. I know, for I have tried."

"Tried?" The word was scarcely a whisper. "You mean that you—"

"That I, too, tried, dear. It *is* hard, as you said just now, to explain sometimes. When you gave me the key that day to return, I—the inner me, that is—was pretty well steeped in azure. Stocks and bonds are all absorbing up to a certain point, but I had got a little beyond that point once or twice, and I wanted to get beyond again. The babies, bless their hearts, are dear little mites, but I wanted you, Marcia—and though you were seated only a few feet off, smiling at me, there seemed an unfathomable gulf between. So I came down to the old Alhambra, seeking that which I had lost, and because there were no other tenants clamoring for possession of the fifth floor back, I bartered with Kearney for a renewal of the lease for another six months. I wanted to be able to come in here occasionally and try to get again the something that had once seemed so much to us both. But it

was a failure. The place and you are inextricably associated, and I discovered that I could neither go back nor forward without you. We must go together, Marcia, or else drift aimlessly alone in still shallow pools. Which shall it be, sweetheart?"

The rain had ceased; the late afternoon sunlight broke defiantly through the mist and danced on the walls of the little room and into the hearts of the two who watched it. "We will come back now and then," Marcia said

softly, "until it is time to turn in the key for good, and then—" She caught her breath.

"Would you like to keep it longer, Marcia?" There was a faint shadow in Van Alen's eyes. "Will it help to break the monotony of everyday? I want your happiness above all things, remember—and if—"

She shook her head and, laying her hand on his arm, drew him toward the door.

"Life is made up of everydays, Ogden," she said.



HER BARRETTE

By JOHN NORTHERN HILLIARD

IF I were poor Pierrot, and you
 Were artless, gay Pierrette,
 I'd filch the silver of the stars,
 And from the sun bright golden bars
 To wear in your barrette—
 If I were poor Pierrot, and you
 Were artless, gay Pierrette.

If I were Aucassin, my dear,
 And you were Nicolette,
 I'd weave a chain of golden words
 And set it to the song of birds,
 To go with your barrette—
 If I were Aucassin, my dear,
 And you were Nicolette.

If I were Jason—ah, my love,
 I fear I should forget
 The Fleece and fare across the seas
 In quest of precious ivories
 And stones for your barrette!
 If I were Jason—ah, my love,
 I know I should forget!



WHEN you begin to take things philosophically you are settling down.

AU RESTAURANT

Par PAUL GILBERT

C E soir-là, le restaurant à vingt-trois sous était comble. Les convives, des habitués, employés et ouvrières, entraient en hâte, mangeaient vite et causaient peu. Les bras surchargés de portions, les garçons affairés circulaient autour des tables avec une adresse mécanique. L'air sentait la viande chaude et l'eau grasse, et des bouffées de chaleur émanaient des cuisines.

Les joues trop rouges, les yeux trop noirs, une femme entra, qui venait là pour manger. Elle s'assit sans bruit et commanda un potage. Une modiste, à sa droite, indifférente, se serra pour lui faire place, sans la regarder, et reprit la lecture du journal illustré qui reposait contre son verre. Un vieil employé barbu, qui tranchait son pain avec lenteur, suspendit son geste un instant et le reprit aussitôt. Les autres voisins de table ne parurent point s'apercevoir que le convive parti venait d'être remplacé.

Mais, en face, à la table voisine, trois larbins, accoudés devant des petits verres, tournèrent la tête ensemble, à l'entrée de la femme, avec un air de surprise amusée, et affectèrent de ricaner en la dévisageant. Elle leur lança un regard noir et attendit, immobile, tandis que le commis, rougeaud, tout jeune, brutal et ennuyé, nettoyait le marbre à grand coups de torchon. Puis il y étendit une serviette encore humide de la lessive, apporta le pain, le vin et le couvert. Le garçon déposa sur la table un bol de métal plein de bouillon brûlant qu'il versa dans l'assiette.

Les trois larbins observaient ce manège comme s'il eût été nouveau pour eux. Ils ricanèrent plus fort et des

gros mots coururent. Quelques têtes se tournèrent. La femme tremblait de fureur contenue. Son visage, encore agréable, prit une expression de cruauté résolue qui fit baisser le ton aux rieurs. Mais, comme on les regardait, ils se crurent engagés d'honneur à poursuivre, et le plus jeune, un petit blond, chafouin et frisé, s'accouda sur la nappe avec une mine de dégoût, et lâcha le mot de "p . . ." sans désigner personne. Comme la réplique tardait, il s'enhardit, baissa la tête, et, de son pouce tendu, sans la regarder, montra la femme en face. Le gros cocher, rubicond, au bout de la table, étouffa sa gaieté dans son verre, et le valet de pied fit chorus, assis entre eux, osseux et jaune, et rit très haut, sans en avoir envie.

Alors, brusquement, la femme se leva, hideuse, et, empoignant le couteau qui traînait à sa droite, d'une voix qui fit retourner toute la salle, menaça les rieurs de leur crever les yeux. Les hommes eurent peur. Le valet de pied devint blême. Des convives effarés se levèrent. La petite modiste, effrayée, transporta prestement son couvert sur une table éloignée. Le gros cocher perdit contenance, et, d'une voix mal assurée :

— Allons, calme-toi, ma petite, calme-toi.

— Petite, moi! cria la femme.

Elle jeta son couteau, et, prenant son visage à pleines mains, la bouche grande ouverte, releva des doigts ses lèvres peintes et découvrit des gencives sanglantes, tuméfiées, où quelques longues dents brunes tenaient encore au milieu d'un trou noir. Le geste était tragique. Les hommes se turent et se

détournèrent. La femme éclata en injures; le vieil employé la fit rasseoir.

Alors, tandis que les convives pressaient le garçon, la femme acheva le potage, sans mettre fin à ses injures. Mais sa fureur était tombée et des larmes tremblaient dans sa voix. De tous côtés, des hommes l'entouraient qui, pour mieux la dévisager, feignaient de se rendre au vestiaire ou d'échanger un mot avec un camarade; mais, ce soir-là, les regards des hommes l'offensaient. Silencieusement maintenant, les yeux baissés, son réticule à sa gauche, elle absorbait hâtivement un ragoût sans lever la tête, et des larmes coulaient sur son fard.

Les hommes, autour d'elle, échangeaient des regards entendus et des propos sournois. Les partants ricanèrent au passage; les arrivants étaient mis au courant de l'aventure et la trouvaient bouffonne. Les trois larbins donnaient le ton. Ils avaient reconquis leur belle assurance: ils parlaient haut, et sans vergogne, du sexe en général et de sa proverbiale et native coquinerie.

Perdue en son chagrin, la femme, affaissée, enlaidie, fixait son pain d'un œil stupide. Soudain, elle s'éveilla, et, d'une voix rauque, appela le garçon qui ne vint pas. Un murmure de réprobation répondit seul à cet appel. La femme tressaillit et son regard fit le tour de l'assemblée: partout des faces tendues, des regards dégoûtés et des rictus haineux. Alors, de sa bouche édentée, elle cracha sur le carreau, en signe de mépris. Aussitôt les clameurs s'élevèrent:

— Hou! hou! A la porte! Enlevez-la! A Saint-Lazare!

Et les larbins criaient plus haut que tous les autres.

La femme riposta par des injures ignobles; la salle s'emplit de cris et d'invectives, et le gérant, effaré, la serviette sous le bras, descendit l'escalier en grande hâte. Un vieux monsieur très convenable, porteur d'une serviette en cuir, et décoré des palmes académiques, lui fit part des doléances des habitués qui exigeaient l'expulsion de "cette gourgandine, objet de dégoût et de scandale." Le gérant s'approcha de la femme, et, très respectueux:

— Madame, je regrette. . . . On réclame votre départ immédiat, et, vous le comprenez, la direction de l'établissement ne peut que déférer au désir de sa clientèle.

La femme était debout, blanche de rage. On put croire un instant qu'elle allait se ruer sur cet homme correct; mais une nouvelle crise de larmes emporta sa fureur, et soudain, étouffant ses sanglots, elle ramassa ses jupes, tourna le dos et s'enfuit éperdument, sous les huées et les bravos de l'assemblée.

— Ces roulures-là, dit le gros cocher, c'est pas des femmes, c'est pis que des bêtes.

— C'est de la charogne, dit le valet de pied, c'est de la pourriture d'hôpital.

Il se tut: la femme était debout, dehors, les bras levés, les yeux sanglants, allongée sur les vitres. Cheveux défaits et bouche ouverte, elle écrasait sur le carreau son masque lamentable souillé de pleurs et maculé de fards, et l'on eût dit une image de la prostitution au désespoir.

La foule se porta vers elle avec des cris et des injures. Elle s'enfuit dans les ténèbres et ne reparut plus. Et les honnêtes gens purent enfin achever de dîner en paix.



L'AMOUR—O sentiment variable, ennemi du repos, tu vagabondes dans le cœur humain; en te jouant de lui, tu l'inondes de chagrins, de douleurs!

THE DRAMAS OF THE FORE AND AFT

By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

ONE evening in January there arrived in New York a man from the West, who in the rare old, debt-filled college days had roomed with me—well, perhaps, firstly with my cravats and cigarettes and secondly with *me*. While in the university he specialized in analytics to such a fine point that he could tell you in a flash the exact composition of every mixed drink known to science. This man, dumped onto a cold world by an unsympathetic professor of Greek, applied his stock of erudition to the lumber business, and in several years owned a bank diploma that showed he possessed five financial degrees. Despite this key to the lock of New York, however, his knowledge of the metropolis had been gained chiefly from the weekly letters that appeared in his home newspaper. He was the sort of individual who really believes the Great White Way is as gay as people say it is.

I invited him to go to the theater with me. After he had checked his coat—a thing that really only strangers in town do—he asked me, upon seating himself, to point out for him the various well known dramatic critics who were in the audience. For answer, I asked him to cast his eye around the auditorium and tell me those men whose appearance led him to believe *were* critics. After looking about with such persistency that two ushers brought him programs and a boy appeared twice with ice water, he turned to me and remarked that he did not see one single dramatic critic in the

house. I thereupon directed his attention to seven men sitting in his immediate vicinity. "They," said I, "are the leading newspaper reviewers." He gazed at me first in doubt, then in surprise. His jaw fell. "You really don't mean it!" he exclaimed. "Why, they look just like anybody else!"

It developed that my friend had become imbued with the idea that a dramatic critic was something of a cross between a human being and an orang-outang. That a critic should bear such a close resemblance to an ordinary mortal was one of the greatest shocks he had sustained in a long time. When I informed him subsequently that I myself seduced the coquettish wherewithal by going home and writing mean things about the plays, while more fortunate individuals were winning and dining and quarreling with the waiters, his astonishment knew no bounds. And my friend is only one of many like him.

For the information of all these, let it be chronicled that a dramatic reviewer will jump if you stick a pin in him; that he eats three times a day—during the theatrical season; and that he sleeps in a bed, wears clothes like other human beings and has perfect control of his limbs. Some critics can even talk intelligently. In short, a dramatic critic is a man who really does not look at all badly in evening clothes, and who is fortunate enough to get some journal to pay him more or less magnificently for expressing in print opinions that you can get for

nothing from ten thousand other theatergoers. The critic has one advantage: There are so many people who think he knows what he is talking about.

During January and in the last week of December the critic earned his salary. New productions were as thick as a certain oft quoted foliage. As usual, some were good. These may be called the dramas "of the fore." As usual, some were bad. These may be characterized the dramas "of the aft." The latter gave misguided theatergoers *mal de mer*. But enough of dramatic merit was revealed during the month to act as pepsin for the greater part of the theatrical voyage.

Distinctly, one of the most important dramas of the fore was "THE LILY," adapted from the French with such dexterous finesse by David Belasco that all the young women who have seen it have rushed madly down to Brentano's after the final curtain in search of the unexpurgated edition. The "way" of the heroine of "THE LILY" makes the "easiest way," shown at the same theater directly previous, look like a section of Broadway while the Subway was being built. In the Eugene Walter play the young woman did what she did because she had to. In "THE LILY" she does what she does just because she feels like it. *Voilà, messieurs et mesdames!* Here we have no so-called sex problem. We have the answer. If, indeed, as has been proclaimed, this latest Belasco production is a "sex problem drama," I venture to add that it is the best of the sort produced in our time, because it unconsciously solves the "problem" in question for once and for all. Turning to the last pages of the textbook of sex calculus, the solution of every one of the "problems" is found to be the same. That solution, or rather *raison d'être* for the "problem," is *inclination*. What is the use of further fuss about it? Why give the "problem" so many difficult angles it does not now and never did possess? It can be solved in the kindergarten of philosophy. Despite this, however, "THE LILY" is a proper study only for high school

graduates of morals. It will interest the young more than any other drama in town—that is one reason why they should be kept at home.

"THE LILY" is another mark of honor on the Belasco coat-of-arms, that fair and gleaming theatrical escutcheon whose most salient ornament has always been the drama rampant on a field of red. This producer might have been a gigantic figure in Wall Street. He has the knack of guessing the psychology of the market. He is the living Harriman of drama and dramatic themes. He does not believe there is good dramatic material in the Ten Commandments, and, what is more, he seems to be entirely right. The weak heroine who is led into temptation and *not* delivered from evil is his *pièce de resistance*, but he usually serves her up with such alluring trimmings that, somehow or other, 'way down in our hearts we get to love her. Belasco is a dangerous man. He could have taken Mrs. Guinness, built a pastoral Indiana play around her and made her actually lovable. I am a firm believer in the idea that for the role of a young woman demanding sympathy, an actress must be selected who *looks* sympathy deserving. All the histrionic art in the world, according to my peculiar way of looking at it, cannot make up for a wrinkled face portraying sweet sixteen. Therefore, when the producer in question has managed to win my compassion, despite my belief, for his erring Christiane, I can do no more than to say salutingly, with Clay of "Soldiers of Fortune": "You, sir, are a great soldier!" Without Clay, I add: "Of Thespis."

"THE LITTLE BROTHER OF THE RICH," by Joseph Medill Patterson and Harriet Ford, was heralded as a "satire on society." You know what that means—idle rich, monkey dinners, "affairs," divorces and all that sort of rot. The same authors showed up in splendid style the workings of a yellow newspaper in their play, "The Fourth Estate." In their latest prod-

uct they "show up" society from that very yellow newspaper standpoint. The "society" that they deal with, however, is hardly the society they would have us believe it is. Rather does it seem to be the social set that gathers in the private dining rooms of the restaurants in the winter and at Sheepshead in the summer. It is "society" as revealed by Upton Sinclair, the "society" that was spotlighted in his book, "The Money-changers." The play is replete with such lines as, "Society is corrupt and useless, just like a pampered lapdog"—to which, speaking of dogs, one is impelled to remark, "Bull"—and such further nonphiloprogenitive philosophisms as, "People born in the bosom of the plutocracy think it undignified to have children."

In one of the scenes of the play Sylvia Castle, an actress, says: "Ah, life in the theater is full of heartaches." The audience did not disagree with her. It added, "And headaches." Miss Ida Conquest made this character, with the authors' permission, as goody-goody as the conventional actress that figures in plays, and Miss Hilda Spong, in the role of a so-termed "huntress of men," made that character as wicked as the asterisks in a *risqué* novel. "A LITTLE BROTHER OF THE RICH" belongs to the Fifth Estate, the dramatic Hoboken. In further conclusion, it is to be chronicled that the leading character in the cast was named Paul Potter. In view of the Girl - from - Rector's - Moulin - Rouge tone of the play, could that, too, have been meant as part of the satire?

"KNOW THYSELF," by Paul Hervieu, was injected into the Berkeley Lyceum for a week by Arnold Daly. It was then ejected by a theatergoing public that knew *itself*.

EVEN those persons who have tired of the numerous dramatized Valentines of Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson, the Georgie-Porgies of play-writing, will find a lot of enjoyment in the latest love affair from their pens, called "YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT."

Before going any further, I submit that Messrs. Tarkington and Wilson must believe the dramatic unities are time, place and girl. They evidently played hookey from school on the day "action" came up for discussion, and ran off to see one of Hough and Adams's musical comediocrities. These latter young gentlemen from Chicago are to the cuddle-up-a-little-closer music show what the authors of the play under discussion have come to be to the come - and - nestle - closely - by - my - side drama. They use fountain pens filled with "horses' necks." And with paraphrastic apologies to the Sultan of Sulu, there's a lemon in it!

In the instance of "YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT," however, Charles Frohman has alleviated the aggravated case of lovesickness by injecting into the play the splendid art of Otis Skinner with capable support. The result is as pleasant an evening of entertainment as I can recommend to you in New York. In the role of the poor one-night stand mummer possessed of a two-hundred-nights-in-New-York love for his little actress protégée, Mr. Skinner is as thoroughly individual and delightful as he was in "The Honor of the Family." He succeeds in investing the part of the grease-painted swashbuckler with the alternating tears and smiles of a very real sympathy, and in his effort receives the able assistance of a young leading woman named Jewell, who is supplied abundantly with "sympathetic looks," regarding the essentiality of which I have already hazarded an opinion. "YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT" bears a general intrinsic likeness to the same playwrights' "Man From Home," the play that made Kokomo famous. In both we have the poor man in love with the girl who is temporarily smitten with more refulgent masculine glamour. And in both, at ten minutes to eleven, the girl comes to realize the "true worth" of the man who has been running second all through the first three acts.

THE New Theater is doing very nicely, thank you. Although it still

sees fit to brace up its constitution by taking the foreign dramatic baths rather than the native treatment, it must be said, in all fairness, that the institution, after giving American theatergoers considerable pleasure with its revival of the Sheridan comedy, continued the good work with some more foreignness by Rudolf Besier entitled "Don." This play is teacup comedy with Bénédictine on the side. It is a dramatization of innocence with a stick in it. It is entertainment based on the premise that where innocence is bliss 'tis yet wise to be discreet. And it is highly amusing.

The play has to do with a young romanticist of decidedly Quixotic temperament, who, perceiving that a young woman is living unhappily with her husband, calmly takes the aforesaid young woman away, registers her platonically at a hotel for the night and subsequently fights out his case with Mr. and Mrs. Grundy and their children. One of the latter, who happens to be the young woman's husband, oddly enough takes the matter somewhat more to heart than do the rest, and arrives on the scene with a revolver. The kidnapping idealist, however, convinces him that *double entente* can happen in the best regulated hotels, that he must study up on compatability of temper if he would live happily ever after with his wife, and that henceforth he must treat her considerably. The husband, promising, sees the error of his ways.

I must confess I did not. If I had a wife who was very much in love with another man, as his confessed she was, and if she gallivanted off with that man to strange roadhouses, I am quite sure that all the idealism in the world could not restrain me on her return from applying to her case either a good spanking or a good divorce lawyer. Incidentally, I wonder if the husband's revolver was loaded?

Eliminating the matter of digressive opinions, "Don," as it stands, is withal bright byplay. One leaves the theater smiling at the picture of M. Besier, his brow wrinkled, wondering to himself

what he was trying to get at with his play. Or maybe M. Besier is a friend of Bernard Shaw! Then the laugh would be on us.

IN the second act of Charles Klein's latest drama, "THE NEXT OF KIN," a character named Dr. McMurtie is made by the author to remark: "We do not need object lessons from playwrights." Did Mr. Klein cast his bread upon the waters in this line, and did it return to smite his play? "THE NEXT OF KIN" was not welcomed to the metropolitan theatrical family fireside with any considerable warmth. Like other recent dramas from the Klein pen, it had an object lesson, and this particular lesson, one in the crooked arm of the law, proved to be one of the undesirable sort included in the sweeping assertion made by McMurtie against his dramatic creator.

Mr. Klein is a serious dramatist—either that or he has been kidding us. In any event, he has been a successful dramatist, which must mean that neither he nor we have any complaint coming. But I, for one, do hope that in his next effort he will turn over a new leaf. I shall be the first to applaud him if he does. While not venturing to waste any space on the oft told tale of the "mission" of the theater—who is there who cares about "missions"?—I submit, really, that Mr. Klein makes the box office a registrar's office. When one goes to hear a Klein play, one is not buying a ticket so much as paying, rather, a tuition fee. I relish lectures, instructive arguments and enlightening discourses, but not between a quarter after eight and eleven o'clock at night. I want a program then, not a textbook. And if the worst comes to the worst, give me a series of maudlin, moony love scenes rather than a dramatic exploitation of those subjects that have offices in lower Broadway. I hold my pen in readiness to praise you, Mr. Klein. Won't you give me—and all the others—a chance?

The central figure in "THE NEXT OF KIN" was Paula Marsh, a young girl

whose relatives were determined to take from her property that was hers by right of inheritance. Miss Hedwig Reicher, of a tall, dark, commandingly tragic personality, was cast for the part. Her "art" was all that could be asked, but she did not "look sympathetic"—there we are again—and as a consequence her whole performance failed, fell flat. One of the first to appreciate this was Mr. Harris, her manager, and Miss Grace Elliston was substituted in the role. Miss Elliston may not be as efficient an actress, in the too widely accepted sense of the word, as Miss Reicher, but the uncontradictory fact remains that, by merely *looking* the part, the effect of her performance aided the play materially. One of the most difficult emotions to invoke is the longing to offer a protecting arm to a woman who looks as if she had just stepped out of a gymnasium.

"THE COMMANDING OFFICER," by Theodore Burt Sayre, proved to be a very interesting, finely built melodrama of life at those Western army posts innocently muckraked for many years by the Laura Jean Libby of the United States Army, Captain Charles King. The make-up of all such fiction, on or off the stage, is usually the same—Colonel's wife, lieutenant, suspicion, *et cetera*, to the final conciliatory curtain. Out of this much stropped material, however, Mr. Sayre succeeded in evolving a stirring dramatic narrative, the force of which was accentuated by the able acting of such performers as Charles Millward, Edward Martindel, Miss Isabel Irving and Miss Rosa Rand. The military play is ever an attractive form of dramatic entertainment. By nature we are fascinated by the uniform, the glint of the saber and the distant rumble of the sound that means duty. One of these days a military play is going to come along, take Broadway by the ears and establish what some writers will refer to as a "cycle." Cycle—rubbish! The time for the military play is always here. If there are no good new ones to be had, substantial proof might be af-

forded through a revival of "Secret Service" or any of the other meritorious dramas of American fighting men.

COMPARISONS are the subterfuge of nonchalant dramatic criticism. Yet, appreciating this, one cannot dispose of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "THE FIRES OF FATE" more aptly—and quickly—than to say it resembled intimately that earlier English melodrama, "The Flag Lieutenant." The Doyle drama dealt with the curing of sclerosis of the spine by shock. The latter drama dealt with the curing of sclerosis of the love affair by self-sacrifice. Although both were supposed to be "thrillers," they failed to affect the spines of their audiences in any way. In each instance the scenery was very beautiful, but pretty scenery never did and never can make a play. If it could, Augustus Thomas, the erstwhile dramatizer of geography, would have dramatized the Delaware Water Gap long ago. No one realized the lukewarmness of "THE FIRES OF FATE" quicker than Charles Frohman, and after allowing them to burn for a little while, he extinguished the blaze in short and effective order with "THE ARCADIAN," the very best musical comedy that has been presented in New York during the last few years.

One of the chief features in the Doyle melodrama was a tribe of Howling Dervishes. The music of the former play has not only enough charms to soothe their disappointed savage breasts, but also enough catchiness to make them stop howling and whistle. I am wearied of daily read comparisons with "The Merry Widow" and "The Dollar Princess," but, if permission be granted to put the matter in cold storage for the rest of the season at least, let me say as a last word that "THE ARCADIAN" not only makes the former lady look a trifle sad, but also makes the latter lady look as if she were minus seventy cents. Percival Knight is the best sour-faced comedian we have had since the day of the late Dan Daly; Alan Mudie is every bit as mash-noteworthy as Donald Brian, and Miss

Julia Sanderson is more "awfully nice" than anything the fellow in the next seat has trained his opera glasses at in a long, long while. I hope to see and listen to "THE ARCADIAN" at least a dozen times more.

"THE AFFINITY," a translation of Brioux's "Les Hanneçons," admirably presented by Laurence Irving and Miss Mabel Hackney, is a very good play about a very naughty subject. As may be inferred from its title, it deals with the French national game. Its dramatic exposition, however, is so ingeniously subtle that the local critical umpires have called it "safe." It is, indeed, despite its theme, a safe play for America. A general idea of the story may be gleaned from the suggestion that a Gallic gentleman, who has a wife in everything but name, finds that the young lady in question becomes not only a smoke nuisance when she forbids him to use his pipe, but a general nuisance in almost every other way. When he tries to rid himself of her he finds he cannot, and thus discloses that the moral of the play, if it wanted to, might well be: The advantage of marriage is the possibility of divorce. The most sensational feature in this exceedingly witty comedy is a kiss delivered in Act I, that makes the kiss in the second act of "The Nigger" take on the appearance of a casual handshake. Relative to the role of the "affinity," which she portrays, Miss Hackney recently has been quoted as saying: "She is a personality one meets every day." In which restaurant, pray?

KLAW and Erlanger's production of Rex Beach's Alaskan melodrama, "THE BARRIER," is so full of thrills that one has to take a musical comedy as a chaser. It is interesting, exciting, well staged and uniformly well acted by a company headed by the peerless Theodore Roberts. Seeing this drama, and recalling "Israel," "The Nigger," "The City," and other contemporaneous presentations, there arises the necessity of cautioning dramatic par-

ents and grandparents to be more discreet in the future. Tainted blood is becoming as common an occurrence in the theater as was tainted money in the business world a short time ago. To be sure, in "THE BARRIER," Necia discovers in the last act that her supposedly red blood is white and free to mingle with the blue blood of her Kentucky lover, but, not having perused the book beforehand, a large portion of the audience was kept in a state of worryment. If things keep going on this way dramatic blood will be thicker than East River water. "THE BARRIER," all in all, however, holds the attention of its auditors at the point of a pistol through each of its four acts. And for those persons who refuse to allow themselves to be startled during the earlier portion of the drama, there has been supplied a revolver fight in the dark later on that wins the reluctant thrill in spite of itself.

WHEN I was a youngster there was always one day in the year to which I looked forward, a day on which I knew I would laugh until I couldn't eat any more peanuts, the day when the circus and its clowns came to town. There is still a day to which I look forward, a day on which I know I will laugh, despite a taint of indigestion that I have inherited from the indiscretion of those selfsame boyish peanuts, the day when William Collier comes to town. Taste has changed a bit but the laugh remains the same. I enjoy the flipflops Collier makes through the hoop of fragile repartee with the same old hearty relish that I used to experience in watching one clown make faces at another. In short, Collier is a circus. His vehicle this season is called "A LUCKY STAR." It is a small body of plot entirely surrounded by jokes, and like every other Collier entertainment, is wholly episodic. Nevertheless, it dashes along at a smile-a-minute pace and breaks the speed law of fun. The man who is foolish enough not to laugh at the Collieries in this play would be foolish enough to carry coals to Newcastle.

"THE PRINCE OF BOHEMIA" is a George Cohan music show written by an Englishman, Hartley Manners. The Grand Old Flag, the strains of the Star Spangled Banner, patriotic speeches about the shame of our daughters allying themselves with the effete titles of Europe, songs on such topics as, "I Wonder What They're Doing Now in Home Sweet Home" and "A Flat in the City is Good Enough for Me" are all there in familiar profusion. Andrew Mack plays George's part, and Miss Christie McDonald is his sister Josephine. Despite Mr. Mack's ingratiating performance and Miss McDonald's undeniable piquancy, however, the bright, particular star of the entertainment is Ned Wayburn, the man who staged the production. Rarely does New York see a better drilled chorus and one coached with more originality than that which these curtains reveal. One of the numbers, called "Sentimental Tommy," does not even have to bow to that catchy salutation, "Hello People."

"THE OLD TOWN," serving to reintroduce Montgomery and Stone to New York at the new Globe Theater, was written by George Ade, and caused even some of the latter's best friends to withdraw their names from his own famous I-Knew-Him-When Club. Mr. Ade must have Slipped on the Banana Peel of humor when he Committed the Book of the play. It was left to Stone's megavoltic dancing to win the entire approbation of hands that itched to clap but, for the most part, had to be content with scratching.

"THE JOLLY BACHELORS" succeeded "The Midnight Sons" at the Broadway Theater and fully succeeded in succeeding. A huge production, loaded to the brim with chorus girls, comedians, specialties, songs, dances and constantly shifting scenes, this so-termed midwinter review will probably be found fighting it out for favor with the Loop the Loop and Shoot the Chutes when summertime comes. Miss Nora Bayes is the leading figure in the

cast statistics and little Miss Gertrude Vanderbilt can kick the highest. The chorus? I can only speak for the opening night. Frankly, I never before saw so many good-looking chorus girls—in the audience.

"THE KING OF CADONIA" mounted the throne at Daly's one Monday night, and the next morning was assassinated by the Black Hand of Criticism. Miss Marguerite Clark was the chief mourner. No request was made to omit flowers. It would have been superfluous. The court of the deceased King was permitted by the Shuberts to demonstrate the fact that some histrionic blue blood flowed in its veins through the medium of a little play by Owen Davis entitled "THE WISHING RING."

Produced after the monarch's funeral, this whiff of rose garden love proved to be fragrant enough to banish the last of the music show's lingering onion odors from the theater. Theatergoers who have known Mr. Davis only as the discoverer of the melodramatic possibilities of cloak models, sewing machine girls and other species of poor but persecuted womanhood, must see his latest effort to appreciate the deftness of perfumed charm that he has concealed for these many years in the barrels of revolvers and similar villainous bric-à-brac. "THE WISHING RING" is "Springtime" with an English setting. It is dainty, graceful and winning, and was well acted. The worst criticism I can charge against it is this: It was presented at a matinee, and matinees do compel one to get up so early.

Miss Clark was "starred" in the production. Although she is possessed of an incontrovertible cuteness and personal charm and eyes that would make any jury in America give her a favorable verdict, a mean, stubborn pen must dare to incur her frown by criticizing the prevailing inflexibility of her performance. Robert Dempster's agreeable portrayal of the leading male role absolved him from the charge of *lèse majesté* that had been lodged

against his machinations in "THE KING OF CADONIA." The performers in general, including those mentioned, indulged in the past participle "been" with fiendish glee after the fashion of most actors. Why will they all insist on treating it as if it were a favorite form of Boston food, when both the Webster and Century dictionaries look with anything but disfavor on the way ordinary mortals pronounce it?

THE Chronic Faultfinder who accompanied me to William Vaughan Moody's new play, "THE FAITH HEALER," in which Henry Miller assumed the title role, told me after the performance was over that he did not know when he had enjoyed an evening so much before. Somewhat astonished at this unanticipated expression of enthusiasm on his part, I asked him the reason. "I'll tell you," he answered confidentially; "I was so awfully busy all day that I really appreciated the sleep." Ah, being a critic has its disadvantages! One's sense of duty does so frequently interfere with one's inclinations. "THE FAITH HEALER" was a distinct disappointment to a public that expected a big sequel to its author's magnificent initial effort, "The Great Divide." The title of the latter can give no fair idea of the chasm that stretches between the two works. "The Great Divide" was superb drama; "THE FAITH HEALER" is bunk. Artificial and unconvincing, the latest Moody play is but a dimly drawn asymptote to the same playwright's other drama. Although not to be denied a certain literary charm, "THE FAITH HEALER," done into stage being, lacks every single element of dramatic life. It is to be doubted whether even a dramatist faith healer of greater experience than its creator could cure its ailments.

The claim has been made for it that it is spiritual and uplifting. It is noth-

ing of the sort. The play is not true enough for that. Like a cracked bell, the fundamental idea and purpose is there, but it does not ring true. Mystery, symbolism and deified suggestion are all very fine in their way, but there is such a thing as carrying them too far. "The Servant in the House" succeeded splendidly in accomplishing its intended purpose. So did "The Passing of the Third Floor Back." "THE FAITH HEALER," however, throws it on so thick that it would wring doubt from a Mrs. Eddy. Consistency in symbolism is a jewel. The present Moody play is replete with Barrios dramaturgy. All the faith, hope and charity in the world cannot cause one to regard it as real and true. I challenge even Mr. Moody to satisfy the curiosity of his auditors as to the legitimacy of the spiritualistic, symbolic psychology of his incident of the Faith Healer and the Ruined Lady.

It was Brillat-Savarin who said: "To invite a guest is to take the responsibility of his happiness during his stay under our roof." If the remark applies to the theater, I shall not feel it my duty to make a party call on "MR. BUTTLES," who tried his best to entertain me one evening during his stay at Weber's Theater, but who, I must confess ungraciously, didn't wholly succeed. "MR. BUTTLES" served me with a farce by Frederic Arnold Kummer that was distinctly cold storage. An appetite that has been whetted by "Seven Days" and "The Lottery Man" cannot be satisfied by the Childs' brand of farce cooking. A critic, like a little boy, can be spoiled by being given too many good things. Henry E. Dixey, who essayed the title role in this play, achieved his greatest fame some years ago in an extravaganza named "Adonis." The name of his present vehicle is A Dennis.



THE LITERARY HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION

By H. L. MENCKEN

MR. CHESTERTON is belaboring the iron while it glows. Within a year he has printed a book of essays, another of verses, an elaborate tract in defense of Christianity, a novel of some four hundred pages, a treatise on George Bernard Shaw, an anonymous autobiography and several hundred scattering introductions, newspaper articles, sermons, acrostics, epigrams, limericks and letters to the editor. I often wonder how he finds time to drink all the beer he is reported to consume. Judging from my own experience, beer drinking, like litigation, is one of the slow and laborious arts. The whiskey drinker can swallow his four fingers, pay the man, stop at the lunch counter and resume his merry way all in the space of a few minutes. But the drinker of beer, unless he would strain his rivets and start his plates, must go at it *largo* and only after due preparation, first selecting a table and a *kellner* with care and thereafter punctuating his gusty gulps with hiatuses of philosophic meditation. In München the orthodox rate of speed is one kilo an hour, and it takes five kilos, at the least, to make a *sitzung*. Even in Berlin, where anglomania corrupts the national manners, they stop occasionally to steal a nap and curse the violoncellos.

But perhaps Mr. Chesterton has some secret technique of his own, whereby he manages to drink and write at the same time. I know a lot of literary men who wish they knew that trick. Perhaps, again, he sips his daily draughts drop by drop, by some sort of osmose.

Whatever his plan, it certainly gives him plenty of time to write books, and all these books, it may be said, are well worth reading. The last to reach me is the novel aforesaid, bearing the appellation, "THE BALL AND THE CROSS" (*Lane*, \$1.50). Here we have Chesterton at his old sports, making his old arguments for supernaturalism and flinging his old defiances at Messieurs, the Materialists; and here we have, too, all of his ancient paradoxes and wheezes. He is the most amusing controversialist that ever plunged pen into inkpot, and by the same token, he is least convincing. To find his equal as a sophist, one must go back to the early Christian Fathers.

The plot of "THE BALL AND THE CROSS" is very simple. An atheist named James Turnbull, residing in London, is consumed by sorrow over the fact that his crusade against holiness fails to inflame the public mind. Outside his little shop on Ludgate Hill, wherein he publishes a blasphemous little paper, he sticks up handbills exposing the fallacies of Christianity, but no one notices them. They make not a single convert, and worst of all, they provoke not a single protest from the pious. But one day a medieval Scotch Catholic named Evan MacLan, idly passing the place, stops to read a display type essay on the Immaculate Conception. Turnbull's appallingly unholy explanation of that miracle turns MacLan's liver to water, but he reads on bravely to the end. Then he picks up a cobblestone and heaves it through the window.

Well, the result of that burst of passion is pleasant to both sides, for it gives each fanatic a palpable foe. Turnbull is delighted that his efforts have at last aroused the godly, and MacIan thanks God that he has at last found a heretic to slay. So they decide to fight a duel, believing that the difference between them is, by long odds, the most serious difference that can separate men. The rest of the book is devoted to a description of that duel. As a matter of fact, it never comes to pass, for every time the contestants cross swords the police or other catch-poles rush in, and they must take to their heels. They are chased over half of England, and the yellow journals burst with the story. They become the most famous duellists in the world—but they never fight.

In the end they are snared by the gendarmes and clapped into a lunatic asylum. This gives Mr. Chesterton a chance to deliver a long and sage discourse upon the horrors of English law. After the smoke of his rhetoric clears away, we find the asylum burning down and Turnbull and MacIan escaping. At last their chance to fight it out has come. But now they discover, as the reader has discovered some time before, that they are stuck fast together by sentimental ties. Partners in adversity, they have learned to love each other as brothers. Going further, each has begun to see some reason in the other's creed. Turnbull has lost his old hatred of idealism and MacIan has lost his old hatred of the infidel. At the end we see them on their knees together, each with his arm around the waist of a girl. No doubt someone once told Mr. Chesterton that a love element was necessary in every novel.

FROM such fantasies and symbolisms we descend to "THE FIGHTER," by Albert Payson Terhune (*Lovell*, \$1.50), a story with no other purpose save that of giving the reader a pleasant hour or two, and separating him, *via* the department store, from his \$1.08. Such stories fall under the heading of anes-

thetics. That is to say, they serve to deaden the little pains of life—to make a gloomy Sunday afternoon less gloomy, a long journey shorter, a dull evening less dull, imprisonment less tedious. When they are well done they deserve all praise, and so I give all praise to "THE FIGHTER." It is a first rate tale of its kind, with a blustering hero who fights his way up from slavery to millions, outraging the English language and the first families, doing kindness by stealth, making love like a prizefighter, tearing his enemies to pieces. There is plenty of wit in the book; the sayings of the heroic brute are full of rich metaphor and shrewd philosophy. I recommend it to all who would laugh a few score hearty and innocent laughs.

Incidentally, Mr. Terhune meets the current fashion by introducing a touch of psychotherapy at the end. Psychotherapy permeates the American atmosphere just now, bringing a savor as of violets to the nose, and so we must have it in our novels. In "THE FIGHTER" the hero is a mere beginner in the art, for he gets no further than raising the heroine from the dead. She has been fatally hurt in a railroad wreck, and he arrives a few moments after her death. Sinking down by her side, he gazes into her still open eyes and cries: "Dey! Come back!" The orthodox doctors, enslaved by their worship of chemicals and cutlery, laugh at him, but he keeps on, and at the end of two or three hours Dey is sitting up. The hero is so exhausted by his effort that he sleeps for twenty hours straightaway, after which, it is to be presumed, he marries the girl.

NEXT comes an example of that new and most horrible type of fiction, the novelized drama. This time it is "MARY JANE'S PA," a version by Norman Way of Edith Ellis's play of the same name (*Fly*, \$1.50). Mr. Way, it must be admitted, has done his ghastly work with some show of skill, but that work is decidedly not worth while. What excuse is there for turning a third rate drama into a fourth rate novel? Those plays which are worth

preserving should be printed as they were written; those which serve merely to keep one awake after dinner should be burned at the season's end.

If I make no mistake, the device of making a bad novel of a bad play was invented by a New York yellow journalist, who sought thus to enliven his "home page" at small expense. Since then scores of farces and melodramas have been fitted with descriptive padding and published between covers. There are literary hacks who devote all their energies to the trade. Even "The Merry Widow" has been turned into a novel! If there is any excuse for the issue of such balderdash, I shall be very glad to hear it. Meanwhile, I cling to the doctrine that it is an offense to the civilized nostril; that it is worse than the old vice, now happily in abeyance, of dramatizing best sellers; that the dramatist who for a few dollars permits his work to be stuffed with parts of speech by a space writer is a dramatist who insults and degrades his profession.

BUT enough! We come to more novels. One of them is Justin Huntly McCarthy's "THE GOD OF LOVE" (*Harper*, \$1.50), a safe and sane romance of the historical species, with Dante dei Alighieri as its fair young hero and Beatrice Folco of the Portinari as its heroine. The teller of the tale is supposed to be one Lappo Lappi, alias Lappinaccio, alias Lappentarius, a squire of dames turned monk. It is a sketchy and somewhat slow moving story, but Lappo is made to tell it well, with abundant humor and plenteous sage remark and pictures of medieval Florence that you must go to Cellini to find equaled. The Dante that we see is jejune and sentimental—a maker of sonnets, a sigher of sighs, a student of the sword as well as of Virgil. Only now and then does the shadow of the stupendous Divine Comedy cast itself across the scene.

"OTHER PEOPLE'S HOUSES," by E. B. Dewing (*Macmillan*, \$1.50), is a

first novel by a frank admirer of Henry James. On the surface it thus appears as a mere imitation, but I rather think that it is more than that. It shows, indeed, in more than one place genuine insight and indubitable individuality. This Miss Dewing, in a word, seems to have something to say, and if at present her utterance is somewhat muddled, we may safely blame it upon her unperfected technique. The very fact that she admires Mr. James sets her apart from the average young novelists of our fair republic, for most of them, judging by their books, seem to give their allegiance to Old Cap Collier and Sylvanus Cobb.

"THE CANVAS DOOR," by Mary Farley Sanborn (*Dodge*, \$1.50), is a rather elaborate fantasy, with a strong flavor of that supernaturalism which seems to inflame just now all college professors, soulful young preachers, literary ladies and other persons of defective education. The fable deals with an old-fashioned beauty who steps out of a family portrait, reunites a warring couple, permits a young fellow to fall in love with her—and then steps back again. It is all told with considerable delicacy and charm. Everyone concerned is benefited by the ancient charmer's embodiment, as Professor Lodge would say, even including the boy who learns to love her; for she leaves behind a series of beautiful memories, and a beautiful memory is one of the things that lift existence above a mere scramble for bread.

THE excellent new English translation of the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, to which I referred at length some time ago, has been augmented lately by four volumes. In a few months five more will be issued, and in the fall the series will be completed, making eighteen volumes in all. Of the four now in hand, one contains a new version of "ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA," by Thomas Common, with an introduction by Frau Förster-

Nietzsche, the philosopher's sister (*Foullis*, 6s.); the second gives us the first half of "HUMAN ALL-TOO-HUMAN," a book which has hitherto appeared in English only in a mutilated and disgusting form (*Foullis*, 5s.); the third contains the essay on "THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION" and several other early speculations (*Foullis*, 2s. 6d.); while the fourth, published under the name of "THE WILL TO POWER," is made up of notes and fragments found among Nietzsche's papers after his death (*Foullis*, 5s.). This last volume contains much material that now appears in English for the first time.

In the late eighties Nietzsche began making plans for a large work in four volumes. "The Will to Power" was the name he chose for it, and in it he proposed to set forth his philosophy in detail and to answer the critics who had fallen afoul of his earlier books. He made copious notes for the whole work, but the only part of it ever completed was the astonishing tract called "The Antichrist," which was to have opened the first volume. This he wrote between September 3 and September 30, 1888. The manuscript was then laid aside and he busied himself with more notes, but illness overtook him before he got very far, and in 1890 he lost his mind. He died in 1900. Five years before that, the publication of a large edition of his works was begun in Germany, and "The Antichrist" was included, but the notes for "The Will to Power" did not see the light until some time later.

These fragments are printed just as Nietzsche left them, without any attempt at revision or amplification. Some of them are merely detached phrases, but others show marks of the philosopher's own sandpaper and varnish. Taken together, they are of extraordinary interest, for they show plainly the ultimate drift of Nietzsche's ideas and give the lie direct to many of his foes, in and out of the pulpit. It is often maintained, for example, that he advocated the merciless stamping out of the unfit, without

regard to notions of humanity, but he here proves the inaccuracy of all such allegations. His war was waged, it appears plainly, not upon the weak and inefficient themselves, but upon that pious philosophy which makes weakness a virtue and exalts the weak to kingship over the strong.

Nietzsche knew very well that Christianity was a valuable thing to the helpless and downtrodden man. He called it the greatest of narcotics, the one thoroughly effective antidote to the bitter facts of life. He saw that it kept the weakling from despising himself; that it gave him hope, peace and self-respect; that it robbed ill fortune of its victory and misery of its sting. But he clung to the last to the doctrine that such anodynes and antidotes were not for the strong. The efficient man, he stoutly maintained, needed no religion. He was sufficient unto himself. He made his own laws and grabbed his own rewards. It was dangerous for him to be humble, for with humility came weakness.

Nietzsche believed that Christianity, or something like it, would survive so long as there were weak and helpless men in the world, and he believed that such men would be born forever. He even advocated artificial schemes for increasing their number, for he saw their vast utility as slaves to the strong. But he held that it was ridiculous to call the inefficient and poor in spirit the flower of the race, and extremely dangerous to erect their incapacity into an ideal. For asceticism and voluptuousness he had the same boundless contempt, for both, he argued, worked against strength and progress. He was the philosopher of good health, of the alert brain and the clean mind, as well as of the hard fist. He believed that the man most worthy of honor was that man who could do his day's work in the heat of the sun without asking charity or praying to the gods to help him—that man who left the world in some sense and some measure better than he had found it. His "good" meant, not

"holy" or "meek," but "able." His one god was efficiency.

H. E. KREHBIEL'S latest volume, "A BOOK OF OPERAS" (*Macmillan*, \$1.75), is full of the curious lore which one always encounters in that learned gentleman's compositions. Mr. Krehbiel, out of the recesses of his mind, could produce a musical encyclopedia a dozen times as fat as that of Sir George Grove. He knows the key, *opus* number and orthodox *tempo* of every composition ever written; he knows the cast, scale of admission and net receipts of every operatic performance ever given in New York; he knows the secret history of every prima donna, the drinking habits of every conductor, the assets and liabilities of every *impresario*, the fallacies and prejudices of every critic, the inner significance of every unresolved dissonance in the civilized world. And with all that cargo of erudition, he manages to write entertainingly, gracefully, even lightly. His daily contribution is the saving grace of the *New York Tribune*. He is our American Schumann, our Berlioz, our musical Supreme Court.

"A BOOK OF OPERAS" does not follow the usual plan of such books. That is to say, it does not presume to cover all the more popular operas, giving short accounts of the text and music of each. Instead, it deals with but seventeen works, but to each of these a long chapter is allotted, rich in shrewd comment and apposite anecdote. We have here not only an analysis of each opera, but also a history of its adventures on the stage, of the traditions and conventions which govern its performance today, of the singers who have helped to give it fame. Mr. Krehbiel's store of knowledge, of course, is not confined to the seventeen operas here discussed. Therefore it is not vain, perhaps, to venture the hope that the present volume will be followed by others of the same agreeable type.

A NEW book may justify its existence upon one of two grounds: either

it may present facts and thoughts that are new to the world and worth hearing, or it may present old facts and thoughts more attractively than they have ever been presented before. "WOMAN'S WORK IN FICTION," by Clara H. Whitmore (*Putnam*, \$1.50), meets neither of these tests. I am unable to find in it any contribution of fact that was not already accessible, nor any contribution of criticism that helps to an understanding of the fair authors discussed. It is accurate and it is workmanlike, but it gets us nowhere.

"FROM FIGG TO JOHNSON," by Barratt O'Hara (*Blossom*, \$1.00), is sterner stuff. Here we have the first complete history in any language of the ancient contest for the heavyweight championship of the world. Mr. O'Hara has exhausted a library of pamphlets and newspaper files; he has searched old records; he has delved into old scandals; he has done justice with the rigid impartiality of a lord chancellor. And there is no little picturesque vigor in his style. He makes us see the dead masters as they stood in the ring, surrounded by honest sports and dealing staggering punch and mortal wallop. He weeds out the spurious champions, exposing their shallow pretensions, and constructs an authentic dynasty of real ones, beginning with James Figg (1719-1734), and ending with Jack Johnson (1909-?). No less than fifty-one honorable names are upon that heroic roll.

Such a book was sorely needed, for the chronicles of pugilism, before Mr. O'Hara tackled them, were in chaos. Our university scholars, going up for their doctorates, disdained the task of reducing that wilderness of material to order. It was, at one stroke, beneath their dignity and beyond their capacity. So it fell at last to Mr. O'Hara, a man fitted for it by Divine Providence—a man with a sincere respect for the oldest and noblest of sports, a thorough training in its technique and terminology and the pen of a ready writer. The result, as I have said, is an entertaining and ex-

cellent book, of human interest all compact.

SOMETHING of the same merit is to be found in "THE HISTORY OF THE GREAT AMERICAN FORTUNES," by Gustavus Myers (*Kerr*, \$1.50). This is the first volume of a three-volume work planned to show how millions have been garnered in our fair land. The present volume deals with the great fortunes of Colonial days, which arose chiefly out of maritime enterprise and speculation in land, and the great land fortunes of the nineteenth century. Here we have the astonishing life stories of Stephen Girard, the elder Astor, Marshall Field, the Longworths, the early nabobs of New York. It is a moving chronicle of graft and chicanery, industry and daring on land and sea. Mr. Myers, it appears, is a Socialist, and in consequence he is too eager to interpret his facts by reference to the Marxian scriptures; but those facts in themselves are sufficiently interesting to make his book worth reading.

THREE play books next invite us. The most important by far is an English translation by Francis J. Ziegler of Frank Wedekind's remarkable German drama, "THE AWAKENING OF SPRING" (*Brown*, \$1.25). This is the second volume in a series of translated plays which began with August Strindberg's "Swanwhite." In the present case Mr. Ziegler's English leaves something to be desired, but the play is so striking that one scarcely notices occasional clumsiness. It is a study of the mental and physical phenomena of adolescence—a study not lacking in unblushing realism, but marked chiefly by a delicate vein of melancholy poetry. Wedekind is no mere literary anatomist, examining children under his glass as an entomologist examines beetles. On the contrary, he seems to enter more than once into the very souls of his characters, so that we see the tragedy of the drama through their childish eyes. An impressive and poignant play, unhappily impossible of performance before chemically pure Americans.

In Germany, where it has been played in the independent theaters, it has left a profound impression, and in book form more than twenty-five editions have been demanded in three years.

"THE PASSION PLAY AT OBERAMMERGAU" (*Duffield*, \$1.50) is a translation by Montrose J. Moses of the German text now used by the play-acting Bavarian peasants. Mr. Moses traces the history of that text and incidently discusses its origin. Both his translation and his commentary have uncommon merit. He is, indeed, fast winning a high place as a dramatic critic of learning and discernment.

"NAPOLEON," by Algernon Boyesen (*Unwin*, 6s.) is a historical tragedy of two hundred and more pages, with an introduction of eight pages, in which last the author expounds his theory of dramatic art and pays his respects to the London Frohmans who refused to present his play. It may be said for Mr. Boyesen that his theory is a sound one, but it cannot be said of his drama that it grips the imagination. Its chief defect is a considerable discursiveness. Too often the characters waste time in ineffective talk.

FOUR more of the Page books about foreign parts are on the shelf in a glittering row. The volumes in this long series are designed for all travelers—for those who linger at the fireside as well as for those who actually fare afield. In the present quartet there are books upon the castles and chateaux of old Burgundy, the inns of old London, the pictures in the Belgian galleries and the marvels to be encountered in wildest Africa. To me the most interesting in the lot has been "INNS AND TAVERNS OF OLD ENGLAND," by Henry C. Shelley (*Page*, \$3.00), a charming mixture of history, gossip and pictures. Here we have all that is worth knowing about the Mermaid, the Cheshire Cheese, Lloyd's, the Grecian, the White Hart and the rest of them—each a landmark in the history of the English race as important

as most royal castles. There is something, too, about Vauxhall, Ranelagh and the other places of resort about the city. A book to dip into pleasantly and to stand upon your shelf for reference later on.

Esther Singleton's "THE ART OF THE BELGIAN GALLERIES" (Page, \$2.00) is a more learned tome. In it there is some account of practically all the Flemish masters, from the Van Eycks down the long line. There are numerous reproductions of paintings. The art interest is also to the fore in "CASTLES AND CHATEAUX OF OLD BURGUNDY" (\$3.00) by Francis Miltoun, an indefatigable writer of books about beautiful places. More than fifty full-page drawings by Blanche McManus, many in tint, and a number of maps and smaller illustrations add to its value. The fourth book is "IN WILDEST AFRICA," by Peter MacQueen, F.R.G.S. (\$3.00), an interesting and workmanlike account of journeys in the region that Mr. Roosevelt is traversing. A good part of it is devoted to Uganda, wherein the crafty British are laying the foundations of an empire that may one day make Europe sit up. A map, some excellent photographs by Peter Dutkewich and an extensive bibliography help to hold the reader.

Now comes bad poetry in a copious stream. "WATERS FROM AN OZARK SPRING," by Howard L. Terry (*Badger*, \$1.00), is a little book of truly execrable verse. "ELIZABETH OF BOONESBOROUGH," by Pattie French Witherspoon (*Badger*, \$1.50), is almost as bad, and "VERSES," by Wilson Jefferson (*Badger*, \$1.00), is even worse. The critic must give up the ghost in the presence of such literary lobsouse. I can only pity the poor printers who were forced by the pressure of economic necessity to set it up. In "THE SILVER LINING," by Nelson Glazier Morton (*Badger*, \$1.00), the badness is measurably less irritating, but even here I am unable to find a single stanza worth printing. In "CHANGING VOICES," by R. D. Brodie (*Badger*, \$1.00), there are one or two lines that almost reach the level

of fair newspaper verse, and in "THE HAUNTED HOUSE," by Henry Percival Spencer (*Badger*, \$1.00), there are half a dozen; but in all six books there is not material enough for one real poem.

In order to spread some balm upon the wounds of these bards, let me confess at once, and before they have time to make the customary charge, that I myself used to be a poet, and that I failed at the trade. I thus qualify as an orthodox critic, for I am a failure barking at the heels of unrecognized genius. But I wish it to be distinctly understood that, even when working for hire, I never wrote verses as bad as those I have just been trying to read. No; there are limits to self-abasement, and I make no such confession. If anyone arises to argue that I should, I shall be tempted to print some of my strophes. Let that serve as a threat and a warning.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A NEURASTHENE—

by Margaret A. Cleves, M.D.

(*Badger*, \$1.50)

The dull history of a female physician with a "sprained" brain. I don't know what a "sprained" brain may be, but in its outward manifestations it seems to bear a quite startling likeness to a bad liver.

THE PLEASURE OF READING—

by Temple Scott.

(*Kennerley*, \$1.50)

A book of harmless platitudes, with elementary excursions into criticism. The author presents a list of books to read which includes Milton, Wordsworth and many other bores, and leaves out Rabelais, Schiller, Mark Twain, Conrad and "Barry Lyndon," not to mention Congreve, Sheridan and Molière.

INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS—

by N. A. Richardson.

(*Kerr*, \$1.00)

Dissertations upon the sorrows of the world, from the Socialist point of view.

THE ISLE OF DEAD SHIPS—

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SPARROWS—

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(Kennerley, \$1.50)

The dull story of a working girl's moral hazards in London town, with sundry observations upon political economy, obstetrics and the white slave trade. Such a story may show insight, feeling and the artistic sense, as "Sister Carrie" abundantly proves, but in the present case there is only a sort of ponderous sentimentality.

THE RED SAINT—

by Warwick Deeping.

(Cassell, \$1.50)

A historical romance of the orthodox sort, with the scenes laid in medieval England. The heroine has sense as well as beauty, and there are some vivid word pictures of fighting.

EUGENIUS, THE STAR CHILD—

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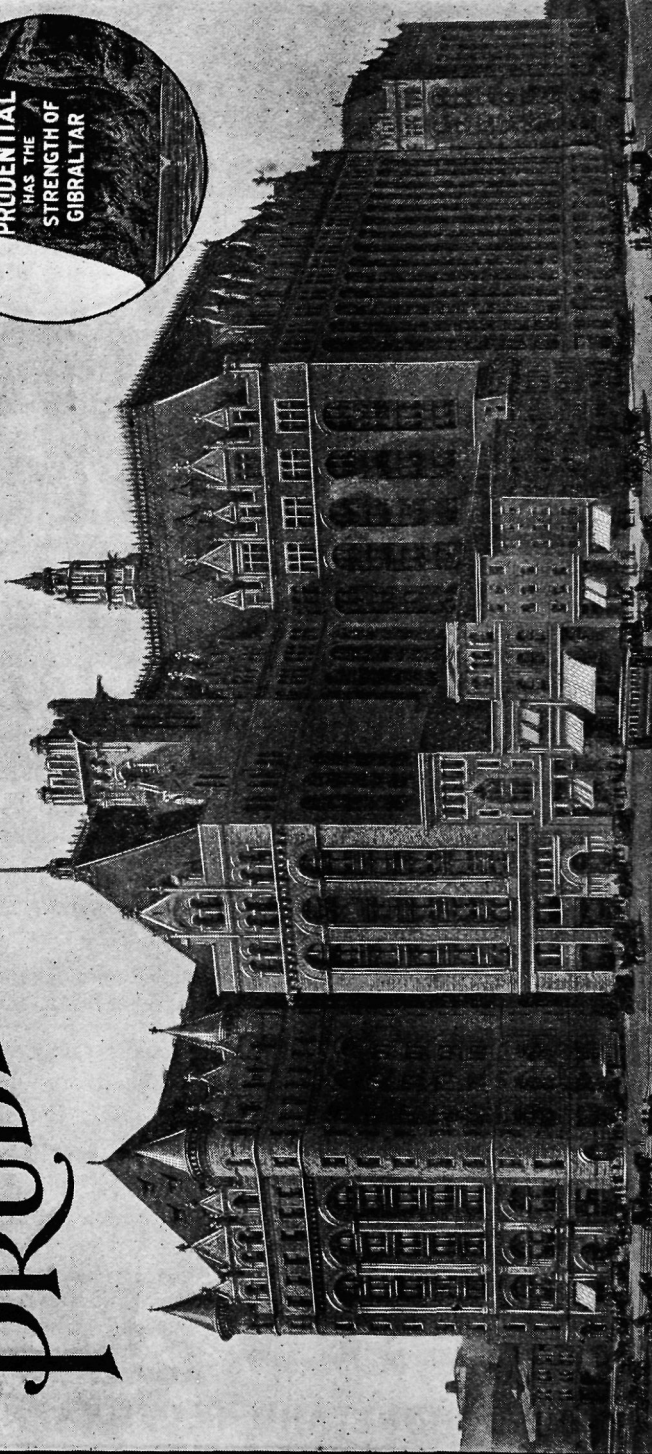
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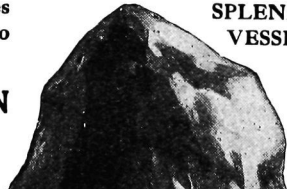
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for April

A New Novel by Mabel Herbert Urner

"THE PRICE INEVITABLE," the novel which will be published complete in the April number of the SMART SET, is the latest work of Mrs. Urner. It is a story even more absorbing than "The Journal of a Neglected Wife," which had the distinction of being the most widely quoted and discussed book of the past year.

In this latest work, Mrs. Urner shows her wonderful power of analysis of human emotions. She lays bare a woman's heart and presents a graphic picture of a struggle between the promptings of love and duty. The scene of the story is New York City. The characters are people of refinement and standing. The story is of the kind that, once begun, will not easily be put aside until the very end is reached.

"THE PHILANDERING OF PENRUDDOCKE"—By G. C. Harvey. English army life and sports form the background of this story, with a part of the drama taking place at a house party where conventionality is not too rigidly insisted upon. There is a delicious touch in the delineation of some of the characters in this story.

"I, TOO, IN ARCADIA"—By Marie C. Oemler. Business and Art—their effort to work together in double harness, and the final outcome of it. A delightful story of sentiment.

"THE PERFECTION OF A SCOUNDREL"—By Frederick Irving. A man's story, of great engineering projects, danger, disaster and tremendous daring.

"TABLOID FICTION"—By James L. Ford. A clever satire on some popular styles of recent novels.

"GIVING UP"—By H. S. Walpole. The story of a splendid renunciation.

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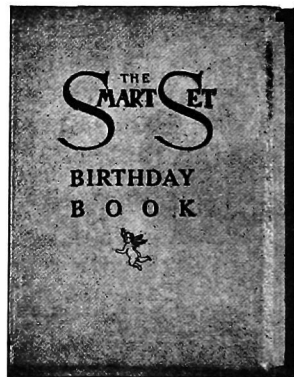
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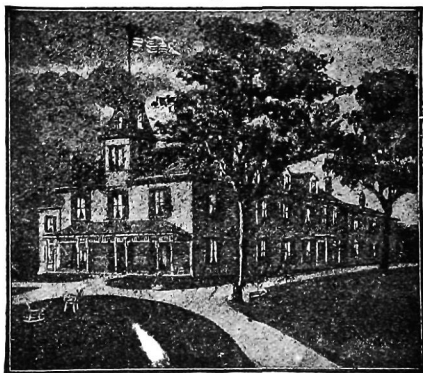
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