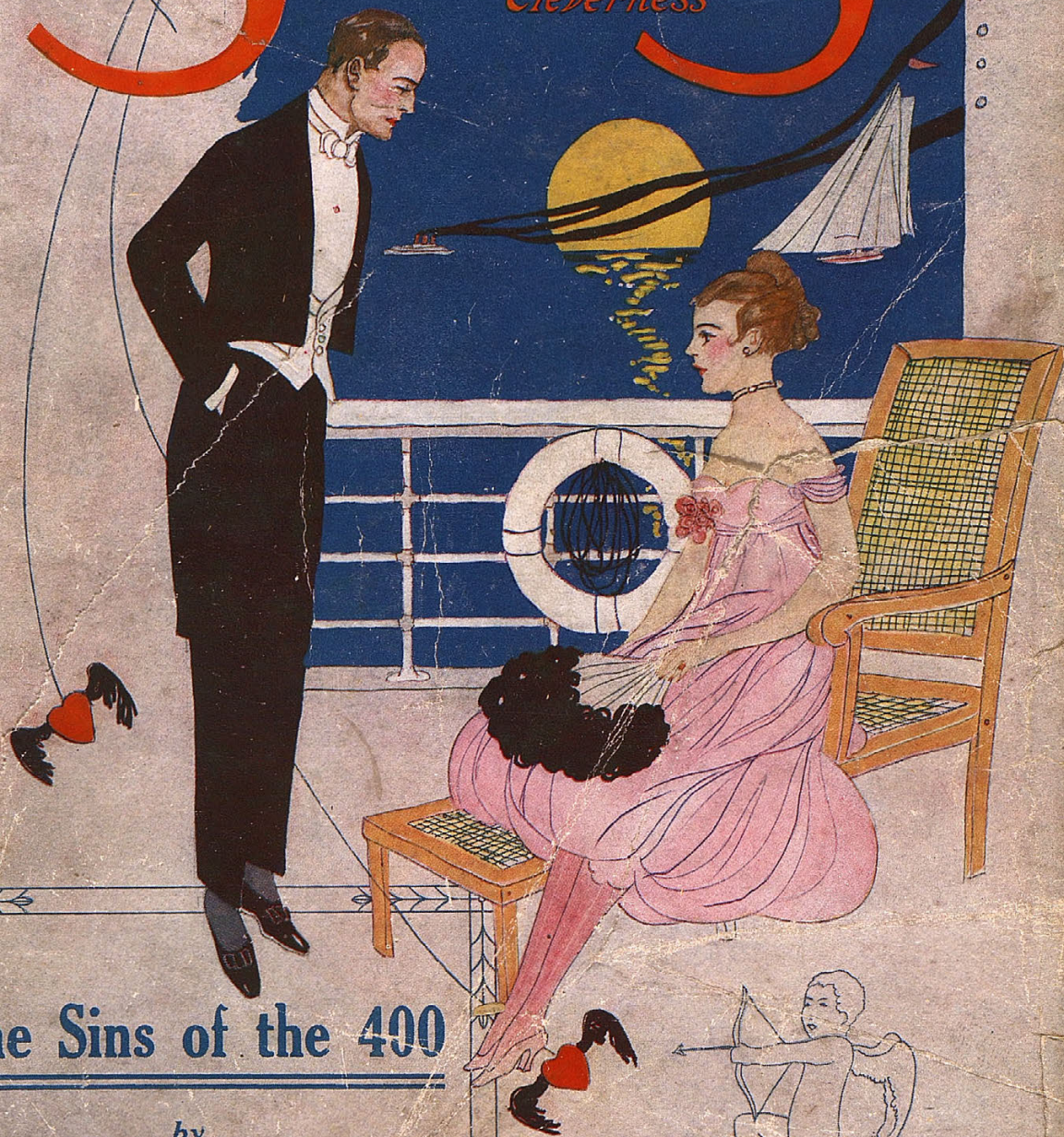


THE MAGAZINE THAT'S READ IN THE PULLMAN

The SMART SET

*A Magazine of
Cleverness*



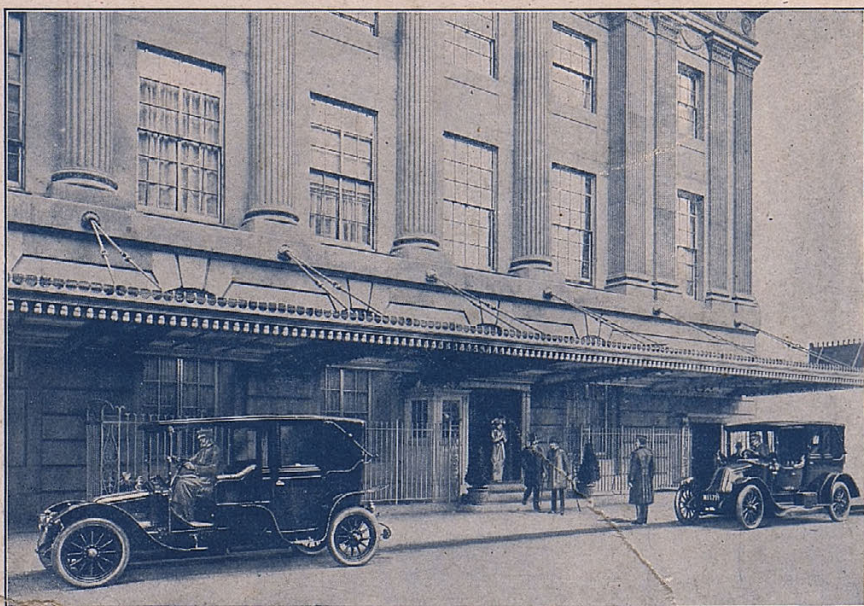
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AND

BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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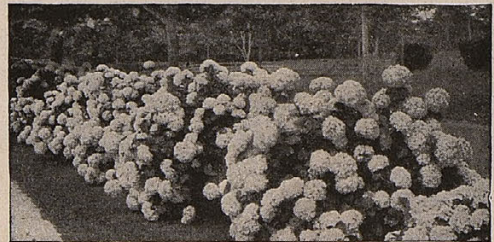
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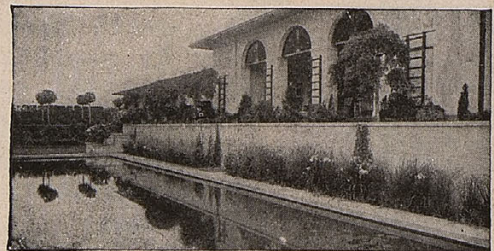
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THE COUNTRY CLUB FANCY DRESS BALL

By Renée G. Thacker

MRS. JASPER SIMPSON is my neighbour on the left. She has blinking eyes, a pathetic nose, and a series of weak and wobbly chins. She reminds me of a sagging cream-puff. . . . She went to the ball as a Spanish dancer. . . .

Mrs. Tommy Watson is my neighbour on the right. She has challenging eyes, a promising mouth, and a chin that suggests daring and independent thinking. She's the kind of woman that other women's husbands refrain from mentioning at home for the sake of peace. . . . She went to the ball as a milk-maid.



BUT STILL—

By Muna Lee

YOUR strength is like a stalwart tree
I throw my arms around,
And I am stronger for the touch
Of life so sound.

But still sometimes I slip away,
And—where you cannot see,
I weep for the tremulous, wistful lad
You used to be.

ONCE AGAIN

By June Gibson

IT was after his eleventh cocktail that he proposed to me.
"Dearest," he said, "the bubbling wine in my glass reflects the sparkle of your eyes. The graceful curve of the bottle counterfeits your slender form. Your touch soothes me as the cool fog at midnight brushing against my hot cheeks. The mysterious fragrance of early morn is your breath. Beloved, I adore you. Marry me."

"Come, Freddie," I replied gently. "You proposed to me ten years ago and I married you. We must go home now. You are drunk."



WINDOW-CANDLE

By Hortense Flexner

I SHALL remember many nights
Of hill and wind and sky,
I shall remember how we stood
In starry-hearted solitude,
Or crossed the untamed, moon-wise wood,
Putting thorn-fingers by.

And other nights of near, sweet ways
Shall stay with me—but last
This one—we came day-worn and slow
Into the hedge-rimmed path we know,
And saw the window-candle glow—
Will-o'-the-wisp chained fast!



THE truth, in itself, is seldom convincing. It takes a clever liar to make us believe it.



BEHIND THE CURTAIN

By Rip van Dam

I

The Orchestra

"**M**URDER!"

Through streets packed thick as caviare with loft-workers that cry of the newsboys filtered painlessly. Even when understood it aroused no curiosity, stirred no interest. What is one murder more?

"Murder in Park Avenue!"

That, too, was a matter of indifference. Crime in the sedatest avenue of the noisest city in the world suggested nothing to aliens to whom the avenue itself was unknown.

"Murder of Louis Kettletas!"

In Madison Square, where, at the moment, the news was being bawled, the name had the value of a zero from which the periphery has gone.

"Large reward!"

That was different. Though the chance of getting a penny of it was remoter than heaven, the offer enticed. Greasily here and there a copper changed hands.

But higher up, near the Plaza, which is the final citadel of fashionable New York, men stopped, eyed each other, exclaimed. There the name was evocative, there Kettletas was known.

Adjacently, in clubland, particularly in the Athenæum of which Kettletas had been a member, men who had scandals and stocks for sole occupation and, what is worse, for sole joys, avidly buttonholed one another.

The accounts were meagre. The night previous Kettletas had been shot down at his door. Why? By whom? The questions constituted just so many pleasurable mysteries in which, sug-

gestively but undefinably, the infernal feminine surged.

As the men talked, they saw him. Young, quiet, good looking, rich—rich as all out-of-doors—not gregarious, but not standoffish either, indifferent merely, they could see him, as some of the older members could also see his father.

Ages ago when New York society was a small and early family party, Louis Kettletas, Sr., had led the dance. He was always before the scenes and at Niblo's, in the great nights of the forgotten "Black Crook," he was behind them. With his land, his millions, his stable, his chefs and his ladies of the ballet, he had lived very extensively. Since then, in his wide, white house on Park Avenue, paralysis had gripped him. He but existed.

Now his son had been murdered. Why and by whom?—pleasurable mysteries concerning which men buttonholed each other and wondered who the woman could be.

But to go back a little.

On Riverside Drive, a month or two earlier, a girl realised that she was being followed.

It was not a new experience to this young woman, whose name was Royal Doré. She was vividly pretty and her face and manner drew naturally the eyes of men. Again and again there had been odious attempts at acquaintance, but hitherto by brutes on foot. The man who was following her then was in a tandem.

To Royal that was the height of impertinence. Ordinary brutes were negligible. With a tilt of her nose and airs of contempt she could rout them. But an ape in a high cart, with a groom

behind and two piebalds strung in front, seemed to her intolerable.

Angrily she compressed her lips, turned the corner, flew up the steps of an apartment-house and flew in.

A few minutes before she had noticed the creature and she could not very well have done otherwise. In a city overrun by herds of bellowing motors, the spectacle of a tandem is necessarily romantic. It evokes Fifth Avenue as it used to be, when it was an avenue and not a ghetto.

But of that prehistoric episode Royal knew nothing. It was the tandem itself that attracted her, and though she had looked at the driver it was only because he was part of the spectacle. But that look, intercepted by him, he had returned with interest.

Tooling, at the moment, along Riverside Drive, his leader was headed down. On the opposite pavement Royal was walking up. It was then that hostilities began, immediately after which the leader turned and Royal realised that he was after her.

But on this mid-April afternoon the door of the house stood open. At once, in a lift, the girl floated to an upper floor, where she was lavishly embraced by Mme. Bravoura, a former prima dinna, who instructed her in what is called the *bel canto*. Then, presently, the lesson began. Royal forgot the ape, who by no means had forgotten her.

"Find out who that girl is," he had told the groom.

The groom did. From the elevator boy he learned that she was a "young lady" who came every day for singing lessons.

The groom's employer took it in, looked at the house, saw that it was cheap and memorised the number. Then the leader turned again, the groom hopped up, the tandem vanished.

Meanwhile, Royal was singing. Her voice carried with it the sound of cornets. The Bravoura, a fat woman with a loose mouth and a painted face, regarded her as a little Tetrassini, in the making, that is, a making which, when reasonably perfected, would pour gold

and a lot of it into the laps of both. For the Bravoura taught the girl on the deferred payment plan, which, if you are sure of your customer, is as good as another, and in this instance was even better, for it involved a third of the prospective coin.

On this afternoon, as Royal sang, the man in the tandem, driving on and away, wondered to just what world she belonged. Her dress was simple and while simplicity in dress may be very costly, yet he had realised that hers was not of that kind. Even so, he reflected, she was not of the shop class and quite as obviously not of his. The latter deduction pleased him. Girls of his own class had a perfect mania for matrimony and marriage he had long since diagnosed as temporary insanity with permanent results. He had no intention of incurring them. Like Royal's dress, his ideas were very simple. Then, entering the Park, he dismissed her.

Royal's ideas were more ornate. As it so happened, after he had ceased to think of her, she was surprised into thinking of him. She was not then with the Bravoura, but at home, in a Harlem flat.

On her way there she had purchased a fashion magazine and this, on entering the flat, she put on the living-room table where a kitten meowed at her.

The room itself, though small, was cheerful and furnished with taste, but otherwise inexpensively. The taste was due to Royal, who exhaled it. The rest of the equipment had been supplied by her father, who had made money in the wine business, lost it in Wall Street—an adventure that had affected his health—and who, at the time this drama begins, acted as salesman for the house that had been his.

Royal he adored, but marvelingly. Of French descent as his name, Doré, perhaps indicated, he had christened her, after her dead mother, Marie. "Royal," an after thought, had been due to her imperious airs. Whence these had come, whence, too, her voice, her beauty, her manner, a way she had

with her, he did not know. They had not come from him, nor yet from her mother. That he could have sworn to. Otherwise their provenance was as mysterious as the stars. Consequently, while he adored his daughter, he regarded her as a being apart, one whom a Providence, otherwise calamitous, had beneficently bestowed.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed as she entered. "Do you know that it is nearly seven?"

Royal's thin nostrils quivered. "I know that I have been followed by a baboon—in a tandem at that."

Doré scowled and showed his gold-filled teeth. His daughter was sacred.

But immediately she supplied a diversion.

"Are you hungry?"

Earnestly she hoped that he was not. She hated preparing dinner, even though it consisted in but one course, cold at that, as it often was.

The scowl faded. "No, I am not hungry. I had a bite on my way up and I am to have another with Dr. Grantly. By the way, I go to Chicago on Thursday."

Royal had taken up the magazine and was looking it over. But the remark reached her. Slowly she turned.

"For long?"

"Oh, a week, I suppose."

"Well, don't over-exert yourself."

She turned to the magazine again. Then at once she gave a little scream.

"What is it?" her father asked.

"Why, here is the ape in the tandem."

Laboriously Doré got up and peered over her shoulder at a picture which she indicated and beneath which was printed: "Mr. Louis Kettletas."

"Kettletas!" he exclaimed. "If he is the Kettletas he must have no end of money. Doesn't look like an ape, either. Very gentlemanly, I should say. Aren't you mistaken?"

"No, and it is not worth talking about. What are you going to Dr. Grantly for?"

As Royal spoke mentally she evoked the physician, a man of international

reputation, who had known her father since the latter was a lad.

Doré stroked the kitten. It meowed and scratched him.

"You see, dear, I am not very well, and if anything should happen to me there ought to be somebody to look after you."

Royal shook her head. "Don't talk about such things. Besides, I can look after myself."

Doré nodded. "Yes, of course. But I did not mean it in that way. I meant financially. You know nothing about business. There's my life insurance. You would not even know how to go about collecting it."

"No, and I certainly would not try. The money would not compensate me in the least. I don't want money. I want you and I want success."

Then, presently, when her father had gone, she fed the kitten and supped on a biscuit, a glass of milk and the magazine.

In it she found the picture of a girl whose face seemed to her singularly noble. Beneath was printed: "Miss Margaret Sturgis." Admiringly she considered it and then looked at the next picture, which was that of a man. His features were regular, their expression was frank and fearless, and Royal admired him also. Beneath was printed: "Mr. Alfred Armitage, whose engagement to Miss Sturgis has been recently announced."

There are primitive people who fear to be photographed. They believe that were their picture in the hands of others, the latter might, merely in looking at it, cast a spell on them. The belief seems very idiotic. But occasionally it may be valid.

Admiringly Royal looked at the pictures of this young couple, whose names, which meant nothing to her, she instantly forgot. She was never to know Margaret Sturgis, she was never to meet Armitage, she was never even to see either of them, and yet their lives, through some caprice of fate, she was destined to affect, and, through no fault of her own, to affect profoundly.

But now again before her was the ape. Under the inscription, "Mr. Louis Kettletas," she discovered a supplement which, in her first surprise, she had failed to notice: "Who is to be Mr. Armitage's best man."

The milk she had drunk, the biscuits she had eaten, the magazine through which she had skimmed, these things must have been a bit heavy, for, insensibly, she found herself in an old-fashioned costume, on an old-fashioned stage, singing an antique score. There was a ripple, a round, a salvo. She bowed right and left and, bowing, saw Kettletas, his gloved hands extended, applauding from a box. She frowned and turned. But he threw a bouquet that hit a chorus girl in the face. The audience laughed, the curtain fell. Then, at once, in the guise of Prince Charming, Kettletas was beside her, offering his arm. She refused of course. But suddenly the air became freighted with sweetness. In it her resistance melted, she took his arm and he led her out to a coach of white and gold, and, presto! they were both en route for Fairyland.

Before they reached it, there came a thunderclap. Royal started and rubbed her eyes. It was her father returning home.

II

The Lady Who Fainted

WHILE Royal was on her way to Fairyland, a woman of another world, and of another type was powdering her nose. The operation was effected before a mirror, in a private suite of the Splendor. The woman had a sweet, winning expression which she had cultivated. She had other accomplishments. The amount of concentrated interest which she could put into a few small words such as: "And now tell me all about yourself," was a triumph of art.

Her fingers were as gifted as her tongue. They bent backward. Her eyes were wonderful. They could so look at a man as to make him think that

he was the one human being on earth. Moreover, she had traveled extensively. Princes had housed her. So, too, had the police. The attentions of the latter had not, however, affected her manner, which was endearing—when she wished it to be—nor her appearance, always a delight.

In the adjoining room was a man in evening clothes who, according to the documents in the case, was supposed to be her husband. He had an air urbane and open. He had also blue, unflinching eyes. At the moment those eyes were occupied with a note from the management. Addressed to Mr. Francis Despard, it demanded in terms that contrived to be both civil and insolent, payment of his account.

On the table beside him was a newspaper. He put the note down, took up the paper, put that down, took the note again and called:

"Claribel!"

Apathetically, from the room beyond, the lady emerged. Despard handed her the note.

"No use in letting them grab our things, eh?"

"Not mine, anyway."

"Now look here," Despard resumed, rising as he spoke and pointing at the paper. "Have you seen this? It says that Armitage is dining the Sturgis girl here to-night with Kettletas and some others. Kettletas and Armitage now! Eh? What?"

Dully the lady patted a fold of her dress.

Despard eyed her. "If we can corner one of them are you game?"

Claribel looked up and, instantly, before those unflinching eyes transformed herself. The apathy, the dullness, where were they? Beside him was a woman with a bewitching expression, talking as though she were eating sweetmeats about nothing at all. It was a joy to behold her and, such was the quality of her voice, that it was a joy to listen.

Abruptly she gasped, tottered and would have fallen, but Despard caught her, his arm upheld her. Then languid-

ly she straightened, winked, freed herself, moved away.

Despard laughed. "You are letter-perfect." He looked at his watch. "I say! It is nearly eight."

A few minutes and they were below, in the restaurant, a room large, high-ceiled, already filled, scented with fruits, with flowers, with orris, with whiffs of champagne. Adjoining it was a ballroom from which a tinkle of mandolins came.

A captain approached. "Have you engaged a table, sir?"

"Yes," replied Despard, who had done nothing of the kind. "I telephoned hours ago."

The captain consulted a chart. "We don't seem to have any note of it, Mr. Despard."

"That is not my fault."

The captain, properly rebuked, considered it. "Very good, sir. I have a table over there." He waved the way.

"Clams, sweetbreads and sorrel, a quart of Ruinart," Despard, when he was seated, threw out. "Where are you to put Mr. Armitage?"

"At that table there, sir," the captain answered. "No soup?"

"And no suggestions, either," Despard, with his urbane and open air, replied.

"We are in luck," he added to Claribel, as the waiter moved away. "We'll be right next to them."

"What does Kettletas look like?" the lady asked.

"Kettletas? A lead in a movie."

"And Armitage?"

"So many pounds of beef, trimmed."

"Not yet," Claribel corrected.

"How, not yet?"

"Not trimmed?"

But now the clams and Ruinart had come. Despard munched, wiped his mustache, turned and exclaimed:

"There they are now. That's Armitage, the tall chap. The feller with the window in his eye, that's Kettletas. The doll with the yellow hair must be the Sturgis girl. As for the rest of the gang, search me."

"Topnotchers, every one," Claribel

in her caressing voice remarked.

At once, as though a topnotcher herself, she directed smiles and uplifts of the chin at people whose backs were turned, at others who did not exist. But behind such stays as she wore there was a gnawing, not of envy—she might as readily have envied the saints in Paradise—but of regret, the incredible regret of a woman who knows that, to her, topnotchdom's facile gates are barred.

Despard, a sweetbread now before him, munched again. "This might be worse, but much better they did us in Paris—and how much better we did them! But here, how do you propose to pull it off?"

"I don't propose to at all," Claribel, between a sip and a morsel, replied. "It can't be done."

As she spoke she looked again at Armitage, and, as she looked, Margaret Sturgis looked at her.

"Alfred," the girl murmured to her betrothed, "there is a woman at the next table, rather a pretty woman, too. She has been staring at you. Don't look now, but in a moment you might and then tell me if you know her."

Margaret Sturgis turned to her neighbor. "I saw you in the Park this afternoon, Mr. Kettletas, but you did not see me."

"I am the most unfortunate of men then," replied Kettletas, who did not mean a word of it, and who at the moment was thinking of the girl whom he had seen.

For Margaret Sturgis he did not care in the least. She had the angel type which he detested, whereas the other girl looked like a verse of Verlaine. Yet, oddly enough, as he then remarked, their hair was just the same, the same orange, the same rich gold.

Margaret Sturgis, who did not represent the angel type precisely, but who did look like a blonde Madonna, turned to her cousin, Philip Pendleton, a man with a face ugly but shrewd. He was seated between her mother and Bettina Jones, a girl whom Armitage had invited partly because she was to be Mar-

garet's bridesmaid and partly for Kettletas, who thus far had civilly ignored her.

"No," Armitage, after a glance about, was saying. "I don't know her. Do you, Louis?" he asked of Kettletas. "Do you know the fairy at the next table?"

Kettletas adjusted his monocle and dropped it. "Never saw her before—or behind." With a movement of the head he added: "There's your friend Hatch; do you see him? He is with Melvale, the district attorney, at that table near the ballroom entrance. If you are doing anything through him in the Street and do not mind a contemptible word of advice—sell."

Armitage nodded. "I was thinking of it. If I get the chance I will speak to him after dinner." He turned to Margaret.

Kettletas addressed the girl's mother. "What do you think of Alfred as a host, Mrs. Sturgis? We have just had farcied truffles and now we are to have ices. Incendiarism and the fire-escape, that's what I call it."

Mrs. Sturgis, who was small, white, fluttery, without any resemblance to her daughter whatever, put down her fork. She had not in the least understood.

"I could not like Alfred better than I do, but I should have preferred that he had not brought us here. In my time nice people dined—and danced—in their homes. Did I tell you that I knew his father? He was very fond of chocolate pudding."

Despard now was lighting a cigar. He looked about. Where there had been silk was emptiness. Here and there couples lingered, but largely the restaurant had disgorged its guests into the neighborly theaters or into the adjacent ballroom, from which came the sound of violins.

The sound stirred him. Turning to his companion, he whispered at her.

Claribel's eyes narrowed. "Perhaps," she replied. Thoughtfully she added: "I like that girl's frock."

The girl she referred to was Bettina

Jones, who, having no illusions in regard to Kettletas and nothing in common with Pendleton, was exclaiming generally:

"Oh, do let's hurry and see what they are doing over there."

The fire-escape had melted. Coffee had come and gone. Mrs. Sturgis sighed and stood up.

"Well, for once, since you wish it, but—"

"Dearest," Armitage, rising also, confided to Margaret, "I will join you in a moment." Turning to Kettletas and Pendleton, he added: "Look after them, won't you, while I speak to Hatch?"

Kettletas, wishing himself well out of it, led the way. The little party moved on.

Meanwhile a waiter had approached with the bill.

Armitage put a hand in his trousers pocket, drew from it a wad of gold certificates, thought better of it, replaced the money, took from the waiter a pencil, signed the check, fumbled in his waistcoat, tipped the man and crossed the room. But not unobserved.

"Mr. Hatch!" a page was bawling. "Mr. Hatch!"

Hatch, a large man, very florid, signaled the boy.

At that moment Armitage was bearing down on both.

"Hello, Armitage!" Hatch exclaimed. He looked at the boy. "What is it?"

"Mr. Hatch? Wanted at the telephone, sir."

Hatch, who had risen, turned to Armitage. "Excuse me for half a minute, will you?"

"Don't hurry," Armitage threw after him, for already he was moving on, and seated himself at his table from which, now, Melvale had gone.

"A glass of brandy," he ordered of a hovering waiter and looked around into the ballroom against which his back was turned. But he could not see Margaret and he turned again.

"How do you do," someone was saying. Before him the Despards stood.

"Had the pleasure of meeting you in

Paris before the war," Despard, in his Delmonico manner, continued. "Let me introduce you to my wife."

Armitage, surprised but civil, got up, bowed to Claribel and nodded at Despard, who, in the same stock-promoter way, ran on:

"We are off to the theater. Delighted if you'll join us."

"Thank you," Armitage tranquilly began. "I—"

"My dear," Despard cut in at Claribel. "Wait with Mr. Armitage while I get the tickets. Perhaps you can induce him to change his mind."

Armitage looked after him. He had gone.

"Mr. Armitage," Claribel was saying and saying it too with a light in her eyes that a candid and eager child might have; "I think I saw you dining with Mr. Kettletas. I was at school with his sister. Such a lovely girl!"

"You mean Lady Dawlish?" Armitage asked, wondering who the deuce Claribel could be.

"Yes, Dormouse as we used to call her," Claribel, in the same deliciously infantile way, replied.

But at once the light died in her eyes, like a flower she drooped, she would have fallen but Armitage caught and upheld her.

A moment only, two at most, then those eyes opened, she gasped, straightened and Armitage dropped his arm.

Yet, during that moment, had you seen him, you would have thought that he was embracing her.

It was precisely what Margaret Sturgis did think. She had just then looked in from the ballroom. That one look sufficed. In that one look the drama of her life and of his began. The idea that the poor devil was not a villain but a victim never occurred to her. The fact that, instead of embracing the woman he was merely having his pocket picked, never occurred to her either. That one look sufficed. She turned away.

It sufficed, too, for Claribel, who had seen her. Sinking into a chair, she languidly murmured:

"Forgive me, please. It must have been the heat. Would you mind—"

Sympathetically Armitage considered her. He was sincerely sorry, as any decent man would be, for a pretty woman in distress.

"Would you mind fetching my husband? He must be in the lobby getting the tickets. I am appalled at being such a nuisance, but I hardly think I can go to the theater now."

"Oh, but I assure you," Armitage got in and turning started to go.

As he did so Claribel's hand went into her corsage. Beautifully formed, it was out again before you could have missed it; which was as well, perhaps, for Armitage turned again.

"Here he is now," he reassuringly explained.

Beyond, Despard was entering. Behind him was Hatch.

Claribel stood up. "It only remains for me then to thank you."

For an instant that beautifully formed hand was in Armitage's. For an instant he had the practised seduction of her smile. Then she floated away. She was joining Despard, who waved a good-bye.

"Who's the lady?" Hatch marching up, inquired.

"Haven't an idea. I say, Hatch, the market looks to me top-heavy. Sell my things at the opening, will you?"

Hatch seated himself. "Let me see. What have you got?"

Armitage, seating himself also, swallowed the brandy which long since had been brought.

"Steel, Copper and—and—"

"Motors?"

"No, I did not get on board in time."

Hatch nodded. "No matter. I will see what you have. You want us to sell everything and at the market?"

"Yes, and at the opening."

Hatch nodded again. "Very good, I'll attend to it. Now, my dear chap, I've got to run."

"Run along, Hatch," Armitage absently replied, for now that was off his mind and, intending at once to join

Margaret, he fumbled in his waistcoat to pay for the liquor he had had.

But the change which had been there he had fed out in tips and he reached into the pocket where the big bills were. It was emptiness that he encountered. He tried the other. That, too, was bare. The idea of suspecting the lady who had fainted and floated away no more occurred to this gentleman than it had to Margaret Sturgis.

Meditatively he sat back. A roll of bills he certainly had at the other table, for he had taken it out. Yes, he immediately told himself. And dropped it there.

He got up, crossed the room, looked about. The table at which he had dined a Greek omnibus was clearing.

"You didn't happen to see a roll of bills here, did you?" he asked, but had he asked a cow the time of day the result would have been the same. The boy blinked and turned away.

But now Kettletas was hailing him.

"Don't stand there on one foot. You make me nervous. Why didn't you come in and orangoutango?"

Armitage patted his chin. "I have lost some money."

"And the opportunity of seeing Miss Sturgis home."

Surprisedly Armitage stared. "What?"

"They've all gone."

"Well, then, lend me a dollar. I'll telephone and follow."

But when Armitage did telephone he was told that Miss Sturgis had gone to her room.

III

The Message to a Flower

"MADAME BRAVOURA?" Kettletas, the following afternoon, inquired at the former prima donna's door, which had been opened by the fallen star herself.

"Perfectly," the extinguished light replied, looking him over while he was similarly engaged with her. Then, affected instantly by the atmosphere of abundant ease which he exhaled, she added: "Will you come this way?"

Kettletas, who with but a glance at her loose mouth and painted face had taken her measure, gave her his name.

The familiar melody of it fell richly on her ears. She motioned at a chair.

But Kettletas remained standing. "I am a business man and you, I take it, are a business woman. Now I would like to meet the girl who came here yesterday at about this time. It will be worth a hundred."

The Bravoura smiled, displaying her false teeth and lapsed into French: "You don't go four ways about it."

"No, nor even two," said Kettletas, who, in speaking, extracted a bill of the nation which he put in her entirely receptive paw.

The Bravoura's smile deepened. "It is an affair understood. She is a Miss Doré." Cocking an ear, she added: "My word! I believe there she is."

Turning, she vanished. In a moment Kettletas was looking into Royal's startled eyes.

The Bravoura was also. "Let me introduce Mr. Kettletas." She waved and imaginatively continued: "A new pupil, I hope."

"No," Kettletas corrected. "Not that at all. I asked our friend here to introduce me because I have a message for you."

With eminent tact the Bravoura vanished again.

Royal looked at her retreating back and then at Kettletas, who was looking at her. She was abominably pretty, he told himself, a little devil, no doubt, but a little beauty also.

"A message?" she incredulously repeated.

Kettletas moistened his lips. "Yes. From Heine."

Royal frowned. The only Heine she knew of was long since dead.

"Yes," Kettletas resumed. "In one of his poems he told me that when I saw a rose to greet the flower for him."

Royal flushed. Her lips parted. In and about the corners a smile hovered, retreated, returned. The compliment, which to Kettletas was but a phrase that he had previously found serviceable,

seemed so delicate that it touched and momentarily disarmed her.

Kettletas, noting the effect as a marksman might, fired again. "Do you think you could suffer a pilgrim and a stranger to know you?"

But now Royal had got her breath. "A pilgrim, are you? Well, perhaps. But hardly a stranger. Only last evening I met you in a magazine."

Kettletas nodded. "But you did not expect to meet me here. Well, I must not interfere with your lesson. Good-bye and—"

He paused and appeared to hesitate. "And may I say—"

With a toss of the head Royal took it up. "Yes, au revoir."

Then at once he was gone and Royal stamped her little foot. "Why!" she indignantly exclaimed at a chair, "that was the most impudent thing I ever knew."

But now the ex-first lady reappeared and looked innocently about.

"He has departed? Good! Men are so tiresome. Come, belovedest, to work!"

Fifteen minutes later the fallen star cried: "My child, you never sang better!"

"I wonder," said Royal slowly.

IV

The High Explosive

WHEN Armitage needed money the only trouble he had in getting it was that of writing a cheque. While Royal was singing he was writing one.

He was then in his library, a large room, massively furnished, which was on the ground floor of an apartment-house just off Park Avenue.

On the avenue, a little above, Kettletas lived with his father. On it also, a little below, Margaret lived with her mother. Conveniently, on Fifth Avenue, was the Athenæum Club, which both he and Kettletas frequented.

But now the painless operation was interrupted.

James, his servant, a man inextrica-

bly wrinkled, entered and asked would he see Mr. Pendleton?

Certainly he would. Moreover, he wanted to. Although not yet thirty, in the pink of condition and with no immediate relatives, he felt it urgently necessary to make a will. Pendleton, who was a lawyer, was the very man and he rose springingly as the latter entered.

"Well, Penny, old chap, how are you? I was just thinking of you. I want you to draw my will—everything to Margaret. Have a cigar?"

Pendleton gave him a cool, resolute hand and sat down. "It is about Margaret that I am here. No, thanks, I won't smoke."

For a moment he fidgeted. "See here, Armitage, I am devilish sorry, but Margaret has reconsidered her engagement to you."

If, instead of saying that, he had thrown a stick of trinitrotoluol, that highest of explosives could not have bowled Armitage over quicker. He felt no pain, only the concussion, only that and complete bewilderment.

"She told me to say that she would always have the kindest feelings toward you, but she felt that— Well, she felt that way about it."

The fingers of Armitage's right hand were moving in and out of the palm, regularly, perhaps unconsciously. He was alive and he was being talked to. Of that he was aware. But was he insane? Or was Pendleton?

"Are you sure of what you are telling me?" he at last got out.

"My dear fellow—"

"Then what is her reason? What have I done? Last night everything was sugar and honey. It is true I missed the chance of seeing her home, but I telephoned and would have followed, only I was told that she had gone to her room."

But what he had not been told, what no one could have told him, except the girl herself, was that, in going to her room, she took with her a cross, the first that she had had to bear, but one which seemed beyond her strength. Like a mediæval torture, it was all she

could endure—and more. It crushed her.

Yet because of it she did not accuse Armitage. She did not judge him, she did not condemn. The fact that she had seen him embracing a woman with whom, a half hour before, he had told her he was unacquainted, aroused in her no resentment, only sorrow for him and for herself.

She had thought him true as steel. That he was otherwise was not his fault, but it was her cross—one which, for some sin, anterior, forgotten, remembered and recorded only by the gods of the doors that close behind our birth, she was called upon to bear.

She knew that, or rather she believed that she knew it, because she believed in theosophy. None the less the weight of it was crushing. It was morning before she slept. When she awoke there it was. Later she had got her cousin and sent him on this embassy to Armitage.

"Yes," the latter was angrily demanding, "what is her reason? She must have one. A girl like Margaret does not promise herself to a man just for the fun of chucking him over. It is not she, it is not in the picture."

Pendleton nodded. "You are quite right. I asked her that and she said 'I cannot tell you, but say to him that I do not reproach him.'"

"Reproach me!" Armitage ragingly and amazedly repeated. "But for what? What has she to reproach me with? What is all this Bedlam? For the love of God, man, what is it?"

Pendleton shook his head. "You see, it was very painful. She broke down and asked me to tell you."

"Yes, but confound it all, Penny, you don't."

"Because she would not explain. But I gathered that something must have occurred in the restaurant after we left you there."

"In the restaurant!" Armitage cried. "Nothing whatever occurred there. Nothing. I give you my word for it. What could have occurred? I dropped some money, yes. I talked to Fitch.

Yes, I did that. Also, a man whom I never saw before introduced me to his wife. Then Kettletas came and told me that Margaret and the rest of you had gone and I telephoned. You got it wrong, Penny, I will go to her at once."

Pendleton stood up. "I wouldn't do that. She asked me to beg you not to. Believe me, Armitage, I am very sorry."

"I shall go, all the same."

And he did. But at the door of the girl's home he was very civilly informed that Miss Sturgis was not receiving.

V

At the Sign of the Splendor

A WEEK later Royal, her lesson over, rounded the corner.

In the interim there had been no sign of a certain person, no further invasion, no attempt to waylay. These abstinences at once mollified and surprised her. Though quite able to take care of herself, she was yet too inexperienced in love and war to suspect that the tactics, entirely strategic, had been planned to abate any fear of attack. In the light of former reconnaissances, she had fully expected some ambuscade and had armed herself accordingly. Then, as the days fell by, the sense of danger went with them and she felt that she had mobilised herself for nothing. That was reposeful, but it was also annoying and it was in this frame of mind that, rounding the corner, she bumped into that very person.

"Is it you—or a nest of songbirds?" Kettletas, who had done the bumping, inquired.

Before her, hat in hand, and very good looking, he stood.

"It was very stupid of me not to have seen you," he continued, "particularly as I was thinking of somebody else."

Royal suppressed a smile. "You quite turn my head."

"I was thinking of Proserpine," he explained. "You remind me of her. I wonder if she took tea?"

Royal considered him. Never had

she seen a man so well and yet so inconspicuously sent out.

"Don't you know?" she asked, for she found but that.

"I am afraid I am not a scholar. At college I once had to read aloud some Greek in which she was mentioned and the professor—a very civil man—said: 'Your pronunciation is outlandish. Where did you acquire it?' 'In Athens,' I told him. Now, forgive that long story, which, however, is apropos of you—I mean of Proserpine—and tea. Let's go and sample some at the Splendor. There's a taxi now."

He raised his stick.

"But—"

Sympathetically he nodded. "In advance, I cannot honestly guarantee the quality."

At the curb before them the taxi stopped.

But there was a brink there, too, a plunge as well. Royal was not sure that she wanted to take it.

"I don't know—" she began.

"Nor I, as I have told you. Never had tea there in my life. Permit me."

Lightly his hand touched her elbow. She was in the cab, an order had been thrown at the chauffeur and Kettletas was beside her, his head still bare.

The deference of it pleased her and though he did put his hat on the deference he maintained. His talk pleased her also. It was about nothing whatever, a subject which he thoroughly understood.

But the Splendor, which she had never entered, impressed.

The beautiful rooms, the careless women, the careful men, the treatment which she was immediately accorded, impressed still more. A head waiter who, to her surprise, bore no earthly resemblance to a bishop, pirouetted as he guided them to a table and would have drawn a chair, as though it were a throne, but that Kettletas prevented. He drew the chair himself, sat opposite her and in French, without the shadow of an accent, directed the man.

"Léopold, we want tea and we want it good. Mademoiselle is most particular. And do not let it delay."

"Perfectly, Monsieur Kettletas. Perfectly. It will be good. I will see to it personally. *Et des sandwiches, et des petits fours. Parfaitement.*"

Royal, considering Kettletas with heightening interest, exclaimed: "It was not at college that you learned to speak French."

Kettletas ran his long, thin fingers through his thick bright hair. "At college I was taught everything that it is easiest to forget."

The stupid jest amused the girl. On entering she had felt shabby. Seated and shielded now by the table, that feeling she lost. The brink at which she had hesitated, the plunge as well, she was glad she had taken them, and presently as she sipped and nibbled at the things which Léopold had personally supervised, she was conscious that she was really enjoying herself and that there was not a danger signal in sight.

"Yes," Kettletas was saying, "at college I was instructed in the largest number of subjects of which the least possible use could be made. No doubt they were intended for my good, but I can't see what difference it would have made if they had been intended for my harm. I don't remember one of them. Our system of education is deplorable. Nowhere is there a chair on gastronomy."

Royal strangled a little laugh. "There ought to be at least a table."

"A dozen of them. Yet just because there is none, we have what is called good plain American fare. In all the world there is nothing viler. Here, though, at this shop, while the food is decent, it utterly lacks imagination. It never would occur to them, for instance, to supply you with an *amourette*—pretty word, isn't it?—of *gazelle*."

Royal laughed again. "Or even a flirtation of giraffe."

Meanwhile, as the girl sipped and nibbled, Kettletas sipped and smoked.

Gastronomy they abandoned for literature and swam out of it into art. The restaurant emptied and refilled and it was not until Royal realised that she was surrounded by people in evening clothes that she started and asked the time.

"Oh, about eight, I fancy. We might have dinner. Léopold!"

"Why! We have been here for hours! I must run."

"But not very fast," said Kettletas, rising as she stood up. "Never mind, Léopold. Another day. For you will come again," he added, turning to Royal, who, without heeding or hearing, moved on.

The hours had gone like minutes and the phenomenon amazed.

"And you will let me see you home," Kettletas continued as they reached the street.

"What?" she asked, for the wonder of it was still about her. "Oh, no. A 'bus will take me almost there. I thank you, though, and for the tea." She paused, trying to think what it had tasted like, but she could not remember and got out: "Léopold must have surpassed himself. There's a 'bus now."

Kettletas helped her in, paid her fare, raised his hat. The motor flew on and Royal with it, but on another highway, one that led to the land of dreams, which is a beautiful but perilous place.

She deserted it, though, at the final halt of the 'bus. That shook her. The noisy and sordid street in which she lived jarred her still more. The apartment, which hitherto she had accepted, seemed to her squalid. Moreover, it was empty. Her father was away. Save herself the only living thing in it was the kitten that ran to her with a squeak.

Caressingly she took the little warm bundle of fur in her arms. But the kitten, who was hungry, meowed and slapped her. Yet even when it had abundantly supped it was no comfort to her at all. What would have been, she wondered. What? She did not know.

VI

His Celestial Highness

THE BRAVOURA, on the morrow, received a letter which was not for her. Addressed, in her care, to Royal, it bore in blue the imprint of the Athenæum Club, which she at once translated into Kettletas.

Significantly she nodded. The little affair then was progressing. And why not? On the stage there are ways and means to be considered and on or off the stage the Bravoura always considered the means. Besides, for the novice there is nothing quite so serviceable as a background in the shape of a millionaire. The question whether Royal could be induced to accept such a background she did not consider. She took it for granted, and that for no other reason than because, obviously, the girl was not insane.

But Kettletas, whose psychology was superior, had not, in writing the letter, entertained any of her convenient views.

"Belovedest," the fallen star exclaimed when ultimately Royal appeared, "I have something for you. Divine what it is."

"A lesson," replied Royal, who felt in no mood for one that day.

With a mimic of wizardry the letter was produced.

"It is from Mr. Kettletas," the girl after a moment announced. "He wants me to dine." She paused. "I have nothing to wear."

"As if he cared," thought the Bravoura. But she said, "There's your chiffon spangle; wear that."

"I am sorry he did not ask you also," the girl resumed. "I had tea with him yesterday. He is not at all upstage and quite good-looking. Yes, I might wear that. I do wish, though, that I had something else."

"He'll attend to it," the Bravoura told herself. But she said: "Good-looking? A man is never good-looking—except on his knees."

She moved to the piano. The lesson began.

Later, when, in that chiffon, Royal issued into the sordid street to take the subway which she hated, a liveried chauffeur touched his cap at her.

"Beg pardon, Miss. Miss Doré? Mr. Kettletas' compliments and he has sent his motor for you."

Royal flushed, but with pleasure. The flush heightened when, in the luxuriously upholstered car, she discovered a box, with her name on it, in which were orchids. Out of the street, down the Riverside, through the Park, easily, almost voluptuously, the motor glided. The thoughtfulness of it all, the flowers, the car itself, charmed her and it was a very radiant girl who got from that car and moved on and in to the lobby of the Splendor, where Kettletas stood in waiting.

"How in the world did you know where I lived?" she asked as he approached and greeted her. "I never told you."

"No, but a little bird did, or rather a fat one. It was your teacher. I telephoned and asked her."

The dinner that followed and which Léopold supervised, was the prelude to others, to teas, and to suppers as well, but not at the Splendor, where Royal, because of her wardrobe's limitations, declined to return.

Kettletas, without questioning, divined her reason, but he did not offer to remove it. He was too sensible. Instead, he took her to another resort, one which had once been very smart, but from which fashion long since had departed. The chefs, though, remained, some of them at least, and so, too, did the cellar.

In these excursions Kettletas omitted to offer the girl any of the agreeable insults which compliments are. Never formal, but never familiar, he made her feel that he meant the very things which he did not say. It was very artistic of him, and so well touched up and toned down that, insensibly, her armor fell from her.

Conscious of this, one day at tea, he said to her and simply enough: "Royal, will you marry me?"

Royal sat back. "Why, yes, if you want me to, only—"

"Only what?"

"Well, you see, don't you know, you are a man of position and your father might not like it."

"He wouldn't mind," said Kettletas, and the statement was true, for his father, dressed always in white velvet and tended by nurses, was too senile to know or to care if his son had married the cook.

"And, besides," Royal continued, "I am a girl with a career, or rather a girl who hopes to make one, and that and Mrs. Louis Kettletas don't rhyme at all."

"You mean the lyric stage?"

"Yes."

Kettletas smiled in her eyes. "It does rhyme then, and very well, for I should be a brute if I interfered and a fool if I did not applaud. There are no classes any more, or rather, there are only two—people who are snobs and people who are not."

Royal's mouth opened and closed, and tightly, for she had felt her lip tremble.

The eloquence of it was not lost on Kettletas. He half raised a finger. "There is an Italian dictum which counts as lost all time not dedicated to the high god Love. Royal, I adore you. Let's be married to-day."

"But—"

"Yes," he cut in, "and let's go to Philadelphia. It is too late to get a license here now, and besides in Philadelphia I have a relative, a clergyman, whom I rather promised should perform the ceremony, if I married, which, until I knew you, I never dreamed of."

Royal twisted in her chair. The quick romance of it appealed.

"But," she protested, "I could not go like this, and, moreover, I have a kitten, to say nothing of a father. They would never forgive me, particularly the kitten."

Kettletas stood up. "Very good. We will motor to your place, where you can leave the kitten with somebody

or other, and afterward I will get a thing or two. Will you come?"

And she went. In the motor he kissed her. Except her father, it was the first time any man had done that and her face flamed red.

The flame still flickered when the sordid street was reached and, bidding him remain in the motor, she went on and up to the little flat; wrote a line to her father saying that he was not to worry, that she was going to marry Kettletas and would write; packed a suit-case; took the little warm bundle of meowing fur; hurried down; left the kitten with the janitor's wife, a dollar with it, and went on and out and further yet, to the city of Philadelphia and His Celestial Highness, the great god Love, whom however, she failed to meet.

VII

A Fringe of the Curtain

KETTLETAS, letting himself in with a latch key, left his hat and stick in the vestibule and removing a glove, entered the luxurious room.

Hostilely Royal looked up.

On arriving at Philadelphia, Kettletas, after depositing her in safety, went off to fetch the clergyman. But, as it happened, the clergyman was out of town. He would be back though on the morrow.

There are morrows that never dawn. What is more remarkable, there are men who know it. Royal discovered that and, in discovering it, made another discovery. Like the clergyman, the Kettletas whom she knew, or thought she knew, did not exist.

The Kettletas of her imagination was a man whom she could have loved and loved madly. The real Kettletas she hated.

She told him so and, in the telling, if eyes could assassinate, hers would have killed.

They were then again in New York, in an asylum which he had offered and which she had accepted only because, in the confusion resulting from the discoveries, she was momentarily at sea.

But shortly she discerned a port, a port in a storm of certainty, but still a port.

It was not, though, the Harlem flat. Any immediate return there seemed to her tactless. The rôle of the penitent was not for her. She had nothing to be penitent about. Her conscience was clear as crystal. Besides, as she told herself, you don't repent because you have been lied to. You become angry at the liar perhaps, but not repentant in the least.

Incidentally she was beautifully housed. Elsewhere in the apartment were boxes of gems, propitiatory offerings which Kettletas had sent. There was, too, a maid; also a cook. But, in the room in which she sat, there was anger. It mantled her. Since the discoveries she had trailed it as a torch trails smoke.

Anger has vibrations that have been photographed. They are like so many zigzags. Kettletas' skin was rather thick but they pierced it. They got on his nerves. They affected him as a drug might have done. He could not stand it. No more could she.

Now, the sound of the key, the closing door, the thin rattle of the stick in the stand, these things announced him and, as he entered, hostilely she kicked a gorgeous floor-pillow from before her and rose from a yellow hand-painted chair.

Kettletas surveyed her. A glance sufficed.

"I need not ask, Royal, what your mood is, I can see. Do you know, all that is such a mistake. A girl who thinks agreeable things shows it and there is nothing better for the complexion. By the same token if she believes in ugly things, she looks them."

"I believed in you."

At the thrust, Kettletas dodged and parried. "And you might continue to, if only——"

"Not in silk and scarlet," she interrupted. "Whatever else I may do, I won't wear that."

The metaphor appeared to amuse him. He smiled and would have replied, but she got in ahead of him.

"No, I won't wear a livery. But if you like, get a license and, as soon afterward as you wish, you may get a divorce."

"Would that suit you?" he asked. "Well, yes," he continued, "I suppose it would. You are not a modernist. You think as most people do. Most people marry out of curiosity and divorce out of optimism. They know that if they are not happy they ought to be. Therefore they have but to divorce, try it again and be happy ever after. People with ideas no more complex than that are a great joy to me."

Royal, half turning, resumed her seat. "If it amuses you to talk like a society play, it does not amuse me."

"Probably not," he told her. "But then your tragedy queen attitude does not amuse me either."

With an uplift of the chin she considered him. "Then find your amusements elsewhere."

"Thank you."

"For nothing. Anyway—"

"Anyway," he got in at her, "I'm sorry. Frankly, I am. But I have been over the matter with my father and I shall be cut off if—"

"If—?"

He nodded.

Royal, who was looking at him, could not tell whether it were true or false. She never knew now whether he were lying or not. But it might be true and she got up.

"There are the stones, there are the pearls. Take them. I don't want jewels, I don't want money, I don't want luxury. If you will marry me, I will live with you and work for you in a slum."

Kettletas smoothed his hair. "You see, I don't care for slums."

She moved back. "Not for anything or anybody but yourself. And I thought you—but no matter what I thought you. Louis Kettletas, you are a cad."

Negligently he took it up. "And I don't care for scenes either—unless I make them myself."

He paused, threw a wad of bills on

the table and added: "You say you don't want money. None the less you will have to have some, for shortly I shall be leaving town."

She did not notice. Her eyes which, a moment before, blazed like two blue disks of flame, had narrowed. She was considering, not him, but this statement about leaving town. It was, she felt, another lie. Save on that first day when he had denied that he was to be a pupil of the Bravoura, when had he told her the truth? Latterly it had seemed to her that even his lies were false, that she could not believe the contrary of what he said. Now, though, she saw what he meant. He had had enough of it. He was leaving, not town, but herself. As she had intended to leave him, the fact, relatively, mattered little. It was the cavalier initiative that stung.

She did not show it however. With a shrug and a toss of the head she said and calmly enough: "You mean that you propose to desert me. Well, I had expected it. Where the cad is there too is the knave. You ought to be shot."

In the lash of that, his face contracted. She saw it and turned. Afterward she wondered whether by any chance, at that moment, he could have seen some uplifted fringe of the crimson curtain behind which his destiny crouched.

Afterward she wondered. But at the time, nursing her wounds and determined not to show them, she was occupied only in getting to the window and as far from him as the room would allow.

From the window she looked at a hurrying motor, an over-dressed child, the rare radiance of the day. Then there came the thin rattle of a stick withdrawn from the stand, the sound of the door being closed. She turned and sighed, but with relief, for he had gone, gone for good or gone for bad, and moving to the table, took up the wad of bills. They were all of the hundred dollar kind.

Royal, who had never seen so much money, put them down, shoved them

aside, seated herself, wrote two receipts and touched a button.

"Yes, m'em?"

At the door, pale and plain, stood the maid.

Royal turned. "Harriet, I am going away and as I shall close the apartment, I am sorry, but you and the cook will have to go too, and will you mind hurrying a little, please."

The maid's mouth opened.

Royal beckoned. "Here is a hundred for you and a hundred for the cook, and here is ink and a pen and these receipts. Take them all out, sign one receipt yourself, have the cook sign the other and bring both of them back to me—and the ink."

"But, m'em, you don't owe us anything like——"

"Now, Harriet, please do as I ask and please hurry."

Then when presently the maid returned with the receipts and the ink, Royal dismissed her.

"But, m'em, sha'n't I pack for you?"

Royal shook her head. "No thank you, Harriet. But good-bye and say good-bye to the cook."

"Cook asked me to say God bless you, m'em." Harriet chokingly whinnied. "I am sure we are both very g-grateful."

Royal watched the maid's exit and rather envied her facile tears. Her own eyes were dry, and though her heart was heavy it was only because it was hard, hardened rather and hardened by him.

At the thought of Kettletas she grit her little teeth, wrote a letter, directed an envelope which she stamped and, stuffing the rest of the money and the receipts into another envelope, scrawled on it: *The property of Louis Kettletas.*

That done she got the jewels he had sent her—and with which he had hoped, and vainly, to abate that anger which was hers—labeled the boxes that contained them as she had the envelope, put the boxes one on top of the other, put the envelope on top of all and left them.

There now remained but one more

duty, not to Kettletas, but to herself. In an adjoining room she took off her dress; put on the frock in which she had gone to Philadelphia; took the suitcase that had accompanied her there; went in again for the letter she had written, and, with that in one hand, the suitcase in the other, vacated the apartment with nothing of Kettletas' except the blight which his memory was.

A little later, the subway aiding, she was ringing at the Bravoura's door.

VIII

The Vision of the Empty Room

ON the following day, Armitage was arranging to enlist. He did not see what other course he could pursue. Kettletas had, in his hearing, somewhere remarked, that a life-long devotion is usually very brief. The devotion on which he had counted had not outlasted two weeks.

Why had it not? He had been as conscious that Margaret Sturgis loved him as he was that he was alive. And he had been conscious of it, not through vanity, for he had none, but because of her attitude, because she had said so, and he knew that she would have had no such attitude and said no such thing unless she had been sure that she loved him, sure too, that he loved her.

Why then had she thrown him over? That why haunted his days, haunted his nights. It obsessed him. But not a solution could he reach, except that there was an error, somewhere, a misunderstanding, not due to any fault of his or of hers. For real love is curiously divinitory and Armitage, who was the least complex of men, hit on the answer to the why, but subconsciously, and therefore vaguely, because, try as he might, he could not imagine from what the misunderstanding had come. He led a clean, straight life, and though he never boasted, even to himself, he knew that he was a clean, straight man. Otherwise he might have concluded that Margaret had heard of this or of that. But there was no this

or that for her to hear of. None the less he realized, as a poet did, that, in the lives of most of us, there is an hour when, if the dead only knew it, they could come back and be forgiven.

For that hour, for half of it, for five minutes of it, he had striven. After the first repulse he had gone again to her house. Very civilly, he was told that Miss Sturgis was not receiving. He had asked for her mother. Mrs. Sturgis was not receiving either. He had written. There had been no reply.

After that it seemed to him that the only dignified course was to desist and to enlist. If, in England for any reason they would not have him, there was France and the Foreign Legion. But the Foreign Legion never knew him. England either. Other matters supervised.

Meanwhile once in the park he thought he had seen her, or rather the back of her head and her unmistakable hair. But it had been only a glimpse as a motor shot by. Again, one night at the Splendor, he thought he had seen her leaving the room. Thereafter he abandoned the park and dined at his club, where there were others who had seen what he had and more.

Among these was Hatch, who, late that afternoon, was seated there in the window companioned by Arthur Jones, a young man of the vanishing type known as "about town."

Finishing a cocktail, Jones threw out: "By the way, what has become of Kettletas? Have you run across him lately?"

Hatch nodded. "Not long ago I saw him dining with Miss Sturgis—or at least I thought it was she."

"With Miss Sturgis!" Jones succulently repeated. "They must be engaged. That will be a pill for Armitage."

"But I thought she was engaged to Armitage."

"It's broken off. There is a paragraph about it in this week's *Town Talk*."

"Ah!" said Hatch, who let it go.

Elsewhere in the metropolis was a

woman by whom it could not be so lightly dismissed. The woman was Claribel Despard. With *Town Talk* before her she too was occupied with the Why?

Her little diversion with Armitage had not disturbed her conscience in the least. On the contrary, it had amused her as it had delighted Despard. Out of the loot, the bill had been paid and with the balance he had since made a killing among the war babies in the Street. For the time being he and Claribel were on velvet and Claribel, who enjoyed being there, developed for the looted a tender spot behind her stays.

Now, the gossip before her, she wondered. She had admired the girl and she liked the man. But for indiscretions of her own, she might have been of their sort. Yet, as indiscretions were hardly imaginable of either of them, she wondered still more.

Then, precisely as you may have seen in a moving picture, the paper fell from her, the room faded; she saw herself, in the empty restaurant, going with Despard to where Armitage sat; she saw him, surprised but civil, rising and saluting her; she saw Despard go; she saw herself pretending to faint; Armitage as he caught and held her, and then, as she straightened, she saw Miss Sturgis look in, start and turn away.

The vision passed. The room reformed. Claribel, the paper at her feet, was seated as before at a table in a private suite. Yet not quite as before. She had nailed the Why, and with the idea of doing one good turn in her life, she got up, consulted a social address book, reseated herself and wrote:

Friday

Miss Sturgis:

In a restaurant, not long ago, a woman fainted and would have fallen had not Mr. Armitage caught her just in time. At that moment you happened to look in and may have misunderstood. But Mr. Armitage had never seen the woman before, nor has he seen her since. Unfortunately, this letter must be anonymous, but the writer is, none the less,

A FRIEND.

There, thought Claribel, as she directed and stamped the envelope. Perhaps that may clear the skies.

IX

The Night Homicidal and Serene

ARMITAGE was writing a farewell. On the morrow he and his servant were to sail. The passports and steamer tickets had been secured. There remained but the packing, which was being attended to then.

"You will take both fur coats, sir?" James, looking in on him from the bedroom, asked.

Armitage, intent on the letter, nodded absently.

"No," he presently corrected. "One will do—the Persian lamb."

"And about the riding boots? Shall you wish them all, sir?"

Armitage, occupied with the farewell, made no reply. James retired, but shortly got back at it.

"Beg pardon, sir. In the table by your bed, sir, there is a revolver. Shall I—"

Friday

Dear Margaret:

It has been very bitter that you will neither see me nor write. You once said that we should never blame any one for anything. Perhaps then you are not to blame. But as I know that I am not, I am leaving for England—

Armitage had got that far when James's question entangled him. He looked up. The revolver he had had for years, but without using it, until a few nights before, when some outrageous cats had annoyed him and he had fired, not at them but over their bristling tails.

"Shall I put it in your dressing case, sir?"

Armitage looked down again and added:

—where if I can manage it I shall enlist—

He turned. "Bring it in here and put it on the mantel with the tickets. And James?"

"Yes, sir."

"I sha'n't dress this evening and you might finish packing after I am gone."

"Thank you, sir."

"And you need not wait up for me."

"Yes, sir, thank you, sir," answered James, who did as he was told.

Armitage, returning to the letter, wrote:

If you ever care to send a line, White's will probably reach me. I shall always love you, Margaret. God bless you and good-bye.
A. A.

He re-read the letter, judged it adequate, pocketed it, with the idea of posting it at his club—which, other matters supervening he forgot to do—and, in a little while, was ordering dinner there, or rather something to eat, for the meal consisted of a small steak and a big apple, things which he consumed gloomily behind an evening paper.

On entering the club he had encountered Melvale, the district attorney, a man with the face of an elderly cherub and the guile of an elderly fox, who, while adjusting his glasses, smiled at him.

"Armitage, do me the pleasure of joining me. I am just ordering a little drink."

"You are very good, Melvale, but if you don't mind, not just now."

With that, Armitage had smiled, nodded and moving on had inquired for Kettletas. Learning, then, that he was not in, he had told the doorkeeper to have the operator telephone to his residence. But Kettletas was not there either, though, as the doorkeeper reported, he was expected about eleven o'clock.

Armitage was both relieved and sorry. He hated saying good-bye and having a fuss made over him. But he had been very pally with Kettletas, who had two natures, of which Armitage knew but one. That nature was debonair and even humorous, and to it, while eating the apple, Armitage concocted a note.

A note to him he afterwards did write, but it was of a totally different kind from what he had planned.

He was then in the main room. Long since the apple had been eaten. Seated in a deep arm chair, of which the back was turned to the entrance, he was looking at a curtained window on which faces and places formed and disappeared, sudden tableaux of the day he had first seen her, the hour he had first loved her, the moment he had first thought she might care for him, and accompanying these, were shaded interiors, chairs under trees, the ball-rooms of Newport, Long Island lawns, wherever he had walked and talked and been with her.

Apart from the tableaux and himself the room had been silent and empty. But now in it, from the hall beyond, drifted snatches of talk.

"Hello!" he heard some one saying, "I have just ordered supper. Will you join me? By the way, I saw Kettletas to-night and for a wonder he was alone. He has been going about latterly with a deuced pretty girl. Do you know who she is?"

"Why, yes," Armitage heard another voice reply. "That's Margaret Sturgis. Hatch was speaking about it this afternoon. I hear they're engaged."

Vehemently Armitage started.

"Rather rough on Armitage, eh?" the first voice resumed. "Well, let's go up."

Armitage got to his feet. Beyond in the hall two men were entering the lift. Though they were in the line of his vision and he was not near-sighted, he did not see them. What he alone saw was the spectacle which they had evoked—Margaret and Kettletas—Kettletas and Margaret—engaged!

At the moment his thoughts stammered. The potential troglodyte that was in him, as potentially he is in all of us, awoke. Otherwise, over the cells of his brain a somnolence had fallen, over all save one, and that one cell, intensely active, incited blood madness and before perhaps it were possible for him to react, he realized that some one was near him, some one by whom he was being offensively addressed.

Savagely he turned. Before him stood Harris, a club servant, who from

the hall had seen him start, seen also his expression, which was so convulsed that tentatively he had approached him.

"Would you wish anything, sir?"

Armitage, maniacal still, could have struck him. The man saw that and moved back.

Yet in the question there must have been something of the effect of a spray. The irritability of the one active cell subsided, that of other cells was aroused.

He glared at the man. "Did you speak to me?"

"I did not know but what you wanted something, sir."

The words fell over him plentifully like water thrown from a bucket. In the douche and splatter of them, somnambulism ceased, his entire brain awoke, the troglodyte dematerialized. A gentleman understood that he had been civilly addressed by a servant.

With an intake of the breath he nodded. "Fetch me a brandy and soda."

Armitage turned again, crossed the room, recrossed it. When Harris came back with the liquor, he was still crossing and recrossing the room.

Harris looked at him. "Where shall I put it, sir?"

But Armitage who had forgotten him, forgotten the liquor, forgotten everything except what he had overheard, snapped viciously. "Wherever you like, but do stop talking to me."

Harris, his dignity offended, bowed distantly, put the liquor on the nearest table, the check beside it and withdrew, but not far, into the hall.

At once Armitage flung himself at another table, grabbed a pen, pulled out a sheet of paper and with the pen, stabbed at it.

Friday

Louis Kettletas:

If what I hear of you is true, you are a false friend and ought to be shot.

ALFRED ARMITAGE.

For a moment he considered it. Then he stood up, saw and helped himself to the brandy, which must have sobered him, for he looked again at the scrawl,

looked at other things, things visible only to himself and, rumpling the note, tossed it in a basket at his side.

After which, he got his hat and stick and went out into the night, a night homicidal and serene, yet leaving unsigned the check for the liquor.

Very serviceably Harris attended to it for him. He wrote on it "Mr. Armitage" and, with a machine in the hall, stamped on it the hour, which was precisely 11:04.

His services did not stop there. Rum-maging in the basket, he fished from it the rumpled note.

X

The Impact

THERE WAS a divinity, rare even in mythology, who after appearing twice in Homer, shot through a verse of Hesiod and vanished behind a page of Herodotus. Known in Rome as Rumor, the goddess was there credited with a hundred mouths, a hundred trumpets. In Greece she lacked these attributes. There she more mysteriously personified the occult wireless which we call presentiment, the impact that surges and warns.

At the hour when Harris was stamping the check, Margaret Sturgis was in the drawing-room. Of the gossip concerning her, the coupling of her name with that of Kettletas, she was unaware. To the coming events which the spiderous Fates held in leash, but which they were loosening then, she was blind. None the less the consciousness of a dread unprecised, shapeless, without a name, possessed her.

During dinner she had barely spoken. But as she had never talked abundantly, her silence passed unremarked by her mother and by her cousin, Philip Pendleton, who, on that evening, was dining with them.

Afterward they had gone to the drawing-room, where Mrs. Sturgis and Pendleton played cards and where Margaret tried to read a book by Mrs. Besant. Yet there were interruptions, not from without but from within, a

sense of disaster which she endeavored to put from her, a shadow of evil—which she sought to elude. But she failed. Together they encircled her with a girdle of ice. She shivered, looked at the clock and stood up.

"Mother, it is after eleven. I will go to bed." She stooped and kissed her. "Good-night, Philip," she added.

"Good-night, Margaret," he replied.

As she turned they eyed each other. When she had gone Mrs. Sturgis lifted her hands.

"What can I do? If she would only confide in me. It does seem too hard. I did like Alfred so much. He—you know I knew his father? He was so fond of chocolate pudding."

Pendleton got from his chair. "Everyone else complains but she never does. That is theosophy and it is very beautiful. Though, if she did complain and have it out, it would be easier for her. But don't worry, it will pass. There is no joy, no sorrow, of which one cannot say: 'This, too, shall pass away.'"

To that platitude the old lady assented. "When her father died I thought I could not bear it. Yet I have."

The fact seemed to astonish and cheer her. Under its influence Pendleton went away.

Margaret, meanwhile, had reached her room. On the mantel was a picture of Armitage. She had put it there long before and had seen no reason to remove it. It represented the loyal lover that he used to be.

Beside the picture was a clock. Her eyes strayed from one to the other. The clock she saw marked 11:09. The clock was utterly commonplace as most clocks are. In the hour that it marked there was nothing unusual. But as she looked at it, the sense of impending ill that had beset her heightened instantly into one of terror.

At what? She did not know. As she afterwards realized it was at this very moment that the thing had occurred. But, at the time, affected and profoundly by the invisible, she shud-

dered, strangled a shriek and, though she was not of the crying kind, broke down and sobbed from sheer fright.

But presently, either because the influence had done its work and departed or else because her common sense exerted itself, the tears ceased, the sense of horror passed. But it was long before she slept.

At a low rumble she awoke. It was a maid, preparing the bath, drawing the curtains, arranging the breakfast tray.

What was it that had happened? She asked herself. At once she remembered. Then though the departed terror of it stirred her, that vanished when, beside the tray, she found and read the note from Claribel.

An Ariadne less candid than she might at first at least have attributed the note to some subterfuge of the faithless. The idea never occurred to this girl. She accepted it unhesitatingly, for the truth that it was and immediately became a battlefield over which two emotions, joy and remorse conflicted.

They would have overwhelmed her, but the necessity of action presented itself. She thought of telephoning. Yet what she had to say was too poignant for any such channel. She thought of writing. Yet what she had to tell was too intricate for that. She thought of sending for him. He might refuse to come. There was but one course, to go to him, ask his forgiveness and leave, since, though he would forgive, he could not love her any more.

She had thought him untrue. But what now was his imaginary sin in comparison to her own? She had condemned him, and she knew that she should condemn no one. That being insufficient, she had condemned him unheard.

Certainly he would forgive her. Forgiveness is always easy to the indifferent, and nothing but indifference could he have for her now. Moreover she would bear with it and even gratefully, with a lightened heart, since her early trust in him was restored.

So she told herself. But for a lightened heart hers was very heavy. She

felt that if he had treated her as she had treated him, she might have tried to forgive and might too have succeeded, but never could she have forgotten. Always it would have rankled. That was her vile nature, she decided. He was well rid of her.

At once she understood, or thought she did, the first forebodings of the night before. What were they but that? Yet now, as with unpremeditated care she dressed, she wondered would he be at home.

From the mirror that showed back her fair and pure Madonna face, she looked at the clock. Precisely as the night before, it marked 11:09. Superstitions she had always regarded as the parody of religion, yet the co-incidence was so striking that it seemed indicative of something about to occur and for a moment, on the threshold of the unknown, she hesitated.

A moment only. Ordinarily she knew what she had to do and did it. It was that way then. She had a duty to perform and she started on its performance.

On the avenue, the air, flavored though it were with gasoline, steadied her. The eager sunshine calmed, but, as she turned a corner, her pulse quickened. Before her was the house in which he lived. She had never been in it, though, from what he had told her, she knew that his apartment was on the first floor, yet on which side of the entrance she did not recall.

At that entrance, people stood. In the hall, there were others, among them a boy in brass and blue.

"Which is Mr. Armitage's apartment?" she asked.

At the simple question the boy's jaw dropped. Ordinarily impudent, and greedy as well, he but stared and pointed.

The direction indicated was to the right and Margaret went to a door that was there.

But now the boy had recovered his tongue. He was muttering at others who were mumbling at him. Margaret did not heed. The door, moved

by an invisible hand, was opening.

Entering the vestibule she found a man who, in earlier days, had brought her the notes and flowers which are tokens of love. On such occasions, when she had seen him, he had impressed her very well. In the dim light of the vestibule he seemed oddly changed. The air too, was insufferable.

Margaret summoned a smile. "Good morning, James. Is Mr. Armitage in?"

James choked and faltered. "Mr. Armitage, Miss. He—they—"

The impacts of the night before, the attitude of the boy, the intolerable atmosphere of the vestibule, the inarticulate servant, these things batten- ing on nerves already overwrought, so prompted that she realized that the horror which she had divined was approaching and she straightened to meet it.

"He—they— Oh, Miss, they came and arrested him."

At that, James's wrinkled face elongated demesurably. It bobbed at her and vanished.

XI

The Leaping Words

WHEN, from the iced bath of the swoon, Margaret swam up, aching she wondered where she could be. The surroundings were strange to her and yet, as she found, not entirely. From a chair in which she was huddled she saw herself pictured in a photograph, that stood on a table beyond. Then she knew. She was in Armitage's rooms. There the horror had come and felled her.

"Would you drink this, Miss?" James was saying.

Then she saw him also. With a hand that was a trifle uncertain he was offering her a little glass.

She took and drank it. It burned, but it steadied, and straightening again, she looked at him.

"Tell me."

She was afraid to know and yet she knew that she must, for, as she looked

at the man, she discerned no comfort in his face, only a sort of wizened anxiety.

For a moment he fumbled with a paper. "They said that—"

But now the paper was before her. "*Kettletas murdered.*" Vividly the headline leaped to her eyes. "*Shot down before his door last night.*" That, too, sprang at her. "*No clews. Large reward—*"

The words struck her and ran. But they had stunned, and they had done so not because of what they shrieked, but precisely because of what they concealed. Yet it could not be that, she told herself. It was impossible. Then the paper began fluttering and, loosened in her hands, fell from her.

In a human hope for help she turned to James.

He had none. Ominously he shook his head. "They said he did it, Miss. There were three of them. It wasn't ten minutes before you—"

A cry interrupted him. Margaret had sunk back in the chair. "I can't stand it," she sobbed.

James twisted. All his savings and more he would have given if only both he and his master could be safe now on the firing line. Concerning what his master had done or omitted, he presumed to no other opinion than that, whatever it were, it was right.

"But I have got to stand it," Margaret was telling herself. "I have got to help."

In a moment she was attempting to. The effort, like the liquor, steadied her. Drying her eyes, she stood up, gave James a number and added: "See if you can get Mr. Pendleton on the wire."

Her head ached, her nerves were quivering, she was frightened and with cause, but herself she had recovered. There were things to be done, and presently she was telling her cousin to do them.

"Philip?" she began when James handed her the receiver. "This is Margaret. I am in Mr. Armitage's rooms."

"You are where?" the astonished lawyer called.

"I have told you. In Mr. Armitage's rooms. He has been arrested."

"What?"

"He has been arrested. You know about Louis Kettletas. It is for that."

"Good God, Margaret! Are you serious?"

The girl, receiver in hand, turned to James.

"Do you know where they took him?"

"There were three of them, Miss. The policemen and a man in plain clothes. I heard him say 'Mulberry Street.'"

"Philip," Margaret called again. "They have taken him to Police Headquarters. Will you go there at once and say that he is innocent?"

"If you are serious, which I can hardly credit, and if they will believe me, I will."

"Philip, go at once, I beg of you. And come to me afterwards. Don't telephone. Come."

Margaret, replacing the receiver, turned again to James. "My cousin, Mr. Pendleton, ought to be able to secure Mr. Armitage's release at once. But in case of any delay, Mr. Armitage may need some of his things. Will you pack them, please, and take them to him?"

"They're all packed now, Miss. We were going to England to-day."

Blankly Margaret stared. "To England? Why?"

"To enlist, Miss. I'm thinking it will be too late now."

"To enlist?" Margaret staring still, repeated.

Then at once divining the reason and the fault of it, which she knew was hers, one of the most curious of physical phenomena manifested itself. She blushed.

It was then high noon. In a little while, she reflected, Philip would be with her. Perhaps he would, too. At the thought of that the blush deepened.

But there are little whites that can contrive to be eternities, another phe-

nomenon of which she became aware when, again in her home, she had to endure the minor torture of her mother's inquisition.

"Margaret," Mrs. Sturgis cried at her as she entered the drawing-room, "have you heard about Louis Kettletas?"

"Yes, just now. Alfred's servant told me."

"Where was that?"

"In his rooms."

Mrs. Sturgis, who was rising, fell back. Like Pendleton, she did not in the least understand. Moreover, the sudden picture evoked, her daughter in a man's apartment, shocked her. None the less, she summoned a smile, a bleak one, but still a smile.

"In my time girls did not do such things."

"Mother, I did not see Alfred, though I went there hoping that I might."

"Margaret! Why, I thought it was all over between you."

"Yes, but I made a mistake and I went to tell him of it."

"Well, I am glad, very, about the mistake, I mean. I must say, though, that it would have been nicer of you if you had sent for him to come here."

"Yes, mother, perhaps so. But he could not have come. He has been arrested."

Mrs. Sturgis grimaced queerly. Either she had not heard aright or else Margaret was temporarily insane.

"His man told me. They said it was he who killed Kettletas. Of course he did nothing of the kind. I have telephoned to Philip. He will have him released and then he is to come here."

But now, consciously or otherwise, Mrs. Sturgis' head began shaking up and down, in the little movements that the palsied have.

"And I knew his father!" She found but that.

It was then that the eternity commenced. Luncheon was served, punctuated by the moans and exclamations of the old lady before whom the earth seemed to have opened.

"But why," she interminably asked, "did they say that Alfred killed his friend?"

Margaret did not know. But meanwhile Pendleton discovered, not the reason, but certain relative facts. It was long, though, before he could tell her of them, so long that in the increasing tension of the delay the minutes that lengthened into hours seemed each a separate agony.

That agony ended. Another replaced it. At last Pendleton came.

"Well!" she queried as he entered the room from which long since her mother had gone.

"Well," he answered and seated himself. "I am afraid things look pretty black."

Margaret blanched as suddenly as she had blushed. "Philip! you can't mean—"

"No, I don't. But it looks that way. It appears—and by the way I told Armitage that it was you who sent me to him and he beamed, actually he did—well, this is the way it is. They have a letter of his in which he says that Kettletas ought to be shot. He wrote it last night at the Athenæum, left it there, went out and, around the corner, five minutes later, Kettletas was killed. How they got the letter I don't yet know. But in his rooms to-day when they arrested him they found passports, tickets for a ship that sailed this afternoon and a revolver—of which one chamber is empty. They claim that in premeditating the murder he planned what they call a 'getaway.' Now he is held without bail."

That other agony, how benign it was in comparison to this! In the pain of it the girl's fingers twisted in and out of each other. There was a feeling, too, of suffocating so intense that at the moment she could not speak. It was her face that spoke for her.

At sight of it Pendleton half raised a hand. "Don't alarm yourself, not needlessly at least. The case is entirely circumstantial, no one has appeared who saw him at it, and unless a witness should appear, I'll get him off. Besides

there is no apparent motive. No, I'll get him off. It may take a year or two, but I will do it."

He might have said more and later did. But at the moment Mrs. Sturgis was entering the room. Rising, he turned to greet her. When he turned again Margaret had risen also. Silently, her face averted, she gave him her hand, and, suffocating with emotion, left him.

XII

The Illegal Magnificence

THE parvenus who, to-day, largely represent New York society and who, not so long ago, were probably paving the streets, relished it all immensely. Kettletas—whose people had governed New York when it was not New York but Nieuw Amsterdam—and Armitage—who came from the pick of the basket—what a morsel! Besides, by Kettletas they had been flouted and by Armitage ignored. Moreover, as they had laboriously learned, New York society has never, within its own circle, tolerated dramatic situations. Consequently, while there was little sympathy for Kettletas, there was none for Armitage. To the chair with him, and the sooner the better! The usual homilies from the press ensued. Then, pending the trial, the episode was dismissed.

But not immediately by Royal. No woman ever forgets her first lover. She may hate him, but she remembers. Royal had hated Kettletas. In that last interview with him she had felt like a nest of vipers. If eyes could assassinate, hers would have killed. Yet, at the news of his death, the woman spoke in her. It seemed to her deplorable that by no chance could he have had the time to go back to the rooms which she had vacated and found the abandoned livery, the dresses, the jewels, the money, the silk and scarlet that were there. To the end he had cheated her.

None the less the news of it hurt. Had he only been as fair as his words! At the thought of that her eyes filled.

But as she was aware, she had no business in that galley. She had thought otherwise. She thought so no longer. What she had to consider was the business of life, and she reabsorbed her tears. These tears of hers were the only ones shed over Kettletas. That, perhaps, is the egotist's fate.

The fate itself puzzled many a managing editor. For admittedly, the normal man, in whom self-restraint is an instinct, does not shoot another for any reason, no matter what, except in the case of that organised violence which war is, and except, too, in one of those rare instances when homicide becomes justified. Even then, the normal man, that Armitage had always shown himself, does not necessarily kill. On the contrary. Besides in the present instance nothing of the kind could be advanced. On the other hand, the two motor forces of masculine activity are money and women. Yet, as Kettletas and Armitage were both men of means, the motive could not have been financial, therefore must have been feminine and consequently *Cherchez la femme*.

But where? Then presently, in reportorial triumph, Miss Sturgis was produced. The triumph was easy and the logic of it still more so. For Armitage had been engaged to her. The engagement had been broken. Subsequently she was said to have been seen with Kettletas. Armitage had heard of it, his jealousy had been aroused, with the crime for result.

That was the triumph. But there were editors who did not applaud it. Jealousy is a fever which in certain natures may become virulent. Admitting its presence in Armitage, it did not in the least follow that it would poison sufficiently to incite him to kill. None the less there was that letter which a club servant, because of the reward offered—a reward entirely imaginary—had given to the police.

Concerning it, Pendleton failed to get any very satisfactory explanation from his client. Armitage admitted writing it, said that he was angry when he did so, argued that the phrase "You

are a false friend and ought to be shot" could not be construed as "shall be shot and by me," and wound up by throwing out and quite casually, as though asking the time of day: "You don't by any chance think me guilty, do you?"

"Even if I did," Pendleton replied, "it would be my duty to assume that you are not."

"Well, assume it, please, and tell Margaret that you do, and tell her also that on leaving the Athenæum I went straight home and to bed. Penny, I am as innocent as you are."

"Of course," said Pendleton, who did not for a moment believe him. "But will you tell me why you wrote that unfortunate letter. You say you were angry, but at what?"

"At everybody, at everything. I had overheard a man saying that Kettletas and Margaret had been seen together and that they were engaged. That is why I wrote as I did, but what I wrote I prefaced with the qualification: 'If what I hear of you is true.' What I heard I now know was false, false as Judas. Even otherwise, if I proposed to shoot a man down in the dark I would hardly warn him beforehand."

"You certainly omitted to do that," Pendleton thought. But he said: "You tell me you went straight home. Your man was there, I suppose?"

"No, I had told him not to wait up."

"That, too, is unfortunate," Pendleton replied and this time spoke truly.

On the whole, therefore, the interview was not very satisfactory. But the gist of it he reported to Margaret, who, meanwhile, had recovered herself again. Pale but resolute she listened.

The knowledge that her name had been associated with Kettletas sullied her. The story that she had been seen with him dismayed. But these things were personal, she let them go. It was the fact that Armitage had written the letter because of them which she could not let pass. In that, she saw, she had but herself to blame. It was her own fault, she told herself, all of it. If, in her criminal folly, she had not broken

the engagement, or if only of that folly she had repented sooner, the letter would not have been written and he would be free.

"What he needs," Pendleton resumed, "is an alibi—and he has none."

As he spoke he made a gesture, wide and hopeless. It angered the girl.

At it and at him she looked. "I can supply one. At the time of the murder he was here."

It was a moment before Pendleton got it. When he did, admiringly he smiled.

"That is magnificent, but it is not law."

"No, perhaps not. But if by perjuring myself I can save him the Lords of Karma will forgive the sin."

"The Lords being, I suppose, a theosophical phrase."

"A fact," she corrected.

"You see," he presently resumed, "it is, as I say, magnificent, but it won't do. At the time of the murder I was in this drawing-room. I did not see him, nor could I say that I did, much less swear to it."

"Naturally, you did not see him. He was in my room."

"Margaret!" the lawyer and cousin hotly protested. "Such a statement would compromise you irretrievably."

Disdainfully she took it up. "And what would that matter to me?"

But Pendleton shook his head. "It won't do, Armitage would be the first to refute you. I will have to find something else."

But, though it was then May, summer had come and gone before he succeeded.

XIII

The Curtain Rises

"HATS off."

Through the vast room the cry was flung, followed instantly by another, an archaic summons, that trailed away.

"Hear ye, hear ye, all ye having business with the Court—"

Within the bar, Melvale, the district

attorney, and his colleagues prowled. Against the bar, watching there, was Pendleton and his associate counsel. Back of them were the reporters, the flower of newspaperdom, virile young men in soft collars and light serge. To the rear were the spectators, a solid mass, men whom you would recognise as first-nighters, women whom you would not recognise at all. To the right of the bar were the witnesses for the prosecution. To the left was the jury. Between and above, beneath the canopy of the Bench, sat the Judge.

The heat was epic, prehistoric, prodigious. Without you could see, within you could feel the fire and furnace of the September sun.

"Alfred Armitage, to the Bar!"

Into the court the prisoner came, perfectly groomed, not cool, perhaps, but entirely self-possessed, a keeper behind him. He shook hands with Pendleton, sat down and looked over to the right of the Bench where, in a sort of proscenium box, Margaret sat with her mother.

The entire setting was that of a play and on it now the crimson curtain had risen.

"May it please the Court: Mr. Foreman and gentlemen of the jury."

With three bows and these rituals, Melvale opened for the State, outlining the case of the People, summarising the evidence, expressing the wish that the jury would believe the defendant innocent until his guilt had been shown, but declaring that, personally, for his part, of that guilt he was thoroughly convinced.

Before he had finished, Pendleton was at him.

"I object to the District Attorney prejudicing the jury against this gentleman, my client."

That gentleman did not appear to heed. From Margaret and her mother he had turned to look at an official who had surged suddenly, as from a trap, at his side.

The objection was not sustained.

"And I except to your Honor's ruling," Pendleton, mopping himself,

threw at the Bench and turned to resume his seat.

But the sudden official whispered at him. "Just delivered at the door."

As suddenly he vanished and Pendleton was looking at a letter, while Margaret and Armitage looked at him. A moment only. Pendleton bent to Wix, his associate counsel, muttered at him, mopped himself again, smiled grimly and left the room.

Melvale proceeded. "There, gentlemen, is the crime. There, too, the motive. To prove both, evidence will be adduced."

He, too, mopped himself and called the first witness, a chauffeur, who, on that night in May, had driven Kettletas to his house and who testified that when the deceased had alighted and he, the witness, was moving on, he heard a shot, stopped, got out and found Kettletas lying, face downward, on the sidewalk.

"Then what did you do?" Melvale asked.

"I called 'Police!'"

Melvale, turning, looked for Pendleton, and, not seeing him, addressed Wix. "Your witness."

But Wix, a small man, very bald, motioned the witness away.

The chauffeur was succeeded by a policeman.

"It was you, was it not, who answered the call of the witness?" Melvale asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Did you note the time?"

"I did that, sir. It was 11.09."

"Your witness," Melvale remarked to Wix, who fanned himself and shook his head.

The next on the stand was a servant out of livery.

Melvale questioned. "On the night of the crime you were, I believe, acting as doorkeeper at the Athenæum Club?"

"Yes, sir."

"State what, if anything, occurred in connection with the defendant."

"Mr. Armitage came a little after seven and asked for Mr. Kettletas. I told him that Mr. Kettletas was not in.

He asked me to have the operator telephone to his house and find out if he was there."

"What then occurred?"

"Well, sir, the telephone boy reported that Mr. Kettletas was not at home, but was expected at about eleven."

"Did you so inform the defendant?"

"I did, sir."

"That's all."

The doorkeeper was succeeded by Harris, who identified an exhibit—marked A—as a letter which he had seen Armitage write.

But now Pendleton, who seemed to have cooled off, reappeared. He muttered at Wix, murmured to Armitage and listened indifferently to the reading of the fateful words.

Wix stopped fanning himself. His small eyes had widened. Armitage, taking the fan from him, waved it at Margaret, who, pale as a ghost, attempted to smile.

"Harris," Melvale was saying, "state what, if anything, the defendant did before he wrote this letter."

"He walked up and down and ordered a brandy and soda."

"What was his manner?"

"He was very angry, sir."

"Do you know why?"

"Two of the gentlemen had come in and were talking about Mr. Kettletas. One of the gentlemen said that he was engaged to Miss Sturgis and that would be rough on him."

"On whom?"

"On Mr. Armitage, sir."

"Then what?"

"The gentlemen went up to supper and Mr. Armitage wrote that letter."

"What else did he do?"

"He left the club, sir."

"Do you know what the time was then?"

"It was 11.04, sir."

"How do you know so exactly?"

"I had to stamp the check for the brandy and soda which he had forgotten to sign."

Melvale looked at the perspiring jury, looked at Armitage, looked again at the witness and asked:

"Have you ever been to the house in which the murdered man resided?"

"I have, sir."

"How far is it from the club?"

"Just around the corner."

"Your witness," said Melvale to Pendleton, who, for a moment, took him to hand.

"Did Mr. Armitage tell you that he had overheard the conversation which you have repeated?"

"No, sir."

"Then how do you know that he did hear it?"

"Well, sir, he—"

"Answer me directly. Do you know or don't you?"

"No, sir, I don't."

With a cool and irritating smile Pendleton listened to the next witness, the detective who had officiated at Armitage's arrest, and who identified various exhibits as the passports, steamer tickets and revolver which he had taken from the defendant's rooms—exhibits doubly serviceable to the prosecution for in addition to supplying the weapon they showed that the defendant had planned an escape.

That point driven in, Melvale asked: "Can you classify the revolver?"

"It's a 32-caliber, sir."

Pendleton, with the same airy air, asked of him but one question.

"When my client was arrested did he say anything?"

Sullenly the detective nodded. "He said he was innocent. They all do."

For form's sake, and obviously for that only, Pendleton negligently asked to have the latter part of the answer stricken out.

The detective was followed by the coroner, a meagre man, in leprous brown, who testified that the deceased had been shot through the carotid artery by a bullet which, from a calculation of its lands and grooves, had been fired from a 32-caliber revolver.

It was with the air of a friend that Pendleton went at him.

"How old are you, may I ask?"

"I? I am forty-nine."

"And are you married?"

"Yes."

"Any children?"

"Yes, but I don't see—"

That friendly manner, where was it now? Pendleton was glaring and snapping.

"Never mind what you see or what you don't see. You say you are forty-nine, married and a father. Now was it your children, your wife or your advancing years that supplied your astounding deduction?"

The little man blinked. He was perspiring profusely.

"What deduction, sir?"

"That from a calculation of the lands and grooves the bullet had come from a 32-caliber revolver."

"Oh, well, from the look of it, I assumed—"

"That will do," Pendleton interrupted. He looked at the Bench. "I ask that the witness's testimony be stricken out."

Melvale objected. A wrangle ensued.

The Judge intervened. "A human being is on trial for his life. I cannot try a case in which only counsel are heard."

Pendleton turned and looked at the door, which was closed and guarded. He turned and supplied a diversion. Bending to Armitage, he told him to take the stand.

The move, wholly unexpected, unusual, almost exceptional in murder cases, created an impression that was excellent, a sense of admiration for the grit of defense which, thus far, had seemed very shaky.

But the excellence of the impression dwindled. In the direct, Armitage denied, of course, that he had committed the murder, denied that he had ever contemplated it, explained the fateful letter in the same manner which he already had, adding that his preparations to sail were due wholly and solely to his desire to enlist.

Leisurely the cross followed.

"Armitage," Melvale began, and in quite the same tone that he would have used to him in the club. "Is it not true

that previous to the murder you had been engaged to Miss Sturgis and that the engagement was broken off?"

Armitage smiled. "It is quite true. But, without wishing to burden you with my private affairs, I may note that the engagement has been renewed."

Melvale bowed. "You have my warmest congratulations."

A newspaper artist who was present afterward remarked that, at the moment, Armitage reminded him of an Egina bas-relief in which the figures fight and laugh, and laughing die.

"Yes," Melvale resumed. "But the point is elsewhere. After the engagement was broken—and before it was renewed—is it not true that you heard that Miss Sturgis was engaged to Kettletas?"

Affably Armitage nodded. "That also is true. But what I heard was false as Judas."

With the same affability Melvale nodded back. "None the less, is it not true that, when you did hear it, you wrote this letter, marked exhibit A, in which you say that Kettletas ought to be shot?"

Armitage, with an air of entire good humor, laughed. "It is astonishing, Melvale, but you are right again."

"Thank you. Perhaps also I am right in this: After writing the letter you left the club, and, five minutes later, Kettletas was—"

"A recess!" the Court ordered.

XIV

Behind the Curtain

TUMULTUOUSLY, an hour later, the session was resumed. But meanwhile the case was clear as a moving picture and far more logical than many of them. From the evidence presented, the jury could visualize Armitage entering the club, inquiring for Kettletas, learning when he was expected home, waiting about until the time arrived and then going forth to meet the man whom five minutes later he had murdered.

That picture the jury, as they

munched and talked, examined. It was flawless.

The foreman, who had a deformed stomach and a terraced chin, summarised it sensibly.

"Gentlemen, we have the motive, the premeditation, the opportunity and the weapon. No clearer case—"

"All the same," a hasty gentleman with a fabulous nose cut in, "he don't look like that kind of a feller. He sat there and talked as pleasant as you please."

Amplly the ogre smiled and crushed him. "So he did. So he did. But you, my friend, haven't been on any of these cases before. I have. And you can take it from me that that's the attitude of the habitual criminal. Have a cigar?"

Pendleton, too, had reviewed the picture; he had reviewed it longly and before it was screened. To him it was not flawless, there were holes in it, and though he felt that these holes might be obscured in the present trial which, while conducted by experts, would be decided by amateurs, yet, on appeal, they should score.

But all that was before the opening. Since then the picture had not interested him in the least.

When the recess was ordered, abandoning Armitage to his keeper, he went over and said two things to Margaret and her mother. Mrs. Sturgis did not seem to get them. But if one may fancy a Madonna gasping, that is the way the girl looked.

Thereupon he took them out and around the corner to a place where they lunched villainously, or at least where he and Mrs. Sturgis did, for Margaret touched nothing except water, which, being bottled, was good. But through the meal, such as it was, he bundled them, hurried them back, saw them to their box, left them there and again went out.

Then presently the session was resumed. At the door was a riot. There a squad of perspiring police fought back a crowd clamoring for admission to the continuous show. For it is al-

ways great fun to see a man tried for his life.

Of the crowd some got through, yet mainly the first-nighters, who had established their rights, but also a man of obvious distinction whom Pendleton piloted, whom the first-nighters recognized and to whom Melvale bowed.

But now Armitage was brought from the Tombs. The jury filed in and the judge, ushered by the cry: "Hats off!" entered and resumed his seat. There, nodding at Pendleton's guest, he invited him up on the Bench.

"Another day," replied the latter, who at the moment was shaking hands with Armitage. "Thanks all the same."

Melvale, mopping himself, asked Pendleton if he proposed to call anyone else. The lawyer turned to the celebrity. "Dr. Grantly, will you take the stand?"

When, leisurely, the famous physician had done so and been sworn Pendleton rubbed his hands.

"Dr. Grantly, will you please tell the Court what you have just told me."

The physician plucked at his pointed beard. "Yes. It is just this. To-day, a patient of mine told me something which he asked me to come here and repeat."

Pendleton motioned. "And what was it?"

"That it was he who shot Kettletas."

Abruptly the room hummed like a wasp's nest.

"Order!" the judge called. In the momentary lull that followed he looked over and down. "This is very astounding, Grantly. Did he say why?"

The physician patted his beard. "He did, and very explicitly. He gave me two letters which I have turned over to Mr. Pendleton, and which he will submit. Both are from a daughter, an only child whom, to my personal knowledge, he greatly loved. In one she told him that she was leaving their home to marry Kettletas; in the other that Kettletas had deceived and deserted her."

Thoughtfully the judge took it in and asked: "Where is he now?"

The physician looked up and away. "I don't know. I doubt if anyone

does. But life is extinct. He is dead."

"And his name?"

"Paul Doré."

Again the room hummed. There were raps for order; commands for silence, threatened punishments for contempt. But the curtain was falling.

Melvale, leaning over the Bar, offered a hand to Pendleton, a smile to Armitage. "You pulled that off very well."

"The State rests," he turned and announced, and, though other formalities were observed, it was but a few minutes before the jury had rendered their verdict and the crimson curtain fell.

"Are there any further charges against the defendant?" the Judge asked of Melvale.

"There are none, your Honor."

Paternalty the Judge nodded at Armitage. "You are discharged."

"I was sure of it," Mrs. Sturgis, fluttering with excitement, exclaimed. "I knew his father!"

XV

The Princess of Porcelain

BEFORE the trial began, a young man was in love with one of the twin daughters of an arrogant hotel-keeper. The latter would have none of him.

"What do you do?" he disagreeably asked.

Modestly the young man answered: "Just now I am composing a musical comedy."

"Oho! You are, are you? Well, when it is produced look in again. Good day to you."

In saying that he was composing a musical comedy the young man showed great powers of imagination. The thing that he did have in hand was not musical, but it was certainly melodious, and, at a pinch, you might, if you were generous, say that it was comedy also. But he was not composing it. From a ton of Donizetti's earlier operas, which have never been given in this country and which Italy has long since forgotten, he was lifting a score.

It was, therefore, melodious. Doni-

zetti at his worst was always that. In addition, though old it was new, besides being so sweet that it was cloying. As such it tickled the palate of a Jew whom the young man beguiled into hearing it.

Oilily he listened. Already he had heard the tale of the haughty innkeeper and it was in allusion to him that he finally exclaimed:

"Vell, he ought to give you bof!"

"Both what?"

"Bof daughters. I'll put it on. Now vat about the book?"

That was the genesis of "The Princess of Porcelain," which was produced just three months after the trial. In its preparation, the Jew, who knew his business thoroughly, worked, not like a slave, but like a slave-driver. The loose ends he stuffed with the shapeliest that Broadway could provide, and how he bullied them!

But at last it was produced. To it came the first-nighters, the eminent critics with their reviews already written, and such ordinary people as could badger or buy their way there.

To the score, the critics bowed as they had at the dress rehearsal. Not an old friend exactly, it more nearly resembled a distant acquaintance. There was not a man among them who would not have sworn that he had met it before, and not one who could have testified where.

"Bellini and soda," it was described by the most eminent of the lot, who will never know, until he reads this—if he

ever does read it—how nearly he hit the mark.

But the less cultured first-nighters enjoyed it. When the curtain parted on an empty stage, across which a little girl just showed her pretty face and vanished, they moistened their lips. Then when her uncle, the wicked and basso king, and his gorgeous, dissolute and soprano court came tumbling after and not finding the beauty, meltingly sang that "nice little girls at night should be tucked in bed all right"—and other fiorituri of the same high Broadway order—the first-nighters sat back. They knew it would be a go, and it was.

Afterward it appeared that the little princess, who should have been safely tucked in bed, was actively eloping with a person of very low birth who, a trifle before 11.15, turned out to be her second cousin and the rightful heir to the throne.

Meanwhile, the little princess sang delightfully. New to Broadway, her face, her manner, a way she had with her, the cornet quality of her upper notes, caught on at once.

"Who is she?" Margaret, who was present, asked of her husband.

Armitage consulted the program. "She is billed as Royal Doré. Probably a stage name."

He paused and added: "Wouldn't it be odd, though, if she were the daughter of the man who did for Kettletas!"

"Wouldn't it!" said Margaret wonderingly.



WHEREVER there are broad shoulders to weep upon and a male tongue to be caught in lies, there a woman finds all the blessings of home.



THE WOMAN ON THE LEFT

By Henry White

HE was looking for Romance. The show was awful. The girls were pretty, but—well, they were impossible. Their beauty was a commodity—on the market like potatoes.

But it was a fruitful place for such a quest: the music enlivening; the auditorium made darker by the shafts of lights on the tinselled dancers on the stage; and the awfulness of the show—and all. And other minds would be bored. They, too, would be seeking amusement.

So he looked around.

A party of old hens occupied a group of seats on the extreme right. On the left, a party of gaudy chickens were entertaining adolescent male company. The stage lights made a blur out of the people in front. One can't see people in the rear very well.

He found Her. She was sitting at his left in the next seat, with her legs crossed saucily, adorably.

The old adage about beginning at the ground came to him; and he studied her feet. The skirt was hardly long enough—that is, for some. It suited him. She wore pink stockings. Where they began to expand, just above the shoetops, he could see white underneath. The semi-darkness heightened its vivid, fascinating beauty.

But of her type; there were those who would say— He hated to think of one's being so piously immured in the restrictions of convention he couldn't pick a live one, even if she did trample decorum unceremoniously.

Who demanded intelligence? Everybody. Even himself. And since he

was picking The Woman, he must not overlook that. Her eyes reflected it. He noted the gleam with a shrug of satisfaction.

He wanted to say something to her, just anything. Something must be said. He couldn't, of course, tell her all that was on his mind—that evening. But he knew—the communion of her soul with his told him—there must be other evenings; perhaps in the same humdrum theater. But now—

She smiled. He put his hand to his mouth and coughed. When he removed it he placed it on the arm of the seat between them—since half of the arm belonged to him anyway. Her hand was there, too! She didn't remove it. Decorum is blind in the dark!

The weak little impulse that traveled from his heart down his arm to his fingers came back warmed into a blush that broke out on his face. He turned abruptly, boldly, and faced her. As she drooped her head it was lit up for a second with a ray of light deflected from the footlights by a tinsel decoration on the costume of one of the chorus girls.

She smiled again!

She was interested, or she would have removed her hand. He had found it. Slowly her fingers unclasped, and he unclasped his to receive them.

Romance was surely at hand. He knew he could be happy with her. Oh! if she would, if only she would—

But one thing stood in the way.

"I'm always forgetting I'm married," he said, and turned to the woman on his right.



THE SINS OF THE FOUR HUNDRED

By _____*

I.

THE FREEBOOTERS

EDITOR'S NOTE:—*This is the first of a series of articles dealing with "The Sins of the Four Hundred." The second will appear in the next issue of THE SMART SET.*

I AM writing this from Paris. My motive in writing is to set before the world something of the life of the sycophant as he lives it to-day in New York society. I am able at last to get a fairly clear perspective of things, and I want to set down cold-bloodedly all the petty ways and means we hangers-on use to eke out a livelihood at the expense of the rich and each other. For I have been in the grind nearly ten years and know what I'm talking about. Our methods are sordid and dastardly. I recognize all that and make no excuses, and yet—I shall be quite honest—I cannot bring myself to the point of condemning. I am a respectable business man now—as respectable business men run in Paris—and am leading a fairly rational existence. And yet as I sit here and write, I can feel again that overpowering glamour of wealth and association with wealth that blinds a man to all sense of the decencies of life.

All about me are souvenirs of those earlier days. Over my desk is a picture of the good coach *Venture*, taken on her maiden trip from London to Brighton. I see Tracy Smith on the box, and myself leaning over and talking to him with careless familiarity. That picture was printed in every newspaper in Europe and in America. I can feel again the zest of that drive and hear the cheering of the crowds that greeted us everywhere along the road. Those cheers were not for the sport-

ing enterprise, but for the millions of the men who put the enterprise through. And I, as a friend of that man, as a member of that party, got a reflected glory from those millions.

And then—there is a picture of a beautiful yacht, the *Viking*, burdened down by the weight of her sail. We won the Astor Cup that year and—"We," did I say? There you are. My income was a scant hundred a month at that time, and yet the exuberant thrill of that victory was as much mine as it was that of the man whose money had made possible the winning craft. Also, the drunk afterwards in celebration was equally mine.

And so it goes. I look around my study at the motley collection of things scattered about. Each is a reminder of some so-called triumph. And such is human nature that I dwell constantly on those triumphs and forget the sordid means I resorted to, to win them.

I managed to get through college on a small allowance. My senior year I fell in with Tracy Smith, the wealthiest man of his age in the country. He took a fancy to me and the following summer I went for a month to his country place in Great Neck. It was with difficulty that I got together the proper outfit of clothes, for commencement expenses had been heavy, but I sold most of the books that I had so carefully collected during the four years and managed to start off fairly well equipped. I state these facts because many men are starting off in their career of sycophancy through just such accident of circumstance,—a college friend, a traveling acquaintance, a chance invitation for the week-end.

From that time on and for ten years,

*For reasons obvious, the author remains anonymous.

my life was a frenzied attempt to get money in one way or another to keep up appearances.

I pulled through that first summer at Tracy's with a fair show of ease, and made good with the North Shore set. The men liked me, for I was something of a sport and rode and raced with the best of them, although I had never owned a horse of my own. The women enjoyed working virgin soil, perhaps! At any rate, my season was accounted a success, and I left Great Neck in the fall with many invitations for the coming winter.

Tracy offered to put me up at his club in New York. I agreed and, being now twenty-one, drew on my very small principal to stand the initiation fee. At the end of that winter there wasn't a cent of my principal left. I read law in the day time and lived at a sordid little boarding house. But the previous summer had forged in me rather expensive tastes. Cigars and cigarettes, cab hire, flowers for my hostesses! And, then, wherever I went, the inevitable bridge table! I began to borrow from the men among whom I worked, for the most part good honest fellows who helped me out gladly to the best of their ability. And then I discovered the various ways and means of getting my cigars for nothing. I had seen other men fill their pockets after dinner at their host's expense. I had seen whole boxes of choice cigarettes surreptitiously "lifted" at week-end parties in the country, and I began to follow suit, to feel a sort of fellowship with those other men whom I had condemned so harshly but a little while before. My sensibilities were becoming blunted; the hardening of my moral arteries had begun.

Then I had my first love affair. The woman was married, older than I, perfectly accomplished in intrigue. It was quite easy to slip into a liaison in that gay set where nearly every man vaunted a mistress and every woman a lover. But it was a new thing to me, and in the excitement and thrill of it I plunged deeper and deeper into debt. I had

learned to avoid the bridge tables by now, and always feigned a preference for dancing, riding, billiards, anything where stakes were not involved. For I was something of a novice at cards and invariably lost. I pawned everything I didn't actually need and moved to cheaper quarters.

Then one day at a week-end party at the Burnhams I attacked Harry Preston, a man living like myself, by his wits. He had shown a semblance of prosperity in the last month and now I saw my chance.

"Harry, could you let me have fifty for a week or two?"

He turned on me quite aghast. "Let *you* have fifty! Has Claire thrown you over?"

"Good God!" I cried—"You don't think I'd——"

But already my indignation had flickered out and I felt a sense of relief. Why not? A month's respite from the terrible gnaw of money worry! I had known right along that that sort of thing was being done, but I had never connected it definitely with anyone in our own little set. But by the light of Harry's remark I read a dozen instances of it. Harry, himself, was in the thrall of a wealthy divorcée and his temporary prosperity was accounted for. Well—why not?

I borrowed money from Claire. She took it as a matter of course; I think she had been expecting it for some time. She had plenty of money, and had floated other lovers before. I found her a lavish patron, but her air of proprietorship over me increased in proportion to my indebtedness to her. She became more and more ruthless in her exactions; I grew restive. Spring brought a final break and I was again thrown on my own resources.

Why not marry for money? That was the next thing that presented itself. I had heard of agencies that provided a man with funds to put through matrimonial schemes of this sort. With Harry's help I sought one out. They took a chance on my connection with Tracy and the fact that I'd figured now

and then in *Town Topics*, and I was started off with a thousand dollars in pursuit of a rich wife.

I will say here that the firm lost its money. I did have one tremendous chance to make a wealthy match, but a spirit of perversity kept me from clinching the matter. I do not regret it in the least. The examples I have seen of such alliances have not been happy ones, and I prefer my freedom at all costs. I should say only about two out of ten of the hangers-on of Society do make profitable marriages, for the smart set are fairly clannish when it comes to the big issues.

I shall shift the scene now from New York to some summer resort. Newport, Narragansett, Bar Harbour—they're all alike. I have spent two or three seasons at each. Let me give you a typical summer in Newport. Things are much more difficult in a small place, for people are thrown constantly together, with the result of greater demands in many lines. For instance, one has to have fairly decent quarters, a greater variety of clothes, some means of transportation, etc. There must have been twenty of us that summer struggling to make a respectable show. Harry Preston, Travor Walters, Richard Kent and myself—we four were perhaps the most conspicuous in that we were the most daring. We were all college men of good family and all, with the possible exception of Harry, who was our ring-leader and a knave at heart, might have proved themselves decent fellows under normal conditions.

The first thing was to open accounts at the Avenue stores. We found the shopkeepers adamant; previous experience had taught them what attitude to take toward a man who hesitated when asked for business references. But we outwitted most of them in the end. For instance, Harry was staying with Tracy at Shore Farm his first week in Newport. He sought out a tailoring firm new to the place and bullied the man into making him a new riding suit, on condition that he bring Tracy

in some time to view the stock. Harry sported the suit all summer and the little firm closed from lack of the right patronage.

And again, one day Travor Walters was walking down the Avenue with Ann Brittingham, Ann whose many millions made her an invaluable patron of any store.

"Oh, Ann!" he cried. "The color of that sweater in —'s! I must see you in it."

Ann was flattered. "It's lovely," he exclaimed as she slipped into it. "Isn't it?" He referred to the obsequious shopkeeper, who had turned him down but a few days before when he had attempted to open an account.

"Just the color for Mrs. Brittingham," said the man.

"Get it and let me paint you in it," Travor pleaded. (He daubed now and then.)

Ann fell, of course. A woman always falls when it comes to having her picture painted.

"And what is that sweater next to it—the man's?" This from Travor, as they were about to go out. "Oh, do you mind waiting, Ann? I think I'll try that on. I lost mine overboard coming from the *Viking* yesterday. Yes, that will do, I think. I want to open an account. References? Ann—" He turned to the lady. "The monster doubts my honesty—"

"Ridiculous," said Ann. "Mr. Walters is my guest; he's staying at my house—Yes, take it with you if you want to, Travor." And Ann had swept out with all dignity, followed by the triumphant Travor with his new sweater.

I opened several accounts that way myself. Of course we were shut down on very soon—but what did we care?

Harry Preston had been in the game longer than the rest of us and knew all the leads. There were many bits of club scandal and boudoir gossip that got into the newspapers and *Town Topics* in an unaccountable way. People wondered and blamed the servants. Many a woman I've driven to Bailey's

in a cab, and the price of that cab was obtained at the expense of her own fair name. You see, I'm putting things quite starkly.

Then again we had many little interchanges with the brokers. Tracy was a fair target. We were seen constantly with him. What more natural than that some of us should be broached as to the possibilities of luring him within certain offices?

"We'll make it quite worth your while, you know." We found these leaders of finance quite smooth in their offers. Dick Kent supported himself one whole summer that way.

We trafficked with restaurants and hotels, not well known, for a dinner here and a luncheon there, on the promise of future patronage from our wealthy friends. We wrested many a commission from a poor artist or struggling dealer already selling at a starvation price. I bought a beautiful piece of harness for Tracy once, and inveigled the dealer into charging forty dollars more for it than was listed, and dividing up the difference with me.

One little incident stands out quite clearly in my mind. Harry was between affairs (he throve for the most part on the women) and I was desperately down. I had that morning cashed a check, OK'd by a man I had run into very casually at the Club, and knew of a certainty it would come back. I had a hopeless, driven feeling and felt capable of anything. We went to dinner at the Clam Bake Club that night with Tracy and he took us afterwards on to Freebody Park. The show was just closing as we were ushered into our box and I thought with regret of the eighteen dollars so foolishly wasted. Tracy left us directly after.

"Come with me," I said to Harry and we went back to the box-office. "I want the money back for that box," I said with would-be carelessness as I peered through the bars of the office window.

Tracy and I looked sufficiently alike for me to attempt the bluff.

"Certainly, Mr. Smith," said the manager. I can see him now, a Jew named

Goldberg. As he was counting out the money his eye caught mine and he put his fat hand over the bills.

"Gosh, you're a slick one. You nearly got by on that. If Mr. Smith wants his money back, let him come and get it himself."

"But Mr. Smith—" I was choking with anger, not so much at being caught red-handed but because the coveted money had escaped.

"Never you mind about Mr. Smith. Look a-here. Are you boys as hard up as all that? Well, come around the corner and I'll buy you a drink to show there's no hard feeling."

And we went. Would you believe it? It was rotten whisky but it was a drink at the other fellow's expense.

That night the ships were all in the harbour. We went to the Reading Room late. "Stick by me," said Harry, "and I guarantee you something that will cover your bad check." I did. We cheated at cards that night. I won't go into all the dastardly details of it, but we cleared out about twenty of Uncle Sam's young ensigns. We kept up that campaign for a week until the Admiral of the fleet, suspecting foul play, forbade the officers the club. And then, afterwards, we boasted of our system.

We acted as middlemen between the young bloods of the summer colony and some of the pretty girls of the town. We couldn't afford ourselves to go in for any such affairs, although Harry did occasionally. I remember one little blonde creature, a typewriter in one of the Avenue stores. Harry courted her ardently, borrowed money from her and then passed on with a laugh.

The old ladies had a penchant for Dick Kent. I imagine he flattered them, listened to their maudlin stories of past triumphs and still treated them as a sex. He would go shopping with them, and, secure in his artless mien and seeming frankness, would always manage to bring home some little souvenir of his shopping tour—a scarf pin, cuff links and the like, all of which would immediately find a home in the pawn shops. How Dick ever explained to the fair

dames the absence of their little gifts afterwards I never made out.

I spoke a little while ago about being obliged to have fairly decent quarters. Our bachelor apartments at first seemed a tremendous drag, but eventually they proved most profitable as investments. For there were found many men and women only too glad to make use of them for their rendezvous. We sold the use of them for good money, of course, and then in many instances blackmailed the people for more, or else sold their secret to someone else—a husband or wife who might possibly be interested—at a still greater profit.

In closing, I am going to sketch briefly the careers of a couple of my friends.

Travor Walters fell in love with a divorcée of moderate income. She was forty and addicted to drugs. Travor went into the thing because at the time nothing better presented itself. In a year's time drugs and the woman had taken the best out of him. The two travelled all over the world together and sank to the lowest depths of debauchery. The woman died in China and left Travor all her money. He ran through it in a year of reckless excess and then sank out of sight. He is probably dead now.

As to Harry—Harry eventually became involved with the wife of one of New York's multimillionaires. He thrived until the husband, seeing how matters stood, cut down his wife's allowance. The wife dared make no ob-

jections, but she and Harry had much bickering, for the money meted out proved inadequate to the needs of both. The husband wanted a divorce, but he could get no straight evidence for the suit, for his wife proved cleverer than he. Then, and he admits it, Harry threw the game, told the husband when and where he could surprise a rendezvous and settled for a cool three hundred thousand. He is now in Vienna, I believe.

And how did it happen that I gave it all up? Not from choice. I became ill. The strain and stress and worry began to tell. And then one night, half in a fever, half drunk, I blurted it all out to Tracy, and he made it possible for me to come to Paris and again take up my law. He had guessed a little how things were going with me, but the man who thinks in millions can have no conception of the agonies of the man who thinks in terms of pennies. And so here I am. I live almost the life of a *récluse*, for I dare not trust myself in any of the big clubs or hotels. I shall never go back to New York. I have not wrestled with temptation and thrown it; I have run away, that's all. But the glamour of those past years is still with me. I look again at the picture over my desk and hear the cheers of the populace. Yes, I should follow the same path if I had to lead my life over again. For dirty, paltry as were the means, I have had the thrill of all the big things millions make possible. What difference if the glory be a reflected one?

NOTE: The names used in this article and in the series to follow are, of course, fictitious. The episodes in which they figure, however, are fact.



NEXT to a habit of breaking his word, the most unpleasant thing to find in a man is a habit of keeping it to the letter.

BALLAD OF HIS OWN FIRESIDE

By John McClure

NOW I have looked on fair France,
And I have looked on Spain,
And I have sailed across the sea
And then come home again.
But of all the places I have found
For a good man to abide,
The fairest spot on the green earth
Is his own fireside.

There's many and many a dainty thing
This side of death and hell,
And I have seen them every one
And I have known them well.
The world is long as life is long
And the world is very wide,
But the fairest spot I have seen in the world
Is my own fireside.

The moon is a dream in sweet France,
The stars are a dream on the sea,
But the warm soft light of my own fireside
Is a fairer thing to me.
And if ever I sing me a lasting song,
And my best song to abide,
That song shall be an even-song
O' my own fireside.



TO be popular in society is difficult. One has to be wicked enough to charm the débutantes, and yet be sufficiently respectable to associate with the divorcées.



ONE never talks of what is nearest one's heart. That is why men talk of money and women of love.



A BAD END

By Thyra Samter Winslow

IN Leffingwell, Kansas, they always predicted a bad end for Alice Taylor. Sitting on their porches in summer, rocking in cadence with their embroidery needles, the matrons of Leffingwell, after they had finished with such important things as clothes and recipes for blackberry jam, would condescend to Alice.

"She's a wild piece," Mrs. Musgrove would say, as she carefully matched shades of pink silk for her rose centerpiece, "she's saucy and loud and hasn't any respect for anyone."

"She is always running around with a crowd of boys; in fact, she is more like a boy than a girl, it seems to me. I won't let my Myrtle play with her any more," Mrs. Billingsly would say.

"Well, you can just about figure out what will happen to her," Mrs. Canaloche would add.

"I don't like to say this," said Mrs. Harpers, as she took careful near-sighted little stitches, "but to me she is just like that Flint girl. Jenny Flint was no good from the start. She was wild and unmannerly and she—went wrong."

"Yes," said Mrs. Canaloche, "Alice Taylor is the same stripe. The same thing will happen to her. You mark my word. That girl will come to a bad end."

Mrs. Morrissy, the wife of Major Morrissy, and one of the dictators of Leffingwell society—she and Mrs. Storking fought for the honor through seasons of entertaining with chicken salad and home-made cotillion favors as ammunition—felt even more strongly about Alice Taylor, and well she might. For the tiny Taylor cottage,

grey and unpainted, stood right next to the elaborate near-Colonial Morrissy home. The Taylors rented their cottage and they paid their rent regularly in advance—the owner of the property was holding it for an expected real-estate boom—so there was no way of getting rid of the Taylors, but Mrs. Morrissy took it as a personal affront. She would not allow her four beautiful and buxom daughters—for whom she was building such gay dreams of social triumphs, to associate with Alice Taylor at all.

"Your father," she would say, "has given you a place in society of which you should be proud. You can't afford to hurt it by such associations. Alice Taylor is rude and common. She'll come to a bad end, that's certain."

Major Morrissy said nothing. His title was purely an honorary one, though, to his credit it may be said that he might well have gained the title of major had a convenient war presented itself at the time. He had a noble head and broad shoulders and limped slightly as he walked. Less impressive people than Major Morrissy have worn greater titles. Major Morrissy never concerned himself about Alice Taylor except to smile rather too friendly when he passed her on the street. Occasionally Alice Taylor smiled back at him.

Alice Taylor knew what Leffingwell, Kansas, predicted for her and she didn't like it. She didn't want to come to a bad end. On the contrary, she didn't want to come to an end at all—just yet. She liked living—was quite fond of it.

There were other things Alice didn't like. She would have liked more money and a better social position—because

that would have meant a better time—but she wasn't exactly unhappy while she was growing up.

Alice's father kept a little corner grocery store. He didn't read the women's magazines about how a grocery store should be kept. He saw nothing unsanitary about uncovered boxes. When Alice was quite young, if she came into the grocery store and started to pick up things, her father sent her about her business, though her business consisted mostly in running around the streets, hopping on wagons and climbing trees, followed, usually, by a couple of ill-mannered boys of her own age. So she never got the habit of helping. But, even if her father had allowed her to tidy things around the store, it is unlikely she would have tidied for long. She didn't read the women's magazines, either, and the uplift was not the thing she did best.

Alice's mother was a faded, quiet little woman and Alice was fond of her, though, under no circumstance, did she ever do anything her mother asked her to do. She always had a will of her own.

In the grade school Alice went with the very nicest girls and boys in town, those that later grew up to be the Leffingwell Younger Set. Mary and Lorena and Pearl Morrissy were in it. Caroline Morrissy was too old. The children liked to play with Alice because she could invent more new games in two recess periods than they could in a school year. She bossed them and sassied them and could run faster and jump rope longer than any of them. Every day in rope time she disproved the old story about dropping dead if you jumped more than one hundred.

In High School, "the crowd," as the unjellied Younger Set was called, gradually drifted away from Alice. They drifted because her parents were nobodies, because she didn't have money and didn't dress well. As the snob in each little small-town soul developed, instead of just a jolly little girl, Alice became the corner grocer's daughter, who wore faded things and had odd

eyes and a lot of straight black hair. There were other boys and girls whom Alice could have gone with, little "outsiders," the social equivalent of corner grocer's children, but, having gone with "the crowd" and learnt the difference, she didn't like the others. Being hurt because the crowd wouldn't go with her, she developed "wild" ways to hide what she felt. Perhaps she was "wild," anyhow. She had too much energy. She didn't like to sit still. She didn't want to be calm. She liked to work hard at things—and then stop and do nothing at all. Even when she grew tall, she preferred to run when walking would have answered better. It was then that the matrons of Leffingwell started talking about her.

Alice was not a pretty girl. She was too thin for that. Her eyes were too large and quite black like her hair. Her skin was a pale olive and she never had any color in her cheeks.

Alice kept on going to High School until the last year of the four-year course. Each year she grew a little wilder. Each year it seemed easier to disobey a teacher, to slap a boy who said something she didn't like. She wanted admiration. She didn't know how to get it. She found the quickest way to be noticed was to "sass" someone, to cut classes, to come in disgracefully late, to laugh loudly. Once, even, she was suspended and her father, without his grocer's apron, came to school about it. Alice was with him and she was ashamed when the pupils laughed. After school that day she had a real fight with a boy bigger than she was and scratched his face. Her lower lip, which had a habit of protruding a bit, stuck out farther than ever and her hair seemed blacker and straighter.

Alice even tried to make a record as "the brightest girl" in order to get attention, but it didn't seem to have much effect. The teachers were not without their social ambitions and the four Morrissy girls always made good grades. The teachers disliked Alice because she was disobedient and seemed to be laugh-

ing at them. They were always afraid she was tricking them when she learned a lesson especially well. She often tried to "show them up" when she read something outside, that was not in the text-book and that she knew the teacher wouldn't know.

After school, instead of walking slowly down Main Street, admiring things in windows and talking in gentle undertones to companions, as did the best young people in Leffingwell, Alice walked too fast and carried her head too high. Usually, some boy who didn't care about social position walked with her. When she was alone, she smiled impudently at those she did know and sometimes at those she didn't. If there had been any wholesome amusements planned for Alice and others—if some of the leaders of the clubs who talked of a Better Leffingwell had done a little something—Alice would have resented it awfully—it might have helped, but no one did.

Just before the end of her last high school year Alice's mother died and Alice stopped school to keep house for her father. The class agreed that, as long as she was sure to come to a bad end, it was just as well to graduate without the stigma of her membership. Alice grieved a great deal over her mother—she was seventeen then—and started to keep house half-heartedly. Her father, never talkative, became silent. At home, she read a great deal, all kinds of things that she got from the incomplete public library—the better people in Leffingwell didn't care much for reading—there were so many pleasanter things to do. If someone had directed Alice's reading—but no one advised her what to read, though she probably would not have taken advice anyhow, so she chose books by the color of their bindings, by the size of the print and by the frontispieces.

Alice never had enough to do. She had no friends. Occasionally she talked to some girl on the street—if the girl's parents didn't see her. She never really did anything wrong, but she was wild and people always suspected that

she did worse things than they knew about. She spoke too loudly and embarrassed the people who spoke to her. She recognized snobbery but never quite understood it. She wanted to be jolly and friendly—and there was no one else who wanted to be.

Boys liked her and this did not help her reputation. Sometimes she went duck-hunting with them, getting up before daylight and wearing a boy's sweater and an old short skirt. No other girl in Leffingwell had ever done this and it didn't help either. Once, in summer, when the little river that ran by Leffingwell was most inviting, she went with a crowd of boys to swim in it. Instead of wearing a regular bathing suit, she wore one belonging to a boy she knew and put a bathing skirt over it. It was more modest than half of the bathing suits that were being worn at fashionable beaches—but Leffingwell did not look to Alice Taylor to lead them in styles. A group of girls, on the way to a sewing club picnic, saw her in bathing, in a boy's suit with half a dozen boys. Another, and a very black mark, was added.

Alice didn't dress well. She was not neat, and she liked brilliant colors, and with her eyes and hair she looked louder in things than most other people.

As she grew older, she learned to flirt. She flirted with commercial travelers in front of the Palace Hotel, on Main Street. She did it for an adventure, because she wanted something to do. It was interesting to talk to new men and you could always tell them what you thought of them and leave them in a hurry if they started to get fresh. But—more people found out that she flirted, and the girls, who had spoken to her before—many of whom did things just as bad, though many times more discreet—cut her when she tried to speak to them.

Alice got tired staying home in the evenings and took long walks by herself. An unchaperoned girl at night was a terrible thing in Leffingwell. Gradually, boys who liked to think that they were "fast" got introduced to her, or,

if they knew her, made engagements to call. She let them call, usually, when they wanted to. Sitting in a poorly furnished living-room in a little, unpainted cottage, with Taylor, the grocer, in the next room, reading the paper, the evening lacked some of the deviltry they expected. Sometimes, to try to entertain them, Alice played an accompaniment on an old piano and sang for them. Her voice was poor.

Occasionally Alice and a young man took evening walks. Sometimes the young man, growing bold, said things he shouldn't have said. When Alice understood she walked home alone, leaving an astonished young man whose ears had just been boxed. These affairs did not add to Alice's popularity, nor to her reputation, for the young men whose ears had been boxed and the others, too, who had merely called, did not tell the truth about their escapades. To those who watched, Alice seemed almost unnecessarily hurried in reaching the bad end.

II

THERE were plenty of parties given in Leffingwell, but Alice was never invited to any of them. More and more, she disliked her own position. The happy, free feeling she had had when she was a little girl, when tree-climbing was the finest sport in the world, was gone. When no one she liked would speak to her, she, herself, felt that her bad end was pretty close. She really did not know what to do. Her manners were bad, but she didn't know that. She didn't think that being loud and rough really mattered. Her clothes weren't pretty—she made most of them herself—but surely old friends wouldn't care about clothes. Outside of flirting with drummers once in a while—and she had seen other girls do that, too—she really didn't know what she had done. She certainly put men in their places when they tried to get fresh with her.

She tried to brave it out—putting even brighter ribbons on her hat, walk-

ing even faster and with higher held chin down Main Street, almost laughing aloud at old friends who pretended not to see her. She couldn't. After all—if she was to come to a bad end—

A show came to Leffingwell in December, when Alice was twenty. It was the sort that passes for refined burlesque on the road. Alice flirted with a member of the cast—she thought he was a commercial traveler. He told her there was a vacancy in the chorus and suggested that she apply for it. She went back to the stage door of the opera-house and talked to the manager of the show and got the job. She left with the show the next night.

Leffingwell found out about her leaving almost immediately. The matrons of the town shook their heads and repeated their prophecies. A bad end—wasn't running away with a burlesque troupe practically there? You could imagine the rest and use your imagination only a little.

Mrs. Morrissy was glad that Alice was gone. She had been a blot on the neighborhood. The four beautiful Morrissy girls, though now all "out," were unmarried. Mrs. Morrissy hoped, now that the bad influence of Alice Taylor was removed from the surroundings, that perhaps young Palmer, whose father owned Palmer & Co., wholesale hardware, might get more courage.

Alice Taylor never came back to Leffingwell. Leffingwell never heard of her again. But all Leffingwell knew, from the boy whose ears had been boxed the hardest to the youngest Morrissy girl, what had become of her. Hadn't they predicted a bad end from the first?

Alice liked the burlesque show. It was called "A Night in Paris." Alice had to wear costumes that were too small for her—left by the girl who had jumped the show at Springfield. She learned the dances easily and liked to do them. She danced well from the first and was put into the front row as soon as she knew the steps. She liked

the music and the hurried changing from one costume to another. She liked being in a new town every day or two. She liked the members of the company, who didn't know she was a wild piece and didn't care about bad ends and treated her like they treated each other.

The girls in the show liked her, too. She was quick-witted and could answer back and wasn't afraid of saying what she thought. Manners were not things of great weight in "A Night in Paris," and, if her morals were too good for a real trouser, no one said anything about it. For an amateur, they agreed, she was some girl.

She liked a boy in the show named Billy Abbott. But Billy was hopelessly in love with the leading woman, who in turn—but there's no use pursuing that end of it. She and Billy grew friendly and he put her next to "trouping tricks" and she got along fine.

Only one man on the show got fresh, but Alice hadn't forgotten how to box ears when necessary. With other girls, she went to dinners and suppers with rubes who thought they were stage-door Johns, and she learned to graft little presents from them—and meals.

She compared herself with the other girls. She knew that she knew more because she had read a lot and had been nearly through high school. She felt that she could get with a better show if she tried—next year, for she could dance as well as if she had been in the business for years. Waiting for the members to go on, a couple of the men taught the girls steps they had learned in other shows, years before, and soon she knew different kinds of "breaks" and could do clogs and shuffles and many steps with fancy names.

Alice had quarreled with her father before she left Leffingwell, and although she had written him four or five letters, he never answered them. She was sorry, for he was the only person who belonged to her. He never had anything to say to her—they never understood each other—but they had

lived together so many years in the little, unpainted cottage—but, if he wouldn't write to her—that's all there was to it.

Alice changed her name to Clarine La Crosse when she joined the show, because that had been the name the girl who jumped the show at Springfield had used and the costumes were marked "La Crosse" and that made it more convenient.

The show closed in Chicago in June and Alice had almost a hundred dollars—more money than she had ever had before. She thought of going back to Leffingwell—a number of the girls went to their homes for the summer, but her father was still angry at her and there was no one else who wanted to see her. She would wait—until she could show off—in Leffingwell. Well, she was no nearer a bad end than she had been a year ago—that was certain.

III

IN Chicago she went to a cheap theatrical boarding-house that had been recommended to her. Here she met more "professionals," vaudeville people, burlesque performers, people from side-shows and carnivals. They were a jolly set. She learned things from them. They liked her because she was friendly and good-natured. After the first week or two, she roomed with a girl who had been in vaudeville, May DeVere. May taught her things about clothes and how to do her hair.

"Here you have this wonderful hair," said May, "and you let it string around and wad it together in the back. I'll show you."

No one had ever taken an interest in Alice's appearance before. Her straight black hair was arranged a trifle too stiffly under May's direction, but it was more attractive and at least it "showed up more."

Alice's hundred dollars grew smaller and smaller. She was worried about a position. Just about the time her money was all gone, May found jobs for both

of them with a carnival company—at the candy wheel. The carnival traveled to little towns and stayed a week in each town. The girls sold little numbered paddles and turned a wheel, awarding a box of candy to the holder of the lucky number.

In these towns, Alice and May talked to a lot of people, country people, in town for the carnival. Alice learned about people, too, and she and May would laugh about their "conquests," farmers, who would take them to dinner in the town's best hotel.

In one town, the hotel clerk, a man of about thirty, liked Alice. Neither of them worked in the mornings and he asked her to go walking with him. He was polite and was interested in her. He was from a good farm family who lived near the town where he worked. On Friday—the carnival left Saturday night—he asked Alice to marry him. Alice liked him fairly well but couldn't consider living in a little country town, when the whole world was before her. But she was gentler with him than she had ever been with a man before. She promised to write to him and almost cried when the carnival company left and she told him good-bye.

"You certainly get the men going," May said. "I don't know but what I'd have jumped this and married him."

Alice thought of Leffingwell, where nothing like a proposal had ever come to her and wondered why she didn't accept. In this peaceful little town the bad end would have been far away. But it wasn't what she wanted. She knew small towns and she hated them. But the proposal gave her a new self-confidence, a feeling of equality with people who were doing the right thing. She no longer felt so much like an outcast. The people who cut her, in Leffingwell, seemed far away. Nothing helps quite as much as a proposal.

When she and May returned to Chicago at the end of the carnival season they roomed together in the theatrical boarding-house again. Alice bought some new clothes, spending nearly all

of her money. She was mighty proud of them, though they were far from sombre.

She applied at the various theatrical agencies, but she didn't find anything for a long time. Then, she went out with a vaudeville dancing act, "The Baby Dolls." She was too tall for the baby dresses she had to wear and felt embarrassed most of the time, but she liked the dancing and the things around the theater, the little grey, rough dressing-rooms, the noise, the meeting with other theatrical people.

The act was poor. In a month, the vaudeville circuit closed them and the manager of the act paid their way back to Chicago. Her roommate, Della O'Neal, told her how lucky she was that the act hadn't been the kind that left you stranded out in the West some place.

Alice found the theatrical business wasn't exactly profitable, though she liked it immensely, for it kept her busy and rather excited all the time. Her clothes were getting shabby again and she had just about enough money to pay her board bill for the first few weeks. May was out with a musical comedy company playing the coast.

People at the boarding-house gave her various hints as to jobs, but it was a bad time of year, all of the good things were out, and she landed nothing. Finally, she had to borrow small sums from some of the other boarders and had to stand off her landlady. The fate that Leffingwell had predicted peeped out at her, but she laughed at it. After all, there were other jobs.

She read the classified section of a morning paper and answered advertisements for many kinds of jobs. She was untrained, so there were few things open to her. Finally, in a big department store basement, she was given seven dollars a week, in the notion department. She was there a month and the job bored her terribly and she just about got along on the seven dollars. She needed clothes badly.

Then, there was a hat sale in the

basement and she was transferred to the hat section. Almost any hat looked well with her black hair and eyes and she had learned to talk to people, so, after the sale, she was kept in the hat department and given eight and then nine dollars a week. She liked this work a little better. She liked trying on hats, liked sauntering around with them on, for people to look at. She learned little poses. She learned little tactful things to say to women. Soon she started to learn styles and color values. When she picked out a hat for herself, she did it with fine discrimination.

Two months later, she was transferred to the upstairs millinery section. Here, she was given a three per cent commission on sales above a ten-dollar salary and made about fifteen dollars a week. Here, too, she met Fay Wheeler.

IV

FAY WHEELER was an English girl with a soft, swinging accent. It fascinated Alice. For the first time in her life Alice recognized beauty in a speaking voice. Her own voice had still been loud and rough, modulated only when necessary in the store. Soon she began to imitate Fay and she laughed when she found her own voice growing softer and more pleasing. She learned little English intonations.

Fay taught her to do her hair more simply than she had arranged it under May's directions. Now, she parted it and waved it back in a soft, big knot on her neck. Hats were even more becoming. She had to wear black skirts in the store and she soon learned that black dresses, with white collars, looked very well on her, though she still preferred bright colors, when she thought them appropriate.

She watched the people who shopped. She learned to tell breeding. She learned little things. In a few months she had regular customers. In six months, she was making about eighteen dollars a week and was saving something. She had nice clothes, too.

All this time, she knew few men. As long as she was busy she did not need men. She was learning things every day. When she came home at night she was tired. The men at the boarding-house were nice to her and took her to the theater on professional passes, but she discouraged them when they grew too friendly.

Now, even the kindest of these men began to bore her. She noticed how loudly they laughed—she, who had laughed louder than anyone in Lef-fingwell. She didn't like their clothes, either, too extreme in cut, too cheap. She grew tired of the boarding house altogether, the professional women with their little jealousies, the coarse jokes, the little immoralities.

Fay asked her about her name. She had been using La Crosse, but admitted that it wasn't her real name. Neither La Crosse nor Taylor pleased her now. She wanted something, oh, decidedly English and elegant. Finally, she read the name "Van Blarcom" in a newspaper and decided to take it when it was convenient to make a change. She decided, for no reason at all, on Marian for the first name. "Marian Van Blarcom" sounded decidedly good to her.

Then Alice grew dissatisfied with her position. She knew that, if she stayed for years and years, she might work up to assistant buyer at a good salary, but she didn't want to do that. Things were getting tiresome. She was no longer using up all of her energy. She wanted to do things. She had learned all she could learn in a department store.

She began going to theatrical agencies in her noon hour. She was well-dressed now. She carried her head high and was not quite as thin as she had been. She sneered at cheap road show positions.

Finally, one day, there was something. A fairly well-known dancer wanted a partner.

"Can you dance?" the agent asked. Alice admitted, modestly, that she was a wonderful dancer, that she had just

finished an important dancing engagement, knew all the new dances and then some and had invented a few of her own.

She interviewed the dancer. He was a nice-looking, slow-thinking young man, who took his profession with the greatest seriousness. They arranged a tryout at one of the theaters for the next morning.

Alice didn't go to the store, but spent the time, until ten, arranging her hair and dressing carefully. She liked the dancer. He was well-dressed, professional, business-like.

At the tryout there were four other girls. Alice was far superior in both looks and ability. The dances were explained—there were three of the new dances that were just coming into vogue and two dances with more intricate steps. Alice was glad, now, that she had been dancing with the men at the boarding house in the evening, for a number of them were professional dancers of a cheaper sort and they had taught her quite a lot. In a few minutes she understood the steps. After an hour, she knew nearly all of them well enough to dance them in public. She was engaged.

The man's name was Richard Trescott. She told him her name was Marian Van Blarcom. So, he added her name to the name of the act and as "Trescott and Van Blarcom" they went on a good vaudeville circuit. Her salary to start was thirty dollars.

The vaudeville engagement lasted for fifteen weeks. Alice stayed at rather cheap hotels, dressed well and saved some money. Trescott was conceited and stubborn, and had to be treated with consideration, but he was quite nice to Alice and did not need to have his ears boxed. She enjoyed being in the act with him and they met with considerable success. Outside the theater, they both kept much to themselves.

They went to New York at the end of the contract. It was Alice's first visit there. She went to a small hotel she had heard of, and spent the first

two weeks walking around getting acquainted with the city. On Broadway she met some of the people she had known on the road or in the Chicago rooming-house.

Trescott got an engagement for them at one of the smaller hotels that had entertainers. Alice's salary was forty dollars, but she had to spend quite a lot of it for evening clothes. She spent hours in the shops matching colors, sometimes accompanied by Trescott, who was proud of the way she dressed, and admitted, as did her other acquaintances, that she had some taste in clothes. The results were startling, but for dancing costumes, quite good. She especially loved one gown of red and purple and another of brilliant green and black.

After five months, a café that was "well known" gave them positions, and Alice's salary went to fifty dollars. She spent all of it, but she didn't care. She enjoyed every minute of her work, the excitement, the admiration. She met a few men and went to dinners with them once in a while. She picked her acquaintances carefully and was rather indifferent and held her head as high as ever. She spent most of her energy in dancing and she enjoyed buying and wearing new evening gowns.

She thought of Leffingwell once in a while. She wanted the town to know of her success, but she did not care as much as she had cared. Finally, though, she wrote to her father, just a little note, saying that she was in New York and wondered how he was getting along.

Three weeks later, an ill-spelled letter, signed with the name of a woman she did not know, told her that her father had died two months before. She felt badly, of course, for she had thought often of the lonely, silent man in the little, unpainted cottage and had even had dreams of sending for him when she could afford it. After a few weeks, she got to wondering what had become of the grocery, for she knew the stock was worth something. She

wrote to the woman who had written to her, but she never received an answer. She didn't know what to do about it, so did nothing at all.

V

TRESCOTT employed a publicity agent as the act succeeded and pictures of the couple appeared frequently in the newspapers and magazines. Alice wished that someone in Leffingwell knew that Marian Van Blarcom of "Trescott and Van Blarcom, dancing at DeMayers" was Alice Taylor, for whom a black future had been predicted, but there was no way to tell them. She didn't know anyone there well enough to write to and her past plans of "showing off" there seemed stupid now. She had no kindly remembrances of her old home and thought of it less and less. She admitted, when questioned, that she was English, and often she got away with it. She saw no reason why folks should know she came from Kansas. So she let things drop. Occasionally, she thought she saw someone she knew from Leffingwell, but she had been away for a long time and she never was quite sure. After all, what difference did it make?

Alice made few friends. She was too busy. She always liked being busy. She spent hours designing her costumes and no one disliked brilliant colors for a professional dancer. She danced every afternoon at the tea hour and every evening. She invented new dance steps and Trescott liked them. She and Trescott quarreled occasionally and she threatened to quit, but usually she was quite happy.

One night she met Teddy McRay. His whole name was Theodore Fordham McRay and his father owned four factories for the making of various kinds of engines and also had several blocks of real estate. Teddy had asked to be introduced. He had a million or so in his own name, already, worked as manager of one of the factories when he thought of it, could drive his car

and did, sometimes, and thought professional people were more interesting and had more "pep" than those he met socially. Teddy McRay did not belong to New York's smartest set. There was no chance that he or possible progeny would ever become social leaders. He was just a millionaire, a plain, ordinary millionaire who knew how to spend money and where to spend it, belonged to a few of the less exclusive clubs and liked a good time.

Alice liked Teddy McRay from the start. She liked him better after he started giving her presents, nice little gold things and flowers she could really wear. She didn't know what his intentions were, but, if he got fresh—well, she no longer found it necessary to box young men's ears—but she could still say a thing or two. She didn't need millionaires hanging around if they were at all impudent.

McRay wasn't impudent. He was almost grateful to her when she smiled at him. He admired her fine, supple figure, her smooth olive skin, her dark eyes. Finally, he proposed. He said that he knew marriage would mean a lot of sacrifice, giving up a career that might mean a big success—but he could offer a few things in exchange, himself. Alice knew that she wasn't as young as she had been when she had left Leffingwell—she was just a couple of years younger than McRay—and McRay wasn't a half bad matrimonial chance, at that. She felt at home with him and could say things she wanted to say, though things she said, in her quiet, English-accented voice, were usually most conventional, though often sarcastic. She liked to think them daring.

So—after the proper hesitation and suspense, Alice consented to marry McRay and received the biggest diamond engagement ring he could find for her. There was nothing of the ultra-refined or delicate about either of them. They were both jolly, lively, liked good times and were rather careful about making friends.

Alice gave her notice to Prescott and

he engaged another dancing partner, whom he married six months later and who is still dancing with him. They are still dancing in cafés and are doing rather well. They've signed up for a big *revue* for next year.

Alice confessed to McRay that she wasn't English but came from Kansas, but, as his father came from Texas, it affected him not at all. He was rather glad that he didn't have to bother about any in-laws, but, outside of that, he cared nothing about Alice's antecedents. She was just the girl he had been looking for, and he had been looking hard—good looking, knew how to wear clothes, bright, quick, clever.

McRay took her to his father, full of pride and assurance, and when his father saw that she painted less than the girls who were pointed out to him as "society" and didn't put on any airs and know how to eat a hearty dinner and laughed at the right time at his jokes and could show off clothes so you could tell a lot of money had been spent on them, he patted her kindly and deeded her an office building, with tears in his eyes. After all, Teddy was his only son.

They were married quietly, with a few friends of each at the wedding, and a none too modest wedding supper with jeweled souvenirs for the guests. They went to one of McRay's country homes for a couple of weeks, but hurried back to town so as not to miss some openings and to go to a new café they had heard about.

They have two children, now, and, although they still both like to dance and Alice's gowns are the admiration of all of her friends, they like to sit alone, occasionally, in the evenings and take things a bit quieter.

Alice is very careful about the way the children are brought up. She lets them go only with children of whose parents she absolutely approves. Both of the children speak French nicely, and a little German, too, and their voices are quite soft and low. Alice and Teddy agree that you've got to be mighty careful these days the way you raise chil-

dren, so that they'll turn out the way you want them to.

VI

Down in Leffingwell, Kansas, things are much the same as they were. Most of those who were young when Alice Taylor lived in Leffingwell have married and have little boys and girls of their own. There are some changes, of course. Major Morrissey, for example, noble Major Morrissey, the proud parent of the four beautiful Morrissey girls who so gracefully led the Leffingwell Younger Set, is spending long and busy days in the penitentiary. It all came about through a small affair, a mine in fact, so small, so insignificant that it existed only in the mind of the Major. But, in moments of forgetfulness, he sold stock in it and the unfeeling buyers, ordinary people, of course, no respecters of family or breeding, had the noble Major arrested and he was tried and convicted, along with three other prominent members of the Leffingwell Business Betterment League. It was very sad. Two of the beautiful Morrissey girls are still unmarried.

There is another Younger Set in Leffingwell and they are having quite good times. There is a little girl named Fannie Winniken, a wild little thing who runs around in a most unmannerly fashion and all of the city mothers are much perturbed over her. Only the other day they were discussing her case.

"She reminds me of Alice Taylor," said Mrs. Musgrove, as she matched shades of lavender silks for her violet centerpiece. "She is a loud, wild thing, without much sense and with no respect for her betters."

"Alice Taylor," said Mrs. Billingsly, reminiscently, "I wonder what became of her." Myrtle, Mrs. Billingsly's only daughter, had recently divorced her husband and had brought her three small children home to her mother.

"No use asking, is there?" asked Mrs. Canalope, "you can just about imagine what became of her, I'm sure. I know I can."

"Yes," said Mrs. Musgrove, "I certainly can, too. It's awful. Down and down she went, most likely. I predicted a bad end for her, in the first place."

Mrs. Harpers said nothing. She was dead.

"And this Fannie Winniken," added Mrs. Canalope, "she's the same kind, wild and rough. She's no good. The same thing will happen to her. You mark my word, now. That girl—she'll come to a bad end."

And no doubt she will.



THE DEVIL WAS WELL PAID

By John Hamilton

I WENT to the Devil one day.

"I am bored," I said. "Amuse me. I shall pay you well."

"I shall lead you to the boudoir of a beautiful woman," said the Devil. "We shall steal into her apartment and conceal ourselves behind a curtain."

"Come," I said, "I desire to be amused."

Of course, there was the Devil to pay.

The apartment was the apartment of my wife and she was not alone.

I murdered them both.

The Devil was well paid.



WOMEN

By June Gibson

THERE are full-bosomed, voluptuous women who impassion men.

There are placid, broad-browed women who soothe men.

There are slanting-eyed women who dare men.

There are vigorous women who challenge men.

There are fresh, unsullied women who please men.

There are languid, dissipated women who disgust men.

There are modern women who amuse men.

There are soft-eyed, confiding women who flatter men.

There are pedantic women who tire men.

There are shapeless, forgotten women who want men.

There are helpless, childlike women who need men.

There are motherly women who get men.

THE PROPOSAL

By S. H. Small

SHE sat beside him, with her hand on his arm, gently. Her mouth was straight and unsmiling, her small, pale eyes were set in deep, radiating wrinkles. Her complexion was non-colored, her hair a stringy lemon tint. She was near forty, old, angular.

The man was clean-looking, straight and strong. His red-brown hair was swept away from a high forehead, under which blue eyes burned hotly. Lean, clever hands moved incessantly as he talked. He could vote—no more.

"I love you, honey dear," he cried. "I want you, all for my own, my very

own, sweetheart, dear. I've loved you so long. I don't know just how to tell you, you are so fine, so sweet, so lovely, Betty mine, but—oh, I love you so, I love you so! I love your gold hair, with the wisps that blow out into the wind and whip across your face. And your eyes, with the mirror of life in them. Betty, Betty, dear, I want you so."

She did not answer him, and he tried to seize her hand.

"Better give him a twelfth of a grain of heroin hydrochloride," the doctor said to the nurse who sat beside the bed.



GO OUT ACROSS THE HILLS

By Muna Lee

O H, little song, go out across the hills!
Oh, little song, go out until you see
The thin brown cheeks; the steady azure eyes
That ever dream, but never dream of me.

Oh, little song, sing softly to his heart
That he may know but tenderness and praise;
And swiftly, swiftly come a-homing then,
Oh, little song, to tell me what he says.



THE TEMPTRESS

By P. F. Hervey

SHE would be there waiting for him, Holt knew, waiting for him in the neat, tiresome rooms of the cheaply pretentious apartment. He mounted the stairs, opened the door with his key, flung his overcoat and his paper upon the stand in the hall, and walked wearily towards the room that faced the front.

Jean was there. At his entrance she dropped her novel casually, and stretched her arms with a complete carelessness of grace. Holt did not offer to kiss her.

"Well," she murmured, as if obeying a code of meaningless ritual, "has it been a hard day for you?"

"The same stupid grind," Holt growled. "Nothing ever happens. It's just work, work, work. I'm tired of it all. I haven't a chance to relax, and yet there's no absolute need for me to go on."

The woman scrutinized him shrewdly. "You're not feeling well to-night, are you?" she asked, with assumed solicitude.

"No, I'm not," Holt jerked out in a voice that was suddenly irritable. "I've enough to have a little fling right now; but you won't hear of it. You don't seem to care for anything that isn't regular and ordered. You don't like uncertainty. Well, . . . I do."

Her reply revealed her diagnosis of his condition.

"Dear, your slippers are in the closet in the hall. Wait, I'll get them. And don't you want your smoking-jacket? I'll bring that and the cigars and in a few moments dinner will be ready—"

"Confound dinner!" Holt roared in a pathetic outburst of puny rage. "I tell

you I'm tired of things, and you suggest dinner, a smoking-jacket, a . . . Do you suppose these—these domestic comforts are what I'm seeking?"

Her voice was very soft, but her eyes held a light like glinting steel. "Jack, . . . it's a long time ago that I first met you. . . . At the beach, that summer, you remember. You were with—but no matter. Things haven't turned out well, for all that we hoped for so much. And of late the tension's grown. All this year you've been steadily getting crankier. I could see that something was coming, and I realize I can't avert it now. The things that make me happy make you restless every so often. I can stand that, Jack. I can stand that though it hurts, but I couldn't stand the thought of another woman. Oh, Jack, tell me the truth! There isn't any other woman?"

The appeal in her tones softened him. "No, Jean," he said, "there's no one. And you're not responsible. It's just that I—I can't like domesticity for very long. I want it for the general run, but every now and then there has to be a touch of the other thing. The other thing! I guess I was born with a little taint in me. Respectability always palls in the end. . . . Just now I'd like to travel at least, and let work and conventional duties go to the devil while I played for a space. Why, I haven't chatted on anything except business for three years. I'm afraid I'll become settled and used to the collar. I'm not old enough yet to let myself get that way. I've got to stop and take the corrective of a holiday."

"Jack," she pleaded, "you're a little nervous to-night. After you've slept,

all this will go out of your head. I think dinner's ready now, judging by the sounds from the kitchen. What do you say that we forget this, and try to talk of other things. You'll—you'll feel better in the morning."

He gazed down at her with searching eyes. She was pretty still, he thought, but long familiarity had rubbed away so much of her attraction. In her simple dark dress she looked honest and wholesome, looked like the embodiment of those comforts for which she stood sponsor. But to-night he wanted colour and revelry, song and careless laughter. How could she, so wedded to the hearth, understand his inner, primitive, wholly masculine need for a flouting of conventions, a cheerful disdain for rules and creeds?

"Jean," he said gently, "perhaps you're right, and perhaps it's only a mood of mine. But the correct way to work it off is to follow it out blindly to the end. It's vain to try to stifle it. You can't smother the spirit, you can't put out the clear flame of impulse with gravy, however good. Don't you see what I'm driving at? I want to go poking my head into perils, and you offer me security. You're a clever woman, you must feel the truth in what I say. . . . So, if you don't mind, I think I'll—I'll go out."

She rose to her feet at that, alert as any tigress.

"You'll go out?" she shrilled foolishly. "You'll go out? I say you won't! There is another woman, there *must* be. Perhaps you haven't met her yet, but you know you are trying to. There's some temptress—"

Her suspicion stirred all the rage in him.

"By God!" he cried with a blazing face, "I wish there was!"

There was a long silence after that. . . .

She confronted him icily, drawing her breath with short, angry intakes. He stood before her defiant, but with the faintest feeling in the world that he had gone too far. To sacrifice his pride was bitter, but his sense of jus-

tice was fairly dominant, and in the end it triumphed.

"Jean," he said, and held out his hands, "I—I didn't mean that. . . . I lost my temper, I'm sorry. But I don't think I am feeling well. As you say, my nerves are jumpy. I never thought I had any until lately. It must be the monotony of the work. If I gave up that, perhaps everything would be all right. I've enough now, you know very well. We can move to a better apartment. I don't like this place with all its rooms, anyway. We could sacrifice half of them to a superior neighborhood."

She spoke slowly and there was no hint in her voice that she had forgiven him. "Some day something may happen to you. And if I should be left alone . . ."

He returned her gaze with an ironic look. "I didn't know how mercenary you were till now. But you need not worry on that score. In the first place, nothing is going to happen to me. I'm singularly lucky in the matter of accidents. And in the second place, the Lord knows you've saved enough and put it away in your own name to have small fear for your own independence. . . . Well, I'm going to exercise a little independence myself."

"What do you mean?"

"Merely that I adhere to my first simple purpose of going out to-night. You needn't wait up for me. You can deliver all your reproaches in the morning."

She played a final card, seeing defeat upon her. "Then if you must go, take me with you."

He smiled. "You know you don't want to go, and you know I know it. You'd be far more contented here, and you can't understand the reasons why I wouldn't. You want to go with me either to keep a watch over me, or else to prolong this hopeless discussion. My dear, I'm afraid I must refuse you a favor for once."

She sank back into her chair and absent-mindedly picked up the novel which she had dropped.

He turned and went down the hall.

As she sat at her dinner alone a few moments later, sullen and silent, she heard him fumbling his way into dress clothes. She was almost through as he stepped into the doorway of the dining-room.

"Good-bye, Jean," he said. Then, with a little whimsical frown, he added: "I wish you'd try to comprehend why I'm doing this. Surely it's better for me to be frank like this than to 'phone you from the office and tell you some lie about being detained downtown. And I'm sorry to hurt you. It's not you, my dear, that I'm running away from; it's just—oh, just life!"

She was trying to hate him, trying to turn each of his statements into a deceit or a slander, but she found instead that she was thinking of what an amazing change had come over him now that he had assumed evening-dress.

He was embarked upon adventure, and his face glowed with the happy spirit of chance.

II

A LITTLE later Holt entered a subway and took a downtown train. He had already lost his irritation, and he felt curiously free and gay and careless.

After all, what was the sense of making a mountain out of a molehill?

He was merely going forth for a night of whatever might fall to his hand, and there was no need to perceive broad significance or subtle lights in that mild, candid protest. He attempted to banish the matter from his mind.

He had a vague feeling that the night held some interesting thing in store for him. He was moved by anticipation of the romantic unknown.

Jean was all right, but, hang it! he had to have an occasional departure from regularity. And if she wouldn't understand, she wouldn't. She had done what she wished often enough. It was his turn now.

First of all he must select his restaurant, and, appetite coming to coax him, he formulated a menu in advance.

Away with the solid and simple meals of his home! Something with a decently disguising name, something to drink, something that would be miles away from such homely fare as roast beef, mashed potatoes and pasteurized milk!

His restaurant was bright and expensive and redolent of Broadway. People played over dainty plates, and seemed to dine upon jewels, and to order liqueurs because of their colour values. In a blaze of lights and amid chattering voices, past a dizzy throng of lovely gowns and stiff shirt fronts of dazzling whiteness, Holt entered and moved to an unobtrusive table in one corner. He ordered with care, and obtained the waiter's respect and his own.

Over a preliminary Scotch-and-soda he gazed about him with good-humoured eyes. How pleasant this was, how jolly and delightful! About him was all the plumage of birds of Paradise, all the hues of golden sunlight transmuted through a thousand prisms. If human beings weren't meant to live in this amiable, splendid manner, how had they been meant to live? If this wasn't the final word in art and ostentation, the true embodiment of financial endeavor, the acme of sumptuousness and brilliance, what on earth was?

Holt leaned back, sipped his glass, smiled about him, and thought what a friendly and human place this old world is. He forgot that previous half hour with Jean, forgot her, forgot everything that was sordid or dull or dreary.

He was halfway through his meal and still in his state of pleased expectancy when a woman and her escort entered. The woman was tall and slim with dark, soft hair and eyes of luminous grey. The man with her had a square face with a stubby nose and unpleasantly glistening eyes. At the first sight of that pair Jack Holt straightened in his chair and then grew red with mingled emotions.

He knew that woman with the taunting face and the careless, scornful eyes.

In a flash he reviewed certain past

experiences and winced at the thought of them. . . .

How lucky it was that Jean had not accompanied him! Surely she would have noted his perturbation, traced it to its cause, and in this flame of a previous time discovered the present temptress she now imagined. Temptress, the woman was beyond a doubt, but Holt hadn't seen her for years and this accidental encounter in the same restaurant was a mere piece of coincidence. As he stared rigidly, the woman turned. Her eyelids gave a flicker of recognition, but she made no sign that she was aware of his presence.

Holt looked at her with a faint sneer and forgot his salad in abstraction.

"Little devil!" he murmured admiringly under his breath.

What a little devil she was, indeed, with her lowered eyelids, the cigarette between her fingers, the cocktail by her wrist, the dim, inscrutable smile upon her lips! She had alluring, mocking eyes, Holt thought. He remembered that he had thought that once upon a time before. . . .

Then her escort summoned his attention, and suddenly he became angry and ridiculously jealous. Jealous! What right had he to be jealous? Was every woman he had ever loved his own personal property until the Day of Judgment? Must every woman whom he had caressed remain faithful with only the memory of those caresses, and be as one profaned by the touch of another?

Yet, try as he would, he couldn't help hating quite heartily the man by her side. That pudgy fellow with the sensuous face, what right had he . . .

Holt continued to stare. He dawdled over the rest of his dinner and drank innumerable cups of black coffee to permit the couple he had under observation to catch up to him. He would have enjoyed throttling that man, he thought, and as for the woman . . . To take her in his arms, press that fine, scornful face to his, bend and break her in his embrace! She aroused in him every instinct of possession. This, this

was what he wanted. Adventure! The old adventure of love, the old, old strings tugging at heart and desire!

He noticed suddenly that they had finished, that the pudgy man was calling for his check. As the woman rose, she turned her gaze upon Holt. No vestige of memory appeared to remain there, but Holt knew she was only playing a skillful game for the game's sake. She remembered him; of that he was sure. A faint contemptuous light stepped into those clear eyes, a challenge, a taunt, an appeal, a glove flung at random. Holt felt his pulses hammer. Here was a temptress indeed.

He slapped down a bill on the table and followed the couple. He hardly knew what he meant to do, but unconscious aspirations surged in his heart. He would rescue the woman from her soulless escort for one thing, and then—why then, he would endeavor to see that no one rescued her from him! They entered a car that drew up at the curb as they stepped out, and a moment later Holt gave excited directions to a taxi-driver, and jumped into a cab.

In the crowded traffic it was easy for the taxi to follow the slowly moving motor, and Holt had at last the satisfaction of seeing the latter draw up before a theater and its occupants go inside. He loitered nervously before the doors, and then pushed his way to the window of the box-office through the throng that was entering the house. It was the first night of something, he didn't know what, but all he was interested in was to obtain a seat.

Apparently the play had been well-announced, and the weather was distinctly propitious, for the clerk, with an insufferable, bored air, as befitted his magnificent station as a Cerberus of the arts, drawled out something that sounded very much like a refusal.

"What was that?" asked Holt, trembling. He was surprised at his own excitement.

"Can't give you anything except a seat in one of the boxes," answered Cerberus.

"I'll take that!" said Holt quickly.

It was, after all, the very thing he wanted. He would be easily seen there by her, no doubt, but then he would be able easily to see. He waited anxiously in the lobby, staring over the orchestra quite vainly, until the lights were switched off and the curtain mounted in a sudden hush.

Then he made his way down the side of the auditorium in the direction of his box.

He had determined to try to discern that alluring face in the darkness; if that failed he would at least discover her in the intermission.

Huddled in the rear of the box he saw with one glance that it would be quite impossible to find her face in that indistinct blur of stiff, regular figures. A woman chewing a bonbon with a gentle smacking sound of satisfaction, a college boy sharpening a lead-pencil in the aisle and endeavoring to look like a metropolitan critic instead of the Assistant Editor of the *Rah Rah Monthly*, caught Holt's eye.

With a slight groan he turned his attention to the stage, and craned his neck to stare past a fat neck that intruded, a neck that was rather pudgy, and . . . the truth burst upon him with the suddenness of shrapnel. He had stumbled into the very box in which they were seated!

His mind was in a whirl and he heard nothing of the play. He attempted to manufacture sensible plans and failed fearfully. He was chiefly astonished at the fellow's temerity in thus taking a conspicuous place. He looked like a man who had a wife and family, even a position that required a considerate eye.

It was only after an interminable and hazy period that Holt heard a sound of clapping. Stupidly he clapped, too. Then he noticed with a queer feeling of bewilderment that the lights were on and that the pudgy man was scraping past his chair.

He was alone with her in the box.

His wits came back to him at a bound.

She turned casually, and as her eyes

fell upon his staring, fascinated face, she started, for all her attempt at self-control. Essaying to cover up that start by a pretense of immediate composure, she nodded.

"Well, Jack, . . . it's a long while since I've seen you. You're—"

"Hildegarde!" he whispered tensely, "there isn't a moment to waste. Will you go before he comes back? I could see at dinner that he bored you to death. Come with me. I wouldn't ask anyone else, but you—you're different."

"Are you serious, Jack?" she asked with a queer smile on her face. "Really serious? Surely you're not again . . . but I don't know why you shouldn't be . . . Yes, he is a bore, a stupid, clumsy creature, but there has to be someone, you know. Well, what do you propose?"

"Let's get out of here," said Holt thickly, "before he gets back. Oh, Hildegarde, I—see here, I can't tell you now, but come on out, and I'll explain. I want you, I . . ."

"Apparently," she countered coolly.

Then a baffling smile crossed her face. "What a good joke it would be if I did leave! I can see his face when he came back and found me gone."

She rose impulsively and moved farther back into the shadowy recesses of the box. "Jack, I'll go, but it's not out of compliment to you, but in deference to my own sense of humour."

In three minutes a taxi was whirling them uptown. . . .

Her apartment was a neat little budget of four rooms. Holt thought he had never seen anything quite so dainty and pretty and compact. For sometime he enlarged upon the theme.

"So you've left her, have you?" the woman asked after a space. "Left the good little woman who sees after your wants, and orders the things you like, and picks out your clothes? And you've come to me,—the siren, the unfettered woman who wouldn't lift a finger for you except at caprice. I wonder why you've come to me, Jack. Is it just a matter of chance? You know you can't

stand me long. And you ought to be home like a good domestic old fogey."

"Don't talk of that, Hildegarde," Holt broke in. "I know this is only a temporary thing. I know I'll go back again. After all, the conventions are the best things for a steady diet. And though you're not what the world calls 'respectable'—thank heaven!—you

mean something quite as much. I love you!"

He caught her to him and held her in his arms for a long moment.

"Oh, Hildegarde," he murmured, "I can never forget . . ."

"Forget what?" she asked. "*Forget that I am your wife?* My dear boy, don't try!"



MY HONEYMOON

By Gordon Seagrove

SOMEDAY I shall pick out a nice sweet girl whom I shall love as has no man before, and I shall marry her. And then a honeymoon; together we shall sail soft turquoise seas; together we shall doze in tropic suns and nibble bon-bons with each cigarette; together we shall stroll down silver paths and kiss and kiss again beneath the moon; and we shall laugh at all the world, each singing songs but for the other, hearing and whispering wild words of love o' nights when slumber passes by the snowy cot.

Thus shall we spend our honeymoon, my love, and when Manhattan's minarets rise to our view at length again and love's May-days are coming to their close—ah, then, my love, I have a splendid plan: when you stand and watch the nearing shores so quietly, I'll steal up from behind and shove you overboard!



EVERY grotesque poem, every absurd picture, every formless bit of music is the artist's parole-card from the madhouse.



A MAN calls it knocking sense into a woman when he begins to make her believe him.



THE living are cowards. They praise the dead because the dead are defenseless.



THE LONELY HOUSE

By Reginald Wright Kauffman

I

SOMETIMES men dream their stories, more often they invent them; but their best are not infrequently those which they hear and repeat. According to my memory, this story was told me, just after I had been re-reading "The Fall of the House of Usher," in Pennsylvania, twenty years ago, by a girl that gave it as having happened to the brother of one of her Bryn Mawr classmates. Yesterday, in Maine, I met the narrator and recalled the incident.

"You dreamed it," she declared; "I never heard it before."

II

KIRBY, on his first vacation after a nervous breakdown, was riding through a part of the Alleghanies that was strange to him. He had left the village of Cuthbertville at four a. m., and at five p. m. knew that he had lost his way. All day long he had followed those obscure trails which, at that time, alone afforded a means of communication between the rare hamlets beside the streams feeding the upper reaches of the Susquehanna. It was autumn: the mountains were a vast glory of red and gold; the late birds sang from the interlacing branches overhead, fish leaped in the rushing brooks, squirrels and even foxes ambled across his path; the air was keen and bracing, the sky an unclouded blue; but, from the moment he left Cuthbertville, Kirby passed no house. Hour after hour, he had pushed thoughtlessly forward, anxious to reach Shelbyton by nightfall, but serenely doubtless of his course and

more than sufficiently fascinated by the panorama of his progress. It was not until the light grew slowly dimmer, and only a crimson glow remained above the pine-capped hills that he realized his predicament and began to consider the unpleasant prospect of passing a night, for which he was ill-prepared, in the open.

Just then the obscure path along which his mare was picking her way turned abruptly from the stream, rounded the sharp heel of a mountain and brought him into view of a scene radically different from any that he had so far encountered.

Before him stretched a narrow valley, hemmed in by walls grown suddenly bleak, and roofed—for the sky seemed low there—by a canopy of gray. The spot had been cleared, but showed patent evidences of recent neglect. The broadened road was uncared for; the fences were falling, the scanty crops rotting in the untended fields. Upon a terrace rank with witch-grass, and beside a barn the door of which hung open like the injured lid of a blind eye, stood what should have been a pretentious house: its windows were dark, its chimneys smokeless; no sign of life clung to its crepuscular exterior. The effect was that of supine desolation, of waste: the heavy stillness was spiritless and stagnant, a calm that was not peace.

Always thereafter Kirby could vividly recall the impression which that picture of loneliness and languor produced upon him. It may have been from sheer weariness, or it may have been because of the acute contrast here presented to the happy chaos that he had been for so long traversing, the

comparison of forests untouched by man with land that man had attempted and forsaken; but certainly Kirby, who had been hoping for some human shelter, saw this one with a quick pang of misgiving followed by an attenuation of the spirit and an impulse to turn back into those woods which he had so lately wanted to leave.

He twisted in his saddle; behind him the mountains rose to the leaden clouds, bare, barren, grim, their dank bases wreathed in a turgidly rising circle of vapor. He looked to the sides; the anæmic fields were an island in a soggy marsh. He brought his gaze forward: the house was a dim spectre in the wan dusk, its roof moist, its walls sweating. No birds twittered, no breath stirred; the very air was saturated with damp and decay: the isolation was unrelieved, unqualified; in that solitude nothing seemed to live. The house was deserted, of course—but why was it deserted? He saw an unrusted hoe lying along the broken fence, as if someone had dropped it there and fled: dropped it and fled recently—from what?

Kirby summoned his common sense—that sense so common as to be below the finer intimations of the spirit. He must have shelter, and here it was. He must have shelter for the night, and this, however uninviting, was shelter. . . .

His mare moved reluctantly, the sound of her hoofs beating loudly against the walls of silence. Beyond even the natural results of the journey, she was dejected, oppressed. Generally a docile animal, she had now gone but a few paces toward the house when she abruptly stopped. He urged her, but she shivered from an instinctive antipathy: Kirby had to force her with the spurs.

He took her through the open door of the barn that was barn and stable combined. The place was empty, but there was a comfortable box-stall with a bed of straw. There was feed in the trough, and Kirby fetched water from an inky pond close by. The mare balked at the stall and refused both

food and drink. Kirby had no choice but to leave the pail beside her and tie her to the nearest post.

The tokens of occupation were of a tenancy so very recent that he began to revise his conclusion: perhaps, in spite of first impressions, somebody was in that gloomy house. Kirby transferred his revolver from his saddle-holster to a pocket of his coat and passed from the stable, through the gathering obscurity, to the tenebrious porch. There was a broken bell-handle now first observable in the evening murk: he touched the humid thing; he pulled.

Through what seemed to be vast corridors, the bell banged and echoed in a terrifying din. Two carrion crows, disturbed by the vibrations, left their nests in a neighboring tree and darted, with a clatter of quick wings, through the swart air. He was literally afraid to ring again; he stood motionless until he heard, at last, the slow trailing of a timid foot dragging toward him from somewhere within the house.

The door opened briefly upon ebon blackness, and the face of a child peered out at him. That dragging step had led Kirby to expect the appearance of age: what he finally saw was age-in-youth. The figure, so nearly as he could make it out, was that of a girl not twelve years old, a girl emaciated almost to the point of collapse, whose dress hung about her in fluttering folds. The hand and arm that held the door were pitifully thin and trembled as if from intransient weakness. The face was long and colorless, a pallid mask out of which shone a pair of eyes fever-bright.

With a rapid flow of words, Kirby explained his position, and heard himself concluding with the statement that he had better, after all, push on to Shelbyton.

"You can't get there to-night. You're twelve miles off the road. Shelbyton's fifteen, and there's thunder in the air." It was the figure in the doorway that spoke; but the face did not alter its expression, and the voice was a scarcely human monotone.

Kirby heard his mare whinnying for him from the stable: he wanted to get away; but he realized the truth of the child's words, and it was impossible not to feel her need.

"Are you in any trouble?" he asked. "If I stay, can I be of help to you?"

The extended arm fell. Her bony hands met before her; they interlaced. She hesitated.

"Perhaps," she said.

"You're not alone here?"

"No. Mama's here. She's upstairs. Wait a minute. Wait out here on the porch. On the porch. You *will* wait?"

She went away. He heard her unaccelerated steps dying in the darkness of the house, and he waited in the lowering twilight. . . .

When she returned she said, still in that shrinking monotone:

"Mama can't come down. She says to excuse her. My brother died this afternoon. He's in the parlor. The undertaker won't get here from Shelbyton till to-morrow morning. Mama says for you to stay, if you don't mind looking out for yourself: there's something to eat in the kitchen. She'd take it kind if you'd help her out: you're to sit up with my brother in the parlor." . . .

III

AFTER one more talk with the child, and with no sight of any other living creature, Kirby found himself, at nine o'clock, alone in the room of the dead. It was a long, high-ceilinged apartment with French windows at each end, opening on the lawn. A door at one side communicated with the dining-room; another door, opposite, led to the hall. In the centre stood a table, bearing a single lamp, beside which was an easy-chair, and between this table and the hall-door, so placed that the table partially intercepted the view of anyone in the chair, had been drawn a low couch on which, as Kirby advanced, he distinguished—clothed in a suit of mortuary black—the figure of a man. A white cloth, a handkerchief, was decently spread across the face; but the

upturned and slippered feet had that rigidity which is observable only in feet that will never walk again, and the clawlike curve of the yellow fingers, which terminated arms stiff against the shrunken flanks, was unmistakably that of the fingers of a corpse.

No sooner had Kirby closed himself in this room of silence than he frankly confessed its effect. He did not at once feel positive fear, but he did experience a flaccidity ready to yield to perturbation. To the oppression that had descended upon him when he came in sight of the house his sensitiveness was now prepared to react violently; he was at the edge of acute nervousness. The lamp lit only a small circle, and that but dimly: it showed the table and the dreadful couch; it permitted but faint indications of the faded wall-paper, the damp windows, the hall-door with a ghostly transom above it: all the rest of the place swiftly declined from shadowy outline to pitchy blackness. There was a mouldy smell and a pervading unquiet. Even at the first, Kirby received the impression of invisible movement; not, perhaps, of life, but of existence, of consciousness, operating imminently yet unobservably, about him.

Kirby, who had entered from the dining-room, remembers, or thinks he remembers, that, as soon as his eyes grew accustomed to the low light, they sought first the transom over the hall-door and then descended directly to the body on the couch. He was, nevertheless, about to settle into the easy-chair and make himself at once as comfortable as possible when, against every inward inclination, something irresistibly impelled him to look more closely at the stark companion of his vigil: he was drawn around the table and stood looking down at the corpse.

Except at two points, the flesh was nowhere visible: the handkerchief lay across it from the shoulders upward and left the figure a black, decapitated trunk. Everywhere the clothes clung to the body with a frightful fidelity—in descents and hollows that bespoke

a terrible tenuity, the absolute tokens of a wasting disease. What was concealed must be the mere skeleton of a man. What had he died of? What fatally contaminating aura still encircled him? Kirby shuddered with abhorrence at the veritable odor of plague that seemed to emanate from the veiled form: the corpse seemed alive with death. And this impression was intensified by the hands; the arms extended in their sleeves like burned boughs, fixedly parallel to the sides: on the bony hands the skin was drawn tight and transparent, the fingers were fastened in a final spasm.

Kirby was possessed by a mastering impulse: he wanted to give peace to the dead by folding the hands across the shrunken chest; and he wanted to withdraw the handkerchief and disclose the dead face. He bent forward. Then the normal dread of disease withdrew him: he staggered back to his chair.

Even there, however, the fascination operated. Sleep he now knew to be impossible. Only by an increasingly difficult effort of the will could he retain his seat through a long hour and a half. There was no sound in the rest of the house, no sound without. He could hear the ticking of his watch. When he would look at the watch—and always the hand that sought it involuntarily determined first that his revolver was at his side—he would wonder at the tardiness of its movement. He had to fight instinct with will in order to drag his eyes from the white bit of cloth just visible from his chair, and when he accomplished this he found his gaze traveling not to the dark patches which were the French windows, nor yet to the closed doors, whence, if anywhere, interruption might be anticipated, but to the transom over the hall-door that gradually became as horribly fascinating as the dead man's covered face.

Through the windows he felt rather than saw the storm hovering. The darkness increased, and the silence, and with them the loneliness and gloom of his position. With every dragging minute he felt the strengthening of that

stifling sense of some malevolent presence in or near the room. He argued with himself in vain; he pleaded uselessly the innocent helplessness of the child and her unseen mother whose guest and guardian he had at once so strangely become. He had tried to sleep, but, the moment his eyes were shut, he would open them with a start, to search the transom or to scan the handkerchief, his hand straying again to the comfortless revolver at his side. The atmosphere grew still heavier; he saw that the windows were fastened and wanted to push them wide, but he was reluctant—he would not yet say afraid—to turn his back upon the room.

At last, with distant mutterings that grew to an ominous growl, the storm rolled nearer, and the air of the room became altogether unendurable. Kirby recoiled from the first noises, then welcomed them: if the storm would only break, this night of watching might be borne. He rose, looked again at the rigid arms and white face-covering, trembling as he did so, felt of his revolver, and then tore himself toward the nearest window and flung it open.

He stepped out upon the lawn. The night was still oppressive, even under the sky. The darkness was inky, but he could detect great storm-clouds mounting like breakers against the grim mountain-tops. A vivid flash of lightning ripped across the heavens and showed vast crumbling castles against the near horizon. . . .

He must not stay from his post too long. He crept quivering back to the room, nervously anxious about what he would find there, but the lamp still burned, the transom remained shut, the body with its hidden face lay stark upon the couch.

Kirby sat down to a repetition of all that he had previously experienced. Again he had that sense of invisible movement; again he was fascinated by the cloth over the head of the corpse. He did not now think so much of his chance for contracting whatever disease had slain this man, but more than ever he wanted to see what manner of

man it had slain. That blank handkerchief was worse than any revelation. If he might only lift that cloth! It would be indecent, of course. Why would it be indecent? He could not stand this: he must lift it. He rose; he took one step forward; he started and glanced, he knew not why, at the transom. He controlled himself and took another step toward the couch. He extended his hand. There came a violent clap of thunder: Kirby staggered back to his seat.

In the silence that was accentuated by the thunderclap which had preceded it, Kirby thought that he heard a dog howl from the fields, although he had seen no sign of a dog on his approach to the house.

While the storm drew nearer, he tried to reason away this trick of his ears, and, partially succeeding, proceeded to apply the same methods to his repulsion in regard to the body. He must do the thing that he had wanted to do, had attempted to do and been startled from doing. Only by uncovering the worst, by subjecting his nerves to his intellect, could he recover his self-respect and do his duty by the people of this house. With his throat swelling to bursting, he walked around the table and snatched the cloth from the dead.

Kirby says that the face might have been that of a man of thirty or a man of seventy: it was beyond all the distinguishing marks of age; it was a picture not of a man, but of suffering. The tallowy skin, as on the hands, was drawn tight over the prominent features: the high cheekbones, the beak nose; there was nothing but bone beneath. The forehead was branded with a purple triangular birthmark, which stood out in horrid vividness; the mouth was tortured into a grin that showed yellow fangs. But all of this was as nothing to the terror in the eyes: the dead eyes had been left open. . . .

Kirby started. He only just suppressed a cry. He wheeled, his unoccupied hand gripping his revolver, because he could have sworn that he

heard a scratching at the transom. He saw nothing there, but his hands trembled as he tried to replace the facecloth, which he was now as eagerly anxious to replace as he had formerly been resolved to remove. The severest effort was necessary: he got the cloth back, however, precisely as it had been and staggered through the open window to the lawn.

He took two or three turns up and down before the house to compose himself, but the attempt was futile. There, under a sky now utterly blotted out, he realized that his experiment at self-control had failed him. What he had seen was worse than anything he had conjectured. It was all very well to tell himself that this was the commonest thing among men: a dead man—that it was what all men that live or would live must be, what all men that had lived were. That mattered nothing: Kirby was racked by a palpitation of the brain as well as of the heart; it was a convulsion of the soul. He would not even yet admit that it was fear, but he knew that it transcended reason. He had to fight back to the room step by step.

Immediately on entering he felt an increase of his nervousness; he was sure that something had changed. Everything was in its place: he made a painful inventory of the room—but something, his subliminal self insisted, had altered. The doors were shut, the transom empty. What had moved there? The body lay stark, in all the rigid uncouthness of death; and yet was it precisely as he had left it? Kirby could detect nothing; he knew that his suspicions were impossible of foundation, but they remained ghastly firm. That sense of some consciousness other than his own imminently operative—of something that in some sense *lived*—became hair-raisingly acute. He was stifling, he was choking for air; he tried to turn again to the window and could not. Had those arms moved? No, there they were as before, stiffly parallel to the sides, the fingers crooked in their final spasm. The handkerchief:

had it been blown by the wind? It lay as he had dropped it across the face. The room seemed to darken. Was the lamp going out? Where was the oil kept? He could not bear to be left here with no light.

Outside the storm broke in a series of mighty peals. Kirby shrank under the shock of it. A physical weakness beset him. He rushed out into a torrential rain.

He stumbled. He fell at the very window-sill. He lay there one second or sixty—he knew not which—only to stagger to his feet under a downpour of water that drove him gasping back into the room.

And then, swaying, wild-eyed—he saw.

Had some night-prowling beast done this thing?

Kirby whipped out his revolver.

Had—but what beast *could* do that?

The dead man's face was covered, but his stiff arms were folded across his emaciated chest; his clawlike hands met above his silent heart.

Kirby had heard of muscular movements occurring in lifeless bodies, of the grisly effect of gases generated in the dead. But he did not now give the least shadow of thought to such purely physical phenomena. Now he knew barefaced fear: he was the creature of craven terror. *Something was, or had just been—something conscious, vicious, malevolent—in that room. Something—*

Kirby wheeled to the transom.

There, clutching by clawlike yellow hands, was the Something: there, pressed against the glass, tallowy skin

stretched tight over high cheekbones and beak nose, mouth twisted into a fanged smirk, forehead blotched with a triangular purple birthmark—there, with the dead eyes still open, *was the face of the corpse!*

It *was* the corpse.

The dead man, a handkerchief hiding him only from the shoulders upward, lay beside Kirby on the couch: his face was grinning through the transom!

Kirby's legs gave way under him; he collapsed, but as he collapsed he pulled the trigger of his revolver. He saw the spurt of flame; the report was drowned in a tremendous clap of thunder—and then the mask at the transom dropped into blackness, and the thunderclap was prolonged in a fearsome screech, high-pitched, senseless, demoniac—a screech horrible in itself, but all the more horrible because of what seemed to be the mere echo of it: the thin, trembling voice of that girl who had led him into this house of terror:

"Brother! Brother! Brother!"

Kirby heard nothing more. He saw nothing more until he awoke in the Shelbyton hospital and learned the truth: his widowed hostess had been the mother of twin sons; both fell ill of a fever, and one died; while, that night, the worn-out mother and daughter slept, the mysterious bond that binds twin to twin drew the delirious survivor from his bed to the couch of the dead man. It was the survivor that had hovered in the hall, that had entered the room during Kirby's absence; it was the survivor, peering through the transom, that Kirby had shot and killed.



THE middle classes are tiresome from a purely economic reason. They cannot afford to be wicked enough to be interesting.



THE GUERDON

By Achmed Abdullah

IT is a shocking experience to cross—let us say—from New York to London, to sit next to an abrupt, purse-mouthed gentleman with sandy eyebrows, a rose-madder complexion, pinchbeck manner, and an explosive tongue whom one puts down immediately as a British knight and as the victim of his wife's social ambitions, which include a longing after Belgravia, a second footman in shorts and powder, and a really-truly coronet—to enter the knight thus on one's diary, with caustic commentaries in matters of the Tight Little Isle, and then to discover, the third day out, that his name is Heinrich Peter Oberhuber and that he travels out of Milwaukee with a swagger line of sausages.

Shocking, disconcerting, disillusioning—a sneering comment on one's pet conceits: power of observation and force of psychological reasoning—and—

Never mind. All this proem may have something to do with Miss Jane Champlin and the Guerdon of the Spiky Vegetable; and, again, it may not.

Jane was thirty-nine; she was good-looking in a sharp, sinewy, ash-blond way; and she was well bred and well educated. Still, her education was a collection of acquired things, a tremendous gathering and garnering of details, vicariously attained through the Lecture Room, the Public Library, Carnegie Hall, and the strictly Academic Family to which she belonged; an education, moreover, which—to believe certain younger and possibly jealous girl

friends of hers—at times exuberantly overflowed the measure of good taste. She knew all about Titus Livius, Epictetus, Seneca, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and St. Thomas Aquinas; and—again vicariously, since modern fiction was not allowed in her father's wainscoted, cigar-flavored library—she had heard of Frank Norris and Theodore Dreiser. She called the first a frivolous modernist, and the second a minor decadent.

But then we must remember that her grandfather had been head of the Sanhedrin Seminary for Oriental Languages and the author of the leading work on the *Tri Pitikes* of the early Buddhists, that her father was the Columbia equivalent of a Regius professor and the greatest exponent of Latin Serpentine verses, that her first brother had acquired fame through his brochure about the difference between the Pythagorean and the Copernican Systems, while her second brother, the year before, had been made a corresponding member of the *Institut de France* because of his epoch-making tomes about Eleatic Philosophy. Thus, whatever she was, it was not her own fault. Heredity is a hard thing to overcome.

Her knowledge of peoples and countries ran parallel to her knowledge of printed culture. It was vast, but wrong.

She had read and listened. Stoddard was her Cook, and the Travelogues given by the Missionary Guild of the Third Presbyterian Church were her Raymond-Whitcomb; and thus she had discovered

that all Englishmen love a lord and beat their wives; that all Irishmen are brave and witty and Fenians; that all Turks massacre all Armenians; that all Germans take an efficiency course in frightfulness; that all Russians drink vodka, talk of their souls, and address each other as "little father" and "little blue dove"; and that all Frenchmen are immoral.

And the Orient—why—it was all fierce and colorful and romantic and tumultuous and treacherous and no plumbing nor Christianity to speak of. On the other hand, it seemed to her very fascinating—with its camels and houris, with its Bedawin and Turkish delight, with its yataghans and hubble-bubbles; for there is doubtless some sound biological and ethnological reason why ash-blond and sinewy spinster ladies of Saxon ancestry have such a strong if subconscious longing for the brunette and turbaned lands—why, from the first primer of pap-fed infancy to the well bred *Here Lies* of final oblivion, their souls are forever longing to wrench themselves free from their drab home fastenings and to rock and sway and do the *danse du ventre* to the syncopated rhythm of reed pipe and dull-droning tomtom.

Perhaps it is caused by the same subtle longing which called the Goths to Africa and the Crusaders to the Holy Land. At all events, it was quite natural that, when her aunt Priscilla died, leaving her an independent income, and when her father, the same year, took a second wife, Jane should go travelling—not to London or Paris or Berlin, but straight to what seemed to her the more respectable part of the Orient: namely Algiers.

She liked it from the first. She did not mind the fact that many of the people there were Sicilians and Malagans and Southern Frenchmen, and that a considerable percentage of the native-born Arabs wore patent leathers and drank absinthe. She did not notice that Algiers was neither East

nor West, but only a disquieting link between the two—a kind of ignoble rag-heap for the malodorous refuse of both. She overlooked the civilized degradations of Moustaffa Supérieur, the Apollon and the Belvedere, and saw nothing but one large blotch of color, luminous with soft fairy mist.

With her methodical, academic mind, she tried to store up everything she saw and heard, to label and register it. But, at the end of her first day, she found herself bewildered, as if she had lost her way in her own brain. Her mind absolutely refused to take in and remember the details.

Her first day had been a succession of impressions of which she retained only two: one, in the morning, when she had strolled into the Arab quarter, where in front of a tiny white-washed mosque, she had seen an old, plum-colored Kabyle woman, dressed in a bright orange shawl and droning with the professional beggar's sing-song intonation the Koran verses which command True Believers to be charitable to the poor; and the other, in the evening, when from the balcony which ran along the upper story of her hotel she had watched, after a gold and purple sunset, a fog of rusty, crimson-nicked steel come down and hang poised above the jagged, fantastic outlines of the city.

Just two impressions: an old Kabyle woman, and a ragged veil of Mediterranean fog—hardly her money's worth, she decided, and so, promptly on the following morning, she told herself that she would "do" Algiers correctly, methodically, thoroughly. For fleeting glimpses of strangeness and beauty meant nothing to her.

So, on the recommendation of the hotel proprietor who had seen and observed Saxon spinsters before, she engaged the services of one Toussaint Piédevache, a Parisian expatriate who earned a decent living by driving through the streets of Algiers a Parisian cab drawn by a sardonic, wall-

eyed, knock-kneed Parisian horse.

Every morning he called for her and drove her about for a good part of each day, playing cicerone, warning off with mock ferocity countless small, paunchy, brown children in search of baksheesh, teaching her the differences between town-bred and desert-bred Arabs, showing her odd little nooks and corners on the other side of Moustaffa Inférieur, and, her first haughty shyness worn off, interpreting for her the more intimate side of Algiers with the beautiful, unconscious democracy of the typical Frenchman—and, too, with a soundness of knowledge which proved that Algiers was to him an open book.

She liked him, in a cool, impersonal way; and, one day, quite casually, she asked him how he happened to know the town so well.

"But, mademoiselle," he replied, half turning on his seat, "I have been here—oh—fifteen years—a lifetime!" and he gave a little sigh.

Jane Champlin looked up sharply. She had heard the sigh, and, though she had perhaps never formed the habit of sympathy, she had at least always tried to take a psychological interest in those about her.

"Homesick?" she asked.

"Yes, mademoiselle," he grinned, and then quickly, to his horse, as if he were trying to hide the silent, gnawing grief, "*En avant, cocotte!*"

Beginning with that day, Jane Champlin took a more personal interest in Toussaint Piédevache. He was homesick; he had admitted it; and it was perhaps the fact that she herself, though she would not leave Algiers until she had explored the last copper vessel in the last bazaar, was beginning to have faint, nostalgic longings, which caused her to study her cabman—and to wonder.

He was a man in the prime of life, solid, healthy, bullet-headed, with close-cropped hair, heavy jowl, a comfortable double chin, and a long, sweeping Gallic mustache. His big mouth laughed, and his little round

eyes twinkled. Even Jane, with her academic, vicarious knowledge of France and the French, recognized in him a good Parisian bourgeois, fond of his home, his wine, and his carpet slippers. He was a typical Frenchman of the sound middle classes—the sort of Frenchman who prefer vermuth-cassis to absinthe, a clay pipe to a cigarette, the *Petit Parisien* to the *Figaro*, Maisons-Lafitte to Enghien, a Theatre Royal farce to Racine at the Gymnase, and a plateful of rabbit stewed with mushrooms and red wine to the airiest vol-au-vent of the Café Riche.

He knew Algiers—there was no doubt of it—but he did not belong to it, nor ever would; his very whip, long, thin, Parisian, struck a discordant note in the shrill symphony of the African streets. He was even more at home in the Arab than in the European quarters; he knew the bazaars, the tiny unexpected, flower-flaunting squares, the mosques, the native cafés, and a good many of the burnoussed inhabitants with whom he was evidently on an excellent footing of comradeship. Yet, the more Jane studied him, the more she saw how out of place he was in Algiers, in spite of his intimate knowledge of the place. The square-towered doorways trailed over with thin-leaved vines, the small courts with their arcades of trefoil-shaped arches, the lacy minarets darkened by cypress trees, the fountains with their wooden roofs—the blotchy sunlight, the purple shadows—the soft-shuffling, soft-spoken Arabs and Jews and Kabyles—the whole sudden, crass shaking-together of races and colors—why—they made a wrong frame for Toussaint Piédevache.

"Do you prefer Algiers to Paris?" she asked him brusquely, a day or two later; and his reply had the careless, astonished ring of utter truth—"Why—no, Mademoiselle!"—he was driving her about in the suburbs of the native quarter, and, beyond the flat, white houses, the soil was a mar-

quetry of emerald wheat and yellow mustard, embroidered with little shining turkis flowers and irregular patches of purple iris, and over it all the heavy scent of saffron and clover; he pointed with his whip—"this is beautiful," he continued, "but—Paris—" he laughed and was silent. The idea of anybody in his right senses preferring any town to Paris struck him as an exquisite joke.

"Couldn't you make a living in Paris?" she asked, after a pause, and again his reply intrigued her.

"Assuredly I could," he said, "in Paris a good cabman can always earn a decent living—*en avant, cocotte!*" with his usual admonition to the sardonic steed between the shafts.

Jane Champlin felt vaguely perturbed—not because she was fluttered by sympathy, but rather because of the fact that her mentality and her psychological reasoning did not seem wide enough to take in the strange, small, stark fact of Toussaint Piédevache: a man, preferring Paris, able to earn his living in Paris, yet a resident of Algiers for fifteen years and—as he had told her one day—expecting to live there always. She had no standard to measure him with, for her only standard was Herself—whatever ready-moulded principles, prejudices, and convictions her former social and intellectual activities had impregnated her with. And as to herself, why—she, too, liked Algiers, but she preferred New York and would return there—while Toussaint Piédevache would live in Algiers until his death.

Why?

Slowly, gradually, as the drowsy African spring wore on, Jane's mind began to weave a fantastic fabric of conjecture about the driver's personality, each having as main spring the latter's hidden reason for remaining in Algiers; but, one by one, as fast as the conjectures arose and crystallized, often even before they crystallized, she was forced to discard them again. For he was not a romantic figure,

with his solid bullet-head, his comfortable double chin, his little twinkling eyes, and his quick, metallic speech; and Jane said to herself, with a faint feeling of shame, that she should be able to dissect the character and motivations of Toussaint Piédevache into a few single and negligible elements with the same ease with which her learned first brother decomposed a force in a question of abstract dynamics.

If the cabman had been a gentleman she would have concluded that an affair of honor—or of dishonor—had driven him away from his beloved boulevards; but not even by the most elaborate stretch of imagination could Piédevache be padded into anything except what he was—a proper and sane Parisian bourgeois—one, moreover, who would have thanked nobody for mistaking him for a gentleman in disguise.

A political intrigue? Why—no! He declared himself openly as a Republican with slightly Nationalist leanings, and even Stoddard and the Missionary Guild of the Third Presbyterian Church had taught Jane enough to know that Algiers was a province of France, subject to the laws of France, and thus not an asylum for political refugees.

Could it have been a love affair, a great, deep-burning, romantic love affair—with a native woman?

Here was a conjecture which Jane Champlin was loath to give up. She clung to it in spite of the straight, logical enthymemes of her prosy, academic mind, in spite even of the testimony of her eyes which showed to her Toussaint Piédevache as he was; bullet-headed, heavy-jowled, riotously alive—not at all a fitting male foil for Algiers' native women.

She had seen the latter, and had observed them, with a sort of self-righteous Christian compassion, not untainted by self-righteous Christian malice. She had never been able to see much of their faces beneath the black crape veils—except the eyes,

lustrous, disdainful, distrustful, a little anxious . . . eyes which would not, could not love such as Toussaint Piédévache. The houses, too, seemed to give the lie to such a romantic conjecture; the native houses which seemed like blind, melancholy animals, with their limp curtains that never stirred, with their massive gratings—with never a sound coming through—with life hidden away secretly, as in prison or convent. They were houses to be scaled and conquered by a Romeo, a Leander, a Lochinvar—not by a Toussaint Piédévache, who was about as heroic as his wall-eyed, knock-kneed horse.

But what else could it be? What else, if not love? And then Jane realized with a little sinking of the heart that love had never come into her life and that her knowledge of what was possible or impossible to love was only vicarious, academic, unreal.

Still, she was a Saxon spinster. She must know. She would not leave Algiers until she knew, and, delicately at first, she began cross-examining him. But he evaded her questions with ease, always turning the conversation into other channels, speaking of everything under the sun except the reasons for his expatriation.

And then, one day, she asked him direct, quite brutally, with a sudden outburst of feminine egotism, though she would have denied the implication; for—to quote a wise Dutchman—while when a man is egotistical, he sometimes feels ashamed of it; when a woman is egotistical she never even notices that she is.

At all events, she asked him: "Why don't you go home, to Paris—since you like it better than over here—since you can earn as good a living there?" and he laughed, and then he blushed. Very evidently, he was embarrassed, and when he asked her if she really wanted to know, Jane felt a little ashamed of herself—as if she was about to peer into the sanctum of a strange faith in which he

could never believe. But she wanted to know.

"Yes," she replied in a hushed voice, "tell me—"

He turned his horse.

"All right," he smiled, "I will."

"You will tell me?"

"Ah, Mademoiselle, I will show you!" and he swung the cab into the Street of the Mutton-Butchers, crossed the Lane of the Perfume-Sellers, and came out into the cramped Bazaar of the Fruit-Vendors.

All European life ended here, cut off as clean as with a knife. This was the real Algiers—soft and strange—and—yes!—sinister—Jane said to herself, and she was just a little frightened. Too, for the first time in her life, she was impressed by something not contained in dictionary, encyclopedia, or anthology.

The bazaar was growing ever more narrow—so narrow that, in places, the balconies on the opposite sides of the street met. Toussaint drove slowly, carefully. Came a sudden, unexpected arcaded square, and, on all sides, fruit and vegetable stalls with their wares heaped up in profuse abundance—with Arabs in plaited turbans and brown, striped burnouses gravely bending over the colored heaps and haggling as gravely; young girls, with enormous bundles of grapes on their veiled heads, gliding through the crowd; old women, unveiled because in the Orient age is supposed to scotch temptation, standing about in twos and threes, chaffering and laughing; and here and there a fine, savage Bedawin strolling about, his nostrils stuffed with cotton against the defiling odors of the city.

Quite suddenly Toussaint Piédévache pulled up his horse and jumped from the box. "Here we are, Mademoiselle—my reason for staying in Algiers—a life time—" and he pointed to a bit of brown drapery hanging over a low stall from which voices were droning forth.

"Where? Where?" cried Jane, excitedly; and, with a smile, he lifted up the drapery and bade her enter.

A little shudder ran over Jane; but she entered, the cabman following. Inside there squatted an old woman chewing a piece of sugarcane with toothless gums, and an old man, in fez and ragged grey shirt, mumbling over a tattered copy of the Koran—just the two—and a huge heap of many-colored vegetables of all sorts, flanked by a smaller heap of spiky, olive-green artichokes.

Piédevache gave a courteous word of Arabic greeting to the two old cronies, then picked up one of the artichokes.

"Mademoiselle—" he commenced,

and she interrupted him, impatiently—"But you promised to tell me—to show me—"

"But I am showing you," he cried, "behold these artichokes! Have you ever seen the like, Mademoiselle—in Paris, in the whole of France? Ah!" with a genuine burst of enthusiasm, "it is this little spiky vegetable which is keeping me away from Paris—from the boulevards—from the *brasseries*—the theater—from my Mother!"

And to her dying day, Jane Champlin believed that Toussaint Piédevache had poked unseemly fun at her . . . Toussaint Piédevache, who had told her the simple, prosy truth—as any Frenchman would understand!



1492

By V. R. Hedden

THE banquet was a great success. As the guest of honor, a great explorer, told of his discoveries in modest yet accurate terms, the company fairly hung on his words. He had gone far, this man, and a newly promised grant would enable him to go still further before long.

"There is no limit to the achievements of man," he said. "In this age we shall go far. I can even perform the hitherto impossible before your very eyes."

Taking an egg from his pocket he stood it on its end on the plate before him by cracking its shell slightly.

A murmur of appreciation went around the room, then a peculiar odor became evident.

He had gone too far.



MARRIAGE, after all, might be worse. No woman, it is probable, ever hated her husband as heartily as every woman hates her husband's brother's wife.



AMONG THE LIONS*

A Social Satire in One Act

By George Middleton

CAST

PATRICIA TENNER, a popular star.

MRS. EMILY FROWDE, a lion hunter.

MISS EVA STANNARD, about whom there has been talk.

THE BROWN ONE
THE BLUE ONE
THE GREEN ONE } guests at the Frowde's; as they appear to Patricia.

M. MAVOSKY, an artist "who's all the rage."

GEORGE SILVERTON, a musician; an old friend of Patricia.

OTHER GUESTS.

SCENE.

Drawing room at Mrs. Frowde's during a small reception given to Patricia Tenner. A late afternoon.

[An elaborate drawing-room is disclosed, with bare high-paneled walls, relieved only by attractive candle-clusters and a stretch of tapestry. At back, in the Right, is an alcove effect in which a piano is seen, with the usual decorations of a music-room. There are two openings at the Left which lead to the hallways and street doors without. At the extreme Right is a stone-built fireplace with a smouldering log blaze and attractive "British Soldier" andirons. By this rests a deep chair which tones with the other furnishings. A tea-table resplendent with silver stands obliquely in the center, with lighted candles burning stately. There are appropriate ferns and flowers in likely places.

GEORGE SILVERTON is playing a Chopin étude in the music-room; about the opening are grouped PATRICIA

TENNER, MRS. FROWDE, THE BROWN ONE, THE GREEN ONE, THE BLUE ONE and others. They are listening, duly impressed at the touch of an expert.

MAVOSKY, the artist, however, is standing off alone by the tea-table munching a macaroon and eyeing PATRICIA.

MAVOSKY is about forty, tall, with large eyes and a pointed beard. There is a slight Russian accent in his speech and his manners have the studied spontaneity of a professional foreigner exploiting a new field. As he continues to watch PATRICIA with a cynical smile, she leaves the group unobserved by the others and moves towards the low, deep chair near the fireplace.

PATRICIA has the large features of a stage-beauty, which enhance her appearance before the footlights.

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Her hair is parted and coiled low on her neck. She is elegantly gowned, with a long, elaborate scarf which is hung across her back and held by each arm. She uses this continually to increase her instinctive plasticity. As she turns there is a serious expression upon her face, as though, for once she had been her true self.]

PATRICIA:

(Almost inaudibly.) George Silver-ton. Poor George!

[She seems to feel MAVOSKY's eyes and again mistress of herself, turns, smiling fetchingly at him. Then she drapes herself artistically in the chair. MAVOSKY comes and offers her the plate of macaroons, which she declines with a pretty gesture. He replaces them on the table and seeing no one is watching, returns to her, speaking softly as the music continues.]

MAVOSKY:

Quel charme!

PATRICIA:

The gown or the pose?

MAVOSKY:

Mademoiselle Tenner, in your profession they are inseparable.

PATRICIA:

We actresses belong only to each moment we act. It is your profession which fastens us as we should be in the memory of others.

MAVOSKY:

Perhaps that is why my portraits please.

PATRICIA:

(Bantering charmingly.) And you only take celebrities, Monsieur Mavosky.

MAVOSKY:

I wish to go to posterity on the hem of their garments.

PATRICIA:

(Smiling.) Some day I may wear a gown that pleases you, eh?

[He starts to answer, but the music stops and the others applaud in perfect taste. He offers his hand in parting, as she seems to invite it.]

MAVOSKY:

Au revoir.

PATRICIA:

(With a fascinating smile.) Deja?

[He bows far over her hand and their eyes meet interestingly. As he turns away, while the others come into the room, PATRICIA gives a secret smile of satisfaction, as though she had obtained her intention. Then she sighs wearily, bored, as she glances at the others.]

MRS. FROWDE, the hostess, is about fifty, looking forty; rather large and as self-contained as possible in her loose black tea-gown. She is a nervous woman, eyes continually criticising and hands correcting, with an apparent seriousness in her social undertakings. She has a gracious voice, and towards PATRICIA, at least, a possessive protectiveness.

THE BROWN ONE has a good profile from her chin up, but otherwise, in spite of lacing, is also stout. Her tan gown makes up in elegance what it lacks in outline.

The clinging gown of THE BLUE ONE accentuates the languid manner she affects. There is a complaisant, set smile upon her aquiline face and her voice maintains a gentle, persistent tremolo.

THE GREEN ONE is younger than the others and in general indefiniteness of bearing and appearance merely suggests means. Her olive-trimmed gown is very simple, but is caught by a conspicuous jade belt.

These, with the other guests who gradually depart, suggest the atmosphere of a conventional tea.]

OMNES:

(Enthusiastically to Silverton.) How delightful! How wonderful!

[GEORGE SILVERTON *is medium-sized, in the late thirties, with a fine, sensitive face and short-cropped hair. He is retiring in manner and seems ill at ease in the present company. Towards PATRICIA, however, this disappears and it is evident he has known her well.*]

THE BROWN ONE:

(Shrugging her shoulders.) He has such a *(splashing each sentence with jerky gestures throughout)* je-ne-sais-quoi. Don't you think?

THE BLUE ONE:

(In a shocked tone.) I'd hardly put it that way.

SILVERTON:

(To THE BROWN ONE.) You compliment me.

MRS. FROWDE:

Didn't Pachmann play that at the Philharmonic Friday?

THE GREEN ONE:

How should I know?

MRS. FROWDE:

I wish they'd announce what they play as an encore so I can recognize it.

THE BROWN ONE:

We need a Chopin in this country. Do you compose, Mr. Silverton?

THE BLUE ONE:

(Who has come down to PATRICIA.) It must be splendid to be a real artist, Miss Tenner *(PATRICIA smiles graciously)* instead of just having money. *We* have to be so careful.

[PATRICIA *nods understandingly throughout.* SILVERTON, *apparently ill at ease, comes beside PATRICIA as MAVOSKY is speaking to MRS.*

FROWDE and the others at the table.]

Oh, Mr. Silverton, your playing made me so—so—*(at a loss for words)* don't you know?

SILVERTON:

(Stiffly.) Music is the only mental adventure in good and evil which some of us ever have.

THE BLUE ONE:

How clever of you! I wonder if that's why I adore Tristan? You will come to my next Thursday and play for me? *I* need adventure. *(She laughs, tremulously.)* I'll have some people there if I may tell them *you* are coming.

SILVERTON:

(Hiding his displeasure.) Charmed.

THE BLUE ONE:

(To PATRICIA.) You have a beastly rehearsal then, haven't you? So sorry. [PATRICIA *smiles as though regretful, and the three continue talking.*]

MRS. FROWDE:

(By the table, shaking Mavosky's hand.) Must you go?

MAVOSKY:

Only till luncheon Tuesday.

MRS. FROWDE:

(Aside to him.) It was good of you to meet her.

MAVOSKY:

(Looking across to PATRICIA.) Miss Tenner is a poem in pose.

THE BROWN ONE:

(Who has been maneuvering to be in his line of departure, as MRS. FROWDE turns to give THE GREEN ONE a cup of tea.) M. Mavosky, I've heard if you wait at Port Said you'll sooner or later meet everyone you know. Here, at Mrs. Frowde's, one only meets those one wishes, n'est-ce pas?

MAVOSKY:

(Gallantly.) You American women!

THE BROWN ONE:

I'll bring my husband to see your portraits. May I?

MAVOSKY:

(*Bowing.*) You speak for his taste.

THE BROWN ONE:

(*Pleased.*) He actually threatens to have one of me, and wishes the very best that can possibly be painted.

[*They exchange pleasantries, and as MAVOSKY passes out he glances to PATRICIA, who has been watching him, while SILVERTON has engaged THE BLUE ONE, who by now has joined THE GREEN ONE and THE BROWN ONE and MRS. FROWDE at the table. They laugh as SILVERTON and PATRICIA find a chance to snatch a few words unheard.*]

SILVERTON:

(*Referring to THE BLUE ONE.*) Who is she that I must pay for my tea by playing for her Thursday?

PATRICIA:

(*Flippantly.*) Her name begins with T. Her husband owns *The Star*. It's been good to me. I call her The Blue One; I no longer remember names. People are color to me. See the stout one—like an overfed question mark? She seems brown all through. Have you heard her talk? With her (*imitating and shrugging shoulders*) "je-ne-sais-quois"? No one who is fat should speak French. And The Green One—ugh!—with the jade life-belt—

SILVERTON:

(*Seriously.*) Pat, why do you still come to these stupid affairs?

PATRICIA:

There are still things I may want, too.

SILVERTON:

Mavosky?

PATRICIA:

A portrait by him in my new rôle. Yes. Mrs. Frowde knew him. Voilà.

SILVERTON:

I see: that's how you still get things.

PATRICIA:

Mrs. Frowde is the greatest "lion-hunter" in captivity. She is happy today; she's caught three of us, a star, a painter, and a promising musician. That's why you're here, isn't it? (*He nods.*) You've finally decided to follow the advice I gave you when we first came East—

SILVERTON:

Yes: how different it was then—

PATRICIA:

(*Reminiscently.*) Yes—how different!

MRS. FROWDE:

(*Gently restraining THE BROWN ONE, who has started towards PATRICIA and SILVERTON.*) I've heard they had quite a romance once.

THE BROWN ONE:

How romantic! I wish my husband played a piano. (*They talk.*)

PATRICIA:

(*Quietly to SILVERTON.*) Funny, George, while you were playing I was thinking of when I hadn't a job and you were copying for a living. Your music actually made me want to throw off all my insincerities here just for once and see what would happen.

SILVERTON:

They'd be shocked—

PATRICIA:

And I'd be chilly.

SILVERTON:

But I couldn't be of any use to you—then.

PATRICIA:

No; my "art" wasn't big enough to succeed by itself alone. I had to play the game—get influence—(*He protests.*) Oh, I know myself, George; I was cruel to you and all the others. Some day, just to square myself in my own eyes, I'll tell people like these here about my life and how I used them to get what I wanted.

SILVERTON:

(*Surprised.*) What is the matter, Pat? You're not yourself.

PATRICIA:

(*Smiling.*) I'm having a rush of sincerity to my lips.

SILVERTON:

(*Looking over to the others.*) I wonder what *they* would say if it slipped out?

PATRICIA:

Perhaps they'd say it was "temperament." I've affected it so much I actually believe I've got it.

MRS. FROWDE:

(*Laughing with others.*) Mavosky is so clever; he called our former President a "palpitating platitude."

THE GREEN ONE:

He told me art had no morals and I understood him.

SILVERTON:

(*To PATRICIA.*) If I could but make phrases.

PATRICIA:

(*Rising, wearily.*) I don't have to; I smile them.

MRS. FROWDE:

(*Coming down anxiously.*) Surely, you're not going yet, Patricia?

THE GREEN ONE:

(*To THE BROWN ONE.*) She calls her—Patricia! Huh—

MRS. FROWDE:

(*Offering PATRICIA a cup.*) I've fixed it the way you like it—no lemon.

PATRICIA:

(*Declining.*) You are so thoughtful, dear Emily.

THE GREEN ONE:

(*To THE BROWN ONE.*) Emily!

THE BLUE ONE:

(*Coming to PATRICIA.*) I'm just dying to see your Rosalind.

PATRICIA:

(*Beautifully covering with an air of sincerity her mockery which SILVERTON alone detects.*) You may before you do.

THE GREEN ONE:

(*In surprise.*) But the papers say—

PATRICIA:

You mustn't believe all you see *there*. My press agent has imagination.

THE BLUE ONE:

(*Cozily to the others.*) Isn't it splendid to be taken into her confidence. [PATRICIA darts a humorous glance to SILVERTON.]

THE BROWN ONE:

I should think you'd be tired going out so much.

PATRICIA:

Mrs. Frowde's friends are always interesting and proper—a rare combination. (*Smiling.*) Her idea of a tragedy would be a social mishap—that way.

MRS. FROWDE:

(*Protectively.*) I warn her against overtaxing herself—and with that trying part to play every night.

PATRICIA:

Whenever it gets trying to me I think of the audience.

MRS. FROWDE:

(*As the others laugh.*) I always said one must have a sense of humor off the stage to play the parts you do.

PATRICIA:

I get my inspiration from my friends; a cup of tea, and brilliant conversation before the horrid time to go and "make-up."

THE GREEN ONE:

Doesn't all that make-up hurt the complexion?

PATRICIA:

(*Sweetly.*) I always use cold cream first—don't you?

[*An abrupt halt in the laughter comes as MISS EVA STANNARD enters and*

pauses momentarily in the doorway.

MISS STANNARD is about twenty-nine, tall, vibrant and almost imperious in bearing. Her forehead is high, her eyes keen and her mouth thin and tense. She is gowned in gray.

PATRICIA is immediately interested in her and in the constrained attitude of the others.

MISS STANNARD slowly comes to Mrs. FROWDE, bowing graciously, as she passes to the others, who return it with sickly smiles, exchanging secret looks of surprise and indignation. Mrs. FROWDE, in her obvious embarrassment, instead of offering hand, proffers the tea-cup, which MISS STANNARD smilingly declines. THE BLUE ONE, with rare presence of mind, coughs, and the others all laugh nervously, as though to cover the silence which has ensued.

PATRICIA slowly sits again, with SILVERTON standing by her chair, intensely interested and curious.]

MISS STANNARD:

(Sweetly.) I had no idea, Mrs. Frowde, you were receiving formally to-day.

MRS. FROWDE:

(Constrained throughout.) I only sent out a few special cards to meet Miss Tenner. But now that you've come, let me present you to her, Miss Stannard.

PATRICIA:

(More cordial than ever.) Miss Eva Stannard? *(Miss Stannard nods.)* Oh—I'm indeed glad to meet you.

MISS STANNARD:

(Formally and a bit puzzled.) Thanks. *(She turns to the others.)*

MRS. FROWDE:

You know the others?

MISS STANNARD:

(Cordially.) Oh, yes—

[The others laugh a little nervously, nod mechanically, with ill-concealed rudeness.]

MRS. FROWDE:

(Nervously.) Do have another cup of tea. *(Pause.)* What lovely weather we are having! *(They all agree.)* I almost hate to go to Florida this winter.

[MISS STANNARD declines again and SILVERTON takes the cup from Mrs. FROWDE to the table, returning to PATRICIA. There is another embarrassing silence of quite some length in which they all look at one another. Finally THE BROWN ONE comes to say good-bye to Mrs. FROWDE, whose discomfort increases throughout.]

Must you really go so soon?

THE BROWN ONE:

(Pointedly.) Yes; I—I had expected to stay longer, but I've just remembered a most important engagement.

THE BLUE ONE:

Can't I drop you on the way? My car's waiting.

MRS. FROWDE:

(Distressed.) Must you, too? But Mr. Silverton has promised to play again.

SILVERTON:

(Significantly.) An improvisation—prompted by the occasion.

THE BLUE ONE:

I'm to hear it Thursday—remember. *[As THE BLUE ONE and THE BROWN ONE say good-bye to MISS STANNARD, THE GREEN ONE goes to Mrs. FROWDE. MISS STANNARD being left alone, shows her struggle at self-control and sits in a chair unasked. THE BROWN ONE and THE BLUE ONE with heads together go out the upper opening.]*

THE GREEN ONE:

It's getting late. I've had such a

pleasant afternoon. You won't forget bridge next Monday.

[MRS. FROWDE responds limply and as THE GREEN ONE turns, Miss Stannard rises and halts her with a look.]

MISS STANNARD:

Good afternoon.

MRS. FROWDE:

Must you?

THE GREEN ONE:

Yes, I'm going to Tiffany's for the prizes. (To PATRICIA.) Good afternoon. (After a moment's hesitation.) Good afternoon, Miss Stannard.

[THE GREEN ONE goes out as MISS STANNARD eyes MRS. FROWDE in silence while PATRICIA and SILVERTON speak unheard.]

PATRICIA:

Leave me here alone, George: *this* is real. I've heard about her—

SILVERTON:

What are you going to do?

PATRICIA:

The cats! There's something inside me wants to speak. Run along. I'm feeling that rush of sincerity I spoke of.

SILVERTON:

Mrs. Frowde—I—leave only because—(as MISS STANNARD catches his eye) Miss Stannard, I'm sorry they did not wait for that improvisation. But I'm afraid they wouldn't have understood. [SILVERTON goes out. PATRICIA leans forward watching the two, as MRS. FROWDE faces MISS STANNARD. There is an embarrassing pause.]

MRS. FROWDE:

Really, I don't know what to say. I hardly thought you would come—under the circumstances.

MISS STANNARD:

(Fencing carefully throughout.) I'm dreadfully sorry. I did not know it was a select affair. I thought you were

always at home to your friends.

MRS. FROWDE:

(Pointedly.) Friends—yes.

MISS STANNARD:

(Sweetly.) Then I'm forgiven?

MRS. FROWDE:

I think you must have seen my friends did not remain after you arrived.

MISS STANNARD:

I'm very sorry; but it is they you should criticize for being so frightfully inconsiderate of you. (With a sudden firmness.) And now Mrs. Frowde, don't you think you owe me an explanation?

MRS. FROWDE:

(Controlling herself with difficulty.) I feel a strong desire to give it only I hardly think you would like me to speak before—

MISS STANNARD:

(Sarcastically.) Strangers? The resentment was shown before Miss Tenner, why not the explanation?

PATRICIA:

(Appealing with the usual success to their intimacy.) Emily, dear, you forget you have already spoken to me of Miss Stannard. (Miss Stannard stiffens.)

MRS. FROWDE:

Wouldn't it be better if I simply asked you not to call again?

MISS STANNARD:

(With a note of challenge.) I must insist that you tell me frankly the reason.

MRS. FROWDE:

You insist?

MISS STANNARD:

Yes.

MRS. FROWDE:

(Bluntly.) There has been too much talk about you. Surely you must have realized your name is on every tongue. You know the world: women can't do

what you have done. You must have been mad—and with a married man at that!

[PATRICIA eyes her keenly. MISS STANNARD tosses her head defiantly; but as MRS. FROWDE eyes her piercingly she seems to lose all her control, begins to tremble, totters, clutching the back of a chair and finally sinks with an hysterical sob upon the sofa, burying her face in her hands. Her vanity-case rattles to the floor. PATRICIA rises instinctively to go to her but sits again as MRS. FROWDE motions her back and approaches MISS STANNARD less harshly.]

I'm very sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you like this. Only one must protect one's self—one's friends. I couldn't have you come here (*Slowly.*) Oh, well, I'm sure you will see one must draw the line somewhere.

PATRICIA:

(*Impressively.*) Yes, Emily, one must draw the line somewhere. Why didn't you begin with me?

[MRS. FROWDE sits in astonishment as PATRICIA leans forward. There is a long pause till MISS STANNARD looks up slowly in wonder and curiosity.]

I really don't see why you discriminate.

MRS. FROWDE:

But—

PATRICIA:

If you and your friends are so shocked by Miss Stannard's presence, why should you tolerate me? No one gives us stage people the right to privacy. Everybody makes it their business to retail our lives. We're public property; so surely you and your friends have heard my story, too. Now, really, haven't you?

MRS. FROWDE:

(*Confused.*) Yes, but—my dear—

PATRICIA:

And what have you heard about me? Let's see if it is correct. My name? It isn't my own. My real one wouldn't look well on the advertising. Besides, my father hadn't given me any reason to be proud of it. My mother may have been a good soul if I had ever really known her. I've always thought I was an unwanted child: I hate children so myself. But mother couldn't have been the sort who'd drink with ease out of your frail tea-cups, and I'll warrant no amount of coaching would have kept the veneer from peeling when she spoke. I grew up somehow among "beer and skittles," as Trilby would say; didn't know what pictures and teas and things were till I came East. And do you know *how* I came? *He* seemed so handsome, too, in those days.

[MRS. FROWDE moves uneasily as she sees a grim smile come to MISS STANNARD.]

MRS. FROWDE:

But, dear, you were young and—

PATRICIA:

Oh, I knew better; but I was bored—bored out there and I wanted a chance to live. We didn't get along very well—he and I—partly my fault. He couldn't be happy with a woman who also had a spark of creation tucked away in her soul. Then, besides, I had made up my mind I'd do something because I had to keep alive. I turned to the stage—most of us poor fools do. But I happened to have a way with me and a pair of shoulders that were proud of my face. (*Sarcastically.*) The critics called it personality. (*Quickly.*) I wonder if you also know I lived in a five-dollar-a-week boarding house with circus acrobats on the floor above, a sad soprano in a closet next to mine and a smell of cooking all over so I wouldn't be lonely?

[*Almost unconsciously her voice at times betrays an unexpected com-
monness.*]

How I hated it! How I wanted these feathers and gilt! And every time I made up my face in that two-by-four part I had, I determined to succeed somehow—*anyhow*. I deserve every bit of success I've got, for I worked hard getting the burrs out of my speech and some grammar into it. (MRS. FROWDE *moves uncomfortably again*.) That's the truth. People suspected I had a brain and I had; but I wasn't wasting it on books—I was studying the hearts and souls of the sort of people I needed to get along. [*With increasing relish at the effect of her revelations.*]

And I saw to succeed in my life I had to grow hard inside and soft out. So I affected my husky voice and my sad smile; sadness gave me a touch of mystery and encouraged curiosity. I knew I'd have to keep my face smooth, too; so I stopped feeling for others and thought only of myself. Suffering isn't good for the complexion. But I helped everybody in convenient ways, because I knew I could make them help me in greater. And as I began to get along I went out more to teas and the like so I could meet the people I could use. Oh, I'm not ungrateful for their kindness (*pointedly*) but I owe them nothing, for I repaid them by letting them do things for me. It flattered them to have me about and to say they knew me "intimately." I was a good asset to their affairs because I was a success. Then I picked up a lot of cant phrases about art and the like, so I could prattle; and I even signed articles which somebody else wrote lamenting the decline of the stage, when I knew in my heart I was glad things were as they were because I could make more money with a dramatized novel or a tailor-made part than in my much advertised and never intended appearance in Shakespeare.

[*Acting as with apparent conviction.*]

And back of this, life was calling me. So I did other things to get along. My eyes were open and so it seems were those of the world. It envied me my freedom because I was a success.

All of us don't do it, and many of the best but I did and it wasn't always love. (MISS STANNARD'S *quick breath halts her for a moment; then she adds dramatically.*) Yes, Mrs. Frowde, if you're going to draw the line somewhere at your teas, why don't you begin with me?

MRS. FROWDE:

(*Floundering.*) But—but you forget, dear, you—you are a great creative artist.

PATRICIA:

No, I don't. Everybody's tolerance of my whims, my moods, my morals would never let me forget it. But what has that to do with the right and wrong of it? That's what you are wondering, Miss Stannard. (MISS STANNARD *gazes at her.*) I don't ask any less charity for myself because my "temperament" has made me live my life my own way; though I don't need charity now I'm on top. (*Surging along effectively.*) But why shouldn't you and your friends extend that same charity to the rest of the sinners? (PATRICIA *does not detect* MISS STANNARD'S *change of manner so intent is she in her own words.*) You give it to me because I am a creative artist. Everybody has a bit of the artist in them. Some of us use it to make bread; others use it to make trouble. All the nice sinners of the world have the creative spirit, too. Sin is the creating of the actual out of the imagined. It's falling over the fence in a desire to see what is on the other side. (*Consciously shaping her words and manner to a climax.*) But the more so are the sins one does for love. Love is the most creative of all impulses. If you forgive me because I'm an artist, as you say; if you can ask me to sit beside your lily-faced daughters and stubby-chinned sons; if you can kiss my lips—I, who have openly violated all your standards—why do you turn against this woman, who has done what she has for the noblest of motives—love—the love of a man?

MISS STANNARD:

(*She has risen tensely and speaks with a biting bitterness.*) I suppose you meant very well, Miss Tenner; you said it just as though it were a scene in some play—with the proper emphasis and pause and nice phrases. But believe me, Mrs. Frowde is right: we can't judge people by the same standards. (*Contemptuously.*) There is a difference between you and me. I feel it myself. When I need forgiveness I shall only want it of my own class. (*Scornfully.*) The tolerance of yours means nothing to me. (*Very quietly.*) I am sorry, Mrs. Frowde. I'll not call again till he and I are married. Then, of course, it will be all right. Good-bye.

[MISS STANNARD goes out quickly leaving PATRICIA dumb at her misreading of the situation.]

MRS. FROWDE, who has been too confused throughout to speak, now vents her anger on MISS STANNARD.]

MRS. FROWDE:

The brazen huzzy! You see what she is—to insult you so after your splendid defense of her!

PATRICIA:

(*Slowly.*) She was right.

MRS. FROWDE:

Not at all. She doesn't understand the difference with a lady of temperament.

PATRICIA:

Temperament—oh, yes. (*She smiles sarcastically and then looks surprised at MRS. FROWDE.*) And you are not angry with me?

MRS. FROWDE:

(*Affectionately.*) At you, my dear friend? Indeed not. I know you didn't mean me. And besides I would have understood you if you had.

PATRICIA:

(*Eyeing her with undetected cyn-*

icism.) Yes, yes. You would have understood.

MRS. FROWDE:

(*Impulsively.*) Won't you stay and have a bite to eat with me—all alone? I can drive you to the theatre.

PATRICIA:

I have an interview.

MRS. FROWDE:

(*As they walk to the door.*) Too bad they misquote so.

PATRICIA:

Yes, isn't it? I've had such a dear afternoon.

MRS. FROWDE:

(*Embracing her affectionately.*) And you'll come to lunch Tuesday?

PATRICIA:

(*As though wishing to escape.*) No—I—

MRS. FROWDE:

(*Solicitously.*) But Mavosky will be here and he's taken quite a fancy to you. Thinks you'd make a splendid study.

PATRICIA:

(*Recalling.*) Mavosky. Oh, yes. I thought you said Wednesday—that's matinee day. Tuesday is all right.

MRS. FROWDE:

Say at two?

PATRICIA:

I may be a moment late.

MRS. FROWDE:

We'll wait for you. (*As they are walking out.*) I hope you'll forget what she said.

PATRICIA:

Oh, Miss Stannard hasn't any temperament, has she?

[*They go out leaving the stage empty, with the candles on the table twinkling in their sockets.*]

CURTAIN

VALEDICTORY

By Louise Winter

AND so you married Gerda; somehow I never fancied you would, although even three years ago people told me I made a mistake having her with us so much. But do you know—laugh now at my foolishness—I used to feel sorry for Gerda. She had made such a mess of her life and no one who knew both of them, as we did, could blame Francis. She floated about like a rudderless ship, attaching herself pathetically first to one friend and then, as she tried out her patience, to another, and I felt so secure that I thought I could afford to be generous, and so I put up with Gerda and ignored warning signs. I wonder if you know that in those days I practically clothed Gerda—and not as many women would have done, in my cast-off frocks, but in new, expensive things that were so becoming people began to speak of her as a pretty woman.

You must know by this time, unless she has been clever enough to hoodwink you, that Gerda is not pretty. Her skin is sallow, though at night it passes for olive; her eyes are too near together—they say that denotes meanness—and her lips are colorless. At least I remember her that way in the morning. Perhaps, though, you do not see her through my eyes.

Strange that you should have married Gerda, strange that you should have married any woman, for, my dear Felix, you are not fitted for marriage, with your curious irritability—drugs—I have since decided—your moods of silence, your long periods of depression following the completion of a scientific article: how could you imagine you could make any woman a companionable husband?

As for your money—my dear Felix—so many men have fewer defects and more money—and Gerda, in that second bloom of hers, transient as it undoubtedly will be—Gerda might have married much better from every point of view.

And doesn't it grate slightly upon her delicate sensibilities—as I recall, she harped constantly on her sensitive nature—to step into my worn-out shoes?

I outgrew them, and they must pinch her—I think I know you too well to believe you would allow her to make any radical changes in your home. And so I can picture it, the dull tones of the library, where you work, and where you smoke your innumerable cigarettes—until the whole atmosphere becomes foggy.

Gerda wears white, I think; she would wear white; it is "bridey," and in her snug way she is eminently conventional, and she tries to read, but all the while she is conscious of your eyes; your restless eyes that search and search. I wonder if they find in her what they never found in me?

It must trouble her sometimes to realize that another woman lives close by who has gone through every experience she is now going through. You see, Felix, we were married too long—I know you thoroughly, every shading of your mean, despicable character, and then, too, I know her; know her as a woman only can know another woman. She set out, quite deliberately, though in a roundabout fashion that could never reflect upon her, to usurp the place I held in your house; long ago I had abandoned the pretense of reigning in your heart, but I confess I clung to the empty honor of wifehood. It adds dig-

nity to a woman, and when one reaches my age, dignity means actually more than love.

Gerda saw that your wife had the outward respect that the world gives to the woman who lives under her husband's roof. She saw that I had plenty of money—she did not know, for I never spoke of it, that the money I spent was my own—saw that I was able to be generous to my friends as well as to indulge my own rather extravagant tastes, and she envied me. Oh, yes—I am older than Gerda, nearly ten years older—and yet she envied me.

There was no other man at hand to divert her attention, and I think, as I calmly look back and fit together the pieces of the puzzle, that it began when I invited her to go South with us. She had no clothes, she told me—so because I felt sorry for her and I hoped to see her married again to some man who would not love her as Francis loved her, but who would give her all that her greedy little soul demanded, I gave her the clothes which she wore when she set her snares for you. Curious, isn't it, how little conscience some women have? I furnished the ammunition and she took aim at my heart.

Not that I've suffered on her account—oh, dear, no, don't flatter yourselves to that extent—but I could not bear to have you both think you have deluded me.

I saw her game, but I thought it would fail because I did not think, drug-steeped as your brain was, that the physical man could be reached by her clumsy tactics.

As I had not dreamed in years that I held you by any stronger tie than the one of material well-being, it amused me to see Gerda scheme to be alone with you—I saw through her little headaches which allowed her to wear fetching negligées, that my money had paid for, and lounge in our sitting-room while I went over the links—you had no headache, but you never played golf—you held a book before you and pretended to read, though I've watched you for hours and have never seen you

turn a page. Some sense of Gerda must have stolen into your dreams, for once when I returned unexpectedly you two were sitting on the lounge and her eyes were red.

That was the night, I think, when you spoke of how cruel the world was to a poor little woman who lacked the aggressive spirit of the modern female and could not battle for herself. I've wondered since if you began then to give Gerda money. I know you gave her money. She was too clever to endorse checks, and about that time you drew crisp yellow-backed notes in large denominations from the bank.

A wife's instinct in these cases is intuitive. I wasn't even worried when I found that out. She will defeat her own ends, I thought, for some day her avariciousness will disgust you. You've often said you hated greedy women, and surely Gerda was greedy; taking from both of us. She was loyal neither to you nor to me—and I fear for your future. Deceit is natural to her and you hate deceit—in others. Will she have sense enough to keep you comfortable? If she ever begins to nag at you, you won't have the courage to beat her as Francis did; you'll just brood over it, until it throws you into one of your moods of depression. She never saw you in one of those. I hid them from the world and you gained the reputation of a silent man of genius. I wonder if you realize now how much I shielded you from? Not only unpleasant details about the house, but in your outside affairs.

Does Gerda know anything about finances? Does she know how to keep your accounts, straighten out tangles in your check-book? As I remember, she rather prided herself upon her absolute ignorance of anything that bordered on business. And you are no business man, my dear Felix. You have less than the average modern author's knowledge of values. Your scientific articles are well paid for—but your work is fitful and you are a prey to temperament. Does Gerda understand this? Does she know that she must curb her selfish

desires when your brain is non-productive? Or does she think because I always had plenty of money that she will have the same?

And now I come to touch on love—the intangible, fleeting sentiment that once turned the world to rose color for me. How quickly it faded, and how soon the gray days came!

Will they come to you again? I could not bear to hope and know failure twice and I am not a temperamental person.

When the white heat of passion fades what will you do? Turn to drugs, more powerful drugs, that will in time shroud your mind in an impenetrable fog? And when you are mad, quite mad, will you wreak vengeance on her? Life is curious, Felix, for it takes its toll, always, and it exacts restitution from thieves. It does little good to say Gerda took what I did not appreciate. *How do you know* I did not appreciate my position in the world? I am telling you now that I did—that nothing else mattered to me. You with your drug-scented dreams, had long ceased to be more than a shadowing protection, but your name gave me liberty to live my own life as I cannot live it now.

Your death would have cast a halo about our name. My divorce, to which you drove me—you, and back of you, as I see it now, Gerda—robs me of the dignity in which I gloried. There is always a tiny sneer in the word "divorce," even when it cloaks another passion about to be fulfilled, and sneers are dagger-pricks to a proud soul.

Gerda has triumphed, but she stands to-day where I once stood, in the eyes of the world, a wife, in her own eyes—what?—

And yet I'm wondering if, after she reads this letter, and I know her too well to think you can hide it from her, since I am sending it by special messenger at your dinner hour—after she reads what I have written about her and you, if she will not think she has paid too high a price for her empty honor.

Love, there can be none—you have no power to feel it and she has too little magnetism to inspire it—so it all resolves into a question of empty honor.

You remember the physician whom we consulted a year ago in Carlsbad? He said you were gradually shriveling up and that in a couple of years your bones would rattle like a dried kernel in a hollow shell. He spoke of more than your physical body, for he was one of the great physicians of the world. Are you shriveling, and does Gerda stand by with her eyes set too near together and watch?

And when you die, what will she gain? I think people will remember that I was your wife for ten years and so even the empty honor will no longer be hers.

And there will be no money, or little, and she cannot buy worldly tolerance with little money.

And if you live and the drugs will not let you produce, she will be even in a sorrier plight.

Frankly, my dear Felix, you have both overreached yourselves and I could not let another day pass without pointing out to you a few things you might have overlooked, although since you have been married a month you have probably discovered many things that each has tried to hide carefully from the other. Gerda's nails are long and they scratch and your tongue is sharp and it stings.

I think, after this, life will never be quite the same to either one of you.

As I finish this letter it is raining and the old house is always dismal on rainy days. Gerda is so thin that the cold affects her. Have you noticed that it makes her nose slightly red? And the cold drives you to drugs—at least it did and I doubt if you have changed—so I can picture the scene in the library, and I do not believe I am exaggerating it.

I could have written this letter a month ago; my wrongs burned fresher then, but I decided to wait. You might have torn the letter up unread a month ago; now you are curious to know how

much I suspected, what I really think of you both. Read, my dear Felix, read, my dear Gerda, I have written plainly so that you might read, and I cannot believe that the reading will be pleasant.

It would be foolish to wish you hap-

piness, foolish and hypocritical—I cannot believe you could be happy and I am not generous enough to wish it to you.

That you may see each other stripped of pretenses and hate each other, as I hate you both; this is my real wish.



GRATITUDE

By Jane Whitaker

I AM the girl who waits on the table. I ask you "Roast mutton, roast beef or beefsteak?" and I pass you the chutney sauce.

You have never looked at me; but last night and the night before you played pieces on the piano. One was like lightning when it flashes before the rain patters down, and the other was like a man who beats the woman he loves.

You have never looked at me, but to-night I put an extra baked potato on your plate. I am the girl who waits on the table.



I KNOW WHAT HELL IS

By John Hamilton

I KNOW what Hell is.

Once I found a long, black hair in my demi-tasse.
Once I had delirium tremens in the morning.
Once I went to a Sunday-School picnic.
Once a homely girl kissed me.

I know what Hell is.



WOMAN is the Stradivarius. Love is the bow. Man is the Philistine who longs for rag-time.



LESBIA'S EYES

By Wyndham Martyn

"I DON'T suppose one could very well find a wicked woman," Gadsden observed when his tutor had finished.

"Or a more beautiful one," the elder man added.

Kirkby, a fellow and tutor of one of the most magnificent foundations at Oxford and a famous authority on the more passionate poets of the Augustan age, had been talking about that most brilliant of Roman poets, Catullus.

"You really think she poisoned her husband?" Gadsden asked.

"Probably," Kirkby answered. "She had lovers by the score. Cicero tells us that, as well as Catullus, and there was no limit to her profligacy. She served her purpose, this Clodia, in that she lives as Lesbia in some of the most beautiful poems Catullus ever wrote."

Gadsden, the American undergraduate, was silent for a minute.

"Catullus says she had magnificent, burning eyes. Have you ever seen anyone with burning eyes, sir?"

Kirkby came back from the passionate times of the Augustan age and remembered he was a man of forty-five engaged in instructing one of his pupils in Latin literature. And however much he might speculate with his own kind in the common room, his was not the task of discussing *flagrantes oculos* with a lad of two and twenty, even though he were an American and more advanced than his fellow undergraduates in the knowledge of men and manners.

"I can't say that I have," Kirkby returned.

"The idea rather fascinates me,"

Gadsden said, and was glad when his lesson was finished.

Awaiting him in his rooms was the closest friend he had in Oxford, a tall, bored youth who could have made a name for himself as a scholar had he not been born rich and titled.

"Ha, ha, my belted earl," Gadsden said cheerfully, "tell me, have your own lack-lustre orbs ever gazed into flaming eyes?"

"You're thinking of Lesbia and poor Catullus, who died for love of her," the earl returned. "Kirkby's most eloquent on the subject. It seems almost improper in a man with so many children and such a respectable wife."

"But did you ever see flaming eyes?" Gadsden demanded.

Lord St. Minver lighted a cigarette and then strolled to the windows and looked out over the same deer park that had charmed Addison two hundred years before.

"Yes," he said, after a few moments of deliberation. "But, of course, they don't flame all the time. Surely you wouldn't expect that."

"When do they, then?" the American asked.

"When they mark a man down for destruction," the earl returned. "Yes, Gaddy, I've seen flaming eyes."

"Then how did you escape?"

"Her husband rescued me," Lord St. Minver told him. "At the moment I preferred destruction, but he was so big and strong that I practically had no say in the matter. From his armory of canes he selected the stoutest and most flexible and rescued me. To walk down the drive after that beating and pretend I was not hurt was the most

heroic thing I ever did. She looked out of a window."

"Tell me about it," Gadsden demanded.

"I'm not sure that it's a fit story," his friend answered. "I was in my last year at Eton, when one feels possessed of all human knowledge. I had been out with the beagles and sprained my ankle rather badly. I made my way to a nearby house and she gave me tea. I had tea there a number of times before her husband found out."

Gadsden glanced at the clock.

"It's only half-past twelve," he cried. "My new motor is tuned up and we can be in town for luncheon by two. My excuse will be a dental engagement. Minnie, be a sport and come, too."

"Of course," Lord St. Minver said plaintively when they were en route for London, "I've no idea why I'm dragged to town. I've already declined to accompany my mother to a concert in the Botanical Gardens and she will think it very strange of me to come now. You Americans do rush one so."

"I've come to find Lesbia, if you must know," Gadsden returned. "Kirkby seems to know her; you've met her husband, but she has passed me by."

"Why not hit a motor truck and find a more easy death?" the earl demanded. "Don't you know, dear Gaddy, that such a woman as Lesbia was is not for innocent undergraduates? Keats called her '*La belle dame sans merci*,' you may remember."

Later on in the day Lord St. Minver turned unaccountably ill tempered.

Gadsden found himself surrounded by a number of very pretty women in the Botanical Gardens, all listening to the band of the First Life Guards. It was an afternoon of late May, when the London season was at its height. Gadsden was enjoying the scene in an impersonal sort of way when his eyes chanced to rest on a woman, the most beautiful he had ever seen.

She had bronze-colored hair, and from her delicate white ears long jade ornaments hung. And her eyes were as the eyes of Lesbia of which Catullus

sung. Very beautifully gowned she was, and she sat on one of the green chairs listening to the splendid military band with a kind of idle indifference until she saw Gadsden's eager look. It was when she was aware of this that he saw her eyes flamed.

Lord St. Minver was looking about the throng for his mother when the American plucked at his arm.

"What is it?" he asked languidly.

"Lesbia," Gadsden cried; "Lesbia with green earrings and the eyes for which one would welcome destruction. Minnie, you know everybody; find out who she is and my car and all that I have is yours."

Lord St. Minver looked at the lady and his eyes narrowed.

"I do not know her," he said deliberately, "and, furthermore, this place and all the beastly chestnut trees and the noisy band bore me. We've had enough of it."

"Not on your life," the American retorted. "I am going to pass the rest of my days here. Surely, Minnie, you must know somebody here who knows her."

"I have told you I do not," the earl said, and strolled away.

Caring little for his defection, Gadsden sauntered to a vacant seat not far from the lady. He was young enough to stare at her steadily without feeling it was rude. Youth has its own way of worship. Presently the lady turned his way and, leaning a little forward, spoke.

"I wonder if you would be so very kind," she said, "as to ask the bandmaster to play that number again."

He bowed and made his way to the band. He had been long enough in England to know the value of a title.

"My lady," he said, drawing a bow at a venture, "would be glad if you would play that number again."

Then he took his way toward her and drew his seat to her side. He had never been of a timorous disposition.

"I believe Lord St. Minver knew you," he began, "but he wouldn't introduce me."

"Perhaps he thought I might not want to know you," she smiled. "I certainly do not want to know everyone who runs an errand for me. If you had not been at hand, I might have asked, let us say, the gardener-man weeding that bed of flowers."

Gadsden was a singularly good-looking youth, and he smiled at her in a manner which she thought charming. She began to be glad that she had chosen him instead of a gardener. She had specialized more or less in youth and its follies, and had been taken with the American directly her eyes had fallen on him.

"The gardener-man didn't come up from Oxford to talk to you," he said.

"He is better employed," she told him. "He is attending to his duties."

"So am I," he returned. "You are part of my studies."

She gazed at him through fringing lashes.

"You do not look to be a book-worm, Mr. —?"

"Gadsden of Magdalen," he retorted promptly.

She glanced at him appraisingly. He had the clear skin and eye of a man who spent his hours out of doors.

"I see no midnight oil in your looks," she remarked. "What, pray, do your studies consist of?"

"The lesser-known Latin poets."

"One understood that they were a little improper."

"Only in translations," he assured her. "Translations are great aids to prudery."

"I think I once met a Mr. Montgomery Gadsden," she said. "A banker."

"He will be known to fame as my father."

"Why did he send you to Oxford? There are universities in America."

"I began at Yale," he admitted. "The authorities there seemed to think I was not a good influence. Yale has what you call over here a 'nonconformist conscience.'"

"It's very nice of you to warn me," she smiled. "What was your peculiar form of wickedness?"

"Nothing worse than a rush of cigarette smoke to the brain. By the way, where shall we have tea?"

"I begin to see why they call yours a progressive nation," she said. "I am not at all sure that *we* have tea. After all, there are certain conventions we observe over here."

"But you know my father," he cried, "and he admired you enormously."

"That was kind of him," she retorted. "Of course, he told you my name?"

"He probably mixed it up," Gadsden said with an appearance of great frankness. "For a successful banker, my father is very bad at names."

A tiny coronet on her gold-headed parasol caught his eye.

"Let me see," he said reflecting.

"Wasn't it Lady—?"

"Lady Frankland," she added. "What a memory you have! How it must please your father."

"I get it from my mother," he declared. "I remember that tea at the Star and Garter is delightful. My car is at a garage nearby. I can get you back to town in plenty of time to dress for dinner, Lady Frankland. The rain has laid the dust and I am a careful driver."

She smiled a little. It had the quality of old wine and intoxicated him.

"I'm afraid I can't believe that of you, but I'll try you."

II

WHEN they were at Richmond taking tea on the terrace that overlooks the Thames valley, Gadsden understood why Catullus, who in his time had many loves, wrote verses to none so beautiful as those he penned to his *Lesbia*.

Lady Frankland was eight and twenty, and since her name and date of birth was in the peerage, never tried to pass for less. There were few more beautiful women in London, and so far she had escaped serious scandals, which was a triumph of good fortune rather than discretion. She admired youth and physical beauty in man, and they were happily combined in this auda-

cious young American; and an adventure in emotions was always to her liking. He had told her that he must return to Oxford that night, and it was not her intention that he should. Lord Frankland was conveniently fishing for brown trout among Welsh mountains and the spectre of domestic jealousy seemed unlikely to obtrude its head. His lordship was of that disappearing primeval type which supposes it should control the actions of its women in relation to other men.

"If you are good," Lady Frankland said as they threaded their way back to town, "you can lunch with me to-morrow."

"I'd love to," he said, regret in his voice, "but—"

She lifted her eyebrows.

"But your tutor will be angry with you? Perhaps he is right."

"It isn't that," Gadsden protested. "It's like this. I've slacked rather and my father wants me to get honors in 'greats,' and as the long vacation is at hand I'm working hard."

"Another time," she said irrelevantly, "when I want a message taken I shall ask just an ordinary gardener-man."

"What time do you lunch?" he demanded.

"At one," she told him.

"Are there many coming?"

She looked at him and smiled.

"I think you'd be more interesting by yourself. I wonder."

Gadsden banished Kirkby, college rules and regulations and examinations from his mind.

"Why not let me motor you down to Brighton and have luncheon there?" he suggested. "I can do it easily in an hour and a half. What time shall I call for you?"

"Make it eleven," she answered, "and in case your father, when he was saying all those nice things about me, did not remember my address, it's Curzon street—number twenty-eight."

III

THE luncheon at the Metropole in Brighton was followed by tea at East-

bourne, dinner at Folkestone and a delightful run back to London along white roads in the moonlight.

No ride that Gadsden had ever taken was comparable with the journey that soft summer night among the orchards and garden lands of Kent. The only thought to disquiet him was the necessity of getting back to his college as soon as he could. Oxford has her rules that must not lightly be broken, and already he had merited some punishment.

"There will never be a ride like this again," he whispered.

"There are other nights," she reminded him, "no further removed than to-morrow."

"To-morrow I shall be working hard to make up for this."

She drew away the soft arm which had been lying against his own. The perfume of her hair was now less vivid. He could see that the prospect was not a pleasing one to her and that she blamed him.

"Oxford grows on one," she said presently; "I've heard it all from my brothers and husband, of 'dreaming spires and gray colleges set in velvet lawns hidden among venerable trees, and beautiful fields all starred with cowslips where the quiet river winds its way to London and the sea.' Lord Frankland used to quote all that Matthew Arnold and Wilde ever wrote about it. I think I hate it, though."

"Hate it?" the boy at her side repeated.

"It's taking you away from me," she whispered, "and you have been saying that you love me."

"I do," he cried passionately; "you know I do."

She laughed lightly.

"And yet the cold stone and incommunicable charms of the Middle Ages appeal to you more than I do. What a dear, wise boy you are! And will you become a professor when you grow up?"

He shut off his motor and drew up beside the hedge. His face was very white and his eyes looked black as

sloes. He turned in his seat and faced her.

"Look here," he said, trying to speak steadily. "Do you want me to stay, or are you just playing with me?"

Perhaps there was an evening of madness and moonlight twenty centuries before, when Lesbia had cast upon her deathless poet such a look as Lady Frankland gave him. And perhaps Catullus was just as eager to cast away his prospects as was Robert Gadsden for a woman's eyes.

IV

It was almost midnight when Gadsden's great car stopped before the house in Curzon street. People do not retire early in London, even if restaurants turn out their patrons at unseemly hours.

"Come in and we'll have cosy talk over a whiskey and soda and cigarettes," she said, "and we'll make wonderful plans."

His second cigarette was barely lighted when Gadsden's peace of mind suffered a rude shock.

A butler bowed before her ladyship.

"His lordship has just arrived from Wales," he said, "and asked to know where you were. His lordship has been in the house about half an hour, my lady."

When the man had gone she leaned forward swiftly and kissed Gadsden.

"I'm afraid, dear lad," she said with an attempt at lightness, "that this is the end of it. Why he isn't still trout-fishing I don't understand."

Lord Frankland had been the heaviest man in the winning Oxford eight during the three years he had rowed for his university. He was one of those giants whose size does not preclude grace of carriage. And he spoke gently, almost effeminately, when one considered his great frame and the reputation he bore for feats of strength and courage.

His wife greeted him brightly.

"I suppose you had bad luck with the trout?" she hazarded. "I've just mo-

tored back from Folkestone with Mr. Gadsden. He's a member of your old college."

Lord Frankland bowed to the younger man without cordiality.

"I am always interested in seeing the latest victim to my lady's bow and spear."

"You have probably a large list of acquaintances," Gadsden returned politely.

"One cuts them from one's tablets of memory without much effort," the peer said meaningly.

"I am fortunate in having a more retentive memory," Gadsden returned. "I prefer to remember the people I like."

"But I never like my wife's youthful victims," the big man said. "I fear I have little patience with amorous boys. I have even been known to lose my temper and cane them. By the way, have you a chauffeur outside with your car?"

"No," said Gadsden, frowning. "Why?"

"Because the police here fine one for leaving a motor unguarded. I think in New York one is not the victim of such attentions. I should be very sorry to hear that a friend of Lady Frankland's had been fined for anything less than speeding."

Gadsden took his leave without enthusiasm. He was not able to get a word alone with Lady Frankland. There was something very watchful about her husband. It gave Gadsden the impression that there had been many such scenes.

"If you've nothing better to do, come in to tea to-morrow," she called, as he left.

Gadsden caught his lordship's cold, unfriendly eye as he glanced back.

"That's very charming of you," he said. "I shall be delighted."

V

WHEN he came to the side of his car there was a man sitting in it, smoking a cigarette. At first he thought it might

be a police officer with a summons, but it was, instead, the Earl of St. Minver. "This is a curious coincidence," he cried.

"Coincidence be damned," the peer retorted crossly. "I suppose you'll tell me it was a coincidence that I've just returned from Brighton, Eastbourne and Folkestone?"

"What were you doing there?" Gadsden demanded.

"Driving my mother's gigantic limousine through country lanes. A damnable machine with a wheelbase a quarter of a mile long. Wherever I went I left a trail of disaster."

"What did you go for?" his friend asked uneasily.

"For you, of course," St. Minver declared. "I don't happen to detest you like I do most men. If you were 'sent down' from Oxford I should have nobody to talk to."

"I don't think I shall go back to Oxford," Gadsden said deliberately. "I have an engagement to-morrow afternoon."

"With Lesbia?" the other queried.

"With Lady Frankland," Gadsden told him. "And what do you know about her?"

He remembered St. Minver's refusal to admit knowing her in the Botanical Gardens.

"She was my Lesbia, too," the other admitted. "Gaddy, I'm afraid she's a no fit friend for you or me."

The American thought of her glo-

rious beauty and the blood stirred in his veins. The classic calm of medieval buildings and antlered deer had never seemed less inviting.

"I don't know how you tracked us," he said after a pause, "and it was all very friendly of you, old man, but here's a case where I do as I please."

Lord St. Minver sighed.

"I hate to shatter your dreams. I had the same visions, but nothing can come of them. You don't know, as I do, that she's most fearfully in love with that hulking beast of a husband."

"That's impossible," Gadsden cried.

"I thought so, too," St. Minver said a little sadly. "I didn't know I was used to bring him back from deer stalking in the Highlands or some other sport that takes him away. She loves him in his jealous rages, that's the primeval part of her, because I think he beats her, and when she wants to get him back again she uses some young fool like me or you. I would ponder over that, my dear Gaddy, if I were you."

"Are you pulling my leg?" Gadsden asked presently.

"Gospel truth," the peer said simply. "Most people know it."

Gadsden looked at his watch.

"It's half-past twelve," he declared. "We can be in sight of Magdalen Tower by two o'clock, with luck."

"Luck is the right word," St. Minver murmured.



THE bride's first burst of tears is a shower of diamonds; her second is a deluge of rhinestones . . . her tenth is an autumn drizzle.



THE republic resounds with sinister qualifications. The next fowl to be discovered, perhaps, will be the hyphenated virgin.



A GENTLEMAN OF DISTINCTION

By Paul Hervey Fox

ALARIC BURTON-BONSETT looked every inch of it. As he modestly exchanged his second-class berth in the *Lawrania* for an equally unostentatious shelter in a Union Square hotel, there were many who gazed awestruck through the windows of his taxicab at that distinguished figure with the coldly aristocratic features.

He was tall and slim and his feet had high arches and were incredibly narrow. His drab hair, flattened and meticulously divided in the middle, crowned a red, bony face. A long mustache, in which every hair was as coarse and distinct as a cat's whisker, drooped languidly over each side of his upper lip. His eyebrows were raised in eternal interrogation and underneath them his chilly grey eyes stared impassively over the heads of the insufferable herd.

Having established himself in his dreary room, Alaric Burton-Bonsett examined the contents of his battered portmanteau with skeptical interest. Three white shirts and a smart, if cheap, dress-suit met his eye. He fumbled further and drew out a portable typewriter.

A few moments later he had written on the hotel stationery some twenty copies of the following:

My dear Sir:

This is an appeal to you in the name of fair charity. Mr. John Bousey, stricken suddenly by gout and other disagreeable complaints, is without funds and is unable to procure any by the employment of his natural faculties. Mr. John Bousey has been for many years an amiable and unselfish member of

society. His friends are circulating this letter with the request that you mail it to him, together with the sum of one dime, at the above address. They ask, further, that you make five copies of this letter and mail them to five of your friends.

Mr. John Bousey would thank you personally for your courtesy were he able to do so. We respectfully ask you not to break the chain!

Alaric Burton-Bonsett contemplated his work with a faint light of approval in his fishy, vague eyes. He then secured a telephone directory, and, selecting such names as seemed to him to possess a ring at once charitable and pecunious, addressed his twenty envelopes. He counted his change thoughtfully, and trusted that the owners of those names were untouched by the vice of procrastination.

When he had dispatched his mail he strolled downtown in the direction of the financial district. He was used to long walks and the distance in no way deterred him. He had a faint curiosity concerning the celebrated Wall Street section, and was bent thither as an idle tourist. He had affixed a huge, polished glass in his eye, and he was carrying a slim and shining stick. His rough tweed suit gave him an air of a man of means who scorns an obvious advertisement of that fact. Only the wealthy can afford to dress badly, and Burton-Bonsett wore his clothes with a spirit of distinction that was immense. No one less than a duke would have dared to apparel himself in so frankly careless a manner.

Before a big white building in lower Broadway, Burton-Bonsett took up a stand, and stared, very hard and very disdainful, at the jostling throng that passed before him. He was growing a trifle hungry, and rather fancied that a pot of tea and a bit of tart from one of the many inviting white-marble restaurants, where the chairs had such curiously thick arms, would set him up no end.

As he arrived at these reflections, a little mouse-like man shot through the revolving doors of the building and stumbled against him.

"Impudence!" ejaculated Burton-Bonsett under his breath.

"I beg your pardon," began the mouse-like man. "Didn't see you, you know. . . . Say, you're—you're an Englishman, ain't you?"

"Quite so," returned Burton-Bonsett crisply and coldly. "I am—ah!—engaged in viewing your quite extraordinary system of—ah!—architecture. My excellent friend, Sir Charles Cheyne Jarvis, was always highly amusing when he described—"

The mouse-like man opened his mouth a trifle. One could discern respect gathering in his eyes. "See here," he interrupted impulsively, "have you lunched? If not, I'd like to have you lunch with me. Always had a great respect for England. Great country, glorious country, splendid people. My name is William K. Harding. Maybe even *you* have heard that before! Hey?"

Mr. Harding laughed nervously at his little joke. At that instant he perceived that the other was regarding him with a marble expression of the eye in which horror and incredulity blended. After a long period in which Mr. Harding shook in anticipation of some verbal annihilation (for the "Terror of the Street" was no better than a tabby-cat in social intercourse), he was relieved to hear instead:

"Amazing, by Jove! . . . Brazen, and yet what a lark! Ah!—my good fellow, I should be glad to join in your repast. . . . Rather interesting. . . .

As for my own name, the ceremony of introduction, and all that, frankly I must inform you that I am here under an alias. Unpleasant complications with the pater, y'know. His lordship—er—ah, that is—I am staying here very simply as Alaric Burton-Bonsett. No display, you understand. Everything necessarily secret, quiet, all that."

Mr. Harding's face was oddly elated. "Delighted to know you, sir," he said with a beaming smile. "This is a pleasure, a great pleasure. Hullo! There's my car. This way, if you please. Thank you. Very kind, I'm sure. And how do you like America, my dear sir?"

Burton-Bonsett leaned back in the cushions and gazed indolently out of the window as if he had not heard. In the face of such futile questions he preferred to be deaf. He looked unutterably bored, and his gaunt, red face was a picture of weary misery. Mr. Harding only hoped that his guest would not leap from the car before he reached his club.

The blooded tourist had, however, no inclination for any such performance, and he suffered luncheon in the grave, high rooms of the Conservative Club with innate courtesy. If the food found small favor in his opinion, surely that was merely a proof of his own superiority! Mr. Harding felt himself impressed rather than indignant at his guest's brief comments on the solid English meal that had been ordered.

"Very bad whiskey, this! Gad, the colonies have no idea of distillation. Clever process it requires. . . . By Jove, what inferior beefsteak. At the Marquis of Pentonby's once I recall—eh, ah! . . . Won't do, by Jove! Must keep discreet. Bad form, very."

"How long are you staying in the country, Mr. Bonsett?" Harding inquired respectfully.

"Burton-Bonsett, if you please! Burton-Bonsett. . . . Ah! I really can't say. I wish to obtain a bit of first-hand information about your curious customs. I travel incognito for that among other reasons."

"Where have you put up?" continued Mr. Harding inquisitively. "At the Ritz, I suppose?"

Alaric Burton-Bonsett became suddenly deaf, and his gaze grew more abstract than ever. Mr. Harding repeated his question.

With a jerk the glass dropped from the distinguished traveler's eye. "Dashed impudence!" he murmured faintly. In a louder tone he drawled, "My good sir, I must keep my quarters private, as I have kept my name so. I've come over to be quiet and undisturbed and all that, y'know, and to avoid social distractions. In case someone got wind of my actual identity, I—ah!—that is—ah!"

Mr. Harding seemed to tremble with delight. "I'm sure I don't want to impose on your lordship's—on your good humour, but I wonder if you couldn't honour a little function my wife is giving this Thursday? I'm sure it would please your grace—er—please you. My wife, Mr. Burton-Bonsett, is a leader of society in New York, and I'm proud of her. You will have an opportunity of meeting the very best people, the most exclusive—"

Burton-Bonsett interrupted with a choppy, meaningless laugh. "Good! I should enjoy it, I'm sure. Quite amusing! . . . This is a deuced bad cigar of yours, I must say. No cigars like those in the old country, by Gad! You understand my frankness, of course. No offense—ah! And the service is filthy bad. Jove! No servants like English servants!"

Before he left, Mr. Burton-Bonsett had courteously accepted a visitors' card for the Conservative Club, of which Mr. Harding, it appeared, was one of the directors. And he had, under pressure, casually consented to be present at Mrs. Harding's function on the Thursday following.

II

THAT evening, after he had bought a couple of cheese sandwiches at a delicatessen, and a carton of beer at a

nearby bar, Burton-Bonsett ate in the privacy of his room; then assumed dress and made his way uptown to the theatrical district. He purchased a cheap seat at a theater in which he observed a large crowd entering. Having whiled away a space in an adjacent café over more beer, he returned to find the performance had begun. An usher halted him at the center-aisle.

"Ah!—the right-hand lower box, I believe," announced Burton-Bonsett easily, and made no signs of proffering a ticket.

The usher glanced at that distinguished face, at that figure of fashionable elegance, and politely led the way to the box designated. A party of three women and two men were there manifest, and Mr. Burton-Bonsett calmly drew up a vacant chair. One of the men—a thin, elderly fellow—turned with a quick irritability.

"Ah!—my good fellow!" murmured Burton-Bonsett gently, "you had better move your chair. It's a bit in—ah!—my way."

After a moment's gaping amazement, in which Burton-Bonsett's impassive features were inscrutable and unmoved, the chair was awkwardly moved further to one side.

At the end of the first act, which the traveller rewarded with a tired smile, he found that the man to whom he had spoken was confronting him, as indeed were the others of the party, with a look of chilly interrogation.

"Perhaps, sir," remarked the thin man, "you are not aware that this entire box was reserved by my party. You are therefore—"

"Gad! Not really?" ejaculated Burton-Bonsett with astonishment. "Deuced awkward! Fool of a manager. Directed me here, y'know. Sorry. My excellent friend, Sir Charles Cheyne Jarvis, was highly amusing when he described—"

"Eric," interrupted the eldest of the three women, an impressive matron in whom angularity and plumpness fought for mastery in the diamond-hung temple of her body, "Eric, will you kindly ask

the gentleman not to disturb himself, and say that we shall be glad to have him remain in our party."

Eric asked and said.

"Eric," continued his spouse, "will you please make the introductions?"

"My name, sir," began Eric with pompous pride, "is Mr. Eric Graham. My wife, Mrs. Eric Graham. Our daughter, Miss Gwendolyn Graham. And Mr. and Mrs. N. de Forrest Jones."

"Ah!—what a lark!" murmured Burton-Bonsett in a whisper so faint that it was just barely audible. In a louder tone he added: "As for my own name, frankly I must offer you an alias. Awkward complications with his lordship, y'know. Ah!—that is—I'm staying here very simply as Alaric Burton-Bonsett. Incognito and all that, y'know. Wouldn't do to—ah!—of course!"

The curtain went up for the second act, and as Burton-Bonsett seemed suddenly afflicted with deafness, speech was not resumed until the next intermission. Then the pompous Eric, having concluded a whispered consultation with his wife, turned and said:

"We consider the usher's mistake a fortunate one. Mr. Bonsett, we should like to have you take supper with us after the play."

The distinguished traveller regarded the speaker with a marble expression of the eye in which horror and incredulity blended. . . .

"Burton-Bonsett," he corrected coldly after a time. Then, "Rather a lark! The Earl of Rockford always—ah!—my dear sir, it would give me—ah!—pleasure."

He seemed, however, to find little pleasure in the sumptuous restaurant in which he later found himself.

"Very inferior wine, this! Gad, the colonies have no palate. . . . This lobster is capable of a dashed deal of improvement. At the Marquis of Pentonby's once I recall—eh, ah! . . . Won't do, by Jove! Must keep discreet. Bad form, very."

Mrs. Eric Graham surveyed with

eyes in which admiration waxed superlative. Her daughter chattered and bubbled with the most delightful ingenuousness. Mr. Graham kept a watchful eye on that director of his life's scenario, his wife. Mr. and Mrs. N. de Forrest Jones seemed to keep up a well-bred, eternal quarrel in a whining undertone.

After a little pause Mrs. Graham asked: "I wonder if you couldn't join us at a little private affair this Thursday, Mr. Burton-Bonsett? We would be honoured by—"

"Sorry," murmured the guest. "Am promised for dinner at Mrs. William Harding's for that evening."

Mrs. Graham's eyes glittered like her diamonds. "Indeed? I received cards myself. Luckily I haven't answered yet. We shall see you there, and later, perhaps, have you all to ourselves, on some special occasion."

"Harding!" broke in Mr. de Forrest Jones with sudden respect. "Are you a friend of his?"

"Friend?" questioned Burton-Bonsett with a quietly reproving smile. "My dear sir! . . . He is an acquaintance of mine. A friend—ah!—dashed amusing, by Jove!"

III

THE following Thursday morning Mr. Burton-Bonsett staggered into a bank with a heavy portmanteau in his hand and requested bills in exchange for many pounds of silver dimes. The appeal on behalf of the unfortunate Mr. John Bousey had not been ineffectual. The mail which arrived for that gentleman at the Union Square Hotel seemed to multiply by a system of cube-root. Whole mail-bags crammed with ten-cent pieces were delivered there every few hours.

When he had concluded his financial transaction, Burton-Bonsett sauntered forth and purchased a silk hat with an English label, a fur-trimmed coat of pretentious design, and similar sundries. And that evening he presented himself, a beautifully immaculate and

imposing figure, at Mrs. William Harding's handsome house on the Avenue.

No expense had been spared on this magnificent occasion. Burton-Bonsett threaded a crowd of splendidly gowned women and their well-groomed escorts, and, with a proper air of ceremonial, was introduced to Mrs. Harding by her mouse-like husband. His friends, the Grahams, and later the languid N. de Forrest Jones, welcomed him enthusiastically. In the huge dining-hall Burton-Bonsett was assigned a seat in proximity to his hostess. On his other side was a tremendous dowager, superbly set-up, like a carven throne. With a bored, slightly savage air, he contemplated the banked flowers, the array of sparkling glass, and the innumerable silver weapons with which Mrs. Harding's meal was to be affronted.

He said very little for the most part of that long and elaborate dinner, but he looked a great deal. Several times in some random discussion he would utter an amused or scathing word: "My dear fellow, you call such wretched spectacles races? Ah!—laughable, by Jove! Races! . . . Really good!"

On these occasions when he spoke, there seemed to fall something like a general silence, and the company appeared to listen attentively. From random fragments he gathered that he was in the presence of the finest flower of American aristocracy, and with his glass in his eye gave everyone in view a calm and analytical scrutiny.

Dinner was nearly concluded, and the company was preparing to enter the drawing-room, where a number of artists from the Metropolitan Opera House had kindly consented to entertain, and Madame Yoshari San was to introduce a sensational dance from Japan. Mr. Harding, taking advantage of a lull in the talk, drew the attention of the company with:

"And what, my dear Mr. Burton-Bonsett, are your impressions of New York and its people?"

The patrician traveller looked up with the air of an orator. "Ah!—

dashed amusing . . . really . . . why not?" he murmured. Then, "Since you ask me, my dear fellow, I may say that I have been greatly diverted by what I may call your—ah!—provincial mannerisms. My good friend, Sir Charles Cheyne Jarvis—eh, ah! . . . Won't do, by Jove! However, I may say that I find your social life very interesting—if you take my meaning. I have only to add that—eh, . . . ah! God save his Majesty, the King, and all that, y'know. Of course!"

And fixing his glass more tightly than ever, Burton-Bonsett turned a malevolent glare on the opposite wall.

In the renewed hum of conversation faint whispers reached his ears:

"What poise! What superiority!" . . . "Isn't it a pity that our men never quite obtain that air?" . . . "Harding told me that he is a member of the Royal Family, no less. . . ." "No!" . . . "Heir to a dukedom, travelling here incognito, Mrs. Trawler. I know the hereditary face. They all have that characteristic jaw. Begged me, when I came in, not to reveal his name. Honour bound."

The distinguished traveller was an amazing success. . . .

IV

It was nearly a week later that Alaric Burton-Bonsett sat at one of the neat writing-desks of the Conservative Club, and thoughtfully inscribed the following letter:

My dear Jane:

America is a land of wealth. By means of a shrewd speculation, I have secured a considerable sum of money. The venture brings me in a very solid revenue in small change, and were it not for the difficulty of handling this, I should be very well satisfied. I shall join you at the end of next month, and possibly I can provide for the forwarding of a very pleasant income which shows no sign of abating. As it is, I have managed to amass

already a snug little fortune.

Of the social side of the country I regret I cannot speak so favorably. I have been "taken up"—as the phrase is—by the most exclusive set of these American foreigners. I find, however, that they are very ill-bred. A vulgar lot. I have not discovered thus far what one would call a gentleman among them. Pushing, and all that, as you may imagine. And not one has "manner," a thing which I—if I may say so—possess to a marked degree. I had planned to stay longer, as you know, but I believe it to be lowering to associate with these unspeakable bounders. As for the women, they only serve to enhance my estimation for you.

I think you had better give your month's notice to Lady Towerminster directly. I should prefer that my wife came to me as a woman of leisure and not as a lady's maid.

I may mention here that I have found it advisable to assume an alias in these colonies of his Majesty. Mail will reach me at this club if directed to Alaric Burton-Bonsett, Esq. (It would not be bad were you to write me upon her

ladyship's note-paper with the crest.) And now, my dear Jane, allow me to sign myself—

At this point the writer was interrupted by one of the club servants.

"Beg your pardon, sir, but there's a telephone call for you. A lady, I think."

The noble tourist frowned. He remembered that Gwendolyn Graham, whom, through her mother's wily maneuvers, he had seen far too often in the previous week, had declared her intention of 'phoning him this afternoon upon some trivial matter.

"Ah!" he said. "Dashed annoying, by Gad! . . . Tell her to—ah!—tell her to go to the devil."

"Certainly, sir," answered the attendant.

Mr. Alaric Burton-Bonsett languidly took up his pen and concluded his note:

And so, my dear Jane, allow me to sign myself—

*Yours affectionately,
John Bousey.*

Through the club windows passers-by gazed upon that distinguished figure and those coldly aristocratic features with a mixture of awe and envy. . . .



APOLOGY

By Walter E. Powers

THE dry land drinks the rain . . . the ocean drinks the water of a thousand rivers . . . the sun drinks up the water from the ocean . . . the stars and moon drink their light of the sun. . . . All nature drinks . . . the whole world is drunk. . . . The whole world is happy. . . . So am I.



A WOMAN in love is never satisfied until she is disappointed.



THE CANDLES OF ROMANCE

By Waldo Frank

I

GODFREY CARBER did not go directly home when school was over. He went for a walk. His wife, Dora, seldom saw him before supper. There were exceptions to this, as, for instance, when his neuralgia troubled him. But his wife did not appear to welcome these exceptions. They were not particularly pleasant. In fact, she seemed anxious to be warned against them.

"Are you coming back early this afternoon?" she would ask if it was raining or a twinge marked its reflex on his face.

And if he answered "No," she seemed relieved.

They lived not far from the school where Carber taught. Their flat was up four flights. A visitor pressed a button under a brass plate at the entrance. He stumbled through a dark hall and at its end felt a gaping which instinct taught him was the bottom of the stair. At least, a visitor would have had to do all this if there had been one. There seldom was. The Carbers lived alone. They had no children. They had no friends among his colleagues. Relatives existed on her side, but New York is a severing place where there is no will to counteract it.

Thirty years before, with his college diploma in his bag, Godfrey Carber had come down to the Metropolis from New England. He had been in business for eight years. He had held positions of no importance, but he had held them creditably. Yet, he had failed. This had seemed to him not at all what he wanted. He had become a teacher.

Here, also, he did not rise. Here, also, he performed his duties decently. Here, also, he did not have what he wanted. In the activities of life, Godfrey Carber had never had what he wanted. In the intimate world of his ideas and of his dreams, he had always managed to find what he wanted. This circumstance had made him rather indifferent to the status of his actual life. The fact of his success within himself explained much of how he had fared otherwise.

It was remarkable how little thirty years had changed him—even in the external things. He had come down from Maine a literally young man with an oldish way. At fifty, he was a literally oldish man with a young way. Always there had been an air about him as of a shell with Youth imprisoned in it. One felt the youth beneath his consciousness, as if it menaced to burst forth. It had never burst forth, however. So that one felt it, when he was fifty, in quite the same relation to himself as when he had been twenty.

Shortly after he became a teacher he had married. For a brief space of time this had seemed to change him. His spirit had grown older; his youth sank farther from the surface. But he had righted himself, after a year or two. And since then nothing material had happened beyond the passing of time.

At breakfast, Carber's humor was at its best. He enjoyed sleep. He once told his class that he could not recall having ever had an unpleasant dream.

"Live right, and you'll dream happily," he explained in a modest way. For he was not sententious.

When Dora brought in the coffee there he was seated, at the table—

a frail, short body of a man with features that were peaked like a bird's and with a crest of greying silken hair rolling above his forehead.

"Good morning!" It was invariably the aroma of the coffee that thawed his voice for the first time. His little, clear, blue eyes sparkled with zest. He was hungry. A long night of unbridled dreaming lay behind him. A not too obtrusive day was interposed ere the unpleasant hours that led to bedtime.

As Dora dealt out his portion, Carber placed his hands on the table and twitched his fingers against his palms. They were small hands—almost ungnarled—the hands of one who did few unpleasant things.

Then Dora sat down beside him. She was a capacious, ample woman, flesh-bound and taller than her husband. Even though her hair was a dull mass of brown, the bit of gleam it had was made the most of by contrast with the pallor of her face. It would have seemed, in the moist weight of her features, the grey crimp under her grey eyes, the crystallized pucker of her lips, that Dora could not be well. But Dora never complained. Carber had not had a doctor's bill to pay for her in a dozen years. And so appearances must have been deceptive.

They spoke little.

"It's a grand day for being out," she observed, looking over her shoulder where a shred of sun fell on the brick of the court.

Carber looked up as if he had been interrupted.

"Why don't you go out, then?" he snapped.

"Oh, you know me. I love lazing."

At this Carber smiled. Her remark had evidently pleased him. That was all.

Beside, Dora had little to say. In fifteen minutes her husband would be gone—until six. And she was not the sort of woman who could say much—or walk far—in fifteen minutes. The soft, almost tremorous texture of her eyes disclosed her inarticulation, even as

the heavy pound of her foot upon the floor as she brought in the breakfast evinced the sign of a sedentary habit. It was, moreover, plain that two pairs of eyes so different as theirs could not look well into each other. Carber's were sharp, rigid, brilliant—the eyes of a man who could express. The eyes of his wife seemed to be painfully endeavoring to speak, where her tongue had failed. Their hands, also, were in poignant contrast. For hers were big and knotted and large of joint. Yet, here at least, appearance must also have been deceptive; for Dora made it plain to her husband—had been making it plain for twenty years—that she did absolutely nothing.

When Carber returned, his wife was sure to be seated in her rocking-chair, with a morning paper in her lap and an air of ease so thick about her that it must have needed all of the intervening hours of Carber's absence to compound it.

At once she jumped up and trudged into the kitchen. Carber changed his coat and shoes for those that he found ready for him on a chair. The while he hummed a tune which began at once when Dora left the room and ceased the moment of her return. Before this, however, he would take his place at the table, which was always set when he came back. He would sit there. He would twitch his fingers against his palms. He would throw his head back and look at the ceiling or let it drop and gaze at the white cloth. Or still more often, he would simply stare with his eyes level and their focus palpably blurred beyond the observance of any especial object. And so he would remain, humming until the food was on the table and his wife beside him. They would eat—quickly, as a couple walk who are more intent on their destination than on each other.

At this meal, Carber's humor was not so blithe as it had been at breakfast. Indeed, the best that could be hoped for was that he be silent. And for the most part he was. He never talked about his work at school. He never

talked about himself. He never asked about his wife. This narrowed their field of conversation. On one occasion, when his salary had been raised, Dora had not known it until he had given her the check. But when he did speak at supper, he was prone to surliness. If Dora recounted an anecdote from the morning paper, he was sure to growl when he might have laughed. The moment that his wife, gathering up the dishes, carried them back into the kitchen, Carber began once more to hum. And always it was the same tune that he had hummed before. The tune varied with the season, never within the day.

Her work done, however lingered over, there was Dora once more ensconced in her chair. The evening began. Often Carber was too weary for another walk before retiring. And then they would sit together for several hours. Carber had his home-work to hedge him in. Dora had nothing to busy her. But since she was so very silent and so very calm, it appeared that this did not bother Dora. Of course, on occasion, there was no class-work to correct—or there were rainy Saturdays, or neuralgic Sundays. They would then sit together, hour by hour, exchanging words which might in more amiable intercourse have been the mere heralds of conversation—words that were isolated, thwarted, upon subjects that Dora usually introduced and her husband closed with some mismated phrase.

Finally, they retired. Carber was always in bed first. And by the time Dora had opened the window and put out the light, Carber was once more at home with his dreams.

This was the couple, as the observer lacking in insight would have caught them. So he would have limned them and been satisfied. An arid pair, shredding their life to tatters as it came in to them. A pair too set in the ways of the desert to be much athirst for what they lacked. A pair with no tongue, no ear, no heart, one for another, and barely enough eye to keep them

from collision. But the observer would have been altogether wrong.

II

WHEN Godfrey Carber married her, his wife was a fresh, plump girl, no longer young, but well-preserved by the attentive spirit of youth which she had within her. Even then the outlines of her face and body had been vague—suggestions rather than clear confines of the prettiness which he had found in her. But it was the sort of prettiness which lay in atmosphere rather than in feature. Her buxomness was already on the verge of being stoutness; her soft quality that charmed him was a bare escape from a less kindly term. Her spirit was the essential to her preservation. It was plain that if this should ever fail, her physical traits would at once lapse altogether into what was their tendency and must be their issue. The outlines of her face would fade; the gentle rondures of her form would overflow.

But during the first year of marriage nothing untoward came about. Carber, it was true, was serious and none too buoyant, as if this too sweet reality were weighing on him. But Dora needed no stimulus from without—provided always that her husband's voice was kindly and his presence amicable. And then a boy was born. And then the infant died. The change was wrought. Without years, there was Dora old. Without a child, there she was, matronly.

Carber had his vision of the earlier Dora so clearly in his heart that it was long before his mind caught the discrepancy. He would bound home, with his elastic step, as soon as school was over, full of the picture of the wife he loved; and full of it to the degree that he felt no lessening of his vision when he crossed the threshold and had the reality before him. Visions and day-dreams were the currency of Carber's life. It would have been strange, indeed, now that the love of woman filled it, had she not also been fitted and merged into the process.

One day it had been snowing hard. Prior to returning home Carber had thought it necessary to visit the sick mother of a pupil in a distant hospital. Traffic was bound up. His return delayed him several hours. He abandoned the cars and took to his feet across the entrenched snows. And as he ran, dodging the tortured horses, flying over drifts, disdaining puddles of ice, his vision of the loved one who awaited him and did not understand his tardiness in coming, grew strong with the very effort of the storm's resistance. The energy that he required to surmount these obstacles threw back their reflex into his imagination and made it glow like a draughted flame. At last, hot and weary, he arrived. His wife opened the door for him. And with the heightened contrast of his image, he saw her as she really was.

She had merely found him listless upon that evening. She was sure that the storm, and perhaps a cold, caused his aloofness. She had nursed him the more tenderly, removing his wet clothes, brewing him a hearty drink and at length placing him in bed. And Carber had acquiesced, absently, moodily, passive in body—while his mind swirled about trying to face and overwhelm this new bitter reality of his wife. She had had no idea of what had taken place. She loved her husband. She was unconscious—even if she had grown old and matronly—that these were not traits he had all along accepted. The traits were not new. He had loved her, ere this, with them. What reason to guess that there would come a change?

But the change came—gradually. And there was still a pause of vacillating, of ebb and flow, before Carber settled into the final phase of his relations with her.

Two things were certain at the outset: that the Dora of his mind was the Dora whom he loved, and that the real Dora was not at all this one. Her hold on life was nonetheless inevitable; she occupied space; she called herself his wife; she ate and talked and slept

with him. Her field was reality. This was a grim, inexorable fact. How could he escape her, save by retiring from her field?

The process started, of course, away from home. He found that despite his discovery, the vision of the loved Dora could still bring solace and delight. So, of course, he continued to entertain that vision. As the reality grew more unpleasant, relief from it grew more desirable. He came to nurse his vision, to strengthen it, to prolong the spaces when he could be with it. At length, he came to dwell with it altogether.

But as yet it was not so strong that he could face reality with it and not see it disappear. Home was the stronghold of the real Dora. The domain of the other could be infinitely widened—but it must stop at the threshold of where he lived.

Godfrey Carber ceased the practice of rushing home as soon as school was closed. His habit, which never faltered, of taking walks began. But, of course, he did not take these walks alone. The dreamed Dora went with him. The mystical period of his married life set in.

Since she was nowhere, and of no particular dimension, he could make of her what he desired. And Carber had many desires in which to clothe her. He was still young in years. The wings of fancy were still strong enough on him to carry him to altitudes where no fact dragged him. The dreamed Dora of this phase was a colored, unhampered replica of all in him which had been inarticulate in life. It was not long before her resemblance to the woman whom he had actually wed began to fade and fall away. After all, any love is a deliberated compromise of man, an act forced by the pragmatic upon the visionary side of him. Carber was no exception. But now the compromise had failed. And the two sides of him were split. There was no longer any need of the real Dora beyond her active missions in their actual home. So, in his mind, the real Dora disappeared. The wife of his fancies had

even differently colored hair, and another lineage, and a totally strange view of life. Only her name remained—like the name of an old god or an old custom, transfigured to the use of a new world.

Since the real Dora, with her mundane attributes, was still so powerful, it was not necessary for the other to have such attributes at all. Carber's life with her was exclusively devoted to the sweeter, more essential things (as he conceived them);—the sort that clutter story-books where heroes do naught but fight and ladies are perpetually loving and yearning and perhaps—as a gross detail—weaving a tapestry. When he left his flat in the morning, there she was in the air of the street, with her soft, shapely arms outstretched to fling about him, The embrace endured until school's crass duties threw her off. But with his walks, she returned, so that they were *their* walks. And now his embrace was likely to be unbroken save by such interludes as when she talked to him or he drew off a little in order better to behold or to recite her charms. At six—at the moulded brass plate and the dingy stair—all of it went. The real Dora, dominant and complete, brought him his supper, as she had his breakfast.

Carber had his practical qualities, although they were subsidiary and submerged. And these longed for amalgamation with the Dream. A purely ethereal Beloved, who brought him no real food, who never soothed his head when his head really ached, who never came beside him on his couch when he was really tired, was after all not a complete Beloved. But there was the indomitable other Dora. Would he ever be strong enough to vanquish her? In the meantime, he could at least resent her. His state was like that of a divided chamber—one part flooded with warmth and light, the other frozen and dark, yet quite as actual a portion of his consciousness. Should the barrier break down, of course the light and the warmth must spread. Yet, always, there was the barrier. It could not be

dreamed away. And Carber's one efficiency, one way of acting, was through dreaming. No other course even suggested itself to him.

Meantime, Dora had learned that she was not well. Her brief motherhood had shaken her. She forgot her child. She loved her husband well enough to release all of her emotion before too long from that pathetic memory and to return it to the living. But the shattering caused to her body by the misfortune long outlived that memory. And at last a real malady fixed on her. She said nothing of her sometimes almost unbearable pains to Carber. Although she could not follow him to the limits where his nature swept him, Dora knew much about that nature. It was plain to her that it would do no good to make talk—to endeavor to make a tie—of her suffering.

She saw him clearly enough. He was a weak, lovable child to her—one who was all swept up by the emotional lilt of his spirit, one who could not concrete this spirit to grapple life with, and who, besides, preferred the ecstasy of being clasped himself and of being drawn beyond. She understood the ingredients of what must be his dreaming, since she felt his character. And she had not failed long to feel her failure to comply with them.

But because of this, Dora did not give up the effort. She would have had to give up caring for him, first. What he wanted of a wife—this was plain to her—was an ornament and a nurse. A wife who was a hard-working comrade, he would have sneered at. A wife who had aches and troubles of her own would have dismayed him. Dora could not go far as a decoration. But she could at least carry out the negative part of the picture. She could present a semblance of doing nothing. Also, she could hide her own troubles and take care of his. By this means the little hold she still had on him could be prolonged.

But the pains grew more frequent and more bitter. And her strength ebbed. Dora was forced to see a doc-

tor. He told her worse than she had dreamed.

"We can try an experiment," he said. "Operations sometimes help. But I'm doubtful. This is not new. Have you had the pains long?"

"Five years," she answered.

The physician eyed her with wonder. "I'll consult with your husband," he said in a dry tone.

Dora's answer was a cry. "No! Not that!"

"I do not have to explain to you"; she hurried on; "what I say is enough. Mr. Carber must know nothing of all this. That is all."

"And the operation—?"

"It's useless," replied Dora with the same bravado. And then, "How much do I owe you, Doctor?"

She went to him several times. And each time she had to pay him. This was the way in which she came to give private lessons in the neighborhood, in English. The lessons thrived, even if she did not. She found first one Russian, then one Bohemian—and from them a widening stream who welcomed her cleverness at teaching.

The Doctor soon confessed that there was nothing more to do. So that expense was saved. But Dora kept on giving lessons. The growing fund of what she earned might one day be helpful to her husband, since it was plain that she must die and that he would be alone. Besides, the occupation eased her from her thoughts, furnished an escape from her pains. Nor did it harm, since he would never guess, finding her as ever in her rocker, lazily reading the morning news, on his return at six.

One consequence of it, however, Dora failed to gauge. With her growing weakness and the increased further effort which she had to give to preparing her husband's food and cleaning the flat and persevering in her comedy of ease and health, her reality also seemed to ebb. The dreamed Dora was not remiss in feeling the deleted pressure of resistance to her advance. And so, it came about that at length she was able

to enter within the threshold and to oust the real Dora in her own home and her own offices.

III

THE final phase of Carber's dream set in. It was no longer banished to mystic and ethereal activities, where he had to hunt and nourish it during long walks and sleeps. It became domestic. It entered in with him. It sat beside him as he ate. It talked with him, of the long evenings. It went to bed with him. And there was the real Dora, tottering, crucified, smiling—working by day and aping leisure when her husband was there to see.

She did not feel that she had altogether lost. Her senses, blunted with much pain, were no longer sharp enough. Always, she knew that what her husband wanted, was a wife that smiled and did nothing and was beautiful. She knew the hopelessness of this last quality. She did not flinch of effort in the others. And if Carber failed to see agony behind her smile, the hypocrisy behind her show of laziness, she thought the cause her own proficiency in acting, rather than his complete absorption elsewhere.

A goodly, serene life it had become for Godfrey Carber. And Dora felt this—although his words for her were few, and disagreeable and miserly when they came. And feeling this was the fruit of Dora's tree. So long as she was sure of it, she deemed her Comedy successful. The fearful length of his aloofness she had no way of measuring. He was indifferent, and cold, and absent,—that was plain enough. But he was happy! And that could mean only that her presence and her service were still welcome, however little he was minded to acknowledge them. Carber must still need her caring for him; must still relish in some abstruse way the role she played of an easeful and contented wife. And after all, what more could she demand? Some day, she would be gone. She would leave behind a little mysterious fortune which

he would accept in his bland blind way, asking no questions; and also she would leave behind a memory that he could fashion to his heart's desire. It was a good world, after all.

What Carber saw, he equally misunderstood. The triumph of his dreamed companion in rounding out her life to the complete dimensions, he ascribed entirely to his own natural evolution and not at all to any real change in Dora. She was diminished, because he now paid no heed to her; because he was the more engrossed within himself. That explanation satisfied. He had no will, and no respite from his dream, to seek another.

At this resolution of his life, Carber was over forty. He was so rhythmically one with his imagining that he lacked even the perspective to rejoice in it. It was himself. He and his dream dwelt together, since he and his dream were of one stuff. It must have been external, had he been conscious enough of it even to be glad about it. He could have been glad about a real wife; he had, indeed, been sorry about one. But now the comrade he had textured from his own desires was merely a design within him. She was too naturally his portion, for him to do other than accept her tacitly. And the real Dora had become an alien portion too far from his attention even to be regretted or found fault with. If she talked to him, yes—or ventured some opinion from her outer world—such false steps would call for a frown or a warning. And since Dora learned the result of such behavior she was wise enough and loving not to misstep too often. Still and unobtrusively she went about her work—caring for him, providing for him. And no more perfect atmosphere could have been found for Carber in which to let loose his Dream, ascribe to it the virtues of his comfort and of his ease, and forget the rest. One ignores an atmosphere. Its benefits one ascribes gladly to an ideal—be it a true god or a true Dream. In this instance Carber's visioned wife was the recipient of the praise and worship. The

real Dora made his bed, and the dreamed Dora entered it; the real Dora prepared his meals and the dreamed Dora shared them; the real Dora upheld his living, and the dreamed Dora occupied it. To the world he was a surly, unthinking husband. In his own world he was a perpetual courtier, a constant lover, an ideal of devotion.

So life flowed on, unruffled. Carber's Dream and his wife's malady grew apace, swelling and shrinking their lives. Nor was there a rift in the long rhythm until at last the sick woman grew too sick to play her part.

For more than ten years she had been hiding her disease; for more than ten years she had been earning and saving against the time when she must leave her husband. And for more than ten years Carber's interloper had lived beside her, using her hands and her strength as a beast drinks blood.

And now Dora lay in bed, unable to move. But even then the rhythm of Carber's life was little more than ruffled. He grew aware in some dim precinct of his consciousness that his breakfast was not cooked for him, nor his clothes laid out. Reflective at last to this knowledge, as is a muscle to a stimulus, he called in a doctor.

He sat in his chair, he with his Dream—a frail, slight man with hands that twitched and a brow that was unusually heavy beneath its cloud of gray silk hair. He was disturbed. He was not living his life, dreaming his Dream, as he had done so long. What was intruding on him?

The doctor stood across the table and spoke insistently. At last he heard.

"You must be brave, Mr. Carber. You, of course, have been expecting this for years. Well—it has come."

Carber looked up and shook his head.

"Do you mean to say," the man went on, "do you mean to say—you didn't know?"

Carber shook his head, once more.

"Why!" cried the amazed physician, "Hasn't your wife had a doctor—before me? Am I the first? It isn't

possible, I tell you! This is fifteen years old!"

Carber stopped shaking his head, now that the Doctor was shaking his. He saw him pass out into the hall.

He sat there, a minute, at the old table, before the untouched food that he had rummaged in the cupboard. For the first time in an eternity, he was alone.

He arose and went into the bed-room.

His wife lay gaunt and heavy upon her pillows. A candle's light danced on her ashen face. Her eyes were shut. Her breath broke through her blue lips, like an incessant sea of moaning. One hand, heavy and knotted, jerked passively upon the coverlet.

Carber could not help thinking of the movement of a fish, dry upon earth, at its last gasp.

He went to her side, and he knelt down; and he placed his lips upon her hand. And her hand was still. Everything was still, save the play of the candle and the stertorous moan of her breath.

"Dora," he said, "—my wife—" a new name for her.

But her one response was the quiet of her hand, as if to move it, even in that moment when any motion was an ecstasy, had been to disturb the tear-drenched face that pressed against it.

The two Doras died, before the low light had ceased its dancing.



A RAINY DAY

By Carl Holt

SHE was dead. And she had killed herself.
The coroner said so.

When he looked for a reason for the act, that was a different matter. Her relatives said she was in ill health, but when her friends got together they nodded their heads and whispered darkly about the evils of a large city and the wickedness of men. Neither of these was right.

There was no one who could give the answer—and no thing. No thing except her pillow, her pillow which she had pounded with clenched fists and wetted with her tears. Her friends would have told you that she had killed herself because she had fallen. But her pillow, her pillow which could not speak, would have told you that she died because there was no one to tempt her.



YELLOW LEAVES

By Margaret Lewis

THIS makes of my anguish an idle thing,
And a trifle of my grief:
To watch the flight, among falling leaves,
Of a falling leaf.



"A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE"

By Helene E. Fraenkel

I

EDSON had aged twenty years in three. As we breakfasted at the Manhattan he told me he was living in Westchester, alone. The word "alone" laid hold of my interest.

I had given up my unofficial connection with the embassy in Turkey, to return home and see what the Mexicans were really trying to do. As I passed the Grand Central at eight o'clock that June morning, Edson, sagging in his walk, smoking a heavy Havana cigar and with lines I did not remember in his clean-shaven face, had come through one of the open entrances into the street.

It was not until he had learned that I was in New York for three days at most, and that my stay in Mexico would probably be a protracted one, that he became suddenly, burstingly, as confidential as in our days at the University. Yet I am sure he trusted me at that moment as always and that this childlike reliance for the safety of his pitiful story on the circumstance of my being out of reach of his friends and acquaintances showed me that Edson, the unsuspicious, had been somehow shaken at his roots. Later, when I discovered how many were already in the secret, I was the more convinced.

The news that his wife was on the stage, traveling West with a third-rate company astounded me.

"Truth," he said, and his smile, poor chap, seemed bitter. A little later I concluded that it was not bitter. Hurt, amazed, uncomprehending,

hopeless it was. But, thank heaven, not bitter.

"Do you remember the day we took you to lunch, Anita and I?" he said. "The first time you saw her and we told you we were going to be married that afternoon and to sail for Liverpool the next day."

"It was also the last time I saw her," I said. "I left for Constantinople while you were on your way back."

Edson leaned suddenly forward, clenching the fingers that had been lying on the table.

"It wasn't any of the usual things, Tim. The 'eighteen-and-forty, I-told-you-so people' were wrong. And we certainly were—well, compatible is such a cold word—but we were. And you know me. I wouldn't have been untrue to her in a dream. No one could have wanted to be, with a wife like Anita."

"And I can't conceive of that simple girl I met encouraging other men's attentions," I put out.

He shook his head.

A picture of Anita Falerno, as she was the day I met her, flashed out across my memory like the impression on an immersed blue-print.

"A miraculous child," I said ruminatively. "I remember how she sat opposite me with that soft mouth in her oval, olive face. Her hair was black and gathered back and her eyes were grey. I remember thinking that if I'd been a Catholic, like you, I'd have believed her expression that of the Madonna when she heard Jesus' natal cry."

"Do you remember how many

questions she asked you that day?" He was smiling the ghost of his old smile.

"There's one I've never forgotten," I said with a chuckle. "That other-worldly ivory, with her Italian voice, who had probably not spoken to ten men in her life—"

"Not to five," from Edson.

"And knew as much of the times, evidently, as," looking through the window, "as Forty-second Street here knows of buttercups and blue-bottles—" I burst into a laugh.

"Do you remember what she said, Alec?"

"No. But undoubtedly the kind of thing she'll always say. Even behind the scenes, in 'Peppita's Motto.'"

"She asked: 'Mr. Trent, are you married?' And, when I'd answered, 'Oh, what a pity!' (she wasn't married herself yet, you'll remember). 'Or perhaps you do not care for the carnal things of life?' Of course I was too dumfounded to answer her. Then she went on, 'I shan't be like that, I'm sure. And I shall have a great many children. All fat, with creasey wrists.'"

We were silent for a moment.

"I took her to Lawrence Harbor to live," he said then. "And there weren't any children."

"Not down with Carrie Chapham and Ella Ghent? Bridge parties, with amer-picon on the side, and Liberal Club balls till breakfast at seven? Rotten judgment, old man. How could you expect a Madonna of madonnas to jibe with those moderns of moderns? Immersing an Anita in that element—"

"Carrie's not fast. She's a fine woman," he interposed.

"Granted. I know Carrie. But, afloat in that element, as I said, an Anita would sink."

Edson looked up wearily.

"God, I think of the things she used to do. I haven't slept four hours in a week. . . . She hypnotized Lawrence Harbor, though. Carrie was eating out of her hand in a month.

They'd never met anything like her. She was like the three wise monkeys of Japan, she neither saw, spoke nor heard evil."

He paused.

"Well—and then everything went to smash."

Edson was long in telling the story, and badly he told it. Carpenter, when I met him in Mercedes, filled in the gaps and Carrie Chapham has just given me the color.

I am waiting to see what success will attend a grey-eyed young woman who is touring the country in third-rate productions. By now, however, she plays leads. And leads mean knowledge—knowledge and experience, even in Cheetah City, N. M.

II

EDSON had been in succession a credulous, gullible boy, with a respect for authority and a hankering after religion; a well-to-do young man with no cares, a widening knowledge of the world and a few disillusioning love-affairs of which each left a mark; a bachelor of forty, prosperous, fond of golf, well liked in a small circle, responsive to appeals for charity, still a bit credulous, still with a queer, rather passive feeling for religious expression.

It was at forty that he met Anita Falerno. He had gone to her home at One Hundred and Eighty-Seventh street with a view to purchasing, for part of a large venture in real estate, some of the adjacent land belonging to the Falerno estate.

He found the large, stone house a revelation, high on a hill as it stood, and overlooking the Hudson, gay with honeysuckle and the crimson Rambler and flanked by a mellowed Italian garden. Admitted, he was received by Miss Falerno, an elderly spinster, garbed in a peculiar fashion which, without conforming to the costume of a nun, suggested it. After an inconclusive but not discouraging interview in which she

showed acumen and a knowledge of values, Edson rose to go.

At this juncture a large white pigeon fluttered in through the open window. With short, quick flappings of its wings it flew from wall to wall. Miss Falerno was exhibiting a dignified agility in pursuing it when the door opened to show, upon the threshold, a girl not flushed, but breathing fast from running.

"Oh, a man!" she cried, and clasped her hands. At once the pigeon, alighting on her shoulder, folded its wings.

She seemed a little above average height and roundedly slender, dressed in a gray soft as her long eyes. Her face was oval and olive with a ripe mouth and a delicate nose. Like the heavy hair gathered into a knot at the neck, her brows and lashes were the blackest Edson had ever seen.

"I'm here, now, you see, Auntie," she said. And it seemed to Edson as though she were trying to coax Miss Falerno to make her welcome in the room.

The aunt rose to what appeared fraught with the air of an occasion. She spoke fluently but coldly.

"Let me present Mr. Edson. My niece, Miss Anita Falerno."

"Your namesake," said Edson.

"No, my name is Guiseppine."

Edson looked puzzled.

"Don't you know my name?" the girl asked. "I own all the land about here." She paused. Then—

"That is why I must be doubly free from sin."

"Er—" from Edson.

"The eye of the needle, you know."

She began stroking the pigeon.

The aunt appeared constrained but still invested with that peculiar, almost belligerent dignity, and Edson was gazing, silent, at the girl.

He watched her lift her chin suddenly. He had often seen a thrush so distend its throat for song. She burst into speech.

"Auntie, I just saw a miserable sight. Someone had pinned a big moth, through the body, on our back

gate-post. It must have fluttered till it died."

The aunt looked grimly at the girl's eyes. They were darkened by excitement.

"Just so," she cried, in a sonorous voice which Edson had not yet heard her employ, "are the living truths of Faith pinned through by Science. But these are not mortal. They live on in our hearts."

The responsive gleam in Edson's eyes must have pleased the elder woman, for she suddenly offered to conduct him about the grounds. From the niece's expression of astonishment, he judged this to be an unusual attention.

That was the beginning of their acquaintanceship. Edson made the most of it through the opportunities which his business interviews with the aunt, who acted for her niece, brought him.

Three months after his first visit, Miss Guiseppine, active and apparently strong, was overcome by two paralytic strokes in rapid succession. Before the coming of the third, the imminence of which she recognized, she told Edson her story.

The only sister of Anita's father, she had been born in Florence and brought up in England and France. The family, which had, by the time Anita was three years old, dwindled to father, daughter and aunt had always been devout in the profession of its chosen religion. At this period an overwhelming crisis of a private and delicate nature had changed Antonio Falerno into a scoffer, a railer against the faith of his fathers. From then until his death, which came when Anita was six years old, the aunt had schemed and worked at once to keep peace in the household and secretly to educate the girl in the religion of her inheritance. Her greatest hope had been some day to make nuns of herself and her charge. Falerno had frustrated this silent plan on his deathbed, however, by extracting a vow from his daughter that she would

never enter a convent. Embittered by the failure of her hopes, Guiseppine Falerno had thereupon taken hold of the new situation with unabated persistence and relentless energy.

For, coming to America and taking possession of Anita's property in New York, she had there organized for herself and her ward a way of life conventual in its austerities. She framed it, to be sure, in artistic and unusual surroundings. But no acquaintanceships were permitted, and even the servants in the house were allowed only the essential intercourse with their employers.

So clever was Guiseppine Falerno that, in spite of Anita's normal vitality, coupled with her unusual life, existence had never palled upon her. The two had always attended a few concerts and an occasional opera. There had been poetry and carefully chosen books to be read, lessons to be taken from a visiting Sister in playing the piano, sewing to be done for the poor, Anita's own truck garden to be tended, goldfish, canaries and pigeons to be fed. Aunt Guiseppine had not only given her two hours of religious instruction a day, but she had made the time fleet. She had also taught her pupil a good deal about English, French and Italian literature, conversed with her in those languages, and studied with her botany, geology and the major parts of world-history.

Throughout the pursuance of these studies as in the living of their daily lives, a peculiar ethical training for the girl had been followed by the elder woman. Anita had learned as little as possible about the existence of evil. All her thinking life had been surrounded by her aunt's watchful influence. Science insofar as it essayed to undermine the truths of faith, was wicked, of course. So were a pitiable minor portion of the world's inhabitants. Evil did exist. But evil, as known to Anita Falerno, was an abstraction. Details she never heard.

When the parlor-maid stole Miss Guiseppine's turquoise brooch, Anita did not hear of the outrage. When the gardener's son got up a cock-fight, knowledge of the cruel performance was never brought to Miss Anita's ears. Only an occasional, unavoidable incident, like that of the transfixed moth, marred the white folds of her spiritual swaddling-clothes.

Her information about sex was equally limited. She knew how babies came into the world, but that any abuses trailed along in the wake of sex was a fact that had never been suffered to touch the fringes of her consciousness. Of a prostitute, a man's mistress, she had never heard.

And so, according to the plans of the brilliant, stupid, bigoted aunt, was it to have continued. At the time of her death she was but forty-two and vigorous. With what seemed to Edson a certainty almost phenomenal, she had counted upon her own longevity. Or perhaps, the thought came to him, it had been part of her faith to believe that even without the presence of the loving guardian the girl would be cared for by the mercy of Heaven.

"I'm dying," Guiseppine Falerno said, in one of her final interviews with Edson.

Edsonlike, he made a deprecatory sound, which she contradicted with a brusque directness.

"And we have no friends here. And none in Italy who know the girl as one must, to make her happy and keep her pure."

Although her hands were motionless, stiff on the coverlet, it suddenly seemed to Edson as though she were leaning forward and pointing her bony finger into his face.

"I think you love her," she said.

Edson blushed faintly as he gravely answered "I do." His manner, worshipful, almost rapt, seemed curiously unlike that of a man in love with a girl of flesh and bone.

"Then you must marry her. It is very bitter to me. I had hoped other-

wise. But you are a good man. And you will make me a promise."

Her pupils contracted into points of black light and her voice rasped horribly. She talked with a funereal rhythm.

"Swear before the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost to keep her pure from evil. Swear to further the spirit of my training as your powers permit."

By an effort which made Edson turn pale, she seemed to infuse life into the passive forearm and hand lying on her knee. Raising them, just as he had previously imagined her doing, she pointed her brown finger at his face.

"I swear," he said huskily, "I swear."

As she turned her eyes upward a look of ineffable relief shone across her features.

Two days later she was dead.

III

EDSON was as though reborn with his marriage. So imbued did he become with Anita's fresh viewpoint of facts long stale to him, that his days assumed an envelopment of vernal glow. To the girl everything and everybody aboard the *Tritonia* seemed beautiful, good and to be marveled at. Her freedom to talk to the people about her was a source of un-failing delight which awakened in her husband a sympathetic pleasure in occurrences of the most commonplace. She made acquaintances in whom she gloried. Of her striking effect upon them all, she remained completely oblivious.

The spreading majesty of the ocean filled her with awe. When they were overtaken by a heavy storm she felt not fear but exaltation at the spectacle of God's might. She liked to watch the stars and their reflections in the black swell. She showed little interest in Edson's explanations about solar systems, zones and trade-winds. To her all her surroundings, all nat-

ural phenomena were but manifestations of divine wisdom and beauty. They needed no little explanations, no man-made reasons for existence, no purposes pettily-attributed in the human scheme. They were. That was enough. And all on shipboard were greatly blessed of God, to be living under the canopy of their pervasiveness.

When she came to her husband remarking that "Mr. Tripler must be a fine man," Edson marveled. Had even he, notorious rake and aristocratic ne'er-do-well, shown this little Puritan some spring of goodness hidden from her grosser fellows?

"He is full of loving-kindness," she said. "He was going to kiss me. And when I asked, 'Why do you want to give me a kiss when you only know me four days?' he said just on account of his large heart."

"You didn't—?"

"No. Because he seemed to forget to, after that. I hope I hadn't hurt his feelings. Maybe, with my questioning, I rushed in where an angel would have feared to tread."

Edson conducted his wife to a chair. When they arose, Anita seemed vaguely to appreciate herself as the property of another individual. How vague her appreciation was Edson had yet to learn.

On their return to America they opened their home at Lawrence Harbor. Edson's old friend, Carrie Chap-ham, called first of the neighbors. She was a shrewd, worldly-wise, kind-hearted widow of thirty-eight, "smart" in the fashions of dress, sports and household management, broad-minded, keen-eyed, the leader of her group.

In this first visit she sensed Anita's quality.

"You were right to take her away before you brought her here," she said to Edson. "I was a bit worried when you wrote me about her. Still, she won't be spoiled. She's learned to go among people. But I don't think people will ever change her."

And go among people Anita did.

During that first summer she learned to swim and to play tennis, and often joined the men in their rides across the island. She was soon well liked by the five or six with whom she came in contact, Harding, Kellner, Ghent, McKenzie and the two Gibbs brothers, the younger of whom was a bachelor.

As one the women had joined in making her welcome with a cordiality attributable at the outset only to their friendship for Edson. They found her genuine and simple. She won Janet Kellner's heart by trying some of that lady's cherished recipes and advertising their value with childlike enthusiasm. Her patience and spiritual kinship with Hannah McKenzie's delicate only daughter was very beautiful in the mother's eyes. Whereas her complete ignorance about the servant question enlisted the sympathetic and somewhat officious assistance of Helena Gibbs, her sweet acceptance of the aid and her sincere gratitude proved doubly endearing. When, having listened to admonishments for three months, Anita suddenly tackled the problem herself, and began running her household with the best of them, Mrs. Gibbs could but regret the loss of the sole pupil who had ever taken all she said as gospel.

The depths of her ignorance and the heights of her knowledge caused amusement and wonder. She took little Sybil McKenzie to Bronx Park, where she fluently informed the child that a zebra was a horse in a bathing-suit. To Howard Ely, making his vaunted Italian sound watery by contrast with her own, she quoted verse on verse, stanza on stanza, of Dante.

She and Edson attended church at six each morning. It was her great happiness to have brought him the habit. He censored the books she read. Ceaselessly did he strive to help her mold her newly acquired views as closely as possible along the lines of the old.

She appeared in the surf one day in a striped, one-piece suit without a skirt. Having purchased it at Ostend,

where there were many like it worn, she had never thought of its being unacceptable at the swimming-grounds of the Park Club. And so pleased was she with herself as a bather that Edson, sorely puzzled, sounding the limits of his vow to Aunt Guiseppine, and suffering tortures of embarrassment, kept silence on the subject. A few feeble flappings he later attempted by frequently substituting other amusement when she had planned to bathe and by dissuading her from so doing whenever he could.

"How nicely my arms and legs stick out," she said to the younger Gibbs on the occasion of the first bath.

"I feel so free," she went on, to Carrie Chapham. "And pure. Almost as pure as the nudes in the galleries abroad."

IV.

It was during their second winter at Lawrence Harbor that what Edson termed "the crash" came. Anita entertained her friends by an evening of old-time charades.

The night was cold and clear, enthusiasm ran high, the simplicity of the entertainment constituted a novelty to the thirty guests, and the first part of the program met with success. It was followed by supper in the drawing-room.

When, after eleven o'clock, the company resumed its places before the small stage of the evening, an air of expectation pervaded the apartment. It was known that six separate tableaux were to be presented by Anita and the other ladies of her immediate group. As it was further understood that each participant had kept secret, even from the others, what she was to represent, speculation ran high.

When the tableaux appeared they were sufficiently hackneyed. Mrs. Kellner, masked and false-toothed to approximate a feminine Roosevelt, and surrounded by all kinds of dolls, represented "no race suicide." Helena Gibbs, in red, black and yellow, posed

gracefully to portray the tango. Carrie Chapham appeared as a Hawaiian girl. She wore a hoola-hoola skirt of grass and native beads, which she had eked out by a simple blouse and short underskirt of pale silk. Hannah McKenzie, as Mexico, half frightened, half aggressive, ragged, bleeding and with a tattered flag, was the recipient of several soft missiles and much confusingly shouted advice. And Ella Ghent elicited a good deal of applause when, following the announcement, "My husband's real love," she waddled out, with legs, arms and head sticking through a round, white surface, to portray an enormous golf ball.

A slight delay preceded the appearance of the hostess.

Then the curtains parted. Stillness settled into the room. None stirred.

Against a background of heavy purple plush, slim, pearly, under a golden-lettered "Purity" stood the naked Anita. Her arms were raised forward slightly, the hands bending up from the wrists, the fingers apart. The chin tilted a little upward, the hair was gathered, as always, into a knot behind. Serene, the eyes gazed just above their natural level, gray, grave, placid.

For a full minute she stood. The curtains, failing again to come together, told of none with courage to move. Then the younger Gibbs let out a sudden stertorous breath and Carrie Chapham, the imperturbable, giggled in falsetto.

Anita allowed her eyes to drop to the audience. They found the open-hanging mouth of Edson. They crossed to the face of the younger Gibbs.

What they had seen bellied into them an eruptive terror. Anita moaned and sank to the floor.

Three women burst into tears, and the curtains joined into an unbroken wall of purple flatness.

Not two of the guests spoke as they left. Nor was Edson on hand to bid them good-bye. He was abroad, walking fast across black fields.

V

ON the following day, when, still groping, he saw Anita, she was as colorless as calm. He offered no objections to the heartbreaking plan she proposed. Those came, with mental adjustment, later.

"I have always been blinded," she said. "There was evil around me last night. In all of you. Or else in me. I don't know which.

"I am going to find out. I have just asked two of the maids where in the world women are most beset by evil. They said on the stage.

"So I am going on the stage. Without money. Perhaps I shall build up a *real* purity. Founded on truth and knowledge. I am going to know and to judge for myself."

There were no farewells. They seemed not to occur to Anita. And Edson did not know when she left his home.

She has not yet returned.

So I am following the career of Anita Edson. At present she is with "Pepita's Folly."

May she prosper in knowledge and truth!



UP to the age of twenty a woman fights against kisses. Between twenty and thirty she collaborates. After thirty she remembers.



SUNSET

By John McClure

THE long, rich streamers of the sunset hover quietly over the trees, some the color of poppy-flowers, and some the color of gold, and some the color of long, thin splashes of Tokay wine. They hover as still in the sky as wisps of weed in quiet water. And the sun sinks silently and gorgeously beneath them all like a lemon afire. They change subtly to the color of peacock feathers fringed with flame. A lilac mist steams out of the ground in the valley, wandering in sinuous coils dreamily here and there. The brown ploughed fields are touched with purple and lavender. The hills in the distance turn blue like smoke. The leaves of the cottonwood tree patter together like a shower of rain.

I am watching all this with a young lady. She is charming. And I feel that I should tell her that I love her. I can hardly refrain. But I have lied to her so often that I am afraid to repeat.



ON OUR TRAIN

By Myron Zobel

THE solitaire lady.

The emotional actress from Peoria.

The man with the guitar.

The newly-weds.

The young divinity student with spectacles who read "*Nina the Adventuress*."

The lady with the beads.

The old man with the corpse.

The Japanese gymnasts.

The mother of "the only little girl on the train."

The underslung buttermaker and his overstrung wife.

The porter who slept all day in my seat.

The—the—do pretty girls never ride on trains?



A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD RÉGIME

By A. A. Nadir

A FEW years ago, when Henri Cazeaux still wrote for the *Figaro* the daily column of trenchant personalities which he called *Les Propos d'un Parisien*, there were some members of the Cercle Richelieu who said that the witty chronicler of the Boulevards had overshot his mark for once when he made those strange allusions to Count Onésime Gilles de Saint-Michel.

The latter, when the old Marquis de Stainville showed him the article, with a dry, colorless cackle of malicious senility, did not lose a whit of his Bourbon manners—his dejected grace and melancholy politeness.

"My dear Marquis," he said, "the points of M. Cazeaux' satire are so fire that they are not visible to the naked eye. One might in fact say that the points are—ah—dull"—a remark which turned the joke on Cazeaux.

And Cazeaux himself?

Why—when he was asked his personal interpretation, he shrugged his shoulders and replied that a daily newspaper column is like an apostolic letter in so far as it is best understood by those to whose address it happens to be directed—which switched the onus straight back on the Count's shoulders. But then, nobody knew when Cazeaux was telling the truth and when he was joshing; and it may be best to repeat here, verbatim, the part of the column which so intrigued Saint-Michel's fellow members of the Cercle Richelieu:

M. le Comte O. G. de S.-M. is typical of the Faubourg Saint-Germain—which is no more. The gentlemen of the families of Livry and Bragelonne and Choiseul-Praslin and Dreux-Brezé have

migrated to the Champs Elysée, the Quartier Francois-Deux, and—alas!—to Passy. Only topographically does the Faubourg exist. From the Seine to the Boulevard Saint-Germain there still runs the Rue des Saints-Pères. Look at the window displays there! There, too, lives M. le Comte O. G. de S.-M., typical of the Faubourg Saint-Germain—which is no more!

The meaning of the less personal allusions was obvious. For it is a fact that the Faubourg Saint-Germain is no longer the social and fashionable entity which it used to be, and that many families of historic name and lineage have sold their ancient palaces and have taken to the jerry-built stucco abominations, the English bath tubs, the American radiators, and the open plumbing of the newer quarters of the capital; some, as Cazeaux said, even migrating as far as the Boulevard Passy—which is to Paris of the Parisians what Flatbush is to the Tories of Lower Fifth Avenue.

But what had Cazeaux meant by his remarks about the window displays in the Rue des Saints-Pères? What had he meant by saying that M. le Comte de Saint-Michel was typical of a Faubourg—which was no more?

Here was the key to the riddle—the members of the Cercle Richelieu knew that—and, on the morning following the appearance of the column, the stewards of the Cercle noticed that the early tables of *écarté* and *chemin-de-fer* were strangely deserted; and, across the Seine, there was an inrush of frock-coated and top-hatted gentlemen who strolled up and down the Rue des Saints-Pères and stared into the shops—evidently in search of something.

But, in that gray, poignant old street which, from the Seine to the Boulevard Saint-Germain, is one long continuance of antique shops, they found nothing except what all the world finds there: the furnishings, the knickknacks, the articles of vertu of yesteryear . . . old-fashioned guéridon tables and brass-edged secretaries; taborets inlaid with tortoise shell and bulbous ebony chif-foniers standing awry on rheumatic legs; porcelain of Meissen and Sèvres and Delft; Louis Quinze commodes; clocks ornamented with scrofulous cupids and martial Bellonas; Gothic stalls and Renaissance buffets—and, everywhere, dusty, faded, melancholy nothings: snuff boxes, bonbonnières, cameos, purses of satin covered with seed pearls, bits of Mechlin lace, graved semi-precious stones, ivory crucifixes, strange old pewter vessels—

Yes! In those crowded windows of the Rue des Saints-Pères, the dead Century seemed to have come to life again—like a delicate phantom, pink and white and lightest blue, dressed in *jupes à cerceaux* and similar antique frills. The ghost of the Eighteenth Century—playing at shepherd and shepherdess in the gardens of the Trianon, warbling amorous madrigals to a waning moon pale with sentiment! The ghost of that France which was before Robespierre rose from the muck-heap of nothing and cast his grim shadow from the Fortifications as far as the Tuileries!

The young Vicomte de Brancas-Lauraguais said something of the sort; but he was known as a poet and a dreamer, and Roland de Miaz, that hearty, purple-faced Norman squire, interrupted him with a laugh. "Yes, yes," he cried, "that's all very fine and poetic, I have no doubt. But—'*scrog-nieugnien*!—what has it got to do with Saint-Michel? What did that animal of a Cazeaux mean?"

There was silence; and then, suddenly, the old Marquis de Stainville gave a strange little cackle.

"My friends," he said, in his high-pitched voice, "behold the Millennium

which has arrived! A Paris newspaper has opened its pages to a personal remark which is neither a slander, nor intended as a lever for blackmail! That little specimen of a clove of garlic of a Cazeaux has actually paid a compliment!"

There were excited questions and exclamations, and, pressed for particulars, the Marquis de Stainville explained.

"Look at this—and that—and this," he said, pointing with his ivory-knobbed stick at a dusty shop window where fretted chandeliers hung low from the pale, embroidered silks of the ceiling, and where little cabinets lurked in dark corners, bright with porcelain and bronze, "look!—an onyx brooch which might have belonged to Marie Antoinette—a tiny, enamelled locket possibly from the wedding-basket of the Princess Lamballe—a snuff box perhaps from the pink satin breeches of Cardinal de Rohan! And it is the same in all these shops, down the whole length of the Rue des Saints-Pères—as if it were the Paris of the olden days, of the *vieux régime*—before there existed those pigs of Jacobins and the fat Corsican upstart and Republics and votes for all the world and a daily press and all the other wretched innovations! And our friend Saint-Michel, too, is of the *vieux régime*. He typifies the dead Century. He is like these window displays—haughty and unbending and elegant . . . and that little animal of a Cazeaux discovered it! Yes, yes," sighed the Marquis, "the Count de Saint-Michel is typical of the Faubourg Saint-Germain—which, to quote Henri Cazeaux, is no more;" and the other members of the Cercle Richelieu agreed that the Marquis de Stainville had solved the riddle.

He had—but not in the way he flattered himself; for, at the same hour, the Count de Saint-Michel was sitting across from M. Cazeaux in a little café, not far from the Place Fontenoy; and he was visibly perturbed.

II

It was a spring day, drowsy and

warm and deep-rose, a great sun blazing down in the horizon, and one pure-white cloud hanging lazily in the distance. Beyond the tracery of the elm trees which border the Place Fontenoy, there was a pleasant glimpse of the tawny Champ de Mars and of the gray, squat House of Deputies—a view of all Paris, seasoned and sprinkled with the people of all Paris—work girls in black taffeta dresses and high, laced shoes, silken-bearded, comfortable business men on a rapid jump from office to café in search of a game of dominoes and a pink drink, blue-bloused teamsters, priests in sober garb, and women belonging to either world, pleasantly conscious of their fine feathers.

Paris in miniature, with its wealth of bustle and color, its fine, sweet Latin logic, its sober art of living—and the Count Onésime Gilles de Saint-Michel loved Paris; he was a good Catholic—and he put Paris far above the chances of his soul's salvation. He loved Paris as a man loves his mistress; he loved it as Balzac had loved it. But today, there was no enjoyment in the sight of the loved city which stretched before him like a painted fan; nor was there warmth in the blazing spring sun.

The Count de Saint-Michel caressed his silken white mustache and curled the long, tapering ends around his fingers; and he shivered a little. He was silent, and so was Cazeaux, who was watching him, a cruel, self-satisfied smile on his haggard, sardonic features.

"You mean it?" asked the Count, suddenly.

"Yes," replied the journalist, "I mean it. That little allusion in the *Figaro* was just in the way of a warning. You understood." He lit a cigarette. "Three thousand francs to be paid to me before noon to-morrow, my dear Count. Otherwise—" he smiled significantly.

"Otherwise?" the Count's voice trembled a little.

Henri Cazeaux lowered his metallic voice. "I, too, belong to the Cercle Richelieu. If you do not pay I shall explain to our fellow members why—"

he laughed, "why I advised them to look into the shops of the Rue des Saints-Pères," and he rose and walked out of the café, leaving the other to settle the score.

It has been a moot point in the annals of the Cercle Richelieu if Count Onésime Gilles de Saint-Michel made an attempt to raise the money, or not. If he did attempt it, he failed. For, promptly at noon on the following morning, he took his usual seat at a little table in the corner of the card room.

A minute later, the old Marquis de Stainville joined him; without waiting for orders, a steward brought a deck of cards, and the Count began dealing.

Gradually the room filled. Some écarté, some manille, some poker, and others taroque—the gambling taste of the Cercle Richelieu was catholic indeed; and gambling there was a dignified and almost hierarchic function. There was no unnecessary noise—only the staccato announcements of the banker, the rustle of cards, the dry click of counters . . . once in a while, a rapidly suppressed cough—

Otherwise silence! And so the entrance of Henri Cazeaux was dramatic in the extreme.

"Messieurs," he cried, with his loud, metallic voice, as he crossed the threshold; and, as all heads turned in his direction, he added, "you have all read my article in the *Figaro*, I have no doubt. You have wondered as to the meaning of my allusions to our esteemed fellow-member, the Count Onésime Gilles de Saint-Michel—" he bowed toward the latter who was sitting like a stone idol; only his right eyelid twitched the least little bit.

The old Marquis de Stainville broke into shrill laughter.

"Save yourself the pain, Cazeaux," he cackled, "yesterday I led a little expedition across the Seine. We looked into the shops of the Rue des Saints-Pères, and we understood. We thank you. A compliment to the address of the Count de Saint-Michel is a compliment to all of us—"

"A compliment?" Cazeaux was frankly astonished.

"Yes," continued the Marquis, "we saw the dusty, dainty things in the shop windows—the things which typify the *vieux régime*—"

Cazeaux understood at once. He laughed.

"My dear Marquis," he said, "if you had looked a little more closely you would have noticed that the little articles of yesteryear in the shops of the Rue des Saints-Pères are—ah—*imitations*—made in the Quartier Saint-Antoine, in Birmingham, and in Vienna. Imitations! Pinchbeck! Fake! And so, Messieurs, is the Count de Saint-Michel! That's why he is so typical of the Faubourg Saint-Germain—which is no more!"

There was a babel of voices—indignant questions, excited exclamations—and, clear above them, the clarion accents of Henri Cazeaux—"Monsieur le Marquis! Monsieur le Marquis de Stainville! Every day, for three years, have I watched your daily game of *écarté* which you play with the Count de Saint-Michel. And the Count—I have seen it—he cheats, he cheats! Ask him—" he added triumphantly, pointing at the Count's ashen face—"ask him—that type of the *vieux régime*! Ask him, if you do not believe me!"

Came silence—the utter, breathless silence of death. Then the old Marquis rose. He walked up to Henri Cazeaux.

"Monsieur," he said, "you are a young man—ah—a young man of the new régime—with neither tact nor pity nor delicacy nor decent breeding. Too, it appears that you are regrettably short-sighted. It is true—the Count plays with me—every day—and he plays with nobody else. True, too, that he amuses himself by palming a card now and again—but, Monsieur, so do I! It is the innocent pastime of two old gentlemen—"

"But—" stammered Cazeaux, "it is the Count who wins—who always wins—"

"A certain proof of that Providence in which you young men do not believe," replied the Marquis, smiling, "for I am a rich man, Monsieur—while the Count de Saint-Michel is poor. Monsieur Cazeaux, the directors of the Cercle Richelieu are awaiting your immediate resignation." He returned to his table and picked up the deck.

"My deal, I believe," he said to the Count; and, with his trembling old hands, for the first time in his life, the Marquis de Stainville tried to palm a card from the bottom of the deck.



I HATE HER

By June Gibson

THAT woman—

The one with painted lips,
And the hair that is too yellow—
I hate her.

She has the movements of a snake,
And the eyes of a vampire.

I abhor her.
If she looks at Jerry,
He will leave me.



A MODERN MONTSALVAT

By James Hunecker

PARSIFAL

Parsifal à vaincu les filles, leur gentil
Babil et la luxure amusante et sa pente
Vers la chair de ce garçon vierge que cela tente
D'aimer les seins légers et ce gentil babil.

Il a vaincu la femme belle au cœur subtil
Etalant ces bras frais à sa gorge excitante;
Il a vaincu l'enfer, et rentre dans sa tente
Avec un lourd trophée à son bras puéril.

Avec la lance qui perça le flanc suprême!
Il a guéri le roi, le voici roi lui-même
Et prêtre du très-saint trésor essentiel;

En robe d'or il adore, gloire et symbole,
Le vase pur où resplendit le sang réel,
Et, o ces voix d'enfants chantant dans la
coupole. —PAUL VERLAINE.

HE impatiently pushed aside his coffee.

"Of course, if you will insist on preaching I must leave you. It's a new rôle for you."

"Oswald," I replied, "you needn't take me up that way; I'm not preaching; I'm playing the part of a friend in a case of this kind, and—"

"The only thing you can play," he interrupted.

"That's right, my boy! Flaunt your virtuosity under my nose! I'm a bull when I see red."

"Go on!" he answered in a resigned manner, reconsidering his rejected coffee.

"What is the matter with you, Oswald? Come, be frank with me! You haven't touched your fiddle for months; you don't go any more with your friends. Are you in debt, are you in trouble, are you in love? Stop a moment"—for he began to scowl again—"I don't wish to pry into your private affairs, but you owe your most intimate

friend some sort of explanation of your strange conduct, besides you look very bad, old man. Your skin is like the Yellow Book and your expression suggests Aubrey Beardsley's best-manner." I stopped for want of breath.

Oswald smiled, rather contemptuously, at my watery similes, but held his peace. He drank his coffee in several gulps and ordered a fresh cup.

We were sitting in the smoking-room of the Vienna Café. The long apartment was almost deserted, for it was too late for luncheon and too early for tea. In a corner were Anton Seidl and Dr. Dvorák, their heads close over a manuscript score. The Slavic conductor was showing the Hungarian conductor some new music of his own. Happy folk, thought I; they at least have an interest in life, while here is Oswald, one of the greatest of violinists, an unhappy, sulking wretch, and for no possible reason that I can discover.

When he had reached the age of seven his love for the violin was so strong that he was allowed to have his own way, so the schooling he had received was mostly on four strings. Five years later he attracted the attention of some wealthy music lovers and was sent abroad. Another five years Oswald was Joachim's favorite pupil and hailed by the critics as the successor to Wieniawski. Never had there been such a brilliant, daring talent; never such an interesting personality. He had the tenderness of a woman and the fire of hell in his play; his technique was supreme, and when he returned musical people went mad. I was an old friend and his handsome face glowed with pleasure

when I called at his hotel in my capacity of music reporter. He played for me. How the fellow played; still a mere youth, without beard or guile! We were inseparable, and then he made his début, and his name become known the length of the land.

Oswald was a man who never drank. His one dissipation was coffee; he smoked, but not furiously. The women who sought him were treated with distinguished courtesy, but he had never loved, and managed to escape all entanglements. Then came the change.

I noticed it first in his playing. At the last Boston Symphony Concert he had played the Brahms Concerto in a listless, tepid manner, though the phrasing throughout was faultless. It was the absence of the inner spirit, the fire of old, that set critics and public abuzzing. What ailed the man? Was he worn out by a strenuous season's work? I suspected a more dangerous reason. After months of despondencies and mysterious disappearances I had caught Oswald at the Vienna Café and put the question to him.

Over his third cup of coffee he brightened up and slowly rolled a cigarette. I watched him closely. His face looked worn, his color was leaden and his eyes lacked intensity; his handsome nose, pure Greek in line, was pinched, his curls disordered. Evidently he had been having a hard time of it; his was certainly no common form of dissipation. At last, rousing himself, he looked at me—almost piteously. It was the silent cry of a man going under, a man whom none could save. Involuntarily I put out my hand and caught his arm; so unpremeditated was it, and he so well read its meaning, that he seemed to sob as he turned his head away from me. The silence lay thickly upon us for some minutes; then I said to the stricken man:

"Oswald, your face recalls to me one of those lost souls met midway in his mortal life by Dante, the dreamer of accursed dreams."

"And I am a lost soul, irrevocably lost, and because of my perversity. Why

does music lead us to such strange alleys—my God! Why?" He was keyed up to a dangerous pitch of intensity, so I forbore further questioning. We aimlessly drifted out and toward theaterland and then separated for the night.

Naturally I thought much about Oswald's case. Evil he was not; there was no love affair. The notion of an hypnotic obsession suggested itself, but was at once dismissed. The curious part of the affair was his relinquishment of playing in private or public. He seemed to entertain an absolute horror of music, and never went to concert or opera. Long absences from his house also alarmed me. I made up my mind finally that some one was leading him astray and that I would spy upon him. Several months after our conversation in the café I met him, looking gaunt, yellow and almost shabby. Another solution of the problem presented itself. Perhaps, like some ardent temperament, he had tasted of that deadly drug which is admired of the unspeakable Chinese; he was an eater of opium. I taxed him with it. As we slowly walked down town we stopped under an electric light, for it was a dismal November night, a night full of mists and shadows. Oswald faintly spoke:

"You accuse me of the opium habit. If I were a victim to that drug I would be a thrice-blessed man. Alas! it is so much worse."

Mystified completely, I walked along with the unfortunate violinist, taking his arm in mine, for he seemed feeble. I asked him if he had eaten that day. He nodded his head. I did not believe him. We left Union Square far behind us, having reached the neighborhood of Astor Place, now. I clung to Oswald and only when we turned down the long, dark street where once stood the Library did I notice our whereabouts. My companion moved with the air of a man for whom things corporal had no longer a meaning. When we reached the lower end of the ill-lighted avenue, I called his attention to the fact that we were drifting into strange places. He

turned to me and after one concentrated glance took my elbow and guided me up the steps of a low building that stood well in the shadow. He did not ring, but rapped with something metallic, and at once the door was silently opened, and we stood in a hallway filled with the violent rays of a lamp that stood at the other end. I never before experienced such repugnance. If I could I would have rushed out, but Oswald barred the way, and, as he regarded me with sad, strange eyes, I was firmly convinced that I was dealing with a crazy man.

"Welcome," he said in vibrant accents. "Welcome to Montsalvat." Then I noticed over a door this incomprehensible musical motto:



I followed my friend into a comfortable library, warmed by a fireplace in which hissed and crumbled huge lumps of cannel coal. In all faith I had to confess that the apartment seemed homelike. Oswald's tragic expression recalled to me that I was about to discover his tormenting secret. "And what," said I, sitting down and lighting a cigar, "is Montsalvat? And what in the name of all that's fantasie means the fearsome motto over the door? Is this a suicide club, or is it merely some new-fangled æsthetic organization where intense young men gather and say sweet words to one another? Or is it a German singing society, or—" and here the humor of the idea broke in upon me—"mayhap it is a secret college of organists wherein pedal practice may be continued during late hours without remonstrating neighbors?"

Oswald, with his glance of anxious rectitude, did not smile at my foolish speech.

"Montsalvat is not one of the things you think," he softly said. "True, it is a club that meets occasionally; meets, but not for recreation, nor yet for discussion. You have read Baudelaire, have you not, dear friend? Then you

must remember those awful lines beginning:

"J'ai vu parfois au fond d'un théâtre banal
Qu'enflammait l'orchestre sonore
Une fée allumer dans un ciel infernal
Une miraculeuse aurore;
J'ai vu parfois au fond d'un théâtre banal

Un être qui n'était que lumière, or et gaze
Terrasser l'énorme Satan;
Mais mon cœur que jamais ne visite l'extase.
Est un théâtre où l'on attend
Toujours, toujours en vain l'Être aux ailes gaze."

"It sounds like Poe done into French," said I, wondering at Oswald's suppressed excitement; "like a more infernal Poe; John Martin, the English mezzotinter, could have translated this poem of sombre bronze into his wondrous art of black and white—you, Oswald, remind me yourself of this same artist's vision of 'Sadak Seeking the Waters of Oblivion.'" I felt that I was merely talking for effect. Oswald's action puzzled me. Why should he become excited in a lonely house over some verses of Baudelaire? Why should the Redemption theme, *Motiv der Erlösung*, from "Parsifal"—I recognized it now—be placed over the door? Suddenly the murmur of voices roused my friend, who started up, crying: "They're here!" . . .

Folding doors, heavily draped in black, were pushed asunder at the end of the room, and I found myself staring eagerly into a large, low-ceilinged chamber. Scattered about were lots of couches upon which lounged men. There were no pictures, but two busts stood in a recess and seemed to regard with malevolent expression the company. I noticed with dismay that they were the heads of Arthur Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner. Conversation was going on in a languid manner. Oswald handed me a pipe as we entered—for I had finished my cigar—and we sat down in a corner. No one paid any attention to us, and I curiously studied the faces about me. One and all they were the faces of cultured men, a few dissipated, but the majority were those

of dreamers, men for whom the world had proved too strong, men who were striving to forget. I saw several musicians, one poet and a half dozen painters. No evidences of opium were present, and no one drank. Chopin's name had been mentioned as we entered, and a big, lazy-looking blond fellow near me said:

"Oh, Chopin! Well, we have got beyond Chopin, I hope. Debussy is our music-maker now—as Browning did not say."

"Why?" asked a pianist, who did not appear to recognize me, though I knew him well. "Why have we got beyond Chopin? For me the Polish composer has an eternal charm."

"Of course," retorted the other, "that's because you are a pianist."

"You know very well that I never play any more," was the sulky rejoinder. The conversation languished for a time.

"What does it all mean?" I whispered to Oswald. He only shook his head.

"Montsalvat, my friends," said a grave, measured voice, "is the last refuge for the soul that has resolved to adjure the illusion of happiness. Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner, our illustrious masters and founders, declared that only the artist and the saint may attain to Nirvana in this life. But we hold to the latter condition, for the artist is ever the victim of the World Illusion, the World Lie. Wagner, when he wrote 'Parsifal,' showed his hatred of life, of art. He knew full well the evils brought into this world by music and sex. Immobility, the state of non-existence, the supreme abnegation of the will, the absolute suppression of the passions; are they not states worth trying for? To live in the idea; ah! my friends, I fear that we are still too worldly, that we still stamp with too much vehemence upon our natures, when surely by this time we should have attained complete psychical freedom. Oh! for a cenobite's life. Oh! for a crust and a hut in the wilderness. The blood bites too hotly

in the cities; life thrusts its multi-colored grin upon you there. You cannot escape it. To live on one tone, to be yourself the pedal-point, while life's jangling harmonies pass over your soul-suspension—to do this is to live music, not to play it; to do as did the Knights of old Montsalvat—that was true life. Wagner knew it when he fashioned his 'Parsifal,' a perfect mirror for all time of the souls of pure men who revolt at life's banality; a new monastic existence is Wagner's, is our modern Montsalvat!"

In wonder I gazed at the speaker, not a hoary-bearded Pundit, but a youth of perhaps twenty-five summers. His sunken cheeks, his strained eyes, gave him a detached, fantastic appearance. In what company was I? What were the aims of this strange crew? Men in the prime and heat of their youth talking of Schopenhauer, of Wagner, of Chopin and Verlaine in strange accents, as if the last keen joy of life was this denial of self, a denial almost depraved. I was completely bewildered.

Oswald's voice broke in: "*J'aime les nuages—les nuages—que passent là-bas—les merveilleux nuages!*"

"There you go with your Baudelaire!" cried a voice. "Oswald, I fear that you still love life. It is consuming you. You delight in reciting verses beginning: 'J'aime.' You have no right to love anything—not even Baudelarian dream-tipped clouds. I suspect that you still yearn after your fiddle or that you secretly read that apostle of damnable Titanism, Nietzsche."

At the name of Nietzsche, Nietzsche the arch-heretic of brutal force, of barbaric energy, the company shuddered. Oswald looked crushed. The voice of the new speaker was flat-toned and infinitely depressing. I felt mentally nauseated. What club of hopeless wretches had I encountered? Robert Louis Stevenson when he contrived his Suicide Club fancied that he had reached the bottom of vicious happenings. But here was something more infernal, another and darker nuance of

pain; living, yet dead, a club of moral suicides, self-slaughterers of their souls; men who deliberately withdrew from all commerce with the world; men who abandoned their ambitions, successes, friends, families, to plunge beyond hope of redemption into a mental condition, a satanic apathy and a slavery worse than drugs; yet gleaning an exquisite joy in the abstention from joys, an intellectual debasement, a slow strangling of the will, and delight that comes from dallying on the forbidden borders of pain and pleasure. Surely Buddhism in its home does not work such evils as I saw before me. These men had not the absorbed look of devoutness and interior exaltation that I have caught on the face of an Oriental. Nor were they lotos-eaters. Eastern ideas cannot be grafted upon the West; evil must result. In the weary faces around me, in Oswald's agonized eyes, I saw the hopelessness of the fight.

Oswald was dying by degrees, infinitesimal degrees, dying withal. His violin was his life. All his music was dammed up in him, and I saw that the struggle was an unequal one; he must perish or else go mad. And these men enjoyed the spectacle of his ruin. His condition was to their jaded brains as absinthe to the drunkard. Oswald, with his genius, his youth, his brilliant career, was drawn unresistingly into the maelstrom of the worship of Nothingness. "His life," I cried in spirit—"his life has not yet been lived; he is not ruined in body; his soul is not a thing of dust, like the others. What a sacrifice is this!"

My face must have been an index, for the voice sardonically continued:

"Oswald has a Philistine with him tonight, I fear. Oswald cannot break from earthly ties. My dear violinist, you had better go back to your Bo-

hemia, with its silly laughter and wine and its four mewling strings. Such things are for boys, as is the illusion of love, woman's soft smiles and other gross nudities. Go back, Oswald, with your friend to his life, to your life. Make empty noises, call it art and forget about the lofty heights of pure speculation, the ravishing vision of a will subdued. Go, Oswald, and do not remember Montsalvat and its knights in search of the Holy Grail of Renunciation. Go join the modulating crowd!"

The voice grew more silvery, but it pleaded even as it menaced. In the quiet, hazy atmosphere of the room I saw with horror Oswald's altered expression. His eyes closed, his body became rigid; a living corpse, only obeying the will of the master. With an effort he roused himself, and taking me by the arm muttered "Come!" Silently we left the room and walked through the library and into the hall. The street door was opened for us, but I alone went out into the mist and darkness.

"The waters of the river have a saffron and a sickly hue; and they flow not onward to the sea, but palpitate forever and forever beneath the red eye of the sun with a tumultuous and convulsive motion. For many miles on either side of the river's oozy bed is a pale desert of gigantic water-lilies. They sigh one unto the other in that solitude, and stretch toward the heaven their long and ghastly necks, and nod to and fro their everlasting heads. And there is an indistinct murmur which cometh out from among them like the rushing of subterranean water. And they sigh one unto the other." . . .

Edgar Poe, too, tarried in the House of the Ineffectual.



THE FLAW

By Edith Mott

MY love is near-perfect. I adore his grey-green eyes, mystic as the sea; his slightly-darker-than-blond hair, silky as the coverlet 'neath which I slumber; his finely carved nose strongly suggestive of an Indian Chief; the firm square-roundness of his chin; his long lithe form; his broad, powerful shoulders seemingly ever squared for my protection, and his long slender hands concealing in their white softness the strength of a Hercules. All these I love. I love my love. Madly and passionately do I love him—but I cannot marry him—I could never be happy with him. He has a flaw a great gaping, yawning chasm of a flaw. . . . He says "I done" and "He don't."



A PRACTICAL GIRL

By Roger O. Lane

SHE was a very practical girl.

Her mother had brought her up that way. From earliest childhood she had been led to believe that worldly things counted most. Consequently she had her maid usher her two lovers into her presence.

"What have you to offer me?" she asked the first, very practically.

"I offer you wealth. I am rich. Silks and satins of the finest texture shall adorn your person. Treasure coffers of forgotten kings I will empty at your feet. You shall travel to tropic isles and sunny climes. These and all the wonders of the world to you will be an open book. This and more I offer you."

She nodded thoughtfully. "And what have you to offer?" she asked the second lover, also very practically.

"I, alas, am poor. I can only offer love. Love and kisses. My future—"

"Hang your future," she interrupted inelegantly. "Me for the love and kisses."

She was a very practical girl.



A WOMAN always says no when she means yes—always, that is, save when a no would save some poor fellow a lot of trouble.



RING AROUND ROSIE; OR, A CASE OF CHILLS AND FEVER

By H. F. Ponsard

HE awoke early, for all that he had slept so little, and raised himself softly in bed. As he looked down at her, lying there so white and frail and delicate with one rounded arm curving languidly over her breast, and her dark, rich hair draping the snowy pillow, Bennett's lips tightened with some unfathomed anguish.

She breathed gently, and that sweet movement of slumber seemed so pure, so ethereal, so pathetically charming, that Bennett felt his heart swell with tenderness. She was beautiful, beautiful even in the haggard and dishevelled hour of the dawn.

His mind suddenly swept back to its previous considerations, and he stared at the outline of the arm beneath the coverlet. His lips twisted again into their aspect of torture. He was sure that what he had seen at the restaurant last night was something wholly illusory, and yet—and yet he wasn't sure. The details of the picture, the hideous instant of shock and amazement, the black three hours that had followed until he had gone home and crept in quietly by her side, the whole damnable affair fluttered past his mind, and now he was sure that what he had seen *wasn't* illusory.

He wanted to raise the coverlet and peer at the slim hand that was hidden. But Rosie was a light sleeper. She would ask questions. He couldn't answer them.

Answer them? God! He couldn't meet her eyes!

He dressed silently, then stole into the dining-room and hurriedly ate the

breakfast the maid served him. Often before Bennett had eaten alone, and so there was no reason that he should find suspicion here. But he thought the maid's gaze rested upon him with some unpleasant significance. Did even she, an uncouth illiterate, pierce his mask, perceive his perturbation, and hazard a guess as to the cause?

Bennett felt his nerves jangling. He strode out of the house as if to catch a train, and, a little later, swept into his office in a battling mood. There, they had never known him to be so sharp. He was unusually long at the lunch hour, and little Bowne reported that he had seen him walking rapidly up the street with his fists clenched and his eyes high in the air.

"And frowning like the dickens," added little Bowne.

When Bennett came back, it was only to lock his desk. He was off, he announced, to his head clerk, for the rest of the day. They were to shut up shop at the regular hour, and he would be down as usual in the morning.

At half-past five o'clock, after he had breasted the air of the bay on a Staten Island ferry-boat, and walked more miles than he was aware of, he returned to town and sought a 'phone booth. First he called his home. The maid answered, and he learned that his wife was out. He was grateful that he was spared the ordeal of speech with her, and yet a random conjecture as to her absence gave him a horrid pang. A phantasmal hand seemed to wave tauntingly before his

vision. He fought for a quiet voice.

"Just—just tell Mrs. Bennett," he stammered hoarsely, "that I'm detained at the office, and will be home later."

He slapped the receiver fumblingly into the hook, and pressed a hand to his temple. After a moment he lifted the receiver again, and named another number. In answer to his query came the smooth reply: "Yes, Mr. Quintard is in."

"Want me to dine with you at the club, eh?" said old Quintard. "Of course! . . . My wife is out of town for two or three days anyway, so you see . . . Oh, no favor at all, my boy."

Quintard appeared in due course, and Bennett arose and threw his cigar to the floor as he advanced with a shaky hand. He hadn't seen Quintard for some time; they met rarely now that each was married; but they had the memories of many glorious rackets together in that prehistoric period when they were still gay, single dogs. Quintard was the senior by a good eight years, he was thirty-nine, forty it might be; Bennett had just topped his thirties and taken up his father's position and responsibilities at a comparatively early age.

As Bennett shook his hand, his eyes twinkled in momentary respite from his worry; he thought of that amazing time that they had gone up the Hudson in a sailing-dory with a cargo of prime whiskey and old pipes, of how Quintard had fallen overboard drunk, and of how. . . . The humours of that blithe expedition filled his mind; he laughed heartily.

"Good old Quintard!" he ejaculated and slapped his friend on the back. "Where—where on earth did you gather that corporation? You hanged old ox-tummy, you!"

Quintard grinned at the salutation. Masculinity is never so affectionate as when it is crudely insulting. He was portly already, was Quintard, quite a different sort from his fellow. Bennett was slim, tall, blonde, quick in speech and action, with a tendency to

idealize at a tangent, or to slump into the most dismal of moping moods. Quintard was keener, shrewder, less easily stirred. He had a cold blue eye, and an ironic line to his lips. Quintard's philosophy was that nothing was greatly worth while outside of, perhaps, that philosophy. He used to boast that no man had ever seen him excited. He had married an heiress in order, as he once cheerfully stated, to buy her expensive presents out of her own money and retain a merely comfortable commission for himself.

The two men, talking in scraps, repeating old familiar phrases, saying, "Haryer, old boy?" and expecting no answer, drifted into the big dining-room. Bennett's first delight had worn away, and his face began to settle again into its look of dull pain. He struggled to conceal it, but now his laughter hit a false note.

"Ordered for you already, Jim," he said. "All the things you used to gorge. Remembered everything. Do you recollect that blow-up we had in those bachelor apartments on Forty-sixth about anchovies? Lord! I wanted to do for you with the carving knife. . . . See here, old man, why haven't you been around lately? You haven't been up to the apartment for nearly six months."

Quintard glanced at the other's revealing face, and a quizzical flicker danced in his eyes. He did not venture, however, to put what he thought into utterance. Instead, he addressed himself to answering Bennett's remark.

"Well, my boy," he drawled in his lazy, amusing way, "it ain't exactly the same, if you take my meaning. Our wives get together and talk away about fashions and one thing and another; and you and I keep on saying, 'Do you remember the time we did so and so?' and each of us is wonderin' how the other's got so respectable, if you take my meaning."

Bennett admitted the truth of this with a little nod.

"But why don't you come up just the same?" he asked.

"Wouldn't do, my boy," returned Quintard. "No use tryin' to live on your memories. You've your present world, I've mine; but we've got nothing actual in common, nothing more than the thought of what we used to have. I'm gettin' to be a stale old stick, and you ain't up to shoutin' through the streets in the old way, if you take my meaning."

Bennett laughed. "Well—maybe. Anyway you're the same old second-rate cynic, Jim, and hang it, I like you."

"Do you though?" said Quintard, naively, his face lighting up with pleasure. "Still . . . you don't like me enough to ask me around to your club to tell me so. If I may say so, my boy, you want me to help you in a pinch of some sort. Frankly now: what's troubling you?"

Bennett's face clouded and he looked away.

"You can still pick a mood, by George!" he declared. "Well I'll—I'll tell you later."

They finished dinner comfortably and lingered over a cordial and a cigar. Bennett had not come out of the somber reflections into which Quintard's intuitive remarks seemed to have sent him, but now he cleared his throat and pushed his glass away. Quintard was aware that he was about to receive the other's confidence.

"See here, Jim," Bennett began slowly, picking at the cloth and not lifting his eyes, "what I'm going to tell you is solemn sacred. I want your advice. Maybe you can help me. I don't know where I stand. I'm wretched. I—"

He broke off for a second and searched for calm.

"Up to last night," he went on in a whisper, "I was the happiest man living. Now I think I'm the most miserable. It's—it's about my wife."

"Of course," Quintard drawled. "Skip the obvious details, my boy, if you take my meaning."

For a moment Bennett glared at him, until the glare was succeeded by a faintly bitter grin.

"I wish you wouldn't say that sort of thing, Jim," he remonstrated. "This—this is different. Rosie is a—"

"Yas," said Quintard like a north countryman, and with ambiguous meaning. "Well, you tell me the story first. What's the row, my boy?"

"Last night," said Bennett crisply and rather angrily at that, "I stopped in a restaurant to meet a fellow about a deal of mine, and Julian Keith was there, Julian Keith—"

Quintard nodded. "Cool young rascal, that Keith," he commented. "I know him. He's been everywhere, done everyone and everything. Well, . . . so he was with your wife."

"Good God, no!" protested Bennett. "Rosie isn't a mere—a mere— She wouldn't appear in public like that. But I think she's fallen in love with the fellow. I think she's—"

"Why?" cut in Quintard and examined his cigar with earnest eyes.

"About three months ago," Bennett began, "I had a ring made for Rosie, not an expensive one by any means, but a mighty pleasant little thing. Provan, that artist fellow, knocked off a design for me one afternoon. I had a small diamond set in it, and the gold comes up and curves over part of it like a—like a cowl. Very unique, you see, and of an original shape. There isn't another like it in the world, for I had the design destroyed. It's pretty in a quiet, simple, almost masculine way, and it's just the sort of thing that would hold a lot of sentiment for a woman. The one and only thing of its kind, you know. Well, last night I saw that ring on that damned Julian Keith's hand!"

"By George!" ejaculated Quintard. He frowned and took his cigar out of his mouth.

Then he said very deliberately: "Now, my boy, are you quite sure that the ring you saw was identical to your wife's?"

"Absolutely!"

"And your wife's is missing?"

"I don't know. It was only last night. I haven't even spoken to her. I tell you I'm everyway certain."

"Was Keith a friend of yours, a visitor and all that?"

"He was for a while, confound him!" said Bennett. "Used to come up and see us casually. He always liked Rosie. I saw that. Like the fool I was, I was flattered by it, thought it showed my own taste. The scoundrel had the coolness to smile and ask me how I was, as I passed his table on the way out last night. And I heard a scrap of his talk just before. It was proof plain. That sour little toady, Ritchey, was with him, with his white face and flattering tongue. I heard Keith say: 'I'm to meet her in Rochester. Then we—we'll light out.' He said something after that which I didn't catch. I don't think he believed I heard him. I was too stunned just then to gather the drift, and I guess my face didn't show anything."

Quintard shook his head.

"That young Keith is a terror," he announced in a tone which held as much envy as condemnation. "He has a record or two behind him, that boy, and he's a handsome blackguard besides."

Suddenly Bennett dropped his head forward on his hands.

"Oh, Jim," he whispered, "what the deuce am I to do? You don't know how I loved that woman, you can't guess how I've left her absolutely free to do as she wished, how I've always let her do what she wanted."

"That's the trouble," Quintard declared with more briskness than usual. "You've been too careless, you've been too easy. You're a nice fellow, my boy, but your head's full of poetry-books. D'ye think I let *my* wife do what she wants? Not me! I keep my eyes open and if I see any Keiths playing badger I—I get rid of 'em, if you take my meaning."

"If I couldn't trust a woman," said Bennett, looking up with a wretched face, "I shouldn't care to live with one."

"Trust a . . . the deuce! Why, my boy, you can't trust anyone! At least, in certain situations."

"Do you suppose a woman likes to

be treated with suspicion?" retorted Bennett.

"I do," declared Quintard. "Makes 'em think more of their value. You never got over the ideas you used to read in books in the time of Queen Victoria, my boy, if you take my meaning."

"Jim," burst out Bennett, "I don't want to hear any more of your easy philosophizing. I want help. What am I to do? You've—you've no comprehension of what this is doing to me. You've never been in a situation of this sort. If she's—if she's guilty, I'll . . . kill her!"

"Don't be more of an ass than you are regularly," said Quintard; "I've never been in such a situation, maybe, but I wouldn't rant like a ham-fatter if I were in one. I'd let things go just as they wanted to, realizin' that it was my fault because I hadn't kept my eyes open. I believe in taking precautions, and when they're useless, not to spend any time cryin' about what's happened, if you take my meaning. As for help, well, the first thing I can do for you is to tell you to go home and find out definitely whether what you think is true or not, before you do any heroics on the street. The second is for me to go along with you to see that you don't do anything foolish after you learn."

It was hardly nine o'clock when the two men stepped into Bennett's apartment, and Mrs. Bennett, lovely, cool and pink, came forward and kissed her husband.

"Why, what's the matter? You're positively trembling!" she said and shook a finger of pretense at him.

"You're growing old!" she added in a profound whisper.

Then she turned with a little laugh. "How do you do, Mr. Quintard? It's good to see you. So *you* were the important business that detained my husband down-town! As if I didn't see through his embarrassment the first thing! And how is Mrs. Quintard?"

For some time the lightest of banter passed between Quintard and Mrs. Bennett. Bennett, himself, sat by white

and silent, and now and then biting nervously at his lip. For the ring was not on her finger! But even yet a faint hope that he had been mistaken lingered in his heart.

At last he spoke in a rasping, choking voice.

"My dear," he said, "I was telling Jim about that ring I gave you, the one Provan designed. He's anxious to see it. Have you—have you got it here?"

She looked at him with a pale face. A queer, quick tremor passed over it.

She pressed her fingers to her lips and for a moment said nothing.

Then she spoke hurriedly.

"I—I took it off when I was washing my hands. If you'll forgive me a moment, Mr. Quintard, I'll—I'll go get it for you. I—er—yes."

Staring into the burning eyes of her husband with a frightened face, she turned with a self-conscious laugh.

When she had left the room Bennett's head dropped on his shoulder.

"Oh, Rosie, Rosie!" he murmured, "so it's true, so it's true! I didn't guess, I didn't know. . . . Oh, God!"

"True?" queried Quintard. "What the devil do you mean? Didn't you hear her say she was going to get it?"

"Say she was going to get it?" echoed Bennett woefully. "Dammit, man, did you see her face? Did you see her face? And there's an entrance to the corridor through the room she went into. She's going to run for it. She's going to leave me. . . . Listen!"

There was the soft noise of a swiftly closed door from the outer hallway.

Bennett gripped the edge of his chair and closed his eyes in an agony of the spirit. A faint moan escaped his lips. Quintard, now quite convinced, leaned over him, and tried to hearten him.

"You'd better not do anything, my boy," he said gently, "not anything. Just let her go."

"Yes," answered Bennett in a faint voice, "I shan't stop her. She can go. I shan't stop her. But how she's deceived me! Oh, Rosie, I . . . But I shan't stop her."

As the minutes passed, Quintard bent over him and tried to offer him a silent but unavailing sympathy with his hand on his friend's shoulder. Quite unexpectedly Bennett jerked up his head. Then he nearly leapt out of his chair.

"What's that?" he cried.

There was the quick slam of a door, a sound of rapid footsteps, and Rosie Bennett burst into the room, her cheeks glowing from exercise.

"Both of the maids were out, dear," she said to her bewildered husband, "and I saw at once that you were going to have one of your attacks of chills and fever. I know how you are about my doing anything for you, so I just ran around the corner without telling you, and bought a bottle of that medicine. You had better take some right away. . . . And, oh, Mr. Quintard, here's the ring you wanted to see. Isn't it pretty?"

Bennett made a curious guttural noise in his throat. A delirious smile waved uncertainly upon his lips.

"I should say it was!" declared Quintard in a jovial humour. "The mere sight of it ought to cure your husband of his chills."

"I'm glad you like it," said Mrs. Bennett. "But I thought you'd seen it, or the copy, before. Mrs. Quintard was here one day and liked it so much that I told her she could have an exact replica made. Hasn't she shown it to—"

"What?" cried Quintard. "What? Oh, my God!" he wailed. "The scoundrel! The dog! The rascal! I'll—I'll kill him if I hang for it! Oh, my God!"

He tottered to the door and scrambled into the hall like a maniac.

Mrs. Bennett gazed after him with dumfounded eyes.

"Why—why, what's the matter with him?" she stammered.

Bennett put his arm about her and held her to him tremblingly.

"Poor fellow!" he explained. "I think he's—I think he's caught my chills and fever!"

CONTRASTS IN PATERNITY

By Alice King

WHEN I was a little boy my father took me every Sunday for a walk in the country. Those were the brightest hours in my week, when we two, like gentlemen and men of the world, walked and conversed together as equals. No thought of mine was too trivial to receive his courteous attention. He, in his turn, outlined for me the ideals that in a boy of ten make for character in the man.

His attitude toward my mother was that of the gentleman of the old school to all womankind—with a deeper tenderness that was for her alone. Her sunny face and gentle manner made for him and their children a home never to be forgotten.

* * * * *

There is but one flaw in the foregoing description. It is not true. My father is not in the least like that. To

begin with, he is not a tender memory, but a living reality—always a disadvantage.

My father comes of an excellent family. Because of his origin he can afford to ignore any or all of the usages of society. He may be insolent to the servants or ignore them utterly. It is his prerogative to refuse to allow his clothes to be pressed until his suits are festooned upon his spare and stooping person.

I am his only child, yet he never speaks to me. He talks through me. I listen respectfully, with an eye on the door. He has a bitter and sarcastic humor, especially after the wine is passed. My mother cringes before him—if there are guests to see. Alone, she is quite able to defend herself.

When I was twenty-one I joined a club. They married; let them fight it out!



WHEN a woman gives herself to a man she doesn't complete the gift until she forgives him for taking it.



IT is always disastrous to take out the tucks and let down the hem of an old romance.



PROHIBITION is on the way. In a few years we'll all be aquapuritans.



WHY SCHMIDT LEFT HOME

By George Jean Nathan

I
WERE Mr. George M. Cohan's farce-comedy "Broadway Jones" to be translated almost literally into French and presented in Paris as having been written by a German playwright and were then the hornswoggled reviewers for the Paris newspapers the next morning to observe that the play was at once a typical specimen of German humour and the work of an obvious rank amateur in matters appurtenant to the stage, one might perhaps permit oneself at least a homœopathic chuckle. Were an even more celebrated German's farce-comedy to be translated almost literally into English and presented in New York as having been written by a British playwright and were then the hornswoggled reviewers for the New York newspapers the next morning to observe that the play was at once a typical specimen of English humour and the work of an obvious rank amateur in matters appurtenant to the stage, one might perhaps permit oneself a snicker no less. This snicker, therefore, out of a magnanimous and an unselfish nature, let me now and here pass along.

Stolen deliberately and almost word for word from Lothar Schmidt's "Das Buch einer Frau" (The Book of a Woman) as that piece was done four years ago in the Königgrätzerstrasse-Theater of Berlin, there was produced in the Princess Theater five or six weeks ago a play called "Such Is Life"—with the name of Harold Owen, an Englishman who collaborated in the writing of the melodrama "Mr. Wu," set down as sole author. Save for such minor alterations as the substitution of an allusion to Edinburgh for one in the

original manuscript to Hamburg and the giving of the characters British, in place of Teutonic, names, the Schmidt play and the play blithely presented by the Englishman as his own were identical. (War abrogates copyright treaties between nations, if not between artists and gentlemen.) The play divulged in the Princess Theater, therefore, was—and I overstate the case in not the slightest degree—a typical German farce-comedy written by Schmidt who, as I have often before pointed out in these pages, is one of the most popular, most widely known and most adroit playwrights in the modern German popular comic theater.

Presently about fifty-three years old, Schmidt (whose plays are acted all over the Empire and its neighbour Austria, and who has been translated onto the Russian stage and, in several instances, the stages of other European countries) belongs to that familiar group of comedy writers that includes such men as Rittner, Molnar, Otto Erler, Felix Salten, Sil Vara, Karl Ettlinger, Otto Ernst, Karl Rössler and Otto Gysae: a group which, while here and there many comedy pegs below the Thoma-Schnitzler-Bahr group, is still many rungs higher than that embracing such writers as Robert Faesi, Otto Schwartz, Paul Apel, Otto Soyka, Vosberg, Otto Falkenburg, Ludwig Bauer and Hans Müller, though the latter are very witty fellows all of them. Among Schmidt's better-known pieces of farce-comedy writing, to recall a few to your notice, are "Die Venus mit dem Papagei" (Venus with the Parrot), "Nur Ein Traum" (Only a Dream), "Entgleisung" (Off the Rails), "Fiat Justitia," "Christiane" and the comedy

which Mr. Owen has translated as "Such Is Life," to wit, "The Book of a Woman." Further to establish the relative theatrical importance of Schmidt—and probably the simplest way in which to bring with conviction his popular Continental eminence to the local notice—it may be chronicled that he demands an exceptionally high royalty—a no less lofty revenue, indeed, than Bernard Shaw—which is to say, fifteen per cent. of the gross box-office takings, a rate noticeably above the customary five, seven-and-a-half and ten with which the usual writer for the theater is well satisfied.

So much for the facts. Keep a firm grasp upon them, if you please, while we proceed now to go 'round the curve.

Of this celebrated German comic writer and of his typical German farce-comedy, clumsily disguised as "*Such Is Life*," an English farce-comedy, by Mr. Harold Owen," what did my good fellow, M. De Foe of *The World*, find? Let us observe. Thus, M. De Foe (with italics by the entire company):

"Harold Owen, the English author of 'Such Is Life,' also wrote 'Mr. Wu' . . . so it cannot be argued that he is wholly without experience in writing for the stage, an inference naturally to be drawn from the tedious proceedings at the Princess Theater. . . . 'Such Is Life' . . . an English war-time comedy. . . . The author might possibly be at better advantage in writing narrative fiction."

And my good fellow, M. Broun, Hazlitt to *The Tribune*, what of M. Broun? Thus, *f. quanto possibile*, M. Broun: "The fact that such a play can achieve production should be most encouraging to every young author."

And my good fellow, M. Darnton, Lewes to the *Evening World*, what of M. Darnton? Thus, *tepidamente*, M. Darnton—"feeble English comedy."

And my good fellow, M. Woollcott, Lamb to *The Times*, what of M. Woollcott? Thus, with punditic scowl, M. Woollcott—"mildly nonsensical bit of English humor."

That "The Book of a Woman" is, in fine truth, the least meritorious of all

Schmidt's plays and that there is no particular disposition here to question the local appraisal of its worth, cannot avail to obscure the succulent give-away which my learned confrères, through the piece, achieved for themselves. So to mistake an intrinsically typical modern German comedy for an English comedy—the humours of the two nations are, of course, quite entirely different; so to imagine one of the leading popular comic writers of Germany "without experience in writing for the stage"; and so further to confuse and disorder, confound and jumble, is a something to give one a crick in the upholstery.

"A critic," wrote Huneker cruelly in *The Times* several weeks ago, "will never be a catholic critic of his native literature or art if he doesn't know the literatures and arts of other lands. We lack æsthetic curiosity. Because of our uncritical parochialism, America is comparable to a cemetery of clichés." The "*Such Is Life*" episode brings to mind the native critical obfuscation, in like quarters, when two years ago Mr. Edward Sheldon presented his dramatization of Hermann Sudermann's novel "*Das Hohe Lied*" under the title of "*The Song of Songs*." The local reviewers, with two exceptions (both men of Continental training), seanced themselves into a spirituelle conclusion that Sheldon had so gutted the German novel of its philosophy that Sudermann, had he had the opportunity to see the dramatization, would never have recognized it as having been made from his book. When, as a matter of record, Sudermann had not only seen the dramatization, but had expressed to Sheldon his profound admiration for the faithfulness of the young American's work.

To proceed in the matter of the disguised Schmidt comedy, the critical gentleman on the staff of *The Dramatic Mirror*, on the other hand, saw in the play "the smart French attitude towards love and marriage"—and so further contributed to the gaiety of

the guessing contest. The reasons for this general critical confusion go, of course, very much further back than "Such Is Life": they go back to the large local fundamental unacquaintance with Continental drama, its philosophies and humours, its viewpoints and its technics. The local criticism is, in the main, builded upon traditions of such philosophies and humours, such viewpoints and technics—traditions frequently false—rather than upon the modern gospels. For example, what the average American critic believes to be the modern French attitude in comic writing is, in reality, the modern German attitude. Schmidt's farce "Only a Dream" is an infinitely more "Frenchy" farce (from the American point of view) than, for example, Sacha Guitry's "Petite Hollande"—which (from the American point of view) has to it a sort of German air. Such German comedies as the "Lottie's Birthday" of Thoma and the "Little Prince" of Misch might seem, to the American mind, to have been written respectively by the French Max Maurey and the French collaborators Maurice Hennequin and Pierre Veber; while such French pieces as Mirbeau's and Natanson's "Le Foyer" might seem, to the same mind, to have been written by a German of the school of Wedekind—or at least of Turszinsky and Jacques Burg.

What Frenchman of to-day has written a farce with so Gallic a viewpoint (locally speaking) as the "Blue Mouse" of the Germans Engel and Horst, well remembered by American audiences; what German of to-day has written a farce with so German a point of view (also speaking from the local angle) as the "Petite Fonctionnaire" of Alfred Capus? One speculates, indeed, into what category our critics would have put such a play as Anthony Wharton's "Irene Wycherley" had it been produced in New York under another title and signed with the name of a Norwegian playwright. Or what would happen were Björnson's "Geography and Love" put on next month in the

Princess Theater as "The Chart of Amour" by François Deauville and August Düsseldorf?"

The difference between the French attitude in matters of amour and the German attitude is to no little extent exactly the opposite of what is locally imagined. That is to say, the respective attitude of the *bon vivant*, the worldly fellow, the Heliogabalus of France and of Germany—and let it be remembered that it is with such sophisticated characters that the typical farce-comedy of both Paris and Berlin more often deals. (Or at least what may in each instance fairly be taken as the typical farce-comedy.) The Frenchman of this sort in his affairs of the heart has in him more of the Viennese than has the German: he is, for all that the Anglo-Saxon believes to the contrary, a highly sentimental and anything but a light-hearted fellow. He loves in the moonlight, where the German loves in the sun. He cooes his *je-vous-aimes* in the key of B flat, where his neighbour to the north laughs his *ich-liebe-dichs* in d f dd. The door-slamming, wardrobe-hiding, under-the-bed-diving French lover of the Anglo-Saxon notion is no more the French lover than the Irish Shaw's Blanco Posnet is an American cowboy. Nor, to point the fact more pertinently, is he the typical lover of typical French farce, as those who know their Rip and Bousquet, their De Flers and De Caillavet, their Romain Coolus, their Bernard and Athis, their Sacha Guitry (in his more recent years) and their Benière properly appreciate. He is no more typical of the French lover or of modern French farce as Frenchmen know it than an American society man by my friend the late Paul Armstrong was typical of an American society man—or than the Italian Bracco's "Comtesse Coquette" is typical of Italian farce, or the British Pinero's "Wife Without a Smile" is typical of British farce, or the German Blumenthal and Kadelburg's "Is Matrimony a Failure?" is typical of German farce, or the French Desvallières and Mars' "Never Again" is typical of

French farce, or the American Hatch and Homans' "Blue Envelope" is typical of American farce.

When the domestic thinkers speak of typical French farce and the typical viewpoint of such farce they speak of the typical French farce and viewpoint not of to-day nor of yesterday, but of twenty and twenty-five years ago. *Tempora mutantur*—and farce and viewpoint, messieurs, change with them. The modern German viewpoint in love matters is the French viewpoint of twenty and thirty years ago; the modern French viewpoint (I speak, of course, as life is reflected in the respective dramatic mirrors) is the German viewpoint of day before yesterday. The German beau has dressed his heart in lingerie; the French beau his in medicated flannels.

As to what is locally regarded as typical English humour. Judging from the reviews of "Such Is Life," the local estimate of typical English humour as being largely a matter of obvious puns is derived in the main from animadversions upon the subject in *Puck*, *Judge* and our other uncomic papers. The pun, of course, as students of international humour know, is less typical of modern English humour than of modern German humour. The pun is the chief weapon of the modern German Tingel-Tangel, or cabaret, as it is of the modern German music show libretto and, in many instances, of second-grade farce. (The French, too, are theatrically much more taken with punning than the English: the Paris revues, librettos and short farce pieces are full of plays on words.) Several years ago, when the farce "Mon Ami Teddy" was translated into German and exhibited in Berlin, the German translator laboriously edged fully half a dozen exotic puns into the manuscript and gained thereby from his German audience fully half a dozen extra chuckles.

The modern English stage piece is free from punning: the English have long since lost their palate, it would seem, for such patent jocosities. Is

there, for example, so much as a single pun in the rank and file of the British farces and comedies of Pinero or of Hubert Henry Davies or of Shaw or of Henry Arthur Jones or of Barrie or of Maugham or of Jerome or of Roy Horniman or of Cicely Hamilton or of Anstey or of Sutro or of Besier or of Arnold Bennett or of Maurice Baring or Keble Howard or Gertrude Jennings or R. C. Carton or Cyril Harcourt or Bernard Fagan or George Rollit or Anthony Wharton or Horace Annesley Vachell or of any other such British playwright, important or unimportant? In six years of playhouse rounds in London, I heard but three puns, two in shows at the Alhambra, the third in a musical comedy at the Adelphi. And in many more years of reading, I have encountered less than ten or twelve puns, at the most, in British play manuscripts. Nor is the typical English humour of Wells and Chesterton, to speak beyond the theater, any more a humour of puns than the typical English humour of W. W. Jacobs and Neil Lyons—or the typical (and excellent) English humour of *The Sketch* and *The Tatler*, *Punch* and *Tit-Bits* and *London Opinion*. The typical English humour, contrary to being a thing for specious mock, is of a high order. The English, above the Germans and the French, it is interesting parenthetically to note, have produced by all odds the best humour out of the grim materials of the present war. (The two jokes in the Shuberts' "Her Soldier Boy," originally a German libretto, at which New York audiences are currently laughing loudest, have been lifted from English funny-papers.)

I regret that I have no more space wherein further to illuminate the darkness of the local Hazlitttry as that darkness cast its shadows upon the Lothar Schmidt play and the qualities which that play brought under the notice of the intramural criticism. The simple truth about the play was probably this: (1) It was, true enough, not a good play though even had it been a good

play it would not have been susceptible of proper enactment by the English actors assigned to its interpretation, for English actors can no more play German farce than American actors can play French farce or German actors American farce. Just as the American actor lacks the deftness and polish for French farce and as the German actor lacks the speed and brashness for American farce, so is the English actor deficient in the gusto and stomach essential to German farce. And (2) the first act was played in high lights (afternoon) where it was plainly necessary to its effectiveness that it be played, as originally, by the lamplight of evening (the humour of the transparent door episode was otherwise lost entirely). And (3), Mr. Owen garbled amateurishly the translation of two of the wittiest passages in the Schmidt manuscript. And (4), the play, a moderately quick farce, was interpreted in the tempo of Stephen Phillips' "Herod." And (5), the actors were, with the exception of Mr. Gottschalk, so very bad anyway that they would have ruined any play.

II

WERE I as competent a critic of drama as Mr. Avery Hopwood is a competent writer of farce, I should stand in abundantly greater respect of myself than I am able presently to conjure up. There are few men currently applying themselves to the farce form to excel this composer. In America there is no one to compare with him. In all Europe there are not more than three or four more expert. In the native theater, he may be listed among the very few genuine talents. His eye to the follies and foibles of his fellows is clear and acute; his ability to command the English language to dance and kick to his tune is shrewd and cunning; his viewpoint is the viewpoint of the travelled, well-educated, well-read, well-fed man. It is a distinct pleasure always to sit before his writings—even when they are not all one

personally might wish them to be, for there is to his work ever a manner, a know-how, an air unmistakable.

Though by now it is perfectly well known that Mr. Hopwood's forte is the risqué farce and that risqué farce is the kind of farce he regularly writes, it has become the habit of many of Mr. Hopwood's critics who are amply aware of the fact to go to his plays and then affect an aggrieved air of mortification over his naughtiness. This species of hypocrisy, one of the hall-marks of native criticism, is a quality common to the Puritan. He is indignant over things risqué, but he is ever extremely careful not to miss seeing them. He likes to put his hand before his eyes—but with the fingers apart.

Hopwood's latest farce is called "Our Little Wife," and is an extremely comical, deftly orchestrated entertainment in the key of "La Séductrice." Guitry and Giafferi, and Adolf Paul and Von Raoul Auernheimer, the Frenchmen and Germans, respectively, of whose labours Hopwood is evidently a close student, could not have made a better job of it. The burlesque Sardou business in the second act is alone worth half the farces one usually sees. The amorous waiter, too, is a droll creation, though I seem to have encountered him before in a piece on the boulevards. Miss Illington has the leading rôle and gives an immensely pleasing performance: one of the best, indeed, I have observed in my time in the farce stalls. Hopwood's farces, true enough, are risqué, but their risqué quality is the delicately risqué quality of a Japanese girl's eyes. The average Anglo-Saxon farce, to the contrary, when it essays to be risqué is approximately as much so as a woolen nightshirt.

As opposed to the facile craftsmanship and literary and dramatic sharpness of Mr. Hopwood, we have in the native field of more serious dramatic literature (thrice sic!) such fellows of the quill as Mr. J. Hartley Manners, Mr. Owen Davis and Mr. George D. Parker. Mr. Manners' philosophy, as revealed in his most recent opus, "The

Harp of Life," has all the efficiency of a bloodhound with a cold. Seizing here upon the theme maneuvered by Wedekind in "The Awakening of Spring," by Cosmo Hamilton in "The Blindness of Virtue," by Ludwig Thoma, satirically, in "Lottie's Birthday," and by writers on end fore and aft, Mr. Manners contrives by a masterly application of cerebral infelicities to make of that theme a thing of serio-comic fluff. Mr. Manners believes that a young boy's curiosity in matters of sex may best be stifled by telling him plainly about such matters, a theory somewhat akin to a belief that the best way in which to keep a young boy from desiring to taste champagne is to open in his presence a bottle of champagne. Mr. Manners is respectfully referred to Professor Havelock Ellis. Mr. Manners should know that temptation and warning are twin sisters. To this, the admonitory "wet paint" placard and the provoking impulse to touch a finger to the paint to see if it actually is wet offer some testimony. So, too, by way of testimony we have keep-off-the-grass signs, prohibition and married women. Mr. Manners also believes that a boy's mother, for the prosperity of his future manhood, should be his sole playmate (the Oberon complex) and that the way in which best to make him respect and be faithful to one woman is to be told suddenly that another woman whom he has respected and fallen in love with has been faithful to some half dozen men. Mr. Manners is, in fine, the sort of dramatist who pours the sugar on the coffee instead of the coffee on the sugar. After seeing one of his *opera* I feel as if I had eaten a chocolate éclair at breakfast. The pleasant talents of the attractive Miss Laurette Taylor are being dissipated upon such plays, which is indeed something of a pity.

If, in writing of Mr. Manners' play, I have written chiefly what certain folk call destructive criticism, I may offer only in simple apology and extenuation that eight of the Ten Commandments are also destructive criticism. And make popular amends by noting that

my good fellow, M. De Foe of *The World*, a constructive critic, found that (I quote the good M. De Foe) "there is more real substance, thought and philosophy in 'The Harp of Life' than in any other play of this year." Mr. Manners may or may not, as the whim seizes him, take comfort in what Monsieur, my confrère, says about his play when he appreciates that among these other thus abruptly dismissed plays of the year there have been Mr. George Bernard Shaw's "Getting Married" and Lord Dunsany's "Gods of the Mountain."

Mr. Owen Davis' play is merely a cheap imitation of Winchell Smith's "Fortune Hunter" and George Cohan's "Broadway Jones," with, for title, "Mile-A-Minute Kendall" as a cheap imitation of Mr. Cohan's "Hit-The-Trail Holliday." Mr. Parker's offering is "Margery Daw," the kind of play in which the little orphan girl wonders wistfully what it is like to have a mother and in which the sweet-natured, white-wigged old village doctor (the kind who nods benignly and chirrups "I under stand, I under stand") informs her gravely that "it is the most wonderful thing in the world."

III-

HERMANN BAHR has been known to the American theatrical world only as the author of "The Concert," produced brilliantly by Mr. Belasco several years ago. His "Principle," an amusing comedy; his "Yellow Nightingale" and "The Star," merry satires; his tender "Franz," his biting drama "The Mother," his "Viennese Women," "The Apostle," "Phantom," "The Athlete," "Josephine" and "The Other Woman"—all these are unknown to the local specialists in the dramatic literature of the Jules Eckert Goodmans. It has remained for the widow of the late Mr. Henry B. Harris, encouraged by Mr. Arnold Daly, to produce now this author's "The Master" and so provide the native stage with a play that has been shuffled aside since 1903 (though it was

done in the original six years ago in Irving Place) to make room for such home-made masterpieces as "Broadway and Buttermilk" and "Fixing Sister." And so to provide the local stage with one more play worth the attention of the adult male who, aside from the Ziegfeld "Follies," gets small opportunity for civilized amusement in the New York theater save when some by-street band of amateurs or some newcomer among producers like Hopkins or Kugel puts on a play.

It is quite unnecessary for me to review "The Master." My particular readers doubtless know it well and have known it well for many years, whether from audition in Continental auditoriums or from the printed book. Suffice it to repeat that it is a finely written play, a play written by a man of feeling and understanding, very considerable originality and high skill. And suffice it to note that Mr. Daly gives one of his customary admirable performances in the leading rôle.

IV

COLERIDGE observed that the true stage illusion as, for instance, to a forest scene consists not in the mind's judging it to be a forest, but in the mind's remission of the judgment that it is not a forest. The true stage illusion as to melodrama consists not in the mind's engaging with it as drama holding the mirror up to nature, but rather as nature holding the mirror up to drama.

Properly to place oneself in a receptive mood before a melodrama, it is essential that the mind be cajoled into surrendering for the time being its sense of comedy. Otherwise, of what avail or plausibility such effective melodrama climaxes as that of the Guignol's "Vers La Lumière," in which an English officer sinks to death in a bed of quicksand over which, but a moment or two before, the villain has airily promenaded in safety? The melodramatic mind must believe temporarily in Santa Claus, in ghosts, in the theory that a woman's

wit is ever superior to a man's, in the notion that all noble fellows, great lovers and valiant heroes in real life are Irishmen, in the theory that murder is never committed anywhere save in a darkened room (preferably a library), and that children are always kidnapped during thunderstorms.

With the mind so persuaded, Mr. Bayard Veiller's latest melo-piece, "The Thirteenth Chair," provides a lively theatrical evening. Writing after the formula practised auspiciously in the Rue Chaptal, the author has contrived as good a show of its kind as was his eminently successful "Within the Law." This Veiller, indeed, would seem to be the most adroit fellow in the matter of melodramatic stage trickeries since the expert William Gillette. Like the clever band of Frenchmen who compose melodramatic pieces for the playhouse of Max Maurey—such men as André De Lorde, Serge Basset, Léon Marchès and Gaston Richard, Eugène Morel, Elie de Bassan and the like—Mr. Veiller is a sufficiently penetrating physician to the mob spine to appreciate the larger modern theatrical value of tricky "props" over the botanical oratory favourite of the melodramatic yesterdays. Two of his most effective stage moments in his latest piece follow the *recipés* practised respectively at the Guignol four years ago by François de Nion in "La Matérialisation de Miss Murray" (reviewed in this place at the time) and a couple of years before that by Robert Francheville in "La Porte Close". . . . The door that slowly and mysteriously opens apparently without human agency is a device that never fails on the melodrama stage.

So engaging is the major portion of Mr. Veiller's melo-piece that it seems something for regret he did not exercise the precaution to spare his audience its present final disappointment over the dubious legerdemain with which he solves his plot. The ease with which the presently confusing elements might have been explained away to the satisfaction of the skeptic yokel is quite obvious, even to one like myself whose

trade lies far removed from play-making. The spiritualistic medium, Mr. Veiller's central character, confesses throughout the earlier portion of the melodrama that she is able easily to deceive her clients by more or less simple stratagems. When, however, at the play's climax the medium is called upon to compel the villain to confess to the murder, her (and Mr. Veiller's) ingenuity fails and, to the sad let-down of the play, she abjures chicanery and trusts for assistance, with much pathos via the face muscles, to God and the spirits.

Now while what follows is all very reassuring to the faithful, it comes as something of qualm to the other nine-tenths of the audience. This qualm might have been prevented—and most readily—had the author merely caused the medium, previous to entering into her final trance, to whisper an inaudible something to the young hero and then caused the young hero, whose presence in the scene is not needed, to leave the stage. This would suffice again to plant trickery in the audience's mind and yet not diminish in the least the present suspense of the situation. And when then the door opens mysteriously and when then the knife tumbles from the ceiling the audience might be spared its present skepticism as to the spirit *fion-fion* and convinced to the greater prosperity of the ticket rack that

a human hand (or a black thread) had had something to do with the currently unconvincing door-opening and that the butler, rather than Little Laughing Eyes, had stamped on the floor above and so dislodged the dagger.

These are, one appreciates, trivial things for the critic to treat of, but one is speaking here less of drama and dramatic literature than of the show-shop. And Mr. Veiller's melodrama as it stands, with half its motivation entrusted to Kellar and the other half to Providence, is, while a very good show despite its last act wabbles, still a trifle like kissing a girl who has been eating onions. To make the kiss pass for nectar, the man must also eat onions. A Hermann the Great, after entertaining his audience and gaining its rapt and willing attention for two hours, could not well hope to retain that audience's favour were he suddenly to turn down his sleeves and begin acting a scene from "The Servant in the House." That, briefly, is what Mr. Veiller has attempted. Yet, on the theory that a palatable dinner is not entirely to be spoiled by a leaky demi-tasse, "The Thirteenth Chair" is probably certain to satisfy the great majority of its partakers. It is as greatly superior as theatrical entertainment to the late Richard Harding Davis' "Vera, the Medium," as it is inferior to Chesterton's "Magic."



IDYLLE D'AUTOMNE

By Charles Val

C'ÉTAIT un jour de fête, dans un pauvre petit village de Bourgogne.

On était en septembre et la douceur d'un beau soir conviait plutôt les âmes mélancoliques à une promenade dans l'attendrissement nostalgique des choses qu'à la danse éperdue dans une foule en délire.

Elle était lasse un peu, la toute petite danseuse, et elle consentit à se prêter au désir que j'avais de la connaître au delà des galantes formules banales qu'on échange dans une cohue sautillante et à s'appuyer sur mon bras pour une rêverie dans l'agonie crépusculaire.

On était en septembre, dans le mois des bruyères mauves, des jours abrégés, des ciels d'aquarelle à peine teintés de nuances délayées. Et nous goûtions ensemble l'accalmie, la paix immense, l'infinie et calme profondeur du soir; car la nuit venait nonchalante, indécise et fatiguée, accrochant, dans le velours bleu de sa robe, l'agrafe d'un mince croissant d'or et le scintil d'une étoile d'argent. . . .

Que dire par une telle nuit?

Fraternellement accessibles aux mêmes émois, nous communions sous les espèces augustes du mystère.

Je la priai de chanter, et elle chanta une mélodie de Chopin lente et grave.

Elle chanta comme chantent les sirènes. Sa voix, aussi limpide que nos pensées, caressait, enlaçait et consolait de la meurtrissure que cause toujours à la sensibilité l'expression du sentiment de l'idéal.

Sa voix était comme son cœur, très pure. Sa bouche exquise s'ouvrait comme un calice. En toute confiance, elle avait appuyé, comme un fardeau trop lourd, son front charmant sur mon épaule et s'était blottie contre mon cœur.

Moi, je voyais son âme à travers sa

chanson; son âme, jardin ouvert où ma fantaisie s'égarait, par des allées bien nettes, vers l'harmonie et la grâce des parterres, vers une corbeille de lys, vers des ombrages délicats mollement endormis sur le velours des mousses, vers une source de foi qui jase, bouillonne, fuit sur un lit de violettes et sous le regard étonné des myosotis, ces petites fleurs bleues sentimentales auxquelles les amoureux prêtent cette signification:

"Plus je vous vois, plus je vous aime," et les amoureuses: "Ne m'oubliez pas."

J'aspirais, comme des parfums d'honnêteté, son enfance, son ingénuité et sa douceur. Et je pensais: pourquoi ne l'ai-je pas rencontrée plus tôt, celle qui eût été une adorable fiancée, une sœur angélique, une épouse infailible?

Pourquoi ne l'ai-je pas trouvée avant tant d'espoirs jetés au vents, de baisers égarés, de vie gâchée, de rêves dispersés et d'ambitions en déroute?

Ah! si ce rêve était encore possible!

S'il ne lui déplaisait pas de consentir à se baisser pour cueillir un amour de septembre et le passer à sa ceinture: l'amour d'une âme en demi-deuil, blessée bien souvent par les épines de la vie, mais délicate encore, mélancolique et câline!

Ah! si j'étais le simple et bon compagnon qui conviendrait à sa douceur!

Des oiseaux chantaient dans mon cœur, en l'entendant chanter comme chantent les petites fauvettes dans les halliers touffus et les taillis ombreux du parc somptueux des châteaux en Espagne.

On était en septembre, dans le mois des bruyères mauves, des jours abrégés, des ciels d'aquarelle à peine teintés de nuances délayées. . . .

THE ROUGH-HOUSE ON PARNASSUS

By H. L. Mencken

§1.

THE war has gone to the heads of the poets, and they gyrate, snort and roll their eyes like Russian dancers. A fearful din arises; it comes in great waves and breakers of sound, like the bellowing of the saved at a Methodist revival. And cutting through it, like a sharp knife through a hog's neck, shrills the appalling super-whoop of Poet Peter Golden, author of "The Voice of Ireland," and the loudest, wildest, most death-and-devil-defying, most ear-to-a-semi-liquid-jelly-reducing minnesinger of them all. Thus, arising trombonally above the rest, his blood-curdling song of hate to his recreant fellow-Gael, the Hon. John E. Redmond, P. C.:

Beside your heaped-up monumental shame
Iscaiot's will be an honored name;
Dermot MacMurrough, Corydon or Keogh,
For all their treason never sank so low.
O Arch Assassin of your land and race,
Long may you live to dodder in disgrace;
And when they lay your carcass in the clay,
The very worms, ashamed, will turn away!!!

I add a few screamers to bring out the bounce of it. Atop it, under the curiously modest title of "A Request," he piles this one:

When Britain is securely bound
And 'round her fast Fate's web is wound,
Lord God in Heaven, I ask one prayer—
Grant me the glory to be there!

Give me the great boon to be nigh
When 'round her neck the noose they tie,
And send her shrieking in the air!
Grant, grant, O God, that I be there!

This, mark you, is hot stuff. But hotter still is in the book—hotter, indeed, than I would dare transcribe to the pages of a great family magazine.

England is denounced as a harpy, as a harridan, as a "vile, diseased old harlot," as a "perjured, pandering prostitute." She is accused of murder, mayhem, piracy on the high seas, lying, sheep stealing, rebating, seduction under promise of marriage, passing bad cheques, violations of the Mann Act. And thus, in high, astounding terms, she is challenged to do her darndest:

You have planted your flag upon every crag
Where the winds of the world do blow;
Your ships they sail before every gale
Where the world's waters go;
You have conquered the races near and far,
From the sun's rise to its set;
But, oh, we fling it in your face—
We are not conquered yet!

By the higher things you could never feel,
By the dreams you could never know,
We will fight to the end of the glorious fight,
O hated and ancient foe;
And we pledge you our hate, our deathless hate,
Till the stars from their course are driven,
And the very ends of the earth itself
Asunder are rent and riven!

Well, well, let us not cackle over Professor Golden. No doubt it is quite natural for a patriotic Celt to feel a certain heat when he thinks of England, just as it is natural for a Belgian to feel a certain heat when he thinks of Germany. Moreover, this fevered bard of the Irish-German-Austrian-Hungarian-Bulgarian-Turkish cause is surely but little more absurd than most of the hymnals of the English-French-Belgian-Russian-Portuguese-Italian-Japanese-Rumanian cause. One and all the war poets quack and gargle dismally; their strophes turn to fustian quickly; they will be buying up their war stuff and hiding it in their garrets in two or

three years. So far, in fact, though I have read them literally by the thousand, I have encountered but two war poems of any genuine merit. One of them is a sonnet by the late Rupert Brooke, and the other is a German poem called "I Have An Old Mother," or something of the sort—a very beautiful, and even noble piece of writing. The French poets are all at the front, and hence benevolently silent; the English poets, and particularly their American echoes and valets, seems to be trying desperately to surpass the bosh and bluster of the German "Hassgesang gegen England." Even the mildest of the jongleurs takes to grotesque monkey-shines when he writes of the war. For example, Charles Hanson Towne, whose "Today and Tomorrow" (*Doran*), in the midst of very pretty lyrics, contains half a dozen hysterical war poems. They resemble nothing so much as doggerel versions of headlines in the *Evening Telegram*. Worse, they are antagonistic in sentiment. In one sonnet the gifted rhapsodist denounces the United States for standing clear of the unpleasantness, and in another he tells William Watson (who has apparently asked him about the matter) that neutrality is a sweet thing and a proof of piety. As for Walter Conrad Arensberg, he descends in "Idols" (*Houghton-Mifflin*) to theological and psychopathological balderdash; it will make truly astonishing reading when the show is over. Wilfrid Wilson Gibson does even worse; he makes the Mother Goose songs his model, as in "The Bayonet":

This bloody steel
Has killed a man.
I heard him squeal
As on I ran.

He watched me come
With wagging head.
I pressed it home,
And he was dead.

Though clean and clear
I've wiped the steel,
I still can hear
That dying squeal.

The school, obviously, of "Hickory, Dickory, Dock." Poetry to be inscribed upon school-house walls. . . . Quite as bad are the noisy roars of Lewis Worthington Smith in "The English Tongue" (*Four Seas*), a sophomoric imitation of Kipling at his cheapest, and the pious rumble-bumble of Grace Fallows Norton in "What Is Your Legion?" (*Houghton*), a book of dithyrambs in the "Maryland, My Maryland" manner. Such stuff is certainly not poetry. It belongs, roughly, to that strident sub-department of beautiful letters which also includes the George M. Cohan song, the Presidential harangue of acceptance and the college yell. In Ruth McEnery Stuart's "Plantation Songs" (*Appleton*) war verse drops a cellar further, and becomes indistinguishable from the inspirational rubbish of the newspapers. For example:

If first and best are sacrificed
And epileptics thrive,
Begetting by their feeble strain
In pale successors of the slain
Whose sons within their loins have lain
In soldiers' trenches—whence again
Will virile men arrive?

Why not send idiots to fight?
Conscript the leper camps?
Wipe out the White Plague on the field?
Soldiers of courage it would yield!
Perhaps our murderers might be healed
By overwork—and kindly shield
From prisons' glooms and damps.

Ding-dong "poetry"—and a belated suggestion. As a matter of fact, the French have sent all their Apaches, actors and poets into the forefront of the fray, the Germans have thus got rid of thousands of Socialist orators, and the Russians have depopulated Siberia in freedom's cause. Even the English, perhaps the least sharp-witted of civilized peoples, have had sense enough to give the Irish good seats at all performances. . . . From such platitudinous piffle one turns with relief to a few war poems of a measurably better sort. Some of them are to be found in "London, One November," by Helen Mackay (*Duffield*), and others in "A

Song of the Guns," by Gilbert Frankau, R.S.A. (*Houghton*). Both of these poets run to *vers libre*; Mrs. Mackay even abandons initial capitals. Much guff is in their books, but in the midst of it there is also an occasional line of beauty, a stray picture that flashes and lingers. But the best of all the war poetry, it seems to me, is in Carl Sandburg's "Chicago Poems" (*Holt*). Here, at all events, one finds restraint and self-respect. Sandburg does not try to scare the Kaiser to death with tall talk, nor does he slobber the old, old slobber over the Belgians (who probably tire of it sorely, and would greatly prefer better rations), nor does he argue that the United States is a fair vestal among the nations, and devoid of all the hoggishness, imbecility and hypocrisy of the rest. What he does say, of course, is more or less self-evident, for so much has been said about war that scarcely anything remains to be said, but he at least spares us his sobs. . . .

Curiously enough, many of these bad war poets do excellent work in other fields. In Mr. Arensberg's book, for instance, there is a three-liner which throws up a brilliant and agreeable image. He calls it "The Voice of One Dead," and it is as follows:

Of the relented limbs and the braid, O lady,
Bound up in haste at parting,
The secret is kept.

Here speaks one of decent restraints, a fellow to be trusted and respected, a gentleman. But when he turns to carnage Mr. Arensberg blubbers. So with the excellent Towne. Some of his short lyrics—"After," "Love Can Die," "Mysteries," "The Quiet Years"—are pure bursts of song. So, too, with Mr. Gibson. His one-act plays in blank verse are the best in the current harvesting. As for Mrs. Norton, she prints a whole book of pretty verses, by name "Roads" (*Houghton*), and save for a few bad war songs at the end, it lifts itself well clear of the fustian of "What Is Your Legion?"

. . . I wish I could say as much for Mrs. Stuart, but the fact is that her "Plantation Songs" are almost as bad as her war songs. Her method of manufacturing a negro song is the simple one of first writing a fourth-rate poem, and then translating it into imperfect dialect. The result a gross misrepresentation of negro ideas, and even of the negro vocabulary. An example from the poem called "Wash-Day":

When de dusk brings out de edges
O' de west'ard growin' hedges,
An' each gou'd-flower on de stable is a sun,
F'om de fiel' beyon' my bleachin'
Comes a cow-song, so beseechin'
Dat I fools aroun' untel de milkin's done.

Imagine a plantation darkey using such an adjective as "westward-growing," or talking of suns (in the plural), or perceiving anything "beseeching" in a cow-song! Such stuff is machine-made and without merit. It is sentimental and bogus. The sub-Potomac lutanists would do well to cease writing it.

§2.

Let us make no truce with bad poets. The art is incessantly invaded by aspirants with no more talent for its tricks than I have for those of diplomacy, and no more capacity for its emotions than George Nathan has for those of the Holy Rollers. Let us, as politely as possible, bounce them off Parnassus. . . . What right, for example, has a poet to assault Christendom with so huge and unpleasant a projectile as Sarah Taylor Shatford's "Birds of Passage" (*Sherman-French*)—a book of no less than 425 bad poems, 510 pages of buncombe and bathos, more than a pound and a half of tosh. I open the vast tome at random and encounter this:

A young girl dreaming of last night's joy,
When her hand was won by a handsome boy,
Gazes with loving and steady glare
On a beautiful diamond solitaire!

Note the rapt damsel's "glare"! And then turn twenty pages to:

If you marry for companionship,
You may eat your crust alone;
You may wander as the guest of God,
If you marry for a home.

If you'd weld with gold the marriage bond,
You may sweat to earn your bread;
There is one cause, and one only,
Which will bless the marriage bed.

Go further, and fare worse! Encountering it in such heroic doses one longs fretfully for the Zeppelins. Let the chute be greased for "Birds of Passage," Rudolph, and notify the hyenas in cage No. 7 that it is coming down. . . . Give them warning, too, of "Songs of Daddyhood," by Albert Edmund Trombley (*Gorham*), a far thinner but still most damnable volume of sloppy sentimentality, a sugar-teat for pushers of perambulators, a maudlin piece of goods, by Allah's chinners! . . . And of "Journeys of a Soul," by Nathan Appleton Tefft (*Gorham*), a sweet brew of piety and patriotism. . . . And of "Ad-em-nel-la," by Ethan Allen Hurst (*Hudson*), a doggerel version of a Kaw legend, with a preface in which the author talks of a time "when the race shall have been advanced to the grade of susceptibility where it can receive and enjoy the beauty of his work." . . . And of "Random Verse," by F. W. B. (*Badger*), and particularly of the lines on page 42:

I am American, am I
And not a being can
Say he is on a plane more high;
I'm good as any man.

And of "The Garden of Abdullah," by Adolph Danziger, not forgetting this:

A happy man is good and clean,
For others' gladness makes him glad;
A wretched man is bad and mean,
For others' glances makes him sad.

And of "Law and Love," by E. J. V. Huiginn (*Badger*), and of "The Arcades," by Lollie Belle Wylie (*Caldwell*), and of "The Long Way," by

Gilbert Moyle (*Four Seas*), and of "Ballads and Lyrics," by Eldredge Denison (*Sherman-French*)—dull, sentimental, maudlin stuff, with no more poetry in it than a Salvation Army hymn-book. It rolls endlessly from the presses; it is a panoramic monument to human vanity and folly. Measurably better, but still vapid and uninspired, is the poetry of such bards as Arthur Ketchum, Newbold Noyes, Caroline Stern, Glenn Ward Dresbach and May Stranathan. In Noyes' "Echo" (*Sherman-French*), for example, one finds all the ancient rubber stamps; velvet feet, sunkissed landscape, falling dusk, happy heart, golden voice, sorry knave, whispering birch—a vast emission of the obvious and commonplace. I spare you further examples. There are publishers who specialize in pursuing these half-poets with their blandishments, and the result is the endless stream of their books. Let a passable lyric appear in a magazine, and its author is straightway approached with an offer to print a book, chiefly at his own expense. Such subtly flattering invitations are forever passing through magazine offices; scarcely a week passes that I do not receive an inquiry from some newly hatched poet or other, asking if this or that firm is reputable. The answer is simple: so far as I know, all of them are reputable. That is to say, they do what they promise to do; they print the book and send it out for review. It gets, as a rule, a few formal notices. Some fair critic in Dubuque or Charlottesville, working her way through high school by writing for the local gazette, perhaps hails it as sweet and soul-filling. The product is another bad poet in the ring, another versifier turned loose. . . .

I do not speak from remote and arctic heights, sniffing disdainfully. When I was young and full of gas I printed a book of verse myself, and paid a clipping bureau \$5 for the seventeen ensuing clippings. Fifteen of them were politely complimentary; the other two told the bitter truth, and in

harsh terms. Once I got over the first shock of it, I began to be grateful to those two unknown truth-tellers, and I have been grateful to them ever since. Had they been lazier, or politer, or more humane to young poets, I might have gone on concocting bad poetry for three or four more years, and so remained cadaverous and moony and a nuisance to my betters. Some philanthropist should subsidize a critic to round them up and do execution upon the novices every year. It would clear the libraries of many worthless books, and the poets themselves, in the end, would erect a shaft to their benefactor. . . .

§3.

ALAS, the harpists of harder and longer service stand in almost as much need of the corrective slapstick—at least this autumn. I open "Including You and Me," by Strickland Gillilan (*Forbes*), snouting with appetite for another "Finnegan," another "Ode on the Antiquity of Microbes." All I find is a collection of inspirational rubbish of the farm-paper variety, with here and there a saving touch of humor. In "Heart Songs and Home Songs," by Denis A. McCarthy (*Little-Brown*), there is only the rubbish. For example:

Month of flowers, month of bowers,
Month of happy sunlit hours!

Turn now to "Lundy's Lane," by Duncan Campbell Scott (*Doran*) a poet praised by William Archer. I find only the usual stuff, the formal stuff, the hollow stuff—cold, precise stanzas without the slightest glow or gusto—poetry as devoid of passion as a syllogism. Nor do I get a single thrill out of "The Great Maze," by Hermann Hagedorn (*Macmillan*), a rhapsodist of very respectable accomplishment in the past. His long title poem leaves me chilly and lonesome, and his play in blank verse, "The Heart of Youth," is such heavy going that I have not got to the end of it. Nor am I lifted up

by Edwin Arlington Robinson's "The Man Against the Sky" (*Macmillan*). On what theory could a sane man maintain that there is poetry in such a composition as his "Llewellyn and the Tree"? Or in his imitations of Browning? . . . But Robinson, at all events, has his moments. In the midst of his vast dreariness I happen upon this:

His fame, though vague, will not be small,
As upward through her dream he fares,
Half clouded with a crimson fall
Of roses thrown on marble stairs.

I hail the one rose on the poet's marble stair. . . . I find another in Amelia Josephine Burr's "Life and Living" (*Doran*), or, perhaps more accurately, a whole sheaf: the poem called "Poppies" is full of a fine sincerity, a simple eloquence, an unmistakable beauty. But with it come many things that fall below it a million miles. . . .

The tried and tested poets, in truth, make a rather sorry showing this autumn. The books they offer are chiefly interesting, not because of their contents, but because their authors are well known. This is particularly true of John Masefield's "Good Friday and Other Poems" (*Macmillan*). The drama in verse which fills the half of it is a competent piece of work, but almost wholly lacking in the divine fire. If it had been written by some beginning *poëtereau* no one would pay any attention to it. Mr. Masefield's sonnets, perhaps sixty in number, are scarcely more arresting. If it be true, as the canned review says, that they are "held by critics to rank with the best in the English language," then there are critics at large who deserve to have their credentials examined by the *poëzei*. Lloyd Mifflin, in his day, wrote better ones; I could name four or five by Lizette Woodworth Reese that belong to an altogether higher order. . . . Nor do I think that Edgar Lee Masters, in his "Songs and Satires" (*Macmillan*), reaches the level of "The Spoon River Anthology." The best thing in the book, it seems to me, is "In the Cage," a searching discussion

of the relations between man and woman—but after all, a discussion, not a poem. The same thing may be said of "The Cocked Hat," a philippic against the late William Jennings Bryan, a celebrated politician of the last age. I find such things as "Rain in My Heart" and "When Under the Icy Eaves" rather formal and empty. But one thing, at least, may be said of Mr. Masters: he is never downright dull. As eager and agile intelligence is visible in everything he does; if he is not actually a first-rate poet he is at all events a sharp-witted and interesting man. . . .

I pass over various dispiriting things: "Laodice and Danaë," a labored play in blank verse by Gordon Bottomley (*Four Seas*), almost devoid of poetical thought; "Five Men and Pompey," by Stephen Vincent Benét (*Four Seas*), an experiment in character portrayal which works out but clumsily; "There Was a Time," by Anne Murray Larned (*Badger*), a thin book of children's poems; "The Tragedy," by Gilbert Moyle (*Four Seas*), a scenario in imperfectly poetical form; "Poems of Panama," by George Warburton Lewis (*Sherman-French*), the chief of police down there. And so to "Advent Songs," by Simon N. Patten (*Huebsch*), a butchery of old hymns in the name of the uplift. Mr. Patten explains in a long introduction that those hymns are archaic and abhorrent. They express the theological ideas of dead generations; they are full of a fiery faith, and what is worse, of resignationism; what they need is a dash of Service. "The Christ of today," he says, "is not the shepherd counting the stars and guarding the lambs. He is the fireman who rushes pell-mell to save the cottage." So much for the theory. Here, in "Onward, Christian Soldiers," is the practise:

Onward, earnest people,
Spreading Christian lore;
Greet thy erring brother,
Harmony restore.
Feud cannot divide us,
Nor can foe dismay;
Ours a faith of promise,
Bright the coming day.

Let me be frank: I prefer the original.

§4.

WE come to sweeter strains. In "Turns and Movies," by Conrad Aiken (*Houghton-Mifflin*), in the midst of much heavy piling up of conventional lines, there is more than one distinct lifting of the mood—for example, in "Discordants," a group of very fair songs, and in "Evensong," a simple and eloquent piece of writing. The thing that Mr. Aiken has yet to master is the fine art of selection; he is still a bit too prodigal with his parts of speech; his inspiration is spread out, so to speak, over too great an area. The worst of his offending, however, seems to be over. At the end of his book he gives plain notice that he will add no more to the inextricable coils and convolutions of "Earth Triumphant," a poem praised by the Boston *cognoscenti*, but really very poor stuff. I have a feeling that he can do much better, and it is supported by certain passages in the present volume.

He will have to go pretty far, however, before he overtakes Bliss Carman and Francis Ledwidge, the former of whom offers a thin little book called "April Airs" (*Small-Maynard*), and the latter a larger tome called "Songs of the Fields" (*Duffield*), with an introduction by Lord Dunsany. Mr. Carman is so tried a poet that his work does not need to be described. In this latest volume, as in those gone before, it is marked by the great qualities of simplicity, directness, clarity. It often seems so transparent, indeed, that the fine skill put into it is apt to be lost sight of. Do not, beloved, fall into that blindness. It is vastly more difficult to make such austere and shining little lyrics, each so unadorned and yet so full of charm, than to manufacture whole cantos of rhetorical fustian. Mr. Carman sings of modest and familiar things—the lovely round of the New England year, with its mild spring, its well-behaved summer, its melancholy autumn, its long and quiet winter. He

gets a touch of magic into the least of his stanzas, and a touch of wistfulness. It is not poetry to inflame the cortex and race the pulse, but it is sound and honest poetry none the less.

As for Ledwidge, he makes a series of brilliant pictures of the Irish countryside—the vivid greens, the poor cottages, the weed-grown roads, the lonely and sinister mountains. Simple words, simple measures—and yet all lighted up with images like this:

And like an apron full of jewels
The dewy cobweb swings.

It is almost impossible to believe, as Lord Dunsany says, that Ledwidge is no more than an inspired clodhopper, a peasant miraculously gifted with song. I have no belief in such miracles. The business of writing English verse is a craft as well as an art; it has its tricks and mysteries; it must be learned laboriously, just as book-keeping or fiddle-playing must be learned. I suspect that this Ledwidge, in the intervals of his clod-hopping, gave many a fevered night to the study of Keats and Shelley.

More good verse out of Ireland is in "Poems of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood," edited by Padraic Colum (*Small-Maynard*). The poets represented are Thomas MacDonagh, P. H. Pearse, Joseph M. Plunkett and Roger Casement, all now done to death, alas, for their parts in the Irish rebellion. Here we have the poetry, not of English poets accidentally of Irish birth, but of genuine Irishmen, and hence mystics. The winds of old romance sigh through their stanzas; one sniffs old pagan altar fires in the midst of Christian songs; the wonder of ancient Erin is there.

§5.

THE Imagists, judging by their latest volumes, seem to be petering out. I can find nothing in such collections as Mary Aldis' "Flashlights" (*Duffield*), Robert Alden Sanborn's "Horizons" (*Four Seas*), Richard Aldington's "Images Old and New" (*Four*

Seas), and John Gould Fletcher's "Goblins and Pagodas" (*Houghton-Mifflin*), save a somewhat tedious straining for effects that are never actually reached. Mrs. Aldis is the least competent and effective of these revolutionists. Her opening poems, "The Barber Shop" and "Love in the Loop," are simply highly improbable anecdotes in stumbling lines; there is no more poetry in them, no more conjuring up of images, no more exaltation of the spirit, than in so many editorials in the *Boston Transcript*; they are weak, flat and foolish. Mr. Fletcher, in his color symphonies, succeeds rather better. Here and there a picture takes form; there is brilliance in detail; the thing shows a certain worthy earnestness. Moreover, Mr. Fletcher prefaces his book with a clear and interesting exposition of his poetic ideas—ideas often erroneous, but still not insane.

But the best of the current Imagist burbling is to be found in Donald Evans' "Two Deaths in the Bronx" (*Brown*), and Carl Sandburg's "Chicago Poems" (*Holt*), and particularly in the latter. Mr. Evans broke out as a prosodic anarchist several years ago, and performed various atrocities in two thin books. He is now a bit more sedate, and a bit more persuasive. At all events, he gets atmosphere into his poems; they have individuality; they are anything but commonplace. I give you "Two Modern Lovers," "Valley of Desire" and "Infidelities" as examples of his talents. . . . Mr. Sandburg's book is thick and in parts it is padded, but half a dozen of the compositions in the first section—the Chicago section—make it worth while. A volume of Chicago lyrics, or even of Chicago sonnets, would be, perhaps, an absurdity. One can scarcely imagine the half-medieval clang and gusto of that overgrown cow camp put into meticulously measured lines. Here the thing is done in its own spirit. Here one gets something of the rattle—and something of the great hope and striving, too. It is an experiment well carried out.

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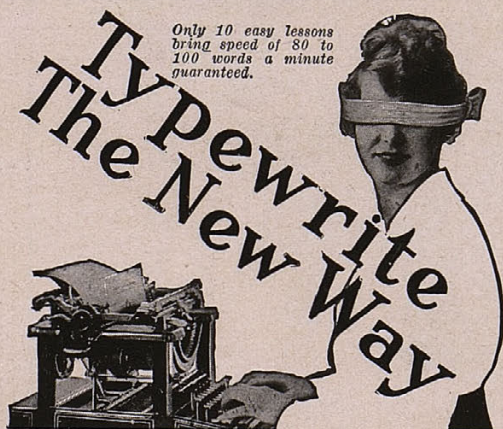
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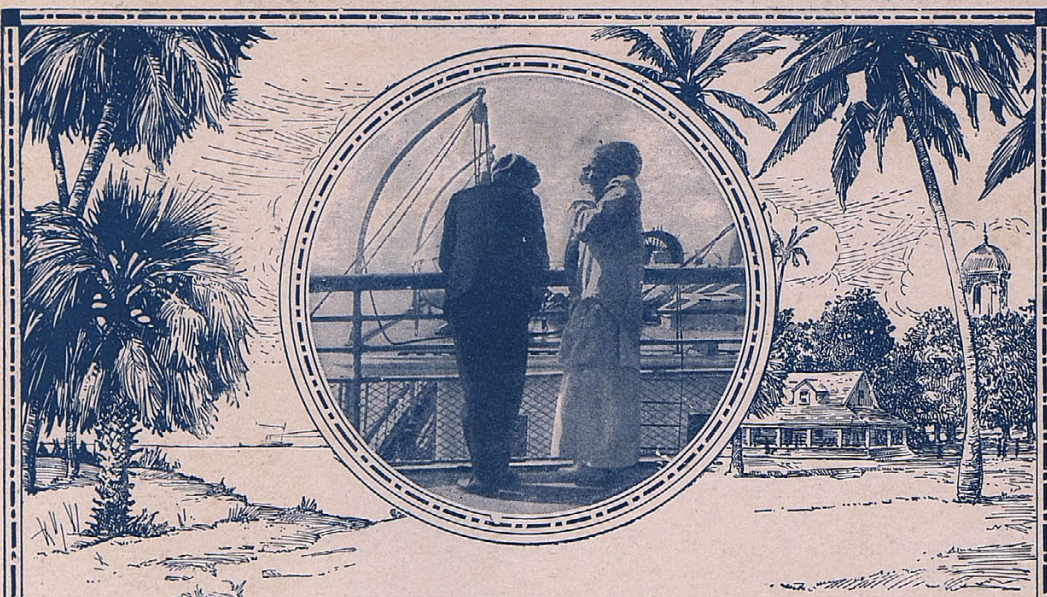
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